

IMPACT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON TOURISM BUSINESS IN THAILAND TARGETING  
KOREAN TOURISTS



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ผลกระทบจากการระบาดของเชื้อไวรัสโควิด-19 ต่อธุรกิจการท่องเที่ยวของไทยที่มีนักท่องเที่ยวชาว  
เกาหลีเป็นกลุ่มเป้าหมาย



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เหตุการณ์การแพร่ระบาดของไวรัสโควิด-19 ส่งผลให้การเดินทางของผู้คนทั่วโลกต้องหยุดชะงักชั่วคราว ทำให้จำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวลดลงเกือบจะ 100% จึงส่งผลกระทบต่อภาคธุรกิจที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการท่องเที่ยว ซึ่งเป็นหนึ่งในอุตสาหกรรมที่สำคัญและสร้างรายได้จำนวนมาก ประเทศไทยเป็นที่นิยมของนักท่องเที่ยวจากนานาชาติ โดยเฉพาะนักท่องเที่ยวชาวเกาหลีที่เดินทางมาท่องเที่ยวเมืองไทยปีละกว่า 1.8 ล้านคน สร้างมูลค่ากว่า 8 หมื่นล้านบาท ติดอันดับ 1 ใน 5 ประเทศที่มีจำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวเดินทางเข้ามาในประเทศ ซึ่งมีธุรกิจการท่องเที่ยวหลากหลายที่ตอบสนองการใช้บริการของนักท่องเที่ยวเกาหลี ดังนั้นเมื่อเกิดวิกฤตการณ์การแพร่ระบาด กลุ่มธุรกิจดังกล่าวที่มีจำนวนมากได้รับผลกระทบอย่างหนัก จึงเป็นที่มาของการศึกษาเรื่องผลกระทบจากการแพร่ระบาดของไวรัสโควิด-19 ต่อธุรกิจการท่องเที่ยวของไทยที่มีนักท่องเที่ยวชาวเกาหลีเป็นกลุ่มเป้าหมาย การศึกษาครั้งนี้ ได้ใช้การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกกับกลุ่มธุรกิจที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศไทยที่มีกลุ่มเป้าหมายเป็นนักท่องเที่ยวชาวเกาหลี เพื่อให้ทราบถึงผลกระทบและปัญหาหลักที่เกิดจากการแพร่ระบาดของไวรัสโควิด-19 ต่อธุรกิจ และกลยุทธ์ต่าง ๆ ที่ใช้ในการจัดการธุรกิจระหว่างการเกิดวิกฤต อีกทั้งยังเพื่อที่จะระบุวิธีการแก้ไขปัญหาและแนวทางฟื้นฟูการท่องเที่ยวไทยหลังผ่านวิกฤตการณ์ครั้งนี้ ทำให้ได้ผลลัพธ์ว่า ผลกระทบที่ผู้ประกอบการท่องเที่ยวได้รับนั้นจะแตกต่างกันไปตามประเภทของธุรกิจ แต่ส่วนใหญ่เน้นคือการขาดรายได้หลักในการดำเนินธุรกิจเนื่องจากมาตรการการป้องกันและควบคุมโรค ในส่วนของกลยุทธ์ที่ธุรกิจใช้นั้นก็แตกต่างกันตามลักษณะของการให้บริการของธุรกิจ แต่ส่วนใหญ่เลือกใช้วิธีการลดค่าใช้จ่ายต้นทุน เช่น ค่าจ้างบุคลากร และหาวิธีเพิ่มรายได้ ในส่วนของวิธีแก้ไขปัญหานั้น จำเป็นต้องได้รับการช่วยเหลือสนับสนุนจากภาครัฐหรือเอกชน ทั้งในด้านการเงินและนโยบายต่าง ๆ ที่จะส่งเสริม เพิ่มศักยภาพการแข่งขันกับต่างประเทศ การประชาสัมพันธ์ การสร้างความมั่นใจและกระตุ้นนักท่องเที่ยวให้กลับมาท่องเที่ยวโดยเร็ว

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The spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) temporarily stops the global travelling which decreases almost 100 percent of the tourists' number. The situation directly affects Thai tourism industry which is one of the significant industries in Thailand that generates large amount of income each year. This is because Thailand is very popular among international tourists, especially Korean tourists, Korea is ranked one of the top five countries base on the number of tourists entering Thailand with more than a year and Korean tourists spend more than 80,000 million baht each year. There is a variety of services in Thailand for Korean tourists, so during the spread of COVID-19, many businesses in tourism industry faces with severe impact. Thus, this research aims to study the effects of COVID-19 towards Thai tourism businesses which aim at Korean tourists. The research uses an in-depth interview on the related business groups in order to find the effects on and problems faced by, their businesses, and the strategies they use during the crisis. Additionally, the research aims to find the solutions to restore Thai tourism industry after the crisis. The result illustrates that there are different effects toward each type of business, but most of them face with an insufficient income to run the business due to the disease prevention and control measures. Each business has different strategies to cope with the problems, most businesses decide to decrease their cost, such as employees' salary, while trying to increase their income. The tourism industry needs help and support from both government and private sectors on finance and policies which will help them to compete with other countries by increasing public relations and stability in order to accelerate confidence and encourage tourists to return quickly.

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Phreedta Thadaopas

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research background

Tourism plays an important role in generating jobs and contributes significantly to the GDP of countries (Quach, 2013). For Thailand, in 2019, income from foreign tourists was as high as 1.88 trillion baht, approximately 11.42 percent of Thailand's GDP (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, n.d.). The tourism industry of Thailand is the largest and most important sector to drive Thailand's economy (Sangpikul, 2008a). The Thai Government has encouraged and stimulated investment in the tourism industry. In addition, transportation technology has advanced to several places around the world. Furthermore, tourism in Thailand has diverse travel characters, whether cultural tourism, historical or city tourism, at a price that is accessible and offers excellent service. As a result, the number of international tourists visiting Thailand increased from 14.5 million in 2007 to 38.28 million in 2018 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, n.d.). In the past few years, tourist arrivals in Thailand have steadily increased and quickly gained popularity. Moreover, the tourism sector has not only increased employment opportunities within the industry but also creating jobs in other domestic industry sectors. (Pongajarn, 2017)

After the South Korean economy developed in 1980, Korean's outbound market also increased, and Korean tourists started to travel out of the country. Korean tourists have different demographic information and diverse travel motivation. In the Asia Pacific region, the Korean outbound market is more important. In addition, Koreans are major tourists to China, Japan and Southeast Asia. After the growth of Korea's outbound market, Thailand also became a destination for Korean tourists. Moreover, lately, tourism in Thailand has increased through internet publicity and television advertisements in Korea. (Sangpikul, 2008a)

A report by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports shows that the number of Korean tourists who traveled to Thailand increased from 411,087 in 1997 to 1,621,237 in 2018 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, n.d.). Moreover, Korean tourists comprise the top 4 of Thailand's tourism industry after Chinese, Malaysian and Indian tourists, respectively. In addition, Korean tourists are also one of the top 10 creating total revenue for the Thailand tourism sector. Therefore, Korean tourists are important to drive the Thailand tourism sector.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of Coronavirus, under the name Covid-19, spread and impacted all around the world. Especially, in 2019, Thailand which is country that about 11.42% of country GDP is the outcome of Tourism industry. The Office of the National Economic and Development Council of Thailand anticipated that, in 2020, GDP of Thailand could decrease to 1.5-2.5% from the original prediction before

the outbreak of the epidemic at 2.7-3.7% from three main factors as epidemic outbreaks, drought and delay of the 2020 budget. And also anticipated that the number of international tourists will decrease from 40.8 million people to 37 million people in 2020, which leads to a reduction of total revenue at approximately 2,300 billion baht. (Office of the National Economic and Development Council of Thailand, 2016).

Thus, Thailand tourism is directly impacted by coronavirus, with dwindling tourist numbers and forecasts of tourism revenue reduction. And also, Korean tourists are an important target for Thai tourism. Therefore, this research studies the impact of Coronavirus on tourism business stakeholders targeting Korean tourists and how to revive the Thai tourism industry after the crisis of Coronavirus.

## 1.2 Research question

Due to the spread of novel Covid-19, the Thai economy suffered especially in the Tourism sector. The number of international tourists and revenue from the tourism sector sharply dropped. One of them is Korean tourists which are ranked 4<sup>th</sup> of international tourists in Thailand tourism. As a result, the owners of tourism businesses or stakeholders targeting Korean tourists could be seriously affected by the outbreak. Thus, this research has three questions as follows:

- How does Covid-19 outbreak affect owners of tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists and what are the major problems that they have?

- What are the strategies undertaken by owners of tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists to cope with the situation of Covid-19 outbreak?
- What are possible solutions from the government to alleviate the problems caused by Covid-19 outbreak and to revitalize tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists?

### 1.3 Research hypothesis

- The main impact of Covid-19 outbreak on owners of tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists is expected to be reduction of income from tourists and the major problem is expected to be financial liquidity.
- The strategies undertaken by owners of tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists to cope with the situation of Covid-19 outbreak are expected to be the reduction of cost and unnecessary expenses and the change of the focus to the local market.
- Possible solutions from the government are expected to be financial and tax support, advertisements promoting Thailand tourism through Korean news or social media, and cooperation with related sectors.

### 1.4 Research objective

- To study the impact of Covid-19 outbreak on owners of tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists and identify the major problems that they have.

- To identify the strategies undertaken by owners of tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists to cope with the situation of the Covid-19 outbreak.
- To suggest possible solutions by the government to alleviate the problems caused by Covid-19 outbreak and to revitalize tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists.

### 1.5 Research significance

This research studies the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on owners of Thai tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists. Results of the study can estimate guidelines for the Thai tourism business sector and Thai Government or related organizations to deal with the coronavirus situation. Moreover, the outcome of this study can build confidence for Korean tourists to visit Thailand destinations.

### 1.6 Scope of study

This research study is about the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on owners of Thai tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists. The respondents, as tourism related businesses targeting Korean tourists in Bangkok, were interrogated about their opinions on the impact of Coronavirus by one to one in-depth interviews. Their operation and planning during the coronavirus crisis and after the crisis to revive Thailand tourism were analyzed. Other tourism related businesses and government or cooperated organizations were also assessed.



### 1.7 Research methodology

This research used a qualitative approach by one to one in-depth interviews. Data were collected on owners of Thai tourism businesses that targeted Korean tourists. After that, the data were analyzed by content. Moreover, secondary data from previous research, news and government documents were also employed to supplement the analysis.

### 1.8 Definition of terms

Tourism related business: A business relating to tourism in each destination consisting of tour operator business, accommodation business, food and beverage business, product and souvenir business, transportation business, and commercial recreation tourism business. This research only focused on those types of tourism business that targeted Korean tourists.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature and research and consists of two main parts. The first part provides information about tourism with epidemics situation and Covid-19 situation both global and Thailand situation. The second part contains general information about Thailand's tourism and Korean tourists in Thailand.

#### 2.1 Epidemics disease on tourism industry

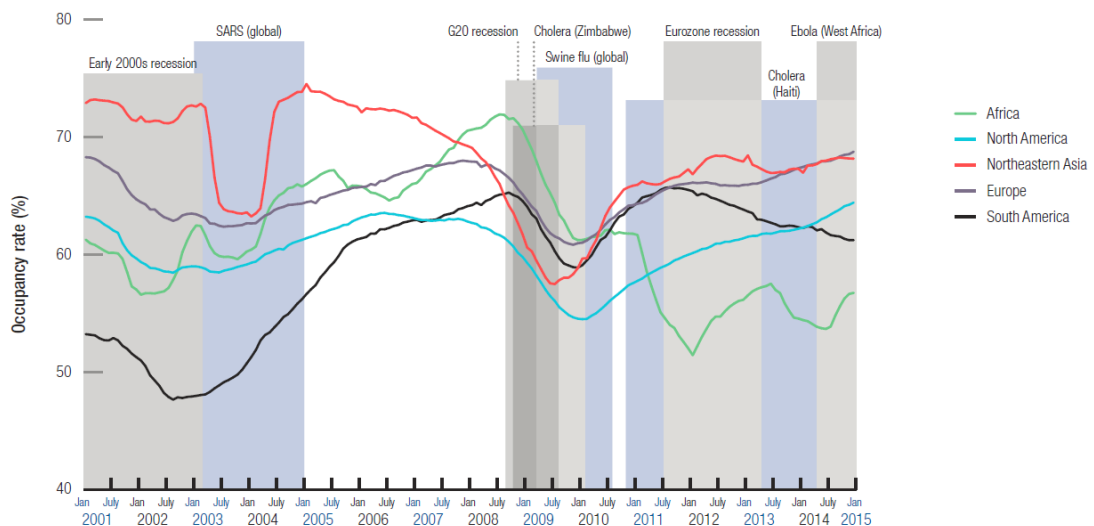
##### 2.1.1 Impact of epidemics on tourism industry

The tourism industry is affected by several uncertain factors for example epidemics, natural disasters or terrorist attacks. (Mylonopoulos, Moira, & Kikilia, 2016) Terrorist attacks and epidemics have a strong effect. However, these two factors have a different effect on tourism depending on countries of origin and destination countries. (Sharon, Shosh, & Oksana, 2012a)

In the past 20 years, the world has faced a number of pandemic diseases whether it be SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), Swine flu, or Ebola. There is great diversity in many terms among these epidemic diseases such as their reach, location, and impact. Diseases could be the reason for rethinking travel decisions to each destination. Figure 1

shows the effect of epidemic diseases on tourism in various global areas. (Misrahi, 2015).

Figure 1 Effects of epidemic disease on tourism in various global areas



Source: STR Global and Deloitte analysis, strictly illustrative.

Source: STR Global and Deloitte analysis

Pandemics impact many countries. For example, the MERS outbreak impacted Korean tourism with a reduction of international visitors to South Korea at around 2.1 million people and total revenue loss of approximately 2.6 billion dollars. (Joo et al., 2019) In addition, the implication of MERS situation, Misrahi (2015) implied that, firstly, as a result of MERS outbreaking most tourists canceled their trips to Korea even though recommendations for travel restrictions from the World Health Organization had not been announced. Secondly, costs in Korea were high, and also, export and customer spending dropped. Thirdly, after crises from pandemics, Korean destinations recovered. Fourthly, security protocols were generated to limit the

outbreak of disease. Since epidemics are usually short-lived, security plans were adapted to each local area. And also, in terms of the global level, international cooperation is important. Finally, governments should also take action. In the case of the MERs outbreak in Korea, the government aimed to limit negative media publicity and developed strong communication in order to build security perceived for the tourism industry. In addition, both private and public sectors should create motivations for tourists such as price reductions.

