

**MARKETING VIETNAM'S TOURISM TO JAPAN: IDENTIFYING AND  
IMPROVING THE IMAGES OF VIETNAM AS A TOURISM DESTINATION  
FOR JAPANESE TRAVELERS**

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Higher Degree Committee

of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Asia Pacific Studies

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Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan

2010

## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks and great gratitude to my supervisor Prof. COOPER Malcolm for his excellent supervision. With his rich academic knowledge and experience, especially his deep understanding of Vietnam's tourism, he suggested valuable ideas for me and helped me to develop my ideas. He kept me on the right track and rectified my problems. He always encouraged me, patiently listened to me, and assisted me when I met difficulties.

I am also very grateful to Prof. OGATA Masakatsu, Prof. OKADA Toyokazu, and Prof. YOTSUMOTO Yukio. Prof. OGATA Masakatsu helped me to understand more about the Japanese tourism systems as well as the characteristics of Japanese travelers. Prof. OKADA Toyokazu provided me with specific and valuable advice in improving the questionnaire and approaching Japanese travelers in the implementation process. Prof. YOTSUMOTO Yukio contributed his comments and suggestions to make my dissertation better.

I am also very thankful to Prof. EADES Jeremy and Prof. MANI, A. for creating open discussion forums in their classes and through research-in-progress seminars for Ph.D. students. These forums made me more aware of what I was doing and what I needed to focus in the research process.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Prof. VU Tuan Canh – Former Vice Chairman of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, Dr. NGUYEN Van Luu – Deputy Director of the Training Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Vietnam, and Dr. HA Van Sieu – Director of the Institute for Tourism Development Research of Vietnam. They supported my study in Japan and facilitated

my fieldtrips in Vietnam. I also keep it in mind that I can fulfill my wish because of the approval and support from the top leaders of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism.

It could have been difficult for me if I had not received the assistance from my Japanese friend HIRAYAMA Yuta who helped me in the issues related to Japanese language, discussed with me about Japanese culture and characters, and regularly commented on my findings in the implementation process. I am also grateful to all the Japanese and Vietnamese people who told me their insightful thoughts on the related issues and answered my questionnaires.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET) and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) for supporting and financing my study in Japan. I am also very thankful to the Ritsumeikan Center for Asia Pacific Studies (RCAPS) for their financial support to my research. I would also like to thank all the scholars, publishers, and organizations on the reference list whose materials create a foundation for my ideas in this dissertation.

Finally and importantly, I can never forget to think of my parents whose life is the strongest motivation for me, and it is never enough to mention the special role of my wife VUONG Thi Minh Hieu who patiently goes along and shares all the difficulties and happiness with me, and my little son Hai-kun whose bright smiles always encourage me to advance. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

April 2010

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## **List of Abbreviations**

APU:	Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
ASEAN:	Association of South East Asian Nations
CNTA:	China National Tourism Administration
CPV:	Communist Party of Vietnam
EIU:	Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd.
EPA:	Economic Planning Agency
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GNP:	Gross National Product
HTA:	Hawaii Tourism Authority
HTJ:	Hawaii Tourism Japan
HVCB:	Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau
ITDIJ:	International Tourism Development Institute of Japan
JATA:	Japan Association of Travel Agents
JETRO:	Japan External Trade Organization
JICA:	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JNTO:	Japan National Tourism Organization
JTM:	Japan Tourism Marketing Co.
KTO:	Korea Tourism Organization

MITI:	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
NTA:	National Tourism Administration
NTO:	National Tourism Organizations
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PATA:	Pacific Asia Travel Association
SARS:	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
TAT:	Tourism Authority of Thailand
TDPM:	Tourism Destination Promotion and Marketing
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO:	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UNWTOBC:	United Nations World Tourism Organization Business Council
VITA:	Vietnam Tourism Association
VNA:	Vietnam News Agency
VNAT:	Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
WTO:	World Trade Organization
WTTC:	World Travel and Tourism Council
VWC:	Visit World Campaign



## **Abstract**

This dissertation attempts to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers and suggest marketing policies to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan by (1) identifying the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in the perception of Japanese travelers, (2) studying the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam, and (3) exploring the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers.

This dissertation begins by reviewing major theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image. Based on this background, a new model of the formation of the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers is created to demonstrate the images of Vietnam perceived by Japanese travelers and its relationships. The other background is the literature review of Japanese tourist market and Vietnam tourism as a base to evaluate the results. Methodologically, this dissertation applies both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods are based on Likert-scale values analyzed by comparing means, importance-performance analysis, factor analysis, and Chi-Square tests. The qualitative methods include researching secondary data, analyzing survey answers to open-ended questions, participating, observing, and consulting with key informants of the related research issues.

The results show that the beneficiary images Vietnam should keep up its good work in include low prices, delicious cuisine, rich culture, new experience, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, knowledge opportunities, impressive

national characters, relaxing atmosphere, interesting local ways of life, and good traditional fine arts. The negative images Vietnam should improve consist of those regarding cleanliness, health care system, service quality, personal safety, political stability, and architectural buildings. The results also reveal that “novelty” is the most explanatory factor for the motivation of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam, who are found to be more ready to travel than those who had not. This dissertation concludes that Vietnam has not been an attractive destination for Japanese travelers although possessing a number of positive images in the Japanese market. However, Vietnam has been a destination for Japanese travelers seeking for novelty, and can still attract Japanese senior well-off travelers if there is an active participation of Japanese travel companies. In addition, the strong effects of travel guidebooks, television, pamphlets/brochures, and internet suggest that Vietnam should focus on promoting its images through these information sources.

Moreover, this dissertation indicates that the national tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam is bound by the rigid external and internal mechanisms of the national tourism organization, limited budget, and unprofessional staff, and that there has not been true tourism destination marketing in Vietnam yet, only tourism destination promotion has been carried out separately from many important steps of tourism destination marketing. This dissertation also recommends that the Vietnam National Administration (VNAT) should learn from the models of the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), especially paying attention to expanding its function to cover all the elements of tourism destination marketing, enhancing the public-private partnership, and playing a leading role in teaming up with major Japanese travel companies.

## **Chapter I - Introduction**

This chapter introduces the research issues, goals, significance, and major concepts in this dissertation. Then, it clarifies the background of this dissertation by discussing the importance of understanding tourism destination image, the tourism development and tourism destination marketing of Vietnam, and the attraction of Japanese travelers and Japanese travelers to Vietnam. This chapter also presents the methodology and the structure of this dissertation.

### **1.1. The Research Issues**

In consideration of the importance of understanding tourism destination image for the success of tourism destination marketing; the requirements of tourism development and tourism destination marketing of Vietnam; the growth and attraction of Japanese tourists; and the trend of Japanese travelers to Vietnam, this dissertation attempts to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers and suggest marketing policies to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan. To achieve the overall result, this dissertation addresses three research issues as follows:

***Research issue 1:*** the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers, including the attribute-based images, the attribute importance-performance analysis, the factor analysis, the holistic images, and the effects of different information sources;

***Research issue 2:*** the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam, particularly in terms of the legal and

organizational framework, and the performance and problems; and

***Research issue 3:*** the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers, particularly in terms of the operation of the national/state tourism organizations in tourism destination marketing.

The above research issues contribute to the overall result in different ways. The first research issue identifies the beneficiary images Vietnam should further promote and the negative images Vietnam needs to improve. The second research issue uncovers the shortcomings of the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam, especially in the way Vietnam promotes its tourism images overseas. The third research issue suggests effective policies for Vietnam to improve its images in Japan from the viewpoint of national/state tourism organizations.

## **1.2. The Research Goals**

The first goal of this dissertation is to provide a thorough assessment of the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers as one of the basic steps in tourism destination marketing. These images are obtained from multiple methods including researching secondary data, interviewing and surveying Japanese people as travelers, and interviewing and surveying Vietnamese tourism administrators/researchers and hotel/travel managers.

The second goal of this dissertation is to recommend practical marketing policies to improve the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in Japan. These

recommendations are based on the assessment of the images of Vietnam in Japan, the analysis of the shortcomings of the national tourism destination marketing of Vietnam, and the exploration of the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers.

### **1.3. The Significance**

Most significantly, this dissertation comes in time to meet a requirement of the national tourism destination marketing of Vietnam. Currently, one of the major tasks of the tourism destination marketing of Vietnam is identifying beneficiary images and making brands of Vietnam's tourism for its specific target markets (VNAT, 2008a), of which Japan has always been important.

Also, this dissertation is a pioneer in studying the tourism destination marketing of Vietnam from tourism destination image approach. In Vietnam, tourism destination promotion and marketing have been mostly based on subjective experiences and there has not been any study on the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in foreign markets. This point will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III when this dissertation reviews the literature of the Japanese tourist market and Vietnam tourism.

Practically, the dissertation can be used as a base for establishing a marketing strategy of Vietnam for the Japanese market. Therefore, it most benefits Vietnamese tourism-policy makers and travel managers. The author hopes that the approach of this dissertation will be further applied to study the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in other target markets of Vietnam.

#### **1.4. The Concepts of Tourism Destination Marketing, Tourism Destination Promotion, and Tourism Destination Image in this Dissertation**

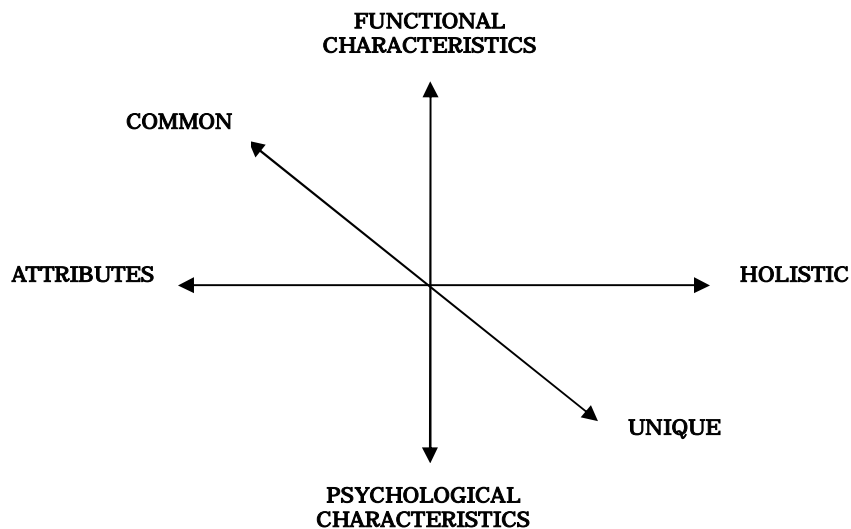
Tourism destination marketing is conceptualized as designing a place to satisfy the needs of the target markets of a destination (Kotler, 2002). This designing process include researching the needs, wants and behaviors of potential visitors, measuring destination image, developing a destination brand, establishing destination positioning, developing themes and promotional efforts, advertising and promotion, and other strategies to bring visitors to the destination (Ritchie & Crouch, 2005).

Tourism destination promotion is understood as one of the tasks of tourism destination marketing to make potential visitors aware of a destination and induce the demand to visit the destination. Tourism destination promotion is normally one of the major activities of national tourism organizations. National tourism organization refers to agency in charge of tourism development at the national level. When discussing the experience of Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers, the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) is a state tourism organization responsible for tourism development in the state of Hawaii as a part of the United States of America. However, in this dissertation, HTA is also called a national tourism organization.

The central concept of tourism destination image in this dissertation is understood as consisting of not only the perceptions of *individual destinations attributes* but also the *holistic impression* made by the destination. It comprises *functional characteristics*, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and *psychological characteristics*, concerning the more intangible aspects. Furthermore, the components of destination image can be arranged on a continuum ranging from traits which can be *common* to compare all destinations to those which

are *unique* to very few destinations (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). The components of destination image as mentioned in the above concept can be illustrated in three dimensions as in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1. The components of destination image**



Source: Echtner and Ritchie (2003, p. 43)

According to Figure 1.1, the components of destination image can range from those based on ‘common’ functional and psychological traits to those based on more ‘unique’ features, events, and feelings or auras. On one extreme of the continuum, the image of a destination can be composed of the impressions of a core group of traits on which all destinations are commonly rated and compared. For example, a destination’s image can include ratings on certain common functional characteristics, such as price levels, transportation infrastructure, and types of accommodation, etc. The destination can also be rated on very commonly considered psychological characteristics, such as level of friendliness, safety, quality of service expected, and fame, etc. On the other end of the continuum, the components can include unique

features and events (functional characteristics) or auras (psychological characteristics).

### **1.5. The Importance of Understanding Tourism Destination Image**

Understanding the images of a destination is essential for a destination wishing to influence traveler decision-making and choice. Researchers and marketers tend to be in consensus about the importance of image for a destination's viability and success in tourism, because the perception of destination image relates to decision-making and sales of tourist products and services (Jenkins, 1999; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). The relationship between the attraction of a tourism destination and imagery is emphasized as follows:

“Tourism is an industry based on imagery; its overriding concern is to construct, through multiple representations of paradise, an imagery (of the destination) that entices the outsider to place himself or herself into the symbol-defined space” (Buck, 1993, cited in Laws, 1995, p. 112).

Imagery is believed to be able to influence the whole process of consumption experience: before purchase, one always has some ideas about a place through imagery; during consumption, imagery can add value and increase satisfaction, or on the other way round; after consumption, it can have a reconstructive role in which a person relives the experience via memories and vacation souvenirs (MacInnis & Price, 1987). Therefore, understanding the differing images that visitors and non-visitors have of a destination is invaluable, enabling the salient attributes of the naïve image and the re-evaluated image to be incorporated into tourism marketing planning (Selby & Morgan, 1996). Hankinson (2001) stresses that:

“In an increasingly competitive market, destination marketers must seek a fuller understanding of the nature of images held by both individuals and organizations in



order to build more favorable brand images and thereby enhance a destination's attractiveness and economic development. This information requires not only with regard to the destination marketer's own destination, but also with regard to competing destinations, if positioning strategies are to be implemented successfully and limited budgets are to be used effectively" (Hankinson, 2004, p. 7).

Batchelor (1999) considers destination images a key element of the situational analysis which destination marketing agencies need to undertake. He holds that "as custodian of the destination's image, the marketing body must evaluate how this is perceived in the marketplace and determine how and by what means it can be enhanced" (Batchelor, 1999, p. 187). He also recommends that it is useful to monitor both levels and changes in the image that the market has of the destination, because monitoring can enable the destination manager to assess the effectiveness of a specific advertising/promotional campaign in a specific target market, or to determine the impact that the hosting of a particular mega-event has had on market awareness of the host destination. Because of such an important role of tourism destination image, national tourism organizations should track the images held by potential visitors in the international marketplace. Such tracking studies and market segmentation analysis are used in the design of their promotional campaigns.

According to Gertner and Kotler (2004), because a destination's image shapes the way citizens, visitors and business people respond to it, a destination must strategically manage its image. It is necessary that today's tourism marketer look at a destination's image as a major influence on investors, new residents, and visitors. Once an investor chooses a location, that place then becomes a part of the investor's projected image to customers. For example, French perfumes, Belgian chocolates, Chilean wines, Russian caviar, and Colombian coffee are elements that contribute to each of the respective country's images. Laws (1995) emphasizes that

“Appropriate image management can counteract the concerns which have kept visitors away, complementing practical programs to restore the infrastructure, calm civil unrest or improve service standards. Since the goal of positioning strategy is to create positive and realistic images, image research can identify the issues which should be addressed in the subsequent marketing for the destination” (Laws, 1995, p. 113).

As held by Leisen (2001), the vacation market can be segmented based on the images held by non-residents of the tourism destination. Because a positive image can increase the likelihood of visitation, these segments can be utilized to form in the short term the most important target markets. The segments with a less favorable image can also be identified. All segments are usually described in terms of image content and their demographic characteristics.

## **1.6. The Tourism Development and Tourism Destination Marketing of Vietnam**

### *1.6.1. The tourism development of Vietnam*

Since Vietnam’s economic reform known as ‘*Doi Moi*’ began in 1986, tourism in Vietnam has had favorable conditions for development as an economic sector. Tourism development is identified as “an important strategic orientation in the socio-economic policy in the process of industrialization and modernization of the country” (CPV, 1994). The Strategy for Tourism Development of Vietnam 2001-2010 declares the orientation to develop tourism become a spear-head economic sector of the national economy. The overall goal of the Strategy is to make Vietnam a tourism center in the region, and a country with the tourism industry among the top list of the region<sup>1</sup> by 2020. The major targets of the Strategy include 5.50-6 million foreign tourists by 2010, and a share of USD 4-4.50 billion of tourism income in Vietnam’s

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<sup>1</sup> The term “region” is unclear in this case, because the Strategy for Tourism Development of Vietnam 2001-2010 also does not specify this term. It may mean ASEAN countries or Southeast Asian region.

GDP by 2010, or about 6.50 % of Vietnam's GDP (The Government of Vietnam, 2002).

Vietnam's tourism has enjoyed a long period of development since the 1990s. During 1991-2000 period, the number of foreign tourists to Vietnam increased by 7.10 times, from 300,000 to 2.14 million; social income brought about by tourism activities recorded a high annual average growth of 25 %, from USD 145 million in 1991 to USD 1.20 billion in 2000 (The Government of Vietnam, 2002; VNAT, 2009).

Except for the decreases in 1998 and 2003 caused by the Asian Financial Crisis (1997-1998), the Iraqi War (2003), and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (2003), the number of foreign tourists to Vietnam has been constantly increasing (see Figure 1.2). In 2007, Vietnam received nearly 4.20 million foreign tourists, an increase of 17.20 % as compared to the number of 2006; social tourism income recorded approximately USD 3.30 billion, 9.80 % higher than that of 2006.

In 2005, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) predicted that Vietnam would be in the top ten of travel and tourism economies recording the highest tourism growth rate during 2006-2015 (WTTC, 2005). The organizing committee of the Iviaggiatori<sup>2</sup>'s Swiss International Holiday Exhibition in Lugano, Switzerland voted Viet Nam as the most outstanding new destination of the Far East region for 2005 (Vietnam News, 2005a). The TravelMode International<sup>3</sup> identified Vietnam as

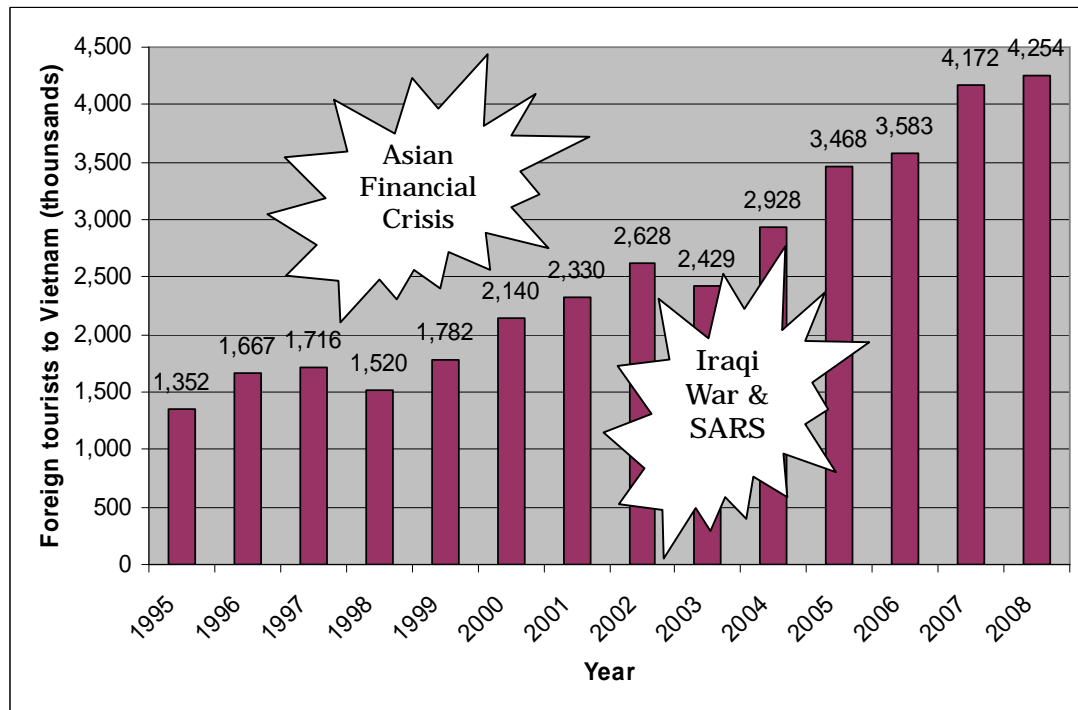
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<sup>2</sup> **Iviaggiatori** Organization belongs to **PromAx Communication SA**, an active Swiss Company that has been working for over 12 years in the field of fairs. From 1995 it has organized successful fairs and tourist events on the Swiss and Italian territories. The Swiss International Holiday Exhibition was born after a long experience in the tourist fairs made within the Northern Italian area. Access <http://www.iviaggiatori.org/chisiamo.asp?lingua=en> for more detailed information.

<sup>3</sup> TravelMode International is an international travel company, doing business at global scale. Access <http://www.travelmode.comcen.com.au/index.jsp> for more detailed information.

one of the most attractive destinations in 2007 based on the opinions of its clients (Ky Thu, 2007).

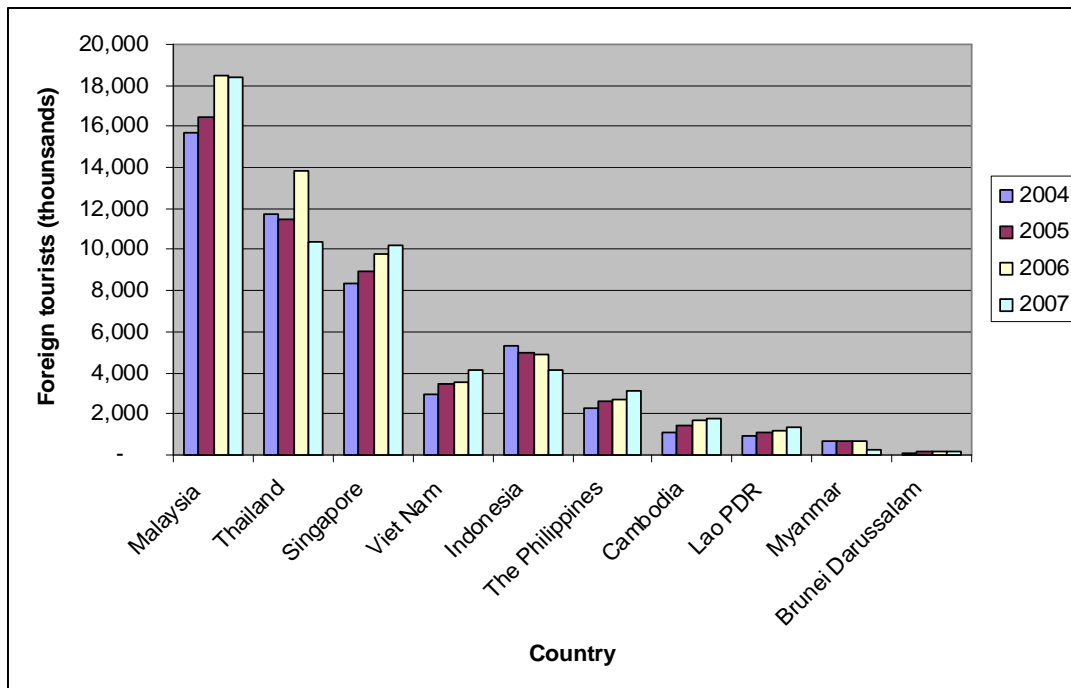
**Figure 1.2. Foreign tourists to Vietnam since 1995**



Source: Vietnam's Tourist Statistics (VNAT, 2009)

However, although always in an increasing trend, Vietnam is still far behind Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore in attracting foreign tourists. According to the statistics of 2007, the number of foreign tourists to Vietnam was only nearly one fourth of Malaysia's number, nearly one million lower than half of Thailand's, and about one million lower than half of Singapore's (see Figure 1.3).

**Figure 1.3. Foreign tourists to ASEAN countries since 2005**



Source: ASEAN Tourism Statistics (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008)

Moreover, the Vietnam National Administration (VNAT) has realized great difficulties in meeting the target of 5.50 – 6 million foreign tourists in 2010. Figure 1.2 shows that the greatest increase of foreign tourists to Vietnam was only about 500,000/ year (over 2003-2005), while, according to VNAT, meeting the 2010 target requires an increase of 800,000 foreign tourists/ year (Le Nam, 2007). The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. (EIU) forecasts that if there are no further public health crises, such as a re-emergence of SARS or a widespread outbreak of another type of flu, the number of foreign tourists to Vietnam will be about 4.67 million by 2010 (EIU, 2007), far lower than the target of 5.50 – 6 million. Furthermore, Figure 1.2 indicates that the growth rate of foreign tourists to Vietnam was only about 82,000 in 2008, or about 0.6 % as compared to 2007, the lowest growth since 2004.

### *1.6.2. The tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam*

Tourism destination promotion has been part of VNAT's activities since it was re-established in 1992. However, this work did not receive much consideration during 1992-2002, because there was little pressure on VNAT to take serious action to improve the efficiency of tourism promotion. Vietnam's tourism grew so fast during this period, and VNAT prioritized in other areas, such as developing the hotel sector, improving tourism attractions, and building a legal framework for tourism development, etc. rather than in tourism destination promotion and marketing. Travel companies also paid limited attention to tourism marketing, because they could make money easily without serious marketing plans. In this time, every individual and household could do business in tourism, which created a messy environment in tourism business. Although the Asian financial crisis caused a decrease of foreign tourists to Vietnam in 1998 (see Figure 1.2), its impacts made the tourism industry stakeholders re-think about their strategies related to hotel investments rather than pay more attention to tourism promotion and marketing.

However, the above situation changed after the crisis in 2003, which was caused by the Iraqi war and SARS, leading to a second decrease of foreign tourists to Vietnam since 1991. The statistics that 85 % foreign tourists to Vietnam did not consider visiting Vietnam for the second time made Vietnam's tourism stakeholders concerned about the development of tourism in Vietnam. Moreover, it was realized that there was little information about Vietnam in foreign markets. In fact, there had been single effort by Vietnamese travel companies to market their tours to foreign markets, but success was limited without an active participation of the national

tourism organizations. Given this context, VNAT was required to play a bigger role as a motive force in national tourism destination promotion and marketing (Nguyen, 2004; Bui, 2004).

The pressure on improving the national tourism promotion increases before and after Vietnam's admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in January 2007. The discussion of marketing Vietnam to the world became hotter when Prof. Philip Kotler visited Vietnam with the message: The efforts of the trade community alone are not enough to market a country; the government needs to take part in with serious actions (Nhu Hang, Le Nam, & Minh Nhat, 2007; Kotler, 2007). This new context made Vietnamese tourism policy makers more aware of a need of an overall marketing strategy for Vietnam's tourism, and marketing strategies for specific target markets (VNAT, 2008a). During March 2007 – November 2008, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), a tourism marketing plan 2008 – 2015 was drafted as a proposal of a research project. One of the major tasks of the plan was identifying beneficiary images and making brands of Vietnam's tourism for specific markets (VNAT, 2008a).

The Strategy for Tourism Development of Vietnam 2001 – 2010 identifies Japan as a target market of Vietnam's tourism. However, Mr. Masato Takamatsu, Director and Vice President of the Japan Tourism Marketing Co. (JTM) claimed that tourism destination marketing of Vietnam to Japan, and specifically the provision of information for visitors, the media, and travel companies, were very unprofessional, while Japan is inundated with information in the media about Thai, Singaporean, and Malaysian tourist destinations, which attracts Japanese people's attention (Vietnam Economic News, 2004).

## **1.7. The Attraction of Japanese Travelers, and Vietnam-Japan Relations and Japanese Travelers to Vietnam**

### *1.7.1. The attraction of Japanese travelers*

After World War II, overseas travel in Japan was severely restricted, only limited to business and government officials, technical study missions, and sporting teams to minimize outflows of foreign currencies (Leheny, 2003; Asamizu, 2005). The turning point of the Japanese postwar tourism was in 1964, when the Tokyo Olympics took place, and overseas travel was liberalized. With the removal of the restrictions, any Japanese could travel overseas, but were still limited to spending USD 500 per trip and taking one trip per year. Also in 1964, JTB International was established, JTB set up its subsidiary in the U.S., and Swiss Air launched Japan's first overseas package tour (March, n.d.).

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Japanese government more strongly supported overseas travel by formulating a policy stance that enabled its people and firms to take advantage of the new "global" leisure environment. The government was involved in designing "international-level" leisure environments and networks both at home and abroad, establishing Japan as a first-class leisure country, and aiding the developing countries to create world-class environments that Japanese might enjoy (MITI Leisure Development Office, 1974). In the strongest action to increase the number of outbound Japanese travelers, the Ministry of Transport issued the Ten Million Program to double the number of tourists traveling overseas annually within five years starting from 1987 (from five million to ten million by 1991). The overall purpose was displayed in the Ministry of Transport's own assessment of the plan:



“With improvements in income levels and the growth of free time, the spread of the package tour, etc., the number of Japanese outbound tourists is definitely growing. Especially with the appreciation of the yen and the relatively cheap prices, there was a big jump, to 5.52 million travelers in 1986, the first time this number has exceeded 5 million.

Even so, if examined as a percentage of the population, by 1986 only 4 % of Japanese traveled abroad annually, compared with the other advanced countries: 39 % of U.K. citizens, 34 % of the West Germans, 16 % of French, and 12 % of Americans, meaning that it is definitely a low level for us. Even when compared with another Pacific country, Australia, we travel abroad less than half their rate of 10 %.

Drawing up the promotion of outbound travel would increase international mutual understanding and would mean the cultivation of our people’s sense of the international. It would furthermore promote the economies of other countries, result in an improved balance of payments between our country and others, and will definitely help our country secure a stable existence in an international society with greater interdependence.

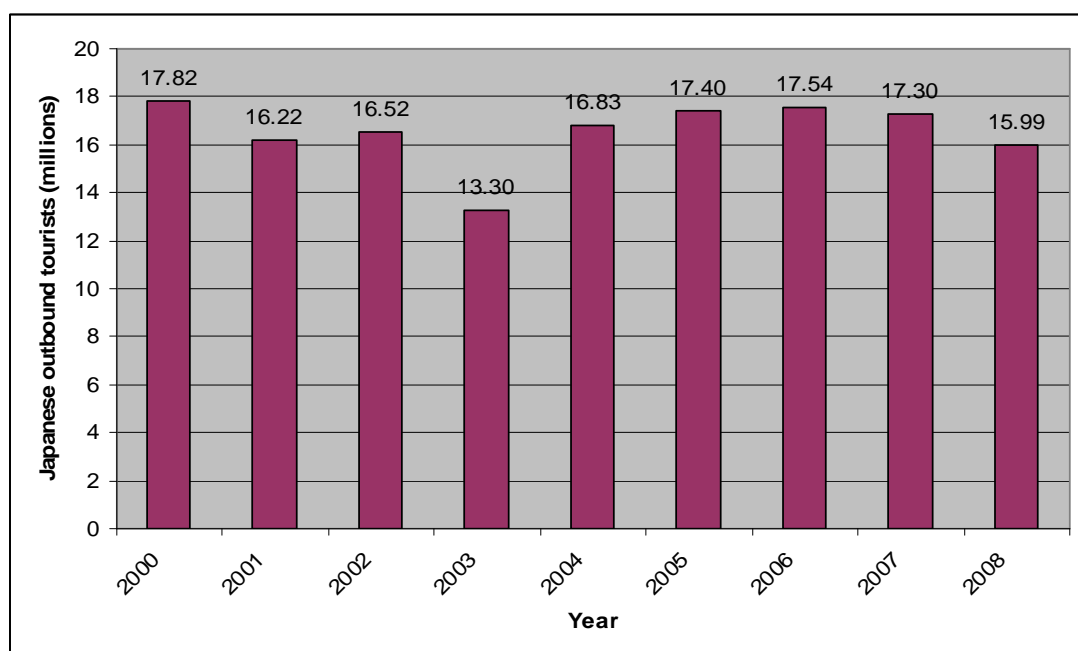
For this reason, the Ministry of Transport, in cooperation with other relevant ministries and agencies, has created the Overseas Trip Doubling Program and aims within five years to bring the number of Japanese outbound travelers to the level of at least ten million. This would bring us, as a percentage of the population, to about the level in Australia” (The Ministry of Transport of Japan, 1994, p. 1).

Japanese people are now encouraged to move away from the lifestyles devoted entirely to work and to create a social environment in which leisure time is more readily available. The 5-day-work-week system has spread throughout Japan, and 95.0 % of workers have a total of 18 annual paid holidays on average (OECD, 2002). Also, there are now 15 national holidays per year in Japan. From 2000, by the amendment of the National Holiday Act, Coming of Age Day (January 15) and Physical Education Day (October 10) are designated to be the second Monday of January and October respectively. From 2003, Ocean Day (July 20) and Respect-for-the Aged Day (September 15) become the third Monday of July and September respectively. As the result, most Japanese workers are able to enjoy 3-day-holidays, which encourage them to take “long-term leave”. Moreover, 3-day-holidays help foster the environment where children can take leaves at school in order to promote family travel. According to a survey by major travel agents,

domestic travel increased 25.0 % during the 3-day-holiday in January 2001, compared to the corresponding period in 2000 (OECD, 2002).

Nowadays, in the world tourism industry, Japan is a major tourism generating market – sending tourists in large numbers as visitors to countries around the world (UNWTO, 2005). Over the 2000s, there has been a high average of around 16 million Japanese people annually traveling overseas (see Figure 1.4).

**Figure 1.4. Japanese outbound tourists in the 2000s**



Source: The Statistics of Japanese Traveling Abroad (JTM, 2009)

Moreover, Japanese tourists belong to the group of the highest spending capacity, only standing behind Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom (The Economist, n.d.). Furthermore, according to a survey based on the views of about 15,000 hoteliers across Europe, the best tourists in the world were the Japanese, followed by the Americans and the Swiss. Japanese tourists were highly appreciated for being polite and tidy, securing 35 % more votes than the Americans who came

second (Reuters, 2007a).

In the context of 2007's outbound market decrease, the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) launched the Visit World Campaign (VWC) to revitalize the Japanese market. The objectives of this campaign are to increase the number of Japanese outbound travelers to 20 million by 2010, and review the current business model and build a stronger business relationship between Japanese tour operators and travel agencies and overseas travel business partners. The campaign brings together within the JATA structure the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and other related government ministries, tourism offices, airlines, airport authorities and other concerned parties as members of the VWC 20 Million Travelers Promotion Special Committee, and establishes the VWC Promotion Office at JATA. The two bodies are tasked with stimulating outbound travel from Japan's regions. The campaign prioritizes in stimulating three target markets: youth market – 20's and 30's, senior market, and family travel market. It also clarifies nine major destinations (South Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Taiwan, Guam, Australia, U.S. Mainland, Hawaii, and France) and three new destinations (China, Vietnam, and Macau) to focus on (JATA, 2008).

#### *1.7.2. Vietnam-Japan relations and Japanese travelers to Vietnam*

Historically, Japan and Vietnam had the first contact in the 8<sup>th</sup> century when a ship carrying Japanese envoys to China washed up on the Indochina Peninsula by a raging storm. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there was lively trade exchange between Japan and Vietnam. The landmark was in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Japanese merchants sailed to Hoi An, a town in the central part of Vietnam by ships granted permission to trade

overseas by the Japanese Shogunate government. Hoi An has become a world cultural heritage recognized by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2009a; UNESCO, n.d.). Vietnam and Japan share the same Buddhist identity: Mahayana Buddhism is predominant in Viet Nam and Japan, which is different from in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand where Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism is common. Therefore, there are many cultural similarities between the two countries based on this common identity, which serve as one of the fundamental foundations for friendly and close relations (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2009b).

Vietnam and Japan established diplomatic relationship in 1973 after a long time affected by the wars. The relations between the two countries have recorded great achievements, especially since 1992 when Japan resumed official development assistance (ODA) for Vietnam. Since 1993, there have been the highest level visit exchanges almost every year. The two countries have signed important cooperation documents, such as Japan-Viet Nam Investment Agreement (2004), Japan-Viet Nam Science and Technology Co-operation Agreement (2006), Japan-Viet Nam Economic Partnership Agreement (2008) (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2009b, 2010). By the end of 2007, Japan had 928 FDI operating projects in Vietnam with a total capital of USD 9.03 billion. Moreover, Japan has always been the number one trade partner of Vietnam. The trade turnover between Vietnam and Japan in 2007 was USD 11.70 billion, and is aimed at USD 15 billion in 2010. Especially, the two countries signed the Vietnam-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to promote the economic activities in trade of goods and services, investment, and intellectual property rights. Furthermore, Japan has been the top aid donor of

Vietnam. During 1992-2007, Japan's ODA for Vietnam achieved approximately USD 13 billion, accounting for about 30 % of the ODA volume committed for Vietnam. The Japanese government always maintains high ODA volumes for Vietnam and wants to make Vietnam become a symbol of high efficiency of Japan's ODA. The two sides have also agreed on the assistance program for Vietnam focusing on five areas: human resource development and institutional building; construction and improvement of transportation infrastructure and electricity; agricultural development and construction of rural infrastructure; educational and health development; and environmental reservation. There were 5613 Japanese nationals working and living in Vietnam by October 2007, and 824 Japanese companies operating in Vietnam by January 2009 (CPV, 2008; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2009b).

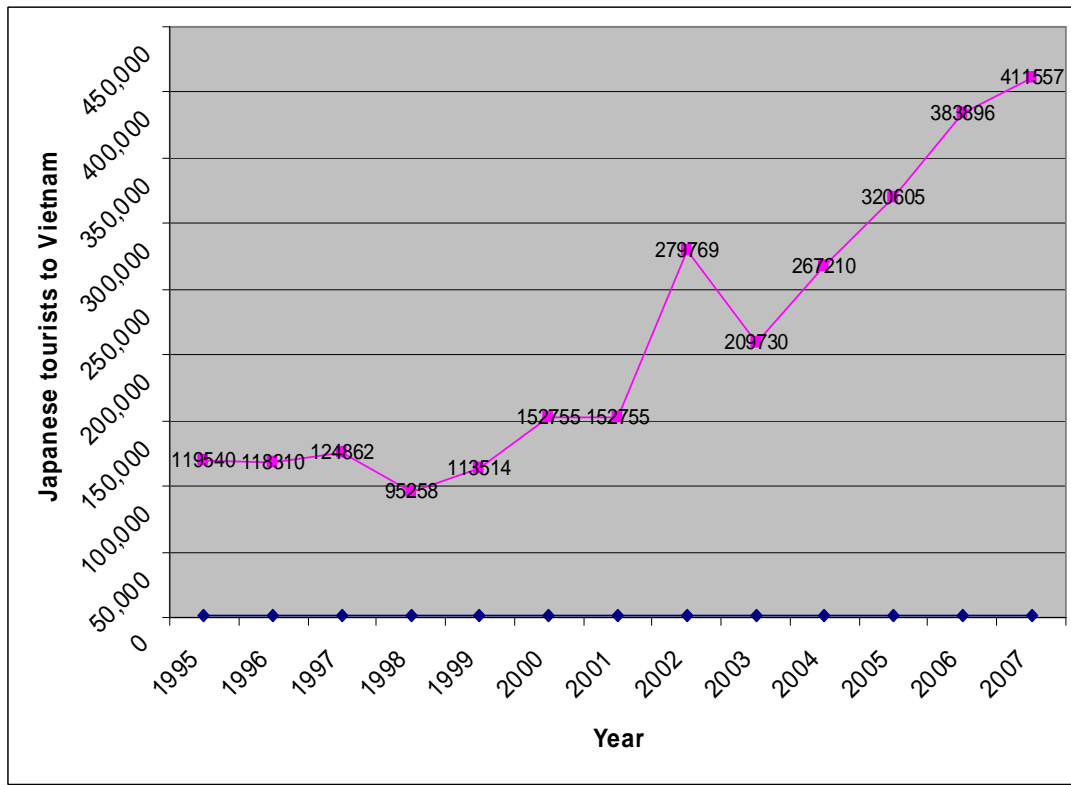
In Vietnam, Japanese tourists are regarded as one of the target markets (The Government of Vietnam, 2002). Since 2005, Japanese citizens have been exempted from entry visas to enter Vietnam. So far, there have been direct flights connecting Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam with Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka of Japan. Regarding Vietnam-Japan tourism cooperation, in 1995 the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) helped Vietnam conduct a research project on master planning for tourism development in the central region of Vietnam. In 2005, the two sides signed the Vietnam-Japan Joint Statement on Tourism Cooperation focusing on exchange of tourists, tourism promotion and marketing, exchange of experts, human resource development, and tourism investment promotion. The Vietnam-Japan Tourism Cooperation Commission was established to implement the Statement. This Commission meets annually to discuss directions and

details of tourism cooperation. Vietnam has requested for Japan's assistance in establishing a tourism institute or university in the central region of Vietnam, establishing a tourism representative office in Japan, promoting Vietnam's tourism in Japan, organizing FAM-trips for Japanese travel agencies to Vietnam, and training Vietnamese travel guides for better serving Japanese tourists. Furthermore, within the West-East cooperation framework, Japan has sent experts to Vietnam for developing craft villages for tourism in Ha Tay and Ninh Binh provinces.

Vietnam's tourism industry achieved initial success in attracting Japanese travelers. The number of Japanese tourists to Vietnam rapidly increased in 2000, 2001, and 2002, hitting a peak of nearly 280,000 in 2002, then declining to 210,000 in 2003 due to SARS and Avian Flu. However, it immediately increased again by 20 % in 2004 and 2005 to reach new records of 320,605 and 383,896 in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Once more, it achieved a new record of 411,557 in 2007, increasing 7.20% as compared with 2006 (see Figure 1.5).

Japan has been for a long time listed among the five (5) countries and territories that contribute the highest number of foreign travelers to Vietnam, together with China, the US, South Korea, and Taiwan. In 2007, the number of Japanese tourists to Vietnam accounts for 9.87 % ( $411,557/4,171,564$ ) of the total volume of foreign tourists. However, the number of Japanese travelers to Vietnam is still very small in comparison with the total number of Japanese outbound tourists (411,557 out of 17,298,000 million in 2007, or 2.38 % of the total number) (VNAT, 2009). As indicated in Figure 1.6, the number of Japanese tourists to Vietnam in 2007 was just above one third of the one of Thailand, and two third of the one of Singapore.

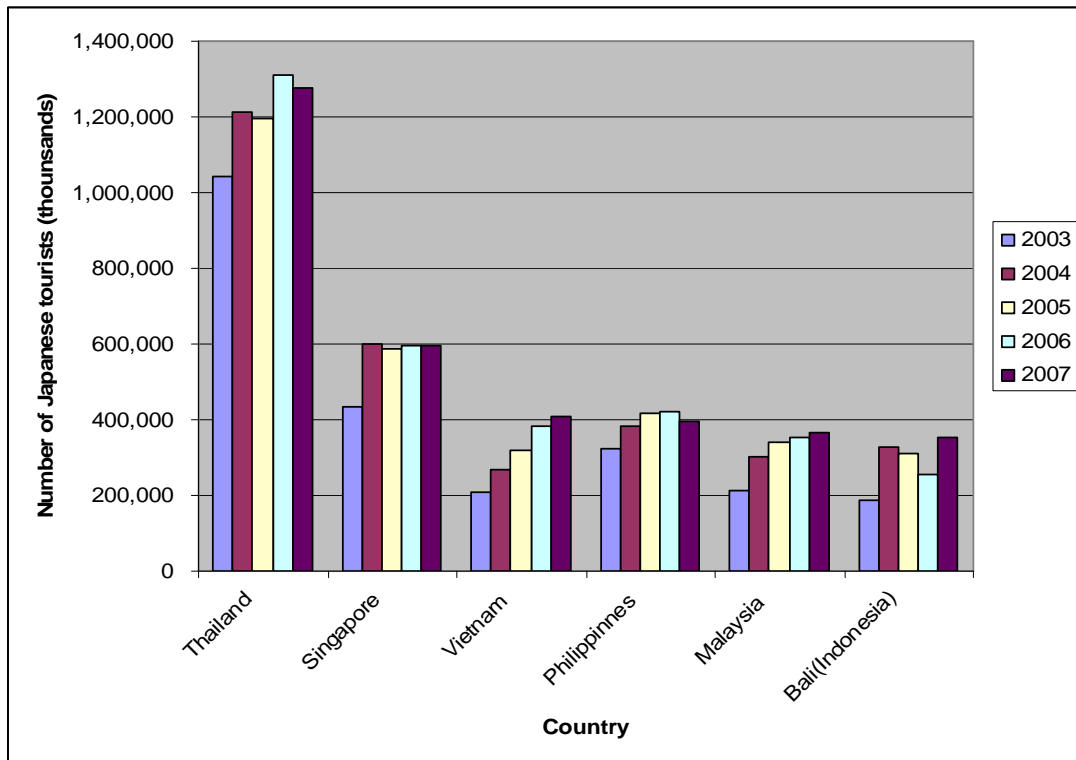
**Figure 1.5. Japanese tourists to Vietnam since 1995**



Source: Vietnam's Tourism Statistics (VNAT, 2009)

In comparison with other ASEAN countries, the number of Japanese travelers to Vietnam ranked third in 2007. It is noticeable that within five (5) years from 2003 Vietnam recorded a constant increase of Japanese travelers, and has surpassed Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines (see Figure 1.6). Moreover, according to the result of a survey on which ASEAN country that Japanese people want to visit at the JATA Travel Fair 2008, Vietnam was chosen as the favorite destination by about 15 % of respondents; Cambodia, Brunei, and Thailand followed Vietnam with the rates of 13 %, 12 %, and 10 % respectively (ASEAN-JAPAN Centre, 2008). This fact indicates that Vietnam has, to some extent, become more popular and attractive to Japanese people.

