

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to draw some conclusions, discuss the main findings, to give recommendations based on the research findings and also to point out the limitations of this research. In the study, the researcher discusses the research results based on 3 objectives. Firstly, to investigate the existing senior tourism market in Thailand, secondly to gain insight in the travel motivation, behavior and preference of senior tourists and finally to suggest guidelines for responding to the specific needs of senior tourists and developing Thailand as an attractive senior tourist destination according to the research aim, which suggests to enhance the senior tourism in Thailand for international tourists which will be identified through research recommendations. Therefore, the content of this chapter can be divided into 6 topics as follows:

4.1 Conclusions

4.2 Discussions

4.3 Recommendations

4.4 Limitations of the research

4.1 Conclusions

There has been little research earlier on senior tourist markets in order to develop Thailand as a senior tourism destination yet. Because of this, the researcher decided to study this area, as well as this market segment due to its potential and huge number of cohorts. The purpose of the study is to gain an insight on current senior tourism in Thailand and to find out about the travel motivation and behavior of senior tourists. In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire, interview and observation as research instruments to collect primary data. For the questionnaire, respondents were conveniently sampled and selected from three targeted provinces including Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang-Mai who were age 55 years and over. A total of 400 copies of questionnaires had been distributed to the respondents between January and June 2007. From a sample of 400, only 323 usable samples were collected from the targeted areas. To

analyze the information collected the researcher used SPSS version 14 with some functions of the program. The SPSS functions used in this study includes Frequency, Cross tabulations, Chi-Square Test and Transform Compute.

4.1.1 Personal Characteristics

More than half of the respondents were males and the majority of them were Europeans, age between 55 to 59 years old. Most of them had a bachelor's degree and married status and more than half of the total respondents were company-employed and followed after they retired. Almost half of them earned an annual household income between 25,000 to 50,000 USD.

4.1.2 Traveling Motivation

Most of the respondents were traveling to relax physically and mentally and their main concern when traveling was "safety". Most of them were influenced to travel to Thailand this time because of experiences from their previous visits and relaxing was their preferred activity while traveling. Regions of residents were significant with traveling motivation; the major activity preferred for all regions was relaxation while the second choice was different. Asian respondents preferred to use a spa while Non-Asians, including Europeans, Americans and Australians preferred to do sightseeing. Not only the preferred activity, regions of resident were also related to the travel influence, most of the respondents from all regions were influenced by their previous visit experience and followed after family's recommendation. Except the Americas region, as the American respondents were secondly influenced by friend's recommendation. Genders were also affected to travel influence, most of the male respondents were influenced by their previous visiting experiences as a majority while female respondents were mainly influenced by family recommendations due to the different behavior and decision power between genders as most females are still the follower in the family structure.

4.1.3 Booking Behavior

Half of respondents arranged their travel plan by themselves and their second option of booking was the travel agent. Looking at residents regions, which did not influence the booking behavior of senior tourists while genders did. Both, male and female respondents mostly made bookings on their own but the second option was different because male respondents used travel agents as their second preferred option while female respondents had family members arrange for their booking. This result reflected the different behavior between genders as males are more independent when compared with females, which are closer and rely on their family members.

Looking at the booking channel, respondents used different ways to arrange each product which can be summarized that most of the respondents who come with package mostly booked their preferred package through travel agents in their home country while the respondents who arranged their travel by themselves, which separately booked each product by different option, most of them booked air tickets and accommodation through the internet but directly booked the travel insurance through the insurance company. For daily trips and activities during the visit, most of the respondents booked them with travel agents in Thailand as well as direct contact with the providing company.

4.1.4 Traveling Behavior

Size of the travel party:

Most of the respondents travel with two persons in their party and followed by 4 persons. When focusing on more details in each region, the results indicated a different behavior which can be conducted that Asian respondents mostly travel in bigger size than four members in their travel party while Non-Asian respondents including Europeans, Americans and Australians usually have a smaller size of travel party. Most of them traveled with their spouse, which were two of them only. This different result showed that the differentiated size of family and culture between Asians and Non-Asian regions as Asian people are closer to the family while Non-Asian families seems to have single characteristic.

Travel companions:

Half of the respondents traveled together with their spouse followed by their family. Looking at the difference between genders, both male and female respondents mostly traveled with their spouse while the second answer of male and female were differentiated. Female respondents secondly travel with family while almost a quarter of the male respondents traveled with other types of accompany beside spouse, family and friends. Some of the male respondents identified others as business partners, colleagues as well as traveling alone. These results showed again the differences between genders which can indicate that females are closer to their family while males are more independent. Looking at the regions of the residents, which also show the differentiation between Asian and Non-Asian regions, as most of the Asian respondents indicated that they were traveling with family while Non-Asian respondents indicated that their travel companions is their spouse. This significant result indicated the different culture and lifestyle between Asian and Non-Asian people as Asian people are still closer to their family even when they are older.

Type of accommodation:

Most of the respondents are likely to stay in city hotels while genders and regions of residents did not have an effect to the behavior on the accommodation type selection. But there was a difference on the data collected areas, as more than half of the respondents collected from Phuket selected resort hotel types as their accommodation which is different from the other two provinces (Bangkok and Chiang-Mai), which indicated the different selection that is reflected from the different types of tourism. As Phuket is offering beach tourism, therefore most of the tourists in Phuket expect to stay close to the beach to feel the beautiful natural beaches; therefore the resort type should be the preferred option for the tourists.

Length of stay

Almost half of the respondents stayed in Thailand between 6-10 nights. When compared by regions of residents, Asian respondents seemed to have shorter trips, more than half of them stayed in Thailand between 1-5 nights due to their living closer to Thailand when compared with other regions and they can return any time when they are available. The vacation behavior of Asians and Non-Asian people is also influenced by this differentiated behavior while the gender does not have any effect as both, male and female have a similar behavior on length of stay. Looking at the statistic report collected by Tourism Authority of Thailand (2005), which indicated the average length of stay of all ages, was 8.20 nights while the average length of stay collected from the research questionnaire was 12.25 nights. This comparison stated that senior tourists stay longer than the average of all ages and they are willing to stay longer than that if they have the right service provided for their satisfying vacation.

Average spending

The spending behavior of senior tourists on accommodation as well as other expenses during their visit such a food, beverages and activities, which excluded the airfare, most of the respondents selected the spending rank between 1-250 USD per night while this research also found that the average spending per night per person of respondent was 190.29 USD which is much higher than the average expenditure of all ages, collected by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2005), which was indicated at 117.88 USD per night per person.

Repeater characteristic

More than half of the respondents have visited Thailand before; most of them have been to Thailand between 1-5 times excluding this trip and mostly tended to travel to Thailand again on their next vacation. This result indicated the characteristic of senior tourist as “repeater” who are preferred to travel back to the destination they are familiar with and can be certain of the service provided in the destination.