The Mexican tourism industry was estimated to lose around 5 billion dollars and destinations recovered from swine flu in 2009. Mexico City suffered from cancellations but in early 2010, occupation levels recovered. Moreover, the outbreak of H1N1 in Hong Kong and China also reduced tourism GDP and jobs within the country. (Misrahi, 2015)

The SARS outbreak in 2003 greatly affected the Asian continent tourism sector. The most affected areas were China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Vietnam. Total revenue loss was assessed at around 20 billion in GDP losses, with decreasing tourist arrivals of about 70% over Asian countries. Similar to the Ebola epidemic in 2013, major impact areas were Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Especially in Sierra Leone, tourist arrivals decreased by around 50% from 2013-2014. (Kongoley, 2015a; Rochelle, 2018)

### 2.1.2 Solution of epidemics outbreak situation

After the outbreak of MERS, the Korea tourism organization (KTO) launched the 'Post- MERS 100-day tourism recovery campaign aiming to revitalize and attract foreign visitors back to Korea. For this campaign, the KTO promoted Korea's distinctive touristic appeal to the global community by inviting foreign media. Also, the tourism industry main decision-makers participated in supporting this campaign in main tourism destinations such as Korean cuisine, major local attractions and Hallyu in Table 1.

Table 1 100 days of Korean tourism recovery project

part	Performance content
Foreign media visiting Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chinese journalist invitation (100 people)</li> <li>- Japanese journalist invitation (100 people)</li> <li>- Southeast Asia journalist invitation (50 people)</li> </ul>
Tourism business invitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invited planners for Chinese theme travel agencies (170 people)</li> <li>- Invited group of main Chinese travel agency presidents.</li> <li>- Invited group of main Japanese travel</li> </ul>

	<p>agency presidents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided FAM tour to Middle-east Asia agency.</li> <li>- Provided MEGA-FAM tour American travel agency.</li> </ul>
Medical Tourism Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visiting hospital experience using foreign network in Korea</li> <li>- Online medical Tourism</li> <li>- Production of medical tourism program using overseas celebrities.</li> <li>- Korea international medical tourism convention.</li> </ul>
MICE tourism promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Korean MICE overseas advertisement.</li> <li>- MICE expert media journalist FAM tour.</li> <li>- Participated in Road shows and exhibition event</li> </ul>
Airlines cooperted campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Korean-Japanese Airline Joint campaign.</li> <li>- FAM travel agency tour</li> <li>- Co-marketing with Middle east Asia airlines</li> </ul>

Domestic and oversea events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Korean – Chinese friendship exchange</li> <li>- Cultural tourism events in London, New York, Tokyo and Bangkok</li> <li>- Korea Japan friendship week event.</li> </ul>
Advertisement promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oversea advertisement on CNN and local TV channel in Japan and China.</li> <li>- Domestic advisement about travel promotion on major Korean TV channel.</li> </ul>

Source: Korea News One (Changwook, 2015)

In terms of the Thailand tourism industry and pandemics, a case study of MERS by the Fiscal Policy Research Institute Foundation found that to prevent the outbreak of pandemics, the Thai Government needed to restrict travel from risk countries such as South Korea and The Middle East. This will affect Thailand's tourism both in service and manufacturing. For the service sector, pandemics most impact on restaurants, related nightlife activities and related beach activities, respectively. Product consumption impact affected clothing, souvenirs and accessories, respectively.

Unoperated and irrational efforts to avoid infection led the economic losses during the outbreak of Ebola epidemics. Thus, interconnected global landscape, coordination and cooperation are important for global security. Also, by using the

same principle to communicate, all affected stakeholders have access to timely and accurate information for efficient and optimal decision-making and also all public and private sectors need to pay attention. (Rochelle, 2018)

### 2.1.3 Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak

Coronavirus, known as COVID-19, was first identified as unknown pneumonia causes in Wuhan, China by the World Health Organization on 31 December 2019. After that, Chinese officials announced that this novel virus possibility recurred from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). “Coronaviruses are common and spread through being in proximity to an infected person and inhaling droplets generated when they cough or sneeze, or touching a surface where these droplets land and then touching one's face or nose”. (Jazeera, 2020) The first death from the virus was announced on January 11. After that, on January 13, the first case of an infected person outside China who had traveled from Wuhan was reported in Thailand. The WHO announced the official new coronavirus name would be “Covid-19”. After this, the virus outbreak increased around the world.

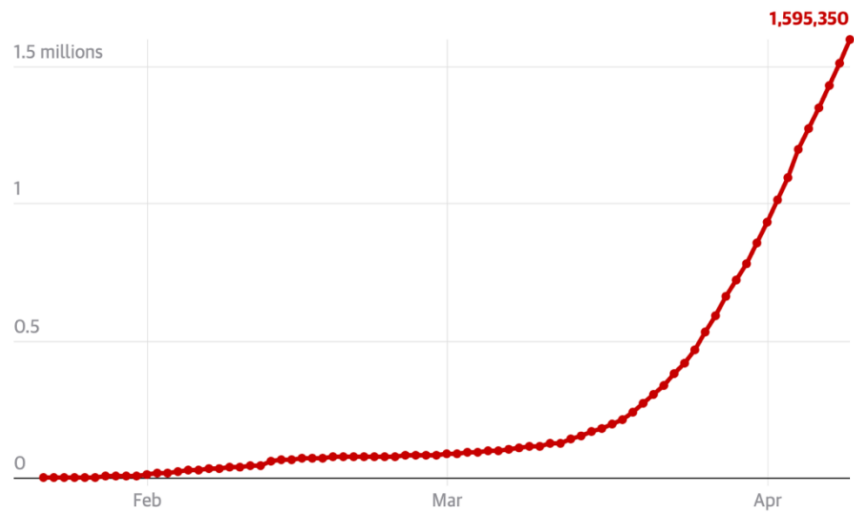
For statistics of Covid-19, data are correct on 10 April. The number of confirmed cases is 1,595,350 people and still rapidly increasing (Figure 2). Moreover, the number of confirmed deaths from Covid-19 is strongly increasing to 95,455 cases all around the world (Figure 3) However, the number of recover cases from Covid-19 also increased (Figure 4). Moreover, recently, Covid-19 outbreak has officially become



a pandemic as announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March.

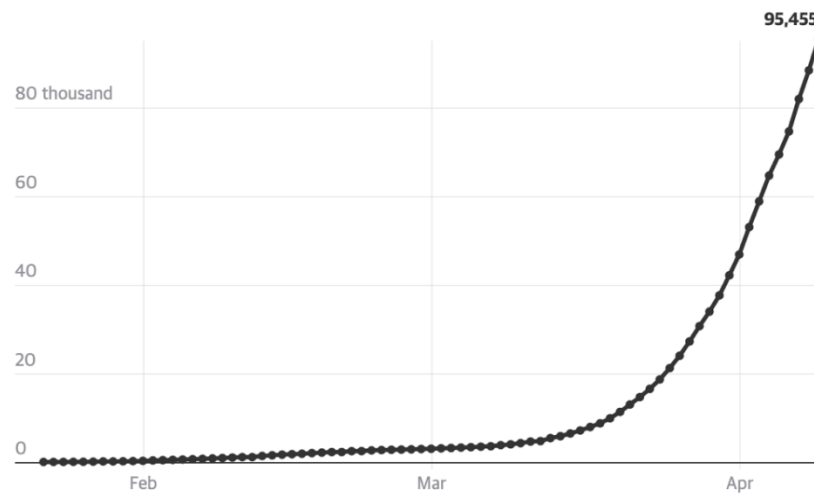
This means that the Covid-19 disease is spreading at a global level.

Figure 2 Confirm cases of Covid-19



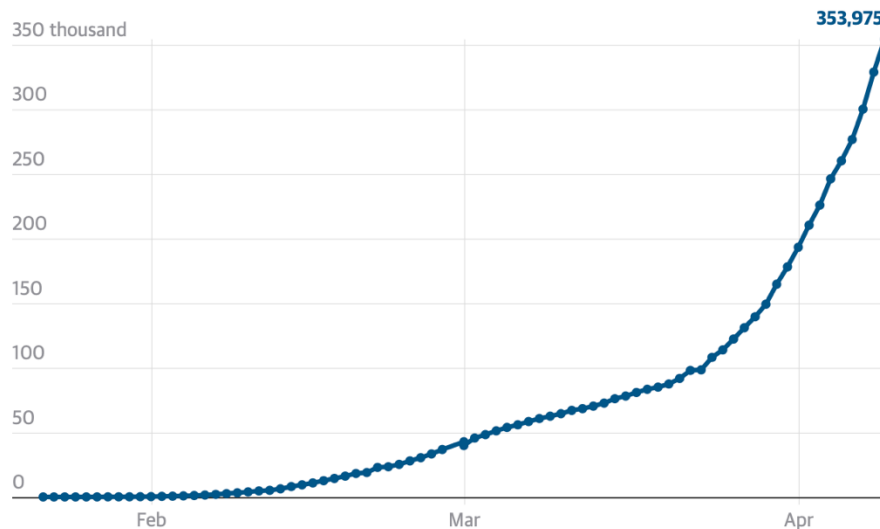
Source : The Guardian News (Gutiérrez, 2020b) , Johns Hopkins CSSE

Figure 3 Confirmed deaths from Covid-19



Source : The Guardian News (Gutiérrez, 2020b), Johns Hopkins CSSE

Figure 4 Confirmed recovered cases from Covid-19



Source : The Guardian News (Gutiérrez, 2020b), Johns Hopkins CSSE

#### 2.1.4 Overview Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Thailand situation

Moreover, recently, the COVID-19, also known as coronavirus outbreak has directly affected Thailand's economy in tourism. China is the largest outbound travel market to Thailand tourism and the tourism sector depends heavily on the Chinese. In addition, first overseas corona confirmed case was occurred in Thailand. As a result, this led to a rapid reduction in the number of international tourists and total revenue from the tourism sector. The number of confirmed infection cases in Thailand is now 2,473 and recovered confirmed cases number 1,013. Recently on 10 April, the first death was confirmed in Thailand. The number of confirmed deaths from Covid-19 is increasing to 33 cases (Department of Disease Control, 2020). As a result, it can be clearly seen from the statistics of international tourists arriving in Thailand on

February from the Ministry of tourism and sport, that the number of international tourists has steadily decreased by 42.78% (Table 3). Moreover, revenue from international tourist also dramatically declined by 43.90% (Table 4).

Table 2 Number of international tourist arrivals classified by month in Thailand

Month	2018	2019	2020
January	3,531,483	3,718,504	3,810,155 (+2.46%)
February	3,552,119	3,603,654	2,061,990 (-42.78%)
March	3,494,645	3,473,088	819,429 (-76.41%)
April	3,096,067	3,195,006	0 (-100%)
May	2,737,834	2,726,808	0 (-100%)
June	3,013,304	3,052,287	0 (-100%)
July	3,177,088	3,327,198	0 (-100%)
August	3,229,031	3,466,456	-
September	2,636,115	2,902,731	-
October	2,704,002	3,042,282	-
November	3,170,996	3,358,592	-
December	3,835,510	3,930,800	-
total	38,178,194	39,797,406	6,691,574 (-83.18%)

\*The brackets show the percentage changed from year 2019

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Table 3 Revenue from international tourists classified by month in Thailand  
(million baht)

Month	2018	2019	2020
January	184,513.52	195,830.15	188,788.29 (-3.60%)
February	182,230.09	184,857.37	103,713.94 (-43.90%)
March	177,544.49	176,258.09	39,510.8 (-77.58%)
April	139,635.97	146,283.02	0 (-100%)
May	118,279.28	118,020.92	0 (-100%)
June	128,769.99	131,322.51	0 (-100%)
July	162,234.73	167,282.51	0 (-100%)
August	159,917.79	169,771.51	-
September	128,410.52	139,621.26	-
October	135,263.14	147,801.38	-
November	162,068.97	163,483.39	-
December	197,268.41	192,836.12	-
total	1,876,136.90	1,933,368.23	332,013.03 (-82.82%)

\*The brackets show the percentage changed from year 2019

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Therefore, The Thai Cabinet established the Corona Epidemic Management Center on March 12. And the first assistance measures from the government for Thai tourism during coronavirus was announced. In order to ease the burden and mitigate

the impact of Covid-19 outbreak for entrepreneurs or business is separated into three main measures. First measure is Financial Measures, the state used the same financial guidelines for middle to small businesses or previous SMEs but also included the tourism business by low interest loan. Moreover, there is still extension of debt payment time and fees in order to improve tourism and related businesses that are affected by Covid-19. Second measure is Tax measures by reducing the tax rate of domestic flight fuel from 4.762 baht per liter to 0.20 baht per liter until 30 September. And also, support domestic seminars and support improving the hotel business in Thailand. Third measure is other aid measures is mitigating the burden of water supply bills and electricity bills which is benefit for tourism business such as accommodation business.

And the second assistance measures from government was issued on March 24, focusing on assisting workers and small business. However, there is also a section that helps business involved in tourism industry. That is loan project by SME development bank to help small business in order to support business operations and ease the burden of expenses that focus on the tourism business, including the tour business, spa business, related transportation business (Bus, Van, Tour Boat, Car Rental), accommodation business and food and beverage business that be suffered from the impact of Covid-19 outbreak. and also postponed tax payments to oil industry operators and services businesses that had to be closed because they were the place that risk of infection.

For measures in place for Thai tourism, the Ministry of Public Health is implementing surveillance at all entry points to Thailand including ground, sea and air. And also, the ministry is continuing to follow the current situation for effectiveness in disease control. In addition, tourism related businesses, have to cooperate and step into hygiene measures to face this crisis

For Thai tourism private sectors and related businesses such as Airport Rail link, MRT subway mass transit systems, department stores and hotels are implementing Covid-19 control measures. For example, transportation systems and many department stores have set up screening points at the entrance of stations, and also provide hand sanitizer gel at common areas. In part of Covid-19 control measures in hotel, hotel operations need to inquire about customers travel history, and also observe health status of customers during their stay at the hotel. Moreover, provide masks to customers and set alcohol dispensers in public areas. For housekeeping of hotel need to increase awareness for cleaning surfaces, especially careful in remote control, light switch, glass of water, telephone and door handles, and also have to wear masks and rubber gloves while working.

the interior minister of Thailand officially announced visa cancellations on arrival for 18 risk countries including Bulgaria, Bhutan, China, Taiwan, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, Malta, Mexico, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Vanuatu. Also, visa exemption for 3 countries, including South Korea, Italy and Hong Kong to control the outbreak of Covid-19. All

visitors from these countries who want to come to Thailand have to apply for a visa at the Thai Embassy or travel with a medical certificate to prove about infection from Covid-19. This is a temporary measure until the outbreak situation improves (Bangkok Post and Reuter, 2020).

Recently, On March 26, there was an Emergency Decree announced by the Thai cabinet in order to resolve quickly and to prevent more violent situations. In which the articles relating to the tourism industry are closing the site of risk of Covid-19 infection which is to temporarily close a place where groups of people are gathered, and closing domestic channels whether traveling by land, sea or air. Those above requirements are applied until April 30.

