

# Examining Belief Attitude and Effectiveness Relations on Banner Advertising of Thai Online Travel Agencies

การศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความเชื่อ ทศนคติ และประสิทธิผลของโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ของธุรกิจตัวแทนจำหน่ายผลิตภัณฑ์ท่องเที่ยวประเภทออนไลน์ของไทย

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## Abstract

This empirical research examined the effects of Thai online travel agencies' banner advertising belief factors on inbound tourists' attitude toward banner advertising and the effects of inbound tourists' attitude toward banner advertising on banner advertising effectiveness. The study focused on inbound tourists. The convenience sampling technique was applied. This study employed a questionnaire survey to collect data. The results of structural equation modeling could partially confirm the belief-attitude-effectiveness relations for Thai online travel agencies' banner advertising from the perspective on inbound tourists. The empirical results from this study indicated that the features and contents of banner advertising in terms of hedonic/pleasure, credibility, social role and image, good for economy and interactivity could lead to favorable attitude toward banner advertising while the irritation feature of banner advertising could create unfavorable attitude toward banner advertising. Furthermore, favorable attitude toward banner advertising was likely to increase effectiveness of banner advertising. The empirical study provided evidence of the direct relationships between attitude toward banner advertising and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.74$ ) and evidence of banner advertising effectiveness and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.70$ ). This study suggested guidelines to develop banner advertising for effective online advertising tasks to drive business survival in the international tourism marketplace.

**Keywords:** banner advertising, belief factors, Thai travel agencies, inbound tourists

**Paper type:** Research

## บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาผลกระทบของปัจจัยความเชื่อในการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ของธุรกิจตัวแทนจำหน่ายผลิตภัณฑ์ท่องเที่ยวประเภทออนไลน์ของไทยที่มีต่อทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวเกี่ยวกับการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ และศึกษาผลกระทบของทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวเกี่ยวกับการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ที่มีต่อประสิทธิภาพของการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่นำมาใช้ในการศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้คือนักท่องเที่ยว โดยใช้เทคนิคการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบพิจารณาตามสะดวก เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลได้แก่แบบสอบถาม ผลการวิเคราะห์โมเดลสมการโครงสร้างยืนยันความสัมพันธ์ระหว่าง ความเชื่อ-ทัศนคติ-ประสิทธิผล ของการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ของธุรกิจตัวแทนจำหน่ายผลิตภัณฑ์ท่องเที่ยวประเภทออนไลน์ของไทยในมุมมองของนักท่องเที่ยว ผลการศึกษาพบว่ามีลักษณะและเนื้อหาของโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ในแง่ของความเพลิดเพลิน/บันเทิง ความน่าเชื่อถือ การสะท้อนบทบาทและภาพลักษณ์



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ทางสังคม ความคุ้มค่า และปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างแบนเนอร์โฆษณาและนักท่องเที่ยว ส่งผลต่อทัศนคติในเชิงบวกที่มีต่อการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ ในขณะที่โฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ที่มีลักษณะและเนื้อหาที่สร้างความรำคาญ จะส่งผลต่อทัศนคติในเชิงลบ นอกจากนี้ ทัศนคติในเชิงบวกมีแนวโน้มที่จะเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพของการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ได้ ผลการศึกษายังแสดงให้เห็นถึงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวเข้าที่มีต่อการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์และแนวโน้มในการซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ (ค่าสัมประสิทธิ์ = 0.74) และความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประสิทธิผลของการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์กับแนวโน้มในการซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ (ค่าสัมประสิทธิ์ = 0.70) การศึกษาครั้งนี้ ได้นำเสนอแนวทางในการพัฒนารูปแบบการโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์เพื่อเป็นแนวทางในการผลิตโฆษณาออนไลน์ที่มีประสิทธิภาพ ทั้งนี้เพื่อให้ธุรกิจตัวแทนจำหน่ายผลิตภัณฑ์ท่องเที่ยวของไทยขับเคลื่อนไปได้ และอยู่รอดในตลาดการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างประเทศ

**คำสำคัญ:** การโฆษณาทางแบนเนอร์ ปัจจัยความเชื่อ ธุรกิจตัวแทนจำหน่ายผลิตภัณฑ์การท่องเที่ยวของไทย นักท่องเที่ยวเข้า

## 1. Introduction

Internet advertising has played an important role on tourism and travel businesses. It becomes a new communication channel that improving competitiveness and performance of tourism businesses (Law, Leung & Wong, 2004). The emergence of new tourism services and products, couple with a rapid increase in tourism demand has driven the adoption of internet advertising as an electronic intermediary (Law et al., 2004). The widespread use of internet has increased the ability of consumers to access to information (Law et al., 2004).