Number of visited provinces

Half of respondents visited 2 provinces when traveling this time, most of them visited Bangkok and other tourist destinations such as Chiang-Mai and Phuket, because Bangkok is the capital of Thailand and many international flights have to stop in Bangkok first. But the results the respondents collected in Phuket were different. Most of the respondents in Phuket traveled directly to Phuket and only spent their vacation time in Phuket, this because Phuket is an attractive destination, many tourists just preferred to travel to Phuket straight away, and also there are many direct flights to Phuket which is convenient for international tourists to directly reach Phuket without transaction as well.

4.1.5 Traveling Satisfaction

Most of the respondents were satisfied with tourism in Thailand, the highest satisfaction was about the beautiful scenery and attractions, while the poorest area were the standard of hygiene, but that was still on the average level of satisfaction. There was also the relation between traveling experience and genders but not for regions of residents, which can lead to the conclusion that male respondents were more satisfied than females. Moreover, more than half of the respondents indicated the firm decision to travel to Thailand next time, which showed the satisfaction of senior tourists for Thailand tourism provided currently.

4.2 Discussion

According to the primary and secondary data of this research, the discussion can be presented according to the research objectives as follows:

4.2.1 Objective 1: To Investigate the Existing Senior Tourism Market in Thailand

According to objective 1, there are three areas involved for discussion including the significantly increasing demand of the senior market, the potential of senior markets, and the existing senior tourism in Thailand which are discussed in details below.

4.2.1.1 Increased Demands and Potential of the Senior Tourism Market

The demand of the senior market has been increasing significantly due to the increasing numbers of senior population worldwide, which related to the travel demands of senior tourists. The number of senior tourist arrivals in Thailand has also been increasing in the past 8 years, even the increasing percentage did not grow consistently, and it was affected by other situations occurring each year such as politics in Thailand, terrorists, bombs, tsunami disaster for instant. In the year 2006, 2,119,675 senior tourists at age 55 years old and over arrived in Thailand (TAT, 2007) which showed an increase of 15% from year 2005, or 45% increase from year 1998. This result showed the significantly increased demand on travel for senior tourists, which would be a benefit to Thailand's tourism today and in the near future.

Not only the significant numbers, both primary and secondary data have also identified the potential of the senior tourism market as a fruitful market segment, which indicated their potential into 3 factors including the specific characteristic of the baby boomer generation, financial status, purchasing power as well as the available times to travel. The research results also indicated that senior tourists tended to stay longer than other ages. The average stay of the respondents derived from the questionnaire shows 12.25 nights. The information was delivered from the interview with the coordinating hotel of Saga tour named, Best Western Premier Bangtao. It indicated that senior travelers regularly stayed at least 2 weeks, which is constituted as "return guests" and they are spending much money during their stay. All of the mentioned information delivers the stability of senior tourism market's significance, which should be targeted as a new opportunity for Thailand's tourism development.

4.2.1.2 Existing Senior Tourism in Thailand

Currently, the government does not try very hard to promote senior tourism in Thailand, while some private sectors do it in different ways depending on their individual style and target. For example, in the hotel industry, some hotels offer special discounts for the elderly, such as Marriott hotels, Starwood hotels and Holiday Inn hotels for instance. Aside from hotels,

other tourism product providers also offer some special service for senior tourists, such as Phuket Fantasea which offers special seat allocation for senior tourist to be accessible; Sukko Spa offers specific treatments for senior clients, which are appropriate for their physical and health condition. At the airport, wheel chairs are provided for the elderly for both, arrival and departure which can be requested upon booking or through the checking in process. Not only airports, most of the airlines also provide privileges for the elderly on entering the aircraft they may go in first, the same as passengers traveling with kids. The wheelchair service is also provided at the department stores for the local elderly as well as senior tourists who would like to shop at the department stores. But unfortunately, there is no other special services provided for senior people aside from the wheelchair service yet, because many providers addressed elderly group the same as the inaccessible group while senior demands are differently and sometime they need more service rather than only wheelchair.

One good example of specialists in providing travel services to senior tourist is Saga holiday, which offers one stop services and exclusive package for elderly who would like to travel. Saga did proper research in each destination, hotel and other tourism products before signing up the contract in order to ensure that each contacted company has proper service according to the requirement for the elderly. For example, the coordinated hotel of Saga tour located in Phuket called Best Western Premier Bangtao, has also reviewed the location, facilities, service, accessibility, safety, hygiene before the contract was signed to ensure that the hotel met the requirement, Saga made a one year contract and they will review the standard of all enquiries before renewing the contract. Aside from this, Saga also provides a satisfaction feedback in documents for all Saga's guests to give feedback on the hotel they stay in, and to review the hotel performance from the guest's point of view as well.

According to the right service which Saga offers, it results in higher satisfaction, longer stay, and more money spending of the senior travelers. The research result indicated that senior tourists who traveled with Saga stayed longer to spend more time and money in Thailand when compared with other senior travelers who stayed elsewhere. As Saga guests were satisfied with the service that Saga and the cooperating hotels provided, with the full convenience facility as well as the quality of appropriate service, according to their needs and behavior. For example by providing appropriate room allocations, which are easy to access and other facilities in the

hotel compound, as well as special recognition of the elderly guests and family members. The hotel also provided a special welcome and farewell party as well as the saga lounge for saga guests to give them a chance to meet other seniors to make more friends and have a happier stay. Aside from these special, the hotel also focuses on the quality of food and beverages to support the demands of senior. These mentioned details reflected that senior tourists are staying longer and they are repeaters with their flexibility and possibility to travel in any season, including the low season, which can fill up the occupancy in the low season for Thailand tourism to generate more revenue as well.

Currently, Thailand does not have specialist for senior tourism provider yet, as most of the private organizations still include senior markets with others, which did not specifically focus on senior groups. Therefore they did not have enough information about senior tourists such as travel motivation and demands for instance. Recently, there was an additional example of providers for senior groups but it did not target senior tourists with an event called “senior happy day”, which was organized by the co-operation between public and private organization named Keng- Karj Company. The concept of this event was the expo lifestyle for seniors which was arranged on May 03-07, 2007 in order to give the recognition to local senior people under the theme of “Endless Happiness”. In this event a variety of activities such as health talk, pet therapy exercising suggestion, concerts, games, performances, shops, nourishment, messages as well as some useful workshops for the seniors but this event did not target or concern tourists and the tourism industry at all. However, this event was a good sign and the right step for both public and private organizations in the tourism industry to concentrate on the senior market in order to understand them better and provide the right tourism products and services for them appropriately, for more satisfaction of the senior tourists as well as benefits for the Thailand tourism with this fruitful market, which its significance and potential.