Since the outbreak has been so severe, the closure of the entry into the country occurred. It had a heavy impact on the country's economy. In particular, the tourism sector that has a direct impact on tourism sector related businesses. And tourism related businesses that will be most affected by this outbreak situation are product and souvenir, accommodation and food and beverage businesses. Including the loss of employment rate by 0.5-1% that affects 180,000-500,000 workers (Pracachat business, 2020). For example, Asia Hotels, in Ratchathewi, are also affected by the number of missing tourists. Until the executives decided to close down the hotel for 2 months. With a policy that provides a suspend work without paying salary, employees are a group of people that are affected. However, the executives allowed employees to sale hotel food by receiving daily wages in order to help the

employees earn money during outbreak crisis (Wongpanya, 2020a). And a tourist bus operator in Phuket said that the company was affected by outbreak of Covid-19 epidemic. The decreasing of international tourists' number from impact of outbreak caused the service bus in company to stop approximately 1,200 buses and led to unemployment of workers in company. Moreover, the Ministry of Commerce states that There are 8 hotels submitted requests for bankruptcy, while 21 restaurants decided to stop proceeding their business (bangkokbiznews,2020)

these impacts to tourism-related businesses might be not only directly affecting the within tourism industry but also affect other related industries and unemployment and lack of income of people in the country also occurred as well. Because of the tourism industry having a multiplier effect which means the tourism industry not only generates income directly within the tertiary sector but also supports growth of primary and secondary sectors. and Revenue from the tourism industry is widely distributed to the population and creates job in country. (Rusu, 2011a; Trebicka, 2016) Therefore, our country needs to prepare for the restoration of tourism industry after the outbreak of Covid-19 in order to shorten the damage period and provide more less damage to tourism related business as well.



## 2.2 Background information of Thailand tourism and Korean tourists

### 2.2.1 General information of Thailand Tourism

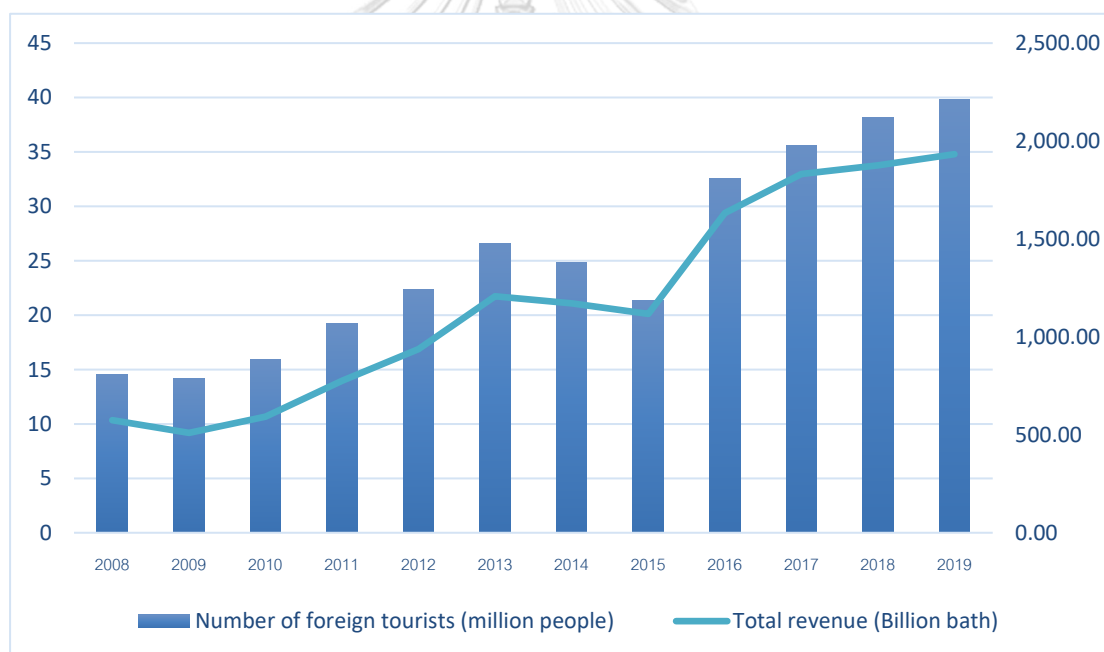
The tourism industry is vital to grow Thailand's economic development. This sector also provides careers and rising income opportunities in Thailand. Pongajarn (2017) stated that increasing numbers of tourists and tourism practices have changed the natural culture in Thailand. Technology innovation has developed Thailand as a tourism destination. The Netherlands Embassy in Bangkok stated about Thailand tourism in 2017, "Thailand has one of the most developed tourism markets in Asia. The 'Land of Smiles', is known for its hospitality, beautiful beaches, historical places and eco-attractions, its world-famous cuisine, good infrastructure and affordable accommodation" and Bangkok, which is the capital of Thailand, is recorded in the top 10 of the world's most attractive cities to visit. Besides Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya and Chiang Mai are well-known tourist destinations within Thailand.

For types of tourism in Thailand, Sharafuddin (2015) classified type of Thailand tourism from Tourism Authority of Thailand consisting of Adventure tourism, Eco tourism, Medical tourism, Cultural tourism, wellness tourism, MICE (meetings, incentive travel, conventions, exhibitions tourism), Cruise tourism, Sports tourism and educational tourism.

Figure 5 indicates the growing number of foreign tourists and the total revenue from the tourism industry of Thailand in the past decade. In 2019, the

number of foreign tourists was 39,797,406 people. When compared to last year, the growth rate was 4.24 %. Total revenue from the tourism industry was 1,933,368.23 million baht and the growth rate were 3.05 percent when compared to total revenue of last year. The largest number of foreign tourists were from China, Malaysia, India and South Korea, respectively (Table 4), while the highest total revenue was from Chinese, Malaysian, Russian and Japanese tourists, respectively (Table 5).

Figure 5 Number of international tourists and tourism total revenue 2008 – 2019



Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Table 4 Top 10 of the highest number of international tourists in 2019

No.	Country	Number of tourists (people)
1	China	10,994,721
2	Malaysia	4,166,868
3	India	1,995,516
4	South Korea	1,887,853
5	Laos	1,845,375
6	Japan	1,806,340
7	Russia	1,483,453
8	USA	1,167,845
9	Singapore	1,056,836
10	Vietnam	1,047,629

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Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Table 5 Top 10 of highest total revenue from international tourists in 2019

No.	Country	Total revenue (million baht)
1	China	543,707.33
2	Malaysia	106,728.72
3	Russia	103,784.23
4	Japan	89,807.95
5	India	86,372.01
6	USA	83,276.12
7	South Korea	74,367.38
8	United Kingdom	74,164.38
9	Australia	56,227.85
10	Laos	54,881.26

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

However, Thailand tourism economic report (2019) also stated about Thailand tourism situation that, in 2019, foreign tourists are still visit in Thailand with an increase of 19.76 million, an increase from 19.42 million in 2018 but less growth compared to the same period in the last few years which increased by only 1.17 percent. In term of income of tourism industry found that, in the first six months of 2019, it was the smallest expansion in the last 3 years, which may be the result of

several factors such as decline in Chinese tourists from the trade war with the United States or the reduction of confidence in safety of Thailand.

Several situations impact Thailand tourism such as natural disasters, epidemics, accidents, crimes and political events. Concern about safety and security is the main decision factor in choosing Thailand as a destination and led to a bad image for Thailand tourism. Thus, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports announced an urgent policy to drive the Thailand tourism economy and bring back the good image of Thailand tourism. That policy consists of 1. Raising safety and security to build confidence for tourists, 2. Promoting cleanliness and environmentally friendly concepts, 3. Promoting fairness to prevent exploitation of tourists, and 4. Generating income through local distribution for sustainable inequality reduction.

### 2.2.2 Tourism business in Thailand

The major function of the tourism industry is to serve tourists. Its success depends on providing a positive experience for tourists and the synergy of the main business sectors. This can be classified into six types of business as follows;

The tour operator business brings tourists to several attractions for leisure reasons or other purposes by providing services and facilities such as accommodation, food and tour guides. In Thailand, there are four main types of tour operators as Inbound tour operator that operates tours for foreign tourists, Outbound tour operator that operates domestic tourists for overseas travel, Domestic tour operator

that operates trips for domestic tourists to domestic travel, and Local tour operator that manages tours in specific local areas.

The accommodation business provides temporary accommodation to tourists or visitors by compensation which can be considered as nine types and several prices depending on type of accommodation. These nine types of accommodation are hotel, motel, guest house, homestay, bungalow, condominium or apartment, hostel or dormitory, tourist holiday villages and campground. For hotel type, in Thailand, there are three kinds separated by managing process as independent hotel, hotel without joint ownership or management committee with other hotels that can independently generate policy or management system. Local chain hotels that developed along with the growth of the first successful hotel such as Dusit Hotel have the biggest number of hotels with chains not only in Thailand but also in foreign countries; the Philippines, United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia. Lastly, internationally managed hotels. In Thailand, there are many, for example, the Accor group under trade names as Sofitel, Novotel, Mercure. In addition, there are eight main divisions in hotels which are room division, front office department, housekeeping department, food and beverage division, engineering division, accounting and finance division, sales and marketing division, and human resource division. Thus, each division involves labor and material resources to implement the hotel business.

The food and beverage business provide food and beverage to tourists during their trip. Thai food is famous among international tourists. From 1998 to 1999, foods were categorized as one of the outstanding products in Thai tourism under the project of 'Amazing taste of Thailand'. Moreover, the food and beverage business related to the tourism industry is separated into four main types as restaurant, food and beverage in hotel business including food and beverage vending machine, food and beverage businesses in various establishments, and food and beverage business in transportation such as airplane, train, tour bus, and ship.

Product and souvenir business. Shopping is an important activity while traveling to any destination. Tourists always need to consume individual essential commodities that they can buy at each destination. On the other hand, local products also attract tourists' attention. Moreover, tourists can buy local products as souvenirs at each destination. As a result, in many countries, souvenirs have been used as a selling point at tourism destinations.

The transportation business is important for tourists to easily and safely access destinations or attractions. More progress in transportation brings more technology in the transportation business that can make transportation time shorter. Thus, tourists can enjoy destinations and consume more.

The commercial recreation tourism business is related to activities and services which meet the needs or purposes of traveling that will profit from the participation of tourists in activities. In addition, this business tends to expand more

because tourists want relaxing places due to social changes. This business also provides high compensation.(Camilleri, 2018)

### 2.2.3 Business model

The business model is the initial concept and the cornerstone in formulating a good and complete business plan. (Chuenjit Aungvaravong, 2017) The importance of a business model is in terms of development of the organization or entrepreneur, and to drive the organization or entrepreneur to plan and make use of a business plan effectively.(Treesamutul, 2015)

Business model building was developed by Alexander Osterwalder (2005) who invented The Business Model Canvas as a tool to help to give a complete visualization while planning the business. Moreover, it helps to determine strategies, evaluate the success of the plan and choose a business model that is effective and suitable for each business. This model can be divided into 9 building blocks for planning and determining strategies.

- Value Proposition is defining how the products or services of the business create value for customers to be a factor that makes customers decide to buy a product or use business services. For example, novelty or quality of products and services, business image, price strategy or user-friendliness and access to product and services.



- Customer Segment is defining the main target audience of the business which is the most important principle in making a business model process. It can be determined from the needs of the target audience and the behavior of the target group. It allows businesses to offer products and services that meet the needs of their customers as well.
- Customer Relationships is the process to identify the types of business relationships that businesses want to have with customers at different levels. In addition, there is a marketing communication strategy in order to create brand awareness and recognition of the business' brand, such as advertising or organizing promotional marketing activities.
- Channels is the process of defining communication channels, products distribution channels, sales channels and the marketing channels that the company uses to communicate with customers that create awareness of the company's products and services. It also gives customers the opportunity to identify specific needs and help the company to provide after-sales service to customers as well. Choosing the right access channel is beneficial to the business. There should be both online and offline channels to allow customers to have access to products and services as much as possible.
- Revenue Streams is a form of income which is the cash that the business receives after deducting expenses. The revenue stream can be a one-time

purchase of a product, a re-purchase, a purchase of service, or after-sales service purchase.

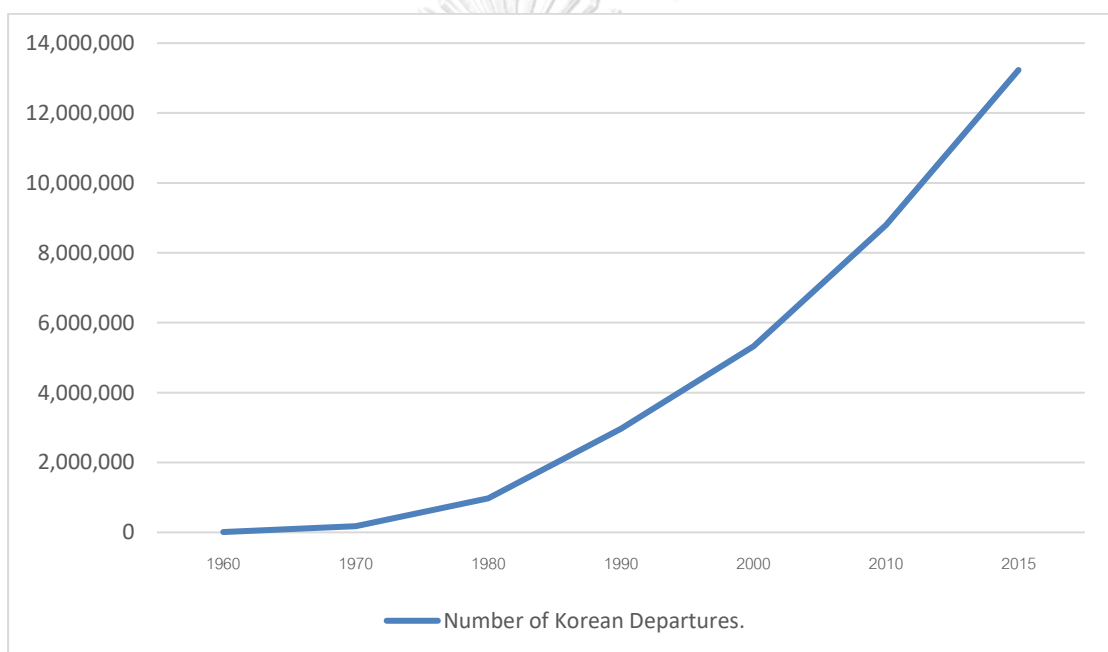
- Key Resources are the organization's most important resources that are essential to the successful implementation of a business plan. For example, Physical resources, financial resources, intellectual property and human resources etc.
- Key Activities is the process to identify the key activities that a business has to perform. For example, manufacturing, providing products and services, solving problems for customers and building networks.
- Key Partners is the building of business partnership that is essential to business. The businesses have a partner to create the best benefits for the business, to reduce risks and to acquire business resources as well.
- Cost Structure is the total cost incurred in the implementation of the business model specified by the company, which can be calculated from the activities specified in Key Resources, Key Activities and Key Partners (Osterwalder,2005).