**Figure 1.6. Japanese travelers to some ASEAN countries since 2003**



Source: The Statistics of Japanese Traveling Abroad (JTM, 2009)

Among the tourist segments, Japanese travelers to Vietnam are mostly aged from twenty (20) to forty (40), many of them are students and females (CPV, 2007). However, a number of travel companies have focused on attracting senior Japanese travelers, who belong to the ‘baby boom’ generation born after World War II and have retired. The most prominent travel company succeeding in receiving the senior segment is the APEX Vietnam Tourist Company (APEX Vietnam), which received 70,000 Japanese tourists in 2006, accounting for 18.23 % of the total number of Japanese tourists to Vietnam.



## **1.8. Methodology**

This dissertation employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods are based on Likert-scale values analyzed by comparing means, importance-performance analysis, factor analysis, and Chi-Square tests. The qualitative methods include researching secondary data, analyzing survey answers to open-ended questions, participating, observing, and consulting with key informants of the related research issues.

Regarding measuring the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers, to distil the construct of the image of Vietnam for empirical research, this dissertation began with capturing the general images of Vietnam through a preliminary phase of research by doing content analysis of written and visual documents (Japanese travel guidebooks, travel brochures, and tourism-related policy documents, etc.), reviewing the relevant literature of tourism destination image and Japanese travelers, consulting with tourism professors and experts, analyzing various related comments in popular newspapers, and carrying out a brief survey to find out how the Vietnamese side thinks about Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers. The results of this phase are a set of statements and tourism destination attributes for measuring the attribute-based images of Vietnam. These statements serve as the initial assumptions or hypotheses for the images of Vietnam in the empirical research.

To identify the attribute-based images, Japanese respondents were asked about the importance of the identified attributes when they consider traveling abroad and the opinions about the statements of the performance of Vietnam about these

attributes. The answers were based on a five (5)-point Likert scale. The importance-performance analysis technique was used to further evaluate the images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind. The factor analysis technique was also used to withdraw the factors of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers based on the attribute performance of Vietnam. This dissertation also compared the perception of Japanese respondents who had been to Vietnam and that of those who had not to look more into the beneficiary and negative images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind.

To identify the holistic images, three (3) open-ended questions were used for capturing functional, psychological, and unique images. To measure the effects of different information sources, a set of information sources was first established according to the model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers. Japanese respondents were then asked about the effects of the information sources to the formation of the images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind. The answers were based on a five (5)-point Likert scale.

Researching the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam was based on directly participating and observing destination marketing activities of Vietnam, interviewing key informants, and studying available secondary data. Exploring the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers was based on content analysis of the available secondary data obtained from the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU)'s library, online databases, and internet.

A questionnaire was designed for empirical research of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers. In the questionnaire design stage, great

attention was paid to the focus, phraseology, and sequencing of the questions. The problems of misunderstanding and misinterpretation were minimized through pilot testing and consulting with tourism scholars and experts. The validity of the methodology concerning face validity, content validity, and construct validity was carefully considered. The reliability of the designed methods was based on examining test-retesting and inter-rating methods. The research was intensively conducted from April 2007 to July 2009 through three main stages: (1) research design stage to form the construct of the dissertation; (2) empirical research in Vietnam and Japan; and (3) data analysis for the conclusions.

## **1.9. The Structure**

This dissertation consists of nine (9) chapters with the major contents summarized as follows:

Chapter I – Introduction: introduces the research issues, goals, significance of this dissertation, and major concepts. This chapter also clarifies the background and briefly presents the methodology of this dissertation.

Chapter II – Theories of Tourism Destination Marketing and Tourism Destination Image: discusses the theories and related discussions that guide the conduct of this dissertation.

Chapter III – The Japanese Tourist Market and Vietnam Tourism: reviews the typical features of the Japanese tourist market and Vietnam tourism described in the existing literature.

Chapter IV – Methodology: introduces the methods used to identify and

improve the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers.

Chapter V – The Images of Vietnam as a Tourism Destination for Japanese Travelers: presents the results regarding the first stated research issue.

Chapter VI – The National Tourism Destination Management, and Promotion and Marketing of Vietnam: introduces the results of the second research issue.

Chapter VII – The Experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in Attracting Japanese Travelers: presents the results of the third research issue.

Chapter VIII – Discussion: discusses the results in Chapters V, VI, and VII.

Chapter IX – Conclusion: summarizes the major findings regarding the three stated research issues, articulates the contributions, analyzes the limitations, and suggests further studies to develop the results of this dissertation.

## **Chapter II – The Theories of Tourism Destination Marketing and Tourism Destination Image**

As stated in Chapter I, one of the two major goals of this dissertation is to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers. To realize this goal it is necessary to review the major contents concerning tourism destination image. Moreover, because tourism destination image belongs to a broader area of tourism destination marketing, it is also necessary to investigate the nature of tourism destination marketing to know the position of tourism destination image in the whole process of tourism destination marketing. In order to set the principles that guide the conduct of this dissertation, this chapter firstly discusses the theories of tourism destination marketing, and then looks into the theories of tourism destination image. The major contents related to measurement of tourism destination image and the effects of the media on tourism destination image are also included. This chapter concludes by highlighting the major features of the discussed theories and a formulation of a model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers.

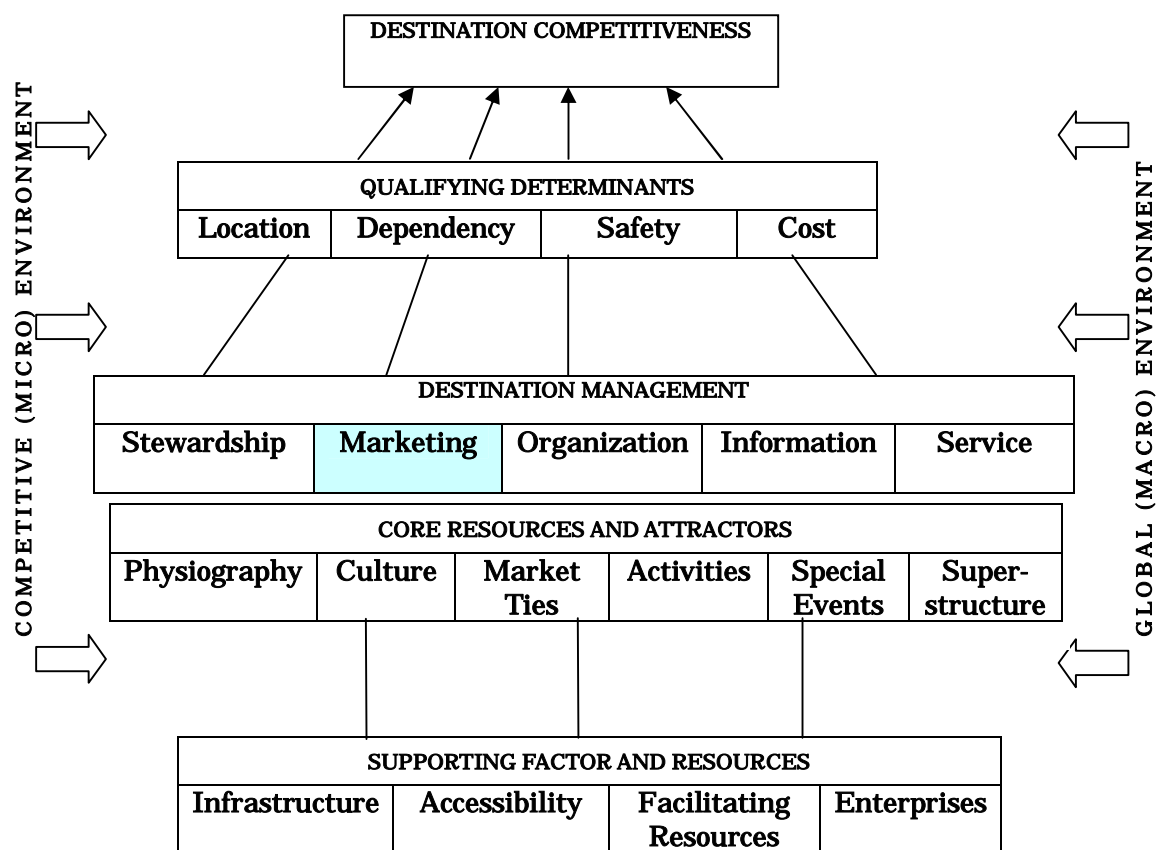
### **2.1. The Theories of Tourism Destination Marketing**

#### *2.1.1. The theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing*

Tourism destination marketing belongs to a broader area of tourism destination management, which is in its turn under a larger area of tourism destination competitiveness. To illustrate these relationships, Crouch and Ritchie (1999) provided a model of tourism destination competitiveness based on determinants

belonging to seven groups as described as in Figure 2.1. The Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization Mr. Francesco Frangialli held that this model is a comprehensive and insightful framework presenting a breakthrough paradigm, and “provides a widely accepted new model of theory and practice in destination management for many years to come” (Ritchie & Crouch, 2005, p. xvii).

**Figure 2.1. Ritchie and Crouch’s model of destination competitiveness**



Source: Ritchie and Crouch (2005, p. 63)

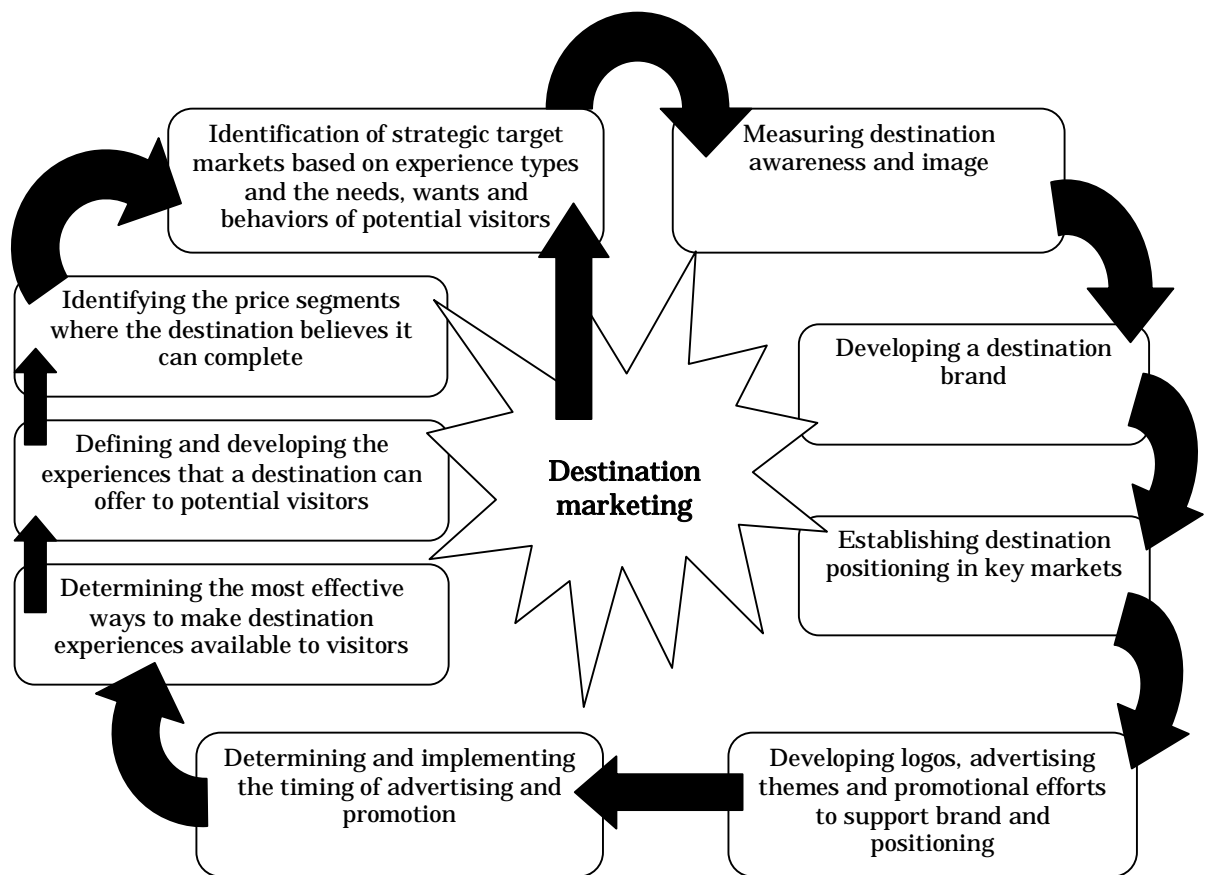
According to Figure 2.1, destination marketing is a part of destination management. Moreover, Ritchie and Crouch (2005) emphasize that destination marketing has been the primary task of destination managers. In the past, the importance of the marketing and promotion roles of the destination management

organization were of such a high priority that the destination management organization label was understood to mean destination marketing organization. It is only in recent years that destination management organizations have acknowledged how significant their non-marketing roles are in developing, enhancing, and maintaining destination competitiveness.

Regarding the concept of destination marketing, Kotler (2002) provides a concept of place marketing as “designing a place to satisfy the needs of its target markets” (p. 183). For the difference between tourism marketing and tourism promotion, he holds that many marketers believe that marketing a place means promoting it, but tourism promotion is in fact one of the least important marketing tasks. Moreover, for a troubled place, tourism promotion can not help, but makes place buyers more aware of the troubles in that place (Kotler, 2002). However, destination promotion is normally destination marketing organizations’ major activity and budget item (Dore, Crouch, & Geoffrey, 2003).

Ritchie and Crouch (2005) provide more operational insights into the elements of tourism marketing as in Figure 2.2. Accordingly, the starting point of destination marketing is identifying strategic target markets based on experience types and the needs, wants and behaviors of potential visitors. Once this task has been completed, destination marketers need to measure destination awareness and image. The measured images are used as a base for developing a destination brand, and then establishing destination positioning in key markets. After that, destination marketers have to develop logos, advertise themes and promotional efforts to support brand and positioning; determine and implement the timing of advertising and promotion.

**Figure 2.2. The elements of destination marketing**



Source: Ritchie and Crouch (2005, p. 189)

In building a strong destination brand, importance is likely to be attached to image creation and destination differentiation. Initially, the holistic destination branding definition tended to include the themes of identification, differentiation, experience, expectations, image, consolidation, and reinforcement. Then, this concept was added to by introducing the important themes of recognition, consistency, brand messages, and emotional response (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). For the difference between destination image and destination brand, Tasci and Kozak (2006) point out that

“Destination image contributes to forming destination brand and to its success in the market. So long as the image is positive, the brand would have a strong position



in the market. A brand is therefore more than an image” (Blain, et al., p. 313).

However, the process of destination branding can create or improve the images of a destination to positively influence potential visitors. This idea is supported by a comprehensive definition of destination branding:

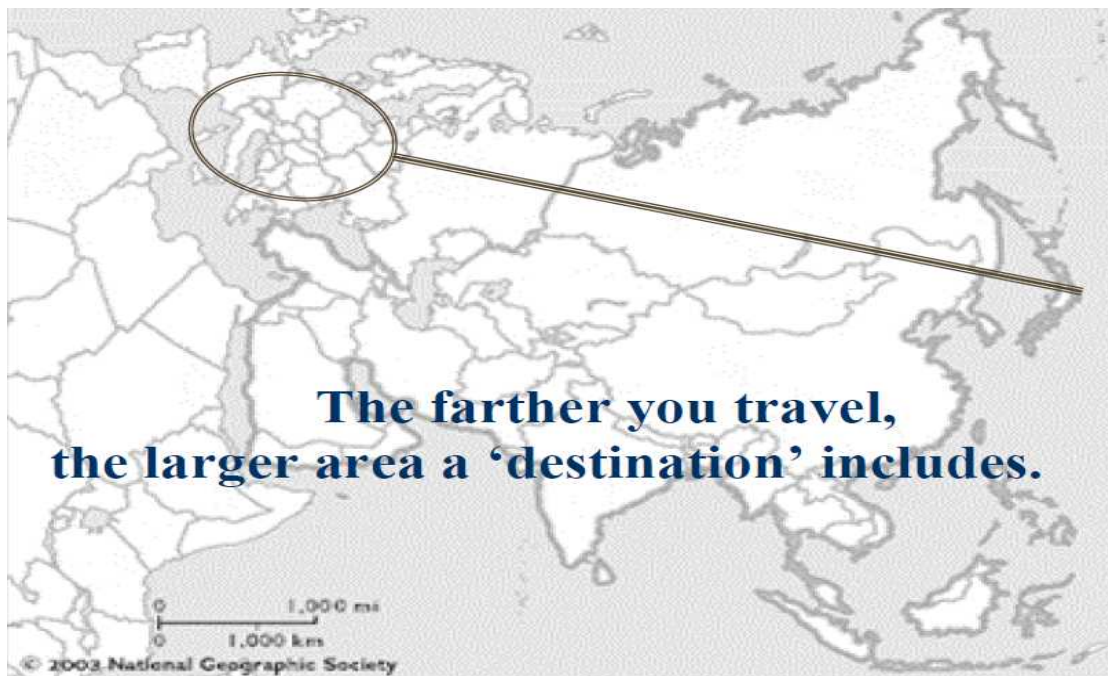
“Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily *identifies* and *differentiates* a destination; that (2) consistently convey the *expectation* of a memorable travel *experience* that is uniquely associated with the destination; and that (3) serve to *consolidate* and *reinforce* the *emotional connection* between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer *search costs* and *perceived risk*. Collectively, these activities serve to create a *destination image* that positively influences consumer *destination choice*” (Blain et al., 2005, p. 337).

It is noticeable from Figure 2.2 that destination marketing not only promotes and advertises what a destination has already possessed, but also participates in creating new values. In this aspect, beside creating or improving the images of a destination as analyzed above, destination marketing deals with determining the most effective ways to make destination experiences available to visitors, defining and developing the experiences that a destination can offer to potential visitors, and identifying the price segments where the destination believes it can complete. These tasks indicate the full participation of destination marketers in designing a place to satisfy the needs and wants of its target markets as stipulated by Kotler (2002).

In designing the experiences a destination can offer their potential visitors, Takamatsu (2007) recommends the theory of the distance from an originating market and the area of a destination to guide destination managers in identifying appropriate areas of destinations for a specific market. This theory says: The meaning of a destination is different depending on where the trip originates - the farther one travels, the larger area a ‘destination’ includes. For example, Japanese people traveling to distant areas like Europe usually include many countries in one trip as illustrated in

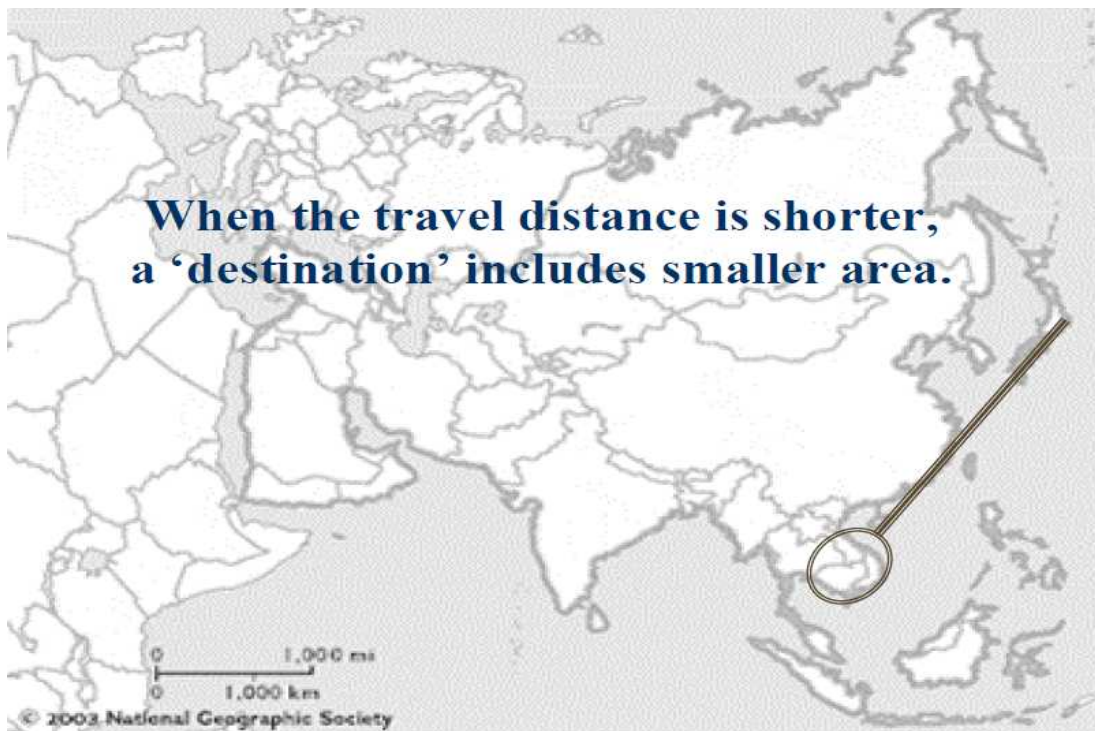
Figure 2.3. On the contrary, when they travel to short distant areas like Indochina, a smaller area is included in one trip (see Figure 2.4.). Similarly, Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka are three different markets for the Seoul market; and West Japan and Korea are included in one trip for the Singaporean market (Takamatsu, 2007).

**Figure 2.3. The European Union as one destination for Japanese travelers**



Source: Takamatsu (2007, p. 26)

**Figure 2.4. An area of Indochina as one destination for Japanese travelers**



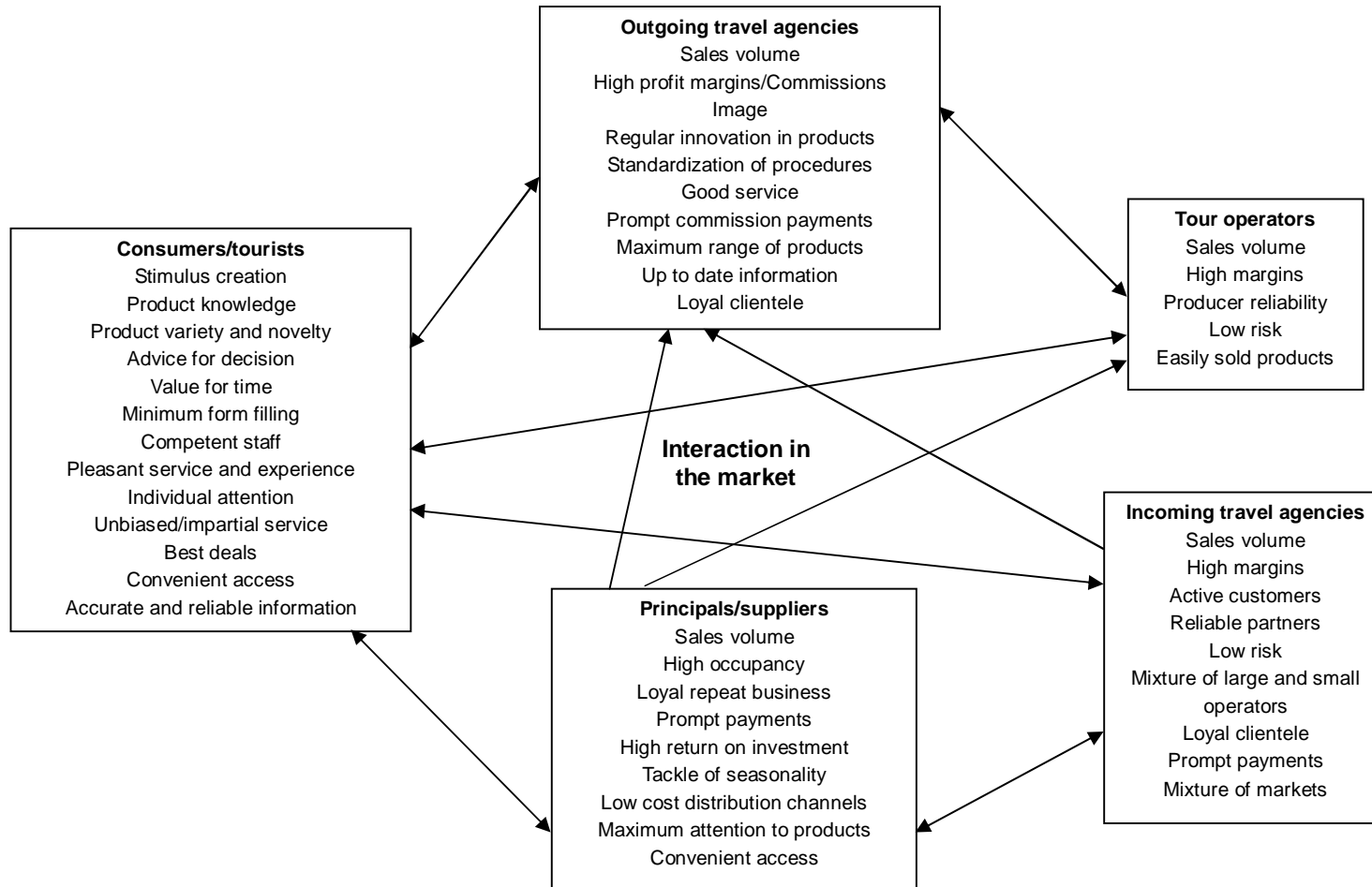
Source: Takamatsu (2007, p. 27)

Also, in order to design a place, destination marketers need to work with various channels of tourism distribution whose needs and wants are very often conflicting with each other. The complexity of the needs and wants of tourism distribution channel members are described by Buhalis (2001) as in Figure 2.5.

Buhalis (2001) further comments on channel conflicts as follows:

“Each tourism distribution channel member has different *needs and wants* (...). Unfortunately, some of these needs are conflicting and antagonistic, and therefore a degree of *channel conflict* is inevitable. This is mainly due to the natural tendency of each player to maximize their profit margin at the expense of their partners, as consumers are prepared to pay a fairly fixed amount for their products” (Buhalis, 2001, p. 13).

**Figure 2.5. Needs and wants of tourism distribution channel members**



Source: Buhalis (2001, p. 12)

Moreover, Buhalis (2001) holds that “power distribution within the tourism distribution channel affects channel control and leadership, while organizations often need to redesign their channels in order to resolve these conflicts” (p. 13). Therefore, it can be inferred that designing a place to meet the needs and wants of the target markets as the duty of destination marketers has a lot to do with settling the conflicts among different tourism distribution channel members. This work requires strong power and leadership from the management organization. The role of national tourism organizations is further discussed in the next section concerning the collaboration in destination marketing.

#### *2.1.2. The theory of collaboration in tourism destination marketing*

Tourism destination marketing is particularly challenging, and requires close cooperation among the tourism industry stakeholders, especially between the private and public sectors (Bennett, 1999). In 2000, a research by the UNWTO Business Council (UNWTOBC) revealed that the main area in which public-private sector partnership in tourism occurs is that of marketing and promotion. The requirements for this partnership come from the pressure of budget constraints and the recognition by governments of the fact that “a public sector-led marketing organization is often less entrepreneurial and effective than one managed by the industry itself, or in collaboration with the industry” (UNWTOBC, 2000, p. 12). Bennett (1999) holds that the nature of tourism, with small businesses selling products in distant markets, has led to a conclusion in many countries that governments and government agencies should have a leading marketing role. Their activities, therefore, need to be undertaken in close cooperation with the private sector. Success is likely to come via

public-private partnerships combined with environmental and social responsibility.

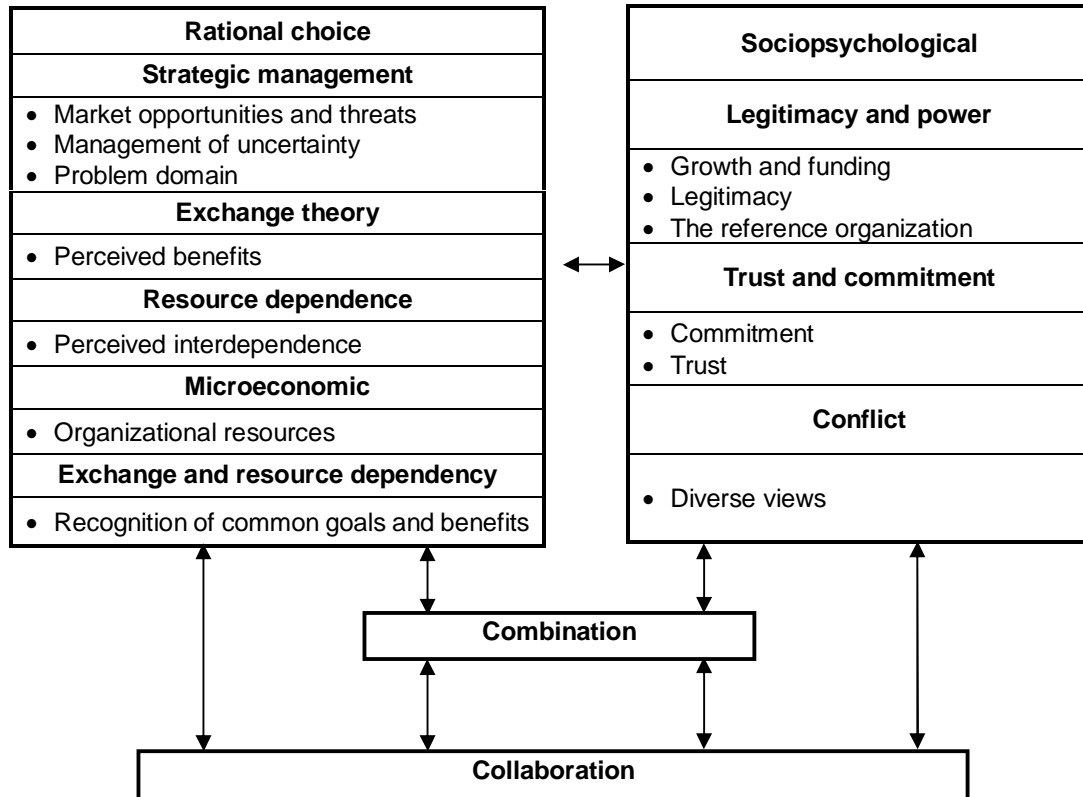
In researching the relationship between destination growth and destination marketing, Prideaux and Cooper (2002) found that the manner in which private and public sector stakeholders work together through a recognized destination marketing organization will influence the overall rate of growth of destinations, particularly when origin markets are located in another state or overseas. Most national tourism organizations that have partnerships with the private sector “rely on the contributions of the private sector mainly for marketing, advertising and funding of special promotional campaigns” (Lennon, Smith, Cockerell, & Trew, 2006, p. 6). The private sector is generally willing to contribute financially to national promotions as long as they feel their contributions “really contribute pro-actively to decisions regarding national marketing and promotional strategy and campaigns” (Lennon et al., p.6). However, these authors emphasize that the development of such a relationship is long term, and based on trust stability and continued cooperation.

In looking for the preconditions for the public-private partnership in tourism marketing, Jantararat and Williams (2000) assert that “collaborative relationships are the sum of perceived *past*, *present*, and *future* benefits. Essentially, collaboration will be enhanced when stakeholders have positive past experiences and trust in the collaborative initiator and/or convener’s ability to achieve the goals of the collaborative project” (p. 127). They propose a model of critical preconditions for successful collaborative tourism marketing as in Figure 2.6. This model shows that

“Situations such as economic recessions and demand uncertainty, in particular, create impetus for joint tourism initiatives. It should be recognized, however, that perceptions of the benefits to be had from joint efforts may vary considerably across participants and may include marketing economies, access to tourism information, increased demand, and technological assistance.

(...) Managers may not understand or believe that their current involvement in a collaborative campaign has any significant attraction. They, nevertheless, are party to activities because of future potential gains, which may include legitimization and enhancement of their image” (Jantararat & Williams, 2000, pp. 27-28).

**Figure 2.6. A critical precondition model of collaboration**



Source: Jantararat and Williams (2000, p. 126)

Moreover, Jantararat and Williams (2000) highlight the importance of a referent or convening organization for successful collaborative efforts. They point out that the “the convener commonly identifies and approaches potential participants, explains to them the proposed campaign, and requests their support” (p. 128). They hold that in the context of conflicting interests, a convening organization needs to “provide strong leadership and direction, an appreciation of trends and issues, as well as infrastructural support” (p. 128).

The “*Amazing Thailand*” campaign has usually been considered a successful

national promotional campaign:

“The Amazing Thailand campaign has been a major success story for the country’s tourism industry. It was initially conceived with the objective of promoting Thailand as the venue and host of the Asian Games in 1998 and to celebrate the sixth year of the reign of His Majesty the King. However, the campaign took on greater significance after the start of the Asian financial and economic crisis. It was used to market Thailand’s value for money in international markets, as well as educating the Thai public and tourism industry as to the economic importance of tourism for Thailand and the need to upgrade the country’s tourism product.

The success of the campaign led to substantial growth for Thailand in tourist arrivals from abroad – from Asian markets negatively impacted by currency devaluations, as well as from long-haul markets whose currencies remained strong” (UNWTOBC, 2000, p. 50).

By analyzing this campaign, especially the active role of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Jantararat and Williams (2000) reaffirm the model of critical preconditions of collaboration as in Figure 2.6:

“All factors outlined in the model were considered important by stakeholders; however, the role of the convening or referent organization was perceived as critical to the project’s success, both by collaborative stakeholders and the conveners themselves” (Jantararat & Williams, 2000, p. 133).

Most comprehensively, Wang and Xiang (2007) propose a theoretical framework of collaborative destination marketing as in Figure 2.7. Specifically, this model integrates the preconditions, motivations, processes, and outcomes of destination marketing alliances, and networks based upon theories of inter-organizational relations. Like Jantararat and Williams (2000), Wang and Xiang (2007) assert that external forces presented to organizations in a destination serve as the preconditions for marketing alliance development in this framework. Moreover, they provide seven propositional statements regarding the given theoretical framework as follows:

- Environmental forces (i.e., social, economic, organizational and technological) will influence the decisions by tourism organizations to



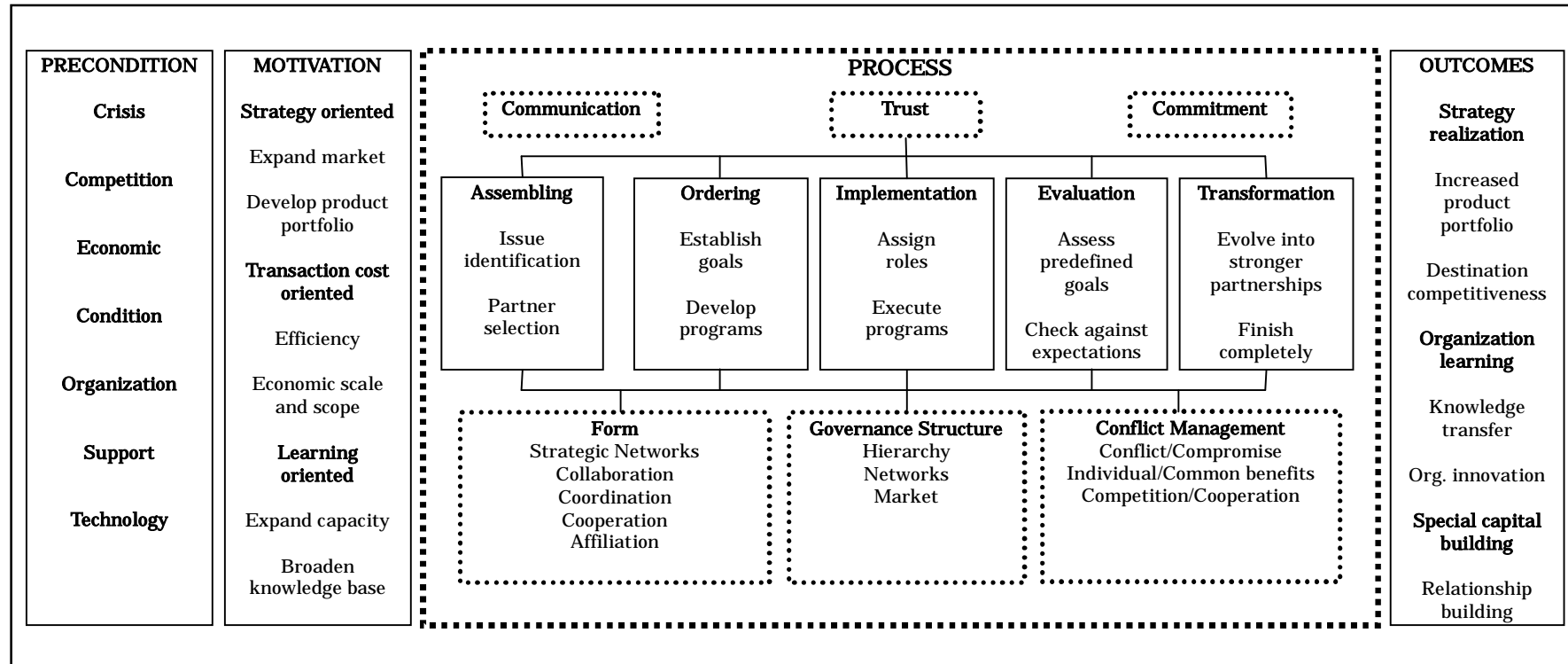
collaborate with each other;

- Tourism organizations in a destination entering into marketing alliances are driven by the following motivations: strategy oriented, transaction cost oriented, and organizational learning oriented;
- The tourism marketing collaboration process is dynamic and cyclical and usually contains five stages: (1) assembling, (2) ordering, (3) implementing, (4) evaluating, and (5) transforming;
- Collaborative marketing relationships among tourism organizations in a destination can be placed in a continuum of affiliation, cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and strategic networks depending upon the levels of formality, integration, and structural complexity. Affiliation represents the lowest, while strategic networks represent the highest level of formality, integration, and structural complexity along the continuum;
- Each of the five stages of marketing alliance formation is dominated by one of the following modes of governance: market, hierarchy, and networks, with networks serving as the supporting mode of governance at all stages of marketing alliance formation;
- Conflicts are present among tourism organizations throughout their collaborative marketing activities. These conflicts are reflected mainly by their efforts to make a balance between their individual organization's benefits and the common benefits to the entire destination, as well as their resultant strategies of cooperation versus competition. The resolution of conflicts generally follows a cooperation-conflict-compromise trajectory; and

- Collaborative marketing efforts in a destination generate specific outcomes for tourism organizations involved, and the results can be reflected in three major areas: (1) strategy realization, (2) organization learning, and (3) social capital building.

Jantararat and Williams (2000)'s model of critical preconditions of collaboration and Wang and Xiang (2007)'s framework for destination marketing alliance formation can help researchers look into the situation of collaboration of tourism destination marketing in a destination. In this dissertation, they are used as a theoretical foundation for analyzing and discussing the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam, and the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers

**Figure 2.7. A proposed framework for destination marketing alliance formation**



Source: Wang and Xiang (2007, p. 79)

## **2.2. The Theories of Tourism Destination Image**

### *2.2.1. The elements of a tourism destination*

Researchers usually conceptualize a tourism destination by generalizing its major elements. For instance, Lumsdon (1997) holds that the term of tourism destination is understood as comprising a number of elements, which are combined to attract visitors to stay for a holiday or day visit. Specifically, he identifies four core elements making up a destination: (1) prime attractors, (2) built environment: physical identity, (3) supporting supply services, and (4) socio-cultural dimensions (see Table 2.1). Moreover, there are three powerful influences shaping the form of tourism marketing at most destinations: (1) natural resources, (2) climate, and (3) culture. However, he adds that it would be misleading to define the destination as a composite product because that definition implies that the destination can be marketed as a packaged bundle of benefits in the same way as a fast moving consumer item.

**Table 2.1. The main elements of a tourism destination**

	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Prime attractors	The main attractors which appeal to the visitor and which differentiate one destination from another, some of which are international, others appealing to a country or on a regional basis	Acropolis in Athens; Pyramids in Egypt; Niagara Falls, USA; Taj Mahal, India
Built environment: physical identity	The physical layout of a destination including waterfronts, promenades, historic quarters and commercial zones. Major elements of infrastructure such as road and rail networks, plus open spaces and communal facilities	Boston Waterfront; London Docklands; Venetian canals; Roman Quarter in Paris
Supporting supply services	Essential facilitating services such as accommodation, communications, transport, refreshment and catering, entertainment, amenities	Essential at all destinations
Socio-cultural dimensions	Cultural attributes – bridges between past and present, the mood or atmosphere ranging from sleepy to vibrant. The degree of friendliness and cohesion between the host community and visitors	Chaotic transport of Delhi, India; the salsa music of La Habana, Cuba; the friendliness of the Greek islands

Source: Lumsdon (1997, p. 239)

According to Pearce (2005), there are six systems or approaches to viewing tourism destinations: (1) activities, (2) settings, (3) facilities, (4) service, (5) hosts, and (6) management. Of these, three systems emphasize physical dimensions, and the three others have a more human and social face (see Table 2.2). Moreover, Page, Brunt, Busby, and Connell (2001) hold that a tourism destination has the following main aspects: (1) attraction and activities, (2) accommodation and food, (3) transportation, (4) policy and institutional elements, and (5) other tourist facilities and services.

**Table 2.2. Six systems for characterizing tourism destinations**

<i>Label</i>	<i>Emphasis</i>	<i>Characteristics and examples of the system</i>
Activities	Physical	Listings, profiles, GIS approach
Settings	Physical	Public management agencies use of zones using a biophysical basis
Facilities	Physical	Micro-environments and servicescapes: the immediate physical features of the tourist space
Service	Social	Personnel: the characteristics of personnel in the service quality framework
Hosts	Social	Community responses and reception; social representations of tourism and differences in community views
Management	Social	Marketing labels and management actions and branding using existing and new tourism infrastructure and themes

Source: Pearce (2005, p. 87)

When researching the transformation process of tourism destinations, Saarinen (2004) holds that tourism destinations are seen as dynamic and historical units with specific identities characterized by hegemonic and other discourses, which all produce a notion of what the destination is and represents at the time. However, there is not just one idea or discourse of destination at a time but several, even conflicting ones, which emphasizes the need to consider the ethical aspects of tourism development in research.

### *2.2.2. The theory of the formation of tourism destination image*

The formation of destination image is described by Gunn (1988)'s model of seven phases of travel experience as follows:

1. Accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences;
2. Modification of those images by further information;

3. Decision to take a vacation trip;
4. Travel to the destination;
5. Participation at the destination;
6. Return home; and
7. Modification of images based on the vacation experience

Based on this model, three stages of destination image formation can be identified at Phases 1, 2, and 7. In phases 1 and 2, destination images are formed based upon secondary sources of information, whereas in Phase 7, actual first hand experience is used to modify the destination image. The seven phases are re-described in a new model of three phases as follows:

*Phase 1 - Organic image:* The image is based primarily on information assimilated from non-touristic and non-commercial sources, such as the general media (news reports, magazines, books, and movies), education (school courses) and the opinions of family/friends. Hankinson (2004) asserts that the organic images associated with history, heritage, and culture tend to have been formed over a long period of time, and result from exposure to communication processes largely outside marketing's core sphere of influence such as education, literature and the arts.

*Phase 2 – Induced image:* More commercial sources of information, such as travel brochures, travel agents and travel guidebooks, are used. As a result of accessing these additional sources of information, the organic image (Phase 1) may be altered.

*Phase 3 – Modified image:* Actual experience modifies the destination image

formed in the previous phases. Many authors hold that as a result of visiting the destination, images tend to be more realistic, complex, and differentiated (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

### *2.2.3. The theory of the elements of tourism destination image*

Kotler (2002) defines a place/destination's image as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of that place" (p. 299). He also states that

"Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and frame huge amounts of data about a place. If no positive data is available, negative processing results" (Kotler, 2002, p. 299).

Table 2.3 shows the results of a comprehensive survey of the definitions of destination image in the major studies of destination image measurement conducted until 1990. In analyzing these definitions, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) realize that

"Destination image could be considered in terms of both an attributed-based component and a holistic component. In addition, some images of destinations could be based upon directly observable or measurable characteristics (scenery, attractions, accommodation facilities, price levels), while others could be based on more abstract, intangible characteristics (friendliness, safety, atmosphere)" (p. 42).



**Table 2.3. Definitions used by tourism destination image researchers**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Definition of Image</b>
Hunt (1975)	To measure the images of four states: Utah, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming	“Perceptions held by potential visitors about an area”
Crompton (1977)	To measure the image of Mexico	Organized representations of a destination in a cognitive system”
Goodrich (1977)	To measure the image of nine destinations: Florida, Hawaii, Mexico, California and five Caribbean Islands	Not defined
Crompton (1979)	To measure the image of Mexico in different States of the United States	“Sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination”
Pearce (1982)	To measure and compare the pre-travel and post-travel images of seven countries	Not defined
Haahti & Yavas (1983)	To measure the image of Finland (twelve countries included in the survey)	Not defined
Crompton & Duray (1985)	To measure the image of Texas (while testing alternative approaches to importance-performance analysis)	Not defined
Kale & Weir (1986)	To measure the image of India	Not discussed
Phelps (1986)	To measure pre-travel and post-travel images of Menorca	“Perceptions or impressions of a place”
Tourism Canada (1986-1989)	To measure the image of Canada in various major tourism generating markets	“How a country is perceived relative to others”
Gartner & Hunt (1987)	To measure the change in Utah’s image over a 12 years period	“Impressions that a person...holds about a state in which they do not reside”
Richardson & Crompton (1988)	To explore differences in images held of USA and Canada between French and English Canadians	“Perceptions of vacation attributes”
Gartner (1989)	To measure the images of four states: Utah, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming (utilizing multidimensional scaling techniques)	“A complex combination of various products and associated attributes”
Calantone, et al. (1989)	To measure the images of eight Pacific Rim countries held by tourists from various countries of origin	“Perceptions of potential tourist destinations”
Reilly (1990)	To measure the image of Montana	“Not individual traits...but the total impression an entity makes”

Source: Echtner and Ritchie (2003, p. 41)

Furthermore, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) provide a comprehensive definition of tourism destination image as follows:

“[Tourism] destination image is defined as not only the perceptions of individual destinations attributes but also the holistic impression made by the destination. Destination image consist of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects. Furthermore, destination images can be arranged on a continuum ranging from traits which can be commonly used to compare all destinations to those which are unique to very few destinations” (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, pp. 43-44).