4.2.2 Objective 2: To Gain Insight in Travel Motivation, Behavior and Preferences of Senior Tourists

According to objective 2, there are four areas for discussion they include travel motivation, travel behavior, travel preferences and limitations of senior tourist which can be discussed in detail as following:

4.2.2.1 Traveling Motivation of Senior Tourists

Research results indicated that most of the respondents were traveling to relax as the information from interviewing the hotel operators, who also stated that most of their senior guests like to spent most of their time relaxing, using the hotel facilities and activity provided by the hotels, which related to the reviewed literature. Shoemaker (1989), which also mentioned that seniors are traveling for pleasure but are different from the research of Stuart (1992), which stated that older people are looking for more experiences and personal growth while other age travelers are more pleasure seekers.

In the interview results, this also explored that senior tourists liked to have a place that makes them feel as home when they traveled and they are likely to return to the same place for their next trip if they felt comfortable with. This also related to the research results as most of the respondents were influenced to travel to Thailand by their previous visit experiences. This result agreed with the seven travel motives of senior travelers which include Nostalgias, Friendliness, Learners, Escapists, Thinkers, Status-Seekers, and Physicals, stated by the Centre for Tourism Research and Development (1999). While the main concern of senior tourists, when traveling is “safety” due to their experiences and physical limitation, they are looking for a secure place to keep them safe during their stay.

4.2.2.2 Traveling Behavior of Senior Tourists

There are differences in the number and type of travel companions between Asian and Non-Asian tourists. Most of the Non-Asian senior tourists are likely traveling with their spouse, while Asian seniors seemed to travel with their whole family which is an indication to the different size of families for Non-Asians and Asian families as well as the different cultures and lifestyles. Looking at the preferred type of accommodation, most of the senior tourists

decided to stay in hotels due to the full facilities and services provided in the hotel and resort, they agreed to pay higher rates to feel ensures of the standard of services and appropriated operations in the selected hotel. Most of them preferred relaxation, followed by sightseeing as their activity during stay. Additional results from the interviews indicated that senior tourists preferred to spend their time internally on the hotel or resort premises, by using the provided facilities as well as enjoying the food, beverages and other activities provided by the hotel. They might want to go out for a trip or tour a couple of times during their visit, therefore the standard of all services operated inside hotel is significantly important for senior tourists as well as for the hotel industries, as they can gain more sales revenue if they can provide the right service internally for their senior guests. For outside activities, the research results have also identified that aside from relaxation preferences, senior tourists also liked to travel to gain knowledge and experiences. Their preferred oversight activity was sightseeing to view and learn about the interesting tourist attractions, about local life, Thai history and culture. Therefore, if the tourism industry in Thailand can provide the right package and type of an interesting tour or activity for senior tourists, they can be motivated to spend more time and more money on the appropriated programs to have their vacation experiences completely satisfied and have more valuable memory for them.

4.2.2.3 Travel Preference of Senior Tourists

Due to their number of experiences, which influenced senior tourist to prefer some specific areas, the research results identified the travel preferences of senior tourists and which can be concluded into 5 main factors including safety, hygiene, nature preservation, consumer protection, and accessibility, which were in harmony with the five factors approached by Handszuh (1996). Additionally, research results also identified that senior tourists prefer to experience Thai hospitality, history, tradition, architecture and culture because they are unique and outstanding, the same as the research of Badinelli (1991) and Calver (1993) found, which also indicated the interest of older travelers who would like to learn and experience more culture and architecture. Therefore, with the uniqueness of Thai, it can impress senior tourist responding to their preferences.

4.2.2.4 Limitations of Senior Tourists

According to the limitations of physical and knowledge, the research results indicated that they did not limit the travel motivation of senior tourists, which is opposite from the results of Pederson (1994) and Blazey (1987) who found that health limitations influenced on traveling motivation. However the health limitation may affect their decision about a preferred destination and things to do while traveling, including the travel behavior and needs. Because the senior tourist would demands different things when compared with other ages, such as the demand a secure and safe place, the accessibility requirement, the one stop service as well as the service operation to make their stay as comfortable as at home. Due to the physical condition, senior tourists need to be ensure about the destination they travel to.

4.3 Recommendations

The recommendations of this research can be indicated as follow:

4.3.1 S.W.O.T. Analysis in order to Develop Thailand as a Senior Tourist Destination

1. Strengths

- Beautiful sceneries

Thailand has beautiful sceneries and rich natural environment surrounded in all areas, especially in tourist attractions, which are suitable for relaxation and sightseeing.

- Various types of tourism

Thailand offers various types of tourism, which is available for tourist selection, for example beach tourism in Phuket, Pattaya, Samui, Hua-Hin or mountain tourism in Chiang-mai as well as historical tourism in Ayuttaya, Sukkothai.

- Thai hospitality

Thai hospitality is very unique and impressive for tourists, especially senior tourists, as they are looking for good care taking and feeling recognition as a family member. Therefore, in the concept of Thailand, land of smiles, Thai hospitality serves properly well on the demand and specific characteristic of senior tourists.

- Good weather

The weather in Thailand is also good, not too warm and not too cold all year, as Thailand has tropical climate with 3 seasons, including rainy, cool and hot season. The average temperature in the rainy season is 24-32 Celsius, in the cool season is 21-32 Celsius and hot season is 25-34 Celsius. The cool season is the best time to visit with high temperatures and low humidity, which relative to the seasonal of tourism.

- Variety of activities

Thailand offers a vast variety of activities which are suitable for tourist attraction such as arts, culture, dining, shopping and healthy therapy for instant. Therefore, senior tourists can enjoy the selection of their preferred activities during their visit.

- Location

As Thailand is located in South East Asia, which is well-known worldwide, it is easy to travel to, this is a very good part in order to promote senior tourism as many international tourists already know and are familiar with Thailand as an attractive tourist destination.

2. Weaknesses

- Substandard of hygiene

In the senior tourist points of view, hygiene in Thailand is still substandard, especially in the public and local areas.

- Substandard of safety

There were some negative developments which happened in the past and still continue, such as bombing and terrorist in the south of Thailand, which make senior tourists feel unsecured while traveling in Thailand.

- Accessibility

Accessibility is the important part for senior tourists due to their physical condition, which requires them to concern on accessibility when traveling.

- Consumer protection

Due to the number of senior tourists' experiences, they expect more on the consumer protection, to ensure that all products they consume are up to standard as well as reasonable price offerings.

- Lack of government program

The Thai government did not focus enough on the increasing phenomenon of the senior population worldwide. Until now there is not yet a specific program arranged or offered by government.

