An Assessment of Beneficial Image of a Country for Vacation Destination

Nirundon Tapachai

1997

AN ASSESSMENT OF BENEFICIAL IMAGE OF A COUNTRY

FOR VACATION DESTINATION

by

Nirundon Tapachai

B.A.(Pol.Science), B.Econ., M.P.A., M.A.

Submitted as part of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

in

the Faculty of Business

Victoria University of Technology

Melbourne, Australia

July 1997

STATEMENT

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any univeristy or other institution.

To the best of the candidate's knowledge, the dissertation contains no materials previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

Signed

July 1997

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LISTS OF APPENDIXES

ABSTRACT

The aims of this study were: (1) to investigate the destination image which influences Australian potential tourists' decision to visit Thailand and the USA as vacation destinations, and (2) to apply a category-based (prototype-based) approach for operationalising the beneficial image. To achieve Aim1, the so-called 'beneficial image' framework, building upon the marketing image concept of Kotler and Barich (1992) and the consumption value theory of Sheth et al. (1992), was developed. This beneficial image framework was based on five values including functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional. The model provided the basis for understanding destination images and how such images influenced tourists' vacation destinations.

To accomplish Aim 2, the development of destination image measurement based on the category-based approach has been undertaken. The author was convinced that by using the category-based approach, destination images which were stored in prototype form can be assessed. The central idea of this approach is that an individual is able to compare the incoming data with prior information or schema stored in memory in evaluating products or things. Therefore, destination image can be assessed by comparing or matching incoming information and image stored in tourists' minds. Based on this assumption, proxy or dummy prototypes of five consumption values were developed from preliminary survey and then compared

with tourists' existing beneficial images of those destinations. This methodological framework was applied to 247 subjects, who are students of Victoria University of Technology, and who have never visited the studied countries before. To operationalise this process, five statements representing these proxy prototypes were developed, then subjects were asked to freely express their congruence/discrepancy with these prototypes. On the basis of this matching process, the beneficial images of the two destinations were assessed.

The key findings of this study revealed that Thailand has strong beneficial images (agreed by 50 % or more of subjects) in all characteristics of functional, epistemic, and conditional values. These include fascinating cheap shopping, exotic food, friendliness of local people, historical sites, tropical beaches, unspoiled countryside, and beautiful scenery (functional value dimension); culture and climate experience (epistemic value dimension); and proximity to Australia, cheap travel, and accessibility to neighbouring countries (conditional value dimension).

For the USA, the strong beneficial images are in all characteristics of functional, epistemic, emotional, and conditional value dimension. These include fascinating shopping, famous theme parks, renown city landmarks, big cities, and beautiful scenery (functional value dimension); novel experience and a variety of things to see and do (epistemic value dimension); diverse, fun, dynamic, and modern (emotional value dimension); and no language barriers, relatively good and cheap

transport, and the opportunity to see special sporting events (conditional value dimension).

However, Thailand possesses the weak beneficial images (agreed by less than 50 % of subjects) in social and emotional value dimensions. These include suitable place for all age and status (social value dimension); and relaxation and calm (emotional value dimension). Whereas, the USA has weak beneficial image in popularity (social value dimension).

This study has theoretical, methodological, and practical implications that can guide future research. From a theoretical perspective, the study introduced the concept of beneficial image which can be a framework for assessing destination image. This model is useful for understanding image characteristics which affect a tourist's decision to visit a particular destination. From a methodological perspective, the study indicated that the developed methods based on a category-based approach can be an alternative approach to measure destination image. Further, from a practical perspective, the findings of this study provide useful and meaningful information for destination marketing in terms of designing promotional programs and marketing strategies.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is currently one of the world's largest industries and promises to remain so into the 21st century. It is expected that employment in the travel and tourism industry will grow almost 50 % faster than in all other major industries. It is also predicted that by the year 2005, annual sales in travel and tourism will gross five thousand million dollars ($US) (Jesitus, 1993).

Promotion of a country is essential in order to gain a strong share in the marketplace and it is clear that tourism promotion will not be effective or successful without the analysis and understanding of the target market. An understanding of the people to be served and their decision-making process in choice of destination is integral to effective planning for tourism development.

In the international tourism context, there is more competition than cooperation. Although attempts have been made to form strategic alliances among countries, it is not clear whether those efforts have been successful. Furthermore, it is apparent that 'competition for a share of the international tourism market is strong and is certain to become more intense as the services economy in general, and international tourism in particular, assume grander roles on the world's economics stage' (Crouch, 1992:5).

For these reasons marketers from a large number of competing locations have strived to communicate to potential tourists the benefits that their destinations offer. The resulting mass of information to which potential tourists are exposed to, is beyond their capacity to assimilate and process. The flood of information about

destinations is therefore somehow selected and fashioned by the tourists into an image or images of those destinations.

In most models of travel decision-making developed to date by marketing scholars and practitioners, the image of a vacation destination plays an important role. An image is influential in directing decision-making and in shaping the subsequent behaviour of tourists. Vague and unclear images may adversely affect market shares within international tourism marketing, thus clear image of a destination should be presented. For example, in the case of Canadian destinations, Canada's market share was found to be small due largely to a lack of awareness of attractions amongst Americans. For about 85% of Americans, Canada was not even considered as a place for holiday-making (Dybka, 1987). Therefore, it is essential for tourism promoters to provide specific information to potential tourists and maintain the particular and clear image of the country.

In terms of holiday choice, destination images form part of consumers' decision-making processes in that they will influence tourists' vacation choice. Destination image is commonly viewed as the 'pull' factor in the decision-making process (e.g. Chon, 1990; Gilbert, 1989; Kent, 1990). Kent (1990) argues that tourists' decisions must be based on their mental image since a tourism product is a service which cannot be checked before purchasing. This is in accordance with Ashworth and Goodall's (1990) view that a country's image acts as an information cue for tourists in their decision-making process. Kent's argument also appears to be consistent with Crompton's study (1977) which found a significant relationship between destination choice and destination image.

Mayo (1975) indicated that the actual characteristics of a destination are of less importance than the way the destination characteristics are perceived in the eyes of potential tourists. Therefore, the image of a vacation destination is positioned in the

tourist's mind relative to other destinations. Reilly (1990) posits that the image of a place to be marketed is the basis of the positioning process of a vacation destination. He argues that an accurate assessment of the image of the destination is an obvious prerequisite to such a process, and assessing the image of destination is of vital importance. Therefore, it is essential for tourism managers to know what image international tourists have of a particular country as a destination and how different images can signal their expectations or needs with respect to different countries.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Most previous studies have focused on the general or common image attributes of a destination, but they have not considered adequately the particular characteristics of destination images which affect decisions to visit particular places. Even though destination image is claimed to be a significant factor in the destination choice process of tourists (Um & Crompton, 1992), it is obvious that not all image attributes are taken into account in decisions to visit a destination. Crompton (1979) indicated significant differences between the image attributes which tourists saw as important in considering a holiday in a country, and the positive images which tourists hold of that country. Understanding the kinds of images which influence a decision to visit a vacation destination would be useful for a tourist agency promoting and developing that tourist destination. This thesis seeks to formulate the issue as a research subject by investigating what images potential Australian tourists consider in deciding to visit two of their most popular countries, Thailand and the USA.

Previous studies have not used adequate methods to evaluate the destination image. Image is identified as a mental prototype and the conceptualisation of destination image embraces both the destination's salient attributes and holistic impressions. Most earlier studies emphasised the use of traditional methods, such as the Semantic

Differential scale and Likert scale, which one based on the piecemeal- or attribute-based approach, in assessing destination images. This approach is inadequate to assess destination image as a mental prototype and could not capture the holistic nature of the image (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Consequently, an alternative methodology to measure the destination image is needed. This study investigates the category-based approach which can be adapted in assessing destination image characteristics which influence a potential tourist's decision to visit a vacation destination.

In short, this study is the result of an attempt to address the theoretical and methodological issues of the measurement of destination image. The study is an initial step toward extending the understanding of image in tourist decision making by presenting a framework for the evaluation of the destination image for marketing purposes. It also is the first step in developing a measurement of destination image based on the category-based approach. This study is exploratory in nature and should be treated as such.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS

According to the research problems outlined above, the aims of this study were:

1) to investigate the destination image which influences the decision of potential Australian tourists to visit Thailand and the USA as vacation destinations. To achieve this aim, the concept of so called 'beneficial image' will be formulated and examined,

2) to apply a category-based approach for operationalising the beneficial image of a vacation destination. To operationalise this aim, the proxy prototypes of the two

studied countries were developed and compared with the images held by potential tourists.

As exploratory research, the present study does not provide a hypothesis, but takes the above-mentioned aims as guidelines for the project.

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS OF STUDY

This study does not attempt to investigate the general images of a vacation destination but focuses on those image characteristics which are taken into account as beneficial to support the tourists' decision to visit a vacation destination.

Tourism product components may vary according to the scale of the entities, such as countries, regions, states, and cities. It is possible, that image of destination at a country level is more complex than at a lower level such as state or city levels. These images of a country are tied to physical, environmental, cultural and social characteristics and values. In this study, "destination image" will be limited to the study of the country level, as applied to Thailand and the USA .

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The context of this research is outlined in Chapter 2 where the concept of image in marketing and tourism areas and the role of tourist image in travel decision and behaviour are described. In addition, studies to date in destination image are reviewed.

Chapter 3 describes the theoretical framework for conceptualising and operationalising beneficial image. Marketing image and consumption value theories which underlie the beneficial image framework are described and their relevance to

this research is outlined. The category-based theory and its role in the operationalisation of destination image is also discussed.

Chapter 4 reviews the existing techniques in measuring destination image and discusses the methodology used in this study. The instrument development process is described.

Chapter 5 discusses and describes the data used in this study. The procedures used to examine the beneficial image are explained. The focus is on the integration of the category-based approach, content analysis and frequency analysis.

Chapter 6 presents and discusses the results of the beneficial image analysis. The comparison between experienced and non-experienced tourists are investigated for the purpose of further exploration. The key findings of the research are highlighted. In addition, the contribution of the beneficial image model and the category-based approach are discussed.

Finally, in Chapter 7, the limitations and implications of the findings are considered together with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMAGE IN TOURISM CONTEXT

This chapter focuses on the literature regarding destination images, the role of the destination image in travel behaviour and a history of research in destination image studies.

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE IMAGE CONCEPT

It is widely accepted that human behaviour depends not on "reality" but on what people think reality is. This notion, initially introduced by Boulding (1956), implies that "the behaviour of a human is not directed by more knowledge and information but is a product of the images that a man perceives" (p.6).

In the field of psychology "image" is viewed differently. There is no generally accepted definition of "image" in the psychological image/imagery literature (Lyman, 1984). This represents the inherent nature of the image concept which is associated with other representational constructs such as attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and so forth. Therefore, imagery should not be considered as a singular concept but rather as a group of concepts gathered under one umbrella label (Childers & Houston, 1982).

Psychologists generally view image as a product of the cognitive operation process arising from prior knowledge or existing schemas, and define images as representational constructs in the minds of individuals (Dennett, 1981; Paivio, 1986). Image is a result of information processing which is abstracted at different levels. It is also represented both in cognitive terms (such as belief and meaning) and affective terms (such as feeling). In addition, image is also viewed in terms of the learning process. Staats and Lohr (1979) defined images as the "stimuli produced by conditioned sensory responses" (p.85). Images may have reinforcing properties: they may elicit responses in the positive emotional sense or avoidance responses in the negative emotional sense.

Even though images are taken to be visual, tactual, auditory, gustatory, and olfactory phenomena (Bourne, Dominowski, & Loftus, 1979), the question of how they are stored in the human memory remains a controversial issue. Those who emphasise the existence of images do not necessarily agree on the form of the storage of image (e.g., picture, symbol, or description). These issues have been discussed by many authors (e.g., Block, 1981; Finke,1989; Lindauer, 1983; Rollins, 1989).

Nonetheless, image is accepted as a dual coding model which embraces both the nonverbal and verbal or linguistic systems (Paivio, 1971; 1978; 1986). These two systems are assumed to involve independent but partially interconnected systems for encoding, storing, organising, and retrieving stimulus information. The codes are also interconnected in that one code can be transformed into the other (i.e., pictures

can be named and words can evoke images). Under this assumption, people can transform the descriptive stimulus (verbal system) to a nonverbal system and vice versa.

In short, although the nature and properties of the image are still debated, it is commonly accepted that images are mental constructs in long term memory which help simplify information storage and retrieval, and allow the average time searching for a solution to be reduced (Cossens, 1995). Images also play an important role in the processes of human thought (Shepard, 1978), and have important implications for understanding consumer choice.

2.2 THE IMAGE IN MARKETING AND CONSUMER RESEARCH

In the marketing context, image is an important factor in creating competitive advantage. An organisation can create a competitive advantage in marketing through three generic strategies: cost leadership, differentiation, and focus (Porter, 1985). In the differentiation component, an organisation can differentiate its offering in many ways and one of these is to use an image differentiation strategy (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1991).

Several meanings of the image in marketing and consumer behaviour have been reviewed by Poiesz (1989). The first aspect is viewed in psychological terms of perception, attitude, and belief. For example, Lindquist (1974-75) and Marks (1976) refer to image as 'perceptions of products'; May (1974-75), James, Durand,

and Dreves (1976), Hirschmann, Greenberg, & Robertson (1978) use the terms 'beliefs and attitudes", while Kroeer-Riel (1975) and Johannson (1971) refer to image as an "attitude".

Secondly, image has been viewed by a number of authors in terms of a cognitive approach. For example, Boulding (1956) views image as 'subjective knowledge", while Reynolds and Gutman (1984) refer to image as " image as a hierarchical meaning structure consisting of means-end (value) chains", and Kroeber-Riel (1986) as "image as concrete visual representations in memory".

Image has also been viewed as a combination of physical and psychological dimensions. Arons (1961) and Martineau (1958) refer to image as 'brand personality", Jain and Etgar (1976-77) see image as 'general characteristics, feelings, or impressions"; and Oxenfeldt (1974) 'linkages between characteristics and feeling/emotions".

In addition, image has been viewed in other dimensions. In solely physical dimensions, Martineau (1957) refers to image as 'the sum of all product meanings conveyed to the consumer". In its symbolic aspect, Erickson, Johnson, and Chao (1984) view image as 'a combination of product aspects that are distinct from the physical product characteristics but are nevertheless identified with the product. Examples are the brand name, symbols used in advertising, endorsement by a well-known figure, and country of origin".

Along with his review of the different conceptualisations of image, Poiesz (1989) also contended that the image concept may be located along an elaboration continuum, ranging from high elaboration through medium to low elaboration. He suggested that the image concept should be used to refer to the holistic impression of the relative position of a brand among its perceived competitors.

The definitions of image just reviewed are diverse as Keaveney and Hunt (1992) concluded in the retail store context. They suggest that "...the (retail store) image paradigm has a rich history of store image conceptualisation....to be a fascinating concept, comprised of both fact and fantasy, objective reality mixed with subjective inference, truth and conjecture, observation and emotion ..." (p.167).

Nevertheless, researchers seem to agree on the idea of viewing image as a perception or impression of things embracing both salient attributes and gestalt (holistic) impressions. These definitions suggest agreement among scholars that image is made up of distinct dimensions of attributes and is also greater than the sum of its parts. Most studies seem to focus on the attributes of image but neglect its holistic aspects (see Section 2.8).

2.3 IMAGE IN THE TOURISM CONTEXT

In the tourism context, it has been found that the definition of destination image is also diverse and viewed at different levels of abstraction and in different dimensions.

Pearce (1988) expressed concern about the definition or meaning of image when he wrote:

> The frustration for the social scientist is that attempts to define the term operationally are doomed to failure since the wide and everyday use of the word swamps the scholar's attempts to use it in a specific limited manner. Since travel agents, journalists, tourists and the public are going to continue to use the term. Perhaps the best approach to be adopted in analysing the concept for our understanding of tourist behaviour is to note the commonest meaning and connotations of the expression and adhere to these nuances of meaning. (p.162)

The concept of "image" in tourism originated as a rather sophisticated idea. It was the notion that potential tourists possess images with regard to specific vacation destinations. Mayo (1973) stated that whether or not an image is in fact a true representation of what any given region has to offer the tourist, what is important is the image existing in the mind of the holiday-maker.

A comprehensive review of destination image literature has been carried out by Echtner and Ritchie (1991). Their image destination definition findings can be summarised as follows:

1. Perceptions held by potential visitors about an area (Hunt, 1975);

2. Organised representations of a destination in a cognitive system (Crompton, 1977);

3. The sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination (Crompton, 1979);

4. Perceptions or impressions of a place (Phelps, 1986);

5. How a country is perceived relative to others (Tourism Canada, 1987);

6. Impressions a person holds about a state in which they do not reside (Gartner & Hunt, 1987);

7. Perceptions of vacation attributes (Richardson & Crompton, 1988);

8. A complex combination of various products and associated attributes (Gartner, 1989);

9. Perceptions of potential tourist destinations (Calantone, et al., 1989);

10. Not individual traits...but the total impression an entity makes (Reilly, 1990).

Destination image is further defined by scholars in the tourism context. For example, Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) refer to destination image as 'the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, emotional thoughts an individual or group has of a particular object or place". Thus, the image may be stereotyped and vary greatly from reality but it reflects an individual's personal evaluations and expectations of a place (Carmichael, 1992).

From the studies reviewed above, it can be concluded that destination image is often viewed as the perception or impression of a destination. While potential tourists form destination image from their perception of vacation attributes, they may also develop these perceived attributes into impressions of the destination. Therefore, in short, destination image will be simply defined in this study as perception or impression of a vacation destination.

2.4 COMPONENTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE

Since the destination image is a multidimensional construct and a tourist may possess a variety of images in the context of travel (Gilbert, 1991), an analysis of image may be undertaken in different ways. Milman and Pizam (1995) conclude that "destination image is a complex concept that may be analysed from different perspectives and composed of a variety of individual perceptions that relate to various product/service attributes. In addition, image, as a multi-variable concept, should be measured on more than one dimension" (p.22). It should be noted that some studies have attempted to conceptualise destination image as a multi-dimensional construct. However, these studies have conceptualised destination image in different ways.

Mayo (1975) is one of the first researchers who tried to investigate the basic components of destination image within the leisure context. He argued that there are three basic dimensions or important attributes of holiday destinations in the minds of United States tourists, namely: scenery, congestion and climate. At the same time, Hunt (1975) characterised the tourist image as including the components of climate, the recreational character, and the people of the destination.

More recently, a comprehensive dimension of destination image has been developed by Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993). Their proposed framework consists of three continua as follows:

(1) Attribute-holistic, based on research concerning the nature of human information processing from the fields of psychology and consumer behaviour;

(2) Function-psychological, where a distinction is made between those characteristics of image that are directly observable (functional) and those that are less tangible and more difficult to observe or measure (psychological);

(3) Common-unique, which highlights the idea that images of destinations can range from those perceptions based on 'common' characteristics (e.g., price level, climate), to those based on 'unique' features or auras (e.g., safety, fame) (Milman and Pizam, 1995).

Although their works contribute to an understanding of destination image by attempting to examine and develop the unique characteristics of the destination concept, the shortcoming of this comprehensive concept can be found in terms of its complication of measurement and the overlap between the dimensions.

Recently, Milman and Pizam (1995) have suggested that the image of a tourist destination consists of a mixture of three components: 1) the product (i.e., quality and variety of attractions, price, uniqueness, categories of users, etc.); 2) the behaviour and attitude of the employees who come in direct contact with the tourists; and 3) the environment, such as the weather, the quality and types of accommodation, restaurants, and other facilities, including physical safety.

In short, dimensions or components of destination image are identified differently according to the kind and level of vacation destination. As Dadgostar and Isotalo

(1992) pointed out 'the composition of destination image depends on the type of destination being studied, the destination attributes and recreational benefits considered by tourists, as well as the interpretation of the researcher" (p.35).

2.5 FORMATION OF IMAGE

One identifiable problem in image research is a lack of knowledge regarding how an image is formed within consumers' minds. Image formation is hypothesised to be a process that occurs at different levels, or stages, within the mind. The process gradually integrates information about specific characteristics until an overall image is formed. The formation of this image may then be implied as one of information processing. It is believed that people do not have identical ideas of what the world around them is like because information about the world is subjected to mental processing before it is meaningful. The image would be constructed according to the available information which may be distorted by an absence of information, or the generalising information of known aspects to (other) unknown aspects. Haynes (1980) explained the basic model of the formation of images in terms of a 'real world", which is defined as that which exists independently of whether we notice it or not. The real world can be construed as sending out millions of information signals about every aspect of existence. An individual's mental image is therefore derived through the process of perception and cognition.

Reynolds (1965) is an early scholar who described the image-building process. He suggested that an image is 'the mental construct developed by the consumer on the

basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions; it comes into being through a creative process in which these selected impressions are elaborated, embellished, and ordered" (p. 69).

The image may be formed from the environment of the entities. More recently, Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) have proposed a model of a "store image" formation process and presented results of a study on how environmental cues are used in forming store images. According to this concept, an environmental cue can be used by customers in forming a store image. Individuals can utilise different cues in developing different image factors.

Image formation process was explained recently using various dimensions of information processing. For example, Keaveney and Hunt (1992) used processing modes: piecemeal-based and category-based processing with respect to the importance of past experience; Poiesz (1989) proposed the complexity of elaboration based on the continuum of elaboration; MacInnis and Price (1987) integrated both the continuum of elaboration and discursive/imagery processing. Thus, it may be that image formation of the individual depends on levels of information processing. Schroder, Driver, and Streufert (1967) maintained that levels of information processing can be described along a conceptual-complexity range: measured from low, moderately low, moderately high, and high integration indices.

In terms of image origin, it is apparent in the marketing literature that the origin of the image concept has been viewed differently over time. For example, the definition of brand image reviewed by Zinkhan and Hirschheim (1992) implied that the evolution of product image formation shifted from product-based to individual-based. In other words, it has shifted from the supply-side to the demand-side. The literature of tourism studies seems to compromise two themes (demand-side and supply-side) by asserting that the image also serves as a nexus between tourist (origin) and tourism product (destination). Crompton (1979) suggested that there are two schools of thought which view the destination image from destination side to tourists-side respectively. Stabler (1988) agrees with this notion. He posited that tourism image can be built up from the side of the product or the potential consumer.

Fakeye & Crompton (1991) and Gartner (1993), have explained the role information plays in the formation of image. They argue that destination image developments evolve from an organic image, through an induced image, to a complex image. These image phases are linked to the informative, persuasive, and reminding functions of promotion. Moutinho (1984) viewed images tourists have as 'total thoughts' derived from information processing. This kind of image is a description of the tourist's attitude towards a number of cues related to the destination attributes. Echtner & Ritchie (1991, 1993) suggest that discursive and imagery processing explain the forming of destination images in consumer's minds.

In short, a destination image is formed through different modes of information processing. A potential tourist builds up an image of a destination based on derived information and mechanism of information processing. The destination image, therefore, may be stereotyped and vary greatly from reality, but also reflect an individual's personal evaluation and expectation of place (Carmichael, 1992).