The components of destination image in Echtner and Ritchie (2003)’s concept can be illustrated in three dimensions as in Figure 1.1. Accordingly, the images of destinations can range from those based on ‘common’ functional and psycho-logical traits to those based on more ‘unique’ features, events, feelings, or auras. In other words, on one extreme of the continuum, the image of a destination can be composed of the impressions of a core group of traits on which all destinations are commonly rated and compared. For example, a destination’s images can include ratings on certain common functional characteristics, such as price levels, transportation infrastructure, types of accommodation, climate, etc. The destination can also be rated on very commonly considered psychological characteristics such as level of friendliness, safety, quality of service expected, and fame, etc. On the other end of the continuum, the images of a destination can include unique features and events (functional characteristics) or auras (psychological characteristics).

Tourism destination image could also be classified as including positive-beneficiary image and negative image. Beneficial image is understood as image characteristics of a destination that positively influence tourists' decision to visit particular vacation destinations (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000), while negative image is conceptualized as “negative associations that affect certain groups and

interfere with the destination's health" (Gertner & Kotler, 2004, p. 50). When identifying the images of a destination in a particular market like this dissertation, it is necessary to identify both beneficiary images to further promote and negative images to improve.

#### *2.2.4. The theory of tourism destination image and its functional relationships*

Tasci and Gartner (2007) model a comprehensive conceptualization of destination image as in Figure 2.8. Accordingly, tourism destination image is conceptualized as "a composite of a wide spectrum of inputs and that can be viewed as affecting either the demand or supply side of the image construct". In this model, the inputs are classified by their characteristics of being controllable (dynamic), or semi-controllable (semi-dynamic), or uncontrollable (static). This model also demonstrates that a destination has an image capital that can be static or semi-dynamic. For example, history is usually static or uncontrollable because it can not be changed, but because it can be interpreted in different ways, it has a semi-controllable feature. Similarly, physical landscape is usually thought to be a static input, but built environments can be considered semi-controllable.

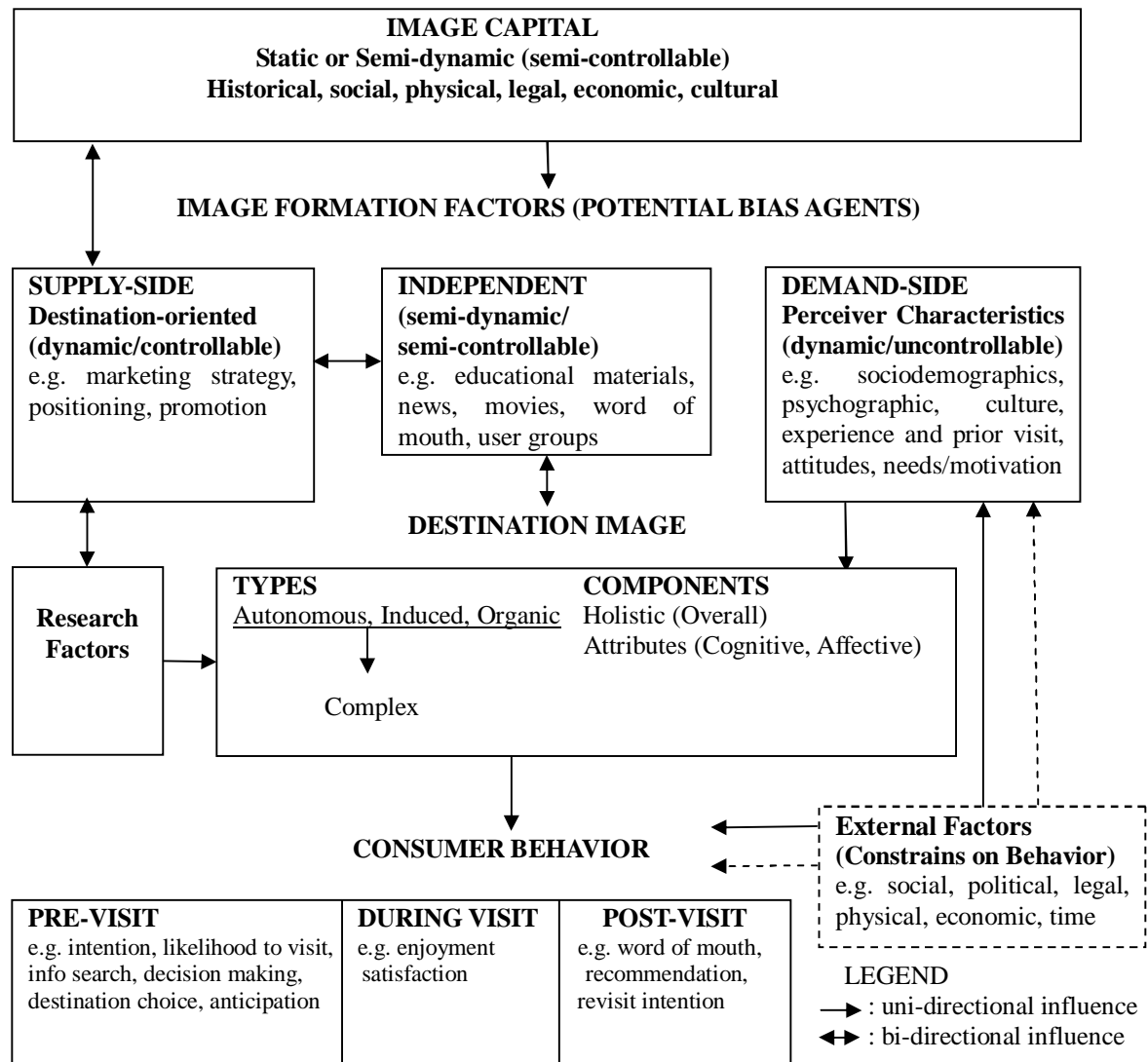
One of the most important features of the model of tourism destination image and its functional relationships is its focus on image formation factors or potential bias agents viewing the image capital in different ways. Tasci and Gartner (2007) point out that:

First, [from the demand-side] destination oriented marketing activities are dynamic (controllable) factors that aim to polish and project a positive image for the destination. These marketing activities, or induced image formation agents, are what try to manipulate uncontrollable or static destination characteristics and turn them into semi-controllable or semi-dynamic inputs. Independent sources of

determinants (autonomous image formation agents), which are usually out of a destination marketers' immediate control, might work for or against the projected, induced image. Similar to destination marketing activities, independent determinants might reflect objective reality. Destination authorities might adjust and modify their marketing activities depending on the information reflected by these independent and autonomous sources (Tasci & Gartner, 2007, pp. 421-422).

The only uncontrollable source of image formation in the model comes from the demand-side (potential market). Tasci and Gartner (2007) hold that socio-demographic and cultural characteristics which are dynamic and uncontrollable affect the interpretation of destination characteristics or image capital.

**Figure 2.8. A model of destination image and its functional relationships**



Source: Tasci and Gartner (2007, p. 422)

In addition to image formation factors, the model of destination image and its functional relationships also shows the research factors of tourism destination image as described by the theory of the elements of tourism destination image. Besides, destination image is also believed to have effect on pre-, during-, and post-trip consumer behavior. This model also points out various external or situational factors as constraints on travel behavior. However, these contents are not focused in this dissertation.

#### *2.2.5. The major characteristics of tourism destination image*

According to Kotler (2002), an image is not just a simple belief, but it implies a whole set of beliefs about a place. Moreover, perceptions of a place do not necessarily reveal their attitudes towards that place. For example, two people may hold the same image of Macau's warm climate and yet have different feelings about it because they have different attitudes towards warm climates. An image differs from a stereotype in that a stereotype suggests a widely held image that is highly distorted and simplistic and that carries a favorable or unfavorable bias while an image is a more personal perception of a place that can vary from person to person.

Gertner and Kotler (2004) add that different people can hold quite different images of the same place. One person may see a particular city as a childhood home town while others may see it as a bustling city, an urban jungle, or a great weekend-gateway destination. They also note that, an image normally sticks in the public's mind for a long time, even after it loses its validity. For example, some people still think of Ireland as the place of the Irish Republican Army (IRA)'s bloody attacks or of the Central America as a place of rife with civil wars and revolutionary

groups, even though today these places are quite different. At other times, a place's image may change more rapidly as media and word of mouth spread vital news stories about it. For example, some time ago, the Dominican Republic was barely noticed as a destination for international travelers; today's Dominican Republic is home to sophisticated resorts and rental villas, and has become a very popular holiday destination. By hosting the 2008 summer Olympics, China hoped to improve the country's image. At the same time, winning the right to host this event was in itself a good illustration of what strategic image management could achieve.

Regarding the benefit an image brings about, Chacko (n.d.) asserts that the beauty of a destination, the architecture of a place, and the holistic artifacts in a museum are examples of attributes that may produce a benefit, or be a tangible representation of an intangible benefit, but are not themselves the benefit. The benefit itself is what the attributes do for the visitor, for instance, a sensation of grandeur, an aura of prestige, or the gaining of knowledge. The credibility of these benefits may diminish rapidly if expectations are not fulfilled. Architecture is soon forgotten if the tour bus breaks down on the return trip. The impression of grandeur loses credibility if visitors feel that their personal safety is threatened. It is the fulfillment of expectations or the inability to, which creates the perception of deliverability for the tourist. Benefits exist in the mind of the customer and are determined only by asking the customer. Only after this information is obtained, can a destination match its strengths to the visitors' needs and the benefits sought. This knowledge will also provide a basis for the development of a credible differentiation strategy.

In discussing tangibles and intangibles in image making, Chacko (n.d.) holds that the tangibles are what is being "sold", but not what is being "marketed". The

tangibles are essential and necessary but as soon as they reach a certain level of acceptance, they become secondary. Because they are so difficult to differentiate, or to be made competitive, the intangibles have to be marketed. For example, even as tangibles mountains and beaches have a measure of intangibility because they are experienced rather than possessed.

### **2.3. Measurement of Tourism Destination Image**

Generally, Lew (1994) asserts that most studies on tourist attractions and tourist attractiveness of places can be classified into one or other of three general perspectives: ideographic listing, organization, and tourist cognition of attractions. Each of these perspectives shares a distinct set of questions concerning the nature of the attractions, as expressed through the typologies used in their evaluation. At the same time, all three perspectives make comparisons based on the historical, locational, and various valuational aspects of attractions.

In an attempt to suggest a direction for developing a methodological analysis to evaluate destination attractiveness, Formica (2002) emphasizes the significance of a method of measuring destination attractiveness from demand perspective rather than supply perspective. He holds that the existence of tourism resources in a region is a necessary element of tourism attractiveness, but it can not predict the magnitude of the attraction of that region. Otherwise, by simply increasing the number of museums, lodging facilities, and hiking trails we would be able to increase the overall attractiveness of a region. The pulling force of a region depends not only on the number of tourist resources located in a given area, but also on how these resources are valued and perceived by tourists.

Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) recommend a framework to measure destination image comprehensively. In this framework, components that must be captured include attribute-based images, holistic impressions, and functional, psychological, unique, and common characteristics. They hold that a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies is necessary to measure destination image. A series of open-ended questions and scale items need to be developed to successfully capture all of the components of destination image.

Jenkins (1999) reviews different techniques for measurement of tourism destination image after Echtner and Ritchie (1991), and compares the advantages and disadvantages of structured and unstructured methods as in Table 2.4.



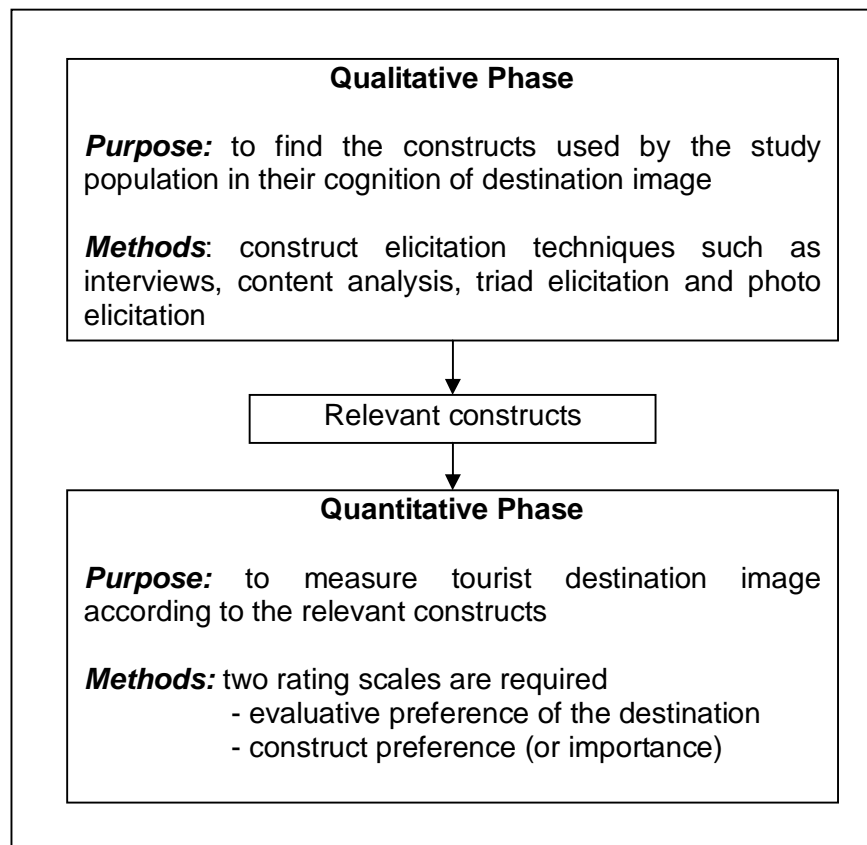
**Table 2.4. Methods used in destination image research: structure versus unstructured (after Echtner & Ritchie, 1991)**

	Structured	Unstructured
<b>Description</b>	Various common image attributes are specified and incorporated into a standardized instrument and the respondent rates each destination on each of the attributes, resulting in an 'image profile'	The respondent is allowed to freely describe his or her impressions of the destination. Data are gathered from a number of respondents. Sorting and categorization techniques are then used to determine the 'image dimensions'
<b>Techniques</b>	Usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales	Focus group, open-ended survey questions, content analysis, repertory grid.
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to administer</li> <li>• Simple to code</li> <li>• Results easy to analyse using sophisticated statistical techniques</li> <li>• Facilitates comparisons between destinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducive to measuring the holistic components of destination image</li> <li>• Reduces interviewer bias</li> <li>• Reduces likelihood of missing important image dimensions or components</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not incorporate holistic aspects of image</li> <li>• Attribute focused – that is, it forces the respondent to think about the product image in terms of the attributes specified</li> <li>• The completeness of structured methods can be variable – it is possible to miss dimensions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of detail provided by respondents is highly variable</li> <li>• Statistical analyses of the results are limited</li> <li>• Comparative analyses are not facilitated.</li> </ul>

Source: Jenkins (1999, p. 6)

Moreover, Jenkins (1999) argues that to provide valid image research, a preliminary phase of qualitative research is important in order to distil the constructs relevant to the population being studied. Construct elicitation techniques, such as free-elicitation, interactive interview, and focus group interview, should be discussed along with new techniques that include the visual aspect of image, such as photo elicitation (see Figure 2.9).

**Figure 2.9. A model for destination image research**



Source: Jenkins (1999, p. 7)

Echtner and Ritchie (2003) summarize and review the strengths and deficiencies of the methods used to define and measure destination image. They assert that

“The methodologies used can not be exclusively structured or unstructured. The most complete measure of destination image should include both types of methodologies; for example, standardized scales to measure the perceptions of functional and psychological attributes, in conjunction with open-ended questions to determine the holistic impressions and to capture unique features and auras” (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, p. 46).

Also, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) introduce a set of attributes of destination image in the studies employing structured methodologies (see Table 2.5). The list is derived by grouping the attributes used by the various researchers into categories,

and arranged within the functional/psychological continuum. Certain items (such as costs/price levels) are quite functional, others are distinctly psychological (for example, friendliness), while some could be argued to be either and, therefore, lie near the middle of the continuum (such as cleanliness). Ritchie and Crouch (2005) comment that while the attributes in Table 2.5 provide a foundation for measuring destination attributes (attribute-based image), the parallel measurement of holistic image is more difficult to standardize. One common approach is to ask potential visitors open questions, such as:

- What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation destination? (functional component)
- How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX? (psychological holistic component)
- Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in XXX. (unique component)

After obtaining answers to the above questions from a number of respondents, it becomes possible to identify the main themes or images that are common for a destination. As an example, Table 2.6 provides the most frequent responses to the above open-ended image questions for the island of Jamaica. Moreover, Ritchie and Crouch (2005) postulate that

“Although attribute measures and holistic measures are frequently used by themselves, it is recommended that they be used in combination in order to gain the richness of understanding of a destination’s image that is necessary for reliable planning and decision-making” (Ritchie & Crouch, 2005, p. 193).

**Table 2.5. Attributes used by researchers to measure destination image**

		Number of Studies Measuring the Attribute **
FUNCTIONAL (physical, measurable)		
↑	Scenery/Natural Attractions	13
	Costs/Price Levels	9
	Climate	8
	Tourist Sites/Activities	8
	Nightlife and Entertainment	8
	Sports Facilities/Activities	8
	National Parks/Wilderness Activities	7
	Local Infrastructure/Transportation	7
	Architecture/Buildings	7
	Historic Sites/Museums	6
	Beaches	6
	Shopping Facilities	5
	Accommodation Facilities	5
	Cities	4
	Fairs, Exhibits, Festivals	2
	Facilities for Information and Tours	1
	Crowdedness	4
	Cleanliness	4
	Personal Safety	4
	Economic Development/Affluence	3
	Accessibility	2
	Degree of Urbanization	1
	Extent of Commercialization	1
	Political Stability	1
	Hospitality/Friendliness/Receptiveness	11
	Different Customs/Culture	7
	Different Cuisine/Food and Drink	7
	Restful/Relaxing	5
	Atmosphere (Familiar versus Exotic)	4
	Opportunity for Adventure	3
	Opportunity to Increase Knowledge	2
	Family or Adult Oriented	1
	Quality of Service	1
↓	Fame/Reputation	1
PSYCHOLOGICAL (abstract)		
** Total number of studies referenced is 14		

Source: Echtner and Ritchie (2003, p. 45)

**Table 2.6. Most frequent responses to open-ended image questions for  
Jamaica (from Echtner & Ritchie, 1993)**

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**Images or characteristics evoked when thinking of  
Jamaica as a vacation destination**

- Beaches (80.5 %)
- Tropical climate (61.1 %)
- Sun (44.3 %)
- Ocean (30.2 %)
- Negroid peoples (25.5 %)
- Music/reggae (25.5 %)
- Rum and tropical drinks (18.1 %)
- Poverty (17.4 %)
- Friendly, hospitable (16.1 %)
- Palm trees (16.1 %)
- Water sports (16.1 %)
- Scenery (13.4 %)
- Culture (11.4 %)
- Fun, parties (11.4 %)
- Tropical vegetation (11.4 %)
- Food, fruits (10.7 %)

**Descriptions of the atmosphere or mood expected  
while visiting Jamaica**

- Relaxing (55.0 %)
- Friendly, hospitable (41.6 %)
- Fun, party (38.9 %)
- Slow pace (38.3 %)
- Happy (21.5 %)
- Exciting (17.4 %)
- Tropical (11.4 %)
- Romantic (10.1 %)

**Distinctive or unique tourist attractions in Jamaica**

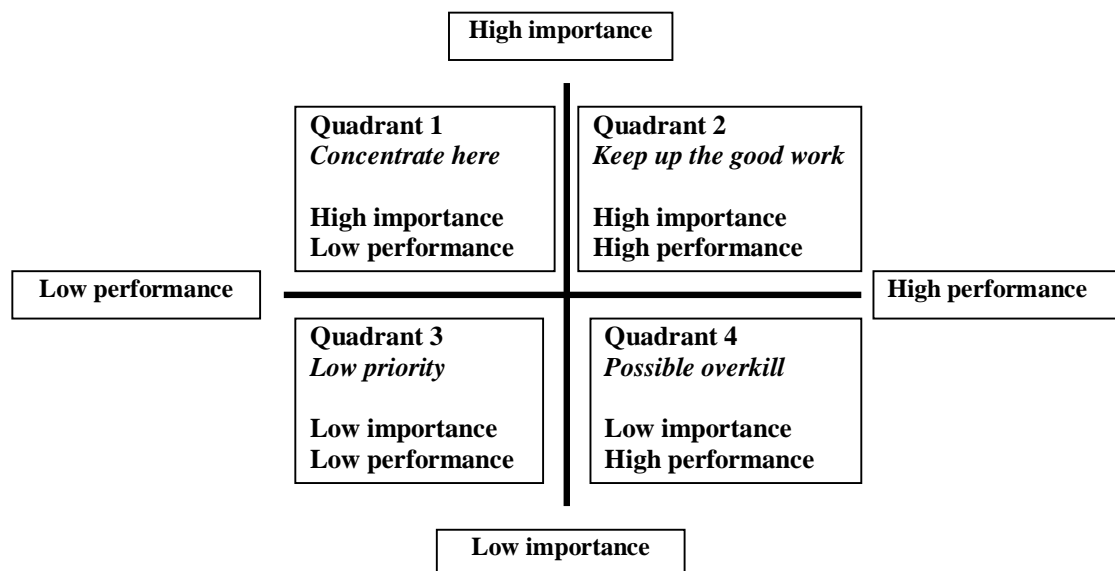
- Beaches (57.3 %)
  - Water sports (17.9 %)
  - Ocean (16.2 %)
  - Music/reggae (14.5 %)
  - Culture (13.7 %)
  - Tropical climate (12.0 %)
  - Montego Bay (11.1 %)
- 

Source: Ritchie and Crouch (2005, p. 196)

In recognition of a fact that even though marketers strive to determine the correct image positioning, they rarely query whether the attributes captured by the marketing messages are actually important to visitors, and that consumer satisfaction is a function of both expectations related to certain important attributes and judgments of attribute performance, O’Leary and Deegan (2005) highlights the significance of using importance-performance analysis (IPA). This technique was first introduced by Martilla and James (1997), and has been used for evaluating the elements of a marketing program. The IPA uses a three-step process either to develop a new marketing strategy or to evaluate an existing strategy: First, a set of product attributes or features is identified through techniques such as literature review, focus group interviews, and so on. Second, consumers are asked two questions about each attribute: “How important is it?” and “How well did the product or service perform?” Third, importance and performance scores for each attribute are calculated.

The values provide x and y coordinates that are then placed on a two-dimensional plot called an IPA grid. The importance and performance scores are plotted on the vertical and horizontal axes respectively. By plotting the numerical results in this way, the components are effectively sorted into a 4-cell typology. This typology categorizes importance and performance on a scale of high or low, so four combinations are possible as in Figure 2.10.

**Figure 2.10. Importance-performance analysis grid**



Source: O'Leary and Deegan (2005, p. 250)

In looking at the evolutionary nature of tourism destination image studies from both theoretical and operational perspectives, Tasci, Gartner, and Cavusgil (2007) realized that several of Echtner and Ritchie (1991)'s recommendations have been followed. As far as the application of the methods for measuring destination image is concerned, there are a number of empirical works in this group. The remaining part of this section reviews some of them.

Chen and Hsu (2000) identified image attributes measuring the total attractiveness of overseas destinations to Korean tourists, and investigates image attributes affecting Korean tourist choice behaviors of trip planning time frame, budgeted travel costs, and length of trip. The attractiveness of a destination was found to be defined by its adventurous atmosphere, scenery, environmental friendliness, availability of tourist information, and architectural style. Respondents' perceptions of travel cost, destination lifestyle, availability of quality restaurants,

freedom from language barriers, and availability of interesting places to visit affect their choice behaviors.

Hui and Wan (2003) sought to examine the image of Singapore as a tourist destination. In addition to answering a short Likert scale - based questionnaire, respondents were asked to describe in their own words the unique aspects of the country based on three questions similar to those suggested by Ritchie and Crouch (2005). Their findings suggest that Singapore is strongly associated as being politically stable, safe and convenient as well as clean. These images are recommended to be capitalized on in Singapore's promotion packages. Moreover, because the respondents' perception that Singapore as a reasonably good place to shop and to find good food is not particularly favorable, more intensive marketing effort should be made to enhance the offerings of unique events such as the 'Singapore Food Festival' and 'The Great Singapore Sales'. Another sustainable core competency that Singapore can work on is to promote itself as a hub of ASEAN and a spring board to north Asia, South Asia, and Oceania. Moreover, it was found that tourists from different country origins have different perceptions of Singapore. Hence, it makes sense from the marketing point of view to segment the tourist market by geographical regions.

Joppe, Martin, and Waalen (2001) examined Toronto visitors' perceptions of products and services in terms of importance and satisfaction by visitor origin, and applied the results to the importance-satisfaction model to identify strengths in service. The results showed that irrespective of origin of visitor, essentially the same attributes were rated as important. In order of importance, these attributes were personal safety, accommodation services, food services and cuisine, value for money,



cleanliness, variety of things to see and do, hospitality of local people, and directional signage. Regarding the satisfaction ratings on these attributes, there are some considerable differences based on visitor origin. U.S. visitors were the most satisfied with their Toronto city experience. All of the attributes deemed important exceeded their expectations, except for cleanliness. For overseas visitors, the importance ratings (with the exception of accommodation and transportation) exceeded their expectations. Canadians were the most critical of their Toronto experience, with only three importance ratings exceeding their expectations: variety of things to see and do, accommodation, and food services.

In an attempt to identify Ireland's image as a tourism destination in France, O'Leary and Deegan (2005) identified seventeen (17) attributes that are important to French tourists when choosing a holiday destination and compared Ireland's performance with respect to these attributes pre- and post-visitation. The comparison of importance with pre- and post-visit performance scores shows that Ireland's destination image is largely confirmed by the experience of French visitors. This can be regarded as positive in that attributes such as beautiful scenery and friendly people were located in the *keep up the good work* quadrant of both IPA grids. The most notable discrepancies between the importance/pre-visit performance ratings and importance/post-visit performance ratings are concerned with the price quality ratio, litter, and access. This suggests that visitors perceived Ireland as being expensive, difficult to get to, and not particularly clean.

Okata (n.d.) adopted importance-performance analysis to assess the Japanese senior travelers' perception of factors of Hawaii as a travel destination. The results indicated that Japanese senior travelers were mostly satisfied with Hawaii as a travel

destination. The features related to natural resources and a comfortable stay were high in priority for seniors in determining their trip to Hawaii, while the features related to natural resources and a physical activities did not have significant influences on their travel decisions.

In studying Turkish tourism, Yuksel and Yuksel (2001) explored how tourists regard the components of a satisfying holiday experience and how tourists perceive the destination performance relative to other destinations. They found that tourists might judge the destination's performance on a set of attributes, some being more tangible, and some being relatively more important. The relation found between tourists' perceptions of other destinations and their evaluation of the current holiday suggests that what other destinations offer might affect tourists' current satisfaction judgments and their future behavioral intentions.

On a larger scale, Wang (2003) identified favorable cognitive and affective destination images of Oklahoma in order to support its actual promotion and advertising campaigns. The results showed that the important cognitive dimensions, in order of Beta weights, were 'Natural Attractions', 'Outdoor Recreational Activities', and 'Cultural Attractions'. The affective image dimensions, in order of importance, were 'Relaxation', 'Novelty Seeking', and 'Prestige Seeking'. This research suggests that Oklahoma's tourism marketers should upgrade and promote its cultural attractions because international visitors who hold a more favorable perception of Oklahoma's cultural attractions tend to visit Oklahoma for more times. More specifically, Wang (2003) holds that Oklahoma's image as a "Native American" state featured with abundant native culture and heritages as well as open-space rural landscape has a good fit for a marketing campaign.

## **2.4. The Effects of the Media on Tourism Destination Image**

### *2.4.1. The advantages and limitations of major media types*

“The media are heavily involved in promoting an emotional disposition, coupled with imaginative and cognitive activity, which has the potential to be converted into tourist activities” (Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson, 2005, p.1). Iwashita (2003) holds that media-induced tourism has become a growing phenomenon. He also outlines a social construction theory that recognizes the legitimacy of everyday experiences, where the meanings and values of many things are constructed, and clarifies the importance of the media, in particular popular culture, as artifacts which humans create in everyday life.

Kotler (2002) generalizes the advantages and limitations of the major media types as in Table 2.7. Accordingly, some media types seem more effective than the others, but rather costly and time-consuming, such as television and magazines; and some are cost-efficient, but the results are limited, such as radio, newsletters, and billboards. In addition to the positive effects of the media in tourism destination marketing, it has also been realized that some negative effects may happen if the media is not used appropriately. For example, when analyzing the negative effects of the press on the Caribbean holiday experience in the UK national press, Daye (2005) showed that press representations of the Caribbean often lacked distinctiveness in their identity and appeal, and tended to promote stylized ‘ways of seeing’, the region’s landscapes, and responding to it, which may be undermining the region’s ability to promote a range of touristic experiences, and to expand market appeal.

**Table 2.7. Profiles of major media types**

Medium	Advantages	Limitations
1. Television	Combines sight, sound and motion. Appealing to the senses, high attention, high reach	High absolute cost, high clutter, fleeting exposure, less audience selectivity
2. Radio	Mass use, high geographic and demographic selectivity, low cost	Lower attention than television, non-standardized rate structures; fleeting exposure
3. Internet	High selectivity, interactive possibilities, relatively low cost	A relatively new medium with a low number of users in some countries
4. Telephone	Many users, opportunity to give a personal touch	Too little local coordination in telecommunications services
5. Newspapers	Flexibility, timeliness, good local market coverage, broad acceptance	Short life, poor reproduction quality
6. Magazines	High geographic and demographic selectivity, credibility and prestige	Long advertisement purchase lead-time, some wasted circulation
7. Newsletters	Very high selectivity, full control, interactive opportunities, relatively low costs	Costs could run away
8. Brochures	Flexibility, full control, can dramatize messages	Brochure production can be a goal in itself; costs could run away
9. Direct mail	Very high selectivity, measurable	Relatively high costs, “junk mail” image
10. Billboards	Flexibility, high repeat exposure, low cost, low competition	No audience selectivity

Source: Kotler (2002, p. 270)

Researchers have also focused on specific technical issues regarding advertising materials. For example, in exploring the effectiveness of print advertising stimuli in evoking elaborate consumption visions for potential travelers, Walters, Sparks, and Herington (2007) found that the presence of more concrete pictures contributed to

the extent of elaboration and the quality of consumers' consumption visions. The addition of concrete words together with instructions to imagine increased the elaboration and quality of the consumption vision. A significant interaction effect between the picture and text variables demonstrated that combining instructions to imagine with concrete pictures is the most efficacious strategy. When analyzing the perception of photographic images of different groups, Dewar, Li, and Davis (2007) realized that different cultural groups perceive photographic images of travel products and destinations differently, which creates a challenge for tourism marketers, who need to communicate specific messages to specific groups.

#### *2.4.2. The effects of general publicity, television programs, online tourism marketing, and films*

In addition to discussing the profiles of the major media types, researchers have also focused on some specific categories. This section introduces the studies of the effects of general publicity, television programs, online tourism marketing, and film tourism.

##### *2.5.2.1. General publicity*

Dore et al. (2003) realize that a promotional method that has been largely ignored in research conducted so far is the use of publicity. While much publicity concerning a destination is unplanned and incidental, and occurs in the general course of 'news', the publicity programs conducted by destinations are often quite deliberate, planned, methodical and coordinated with a clear set of objectives. They found that

“The publicity programs conducted by NTOs have become critically important elements of their destination promotional strategies. While publicity programs run third behind advertising and personal selling in terms of expenditure by NTOs, they are rated first in terms of promotional importance due to their much greater perceived cost-effectiveness” (Dore et al., 2003, p.149).

Also, Dore et al. (2003) conclude that formally organized and conducted media familiarization tours are the core publicity activity for NTOs. As for the cost for publicity programs, they postulate that

“Although publicity results in unpaid promotion of the destination, these programs are not cost free. Indeed, in order to formalize and operationalize these programs, a considerable effort is required to design, organize and manage their execution so that they run smoothly and attract the interest and participation of industry enterprises which contribute only modestly to the monetary cost of the programs (about 5-20 percent) but which provide the greatest proportion of in-kind support (75-100 percent) without which these publicity programs could not function” (Dore et al., 2003, p. 149).

In exploring publicity and advertising, two of the basic tools used by tourism marketers, Loda, Norman, and Backman (2007) take message stimulus as an independent variable, and consisting of two parts: message presentation (i.e., publicity or advertising) and message sequencing (i.e., publicity only, publicity then advertising, advertising only, or advertising then publicity). Four dependent variables are organized in two categories: message acceptance (i.e., perceived credibility, message strength) and message response (i.e., attitude toward the destination, purchase intent). The results showed that publicity, in either presentation or sequencing, created significantly higher mean scores than advertising for credibility, message strength, and purchase intent. This study reaffirms that publicity is an important element in the tourism marketing mix. Furthermore, it suggests that a publicity-then-advertising strategy is most effective at persuading potential tourists to visit a specific destination.

In examining how different information sources affect the pre-visit perceived

image of a of tourism destination in travelers' mind, Govers, Go, and Kumar (2007) found that tourism promotion does not have a major impact on the perceptions of travelers and that other sources of information (television, friends, magazines, internet, books, pictures, movies, etc...) have a much greater bearing on the formation of destination image. Therefore, tourism authorities need to understand that successful tourism promotion is dependent on a broad range of external influences. At the same time, the impact of marketing communication decisions on measurables such as revenue, market share, and costs must be carefully assessed.

In identifying the images that international backpackers have of the Australian coastal destination of Byron Bay, the information sources from which these images were drawn, and the role these sources played in destination image formation, Hanlan and Kelly (2005) reveal that mainstream media play little or no part in the formation of respondents' image of the coastal destination of Byron Bay. Rather, word of mouth and autonomous independent information sources were the key media through which respondents formed their image of this iconic Australian tourist destination. These findings also showed the importance of destination experience in the image formation process and suggested that destination marketing organizations can and should go beyond traditional mainstream media to communicate their brand message.

#### 2.5.2.2. Television programs

Inglis (2000) discusses the role of television to imagery as follows:

“Television is the source of the imagery with which we do our imagining of the future, and the holiday imagery now so omnipresent on the screen – in the soaps as well as the ads in the travel programs of all sorts – is one of the best places to find

our fantasies of the free and fulfilled life” (Inglis, 2000, p. 5).

However, when analyzing Swedish television travel shows with television reporters and anonymous tourists taking part in various activities, Hanefors and Mossberg (2002) found that

“The content of the shows does not reflect the destinations to any large extent, which seems to be the natural and expected situation. It rather tempts the viewer to travel in a general way. Many of the films are so general in character that they could easily be used for a number of tourist destinations around the world – showing reporters and anonymous tourists taking part in various activities” (Hanefors & Mossberg, 2002, p. 243, cited in Crouch et al., p. 3).

Dunn (2005) detects an increasing role of the celebrity system in television marketing programs. Performance of media celebrity by presenters, who are supposed to sample holiday destinations on behalf of the viewer, becomes more important than the role of the programs as consumer guides to holiday choice. Moreover, when studying British television holiday programs, Dunn (2006) sees that there are close links between the tourist gaze and the gaze of the television camera, and British television holiday programs have conventionally privileged the scopic in their representations of the tourist destination.

#### 2.5.2.3. Online tourism marketing

Great variations in sophistication and quality were found in the websites of destination marketing organizations (UNWTOBC, 1999, cited in Hudson & Lang, 2002). When the cases of Scotland and Singapore were analyzed, it was found that these destinations had yet to properly exploit the diverse services and capabilities of online tourism marketing (Cano & Prentice, 1998; Bauer & Reid, 2000). By analyzing the use of online tourism marketing of tourism operators from Banff in the Canadian Rockies, Hudson and Lang (2002) conclude that “the Internet has emerged



as an important marketing tool for operators in BNP [Banff National Park], with demonstrable impact on the bottom line, and has proved to be a cost-effective marketing option, especially when partnerships are formed” (p. 164). In an effort to identify the success factors of a website, Park and Gretzel (2007) introduced a unified framework of commonly used website success factors emerging from the analysis and including a total of nine factors: (1) information quality, (2) ease of use, (3) responsiveness, (4) security/privacy, (5) visual appearance, (6) trust, (7) interactivity, (8) personalization, and (9) fulfillment.

When analyzing available online destination marketing system according to the requirements of a destination marketing system (DMS), Wang and Russo (2007) recognized that most research on online destination marketing systems has taken a technological viewpoint, and has not considered the particular functionality of a destination marketing system. They proposed that a DMS should be composed of four interrelated components: virtual information space, virtual communication space, virtual transaction space, and virtual relationship space. At the most fundamental level, a destination marketing system must provide tourists with up-to-date information about the destination. Once the information level has been sufficiently implemented, convention and visitor bureaus should then consider the communication function, which takes into account all areas of promotion and marketing research. At this stage, e-mail and contact information are disseminated, allowing for a direct exchange of information between the destination marketing system and consumers, which paves the way for future relationship building. The implementation of the transaction function enables convention and visitor bureaus to generate revenue both internally and also externally for their stakeholders. At the

very core of this system is the relationship management component, which is probably the most difficult to implement given the required technological expertise and lack of knowledge-base in this area.

Given the development of travel blogs, Pan, MacLaurin, and Crotts (2007) explored travel blogs as a manifestation of travel experience. The results demonstrated that travel blogs are an inexpensive means to gather rich, authentic, and unsolicited customer feedback. The authors conclude that information technology advances and increasingly large numbers of travel blogs facilitate travel blog monitoring as a cost-effective method for destination marketers to assess their service quality and improve travelers' overall experiences.

#### 2.5.2.4. Films

The effects of films are much discussed in the area of film tourism. This topic is analyzed comprehensively by Hudson and Ritchie (2006a & b). Conceptually, film tourism can be understood as "tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination's being featured on television, video, or the cinema screen" (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b, p. 387). Film tourism is seen as a growing phenomenon worldwide, fueled by both the growth of the entertainment industry and the increase in international travel (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006b). However, many tourism organizations have been slow to tap the potential benefits of film tourism, perhaps due to a lack of knowledge, research, or evidence that explains the potential of film tourism (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006a).

Hudson and Ritchie (2006b) reveals four types of marketing activities in which destinations can engage to promote film tourism: (1) proactive efforts to encourage

producers and studios to film at the location, (2) efforts to generate media publicity around the film and its location, (3) marketing activities that promote the film location after production, and (4) peripheral marketing activities that leverage film tourism potential.

When examining the impact of the film *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* on the Island of Cephalonia in Greece, Hudson and Ritchie (2006a) claim that films can have a powerful influence on travel decisions. Mestre, Rey, and Stanishevski (2008) hold that fictional cinema is one of the cultural agents shaping the international image of each country. It colonizes spectators' imagery, and can influence their choice of tourist destinations. In discussing the image of Spain as a tourist destination built through fictional cinema, they assert that Spanish cinema's international diffusion has allowed the exhibition of movies that spread and renew the image of Spain in different ways. More specifically icon films, pastiche films, and tourist poster films are a three-fold typology of films that may stimulate the increase of a cultural tourism very different from the traditional one that inspired many to come to Spain mainly looking for sunny beaches.

## **2.5. The Major Features of the Theories of Tourism Destination Marketing and Tourism Destination Image, and Formulation of a Model of the Formation of the Images of Vietnam in the Perception of Japanese Travelers**

### *2.5.1. The major features of the theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image*

Three major features identified from the theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image are as follows:

Firstly, some theories comprehensively cover all the most important aspects of

tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image. These theories include the theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing and the theory of tourism destination image and its functional relationships. The theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing provides a comprehensive model that shows a circle of specific tasks of tourism destination marketing. The theories of tourism destination image and its functional relationships is an advanced combination of the theory of the formation of tourism destination image and the theory of the elements of tourism destination image.

Secondly, the other theories focus on specific aspects of the more comprehensive theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image as mentioned above, and supplement to each other to provide insights of these aspects. Specifically, the theory of the formation of tourism destination image and the theory of the elements of tourism destination image are the insights of the theory of tourism destination image and its functional relationships. The theory of distance from an originating market and the area of a destination and the theory of collaboration in tourism destination marketing are the insights of the theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing.

Regarding measurement of tourism destination image and the effects of the media on tourism destination image, they are all part of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image. They are not named as ‘theory’, but still placed in this chapter because they are a system of rules, procedures, and assumptions that can suggest methods to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers and help analyze the situation of tourism destination marketing of Vietnam. A major difference is that the discussed ‘theories’

as labeled in this dissertation form a set of statements and principles that can help explain and generalize a group of facts or phenomena concerning tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image, while these contents focus more on specific techniques and evaluations.

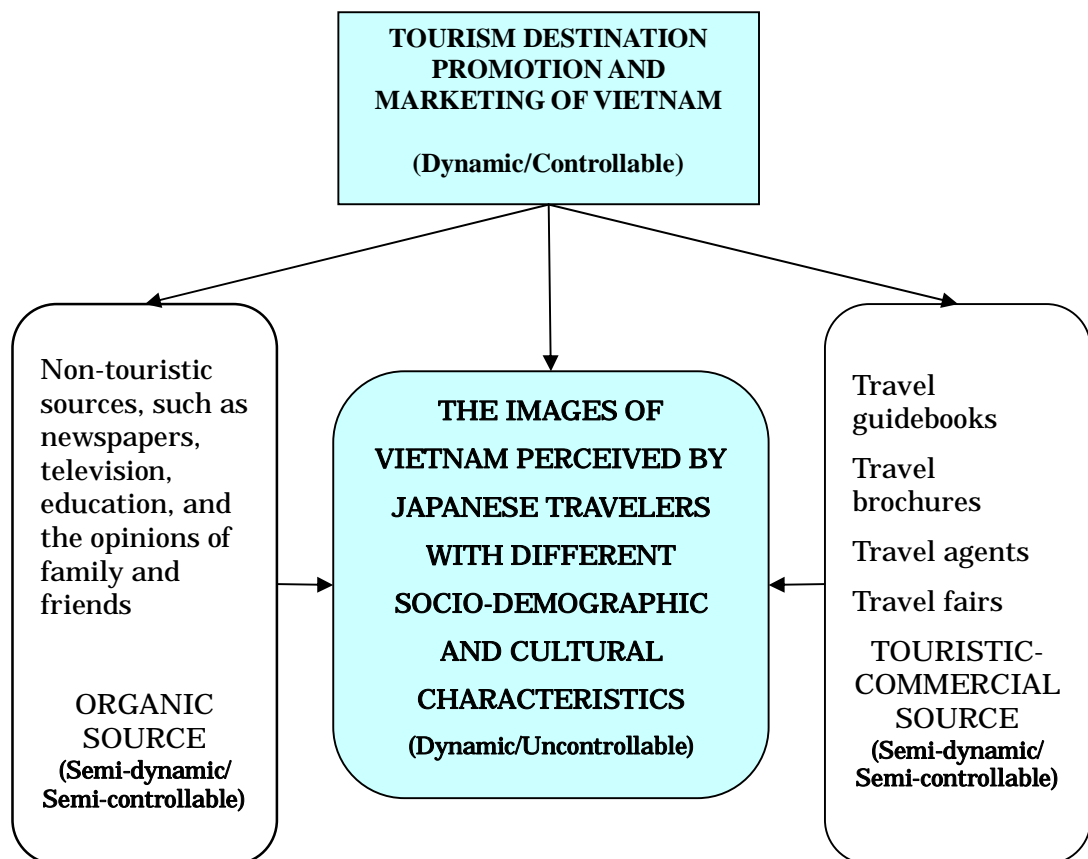
Thirdly and most importantly, the theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image can be combined to create a strong foundation to resolve the research issues raised in this dissertation. More specifically, the theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing and the theory of collaboration in tourism destination marketing can be a strong base to evaluate the situation of tourism destination marketing of Vietnam and the experiences of China, Korea, and Hawaii in marketing to Japan. The theory of the formation of destination image, the theory of the elements of tourism destination image, and the theory of destination image and its functional relationships is a solid foundation to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers. In addition, the model of destination image research, the methods of measuring destination image, the technique of importance-performance analysis, and the evaluations of the effects of the media on tourism destination image formation can also suggest ideas for this dissertation.

#### *2.5.2. Formulation of a model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers*

Because one of the major purposes of this dissertation is to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers, it is necessary to understand how the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers are formed. By combining the essentials of the theory of the formation of tourism

destination image and the theory of destination image and its functional relationships, a model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers is formulated as in Figure 2.11. Accordingly, the images of Vietnam are a result of the effects of various information sources from the Vietnamese (supply) side and the Japanese (demand) side.