- Not enough packages provided

Currently, there are not enough appropriate packages provided for senior tourists yet, either by the government or by private organizations. Also, senior tourists have unique characteristics and specific demands, which require appropriate packages to supply properly according to the demands.

3. Opportunities

- The significantly increasing number of the senior population

The senior population keeps increasing nowadays and in the future, which will also increase and expand the senior market as a fruitful segment for all industries.

- Retiring of baby boomer generation

Due to the huge group of the world population born between 1946 and 1964, now this group of people is entering retirement with available time and money to travel.

- The potential of the senior market

Senior population nowadays is different from seniors in the past. Either the characteristic, demands, or financial status, which can be summarized that nowadays seniors have better life quality, which places them in the potential senior market for all industries involved.

- Purchasing power

There is significance on purchasing power of senior tourists. The research results indicated that the average spending per night of senior tourists was much higher than the average expenditure of all ages, as they are willing to pay if they are satisfied with the provided products and services.

- Senior tourists increasing demands to travel around the world

Nowadays senior demand more traveling, which increases the demands of senior tourists worldwide. After the stress from work, they have proper plans to travel and refresh their retired life with a journey.

- The expansion of tourism marketing and continuing expansion worldwide

With the continuing expansion of the worldwide tourism industry, it is a positive sign for Thailand tourism as well as to encourage senior tourism in Thailand, which

can go along with the same direction of the world tourism market.

- Increasing of direct flights to interesting tourist destination in Thailand

There are many direct flights provided from different countries around the world that fly directly to Thailand as well as some attractive destination of Thailand such as Phuket, which makes the journey easier for tourists and motivates them to travel to Thailand even more.

- Increasing demand for a healthy lifestyle

The demand for a healthy lifestyle has been increased nowadays, especially in the seniority group who is more concerned about health due to their number of experiences and physical condition. Thailand can also offer health tourism with the traditional lifestyle as Thai as well as herbs.

4. Threats

- World event impact

Negative world events impact is the main threat for the tourism industry in Thailand as it is affected to the demand and confidence to travel for tourists at all ages, especially seniors, as they are more concerned about safety when traveling. For example the 9-11 impact in United State, Bird flu disease, SARS, Tsunami.

- Domestic security

Domestic security is also a threat to the development of Thailand's tourism, especially in order to encourage senior tourism, as senior tourist are more concerned about safety and security, as they require more on the stable situation to ensure that they will have a pleasant and safe trip.

- Neighbor competitors

Not only Thailand, which is outstanding as an attractive travel destination in South East Asia, there are other neighboring competitors, which are also outstanding and

they are offering a similar type of tourism and attractions such as Vietnam, Japan, and Malaysia.

Table 4.1 summarizes the S.W.O.T. analysis of senior tourism in Thailand.

Table 4.1 S.W.O.T. Analysis in order to Develop Thailand as a Senior Tourist Destination

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beautiful sceneries - Variety type of tourism - Thai hospitality - Good weather - Variety of activity - Location 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Substandard of hygiene - Substandard of safety - Current accessibility - Consumer protection - Lack of government program - Not enough specific packages
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing of senior population - Retiring of baby boomers - Potential of senior market - Purchasing power - Increasing of traveling demands - Expansion of world tourism - Increase of direct flights - Increase demand on healthy life 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World event impact - Domestic security - Neighbor competitors

4.3.2 Guidelines for Developing Thailand as an attractive Senior Tourist Destination

After analyzing the data collected, there are 2 main areas of this research with recommendations including: developing areas according to senior tourist demands on the tourism industry and promoting Thailand as a senior tourist destination.

4.3.2.1. Improving the Satisfaction of Senior Tourists in Thailand

Regarding to the research results from the questionnaire, interview and observation, there are some areas that need to be improved according to the senior tourists' demands, motivation, behavior, preferences as well as limitation. Therefore, for more satisfaction of senior tourists, the required areas that need improving can be sectorized as follow:

Standard of Hygiene

Low hygiene standard is one of the weakest areas which got the lowest satisfaction points in the tourism industry, according to the respondent's opinions. Both public and private sectors involved in the tourism industry should take more focus on this subject to improve the standard and maintain Thailand as a hygiene place, as well as to get the positive perception back on this reliability, especially in the public areas, in order to impress the senior international tourists and have them as repeating visitors to return to Thailand on their next vacation.

Recommendations for the government and public sector:

- Study the needs and expectation of senior tourist on the hygiene standard to compare with the current situation and find the improvement areas.
- Create proper plan and regulation in order to increase the standard of hygiene in the tourism industries point of view, and then distribute the plan to all related sectors to get their acknowledgment.

- Educate all sectors directly and indirectly related to the tourism industry and local people to have them realized the importance of tourism in their points as well as the benefit they get from the tourism industry. Also, to have them understand the importance of the hygiene standard in the tourism industry points of view and their own benefit on this improvement.
- Arrange training for each segment in appropriate occasions, for example hotels, tour operators and local people.
- Design a reward program to each community or province which can improve the hygiene in their own area up to the standard.
- Provide a certificate to notify and guarantee the private sector, which can improve their hygiene up to the expected standard.
- Educate and distribute the meaning of certificate to senior tourists to understand and ensure in the quality of place with the certificate identified.
- Create a reviewing plan and assign to the local government to be responsible for this improvement process, especially in the public areas to control the current situation up to the expected standard as well as review the standard in private sectors areas.
- Enhance clean food good taste project by providing a caravan festival under the concept of clean food good taste in each province.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Cooperate and follow the plan and guideline from the government and the public sectors.
- Internally educate and training for their staff on the importance of hygiene related to their business and the impact of sub-standards, short and long term.
- Prioritized focus hygiene in their own areas of the organization and extend in the neighborhood.
- Arrange a yearly competition among the same business such as hotels, travel agents and restaurants to measure the standard of hygiene.

- Encourage standard of food and beverage and create more selections.

Nature Preservation

As Thailand is still developing in most of the areas, especially in tourist attractions, there were many trees and green areas destroyed for buildings, infrastructures and some other facility to support the tourists and tourism industry. Sometime might look over the importance of the rich nature and environment which is a significant selling point for Thailand tourism. Most of the tourists decide to travel to Thailand to get in touch with the natural beauty and fresh air, therefore government, public and private sectors as well as the people involved in this industry should be more concerned with nature preservation along with the physical and economical development for sustainable civilization.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Educate all sectors directly and indirectly related to the tourism industry and local people to have them realized the impact if nature is destroyed.
- Educate local people and investor to get concerned about the importance of global warming, as well as the impact to everybody.
- Emphasize tourist to concern on remaining the rich environment of Thailand for the future visit as well as their children's visit in future.
- Create strong laws or regulations to control and remain green areas as well as the natural environment together with the development.
- Zoning green areas do not allow any building or construction in the prohibited zone or if necessary need strictly follow the regulation of zoning areas.
- Arrange activities concerning the preservation of nature with private sectors and local people more often, for example beach cleaning day, and plant more trees.
- Manage monthly meetings for all related sectors to evaluate the result of nature preservation in each area.