2.6 FACTORS AFFECTING DESTINATION IMAGE

Many past studies have been undertaken on factors affecting tourist images. For example, demographic variables have been found that influence the image of destination. Franscescato & Mebane (1973) demonstrated that different age groups and different socio-economic groups drew sketch maps varying in complexity and, knowledge of the range or scope of designated cities, but did not find gender differences. Ahmed (1989), however, also found that age differences affect the image of a destination.

Geographical and distance differences are found in many studies as a factor affecting tourist image of destination. These studies include Ahmed (1989), Crompton (1979), Dadgostar and Isotalo (1992), Fakeye and Crompton (1991), Gartner (1989), Hunt (1975), Reilly (1990). Hunt (1971) suggested that distance from a region may be an important ingredient in image formation. Tourists in nearby markets have an equal or greater opportunity for similar recreation experiences in their own states and consequently are less interested or less able to discern major differences in similar attractions and activities in other nearby states. Tourists of nearby markets may

know more about the neighbouring states and thus perceive them as more equal. Tourists of distant markets may know of only famous attractions in selected states and thus find them comparatively different.

Destination image may be formed primarily upon information or actual experience, or both. It should be noted that the actual vacation experience is used by a tourist to modify destination image, tending to be more realistic, complex, and differentiated (Echtner & Ritchie, 1990). Empirical studies including those of Ahmed (1989), Fakeye and Crompton (1991), Millman and Pizam (1995), Pearce (1982), and Zhang (1988) suggest a significant relationship exists between past experiences and different images of destinations. This evidence supports the notion that reformation of image or the complex image (that held by previous visitors) exists in previous visitors as proposed by Chon (1991) and Gartner (1993). Potential tourists form their own images of a destination through two processes including organic aspect (e.g., general information from unsolicited mass media communication) and induced aspect (e.g., information from destination promotion or advertising) (Gunn, 1972). Experienced tourists form complex images through information they received from actual visitation.

The relationship between cultural influence and image differences is supported by Richardson and Crompton (1988) who explored similarities and differences between French and English Canadians in their perceptions of the vacation attributes of the USA and Canada. They suggest the existence of primary influences of cultural antecedents upon perceptions of two subculture groups. The finding is consistent

with the work of Mayo and Jarvis (1981) who suggest that perceptions are influenced by culture and social class. The mode of transportation has also been found to affect the image and perception of destination held by tourists (Ahmed, 1989).

In short, past studies revealed factors affecting tourist images. These included demographic, geographical, experience, and cultural factors.

2.7 THE ROLE OF DESTINATION IMAGE IN TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

It is obvious that tourist's destination image has a significant linkage with a tourist's vacation decision. Image of the destination or vacation site is mentioned in several research reports and is identified in several models of travel decision and behavior (e.g., Chon, 1990; Gilbert, 1991; Goodall, 1988; Moutinho, 1984; Schmoll, 1977) as a powerful factor within the decision-making process for potential travellers in the anticipation stage. Reynolds (1965) suggests that human behaviour is grounded in need recognition and fulfillment, but that perception is the initiator of behaviour and the process by which we interpret our surroundings. He further argues that the way people behave depends to a great extent on how they perceive the world around them. As destination image is a tourist's mental picture or subjective (perceived) reality of a particular destination, it affects the tourist's travel decision and behavior. This notion was supported by several studies which showed that a traveler's image of an area was a critical factor in the decision to visit that area (e.g., Mayo, 1973; Stringer, 1984). A study of destination image undertaken by Mayo (1975) proposed

that the image of a destination area is a critical factor in choosing a destination. This study originated from his initial inquiry into why tourists decide to journey to a destination, even though they have little knowledge about the destination. He set the following question: 'What prompts such travelers, then, to spend both days and dollars travelling to a relatively unknown destination area ?', and 'How does the individual tourist decide to journey to one relatively unknown rather than to some other one ?" (Mayo, 1975, p.14). He found that the destination image was the answer. He states that:

> ... tourists generally do not have a great deal of knowledge about any area they have not previously visited...Nevertheless, in their minds they hold images of alternative destination areas. Comparing these images to images of an "ideal" destination area - whether or not they think one really exists - leads tourists to choose one destination or combination of destinations that promises to provide them with the greatest amount of satisfaction ... (p.14)

The importance of the role of image in the vacation decision have been highlighted by LaPage and Cormier (1977) as 'information available to tourists before they visit a tourist region is usually supplemented by their own mental image of that region. In many cases, it is probably the image more than the factual information that produces a tourist's decision on where to travel" (p.21). Recently, the role of image has been confirmed by the work of Um and Crompton (1992). They argue that potential tourists frequently have limited information about a destination. Nevertheless, they would formulate images of alternative destinations and use image as a critical element in their destination choice process.

Although the majority of studies acknowledge the role of destination image in vacation decision and tourism behaviour, most of them have not explicitly explained how destination image plays the role in the decision process.

Gensch (1978) termed "image" as an abstract concept incorporating the influences of past promotion, reputation, and peer evaluation of the alternative. Image also connotes the expectations of a consumer. He argued that image is assumed to have a more significant role in product situations in which the individual has difficulty obtaining objective measures on the important product attributes. A tourism product requires subjective judgements rather than objective measurement, as it cannot be tried before visiting. Potential tourists frequently have limited knowledge about a destination that they have not previously visited (Um & Crompton, 1992). The potential tourists have difficulty obtaining objective measures on the important destination or vacation site attributes, and thus the image of destination will take the holistic position in the evaluation process of a tourism product. Gensch also hypothesised that "the more subjective the attribute measurements, the more likely image will be a significant interactive variable in determining brand preferences" (p.385).

Although image and attitude are related, and in some studies image is defined as an attitude, they are not identical. Attitude is defined as "a mental state that predisposes individuals to respond in a certain way when they are subjected to a given stimulus" (Weiers, 1988, p.176). In a general sense, attitude is an evaluation-focused mental state and is viewed as an overall evaluation of things ranging

between favourable and unfavourable feelings (Allport, 1935; Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1990). In contrast, image is 'the mental construct developed by the consumer on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions and comes into being through a creative process in which these selected impressions are elaborated, embellished, and ordered" (Reynold, 1965, p. 69). It may be that a mental state such as attitude would be employed in this selected impressions process. In other words, attitude would play an important role as a component of the image formation. To understand clearly the distinction and relationship between image and attitude, Moutinho (1987) viewed an image as 'total thought" about the product derived through processing the information of things or products. He also proposed that the image of a product is the function of the level of awareness in relation to the product, beliefs and attitudes developed about the product, and expectations (about benefits) created with the product. His notion obviously shows the distinction between image and attitude. This notion is supported by Cossens (1995) who stated that

> When people consider a holiday destination, such as an alpine resort, they do not just see a picture of mountains and snow, the representation is alive with meaning, feelings, experiences. Their own 'interpretation', attitudes and perception, expectations can be woven in to the image, and the end result may be far from the reality of a picture of snow capped mountains (p. 589).

In summary, a destination image is an abstract construct developed from various mental states such as attitude, belief, and expectation of a vacation destination.

2.8 EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN TOURISM IMAGE

Studies of the tourist image have been growing steadily over the past three decades. In comparison to image studies conducted in marketing and consumer research, however, there seems to be fewer studies conducted in tourism research. Although the pioneer studies in tourist image were conducted more than 20 years ago, extensive studies have not been conducted recently as often as they might have been in the past.

The concept of destination image has proven to be of value in decision-making about holidays. A tourist's decision to travel to a particular destination is linked to the destination image held by that tourist. Most studies in destination image do try to thoroughly investigate the image a tourist destination or vacation site held by particular potential tourists. Table 2-1 (pp.26-27) summarises the objectives of previous studied on destination image.

As can be seen in Table 2-1, the central question for destination image research deals with general characteristics of images of the studied destinations. Few researchers attempted to go beyond this theme and search for the larger implications of their findings in marketing terms such as exploring particular characteristics of destination image which relate to travel decision. It should be noted that most previous studies attempted to develop a standard set of scales and have utilised comprehensive component framework to capture the general or comprehensive characteristics of the destination image. For example, Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) proposed a

Table 2-1

Objectives of previous destination image studies

Reference	Objective
Hunt (1975)	To measure the images of four states in USA
Crompton (1977)	To measure the image of Mexico
Goodrich (1977)	To measure the image of nine destinations in the USA
Crompton (1979)	To measure the image of Mexico in different states of the United States
Pearce (1982)	To measure and compare the pre-travel and post-travel images of seven countries
Haahti and Yavas (1983)	To measure the image of Finland
Crompton and Duray (1985)	To measure the image of Texas
Kale and Weir (1986)	To measure the image of India
Phelps (1986)	To measure pre-travel and post-travel images of Menorca
Gartner and Hunt (1987)	To measure the change in Utah's image over a 12-year period
Richardson and Crompton (1988)	To explore similarities and differences in images held of USA and Canada between French and English Canadians
Gartner (1989)	To measure the images of four states in The USA by using multidimensional scaling techniques
Calantone et al. (1989)	To measure the images of eight Pacific Rim countries from various countries of origin
Reilly (1990)	To measure the image of Montana

Table 2-1 (cont)

Objectives of previous destination image studies

Reference	Objective
Ross (1991)*	To measure the ideal and actual image of the wet tropical rainforest of Northern Queensland.
Dadgostar and Isotalo* (1992)	To examine the effect of city destination image along with other important variables on the travel behaviour of near- home tourists living in small communities
Ross (1993)*	To measure the ideal and actual image of Backpacker visitors to Northern Australia
Carmichael (1993)*	To measure ski resort image in Victoria
Echtner and Ritchie * (1993)	To develop the conceptual framework for destination image measurement and to measure the image of Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, and Switzerland
Milman and Pizam* (1995)	To examine the relationship of awareness an familiarity with destination image
Alhemoud and Armstrong* (1996)	To examine image of Kuwait tourism sights as perceived by local student and foreigners

Note: Adapted from Echtner and Ritchie (1991)

* additions by the author

comprehensive framework of destination image which consists of functional/psychological, unique/common and attribute/holistic components.

The question must be asked - 'Will these three components guide and influence people's destination choice ?''. The general or comprehensive image characteristics derived may be of little use or even meaningless for tourism marketing if this information is not relevant to tourist's decision-making in any vacation destination. Often the information of general or comprehensive characteristics of image is too broad to use in a marketing sense.

Even though the destination image contributes to the model of the travel decision process (e.g., Chon, 1990; Gilbert, 1991; Goodall, 1988) and many researchers attempted to determine just what the image of a particular vacation destination is, the empirical study by Crompton (1979) showed that not all image attributes have an influence on tourists' decision making process. There are only a few image studies in the tourism literature where the images involve a decision or a consideration to visit a vacation destination. Crompton attempted to examine particular attributes of a destination image related to making a vacation decision. He concluded that 'the descriptive image data without inclusion of the evaluative dimension is of limited value for it gives no indication of the relative importance which respondents attach to particular attributes of destination image when making a vacation decision" (p.19).

Using US student groups, Crompton (1979) found that images that are related to factors important in decisions to travel to the site are sometimes not the same. To illustrate this finding, an example was given whereby respondents rated descriptive scales such as "The People of Mexico are: Rich-Poor and Friendly-Unfriendly," as equal scores of 5. The former may be of only marginal importance, while the latter may play the primary role in influencing decisions to go to Mexico. The findings seem to be consistent with Gartner's (1989) study which found that specific attributes of a destination may not actually be the most important attributes in the consumer decision process.

As outlined above, it is evident that previous studies, though contributing to the knowledge of image formation and its importance in marketing the vacation destination, lack focus and framework to explore meaningful characteristics of destination image. Understanding the particular characteristics of a destination image related to vacation destination is needed in the marketing context. Under a limited budget, tourism agencies or tourism authorities need relevant and accurate information for their marketing efforts to promote and position their destinations. While research is expected to contribute to the marketing strategy for selling the tourism product, it is argued that although it is a complex concept, image research should be emphasised to provide accurate and meaningful information as well as implication to tap the practical level. Therefore, the goal of this study is to explore those particular images of a destination which affect the decisions of tourists concerning their vacation destination.

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the complexity and significance of image in the marketing and tourism context and also elaborated on the role of the destination image in studies of travel behaviour. The review of empirical studies on destination image has provided an understanding of the central question and the results of previous destination image studies.

Destination image is an abstract construct stored in long-term memory. Due to its complex nature, destination image is viewed at different levels of abstraction and in different dimensions. Most researchers view destination image as a perception or impression of a holiday place. Image is a multi-variable concept and destination image may be analysed from different perspectives. Past studies revealed the relationship between destination characteristics (i.e. demographic, geographic, experience, and cultural) and destination images. Although, destination image is still a controversial issue, destination images play an important role for understanding vacation choice.

With regard to the focus of this chapter, it is worthwhile noting that not all of the image characteristics of a destination have an influence on tourists' decision processes. Most researchers have attempted to investigate common and comprehensive characteristics of destination image and have not extended this work to explore particular characteristics which relate to the travel decision. The objective of this study, therefore, is to deepen our understanding of the specific characteristics

of those destination images which are considered in any decision to visit a vacation destination.

The following chapter outlines the theoretical framework underlying the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the so-called "beneficial image", which represents the type of image affecting vacation destination decisions.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter a 'beneficial image" model is presented. Its conceptualisation and operationalisation are outlined and discussed.

3.1 CONCEPTUALISATION OF BENEFICIAL IMAGE.

While numerous studies, reviewed in Chapter 2, have described the nature and importance of destination image and presented the methodologies used to capture the destination image, the literature gives little attention to the analysis of the particular characteristics of destination image related to travel decision-making. In this chapter a concept of 'beneficial image" is proposed. The major focus is on the particular characteristics of destination image which influence or relate to any decision to visit a particular destination. In this section the focus is on discussing the theories and concepts to build the model of beneficial image.

3.1.1 MARKETING IMAGE CONCEPT

In order to understand the kind of image which affects the decision-making process in purchasing behaviour, it is necessary to review the work of Kotler and Barich (1991). They introduced the concept of a company's marketing image which

represents the way people view the "exchange value" of the product offered by a company.

> A company's marketing image consists of how customers and other members of the public rate the "exchange value" of the company's offerings compared to those of its competitors. A company has a strong marketing image if customers believe that they get high value when they buy from it. The high value comes from such factors as good products and services, reasonable prices, and so on (p.97).

This concept is based on the idea that a marketing image is the function of comparative values or benefit, and emphasises the link between perceived values or benefits and decision-making in buying behaviour. Marketing image management aims to influence buying behaviour. It seeks to encourage customers to purchase the company's products and services, as well as to recommend its products and services to others.

The concept also implies that a customer has benefit or value characteristic of a particular product image in his/her mind. This image of a product or service is formed on the basis of benefit or exchange value expected to be derived from that product or service. This notion was supported by Moutinho (1984) who postulated that an image may be formed from expected benefits of things.

Thus the concept of marketing image is based upon benefits or consumption values of a product or service held in consumer's mind. To better understand this theme, the theory of market choice behaviour proposed by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) will be considered.

3.1.2 THEORY OF CONSUMPTION VALUES AND MARKET CHOICE

The consumption values theory was developed by Sheth, et al. (1991) to describe the relationship between the values of a product and market choice behavior. This theory is constructed by synthesizing disciplines of various fields in social science such as psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, consumer behaviour, political science, marketing, social psychology, communications, environmental psychology, geography, experimental and educational psychology.

Sheth, et al. (1991) suggests that marketing choice behaviour is a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving multiple values - including functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values. These are described as follows:

1. Functional value is referred to as: "...the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as the result of its ability to perform its functional, utilitarian, or physical purposes. Alternatives acquire functional value through the possession of salient functional, utilitarian, or physical attributes ..." (p.18)

This value is based on the assumption that a consumer driven by functional value will choose an alternative that performs best on salient physical and utilitarian attributes, or the alternative that possesses the most of those attributes.

2. Social value is referred to as: "...The perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its association with one or more specific social groups. Alternatives

acquire social value through association with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socio-economic, and cultural-ethnic groups ..." (p.19).

Based on this value, a consumer driven by social value will choose the alternatives associated with those groups to which he or she belongs, identifies with, or aspires to.

3. Emotional value is referred to as "...The perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its ability to arouse feelings or affective states. Alternatives acquire emotional value when associated with specific feelings or when they facilitate or perpetuate feeling..." (p.20).

Emotional value, which is an affective-based value, plays a significant role in many market choice situations. A consumer driven by this value will choose the alternatives which are able to arouse the desired feeling response.

4. Epistemic value is referred to as: "...the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its ability to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge. Alternatives acquire epistemic value through the capacity to provide something new or different ..." (p.21).

A consumer driven by epistemic values will choose the alternatives which are able to satisfy a desire for something "new" or "different", or fashionable.

5. Conditional value is referred to as: "...the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of the specific situation or the context faced by the choice maker. Alternatives acquire conditional value in the presence of antecedent physical or social contingencies that enhance their functional or social value, but do not otherwise possess this value ..." (p.22).

Based on this concept, a consumer will choose the alternatives to derive utility from its association with an antecedent situation. Conditional value focuses on the "extrinsic" utility rather than intrinsic utility of alternatives.

Sheth, et al. (1991) postulate that these values are the crucial factors underlying and influencing market choice behaviour. They also suggest that any choices may be influenced by any numbers of values, ranging from one to five, or all.

As the tourism product is claimed to be an amalgam of experiences with various products and services (Milman & Pizam, 1995), it reflects multi-attributes composed of both objective and perceptual attributes (Carmichael, 1992). In other words, it contains a wide range of important attributes both tangible and intangible. According to the consumption values concept, a destination would present a few, or a full range, of consumption values or benefits.

As the tourism product can not be experienced before visiting, potential tourists are likely to use subjective judgement via image to evaluate a destination. This leads to the proposition that potential tourists will form an image based on these values or

beneficial characteristics of alternative destinations in their "evoked set" or "consideration set". The evoked set or consideration set is a set of possible alternative destinations a tourist would consider visiting. They then use these images in the decision process. This proposition is generally supported by the work of Chon (1990), who concluded that these images - or performance expectancies of a vacation destination - will be held by potential tourists and employed to evaluate the tourism product.

Based on the marketing image outlined in Section 3.1.1 and on the consumption values concept in relation to the purchasing decision-making process of tourist destination, the present study suggests two propositions:

1) potential tourists who are in the process of deciding upon a destination, would form their images of the alternative destinations in their "evoked set", with respect to some or all of these five beneficial characteristics or consumption values, and

2) this kind of image will influence potential tourists' vacation decisions to visit a destination.

The propositions are consistent with Mayo and Jarvis (1981) who argue that as a tourist is deciding on a travel destination among alternative choices, the subjective judgement made about the alternatives available depends on a number of factors, among which the most important is the image of each alternative and its perceived ability to satisfy the tourists' needs.

For the purpose of this study, the so-called 'beneficial image' of a destination is conceptualised as *perceptions or impressions of a destination held by tourists with respect to the expected benefit or consumption values including functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional benefits of a destination. These perception/impression in turn lead to the decision to visit a country as a pleasure destination.*

The model of the beneficial image and its contribution to the study of destination image is shown in Figure 3-1 (p.39), and its contribution to the study of destination image is presented in the following section.

3.2 JUSTIFICATION OF THE BENEFICIAL IMAGE MODEL

The proposed model contributes to the study of destination image in many ways. First, the beneficial image presents a specific framework of destination image for understanding and analysing the role of destination image in travel decision and travel behaviour as a whole.

Marketing studies such as those of MacInnis and Price (1987) and Keaveney and Hunt (1992) point out that the image an individual has formed plays a crucial role in evaluating products or stores. Studies to date have shown that image reflects two modes in information processing -- discursive processing and imagery processing (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). While discursive processing is a mode in which a stimulus is evaluated by pieces of attributes, imagery processing is a mechanism