Internet advertising is regarded as one of influential information sources for prospective and current visitors (Burke & Gitelson, 1990; Gretzel, Yuan, & Fesenmaier, 2000; Kim, Hwang, & Fesenmaier, 2005). It can provide greater product and service information (Chaiprasit, Jariangprasert, Chomphunut, Naparat & Jaturapatraporn, 2011; Doolin & Cooper, 2002) as well as potential to be tourism business's main communication tool (Kim, Kim & Han, 2007; Murphy and Tan, 2003). Internet advertising also has significantly impact on travel and purchase behavior (Buhalis & Licata, 2002; Tierney, 2000).

Regarding Schlosser et al. (1999), there are many types of internet advertising formats, among those formats, the banner advertising is the one that has been mostly used and has been the second order predominant form of internet advertising after 'Search' with a twenty one percent of online revenue in 2011 (Internet Advertising Bureau, 2012). Banner advertising is believed to have a key advantage over other internet advertising formats that is it does not meddle with consumers' surfer activity and it has a function to arouse consumers' interest and purchase intention (Edward, Li & Lee, 2002). Recently, there are a growing number of people who seek tourism products online, thus banner advertising has more significant role in

the product communication. It can create tourist's awareness of tourism products and services and effectively promotes purchase intention (Sathish, Kuma & Bharat, 2011).

The prior literatures (e.g., Choi & Rifon, 2002; Wu, Wei & Chen, 2008; Yoo, Kim & Stout, 2004) indicate that consumers' responses are related to their attitude toward the banner advertising and the way they respond to products and services is somewhat a predictor of banner advertising effectiveness (e.g., Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002; Palanisamy, 2004; Wolin et al. 2002; Wu et al., 2008; Yoo et al., 2004). Thus, while research and practice have identified the promise and importance of banner advertising, little is known about the impact of banner advertising in Thai online travel agency context as the literature has mainly focused on advertising in general (Kamal & Chu 2012; Sun & Wang 2010; Wang & Sun 2010).

Even though, numerous studies on marketing activities have also been conducted in hospitality and tourism contexts, but there have been deficient in tourism internet advertising (Goldsmith & Pan, 2008; Gretzel & Sirakaya-Turk, 2007; Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007; Law & Bai, 2008; Law, Qi & Buhalis, 2010; Lee, Ku & Kim, 2007; Litvin, Park, Fu, Lai & Law, 2010; Vrana & Zafirooulos, 2006; Wang, Chou, Su & Tsai, 2007; Wen, 2009). In addition, published researches available on inbound tourists' evaluation of tourism businesses' banner advertising are still minimal and rarely found in Thailand context.

The present study attempts to investigate inbound tourists' beliefs, attitudes and their behavior responses toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies, especially when the behavior responses come to the indication of banner advertising effectiveness. Therefore, modeling the relationships among beliefs about, attitudes and behaviors towards banner advertising, through the

results of the current study, could help tourism advertisers design efficient banner advertising that reach inbound tourists more effectively in the online travel agencies context.

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, the study aims to investigate attitudes of inbound tourists toward banner advertising of Thai travel agencies basing on the seven belief factors (i.e., product information belief, hedonic/pleasure belief, credibility belief, social role and image belief, good for economy belief, irritation belief, and interactivity belief). Second, it aims to substantiate the relationship between attitudes of tourists toward banner advertising and its effectiveness. Lastly, the uppermost objective of this study is to propose the guidelines to develop effective banner advertising for Thai online travel agencies.

This study develops and validates scales used to measure beliefs and attitudes towards banner advertising and effectiveness of banner advertising which are based mainly on existing scales commonly used in advertising and internet advertising literatures, and test a proposed model. This model is proposed on the basis of belief-based measurement and unique characteristics of tourism products. Specifically, the research is conducted by using 'Tourism Business's Banner Advertising Belief Model', and then to investigate Thai online travel agencies' banner advertising effectiveness in relation to inbound tourists' attitudes.

## 2. Literature review and hypotheses

### 2.1 Banner advertising

Banner advertising is a type of online advertising in which banners are placed on third-party websites, when clicked; the banner redirects the user to the advertiser's website where they can learn more about a particular product or service (O'Connor & Galvin, 2001; Rae & Brennan, 1998). Banner advertising typically appears as a rectangular-shaped box, which is composed of text and graphic image either static or animated and located at the top, side, or bottom of a webpage (Burke et al., 2005; Hoffman & Novak, 1997;). To be more specific, banner advertising in this study refers to a typically rectangular advertisement placed on a third-party website. The study focuses on the banner advertising of Thai online travel

agencies that is designed to attract inbound tourists

### 2.2 Advertising of tourism products and services

The unique characteristic of tourism products limits the use of marketing communication tools, especially the use of online marketing tools (Dionyssopoulou & Stafylakis, 2007; Werther & Klein; 1999). The complexity of marketing tourism products online occurs because of many reasons (Henriksson, 2005; Martin, 2004; Werther & Klein, 1999).