### 2.2.3 Background information about Korean tourists in Thailand

The economic development of Korea strongly increases the desire to travel abroad by Korean tourists. According to Figure 6, there are many research studies on

Korean tourists in several ways such as travel motivation or travel behavior. Korean tourists are also an important part of Thai tourism because numbers of Korean visitors to Thailand are one of the ten largest numbers of people who travel to Thailand, and also generate the highest total revenue for tourism in Thailand.

Figure 6 Number of Korean departures in 1960 – 2015



Source: Korea Tourism Organization

Table 6 shows statistical data about Korean tourists in Thailand. The number of Korean tourists doubled in the past decade. In 2019, there were 1,887,853 Korean tourists. When compared to last year, it was found that the growth rate was 5.09 percent. Tourism receipts from Korea have increased almost 3 times since 2008. Moreover, the growth rate was 4.39 percent when compared to the total revenue of

2018. It is also interesting to see from this statistic that the number of Korean tourists traveling by tour companies was higher than in the past. However, in 2019, the number of tourists who traveled by themselves dramatically increased.

General information of the Korean inbound travel market to Thailand is provided by the Tourists' In-depth Behavior Analysis in 2018 of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. This travel behaviors analysis found that the average duration of stay is 5.95 days. In addition, Korean tourists mostly travel with friends and family. And average of the top 10 factors that affect travel decision of Korean tourists visiting Thailand in 2018 found that variety of tourism activities and attractions, recommendations from family or relatives, interesting in local culture and Thai food are important to decide Thailand as the most destination respectively.

Table 6 Number of Korean arrivals in Thailand 2008 - 2019

Year	No. of total Korean Arrivals	No. of Arrivals		Per Capita Spending (baht/day)	Tourism Receipts (million baht)
		Group tour	Non group tour		
2008	897,918	547,511	350,407	4629.03	26,850.91
2009	620,700	331,832	288,868	4,451.99	18,265.70
2010	805,179	422,521	382,658	4,564.43	24,623.79

2011	1,001,105	507,976	493,129	4,670.19	34,130.05
2012	1,153,457	579,317	574,140	4,811.40	42,399.85
2013	1,292,335	670,312	622,023	5,020.36	49,697.91
2014	1,109,429	462,913	646,516	5,278.49	43,569.40
2015	1,359,211	504,652	854,559	5,417.58	56,847.18
2016	1,449,617	523,605	926,012	5,654.87	63,365.85
2017	1,698,608	621,437	1,077,171	5,848.98	75,506.73
2018	1,785,147	656,858	1,128,289	5,520.98	71,158.50
2019	1,887,853	-	-	-	74,367.38
	(+5.09)				(+4.39)

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

General information of the Korean inbound travel market to Thailand is provided by the Tourists' In-depth Behavior Analysis in 2019 of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. This travel behaviors analysis found that the average duration of stay is 5.65 days. In addition, Korean tourists mostly travel with friends and family. An average of the top 10 factors that affect travel decision of Korean tourists visiting Thailand in 2019 found that variety of tourism activities and attractions, recommendations from family or relatives, interesting in local culture and Thai food are important to decide Thailand as the most destination respectively.

In terms of the travel characteristics of Korean tourists, 14.83% of Korean tourists travel with a travel agency, and others travel by managing their own travel plans (85.62%). As for the expenses of the tourists who manage their own travel plans, their expenses are described in Table 7.

Table 7 The expenses of the independent tourists in 2019

Expenses	Amount (baht: per person/ per trip)
Accommodation	24,090.49
Food and Beverages	5,600.05
Shopping	5,762.38
Activities	12,650.77
Transportation (exclude airfare)	3,090.59

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand  
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Mostly, the channels for receiving information about Thailand tourism are Social media, Friends and family respectively. In addition, most Korean tourists also reserve Table 8 shows the travel purpose of Korean tourist. Relaxing, honeymoon, shopping and business are the popular reasons to Travel to Thailand respectively.

Figure 8 indicates the distribution of Korean tourists in various provinces of Thailand. Korean tourists travel on average to 1.45 provinces per person, and most of them travel to Bangkok, Chon Buri, Phuket and Chiang Mai, respectively.

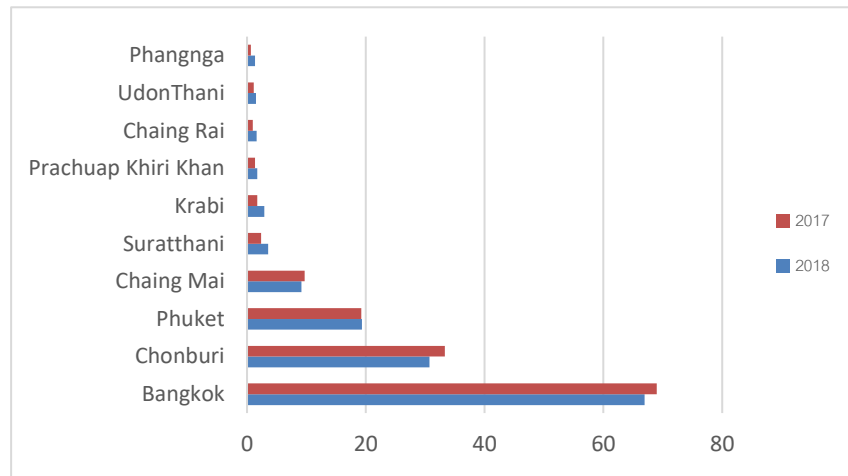
Table 8 Travel purpose of Korean tourists in 2019

Travel purpose of Korean tourists	Amount (Percentage)
Relaxing	83.93
Business	3.41
Diving	2.04
Shopping	1.81
Wedding and Honeymoon	1.70
Relatives visiting	1.67
Sports	1.34
Conference	0.96
Educational	0.28

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

Figure 7 indicates the distribution of Korean tourists in various provinces of Thailand. Korean tourists travel on average to 1.37 provinces per person, and most of them travel to Bangkok, Chon Buri, Phuket and Chiang Mai, respectively.

Figure 7 Distribution of Korean tourists in various provinces of Thailand



Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

Figure 7 shows that Korean tourists like to visit large cities with various attractions and convenient transportation. Thus, Bangkok is the most popular province for Korean tourists. Tourist attractions in Bangkok that are popular among Korean tourists are as follows (Table 9).

Table 9 List of tourist attractions in Bangkok of Korean tourists in 2019

Tourist attractions	Proportion (%)
Khao san Road	27.21
Terminal 21	19.31
The Grand Palace	18.69
JJ Market	14.55
Restaurants in Bangkok	13.92
General tourist spot in Bangkok	12.55
Siam Center	11.67

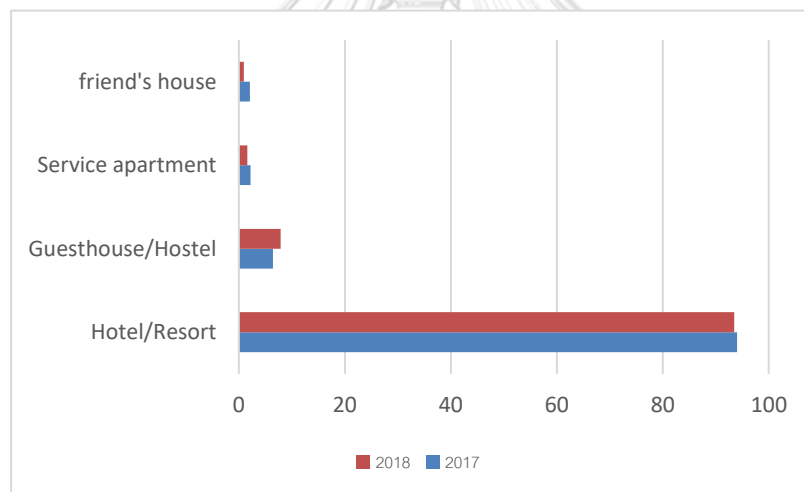


Siam Paragon	11.61
Bangkok street food	7.88
Café in Bangkok	6.93

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

Moreover, according to figure 8, this survey found that Korean tourists' average duration of stay is 5.95 days and the type of accommodation that most of Korean tourists stay in the hotel or resort.

Figure 8 Type of accommodation of Korean tourists in 2019



Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

A survey of the proportion of Korean tourists doing activities and consuming various products found that during the 2 years of the survey, the most famous activities among Korean tourists in Thailand were eating Thai food, spa and massage, visiting historical sites and beach sightseeing, respectively (Table 10). As for the

consumption of Korean tourists, in 2019, tourists who were shopping during travel in Thailand accounted for 87.84 percent. The products that Korean tourists like to buy are Thai food products, souvenirs and clothing, respectively (Table 11).

Table 10 Activities of Korean tourists in Thailand in 2019

Activities	Participated (%)	Not participated (%)	Expenses (baht/per person per trip)
Eating Thai food	90.70	9.30	4,482.09
Massage and spa	76.66	23.34	3,443.16
Historical sight seeing	53.84	46.16	1,123.66
Beach sight seeing	48.10	51.90	1,985.39
Night life	47.83	52.17	4,335.33
Local life learning	27.65	72.35	1,464.93
Natural sight seeing	23.24	86.76	884
Snuggle diving	17.71	82.29	1,869.59
Theme park, Amusement park	10.34	89.66	1,960.85
Golf	6.80	93.20	17,452.97
Adventure	6.44	93.56	2,888.41
Scuba diving	3.55	96.45	12,224.78
Festival	2.24	97.76	1,391.59
Thai food learning	1.94	98.06	2,437.27
Health check or surgery	0.35	99.65	20,536.89
Thai Boxing	0.96	99.04	1,334.20

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

Table 11 Famous shopping items among Korean tourists in 2019

Products	Consumed (%)	Not consumed (%)	Expenses (baht/per person per trip)
Thai food products	58.40	41.60	3,157.91
Souvenirs	51.75	48.25	2,369.73
Clothing	43.68	56.32	3,471.47
Cosmetics/Fragrances	21.42	78.58	3,352.08
Craft products	8.15	91.85	2,735.91
Leather goods	8.04	91.96	3,916.80
Accessories/Gems	6.25	93.75	7,181.79
Thai silk	3.02	96.98	2,205.12
Furniture	1.34	98.66	8,151.97
Electric equipment	0.40	99.96	4,030.69

Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

And from the table 12 shows the number of Korean tourists classified by month. It can be seen that the periods that Korean tourists are more likely to travel to Thailand than usual are on January, February, August and December

Moreover, after their trip, Korean tourist tend to sharing their trip experience though both online and offline. But, in term of Thailand tourism, Korean tourists still low confidence about safety and cleanliness of Thailand tourism. So, we should take look to study about Korean tourist market in our country and also study about

several aspect of Korean tourists' satisfaction in order to improve and benefits for tourism industry competitiveness of Thailand.

However, if comparing with the number of Korean tourists who have traveled abroad, Korean tourists traveling abroad are still much higher than Korean tourists in Thailand because of competition in the global tourism industry. For instance, Laos and Vietnam have tourist attractions, destination image, cultural characteristics and weather similar to Thailand. It can be seen in a survey of Korean tourism news that Korean people decided to travel to Vietnam more than Thailand on their holiday. For this reason, the growing rate of tourists may slow down. Moreover, due to the outbreak of Covid-19, it can be clearly seen from the statistics of Korean Tourists arriving in Thailand from Ministry of tourism and sport, that the number of Korean tourists, on February 2020, has steadily decreased by 72.59% compared to the same period last year. (Table 12)

Table 12 Number of Korean tourist arrivals classified by month in Thailand 2017 - 2020

Month	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	171,485	197,620	208,158	200,808 (-3.71)
February	163,559	159,983	184,406	50,549 (-72.59%)
March	128,236	143,644	144,524	8,451 (-94.5%)
April	116,407	115,859	118,145	0 (-100%)
May	112,223	122,680	111,911	0 (-100%)

June	133,770	141,555	140,243	0 (-100%)
July	152,532	153,524	166,107	0 (-100%)
August	164,028	164,137	180,418	-
September	134,475	135,484	145,528	-
October	123,236	132,018	151,047	-
November	147,772	154,562	155,728	-
December	161,542	175,360	181,638	-
total	1,709,265	1,796,426	1,887,853	259,808 (-86.23%)

\*The brackets show the percentage changed from year 2019

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter purposes to describe research methodologies used to study about the impact of Coronavirus to stakeholders in Thailand tourism business sector, targeting Korean This chapter provides the discussion about data collection, population and sample determination, and data analysis.

#### 3.1 Research design

This is a qualitative research approach with examination by using secondary data and in-depth interviews. Data were collected from several sources in order to apply in this research. The main data collection method was in-depth interviews of tourism related businesses targeting Korean tourists with opened-ended questions.



#### 3.2 Sample group

Samples in qualitative research are stand-ins for much of the population to deepen understanding about processes or relationships.(Neuman, 2014) Thus, in this research, samples are tourism related businesses that target Korean tourists, chosen from tourism related businesses that are popular among Korean tourists. Samples business list were set and chosen by recommendation of Korean social media about Thailand tourism, for example Travelholic, Naverpost, Getabout Travel webzine or

Korean Instagram hashtag about Thailand Tourism. Sample size in this research approximately around 12 -15 businesses or doing the interview until saturation point of answers. In the case that it is not possible to contact the tourism business chosen by the researcher, this research will use snowball sampling technique in order to be able to complete the sample size. Types of businesses sample that selected by the researcher are as follows;

1. Accommodation businesses in Thailand
2. Food and beverage businesses in Thailand
3. Tour operator businesses in Thailand
4. Product and souvenir businesses in Thailand

### **3.3 Research instrument**

This study used qualitative research that focused on the impact of the epidemic on the Thai tourism business and stakeholders with Korean tourists targeted using in-depth interviews. Tourism-related businesses with Korean tourists were targeted.

### **3.4 Questions for interviews**

The questions used in the interviews for tourism related businesses that target Korean tourists were developed by reviewing the literature, news and consulting with an advisor. Questions are as follows;

1. Basic information about tourism businesses such as type of business, revenue, business cost, labors.
2. How does Covid-19 impact your business and have you ever anticipated or prepared for this kind of situation?
3. What is the major problem from the impact of Covid-19 outbreak in Thailand to your business?
4. How does your business adjust to cope with the outbreak situation?
5. how does your business plan to prepare for the situation after this crisis?
6. Does your business need a government assistance policy? And if you want, what kind of policy do you need from the government? (Both during and after the outbreak situation)

### 3.5 Data collection

This researcher collected the data separately from two sources as follow

#### - Primary data collection

Primary data collection is In-depth interviews. It will be collected from the list of tourism businesses that popular among Korean tourists and Korean social media recommendations about Thai tourism and snowball sampling technique is adopted to help when cannot contact the business in prepared tourism business list. The interview will finish when gathering data until interview until saturation point of answers. During interviews, the researcher uses question outline and sub-question to



probe and better understand by taking and motivating the respondent to be willing and free when answering the question. The question can be adjusted depending on the situation and background of the respondent.