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Perceptions/Impressions     │
│ of a beneficial image       │          ┌──────────────────┐
│ based on consumption value: │          │                  │
│       - Functional          │   ⟹      │ Beneficial image │
│       - Social              │          │                  │
│       - Emotional           │          └──────────────────┘
│       - Epistemic           │                   ⇓
│       - Conditional         │
└─────────────────────────────┘          ⎛   Decision to visit    ⎞
                                         ⎝ a vacation destination ⎠
```
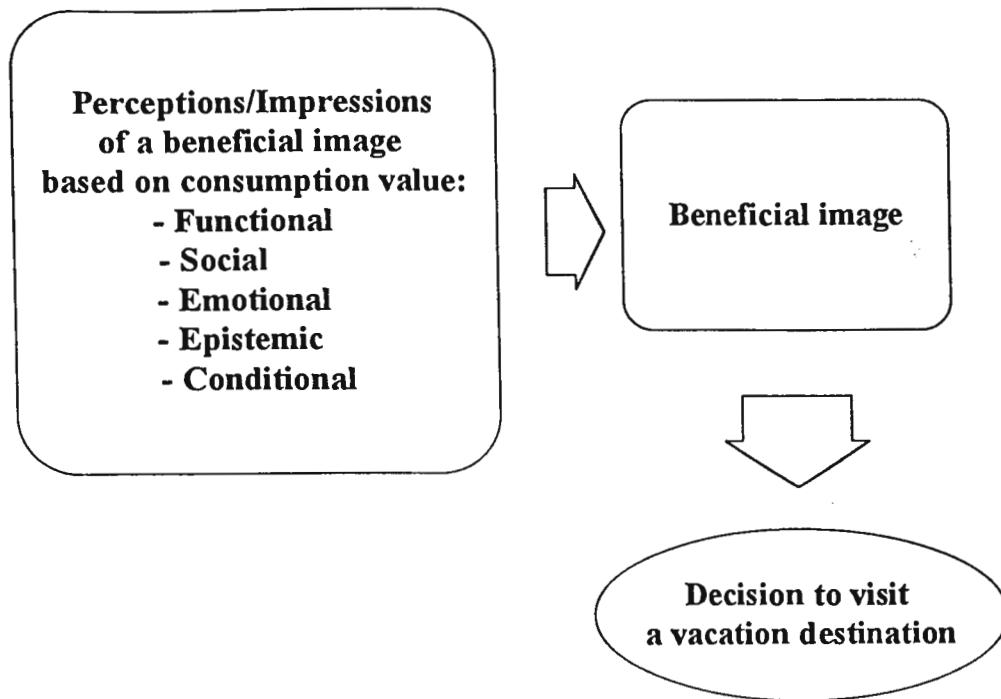
Figure 3-1
Beneficial Image Model

through which a stimulus is evaluated by holistic impressions of that stimulus (MacInnis & Price, 1987). As a result, Echtner and Ritchie concluded that "In this scenario, image would consist of perceptions of individual product attributes, as well as, total, holistic impression" (p.4). Based on this assumption, beneficial images proposed in this study embrace both attributes and holistic impression of a destination.

MacInnis and Price (1987) suggested that a consumer may use discursive and imagery modes in evaluating products or stores as a two phase decision-making strategy. Firstly, discursive processing is used to reduce a number of alternative products to a few possible targets. Secondly, holistic imagery is used to evaluate the possible targets to make the final choices. However, the opposite process would be equally possible where the holistic mode is used to reduce the number of alternatives. On the basis of this assumption, the beneficial image can be used in evaluation of a destination.

Um and Crompton (1992) have proposed that the vacation choice process comprises three hierarchical stages: (1) development of an initial set of possible destinations; (2) an alternative reduction process; and (3) a final single choice from the remaining alternatives. Applying information processing concepts to tourism marketing in terms of vacation choices, the tourists will form their beneficial images of alternative destinations with respect to either discursive processing or imagery processing or both. As selection of a vacation destination would normally be regarded as a high involvement decision, then they use these beneficial images (incorporating them to

other factors) to evaluate destinations in stage two and three of the vacation choice process. Eventually, ceteris paribus, they would choose the destination that yields the highest value in terms of perceived benefit. This is quite consistent with the work of Goodrich (1978), which established the relationship between preferences for (choice of) tourist destinations and favourableness of perception of those destination. He indicated that the more favourable the perception, the greater the likelihood of choice.

Tourists will form beneficial images of a destination and these beneficial images can be used in the evaluation process, and eventually in their decision-making process in vacation choice. Based on the assumption that individuals are utility maximizers of products and services. They would be likely to use beneficial images to evaluate a vacation destination.

The additional implication of the beneficial image concept in vacation decisions is that it may be a factor which potential tourists use to decide on multi-destination vacations. Multi-destination visits are viewed as rational behavior patterns that reduce time and cost associated with travel, and therefore, increase the potential benefits that accrue. It also may be that potential tourists are likely to expand the benefits sought from single visit to multiple visits where they have enough time and budget to satisfy their need for variety. (Lue, Crompton, & Fesenmaier, 1993). Woodside and Jacobs (1985) pointed out that the understanding of image between different groups or target segments may assist tourism management in the promotion of destinations. Understanding of beneficial images of different destinations between

different groups or target segments will be useful for tourism management in the promotion of multi-destination trips.

The beneficial image model can be useful for an industry to identify meaningful images for promoting a destination. In a marketing context, the long term success of a brand depends on marketers' abilities to select a brand meaning prior to market entry, operationalise this meaning in the form of an image, and maintain the image over time (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis 1986). This notion implies that the successful brand has an image which communicates the meaning of the brand to customers. Applied to tourism marketing, if a destination is to be successful in the market place, it should have images reflecting the meaning of the destination according to the views of potential tourists. The meaning of the destination has to reflect the benefit to tourists. The resulting information derived from an analysis of beneficial image of a destination will be useful for tourism management to use for marketing communication to a target market. This kind of beneficial image should be selected and promoted. Such beneficial perceptions will outweigh any negative images of a destination and draws a positive inference to compensate for the negative pictures of the destination.

It should be noted that promoting a country as a place for a vacation needs more effort than that adopted for consumer products. Tourism products are the mixture of attractions and services. Promoting the image of a destination should not depend upon a single theme. Rather tourism management should convey a whole picture which has a mixture of various benefits or values to the consumers (tourists).

Managing this "collage" of images reflecting the destination may be difficult. For example, a destination with multiple beneficial images may be less effective in establishing an image/position by making the image too complex to identify with the destination's basic meaning. Nevertheless, the mixture of beneficial images or pictures of the destination may satisfy tourists, assuming that they need to fulfill and maximize a variety of attractions and holiday activities.

Recently, attributes of destination image have become a methodological issue in terms of validity and completeness. As Etchner and Ritchie (1991) pointed out :

> ... very few researchers have succeeded in incorporating the majority of attributes into a measurement instrument. Furthermore, the emphasis in existing research has obviously been on the more functional attributes of destination image. The only psychological attribute measured by the majority of researchers is friendliness ... (p. 10).

The proposed framework of beneficial image presents a simple and practical model which embraces relevant dimensions for analysing the destination image in terms of both functional and psychological attributes on a holistic level. Therefore, the beneficial image model may be more appropriate to be used as a framework of destination image.

3.3 OPERATIONALISATION OF BENEFICIAL IMAGE:

CATEGORY- BASED APPROACH

Image is a multidimensional construct that is quite challenging to measure operationally (Milman & Pizam, 1995). As can be seen from the concept of image outlined in Chapter 2, destination image is a complex concept that may be analysed from different perspectives. It is composed of a variety of individual perceptions that relate to various product/service perspectives.

As mentioned in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2, p.3), it has been found that inconsistency between conceptualisation and operationalisation becomes an emerging problem in destination image studies. Image is identified as a mental prototype (Hirschman, 1981), and conceptualisation of destination image from previous studies embraces both a destination's salient attributes and a gestalt or holistic view such as total impression, feeling, and auras (as discussed by Echtner & Ritchie,1991). However, it is apparent that researchers have not been successful in reconciling conceptualisation and operationalisation of destination image. Almost all of these researchers relied on the use of a piecemeal - or attribute-based - approach, which could capture only the individual attribute component of destination image, but not the holistic component. By using this approach, destination images are evaluated on an attribute-by-attribute basis, or on each attribute separately. The attribute-based approach is applied by using structured methodologies such as the Semantic Differential Scale, Likert Scale, and Multidimensional Scaling. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) also pointed out that structured methodologies, which are attribute-focused,

force the respondents to think about pre-determined image attributes specified by the scales and do not allow the respondents to describe holistic impressions. As a result, the majority of destination image measurement studies which applied these methodologies have focused on the common, attribute-based components of destination image and have not addressed the more holistic components such as feeling or impression of the destination.

In addition, an image prototype is implicitly assumed to be a 'schema' (Mitchell & Beach, 1990). Traditional measurement has failed to capture destination image in that the scaling methods measure image by a piece or attribute, rather than by a prototype or schema. As stated by Keaveney and Hunt (1992) "an image was believed to be a picture, but was measured with a list" (p.167).

Recently, Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) have attempted to combine unstructured (open-ended) and structured (scaling) methods to capture both attribute and holistic aspects in three components of destination image (see Section 2.4, p.14). However, the structured techniques using complete or standardised scales developed by the researchers may not be valid for the measurement of destination image of a particular country. Reilly (1990, p. 25) stated that 'Since different segments may have different salient images dimensions, different scales would have to be developed for each segment". This combination of techniques is not, therefore, theoretically adequate for assessing destination image as a schema.

In the present research, a method was developed to use a category-based approach as a measure of destination image. Keaveney and Hunt (1992) proposed a category-based processing concept (as opposed to piecemeal or attribute-based processing concept) in image study. This theory is useful in that it reconciles image conceptualisation and operationalisation. In the review of piecemeal (or attribute-based) processing and category-based processing concepts, Keaveney and Hunt (1992) found that the piecemeal processing concept does not adequately represent the gestalt or holistic perspectives that underlie image conceptualisation. They postulated that a category-based processing concept accommodates both attribute and holistic perspectives of image. They stated that 'It is the ability of category-based processing theory to explain the gestalt, the affect, the inferences, and the other characteristics of (store) image that offers the greatest promise for research within the (store) image paradigm" (p.170).

The idea for the category-based processing concept came from the work of Fiske (1982) and Fiske and Pavelchak (1984). They proposed that individuals may evaluate stimuli in two basic processing modes namely piecemeal processing (or attribute-based processing) and category-based processing. In piecemeal processing, the evaluation of a stimulus is the combination of the evaluations of the individual element or attributes of that stimulus. In category-based processing, the evaluation of a stimulus is guided by one's prior experiences or knowledge related to a category, or the category 'schema". Therefore, if a stimulus is successfully categorised in an existing category, the evaluation associated with that category is associated with the stimulus. Based on this processing, Fiske and Pavelchak (1984)

hypothesised that the first time a novel stimulus is encountered, it is evaluated by category-based evaluation processing. If categorisation fails, then piecemeal processing is invoked. However, whether any processing is used, in the end, the result of evaluation will be a category-relevant decision (Fiske, 1982 , Keaveney & Hunt , 1992).

In essence, the assumption underlying category-based processing concept is that individuals do not face each new stimulus as a completely novel experience, but compare incoming stimulus with or to category schema stored in memory and formed through prior exposure to the concept (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992). Thus it is hypothesised that when people are confronted with another incoming stimulus (e.g. person, object or other entities), they first attempt to categorise this stimulus by comparing it to a typical representation in memory. If the incoming stimulus presents the same properties as those of other members in the class, it fits an existing category. If the incoming stimulus does not exactly fit an existing category, the process of assimilation or accommodation will be used (Sujan & Bettman, 1989). The process of assimilation to a generic schema is likely to occur when new information is slightly to moderately discrepant from the category schema, but not when it is strongly discrepant, while the process of accommodation is likely to occur when inconsistencies are large and cannot be filtered out (Sujan & Bettman, 1989). From this premise, individuals will encounter either of three situations (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992 ; Sujan & Bettman, 1989):

1) **Schema-based evaluation model:** the new stimulus is exactly consistent with an existing category and identified as a member of the category. For example, if a customer found a new-brandnamed product of A4-paper size, containing monitor, key board, CPU and floppy disk drive, regardless of brand name, the consumer can identify this brand as generally like another brand under the category label 'notebook computer'.

2) **Schema-plus-tag model:** the new stimulus is consistent with an existing category but with modification. For example, if a customer encountered a new object with the same characteristics as explained in 1), but integrated with a built-in CD-ROM player and sound card, then the customer would agree that it is generally like other notebook computers but has distinguishing features. Thus, the product would still be categorised as a 'notebook computer, but with multimedia features'.

3) **Subtyping model:** the new stimulus is discrepant with an existing category and thus a new category must be created. This situation occurs when categorisation of the stimulus fails because one or more salient product attributes are 'dramatically inconsistent' with expectations from memory (Fiske & Pavelchak, 1984). For example, a digital videodisc player or DVD, which plays standard-size CDs containing high-resolution movies and digital sound, is discrepant to the category label 'Videocassette Recorder or VCR', even though both possess the same function (movies and sound). In such a case, individuals are likely to evaluate the novel product based on actual product attributes and then, finally, to create a new category in their schema (see Figure 3-2, p.49).
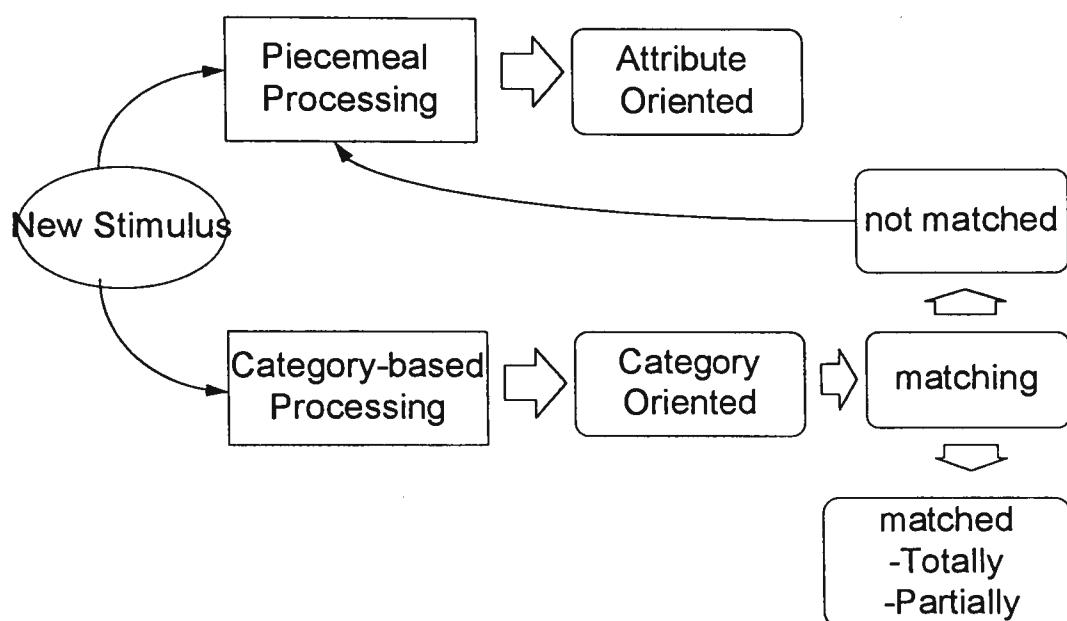
Figure 3-2
Category-based Processing Model

Keaveney and Hunt (1992) also posit that, regardless of any first time situation, each subsequent encounter with either of the products above, or another product of the same type, will be evaluated via category-based processing.

On the basis of this concept, therefore, when a consumer encounters a product, he/she can justify the product (information) by matching it with an existing category schema with respect to that product. The result of matching, then, will be either of three situations, namely: complete match, partial match, and total mismatch.

The category-based approach has been introduced in the field of marketing and consumer research and has been supported by variety of research projects, including the evaluation of product (see Alden, Stayman, & Hoyer, 1994; Kulik & Clark, 1994; Sujan, 1985; Sujan & Bettman, 1989); evaluation of restaurants (Lee, 1994); and the evaluation of advertising (Goodstein, 1993). This concept could also be applied in the evaluation of destination image.

Keaveney and Hunt (1992) supported the category-based approach in image studies by indicating the remarkable similarities between the characteristics of an image and a schema which underline the category-based concept:

> Like (store) images, schemata contain information about salient physical attributes and their importance. However, just as retail store images were envisioned to do, schemata also include affect, overall impression, examples of prototypes, and context (situations, events, sequence of action, and network of causal relationships). Both (retail store) image and schema capture a gestalt, a holistic view, an overall impression evoked almost unthinkingly; neither assumes effortful processing. Both images and schemata contain information about salient attributes, importance weights, and combination rules, but

neither is constrained to only that information (as piecemeal processing might suggest). Both images and schema serve to simplify and structure complex, abstract information. Both are based on individual perceptions of objective environment. Both include affective evaluations. Unlike piecemeal processing, both images and schemata assume that previous experiences influence present (and future) processing; both allow the consumer to fill in missing information by making inferences; both consider that errors may be made" (p.170).

This notion appears to confirm Mitchell and Beach's (1990) contention that 'the concept of image is similar to the concept of schemata, which has for a long while been important in the cognitive literature" (p.7). They also stated that 'schemata are cognitive frameworks that help the actor organize his or her world and provide meaning and structure to incoming information" (p.7).

This thesis adopts the category-based approach in the evaluation of destination image. Potential tourists extract and perceive certain features from the reality or information of a destination which is partly controlled by tourism management (e.g. national tourism organisation of destination countries, tour operators, agents, etc.) via advertising and other sources (e.g. peer group, advertisements, newspaper reports and others), and form images of a particular destination which are congruent with their idiosyncratic cognitive configuration. Whenever the tourists think about a destination label, the image set of that destination will be evoked in their minds. Therefore, when they encounter incoming information under a destination label, they can compare it with typical images (as a schema). From this premise, if a potential tourist encounters incoming information of a certain destination, they can justify the information (category properties) of that destination by matching it with their existing image of the destination in which the result of matching will be either

of three situations, namely: complete match, partial match, and total mismatch. By applying this process to assess the image a potential tourist holds of a destination, proxy or dummy information of destination attributes have to be created and used as an incoming stimulus (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.2).

Image is identified as a mental prototype (Hirschman, 1981). As image may be presumed to be a reduction (or crystallisation) of many perceptions into a simpler form or as an abstracted representation, it is possible that images may be abstracted as a prototype form. Ellis and Hunt (1993) viewed the prototype theory as follows :

> When a person is presented with a set of stimuli for purposes of learning, they abstract the commonalties among the stimulus set and the abstracted representation is stored in memory ... this abstracted prototype is like a schema which serves to help categorise new information. (p.217).

Within the relevant literature, a prototype has been conceptualised as representing the average of a set of exemplars (or a best example of a category stored in memory) (Solso, 1988), an abstracted composite of typical attributes or sort of the quintessential example (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992), and the best representation of a category (Ellis & Hunt, 1993).

From this premise, it can be ascertained that the image of a destination is formed into prototypes. A potential tourist forms an image of a destination by abstracting and matching new items into a prototype form. When given a piece of particular information (stimulus) (either verbal or nonverbal form or both) about a destination, a potential tourist will compare this information to an existing prototype image of

that country (category). If the given information (stimulus) is sufficiently similar to the prototype (image), a potential tourist then judges it to be a part (or all) of the image. Destination image can, thus, be assessed in the form of prototype assessment.

Building on this assumption, the image of a destination can then be measured by comparing or matching the incoming information (stimulus) and the existing typical image in the category-based approach via prototype matching. This exploratory study, having its principle aim to assess beneficial images of destination, will rely upon this assumption.

.

It should be emphasised that matching methods in the category-based approach were applied in consumer research by Sujan (1985) and Sujan and Bettman (1989), respectively, to examine the effects of prior knowledge on consumer judgment and the effects of brand position strategies on consumer perception. In Sujan's (1985) study, both experts and non-experts formed evaluations based on summary representations (schema) in memory when information in an advertisement for a new camera matched expectations cued by the category label (i.e., 35-mm camera). The study illustrates that when the information (schema statement) in a print advertisement matches or mismatches expectations, there is evidence of category-based processing. Verbal responses were elicited from respondents to support category-based processing in all three categories of thoughts including categorisation thoughts, subtyping thoughts, and discrepancy thoughts.

However, the above studies focused on product evaluation and used stimulus from visual real objects (print ads). In applying Sujan's (1985) approach to the present study which emphasises an assessment of the beneficial image of a vacation destination, the process must be modified, on the assumption that potential tourists already have beneficial images of a destination in their minds, and they are able to compare or match them with incoming information concerning beneficial attributes of a destination cued by the category label (name of destination). In this study, a set of proxy beneficial prototypes as an incoming stimulus were created. These prototypes represent each dimension of the beneficial attributes of each studied country (Thailand and the USA as examples for exploratory purposes). These proxy beneficial prototypes were then compared with the beneficial images held by respondents. The process of generating, selecting, and evaluating of these prototypes is detailed in Chapter 4.

It is presumed that by using this approach, the beneficial images which individuals have of a particular destination would be effectively assessed or captured. Specifically, this prototype-matching approach could possibly reduce difficulties in assessment when images represent abstract terms.

3.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on the academic literature regarding image and decision-making, and measurement of image for the purpose of developing a conceptualisation and operationalisation framework of beneficial image. On the

conceptualisation level, two main theories underlying the beneficial image model have been reviewed and discussed. The propositions derived from the theories are 1) potential tourists who are in the decision process of destination choice, will form their own images of alternative destinations in their 'evoked set', based on some or all of five benefits or consumption values and 2) this kind of image will influence potential tourists' vacation decisions to visit a destination. Based on these two propositions, the beneficial image model was developed.

On the operationalisation level, a critical review revealed that previous studies have not used an adequate approach to evaluate the destination image. The category-based processing concept, as an alternative approach, was examined. The concept is important in image measurement. The central idea of this concept is that individuals do not face each new stimulus in a completely novel experiences, but compare incoming data against prior information or schema stored in memory. From this premise, tourists' beneficial images of a vacation destination could be captured properly by using matching process between developed proxy prototypes (incoming information) and image prototypes stored in their minds. Figure 3-3 (p.56) presents the conceptualisation and operationalisation framework for this study.
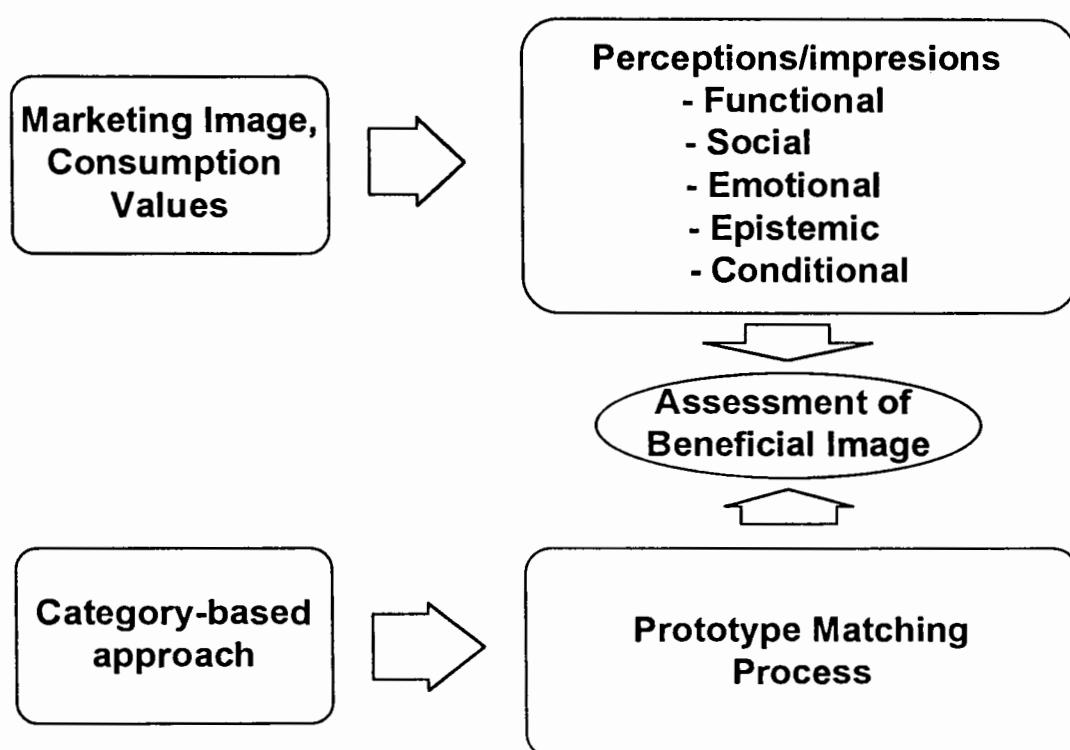
Figure 3-3
Conceptualisation and Operationalisation of Beneficial Image

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY (1)

DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Following from the fulfilment of the first aim which was to investigate the destination image which influences Australian potential tourists' decision to visit Thailand and the USA as vacation destinations, the second aim of the research was to apply a category-based approach to the measurement of beneficial destination image. To achieve this, appropriate methodologies were developed. This chapter reviews the existing techniques in measuring destination image in terms of their contribution and shortcomings. The focus of this chapter is on instrument development, based on the operationalisation framework presented in the previous chapter.

4.1 MEASUREMENT OF TOURIST IMAGE

Traditional techniques of destination image measurement focus on structured and scaling methods including Semantic Differential Scale, Likert Scale, and Multidimensional Scaling (Reilly, 1990 and Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). The concept behind these scaling methods in image measurement is the multi-attribute model (Fishbein, 1963) which proposes that a customer views or evaluates a product or brand based on its important or salient attributes. According to this assumption, the image of a destination is captured via the evaluation of the salient attributes a customer perceives. Most previous studies have identified the set of salient

attributes (image construct) of a product or brand, and applied the scaling methods to evaluate each attribute. The image construct, or predetermined items developed by researchers to measure image of destination, may not be valid since it may not reflect the attributes of a particular destination. For example, an image construct used for Japan may not be relevant to Kenya. In addition, some items of construct may be irrelevant to the actual image tourists hold and this could lead to inaccurate conclusions. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) and Reilly (1990), in a critical review of the literature, presented a cogent discussion of image measurement issues (e.g., the shortcomings of a semantic differential scale). They also noted that there are substantial reliability and validity issues left unresolved in existing destination image measurement. Criticisms of the semantic differential focus on the observation that 'people are encouraged to respond to characteristics that do not necessarily comprise the image they have of the store (or the product) being studied" (Kunkel & Berry, 1968, p.25). Hence, respondents are forced to respond to, or evaluate some items of construct, which may be irrelevant to the actual image they have or perceive. Generally, this occurs because the forced-choice of the scaling method does not have a category labelled 'no such image attribute in my mind" or 'no image" or, "don't know" responses for some items. (McDougall & Fry, 1974-75). As a result, the scaling method will produce a validity problem when the resulting 'image" is likely to be more highly correlated with the instrument than with reality (Kunkel & Berry, 1968) leading to potentially inaccurate conclusions.

Unstructured techniques can be used successfully in destination image measurement. As previous studies showed, however, the use of unstructured techniques in

destination image measurement appeared only in the work of Reilly (1990) and, Echtner and Ritchie (1993). Carney (1972) and Keaveney and Hunt (1992) suggested that unstructured techniques in association with content analysis can be applied in analysing images measured with the category-based approach.

The unstructured method was introduced by Kunkel and Berry (1968) to measure store image. They believed the structured instruments like semantic differential scaling have limitations which force respondents to respond to characteristics that do not necessarily comprise the image they have of the store being studied. They proposed unstructured instruments as preferable in image study.