The intangibility of tourism products creates uncertainty and perceived risk in tourist's mind, and decreases the ability of tourists to distinguish the differences between tourism suppliers (Hoffman & Bateson, 2002) and increases the difficulty for tourists to grasp advertising messages (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). Therefore, the offered tourism products must be apparent in the advertising message so that they can overcome some of the challenges created by intangibility (Cutler & Javalgi, 1993; George & Berry, 1981; Hill & Gandhi, 1992; Legg & Baker, 1987; Mortimer, 2000; Murray & Schlacter, 1990).

Tourism product is a bundle of activities, services and benefits are served by a number of providers (e.g., transport, accommodation, restaurant, and activities). These providers vary greatly in terms of quality and price, and mistake can happen in actual time (Yilmaz & Bitziti, 2005). Thus, it is difficult to market tourism products online, which will perfectly meet tourist's need and expectation.

In addition, tourism product is an experience good. Marketing a tourism product online to present what kind of experience a tourist will receive is quite challenging. Lastly, the heterogeneity characteristic of tourism products that involves a mixture of varied business services also has influence on the information exchange and affects the use of online marketing tools in the tourism industry.

### 2.3 Belief about banner advertising

Belief factors used for examining inbound tourists' attitude toward Thai online travel agencies' banner advertisements were proposed in relevant to the intrinsic characteristics of tourism products. Belief factors included;

#### 2.3.1 Product information

Because of the intangibility of tourism products that creates consumer's perception of risk and uncertainty (Hugstad, Taylor & Bruce, 1987; Zeithaml, 1981), tourists



usually collect a large amount of information to form their expectations before purchasing a tourism product. More information flow and communication effort about the products are required in order to reach efficient purchase decision for tourism products (Hugstad, Taylor & Bruce, 1987; Zeithaml, 1981). Berry and Clark (1986) propose the visualization method of advertising to help tourism products being more tangible to consumers. Visualization strategy can create live picture of services, its qualities, and utilities, which help customers to recognize its benefits and grasp the tangible cue. In this study, product information belief is defined as individual's beliefs about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies whether it is a good source of tourism product or service information (Wang & Sun, 2010) and it provides useful information for inbound tourists (Bendixen, 1993; Ducoffe, 1996; Kim et al., 2010).

### 2.3.2 Hedonic/pleasure

Hedonic/pleasure is individual's beliefs about banner advertising in terms of being fun, entertaining and pleasant (Wang et al., 2009), and providing amusing and pleasant experience through the use of advertising (Eighmey & McCord, 1998). Hedonic can serve as an assessment of entertainment value of an advertisement (Raman & Leekenby, 1998). Value of advertising products and services can be increased if the advertising contains messages and images that embedded with enjoyable, attractive color or specific language communication (Haghirian et al., 2005). Hedonic/pleasure can strengthen the effectiveness of advertising message since it can strongly impress on the memory of people and influence their behavior (MacInnis & Price, 1998; Werner, 1998). Following prior studies, this study defines hedonic/pleasure belief as the belief that viewing banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is fun, entertaining and pleasant (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Pollay & Mittal, 1993; Wang et al., 2009), providing an amusing and pleasant experience (Eighmey & McCord, 1998), as well as applying animated and visualized advertising contents (Korgaonkar et al., 2001).

### 2.3.3 Credibility

In the context of tourism products, consumer's perception of risk and uncertainty in purchasing a tourism product increases the importance of credibility (Fisk, Grove, & John, 2000), particularly in the situation that consumers

must make decisions or take action under the condition of uncertain information (Okazaki, 2007). Generally, acquiring information is a risk reduction strategy for consumers. The more reliable or credible the information is, the lower the perceived risk will be (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998). Following prior studies (e.g., Adler & Rodman, 2000; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Meyer, 1988; Newhagen & Nass, 1989; O'Keefe, 1990), the term credibility in this study is defined as the beliefs of inbound tourists that banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is trustworthy, truthful, reliable and accurate.

### 2.3.4 Social role and image

Social role and image reflects the beliefs that advertising influences people's lifestyle and formation of social status and image (Wang & Sun, 2009). By associating the product with some desirable image, advertising offers people the opportunity to satisfy those psychic or symbolic wants and needs (Purmal et al., 2013).

Advertising is one of the most influence sources of symbolic meaning (Grunert, 1986; Lannon & Cooper, 1983; Mick & Buhl, 1992; Sherry, 1987). Because consumption of tourism does not occur regularly, Hummon (1988) suggests that advertising of tourism products should provide symbolic representation for status display that is not normally found in everyday life. In many cases, tourists travel to gain status recognition from others, and thus prefer destinations and services that match their self-image (Dann, 1977). Social role and image also refers to the ability of advertising to communicate believable social integration, image and role to the audience (Zinkhan & Hong, 1991).

In this study, social role and image is the belief of an inbound tourist that banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies conveys messages that are consistent with their social status and provides social and lifestyle messages (Korgaonkar et al., 2001) that represent his/her self-identity (Burns, 2003; Wang & Sun, 2009).