- Set an audit sector to review the existing organizations as well as to check the enforcement.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Internally train staff to understand the importance of nature preservation.
- Maintain trees and green areas in their compound. For example, when building new hotels, they should maintain original trees on the land as much as possible and try to draw the hotel landscape including the existing tree and natural environment. For this, the hotel will benefit from the natural scenery, fresh air and it will be saving costs for gardening as well.
- Arrange internal activities that are concerned on nature preservation, such as planting and beach cleaning.
- Revise the resource usage in order to reduce dangerous materials and garbage which will damage the nature, such as plastic and use other alternatives, according to the nature preservation concept. For example, reduce the usage of plastic bags in the hotel and use fabric bags instead or do not use chemicals for mosquito protection but use the optional herbal protection instead.
- Set the system to control the resource usage of guest in the hotel, such as water, electric. For example, to use water and electric at the limit time.

Infrastructure and Facility

One of the areas that need improvement are infrastructure and facility, especially for the public areas, such as walk path. In order to develop Thailand as a senior tourist destination, it is very important to properly develop in this enquiry, which needs the collaboration from both public and private sectors concerned with the tourism industry. According to the research results, the preferred activity of senior respondents was “relaxing” and most of them were spent in the hotel compound. Therefore, each sector needs to study more on the demands,

according to the characteristic of senior tourist, to provide the appropriate infrastructure and facilities to support them.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Review the current infrastructure and facilities in both public as well as private areas.
- Study the infrastructure and facilities used in developed countries such as America and Japan as a model's to improve the infrastructure and facilities inside Thailand.
- Draw up a standard and guideline for appropriate infrastructure and facility development.
- Arrange meetings with all related sectors who would like to develop themselves to supports senior tourists. Explain to them about the required standard of infrastructure and facilities from a senior tourist view.
- Start developing in the top ten tourist destinations and attractions, and then expand to all provinces and areas.
- Create specific certificates to notify companies or organizations which have the infrastructure and facilities improved up to standard.
- When the infrastructure is developed properly, the accessibility should be accounted accordingly.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Review the internal current infrastructure and facilities of each company to ensure they meet the standard and requirement.
- Follow the guidelines of standard in order to internally develop the infrastructure and facilities in their own areas.
- Provide more appropriate activities inside hotels such as Thai cooking class, Fruit carving, Thai historical lessons for instant, in order to persuade senior tourists to enjoy their stay with a variety of activities.

Accessibility and Driving Behavior

Accessibility is one of the areas which senior tourists are concern with when they travel, due to the safety consideration and their physical condition. Currently, there are not many choices for tourist to take public transportation; therefore they need to use the local taxi service, which faced them with the elastic prices, offensive drivers as well as inappropriate driving behavior. Focusing on the driving behavior, it is not only for taxi drivers, this is also referring to the driving behavior of local people as well, which would be difficult for tourists, especially seniors to drive by themselves.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Provide more option of public transportation, especially in other provinces beside Bangkok, and then tourists can choose the convenience option according to their behavior and situation.
- Provide training on service and behavior for taxi driver to maintain them up to the standard.
- Provide special signs on the car or transportation for senior tourists to notify that there are senior people in the car or transportation such as senior in car.
- Build more walk paths in public tourist attractions.
- Provide wheelchair and wheelchair access in public areas as well as easy walk ways in tourist attractions.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Develop the business according to the government plan.
- Give special room allocation for senior tourists for example assign convenience and accessible room for them such as ground floor, close to other facilities.
- Create more business according to the government plan.

Communication Skill

Proper communication is a must for the people in the tourism industry now. So the opportunity of taking language courses should be provided to all levels of people in order to give them a chance to work and interact with people in the tourism industry.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Provide a communication skill improvement center which is available for local people who are interested, as well as other private sectors which need collaboration with related organizations.
- Prepare a guideline of communication skill standards for all related sectors to follow to the same direction, for example for hotels, tour operations
- Design a signet for international tourists welcome for organization (e.g. hotels, activity providers, restaurants, shops, etc.) who meets the standard of communication to notify tourists.
- Research more to find the important market when promote senior tourism to indicate the necessary languages and then provide the language training course accordingly.
- Provide more training programs for local guides to educate them in the provision of relevant tourism information for senior tourists.
- The government can coordinate with universities in each province to provide free language courses for local people as well as other private organization and companies.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Follow the standard guideline of communication skills which are arranged by the government.
- Provide internal training to improve communication skills especially for the useful languages, such as English for example.

- Internally control the standard of communication of their staff.
- Create a feedback form for senior tourists for evaluation.

Standard of Local Tour Operators and Agent Services

There are many tour operators and agents in Thailand right now, especially in the tourist attractions. Somehow it would be difficult to control the standard of service for every single company.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Get collaboration of professional organizations involved with tour operators and agents such as TTAA (Thailand Travel Agent Association) to review the existing service and operation of all local tour operators and agents, as well as to give a guideline of service standard which every company has to follow.
- Make a list of local tour operators and agents' company name as the members of organization, evaluate the qualification of the operation and service of each company according to the required standard, and rate them by the quality of service.
- Educate all organization members to understand the requirements and the rating program.
- Arrange guide book for all members of the organization to notify the rate of each company or organization.
- Provide certificate or signet for all members to notify themselves as the senior welcome sectors.
- Distribute the handbook to senior tourists to notify them the list of travel operations and agents which join the program, then they can select the preferred company to contact according to the rating and information of each company.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Coordinate with the government and follow the plan.
- Join the organization and attend the meeting which is provided by the government to keep up to date with useful details to develop their own company.
- Provide more appropriate packages for senior tourists that respond to their demands and behavior.

Safety

Refer to the safety of the destination for the whole image, such as terrorists, bombs, tsunami evocation and some other small issues like thief and local mafia as well as the behavior of people who are involved in the tourism industry. Sometimes they are too offensive for the tourists and make them feel unsafe while traveling in Thailand.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Maintain the good reputation of Thailand as land of smiles by controlling the possible risks which could happen and concentrate more on risk prevention.
- Set up a center organization of the tourism industry who is responsible for reviewing as well as to arrange some training for people involved in the industry, and to have everybody understand the same thing and follow the standard of service.
- Provide a signet for senior tourists who travel in Thailand to notify that they are guests of our country to treat them specially.
- Create plan and guidelines concerning safety.
- Provide training in crisis management on individual situation for each type of organizations, for example first aid training, fire alarm training.