> An alternative means of retail image identification and analysis is the use of unstructured instruments, followed by content analysis and coding of responses. In answering unstructured, open-ended questions, the respondent is free to discuss only that which is relevant to his image of the store. In other words, only the critical reinforcing image components are identified. Conversely, the semantic-differential test forces responses for all image components included in the questionnaire, and hence cannot serve to isolate critical image components. (Kunkel & Berry, 1968, p.25).

Analysis of unstructured techniques seems to have advantages in regard to minimal imposition of the perception of image dimensions. These non-predetermined boundaries of image perception allow subjects the freedom to respond to or explain existing real images, and to discuss only that which is relevant to the image of the things in the respondents' mind (McDougall & Fry, 1974-75). The unstructured techniques also provide a relatively simple and inexpensive way of determining the image that customers or potential customers hold of a tourist product (Reilly, 1990). The use of content analysis may aid in capturing image in terms of both specific attributes and overall impressions (Zimmer & Golden, 1988).

The objective of this study was to analyse destination images of a country for vacation through descriptions of the stimulus countries provided to respondents in a free response situation. To achieve this objective, open-ended questions accompanied with the category-based approach have been used. However, the open-ended format in this study differs from the typical format in previous image studies which, in the main, have asked respondents to describe the image of a product or a store without specifying the attributes or impression of the image in question. A simple question was used in these studies such as 'Please describe your image of X store'. Table 4-1 reviews the open-ended questions used in previous image studies.

The similarity of a typical open-ended question format used in previous studies, and the open-ended format in this study, is that both allow the respondent to freely provide the image without being forced by pre-determined items as occurs in structured techniques. The open-ended format adapted here differs from formats of previous studies in relation to the content of questions and the approach of answering. Whereas in previous studies, researchers asked respondents to indicate or describe attributes, characteristics, or even specific images of mentioned products (or stores, or destinations) as shown in Table 4-1, in this study respondents were asked to express the consistency or congruence (match or mismatch) between the set of beneficial characteristics of a destination specified in a question statement and a prototype image held in their mind.

Table 4-1

Selected Open-ended formats of Product, Store and Destination Image

Product(Band)

- 'What are the product images of selected consumer goods ?' (Woodside, 1972)

- 'Tell me what comes to your mind when you think of brand X ?' (Olson and Muderrisoglu, 1978)

- 'What do you think of brand X ? ...Anything else ?..' (Lutz & MacKenzie, 1981)

- 'What do you think of (energy source) ?' (Boivin, 1986)

Store

- 'What do you like most about shopping at ___?'

  'What do you like least about shopping at ___?'

  'What are the major reasons why you think other people shop at_____?'

   (Kunkel and Berry, 1968; Berry, 1969)

- 'The first words that come to your mind after each store name was called out' (Jain

   and Etgar, 1976-1977)

- 'Please describe your image of X store?' (Zimmer and Golden, 1988)

Tourism

- 'What three words best describe the state of Montana as a destination for vacation or

   pleasure travel?'

  'What three words best describe ' Montana Mountain' (name is disguised) as a place

   to ski?' (Reilly, 1990)

- 'What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation

   destination?'

  'How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to

   experience while visiting XXX?'

  'Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in XXX'.

      (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993)

Using this approach, respondents could indicate agreement, partial agreement, or disagreement with given statements, providing supporting reasons, rather than indicate the image attributes or characteristics as in typical open-ended question.

4.2 INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

This section outlines the procedure used to develop category-based questions in destination image measurement.

There were five main phases in instrument development, as follows:

(i)   Selection of studied destinations

(ii) Generation of beneficial attributes

(iii) Categorisation of responses and selection of the list of benefit attributes

(iv) Development of proxy prototypes

(v)   Development of open-ended questions coupled with the category-based approach

4.2.1 Selection of Studied Destination

Two countries were used as the stimulus destination for the study, Thailand and the USA. These particular countries were selected because both offer a different variety of vacation destination. Both countries differed in a number of aspects, such as

geographic location, culture and type of vacation destination. Focussing on the variation, the two countries possessed the following characteristics:

Thailand - developing nation, part of Asia continent, generally a mixed cultural/recreational vacation destination

The USA.- developed nation, part of North America continent, generally, a mixed modern/recreational destination

They are also well known tourist destinations for Australian tourists. Thailand is a very popular country in Asia which has a record of more than 5 million inbound international tourists a year, while the USA receives the most international inbound tourists.

4.2.2 Generation of Beneficial Attributes

A common methodological issue in destination image study is the origin of image attributes. Ross (1993) noted that most researchers have relied on secondary sources of information (literature reviews, brochures) and the opinions of "experts" (travel agents and others in the tourism industry) in generating the lists of destination image attributes. He further argued that the disadvantage of secondary sources is their failure to incorporate all of the relevant functional and psychological characteristics of the destination image. He suggested that extensive research should be conducted in the primary stage of scale construction using a real consumer. In the present study, the sources of information used to identify and generate the image

attributes and characteristics came from potential tourists (university students and adults) and also from tourism experts (tour agencies and tour operators) through open-ended questionnaires to ensure the completeness of all the relevant characteristics of destination image.

Recent studies in destination image have provided a detailed description of country image attributes. But those image attributes were too general and could not be applied to specific destinations and for specific tourist groups. Therefore, as an exploratory study, it was necessary to obtain the information from a variety of respondents to develop a suitable research instrument. Three groups were selected in this phase. These included two potential tourist groups (university students and other adults) and tourist experts (tour operators). The benefit of using various sample groups was to increase content validity of the instrument. Open-ended questionnaires were designed to generate data relevant to the benefits expected from visiting Thailand and USA.(see Appendixes A, B, and C). These open-ended questionnaires were distributed to each group to generate answers about the expected benefits from visiting Thailand and the USA for a vacation.

A survey of the three groups of respondents in the preliminary stage was undertaken during April - August 1995 by using self-administered questionnaires. A sample of 40 travel agents and tour operators in the State of Victoria who operate tours to Thailand and the USA were randomly selected from the Victorian tour operators data base available from Victoria University of Technology. Due to the low response rate (5 questionnaires returned or a response rate of 12.5 %) in the first

survey, the questionnaires were re-sent to another 40 travel agents and tour operators. In the second survey, 7 questionnaires (a response rate of 17.5 %) were returned. The total response was 12 questionnaires from the sample of 80 agencies (15% return rate). Even though the return rate of this group seems very low, it was deemed sufficient to use it in this exploratory study. All of the questionnaires returned were useable.

For practical purpose, a convenience sample of 100 university students was selected from undergraduate students at the Victoria University of Technology, and a convenience sample of 40 adults was selected from professional workers who live in Melbourne. The survey of the student group achieved a 100 % return rate and that of the adult group achieved a 45 % return rate (18 questionnaires returned). In the student group, who were asked to generate benefit characteristics expected from visiting both Thailand and USA, 87 subjects (87 %) produced useable responses for Thailand and 97 subjects (97 %) produced useable responses for the USA.

4.2.3   Categorisation of   Responses and Selection of the Final Benefit Attributes

The main purpose of this phase was to identify the common and salient benefit attributes of two countries and to develop a proxy beneficial prototype in five consumption values as outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2.

From the first phase, there was a total of 340 associated text units (responses) from the 117 subjects of the three samples for Thailand, and 466 associated text units (responses) from 127 subjects for the USA. The raw data was analysed in two stages:

(i) *content analysis of respondent categories and*

(ii) *selection of a final list of beneficial attributes of each studied country.*

(i) Categorisation of responses

In the first stage, the various responses were analysed by content analysis techniques. A central idea in content analysis is to classify the many words of text into much fewer content categories (Weber, 1990) which are mutually exclusive and exhaustive (Boivin, 1986). To classify words or text units, a coding scheme is needed. The steps of designing and implementing a coding scheme were adapted from the process proposed by Weber (1990). Therefore, as an exploratory study, the categorisation process of text units was undertaken by the following steps:

1) defining the coding units,

2) defining the categories,

3) test coding on a sample of text, and

4) coding all the text.

Step 1. Defining the coding units. Weber (1990) stated that there are six commonly used options including word, word sense, sentence, theme, paragraph, and whole text. In the present study, most responses involved words, phrases, and sentences. Words were found in the form of both proper nouns, such as Disneyland, Universal studios, etc., and common nouns, as well as phrases and sentences such as "I like to see the highly competitive sports such as basketball, grid iron, ice hockey".

Step 2. Defining the categories. There were two basic decisions relevant to creating category definitions. Firstly, whether the mutually exclusive categories are present and, secondly, how narrow or broad the categories are to be (Weber, 1990). Regarding this concern, certain categories were defined as clear, not vague, and not too broad to ensure them to be mutually exclusive. Also a recording unit could be classified in only one category. The process of identifying a coding scheme used by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) was adapted in this study. A subset of 30 questionnaires from the total sample was randomly drawn for each country and then answers sharing similar meaning in terms of either the precise meaning of the text units (such as synonyms) or similar connotations (shared concept) for each country were grouped. The categories were labelled by simple words, such as famous theme parks, tropical beaches, exotic food, etc. The initial classification schema comprised 40 categories for the USA and 34 categories for Thailand. It can be noted that the categorisation reduced the complexity of the data (text units) into the simple form. This simplification process is useful for assessing image as image is generally accepted as a simple picture held in an individual's mind.

Step 3. Test coding on a sample of text. Another set of 20 questionnaires was again randomly drawn to test the initial classification scheme. It was found through testing that all the responses fitted the initial classification scheme for the Thailand group, while almost all the responses fitted the initial classification scheme for the USA. group. A few responses for the USA which were found not to fit the existing initial scheme were coded as new categories. As a result, three new categories were established for the USA classification scheme. The final classification schema comprised 43 categories for the USA and 34 categories for Thailand (see Appendixes D and E).

Step 4. Coding all the text. The responses regarding benefit attributes on the remaining questionnaires were coded according to the established coding scheme. Recording units (word/phrase/sentences), which share similar meaning in terms of either the precise meaning of the words (such as synonyms) or similar connotations (shared concept), were classified and coded into established categories. For example, the responses 'it would be amazing to experience a totally different culture', 'learn a new culture and way of life' and similar meaning responses were combined into the category 'cultural experience'. Frequency of responses in each category, were then produced for the two countries.

(ii) Selection of final benefit attributes

Stage two involved a selection of final benefit characteristics or attributes derived from the generation phase (stage one). The objective of stage two was to reduce the

existing descriptor terms of categories into a smaller number of broad categories so that descriptor terms of categories represent most common benefit attributes of each studied country, thus being more manageable for assessment. To arrive at the most common beneficial attributes for each country studied, selection criteria of final attributes were developed. In previous destination image studies, the proportion of responses provided by the relevant sample was differently determined in selecting the common image. Reilly (1990) used at least 5 % of the entire sample or 5 % of the particular segment in selecting the common image of destination, whereas Echtner and Ritchie (1993) used 20 % or more of the sample. As one can see, no rule is given for the unique proportion of selection.

Due to the variety and different sizes of the sub-samples, the different percentage of subjects selected for the study was determined according to the size of the sub-sample. A larger proportion of selection was given to a small size sub-sample. Following this rule, beneficial attributes registered for particular categories were chosen to construct the beneficial proxy prototype of each country where responses were generated by:

- **10 % or more of subjects in the student group, or**

- **20 % or more of subjects in the adult group, or**

- **30 % or more of subjects in the tour operator group.**

In this study the category "popularity" for the USA (mentioned by 7 % of the student group) and the category "suitable for all people" for Thailand (mentioned by

25 % of the tour operator group) which did not satisfy the criteria were included in this procedure. The reason being, "popularity" (in case of the USA) and "suitable for all people" (in case of Thailand) were the only benefit attributes which could be classified in the social value dimension for each of the countries. The inclusion was done to ensure content validity of measurement. The final lists of benefit attributes chosen for developing proxy prototypes in this study are shown in Tables 4-2 and 4-3.

Tables 4-2 and 4-3 show that descriptors expressing the benefit characteristics are different for the two studied countries. This confirmed the notion that the common and therefore standardised set of attributes or image items designed by researchers in previous image studies, particularly by Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993), could not apply to the measurement of destination image of a particular country precisely. Standardised or complete sets may have more or less attributes than a particular destination may actually have.

The Tables also show that a different number of attributes generated among the sample groups were found in both countries. The most common benefit attributes generated by the three sub-sample groups included 'experience', 'cheap travel', 'climate experience', and 'proximity to Australia' in the case of Thailand, and 'variety of things to do and to see' and 'good and cheap local transport' in the case of the USA.

Table 4-2

Benefit attributes for Thailand selected for developing proxy prototype

Attributes	Percent Mentioning For:		
	Students (%) N = 87	Tour operators (%) N = 12	Adult potential tourists (%) N = 18
Culture experience	63*	42*	83*
Cheap shopping	37*	16	22*
Exotic food	34*	25	28*
Cheap travel	16*	33*	50*
Tropical beach	15*	33*	22*
Historical sites	15*	17	-
Relaxation	13*	8	6
Calm	13*	8	6
Beautiful scenery	15*	17	39*
Proximity	12*	33*	44*
Climate experience	11*	33*	22*
Unspoiled countryside	10*	-	11
Friendliness	9	8	39*
Accessibility	5	33*	11
Suitable for all ages and status	-	25**	-

* satisfied the given criteria

** not satisfied, but included (illustrated on p. 69)

Table 4-3

Benefit attributes for the USA selected for developing proxy prototype

Attributes	Percent Mentioning For:		
	Students (%) N =97	Tour operator (%) N = 12	Adult potential tourists (%) N = 18
Famous theme parks	37*	25	33*
Fascinating shopping	29*	17	22*
Beautiful scenery	28*	8	50*
Renown landmarks	20*	17	17
Big cities	19*	17	22*
Novel experiences	19*	8	22*
Special sporting events	15*	-	-
Variety of things to do and to see	12*	50*	28*
No language barriers	12*	17	39*
Modern	11*	-	6
Diverse	10*	-	17
Fun	10*	-	-
Dynamic	10*	-	6
Good and cheap transport	10*	33*	28*
Popularity	5**	-	-

* satisfied the given criteria

** not satisfied, but included (illustrated on p.69)

4.2.4 Development of proxy beneficial prototype

The purpose of this stage was to develop possible proxy benefit prototypes of beneficial image for five consumption values based on the conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2. To fulfil this purpose, the 15 selected benefit attributes for Thailand (as shown in Table 4-2), and 16 selected benefit attributes for the USA (as shown in Table 4-3) were classified and grouped into five consumption value dimensions according to the definitions of each consumption value outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2. Each selected benefit attribute was classified according to the definitions of each consumption value. The benefit attributes such as "exotic food", "cheap shopping", "famous theme park" which reflect the physical and functional aspects of a tourism product were classified into a functional value dimension, defined as "...the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as the result of its ability to perform its functional, utilitarian, or physical purposes. Alternatives acquire functional value through the possession of salient functional, utilitarian, or physical attributes ..." (Sheth et al., p.18). The benefit attributes such as "popularity" and "suitable place for all age and status" which reflect the perceived value of a particular group were classified into a social value dimension, defined as "...The perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its association with one or more specific social groups ..." (Sheth et al., p.19). The benefit attributes such as "relaxation", "fun", and "dynamic" which reflect feelings or affective states were classified into an emotional value dimension, defined as "...The perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its ability to arouse feelings or affective states. Alternatives acquire emotional value when

associated with specific feelings or when they facilitate or perpetuate feeling ..." (Sheth et al., p.20). The benefit attributes such as "different culture experience" and "novel experience" which arouse feelings of novelty or difference were classified into an epistemic value dimension, defined as "...the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of its ability to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge. Alternatives acquire epistemic value through the capacity to provide something new or different ..." (Sheth et al., p.21). The benefit attributes such as "proximity to Australia", "cheap travel", and "accessibility to neighbouring countries" which reflect an antecedent or specific situation which enhance the benefit of a destination were classified into conditional value, defined as "...the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as a result of the specific situation or the context faced by the choice maker. Alternatives acquire conditional value in the presence of antecedent physical or social contingencies that enhance their functional or social value, but do not otherwise possess this value ..." (Sheth et al., p.22).

A difficulty in classifying some benefit attributes into a particular consumption value dimension emerged. For instance, "popularity" was difficult to classify into a particular value dimension. It may be classified in either "social value" or "conditional value" dimension. By considering the definition of social value and assuming that the perception of "popularity" of a destination is associated with a particular social group, the attribute "popularity" was best fitted to the social value dimension. Therefore, as a rule of thumb, the attribute "popularity" was classified into the "social value" dimension.

The result of classification of the selected benefit attribute in each dimension is presented in Tables 4-4 and 4-5. The benefit attributes grouped in each dimension represented the proxy beneficial prototypes of each dimension. These prototypes are then built up in a schema statement form, as discussed in the next phase.

It should be noted that the benefit characteristics in the social value dimension were generated less than those of other dimensions. This indicated that individuals were more aware of the benefits offered by the tourism product of other values (i.e., functional, epistemic, emotional, and conditional) than those of the social value. In addition, it is interesting to note that the benefit characteristics classified into five value dimensions of the beneficial image model represented both the destination's salient attributes and holistic impression. While the benefit characteristics in funcional and conditional value dimensions represented the salient and concrete attributes of the destinations, the benefit characteristics in epistemic, emotional, and social value dimensions represented the holistic nature or impression. It is acknowledged however that a holistic image phenomenon is inherently complex and its classification may distort the accurate description of an image held in the individual's mind.

4.2.5 Development of open-ended questions for the assessment of beneficial image

Based on five proxy benefit prototypes as outlined above, a series of five statements, reflecting five value dimensions of each country studied were created. These schema

Table 4-4

Beneficial Proxy Prototypes for Thailand in each dimension

Functional dimension

fascinating cheap shopping, exotic food, friendliness, historical sites, tropical beaches, unspoiled countryside, beautiful scenery

Social dimension

Suitable for all people

Emotional dimension

relaxation and calm

Epistemic dimension

cultural experience, climate experience

Conditional dimension

proximity, cheap travel, and accessibility to other countries

Table 4-5

Beneficial Proxy Prototypes for the USA in each dimension

Functional dimension

fascinating shopping, famous theme parks, well-known landmark, big cities, and

beautiful scenery and landscape

Social dimension

popularity

Emotional dimension

diverse, fun, dynamic, and modern

Epistemic dimension

novel experience, variety of things to do and to see

Conditional dimension

no language barriers, good and cheap transport, special sporting events

---

statements were used as stimulated descriptions to test congruence or discrepancy between proxy beneficial prototypes (incorporated in statement forms) and actual beneficial images respondents held in their mind. Each statement started with the short sentence *"Thailand (or the USA) is generally a vacation destination...",* to draw attention on and evoke images of the studied country as a vacation destination, then followed by the sentence *"... and I would visit Thailand (or the USA) because (proxy prototype in each value) ..."* to focus destination image characteristics associated with the decision to visit the country. An introductory paragraph was developed to instruct respondents to report their thoughts or ideas, no matter how congruent, partially congruent, or discrepant with the given statements. The initial open-ended questions were developed as shown in Appendixes F and G.

4.3 PRE-TEST OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

A pre-test was undertaken in two steps to examine the content validity of the questions and to ensure the reliability of measurement. The initial draft of open-ended questions was circulated to a convenience sample of student respondents (N=120) to obtain feedback regarding wording and comprehension of open-ended questions, and to test the category-based processing as outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.3. This sample was selected by convenience sampling from the first year students at the Faculty of Business, Victoria University of Technology. To test the category-based processing, respondents were randomly separated into two equal groups. Respondents in each group were given different questionnaires. Respondents of both groups were asked to imagine that they had recently decided to

visit the USA. Then, they were asked to express freely their agreement (congruence)/disagreement (discrepancy) with five given schema statements contained in the questionnaires about the USA as a vacation destination. The statements in the questionnaire for the first group were identical to the statements for the USA as shown in Appendix G. The schema statements in the questionnaire for the second group used the statements produced for Thailand (as shown in Appendix F), but replaced the word 'Thailand" with 'the USA". As might be expected, the responses: 'agree", 'partially agree", and "disagree", which represented the category-based thought namely congruency, partial congruency, and inconsistency were given across the five statements in both groups. Examples of responses that reflected congruence, partial congruence, and inconsistent thought are presented in Table 4-6.

These responses indicated a category-based thought throughout the match/mismatch process. This suggested that the category-based approach can be applied in image measurement of a destination, based on Keaveney and Hunt's (1992) theoretical concept (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3). However, some feedback was received from the both groups regarding comprehension of the beneficial value dimension in the initial open-ended statements. It was found that some respondents elaborated upon their reasons in detail which indicated an inconsistency with the beneficial dimension of the statement. For example, in the statement designed to test the image in the emotional value dimension, respondents elaborated on functional aspects which were irrelevant to the emotional aspect, such as " disagree, I would not visit USA because of these aspects (diverse, fun, dynamic, and modern), I' d visit it to see beautiful

Table 4-6

Category -based thought	Examples
A. Congruence thought (matching)	*"agree, I'd go there because of its popularity. Some peers have been there and have boasted about it"*
B. Partial congruence thought (partial matching)	*"I'd like to go there because you don't need a second language, but disagree because transport isn't that cheap"*
C. Inconsistency thought (mismatching)	*"disagree, you can find different experience and satisfaction from other choices which may not mean going to USA"*

scenery and important landmarks". It may be that the content of each statement did not give respondents adequate information about the beneficial value dimension. This problem, therefore, reduces the validity of the statements and the accuracy of the responses.

Based on the feedback, the set of open-ended statements was revised. The revision of the questionnaire was done by adding a simple sentence to give respondents guidance on the dimension or aspect of each statement. For example, in the emotional dimension, the statement began with the sentence 'People sometimes would visit a country for personal or emotional reasons.", then the main statement of each dimension followed. This ensured that respondents understood the beneficial value dimension of each statement.