### 2.3.5 Good for economy

Good for economy is related to the economic effects of advertising for consumers. Basing on the economics of information theory of Stigler (1961) and Telser (1964), and the study of Korganonkar et al. (1997), reliability of information would reduce the searching costs of

consumers. The economic benefit of advertising is therefore related to the ability of the advertisers to provide accurate and reliable information about their products and services (Petrovici et al., 2007). Internet advertising can enhance purchasing efficiency by facilitating consumers' access to product information more quickly with less time, effort, and monetary cost for information collection (Moon, 2004).

Good for economy in this research is defined as the belief that an inbound tourist can economically benefit from banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies in terms of providing accurate and reliable product information (Petrovici et al., 2007) that is value for time (Korgaonkar et al., 1997; Wolin et al., 2002) and money (Bharawaj et al., 1993; Chiplin & Sturgess, 1981; Eskin & Baron, 1977; Nelson, 1974).

### 2.3.6 Irritation

The intrusive and complex tactics advertisers employed when grasping consumers' attention can be annoying (Duncoffe, 1996; Rettie, Robinson & Jenner, 2003; Sandage & Leckenby, 1980; Zhang 2000). In general, users are frustrated by advertisements that create unwanted interruption and require more attention and effort (Chan et al., 2004). In most cases, consumers have no control over receiving unwanted advertisements information. The design of banner advertising with animation, music or video can also distract users from page content or even make them close the website after all. This lack of control can generate the sense of irritation (Mccoy et al., 2008) and has been found to negatively affect consumers' attitudes toward the advertising (Rettie, 2001). This negative attitude can also affect brand perceptions (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) and lead to advertising avoidance (Abernethy, 1991).

In this study, irritation is defined as an undesirable perception on banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies, which contributes to annoyance, offensive or disturbance to tourists while surfing webpages (Aaker & Bruzzone 1985; De Pelsmacker & Van den Bergh, 1998).

### 2.3.7 Interactivity

Interactivity is defined as "the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time" (Steuer, 1992), while Bezjian-Avery et al. (1998) conceptualize interactivity as the ability to control information. Cho and Leckenby (1999)

define interactivity in terms of advertising as "the degree to which a person actively engages in advertising processing by interacting with advertising messages and advertisers." Novak et al. (2000) define interactivity as the interaction between a particular site and its users.

Highly interactive advertisements give consumers a considerable level of control and choice to help shape their online experience. More specifically, animated banner advertising, which allow users to modify features as well as provide quick response, are perceived as high interactivity (Cho & Leckenby, 1999; Li & Bukovac, 1999). Following Cho and Leckenby (1999), this study defines interactivity as "the degree to which a person actively engages in advertising processing by interacting with advertising messages and advertisers." More specifically, it is the degree to which a tourist engages in banner advertising by interacting with advertising messages of Thai online travel agencies in terms of user control (Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998; McMillan & Hwang, 2002) and speed of response (McMillan & Hwang, 2002).

## 2.4 Relationship between belief and attitude toward banner advertising

Extant researches (e.g., Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Anderson, 1972; Pally & Mittal, 1993; Previt & Forrest, 1998) have found a close link between beliefs and attitudes. Any change in one belief is likely to produce a change in attitude. While belief is the perception that a person has about other people, objects and issues (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), attitude is summative evaluation of particular objects (Pollay & Mittal, 1993).

Belief factors are commonly used as a measurement of attitude toward advertising (e.g., Kak, 1995; Ramaprasad, 2001; Wang & Sun, 2010; Wolin, Korgaonkar, & Lund, 2002; Yang, 2000) and able to conclude with empirical evidence that attitudes toward advertising are influenced by a variety of belief dimensions about advertising (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992; Andrew, 1989; Barksdale & Darden, 1972; Dubinsky & Hensel, 1984; Sandage & Leckenby, 1980; Yang, 2000)

In online advertising context, the study of Mehta and Sivadas (1995) suggests that consumers tend to have negative attitudes toward advertising on newsgroups and emails. Zhang (2000) finds that people perceive web



advertising to be irritating, non-informative, and obstructs users while seeking information on a website. Belief factors are commonly used as the predictors of web advertising attitudes (e.g., Kak, 1995; Ramaprasad, 2001; Wang & Sun, 2010; Wolin, Korgaonkar & Lund, 2002; Yang, 2000). More specifically, the attitudes toward web advertising of consumers are generally derived from their own beliefs and demographic factors.

In summary, extant studies suggest that consumers' beliefs about advertising are associated with their attitude toward advertising. In particular, product information, hedonic/pleasure, credibility, social role/image, good for economy and interactivity beliefs are expected to be positively related to attitude toward advertising while irritation is expected to be negatively associated with attitude toward advertising. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are developed for empirical testing.