- **Secondary data collection**

Secondary data collection are literature review, News and Government document

### 3.6 Data analysis

After data are collected, these collected data will be analyzed with secondary data by content analysis. And after each interview, there will be sorting before data analysis in order to confirm the accuracy of the data.

### 3.7 Safety measure

To ensure that the researcher does not get infected with Covid-19 during the data collection process, all interviews will be conducted via a telephone, after first contacting for permission.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

This research study investigated the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on Thailand tourism business targeting Korean tourists by using qualitative research with in-depth interviews during the period from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 to 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020. For in-depth interviews, the target groups were separated into five groups including accommodation business, food and beverage business, tour operator business, massage and spa service business, and product and souvenir business.

According to the study, the researcher presented the interview results from Thailand tourism-related business targeting Korean tourists, which are divided into three main parts:

- Part 1: General information about each type of tourism business. This part aims to identify the characteristics of each business, as well as the outcome and managing costs for each type of business.
- Part 2: The impact and opinion about the outbreak of Covid-19 on each type of business. This part aims to identify the major problems from the Covid-19 outbreak on tourism businesses, as well as how each tourism business copes during the outbreak situation, the different scenarios forecasting each tourism business, and the plan for each business to prepare for post-crisis.

- Part 3: Opinions about government assistance and Thailand tourism restoration. This part aims to identify a possible solution and alleviate the problems caused by the Covid-19 outbreak on tourism businesses, both during and post-crisis.

### Interview session analysis

#### 4.1 General information about each type of tourism business

The researchers chose a business that is a target group of researchers from the business popular among Korean tourists in Bangkok using websites and social media. Due to international tourists' in-depth behavior analysis in 2018 by the Tourism Authority of Thailand, it was found that Korean tourists are mainly touring in Bangkok. The researchers interviewed businesses for diversity in terms of category and size, including 14 businesses, as in Table 8.

Table 13 Types of target business groups

Type of business	Amount
Accommodation business	4
Food and beverage business	3
Tour operator business	2
Massage and Spa business	2
Product and Souvenir business	3

The general information from each tourism business included three main parts, comprised of characteristics, turnover, and managing costs for each business, divided by types of business.

#### 4.1.1 Characteristics of each tourism business

Accommodation business - The researcher conducted interviews in big hotels with approximately 600 employees and 565 rooms as well as guesthouses with only 4 to 5 employees and 10 rooms. Some businesses are also a combination of two types of businesses such as accommodation businesses that provide restaurants and drinks or accommodations businesses, which sell tourist souvenirs as well. Moreover, most of the Korean customers will book online, with few to no Korean tourists staying by walk-ins.

Food and beverage businesses - According to the in-depth survey of international tourist behavior (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018), it was found that most of the food and beverage businesses that are popular among Korean tourists are Thai food. Thus, the researchers decided to choose Thai restaurants popular with Koreans, both single branch businesses and multi-branch businesses. Also, there are both single restaurants and restaurants located in the tourist market, especially the Ratchada train night market. Various businesses said that most of their customers were Korean and Chinese, while some restaurants located near tourism attractions said that “Most Korean customers will come to eat from a review via social media as

the restaurants are located at the bottom and there are stores that sell the same food in the market. If you don't follow the reviews, you probably won't find them” This shows that Korean tourists mainly use social media for making decisions about food.

Tour operator businesses varied due to the number of Korean tourists who changed their travel behavior from group tours to independent travel. Because traveling to other provinces besides Bangkok is difficult, Korean tourists choose to use tour operators for small or private group tours or one-day trips (Tourism Authority of Thailand,2018). The researcher conducted a survey of the tour operator business in private groups by surveying whether the business owners were Thais or Korean.

Products and souvenir businesses, which are mostly located at Chatuchak Weekend Market, Terminal 21, Platinum, and Asiatique, are popular shopping places for Korean tourists. The business of this type is mostly small businesses in the household and has staff only approximately 1-2 people in each branch. The main customers are foreigners, but not only Korean. There are Chinese, Taiwanese, Indonesian, Filipino and Vietnamese as well. In addition, this product business still retails in front of the shop and also exports to foreign countries through a co-seller. All of these businesses mainly comprise offline channels to contact and trade with customers. Furthermore, the interviews of businesses found that the raw materials used in the production of the goods are also supplies bought from Thais. For

example, products and souvenir businesses said that “Our business sells craft products designed by Korean people that are sent to the villagers in the northern region to produce and brought back to sell in various stores. Our products will focus on our design and natural materials. We begin with finding the special characteristics that each local community has, such as the handicrafts of the local villages. We will then design a product that they can produce in order to boost their market and increase income for the local community”. Therefore, it is considered the income distribution of community tourism or the Multiplier Effect of Tourism (Rusu, 2011).

According to the in-depth survey of international tourist behavior (2018), it was found that the massage and spa business is one of the most famous activities among Korean tourists. The researcher chose the massage and spa business to be as one of the main types of business in this study. In the field of massage and spa, the business provides services including Thai massage, spa services for health and wellness. There is one business that distributes its own products such as skincare and spa products. In addition, there are also restaurants and cafes. The location of the spa is both a single branch and located in a department store as well. Most customers are Asian, such as Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

From the interviews about general business information, it was found that most of the businesses were not only popular with Korean people but also popular with those from other countries in Asia as well. Therefore, the main customers of businesses are Asian.

#### 4.1.2 The business profit of each tourism business

Due to all the tourism-related businesses being located in tourist attractions and the main customers being foreign tourists, their turnover dropped since the Covid-19 outbreak occurred. As stated by a small accommodation business, "Before the epidemic situation, the turnover range was good during April for the Songkran festival. Normally, the accommodations are booked fully. Since Covid-19 occurred in late March until now, no one comes to stay at all." While large businesses still have income from other interests besides accommodation, such as the restaurant of a hotel, some have been severely affected by the profit lost.

Food and beverages business turnover has also suffered due to restaurants being located in tourist attraction areas. Therefore, all of them lost almost all profit as can be seen from the restaurants that are located on Train night market Ratchada, which said that "When the epidemic of Covid-19 occurred, it made the food unable to be sold at all because the restaurants are located in the tourist market. The income is decreased around by 95-97% " and also other restaurants said in the same way that, "At the beginning of the outbreak situation and before the lockdown, the number of tourists decreased clearly. When our country was closed by the government's policy, our income was deducted implicitly."

Since the outbreak happened, especially the tour business which depends on foreigners as customers, the result has been reduced income to the point nearly all income was lost, as can be seen from one tour operator business owner who said:

“The company started to decrease sequentially from February and now 100% decrease in early May.”

On the other hand, several previous situations in Thailand, whether accidents or political unrest, resulting in the turnover of some businesses, which started to drop before Covid-19 occurred. Further, when the outbreak occurred, the turnover of business dropped dramatically. As can be seen from the tour operator businesses owned by Thais, they said that “From several previous situations, the company's revenue started to decrease. After the encounter with this outbreak, it made our business almost has no income at all.” Also, one of the massage and spa businesses said in the same way that “Due to the various situations that occurred in Thailand, such as the accident in Phuket, the revenue has been declining since 2019. Still, it is still good in terms of the growth threshold at that time. However, when the epidemic occurred, the percentage of income during before and after Covid-19 caused lost revenue of around 95% and sales of branded products slowed down as well.”

#### 4.1.3 The cost of managing each type of business

Accommodation businesses will mainly spend on worker wages and venue rentals. The other expenses include utilities and miscellaneous expenses such as water, electricity, internet fees, taxes, commissions that have to be paid to OTA, marketing expenses and equipment used in the business, etc.



There are main expenses in food and beverage businesses, which are raw materials, worker fees, shop rentals, utility expenses.

For the cost of tour operator businesses, the expenses are also mainly rental office fees and staff fees. A company that has foreign employees such as Koreans will need extension of stay visas and work permits, as well as communication costs for translation from Korean into Thai for doing business.

In the part of the product and souvenirs business, the main expenses are store rental fees, cost of raw materials for product production, and worker wages. In addition, other costs will increase according to the feature of the product, especially the cost of stock products. One store said that “they designed the pattern of the product by themselves, but had to order for print, which has a minimum order, making them have expenses for stock”. On the other hand, another business said that “our store has many branches, so it is necessary to have a central stock for easy distribution to various branches. Therefore, we have additional expenses such as renting room for goods in stock.”

For the massage and spa business, the main expenses are store rental, utility expenses, wages for workers including maids, therapists, supervisors, receptionists and managers, and also business marketing expenses. The second payment is the cost of the various conveniences used in customer service, such as oils, towels, soaps, underwear and clothes, etc.

## 4.2 Impact and opinions about the outbreak of Covid-19 on each type of business

This part consists of five main questions that aim to identify the major problems from the Covid-19 outbreak on tourism businesses, how each tourism business copes with the situation, the different scenarios forecasted by each tourism business, and the plan to prepare for post-crisis actions by each business. The results of each type of business are separately indicated question by question, as follows:

4.2.1 What are the major problems caused by the Covid-19 outbreak in your business?

The impact on the tourism industry is caused by many factors, but the main factor is the announcement of measures to prevent the spread of the disease, both domestically and internationally, including locking down and the use of an emergency decree, such as prohibiting international travel in and out of the country, closing air traffic measures and also free visa cancellation measure.

In terms of the main impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on each type of business, the lack of business income for the business was the major factor. However, the severity of the impact depended on the amount of dependency on foreign tourism as well as a business location. For the businesses located in tourist attractions and mainly serving foreign tourists, they were directly affected by the situation and by depending on foreign tourists.

From the above factors, it affects the business by a number of issues ranked according to priority, as follows:

- **The lack of income from the reduced number of tourists**

For the accommodation business, as seen from a large hotel, one interviewee said, “Besides Korean customers, our customers are also Chinese tourists. When the Chinese used lockdown measures for their country, the hotel lost more than 70% of its income.” Also, the owner of a small guesthouse located on Khao San Road said “Our business is located in a main tourist attraction area. When there are no tourists, our business lacks the income to run.” A middle-sized hotel manager also said “We've been affected by the loss of income that comes from the number of tourists dropping,” which corresponds to a hostel owner in Silom, who said that all foreign customers who had booked in advance canceled due to the spread of the virus. “The guesthouse had 100% pre-booking in April, but after prohibiting international travel in and out, closing air traffic measures for the outbreak crisis, it was canceled entirely,” they said. Due to the mentioned measures, there are still some tourists remaining, as the owner of the hostel said, “Only 1 or 2 tourists still can't return to their country.”

It can be seen that whether it is a small size or large size accommodation business, it was affected by the dependence on large quantities of tourists causing

the main customers to disappear, which directly affected the income used to manage the business.

As for the food and beverage business, many said “Our restaurant is close to tourist attractions, so the business relies mainly on tourists. When there are no tourists, the income decreases and the lack of income has an impact on the hiring of employees.” (a restaurant located on Phra Arthit Road) and “Because our restaurant is located in a market that has to rely on a lot of tourists and the main customers are tourists too, no customers mean a lack of income for business” (restaurant located at the train night market, Ratchada).

A tour operator business also said about the policy of closing air transportation channels, business is unable to operate” (Thai owner of a tour operator company).

Massage and spa businesses are also largely dependent on foreign tourists and due to the disease prevention and control measures they have to be temporarily closed. Therefore, those businesses lost their main income. It can be seen from a spa business owned by a foreigner that said “Because more than 70 percent of the main customers are foreign tourists, income is lost when there are no tourists.” Also, “No customers result in a lack of revenue. It affects the whole business management system.” (Thai owners of a spa).

The product and souvenir businesses agreed and said “Our main customers are foreign tourists, resulting in lower income. It might be a long-term impact,” (Craft

products business). A clothing product business also said that “Our store is located in a shopping mall that is a tourist attraction. The main customers are foreigners. When there are no tourists, the income disappears.”

- **Responsibility for expenses in order to maintain business**

According to one massage and spa business in Sukhumvit “Due to the government restrictions we are closed since the 17th of March. Unfortunately, the basic expenses are the same, so we have the responsibility to pay all the expenses, even if we are not able to work.” The products and souvenirs business in one mall said that because of the lockdown measures and announcement, the department store had to close suddenly, which caused the business to not have time to prepare to move stock products.

- **Compensation for damage to customers**

The tour operator business sector is a business group that is completely dependent on foreign tourists. This results in having the worst impact compared to other businesses. In fact, businesses owned by both Thai and foreigners have said the same thing that “Due to the scare of the infection by customers, the number of customers has decreased dramatically.” (Thai business owner) and “Because we didn’t have customers, the company couldn’t make any income.” (Korean owner

business). Besides the problem of decreasing income, they still have problems with the cancellation of all travel programs. This resulted in a problem with the customer's airfare, accommodation with both the postponement and responsibility for refund (Thai owner of a business).

4.2.2 What are the other problems of the Covid-19 outbreak on your business that you can cope with or manage for a while?

Besides the effects of the crisis that is the main problem, owners have to adapt in various ways in order to keep the business going, according to the research data in the first question. There are still other minor problems that affect the business which entrepreneurs can cope with during the present time. The nature of the problems will vary according to the type of business, as follows.

- **The problem of the ability to manage revenue and balance with expenses**

Although a business can operate partially, it only has domestic customers, which is not able to generate income as normal. If the situation is like this in the long run, there will not be enough income. Moreover, it will have accumulated expenses which will lack liquidity for business and, finally, will be unable to sustain the business. For example, in the case of accommodation business, one large hotel said

that “With a large size and high expense of our business, our income relies mainly on foreigners, which is not possible to compare to relying on only domestic tourists.” In the case of a restaurant, the interviewee from a tourist attraction said “Closure of a store and opening only just for delivery service can make some income. However, the income may not be enough for business expenses in the long run.”

Even some businesses with reserves money can encounter problems. If it is not possible to return to service in the long run, it must shut down as well. It can be seen from the massage and spa business owned by foreigners, which said “We have an emergency budget in our bank to support a few months of expenses, but we can’t go on for many months. So, I believe many spas and massage parlors will close soon with thousands of therapists without jobs.”

- **Problems of foreign overseas transportation**

For this problem, the business of products and souvenirs will be affected. Due to the announcement of a ban on traveling outside of the country, the result is limited flights to various places. As a result, transportation delays and higher shipping costs occur, which can be seen from the business of goods and souvenirs that said “there are air transport issues for wholesale Korean customers who cannot export to them.” (Craft product business) and product businesses located in department stores also said “There are only overseas transportation delays.” “Now there are some Thai

customers and foreign customers from China and Taiwan only. Because of the problem of overseas shipping, profits decreased as a result.”