Second, the revised open-ended statements were again examined by the procedure as outlined above on other convenience samples of student respondents from Victoria University of Technology (N=80). As it may be expected, respondents elaborated their reason in details consistent with the given beneficial dimension of the statement. This confirmed the validity of the statements. General questions about the subjects including the previous experience of travel to studied countries, course of study, the likelihood of knowledge about the studied countries, sex, and age were added for the final questionnaire format (Appendixes H and I).

4.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, an attempt was made to develop the alternative methods for assessing beneficial image of a destination. The contribution of unstructured techniques in the measurement of destination image was reviewed and justified. In the course of applying the category-based approach in the measurement of beneficial destination image, an appropriate research instrument was developed. The process of instrument development included selection of studied destinations, generation of beneficial attributes, categorisation of responses and selection of the list of benefit attributes, development of proxy prototypes, and development of open-ended statements. In addition, a pre-test of instrument was discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY (2)

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter outlines the research methods including data collection and data analysis. The responses to the open-ended statements, based on a category-based approach, are examined using content analysis followed by frequency analysis.

5.1 POPULATION AND DATA COLLECTION

5.1.1 Sample

Due to budget and time constraints, and on the assumption that university students can represent a segment of prospective out-bound tourists, respondents were recruited from the student population at Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia. In total, 400 students (convenience sample) were asked to volunteer for a study on destination image.

5.1.2 Survey Procedures

The subjects were separated into two groups to answer questions concerning either Thailand or USA. The self-administered questionnaires as shown in Appendixes H and I were administered between May and June 1996 (200 questionnaires for each country). The respondents were told that the study was

on destination image. They also were told to read carefully the introductory paragraph and return the questionnaires in the given time.

5.1.3 The response rate

The total number of questionnaires returned in the stipulated time period was 332, representing 83 % response rate. The number of responses for Thailand was 164 (82 %) and for the USA., the number of responses was 168 (84 %).

This overall response rate was fairly satisfactory considering the open-ended nature of the questionnaire. The favourable response rate was probably due to the simplicity of the statements and the short length of the questionnaire (2 pages), and also the fact that subjects seemed interested in commenting on the beneficial image of both Thailand and the USA as holiday destinations.

5.1.4 Useable Sample

Those questionnaires rejected included those which: 1) were returned without any answers, 2) contained responses to few or all questions but mentioned that the respondents would not visit the countries studied, and 3) did not provide details in any answer (for example, the questionnaires which produced only single-word response:"agree", or "disagree", or "partially agree" to all questions without description). These unusable questionnaires numbered 22 (8.3 %) of the total responses (11 questionnaires for each country). Therefore, the useable

sample at this stage consisted of 310 respondents, with 153 who responded for Thailand, and 157 who responded for the USA.

Past empirical studies (e.g. Ahmed, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; and Pearce, 1982) indicated the influence of travel experience on destination image. Thus, travel experience factor was controlled in this study. Only those respondents who had never visited Thailand or the USA were selected. This purposive approach was employed to ensure that images of the studied countries including Thailand and the USA held by respondents were formed by secondary sources of information and not based on first-hand experience. Therefore, respondents who previously visited Thailand or the USA were excluded. There were 22 questionnaires which were excluded from the Thailand sample, and 41 questionnaires from the USA sample. These questionnaires were analysed separately for the purpose of comparison as discussed in Chapter 6.

The total number of useable questionnaires included in the analysis was 247, comprising 131 for Thailand and 116 for the USA. Table 5-1 presents a summary of the response rate and useable sample.

5.1.5 Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 5-2 presents the characteristics of the respondents for both studied countries. For Thailand, the respondents were predominantly females (75.4 %), and the majority of respondents were aged between 17 to 20 (56.3 %). A

Table 5-1

Summary of Response and Usable Rate

	Thailand		USA	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Total target population	200	(100.0)	200	(100.0)
less non-returned in time	36	(18.0)	32	(16.0)
Total responses	164	(82.0)	168	(84.0)
less unusable responses	11	(5.6)	11	(5.6)
Total usable responses	153	(76.5)	157	(78.5)
less unqualified respondents (experienced tourists)	22	(1.1)	41	(20.5)
Total final usable responses	131	(65.6)	116	(58.0)

Table 5-2

Sample Characteristics

	Thailand (N=131)		USA (N=131)	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Age				
17-20	71	54.2	58	50.0
21-25	37	28.2	39	33.6
26-30	6	4.6	7	6.0
31-35	3	2.3	2	1.7
36-40	5	3.8	3	2.6
40 +	4	3.1	5	4.3
Missing	5	3.8	2	1.7
Sex				
Male	31	23.7	34	29.3
Female	95	72.5	81	69.8
Missing	5	3.8	1	0.9
Likelihood of knowledge				
none	37	28.2	4	3.4
Fair	74	56.5	68	58.6
Good	12	9.2	38	32.8
Excellent	1	0.8	4	3.4
Missing	7	5.3	2	1.7
Course of study				
Health Science	21	16.0	34	29.3
Business	90	68.7	60	51.7
Recreation	2	1.5	1	0.9
Asian Studies	11	8.4	16	13.8
Urban Studies	1	0.8	2	1.7
Applied Science	1	0.8	-	-
Missing	5	3.8	3	2.6

majority of respondents had enrolled in business studies courses (71.7 %), and described themselves as having a fair knowledge of Thailand (59.7 %)

In case of the USA, the majority of respondents were females (70.4 %) and they were between 17 to 20 years old (50.8 %). They had also enrolled in business studies courses (54.3 %) and had a fair level of knowledge about the USA (59.6 %).

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Data derived from open-ended statements comprised responses expressed as either match, partial match, or mismatch with given statements, in each value dimension. The data were analysed in a two-staged procedure: 1) content analysis techniques were used to classify text units into category-based 'thoughts', and then into an individual beneficial image attribute and 2) frequency analysis of beneficial images were used to derive the percentage of individual beneficial image.

5.2.1 Content Analysis of Data

Content analysis, an unstructured analysis, is defined as "a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (Weber,1990, p.9). The method was employed to analyse the data derived from open-ended questionnaires. For the purpose of the reliability of coding, two students studying for a master's

degree in Tourism Development and who had experience in research methodology were selected as judges for coding. Before coding, the judges were asked to discuss the coding scheme to ensure understanding and clarity of the coding scheme. The two judges separately coded half of the responses, and the researcher, as the third judge, coded all of them together.

Data derived from each statement were analysed in two steps. Firstly, responses were classified into one of three category-based 'thoughts', according to the developed coding scheme (see Table 5-3).

It should be noted that those answers which expressed disagreement with the statement could be classified into two categories. In the first category are respondents who did not perceive that the studied country offered such kind of beneficial attributes, for example, " Disagree, I don't think of Thailand as relaxing and calm place" or "Disagree, Thailand would not make me feel relaxed and calm". In the second category are respondents who disagreed because they did not think that those attributes were important in their decision to visit it, although they did believe that the studied country provided the stated beneficial attributes, for example, "Disagree, I don't think I would go to Thailand for those reasons (relaxation and calm)".

Some respondents expressed "no idea" with regard to the statement (such as 'I have no idea about this statement", "I don't know") or left the answer "blank". This was

Table 5-3

Coding Scheme for responses

Category-based thought	Response Type	Example
Congruence thoughts	Agreement with given statements	" I agree with the statement. All of the above is true. The USA seems to have a lot of resources. So personally, I would visit the USA for the above reasons" or " I agree with this statement as it is true."
Partial congruence thoughts	Partial agreement with given statements	"I partially agree. I would visit the USA because of great tourist attractions (famous theme parks, renowned city landmarks, big cities, and beautiful scenery), but on the other hand I would not care much about the shopping or food."
Discrepancy thoughts	total disagreement with given statements	" I really don't agree with this statement. I would not go for all these reasons (diverse, fun, dynamic, and modern). The only reason I would go to the USA is described in the first statement (functional attributes)".

assumed to be an indication that the respondent had no beneficial images of the studied country in that particular dimension.

Content analysis of open-ended responses again indicated the existence of respondents' category-based thoughts derived from matching between proxy prototypes (in given schema statements) and beneficial images stored in their memories. The results of content analysis are presented in Table 5-4 and Table 5-5.

The findings indicated that, in the case of Thailand, the congruence thoughts with the given statements were expressed by a majority of respondents for functional, epistemic and conditional values (67.2 %, 76.4 % and 67.9 % respectively), whereas the discrepancy thoughts with the given statements were expressed by a majority of respondents for social and emotional values (71.0 % and 66.4 %). In the case of the USA, the congruence thoughts with the given statements were expressed by a majority for functional, emotional, epistemic and conditional values (76.7 %, 58.6 %, 73.3 % and 63.7 % respectively), whereas the discrepancy thoughts with the given statements were expressed by a majority of the respondents only in the social value (67.2 %).

It should be noted that whereas the congruence or discrepancy thoughts with the given statements were expressed by a majority of respondents, no partial congruence thought was expressed by a majority of respondents for any value in both studied countries. However, the partial congruence thought was expressed by

Table 5- 4

Category-based thoughts according to consumption values (Thailand)

Category-based thoughts	Value type				
	Functional	**Social**	**Emotional**	**Epistemic**	**Conditional**
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Congruence	88 (67.2)	38 (29.0)	44 (33.6)	100 (76.4)	89 (67.9)
Partial congruence	17 (13.0)	-	-	26 (19.8)	36 (27.5)
Discrepancy	26 (19.8)	93 (71.0)	87 (66.4)	5 (3.8)	6 (4.6)

Table 5-5

Category-based thoughts according to consumption values (USA)

Category-based thoughts	Value type				
	Functional N (%)	**Social** N (%)	**Emotional** N (%)	**Epistemic** N (%)	**Conditional** N (%)
Congruence	89 (76.7)	38 (32.8)	68 (58.6)	85 (73.3)	74 (63.7)
Partial congruence	7 (06.0)	-	38(32.8)	26 (22.4)	36 (31.0)
Discrepancy	20 (17.3)	78 (67.2)	10 (8.6)	5 (04.3)	6 (05.3)

respondents in second order for epistemic and conditional values in the case of Thailand, and for emotional, epistemic and conditional values in the case of the USA.

Secondly responses to each consumption value statement were then coded in quantitative terms in relation to the individual beneficial image attributes on coding sheets, according to the coding scheme shown in Table 5-6. A given number was coded into a coding sheet (see Appendixes J and K) which comprises of various columns containing each image attributes of five value dimensions. Each column of the coding sheet represents beneficial image attributes. In case of a total agreement response (congruence thought), a "1" was coded in every column of the dimension presented in that question. In case of a total disagreement response (discrepancy thought), a '2" was coded in every column of dimension presented in that question. In the case of a partial agreement response (partial congruence thought), a "1" was coded in columns representing attributes which respondents agreed with, and a '2" was coded in columns representing disagreed attributes.

The consistency of coding and agreement between judges was investigated. The results of coding between the judges was compared case by case for all cases to examine the differences in coding. For the Thailand sample, the agreement between judges was on average 94.1 percent (the agreement between Judge One and Judge Three was 92.1 percent, and the agreement between Judge Two and Judge Three was 96.1 percent). In the case of the USA, the agreement between judges was on average 94.6 percent (the agreement between Judge One and Judge Three was 94.2

Table 5-6

Coding scheme for individual beneficial images

Response thought	Coding
A. Total agreement	mark 1 for every item in Coding sheet
B. Partial agreement	mark 1 for agreed items,
	mark 2 for disagreed items, or no idea items
C. Total disagreement or No idea	mark 2 for every item

percent, and the agreement between Judge Two and Judge Three was 95.0 percent).
Appendixes L and M show the interjudge agreement in each value dimension. It
should be noted that the comparison between Judge One and Judge Two was not
done as they coded different parts of the data. Disagreements were resolved
through discussion, so that all responses could be coded.

5.2.2 Frequency Analysis of data

The objective of frequency analysis was to determine the number and percentage of
agree and disagree (or no idea) responses on each of individual beneficial image
attribute. To achieve this purpose, frequency tables were produced for all beneficial
images. The data was coded into a coding sheet, and agree and disagree (or no idea)
items of each beneficial characteristic were computed. The frequency analysis
results of all beneficial images are present in Appendixes N and O.

5.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the research methods, including data collection and the
data analysis process. In the data collection section, the sample used, the survey
procedure, the response rate, the useable sample and characteristics of respondents
were discussed. In the data analysis section, the process of data analysis, using
content analysis and frequency analysis techniques, were described. The results of
the content analysis derived from open-ended questions provided detail of category-
based thoughts data according to consumption values of both studied countries. The

data were then coded in quantitative terms of individual beneficial image. Finally, the data were processed to derive the number and percentage of each individual beneficial image characteristics.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the results derived from the analysis of data based on the application of the category-based approach. This chapter will discuss the findings derived from the application of the beneficial image model and the use of the category-based approach. The primary focus of this chapter is first, to present and discuss the beneficial images of Thailand and the USA; second, to compare the beneficial image results derived from experienced respondents and non-experienced respondents; and finally, to discuss the effectiveness of the beneficial image model as a framework for assessing destination images affecting the decision to visit a vacation destination and the usefulness of the category-based approach in measuring destination image.

6.2 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The aims of this study were 1) to investigate the destination image which influences Australian potential tourists' decision to visit Thailand and the USA as vacation destinations and 2) to apply a category-based (prototype-based) approach for

operationalising the beneficial image of a vacation destination. This section, presents the results which were obtained from the 'beneficial image' model based on consumption values and the category-based approach. Using the procedure derived from the category-based approach as described in Chapter 3, five schema statements reflecting proxy prototypes in each value dimension were developed to measure the beneficial images of Thailand and the USA. The content analysis and frequency analysis were used to analyse the responses derived from open-ended questions. The results of the analysis of beneficial images in each of five consumption value dimensions of both countries are presented below.

6.2.1 Beneficial Image of Thailand

Using the category-based approach via a prototype matching process, beneficial images of Thailand were produced. Table 6-1 contains beneficial image profiles of Thailand in five consumption value dimensions (i.e. functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional).

Table 6-1 indicates that all beneficial characteristics of functional, epistemic, and conditional values were strong beneficial images as agreed on or perceived by a majority of subjects. The percentage of image characteristics agreed by a majority of subjects varied from 84.7 % (fascinating cheap shopping) to 69.5 % (accessibility to other neighbouring countries). The Table also indicates that all beneficial

Table 6-1

Beneficial Image Characteristics of Thailand, N=131

Beneficial Image	Agreed responses	
	N	%
Functional Value		
Fascinating Cheap Shopping	110	84.0
Exotic Food	104	79.4
Friendly local People	103	78.6
Historical Sites	103	78.6
Tropical Beaches	104	74.9
Unspoiled Countryside	95	72.5
Beautiful Scenery	97	74.0
Social Value		
Suitable for all Ages	38	29.0*
Emotional Value		
Relaxation	44	33.6*
Calm	44	33.6*
Epistemic Value		
Experience of Different Culture	105	80.2
Experience of Different Climate	100	76.3
Conditional Value		
Proximity to Australia	91	69.5
Cheap Travel	93	71.0
Accessibility to Other Neighbouring Countries	91	69. 5

* attributes agreed by less than 50 % of the subjects

characteristics of social and emotional values were weak beneficial images of Thailand, as perceived by a minority of respondents (less than 50 %).

The findings show that all beneficial characteristics in the "epistemic" value were high (80.2 % and 76.3 %). "Different culture experience" and "different climate experience" appear to be characteristics which were perceived by most subjects as beneficial images, and which influence their decision to visit Thailand. Thailand was perceived to be one which possesses a rich and unique culture and climate quite different from Australia. Subjects therefore viewed Thailand as a country from which they are able to seek satisfaction from the experience of differing culture and climate.

With regard to the functional value, the percentage of all beneficial images agreed by respondents was also high, ranging from 72.5 % to 84.0 %. This findings indicates that respondents were impressed with all beneficial characteristics including fascinating cheap shopping, exotic food, friendliness of people, historical sites, unspoiled countryside and beautiful scenery.

Beneficial characteristics of the conditional value dimension were also perceived as beneficial images of Thailand. A majority of subjects were convinced that Thailand

was a place which is close to Australia (68.7%), which involves cheap travel (71.0%), and which is accessible to other neighboring countries (69.5%), therefore they would visit Thailand for those reasons. With regard to proximity, this finding indicated that respondents had impressions on distance between Australia and Thailand and this impression was taken into account in the decision to visit the country. As the sample was drawn from students who had budget constraints, "cheap travel" appealed to them as a reason to visit Thailand. In addition, the high score of "accessibility to other countries" implied that respondents were impressed with Thailand as a gateway to its neighbouring countries.

Surprisingly, a majority of respondents disagreed that Thailand was a suitable place for all ages and status (social value dimension), or that it offered relaxation and calm (emotional value dimension) as beneficial images. "Suitable place for all ages and status" (social value dimension), "relaxation" and "calm" (emotional value dimension) were perceived by only 29.0 %, 33.6 %, and 33.6 % of subjects respectively. Therefore, one could say that most subjects would not visit Thailand on the basis of these beneficial images. In summary, Thailand provides a wide range of tourist attractions which were perceived by most subjects in the functional value dimension, such as historical sites, natural countryside, scenery, and tropical beaches. Moreover, Thailand is an affordable place for students or young people. Thailand does not seem to appeal to a majority of subjects as catering for all Australians, and does not provide the feelings of relaxation and calm. This finding

indicates that these characteristics represent weak beneficial images of Thailand from the subjects' view point.

Two main reasons could be suggested as to why most subjects disagreed with "the suitable place for all ages and status". One is that respondents did not see that age and status were important reasons for visiting Thailand. Typical comments, such as "I would not just travel for this reason", " I think it doesn't depend on the age, I would visit Thailand for other reasons" were frequently stated. Another reason is that respondents perceived Thailand as a suitable place for adults, but not for children. Comments such as "I don't think it is suitable for children as much as adults", "Disagree, children probably wouldn't find it as interesting as adults", "I perceive it as a place for the over 30's and honeymooners" were frequently made.

Likewise, Thailand was not perceived by most subjects as a relaxing and calm place. Most subjects who disagreed that "relaxation" and "calm" prototypes were beneficial images, viewed Thailand as a rushing, busy, noisy, and polluted place. The most common responses given included " disagree, Thailand is a noisy place", "I don't believe Thailand represents a calm and relaxing atmosphere, I perceive it as a rushed place", "disagree, I get the impression of a very busy country" and "I have an image that Thailand is hustle and bustle". It is interesting to note that these perceptions are concerned with the stereotype of Bangkok rather than with Thailand as a whole. It is possible that the stereotype of Bangkok, which reflects the picture

of traffic congestion, pollution and a busy place, may simply be extrapolated to the rest of the country. The image of Thailand as a developing country may also have an effect on subjects' perception, with an image of industries and pollution predominating. The responses such as "I get the impression of a very busy country, a lot of manufacturing." were given on some occasions. This indicates that, like other consumer products, Thailand is confronting "made in" images that are preconceived notions about the country and its tourism products. It seems that destination images may be formed by drawing inference from other image characteristics of that destination. The findings support the notion that the tourist image is only one aspect of a country's general image, with the two being closely interrelated (e.g. World Tourism Organisation 1970, Gunn 1972, Gilbert 1991).

By calculating the average score of beneficial images in each value, the overall beneficial image picture in each value can be derived. The average score of the beneficial image characteristics in each consumption value is calculated and presented in Table 6-2.

The average scores for each value dimension indicated that, among all values, the epistemic, functional, and conditional values were seen by subjects as the predominant ones in their decision to visit Thailand. Beneficial images in social and emotional values appeared to be relatively less important in decisions to visit that country.

Table 6-2

Overall Beneficial Images of Thailand by Consumption Value Dimension

Dimension of Beneficial Images	Average score of agreed responses (%)
Functional Value	78.1
Social Value	29.0
Emotional Value	33.6
Epistemic Value	78.2
Conditional Value	69.9

Based on the average score of each consumption value, it may be assumed that, in the decision-making process regarding destination, subjects evaluate Thailand in their decision by using functional, epistemic, and conditional values to a greater extent than social and emotional values. These findings indicate important implications for marketing Thailand as a vacation destination. A discussion of the marketing implications will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.2 Beneficial Images of the USA

Using the category-based approach to analyse beneficial images of the USA, the results are presented in Table 6-3. The Table shows that all characteristics of functional, epistemic, emotional, and conditional values produced strong beneficial images for the USA as revealed by the majority of subjects (scored between 62.9 - 91.4 %). "Popularity", which is only one characteristic in social value dimension, was perceived as a weak beneficial image of the USA (agreed by less than 50 % of respondents).

Considering the percentage of characteristics or attributes agreed by subjects, one can implicitly say that the USA possesses strong beneficial images in all characteristics of functional value. These included "fascinating shopping", "great food", "famous theme parks", "renown city landmarks", "big cities", and "beautiful

Table 6-3

Beneficial Image of the USA, N=116

Beneficial Image	Agreed responses	
	N	%
Functional Value		
Fascinating Shopping	94	81.0
Great Food	91	78.4
Famous Theme Parks	106	91.4
Renown City Landmarks	99	85.3
Big Cities	104	89.7
Beautiful Scenery	102	87.9
Social Value		
Popularity	38	32.8 *
Emotional Value		
Diverse	70	60.3
Fun	76	65.5
Dynamic	73	62.9
Modern	75	64.7
Epistemic Value		
Novel Experience	87	75.0
Variety of things to see and to do	93	80.2
Conditional Value		
No Language Barriers	74	63.8
Good and Cheap Local Transport	69	59.5
Special Sport Events	70	60.3

* attributes agreed by less than 50 % of the subjects

scenery". Among these beneficial images, famous theme parks received the highest score (91.4 %), followed by big cities (89.7 %) and beautiful scenery (87.9 %) respectively. This relative scores indicates the importance of these characteristics in decision-making to visit the USA.

With regard to epistemic value, a "variety of things to see and to do" was agreed by most respondents (80.2 %), while "novel experience" came second (75.0 %). This suggests that the USA is an impressive place which provides many tourist attractions and activities for most potential tourists. It also appeals to the respondents as a place providing many interesting novel things for tourists to experience.

Viewing the emotional value dimension, the characteristics "diverse", "fun", "dynamic", and "modern" were those most agreed by a majority of respondents. Of these characteristics, "fun" received the highest score (65.5 %). The findings indicate that all these characteristics of the USA appeal to Australian tourists and would be considered in the decision to visit the USA.

Those characteristics in the "conditional value" dimension, including "no language barrier", "relatively cheap and good domestic transport", and "special sporting events" were also perceived by a majority of respondents as beneficial images of the USA. It is possible that, "speaking the same language" could minimise the feelings

of foreignness which may occur during travel in that country (Britton, 1979). The "no language barriers" characteristic was supported by respondents. It also appears that "relatively cheap and good local transport" appeals to subjects as a beneficial image, probably because the USA is thought to be a holiday destination which possesses good transport facilities at affordable cost.