H1: Product information belief about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to attitude toward the banner advertising.

H2: Hedonic/pleasure belief about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to attitude toward the banner advertising.

H3: Credibility belief about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to attitude toward the banner advertising.

H4: Social role and image belief about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to attitude toward the banner advertising.

H5: Good for economy belief about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to attitude toward the banner advertising.

H6: Irritation belief about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is negatively related to attitude toward the banner advertising.

H7: Interactivity belief about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to attitude toward the banner advertising.

### 2.5 Banner advertising effectiveness

Advertising effectiveness is defined as the extent to which a specific advertising generates a desired effect specified by the advertiser (Corvi & Bonera, 2010; Puranik, 2011). Prior studies (e.g., Pavlou & Steward, 2000) have

confirmed that the measurements of online advertising effectiveness do not differ from the conventional media. The banner advertising effectiveness can be measured by both traditional measures and web metrics (Danaher & Mullarkey, 2003; Drez & Hussherr, 2003; Gong & Maddox, 2003; Palanisamy, 2004). This study tests the banner advertising effectiveness by traditional measures (i.e., advertising recall, brand attitude, and purchase intention (Alba, Hutchinson, & Lynch, 1991), as well as a commonly used web metric (i.e., click-through (Baltas, 2003; Chatterjee, Hoffman, & Novak 2003; Kania, 1999; Internet Advertising Bureau, 1998; Rosenkrans, 2006; Young, 2000), namely;

#### 2.5.1 Advertising recall

Advertising recall is one of the major measures used in advertising effectiveness testing (Mehta & Purvis, 2006). Advertising recall refer to the ability of web advertising to create remembrance after advertising exposure (Laskey et al., 1995). In other words, advertising recall measures some aspects of memory toward advertising by technic of dredging the advertising recollection and awareness. Many scholars find the relationship between attitude toward advertising and the advertising recall (e.g. Danaher & Mullarkey, 2003; Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002; Menon & Soman, 2002; Metha, 2000), indicating that more favorable attitude toward advertising can lead to higher ability of advertising recall. More specifically, consumers who have positive attitude toward advertising are more likely to recall the advertising than those with negative attitude.

Following Laskey et al. (1995), this study defines advertising recall as "the ability of banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies to create remembrance after the exposure of the banner advertising".

#### 2.5.2 Click-through

Click-through refers to the process of clicking through banner advertising to the advertiser web site (Yoo, Kim & Stout, 2004). A click indicates the interaction of consumer with the advertising (Bhat et al., 2002) and it is the most common way to draw consumers into a target site and engages them with a brand or product. Click-through is therefore a widely used measurement for assessing banner advertising effectiveness (Dreze & Hussherr, 2003; Faber et al., 2004). More particularly, consumers who exhibit



favorable attitude toward banner advertising are more likely to click on it accordingly (Cho, 2003). Gong and Maddox (2003) also find that click-through is a significant predictor of banner advertising recall.

### 2.5.3 Brand attitude

Brand attitude is related to consumers' perspective regarding their evaluation of brand with some degree of favor or disfavor (Doss, 2011; Mitchell & Olsen, 1981). It has been used as a measurement of advertising effectiveness (Brown & Stayman, 1992; Pecheux & Derbaix, 2002). Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch (1983) define brand attitude as "recipients' affective reactions toward the advertised brand", while Phelps and Hoy (1996) define brand attitude as "predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular brand after the advertising stimulus has been shown to the individual".

This study defines brand attitude as "inbound tourists' evaluation of the brand advertised on Thai online travel agencies' banner advertising with some degree of favor or disfavor".

### 2.5.4 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a key indicator of online advertising effectiveness (e.g., Brown & Stayman, 1992; Moe & Fader, 2004; Raney et al., 2003) as prior studies find it to be a predictor of consumers' purchase behavior (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2002; Gresham & Shimp, 1985; Yi, 1990). Purchase intention is defined as the likelihood of an individual to purchase the product (Phelps & Hoy, 1996) or "the predisposition to buy a certain brand or product" (Belch & Belch, 2007). Following extant literatures, purchase intention in this study is defined as an inbound tourist's intention to make an initial purchase from a Thai online travel agency.

The attitudinal studies of Bruner and Kumar (2005), Karson and Fisher (2005), Korgaonkar and Wolin (2002), Mitchell and Olsen (1981), Stevenson et al. (2000), Wang et al. (2009), and Wolin et al. (2002) indicate that purchase intention is positively influenced by attitude toward advertising. For example, Mitchell and Olsen (1981) find that attitude toward advertising affects consumers' response toward advertising and their purchasing behavior. A more favorable attitude toward advertising is linked to more

positive advertising evaluations and consequently, resulting in more advertising recalls and higher buying interest (Bauer & Greyser, 1968; Mehta & Purvis, 1995).