**Figure 2.11. The model of the formation of the images of Vietnam  
in the perception of Japanese travelers**



From the Japanese (demand) side, numerous Japanese characteristics are associated with how Japanese travelers receive and interpret the outside information. These characteristics are dynamic and uncontrollable because they can change and the outside forces can hardly control them. These characteristics also include

experience and prior visit to a destination as indicated by the theory of tourism destination image and its functional relationships. Depending on their socio-demographic and cultural characteristics, Japanese travelers have different needs, inclinations, interests, and motivations, which define what they select to see, hear, read, think about, and pay attention to. This, in turn, affects how they interpret the characteristics of Vietnam and ultimately the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination.

The outside information sources affecting the formation of the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in the perception of Japanese travelers include non-commercial non-touristic information sources from newspapers, television, education, and the opinions of family and friends. These information types are the organic sources according to the theory of the formation of tourism destination image. They are all semi-dynamic and semi-controllable because they can change by itself and be affected to change by the outside forces such as tourism destination promotion and marketing activities of Vietnam. Japanese travelers are also affected by such intentional information sources as travel guidebooks, travel brochures, travel agents, travel fairs, and tourism destination promotion and marketing activities of Vietnam. According to the theory of the formation of tourism destination image, these information sources have commercial touristic characteristics. Similarly to the organic sources, they are all semi-dynamic and semi-controllable.

From the Vietnamese (supply) side, the tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam through such activities as advertising, travel shows, travel fairs and exhibitions, presentations, and sports and cultural events, etc can directly affect Japanese travelers to make them aware of Vietnam as a tourism destination. From the

approach of Vietnam as a tourism destination (supply side), these activities are dynamic and controllable because Vietnam can tailor tourism promotion and marketing activities to serve its purposes. Also, the tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam can directly affect the commercial touristic and non-commercial non-touristic information sources in the ways these information sources introduce Vietnam to Japanese travelers, thereby indirectly influencing Japanese travelers. According to the theory of tourism destination image and its functional relationships, these commercial touristic and non-commercial non-touristic information sources act as independent sources of determinants (autonomous image formation agents), which are usually out of Vietnamese destination marketers' immediate control, might work for or against the projected, induced image by the tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam. Vietnamese tourism marketers might adjust and modify their marketing activities depending on the information reflected by these independent sources.

If the newly-created model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers is compared to the theory of the formation of tourism destination image, it is found that the information sources of the newly-created model are based on the three phases of the theory of the formation of tourism destination image. Specifically, the organic source comes from the phase 1 (organic image) and the touristic-commercial source stems from the phase 2 (induced image). Regarding the phase 3 (modified image) highlighting the effect of actual experience of travelers in a visited destination, it is hidden as part of different characteristics of Japanese travelers which also include experience and prior visit as shown in the theory of destination image and its functional relationships. If compared



to those who have not been to Vietnam, Japanese travelers who have been to Vietnam may have different images of Vietnam. This dissertation also examines these differences when identifying the images of Vietnam.

The major difference between the newly-created model and the theory of the formation of tourism destination image is that the newly-created model does not classify image formation into phases, but types of information sources. This difference comes from an awareness that image formation does not always fit into only one phase of the theory of the formation of tourism destination image, but is a result of combined effects of different information sources which can be from multiple phases of the theory of the formation of tourism destination image. In fact, it is impossible to clearly identify the phase of tourism destination image formation in the perception of a traveler, but much easier to identify the major information sources affecting his/her image formation. The images of Vietnam in the perception of a traveler may be in the phase 1 (organic image) and/or phase 3 (modified image) (if he/she has been to Vietnam) without undergoing the phase 2 (induced image). Also, the images may experience all the phases, but even when they have undergone the phase 3 (modified image), they can continue to be affected by the information sources of the phase 1 and phase 2.

If compared to the theory of tourism destination image and its functional relationships, it is found that the newly-created model is influenced in the way of grouping information sources according to its characteristics of being dynamic/controllable, semi-dynamic/semi-controllable, and dynamic/uncontrollable from the approach of the supply side. The classification of information sources into those from supply side (Vietnam as a tourism destination), demand side (Japanese

travelers), and independent factors in the newly-created model is also suggested by this theory. However, it should be noted that independent factors of the theory are expressed as organic source in the newly-created model, but the nature is the same in both the theory and the model as semi-dynamic/semi-controllable.

Regarding the differences between the newly-created model and the theory of tourism image and its functional relationship, it is seen that the theory demonstrates many functional relationships with tourism destination image, but the model only focuses on the image formation factors (potential bias agents) that can be affected to change by tourism destination marketing and promotion activities. Therefore, the image capital and the research factors regarding consumer behaviors are omitted. Also, because the model only demonstrates the formation, the types and components of destination image are not included in the model, but they are carefully considered in this dissertation through the theory of the element of tourism destination image.

The model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers clearly indicates that this dissertation studies Japanese people as travelers and Vietnam's tourism, focusing on the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in the perception of Japanese travelers and the tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam. This dissertation also examines the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers based on the theories of tourism destination marketing, which are not incorporated in this newly-created model.

## **2.6. Summary**

In summary, this chapter discusses the theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image that guide the research implementation of this dissertation. These theories include:

- The theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing;
- The theory of collaboration in tourism destination marketing;
- The theory of the formation of destination image;
- The theory of the elements of tourism destination image; and
- The theory of destination image and its functional relationships.

This chapter also discusses various methods and recommendations as important guidance for researching and discussing the relevant issues, such as the model of destination image research, the methods of measuring destination image, and the technique of importance-performance analysis. In addition, this chapter examines the effects of the media on the formation of tourism destination image as a base for analyzing the results of this dissertation.

The discussed theories and related contents have three major features: First, some theories comprehensively cover all the most important aspects of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image; second, the other theories focus on specific aspects of the more comprehensive theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image, and supplement to each other to provide insights of these aspects; and thirdly and most importantly, all the theories can be combined to create a strong foundation to resolve the research issues. In addition to

discussing the existing theories, this chapter creates a model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers according to the theory of the formation of destination image and the theory of destination image and its functional relationships.

### **Chapter III – The Japanese Tourist Market and Vietnam Tourism**

In order to explore the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers as one of the major goals of this dissertation, apart from looking for the theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image, it is also necessary to examine the major features of the Japanese tourist market and Vietnam tourism, because before measuring destination image, identifying the experience types, needs, wants, and behaviors of the target markets is also a requirement according to the theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing. These discussions will serve as a background with which the results of this dissertation can be compared to draw new and significant points and to suggest practical policies and measures for Vietnam to attract Japanese travelers.

#### **3.1. The Japanese Tourist Market**

This section describes the typical features of the Japanese tourist market in the existing literature by focusing on three areas: (1) the major segments of Japanese travelers and trends, (2) the general needs, wants, and behaviors of Japanese travelers, and (3) the ways to approach Japanese travelers and travel companies.

##### *3.1.1. The major segments of Japanese travelers and trends*

Japanese demographic characteristics define specific tourist segments which are significantly different, particularly with regard to objective attributes. Each segment appears to have different propensities for physical activity, experiencing culture, and experiencing nature (Iverson, 1997). Generally, there are eight stages of the Japanese

travel life cycle, including (1) family trip, (2) school excursion, (3) language study, (4) graduation trip, (5) overseas wedding, (6) honeymoon, (7) in-company trip, and (8) silvers (March, 2000). Also, Japanese travelers can be generalized into four main categories: (1) package tourists, (2) working holiday tourists, (3) student tourists, and (4) long stay tourists (Inbound Japanese Tourist Segments, 2005).

According to Nishiyama (1996), Japanese people are more likely to travel overseas before taking on a responsible position in their career paths; young women are also more likely to go abroad before getting married. He also holds that the major important segments of Japanese travelers include honeymooners, young female office workers, student travelers, “full-mooners,” senior citizens, middle-aged women, family group travelers, businessmen, rich business executives, and conventioners. The major characteristics of these segments are described as in Table 3.1. Nishiyama (1996) also emphasizes that office ladies and senior citizens are large groups of travelers, family groups are the newest and most promising segment, and middle-aged women are unique to Japan.

**Table 3.1. The major segments of Japanese travelers**

Segments	Age	Time	Social/work Responsibility	Spending Capacity	Shopping	More Descriptions
<b>Honeymooners</b>	20s – early 30s	Much	Low	High	Much	Staying at luxury hotels, eating in fine restaurants, taking deluxe tours, and buying expensive gifts
<b>Young female office workers (Office Ladies/O.L.)</b>	18 – 35 (most 20 – 25)	Much	Not very high	High	Much	Most are single, don't have any housing costs because they live with their parents, and are not career-oriented
<b>Students</b>	18 – 25	Much	Low	Low	Not much	Taking trips during long weekends and vacations; taking inexpensive tours or buying discount air tickets; not buying expensive brand-name items; more from a privileged, thus being richer; traveling more regularly
<b>Full-mooners (traveling as couples after raising their children)</b>	Late 50s	Not too much	Not very high	High	Much	Buying deluxe package tours; usually not speaking English or local language; staying at nice hotels, eating good meals, and buying expensive items for themselves and their family
<b>Senior citizens (Silver market)</b>	60s and above	Much	Low	High	Not much	Having retired; traveling with relatives or close friends; requiring high standard service; not spending much on souvenirs

Segments	Age	Time	Social/work Responsibility	Spending Capacity	Shopping	More Descriptions
<b>Middle-aged women</b>	Late 40s - early 50s	Much	Not very high	High	Much	Having completed their duties as education mothers; working part-time and saving money for extra expenditures
<b>Family groups</b>	Varied	Not much	Not very high	High	Much	Most traveling when their children are still young (three to twelve years old) – before beginning to study hard for high school entrance exams
<b>Businessmen</b>	Varied	Limited	High	High	Not much	Managers and employees in company-financed trips that may include a field trip and short study session plus sightseeing and recreational activities
<b>Wealthy business executives</b>	40s and above	Limited	High	Very high	Not much	Top executives of large corporations or owners of medium and small business enterprises; demanding prompt and courteous service as accustomed to being pampered in Japan
<b>Conventioners</b>	40s and above	Limited	High	High	Not much	Affluent businessmen and professionals who can afford to participate in overseas conferences without financial difficulties

Source: Nishiyama (1996)



Also, Japanese tourists are classified according to the typical characteristics of their birth time in the history. For instance, “baby boomers” are referred to those born during 1947-1949. They possess great financial assets, and their consuming propensity is rising. They are expected to significantly boost consumption in not only tourism but also various sectors of Japan’s economy (Nitta, 2006). “New human being” generation is referred to those who were born between 1960 and 1965 (they are called "Shin-jinrui", which literally means 'new human being' or 'new human breed'). They have values quite different from preceding generations, and their way of thinking and acting is hard to understand for the elders (Hayano, 2008b).

In forecasting Japanese international travel to 2025, Mak, Carlile, and Dai (2005) conclude that the Japanese will continue to travel abroad in increasing numbers, but aging population will dramatically slow the rate of growth of future Japanese overseas travel. Moreover, they hold that the number of overseas trips taken by “seniors” will increase sharply, but there will be fewer trips taken by the Japanese in the 20s and early 30s age groups. According to Sakai, Brown, and Mak (2000), age and cohort membership are significant determinants of Japanese international travel demand. They assert that given reasonable assumptions about future real wage growth, labor force participation, and currency exchange rates, increasing numbers of Japanese will travel abroad in the 21st century, although at a much slower pace.

Generally, the Japanese outbound market has experienced a decreasing trend. 17,295,000 Japanese outbound travelers in 2007 showed a decrease of -1.3 % if compared to the number of 17,534,565 in 2006. According to Takamatsu (2008), this trend will continue because the Japanese economy is still unstable on account of several social issues, such as the increase in unemployment rate among the younger

generation and an aging population. Moreover, the decline can be explained by the short supply of air seats to major holiday destinations, and competition with domestic destinations and recreational activities other than travel.

More specifically, the young female market has slowly recovered since it hit a trough in 2003 due to (1) the concern of safety and security of traveling after the events of September 11, 2001 and SARS epidemics, (2) the continuous decline of women in their 20s, (3) the decrease in the average disposable income of young workers, and (4) the lack of interest in overseas travel. Moreover, it seems that Japanese youth today try to avoid the trouble related to overseas travel and prefer staying at home with a mobile phone in their hand (Takamatsu, 2008).

Recently, young travelers and “new human being” in their forties have been more focused. The Japan Tourism Marketing Co. (JTM)’s survey shows that female youngsters are particularly eager to travel overseas: More than 40% of the female youngsters selected overseas travel as a priority, which marks almost as high as saving money, while the male's selection rate saw only 23%; and men seem to prefer domestic travel regardless of their income level. The survey result also shows that travel purposes such as 'to enjoy nature and scenery' and 'sampling local cuisine' ranked high in general. Moreover, the survey indicates that youngsters meet financial difficulties to travel. Many young consumers in Japan today must rely on sizable amounts of money such as a bonus, to manage their daily expenditure due to the limited amount of their monthly income. Other obstacles include concerns about language, terror attacks, contagious diseases, safety and security, sanitary conditions and food safety (Kono, 2008).

As for the shopping behaviors of the “new human being” generation, according to Hayano (2008b), Japanese people in their forties are particularly active in shopping abroad when outbound travel market itself remains stagnant. There are several factors explaining that fact: Firstly, many of men in their forties are frequent business travelers, and therefore have more occasions to purchase gifts and souvenirs; secondly, people currently in their forties belong to a generation that has fortunately survived the big change in social and work environment after the crush of Japan's bubble economy in early 1990s. This generation started working during the bubble economy when they could get a job with comparatively advantageous terms. When the Japanese economy entered into its structural reform period, their wages had not yet reached high enough to be included in the target of employment adjustment. As a result, in spite of current challenges in Japanese society, the forties today are relatively well off, are active in consumption as individuals and as a family. Additionally, Hayano (2008b) holds that the international tourism community appears to shift their attention from Japanese travelers to the fast growing Korean and Chinese travel market. However, it should be noted that Japanese travel market still has potential for success. The key for successful marketing lies in capturing this “New Generation in their 40s” segment that continues to lead Japan's consumption activity since the bubble economy.

### *3.1.2. The general needs, wants, and behaviors of Japanese travelers*

Japanese people's travel-related behavior is “believed to be influenced to a large extent by cultural values” (Mok & Lam, 2000a, p. 181). In exploring cultural differences underlying individualism-collectivism between Anglo-American and

Japanese tourists and examining the relationship of two cultural dimensions to tourist motivation, Kim and Lee (2000) find that “Japanese tourists expressed more cultural attitudes toward interdependence and family integrity (...), and showed more collectivistic characteristics in seeking travel motivation” (p. 167). However, “Japanese communication services are particularly important for the increasing number of independent travelers from Japan” (Yamaguchi, Emenheiser, & Reynolds, 2000, p. 208). When Japanese people travel overseas, they prefer to stay at hotels that are close to shopping, sightseeing, or business districts (Yamaguchi et al., 2000). In an analysis of the cultural differences between Australian and Japanese populations in a tourism context, Reisinger and Turner (1999) argue that the challenge for tourism marketers lies in understanding the cultural make-up of the Japanese market, and developing culture-oriented marketing strategies. Also, they assert that the key cultural factors influencing Japanese holiday experiences in Australia are culturally determined perceptions of service and interpersonal relations with hosts.

Regarding a cultural issue when conducting studies on Japanese tourists, Iverson (1997) points out some pitfalls of “Western” survey design and research methodology in understanding Japanese travelers. The author holds that evaluation surveys should be administered to Japanese tourists only after they have returned home to facilitate their providing a more truthful evaluation. This is because satisfaction and other subjective measures are most likely biased towards the mean by the reluctance of Japanese visitors to express extreme emotions, particularly displeasure, and this bias is likely to be more acute when a survey is administered in the host country.

Referring to more specific characteristics, Japanese tourists are very sensitive to

the problems related to safety, security, and health (Kaneko, 2005; Nardi & Wilks, 2007; Takamatsu & Hayano, 2004). Japanese are eager to try local dishes, special cuisine and drinks, and they are delighted to learn the origin or background behind the food (Kaneko, 2005; Nishiyama, 1996). Most Japanese visitors try to have a few of the most famous foods and drinks wherever they visit. In fact, *Tabi wa mikaku* (travel is to eat tasty food) is a frequently used catchphrase for travel advertising in Japan, and almost every tourism destination heavily advertises all sorts of *meibutsu* (famous products) considered attractive to Japanese visitors (Nishiyama, 1996).

Moreover, Japanese are particularly concerned about cleanliness. In hotels and restaurants, they always pay attention to the cleanliness of towels, bed linens, restaurant utensils, toilets, bathrooms, and overall cleaning standards. Also, they expect and demand everyday standard amenities even while traveling abroad and they worry when these are not available (Kaneko, 2005).

Regarding transportation, Kaneko (2005) holds that easy access to a destination is essential, and Japanese do not like changing flights unless there is no choice. They also tend to expect convenient, punctual public transportation just like in Japan. They are impatient, and do not like having to wait long. They want to move around and go sightseeing efficiently without wasting much time, and do not like bumpy pavement or dirty roads when traveling by car or coach.

Concerning characteristics of specific segments, Gilbert and Terrata (2001) reveal that three-quarters of the younger holidaymakers are motivated to travel abroad by wanting to enhance their experiences, whereas only one fifth of the older generation chose this element. You and O' Leary (2000) realize that the older travel

market is becoming more active compared to 10 years before, and travel characteristics of this market also change over time. They specify that

“There is a high demand for security and safety among Japanese older travelers while they travel overseas. Good travel infrastructure also appears to be very important to this group. Furthermore, culture and heritage travel products have strong appeal that has grown among the older Japanese travelers” (You & O’ Leary, 2000, pp. 39-40).

In examining Japanese independent visitors to Scotland, Andersen, Prentice, and Watanabe (2000) divide the independent traveler market into three groups based on the purpose characteristics of their trip: careerists, seeking to improve their careers through foreign travel; collectors, seeking prestigious and developmental experiences; and a large segment, mainstreamers. These groups differ in the emphasis given to independence in travel, with mainstreamers least emphatic about liking to be alone. In researching the profile of Japanese visitors to Alaska, Milner, Collins, Tachibana, and Hiser (2000) found that the modal Japanese traveler is a young female who is searching for experiences that are closely tied to beautiful natural phenomena and is likely to complete all travel within a week’s time, and most use package travel although there are trends toward travelers using combination trips as well as traveling independently. They also found that Japanese visitors to Alaska may be further subdivided based on season - winter and summer.

In research on Japanese university student tourists, Le (2007) also found that the determinants belonging to safety and security affect their travel decisions most. The second most important determinants were in the groups of culture and scenery (cuisine, different culture, natural scenery, interesting culture, well-known attractions), supporting conditions (climate and weather, local people’s friendliness, internal transportation facilities), and price (shopping, price index of products, price

of air tickets). As far as the main factors are concerned, eight (8) important factors affect Japanese university students when they consider traveling abroad. These factors are listed in the priority order of importance level, size, and percentage of variance as follows: (1) safety and security, (2) culture, (3) cuisine and well-known attractions, (4) price, (5) scenery and friendliness, (6) climate and local life, (7) transportation, communication and hospitality, and 8) arts.

In examining Japanese senior travelers' motivations to visit Thailand, Sangpikul (2008) identified three push and four pull factors. The three push factors are (1) novelty and knowledge-seeking, (2) rest and relaxation, and (3) ego-enhancement. The four pull factors are (1) cultural and historical attractions, (2) travel arrangements and facilities, (3) shopping and leisure activities, and (4) safety and cleanliness. Among them, novelty and knowledge-seeking, and cultural and historical attractions are regarded as the most important push and pull factors respectively. The author also found that psychological well-being and education are two factors influencing Japanese senior travelers' travel motivations to Thailand.

Most Japanese tourists are avid shoppers, in respect to their *omiyage* (souvenirs) tradition (Iverson, 1997). According to Nishiyama (1996), Japanese travelers are well known for their shopping sprees at tourist destinations around the world. Even when they go on sightseeing trips in Japan, they still practice the age-old custom of buying souvenirs for relatives, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Souvenir giving is the most common method of cultivating and nurturing amicable interpersonal relationships and showing appreciation to those with whom one lives and works. Japanese travelers will do the same when they take overseas trips. This social custom makes them very good customers for the many tourist shops and retail

stores catering to them.

Kaneko (2005) classifies Japanese travelers into two groups based on their shopping behaviors: those looking for designer and brand items and those preferring local arts and crafts. Both groups like purchasing items that evoke memories and are easy to carry home. Some people enjoy bargaining while others are satisfied with the price marked. Moreover, Japanese have a discriminating eye for quality, and they dislike hawkers touting goods. Also, they worry about being cheated when shopping.

Rosenbaum and Spears (2006), in exploring spending behaviors among Japanese tourists in Hawaii, found that Japanese tourists primarily plan to engage in duty-free shopping during their stay in Hawaii. In contrast, American tourists plan to engage in cultural activities and fine dining opportunities during their Hawaiian vacation. They classify Japanese tourists into two exclusive groups: shopping enthusiasts and non-shoppers. Moreover, they discovered that shopping enthusiasts plan to patronize three types of retail outlets in Hawaii: duty-free stores, factory outlets, and designer boutiques. Rosenbaum and Spears (2005) also found out that Golden Week Japanese tourists spend about USD 900 on gifts during their stay, nearly 30 % more than average spending among non-Golden Week tourists. Golden Week tourists were also found to be employed, well-educated, and primarily interested in vacationing and leisure activities.

Recently, the Japanese outbound travel market has been “bipolarized” into low-cost and luxury travel. An analysis of travel cost of Japanese overseas traveler reveals an increase in low cost travelers and high spenders and slight decrease in those who spend around average amount of money on their international trip. On one



side, there are consumers who are extremely price conscious while some other people seek for luxury travel services (Takamatsu, 2008).

It is also recognized that the amounts spent by Japanese overseas travelers have suffered a continuous decline for more than a decade. According to JTM's annual survey on Japanese overseas travelers, the average spending per head in 2006 was approximately 46,000 yen, almost 50% less than the 109,000 yen spent in 1995. During the latter half of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Japanese travelers' major shopping items used to be luxury branded liquors, tobacco products, designer brand bags, and gift items. However, there have been significant changes that make Japanese travelers no longer much interested in buying these items when traveling overseas. Hayano (2008a) specifies these changes as follows:

- Overseas traveling has already become such a common activity for most Japanese that it is no longer important for them to buy large amounts of souvenirs for neighbors and work colleagues;
- The revision of the Liquor Tax Law in 1989 resulted in a wider distribution of discount liquor shops, which has allowed the Japanese to buy imported liquor at reasonable prices in Japan. With a sharp decline of Japanese smokers, the shopping expenditure of tobacco products overseas dropped as well; and
- The expansion of brand shops and outlets over the past decade has enabled the Japanese to purchase premium branded items in nearby places at comparatively reasonable prices.

However, Hayano (2008a) holds that shopping remains among the favorite activities of overseas travel. Even for female travelers, shopping overseas is still

considered "a gift one gives to oneself". Nevertheless, the Japanese love exclusiveness. They like to buy or experience something that is only available for a limited time or available at a certain place. If the shopping related industry could offer local souvenirs and exclusive products, making one feel that "I have to buy them now or I won't get them anymore", the chance is that this will stimulate more demands for overseas shopping from Japanese travelers (Hayano, 2008a).

Particularly focusing on tourism attractions preferred by Japanese travelers, Nishiyama (1996) holds that famous scenic spots and the natural beauty in foreign countries are the most popular attractions for Japanese visitors because from early childhood Japanese people have learned to appreciate the beautiful nature and scenery abundant in their own country through frequent family trips, school excursions, and company recreation trips. They actually have a list of must-see places and are disappointed if they are unable to go there.

Moreover, Nishiyama (1996) emphasizes the strong interest of Japanese travelers in visiting historical sites and famous architectures at tourism destinations in foreign countries. They will be particularly interested in going to those places they have seen on television programs and read about in books. Because of their interest in history, Japanese travelers also like visiting art galleries and museums. Indeed, almost all Japanese visitors are interested in visiting world-famous art galleries and museums at overseas destinations because visits to art galleries and museums are important features of school excursions and sightseeing trips in Japan. Kaneko (2005) adds that Japanese travelers prefer historical places because they love learning from history, want to satisfy their intellectual curiosity at historic sites and museums, and especially like to compare Japan's history with other countries'.

Nishiyama (1996) also specifies that Japanese travelers are strongly interested in amusement parks (Disneyland in Anaheim, California, Universal Studios in Los Angeles, and Walt Disney World in Orland, Florida, Dreamworld in the Gold Coast of Brisbane, zoos, sea-life parks, aquariums, and botanical gardens, etc.), entertainments activities (folk songs, folk dances, and night club shows, etc.), and outdoor sports (golf, tennis, marathon, and fishing, etc.), rest and recreation for physical relief and mental relaxation, gambling and romantic encounters. Kaneko (2005) holds that some Japanese travelers like enjoying nightlife after dinner at bars or nightclubs as they would in Japan. If safe and sanitary, a lively nightlife district is appealing to all Japanese tourists.

In addition, according to Kaneko (2005), hospitable people at a destination are a great resource that can help enhance the overall image of a place in Japanese travelers' mind. Japanese travelers like local guides who have sufficient Japanese language ability to correctly explain the local tourist attractions and culture, and more Japanese want an opportunity to interact and communicate with local residents when traveling. Also, regarding authentic arts and crafts, Japanese travelers are interested in enjoying local music or dancing, and see music as a key component of their travel experience. They particularly like seeing traditional arts and enjoying performances at their original locations.

Concerning the overall impression of Japanese tourists with respect to a specific destination, in an analysis of Japanese tourists' satisfaction levels and the likelihood of them recommending Hong Kong as a tourism destination to others based on a set of travel attributes, Heung and Qu (2000) found that the overall accessibility of Hong Kong appears to be the top satisfaction attribute perceived by Japanese tourists. The

travel attributes identified are grouped into eight dimensions: (1) people, (2) overall convenience, (3) price, (4) accommodation and food, (5) commodities, (6) attractions, (7) culture, and (8) climate and image. Their analysis also indicates that accommodation and food exerted the most influential impact on both satisfaction levels and the likelihood recommending the destination to others.

When discussing Japanese travelers to the US in the 1990s, Chacko (n.d.) realized that Japanese travelers like to go to places that have been previously visited by Japanese visitors and where they have opportunities for sightseeing, shopping, and dining. They are very concerned about personal safety, not interested in associating with the local community, and like to receive Japanese-style services.

Latzko (n.d.), in investigating the sensitivity of the Hawaiian tourist industry to fluctuation in the Japanese economy, found that the number of Japanese visitors to Hawaii correlates most strongly with fluctuations in relative prices as measured by the ratio of the Japanese wholesale price index to the Hawaii consumer price index. In an analysis of Japanese senior travelers (aged over 50 years old) to Hawaii, Okata (n.d.), by applying an importance-performance grid, found that Japanese senior travelers are mostly satisfied with Hawaii as a travel destination. Specifically, factors related to natural resources and comfortable trip are viewed as major strengths of Hawaii. Interestingly, the features related to physical activities such as golfing, water sports, and outdoor activities are not viewed as important travel destination attributes for Hawaii for both seniors and a younger sample.

According to Canadian Tourism Commission (2006), Japanese travel to Canada is overwhelmingly for pleasure travel purposes, as a result of fewer Japanese

travelers coming to Canada for business purposes. Moreover, consistent with the long-haul pleasure travel market to destinations other than Canada, Japanese travelers to Canada are increasingly traveling with their spouse/significant other at the expense of traveling with friends and children. Additionally, a growing number of Japanese travelers to Canada are choosing to travel alone as opposed to traveling within a group or with business associates. Surprisingly, despite Canada's image as a destination for outdoor activities and nature, large percentages of Japanese are engaging in typically urban activities while in Canada. Shopping, fine dining, and taking in culture or historical sites are the activities that two in ten or more Japanese travelers report having done while in the country.

Recently, there has been a shift from long-haul destinations to short-haul destinations mostly in Asia. This fact is explained by increasing business traffic within Asia and an increase in air seat supply to China and Korea coupled with downsizing of aircraft for trans-Pacific and European routes. As a result of the airlines policies to further concentrate their seat allocation to profitable business passengers, the supply of economy class seats for the leisure market has been reduced (Takamatsu, 2008).

### *3.1.3. The ways to approach Japanese travelers and travel companies*

Regarding the media used for tourism promotion and marketing, according to Nishiyama (1996), the tremendous increase of Japanese travelers to many overseas destinations can be attributed to the extremely successful promotion and marketing of overseas travel via the various advertising media readily available in Japan. Television, radio, newspapers, guidebooks, magazines, posters, and billboards are

effectively used to appeal to potential Japanese travelers. Because Japan is a not very large island with a large population and only one time zone, it is quite easy for all mass media to reach the entire population of Japan. Indeed, instantaneous communication to every corner of the Japanese island chain is easily attained if an advertiser decides to use national television networks, national radio networks, and national newspapers. Other promotion and marketing strategies for overseas tours are package tour catalogs, travel fairs, special events, and familiarization trips. Recently, web-based strategies have been increasingly applied by major Japanese travel agencies such as JTB, Nippon Travel Agency, and Kinki Nippon Tourist (Zhang, 2004; Nardi & Wilks, 2007). All of these have been effectively used to facilitate the continuing expansion of overseas travel among Japanese people.

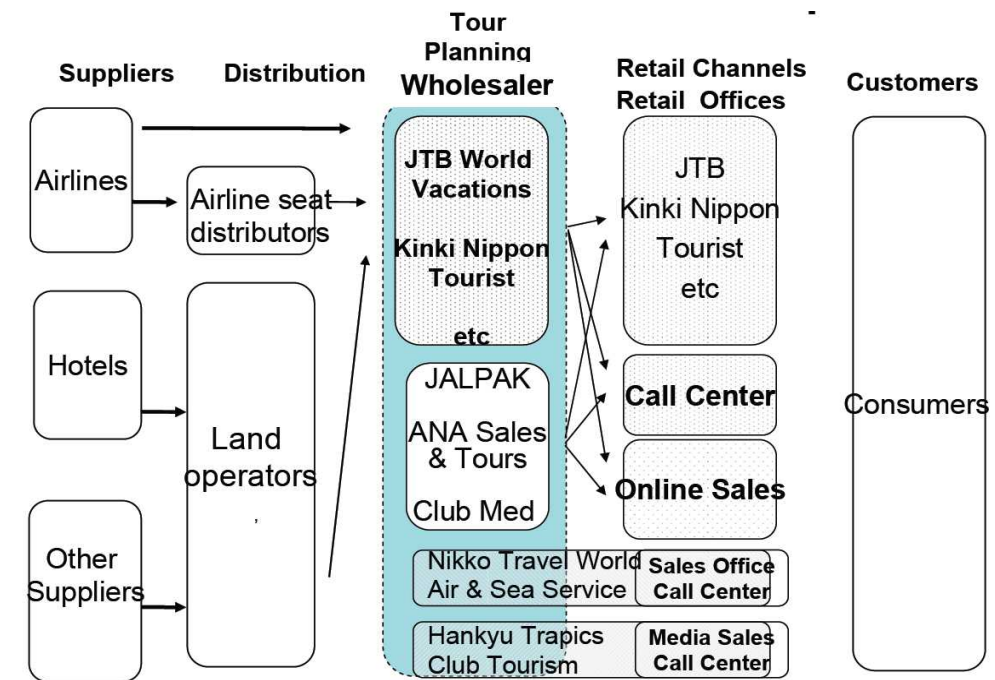
Guidebooks are an important promotion channel to Japanese travelers, in investigating the incidence of guidebook use by Japanese tourists, Nishimura, Waryszak, and King (2007) found that Japanese travelers use guidebooks for a range of needs: forward-looking needs, learning needs, enjoyment needs, guidebook enthusiast needs, and functional needs. The tourists most likely to use guidebooks were found to be female flexible package tour participants or independent travelers visiting the destination region for holiday purposes for the first time. The proposition that "type of tourist" is an influence over the decision to use a guidebook or not was supported. Overall, the less freedom exercised by the tourist over the travel itinerary, the less likelihood that a guidebook will be used.

In an examination of the characteristics of contemporary Japanese package tourism by analyzing tour brochures, Yamamoto (1999) found that Japanese package tour products to Whistler in Canada typically have a very similar tour schedule, and

contain minimal tour components (airline, accommodation, on-site coordinator, and local transportation), with a few airlines and hotels being particularly dominant components. As a result, most tours appear quite undistinguishable from each other, with the emphasis on price, in terms of the functional tour components.

Regarding travel distribution channels and Japanese travelers, Takamatsu and Hayano (2004) introduce the travel distribution channels in Japan as in Figure 3.1. They also specify that the Japanese travel market is controlled by a few major wholesalers with a large network of retail travel agents. In this aspect, Nishiyama (1996) adds that the Japanese travel industry has a hierarchical structure primarily based on the financial strength of respective travel companies and their major stockholders. Most of these companies are not public corporations. They are either partially or wholly owned subsidiaries of major railways, airlines, shipping lines, large hotel chains, giant life and casualty insurance companies, and leading financial institutions. Many others are in-house travel agencies of large business conglomerates.

**Figure 3.1. Travel distribution channel in Japan**



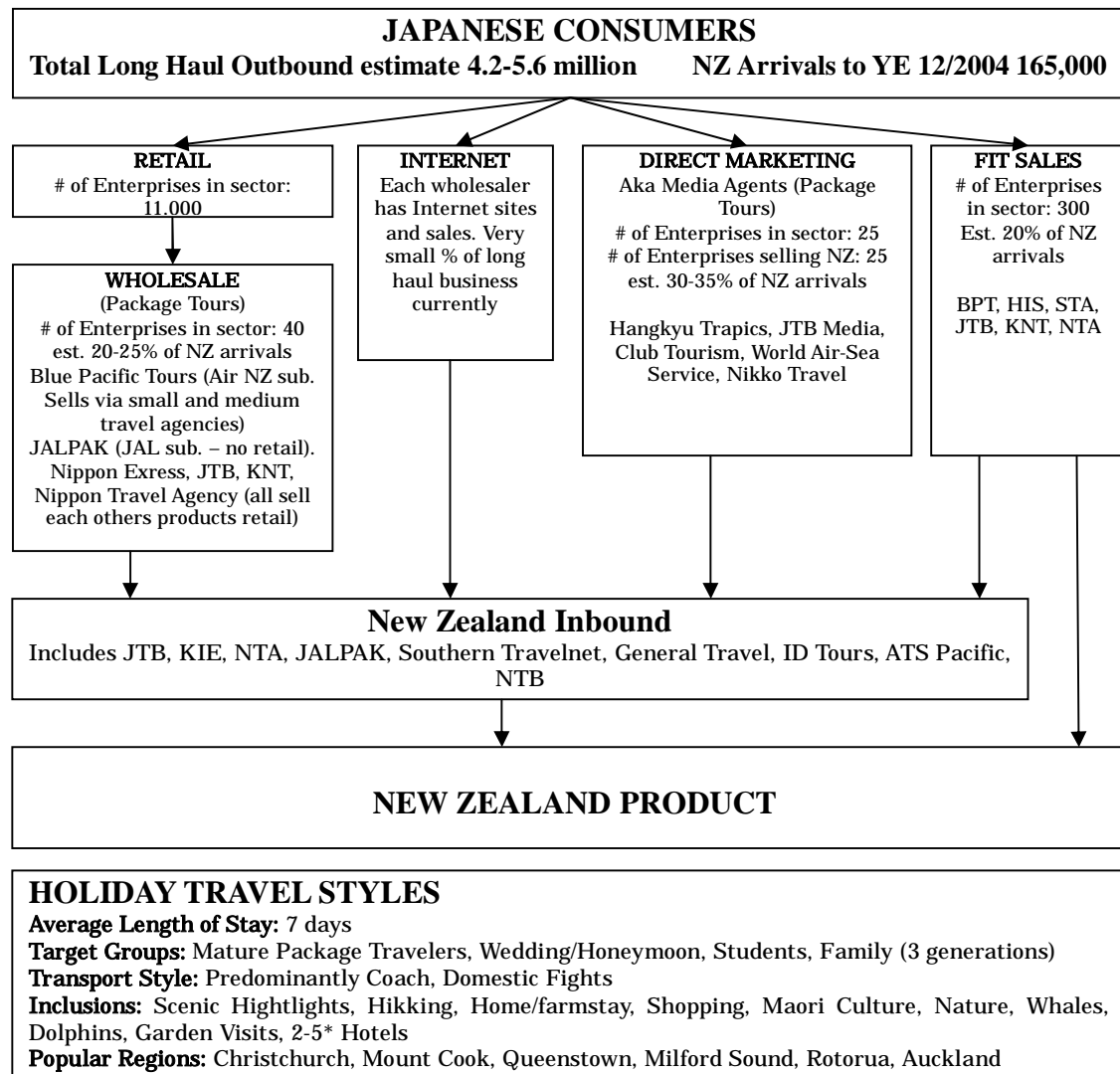
Source: Takamatsu and Hayano (2004, p. 46)

The strongly regulated structure of the Japanese travel industry is identified as having three levels of license categories for agents: (1) wholesale and retail sectors for both overseas and domestic tours; (2) wholesale domestic tours only (they could sell overseas tours that are produced by the first category agents as retail travel agents); and (3) retail travel agents (they could sell overseas and domestic tours that are produced by first category agents and second category agents) (Tourism New Zealand, 2005). The case study of New Zealand indicates that Japanese travelers to New Zealand are approached through four main channels: (1) retail and wholesale, (2) internet, (3) direct marketing, and (4) FIT sale (see Figure 3.2). A major feature from Figure 3.2 is that the marketing channels are dominated by Japanese travel companies. Moreover, except for FIT sales with about 300 enterprises in the sector, the retail, internet, and direct marketing channels are the area for a limited number of



enterprises including some major wholesalers such as JTB, KNT, and Nippon Travel Agency.

**Figure 3.2. Japanese travel distribution channels in New Zealand**

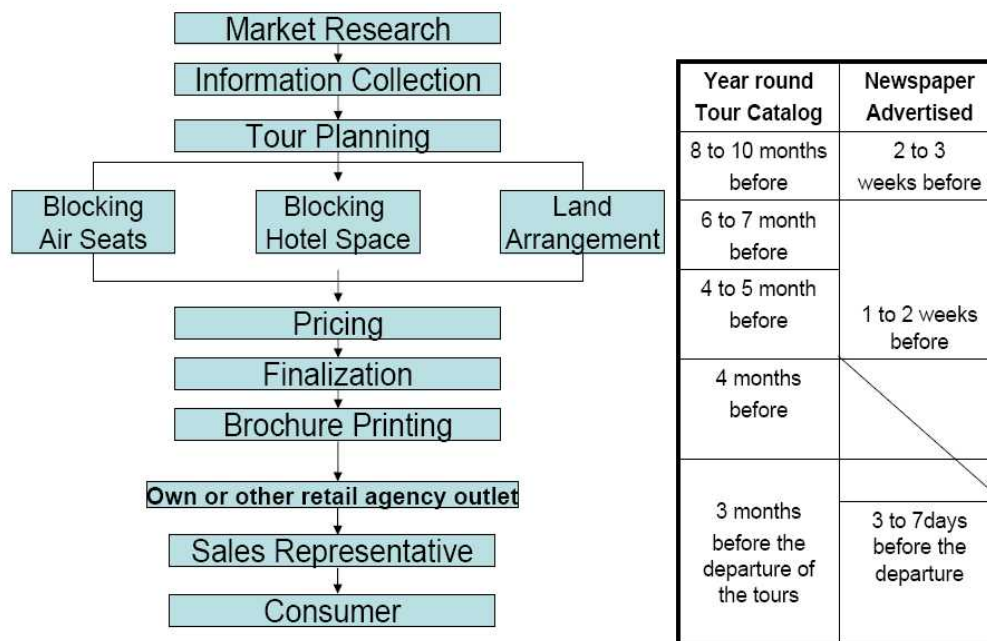


Source: Tourism New Zealand (2005)

The wholesaler tour planning work flow chart is described as in Figure 3.3. Noticeably, it shows that a tour is usually planned 8-10 months before it could be sold in the market, and the pricing is usually fixed 4-5 months before the sale. This schedule is significant for foreign destinations in timing their offers to Japanese

travel wholesalers.

**Figure 3.3. Wholesaler tour planning work**



Source: Takamatsu and Hayano (2004, p. 47)

In investigating Australian tourism companies' promotional efforts to the Japanese market, Pettersen and Norman (2008) found that promotional efforts in Japan do not differ greatly from how they promote their companies in Australia. The most important difference in this industry, however, is the power of the Japanese inbound wholesalers or travel agents (the trade), which highly determines promotional efforts. Such relationships are vital, as the Japanese still book their holiday through traditional channels. Hence, the most effective promotional tool in most markets is found to be wholesalers travel brochures. The power of the trade renders Internet promotion less important, as companies are advised to make use of the wholesalers' more sophisticated websites. Moreover, publicity is found to be essential promotional tool, including celebrity endorsement, travel TV programs,

travel books, and piggybacking on local events. Pettersen and Norman (2008) also found that great benefits can be gained by participating in intra-destination collaboration. When exploring similarities and differences between small and large tourism companies' promotion on the Japanese market, they found that these differences are not large due to the importance of the trade.

For the practices of doing business in tourism with Japanese travel companies, Nishiyama (1996) emphasizes that those who want to do business with Japanese tour companies must understand the unique structure of the Japanese travel industry and study the culturally acceptable ways of doing business with Japanese businessmen in this industry. He postulates that

“Establishing new business relations with Japanese tour companies can be a frustrating experience for foreign businessmen. Japanese tour company managers and representatives speak fairly good English and appear to be Westernized, but they usually conduct business in a way that is uniquely Japanese. They are difficult to approach without proper introductions, and they do not negotiate business contracts based on common Western business customs and practices. They make decisions by using different means and for different reasons. They like to solve business disputes in a cordial manner rather than through litigations. They prefer to maintain good business relations through constant face-to-face communication, instead of communicating by letter, telephone, and facsimile message. Those who want to do business with Japanese tour companies must understand the unique structure of the Japanese travel industry and study the culturally acceptable ways of doing business with Japanese businessmen in this industry” (Nishiyama, 1996, p. 144).

Culture and location influence aspects of social network behavior of the consumer and corporate buyer (Money & Crofts, 2000). It is a popular saying that, in Japan “it’s not just who you know, but *where* that *who* is in the network” (Money & Crofts, 2000, p.15). Comparing the business culture between the US and Japan by exploring existing empirical evidence, Money and Crofts (2000) realized that “the business culture in Japan is vastly different than that of the U.S., and getting business done there requires a different approach than the ‘go it alone’ business culture of the

US” (p. 15), and that “Japanese use more referral sources than Americans, both in the U.S. and Japan” (p.15). When advising American travel companies that want to do business with Japanese travel companies, Money and Crofts (2000) state that

“Both in the U.S and Japan, American managers who want to sell travel services to the Japanese should be willing to exhibit patience in building solid relationships with well-placed intermediaries such as banks, trading companies, and insurance companies, which are key to Japan’s industrial groupings (keiretsu). Joint venturing with a firm who is already well-entrenched in the market is one way to gain access to important Japanese markets. Success in Japan usually requires working with established companies and systems rather than trying to work around them. One of the best ways to gain access to what some consider a “closed” Japanese market is patiently building relationships with strategically placed sources of word-of-mouth information” (Money & Crofts, 2000, p. 15).

Similarly, when examining the perceptions and attitudes of Australian tourism suppliers in their relationships with large Japanese tour wholesalers and inbound operators in the Australian market, March (1997) notes five main categories of concern: (1) criticality of human relationships, (2) differing cultural and behavioral communication norms, (3) opaque decision-process, (4) lack of product feedback, and (5) supplier dependence on the Japanese buyers.

### **3.2. Vietnam Tourism**

If compared to the studies on tourism destination image and the Japanese tourist market, the number of studies on tourism in Vietnam is not so large. However, the existing literature has underlined the major characteristics of Vietnam tourism through its history. By reviewing the literature and updated information from Vietnam, this section describes Vietnam tourism by focusing on the history of Vietnam tourism after the war time to the late 1990s and the tourism policy and development in the 2000s. This section also examines the fact of research on Japanese travelers to Vietnam.

### *3.2.1. The history of Vietnam tourism after the war time to the late 1990s*

After Vietnam started its renovation process, popularly known as '*Doi Moi*' to open up its internal economy, gradually following the principles of a market economy in 1986, Vietnam's tourism began to take off with some speed, and draw more attention from the government. According to Cooper (2000), "tourism was not given priority in national planning during the first 25 years of Vietnam's post-colonial existence. However, with the 1986 '*Doi Moi*' policies the government's attitude to tourism altered dramatically as the industry's ability to provide economic benefits was increasingly realized" (p. 175). However, the initial enthusiasm about tourism development in the early 1990s was then shadowed by a downturn caused by the Asian financial crisis (1997-1998). Given the contest, Vietnam's tourism especially drew great attention from researchers in the late 1990s.

Many authors emphasize the potential of Vietnam's tourism development. For example, Cooper (2000) suggests that Vietnam has considerable potential for tourism development, based on extensive natural resources such as beaches, lakes, forests, mountain ranges, many rare species of fauna and flora and a rich and diverse human cultural heritage. Haley and Haley (1997) state that

"Vietnam has some innate assets that encourage the development of its tourism industry. The country has a fascinating history, miles of beautiful beaches and scenic, interior areas, as well as a complex allure for many owing to its recent wars for independence. While largely agricultural, Vietnam enjoys over 90 per cent literacy and a significant proportion of its population has technical skills, education and training. With the Viet people forming the majority, Vietnam also includes many minority peoples and cultures, including 54 ethnic tribes that offer diverse, cultural events to attract tourists" (Haley & Haley, 1997, p. 592).