Recommendation for the private sector:

- Follow the standard of safety and maintain the safety in own private areas.
- Announce contact person in case a senior tourist has a problem or needs urgent assistant concerning his safety.
- Develop own crisis management programs and train their employees accordingly.

Standard of Price

The concern on standard of price is referring to all products related with the tourism industry, such as taxi price and goods price for instant. As there is no standard for prices of each product, the tourists have to just pay whatever the seller or the servers ask for.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Create a law and regulations in order to strictly control the price standard.
- Review, control and give a punishment to any organization or company who does not follow the regulation such as to give the first warning to a company which doubles prices for tourists, and if the same company does the same for maximum of 3 times, the government will withdraw the permission to sell their products to tourists.
- Provide a guideline for pricing standards and distribute them to all tourists, to notify them of the reasonable prices for each type of product. Also, each product provider and seller needs to follow the standard of price as well.
- Provide a brochure or guide book for senior tourists to educate them about the price standard for each type of product and service.
- Indicate price tag to each product shown in the stores or shops, to avoid over charging.
- Indicate a reasonable price rank for the main products in websites tourist guidebooks.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Follow the rule and standard created by the government
- Show the price on each product
- Don't double the price

Wellness and Medical services

Medical and health is one of the areas which senior tourists are mainly concerned with, especially when they travel, due to their physical condition and experiences. Therefore, to develop senior tourism in Thailand, this topic should be in the center of consideration for more improvement as well.

Recommendations for the government and the public sector:

- Study on the physical and illness limitation of senior tourist to clearly understand in order to prepare the right services.
- Provide standard for medical and health care services in order to develop senior tourism by studying intensely the demands of senior tourists in this area when they travel.
- Emphasize wellness tourism to attract more senior tourists as well as increase the stay extension of senior tourists.
- Communicate the wellness and medical service to senior tourists for both inside and outside Thailand.
- Enhance private organization that would like to expand their business related to wellness and medical services.
- Arrange the wellness and healthy events relating to the Thai herb and traditional healthy life as Thai to attract the health conscious group of senior tourists.

Recommendations for the private sector:

- Private sectors related to tourism industry, especially hotels, should provide medical and health care centers in their compound such as available clinic onsite, medical box in the guest rooms which provides necessary medicine.

- Besides the medicine requirement, all private sectors should also be concerned as a health service provider, which includes food, beverage, cleanliness etc.
- Emphasizing health packages related to their own business when promoting senior tourist destinations.

To improve all mentioned areas, we need the collaboration of the public and private sector as well as local people themselves for better development and more suitability to support senior tourists. To persuade interested investors and advertise the promotion plan to all sectors to keep them informed about the development which will benefit their investment flow as well.

The recommendations as well as responsibilities of each sector are summarized in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Improving the Satisfaction of Senior Tourists in Thailand

Developing Areas	Recommendations	Public	Private
1. Standard of Hygiene	* Create plan and regulation	X	
	* Distribute plan and regulation to related sectors	X	
	* Educate and training	X	
	* Design reward program	X	
	* Announce rewarding program to related sectors	X	
	* Provide certificate for organization reach standard	X	
	* Create specific organization to review	X	
	* Enhance the Clean Food Good Taste project	X	X
	* Cooperation according plan and regulation		X
	* Responsible own area and neighborhood		X
	2. Nature Preservation	* Create strong law and regulation	X
* Education and training		X	
* Audit existing organization to review enforcement		X	
* Zoning green areas project		X	
* Arrange activities in preserved nature concept		X	
* Manage monthly meeting		X	
* Follow the law and regulation			X
* Review the use of natural resources			X

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Developing Areas	Recommendations	Public	Private
3. Infrastructure / Facility	* Review current infrastructure and facility	X	X
	* Study best practice from developed countries	X	
	* Draw standard as guideline	X	
	* Develop initially in top ten tourist destination	X	
	* Continually develop in other provinces	X	
	* Review and evaluate the developed areas	X	
	* Provide certificate for organization reach standard	X	
	* Follow the existing guideline of standard		X
	* Review and develop private areas		X
4. Accessibility	* Research current public transportation	X	
	* Provide more choices of public transportation	X	X
	* Increase the standard of service	X	X
	* Education and training on standard of service	X	X
	* Design a signet to notify "Senior in car"	X	
	* Build more walk path in public tourist attractions	X	
	* Develop own areas of private sector accordingly		X
	* Create more business along with government plan		X

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Developing Areas	Recommendations	Public	Private
5. Communication	* Communication skill training center	X	
	* Prepare and distribute communication standard	X	
	* Design a signet to notify the skills	X	
	* Research required language of attractive markets	X	
	* Arrange training course for specific languages	X	
	* Coordinate with university for language courses	X	
	* Follow the communication standard of government		X
	* Internal training in each organization		X
	* Internal control in each organization		X
	* Provide feedback of senior tourist to related sectors		X
	6. Service of tour operators /agents	* Coordinate with professional organization	X
* Provide guideline of quality service		X	
* Rating each company with quality of service		X	
* Arrange guidebook with company name/ rating		X	
* Give guideline of training to tour operators/ agents		X	
* Distribute guide book to all company		X	
* Distribute guide book to senior tourists		X	X
* Coordination with all related sectors			X
* Provide special packages and services for senior			X

Table 4.2 (Continued)

Developing Areas	Recommendations	Public	Private
7. Safety	* Maintain good reputation of peaceful Thailand	X	X
	* Control and avoid any risky situation or accident	X	
	* Provide more police or security in public areas	X	
	* Announce contact person for any emergency needs	X	X
	* Enforce traffic rules more strictly	X	X
	* Create plan and guideline on safety basis	X	X
	* Provide training in crisis management	X	X
8. Standard of Price	* Indicate reasonable price in guide book/ websites	X	
	* Add the reasonable prices details in website	X	
	* Distribute guide book to senior tourist	X	X
	* Indicate price on each product item	X	X
	* Review and control standard	X	X
9. Wellness and medical service	* Study physical condition, illnesses and health	X	
	Requirement of seniors		
	* Provide standard guideline of wellness services to related sectors/ organizations	X	
	* Education and training in wellness and medical services	X	
	* Emphasize wellness tourism to attract elderly	X	X
	* Provide medical and health cares center or service	X	X
	* Emphasize health packages	X	X

4.3.2.2 Promoting Thailand as a Senior Tourist Destination

After improving all developing areas, the next step is, to promote Thailand as a senior tourist destination, with the good reputation and positive image of the strongest part of Thailand tourism to supply the senior market, which can generate more income for people and all sectors related in the tourism industry as well as creating more additional revenue during the low season as senior tourists have more available time and are flexible to travel any time, including low season when compared with other age groups. Also, the senior tourist market has special characteristic as “repeater” as well.