Basing on the results from prior studies, attitude toward advertising is expected to have significant relationship with advertising effectiveness (e.g., MacKenzie et al., 1989; Poh & Adam, 2002; Schlosser et al., 1999). The following hypotheses are developed for empirical testing of the relationship between attitude of inbound tourists toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies and banner advertising's effectiveness.

H8: Attitude toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to the ability to recall the banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies

H9: Attitude toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to click-through to the banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies

H10: Attitude toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to attitude toward brand of Thai online travel agencies

H11: Click-through to the banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related the ability to recall the banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies

H12: The banner advertising effectiveness of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to the purchase intention of inbound tourists

H13: Attitude toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies is positively related to the purchase intention of inbound tourists

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Conceptual framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of this study. Focusing on banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies, this study empirically tested the belief-attitude-effectiveness relations that inbound tourists had about the banner advertising.

### 3.2 Measurement

A survey of inbound tourists was conducted by structured questionnaire, comprising of the measurements of the inbound tourists' beliefs (7 factors, 31 items) and attitudes (4 items) toward banner advertising of Thai online



travel agencies, and their behavioral responses (4 factors, 14 items) that indicated the effectiveness of banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies (Appendix A). The items were measured on the seven-point Likert's scale. The measurement of the beliefs and attitudes toward banner advertising and its effectiveness required banner advertising viewing experience, therefore, questionnaire was designed to screen out the respondents who have no experience viewing banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies.

### 3.3 Population and sample

The population of interest for this study was international tourist travelling into Thailand. Total number of population as of 1 January 2013 (N) is 22,353,903. The number of sample was determined around 384 through Krejcie and Morgan's formula (1970) with an error percent of 5. Therefore, 450 participants were involved in responding to questionnaire survey to ensure that minimum sample size was achieved with at least 384 usable questionnaires. 450 samples of inbound tourists were randomly selected by using convenience sampling method. Of which, 418 completed questionnaires were used for the analysis.

### 3.4 Data analysis

Internal consistency was examined to ensure the quality of the instrument (Churchill, 1979). The internal consistency of each dimension was assessed by coefficient alphas and item-to-total correlations. All of the measurement models were refined through the use of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to estimate the construct validity, discriminant validity and convergent validity in order to ensure that each construct would be appropriate for use in the Structural Equation Model (SEM). To evaluate whether the data gathered from inbound tourists sufficiently fitted the proposed model, fit indices and cut-off values adopted for this study were based on Hair et al. (2010) include;

- (1)  $\chi^2$  with a significant p-value
- (2)  $\chi^2/df$  with a value equal or less than 3.00
- (3) CFI with a value equal or greater than 0.90
- (4) TLI with a value equal or greater than 0.90
- (5) NFI with a value equal or greater than 0.90
- (6) RMSEA with a value equal or less than 0.07

SEM was then applied to test the proposed conceptual framework (Figure 1). The Maximum Likelihood

(ML) method was used to estimate all of the parameters in the model. Goodness-of-fit indicators used to evaluate the main model were based on the same indicators used for CFA.

## 4. Key findings and discussion

The results of internal consistency reliability analysis indicated good reliability of all the measures used in this study (Appendix B). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all measurements ranged between 0.821 and 0.924, exceeding the benchmark value of 0.70 as the cut-off to determine the amount of variance due to the random errors of content heterogeneity (Leong & Austin, 1996; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Robinson, Shaver & Wrightman, 1991). The corrected item-to-total correlation values for all the items ranged between 0.635 and 0.837, greater than the satisfactory level of 0.50 to maintain an item (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989; Zaichkowsky, 1985). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated that the values of factor loadings for all observed items varied between 0.71 and 0.89 (Appendix C), which were far above the recommended level of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010), thus the item validity was confirmed. The test on the construct validity reported some good fit models (Appendix C), thus the constructs were accepted for the structural equation analysis.

The results of structural equation modeling indicated that the model that allowed the correlation between the product information and hedonic/pleasure variable showed an acceptable fit with the value  $\chi^2/df = 3.23$ , NFI = 0.79, TLI = 0.83, CFI = 0.84, and RMSEA = 0.07, respectively. There were no better fit models due to the lack of theoretical justification, and the indices only marginally fitted the data collected from the inbound tourists. Figure 2 and Table 1 present the estimated parameters of the hypothesized model.

The coefficients for the six belief factors (i.e., hedonic/pleasure (H2), credibility (H3), social role and image (H4), good for economy (H5), irritation (H6) and interactivity (H7)) on attitude toward banner advertising were statistically significant at the 5% level or better, suggesting that these belief factors had significant effect on inbound tourists attitude toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies.