Mok and Lam (2000b) also assess that Vietnam has many natural endowments and resources that are major attractions for tourists. They clarify that

“Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are the most popular cities for visitors, as people can find elegant French architecture and boutiques, and weathered colonial buildings there. The over 3,000-kilometer coastline also contains plenty of untouched scenic spots and beach resorts, which have become popular tourist attractions” (Mok & Lam, 2000b).

In addition to the endowed resources, politics and government involvement were the factors shaping Vietnam’s tourism in this period (Mok & Lam, 2000b). In 1995, Vietnam was accepted as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). According to the agreement, the other ASEAN members will provide assistance to Vietnam in terms of personnel training and development, financial support, and involvement in promotional activities, such as encouraging ASEAN-bound visitors to extend their trips to Vietnam. Moreover, also in 1995, the US restored bilateral diplomatic relations with Vietnam. To many Vietnamese, the return of the Americans represented the return of commerce and tourism (Mok & Lam, 2000b). Furthermore, the Vietnamese government’s determination to develop tourism as its dominant foreign exchange earner can not be underestimated, and is shown in the establishment of the new Vietnam National Administration of Tourism in 1992 directly under the direction of the Prime Minister to highlight the key roles of the tourism industry and to facilitate its development (Mok & Lam, 2000b).

Moreover, researchers point out the problems and challenges facing Vietnam’s tourism at this time. Cooper (2000), and Mok and Lam (2000b) list the major problems as follows:

- Air transportation was solely dominated by Vietnam Airlines, whose dominance resulted in no competition, high price, and poor quality;
- The poor road systems made tourists difficult to reach tourist attractions far from the major tourism centers;

- Accommodation facilities generally remained in poor condition and many did not meet basic international standards;
- There was a lack of basic infrastructure provision (water supply, sewerage, energy, distribution of goods);
- Service quality was of low standard, because the training system did not have enough places for students, and most industry training was done in-house by the tour companies and/or the major hotels; and
- Safety was not guaranteed because pickpockets and robbers were common in cities, and many tourist areas had nonexistent or nonfunctional street lighting.

In analyzing the crisis of Vietnam's hotel industry in the late 1990s, Mok and Lam (2000) see a lack of strategic planning and control of hotel development by the Vietnamese government, and the shortcomings of Vietnam's statistics system resulting in the failure to give accurate statistics for developers' reference, which in turn lead to developers' false assumptions about the demand for rooms in the cities. Cooper (2000) suggests that the basic problem facing the researcher seeking to reconstruct patterns of tourism in Vietnam was the consistency and reliability of the available statistics. He holds that this is a historical problem related to the secrecy which surrounded tourist arrivals during the socialist regime. Also, he points out the problems of Vietnam's tourism policy formulation as follows:

“Vietnam is a strategic planner's paradise – for plans on paper that is. While the strategies were not of themselves controversial (...), the resources do not yet exist to achieve them. A major dilemma thus arises for the government – should it seek to actively promote investment in tourism without being able to service such development properly (...). Possibly as a result of this, Vietnam has not developed clear actions that go with the strategic approaches (...)” (Cooper, 2000, p. 175).

It seems that in the mass tourism development of the early 1990s, Vietnamese

tourism planners were too happy and optimistic to realize the negative impacts of tourism development. However, foreign observers had realized this problem. Haley and Haley (1997) emphasize that although researchers and policy makers comprehend particular aspects of tourism, they often misperceive how the variables interact within economic and political systems. In the case of Vietnam, they specify that

“Vietnam lacks the infrastructure and industrial development to generate the greatest possible returns on its assets (... ). The tourism industry's growth will bring many economic and social changes to Vietnam: the government has to monitor routinely and to evaluate these changes to prevent and to cure” (Haley & Haley, 1997, p. 592).

In discussing the downturn in the flow of international tourists to Vietnam in the late 1990s, Cooper (2000) states that “there was a too-rapid expansion of the luxury end of the tourism market, directed by an unrealistic view of the capacity of the Vietnamese economy to sustain this” (p. 176). He stresses that Vietnam was a newly opened destination and predictions of tourist arrivals were highly optimistic while in fact Vietnam had not been able to attract enough of this type of tourists. He also suggests that “new marketing strategy must be formulated to maintain the level of tourist arrivals, and that should be to attract precisely those tourists who are most able to cope with infrastructure problems or who desire an economy-class experience” (p. 176). Moreover, Cooper (2000) warns of some negative impacts related to local environment and culture caused by inappropriate policies, which lead to widespread ecological damage and fairly superficial culture.

According to Mok and Lam (2000b), the most pressing issue for Vietnam's tourism is safety, which requires stringent law enforcement measures to ensure a safer environment for tourists, and police should intensify their efforts by arranging for more police officers to patrol on the streets in major tourist attraction areas. Also,



infrastructure needs great improvement. In addition, they also stress the needs of more training centers and hotel schools, simplification of visa granting procedures, conservation of heritage and cultural remains. Besides, strategic marketing planning and promotion activities are necessary to improve Vietnam's public image and expand its international market share.

### *3.2.2. The tourism policy and development of Vietnam in the 2000s*

Since the early 2000s, Vietnam has issued a spate of strategic documents, such as the Strategy for Tourism Development of Vietnam 2001-2010 (in 2001), the Tourism Law (in 2005), and the Action Plan of the Tourism Industry after Vietnam's Admission into the World Trade Organization (WTO) 2007-2012 (in 2007). However, these policies do not receive special attention from researchers. Rather, they are more interested in the real factual problems and solutions for Vietnam's tourism industry.

Researchers have pointed out the most pressing problems facing Vietnam, such as personal safety for foreign tourists (Pham, 2006), environment and culture conservation, and community-based participation (Pham, 2002, 2003, 2004; Vo, 2004, 2007). Especially, there have been an increasing number of researchers focusing on the area of tourism promotion and marketing, particularly for specific major markets (Do, 2006; Nguyen, 2001; Nguyen Anh Tuan, 2007; Tourism Promotion Department, 2008; Van Anh, 2007; Vietnam Sketch, 2007). The remaining of this section focuses on discussing the studies by these authors.

In examining Vietnam's tourism promotion and marketing activities during 2000 – 2005, Do (2006) found that tourism promotion was given low priority among

the tourism management activities; therefore, the images of Vietnam were, in many cases, incorrect in the foreign markets. She holds that Vietnam should formulate a master marketing plan, and build promotion strategies for specific major markets. Possibly, the largest-scale study is the research on the facts and solutions to enhance the competitiveness in international travel of Vietnam conducted by Nguyen Anh Tuan (2007) with the support of experienced experts of the VNAT Travel Department and travel managers from prestigious travel companies. The author concludes that the competitiveness of marketing and market development of Vietnam's tourism is alarmingly low. He specifies that

- The policies for tourism promotion and marketing are still as in the former command economy, thus always coming after market demand;
- The central and local national promotion marketing agencies do not operate efficiently;
- The budgets for tourism promotion and marketing are limited, for example, USD 1.25 million in 2007 compared to USD 38 – 70 million for Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore separately; and
- The proposals to establish national tourism representative offices in the target markets, such as France and Japan have got stuck due to the current management mechanism.

In addition, Nguyen Anh Tuan (2007) also uncovers the weaknesses of Vietnam's travel industry in the areas of world travel fair participation, promotion documents (posters, pamphlets/brochures, CD-Rom, etc.), television promotion, and organization of road shows, FAM trips, and press trips. In considering various factors,

he asserts that Vietnam has some advantages in natural, human, and cultural resources, however, if compared to Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Cambodia, the competitiveness of Vietnam's travel industry is only higher than Cambodia. This low level is mostly explained by Vietnam's weak management system, unstable business environment, and poor infrastructure. Nevertheless, Nguyen Anh Tuan (2007) holds that Vietnam can take advantage of a new emerging destination with many favorable conditions (tourism resources, geographic position, high economic growth, increasingly favorable tourism policies, etc.) to catch up with other more advanced destinations in the region.

### *3.2.3. Japanese travelers to Vietnam*

The first attempt to explore the characteristics of the Japanese travelers in Vietnam was made by Nguyen (2001). She found that Japanese university students accounted for the largest part of the Japanese tourists to Vietnam (35.20 %), compared to retirees (16.70 %), businessmen (15 %), and housewives (9.50 %). Most of Japanese travelers (66.30 %) arranged their trips by themselves, compared to 28 % by travel companies. The attractors most enjoyed by Japanese tourists included historical and cultural sites (65.20 %), local lifestyles (62.80 %), cuisine (61.60 %), and natural landscapes (54.90 %). Also, a majority of Japanese travelers (79.40 %) held that prices in Vietnam were not low if compared to other ASEAN countries. Overall, about two third of Japanese tourists felt satisfied with their visits in Vietnam. Nguyen (2001) also recommends that Vietnam should establish tourism representative offices in Tokyo and Osaka; enhance the cooperation with Japanese travel organizations and companies; and pay attention to training qualified staff.

Particularly focusing on the perception of Japanese university students about Vietnam, a study conducted by the author of this dissertation (Le, 2007) shows that Vietnam performs badly in (1) safety and security, (2) transportation, telecommunication, and hospitality services; not very well in (1) climate and local life, (2) arts, and (3) price; rather well in (1) culture, (2) cuisine and well-known attractions; and very well in (4) scenery and friendliness. Moreover, a model of policies for Vietnam to attract Japanese university students is suggested, focusing on tourism product and infrastructure development, and promotion and marketing, with attention paid to private – public partnerships.

Noticeably, Vietnam Sketch (2007) surveyed Japanese people who visited the exhibition area of Vietnam in the JATA 2007 travel fair. The survey was based on three main questions:

1. What would you plan to enjoy in your trip to Vietnam?

The respondents were asked to choose among given answers including: delicious cuisine, beautiful landscapes, shopping, walking out in cities, cultural heritages, local communities, este/spa/massage, buying traditional costumes like ‘Ao dai’, relaxation, study (language, cooking, etc), investment/ business, sports (golf, diving, etc.), and others.

2. What places do you want to visit most in Vietnam?

The respondents were asked to select among given answers including: Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Ha Long Bay, Sa Pa, Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An, Nha Trang, Da Lat, Mui Ne, Phu Quoc Island, and MeKong Delta.

3. What does the term Vietnam suggest in your mind?

The respondents were asked to choose 5 among 21 given answers including: delicious cuisine, traditional 'Ao dai' (Long dress), various natural resources, friendly people, various cultural sites, wars, low prices, beautiful landscapes, Vietnamese smiles, condense networks of rivers, cheating, beautiful beaches, greenery of the nature, poor country, hard-working and eager-to-study people, safe and secure environment, ethnic minorities, luxurious restaurants, danger, outdoor sports, high standards.

The results indicated that, for the first question, cuisine, natural landscapes, and shopping were most chosen by Japanese people as the activities they wish to enjoy in Vietnam. For the second question, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Ha Long Bay are the most popular attractions Japanese people want to visit in Vietnam. For the third question, delicious cuisine and traditional 'Ao dai' (Long dress) are the most popular images of Vietnam held by Japanese people. In addition, war-related impressions are also strong in the Japanese mind.

In conclusion, this chapter features the background of this dissertation by discussing the Japanese tourist market in three main areas: the major segments of Japanese travelers and trends; the general needs, wants, and behaviors of Japanese travelers; and the ways to approach Japanese travelers and travel companies. This chapter also describes Vietnam tourism in three main areas: the history of Vietnam tourism after the war time to the late 1990s; the tourism policy and development of Vietnam in the 2000s; and Japanese travelers to Vietnam. The next chapter introduces the methodology and points out the distinctive characteristics of this dissertation.

## **Chapter IV - Methodology**

This chapter introduces the methods used to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers and to suggest marketing policies to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan. Firstly, this chapter presents the methods used to identify the images of Vietnam including the procedures and techniques to find out the general images, the attribute-based images, and the holistic images. Then, this chapter focuses on the methods used to measure the effects of different information sources and the methods used to research the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam, and the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers. This chapter also presents the instrumentation of the methodology including the questionnaires designed for empirical research, their validity and reliability, and the implementation process. In its final part, this chapter points out the distinctive characteristics of this dissertation.

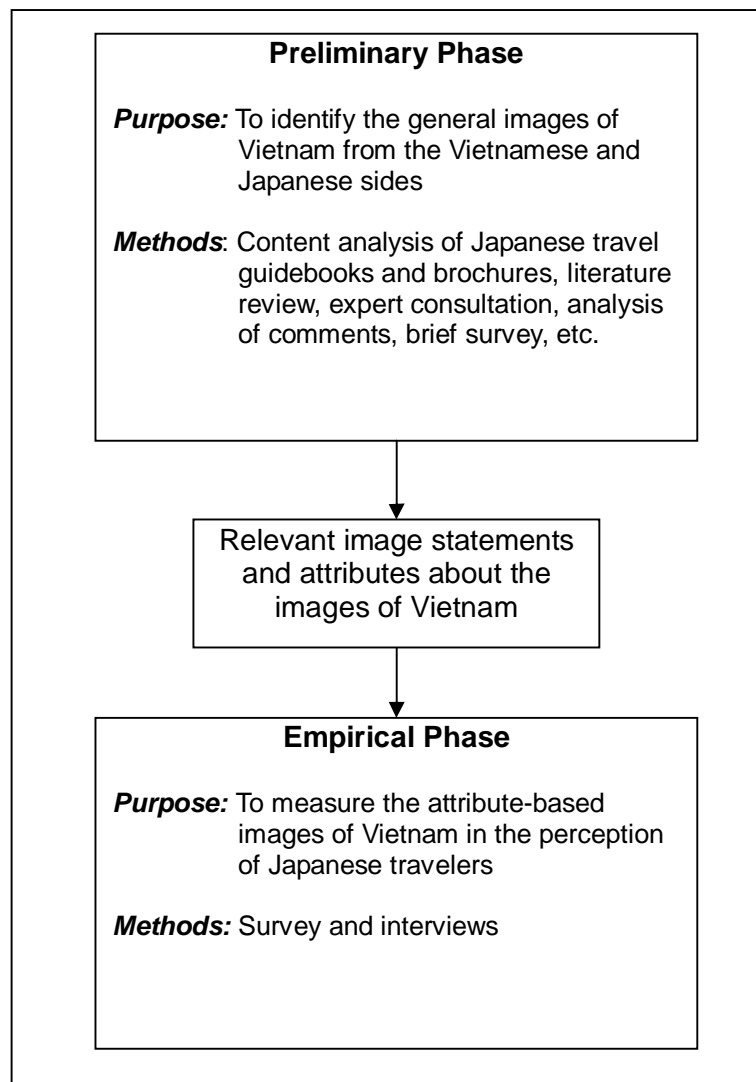
### **4.1. Identifying the Images of Vietnam as a Tourism Destination for Japanese Travelers**

#### *4.1.1. Identifying the general images of Vietnam*

As shown in the model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers (Figure 2.11), this dissertation studies the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in the perception of Japanese travelers. According to the theories of tourism destination image, particularly the theory of the elements of tourism destination image, measuring destination image should cover attribute-based

images and holistic (functional-psychological and common-unique) images. To identify the attribute-based images, a research model is established as in Figure 4.1 adapted from the model of destination image research (see Figure 2.9).

**Figure 4.1. The research model for identifying the general and attribute-based images of Vietnam**



According to Figure 4.1, a preliminary phase of qualitative research is carried out to identify the general images of Vietnam presented in the existing documents from the Vietnamese and Japanese sides. The result of this phase is a set of image

statements and attributes most relevant to Vietnam. These image statements and attributes are then used in the empirical phase to measure the attribute-based images.

Image statements and attributes are various from the literature, however, to be closely relevant for Vietnam, they should be from what the Japanese and Vietnamese sides present Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers. Therefore, this research began with a preliminary phase of research to identify the general images of Vietnam from the Japanese and Vietnamese sides.

From the Japanese side, the general images of Vietnam were firstly captured through analyzing guidebooks and travel brochures about Vietnam from major Japanese travel agencies such as JTB, Kinki Nippon Tourist (KNT), H.I.S, ANA Hallo Tour, Nippon Travel Agency, JALPAK, Rainbow Tours, and TABIX World. These images were then supplemented by the statements about Vietnam from Japan's general public sector (JETRO and politicians) and private sector (managers, reporters, tour leaders, and travelers) obtained by the LexisNexis database from the most common general newspapers and magazines of Japan such as The Asahi Shimbun, The Asahi Shimbun – Market and Industry Stories, The Daily Yomiuri, The Japan Times, Jiji Press Ticker Service, and Mainichi Daily News.

From the Vietnamese side, the general images that Vietnam introduced to the outside world were captured by analyzing the tourism policy documents of Vietnam that state the advantages of Vietnam as a tourism destination for foreign travelers, and the opinions of Vietnamese tourism administrators, politicians, tourism(-related) managers, consultants, researchers, journalists, and tour guides. These general images are not particularly for Japanese travelers, but for foreign travelers in general



because in Vietnam there have been only marketing programs for general foreign tourists, no particular marketing strategy/program for any specific foreign target market. Moreover, a brief survey was carried out to find out how the Vietnamese side represented by Vietnamese tourism administrators/ researchers and travel/hotel managers, and some Vietnamese students and employees in Japan think about Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers based on three open-ended questions:

1. According to your own understanding about Japanese tourists, in your opinion, what images or characteristics would come to mind when Japanese tourists think of Vietnam as a tourism destination? (for functional images)
2. According to your own understanding about Japanese tourists, in your opinion, how would Japanese tourists describe the atmosphere or mood that they would expect to experience while visiting Vietnam? (for psychological images)
3. According to your own understanding about Japanese tourists, in your opinion, are there any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that Japanese tourists are likely to think of in Vietnam? (for unique images)

After identifying the general images of Vietnam from different sources in Japan and Vietnam, a set of image statements and image attributes was established for measuring the attribute-based images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers. These image statements serve as initial assumptions or hypotheses for the empirical phase. The detailed methods for measuring the attribute-based images are

presented in the next section.

#### *4.1.2. Measuring the attribute-based images*

According to the identified attributes and statements, Japanese travelers were asked two following questions about each attribute and statement:

1. How important is each of the following factors of a tourism destination when you consider traveling abroad?
2. How much do you agree with the following statements about Vietnam?

The answer choices for the two questions were based on a five (5)-point Likert scale from one (1) to five (5), in which, for the first question, one (1) is equal to “very unimportant” and five (5) is “very important”, and for the second question, one (1) is equal to “strongly disagree” and five (5) is “strongly agree”.

To analyze the results, the basic techniques were comparing the means of the rated attributes and statements, and analyzing the attribute importance- performance (see Figure 2.10). Also, this dissertation identified the factors of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers by using the factor analysis technique.

Factor analysis is a data analyzing method that attempts to identify underlying variables, or factors, that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. This method is often used in data reduction to identify a small number of factors that explain most of the variance observed in a much larger number of manifest variables. In this dissertation, factor analysis was used to identify the major factors of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers based on the values of thirty three (33) statements of the attribute performance of Vietnam rated by

Japanese respondents. The conduct of factor analysis followed the instructions by Field (2005), Newcastle University (n.d), and Hoang and Chu (2005). The principal criteria and settings are as follows:

- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO): from 0.50 to 1.00;
- Eigenvalue: greater than 1.00;
- Significant level: less than 0.01;
- The cumulative percents of variance: at least 60.0 %; and

The result presents the component/factor matrix, which is a table reporting the factor loadings for each variable on the unrotated components or factors. Because there are items with large loadings on several of the unrotated factors, which make interpretation difficult, a rotated solution was used to simplify interpretation of the factor analysis.

Chi-Square tests were also used to identify whether there are significant differences in the perceptions of Vietnam as a tourism destination between Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not. The significant level to reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$  was set to be 5% and the number of cells having expected counts less than five (5) was not higher than 20 %. The results of the Chi-Square tests of comparing the perceptions of Vietnam by those who had been to Vietnam and those who had not in the most important attributes were used as a base to further evaluate the beneficiary and negative images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers. Accordingly, there are four possible combinations for policy recommendations:

- If those who had been to Vietnam reacted positively to an important attribute

while the other group was negative, Vietnam should be recommended to correct the perception of those who have not been to Vietnam;

- If those who had been to Vietnam reacted positively to an important attribute and those that did not go did also, that attribute is a strength that Vietnam tourism should further promote;
- If those who had been to Vietnam reacted negatively to an important attribute while the other group was positive, Vietnam needs to improve its performance in that attribute; and
- If those who had been to Vietnam reacted negatively to an important attribute and the other group did also, Vietnam really has problem on that attribute performance.

#### *4.1.3. Identifying the holistic images*

Three (3) open-ended questions suggested by Ritchie and Crouch (2005) were used for identifying the holistic (functional, psychological, and unique) images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind. The three questions are:

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Vietnam as a tourism destination? (for functional images)
2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Vietnam? (for psychological images)
3. Could you please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Vietnam? (for unique images)

#### **4.2. Identifying the Effects of Different Information Sources**

According to the model of the formation of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers, the following information sources were examined:

- Organic sources: education, relatives and friends (these sources are all semi-dynamic/semi-controllable);
- Touristic-commercial sources: travel guidebooks, travel brochures, travel agents, world travel fairs, and tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam (Sports and cultural events, travel fairs and exhibitions, etc...) (Except for world travel fairs, and tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam which are dynamic/controllable, the other sources are semi-dynamic/semi-controllable); and
- Sources that may be organic or/and touristic-commercial: newspapers, television, internet, magazines, and books (these sources are all semi-dynamic/semi-controllable).

Japanese travelers were asked the following question: How much do the following information sources influence your image of Vietnam as a tourism destination? The answer for this question was based on a five (5)-point Likert scale with the numbers from one (1) to five (5) representing the scale from “not influential at all” to “strongly influential”.

#### **4.3. The Methods to Study the National Tourism Destination Management, and Promotion and Marketing of Vietnam, and Explore the Experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in Attracting Japanese Travelers**

Regarding researching the tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam, the researcher directly participated in and observed the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing activities of Vietnam in foreign markets during 2001 – 2005 as an employee of VNAT. During this period, the researcher worked for the Department of Organization and Personnel of VNAT. One of the researcher's tasks was drafting decisions to send members of VNAT to foreign countries to participate in international travel fairs and exhibitions. Once these members had come back, they had to report to his department about their trips with recommendations, and the researcher was the one who could read all these reports. Also, the researcher had opportunities to talk with them about their activities. Therefore, the researcher gained a comprehensive understanding of the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing activities of Vietnam during this time. Although the researcher has studied in Japan since 2005, he is still an employee of VNAT and has contacts with some important informants working for the Tourism Market Department (formerly the Tourism Promotion Department of VNAT), the Travel Department (formerly in charge of tourism promotion of VNAT), and the Vietnam Tourism Association (VITA). Therefore, the methods for researching the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam were participating, observing, and consulting with key informants from VNAT and VITA.

Secondly, concerning exploring the experiences of China, South Korea,

Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers, this dissertation carried out content analysis of the available secondary data obtained from APU's library and online databases. These data provided necessary information about the experiences of these destinations in attracting Japanese travelers.

#### **4.4. Instrumentation**

##### *4.4.1. Questionnaires*

The questionnaire for Japanese respondents to explore the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in their mind (see Appendix A) includes seven (7) questions that can be classified into five (5) main parts: Part one (1) refers to question one (1) asking about the importance of each of the thirty three (33) attributes; part two (2) refers to question two (2) asking about the opinion of Japanese travelers about the statements regarding the attribute performance of Vietnam; part three (3) includes questions three (3), four (4), and five (5) to identify holistic (functional, psychological, and unique) images of Vietnam; part four (4) refers to question six (6) asking about the opinion of Japanese travelers about the effects of different information sources on their perception of the images of Vietnam; and part five (5) refers to question seven (7) about the demographic background of the respondents.

In the questionnaire design stage, great attention was paid to the focus, phraseology, and sequencing of the questions. The problems of misunderstanding and misinterpretation were minimized through pilot testing and consulting with tourism professors and experts.

#### *4.4.2. Validity*

Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration. The major types of validity include face validity, content validity, and construct validity: Face validity refers to the fact that the concept being measured is being done so appropriately, that is ‘on the face of it’; content validity concerns the use of measures incorporating all the meanings associated with the research issues; and construct validity is associated with a measure encapsulating several indicators that are theoretically sound (Jennings, 2001).

In the methodology of this dissertation, face validity and content validity are shown in the fact that the methods are designed to closely examine all the research issues, both ‘on the face of them’ and in their in-depth contents. Moreover, the methodology relies on the theories of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image such as the theory of the elements of tourism destination marketing, the theory of collaboration in tourism destination marketing, the theory of the formation of tourism destination image, the theory of the components of destination image, the theory of destination image and its functional relationships, the model of destination image research, the framework of measuring destination image, the technique of importance-performance analysis, and other theoretical conclusions regarding the effects of the media on the formation of destination images. These theories and methodological guidance form the construct validity of the methodology of this dissertation.



#### *4.4.3. Reliability*

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. A test is considered reliable if the same result is repeatedly obtained for the same subject of study. For example, if a test is designed to measure the images of Vietnam by a particular Japanese traveler, then each time the test is administered to that person, the results should be approximately the same. To put it in a different way, reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same subject, would yield the same result each time (Jennings, 2001). This dissertation used the two following ways to maximize the reliability of the methodology:

Test-retest reliability: To gauge test-retest reliability, the test is usually administered twice at two different points in time to assess the consistency of the result across time. This type of reliability assumes that there will be no change in the quality or construct being measured. To test this kind of reliability, a group of five (5) Japanese students were asked to answer the questionnaire at two time points whose interval was about two (2) weeks. Little differences in the results of the two time points show the test-retest reliability of the methodology of this dissertation.

Inter-rater reliability: This type of reliability is assessed by having two or more independent judges evaluate the test. The evaluations are then compared to determine the consistency of the raters' estimates. For the methodology of this dissertation, it received comments from professors and students in APU and Vietnamese tourism experts, and was revised many times before final use.

#### **4.5. Implementation Process**

The implementation process took place from April 2007 to July 2009, through three (3) stages: research design (April 2007 – November 2007); empirical research in Vietnam and Japan (December 2007 - May 2009); and data analysis (December 2008 – July 2009) partly in parallel with the empirical research.

##### *4.5.1. Research design stage*

In this stage, the most important task was to identify the general images of Vietnam by doing content analysis of visual and written information, reviewing the literature of Japanese travelers, consulting with Japanese professors and Vietnamese tourism experts, and carrying out a brief survey of Vietnamese tourism administrators/researchers, travel/hotel managers, and some students and employees in Japan. The content analysis was conducted on Japanese travel guidebooks and travel brochures, articles, strategic tourism documents, etc. from Vietnam and Japan. Various studies of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image, and Japanese travelers were obtained from APU's library, popular professional online databases such as ProQuest, DialogSelect, EBSCO Host, and Emerald Fulltext, etc. Interviews and consultations were also carried out with about ten (10) people including Japanese professors, Vietnamese tourism experts, and some students in APU. The general images are in the form of statements as they were found from different information sources. Each statement is about an attribute of Vietnam.

The first full draft of methods was formed in September 2007. After that, the methods were pre-tested, and received comments from professors and students in

APU and Vietnamese tourism experts. The detailed research proposal was finalized in November 2007. The empirical research stage for primary data took place during December 2007 – May 2009.

#### *4.5.2. Empirical research stage*

The empirical research stage began with fieldwork in Vietnam during December 2007 – March 2008. In a former socialist country like Vietnam, gathering data from the public sector is not always easy, partly because public officials are not very open to questions, and partly because many officials are likely to think that their affairs are being interfered with, and they do not like researching about themselves. Being aware of this fact, the researcher went back to work voluntarily for VNAT, where he had worked during 2001 – 2005. During the research period, the researcher took advantage of every occasion to approach target figures, especially in conferences, meetings, and also through informal contacts in cafés, bars, and restaurants.

After nearly two months intensively working in VNAT and some more occasions going back, a significant amount of primary data was obtained from target figures. In-depth interviews were conducted with high-ranking tourism administrators/researchers, such as Chairman of the Vietnam Tourism Association (VTA) (also Former Vice Chairman of VNAT), Director and Vice Director of the Tourism Market Department, Vice Director of the Travel Department, Vice Director of the Hotel Department, Head of the Market Division of the Institute of Tourism Development Research, and some senior administrators working for the above organs. The researcher also focused on studying the case of APEX Vietnam Travel

Company that has held the first rank in receiving Japanese travelers in Vietnam.

For the Japanese side, the empirical research took place during April 2008 – May 2009. There were two strategies to approach Japanese travelers including: (1) direct contacts with Japanese travelers in Vietnam and Japan, mostly in Japan; and (2) indirect contacts using paper and online questionnaires through a networking system of the researcher's friends. Regarding direct contacts, most of the Japanese people the researcher knew were surveyed. Also, the researcher always brought tens of envelopes pasted with 90 yen stamps (enough to send a letter with the paper questionnaire from any place to another in Japan). Whenever the researcher met a Japanese person, he tried to focus the talks on his research and asked him/her to answer his questionnaire and send it to his address in Japan. The researcher surveyed about 100 Japanese people by himself. For online questionnaires, firstly, an online version with the same contents with the paper questionnaire was built. To approach Japanese online respondents, the researcher emailed Japanese people he knew the link of the online questionnaire and requested them to answer. The researcher also requested many Japanese people he had never met, but he kept their business cards or only knew their email addresses. Two weeks after each request, the researcher emailed them again to firstly thank them, and secondly ask them to answer his questionnaire again if they had not. Besides, he undertook several tours with Japanese travelers in Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, and Nha Trang to study their behaviors in factual contexts.

Referring to indirect contacts, the researcher made full use of the networking system of his friends' relations throughout Japan and Vietnam to approach Japanese respondents. About 10 Japanese and Vietnamese friends provided assistance in

distributing about 500 paper questionnaires to their relatives, friends, and acquaintances. An estimate of 600 requests to answer the online questionnaire were made by his friends. The networking strategy used has two strengths: (1) the return rate of the paper questionnaire was as high as about 60 %; and (2) the methodology could follow the recommendation by Iverson (1997) to reduce untruthful evaluation by avoiding interviewing Japanese travelers at the tourist sites because Japanese travelers are unlikely to express extreme emotions, particularly displeasure. Moreover, the survey received constructive cooperation from Japanese respondents when they accepted to answer the questionnaire, which is shown in the fact that most of the questions were filled rather carefully (see more in the section 5.2.1). However, it should be noted that among 10 people supporting the delivery of his paper and online questionnaires, eight (8) people were students under 30 years old, one (1) was a company employee in Japan in-between 30-40 years old, and only one (1) was a retired employee above 70 years old. This feature affected the characteristics of the sample of this research (see more in the section 5.2.1).

#### *4.5.3. Data analysis stage*

This stage took place intensively from December 2008 to July 2009. Before May 2009, the gathered data were constantly input for draft analysis. However, the final analysis was decided only when the data was thick and deep enough to secure the validity of the results.

#### **4.6. The Distinctive Characteristics of this Dissertation**

As stated, this dissertation identifies the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers, and suggests marketing policies to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan. The distinctive characteristics of dissertation are shown in the methodology to achieve these two goals.

Regarding identifying the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers, there have been some findings about this issue. Nguyen (2001) found that the attractors of Vietnam most enjoyed by Japanese tourists include historical and cultural sites (65.20 %), local lifestyles (62.80 %), cuisine (61.60 %), and natural landscapes (54.90 %). The previous study conducted by the author of this dissertation (Le, 2007) revealed that in the perception of Japanese university students, Vietnam performs badly in (1) safety and security, (2) transportation, telecommunication, and hospitality services; not very well in (1) climate and local life, (2) arts, and (3) price; rather well in (1) culture, (2) cuisine and well-known attractions; and very well in (4) scenery and friendliness. Vietnam Sketch (2007) found that cuisine, natural landscapes, and shopping are most chosen by Japanese people as the attractors they wish to enjoy in Vietnam; Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Ha Long Bay are the most popular attractions Japanese people want to visit in Vietnam.

The above findings are, to some extent, significant, but if the methodology and implementation of these studies are closely examined, some major shortcomings are identified. Nguyen (2001) withdrew her findings from a small sample of 179 Japanese travelers in Vietnam. Regardless of the validity of the sample size and the

bias resulting from the likelihood to provide untruthful answers by Japanese travelers when the survey was administered at the tourist sites in Vietnam as pointed out by Iverson (1997), her findings indicate the opinions of Japanese travelers during their visits, while the perceptions of those who have not been to Vietnam are still open. In understanding the target markets, it is necessary to understand the perceptions of both groups to capture positive images as well as wrong negative images for promotion or correction. For instance, if most Japanese travelers who have been to Vietnam perceive that Vietnam is a peaceful and relaxing country while those who have not been to Vietnam think that Vietnam is still at war, this negative image will urgently need correction.

Differently from Nguyen (2001), Vietnam Sketch (2007) studied the images of Vietnam perceived by Japanese travelers in Japan. However, this survey was based on the questions with structured answers given by the survey designers, even for the open-ended question “What does the term Vietnam suggest in your mind?” With this type of questions, the results could not produce various holistic images and differentiate functional, psychological, and especially unique images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind. Moreover, for the question “What would you plan to enjoy in your trip to Vietnam?”, with over 80 % respondents of the sample had not been to Vietnam, the results might show the activities Japanese people wish to enjoy in almost any destination, not only in Vietnam.

In both of the above two studies, the authors could not show the level of favorability of Japanese travelers to a specific attribute, or the images of Vietnam were not fully measured. For example, Vietnam Sketch (2007) found that cuisine, natural landscapes, and shopping are most chosen by Japanese people as the

activities/items they wish to enjoy in Vietnam; however it is not clear how strongly Japanese people like these attractors of Vietnam. Moreover, when using this methodology it is impossible to differentiate the perceptions of those who have been to Vietnam (nearly 20 %) and those who have not (over 80 %).

Furthermore, the above two studies explored the images of Vietnam without thorough analyses of the needs, wants, and behaviors of Japanese travelers. Therefore, they committed a common shortcoming that has been pointed out by O'Leary and Deegan (2005) that even though marketers strive to determine the correct image positioning, they rarely query whether the attributes captured by the marketing messages are actually important to visitors, while consumer satisfaction is a function of both expectations related to certain important attributes and judgments of attribute performance. Therefore, it is not enough if only the attribute performance as images of Vietnam is analyzed separately from considering the attribute importance in the perception of Japanese travelers.

The previous study conducted by the author of this dissertation (Le, 2007) was an exploratory study based on only a structured design. Although the author had already measured the images of Vietnam based on a set of attributes, this was not enough to provide a rigorous test of all aspects of the images of Vietnam. For instance, like Vietnam Sketch (2007), among the pre-given attributes, it is impossible to know what the unique images of Vietnam are that would differentiate Vietnam with other destinations. Moreover, this study was limited to a segment of Japanese university students. Furthermore, in the implementation process, there was a lack of a preliminary phase of research to distil the construct relevant to Vietnam, so whether the selected attributes really represented all relevant aspects of Vietnam as a tourism



destination was not carefully thought through. Nevertheless, this research was a pilot study for this PhD dissertation.

If this dissertation was only limited to studying the images of Vietnam without discussing ways for improving these images, its results would be not really significant. Therefore, another goal of this dissertation is to suggest marketing policies to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan. Suggesting marketing policies are based on analyzing (1) the results of researching the images of Vietnam, (2) the evaluation of the tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam, and (3) the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers.

There have been various recommendations about marketing policies for Vietnam tourism since the early 2000s. For instance, Nguyen (2001) recommended that Vietnam should establish tourism representative offices in Tokyo and Osaka; enhance the cooperation with Japanese travel organizations and companies; and pay attention to training qualified staff. However, nearly a decade has gone and these recommendations are still on paper, and sometimes repeated by travel managers or administrators. It is impossible that tourism authorities have not heard about these recommendations because many high ranking officials participated in researching this issue, and agreed with these recommendations. There have to be some obstacles behind this fact, which need discovering.

In this dissertation, instead of stressing the ideal policies usually existing on paper, the focus is on the shortcomings of the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam. Based on this analysis, it

takes a realistic view about what should and could be changed to improve the situation according to the theories of tourism destination marketing, particularly the theory of elements of destination marketing (Ritchie & Crouch, 2005), the theory of critical preconditions for public-private partnership in destination marketing (Jantararat & Williams, 2000), and the theory of collaborative destination marketing (Wang & Xiang, 2007). The experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers are another foundation to recommend specific measures. It should also be stressed that marketing policies are suggested to improve the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers in Japan as an originating market, not only Japanese travelers in Vietnam as in the approach taken by Nguyen (2001).

All the things considered, this dissertation is distinct from the literature concerning marketing Vietnam's tourism to Japan and the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers in the following points:

Firstly, this dissertation studies the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers from both groups: those who have been to Vietnam and those who have not been to Vietnam. The perceptions of these two groups are compared with each other;

Secondly, this dissertation measures the attribute-based images of Vietnam by scaling its performance based on a set of relevant attributes. The attribute importance is also scaled to carry out attribute importance-performance analysis. A preliminary phase of research is conducted to distil the construct most relevant to Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers;

Thirdly, this dissertation explores the holistic images of Vietnam based on a set

of open-ended questions to discover functional, psychological, and unique images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind;

Fourthly, to recommend marketing policies for Vietnam, this dissertation takes a realistic approach based on analyzing the shortcomings of the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam according to the theories of tourism destination marketing; and

Finally, suggested practical measures to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan are based on analyzing the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers.

In conclusion, this chapter introduces and discusses the methods used to identify the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers, including the effects of different information sources; study the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam; and explore the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers. This chapter also points out the distinctive characteristics of this dissertation, especially in terms of methodology. The following Chapters V, VI, and VII present the results relating to the research issues obtained from using the methods introduced in this chapter.

## **Chapter V – The Images of Vietnam as a Tourism Destination for Japanese Travelers**

This chapter presents the results of researching the first research issue stated in Chapter I: the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers. It begins with exploring the general images of Vietnam from the Japanese and Vietnamese sides based on a preliminary phase of research to find out initial assumptions serving as the hypotheses for the empirical phase. Then, this chapter focuses on the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in the perception of Japanese travelers based on empirical research, including: (1) the attribute-based images, (2) the attribute importance- performance analysis, (3) the attribute factors of Vietnam, (4) the holistic images, and (5) the effects of different information sources. When analyzing each of the above five contents, this chapter makes comparisons between the perception of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and that of those who had not.

### **5.1. The General Images of Vietnam from the Japanese and Vietnamese Sides Based on a Preliminary Phase of Research**

#### *5.1.1. The general images of Vietnam from Japanese travel guidebooks and brochures*

Geographically, Vietnam as a tourism destination is introduced in three patterns by travel companies: (1) Vietnam in connection with Cambodia (Angkor Wat) (by JTB, ANA, and TABIX World); (2) Vietnam in connections with other Asian destinations such as Cambodia (Angkor Wat), India, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc. (by NTA and KNT); and (3) Vietnam alone in focus (by travel

guidebooks about Vietnam and some brochures of H.I.S). The first and second patterns are more popular than the third. The southern regions (Ho Chi Minh City, Me Kong Delta) and central regions (Hue Former Capital, Da Nang Beach City, and Hoi An Ancient Town) of Vietnam are offered to Japanese travelers more often than the northern region.

Regarding the physical images of Vietnam, the most frequently presented attractions include: Ha Long Bay, French architectural buildings (opera houses and churches in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City Hall, and Ben Thanh Market in Ho Chi Minh City), the three world cultural heritages (Hoi An Ancient Town, Hue Former Capital, and My Son Sanctuary), and the old residential quarter in Hanoi.

Although not so often highlighted as the places mentioned above, some other historical places are also rather frequently presented. These include Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in Hanoi, Reunification Hall in Ho Chi Minh City, and Cu Chi Tunnels. Beaches and seaside resorts are not commonly highlighted by the travel companies, except for H.I.S which presents all the most beautiful seaside resorts in Vietnam, including those in Da Nang, Hoi An, Hue, Nha Trang, Phan Thiet, and Phu Quoc.

Many of the brochures present the images of traditional culture of Vietnam, such as pictures of Vietnamese girls wearing traditional long dresses (“Ao dai”) against a traditional background such as Hoi An Ancient Town (by KNT and H.I.S) or the French architectural quarters in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City (by ANA Hallo Tour and H.I.S). Food is also very frequently highlighted. The most popular dishes are “Pho” (Vietnamese noodle), “Goi cuon” (Vietnamese fresh spring rolls), “Cha

gio” (Vietnamese fried spring rolls), and different kinds of fruits. Vietnamese coffee is also introduced as a specialty by H.I.S. Moreover, pictures of everyday life in Me Kong Delta, Ho Chi Minh City, and Hanoi are frequently presented. It is also seen that water puppet shows are the most popular traditional performances introduced by the travel guidebooks and brochures.

As for other traditional handicraft products, including bags, purses, small boxes, laces, small ornaments, etc., items made from silk and ceramics are most presented. Some traditional shopping corners in the ancient quarter of Hanoi or Ben Thanh Market in Ho Chi Minh City are also introduced, but without focusing on specific products. As for accommodation, four or five standard hotels are usually offered to Japanese travelers.

#### *5.1.2. The general images of Vietnam from other comments of the Japanese side*

Regarding the positive images, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Japanese politicians, and the media highlight safety, political stability, high economic growth, and central geographical location as the advantages of Vietnam (Cam Ha, 2007; “Japanese investors,” 2007; Minh Quang, 2005; Reuters, 2007b; Shimizu, 2007; VietnamNet, 2006b; VNA, 2007b; VNA/Asia Pulse, 2006). Additionally, beautiful natural landscapes and delicious cuisine are the two strong images of Vietnam stressed by Japanese managers and the mass media. Also, Japanese businessmen in Vietnam highly appreciate the world heritage sites, peaceful and relaxing living environment, original fine arts, handicraft products, friendliness, and nice weather in Vietnam (Footprint Vietnam Travel, 2006; The SGT Daily, 2005). Besides, the media highlights Vietnam as a new destination with famous war history,

young people, and strong spiritual life (Swinnerton, 2003; Takenouchi, 2007; VNA, 2007a).

Regarding the opinions of airline and travel managers, Mr. Kiyotaka Kanio, All Nippon Airways (ANA)'s General Manager for Vietnam held that the most attractive things of Vietnam are foods and shopping places. Japanese tourists like Vietnamese foods very much. Moreover, in Japan, Vietnamese traditional long dress ("Ao dai") has become fashionable for many youngsters. Also, young male tourists like enjoying entertainment activities, trying delicious foods, and going shopping in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2005). Junko Noda, Chief Representative of Japan's NHK in Hanoi, shared that her best films about Vietnam are reportage films about Vietnamese cuisines that she tried during her trans-Vietnam itinerary (Thu Phuong, 2008).

According to Ms. Hiroko Kawano, JTB's Marketing Officer (Asian market), Vietnam is an attractive destination for Japanese travelers. She held that Vietnam has advantages of suitable flying time from Japan, many world heritages in genuine forms, delicious cuisine, and good places for shopping (Nguyen, T., 2008). Referring to the uniqueness of Vietnam, Mr. Masato Takamatsu, Director and Vice President of the Japan Tourism Marketing Co. (JTM) emphasized that Japanese visitors are especially attracted by walking along the streets and shopping handicrafts at ordinary local shops in Vietnam (Takamatsu, 2007).

Referring to the negative images, Mr. Nobu Taka Ishikure, Chairman of Japan's Branch of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), held that the boom in Japanese travelers to Vietnam has proved the attractiveness of the market in the eyes of Japanese people. Nevertheless, Japanese travelers do not return to Vietnam for a

second or third time. The problem lies in the fact that the travelers lack information, and are not satisfied with their shopping due to the lack of product diversity. In addition, the Japanese do not trust Vietnam's health care system. The poor infrastructure and that Vietnam's tourism does not target well-off travelers are also been cited as main reasons for the refusal of the Japanese to return to Vietnam (Footprint Vietnam Travel, 2006).

Mr. Kiyotaka Kamio, All Nippon Airways (ANA)' General Manager for Vietnam held that Vietnam should improve its hotels, airports, roads, and places of tourist interest. Although Vietnam has diverse places to offer Japanese travelers, it is not convenient for tourists to get to because of poor transportation infrastructure. Japanese tourists like beautiful beaches such as Hawaii, Bali (in Indonesia), and Phuket (in Thailand). There are also many resorts in Vietnam, but they have not met Japanese tourists' demand. He stressed that the most unattractive thing is army-style uniform of polices and customs officers at airports and border passes. In other countries, such uniforms have been replaced by more friendly-looking ones (Nguyen, 2005).

In addition, there are some conflicting opinions about the images of Vietnam related to the impressions of wars. According to Ms. Yoshino Oishi, a photographer who made about twenty (20) photo-taking trips to Vietnam during 1981-2000, Vietnam still signifies war, rather than tourism and she admitted that she has difficulties relating to the country's phenomenal popularity as a tourist destination, especially among young Japanese women. She said: "I suppose that young Japanese women who are bored with shopping for designer labels consider Vietnam a novelty" (Watanabe, 2001). However, Mr. Hiromi Tanaka, a tour leader of Sinh Cafe Tours in



Vietnam said: “Vietnam for many Japanese has become a country of fresh spring rolls and variety stores, rather than a country with painful war memories” (Hasegawa, 2002).