As mentioned previously, the "popularity" was the only element of "social value" dimension which possessed a weak beneficial image as perceived by a minority of subjects (32.8 %). Although the USA was recorded as the leading country in the world in attracting tourists, most respondents did not consider "popularity" as an important factor in deciding to visit the USA. Common responses given were "Disagree, I would not visit the USA because of its popularity", " I don't think this is really a great reason to visit the USA". Many respondents agreed with its popularity, but they did not think that this was important for them in deciding to visit the USA.

The average score for beneficial image in each consumption value category is presented in Table 6-4. Based on the beneficial image model, the findings indicate the pre-eminent importance of "functional", "epistemic", "emotional", and "conditional" values in decision-making to visit the USA.

Table 6-4

Overall Beneficial Images of USA by Consumption Value Dimensions

Dimension of Beneficial Images	Average score of agreed responses (%)
Functional Value	85.6
Social Value	32.8
Emotional Value	63.4
Epistemic Value	77.6
Conditional Value	61.2

It should be noted that, in the comparison of both countries, Thailand and the USA, the beneficial images in the "functional value" (average score equal to 78.1% for Thailand and 85.6 % for the USA.) and "epistemic value" (average score equal to 78.2 % for Thailand and 77.6 % for the USA.) dimensions outperformed those of "social value", "emotional value", and "conditional value" dimensions. This indicates that potential tourists consider "functional" and "epistemic" values to be the most important factors in their travel decision process. The marketing implications from these finding would be that, a tourism manager planning marketing programs should focus on both functional and epistemic attributes of destination as a high priority.

6.3 THE COMPARISON OF BENEFICIAL IMAGES BETWEEN EXPERIENCED SUBJECTS AND NON-EXPERIENCED SUBJECTS

Although it is not the main objective of this study, a comparison between beneficial images of the studied countries held by subjects who have previously visited the countries and those who have not will be explored.

Previous studies have suggested that a significant relationship exists between past experiences and images of destinations (e.g. Ahmed, 1989; Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Millman & Pizam, 1995; Pearce, 1982; Zhang,1989), and, thus, previous visits are likely to play an important factor affecting the beneficial image.

The sample was derived from those respondents who had visited the studied countries and who were excluded from the main study, as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.4. The sample comprised of 22 respondents for Thailand, and 41 respondents for the USA. Due to the small size of the "experienced visitor" samples, the significant difference of beneficial images between the experienced sample group and non-experienced sample group could not be statistically analysed. Nevertheless, as a preliminary study for future research, the comparative analysis was undertaken by comparing the percentage score of beneficial images between the two groups. The comparative results are shown in Table 6-5 for Thailand and Table 6-6 for the USA.

From Table 6-5, the results indicate that the scores of all perceived beneficial images in the experienced tourist group exceeded those of the potential tourist group. While percentages of all beneficial images in "functional", "epistemic", and "conditional" value dimensions slightly increased (from 4 to 16 %), those in the "social" value and "emotional" value dimensions dramatically increased (23 % difference in "suitable for all ages and status", 30 % in "relaxation" and 26 % in "calm"). More than half of the experienced subjects agreed that Thailand was a place

Table 6-5

Comparison of Beneficial Image of Thailand perceived by Experienced and

Non-experienced Subjects

Beneficial Images	% of agreed responses	
	Experienced (N= 22)	Non-experienced (N=131)
Functional Value		
Fascination Cheap Shopping	90.9	84.0
Exotic Food	90.9	79.4
Friendly local People	86.4	77.9
Historical Sites	90.9	78.6
Tropical Beaches	90.9	79.4
Unspoiled Countryside	86.4	72.5
Beautiful Scenery	90.9	74.0
Social value		
Suitable for all Ages	54.5	27.0
Emotional value		
Relaxation	63.6	33.6
Calm	59.1	33.6
Epistemic value		
Different Culture	90.9	80.2
Different Climate	90.9	76.3
Conditional value		
Proximity to Australia	77.3	68.7
Cheap Travel	81.8	71.0
Accessibility to Other Neighbouring Countries	81.8	69.5

which is able to cater for all ages and status. A wide range of tourism products which suit all Australian tourists are mentioned. In addition, more than half agreed that Thailand was a relaxing and calm place and they would visit it for those reasons. A possible explanation for these results is that subjects who have been to Thailand before may receive first-hand experience which differentiates them from those who have never visited Thailand. They might received more information about these established tourist settings.

It can be assumed that a re-formation of image or the complex image (held by actual tourists) exists in actual tourists' minds and is different from the induced image (that is held by potential tourists) in the beneficial images of social and emotional values. The results support the notion that destination images are reinforced or modified by experience (Stringer 1984, Gunn 1988, Fakeye and Crompton 1991, Chon 1991, and Gartner, 1993). This modified image may become an important element in subsequent conversational image and in further travel decisions (Stringer, 1984).

The findings also suggest important implications for marketing strategies. Thailand should maintain and reinforce amongst prospective tourists strong beneficial images with regard to attributes or impressions of destination in the functional, epistemic and conditional value dimensions. The practical implication is that if the promotion of these attributes is given high priority, the strategy would probably be

successful and would obtain positive consequences. The score of beneficial images that were held by previous visitors (the complex images) of Thailand exceed those of beneficial images that are held by non-visitors (the induced images). This implies that once trips are taken, expectations would be met (ever better than they had expected). This would result in the process of image re-formation, with an increased level of beneficial image and re-visitation. Thus, the obvious strategy is to maximise the strength of these attributes which are seen as influential in travel decisions by most respondents.

Characteristics in social and emotional values, including perceptions of a suitable place for all Australian tourists and perceptions of a relaxing and calm place, could also be utilised. While a low percentage of non-experienced respondents identified as "a suitable place for all ages and status", "relaxation", and "calm" as beneficial images of Thailand (27.0 %, 33.6 %, and 33.6 % respectively), the majority of experienced respondents agreed upon these beneficial images (54.5 %, 63.6 %, and 59.1 % respectively). This may be just a question of improving perception through a marketing campaign. As the beneficial images of these attributes were much stronger in previous visitors than in non-visitors, it would appear that attempting to raise the strength of such images probably would be successful.

Unlike Thailand, no large differences were found in the case of the USA. There were slight changes in the percentage of beneficial images existing in the

Table 6-6

Comparison of Beneficial Image of the USA perceived by Experienced and
Non-experienced Subjects

Beneficial Images	% of agreed responses	
	Experienced (N= 22)	Non-experienced (N=116)
Functional value		
Fascinating Shopping	85.4	81.0
Great Food	78.0	78.4
Famous Theme Parks	90.2	91.4
Renown City Landmarks	95.1	85.3
Big Cities	95.1	89.7
Beautiful Scenery	87.8	87.9
Social value		
Popularity	43.9	32.8
Emotional value		
Diverse	53.7	60.3*
Fun	65.9	65.5
Dynamic	53.7	62.9*
Modern	58.5	64.9*
Epistemic value		
Novel Experience	80.5	75.0
Variety of things to see and to do	80.5	80.2
Conditional value		
No Language Barriers	68.3	63.8
Good and Cheap Local Transport	61.0	59.5
Special Sport Events	65.9	60.3

experienced subjects (actual tourists) group compared with the non-experienced group in all values (from 0.1 to 11.1 %). It should be noted that, while an increase in the percentage was found in most cases, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of some image attributes in the experienced group namely, diverse (6.6 %), dynamic (9.2 %), and modern (6.4 %).

The marketing implications derived from the findings are that tourism management could highlight beneficial attributes in functional and epistemic values. Although, as a comparison of previous tourists' image with potential tourists' image, the slight difference between the two groups in these characteristics were found, all characteristics or attributes of both functional and epistemic values components have been seen as strong beneficial images (by more than 50 % of respondents of both group). Therefore, the marketing budget could be spent on these image characteristics. Marketing, which emphasizes physical and functional characteristics of great shopping and a great food place along with a variety of tourist attractions including theme parks, renown city landmarks, big cities, and beautiful scenery, would capitalise on the beneficial image about the USA. Taken together with the agreement of the majority subjects in beneficial images of epistemic value, the opportunity for characteristics, including a place of great "novel experience" and "a variety of things to do and see", could also be expected to appeal to potential tourists.

Beneficial images of the USA. strong in conditional and emotional values also have implications for tourism marketing. All characteristics or attributes of the USA. in the conditional value component, including no language barriers, good and cheap local transport, and special sport events, should be highlighted to prospective tourist groups to reinforce or support their decision. These attributes have been seen as beneficial images by 60 % and more of non-visitor subjects and also seen stronger by previous-visitor subjects.

It should be noted that some characteristics or attributes of the emotional value component including "diversity", "dynamic", and "modern", were seen as beneficial images by less subjects of the experienced respondent group. Nevertheless, the difference does not seem to be obvious and all of the characteristics in this component have been perceived as strong beneficial images (by more than 50 % of non-experienced subjects). These characteristics may be promoted, but do not have to be a high priority. The strategy which emphasizes too many of these attributes would probably be unsuccessful. As Ahmed (1991) stated, "It would appear that attempting to raise an induced image (non-visitors' image) above the organic (previous visitors' image) would lead to unrealised expectations once trips were taken and that the resulting process of image reformation would have negative consequences" (p.339).

The findings also indicate that popularity should not be emphasised in the marketing effort. As a comparison of previous visitors' image with non-visitors' image, "popularity" was also seen as a beneficial image by the minority of both groups (32.8 % by the nonvisitor group and 43.9 % by the visitor group). This figure indicates that a marketing strategy which emphasises the popularity of the USA may not be successful in destination promotion.

In summary, the results indicate that scores for the most beneficial images in the experienced tourist group exceeded those of the potential tourist group. The most notable differences were in the beneficial images between the experienced and non-experienced sample, which was interestingly found in "social" and "emotional" values for Thailand. The findings are consistent with that of Milman and Pizam (1995), who found that respondents familiar with a certain destination (previous visitation) had a more positive image of that destination. This means that the promotion of image of two countries can be enhanced to strengthen those beneficial characteristics. A promotion strategy emphasising these attributes of the country would probably be successful. This means that once trips are taken, expectations would be met (perhaps better than expected), and this could lead to satisfaction with the destination. This would result in the process of image re-formation, increasing the level of beneficial image and the subsequent likelihood of re-visitation.

6.4 DISCUSSION

This section focuses on 1) the value of the beneficial image model as a conceptualisation framework for the analysis of destination image influencing decisions to visit a destination, and 2) the effectiveness of the category-based approach as an alternative method to measuring the destination image.

6.4.1 Beneficial image as the conceptual framework of destination image

The beneficial image model was built up from the two main concepts--Kotler and Barich's (1991) marketing image concept and Sheth at el.'s (1991) consumption value and marketing choice theory. The model provides the basis for understanding destination images and how such images influence tourists' vacation decisions or destination choices. The model also proposed five components of beneficial image namely, functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional value dimensions. Beneficial images in some or all of these values were used by potential tourists in the destination choice process.

The results of the two studied countries indicate the usefulness of the beneficial image model as a framework for understanding destination image and holiday choice. The results demonstrate the existence of beneficial images for both studied

destinations in all five values. The results of this study also indicate the different degree of beneficial image in each value dimension for both studied countries. For example, in the case of Thailand, it was found that beneficial images in the epistemic, functional, and conditional values played an important role in respondents' decisions to visit the country, whereas the beneficial images in social and emotional values played less importance in their vacation decision. By examining the responses derived from the open-ended questions, the findings indicate that destination choices were driven or influenced by different degrees of beneficial images. While the beneficial attributes or impressions in the epistemic, functional, and conditional values were perceived by a majority of respondents (ranging from 69.5 % to 84.7 %) as reasons for visiting Thailand, the beneficial image attributes or impressions in the emotional and social values were only perceived by a minority of respondents (less than 50 %).

The findings from the above example clarify that the five values make differential contributions to specific destination choices. As Sheth et al. (1991) argued, " ... while multiple values drive market choice making, their contributions are usually unequal. In any specific choice situation, some values contribute more than others" (p. 10). This information could have important implications for marketing strategy of a destination.

Overall, the results showed the value of the beneficial image model as a framework for analysis of destination image. Compared with most previous studies, this model, based on five consumption values, provided a more thorough understanding of destination image characteristics associated with potential tourists' decisions to visit a vacation destination. In contrast to most previous studies which have attempted to capture the general or common characteristics of destination image, the beneficial image model provides more specific and meaningful characteristics, which potential tourists can take into account in their decision to visit a destination. Therefore, the information of destination image derived from using the beneficial image model could be useful and meaningful for destination marketing.

6.4.2 The application of the Category-based approach in the measurement of destination image

Applying the category-based approach for measuring beneficial destination image, an appropriate research instrument was developed (discussed in Chapter 4). The research instrument in this study was an open-ended questionnaire comprising five schema statements (in association with five values in the beneficial image model). Each statement represented proxy beneficial prototype of each consumption value in the beneficial image model. Subsequently, the prototype matching process was applied by asking subjects to read and express freely their ideas regarding the developed five schema statements. Subjects were instructed to answer the questions

about Thailand or the USA, with reference to the beneficial images that these countries evoked in their mind. They compared or matched their image with the given proxy prototypes (schema statements), then elaborated upon their comparison regarding those proxy prototypes in one of three category-based thoughts. The responses derived were analysed by content analysis and frequency analysis. Finally, the beneficial images of studied countries were assessed.

The results of the present study indicate the usefulness of a category-based approach for assessing the beneficial image of a destination. The responses showed that when asked to express the congruence, partial congruence, or discrepancy between their images and the prototypes given by the schema statements, the respondents could report their ideas regarding those thoughts. The results demonstrate that using the category-based approach (via prototype matching process), respondents could match or compare the proxy prototypes (developed in schema statement form) in each value dimension. The responses which reflected the category-based thought, congruence, partial congruence, and discrepancy were distributed across five proxy prototypes as discussed in Chapter 5 (Section 5.2).

The usefulness of the category-based approach, in conjunction with open-ended questions, is that the beneficial image was captured via the prototype or schema form rather than being assessed via individual attributes, as used by scaling methods or traditional open-ended techniques. As destination image is assumed as a

prototype or schema, the process of prototype matching in the category-based approach has been successful in capturing destination images in that scenario.

6.5 SUMMARY

The analysis of beneficial image using the category-based approach revealed the existence of beneficial images of both destinations on a different level. In the case of Thailand, the results indicated that strong images emerge in the epistemic, functional, and conditional values. These included "fascinating cheap shopping", "exotic food", "friendliness of local people", "historical sites", "tropical beaches", "unspoiled countryside", and "beautiful scenery" (in functional value dimension); "different culture experience" and "different climate experience" (in epistemic value dimension); and "proximity to Australia", "cheap travel", and "accessibility to neighbouring countries" (in conditional value dimension). For the U.S.A., the strong beneficial images include "fascinating shopping", "famous theme parks", "renown city landmarks", "big cities", and "beautiful scenery" (in functional value dimension); "novel experience" and "a variety of things to see and to do" (in epistemic value dimension); "diverse", "fun", "dynamic", and "modern" (in emotional value dimension); and "no language barriers", "relatively good and cheap transport", "the opportunity to see special sporting events" (in conditional value dimension).

For the weak beneficial images, "suitable place for all age and status" (in social value dimension) and "relaxation" and "calm" (in emotional value dimension) are perceived by the minority as beneficial images affecting decisions to visit Thailand. Also, the minority of respondents were not convinced that "popularity" (in social value dimension) is a beneficial image of the USA.

These findings support the notion that the images are simplified impressions, but they are not unidimensional. The findings indicate evidence which shows the various dimensions of beneficial images. Therefore, decisions to visit a destination may be influenced by beneficial images in different value dimensions. Subjects are likely to integrate these beneficial images in the way that reveals their distinctive preferences which match with their own personality, and their self-concept.

The findings also reveal the relationship between images. Negative images may effect other beneficial images of a destination. For instance, in the case of Thailand, the negative picture of traffic congestion, pollution, and rushing distorts the picture of relaxation and calm in the country.

The results revealed differences in some beneficial images of the selected countries between subjects who had visited and those who had not visited the target countries previously. The effects of prior experience give a strikingly different picture, especially in the case of Thailand. The characteristics, affected, included a "suitable

place for all ages and status" (in social value dimension), and "relaxation" and "calm" (in emotional value dimension). These findings support previous studies which found a relationship between experience and destination image.

Finally, the findings fulfill the research aims by applying beneficial image model and the category-based approach in measuring destination image. A discussion of the usefulness of both beneficial image and the category-based approach was provided. The results indicated the usefulness of the beneficial image model as a framework for analysis of destination image. It provides useful and meaningful information for destination marketing. The results also supported the effectiveness of the category-based approach in measuring the destination image, especially in terms of prototype or schema analysis.

CHAPTER 7

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the limitations of the study concerning the beneficial image model and the application of the category-based approach via prototype matching process. The chapter also discusses the implications of the beneficial model and the prototype matching process of the category-based approach via open-ended questions. In addition, the implications for tourism marketing and some suggestions for future research are presented.

7.2 LIMITATIONS

Although the study approach then was found fruitful in capturing image, a number of limitations were found. These limitations include the framework and methods used as follows:

1) The analysis of data and the statistical methods used here have limitations regarding reliability and validity of measurement. Due to the nature of data obtained from open-ended questions, the data analysis was conducted using the content analysis technique.

Considerable care was required in the interpretation of the meanings derived from the data in statement or text form. As Reilly (1990) has argued, "a more traditional approach to scale development provides more assurance that a reliable and valid measurement instrument results". A derived data does not meet the requirements of statistical distribution, only frequency analysis can be used. The inference statistics for quantitative analysis such as multivariate analysis cannot be applied.

2) Difficulties of proxy image prototype development in each studied country were found. First, at the stage of benefits generation, benefit prototypes of each country may be produced differently if the data were surveyed from other groups with increased size. Most of the data used to develop proxy prototypes in this study were derived from students (N=100), with a small number derived from adult group (professional workers) (N=18) and tour operators (N=12). The increase in sample size from these groups may produce different most common benefit attributes or characteristics expected from visiting the studied countries. Consequently, this would lead to the different benefit image prototypes for those countries.

Second, as discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.4), difficulty emerged in classifying some benefit attributes into a particular consumption value dimensions. Some benefit attributes or impressions between the two consumption values could overlap. In turn, this led to difficulties in classifying such benefit attributes into a particular value dimension.

3) Due to budget and time constraints, the final sample was limited by using only the university student population and linked to two countries being selected for this study. The findings from this study, therefore, are confined to this particular group and cannot be generalised to other groups of potential tourists. For instance, theme parks were seen as the most beneficial image of the USA by most student subjects. A different answer may be produced if a more representative sample of the general population were used. The investigation of beneficial images using data from other sample populations such as professional working adults, or aged tourists, should be replicated to compare the results. In addition, the developed methods should be replicated by using other destination countries.

This study, however, presents a beginning in a research methodology not employed by other researchers in the field of tourism. It is hoped that this exploratory study will introduce the methodology to other researchers in the field.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS

This study proposed the beneficial image model and described a category-based approach to image analysis of two destinations. Three implications are evident from the results along three dimensions -- theoretical, methodological and marketing.

7.3.1 Theoretical Implications

There are two main conceptual frameworks which are basic to the nature and purpose of the proposed beneficial image model.

1) Kotler and Barich's (1991) marketing image concept explains the role of marketing image in buyer behaviour. The concept presents the fundamentals of the relationship between product image and marketing value. The central idea of this concept focuses on 'exchange value' in determining the strength or weakness of a firm's product image. As a result, the concept provides the basis for understanding the relationship between product image and the buying decision.

2) Sheth at el.'s (1991) consumption value and marketing choice indicates five consumption values as bases for consumer decision-making in marketing choices. The elements of consumption value are drawn from Sheth et al. (1991). These consumption values extend the understanding of how consumption value works in the process of the buying decision.

The beneficial image model, which was built up from these two concepts, provides the basis for understanding destination images in a way which influences tourists' vacation decision or destination choices. The model proposes five components of beneficial image namely: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional

value dimensions. Beneficial images in some or all of these values were used by potential tourists in deciding destination choices. The findings of this study indicate the existence of beneficial images of studied destinations based on five values. The findings also indicate that destination choices were driven or influenced by beneficial images to a different degree for each value.

Consequently, the results indicate that the beneficial image model can be an alternative framework of destination image measurement. The model, based on five consumption values, demonstrates a framework that is both comprehensive (rich) and economical or concise (simple). It also appears useful in image study as a model for understanding image characteristics which affect the decision-making to visit a particular destination. Although extensive prior research has been conducted to measure destination image, past research has underscored the importance of certain image characteristics affecting the travel decision to visit a country. Most of this research attempted to find an universal set of images and comprehensive attributes rather than finding meaningful image characteristics useful for marketing strategy.

From a practical standpoint, a beneficial image model provides more meaningful, useful and specific information for marketing a destination or highlighting image in advertising by determining important attributes of that destination which are beneficially perceived by potential tourists.

7.3.2 Methodological Implications

The aims of this study were to demonstrate the need for a methodology for assessing images of countries as a tourist destination. The primary implication for research methods is that destination image can be assessed by using the developed methods which are based on the category-based approach. The present study used a prototype matching process, via open-ended questions, to capture the beneficial image of the studied countries. The methods used here differed from typical methods used in image studies in tourism context. Destination image in this study was assessed via prototype form, and not individual attributes using scaling methods.