Therefore, to promote Thailand as a senior tourist destination, the marketing strategy plan can be suggested as follow:

Marketing Strategies Goal

“To enhance Thailand as senior tourist destination together with the existing reputation to welcome tourists at all ages”

Marketing Objectives

1. To encourage senior tourism targeted to international senior tourist at age 55 years old and over.
2. To generate more revenue from the tourism industry the whole year.
3. To generate more revenue from the tourism industry in the low season period.

Marketing Positioning

Establish Thailand as a senior tourism destination.

Marketing Segmentation

From the characteristic analysis of International senior tourists as well as the research from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (Rojwanlee, 2007), the interesting market segmentation can be presented as follow:

Targeted by Regions:

- East Asia

The East Asian region has the biggest share of international tourist arrivals statistic at 51.33% (TAT, 2006), which is important to get mainly focused as target.

- Europe

Europe has another big share of international tourist arrival statistic shows at 30.55% (TAT, 2006), which is significance enough to target onto this region.

- Australia

Due to the situation happened in Bali, more tourists came to Thailand as well as senior tourists. Also, there are increasing direct flights from Sydney and other cities from Australia to Phuket, which also increase the share of international tourist arrivals from 2.67% in year 2004 to 4.03% in year 2005 and 3.98% in year 2007.

Targeted by Married Status:

- Married

Combination of Regions and Married Status Related to the Size of Travel

Party:

- Asia regions, married and travel with family
- Europe regions and Australia, married and travel with spouse

Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies for promoting senior tourism in Thailand can be designed according to the theory of service markets and management of the marketing mix in service product by Rust: Zahorik and Keiningham (1996) as follows:

● **Product Strategies**

Product is the key main factor of the marketing strategy, especially for tourism, as it is the main selling point of itself. In order to do marketing for senior tourism in Thailand, the product strategies can be recommended as follows:

Increase value added products to existing tourism in Thailand

To create value added to Thailand tourism product by providing more events, activities and festivals to attract senior tourists which can be responsible by both public and private sectors. For example, provide the year tourism schedule which includes the existing and new events, activities as well as festivals provided during the year, such as beach Valentines festival, Northern flowers blossom event and old time Siam event.

Create new option of tourism products according to the needs of senior tourists

To persuade senior tourists to travel to Thailand by creating more choices or options of Thailand tourism products related to the senior tourist preferences, such as

historical tourism, cultural tourism as well as medical and therapy tourism for instance. For example, to enhance historical and cultural tourism in the provinces which already have good strong background on history and are outstanding for Thai traditional and culture, such as Sukkothai and Ayuttaya and also to provide sightseeing tours and offer events to give knowledge about history of each destination.

- **Price Strategies**

Price is one of the important factors of marketing strategies, which can attract senior tourists to select Thailand as their preferred travel destination. Focusing on the current situation, price strategies can be recommended as follows:

- Standard of price

The standard of price setting should be considered to provide consumer protection for senior tourists and to offer them reasonable prices, which refer to the value for money the senior tourist spend for tourism and bring them back with high satisfaction. The price should be fair for either Thai or foreigner which should stop the two price system which is currently used, by providing a guide book for senior tourists to notify the price standard of each type of tourism product and put down the list of private sectors and company names on the guide book to indicate the member name and senior tourists can ensure using service with the member of organization.

- Discount price for senior tourists

To offer senior tourists with special discount prices all tourism products in Thailand such as hotel rooms, restaurants, shopping, tourist attraction entrance fee as well as other activities fee.

- **Place Strategies**

Accessibility to the tourist destination is another important factor for the tourism industry, therefore to develop senior tourism the accessibility development should become a mainly focus in order to bring senior tourist to each promoted attraction. Firstly, the country should increase the transportation capability and quality as well as create more choice for senior tourist to select as their preference and convenient. Secondly, the country should also build new roads to new promoted attractions as well as well maintained the existing ones in good condition to meet the increasing demand and expectation of senior tourist in future. Finally, the country should add all of the details in tourism information media which can distribute or communicate directly to senior tourists, such as guidebook, brochure, etc

Additionally, in each tourist attraction, it should has visitor center with quality information staffs in foreign languages, where senior tourists can be assist with any enquiry and concerns.

- **Promotion Strategies**

Promotion is an important part to influence senior tourists' decision on selecting Thailand as their travel destination, therefore the promotion strategies can be recommended on the following sub-factors:

Advertising and Public relations

From the study, the main targeted markets of senior tourists are East Asia, Europe and Australia and as the research results identified, that most of the senior tourists were traveling with a spouse or family, therefore the advertising should be concerned on this significant travel behavior and directly communicated to the three targeted markets as prioritize

by using appropriate media according to the suitability of each market. For more efficient, the advertising and public relations should communicate and distribute in the international targeted market through the recommended media such as television, magazines, journals, newspapers, brochures, leaflets, tour operators, travel agents for instance, in order to introduce Thailand as a senior tourist welcome destination as well as offer interesting campaigns to motivate senior tourists to decide to travel to Thailand. For example, to offer an exclusive package for married couples as well as family packages which include all requirements when traveling, such as accommodation, daily trips, food and beverage, activities and some entertainment which is suitable for families.

Beside advertising in international markets, the advertising should be done in the domestic markets as well, such as to do value adding on existing products by producing the brochure and tourism manuals that provide in depth information for senior tourists individually and increasing the efficiency of public relations by presenting fast, clear and accurate information with all distributed items and channels.

Sales promotion

Organize and join sales promotion activities especially on international travel trade fairs by forming tourism related services such as hotels, local transportation, and tour companies. Also, governments should coordinate with specialized organizations such as Sag a travel, to work together in developing sale promotion activities.

Packaging

Offer special packages related to the senior tourists motivation, behavior, needs and preferences to support the demand of senior tourists. For example, one stop package including all required items when traveling such as air ticket, appropriate accommodation, food, beverage, medical service, insurance, activities and tours during stay.

Word of mouth

Word of mouth is the best promotion method in tourism. From the study, most of the senior respondents were influenced to travel to Thailand by their previous visit experienced and followed after by family and friends' recommendation, therefore the word of mouth will be the right method to do promotion.

- **People Strategies**

Human resources is one important part of all fields, especially in the tourism industry as it relies on the services which require the quality of the working personnel. Therefore, to emphasize Thai hospitality as the good part of Thailand tourism, which is suitable for tourists at all ages as well as senior tourists. Most of the senior tourists prefer to get recognition as a friend or family while traveling, Thai hospitality and service mind will be appropriate to respond to these expectations and impress senior tourists properly. However, the proper education and training, such as the specific cares for elderly, are required to provide internally in all related sectors and organization (e.g. hotels, activities providers, and restaurant).