More specifically regarding the Japanese segments that Vietnam should aim at, Minh Quang (2005) introduces some proposals initiated by travel managers, typically among which is the idea by Vice Director of APEX Vietnam, Mr. Kitagawa Koichi saying that Vietnam should pay attention to attracting pupils and students from Japan because Vietnam has been known as a safe country, which is a comparative advantage to Thailand; and most of the high schools and universities in Japan have plans for their students to travel abroad as extra-curricular activities, and safety is a key factor for destinations of their choice. Accordingly, Ho Chi Minh City in particular and Vietnam in general should actively invite teachers and students of Japanese schools and universities to Vietnam, like actions done by many European and American cities’ mayors.

#### *5.1.3. The general images of Vietnam from the Vietnamese side provided by policy documents, promotion programs, and prestigious persons*

The Strategy for Tourism Development of Vietnam 2001 – 2010 identifies the advantageous identities of Vietnam to promote tourism as follows:

“Vietnam has special advantages in terms of geo-economic and geo-politic position. Situated in the center of the Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese land is linked with both the mainland continent and the sea, which is convenient for international transportation by sea, rivers, railways, land, and air. These advantages serve as important base for developing international tourism.

Vietnam has a stable political regime and a large source of labors. The Vietnamese people are creative, hardworking, and friendly. These characteristics are a strong foundation for tourism development.

Vietnam has diverse tourism resources of nature and culture. Regarding the nature, the diversity of land structure including seas and islands, deltas, hills, mountains, and plateaus creates a variety of landscapes and eco-systems such as sea-islands, river-lakes, forests, and caves that favor the development of different types of tourism (...).

Referring to the culture, Vietnam has a history of thousands of years of building and defending the country with about 40,000 historical and cultural heritages, 2,500 of which have officially been certified by the government. The most typical heritages include Hue former capital, Hoi An ancient town, and My Son sanctuary, which are granted the title of World Cultural Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Also, there are many handicraft villages with unique products, many festivals originating from traditional cultural activities of fifty four (54) ethnic groups in Vietnam, and various delicious foods. All these characteristics are combined with the nature and landscapes featuring Eastern philosophy, creating favorable conditions for Vietnam to promote cultural and historical tourism.

Generally, tourism resources of Vietnam are distributed throughout the country with some clusters surrounding big cities and important national high ways. This feature facilitates the planning and organization of tourism areas which supplement to each other” (The Government of Vietnam, 2002, pp.3-5).

In 2005, Vietnam participated in the Expo 2005, Aichi, Japan with a pavilion on an area of over 400 square meters. According to Mr. Nguyen Xuan Loi who was in charge of the pavilion, what Japanese visitors liked most about Vietnam’s pavilion is the water puppetry and folklore art performances and Vietnam’s handicraft products. Japan’s NHK television produced two direct programs on Vietnam’s pavilion, in which traditional long dresses (“Ao dai”), Dong Ho paintings, and Vietnam’s traditional arts were covered (Nhan Dan, 2005).

In 2007, for the first time Vietnam broadcast its images on the Cable News Network (CNN) during three months according to an about USD 300,000 contract. The 30-second clip focused on the scenes of land and people in Ha Long Bay, Hue Former Capital, Da Nang Beach City, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City. Vietnam also introduced foods, traditional festivals, Vietnamese and French architectural buildings, traditional performances, and people’s daily life (Phap luat Tp. Ho Chi Minh, 2007).

In 2009, Vietnam broadcast its images on the BBC World News channel and taxis in London. According to Mr. Nguyen Van Tinh, Director of the International Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the images posted on London's black taxis are mainly the beauty of Vietnamese seas, including Ha Long Bay (BBC, 2009). The images on the BBC World News include foods on a street background, puppetry shows, traditional long dresses ("Ao dai"), architectural buildings in Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, floating markets in Me Kong Delta, ladder rice fields, and the dynamic images of Ho Chi Minh City (The Center of Information Technology of VNAT, 2009a).

In addition to the policy documents and promotion programs, many prestigious people have suggested specific tourism images or products that Vietnam should show to the outside world. In an attempt to identify the advantages of Vietnam's tourism, Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho, President of Ho Chi Minh City's Tourism Association, held that if compared to other ASEAN countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, Vietnam has equal or stronger advantages for tourism development. Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are the two centers of the north and the south. The advantageous features of these two centers lie in the supplementation of the surrounding sub-regions, which facilitates side-trips to diversify tourism products. For example, within a circle of 150-450 km from Ho Chi Minh City, tourists coming to Ho Chi Minh City can expand their trip by enjoying beautiful beaches in Nha Trang, Vung Tau, Phu Quoc, etc., visiting Cu Chi Tunnels – a war heritage, exploring Me Kong Delta, enjoying nice weather in Da Lat (in Lam Vien plateau), and discovering the culture of ethnic minorities and the nature in Tay Nguyen highland. In the north, visitors to Hanoi can lengthen their trip by visiting traditional handicraft

villages, unique architectural buildings, and the life in Red River delta, enjoying traditional festivals, traveling to Ha Long Bay – a world natural heritage, and exploring the culture of ethnic minorities and the nature of the northwest region, especially Sa Pa tourism town. Moreover, the central part of Vietnam with a long coastal line connecting Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and four physical world heritages (Phong Nha Cave, Hue Former Capital, Hoi An Ancient Town, and My Son Sanctuary) are a great advantage of Vietnam (Nguyen, 2006).

According to Mr. Le Dinh Tuan, General Director of Celadon International (an Asia hotel management company), Vietnam's tourism should be attached to its seas. He held that because Vietnam is a long-shape country with various beautiful beaches, 3,200 km coastal line along the country should be grouped into different seaside regions throughout the country with distinctive characteristics, in which the central regions with the famous beaches such as the ones in Da Nang, Hoi An, Quang Ngai, Quy Nhon, Nha Trang, and Ninh Thuan can achieve a boom of seaside tourism (Le Nam, 2006a). Mr. Paul Levrier, CEO of Destination Asia Vietnam, whose customers are MICE travelers of the companies from English-speaking countries in Europe, Australia, and America, emphasized the distinctiveness of Vietnam to other Asian destinations, especially cultural characteristics. He pointed out that even though the nearby countries of Vietnam may have better infrastructure, Vietnam is preferred because his customers can be immersed in an environment with new experiences. He also specified that Vietnam has many islands and beautiful beaches such as Phu Quoc, Nha Trang, and Con Dao, etc. However, these sites are too quiet, without cultural and shopping places, therefore not suitable for MICE tourism, and only Da Nang, Hue, Hoi An, My Son have enough conditions for MICE tourism (Le Nam, 2006b).

According to Ms. Ton Nu Thi Ninh, the former Vice Chairwoman of the National Assembly's Committee of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam has a special history, which is an advantage in promoting the country. Therefore, she held that the history of Vietnam should be part of Vietnam's brand (Nhu Hang et al., 2007). Mr. Nguyen Si Dung, Deputy Head of the National Assembly's General Office suggests that the culinary culture of Vietnam could be a starting point for building Vietnam's national brand. With the brand "Vietnam – kitchen of the world", Vietnam can promote its traditional foods together with diverse agricultural products as well as food-related services (Nguyen Si Dung, 2007). Mr. Dang Le Nguyen Vu, Director of Trung Nguyen Coffee Co. Ltd, the largest coffee company of Vietnam, asserted that Vietnam should promote advanced agriculture and tourism based on the country's rich culture and nature, which is obviously shown in over 3,000 km coastal line, the strategic geo-politic position, and time-honored tradition and culture, and hardworking and creative people (Dang, 2007).

According to Mr. Denis Bissonnette, a Canadian lecturer of the Tourism Department, Hanoi Open University, not many people have known about a Vietnam of peacefulness, dynamic economy, and various tourist attractions. He stressed that the most appealing attraction of Vietnam for foreign visitors is a unique culture of 54 ethnic groups with varied traditional customs. Vietnam could also promote itself as a land of million smiles, which emphasizes the friendliness of Vietnamese people found everywhere throughout the country (Dau tu, 2007). He commented that Vietnam can compete with Thailand and China in attracting foreign travelers. Now travelers no longer rush into Thailand as before because of the mass commercialization of tourism with sex shops and a changing culture like into the

model of the US and European countries. China is too crowded, does not have beautiful beaches, and has some “sensitive” issues hindering the motivation of foreign travelers. However, the weakest point of Vietnam lies in national destination marketing, which leads to poor images of Vietnam abroad. Most travelers still hold an impression of Vietnam in wars, which was broadcast on television worldwide in the 1970s of the last century.

#### *5.1.4. The general images of Vietnam as a destination for Japanese travelers from the Vietnamese side based on a brief survey*

A brief survey was conducted to find out how the Vietnamese side thinks about the functional-tangible, psychological-intangible, and unique images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers. One hundred and seven (107) Vietnamese respondents took part in this survey by direct interviews and online questionnaire. As shown in Table 5.1, this sample includes 37% females and 63% males; respondent ages range from 20 to 63 years old (mean = 35.50); 37% tourism administrators, 19% hotel managers, 17% travel managers, 6% tourism researchers/teachers, 15% students in Japan, and 6% classed as ‘others’ (Vietnamese employees in Japan, tourism related administrators, etc). Although the number looks small, the sample could be considered rather representative because a large number of participants were tourism administrators from VNAT who are responsible for marketing the country’s tourism attractions first and foremost. According to the information of VNAT by the end of 2007, VNAT has nearly 90 professionals, 40 of them work for the three major departments, namely the Travel Department, the Hotel Department, and the Tourism Market Department. 38 out of 90 administrators of VNAT including

the leaders of the major departments participated in this survey can be regarded as significant. Moreover, the participation of 18 travel managers, 20 hotel managers, and other related members makes the sample more representative.

The results of this survey are summarized in Table 5.2. Regarding tangible images, Ha Long Bay and Hoi An Ancient Town were chosen the most prominent images by about 50 % respondents. Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City follow with about 30 % opinions of the respondents. 15 % respondents held that Hue Former Capital is a typical tangible image. It was specified that while Hoi An Ancient Town, Hanoi, and Hue Former Capital represent an old and traditional Vietnam, Ha Long Bay is the most beautiful natural landscape, and Ho Chi Minh City is the biggest economic center, from which one can easily travel to other destinations, especially Me Kong Delta. While Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi are the most popular places for Japanese tourists because only there they can easily enjoy standard conditions for shopping, relaxation, entertainments, and other services, Ha Long Bay and Hoi An Ancient Town are the most recommended attractions for Japanese travelers. 14 % Vietnamese respondents commonly held that Vietnam is a destination of beautiful natural landscapes for Japanese travelers, including Ha Long Bay (51 %), Nha Trang (15 %), Sa Pa (11 %), and Me Kong Delta (10 %). 12 % of respondents believed that Japanese travelers are attracted by delicious cuisine in Vietnam. However, 13 % asserted that for Japanese travelers, the infrastructure and tourism facilities in Vietnam are generally of poor quality. The transport system was emphasized as the weakest point of Vietnam, which makes Japanese travelers feel unsafe when traveling.

Referring to intangible images, 36 % Vietnamese respondents believed that Vietnam is a friendly destination for Japanese travelers, which is featured by the characters of the Vietnamese people. More specifically, Vietnamese people are open and respect Japanese travelers. Although Japan ruled Vietnam during 1941-1945, and this period was a tough time in the Vietnamese history, the relation between Vietnam and Japan has no sensitive problems that can lead to hostile attitudes towards Japanese travelers like in China and Korea.

Moreover, Vietnamese respondents held that Vietnam has a rich culture and an interesting history (35 %), is a safe destination (29 %), and a new and peaceful place (23 %) for Japanese travelers. 16 % respondents believed that prices in Vietnam are generally low for Japanese travelers. In addition, 13 % respondents held that Vietnamese people share many things with Japanese people in the spiritual life, characters, and national history, such as agricultural culture in the past and war wounds. 10 % respondents believed that Vietnam is a potential destination for Japanese travelers.

However, 13 % respondents admitted that poor tourism services are a hindrance in attracting Japanese travelers to Vietnam. The poor services were especially shown in the limited skills of the staff and the lack of Japanese-speaking tourist guides. The service quality in the southern regions was believed to be better than in the north. Moreover, many tourist attractions are dirty or polluted, and the bad habits of local people (throwing waste freely, disorderly driving, etc.) are very counter-productive in the Japanese mind.

As for the unique images, Ha Long Bay is the only specific attraction regarded



a unique image of Vietnam by 15 % Vietnamese respondents. 30 % respondents held that Vietnamese culture, history, and cuisine are uniquely attractive for Japanese travelers. In addition, Vietnamese respondents stated that the unique characteristics of Vietnam are shown in the friendliness of Vietnamese people (24 %), and new experience opportunities and peaceful environment (17 %). There was an opinion that Japanese travelers in Vietnam can find themselves in the past when modern technology had not massively applied in Japan. Also, 11 % Vietnamese respondents held that beautiful natural landscapes and bright economic prospect were among the most distinctive characteristics of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers.

**Table 5.1. The characteristics of the sample of the Vietnamese side**

<b>Category</b>		<b>Absolute Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	67	62.62
	<b>Female</b>	40	37.38
<b>Age</b>	<b>&lt; 25</b>	9	8.47
	<b>25 – 45</b>	77	74.76
	<b>≥ 46</b>	17	16.50
	<b>Mean</b>	35.50	
	<b>Minimum</b>	20	
	<b>Maximum</b>	63	
	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	9.273	
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Tourism Administrator</b>	38	36.89
	<b>Tourism Researcher/Teacher</b>	6	5.83
	<b>Travel Manager</b>	18	17.48
	<b>Hotel Manager</b>	20	19.42
	<b>Employee and Student in Japan</b>	17	16.50
	<b>Other</b>	4	3.88
<b>Travel-to-Japan Experience</b>	<b>None</b>	55	51.89
	<b>Once</b>	14	13.21
	<b>2-3 times</b>	13	12.56
	<b>4 times and plus</b>	24	22.64

**Table 5.2. Most frequent responses to open-ended image questions for Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers from the Vietnamese side**

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**Images or characteristics evoked when thinking of Vietnam as a tourism destination**

1. Ha Long Bay (51 %)
2. Hoi An Ancient Town (46 %)
3. Hanoi (31 %)
4. Ho Chi Minh City (28 %)
5. Hue Former Capital (21 %)
6. Nha Trang (15 %)
7. Beautiful natural landscapes (14 %)
8. Poor infrastructure (13 %)
9. Delicious cuisine (12 %)
10. Sa Pa (11 %)
11. My Son Sanctuary (11 %)
12. Me Kong Delta (10 %)

**Descriptions of the atmosphere or mood expected while visiting Vietnam**

1. Friendly (36 %)
2. Rich culture and interesting history (35 %)
3. Safe (29 %)
4. New and peaceful, (23 %)
5. Cheap (16 %)
6. Similar and close to Japan (13 %)
7. Poor services (13 %)
8. Potential destination (10 %)

**Distinctive or unique tourist attractions in Vietnam**

1. Culture and history (30 %)
  2. Cuisine (30 %)
  3. Friendly (24 %)
  4. New and peaceful (17 %)
  5. Ha Long Bay (15 %)
  6. Beautiful natural landscapes (11 %)
  7. Economic growth (11 %)
-

#### *5.1.5. The general images of Vietnam from the Vietnamese and Japanese sides*

According to the images of Vietnam suggested from the Japanese and Vietnamese sides as shown in the sections 5.1.1-5.1.4, the literature review of the Japanese tourist market, and the researcher's consultations with Japanese people, possible statements about the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers are withdrawn as in Table 5.3.

Some points in Table 5.3 need clarifications. The statement about the central geographical location of Vietnam is expressed as "It is easy to travel to other regional countries" from Vietnam. This new expression is more suitable in the case of travel because travelers may think about several destinations in a travel package, and the connections of a destination to others can be considered as an advantage.

Through the literature review, it is realized that there are some important attributes for Japanese travelers when they consider traveling abroad not included in the sections 5.1.1-5.1.4. These attributes are: opportunities for adventure, opportunities for more knowledge, opportunities to improve business/career, and unique souvenir products. According to the segmentation of the independent traveler market provided by Watanabe (2000), there are three groups of Japanese independent travelers based on their purpose characteristics of their trip: careerists, seeking to improve their careers through foreign travel; collectors, seeking prestigious and developmental experiences; and a large segment, mainstreamers. Sangpikul (2008) also found that novelty and knowledge-seeking are the most powerful push factors for Japanese travelers. Therefore, opportunities for more knowledge, opportunities to

improve business/career, and opportunities for adventure should also be included for consideration. In shopping behavior, according to Hayano (2008a), the Japanese love exclusiveness - they like to buy or experience something that is only available for a limited time or available at a certain place. Therefore, unique souvenir products should be included as an attribute for testing. However, it is still unclear about whether these attributes are appreciated or not by Japanese travelers in the case of Vietnam.

To conclude this section, various general images of Vietnam have been projected by the Japanese side (Japanese travel guidebooks and brochures, organizations, politicians, tourism experts, and journalists), and the Vietnamese side (Vietnamese policy documents, promotion programs, prestigious persons and a survey of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers from the Vietnamese side). However, it should be emphasized that these are only the images that are suggested. The matter of how they are true in the perception of Japanese travelers is still open. Therefore, these general images only serve as hypotheses that need to be tested. The following section focuses on the results of testing these hypothetical image statements.

**Table 5.3. The statements about the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers withdrawn from the preliminary phase of research**

No.	Statements	Notes
1.	You are safe in Vietnam	Positive, from both the Japanese and Vietnamese sides
2.	Vietnam is politically stable	
3.	Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	
4.	There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam	
5.	Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes	
6.	There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam	
7.	You can have many new experiences in Vietnam	
8.	It is easy to travel to other regional tourism destinations from Vietnam	
9.	Vietnam has good traditional fine arts	
10.	Vietnamese people are friendly	
11.	There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam	
12.	Prices in Vietnam are low	
13.	Vietnamese national characters are impressive	
14.	Vietnam has a bright economic prospect	Positive, from the Japanese side
15.	There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam	
16.	Spa and massage services are good in Vietnam	
17.	The climate in Vietnam is pleasant	Positive, from the Vietnamese side
18.	Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts	
19.	Vietnam has many beautiful beaches	
20.	Vietnam has many tourist attractions	
21.	Vietnam is rich in culture	
22.	Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	
23.	Vietnamese ways of life are interesting	
24.	Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	Negative, from both sides
25.	Vietnam has poor infrastructure	
26.	Vietnam has a poor health care system	Negative, from the Japanese side
27.	Service quality is not good in Vietnam	Negative, from the Vietnamese side
28.	It is not clean/hygienic in Vietnam	
29.	There are many good places for shopping in Vietnam	Unclear
30.	You can adventure a lot when visiting Vietnam	
31.	You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	
32.	You can find many opportunities to improve your career/business in Vietnam	
33.	There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam	

## **5.2. The Images of Vietnam as a Destination in the Perception of Japanese Travelers Based on Empirical Research**

### *5.2.1. The sample*

Among about 600 paper questionnaires distributed, nearly 350 (58 %) valid completed questionnaires were returned. The use of online questionnaires resulted in nearly 200 valid completed ones from an estimate of about 800 requests (25 %). Overall, five hundreds and twenty three (523) valid completed questionnaires were received. It should be noted that the completed questionnaires regarded “valid” are those that are carefully filled in on most of the items of each question. Because there are a quite large number of items to be filled in on each questionnaire (87 items), if there are a few items left blank, it is still considered “valid”. However, if a whole question (for example, the question regarding the performance of Vietnam about each attribute with 33 items or the question concerning the demographic background with 5 items) is left blank, the questionnaire is considered “invalid”. In fact, about 520 of 523 respondents answered each item of a question (see the count numbers of responses - N of Table 5.5 and Table 5.6) and about 450 respondents answered all the items of the questionnaire (see the Listwise of Table 5.5 and Table 5.6) are high numbers in consideration of the large number of items in the questionnaire.

As shown in Table 5.4, this sample included 56.79 % females and 43. 21 % males; the age mean was 34.30 years old (the age range from 18 to 75 years old, 70.38 % not older than 40, the standard deviation was 16.464); 49.61 % students, 30.65 % employees (mostly company employees), 6.51 % housewives, 5.56 % researchers/teachers, and 7.66 % classed as ‘other’. Among the respondents, 3.63 % had not traveled overseas, 9.94 % had done once, 21.80 % from 2 to 3 times,

22.94 % from 4 to 5 times, 12.81 % from 6 to 9 times, and 28.87 % from 10 times and plus. Noticeably, 47.23 % had been to Vietnam at least once.

The overall sample can be further divided into two sub-samples of those who had been to Vietnam and those who had not, which is described in detail in Table 5.4. It is noticeable that among Japanese who had been to Vietnam the number of males is higher than that of females (52.63 % against 47.37 %), and most of them are experienced travelers (47.37 % traveling overseas 10 times or more times, 35.63 % traveling overseas 4-9 times), and nearly 50 % were repeaters who had come to Vietnam two or more times.



**Table 5.4. The characteristics of the sample of Japanese travelers**

Category		Total		Those who had been to Vietnam		Those who had not been to Vietnam	
		Absolute Number	Percentage (%)	Absolute Number	Percentage (%)	Absolute Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	226	43.21	130	52.63	96	34.78
	Female	297	56.79	117	47.37	180	65.22
Age	≤ 40	366	70.38	181	73.28	185	67.77
	> 40	154	29.62	66	26.72	88	32.23
	Mean	34.30		34.37		34.25	
	Minimum	18		18		18	
	Maximum	75		71		75	
	Std. Deviation	16.464		16.071		16.840	
Occupation	Student	259	49.61	123	49.80	136	49.45
	Employee	160	30.65	88	35.63	72	26.18
	Housewife	34	6.51	9	3.64	25	9.09
	Researcher/Teacher	29	5.56	18	7.29	11	4.00
	Other	40	7.66	9	3.64	31	11.27
Overseas Travel Experience	None	19	3.63	0	0	19	6.88
	Once	52	9.94	7	2.83	45	16.30
	2-3 times	114	21.80	35	4.17	79	28.62
	4-5 times	120	22.94	58	23.48	62	22.46
	6-9 times	67	12.81	30	12.15	37	13.41
	10 times and plus	151	28.87	117	47.37	34	12.32
Travel-to-Vietnam Experience	None	276	52.77	0	0	276	100
	Once	124	23.71	124	50.20	0	0
	Twice and plus	123	23.52	123	49.80	0	0

### *5.2.2. The attribute-based images or the attribute performance of Vietnam*

#### *5.2.2.1. The attribute-based images from the whole sample*

Table 5.5 presents the results of the attribute performance of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers. Accordingly, Vietnam was strongly agreed to be a destination of low prices, delicious cuisine, and rich culture (means  $\geq 4.00$ ). Also, Japanese respondents were likely to agree that Vietnam suggests new experiences, friendly people, many beautiful natural landscapes, a famous and interesting history, many handicrafts/small attractive items, many knowledge opportunities, impressive national characters, many unique souvenir products, relaxing atmosphere, interesting local ways of life, good traditional fine arts, bright economic prospect, many tourist attractions, exciting traditional performances, and many adventure opportunities ( $4.00 > \text{means} \geq 3.50$ ).

In addition to the positive responses, Table 5.5 shows that Japanese respondents felt negative about service quality, health care system, infrastructure, and cleanliness in Vietnam when they showed strong disagreement with the positive attribute statements ( $3.00 > \text{means}$ ). Table 5.5 also reveals that Japanese respondents indicated neutral reactions to the attribute statements about Vietnam concerning good shopping places, many beautiful beaches, easy travel to other regional destinations, many beautiful seaside resorts, good spa and massage services, many beautiful architectural buildings, nice climate, political stability, personal safety, many career/business opportunities, and many world heritage sites ( $3.50 > \text{means} \geq 3.00$ ).

**Table 5.5. The attribute-based images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers based on the whole sample**

<b>Attribute Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Prices in Vietnam are low	523	4.18	.930
Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	523	4.10	1.004
Vietnam is rich in culture	523	4.02	.930
You can have many new experiences in Vietnam	520	3.96	.921
Vietnamese people are friendly	521	3.93	.907
Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes	523	3.88	.945
Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	523	3.88	.999
There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam	522	3.88	.992
You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	522	3.78	.996
Vietnamese national characters are impressive	522	3.76	.997
There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam	522	3.75	.990
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam	520	3.75	.918
Vietnamese ways of life are interesting	523	3.71	.972
Vietnam has good traditional fine arts	523	3.68	.960
Vietnam has a bright economic prospect	521	3.67	1.001
Vietnam has many tourist attractions	523	3.65	.930
Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	518	3.61	1.021
You can have many adventure opportunities in Vietnam	522	3.55	1.038
There are many good shopping places in Vietnam	517	3.48	.974
Vietnam has many beautiful beaches	520	3.44	1.009
It is easy to travel to other regional destinations from Vietnam	521	3.44	.973
Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts	521	3.40	.894
Massage and spa services are good in Vietnam	515	3.39	.847
There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam	523	3.37	.956
The climate in Vietnam is pleasant	515	3.31	.899
Vietnam is politically stable	521	3.29	.962
You are safe in Vietnam	520	3.19	.941
You can have many career/business opportunities in Vietnam	520	3.18	1.010
There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam	516	3.15	.924
Service quality is good in Vietnam	515	2.92	.868
Vietnam has a good health care system	520	2.81	.836
Infrastructure is good in Vietnam	522	2.74	.885
It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam	522	2.71	.906
Valid N (listwise)	487		

#### 5.2.2.2. Comparing the attribute-based images in the perceptions of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not

In comparing the opinions between Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not, if a difference that is higher than 0.20 is considered significant, Table 5.6 shows that those who had been to Vietnam appreciated Vietnam for delicious cuisine, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, handicrafts/small attractive items, bright economic prospect, many tourist attractions, good shopping places, and many beautiful beaches more than those who had not been to Vietnam. Those who had been to Vietnam also had higher opinions of Vietnam regarding political stability, personal safety, and career/business opportunities, but all at low levels (means < 3.50). Noticeably, those who had been to Vietnam expressed stronger negative reaction to the situation of cleanliness in Vietnam than those who had not been to Vietnam.

Among the attributes that show differences, delicious cuisine, beautiful natural landscapes, political stability, personal safety, and cleanliness are the ones rated as among the most important attributes by both of the groups (see Table 5.13). Chi-square tests were conducted to examine the significance level of the differences between the perceptions of the two groups. If the significant level to reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$  that there is no significant difference between the two groups is set to be under 5% and the number of cells having expected counts less than five (5) is not higher than 20 %, the results confirm that the observed differences from Table 5.6 are statistically significant (see Table 5.7a-5.11b).

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**Table 5.6. Comparing the attribute-based images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not**

Attribute Statements	Those who had been to Vietnam			Those who had not been to Vietnam		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	247	4.21	.958	276	4.00	1.036
Prices in Vietnam are low	247	4.15	.964	276	4.20	.900
You can have many new experiences in Vietnam	245	4.06	.945	275	3.87	.891
Vietnamese people are friendly	247	4.03	.930	274	3.83	.878
Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes	247	4.02	.919	276	3.76	.951
Vietnam is rich in culture	247	4.01	.954	276	4.03	.910
There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam	247	3.98	.881	275	3.78	1.075
Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	247	3.90	.912	276	3.86	1.073
You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	247	3.85	1.028	275	3.73	.964
Vietnamese national characters are impressive	247	3.83	1.000	275	3.69	.991
There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam	247	3.82	.984	275	3.69	.994
Vietnam has a bright economic prospect	245	3.80	.949	276	3.55	1.034
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam	247	3.77	.905	273	3.73	.930
Vietnam has many tourist attractions	247	3.76	.973	276	3.54	.879
Vietnamese ways of life are interesting	247	3.70	.953	276	3.72	.990
You can have many adventure opportunities in Vietnam	247	3.62	1.079	275	3.49	.998
Vietnam has good traditional fine arts	247	3.60	.829	276	3.75	1.060
There are many good shopping places in Vietnam	247	3.59	.962	270	3.38	.975
Vietnam has many beautiful beaches	247	3.55	.944	273	3.34	1.055
Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	245	3.55	.972	273	3.67	1.061
It is easy to travel to other regional destinations from Vietnam	247	3.47	.882	274	3.41	1.049
Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts	247	3.43	.827	274	3.38	.950
Vietnam is politically stable	247	3.42	1.004	274	3.18	.909
There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam	247	3.37	1.003	276	3.37	.915
Massage and spa services are good in Vietnam	242	3.37	.841	273	3.41	.853
You can have many career/business opportunities in Vietnam	247	3.32	1.024	273	3.05	.980
You are safe in Vietnam	247	3.32	.905	273	3.07	.960
The climate in Vietnam is pleasant	247	3.28	.966	268	3.35	.832
There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam	247	3.11	.877	269	3.18	.966
Service quality is good in Vietnam	247	2.89	.975	268	2.94	.757
Vietnam has a good health care system	247	2.79	.792	273	2.82	.875
Infrastructure is good in Vietnam	247	2.76	.918	275	2.73	.856
It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam	247	2.55	.922	275	2.86	.866
Valid N (listwise)	236			251		

**Table 5.7a. Chi-Square tests of travel-to-Vietnam experience and delicious cuisine in Vietnam**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.819(a)	4	.012
Likelihood Ratio	14.404	4	.006
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.752	1	.016
N of Valid Cases	523		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.89.

**Table 5.7b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and delicious cuisine in Vietnam**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	Strongly disagree	Count	4	0	4
		% within Times to Vietnam	1.4%	.0%	.8%
	Disagree	Count	23	14	37
		% within Times to Vietnam	8.3%	5.7%	7.1%
	Neutral	Count	54	50	104
		% within Times to Vietnam	19.6%	20.2%	19.9%
	Agree	Count	82	52	134
		% within Times to Vietnam	29.7%	21.1%	25.6%
	Strongly agree	Count	113	131	244
		% within Times to Vietnam	40.9%	53.0%	46.7%
Total		Count	276	247	523
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5.8a. Chi-Square tests of travel-to-Vietnam experience and beautiful natural landscapes in Vietnam**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.222(a)	4	.004
Likelihood Ratio	17.160	4	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.415	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	523		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.36.

**Table 5.8b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and beautiful natural landscapes in Vietnam**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes	Strongly disagree	Count	5	0	5
		% within Times to Vietnam	1.8%	.0%	1.0%
	Disagree	Count	18	15	33
		% within Times to Vietnam	6.5%	6.1%	6.3%
	Neutral	Count	82	56	138
		% within Times to Vietnam	29.7%	22.7%	26.4%
	Agree	Count	105	84	189
		% within Times to Vietnam	38.0%	34.0%	36.1%
	Strongly agree	Count	66	92	158
		% within Times to Vietnam	23.9%	37.2%	30.2%
Total		Count	276	247	523
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5.9a. Chi-Square tests of time-to-Vietnam experience and political stability in Vietnam**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.058(a)	4	.001
Likelihood Ratio	18.403	4	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.208	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	521		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.48.

**Table 5.9b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and political stability in Vietnam**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
Vietnam is politically stable	Strongly disagree	Count	14	6	20
		% within Times to Vietnam	5.1%	2.4%	3.8%
	Disagree	Count	34	36	70
		% within Times to Vietnam	12.4%	14.6%	13.4%
	Neutral	Count	133	94	227
		% within Times to Vietnam	48.5%	38.1%	43.6%
	Agree	Count	76	71	147
		% within Times to Vietnam	27.7%	28.7%	28.2%
	Strongly agree	Count	17	40	57
		% within Times to Vietnam	6.2%	16.2%	10.9%
Total		Count	274	247	521
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



**Table 5.10a. Chi-Square tests of travel-to-Vietnam experience and personal safety in Vietnam**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.986(a)	4	.027
Likelihood Ratio	11.086	4	.026
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.615	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	520		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.03.

**Table 5.10b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and personal safety in Vietnam**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
You are safe in Vietnam	Strongly disagree	Count	13	6	19
		% within Times to Vietnam	4.8%	2.4%	3.7%
	Disagree	Count	56	34	90
		% within Times to Vietnam	20.5%	13.8%	17.3%
	Neutral	Count	123	105	228
		% within Times to Vietnam	45.1%	42.5%	43.8%
	Agree	Count	60	80	140
		% within Times to Vietnam	22.0%	32.4%	26.9%
	Strongly agree	Count	21	22	43
		% within Times to Vietnam	7.7%	8.9%	8.3%
Total		Count	273	247	520
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5.11a. Chi-Square tests of travel-to-Vietnam experience and cleanliness in Vietnam**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.014(a)	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	23.970	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.406	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	522		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.52.

**Table 5.11b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and cleanliness in Vietnam**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam	Strongly disagree	Count	10	33	43
		% within Times to Vietnam	3.6%	13.4%	8.2%
	Disagree	Count	81	83	164
		% within Times to Vietnam	29.5%	33.6%	31.4%
	Neutral	Count	136	98	234
		% within Times to Vietnam	49.5%	39.7%	44.8%
	Agree	Count	34	29	63
		% within Times to Vietnam	12.4%	11.7%	12.1%
	Strongly agree	Count	14	4	18
		% within Times to Vietnam	5.1%	1.6%	3.4%
Total		Count	275	247	522
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

### *5.2.3. The attribute importance and attribute importance-performance analysis*

#### 5.2.3.1. The attribute importance and attribute importance-performance analysis based on the whole sample

Table 5.12 shows the importance mean scores of the tourism destination image attributes. Accordingly, Japanese respondents preferred destinations ensuring their personal safety, and offering them beautiful natural landscapes, and delicious cuisines (means  $\geq 4.00$ ). In addition, they attached considerable importance ( $4 > \text{mean} \geq 3.50$ ) to the following attributes: rich culture, political stability, low prices, new experience, relaxing atmosphere, impressive national characters, cleanliness, many knowledge opportunities, good service quality, beautiful architectural buildings, good health care system, good traditional fine arts, friendliness, and interesting local ways of life.

As for the other end, Japanese respondents attached little importance (means  $< 3.00$ ) to bright economic prospect, many world heritage sites, handicrafts/small attractive items, easy travel to other regional destinations, many career/business opportunities, and good massage and spa services.

Japanese respondents also showed the following attributes as neutrally important ( $3.50 > \text{means} \geq 3.00$ ): famous and interesting history, beautiful beaches, nice climate, good infrastructure, many adventure opportunities, exciting traditional performance, many tourist attractions, beautiful seaside resorts, good shopping places, and unique souvenir products.

**Table 5.12. The attribute importance in the perception of Japanese travelers**

<b>Attributes</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Personal safety	520	4.14	1.060
Beautiful natural landscapes	521	4.14	.978
Delicious cuisine	522	4.07	1.058
Rich culture	522	3.95	1.085
Political stability	520	3.95	1.059
Low prices	521	3.93	1.004
New experience	522	3.92	1.016
Relaxing atmosphere	517	3.84	.945
Impressive national characters	519	3.82	.974
Cleanliness	520	3.74	1.169
Many knowledge opportunities	518	3.71	1.011
Good service quality	514	3.65	1.107
Beautiful architectural buildings	517	3.63	1.062
Good health care system	517	3.62	.978
Good traditional fine arts	522	3.59	1.138
Friendliness	522	3.56	1.063
Interesting local ways of life	522	3.50	1.121
Famous and interesting history	515	3.47	1.081
Beautiful beaches	522	3.46	1.144
Nice climate	520	3.46	1.074
Good infrastructure	522	3.42	1.138
Many adventure opportunities	522	3.26	1.207
Exciting traditional performance	519	3.25	1.053
Many tourist attractions	515	3.23	1.112
Beautiful seaside resorts	522	3.21	1.189
Good shopping places	518	3.18	1.085
Unique souvenir products	522	3.17	1.181
Bright economic prospect	520	2.92	1.076
Many world heritage sites	517	2.90	1.048
Handicrafts/small attractive items	509	2.88	1.195
Easy travel to other regional destinations	522	2.87	1.022
Many career/business opportunities	517	2.72	1.114
Good massage and spa services	520	2.60	1.196
Valid N (listwise)	443		

If the mean value of 3.50 is set as the point differentiating low and high importance/performance, following which the mean value under 3.50 is considered low and the mean value from 3.50 and above is regarded high, and if the attribute performance of Vietnam rated by the whole sample of Japanese travelers is used, the importance – performance analysis grid is indicated as in Figure 5.1. Accordingly, the importance and performance scores are scattered in the horizontal and vertical axes and the attributes are classified into four groups:

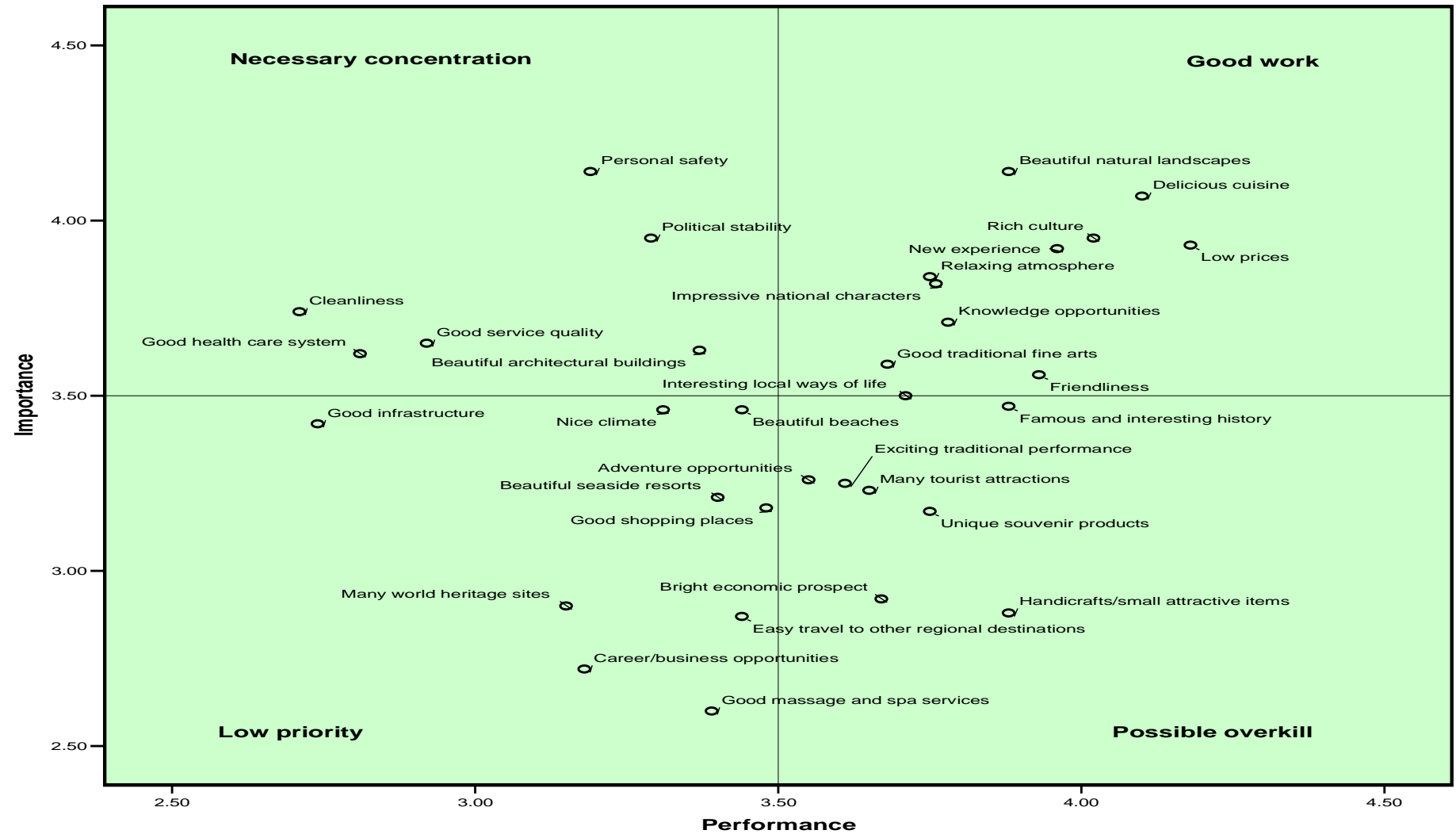
**Good work** (importance means  $\geq 3.50$ ; performance means  $\geq 3.50$ ) consists of the following 11 attributes: low prices, delicious cuisine, rich culture, new experience, friendliness, beautiful landscapes, knowledge opportunities, impressive national characters, relaxing atmosphere, interesting local ways of life, and good traditional fine arts;

**Necessary concentration** (importance means  $\geq 3.50$ , performance means  $< 3.50$ ) contains the following 6 attributes: cleanliness, good health care system, good service quality, personal safety, political stability, and beautiful architectural buildings;

**Low priority** (importance means  $< 3.50$ , performance means  $< 3.50$ ) comprises the following 9 attributes: good massage and spa services, career/business opportunities, easy travel to other regional destinations, many world heritage sites, good shopping places, beautiful seaside resorts, good infrastructure, nice climate, and beautiful beaches; and

**Possible overkill** (importance means  $< 3.50$ , performance means  $\geq 3.50$ ) includes the following 7 attributes: famous and interesting history, handicrafts/small attractive items, unique souvenir products, bright economic prospect, many tourist attractions, exciting traditional performance, and adventure opportunities.

**Figure 5.1. Importance-performance analysis of Vietnam as a destination for Japanese travelers**



5.2.3.1. The attribute importance and attribute importance-performance analysis based on the sub-samples of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not

Table 5.13 shows the attribute importance rated separately by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not. In comparison, if a difference from 0.20 and above is considered significant, Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam attached significantly more importance to new experience and adventure opportunities, while those who had not been to Vietnam put significantly more importance to knowledge opportunities, cleanliness, beautiful architectural buildings, good traditional fine arts, beautiful beaches, many tourist attractions, unique souvenir products, and bright economic prospect.

Among the attributes that indicate significant differences, new experience, knowledge opportunities, and cleanliness are the most important ones for both of the groups (means  $\geq 3.50$ ). Chi-square tests were conducted to examine the significance level of the differences between the perceptions of the two groups about these attributes. If the significant level to reject the null hypothesis  $H_0$  that there is no significant difference between the two groups is set to be under 5% and the number of cells having expected counts less than five (5) is not higher than 20 %, the results confirm that the observed differences from Table 5.13 are statistically significant (see Table 5.14a-5.16b).

With smaller gaps, those who had not been to Vietnam attach more importance to local ways of life, friendliness, good traditional fine arts, famous and interesting history, nice climate, beautiful beaches, and beautiful architectural buildings.

Although these attributes are not important for both of these two groups, they affect the results of the importance-performance based on the sub-samples. If the mean value of 3.50 is set as the point differentiating low and high importance/performance, following which the mean value under 3.50 is considered low and the mean value from 3.50 and above is regarded high, and if the attribute performance of Vietnam rated by the sub-samples as in Table 5.6 and the attribute importance rated by the sub-samples as in Table 5.13 are correspondingly used, the importance-performance analysis grids based on the sub-samples of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not are drawn as in Figure 5.2 and 5.3.

The results of the importance-performance analyses show that the ‘Good work’ groups in both of the cases include delicious cuisine, low prices, new experience, beautiful natural landscapes, rich culture, knowledge opportunities, impressive national characters, and relaxing atmosphere. However, because local ways of life, friendliness, good traditional fine arts, and famous interesting history are important for those who had not been to Vietnam (means  $\geq 3.50$ ), but not important for those who had been to Vietnam (means  $< 3.50$ ), and these attributes of Vietnam are rated high by both of the groups (means  $\geq 3.50$ ), these attributes belong to the ‘Good work’ group in the perception of those who had not been to Vietnam, and under the ‘Possible overkill’ group in the perception of those who had been to Vietnam.

Also, the results reveal that the ‘Necessary concentration’ groups in both of the cases includes political stability, personal safety, good service quality, good health care system, and cleanliness. However, because nice climate, beautiful beaches, and beautiful architectural buildings are important for those who had not been to Vietnam, but not important for those who had been to Vietnam, and these attributes of Vietnam



are rated high by both of the groups, they belong to the 'Necessary concentration' group in the perception of those who had not been to Vietnam, and under the 'Low priority' group in the perception of those who had been to Vietnam.

**Table 5.13. The attribute importance in the perceptions of those who had been to Vietnam and those who had not**

Attributes	Those who had been to Vietnam			Those who had not been to Vietnam		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Beautiful natural landscapes	246	4.08	1.019	275	4.19	.939
Personal safety	246	4.06	.965	274	4.20	1.136
New experience	246	4.02	.934	276	3.82	1.076
Delicious cuisine	246	4.00	1.004	276	4.13	1.103
Rich culture	246	3.97	1.080	276	3.94	1.091
Political stability	245	3.90	.989	275	3.99	1.119
Low prices	246	3.89	.962	275	3.98	1.039
Impressive national characters	244	3.82	.919	275	3.82	1.022
Relaxing atmosphere	244	3.82	.939	273	3.85	.953
Good service quality	241	3.60	1.095	273	3.70	1.117
Knowledge opportunities	242	3.60	1.135	276	3.81	.878
Cleanliness	246	3.57	1.125	274	3.90	1.188
Good health care system	246	3.52	1.005	271	3.71	.947
Friendliness	246	3.48	1.025	276	3.63	1.092
Interesting local ways of life	246	3.46	1.138	276	3.53	1.107
Beautiful architectural buildings	245	3.46	1.182	272	3.79	.916
Famous and interesting history	244	3.41	1.150	271	3.52	1.014
Nice climate	246	3.40	1.044	274	3.51	1.100
Good traditional fine arts	246	3.39	1.077	276	3.77	1.162
Adventure opportunities	246	3.35	1.213	276	3.18	1.199
Good infrastructure	246	3.35	1.077	276	3.48	1.189
Exciting traditional performance	246	3.29	1.023	273	3.22	1.080
Beautiful beaches	246	3.24	1.203	276	3.67	1.050
Beautiful seaside resorts	246	3.19	1.157	276	3.22	1.218
Many tourist attractions	239	3.12	1.122	276	3.32	1.098
Good shopping places	242	3.08	1.051	276	3.27	1.109
Unique souvenir products	246	3.00	1.162	276	3.31	1.180
Easy travel to other regional destinations	246	2.86	1.061	276	2.88	.987
Handicrafts/small attractive items	246	2.82	1.136	263	2.94	1.248
Career/business opportunities	241	2.78	1.210	276	2.67	1.022
Many world heritage sites	246	2.78	1.047	271	3.01	1.038
Bright economic prospect	246	2.76	1.143	274	3.06	.993
Good massage and spa services	246	2.61	1.259	274	2.59	1.139
Valid N (listwise)	215			228		

**Table 5.14a. Chi-Square tests of travel-to-Vietnam experience and the importance of new experiences**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.806(a)	4	.044
Likelihood Ratio	13.256	4	.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.141	1	.023
N of Valid Cases	522		

a 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.24.