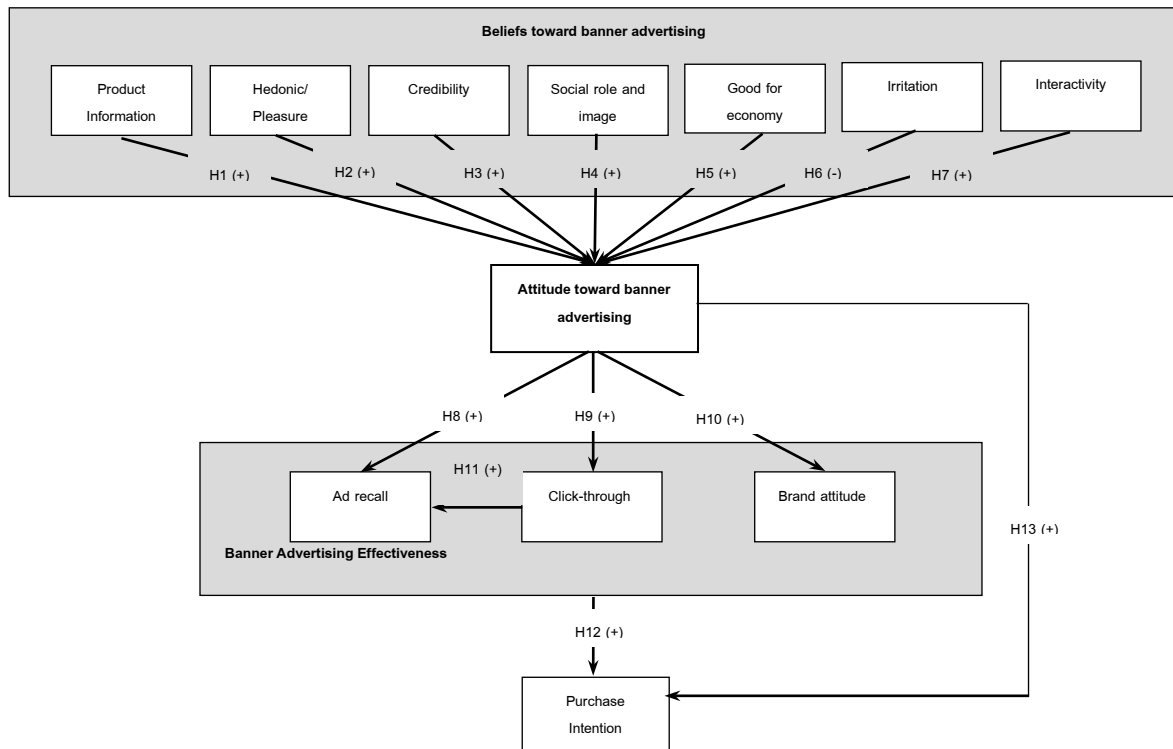


These empirical findings were in line with the findings in previous studies such as Ducoffe (1996), Wolin et al. (2002). Consistent with theoretical prediction, hedonic/pleasure, credibility, social role and image, good for economy and interactivity seemed to have positive effect on the attitude of inbound tourists toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies. Meanwhile, irritation appeared to negatively affect the attitude of inbound tourists toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies. Among these belief factors, interactivity had the most dominant effects on the inbound tourists' attitude toward the banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies, followed by hedonic/pleasure and good for economy belief dimensions. Contrary to our expectation, product information seemed to have no effect on the attitude of inbound tourists toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies. Due to the fact that banner advertising usually has space limitation (Choi & Rifon, 2002), a minimum of limited amount of product information may be used as an input into attitude formation (Faber et al., 2004). Thus, the belief factor of product information might exert no significant influence on the attitude toward banner advertising in this study.

The coefficients for the relations between attitude toward banner advertising and banner advertising effectiveness (i.e., advertising recall (H8), click-through (H9), brand attitude (H10), and purchase intention (H13)) were positive and statistically significant at the 1% level, suggesting that favorable attitude of inbound tourists toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies was associated with the effectiveness of the banner advertising. The findings provided additional empirical evidence that supported the attitude-behavior link found in prior literatures (e.g. Wolin et al., 2002; Gong & Maddox, 2003). In addition, the empirical results indicated that banner advertising effectiveness was associated with purchase intention of

inbound tourists as the coefficient for banner advertising effectiveness on purchase intention (H12) was statistically significant at the 5% level. This study also found that the frequency of clicking on banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies was positively and significantly related to the ability of inbound tourists to recall banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies (H11).





That was, the more frequency inbound tourists clicked on banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies, the higher the probability that they could recall the ad.

Overall, this study could partially confirm with empirical evidence the belief–attitude–effectiveness relations for Thai online travel agencies' banner advertising from the perspective of inbound tourists. From a theoretical point of view, the results of the current study were consistent with Theory of Reason Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) in terms of an individual behavioral intention was resulted from his/her attitude that was stemmed from underlying beliefs about that particular attitude objects. Our findings also confirmed earlier work linking beliefs attitudes and perceived behavioral control, which was proposed as Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991). TPB used attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control to predict and explain individual behavioral intentions.