- **Process Strategies**

In order to develop Thailand as a senior tourism destination, the appropriated process and step of service management should be systematic in all aspects to achieve high a quality of service, with the consideration of good management as the most important aspect in the development. Therefore, we need the cooperation of various units of different sectors. The whole process usually starts from working out the implementation plan, which should delegate and coordinate into practical application, and follow up with the monitoring and evaluation process which is required to review the implemented plan and solve if there are any problems and obstacles occurring in time for more sufficiency on development.

- **Physical evidence strategies**

Safety and hygiene are the main concern of senior tourists, especially when they decide to travel to other countries which can influence them either to travel or not. Therefore, government and public sectors related to tourism and hospitality should focus and maintain the standard of safety and hygiene to gain the confidence of senior tourists as well as to promote Thailand as a safety and hygiene destination.

In summary, the recommendation of the marketing strategy guideline in order to promote Thailand as a senior tourist destination can be in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Marketing Strategy in order to Develop Thailand as a Senior Tourist Destination

Marketing Mix	Targeted	Action
Product Strategy	Increase value added to existing tourism Create new option of tourism Products	Provide more events, activities and festivals Provide year tourism schedule Offer more selection of tourism product such as historical tourism, cultural attractions
Price Strategy	Standard of price Discount price	Consideration on price setting Provide consumer protection Stop two price system (offer only one price) Provide guidebook to notify reasonable price Offer special discount rate for senior tourists
Place Strategy	Accessibility	Improve accessibility for more convenience Increase quality of public transportation Increase more choice of public transportation Build more roads to promoted attractions Maintain existing roads in good condition

	Visitor center	Add details of information in media Provide visitor center in tourist attractions Provide quality information officers

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Marketing Mix	Targeted	Action
Promotion Strategy	Advertising and public relation Sales promotion Packaging Word of mouth	Research and advertise in main markets Use local medias in targeted markets Offer campaigns to motivate senior tourists Provide manual or brochure to senior tourists Present fast, clear and accurate information Join sale promotion in worldwide travel fairs Offer special exclusive package Increase satisfaction by word of mouth
People Strategy	Education Training Rewarding	Educate human resources related in tourism to understand the developing plan and process Provide training to human resources in all related sectors Offer good and appropriate benefit to quality human resources Provide rewarding program for organization which can well train their human resources

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Table 4.3 (Continued)

Marketing Mix	Targeted	Action
Process Strategy	Systematic management	Require the appropriate process and step of service management systematically
	Collaboration of related sectors	Collaboration of all related sectors
Physical Strategy	Standard of safety	Increase the standard of safety
	Standard of hygiene	Increase the standard of hygiene

4.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Study

There are several limitations of this study in order to develop Thailand as a senior tourist destination which should be in concern for further study that can be suggested as follows:

(1) This research is studying people who are today's 55 years old and over which would include people who are above 60 years old currently, who are the pre-baby boomer generation. As the baby boomer is the specific generation, therefore the baby boomers would demand and behave differently.

(2) This research is focusing on the increasing number of the senior population which is based on the future forecast; therefore the number of senior tourists in the future may be changed if any unexpected situation happens.

(3) The actual sample size was lower than the target sample size, which may have affected the reliability of the statistical analysis.

This research aims to enhance Thailand as a senior tourist destination by firstly providing an overview of the existing tourism in Thailand as well as to review the possibility to be developed, secondly to investigate the travel motivation, behavior and needs of senior tourists, and lastly to give the appropriate suggested guidelines for the proper development.

The research analyzed a sample of 323 respondents from distributed questionnaires collected from 3 targeted provinces including Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang-Mai. In addition, interviews were carried out with 20 senior tourists, 1 government organization and 5 private sectors including hotels and activity providers. The results indicated that there is no specific plan, program or service provided by the government especially for senior tourists yet, while some private sectors provide some special services in a different way depending on the type of business and their own target. Focusing on the senior tourist's point of view on the current Thailand tourism, most of them were satisfied with existing tourism products and services in Thailand and tended to travel back to Thailand again for the next visit. And to increase their satisfaction, there are some areas that need to be improved such as standard of hygiene, nature preservation, current infrastructure, communication skills, and quality of tour operators and agents' services which were closed to the 5 factors approached of senior tourist main concern indicated by Handszuh (1996) which included safety, hygiene, accessibility, environment concern and consumer protections. The research results also identified the travel motivation, behavior and needs of senior tourists which can be summarized "safety" is the main concern of senior tourists when they plan to travel and mostly travel for relaxation and prefer to just do some activity to relax physically and mentally. Most of them decided to travel to Thailand because of their previous visit experience and like to come back again on their next trip which indicated the unique characteristic of senior tourists as "repeater" as well as their potential to travel with available times and money. For the booking arrangement behavior, most of the senior tourists arranged the travel plan by themselves by using different booking options depending on the type of products for example, package mostly booked through travel agent in their home country, air ticket and accommodation mostly booked through the internet, travel insurance booked directly through the insurance company, while activities and daily trips were booked directly through

travel agents in Thailand. For the travel behavior, senior tourists mostly travel with their spouse or family, either with two or four persons in their travel party, and most of them preferred to stay in the hotel or resort as they can rely on the standard of service and facility. The average length of stay of the respondents was 12.25 nights, which was longer than the average length of stay of international tourists at all ages which was indicated at 8.20 nights (TAT, 2005) as well as the average spending of respondents at USD 291.57 per night was also double as much than the average spending of all ages at USD 117.88 per night. These results identified the purchasing power and the significant of financial status of senior tourists.

Based on the results of the research, recommendations are drawn into two areas including: first, to improve the satisfaction of senior tourists in Thailand by improving the identified areas which include (1) standard of hygiene, (2) concern of nature preservation, (3) quality of infrastructure and facility, (4) accessibility, (5) communication skills, (6) standard of local tour operators and agents services, (7) standard of safety, (8) standard of price and (9) wellness and medical cares service. Second, to promote Thailand as a senior tourism destination by using efficient marketing strategies such as establishing Thailand as a senior tourism welcome reputation, emphasizing the uniqueness of Thai hospitality, value adding for existing tourism products as well as providing a variety type of tourism, activities, special promotion and packages for senior tourists, prioritizing advertisement and to the main targeted markets including Asia, Europe and Australia, then expand to other possible fruitful market.

However, in order to develop Thailand as a senior tourist destination, all issues and problems should be addressed and carefully solved not only by the central government but also by private sectors as well as local people whom are involved in the hospitality and tourism industry to get proper collaboration of all stakeholders, including business government, public organizations, company owners and managers, educational institutions as well as local people for more efficient results of the development.