**Table 5.14b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and the importance of new experiences**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
New experience	Very unimportant	Count	9	0	9
		% within Times to Vietnam	3.3%	.0%	1.7%
	Unimportant	Count	21	15	36
		% within Times to Vietnam	7.6%	6.1%	6.9%
	Neutral	Count	71	59	130
		% within Times to Vietnam	25.7%	24.0%	24.9%
	Important	Count	84	77	161
		% within Times to Vietnam	30.4%	31.3%	30.8%
	Very important	Count	91	95	186
		% within Times to Vietnam	33.0%	38.6%	35.6%
Total		Count	276	246	522
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5.15a. Chi-Square tests of travel-to-Vietnam experience and the importance of knowledge opportunities**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.542(a)	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	37.472	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.914	1	.015
N of Valid Cases	518		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.94.

**Table 5.15b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and the importance of knowledge opportunities**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
Knowledge opportunities	Very unimportant	Count	2	15	17
		% within Times to Vietnam	.7%	6.2%	3.3%
	Unimportant	Count	9	28	37
		% within Times to Vietnam	3.3%	11.6%	7.1%
	Neutral	Count	98	50	148
		% within Times to Vietnam	35.5%	20.7%	28.6%
	Important	Count	97	96	193
		% within Times to Vietnam	35.1%	39.7%	37.3%
	Very important	Count	70	53	123
		% within Times to Vietnam	25.4%	21.9%	23.7%
Total		Count	276	242	518
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5.16a. Chi-Square tests of travel-to-Vietnam experience and the importance of cleanliness**

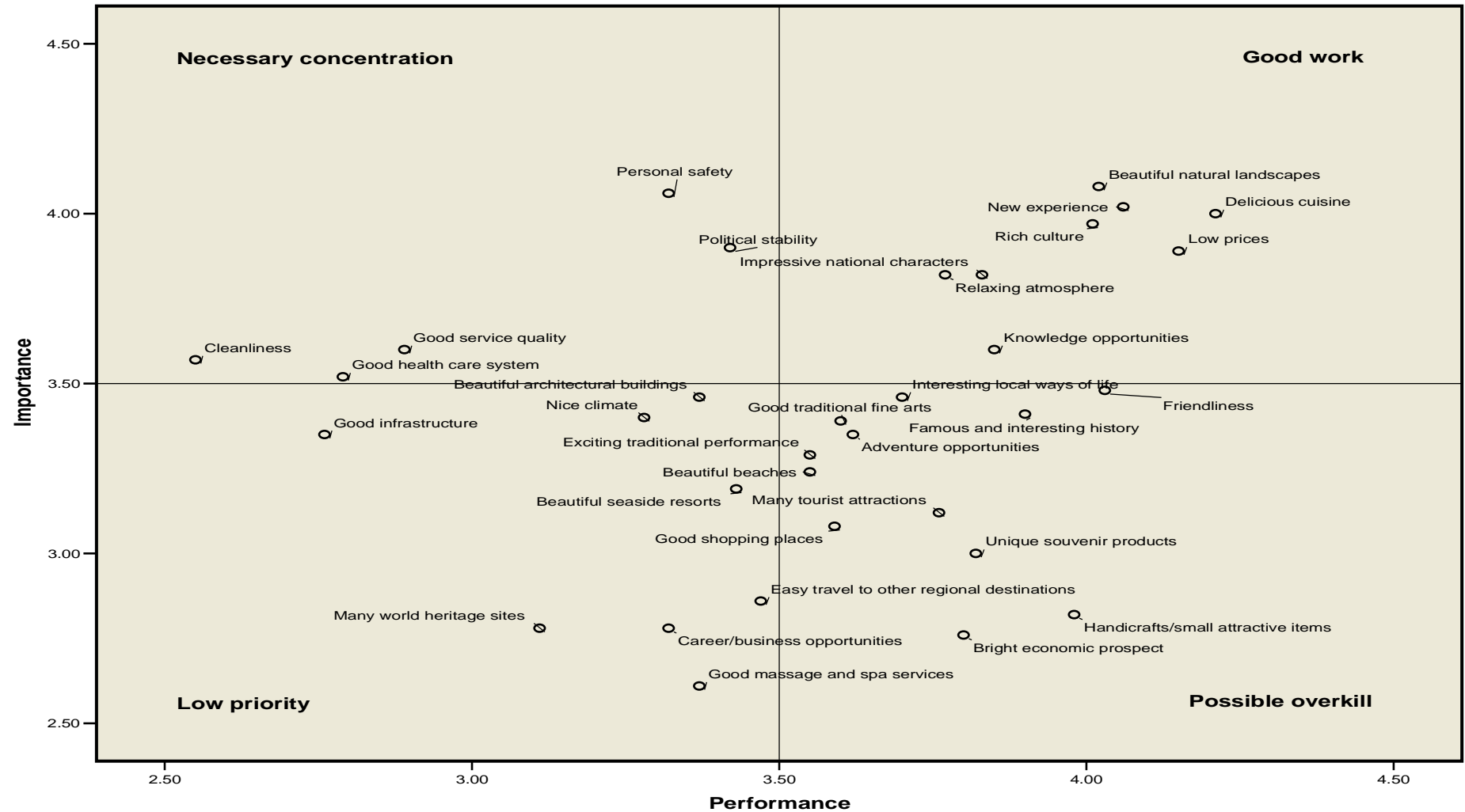
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.161(a)	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.791	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.245	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	520		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.88.

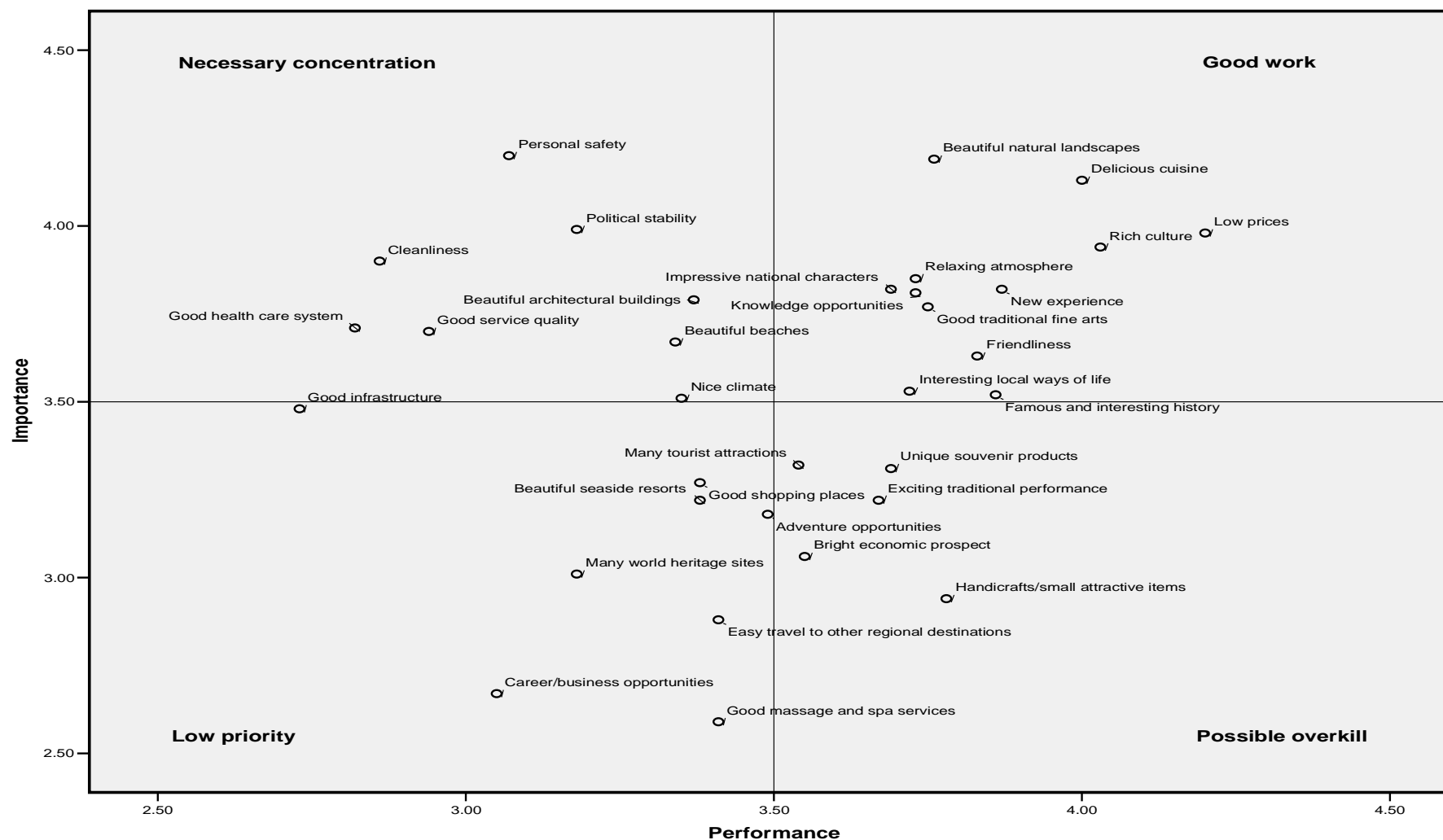
**Table 5.16b. Crosstabulations between travel-to-Vietnam experience and the importance of cleanliness**

			Times to Vietnam		Total
			None	Once and plus	
Cleanliness	Very unimportant	Count	16	7	23
		% within Times to Vietnam	5.8%	2.8%	4.4%
	Unimportant	Count	16	41	57
		% within Times to Vietnam	5.8%	16.7%	11.0%
	Neutral	Count	64	66	130
		% within Times to Vietnam	23.4%	26.8%	25.0%
	Important	Count	62	69	131
		% within Times to Vietnam	22.6%	28.0%	25.2%
	Very important	Count	116	63	179
		% within Times to Vietnam	42.3%	25.6%	34.4%
Total		Count	274	246	520
		% within Times to Vietnam	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Figure 5.2. Importance-performance analysis of Vietnam as a destination for Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam**



**Figure 5.3. Importance-performance analysis of Vietnam as a destination for Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam**



#### 5.2.4. The factors of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers

##### 5.2.4.1. The factors of Vietnam based on the whole sample

Tables 5.17 – 5.20 show the results of the factor analysis to identify the factors of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers based on the attribute performance of Vietnam perceived by the Japanese respondents sampled. According to Table 5.17, the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.893. Statistically, a factor analysis is considered highly appropriate if the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is from 0.50 to 1.00 (Hoang & Chu, 2005). In this case, the value of 0.838 indicates a strong appropriateness of the use of the factor analysis method.

**Table 5.17. KMO and Bartlett's test (the factor analysis based on the whole sample)**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.893
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	9694.227
	Df	528
	Sig.	.000

As indicated in Table 5.18, when the default Eigenvalue is set higher than 1.00, seven (7) factors are identified. Statistically, the factors with the Eigenvalue lower than 1.00 can not summarize the information better than each individual variable, so only the factors with the Eigenvalues higher than 1.00 are considered significant. The Cumulative % of the identified seven (7) factors can explain a significant height of 66.666 % of the total variance.

Table 5.19 shows the seven (7) unrotated factors. In this table, all the values lower than 0.30 are suppressed to make it easier to see the significantly large



loadings of each attribute. However, it is seen from Table 5.19 that there are some items with large loadings on several of the unrotated factors, which make interpretation difficult. For instance, the statement ‘There are many good shopping places in Vietnam’ has a loading of 0.581 on the first factor and a loading of 0.425 on the fifth factor; and the statement ‘You are safe in Vietnam’ has a loading of 0.475 on the first factor, a loading of 0.314 on the second factor, and a loading of 0.521 on the third factor. In this situation, an item may belong to several factors with small differences. A rotated solution is used to simplify interpretation of a factor analysis by making an item have a large loading on one factor and significantly smaller loadings on the other factors.

The results of the rotated solution are indicated in Table 5.20. Accordingly, the loadings of an attribute on the rotated factors have become more clearly different, and the attribute belongs to a factor that it has the largest loading. The components of each of the seven (7) identified factors are as follows:

- Factor 1 consists of: many unique souvenir products, delicious cuisine, many handicrafts/small attractive items, good shopping places, famous and interesting history, rich culture, and good traditional fine arts. This factor could be labeled as ‘**Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture**’.
- Factor 2 includes: many tourist attractions, many beautiful beaches, many world heritage sites, many beautiful seaside resorts, many beautiful architectural buildings, and many beautiful natural landscapes. This factor could be labeled as ‘**Natural and Built Tourist Attractions**’.
- Factor 3 is comprised of: friendly people, political stability, bright economic

prospect, personal safety, and impressive national characters. The factor could be labeled as '**Safety and Hospitality**'.

- Factor 4 contains: interesting local ways of life, many adventure opportunities, new experience, more knowledge opportunities, exciting traditional performance, and relaxing atmosphere. This factor could be labeled as '**Novelty**'.
- Factor 5 consists of: cleanliness, good health care system, and good service quality. This factor could be labeled as '**Cleanliness and Services**'.
- Factor 6 includes: good massage and spa services, nice climate, and low prices. This factor could be labeled as '**Comfort and Low Prices**'.
- Factor 7 is comprised of: easy travel to other regional destinations and career/business opportunities. This factor could be labeled as '**Geographical Location and Business Opportunities**'.

In brief, when the attribute performance of Vietnam rated by all the respondents sampled is used for factor analysis, there are seven (7) factors of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers including those who had been to Vietnam and those who had not: (1) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture; (2) Natural and Built Attractions; (3) Safety and Hospitality; (4) Novelty; (5) Cleanliness and Services; (6) Comfort and Low Prices; and (7) Geographical Location and Business Opportunities.

**Table 5.18. Total variance explained (the factor analysis based on the whole sample)**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.516	34.896	34.896	11.516	34.896	34.896	4.492	13.611	13.611
2	2.510	7.606	42.502	2.510	7.606	42.502	3.895	11.802	25.413
3	2.122	6.432	48.933	2.122	6.432	48.933	3.530	10.697	36.110
4	1.780	5.393	54.326	1.780	5.393	54.326	3.492	10.581	46.691
5	1.482	4.491	58.817	1.482	4.491	58.817	3.242	9.825	56.516
6	1.366	4.140	62.957	1.366	4.140	62.957	1.697	5.144	61.660
7	1.224	3.709	66.666	1.224	3.709	66.666	1.652	5.006	66.666
8	.880	2.667	69.332						
9	.823	2.493	71.825						
10	.775	2.348	74.173						
11	.747	2.264	76.437						
12	.673	2.038	78.475						
13	.623	1.888	80.364						
14	.602	1.824	82.188						
15	.547	1.659	83.847						
16	.521	1.579	85.426						
17	.462	1.401	86.828						
18	.435	1.319	88.147						
19	.420	1.272	89.419						
20	.391	1.186	90.606						
21	.336	1.018	91.624						
22	.316	.958	92.582						
23	.312	.944	93.526						
24	.288	.873	94.399						
25	.275	.832	95.231						
26	.264	.800	96.031						
27	.227	.688	96.719						
28	.227	.687	97.406						
29	.199	.603	98.009						
30	.191	.580	98.589						
31	.176	.532	99.121						
32	.167	.506	99.627						
33	.123	.373	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 5.19. Component matrix (the factor analysis based on the whole sample)**

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vietnam is rich in culture	.786						
Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	.740						
Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	.737						
There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam	.737				.375		
There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam	.701						
Vietnamese national characters are impressive	.694		.315				
Vietnam has good traditional fine arts	.691						
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam	.685						
Vietnam has many tourist attractions	.681		-.401		-.339		
You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	.661	-.312					
Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	.660						
Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes	.659			.357			
There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam	.628		-.402				
You can have many new experiences in Vietnam	.616	-.334		-.330			
Vietnam has many beautiful beaches	.601					-.378	
There are many good shopping places in Vietnam	.581				.425		
Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts	.572		-.309			-.441	
Vietnamese ways of life are interesting	.571			-.520			
Vietnam has a bright economic prospect	.561		.455				
Service quality is good in Vietnam	.553	.461					
There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam	.536		-.432				
It is easy to travel to other regional destinations from Vietnam	.532					-.363	.352
You can have many career/business opportunities in Vietnam	.532		.313			-.409	
Vietnamese people are friendly	.531	-.318	.446				
The climate in Vietnam is pleasant	.478					.394	.314
Prices in Vietnam are low	.429	-.360					.399
It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam	.380	.693					
Vietnam has a good health care system	.440	.614					
Infrastructure is good in Vietnam	.433	.595					
Vietnam is politically stable	.456		.589				
You are safe in Vietnam	.475	.314	.521				
You can have many adventure opportunities in Vietnam	.517			-.629			
Massage and spa services are good in Vietnam				.377	.559		.384

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
7 components extracted.

**Table 5.20. Rotated component matrix (the factor analysis based on the whole sample)**

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam	.744						
Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	.731						
There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam	.724		.310				
There are many good shopping places in Vietnam	.669						
Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	.588						
Vietnam is rich in culture	.577	.342		.388			
Vietnam has good traditional fine arts	.566						
Vietnam has many tourist attractions	.302	.778					
Vietnam has many beautiful beaches		.703					.353
There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam		.699					
Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts		.638					.486
There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam	.301	.623			.377		
Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes	.327	.582	.372				
Vietnamese people are friendly			.721				
Vietnam is politically stable			.709		.346		
Vietnam has a bright economic prospect	.369		.696				
You are safe in Vietnam			.646		.456		
Vietnamese national characters are impressive			.610	.359			
Vietnamese ways of life are interesting				.778			
You can have many adventure opportunities in Vietnam				.750			.307
You can have many new experiences in Vietnam				.701			
You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	.409		.426	.530			
Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	.448	.388		.492			
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam		.334		.454		.305	
It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam					.788		
Vietnam has a good health care system					.737		
Infrastructure is good in Vietnam					.699		
Service quality is good in Vietnam		.393			.601		
Massage and spa services are good in Vietnam						.729	
The climate in Vietnam is pleasant					.413	.556	
Prices in Vietnam are low				.377		.538	
It is easy to travel to other regional destinations from Vietnam							.677
You can have many career/business opportunities in Vietnam			.423	.302			.475

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

5.2.4.2. The factors of Vietnam based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam

Tables 5.21 – 5.23 show the results of the factor analysis of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam. Table 5.21 indicates a strong appropriateness of the use of the factor analysis method when the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.852.

**Table 5.21. KMO and Bartlett's test (the factor analysis based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam)**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.852
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6000.064
	Df	528
	Sig.	.000

Table 5.22 shows that when the default Eigenvalue is set higher than 1.00, seven (7) factors are identified. The Cumulative % of the identified seven (7) factors can explain a significant height of 70.879 % of the total variance. Table 5.23 reveals the rotated components of the seven (7) factors as follows:

- Factor 1 consists of: new experience, many adventure opportunities, interesting local ways of life, easy travel to other regional destinations, more knowledge opportunities, exciting traditional performance, and career/business opportunities. This factor could be labeled as ‘**Novelty**’.
- Factor 2 includes: many beautiful seaside resorts, many world heritage sites, many tourist attractions, many beautiful beaches, many beautiful architectural

buildings, and good traditional fine arts. This factor could be labeled as **‘Natural and Built Tourist Attractions’**.

- Factor 3 is comprised of: delicious cuisine, rich culture, many unique souvenir products, many handicrafts/small attractive items, and famous and interesting history. This factor could be labeled as **‘Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture’**.
- Factor 4 contains: political stability, personal safety, bright economic prospect, friendliness, and impressive national characters. This factor could be labeled as **‘Safety and Hospitality’**.
- Factor 5 consists of: cleanliness, good service quality, good infrastructure, and good shopping places. This factor could be labeled as **‘Cleanliness and Services’**.
- Factor 6 includes: nice climate, relaxing atmosphere, beautiful natural landscapes, and low prices. This factor could be labeled as **‘Nature and Low Prices’**.
- Factor 7 has the only attribute of massage and spa services, and could be labeled as **‘Massage and Spa Services’**.

To summary, there are seven (7) factors of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam: (1) Novelty, (2) Natural and Built Tourist Attractions, (3) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture, (4) Safety and Hospitality, (5) Cleanliness and Services, (6) Nature and Low Prices, and (7) Massage and Spa Services.

In comparing the factors withdrawn from the whole sample and the factors withdrawn from the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam, it is seen that basically the two results produce six (6) similar factors, namely (1) Novelty, (2) Natural and Built Tourist Attractions, (3) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture, (4) Safety and Hospitality, (5) Services, and (6) Comfort and Low Prices. The factors 7 of the two solutions are different: the factor 7 from whole sample is 'Geographical Location and Business Opportunities' and the factor 7 from the sub-sample is 'Massage and Spa Services'. Small differences can also be seen in the components of each factor. For example, while 'good shopping places' belongs to the factor 1 - Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture of the whole sample solution, it is a component of the factor 5 – Services of the sub-sample solution. The differences affect the size of each factor of the two solutions, but the nature of the factors does not significantly change.



**Table 5.22. Total variance explained (the factor analysis based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam)**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.574	38.103	38.103	12.574	38.103	38.103	4.724	14.315	14.315
2	2.623	7.949	46.052	2.623	7.949	46.052	3.850	11.666	25.980
3	2.271	6.882	52.934	2.271	6.882	52.934	3.779	11.451	37.431
4	1.723	5.221	58.155	1.723	5.221	58.155	3.357	10.171	47.602
5	1.540	4.666	62.820	1.540	4.666	62.820	3.009	9.117	56.719
6	1.387	4.203	67.023	1.387	4.203	67.023	2.920	8.849	65.569
7	1.272	3.856	70.879	1.272	3.856	70.879	1.752	5.310	70.879
8	.951	2.883	73.762						
9	.872	2.642	76.404						
10	.798	2.418	78.821						
11	.717	2.172	80.993						
12	.604	1.829	82.822						
13	.594	1.800	84.622						
14	.556	1.684	86.306						
15	.505	1.532	87.838						
16	.455	1.377	89.215						
17	.380	1.152	90.368						
18	.358	1.084	91.452						
19	.353	1.069	92.521						
20	.339	1.026	93.547						
21	.306	.928	94.475						
22	.256	.775	95.250						
23	.235	.712	95.962						
24	.213	.645	96.607						
25	.195	.592	97.199						
26	.175	.530	97.729						
27	.143	.434	98.164						
28	.138	.417	98.581						
29	.119	.362	98.943						
30	.111	.335	99.278						
31	.089	.270	99.548						
32	.084	.254	99.802						
33	.065	.198	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 5.23. Rotated component matrix (the factor analysis based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam)**

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
You can have many new experiences in Vietnam	.790		.321				
You can have many adventure opportunities in Vietnam	.744						
Vietnamese ways of life are interesting	.671					.508	
It is easy to travel to other regional destinations from Vietnam	.642						.426
You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	.628		.357	.374			
Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	.583	.366	.406				
You can have many career/business opportunities in Vietnam	.539			.420			
Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts		.733					.327
There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam		.730			.319		
Vietnam has many tourist attractions		.698	.348				
Vietnam has many beautiful beaches		.687		.457			
There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam		.644					
Vietnam has good traditional fine arts		.559	.404				
Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious			.758				
Vietnam is rich in culture	.426		.690				
There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam			.635		.366	.392	
There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam			.627				.301
Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	.498	.302	.531				
Vietnam is politically stable				.804			
You are safe in Vietnam				.767	.328		
Vietnam has a bright economic prospect			.442	.628			
Vietnamese people are friendly	.310			.611			
Vietnamese national characters are impressive	.419			.481		.453	
Vietnam has a good health care system					.790		
It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam				.347	.723		
Service quality is good in Vietnam					.655	.456	
Infrastructure is good in Vietnam		.341			.570		
There are many good shopping places in Vietnam	.398				.433		.364
The climate in Vietnam is pleasant						.651	
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam	.430					.637	
Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes		.441	.476			.558	
Prices in Vietnam are low						.537	.338
Massage and spa services are good in Vietnam							.834

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

5.2.4.3. The factors of Vietnam based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam

Tables 5.24 – 5.26 show the results of the factor analysis of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam. Table 5.24 indicates a strong appropriateness of the use of the factor analysis method when the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.847.

**Table 5.24. KMO and Bartlett's test (the factor analysis based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam)**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.847
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5490.161
	Df	528
	Sig.	.000

Table 5.25 shows that when the default Eigenvalue is set higher than 1.00, eight (8) factors are identified. The Cumulative % of the identified eight (8) factors can explain a significant height of 71.355 % of the total variance. Table 5.26 reveals the rotated components of the eight (8) factors as follows:

- Factor 1 consists of: unique souvenir products, delicious cuisine, good shopping places, good traditional fine arts, many handicrafts/small attractive items, famous and interesting history, and rich culture. This factor could be labeled as '**Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture**'.
- Factor 2 includes: many tourist attractions, many world heritage sites, many beautiful beaches, many beautiful architectural buildings, many beautiful

natural landscapes, many beautiful beaches, many architectural buildings, many beautiful natural landscapes, many beautiful seaside resorts, relaxing atmosphere, good service quality, and exciting traditional performance. This factor could be labeled as **‘Natural and Built Tourist Attractions’**.

- Factor 3 is comprised of: cleanliness, good infrastructure, good health care system, nice climate, and personal safety. This factor could be labeled as **‘Health-Related Conditions’** (including Cleanliness and Safety).
- Factor 4 contains: friendliness, bright economic prospect, impressive national characters, and political stability. This factor could be labeled as **‘Hospitality, and Economic and Political Environment’**.
- Factor 5 consists of: many adventure opportunities, interesting local ways of life, and new experience. This factor could be labeled as **‘Novelty’**.
- Factor 6 includes: easy to travel to other regional destinations, many career/business opportunities, knowledge opportunities. It is noticeable that ‘knowledge opportunities’ has a negative loading on this factor, which means that this attribute tend to be associated with this factor in the opposite sign. This attribute also has a large loading on the factor 1 - Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture and the factor 5 – Novelty. This factor could be labeled as **‘Geographical Location and Business Opportunities’**.
- Factor 7 has the only attribute of good massage and spa services, so it should be named as **‘Massage and Spa Services’**.
- Factor 8 has the only attribute of low prices, so it should be labeled as **‘Prices’**.

In short, there are eight (8) factors of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam: (1) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture, (2) Natural and Built Tourist Attractions, (3) Health-Related Conditions, (4) Hospitality, and Economic and Political Environment, (5) Novelty, (6) Geographical and Business Opportunities, (7) Massage and Spa Services, and (8) Prices.

In comparing the factors withdrawn from the whole sample and the factors withdrawn from the sub-samples of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not been to Vietnam, it is seen that basically the three results provide four (4) similar factors, namely (1) Novelty, (2) Natural and Built Tourist Attractions, (3) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture, and (4) Cleanliness and Services.

The factor analyses of the whole sample and the sub-sample of those who had been to Vietnam have two more factors in common: Safety and Hospitality; and Comfort and Low Prices. The factor analyses of the whole sample and the sub-sample of those who had not been to Vietnam have two more factors in common: Geographical Location and Business Opportunities; and Massage and Spa Services. There are two (2) factors that are unique for the sub-sample of those who had not been to Vietnam: Hospitality, and Economic and Political Environment; and Prices.

It should be noted that labeling a factor is subjective based on the loadings of the components on that factor. Accordingly, the name of a factor needs to contain the meaning of the components with the largest loadings. For example, the name ‘Novelty’ of the factor 1 of the factor analysis of the sub-sample of those who had been to Vietnam is influenced by the components with the largest loadings, namely ‘new experience’ and ‘many adventure opportunities’, while ‘easy travel to other

regional destinations’ and ‘career/business opportunities’ does not have much influence because of their limited loadings on this factor. However, ‘new experience’ and ‘many adventure opportunities’ are the only components of the factor 7 of the factor analysis of the whole sample. Therefore, they have the full loadings on this factor, and this factor should be labeled as ‘Geographical Location and Business Opportunities’. Similarly, ‘good shopping places’ belongs to the factor 1 - Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture of the factor analyses of the whole sample and the sub-sample of those who had not been to Vietnam, it is a component of the factor 5 – Cleanliness and Services of the factor analysis of the sub-sample of those who had been to Vietnam. The principle of loading-based labeling ensures that the nature of the factors in each case is subjectively described by their labels.

It should also be noted that the size of each factor is based on the percentage of variance explained of that factor. In the case of the factor analysis of the sub-sample of those who had been to Vietnam, the decreasing order of the factor size is as follows: (1) Novelty, (2) Natural and Built Tourist Attractions, (3) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture, (4) Safety and Hospitality, (5) Cleanliness and Services, (6) Nature and Low Prices, and (7) Massage and Spa Services. In the case of the sub-sample of those who had not been to Vietnam, the decreasing order of the factor size is as follows: (1) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture, (2) Natural and Built Tourist Attractions, (3) Health-Related Conditions, (4) Hospitality, and Economic and Political Environment, (5) Novelty, (6) Geographical and Business Opportunities, (7) Massage and Spa Services, and (8) Prices.

**Table 5.25. Total variance explained (the factor analysis based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam)**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10.793	32.706	32.706	10.793	32.706	32.706	4.846	14.685	14.685
2	3.023	9.161	41.867	3.023	9.161	41.867	4.320	13.092	27.777
3	2.404	7.286	49.153	2.404	7.286	49.153	3.615	10.955	38.732
4	1.883	5.705	54.858	1.883	5.705	54.858	3.351	10.153	48.885
5	1.672	5.066	59.923	1.672	5.066	59.923	2.504	7.589	56.474
6	1.527	4.627	64.550	1.527	4.627	64.550	2.033	6.160	62.634
7	1.240	3.757	68.307	1.240	3.757	68.307	1.553	4.706	67.340
8	1.006	3.048	71.355	1.006	3.048	71.355	1.325	4.015	71.355
9	.889	2.695	74.051						
10	.792	2.401	76.451						
11	.726	2.201	78.653						
12	.709	2.148	80.800						
13	.615	1.863	82.664						
14	.581	1.760	84.423						
15	.540	1.637	86.060						
16	.501	1.518	87.578						
17	.449	1.361	88.939						
18	.434	1.316	90.255						
19	.383	1.161	91.416						
20	.326	.989	92.405						
21	.297	.899	93.304						
22	.280	.847	94.151						
23	.264	.800	94.951						
24	.251	.761	95.712						
25	.223	.676	96.388						
26	.213	.646	97.034						
27	.180	.545	97.579						
28	.167	.507	98.086						
29	.148	.450	98.536						
30	.143	.434	98.970						
31	.119	.359	99.330						
32	.115	.348	99.678						
33	.106	.322	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 5.26. Rotated component matrix (the factor analysis based on the sub-sample of Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam)**

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam	.806							
Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	.754							
There are many good shopping places in Vietnam	.750							
Vietnam has good traditional fine arts	.671		.306					
There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam	.662	.339		.336				
Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	.615	.322						
Vietnam is rich in culture	.596	.373						
Vietnam has many tourist attractions		.806						
There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam		.744						
Vietnam has many beautiful beaches		.608				.499		
There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam	.344	.606	.393					
Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes		.597		.389			.311	
Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts		.576				.461		
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam		.515			.390			
Service quality is good in Vietnam		.489	.483				.310	
Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	.431	.481			.336			
It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam			.810					
Infrastructure is good in Vietnam			.805					
Vietnam has a good health care system			.750					
The climate in Vietnam is pleasant			.545				.319	.447
You are safe in Vietnam			.510	.498				
Vietnamese people are friendly				.737				.324
Vietnam has a bright economic prospect				.719				
Vietnamese national characters are impressive	.357			.670				
Vietnam is politically stable			.467	.557				
You can have many adventure opportunities in Vietnam					.788			
Vietnamese ways of life are interesting					.739			
You can have many new experiences in Vietnam		.377			.642			
It is easy to travel to other regional destinations from Vietnam						.693		
You can have many career/business opportunities in Vietnam				.376		.572		
You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	.452			.409	.416	-.454		
Massage and spa services are good in Vietnam							.804	
Prices in Vietnam are low								.773

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
Rotation converged in 12 iterations.



#### 5.2.5. *The holistic images*

The responses of Japanese travelers are divided into two groups: the ones by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and the ones by those who had not been to Vietnam. The results of the content analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions by these two groups are summarized as in Table 5.27.

Among the responses by Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam, only a few images were mentioned by more than 10 % respondents. These images include delicious cuisine (35 %) and traditional long dress (“Ao dai”) (15 %) as tangible images, low prices (11 %) as an intangible image, and Ho Chi Minh City (22 %) and Hanoi (17 %) as unique tourist attractions.

Regarding the images held by respondents who had been to Vietnam, the most prominent tangible image is delicious cuisine which was mentioned by 25 % respondents. The most typical food dishes are “Pho” (Vietnamese noodle), “Nem cuon” (Vietnamese fresh spring rolls), and “Cha gio” (Vietnamese fried spring rolls). 14 % respondents mentioned seas of motorbikes in the streets in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi as the strong image in their mind. This image was considered by some respondents spectacular, but for most respondents it is a messy situation and dangerous to them. For 14 % respondents, the iconic “Ao dai” (Traditional long dress) is a typical image.

However, there are negative tangible images. 11 % respondents held that Vietnam suggests poor infrastructure, which is shown in the facilities of the airports in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, the inconvenient domestic transport system, and the

poor drainage system causing a lot of problems in raining season. Hot weather in Ho Chi Minh City is also a negative image held by 11 % respondents. Moreover, 8 % respondents expressed their disappointment towards the actions of pocket-lifting, street begging, and robbing, etc. in the public, which made them feel unsafe and uncomfortable during their trip.

Referring to the intangible images, 22 % respondents stated that Vietnamese people are friendly and they felt relaxed in Vietnam. They held that there are many cultural similarities between Vietnam and Japan, and some felt at home in Vietnam. Wars and low prices are strong images held by 17 % and 15 % respondents respectively. For many respondents, wars and a communist party-led regime are unfriendly images of Vietnam as a tourism destination. For young travelers, especially students, Vietnam is very attractive for low prices because they can enjoy traveling and shopping on a limited budget. Moreover, about 15 % respondents mentioned an image of a developing Vietnam with dynamic and energetic people.

However, there are also very negative intangible images of Vietnam in the mind of Japanese respondents. For 19 % respondents, Vietnam suggests noisy, crowded, and messy streets, and polluted and dirty environment. In several times when the researcher escorted Japanese travelers in Hanoi, most of them felt afraid of the streets; some of young male travelers considered traveling in the streets of Hanoi an interesting adventure; and almost all agreed that it is dangerous to participate in the transport system of Hanoi without help of a local person. Even, a Japanese student felt shocked when he first arrived in Hanoi, and it took one day for him to get familiar with the situation.

While Vietnamese cuisine is said to be delicious, many do not dare to eat in normal restaurants because of the uncleanness. Therefore, they had to come to luxurious restaurants and pay higher prices. Furthermore, 11 % Japanese respondents expressed their bad feelings about undisciplined habits of Vietnamese people who are very often seen throwing waste freely, not queuing in the line, and not following public transport regulations. When the researcher went with a group of Japanese travelers in Ha Long Bay, some Japanese travelers felt uncomfortable when seeing many local people throw waste directly into the sea. When a group of European travelers enjoyed swimming, the researcher asked one of the Japanese travelers sitting on the boat watching the sea why he did not participate. He said: “I am afraid that the water is not clean”.

As for the unique images, Ha Long Bay and Hue Ancient Capital were chosen as the unique attractions of Vietnam by 38 % Japanese respondents. The next most distinctive attractions include Hanoi (26 %), Me Kong Delta (24 %), Nha Trang (24 %), and Cu Chi Tunnels (22 %). The other unique attractions most mentioned are Hoi An Ancient Town (17 %), Ho Chi Minh City (15 %), Da Nang (15 %), War Museum in Ho Chi Minh City (14 %), and Sa Pa (14 %).

**Table 5.27. The most frequent responses to open-ended image questions for Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers from the Japanese side**

Types of images	Specific images	Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam	Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam
Images or characteristics evoked when thinking of Vietnam as a tourism destination	1. Delicious cuisine	25%	35%
	2. Motobikes	15%	3%
	3. Traditional long dress ("Ao dai")	14%	15%
	4. Poor infrastructure	11%	8%
	5. Hot weather	11%	4%
	6. Pocket-lifting, robbery, street beggars, etc	8%	7%
	7. Beautiful beaches	8%	5%
Descriptions of the atmosphere or mood expected while visiting Vietnam	1. Friendly	22%	9%
	2. Wars	17%	8%
	3. Low prices	15%	11%
	4. Noisy, polluted, dirty	19%	6%
	5. Developing	13%	3%
	6. Bad habits of Vietnamese people	11%	1%
Distinctive or unique tourist attractions in Vietnam	1. Hue Former Capital	38%	5%
	2. Ha Long Bay	38%	1%
	3. Hanoi	26%	17%
	4. MeKong Delta	24%	6%
	5. Nha Trang	24%	1%
	6. Cu Chi Tunnels	22%	1%
	7. Hoi An Ancient Town	17%	2%
	8. Ho Chi Minh City	15%	22%
	9. Da Nang	15%	2%
	10. War Museum	14%	4%
	11. Sa Pa	14%	1%

#### 5.2.6. The effects of different information sources

Table 5.28 shows the effects of the information sources on the formation of the images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind based on the whole sample. Accordingly, relatives and friends (words of mouth), and travel guidebooks have the strongest influence on the formation of Vietnamese images (means  $\geq 4.00$ ). Television, pamphlets/brochures, and internet have significant influence ( $4.00 > \text{means} \geq 3.50$ ). Such popular information sources as books, magazines, travel agents, newspapers, and education do not have much influence ( $3.50 > \text{mean} \geq 3.00$ ). Tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam is also not very significant in influencing the images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind (mean = 3.26). World travel fairs have little influence (mean = 2.92).

**Table 5.28. The effects of the information sources based on the whole sample**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relatives and friends	521	4.11	.998
Travel guidebooks	519	4.04	.974
Television	514	3.84	1.038
Pamphlets/brochures	520	3.76	1.041
Internet	518	3.72	1.098
Books	519	3.42	1.055
Magazines	507	3.40	1.070
Travel agents	521	3.34	1.194
Tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam	508	3.26	1.124
Newspapers	513	3.12	1.155
Education	519	3.04	1.134
World travel fairs	496	2.92	1.169
Valid N (listwise)	479		

In comparing the effects of the information sources rated by those who had been to Vietnam and those who had not, it is noticeable that all the selected information sources have stronger influence on Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam in forming the images of Vietnam in their mind (see Table 5.29). Relatives and friends, travel guidebooks, television, pamphlets/brochures, and internet are still the most influential sources in both of the cases. For those who had been to Vietnam, books and magazines have modest influences ( $3.50 > \text{means} \geq 3.00$ ), and travel agents, tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam, newspapers, world travel fairs, and education have little influences ( $\text{means} < 3.00$ ). For those who had not been to Vietnam, books, magazines, travel agents, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam have significant influences ( $\text{means} \geq 3.50$ ), and newspapers, world travel fairs, and education have modest influences.

**Table 5.29. The effects of the information sources rated by those who had been to Vietnam and those who had not**

Information sources	The effect rated by those who had been to Vietnam			The effect rated by those who had not been to Vietnam		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relatives and friends	247	4.01	.981	274	4.20	1.005
Travel guidebooks	247	3.96	.985	272	4.12	.959
Television	247	3.69	1.041	267	3.98	1.018
Pamphlets/brochures	247	3.57	1.102	273	3.94	.951
Internet	247	3.54	1.081	271	3.88	1.090
Books	247	3.31	1.083	272	3.53	1.020
Magazines	247	3.19	1.078	260	3.60	1.026
Travel agents	247	2.99	1.160	274	3.66	1.134
Tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam	244	2.99	1.060	264	3.52	1.123
Newspapers	247	2.94	1.059	266	3.29	1.214
World travel fairs	237	2.81	1.272	259	3.01	1.060
Education	247	2.81	1.072	272	3.26	1.147
Valid N (listwise)	235			244		

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on one of the two major research issues of this dissertation: identifying the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers. The next chapter is to examine the other research issue: the tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam and the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers.

## **Chapter VI – The National Tourism Destination Management, and Promotion and Marketing of Vietnam**

This chapter examines the second major research issue of this dissertation: the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing (TDPM) of Vietnam. Firstly, this chapter reviews the tourism management of Vietnam, particularly regarding the history and organizational and legal framework, and the major problems of the national tourism destination management of Vietnam. Then this chapter analyses the TDPM of Vietnam, focusing on the legal and organizational framework, and the performance and problems.

### **6.1. The National Tourism Destination Management of Vietnam**

#### *6.1.1. The history of the national tourism management organization and the development of tourism enterprises of Vietnam*

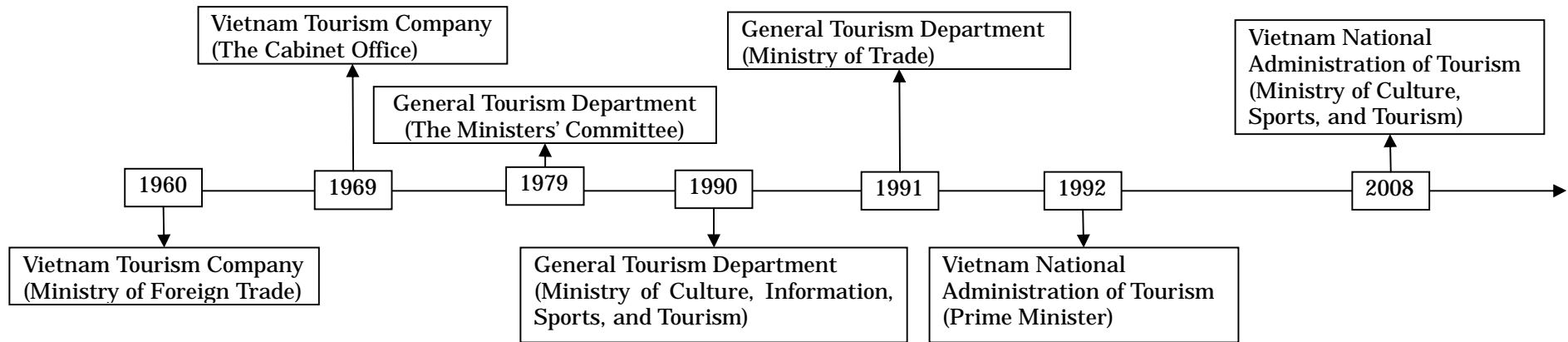
To begin with, the history of the tourism management of Vietnam is corresponding to the history of the national tourism organization of Vietnam as illustrated in Figure 6.1. It was marked by the establishment of the Vietnam Tourism Company, first under the Ministry of Foreign Trade in 1960, then moved to be part of the Cabinet Office in 1969. In 1979, the General Tourism Department as an administrating organization of tourism activities throughout the country was established, directly under the Ministers' Committee (corresponding to the Cabinet at present). During 1960-1986, Vietnam's tourism still mainly served state officials, foreign experts, and guests from socialist countries (VNAT, 2005, 2006).

After Vietnam started its renovation process known as '*Doi Moi*' to gradually



open its national economy, following the principles of a market economy, Vietnam's tourism began to take off with some speed, and tourism activities drew more attention from the central authorities. In 1990, the General Tourism Department was transferred to be part of the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports, and Tourism, and in 1991 was moved to be part of the Ministry of Trade. However, in 1992, it was again separated to operate in the name of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), directly under the Prime Minister. The local administrations of tourism were also established countrywide. However, in 2008, VNAT was again moved to the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, and all the local administrations of tourism become part of the local administrations of culture, sport, and tourism.

**Figure 6.1. The history of the national tourism organization of Vietnam**



Nowadays, VNAT administers tourism activities of not only state-owned travel companies as before 1986, but also a large number of travel companies of other types of ownership. Regarding the travel sector, Table 6.1 shows that by the end of 2007 there had been over ten thousands of travel companies doing domestic travel business and 605 travel companies licensed to do foreign travel business including 14% state-owned companies, 26% joint-stock companies, 2% joint-venture companies, 57% limited liability companies, and nearly 1% private companies.