In addition, several previous destination image studies have employed conventional open-ended questions as the instrument for measuring destination image (e.g. Rielly 1990, Echtner and Ritchie 1993). The present study employed an alternative type of open-ended question technique which satisfied the prototype matching process. The value of this method lies in highlighting the importance of the link between the prototype matching process and the use of open-ended questions, based on category-based approach in measurement of destination image. The findings indicate differences between the methods used in the present study and the typical open-ended question methods used in previous studies, as follows:

1) The present method demonstrated that it is easier for subjects to retrieve their own images of the studied destination. Subjects were given a proxy prototype of a beneficial image (set of most common beneficial features or exemplars) in each dimension, then they compared these proxy or dummy prototypes with existing beneficial images in their minds. By using typical open-ended questions (free response) which ask subjects to respond freely, respondents may find it difficult to retrieve the completeness of destination image from their memory. In contrast, by using schema open-ended questions in the category-based approach, it is easier for subjects to think of destination images by matching the given proxy prototype of an image with actual images they have of a particular destination.

2) the present method provides respondents with the opportunity to freely express the congruence or discrepancy between proxy prototype of an image and their actual image. The respondents can express what they think about a given proxy prototype and elaborate in detail. The method provides an opportunity for more description and elaboration of reasons, especially when respondents disagree with the given statements. Rather than asking respondents a question such as "what comes to your mind when you think of X destination", this study asks respondents to express agreement or disagreement on an idea about the given prototype (in statement form) of the studied countries. Adopting this method provides useful information, especially when the subjects elaborated upon why they did not agree

with the statement. In some cases, the subjects revealed negative images of the studied destination. This method, therefore, provides more specific meaningful and useful information and also adds to the understanding of why respondents think about the destination image in the way they do.

In practical terms, this method can be used by the tourism industry in evaluating the effect of promotion, particularly the advertising, of a destination. It is useful for a tourism authority or agency to examine the effectiveness of the marketing effort which is done through various processes of promotion of a destination. However, rather than developing a proxy prototype of destination from surveyed data derived from various groups, as has been done in the present study, the proxy image prototypes may be built from the content or features of advertising which have been communicated to potential tourists. The results may indicate that if an image has been built in potential tourists' minds, or on the other hand, attributes of destination portrayed were perceived similarly and/or differently (match/mismatch) by the target market.

7.3.3 Implications for Tourism Marketing

This section indicates how the results of this research can be applied in the area of tourism marketing. Ahmed (1991, p.331) stated that "What tourists think about a destination's image is strategically more important that what a marketer knows

about the destination. The key to creating a successful image is convincing tourists to view a destination in the manner intended by the destination's marketers." This statement clearly implies that desirable information about a destination conveyed to potential tourists should be collected. Therefore, learning about the beneficial image perceived by a different target market may be useful for deciding, revising or highlighting appropriate advertising messages.

From a tourism marketing standpoint, the study makes the following suggestions. First, the data supports the view that the two studied countries do have beneficial images. Second, it also demonstrated the degree of beneficial images ranging from strengths to weakness of both destinations. This image information has implications which can be useful in destination marketing, especially for designing advertising appeals to potential tourist markets, and for developing guidelines to improve or strengthen the image of a particular tourist destination.

To illustrate, marketing strategy could reinforce the country's position in terms of criteria that are already highly regarded. In the case of Thailand, the findings indicated a strong beneficial image in all characteristics of the epistemic, functional, and conditional value dimensions. Promotion campaigns could portray Thailand as a land of hospitable people, with a different culture and climate; fascinating cheap shopping, exotic food, friendliness of local people, historical sites, tropical beaches, unspoiled countryside and beautiful scenery. Advertisements could also focus on the

fact that Thailand is a place which is in close proximity to Australia offering affordable travel, and connects to many Asian and Indo-China countries.

Where beneficial image is weak, promotional communications can be used to help strengthen that image. A marketing strategy conveying images of relaxation, calm, and the suitability of Thailand for all ages could be emphasised to potential tourists. The strength or focus on the existing tourist settings could be communicated to create awareness to potential tourists.

In the case of the USA, the findings of this study indicate that the country has strong beneficial images in every characteristics of functional, epistemic, emotional and conditional values. The findings have practical implications for tourism marketing. Characteristics of the country with strong and moderate beneficial images could be emphasised in destination marketing. Advertisements could portray the USA as a land of novelty and variety which provides fascinating shopping, great food, famous theme parks, renown city landmarks, big cities and beautiful scenery. Promotion campaigns could also focus on the good and cheap domestic transport, and home of many popular sporting events. In addition, the characteristics which arouse the feelings of fun, diversity, dynamic and modernity could be emphasised.

In short, implications based on study findings can be utilised in destination marketing effort for both Thailand and the USA. Marketing strategies could emphasize the combination of benefits or values of a certain country. Although these benefits or consumption values are independent, they may relate additively and contribute incrementally to destination choice (Sheth et al., p. 12). Advertising a combination of two or more value dimensions of a destination would probably be more successful. For example, the advertisement of Thailand may illustrate its brochures with pictures showing young children playing happily in a calm, shallow water while their parents relax nearby on the beautiful beach of an exotic island. This sort of advertising conveys beneficial images in three value dimensions to potential tourists. The beach reflects an image of functional value, the picture of children playing happily in the calm and parents relaxing nearby reflect images of both emotional value and social value (family-oriented).

Promoting destinations to potential tourists could take a different track for different segment markets. For example, in case of the USA, emphasis should be on the interesting novel experience, a variety of things to see and to do, fun, and special sporting events for the young or student tourist market, whereas, a great place for shopping, beautiful scenery, and a variety of tourist attractions could be emphasised on the couple or professional adult market.

However, the promotion of these beneficial characteristics should be done in association with tourism facilities of the given area to enhance the choice of a particular destination. As stated by Goodrich (1978, p.12), "choice of a particular destination is enhanced when tourists perceive the destination to possess adequate and desirable facilities which they deem important". Therefore, good tourist facilities such as information about attraction, sanitary condition, and safety should be provided by the destination and the information regarding these facilities should relay to potential tourists.

7.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has addressed some of the issues involved in measuring destination image characteristics considered in tourists' decision processes. Although, it has produced results which expand the body of knowledge related to destination image and provided implications for tour operators and educators, additional future research is needed to verify the validity and reliability of the developed methods.

First, as discussed previously in the limitations of the study, research methods for developing a research instrument should employ larger sub-samples. Proxy image prototypes of a studied country could differ in terms of content if the derived information is from larger sub-samples. Therefore, the refinement of proxy prototypes in each studied country should be conducted using more representative

samples of respondents and using different groups in order to obtain complete and most common benefit characteristics in each value.

As exploratory research, this study developed the proxy prototype of a studied country based on data derived from the survey of student, professional adult, and tour operator samples. It is possible that the proxy prototypes could be developed in conjunction with other techniques, such as the focus group technique. In using this technique, initial proxy prototypes of a studied country, derived from the preliminary survey, could be discussed and refined by an expert panel.

Second, this study should be replicated using different sample groups and different countries. The findings derived may be different if this method is repeatedly tested with different populations. For example, in case of Thailand, "suitable place for all age and status" may be more appropriate in an adult sample. It may be that this characteristic of Thailand was not significant for respondents due to the student sample used in this study. They may not think that this attribute meant anything to them. Woodside and Jacobs (1985) suggest that the benefits realised from a destination differ widely for different market segments. To ascertain how beneficial images of a certain country differ between various groups in target markets, such as student group, professional working people, and backpackers, it would be useful for a marketer to understand and determine the appropriate marketing strategies.

In addition, the use of different countries could be beneficial. This would enhance the knowledge about measuring images within the framework of 'beneficial image' and within the category-based approach.

Third, the influence of some factors upon beneficial image could be examined. As outline in Chapter 2, previous studies indicated a relationship between several factors and the destination image. Basic demographic factors such as sex, age, social status, and factors such as level of awareness, level of knowledge about the studied country, and self-image or self-concept, could also be ascertained. This information could be useful to understand the beneficial image of a particular segment market and in determining proper content of advertising for different segmentation.

As an image of a destination is formed through induced and organic processes (Gunn, 1972), potential tourists will form their own image of a destination by searching for information from various advertisements promoting that destination. Therefore, the influence of advertising on beneficial image formation in terms of type and channel could be investigated.

Destination image studies are challenging and required areas of tourism research. This study has addressed the use of the so-called Beneficial Image as a framework for the analysis of destination image for two countries. In addition, it has

presented the development of measurement in destination image via a category-based approach. The study has produced results demonstrating the existence of beneficial images of both studied destinations to different degrees. The results indicate the usefulness of the beneficial image model as a framework for understanding destination image and holiday choice. They also indicate the effectiveness of category-based approach for assessing the beneficial image of a destination.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, Z. U. (1989). Determinants of the components of a state's tourist image and their marketing implications. [CD-ROM]. Abstract from : ProQust File : Dissertation Abstract Item : A 50/05

Ahmed, Z. U. (1991). The influence of the components of a state's tourist image on product positioning strategy. Tourism Management, 12(4), 331-340.

Alden, D. L., Stayman, D. M., & Hoyer, W. D. (1994). Evaluation strategies of American and Thai consumers. Psychology & Marketing, 11(2), 145-161.

Alhemoud A. M. & Armstrong E. G. (1996). Image of Tourism Attractions in Kuwait. Journal of Travel Research, 34 (spring), 76-80.

Allport, G. W. (1935). Attitudes. In Handbook of Social Psychology. Worcester, Mass.: Clark University.

Ashworth, G., & Goodall, B. (1988). Tourist images: marketing considerations. In G. Ashworth & B. Goodall (Eds.), Marketing in the tourism industry, (pp. 213-238). London: Routledge.

Ashworth, G., & Voogd, H. (1990). Can place be sold for tourism ? In G. Ashworth & B. Goodall (Eds.), Marketing Tourism Places, (pp. 1-4). New York: Routledge.

Berelson, B. R. (1971). Content analysis in communication research. New York: Hofner.

Berry, L. L. (1969). The components of department store image: a theoretical and empirical analysis. Journal of Retailing, 45(1), 5-20.

Block, N. (1981). Imagery. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Boivin, Y. (1986). A free response approach to the measurement of brand perceptions. International Journal of Research in Marketing, 3, 11-17.

Boulding, K. (1956). The Image. Ann Arbor, MI : The University of Michigan Press.

Bourne, L. E., Dominowski, R. L., & Loftus, E. F. (1979). Cognitive Process. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Britton, R. J. (1989). The image of the third world in tourism marketing. Annals of Tourism Research, 6 (3), 318-329.

Carmichael, B. (1992). Using conjoint modelling to measure tourist image and analyse ski resort choice. In P. Johnson & B. Thomas (Eds.), Choice and demand in tourism, (pp. 93-106). London: Mansell.

Carney, T. F. (1972). <u>Content analysis: a technique for systematic inference from</u> <u>communication</u>. London: B. T. Bastsford.

Chillders, T. L., & Houston, M. J. (1982). Imagery paradigm for consumer research : alternative perspectives from cognitive psychology. <u>Association in Consumer</u> <u>Research, 10,</u> 59-64.

Chon, K. S. (1990). The role of destination image in tourism: a review and discussion. <u>The Tourist Review, 2,</u> 2-9.

Chon, K. S. (1991). Tourism destination image modification process: marketing implications. <u>Tourism management, 12</u>(1), 68-72.

Cossens, J. (1995). Destination image: another fat marketing world? In Massy University (Ed.), <u>Tourism Down-Under: A Tourism Research Conference,</u> (pp. 579-600). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University.

Crompton, J. L. (1977) <u>A system models of the tourist's destination selection decision</u> <u>process with particular reference to the role of image and perceived constraints</u>. Unplubished doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University.

Crompton, J. L. (1977) <u>A system models of the tourist's destination selection decision</u>

<u>process with particular reference to the role of image and perceived constraints</u>.

Unplubished doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University.

Crompton, J. L., & N.A. Duray (1985). An investigation of the relative efficacy of four

alternative approaches to importance-performance analysis. <u>Journal of the</u>

<u>Academy of Marketing Science,13</u> (Fall), 69-80.

Crouch, I. G. (1992) <u>Marketing international tourism: A meta-analytical study of</u>

<u>demand</u>. Unpublished Ph D. thesis, Monash University.

Dadgostar, B., & Isotalo, R. M. (1992). Factors affecting time spent by near-home

tourists in city destinations. <u>Journal of Travel Research, 31</u>(Fall), 34-39.

Dennett, D. (1981). The nature of images and the introspective trap. In N. Block (Ed.),

<u>Imagery</u> Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Dybka, J. M. (1987). A look at the American traveler: the US pleasure travel market

study. <u>Journal of Travel Research, 25</u>(3), 2-4.

Echtner, C. M., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1991). The meaning and measurement of destination

image. <u>Journal of Tourism Studies, 2</u>(2), 2 - 12.

Echtner, C. M., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1993). The measurement of destination image: an empirical assessment. Journal of Travel Research, 31(spring), 3 - 13.

Ellis, H. C., & Hunt, R. R. (1993). Fundamentals of cognitive psychology. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Communications, Inc.

Engle, J. F., Blackwell, R. D. & Miniard, P. W. (1990). Consumer Behaviour (6 th ed.). New York: Dryden Press

Erickson, G. M., Johanson, J. K., & Chao, P. (1984). Image Variables in Multiattribute Product Evaluations: Country-of-Origin Effects. Journal of Consumer Research, 11, 694-699.

Fakeye, P. C., & Crompton, J. L. (1991). Image differences between prospective, first-time, and repeat visitors to the lower Rio Grande Valley. Journal of Travel Research, 30 (2)(fall), 10-16.

Fesenmaier, D. R., & Johnson, B. (1989). Involvement-based segmentation: implications for travel marketing in Texas. Tourism Management, 10(4), 293-300.

Finke, R. A. (1989). Principles of mental imagery. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Fishbein, M. (1970). The relationship between beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in research. In Research in Consumer Behaviour (pp. 216-235). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). Beliefs, Attitude, Intention and Behaviour: An Introduction to Theory and research. Reading MA: Addison-Wesley.

Fishbein, M. A. (1963). An Investigation of the Relationships Between Beliefs About an Object and the attitude Toward That Object. Human Relations, 16(August), 233-239.

Fiske, S. T. (1982). Schema-Triggered Affect: Applications to Social Perception. In M. S. Clark & S. T. Fiske (Eds.), Affect and Cognition: The 17th Annual Carnegie Symposium on Cognition, (pp. 55-78). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Fiske, S. T., & Pavelchak, M. A. (1986). Category-based versus piecemeal-based affective responses: developments in schema-triggered affect. New York: Guilford Press.

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1984). Social cognition. New York: Random House.

Francescato, D., & Mebane, W. (1973). How citizens view two great cities: Milan and Rome. In R. Downs & D. Stea (Eds.), Image and environment London: Edward Arnold.

Gartner, W., C. (1989). Tourism image: attribute measurement of state tourism products using multidimensional scaling techniques. Journal of Travel Research, 28(2), 16-20.

Gartner, W. C. (1986). Temporal influences on image change. Annals of Tourism Research, 13, 635-644.

Gartner, W. C. (1993). Image formation process. Journal of Travel and Tourism marketing, 2(3), 197-212.

Gartner, W. C., & Hunt, J. D. (1987). An analysis of state image change over a twelve-year period (1971-1983). Journal of Travel Research, 26(Fall), 15-19.

Gensch, D. H. (1978). Image-measurement segmentation. Journal of Marketing Research, 15, 384-394.

Gilbert, D. C. (1991). An examination of the consumer behaviour process related to tourism. In C.P. Cooper (ed.), In Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management, (pp. 78-105). London : Belhaven Press.

Goodall, B. (1988). How tourists choose their holidays: an analytical framework. In B. Goodall (Ed.), Marketing in the tourism industry: the promotion of destination regions, (pp. 1-17). London: Routledge.

Goodrich, J. N. (1978). The relationship between preferences for and perceptions of vacation destinations: application of a choice model. Journal of Travel Research, 16(Fall), 8-13.

Goodstein, R. C. (1993). Category-based applications and extentions in advertising: motivating more extensive ad processing. Journal of Consumer Research, 20(June), 87-99.

Gunn, C. A. (1972). Vacationscape: designing tourist regions. University of Texas:

Gunn, C. A. (1988). Tourism planning, (2nd ed.). New York: Taylor and France.

Haahti, A., & Yavas, U. (1983). Tourists' perceptions of Finland and selected European countries as travel destinations. European Journal of Marketing, 17(2), 34-42.

Haynes, R. M. (1980). Geographical images and mental maps. London: Macmillan

Education.

Hirschman, E. (1981). Retail research and theory. In B. N. Enis & K.J. Roering (Eds.),

Review of Marketing (pp. 120-133). Chicago, IL: American Marketing

Association.

Hunt, J. D. (1971) Image: factor in tourism. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Colorado

State University, Fort Collins.

Hunt, J. D. (1975). Image as a factor in tourism development. Journal of Travel

Research, 13(3), 1-7.

Jesitus, J. (1993). A brighter outlook: international report. Hotel & Motel Management,

208, 19-31.

Kale, S. H., & Weir, K. M. (1986). Marketing thrid world countries to the western

traveler: the case of India. Journal of Travel Research, 25 (Fall), 2-7.

Keaveney, S. M., & Hunt, K. A. (1992). Conceptualisation and operationalisation of

retail store image: a case of rival middle-level theories. Journal of the Academy of

Marketing Science, 20(2), 165-175.

Kent, P. (1990). People, places and priorities: opportunity sets and consumers' holiday choice. In G. Ashworth & B. Goodall (Eds.), <u>Marketing tourism places,</u> (pp. 42-62). New York: Routledge.

Kotler, p., & Barich, H. (1991). A framework for marketing image management. <u>Sloan Management Review, 32</u> (2), 94-104.

Kulik, C. T., & Clark, S. C. (1994). Category-based and feature-based cognitive processes: the role of unfavourable information. <u>Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 24</u>(21), 1891-1918.

Kunkel, J., & Berry, L. L. (1968). A behavioural conception of retail image. <u>Journal of Marketing, 32</u>(October), 21-27.

LaPage, W. F., & Cormier, P. L. (1977). Images of camping-barriers to participation? <u>Journal of Travel Research, 15</u>(spring), 21-25.

Lawson, F., & Baud-Bovy, M. (1977). <u>Tourism and recreation development</u>. London: Architectural Press.

Lee, M. (1994). Category-based versus piecemeal progresses underlying evaluations of restaurants. <u>Psychological Reports, 74</u>, 251-258.

Lindauer, M. S. (1983). Imagery and the arts. In A.Sheikh (Ed.), <u>Current theory, research, and application,</u> (pp. 468-506). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Lue, C. C., Crompton, J. L., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (1993). Conceptualisation of multi-destination pleasure trips. <u>Annals of Tourism Research, 20,</u> 289-301.

Lutz, R. J., & Mackenzie, S. B. (1981). Construction of a diagnostic cognitive response model for use in commercial pretesting. In <u>American Marketing Association,</u> (pp. 5-8). Hot Springs, VA : American Marketing Association.

Lyman, B. (1984). An experiential theory of emotion: a partial outline with implications for research. <u>Journal of Mental Imagery, 8</u>(4), 77-86.

MacInnis, D. J., & Price, L. L. (1987). The role of imagery in information processing: review and extensions. <u>Journal of Consumer Research, 13,</u> 473-491.

Marks, R. B. (1976). Operationalizing the concept of store image. <u>Journal of Retailing, 52</u>(2), 37-46.

Martineau, P. (1957). <u>Motivation in advertising.</u> New York: McGraw-Hill.

Mayo, E. (1975). Tourism and the national parks: a psychographic and attitudinal study. Journal of Travel Research, 14(summer), 14-18.

Mayo, E. J. (1973). Regional image and regional travel behaviour. Proceeding of traval and tourism resarch association, Salt Lake city, 211-217.

Mayo, E. J., & Javis, L. P. (1981). The psychology of leisure travel: effective marketing and selling of travel services. Boston: CBI Publishing, Inc.

Mazursky, D., & Jacoby, J. (1986). Exploring the development of store images. Journal of Retailing, 62(2 summer), 145-165.

McDougall, G. H. G., & Fry, J. N. (1974-75). Combining two methods of image measurement. Journal of Retailing, 50(Winter), 53-61.

Milman, A., & Pizam, A. (1995). The role of awareness and familiarity with a destination: the central Florida case. Journal of Travel Research, 33(3), 21-27.

Mintzberg, H., & Quinn, J. B. (1991). Generic strategies. In H. Mintzberg (Ed.), The strategy process: concepts, contexts, cases, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Mitchell, T. R. & Beach, L. R. (1990). "... Do I love thee ? Let me count ... "Toward

an understanding of intuitive and automatic decision making. Organizational-

Behaviour and Human Decision process, 47 (1), 1-20.

Moutinho, L. (1984). Vacation tourist decision process. The Quarterly Review of

Marketing, 9 (Spring), 8-17.

Moutinho, L. (1987). Consumer behaviour in Tourism. European Journal of Marketing,

21(10), 1-44.

Oliver, R. L., Robertson, T. S., & Mitchell, D. J. (1993). Imaging and Analysing in

Response to New Product Advertising. Journal of Advertising, XXII(4), 35-50.

Olson, J. C., & Muderrisoglu, A. (1978). The Stability of responses obtained by free

elicitation: Implications for measuring attribute salience and memory structure.

Advances in Consumer Research, 6, 269-275.

Paivio, A. (1971). Imagery and verbal processes. New York: Holt.

Paivio, A. (1978). A Dual coding approach to perception and cognition. In H. L. Pick &

E. Saltzman (Eds.), Modes of perceiving and processing. Hillsdale, New Jersey:

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Paivio, A. (1986). Mental representations: a dual coding approach. New York: Oxford University Press.

Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J., & MacInnis, D. J. (1986). Strategic brand concept-image management. Journal of Marketing, 50(October), 135-145.

Pearce, P. L. (1982). Perceived Changes in Holiday Destinations. Annals of Tourism Research, 9, 145-164.

Pearce, P. L. (1988). The ulysses factor: evaluating visitors in tourist settings. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Poiesz, T. B. C. (1989). The image concept: its place in consumer psychology. Journal of Economic Psychology, 10, 457-472.

Porter, M. E. (1985). Competitive advantage: creating and sustaining superior performance. New York: Free Press.

Reilly, D. M. (1990). Free elicitation of descriptive adjectives for tourism image assessment. Journal of Travel Research, 28(4), 21-26.

Reynolds, W. (1965). The role of the consumer in image building. California
Management Review, 7(spring), 69-76.

Richardson, S. L., & Crompton, J. L. (1988). Cultural variations in perceptions of
vacation attributes. Tourism Management, 9 (2), 128-136.

Rollins, M. (1989). Mental imagery: on the limits of cognitive science. New Haven: Yale
University Press.

Ross, F. G. (1991). Tourist destination images of the wet tropical rainforests of North
Queensland. Australian Psychologist, 26(3), 153-157.

Ross, F. G. (1993). Ideal and actual images of backpacker visitors to Northern Australia.
Journal of Travel Research, 32(2), 54-57.

Schmoll, G. A. (1977). Tourism promotion. London: Tourism International Press.

Schroder, H. M., Driver, M. J., & Streufert, S. (1967). Human information processing.
New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Shepard, R. N. (1978). The mental image. American Psychologist, 33(February),
125-137.

Sheth, J. N., Newman, B. I., & Gross, B. L. (1991). Consumption values and market choices. Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co.

Solso, R. L. (1991). Cognitive psychology. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Staats, A. W., & Lohr, J. M. (1979). Images, language, emotions, and personality: social behaviourism's theory. Journal of Mental Imagery, 3, 85-106.

Stabler, M. J. (1988). The image of destination regions: theoretical and empirical aspects. In B. Goodall & G. Ashworth (Eds.), Marketing in the Tourism Industry, (pp.133-161) London: Routledge.

Stringer, P. (1984). Studies in the socio-environmental psychology of tourism. Annals of Tourism Rresearch, 11(1), 147-166.

Stringer, P. F., & Pearce, P. L. (1984). Toward a symbiosis of social psychology and tourism studies. Annals of Tourism Research, 11, 5-17.

Sujan, M. (1985). Consumer knowledge: effects on evaluation strategies mediating consumer judgments. Journal of Consumer Research, 12(June), 31-46.

Sujan, M., & Bettman, J. R. (1989). The effects of brand positioning strategies on consumers' brand and category perceptions: some insights from schema research. Journal of Marketing Research, 26(November), 454-467.

Um, S., & J. L. Crompton. (1992). The roles of perceived inhibitors and facilitates in pleasure travel destination decisions. Journal of Travel Research, 30(3), 18-25.