- **Problems about suppliers of business**

Products and souvenirs businesses are business that requires Thai suppliers to produce products. When problems occur, there are cases of inconvenience in finding raw materials. For example, an interviewee from a clothing business in a department store said “There are some raw material finding issues. That means finding material is inconvenient and the sewers can’t work.” Or in the case of the craft product business, they encountered the problem to assume responsibility for the supplier, a villager in the northern region who produces local products. They said “The other problem is, even if we can't sell our product, we still have to take responsibility for producing certain products. It also helps local manufacturers to earn income.”

In the case of a tour operator businesses as a business that has major problems, since it cannot open service to customers at all. As can be seen from interviewees from the tour businesses for both companies, whether the owner is Thai or foreign, said “It is currently not possible to cope. The biggest problem is to refund money to customers who cancel tours.” “Nothing can be handled. I hope Covid-19 will calm down quickly so that more travelers will come and we can work again. We plan to do other work just in case.”



#### 4.2.3 Have you ever anticipated the heavy impact on your business before?

Many crises have occurred in the past, whether SARs MERs or disasters such as floods, tsunamis or political unrest. Such crises affected the tourism business sector, but no crisis has caused severe and quick decline like the Covid-19 crisis. It can be seen from the accommodation business, one of the small hostels said that “I did not anticipate the violence that would expand all around the world. I only expected that it could affect tourists from China.” For the food and beverage business interviewees from, both restaurants located around tourist attractions also said in the same way that “I never expected this kind of situation.” (Restaurant that located on train night market, Ratchada) and “I didn't expect it, and I didn't think anyone thinks that this extremely violent situation would happen.” (Restaurant located on Dinso Road).

A tour operator business owned by a foreigner said “I've been through a lot of situations in Thailand such as SARS, MERS, Snami, and terrorism. However, I never expected that there would be any problems like Covid-19 that could ruin all businesses.” And “We survived many economic problems before, but Covid-19 is different. It's a pandemic virus and, at the moment, nobody can predict it,” a foreign owner of a massage and spa business said.

Still, there are some businesses that have anticipated in advance and done some preparation already. It can be seen from an interviewee from an accommodation business, a large hotel, which said that “The hotel has already

predicted and prepared for this, but it's still damaging the business” and “Our business has anticipated it, but this time is the most violent since the founding of the business. This outbreak happened suddenly. It spread all over the world, so almost every country needed to be cut off from each other. People have to rely on themselves,” said the Thai owner of a massage and spa business.

#### 4.2.4 How does your business adjust to cope with the outbreak situation?

This section illustrates the strategies that tourism businesses used to cope with the COVID-19 situation. The strategies that are utilized by each business depending on the business types, including cost reduction, change of business operation method, and launch of new products as well as temporary closure of businesses.

- **Cost reduction**

This strategy is used in a variety of business types by reducing the cost of rental and employees, whether to reduce working days, wages, or the number of employees etc. For instance in the case of, accommodation business an interviewee from, a large hotel said “For employees, let them take both paid and unpaid leave to reduce costs and also reduce the number of people working in the hotel each day by following the outbreak preventive measures.” Also, a small hostel owner said, “Request to reduce rental fee and reduction of staff costs means reducing the

number of working days and reducing wages, including reducing the number of employees.” In addition, there was a reduction in other costs such as miscellaneous expenses or utilities, as a small hostel owner said “Also, business managing costs are reduced, as are miscellaneous expenses, water and electricity costs, which are decreased according to the amount of usage.”

Food and beverage businesses also use this method. As it is a customer service business, there are many employees. Therefore the business had to reduce employee costs, as can be seen from an interviewee from one restaurant in the train market in Ratchada, which said: “Because our store has quite a large number of staff, it is necessary to reduce staff costs by reducing the number of staff and staff wages.” Another interviewee from a restaurant located on Dinso road also said, “In the long-term situation, we might reduce employees’ wages or reduce the number of employees because we had many employees before the Covid-19 situation.”

The massage and spa business owner also said that “In our case, we fired 60% of our employees to keep our budget.” (Foreign owner massage and spa business) and “Our business let the staff choose between using vacation or leave without pay.” (Thai owner of a massage and spa business).

Some businesses have reserved money for emergency situations in order to sustain the business for a while or can be a fund to help employees. It can be seen that both massage and spa businesses have commented that “We have an emergency budget to cover a few months but without the support of any banks.”

(foreign owner massage and spa business) and “Our businesses also have funds to support employees, the funds are combined with the money provided by the government and our business uses the money to help employees.” (Thai owner massage and spa)

Products and souvenirs business also used a reduced cost method. We can see from an interviewee from souvenir store that has many branches who said “In order to reduce our costs, originally there are 10 branches, but now maybe only 3-4 branches are left. When the situation is better, it will be opened again.”

- **Changing business operation**

This strategy is varied according to the nature of each business. For example, accommodation business adapted to food delivery service or increase other services as can be seen from an interviewee from a large hotel who said: “We Adapted our business to food delivery service and generate revenue from available resources in hotels such as open only the restaurant part and there is a plan to open a cooking class as well.”

In the restaurant business, it is impossible to dine at the restaurant due to disease prevention and control measures. Therefore, various restaurant businesses have changed the format to take out or delivery service online. For example, an owner of one restaurant located on tourists’ attraction said “we opened the delivery

service both from self-delivery via Line application and cooperated with the delivery application.” And another restaurant owner also said, “we changed to take away service and delivery service.” An owner of a massage and spa business also said that “Our business also has cafes and restaurants as part of the business, so I switched to delivering food online to make more income.”

For product and souvenir businesses, they change contact and sale channels to online instead and focus on export only. For example, “We changed to focus more on exports. From before, customers come to the front of the store to choose and buy products. But now we change to make contact with customers online.” “The adjustment of our business has also changed to more online channels, which made us have more Thai customers.” Both businesses that have stores located in department store and craft product business said “We now focus on export our product. And we need to find the craft products for our customers properly.”

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- **Launching new product**

There are businesses that can still operate, for example, products and souvenirs, and food and beverage businesses. Due to insufficient income, owners have to produce new products in order to increase businesses’ income. For example, the restaurant located in Phra Arthit road said “Prepared by designing instant food products of our restaurant to extend the lifetime of a product, which is adjusted to

consumer behavior during the pandemics.” And also, product and souvenir business said “Before a more violent crisis, we started to sell Face mask with our design pattern. And we also need to design new products and more present them via online and social media promotion.” (Clothing shop located on tourist’s attraction)

- **Temporality closed business**

Some businesses are temporarily closed. Tour operator businesses cannot be operated or modified during the COVID-19 situation. Therefore, they have to temporarily stop their service and let the small numbers of employees to work from home instead. For example, both Thai and foreign owners also said “There is no response at this time. Without travelers, company product development or any strategy is meaningless.” (Foreign owner business), and “No reduction in the number of employees but will change to work from home instead” (Thai owner business).

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4.2.5 How long do you think this situation will last? And how will your business cope with this long situation?

In the case of the end of the epidemic, businesses have agreed that the situation can return to normal depending on vaccine or medication, it can be seen from an interviewee from a large hotel who said that “The disease will not end until there are medications and vaccines.” And the massage and spa business that the

foreign owner also said that “In my opinion, we will be back to normal only after a vaccine.” “If there is a vaccine or medication, the situation will be better” craft product business owner said.

In terms of duration, mostly there are two predictions: short-term and long-term when the situation can return to normal or improve. From the interviews with the owners, they have predicted that the short-term will take about 3 months or the 3rd quarter of the year. The businesses will be able to reopen as usual. It can be seen from both small accommodation business owner who said that “I think at least it might take around three months. The situation might be a little bit better” And one tour operator business owner also said, “The spread of Corona 19 is expected to continue until this fall (September-October).” In the case of the long-term, around the end of 2020 to the beginning of 2021, the situation will return to normal, as can be seen from tour operator business owner who said that “I think it will continue until the end of this year.” Another restaurant also said in the same way that “I think there might be an end around the beginning of next year because disease control should have many steps.”

But some businesses anticipated that it may take longer than 1 year until the situation returns to normal. For example, the owner of a restaurant located in the tourist attraction market said that “More than one year, surely.” And one of the hotel owners also said “Maybe it will take over two years. But I think the heaviest violent period is probably 6-8 months. Because it was a peak period of infection.”

However, businesses still have additional opinions that although the situation has returned to normal tourists will not travel immediately as before. Because during that critical period most people are more careful in spending and consume only the products and services that are fundamental in daily life. Still, tourism is still not a necessity. Therefore, tourism-related businesses may require a longer rehabilitation period than other business sectors. For example, one of the tour operator business owners, who is a foreigner, said that “Even after tourists will not be increasing immediately. However, we won't be able to start our own business and I don't think a tour company will be possible in 2020. My business might be difficult to run with this situation if it goes beyond this year (2020) to next year.” And “Although the disease disappeared, tourists must take time to save money to visit again. So, we need to plan to survive and have a minimum loss of our business,” one restaurant owner said.

If the situation and duration are as expected by the owners, it is necessary to have a plan for conducting business during a difficult and long period. Given a large reduction in revenue and insufficient reserves money, this may cause some businesses to liquidate or partially close. We can see from an owner of a souvenir store that have many branches who said “If the situation is last longer, we have to close some branches in order to reduce our costs, originally there are 10 branches, but maybe only 3-4 branches are left. When the situation is better, it will be opened again.” And also, one of massage and spa business owner said that “The tourists will



take time to travel because as a pandemic worldwide every country has been affected badly and before the people start to spend money on vacation it will take time. In our case, if we cannot come back to work as soon as possible we (we like many other spa/hotels) will have no budget enough to afford the basic expenses.”

4.2.6 How has your business prepared or planned for the situation after this crisis?

The purpose of this question is to identify the strategies undertaken by owners of tourism businesses to cope with the situation of the Covid-19 outbreak. In which each business chooses to use, there are 4 main aspects which consist of Hygienic and safety service, Product Marketing, Reserving money for business and Improvement of establishments

- **Hygienic and safety service standard**

According to this crisis is a pandemics crisis that can spread easily and quickly. Therefore, hygiene and safety are a priority. It should be considered first. The tourism business is a business that must provide services directly related to customer hygiene, including those of the entrepreneurs themselves, must pay attention to service standards regarding cleanliness and safety in business management by strictly following the disease control and prevention measures. It can be seen from owners

of accommodation business whether large or small size, who also said consistently that “From now on, the most important priority is hygiene and social distance. Our service standards will change.” (Owner of a large hotel) And “we will still control safety as according to government measures.” (Owner of a guest house located on Rambutti Road). In the part of the food and beverages business said in the same way that “Opening the storefront with cleanliness and safety.” (Owner of a restaurant located on Phra Arthit road) And “We will focus on the cleanliness of the restaurant. Control and preventive measures should be used as much as we can.” (Owner of a restaurant located on Dinso road). In addition, a Thai owner of a massage and spa said “we have to strictly follow the Ministry of Public Health’s disease preventive and control measures.”

- **Product Marketing**

The owners have tried to market their business whether new product releases or the promotion of various discounts in order to attract the attention of customers to return and consume products and services as before. And also, finding ways to increase revenue for the business is important as well. It can be seen from one of the tour operator businesses who said that “Developing new products, actively promoting them.” And one of massage and spa business said in the same way that

“Our strategy is to introduce healthy-organic- food in the spa, in this way the customers can enjoy the Spa treatment and food/beverage as well”.

In the part of the product and souvenir, all of them said about their strategies that are related to online channels. For example, both owners of business selling goods located in a department store said that “We should continue to do online marketing. And focus on wholesale from existing customers. Moreover, we should work hard to launch our new product and present them online also.” And “we have to promotion via online to make our customers realize that we are back. Because normally we focus on offline to sell our product”

- **Reserving fund for business**

Due to this severe and unforeseen crisis, it is an experience that makes some business owners have a strategy in planning to reserve money in case of unexpected emergencies in the future. For example, a large hotel owner said that “I think we have to plan a business’s reserve fund for the unexpected events in order to enable the business to continue in a crisis situation.”

- **Improvement of establishments**

Besides, the other preparations, businesses also need to have location arrangements. In order to support the return of tourists to use various business

services whether domestic or foreign tourists. For example, one of the products and service businesses that also provide services for the accommodation said that “I think we should invest in our place improvement while waiting for a better situation. So, we are preparing to redecorate our store and homestay.”

#### **4.3 Opinion about government assistance and Thailand tourism restoration.**

This part consisted of three main questions that aim to identify the possible solutions and ways to alleviate the problems caused by the Covid-19 outbreak on tourism businesses both during and post-crisis. The results for each type of business are separately indicated question by question as follows;

4.3.1 Does your business need a government assistance policy? - And if you want, what kind of policy do you need from the government during the outbreak situation?

Businesses need supportive policies from the government in order to alleviate the problems which are caused by the Covid-19 outbreak and to revitalize tourism businesses. There are many forms of needs that are divided into different areas as follows;

- **Financial support**

The main problem during the crisis is that there is no tourist who uses the service; causing an insufficient income to operate the businesses. Thus, most entrepreneurs need financial assistance policies. Whether it is funding, employee assistance measures to ease the burden of businesses, providing loans, and reducing the interest rate, or extending the repayment period. This can be seen from the accommodation business, whether small or large, where an interviewee said that “We need support for those staff. Including helping the business with various financial policies.” And “We need more help in reducing the interest rate and extending the repayment period because I think three months is not enough.”

Because personnel are an important factor in the tourism service business, business owners give priority to financial assistance for employees. Therefore, it is necessary to continually maintain the relationship between businesses and employees. It is a preparation for the business to be able to recover quickly as the owner of a restaurant located on Dinso road said that “The government should provide financial support to business so that business owners can help their employees, which is like can keep the relationship between the owner and employee, which will make the business to be interrupted, but can start again faster.” And another restaurant also said “I need the support for some of the expenses such as employees' wages. It will help a lot of businesses.”

As for other financial contributions, it is equally important. Such as cash flow, maintenance fee, consumer subsidies, and other businesses to promote the use of tourism services etc.

Also, for massage and spa businesses, both Thai and foreign owners, said “We just hope to have more support from the government and the bank as well but we understand the situation. To run a business needs cash flow, without cashflow it will be difficult to improve the facility. I hope the government helps us land hotels and any other tourist attractions.” And “If looking at the point of breakeven, there is a matter of rental fee. That I need to receive the support.”

In the part of product and souvenirs businesses located in the department store, an owner also said in the same way that “I need the government to help thoroughly because if people get support money, they will have the power to spend money more.” And “There should be government’s measures to help the department store by supporting them with money for distribution to the store. It should be easier to access and manage. Or, support money to the department store to make them pay no rental fee for a while.”