Online travel agency's advertisers promoting in Thailand are encouraged to influence inbound tourists' beliefs about banner advertising to be more positive and less negative. That can be through, for example, working towards having banner advertising more interactivity (e.g. providing ability to control the banner ads or providing instantaneous speed of response), more entertaining (e.g. including animation or enclosing amusing pictures), more concrete economic effects (e.g. promoting healthy competition between travel/tourism companies, which ultimately benefits tourists the lower product price). So, inbound tourists will mostly have more favorable attitude toward the banner ads and that leads to more favorable behavioral responses indicating banner advertising effectiveness in respect to recall them, click on them, have favorable attitude toward brand, and have higher buying interest.

At the theoretical level, this study primarily contributes to the growing body of advertising literature. The study has identified the belief dimension, attitude dimension and banner advertising effectiveness dimension, and substantiated their interrelationships based on existing literatures. The empirical evidences in all studies in this thesis are also contributed specifically to the tourism and hospitality literature. In addition, this study can be seen as the first to comprehensively investigate inbound tourists' complicated structure of beliefs, attitudes toward advertising in the context of online travel agencies in Thailand. This thesis also proposed 'Tourism business's Banner Advertising Belief Dimensions', which was an attempt to get the in-depth understanding of inbound tourists' beliefs and attitudes toward banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies in relevant to the intrinsic characteristics of tourism products. The study confirms 'Tourism business's Banner Advertising Belief Dimensions' as a valid construct that can be adopted in future tourism advertising studies.

## 5. Conclusion

This study provided a comprehensive picture to understand the belief-attitude-effective relations on banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies. More specifically, this paper was able to confirm with the empirical evidence that the belief dimensions of banner advertising (i.e., hedonic/pleasure, credibility, social role and image, good for economy, irritation and interactivity) had significant impact on the attitude of inbound tourists toward banner advertising. To create favorable attitude toward banner advertising, Thai online travel agencies should design their banner advertising to be entertaining, credible and interactive, promote social role and image of users, have economic value and do not contain any irritation components. Interactivity of banner advertising seemed to be the most influential dimension that led to favorable attitude toward banner advertising. Furthermore, the attitude toward banner advertising was positively associated with the effectiveness of banner advertising (i.e. advertising recall, click-through, brand attitude and purchase intention). That was, to increase effectiveness of banner advertising, Thai online travel agencies needed to create positive attitude of inbound tourists toward banner

advertising. In summary, the effectiveness of banner advertising increased with favorable attitude of inbound tourists toward banner advertising. The favorable attitude toward banner advertising could be developed by designing banner advertising to have specific features and contents (i.e., hedonic/pleasure, credibility, social role and image, good for economy, interactivity and no irritation).

The findings from this study have significant implications for Thai tourism marketers and Thai travel agencies in designing online advertising features and contents to effectively communicate to foreign tourists. As online advertising has become an important marketing tool with high power of accessibility and cost advantages, the effective use of online advertising is a key determinant that enhances competitiveness of Thai travel agencies. More specifically, this study suggests a banner advertising guidelines for developing effective online advertising tasks to drive business survival in the international tourism marketplace.

This study is subjected to some limitations. The study is based primarily on the specific set of questions from prior studies, thus some new factors that may have significant effect on the belief-attitude-effectiveness relations are not investigated. The survey is based on self-report of respondents, thus the defect of memory about banner advertising of Thai online travel agencies may possibly occur, especially in the case of the respondents who planned their travel long in advance. To test the validity of these research findings, future research should address these issues.

Finally, as this research was carried out within a single tourism context, future research can also explore the differences in belief-attitude-effectiveness relations of banner advertising through comparative studies across tourism businesses. The cross-comparison of tourism and hospitality organizations will also enhance knowledge of online advertising at a profound level.



**Table 1** Hypothesis verification

Hypothesis Path	Estimated Sign	Path Coefficient	Result
H1: ProdInf > ATTB	+	0.09*	Not supported
H2: HedonicP > ATTB	+	0.38**	Supported
H3: Credibility > ATTB	+	0.08*	Supported
H4: SocialRole > ATTB	+	0.29**	Supported
H5: GoodEcon > ATTB	+	0.30**	Supported
H6: Irritation > ATTB	-	- 0.15**	Supported
H7: Interactivity > ATTB	+	0.61**	Supported
H8: ATTB > Ad Recall	+	0.51**	Supported
H9: ATTB > Click-through	+	0.70**	Supported
H10: ATTB > Brand Attitude	+	0.73**	Supported
H11: Click-through > Ad recall	+	0.29**	Supported
H12: BA Effectiveness > PCI	+	0.70*	Supported
H13: ATTB > PCI	+	0.74**	Supported

Note: 1) "Attitude" refers to attitude toward banner advertising; "Ad recall" refers to banner advertising recall

2) Symbols \*\* and \* denote significance at the 1% and 5% level, respectively



Figure 2 The estimated parameters of the hypothesized model

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