Weber, R. P. (1990). Basic Content Analysis. Newbury: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Weiers, R. M. (1988). Marketing research. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Woodside, A. G. (1972). A shopping list experiment of beer brand images. Journal of Applied Psychology, 56, 51-53.

Woodside, A. G., & Jacobs, L. W. (1985). Step two in benefit segmentation: learning the benefits realised by major travel markets. Journal of Travel Research, 24 (1), 7-13.

Woodside, A. G., & Lysonski, S. (1989). A general model of traveler destination choice. Journal of Travel Research, 16(winter), 8-14.

World Tourism Organization (1979). Tourist image. Madrid : WTO

Zhang, Y. (1988) <u>American tourists to China: a marketing perspective of perceived tourism quality in China.</u>[CD-ROM]. Abstract Item : A 51/60

Zimmer, M. R., & Golden, L. L. (1988). Impressions of retail stores: a content analysis of consumer images. <u>Journal of Retailing, 64</u>(3), 265-293.

Zinkhan, G. M., & Hirschheim, R. (1992). Truth in marketing theory and research: an alternative perspective. <u>Journal of Marketing, 56</u>(April), 80-88.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Victoria University of Technology
300 Flinders Street   Telephone
Melbourne   (03) 248 1066

PO Box 14428   Facsimile
MMC   (03) 248 1064
Melbourne
Victoria 3000
Australia

City Campus
Research and
Graduate Studies
Faculty of Business

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY of TECHNOLOGY
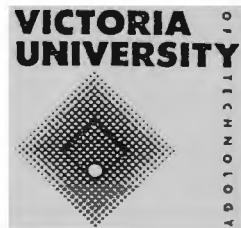
13 April, 1995.

Dear Travel Agency/Tour operator,

I write to confirm that Mr. Nirundon Tapachai is a Doctor of Business Administration student of Research & Graduate Studies, Faculty of Business and is undertaking reasearch on the subject of **"Assessment of Beneficial Images of a Country for Vacation Destination"**.

I shall be obliged if you could answer the questionnaire attached. The material Mr. Tapachai is collecting is for academic research only and will be treated as confidential to the extent you require. If you desire, Mr. Tapachai will provide you with details of any results.

Your sincerely,

Prof. Keith Lansley

TOURIST DESTINATION SURVEY

Dear Travel Agency/Tour Operator. We are conducting a research about beneficial images of tourist destination. Could you please take a few moments to reflect upon the following statement:

Your client has decided to visit recently one of the two countries nominated. List below as many benefits as possible that come to your mind which helped your client decide to visit that country.

U.S.A. :

THAILAND :

Thank you very much for your help.

Nirundon Tapachai-Research Fellow.
Dr.Robert Waryszak-Research Coordinator.
Research & Graduate Studies, Faculty of Business,
Victoria University of Technology
300 Flinder St., Melbourne 3000
Fax: 2481064 Tel: 2481083

APPENDIX B

TOURIST DESTINATION SURVEY

Dear Potential Tourist. We are conducting a research about beneficial images of tourist destination. Could you please take a few moments to reflect upon the following statement:

Imagine that you have decided to visit recently the two countries nominated. List below as many benefits as possible that come to your mind which helped you decide to visit these countries.

U.S.A. :

THAILAND :

Thank you very much for your help.

Nirundon Tapachai-Research Fellow.
Dr.Robert Waryszak-Research Coordinator.
Research & Graduate Studies, Faculty of Business,
Victoria University of Technology
Office No.1094, 300 Flinder St., Melbourne 3000
Fax: 2481046 Tel: 2481083

APPENDIX C

TOURIST DESTINATION SURVEY

Dear Student. We are conducting a research about beneficial images of tourist destination. Could you please take a few moments to reflect upon the following statement:

Imagine that you have decided to visit recently the two countries nominated. List below as many benefits as possible that come to your mind which helped you decide to visit these countries.

U.S.A. :

THAILAND :

Thank you very much for your help.

Nirundon Tapachai-Research Fellow.
Dr.Robert Waryszak-Research Coordinator.
Research & Graduate Studies, Faculty of Business,
Victoria University of Technology
Office No.1094, 300 Flinder St., Melbourne 3000
Fax: 2481046 Tel: 2481083

Appendix D
Classification scheme of the USA

Categories	Definition	Example
fascinating shopping	Text units associated with the satisfaction of local shopping and goods	Great shopping, Variety of products, Cheap cloths, diverse shopping
novel experience	Text units associated with the experience of local culture, way of life, and tradition	New experience, to find out first hand what the American life is like, see and do new things, driving on wrong side of the road and so on
beautiful scenery	Text units associated with the beauty of scenery	Beautiful scenery, scenery of Grand canyon, Rocky mountain
diversity	Text units associated with diversity or variety of people, culture and geography	Can experience different culture and climates within same country, diverse country, variety of whether
Big city	Text units associated with the experience of the big and important cities	Visit big cities e.g. New York, L.A.
Great Food	Text units associated with the satisfaction of food or cooking	Great food, varied food, nice restaurant
Friendiness of local people	Text units associated with hospitality of local people	Friendly people
Good accommodation	Text units associated with the satisfaction of accommodation	Good accommodation, big hotel, nice beach resorts
Beautiful beaches	Text units associated with attractive or beautiful beaches	Beautiful beaches in Florida and Hawaii
Cheap living	Text units associated with living at budget cost during travelling	Cheap living available during touring
Exciting	Text units associated with the feeling of exciting or amazing	Exciting country, anxious to see

Appendix D (cont)
Classification scheme of USA

Categories	Definition	Example
Famous theme parks	Text units associated with any well-known theme parks	Disneyland, Disney World, Universal Studios, amusement parks
No language barrier	Text units associated with the ease of communication with local people	Same language, English speaking
Surfing	Text units associated with the suitable place for surfing	Heap of surf place that have prestige
Fun	Text units associated with the feeling of fun, enjoyment and entertainment	Fun, enjoyable
Night life	Text units associated with the experience of night life	Night life, night club, having exciting night life,
Sport events	Text units associated with the experience or attention in important sport events.	See the Celtics team, the Dallas Cowboy, lots of sport to see
Historical country	Text units associated with the interest of learning about history of the country	Historical country
Civilization	Text units associated with the civilisation	Centre of cilvilisation in modern world
Skiing	Text units associated with the suitable place for skiing	Skiing, skiing at Colorado
Movie stars	Text units associated with seeing American movies stars	See movie stars, meet Brad Pitt
Beautiful countryside	Text units associated with the attractive or beautiful countryside	Beautiful countryside, countryside in different states
Visit family & friend	Text units associated with the desire of visiting family and friend in USA	Visit my relatives and my dad home town, visiting friends
Cheap ticket	Text units associated with perceived low cost of airfare	Cheap airfare, good price airfare
Ethnic groups	Text units associated with the experience of ethnic group of people	Variety of ethnic people

Appendix D (cont)
Classification scheme of USA

Categories	Definition	Example
Popularity	Text units associated with the popularity of the USA.	Popularity place, many friends went there and boast about it
Dynamic	Text units associated with the feeling of dynamic or fast life	Life in fast lane, dynamic society , hyperactive country
Modern	Text units associated with the feeling of modernisation	Modern country, modern lifestyle,
Gambling	Text units associated with gambling and gambling places	Casino, gambling at Las Vegas
Safe	Text units associated with the perception of travel safety	Safe tourist places
Freedom	Text units associated with the freedom	Freedom, great land of freedom is something to see
Renowned city landmarks	Text units associated with famous or renowned city landmarks	See famous landmark such Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building, Golden Gate
Nice climate	Text units associated with good climate	Nice climate
Big Building	Text units associated with big or tall building	See big buildings, skyscrapers
Similar to Australia	Text units associated with the similarity of the USA. and Australia	Many things similar to Australia
Ease of getting there	Text units associated with convenience of getting the USA.	Availability of flights, frequency of airline flights to
Good tourism information	Text units associated with good tourist information	Good tourist information, lots of tourist information
good stopover	Text units associated with being the place where can be stopovered to other countries	Can stopover on the way to other countries, Stopover to other countries

Appendix D (cont)
Classification scheme of USA

Categories	Definition	Example
relatively good and cheap local transport	Text units associated with good and cheap lcal transport	Cheap and good transport, railpass, convenience transport among states, ease of domestic travel,
High technology country	Text units associated with high technology	High level of technology, science
variety of things to do and do	Text units associated with variety	Variety of things to see and do, many activities
good package tour	Text units associated with good package tour	Good hotel/ airpasses available, good package tour
National park	Text units associated with famous national parks	Famous national parks, yellow stone

Appendix E
Classification scheme of Thailand

Categories	Definition	Example
Exotic food	Text units associated with satisfaction of Thai foods or Thai cooking	Nice food, exotic food
Great cheap shopping	Text units associated with cheap shopping or cheap goods	Great for shopping, cheap clothes
Culture experience	Text units associated with the interest of culture, way of life, and tradition experience	Learn new culture, experience way of thinking
Climate experience	Text units associated with the interest of local climate experience	Experience tropical weather, humidity
Historical site	Text units associated with historical site or setting	See historical sites, interesting historical places
Friendly people	Text units associated with friendliness of local people	Hospitable people, friendly local people
Beautiful beaches	Text units associated with beautiful local beaches	Beautiful beaches, attractive beaches, tropical beaches
Islands	Text units associated with local islands	Tropical islands, beautiful islands
Relax	Text units associated with the feeling of relaxation	Relaxation, relaxed life style, relaxing atmosphere
Calm	Text units associated with the feeling of clam	Calm, calm place
Beautiful scenery	Text units associated with the beauty of scenery	Beautiful scenery, fantastic scenery, beautiful scene of Choa Praya river
Cheap travel	Text units associated with low cost of living during travelling	Cheap to tour to Thailand, low travel cost
Buddhism	Text units associated with Buddhism religion	See Buddhist country, Buddhist temples
Surfing	Text units associated with the suitable place for surfing	Place for surfing, surfing

Appendix E (cont)
Classification scheme of Thailand

Categories	Definition	Example
language challenge	Text units associated with the needs of local language experience	Different language, challenge of non-English language
beautiful landscape	Text units associated with	Beautiful landscape
unspoiled countryside	Text units associated with the natural or unspoiled of country side	untouched countryside, unspoiled countryside
Local market	Text units associated with the experience of local market	Local market, see local market view
Different mode of transportation	Text units associated with the experience of local mode of transportation	Experience different mode of transportation, taking long tail boat
Trekking	Text units associated with the suitable place for trekking	Trekking in Northern Thailand, trek amongst hill tribe people
Close proximity to Australia	Text units associated with the short distance of traveling from Australia	Close to Australia, ease of getting there
Good accommodation	Text units associated with the good place for stay	Good accommodation, plenty of splendid hotels
Night life	Text units associated with the experience of night life	night life in Bangkok, night time sightseeing
Hill tribe people	Text units associated with the experience of ethnic people	Hill tribe people, see Karen people
Different animals	Text units associated with the experience of local animals	Different animals, native animals
Flower and vegetables	Text units associated with the experience of local flowers and vegetables	Native flower, local vegetables
Cheap fight	Text units associated with the low price of airfares	Low price air fares, cheap air fare
history interest	Text units associated with the interest of Thailand history	Learning Thai history
good stopover	Text units associated with stopover destination	Good stopover to Europe, fit travel around the world

Appendix E (cont)
Classification scheme of Thailand

Categories	Definition	Example
variety of destination	Text units associated with variety of tourist destination	Wide range of tourist attractions
suitable place for all ages and status	Text units associated with being the place suit all age and status	Suitable place for all ages and status, place for all ages
adventurous	Text units associated with the feeling of adventurous to travel to Thailand	Adventurous, adventure place
ease of getting there	Text units associated with the convenience of getting Thailand	Availability of flights, many airlines to Thailand
snorkeling/diving/swimming	Text units associated with the need to snorkel in Thailand	Snorkelling, diving, swimming at Phi Phi island
local sport	Text units associated with local sport	Thai boxing, canned ball
good value of money	Text units associated with the feeling of good value of money	Good value of money
handicraft	Text units associated with local handicraft	Local handicraft, hand-made products
fairy safe	Text units associated with the feeling of safety during travelling	Fairy safe, relatively safe place
accessibility to nieghbor countries	Text units associated with accessibility to other close countries	Accessibility, ease of getting Vietnam, Singapore etc.

Appendix F

Open-ended questions developed for Thailand

Dear student. We are conducting research about beneficial images of tourist destinations. Imagine that you have recently decided to visit Thailand. Below are five (5) statements about this country. In spaces provided, write WHY you AGREE, or PARTIALLY AGREE, or DISAGREE with EACH statement. Please, elaborate on your reasons in detail.

1. Thailand is generally a vacation destination, and I would visit it for fascinating cheap shopping, exotic food, friendliness of local people, and the variety of great tourist attractions including historical sites, tropical beaches, unspoiled countryside, and beautiful scenery.

2. Thailand is generally a vacation destination , and I would visit it because it caters for all Australian tourists.

3. Thailand is generally a vacation destination and I would visit it because I have a feeling about this country being relaxed and calm.

4. Thailand is generally a vacation destination I would visit it, to enhance knowledge about and experience different culture, and different climate.

5. Thailand is generally a vacation destination I would visit it because of its proximity to Australia, cheap cost of traveling, and accessibility to other neighbouring countries.

Thank you very much for your assistance and co-operation.

Nirundon Tapachai, Research Fellow, VUT,
Dr. Robert Waryszak, Research Coordinator, VUT, Phone: 96884625

Appendix G

Open-ended questions developed for the USA

Dear student. We are conducting research about beneficial images of tourist destinations. Imagine that you have recently decided to visit the USA . Below are five (5) statements about this country. In spaces provided, write WHY you AGREE, or PARTIALLY AGREE, or DISAGREE with EACH statement. Please, elaborate on your reasons in detail.

1. The USA is generally a vacation destination, and I would visit it for fascinating shopping, great food, and the variety of great tourist attractions including famous theme parks, renown city landmarks, big cities, and beautiful scenery.

2. The USA is generally a vacation destination, and I would visit it because of its popularity in my age group.

3. The USA is generally a vacation destination and I would visit it because I have a feeling about this country being diverse, fun, dynamic, and modern.

4. The USA is generally a vacation destination I would visit it, to have novel experiences, and achieve satisfaction from a variety of things which I want to see and do.

5. The USA is generally a vacation destination I would visit it because there are no language barriers, relatively good and cheap transport, and the opportunity to see special sporting events

Thank you very much for your assistance and co-operation.

Nirundon Tapachai, Research Fellow, VUT,
Dr. Robert Waryszak, Research Coordinator, VUT, Phone: 96884625

APPENDIX H

Dear student. We are conducting research about beneficial images of tourist destinations. Imagine that you have recently decided to visit Thailand. Below are five (5) statements about this country. In spaces provided, write **WHY** you **AGREE/ PARTIALLY AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with **EACH** statement. **Please, elaborate on your reasons in detail.**

1. People sometimes would visit a destination due to its tourist product. Thailand is generally a vacation destination I would visit because it would provide me with a fascinating cheap shopping, exotic food, friendly local people, and a variety of great tourist attractions including historical sites, tropical beaches, unspoiled countryside, and beautiful scenery.

2. Someone would visit a destination because they think it represents their own age and social status. Thailand is generally a vacation destination I would visit because it is suitable for all ages and status of Australian tourists.

3. People sometimes would visit a destination for personal or emotional reasons. Thailand is generally a vaction destination I would visit because I would get a feeling about this country as being relaxed and calm.

PLEASE TURN OVER

4. Some people would visit a destination because they are curious about it. Thailand is generally a vacation destination I would visit to enhance knowledge about and experience different culture and different climate.

5. Certain conditions motivate people to visit a destination. Thailand is generally a vacation destination I would visit because of its proximity to Australia, cheap travel, and accessibility to other neighbouring countries.

6. Have you ever visited Thailand ?   yes ☐   no ☐
7. Is your knowledge about Thailand: none ☐   fair ☐   good ☐
                                      excellent ☐
8. Your age _____
9. Are you: Male ☐   female ☐
10. What course are you doing ? _____

Thank you very much for your assistance and co-operation.

Nirundon Tapachai, Research Fellow, VUT,
Dr. Robert Waryszak, Research Coordinator, VUT, Phone: 96884625

PLEASE TURN OVER

APPENDIX I

TOURIST DESTINATION SURVEY TO U.S.A

Dear student. We are conducting research about beneficial images of tourist destinations. Imagine that you have recently decided to visit the U.S.A. . Below are five (5) statements about this country. In spaces provided, write **WHY** you **AGREE/PARTIALLY AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with **EACH** statement. **Please, elaborate on your reasons in detail.**

1. People sometimes would visit a destination due to its tourist product. U.S.A. is generally a vacation destination I would visit because it would provide me with a fascinating shopping, great food, and a variety of great tourist attractions including famous theme parks, renown city landmarks, big cities, and beautiful scenery.

2. Someone may visit a destination because they think it represents their own age and social status. U.S.A. is generally a vacation destinaion I would visit because of its popularity in my age group

3. Poeple sometimes would visit a destination for personal or emotional reasons. The U.S.A. is generally a vacation destination I would visit because I would get a feeling about this country as being diverse, fun, dynamic, and modern

PLEASE TURN OVER

4. Some people would visit a destination because they are curious about it. U.S.A. is generally a vacation destination I would visit because I would get novel experience and satisfaction from a variety of things which I want to see and do.

5. Certain conditions motivate people to visit a destination. U.S.A. is generally a vacation destination I would visit because of no language barriers, relatively good and cheap local transport, and a chance to see special sporting events.

6. Have you ever visited the U.S.A.?   yes ☐   no ☐
7. Is your knowledge about U.S.A.   none ☐   fair ☐   good ☐
                                      excellent ☐
8. Your age _____
9. Are you: Male ☐   female ☐
10. What course are you doing? _____

Thank you very much for your assistance and co-operation.

Nirundon Tapachai, Research Fellow, VUT,
Dr. Robert Waryszak, Research Coordinator, VUT, Phone: 96884625

PLEASE TURN OVER

APPENDIX J
Coding Sheet of the USA

N	shop	food	park	lmar	city	scen	popu	div	fun	dyna	mod	novel	varie	lang	tran	spor
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
.																
.																
.																
.																
.																
.																
116																

Legends: USA

shop = fascinating shopping
food = greatfood
park = famous theme parks
lmar = renown city landmarks
city = big cities
scen = beautiful scenery
popu =popularity
div = diverse
fun = fun
dyna = dynamic
mod = modern
novel = novel experience
varie = variety of things to do and to see
lang = no language barriers
tran = cheap and good local transport
spor = special sporting events

APPENDIX K
Coding Sheet of Thailand

N	shop	food	peop	hsite	beac	cour	scen	ages	relax	calm	cult	clima	prox	chea	acc
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
.															
.															
.															
.															
.															
.															
131															

Legends: Thailand

shop = fascinating cheap shopping
food = exotic food
peop = friendly local people
hsite = historical sites
beac = tropical beaches
cour = unspoiled countryside
scen = beautiful scenery
ages = suitable for all ages and status
relax =relaxation
calm = calm
cult = cultural experience
clima = climate experience
prox = proximity to Australia
chea = cheap travel
acc = accessibility to other neighbouring countries
spor = special sporting events

Appendix L

Interjudge agreement in each characteristic of Thailand

	Interjudge Agreement (%)	
	1/3	2/3
Functional		
Fascinating cheap shopping	88.3	97.2
exotic food	95.0	97.2
friendly people	91.7	97.2
historical sites	91.7	97.2
tropical beaches	91.7	97.2
unspoiled countryside	91.7	97.2
beautiful scenery	93.3	97.2
Social		
suitable for all people	83.3	98.6
Emotional		
relaxation	93.3	95.8
calm	91.7	95.8
epistemic		
different culture	93.3	95.8
different climate	96.7	97.2
conditional		
proximity to Australia	93.3	94.4
cheap travel	93.3	90.1
accessibility to other countries	93.3	93.0
average	92.1	96.1
Total average	**94.1**	

Note: 1/3 = Interjudge Agreement between Judge 1 and Judge 3
2/3 = Interjudge Agreement between Judge 2 and Judge 3

Appendix M
Interjudge agreement in each characteristic of USA

	Interjudge Agreement (%)	
	1/3	2/3
Functional		
fascinating shopping	98.3	94.6
great food	95.0	94.6
famous theme parks	98.3	92.9
renown city landmarks	96.7	92.9
big cities	98.3	96.4
beautiful scenery	93.3	94.6
Social		
popularity	93.3	98.2
Emotional		
diverse	93.3	92.9
fun	91.7	92.9
dynamic	91.7	91.1
modern	95.0	89.3
Epistemic		
novel experience	95.0	100.0
variety of things	95.0	100.0
Conditional		
no language barrier	95.0	96.4
good and cheap local transport	88.3	96.4
special sporting events	88.3	96.4
average	94.2	95.0
Total average	**94.6**	

Note: 1/3 = Interjudge Agreement between Judge 1 and Judge 3
2/3 = Interjudge Agreement between Judge 2 and Judge 3

APPENDIX N

Frequency Analysis of Beneficial Image Characteristics (Thailand)

	N	
	Valid	Missing
ACCESS	131	0
ALLAGE	131	0
BEACH	131	0
CALM	131	0
CHEAPTRA	131	0
CLIMATE	131	0
COUNTRY	131	0
CULTURE	131	0
FOOD	131	0
HISSITE	131	0
PEOPLE	131	0
PROXIMIT	131	0
RELAX	131	0
SCENERY	131	0
SHOP	131	0

ACCESS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	91	69.5	69.5	69.5
	2.00	40	30.5	30.5	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

ALLAGE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	38	29.0	29.0	29.0
	2.00	93	71.0	71.0	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

BEACH

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	104	79.4	79.4	79.4
	2.00	27	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

CALM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	44	33.6	33.6	33.6
	2.00	87	66.4	66.4	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

CHEAPTRA

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	93	71.0	71.0	71.0
	2.00	38	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

CLIMATE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	100	76.3	76.3	76.3
	2.00	31	23.7	23.7	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

COUNTRY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	95	72.5	72.5	72.5
	2.00	36	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

CULTURE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	105	80.2	80.2	80.2
	2.00	26	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

FOOD

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	104	79.4	79.4	79.4
	2.00	27	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

HISSITE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	103	78.6	78.6	78.6
	2.00	28	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

PEOPLE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	103	78.6	78.6	78.6
	2.00	28	21.4	21.4	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

PROXIMIT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	91	69.5	69.5	69.5
	2.00	40	30.5	30.5	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

RELAX

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	44	33.6	33.6	33.6
	2.00	87	66.4	66.4	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

SCENERY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	97	74.0	74.0	74.0
	2.00	34	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

SHOP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	110	84.0	84.0	84.0
	2.00	21	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	131	100.0	100.0	
Total		131	100.0		

Frequency Analysis of Beneficial Image Characteristics (USA)

Statistics

	N	
	Valid	Missing
CITIES	116	0
DIVERSE	116	0
DYNAMIC	116	0
FOOD	116	0
FUN	116	0
LANDMARK	116	0
MODERN	116	0
NOVEL	116	0
PARK	116	0
POPULAR	116	0
SCENERY	116	0
SHOP	116	0
SPORTS	116	0
TRANSPRT	116	0
VARIETY	116	0

CITIES

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	104	89.7	89.7	89.7
	2.00	12	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

DIVERSE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	70	60.3	60.3	60.3
	2.00	46	39.7	39.7	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

DYNAMIC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	73	62.9	62.9	62.9
	2.00	43	37.1	37.1	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

FOOD

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	91	78.4	78.4	78.4
	2.00	25	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

FUN

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	76	65.5	65.5	65.5
	2.00	40	34.5	34.5	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

LANDMARK

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	99	85.3	85.3	85.3
	2.00	17	14.7	14.7	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

MODERN

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	75	64.7	64.7	64.7
	2.00	41	35.3	35.3	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

NOVEL

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	87	75.0	75.0	75.0
	2.00	29	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

PARK

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	106	91.4	91.4	91.4
	2.00	10	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

POPULAR

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	38	32.8	32.8	32.8
	2.00	78	67.2	67.2	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

SCENERY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	102	87.9	87.9	87.9
	2.00	14	12.1	12.1	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

SHOP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	94	81.0	81.0	81.0
	2.00	22	19.0	19.0	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

SPORTS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	70	60.3	60.3	60.3
	2.00	46	39.7	39.7	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

TRANSPRT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	69	59.5	59.5	59.5
	2.00	47	40.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		

VARIETY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	93	80.2	80.2	80.2
	2.00	23	19.8	19.8	100.0
	Total	116	100.0	100.0	
Total		116	100.0		