- **State policy on disease prevention and control measures**

Building confidence in the control of epidemics is the most important thing. Therefore, the entrepreneurs need the measures to prevent and control diseases

from the government in order to use as the standard and guidelines for tourism businesses and to proceed according to the government's rules and regulations. In addition, it includes hygiene-related personnel development and public relations of various measures to tourists. In order to ensure the safety of the epidemic which will attract the tourists' decision to choose to travel in Thailand.

It can be seen from the accommodation business, large hotel, said that "Most importantly, the state must ensure confidence and have a clear system about good controlling and managing the pandemic situation. In order to make foreigners aware and trust in our country to come back to travel, use services or invest in the future." Also, in the part of the food and beverages business, an owner said in the same way that "government assistance in terms of spreading the right information, control the disease quickly and provide a lot of assistance to various personnel involved in this work." And another restaurant also said "The government must be faster and clearer in the way of broadcasting accurate information and preventive measures. And the government should also provide knowledge about actions to prevent and control diseases to the Thai people thoroughly." And "I would like to have clear operational measures that we can continue to operate our business." One of Thais owner massage and spa business said

- State support of non-Thais workers in Thailand

Besides support for Thai people, there are still some businesses that foreign owners want to help support foreigners, both skilled workers and unskilled workers, who come and working in tourism-related businesses in Thailand such as marketing, communicating, and recommending information to customers in foreign languages. Both in the matter of visa or work permission entry procedures, for example, one of the tour operator business owners said that “Foreign entry procedures (visa, etc.) should be converted more easily. Visas to stay in Thailand and easily process work permit extensions.” In terms of unskilled workers in Thailand, they are one part of the tourism business in Thailand, especially in the food and beverage business. Thus, the state should also support them as well. As we can see from the product and souvenir business owner who said “the government should support foreign workers who came to work in the country, because this group cannot get any support and also cannot go back to their country since the country is closed.”



4.3.2 What kind of assistance or policy from the government should be used to revitalize the Thai tourism sector after the outbreak situation?

After the crisis has passed, the government must have policies and methods to revitalize the country's tourism industry. There should be cooperation from the government, private sectors, and related organizations. The tourists' decisions will depend entirely on epidemiological safety. Therefore, the processes are important to both push and protect at the same time. It should start by encouraging and promoting domestic tourists to travel first. After that, for foreign tourists will be opened next by considering the countries that can already control the epidemic to be careful to prevent re-infection. This can be seen from accommodation business owners who said “The government has to build confidence for tourists. First, they should build a campaign to encourage domestic tourism. And then open the country to bring tourists, who live in countries that without infection or with less risk, to our country for tourism.” Also, both restaurant business owners said “They have to have tourism policy in order to build confidence for tourists to return back and travel in Thailand as before.” We also have to build confidence for tourists that when they come back to Thailand, we will not infect from the virus. Even domestic tourism as well. If we can build confidence, I believe that there will be more decisions to revisit Thailand.”

Base on business owners' commenting creating confidence and attracting tourists can be done in many ways as follows;

- **Building confidence in disease control and preventive measures**

The government must establish measures that are the system of disease prevention and control in Thailand, which can build trust and encourage tourists to come to travel as soon as possible, as seen from a restaurant owner, who said that “they have to assure foreigners that we have a great and safe infection control management system. That's how tourist has the confidence to travel to Thailand again” also both of product and souvenirs businesses said “The preventive measures should be created in detail and strictly. For example, there should be management to track everyone who travels into the country. If there is quarantine for foreigners who travel into our country, we must have measures to extend the duration of a tourism visa.” And “we should have strict regulations. Those methods and audits must be disclosed to the public as well.”

- **Overseas public relation**

Owners commented that the government must accelerate public relations to promote tourism in Thailand in various ways through international media. In order to attract the attention of tourists as the business of product and souvenirs said that “and also need to be promoted through foreign media as well. In order to attract foreign tourists.” A foreign owner of a tour operator business also said that “About a

decade ago, there were active Thai tourism promotion policies such as Amazing Thailand, and such efforts are needed again.”

- **Business cooperation**

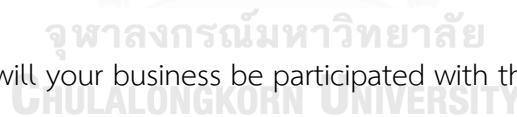
Collaboration from related tourism businesses in providing discounted promotional programs to motivate tourists' decisions is also important. It can be seen from one of the massage and spa business owners who said: “TAT should to promote Thailand with a discount (flights and hotels as well).” Tour operator business and products business also said in the same way that “we need active marketing so that foreign travelers can find us again.” Also, “the government must contact and consult with various accommodation and tour businesses for having a discounted promotion”

- **Develop and upgrade Thai tourism**

While waiting for the recovery of the tourism business, the government should develop Thai tourism whether tourist attractions or various management systems in order to enhance Thailand's tourism potential to be sustainable and with better quality. As can see from the large accommodation operators and the restaurant commented that “government should promote sustainable tourism management as well.” And “During the period that we are waiting for the coming

back of tourists, it is also possible to manage several tourist attractions in the long run.”

However, the owners have given another opinion that reviving the tourism industry in Thailand does not depend only on the situation and preparation in our country but also depends on the situation of the target customer countries as can be seen from one restaurant located on tourism attraction said “But this problem does not just depend on only Thailand. It also depends on other countries that are our customers as well. If our country and customer’s country sooner recover, the better we are.” and craft product business owner also said in the same way that “However, even though our government can make tourists confident, it depends on the situation of the country that will travel to our country as well. If they still not ready, no one dares to travel.”



4.3.3 How will your business be participated with these policies to revitalize the Thai tourism sector after the outbreak situation?

In order to revitalize the Thai tourism industry, businesses must be involved in government policies in various fields, whether complying with state or international measures to control and prevent disease, conduct business in accordance with policies and marketing activities prepared by the government.

With regard to giving cooperation to the government, it can be seen in the accommodation business owners, whether small or large, who said that “Cooperate

with government and WHO's measures to prevent disease." And "The hotel cooperates with the government by strictly following the government's operations." For food and beverage, the owners also said "we take care of ourselves to the best followed by the government's measures in terms of regulating and quarantine of the pandemics. Keep the restaurant clean and safe."

In the part of cooperating in the state's marketing activities provided by the government as can be seen from the restaurant located on tourists' attraction said that "There may be discounts and might be participated with government promotion."

As well as the self-investment business, marketing more customers by oneself as can be seen from one of massage and spa owner who said "For me, the key is more marketing means more customers. So, do more marketing and more promotions by invest 130.000THB x month in marketing." And product and souvenir business also said in the same way that "Our business needs to design products to meet customer's needs or develop our products to comply with the daily use of our customers."

For businesses related to tourism is a representative of the country that serves and provides services with good quality standards, clean and safe for tourists' impression and promotes the tourism image of the country. Including creating confidence for tourists to choose to travel to Thailand as well. For example, one restaurant located on Dinso road said "In terms of tourism, we can impress the

taste and service for both Thais and foreign tourists.” and also a Thai owner of a business said massage and spa said “we're like representing our country. Therefore, we must be sincere with our customers and employees. Pay attention to the method of our work.”

Overall, this chapter provides a result of the in-depth interview on the business target group which consists of accommodation business, food and beverage business, tour operator business, spa and massage business and product and souvenir business. The results are shown base on the interview question and are divided into various important issues. Overall, the results give an overview that all types of businesses have been affected by the outbreak from moderate to severe. At a moderate level, some businesses can still open their services but income has decreased dramatically compared to normal situations. Therefore, they used a strategy to change the business model in order to increase their revenue and also reduce some costs, especially employees' wages. The severe level is temporarily closed, so there is no income. In addition, various businesses also agree that they need help from the government. Especially, financial support and also the speed and clarity of managing the epidemic control measures are needed as well. The researcher summarizes and discusses the results with the secondary data, which are shown in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

This chapter will provide the results of the research through the data analysis in order to identify the impact of the outbreak of Covid-19 on tourism-related businesses targeting Korean tourists. This study is able to provide a possible solution to alleviate the problems caused by the Covid-19 outbreak on tourism businesses, both during and post-crisis.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The research studied the impact from the spreading of Covid-19 affecting the tourism business, which has Korean tourists as the target market the study aimed to study the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on owners of tourism businesses targeting Korean tourists and identify the major problems that they have. Also, the study aimed to identify the strategies undertaken by owners of tourism businesses and to suggest possible solutions the government can take to alleviate the problems caused by the Covid-19 outbreak to revitalize tourism businesses. This research collected data by in-depth interviews by telephone or through online means. The tourism business can be divided into the following groups; accommodation business, food and beverages business, tour operator business, massage and spa business, product

and souvenir business covering the long period of time from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 to 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and the study covered 3 main points on the impact of Covid-19 virus in each business, adapting to such a situation and seeking for help that could lead to recovering the tourism of the country. Each point will also have details in analyzing the study, such as the basic information about the business to know the location, the type of business, operation cost, turnover rate and the impact of Covid-19 including both major and minor problems followed, predicting and preparing for possible similar scenario in the future, adaptation to such a scenario, planning after the pandemic virus, support from the government sector after the crisis, and cooperation of the business sector in response to any measure launched by the government.

From the study, we have found that most tourism businesses are located in the areas of tourist attractions and, apart from Korea tourists, there were also Asian tourists as main customers. However, there was a drop in turnover rate by almost 100% since the pandemic virus came because tourists are too afraid to travel. Afterwards, the government came to regulate the control measures and prevent the virus from spreading in the country. In addition, most of the expenses come from wages and rental fees.

The impact of the tourism business section comes from many factors. However, it mostly comes from the prevention measures of the government from every country. The government came to regulate locking down such that there is no



travel between the countries, shut down the air traffic and impose social distancing. Also, there was the cancellation of visas to some Korean tourists, making traveling in and out of the country impossible. The lack of income came from the reduced number of tourists because the study focuses on hotels located in tourists' attractions, not the local tourist. Therefore, the income is decreasing since the businesses count on those foreigners. The next impact is on the responsibility for expenses in order to maintain business. Even though the income is reduced almost 100%, the fixed costs are still there, so there will be a requirement to be responsible for those expenses, even though there is not sufficient income. This includes the compensation for damage to customers as the situation has a direct impact on tour operator businesses that are completely dependent on foreign tourists. They have to handle the problems of the cancellation of all travel programs. This resulted in a problem with the customers' airfare, accommodation with the postponement and responsibility for refund. Plus, these minor problems caused more problems with the ability to manage revenue and balance expenses. The business can still operate in some parts, but the income is not as much as it used to be. In the case that the situation continues for a long time, this would increase the gap between income and expenses, causing the business to shut down. The last impact is the problem of foreign overseas transportation and problems about suppliers of business that happened to every owner of a souvenir business because the prevention measures of disease mean fewer flights for shipment, which leads to the problem of delayed

delivery. This causes the business to be responsible for suppliers and also, there is the problem of inconvenience in finding raw materials to produce the products.

When it comes to the adaptation of each business towards this crisis, most of the tourism businesses are losing the income of 100%, especially the businesses that serve foreigners, such as the hotel business, tour business and massage and spa business. However, some businesses still gain some revenue such as the restaurant business, which has shifted to take away and delivery. Some souvenirs and products businesses adapted by exporting. However, there are still some problems occurring, as the problem of the ability to manage revenue and balance expenses, meaning the business can only operate for some parts, making less income compared to the normal situation, plus some existing expenses.

In addition to overcoming the impact of this crisis, most business owners didn't think the situation would happen, but it is crucial and spreading all over the world without anyone having prepared for such a situation. So, the owners could only survive if they adapt to the situation. There are many ways of adaptation. However, the one that seems to be most effective is cutting costs by focusing on wage costs. Some businesses are reducing the working days, reducing wage pay or even firing people, including reducing some regular expenses in order to match with less income to keep the business going or trying to change the patterns of managing the business to find more income, which will be varied according to the sources available for each business. Trying to find the channel to sell online, operating the

delivery channel, focusing on serving local customers or some businesses will adapt by launch the new products to draw the attention of the customers to both maintain the relationship and communicate with customers that the business still exists. However, some businesses that cannot hold any further choose to close business temporarily to reduce the cost of business by giving the employees days off or working from home instead.

Even though we try to adapt and handle the situation that has happened, planning to get ready for the situation after the crisis has some important issues that include insufficiency of cash flow to continue do the business. If they could not make income continuously, they will not be able to hold the business for much longer. Therefore, the unpredictable period of the crisis causes concern for the business owner because they all believe that the situation will become normal. Still, consumers' behavior might change forever. According to the impact happening in the crisis, people will tend to consume what matters to live life, making financial life stable and having some saving, rather than travelling, which has less priority than the above mentioned. So, the owners of the tourism business have to handle this problem for a longer period of time.

By the way, traveling on both business trips and holiday trips remain unlikely. More importantly, for tourism business, one of the major income sources comes from tourists. Therefore, the tourism business has to get ready all the time in the issues of hygienic and safety service standards because after the crisis, hygiene

and cleanliness are important as attributes that they will consider when choosing to travel. The owners of businesses have to follow the standards strictly, including doing marketing for products and services through online means. In both product line and marketing, the business needs to attract more customers because of the unpredictable situation. There can be lessons learned from the tourism business that they need to be prepared and reserve money for business for emergencies that occur in the future. Apart from preparing the services, tools, and people, the building location of the business has to also adjust better to welcome tourists back after Covid-19.

The point of seeking help for each business is to lead to the recovery of tourism business in the country. From the predictions of recovery time that would consume a lot of time, there will need to be supported in the financial issue from the government and private sectors for the short term, long term, soft loan to minimize the debt of the owner making the flow of operating the business. Supporting employees is an important thing to do in the service business. This includes having a rapid and correct policy from the government that will support preventing and protecting against the disease. For example, setting the standard of protection for any business to compete with other countries to bring back foreign tourists to travel in the country again is needed. This will create confidence in tourists and urge tourists to come back and help the tourism business continue operating after the crisis. In order to change the crisis to opportunity, apart from

waiting for tourists to come back, we should develop more parts of tourist attractions and also the system of operating tourism within the country to enhance Thailand's tourism potential to be sustainable and with better quality as well. For later knowledge, business owners can also utilize the experience they got from this crisis to manage to cope with circumstances that could happen in the future, including by expanding the business into other aspects to minimize risk.

## 5.2 Discussion

Spreading the disease of Covid-19 in the present has an impact all over the world, especially in the tourism industry, which has seen the most impact. However, this is not the first time we have had to handle this pandemic disease because, if we count from the year 2000, our world has had to face pandemic diseases more than 5 times in the past. For every disease, it has different severity and impact as follows: In 2002-2003, SARS was spreading by having 8,098 persons infected patients in 29 countries and total deaths were 774. In the situation in Thailand, tourists decreased to 10.1 million people from 10.9 million people. When it was controlled in 2004, tourism increased to 11.7 million people. In 2009, New Influenza (H1N1) spread to 116 countries around the world and the total death toll was roughly 280,000 persons. The number of tourists coming to Thailand decreased by 0.4 million from 14.4 million persons that year. After the overall situation got better in 2010, there were about 15.9 million people in the mentioned year. In 2012, there was a spread

of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS, in 27 countries around the world. There were 2,494 infected and deaths were 858 persons. In Thailand, the tourists were approximately about 22 million people. Later, in 2014-2016, Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever occurred. Infected numbers were 28,000 people and 11,000 deaths. In Thailand, tourist numbers were down by about 1.7 million from 26 million people previously. After the situation got better, tourist numbers rose to 29.9 million in 2015.

At present, Covid-19 or the Corona Virus disease is still active, first occurring at the end of 2019 to the beginning of 2020. The danger is spreading at rapid speed, meaning it could significantly affect people's daily lives (Terrabkk, 2020). Today, it has spread to 215 countries around the world. The number of infected is 19,115,986 cases, while deaths are 713,901 people. For the information in Thailand, the number of infected is 3,330 cases, while deaths are 58 people. The information is current up to 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 (Worldometer, 2020).

We can see from all of the diseases that have occurred from the past to present, it can be seen that various diseases that have occurred in the past, have an epidemic period of approximately 1-2 years. But currently, COVID-19 or Corona Virus Disease which is a virus that occurred from late 2019 to the present (2020), is not under control yet in many countries and there will probably be an increasing number of infected people. Here, it is especially important since the place where Covid-19 first occurred was a country that has a large population, which caused it to spread globally at rapid speed and caused an unexpected situation. Also, there is still no

proper treatment to cure the disease, which means it is highly dangerous to people's daily lives. Each country has to use preventive measures and control the disease almost the same way, especially concerning travel between the countries in the world. This has never happened in the history of diseases. It can be considered the most impactful and severe pandemic virus that will affect the tourism sector in the long term.

For tourism in Thailand before the spread of the disease situation, the Kasikorn research estimated that the foreign tourists coming to Thailand are expected to be approximately 40.5-40.9 million by the year 2020. Most of the tourists come from countries in the Asia. However, after the situation of Covid-19, it is expected that the number of tourists to travel abroad should average between 20-30 million in a month, or 0.7-1 million people daily. It is decreasing from traveling abroad by about 4 million per day. For Thailand, the number of foreign tourists in March 2020 compared to March 2019 was decreased by 76.4% in the same period of time. However, for the value of tourism defined by the income from tourism in March, Thailand showed decreasing income by 77.6% compared to last March. Thus, we can see how the disease spread has had a significant impact (Kasikorn Thai Research Center, 2020).

It is consistent with the results which show that the spread of COVID-19 affects tourism businesses of the target group of this research as most of their customers are Korean, Chinese, Japanese and other Asian tourists. Due to the huge

decrease of tourists' number, many businesses lack the revenue to run their companies. The levels of impact depend on many factors. First, the dependency level towards tourists. If the business has high dependency level on foreign tourists, they will face with high impact of COVID-19. It can be seen that Thai tourism businesses mainly depend on foreign tourists, so they are highly affected. Moreover, they lack income because they have to temporarily close the businesses and also compensate the customers. Meanwhile, other businesses still have income from Thai customers such as food and drinks, spa, Thai massage, and hotel businesses, as they have lower dependency level on foreign tourists than tour operator business. Furthermore, Thai products and souvenir businesses can still export their products in order to sell to their target customers. Second, the location of businesses. The businesses which are located near to popular places of Korean tourists tend to have higher impact. Due to the reason that most of the research's target businesses are located in popular areas of Korean tourists (referred to the research of Tourism Authority of Thailand, TAT), so they face high impact of COVID-19. Nevertheless, the spread of COVID-19 is critical, so all of Thai tourism businesses are affected from this incident.

The potential and sizes of businesses can be divided into small and big businesses. Due to the rapid spread and emergency measures of COVID-19, many small businesses did not have plans to cope with the situation, so they do not have a backup plan and backup money to run their businesses. Thus, small businesses



tend to receive higher impact than medium and large businesses. For instance, big hotel, spa, Thai massage, and food and drinks businesses have a backup plan to adjust their operation in order to generate income and they also have backup money in case of an emergency. Thus, medium and large businesses tend to face with lower impact of COVID-19 or at least they can slow down the impact. Nevertheless, although bigger businesses can slow down the impact of COVID-19, but if they have to run their businesses without sufficient income, they will face with critical impact too as they do not have enough money to manage huge operation which is costly. This may causes long-term effects and the businesses may have to permanently stop their operation.

For the coping methods during the spread of COVID-19, each type of business has different ways of coping. Medium and large businesses tend to cope with the situation better than those small businesses as they have a better backup plan and money to run the businesses during an emergency situation. In addition, almost all businesses have changed their target customers from foreign to Thai or local customers and set a higher standard on both cleanliness and safety. Many businesses mainly choose to reduce their costs by decreasing employees' salary and rental fees. Nevertheless, most businesses still give a priority to their employees as they choose to reduce the number of working days rather than number of employees in order to keep a good relationship, as employees are an important part of service businesses.

Additionally, they will be able to recover faster and also help to reduce unemployment rate of Thailand.

It can be seen that the level of COVID-19 impact towards Thai tourism businesses depends on the decreasing number of tourists due to the area of infection and the spread of COVID-19. The situation of COVID-19 has never existed before, so it may lead to critical and unpredictable impact in the long-run.

Regarding the restoration to build confidence and adaptation to the change of tourism impacted by the Covid-19 disease in the future, it must include help and support measures by the government sector. The Secretariat of the Prime Minister (2020) announced that the Ministry of Tourism and Sports has prepared a recovery plan with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TOT) to support the situation when it has come to the point of easing up in order to boost the tourism sector which has been affected by the virus so that it will be able to generate revenue again. Helping to stimulate the overall economy with rapid speed will aid national recovery. After Covid-19, there will be a plan to recover to support the new normal, which will be the new normal policy to mainly give importance to hygiene and safety. For example, a campaign for Amazing Thailand safety and health administration will be created: SHA, to prepare Thai tourism operators to be ready for the return of tourism after Covid-19. This aims to raise the tourism industry standards and build confidence among international as well as domestic tourists (Tourism Authority of Thailand Newsroom, 2020). Moreover, they will bring technology to help facilitate many parts

by mostly focusing on the confidence of tourism, drawing people to come back to travel in Thailand. The recovery measures of Korean tourism have applied the 100 days recovery measure in marketing the strong point of Korea to other countries' media to attract foreign tourists to travel again.

Besides, the government has prepared a tourism policy called the travel bubble, which aims to set limits on tourism, in order to welcome foreign tourists. Additionally, the government will classify countries into different pairs or groups and allow the tourists of those countries to travel under the regulation. For instance, tourists need to come from safe countries only, meaning those that no longer have infected people or have similar numbers of infected people. Moreover, there is a limitation on the number of tourists who enter the country and a special visa application process, in which the tourists need to be checked for the COVID-19 virus, both at the country of origin and the destination. The process focuses on two main tourist groups: business people who need to enter Thailand and foreigners who need continued medical care in Thailand. The government expects that there will be approximately 1,000 tourists who enter Thailand each day (Thairath, 2020; Bangkokbiznews, 2020).

For the policies to stimulate Thai tourism, the government has prepared the "Tiew Pun Sook" campaign in order to support traveling expenses of public health volunteers and the staff of district hospitals by allowing them to use the services of a travel agency. In addition, there is a promotion on three travel ticket types, which

include domestic airplane tickets, non-fixed transport vehicles between districts, and rental cars. Moreover, there is support for accommodation expenses such as co-pay, food expenses and entry expenses for tourist attractions. From the aforementioned policies, it illustrates that the government tries to help Thai tourism businesses in various ways. If the businesses that focus on Korean tourists adjust to the government's policies, they will be able to receive the benefits as well (Thaipbs, 2020).



The researcher has a comment that the target market has to do with foreign tourists as the main focus. It is said that we should study the trends of development in the tourism business in the country and globally; after the situation caused by Covid-19, tourism will change. Thailand has seen that travel within the country has many possibilities because there are many places abroad that have infected patients, which matches the international view that people should start to travel in short distances or travel within the country. For example, the Trip advisor research team said the recovery of tourism has to begin locally because the possibilities for tourists to travel are better when nearest to their hometown, whether that means they will eat local food, rest in local accommodations, or travel within the country, before the need to travel abroad will be back again (Trip advisor market research team, 2020).

Since people are locked down for a long period of time, making people want to travel more, countries should have enough resources for travel, including

Thailand. They will have more potential in the tourism business if they have beautiful tourist attractions, various ways of living, historical places and so on. There are many tourist attractions in Thailand compared to other countries. If they can be restored and developed, the tourist locations during Covid-19 and the country can manage to control the disease at a manageable level. The lockdown release will eventually open for those who like to travel and support more travel within the country with a special campaign provided by the government and organizations related to supporting businesses, which are the main drivers of the Thai economy. This is one way to help to restore the economy and restore the tourism business in a more rapid way by bringing technology to facilitate in many parts. Even in the future, disease control measures such as international travel ban restrictions will be canceled, but having many people together for activities will likely remain prohibited until a vaccine to cure the disease can be found. There is still social distancing, which means a limited number of people together. Therefore, BEST (Booking, Environmental, Enthusiasm, Safety, Technology) measure will further increase the importance of reservations, taking care of the environment, standard controlling, facial recognition, virtual systems and tracking systems to travelers and so on (Tourism Authority of Thailand Newsroom, 2020). There is an estimation of the country to open and accept foreign tourists in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the year 2020, though it will only open to travel for some select places (selective opening). It will only allow travel from countries that have less risk. However, tourists who travel will

have to be reminded to follow health and safety recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by social distancing, wearing a mask or cloth mask when going out, and washing hands frequently. People must avoid close contact with other persons and not hug, especially with vulnerable groups like the elderly or those who have underlying conditions because it can increase the infection rate and potentially lead to severe disease more easily than in other groups. When staying together, people should be reminded to wear masks, use personal utensils or serving spoons, or eat a la carte servings to protect themselves and loved ones from getting the disease (Prachachat, 2020).

In addition, wellness and medical tourism is one pattern of tourism that should be supported more seriously since the change of behavior after the spread of the virus will increase the importance of health safety as a key. Thailand is one of the countries that has received compliments from all over the world about its effective public health system, meaning the country is doing its best to handle the spread of Covid-19. However, Thailand is also one of the countries that has a standard to be ready for operating this kind of industry as Thailand is one of 4 countries that are final destinations to travel in Asia. It is also the 20<sup>th</sup> rank in the best wellness and medical tourism location focusing on foreign tourists, meaning the world image of Thailand is a destination country to have wellness and medical tourism.

Changing the crisis to an opportunity for Thailand tourism will have to depend on cooperation from the government sector, private sector and tourism businesses for developing the level of competency in wellness and medical tourism competition to make it more effective in the patterns of traveling so that it is safe for health and more effective for service. We must push wellness and medical tourism to adapt to a new normal policy in the future as it is one way to attract the attention of tourists and restore the tourism industry for Thailand after Covid-19.

### **5.3 Limitations and further studies**

The research was conducted about a new disease that has spread within a short period of time. In fact, the situation is still happening to the point we still need to do social distancing, making interviews have to be conducted through online channels such as email, video or telephone. Therefore, the information gained might not be as varied as if done face to face. For further advice in the future, this research studied within the period of crisis spread, which means we have not ended the outbreak crisis yet. Therefore, the study only covers some parts of a situation that is still evolving. Thus, a suggestion from the researcher is that researchers in the future bringing the results of this study for further research should study through the points after the situation and the treatment of the disease, which should have further information period of time. There should also be a following of the cases, patterns of

recovery for the business and behaviors of those involved. Such data would be beneficial information for crises that could happen in the future.







APPENDIX

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
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## Tourism related business list

Table 14 Accommodation business list

Business	Address	website
Sala Rattanakosin	39 Maharat Road, Rattanakosin Island, Bangkok 10200 Thailand	<a href="https://www.salahospitality.com">https://www.salahospitality.com</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/salاراتtanakosin">https://www.facebook.com/salاراتtanakosin</a>
Silom space hostel	8 Silom Rd. (soi2) Suriyawong Bangrak, Bangkok 20500	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SilomSpacehostel/">https://www.facebook.com/SilomSpacehostel/</a>
Nina guesthouse	71 Trok Bavorn Rang Si Thanon Tanao Bangkok 10200	-
Centara grand	1695 Phaholyothin Road, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900, Thailand	<a href="https://www.centarahotelsresorts.com/th/centaragrand/cglb/">https://www.centarahotelsresorts.com/th/centaragrand/cglb/</a>

Table 15 Food and beverage business list

Business	Address	website
Nai Soie beef noodle	100/2-3, Phra Athit Rd., Chana Songkhram Sub-District, Phra Nakhon District, Bangkok, Thailand (Phra Nakhon)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/NaiSoie">https://www.facebook.com/pg/NaiSoie</a>
Holy shrimps	Train Night Market Ratchada Dindaeng, Dindaeng, Bangkok 10400 Thailand	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Holyshrimpbkk">https://www.facebook.com/Holyshrimpbkk</a>

Krua Apsorn	169 Dinso Rd, Wat Bowon Niwet,  Phra Nakhon, Bangkok 10200,  Thailand	<a href="http://kruaapsorn.com">http://kruaapsorn.com</a>
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Table 16 Tour operator business list

Business	Address	website
Hongik tour	49/4 Soi Rongmai,Chaofa Road,Banglampoo,Bangkok 10200	<a href="http://hongiktravel.com">http://hongiktravel.com</a>
Navigator Tour	84/225 Lamlukka Rd. Pratumtani 12150	<a href="https://www.navigatortravelservice.com">https://www.navigatortravelservice.com</a>

Table 17 Massage and spa business list

Business	Address	website
Divana spa	16/15 Soi Somkid, Lumpini, Pathum Wan, Bangkok 10330 Thailand	<a href="https://www.divanaspa.com">https://www.divanaspa.com</a>
Baan Sabai Spa by Sahree	Sukhumvit Soi 26 Bangkok, 10310 Thailand	<a href="http://baansabaispa.com/en/">http://baansabaispa.com/en/</a>

Table 18 Product and souvenir business list

Business	Address	website
Bang! Bang! Shop	JJ Market 030 Section 3 soi 42/1 Terminal 21 2137 2nd Floor	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/BangBangShop-134302776648125/">https://www.facebook.com/BangBangShop-134302776648125/</a>
Hammer G Shop	Asistique The Riverfront (Warehouse 1) JJ Market (Section 26 Main Road) 3. Big C Ratchadamri (1st Floor)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/HammerGshop%20/">https://www.facebook.com/HammerGshop%20/</a>
Enough for life	160/7 Huaikew Rd. Suthep, Muang, Chaing Mai 50200	<a href="http://www.enoughforlife.com">www.enoughforlife.com</a>



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