**Table 6.1. The statistics of foreign travel companies by the end of 2007**

<b>Type of ownership</b>	<b>Number (Count)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
State-owned travel companies	87	14%
Joint-stock travel companies	157	26%
Joint-venture travel companies	12	2%
Limited liability travel companies	345	57%
Private companies	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: The Travel Department of VNAT (2008)

Referring to the hotel sector, by the end of 2007 Vietnam had had 9,000 accommodation establishments with 180,051 qualified rooms according to the standards set by VNAT. Table 6.2 indicates the number of 1-5 star hotels certified by VNAT (3-5 stars) and provincial tourism administrations (1-2 stars). It should be noted that beside hotels, there are also a large number of accommodation establishments not named as ‘hotels’ because of their limited number of rooms or the lack of some other standard requirements, but these establishments are also licensed to service tourists. The Hotel Department of VNAT also informed that the 2007 average occupancy of the hotel capacity of the entire hotel sector was as high as

51 %; especially the average occupancy of the accommodation establishments in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City was over 80 % (The Hotel Department of VNAT, 2008). Based on the types of ownership, the 2006 statistics provided by the Hotel Department of VNAT revealed the proportions of decreasing 10.39 % state-owned accommodation, 35.07 % private accommodation establishments, 14.14 % limited liability accommodation establishments, 5.01 % joint-stock establishments, 0.88 % joint-venture (with foreign partners) establishments, 0.16 % foreign establishments, and 0.94 % others.

**Table 6.2. The statistics of certified hotels and qualified rooms by the end of 2007**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Number of Certified Hotels</b>	<b>Number of Qualified Rooms</b>
Five Stars	25	7,167
Four Stars	76	9,472
Three Stars	155	11,260
Two Stars	590	24,041
One Star	632	16,976
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,478</b>	<b>68,916</b>

Source: The Hotel Department of VNAT (2008)

#### *6.1.2. The organizational and legal framework of national tourism destination management of Vietnam*

Regarding the organizational and legal framework, according to the Tourism Law of Vietnam, the government administers all the tourism activities. The central tourism organization (now the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism) is authorized by the government to be in charge of tourism administration, and to chair and coordinate with other state organizations in tourism administration. Other ministries are responsible for cooperating with the central tourism organization in

tourism administration within their authority and following the guidance of the government.

To facilitate the coordination among tourism-related ministries, the government establishes a state steering board of tourism. The State Board of Tourism established in 2008 includes a Deputy Prime Minister as the Chairman of the Board, Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism as the Vice Chairman of the Board. The other members are Deputy Ministers of Police, Trade and Industry, Education and Training, Transport, Planning and Investment, Foreign Affairs, National Defense, Finance, Natural Resources and Environment, and Cabinet Office. The Chairman of VNAT as the organization authorized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in tourism administration is also included in the Board as the Standing Member and Head of the Board Office (The Government of Vietnam, 2008a). The structural organization of the State Board of Tourism is illustrated in Figure 6.2.

According to the Tourism Law, the provincial people's committees administer all the tourism activities in their localities according to the power decentralized by the government. The bodies of the provincial people's committees authorized to be in charge of tourism administration are the departments of tourism, sports, and tourism.

Beside the administrating system of tourism, the Communist Party of Vietnam has an especially important role in deciding strategic directions for tourism development. The CPV Charter states that "CPV leads the State and social-political organizations by political programs, strategies, policies, and directions; and through ideology, personnel and organization, and inspection" (Clause 41, Provision 1). Since the early 1990s, CPV has been consistent that tourism development is an important

strategic orientation in the socio-economic development of Vietnam, and tourism development should be prioritized as a spear-head industry in the national economy (CPV, 1994, 2001). Accordingly, the National Assembly and the Government have taken moves to support this orientation. For instance, in 1998, the Political Bureau, the highest unit of the CPV Central Committee, directed the National Assembly to issue the Tourism Ordinance, and directed the Government to build the Strategy for Tourism Development 2001-2010 (CPV, 1998); as a result, the Tourism Ordinance was issued by the National Assembly in 1999 (The National Assembly of Vietnam, 1999), and the Strategy for Tourism Development 2001-2010 was approved in 2002 (The Government of Vietnam, 2002). The CPV can direct the National Assembly and the Government, because almost every member of the National Assembly and the Government is also its member. The 1992 Constitution of Vietnam states that the CPV is “the political force that leads the State and society” (The National Assembly of Vietnam, 2001).

The relationships among the public organizations involved tourism management of Vietnam are described in Figure 6.3. Accordingly, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the National Assembly decide strategic directions and policies for tourism development, the Government decides more specific strategies, master plans, investment policies, etc. The Government’s Steering Board of Tourism coordinates the related ministries. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, particularly VNAT, is responsible for chairing, coordinating, and implementing all the decisions in the name of the Government. The Local Administrations of Culture, Sports, and Tourism are in charge of tourism activities in their area following the directions of the Local Governments and the guidance of

VNAT. The Local Governments have to follow the directions of the Local Committees of the CPV and the Local People's Councils.

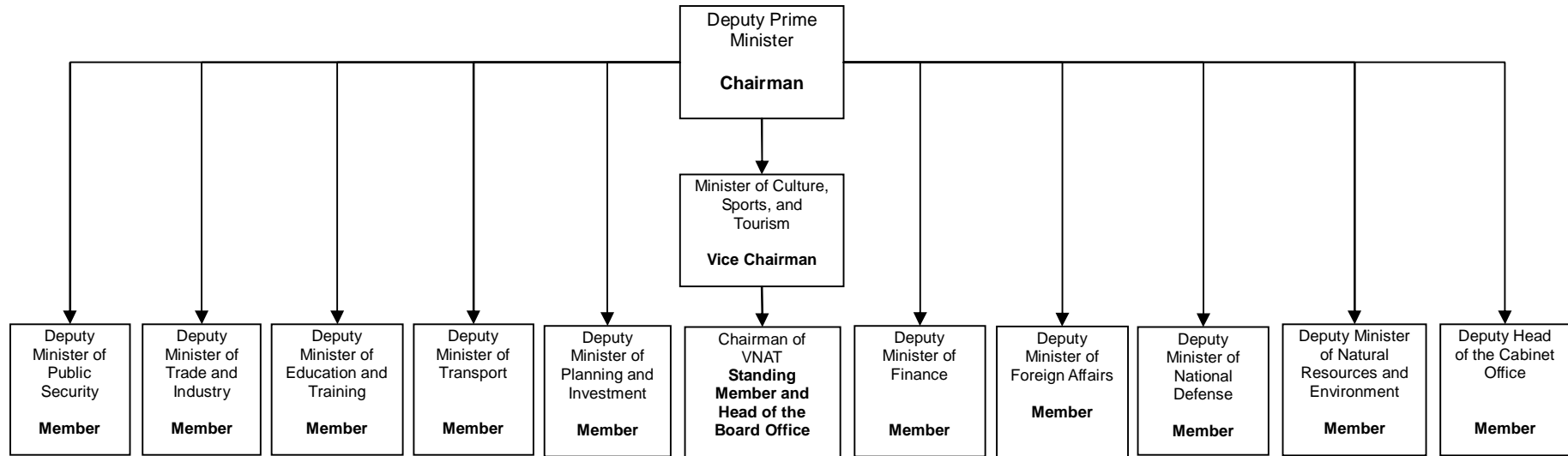
At the central level, VNAT is the highest public organization directly administers tourism activities. The structure of VNAT is shown in Figure 6.4. Accordingly, the Travel Department, the Tourism Market Department, and the Hotel Department are the organs implementing the major administrating tasks. The Travel Department assists the Chairman of VNAT in administering the activities related to travel organization, tourist guides, tourism transportation, and management of tourism areas, tourism circuits, and tourism attractions (VNAT, 2008c). It should be noted that the concept of travel is not simply going from one place to another, but is defined by the Tourism Law of Vietnam as concluding “building, selling, and implementing a part or the whole tourism program bought by tourists” (Clause 4, Provision 14). The Tourism Market Department assists the Chairman of VNAT in researching tourism markets, forecasting the trends of tourism products, and implementing tourism promotion (VNAT, 2008d). The Hotel Department assists the Chairman of VNAT in administering accommodation services (VNAT, 2008b).

The Vietnam Tourism Association (VITA) established in 2002 as a non-governmental and voluntary organization also supports the operations of VNAT. In fact, the establishment of VITA was initiated by VNAT with the approval of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the highest leaders of VITA are usually the retired leaders of VNAT. As stated in its Charter of VITA, the purpose of this organization is linking its members for cooperating with and supporting for each other in the issues regarding tourism, including stabilizing the tourism market, improving tourism quality, increasing the competitiveness, and protecting the rights of its members

(Clause 2). However, VITA can not gather and strengthen the cooperation of the tourism industry, its activities are limited to organizing skill contests, seminars, etc. and annually selecting top ten travel and hotel companies.

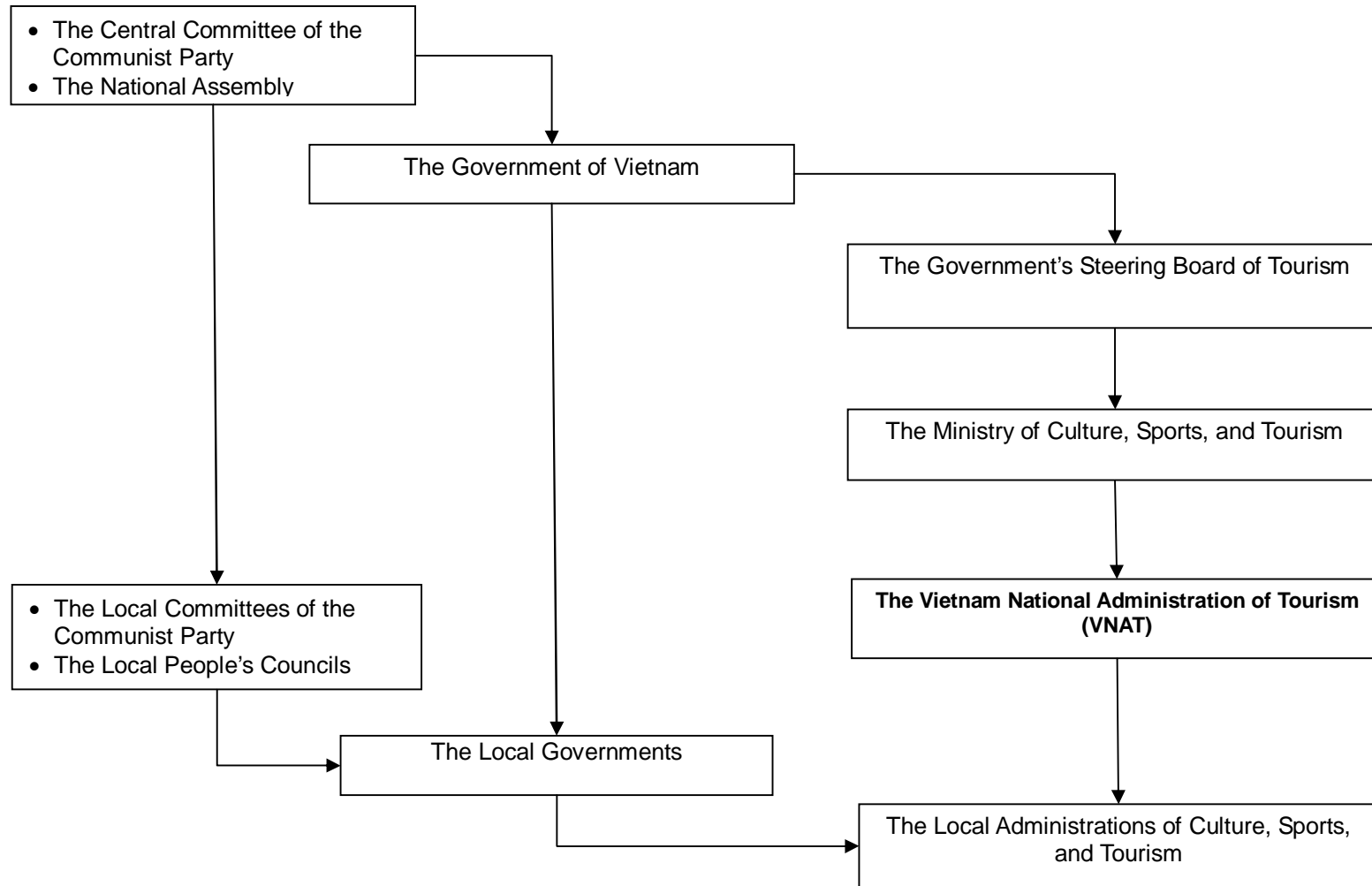


**Figure 6.2. The structural organization of the State Steering Board of Tourism of Vietnam**

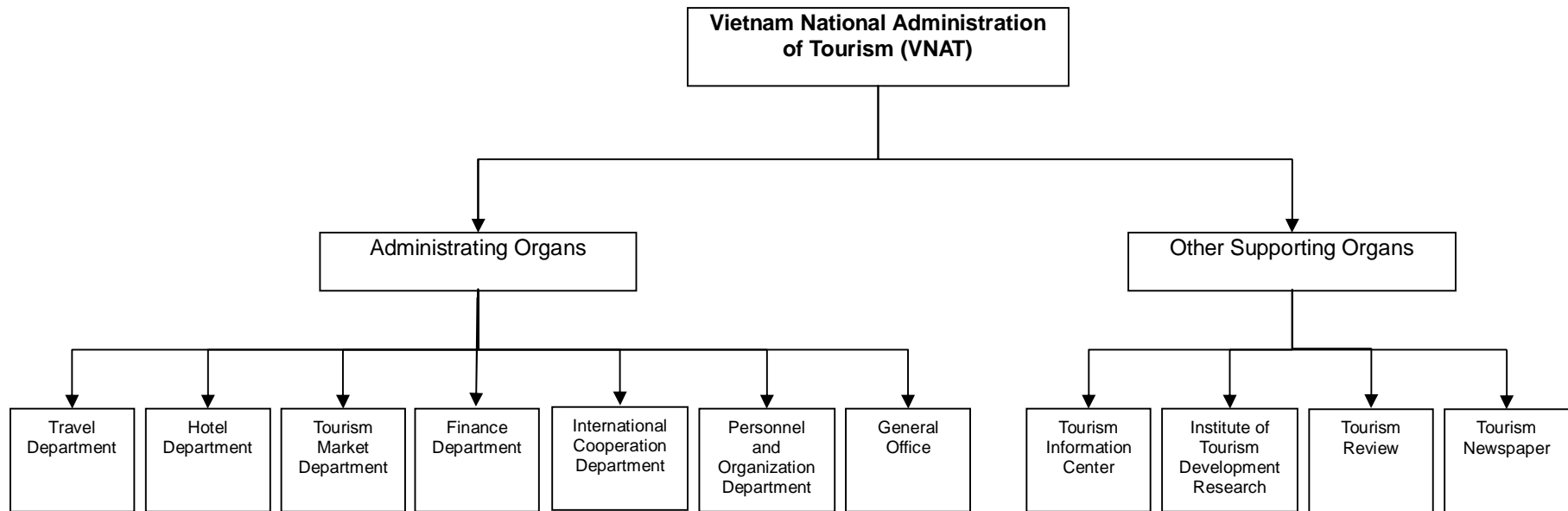


Source: The Government of Vietnam (The Government of Vietnam, 2008a)

**Figure 6.3. The system of tourism management of Vietnam**



**Figure 6.4. The organizational structure of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism**



Source: The Government of Vietnam (The Government of Vietnam, 2008b)

### *6.1.3. The major problems of national tourism destination management of Vietnam*

So far, there have been a rather adequate legal framework for tourism development, from the Tourism Law to the regulations on specific areas; and the central and local administrations have basically worked well with each other. However, there are two major issues most affecting the work of tourism administration: (1) the cooperation among the tourism-related ministries of the State Steering Board of Tourism; and (2) the operation of VNAT.

Regarding the cooperation among the tourism-related ministries, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism represented by VNAT and the Ministries of National Defense, Trade and Industry, Education and Training, Transport, Natural Resources and Environment, and Planning and Investment have common goals of ensured safety and security, high consumption of products, skilled work force, good means of transport, clean environment, increasing investments, etc. However, there are conflicting needs and wants from the members of the Board, particularly between VNAT and the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the relation with the Ministry of Finance, VNAT and local tourism administrations have always been in serious need of money for their promotion activities. For instance, the 2008 National Tourism Year titled “Me Kong 2008” was planned to receive Vietnamese Dong 20 billion (about USD 1.17 million)<sup>4</sup>, half of which was from the Ministry of Finance. However, the amount from the Ministry of Finance was finally cut off, and the local administrations had to manage by

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<sup>4</sup> In this dissertation, USD 1 is equal to 17,000 Vietnamese Dong

themselves (Minh Truong, 2007).

In the relation with the Ministry of Public Security, the efforts to exempt visas for foreign visitors of some nationalities have been several times hindered by the Ministry of Public Security, particularly the Immigration Department. In 2001, VNAT proposed to the government to waive visa requirements for Japanese and French tourists. However, VNAT's proposal encountered stiff opposition from the Ministry of Public Security because the government had not signed any agreements with Japan and France on visa exemption, the Immigration Department could not unilaterally grant visa-free status to Japanese and French tourists (Kyodo News, 2001). As a result, it was not until July 1st, 2004, when Vietnam officially and unilaterally exempted the short-term visa to Vietnam for all Japanese passport holders (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, 2007). Before 2009, Vietnam did not grant entry-visas at the border gates and only granted single visa (used one time only). This fact hindered the inflow of foreign tourists who are always short of time and not willing to follow complicating procedures, such as MICE travelers and weekend tourists. Consequently, these segments are likely to travel to Phuket, Bali, Macao, Cambodia, and Singapore that offer simpler visa procedures. Therefore, VNAT has made effort to propose waiver and simplification of entry-visa procedures. However, VNAT can not decide because this work is under the authority of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (The Center of Information Technology of VNAT, 2008).

Nowadays, the Ministry of Public Security has facilitated the granting of visas for foreign tourists. At time of writing, citizens from fifteen (15) countries (including 8 ASEAN countries, Japan, South Korea, and 5 European countries) have been

exempted from visas to enter Vietnam. Visas may be issued at the border gates to those who have written invitations by a Vietnamese competent agency or to tourists in the tours organized by Vietnamese international travel companies (The Center of Information Technology of VNAT, 2009b).

The conflicting needs and wants between VNAT and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are shown in the regulations of Vietnam's representative offices in foreign countries that directly affect the establishment of Vietnam's tourism representative offices in the target markets. These conflicts and the operation of VNAT are analyzed in the next section because they are closely related to the tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam.

## **6.2. The National Tourism Destination Promotion and Marketing of Vietnam**

### *6.2.1. The legal and organizational framework for tourism destination promotion*

The Tourism Law of Vietnam defines tourism promotion as “an operation covering tourism propaganda, tourism popularization, and tourism campaigns to look for, and enhance opportunities to develop tourism” (Clause 4, Provision 17). The concept of tourism marketing is not mentioned in the law and other legal documents as an operation of the national tourism organization.

The Clause 79 of the Tourism Law specifies tourism promotion as concluding the following tasks:

- Popularizing and introducing Vietnam's tourism domestically and internationally;
- Enhancing the social awareness of the issues regarding tourism

development;

- Mobilizing resources to develop tourism cities, tourism areas, and tourism attractions in terms of quantity and quality; and
- Researching tourism markets, guiding the development of tourism products, and propagandizing tourism products.

Noticeably, the above list of tasks does not cover selling tourism products as the final outcome of tourism destination marketing. This task is left for travel companies to do it alone.

Before 2004, the tourism market promotion task was under the responsibility of the Tourism Department (now the Travel Department). During 2004-2008, the newly established Tourism Promotion Department was in charge of this task. In 2008, the Tourism Promotion Department was changed into the Tourism Market Department as an organ assisting the Chairman of VNAT in the following areas:

- Formulating and implementing directions, policies, strategies, programs, and legal documents related to tourism promotion;
- Studying, classifying, and forecasting domestic and international tourism markets; initiating mechanism and policies to develop tourism products to satisfy the needs and wants of tourists; and propagandizing and popularizing tourism products and potentials of Vietnam's tourism;
- Chairing and coordinating with local authorities and related organizations in participating in international tourism conferences, summits, fairs and exhibitions, and other tourism promotion events in Vietnam and other

countries;

- Working with domestic and foreign media in tourism promotion;
- Organizing familiarization (FAM) trips for foreign travel companies and media agencies to introduce Vietnam's tourism; organizing field trips for domestic travel companies and related organizations to study the experiences of developing tourism market and products in foreign countries;
- Chairing and coordinating with related partners to make promotion documents and other products to support tourism promotion; and coordinating the cooperation with other national and international tourism organizations in tourism promotion. (VNAT, 2008d)

In fact, the main activities of the Tourism Market Department are limited to organizing or coordinating the participation of Vietnamese travel companies in such promotion events as travel fairs and exhibitions. A part of the tourism promotion function is carried out by the International Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Vietnam, 2008). The International Cooperation Agency is now responsible for promoting the images of Vietnam in international media such as CNN, BBC, Star World, ESPN, BS Japan Television, etc. (The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, 2009). The function of tourism promotion is also shared by the Travel Department. The Tourism Market Department had a modest role in the 2009 *Impressive Vietnam* promotion campaign whose core content was to offer a 30-50% discount and simplified procedures for tourists taking tours to Vietnam. This campaign was led by the Travel Department. The Tourism Market Department plays



a limited role in tourism product development, especially in the area of building, selling, and organizing tourism programs which is under the sphere of the Travel Department. The Vietnam Airlines also plays an active role in promoting Vietnam's tourism through such activities as participating in world travel fairs (about 30 world travel fairs per year), supporting and organizing Vietnamese culture events, FAM trips, roadshows of other ministries including VNAT (The Ministry of Transport of Vietnam, 2008).

It does not matter if the administrative organs of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism do work well with each other, because they are under an umbrella. However, this is not true in practice. Ms. Nguyen Thanh Huong, Vice Director of the Tourism Market Department, asserted that a major difficulty hindering the operation of tourism destination promotion is the unreasonable assignment of the tasks related to national tourism promotion, particularly between VNAT and the International Cooperation Agency as mentioned above. Mr. Pham Trung Luong, Vice Director of the Institute of Tourism Development Research, specified: "Tourism promotion is different from culture promotion. It is unreasonable when currently tourism promotion is only part of culture promotion". However, Mr. Nguyen Van Tinh, Director of the International Cooperation Agency held that tourism promotion should firstly prioritize broadcasting the general national images to make the world understand more about Vietnam, and culture and tourism are part of these images.

Before 2006, the national tourism destination promotion of Vietnam did not accept the participation of foreign individuals and entities as a contractor. The former Chairwoman of VNAT, Ms. Vo Thi Thang, referred to a missed chance to cooperate with the famous Chef Martin Yan of the *Yan Can Cook*, Inc. to promote Vietnam in

prestigious TV channels as the consequence of inflexible mechanism that did not allow the use of state budgets to pay foreign partners in tourism promotion cooperation. However, the Tourism Law in effect from 2006 opens ways for the use of foreign experts and media to promote Vietnam' tourism (Clause 80, Provision 3). Since July 2006, VNAT has had the right to hire foreign partners for tourism destination promotion programs worth not more than USD 30,000. For programs worth more than USD 30,000, VNAT can submit to the Prime Minister for consideration once the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Ministry of Finance have examined the proposal (VietnamNet, 2006a). Before 2006, several travel companies such as Saigon Tourist, Hanoi Tourist, and Ben Thanh Tourist hired foreign partners to market their companies' tours. In a special case, Da Nang City worked with the Incentive Dynamics Co. Ltd. (Thailand) to promote Da Nang as a destination of big events such as conferences, sports, exhibitions, trade, and investments (Tuoitre, 2006). Before that, Da Nang City established its Representative Office in Tokyo in 2004, one of the major tasks of the office is to promote tourism without the support of VNAT (Da Nang City, n.d.).

#### *6.2.2. The national tourism destination promotion: performance and problems*

Regarding how the tourism destination promotion activities of Vietnam have been carried out, the Tourism Law states that "the central national tourism organization [now the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism] shall chair and coordinate with related ministries and organizations to formulate national promotion strategies, programs, and schedules; chair and coordinate with the provincial people's committees [local governments] to organize promotion events domestically and

internationally with the participation of tourism companies; and coordinate interregional and inter-provincial promotion activities” (Clause 81, Provision 1).

Since 2000, the national tourism destination promotion of VNAT has been based on the National Action Plan of Tourism implemented through two periods of time – from 2000 to 2005, and from 2006 to now (until 2010). During 2000 – 2005, VNAT took part in 49 annual world travel fairs, 28 road shows in the target markets, and participated in 11 promotion activities lead by other ministries (PATA Vietnam Chapter, 2006). Most of these events were world travel fairs that VNAT just registered to join. Except for travel road shows normally taken place within about 2 days, VNAT had few large-scale independent events to attract foreign visitors in the target markets. Table 6.3 shows the typical promotion activities of Vietnam annually carried out by VNAT.

**Table 6.3. The tourism destination promotion schedule of VNAT in 2009**

Type	Promotion Activity		Time (2009)	Place
World Travel Fair	1	FITUR	January 27-31	Madrid
	2	ITB	March 11-15	Berlin
	3	Matta	March 13-15	Kualalumpur
	4	MITT & Intourmarket	March 18-24	Moscow
	5	Thailand Travel Mart Plus	June 03-07	Bangkok
	6	KOTFA	June 04-07	Seuol
	7	Top Resa	September 22-25	Paris
	8	JATA	September 18-20	Tokyo
	9	ITB Asia	October 21-23	Singapore
	10	WTM	November 09-12	London
	11	CITM	November 19-22	Kunming (China)
Road Show	16	Road show in Australia	February 14-16	Melbourne
	17	Travel by Land Vietnam-Laos-Thailand	April 20	Khon Khen (Thailand)
	18	Vietnam's Seas	April 28-29	Paris
	19	Road show in Japan	September 22-24	Nagoya , Osaka
	20	Road show in Taiwan	April	Taiwan

Source: The Tourism Market Department of VNAT (2009)

The participation of Vietnam in world travel fairs led by VNAT has worked based on the following principle: VNAT pays all the display ground rent fees, and makes the stall of Vietnam as a common destination; participating travel companies pay their own fees (accommodation, food, transport, etc.), and part of the designing and decorating fees of the common stall of Vietnam. For road shows, VNAT hosts the events (renting the grounds, inviting partners, organizing performances and parties, etc.), and participating travel companies pay their own fees and part of the decorating and facility-renting fees. Before each event, once the list of participants has been decided, according to an agreement with Vietnam Airlines, VNAT requests Vietnam Airlines for two (2) discount return air tickets to each participating company, and for exemption of all the air transporting fees of promotion materials (Ha Yen,

2007; The Tourism Market Department of VNAT, 2009).

Referring to the budgets for tourism promotion, during 2001-2005, VNAT had a total budget of 112 billion Vietnamese Dong (about USD 6.6 million), or 22.40 billion Vietnamese Dong per year (USD 1.32 million) for tourism promotion (VNA, 2006). During 2006-2010, tourism promotion is provided with a total of 121 billion Vietnamese Dong (about USD 7.10 million), or 24.20 billion Vietnamese Dong per year (about USD 1.42 million) (Dautu, 2006). However, not all these amounts are spent for overseas tourism promotion. For example, only about 10 billion Vietnamese Dong (about USD 0.60 million), or half of the annual total budget for tourism promotion was spent for overseas promotion in 2007. These numbers are too modest if compared to the average USD 40 million per year of Malaysia, Thailand, India, and Hong Kong (The Center of Information Technology of VNAT, 2008; Vuong Le, 2007). The former Director of the Tourism Promotion Department Mr. Pham Huu Minh revealed that VNAT can only pay the fee of display grounds, the fees of designing and decorating the stall of Vietnam are mostly from the enterprises. Moreover, he added that it usually takes the staff about 60-70% of the time on financial procedures to be able to spend state budgets for tourism promotion, and the mobilization of money from the enterprises is not easy, because they are only ready to contribute when recognizing significant benefits. Ironically, Mr. Pham Trung Luong, Vice Director of the Institute of Tourism Development Research, pointed out that although only a small budget of 25 billion Vietnamese Dong (about USD 1.47 million) was allocated for tourism promotion in 2008, VNAT could not spend all this budget.

Mr. Nguyen Duc Quynh, Deputy General Director of Furama Resort (Da Nang

City) commented that Thailand, the Philippines, or Indonesia usually establish large and eye-catching common stalls of their countries at world travel fairs, while the common stall of Vietnam is too simple. He added that while each participating tourism company of other countries has to pay a fee of only about 400 USD, each Vietnamese tourism company has to pay about 2000 USD. Therefore, only a small number of tourism companies can participate in world travel fairs. They estimate that with such a large amount of money, they should rather rent their own area than rely on VNAT. As scheduled, the 2009 *Impressive Vietnam* promotion campaign would be broadcast in CNN, KBS, NHK, and television programs of Quangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan (China). However, this program was not implemented because of the allocated budget decided by the Prime Minister got stuck by procedures related to other ministries (Doan Loan, 2009).

The establishment of an annual promotion schedule as in Table 6.3 also has problems. As pointed out by Mr. Pham Huu Minh, the former Director of the Tourism Promotion Department, annual campaigns and schedules should be decided at least one year before they are launched so that travel companies and other related organizations can have plans for their own schedules. However, the schedules of national tourism promotion activities of VNAT are usually decided at the beginning of the scheduled year, and the budget is approved by the Ministry of Finance in the middle of the year. Because these schedules are independent and do not facilitate the operation of travel companies, the aggregate efficiency of tourism destination promotion is limited. Mr. Than Hai Thanh, General Director of Ben Thanh Tourist, one of the top ten travel companies of Vietnam, held that the private sector may be ready to contribute to the budget of national tourism destination promotion. However,

they do not trust the public sector in ensuring its efficiency.

The lack of qualified staff is also a hindrance to the tourism destination promotion of Vietnam. The former Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the State Steering Board of Tourism Mr. Vu Khoan pointed out three limitations of the tourism promotion staff regarding knowledge, professionalism, and communication skills (Anonymous, 2006). It is seen from the qualifications of the staff of the Tourism Market Department, formerly the Tourism Promotion Department, that out of 21 members, only four (4) persons have tourism qualifications at university level; the others do not have qualifications of tourism, but foreign languages, economics, public administration, foreign relations, laws, etc (The Personnel and Organization Department of VNAT, 2007). No one specializes in tourism marketing, but everyone does tourism marketing. Sometimes, a promotion team includes members who do not have a clear understanding of the promotion program, but they can join because they are retiring soon and have had few chances to travel abroad.

In 2004, the former Prime Minister of Vietnam Mr. Phan Van Khai in a talk with his followers in Yokohama, Japan, stressed the importance of promoting the images of Vietnam to the outside world and removing the obstacles inside the mechanism of Vietnam (Nguyen, 2004). In 2005, the former Chairwoman of VNAT Vo Thi Thang admitted that although much enhanced in 2005, the national tourism promotion of Vietnam was very limited if compared to other regional countries due to the constraints of budget and rigid bureaucracy (Viet Anh, 2006). The Director of the Travel Department of VNAT Mr. Vu The Binh also confessed that Vietnamese tourism marketers lack professional knowledge of tourism promotion and marketing, which has led to the poor images of Vietnam in international tourism fairs and

exhibitions, and needs tens of years to catch up with other advanced countries (Trung Binh, 2006).

Regarding the proposal to establish Vietnam's representative offices in foreign markets, according to the Tourism Law, the central national tourism organization can "establish Vietnam's tourism representative offices in foreign target markets to enhance tourism promotion according to the regulations of the government" (Clause 80, Provision 2). The issue of establishing Vietnam's tourism representative offices has been discussed since the early 2000s. In 2005, VNAT officially submitted its requests to open seven (7) representative offices in the tourism target markets, firstly in Japan and France, then from 2007-2010 in the US, China, Germany, Singapore, and Australia. However, the request of VNAT can not be accepted because of the conflicting needs and wants with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

More specifically, the Law of Vietnam's Representative Offices in Foreign Countries coming into effect from September 2, 2009 regulates that all the operations related to trade, investment, tourism, labor, and science-technology are combined in one section of the embassy (Clause 16, Provision 1c). The embassy is in charge of tourism promotion in the receiving country (Clause 17, Provision 4). Each related ministry or branch can dispatch their members to work as attachés in the embassy under the leadership of the ambassador (Clause 15, Provision 3). If there are conflicting opinions between the ambassador and the members of other related organizations of specific issues concerning these organizations, the ambassador can decide, and then inform other related organizations (Clause 36, Provision 2).

The formulation of the above Law of Vietnam's Representative Offices in



Foreign Country is initiated and chaired by the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs in the context of decreasing role of this Ministry. In the Cold War when Vietnam closed itself off from a major part of the world, political diplomacy was especially important, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played an essential role as the only organization that could directly deal with foreign issues, both politically and economically. However, the presence of the embassies is currently ignored in many cases when almost every organization, and individuals, can work with foreign partners by themselves, political diplomacy has become less important than before, and the work of commercial counselors of the embassies was not efficient in assisting economic activities including tourism promotion. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been criticized for these weaknesses. As a result, Vietnamese delegations on business in a foreign country usually inform and invite members of the embassy to join ceremonial meetings without really seeking significant contributions (Nguyen Dung, 2008). Before the National Assembly, the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Industry Le Danh Vinh did not agree with this Law. He held that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could not replace the role of other ministries (The World & Vietnam Report, 2009). However, the Law has been approved.

Since 2008, Vietnam tourism has faced another crisis caused by the world economic downturn. The number of foreign visitors only grew 1 % in 2008 with 4.20 million, or 87 % of the target of 4.80 – 5.00 million (VNAT, 2007, 2008c). Given the context, the tourism leaders of Vietnam have found it urgent to unite the whole industry for concerted action. This impact resulted in the “Impressive Vietnam” campaign launched in January 2009, with the participation of various stakeholders of the tourism sector such as travel agencies, hotels, transportation companies, Vietnam

Airlines, etc., offering 30-50 % tour discount for travelers from France and Western Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, ASEAN, and China. Moreover, VNAT has proposed a spate of specific and practical measures, including: returning value-added tax payments for international travel companies receiving inbound visitors; subsidizing 10 % of the price of the products supporting entertainment and recreation activities by international travel companies having contracts of tours consisting of at least 5 visitors staying in Vietnam for at least 5 days, including 4 nights staying at hotels; subsidizing 10 – 15 % of the price of MICE products organized by international travel companies receiving at least 50 inbound visitors in 2009; and simplifying visa granting procedures at Vietnam's embassies abroad, shortening visa granting time at international ports, and unilaterally removing visa requirements for the citizens of some target tourist markets, etc. (Vuong, 2009). However, as mentioned before, a spate of proposed promotion activities are unlikely to be implemented because of the allocated budget decided by the Prime Minister gets stuck by procedures related to other ministries.

Recently, VNAT has paid more attention to marketing research. In 2008, VNAT established the Marketing and Competitiveness Groups, participated by individual members from all the areas of tourism influence such as travel, hotels, restaurants, and transportations, aiming at identifying problems, studying solutions, and generating specific marketing proposals (Tourism Promotion Department, 2008). The tasks of each marketing and competitiveness group include studying current market trends, exploring new tourism products, and doing SWOT analysis of their operating area in Vietnam.

Regarding the promotion of the national tourism destination images of Vietnam

to the world, in 2000-2005, Vietnam's tourism used the slogan "*Vietnam – a Destination for the New Millennium*" together with the picture of a smiling girl in typical Vietnamese poem hat (see Appendix B). The critical point was in 2004 when VNAT introduced a new slogan "*Welcome to Vietnam*" accompanied by a logo of a woman wearing traditional long dress ("Ao dai") (see Appendix B). The slogan and logo received strong criticism, especially from the private sector describing them as too plain, uncreative, and unimpressive (Ha Yen, 2005; Viet Anh, 2004, Vietnam News, 2005b,) if they are compared to "Uniquely Singapore", "Dynamic Korea", "Amazing Thailand", "100 % Pure New Zealand", and "Malaysia, Truly Asia".

The "*Welcome to Vietnam*" slogan was used in 2004-2005, and then replaced by a new branding "*Vietnam – the Hidden Charm*", accompanied by a new logo (see Appendix B). The new logo and slogan were selected after more than four months of a competition on designing slogan and symbol for Vietnam's tourism. The organizing board received more than 1,194 entries by 968 designers, including 814 slogans and 380 symbols. Competitors included schoolchildren, pensioners, university students, linguists, artists and Vietnamese and foreign tourists. The competition also attracted a large number of advertising companies. Entries were reviewed by a 23-member jury, including officials from VNAT and representatives from local tourism departments, travel companies and the Vietnam Artists' Association. The brand "*Vietnam – the Hidden Charm*" has been used up to now and may be interpreted as follows:

"It was written in a succinct and impressive style which is easily promoted on mass media and tourist products. The image of lotus bud is stylised in the word "Vietnam", symbolising simplicity, nobility and vitality which is close to the Vietnamese people's culture.

The font style is combined between a hanging stroke of Chinese characters calligraphy and soft curved stroke of Vietnamese script, inspiring tourists to discover the land with hidden wonders" (Vuong, 2005).

### *6.2.3. The national tourism destination promotion to the Japanese market*

Annually VNAT leads a group of travel companies to participate in the JATA travel fair and organize a road show in Tokyo. All these activities take place within about four (4) days around the time of the JATA travel fair. In facing the decreasing trend of Japanese travelers to Vietnam since 2008, a spate of promotion activities has been carried out. In May 2008, the PATA Vietnam Chapter received a FAM trip organized by the PATA Japan Chapter and JATA, together with All Nippon Airways, APEX and Include travel companies to study some tourism attractions in Vietnam including Ha Long Bay, Hue Ancient Town, and Ho Chi Minh City, and work with Vietnamese travel companies operating in these attractions. In October 2008, Vietnam Airlines cooperated with VNAT to organize a FAM trip for 70 Japanese travel companies, journalists, and representatives of JATA.

In February 2009, JATA worked with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and Vietnam Airlines to encourage Japanese travelers to Vietnam within its “Visit World Campaign”. In the meeting, there was still a dispute over whether Vietnam should focus on young or senior segments: Vietnam Airlines preferred the young segment while the travel companies like senior segment. Mr. Trinh Hong Quang, Deputy General Director of Vietnam Airlines stressed the need to stimulate the young segment when there were signs that the number of young Japanese travelers to Vietnam was decreasing. Mr. Luu Duc Ke, General Director of Hanoitourist, one of the top ten travel companies of Vietnam, disagreed with Mr. Trinh Hong Quang stating that young Japanese travelers mainly visit Vietnam as backpackers for about 4-5 days and have limited spending capacity, while senior

Japanese travelers have high spending capacity, stronger travel motivation, and are “billionaires” of time; usually travel for 7-10 days, stay in 4-5 star hotels, and enjoy high services. Mr. Trinh Hong Quang also complained that it is difficult to make sound marketing decisions based on the current tourism statistics without specifying the data related to each market segment. He specified that if there were signs that the number of Japanese women in their 30s – 40s is increasing, Vietnam Airlines would launch promotion campaigns targeting this group. Also in this meeting, some travel companies pointed out the lack of direct flights from Japan to the central region of Vietnam where popular attractions for Japanese travelers such as Hoi An Ancient Town, Hue Former Capital, My Son Sanctuary, and Da Nang City are situated is a reason hindering the travel of Japanese visitors to Vietnam. Until this writing, there are only 36 direct flights per week connecting Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, and Nagoya with Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.

The APEX Vietnam Tourist Company (APEX Vietnam) is a travel company achieving the greatest success in attracting Japanese travelers to Vietnam. In 2006, this company received a record number of 70,000 Japanese tourists. APEX Vietnam targets Japanese senior visitors who were born after World War II, have retired, and usually travel in groups from 3-10 people. This company approaches Japanese travelers through its APEX mother company in Japan. It has launched the construction of two resorts worth about USD 6 million in Quang Nam province to particularly serve Japanese senior tourists. In an interview, Mr. Nguyen Van Tran - the General Director of APEX Vietnam Tourist Company said:

“Marketing Vietnam’s in Japan is too poor if compared to the neighboring countries like Thailand and Malaysia whose representative offices in Japan operates actively by monthly activities. So far, Vietnam has not had any

representative offices in Japan and its marketing activities are not based on long term plan but occasionally single activities. Therefore, the support of the Vietnamese government to the travel companies in exploiting the Japanese travel market is still modest. Moreover, Vietnam has problems with tourism product planning. Japanese tourists usually book tours from 3 to 6 months before departure. However, many things from the Vietnamese side may change from the booking time to the departure, which makes Japanese tourists feel uncomfortable”.

Overall, Ms. Nguyen Thanh Huong, Vice Director of the Tourism Market Department admitted that over the past years, the national tourism destination promotion activities of Vietnam have been mostly based on subjective experiences and there have not been any comprehensive studies on tourism products and markets. Regarding the Japanese market, according to Mr. Masato Takamatsu, Director and Vice President of the Japan Tourism Marketing Co. (JTM), Vietnam's tourism marketing to specific market segments in Japan, and the provision of information for visitors, the media, and travel companies are very limited and unprofessional. He specified: "Japan is inundated with information about Thai, Singaporean and Malaysian tourist destinations. As provided through the media, this information attracts Japanese people's attention. Vietnam will attract more Japanese visitors if it is able to improve its presentation" (Vietnam Economic News, 2004).

## **Chapter VII - The Experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in Attracting Japanese Travelers**

This chapter focuses on the third research issue stated in Chapter I – the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers as a base for suggesting marketing policies to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan. China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii are chosen for analysis in this dissertation because they are all the key destinations for Japanese travelers. China and South Korea have ranked the first and second respectively in the list of the most frequently visited destinations by Japanese travelers. China has similarities with Vietnam in terms of economic development model. Hawaii has been for a long time in the top five destinations most visited by Japanese travelers, and Thailand is the only destination of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the top five destinations (JATA, 2008).

### **7.1. China**

In China, the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) is an agency directly affiliated to the State Council (the central government of China) whose tasks include:

- Establishing and organizing the implementation of market development strategies for domestic tourism, inbound tourism, and outbound tourism; organizing external publicity and significant promotional activities on the overall image of China's tourism; and guiding the work of China's tourist institutions stationed abroad; and

- Promoting the international communication and cooperation of tourism and take charge of affairs relating to the cooperation with international tourist organizations; establishing policies on outbound tourism and border tourism, and organizing the implementation; examine and approving foreign travel agencies established in China, examining the market access qualifications of foreign-invested travel agencies and travel agencies engaged in international tourism, and examining and approve overseas (outbound) tourism and border tourism cases.

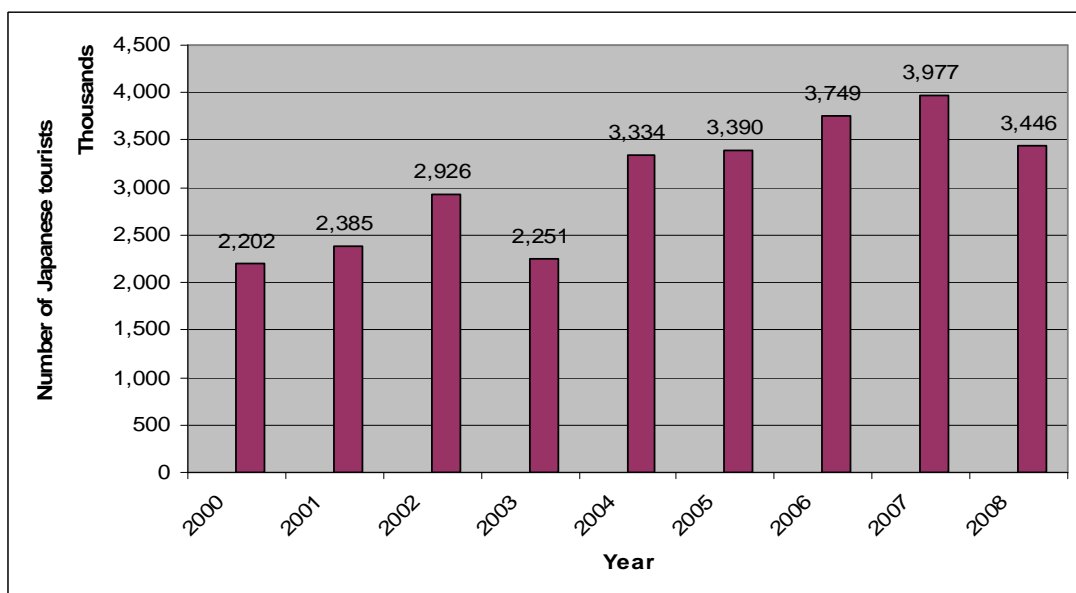
Among the internal departments of CNTA, the Department of Tourism Promotion and International Liaison is the organ responsible for developing domestic and international tourist markets; organizing promotional activities for key tourist regions, destinations and routes; implementing international cooperation and communication; promoting the orderly opening of outbound tourism destinations towards Chinese citizens; examining and approving foreign travel agencies to be established in China; and instructing the operation of China's tourist institutions stationed abroad. CNTA has 18 overseas offices in 14 countries and regions, two (2) of which are in Tokyo and Osaka (CNTA, 2008). Besides, the China International Travel Service (CITS), the first and largest comprehensive travel agency in China, has three representative offices in Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka (Anonymous, n.d.; ChinaCulture, n.d.).

As shown in Figure 7.1, the number of Japanese tourists to China grew significantly in the 2000s, has been stable at over 3 million since 2004, reaching a record of nearly 4 million in 2007 (JTM, 2009). Three quarters of Japanese travelers to China are males, particularly those aged 30 to 60. This is an indication that a large



proportion of Japanese visitors to China are business people who frequent between China and Japan (Takamatsu, 2008). Since 2001, China has replaced South Korea as the favorite destination for Japanese travelers. A survey of JATA shows that 82.10 % Japanese tourists to China show their interest in visiting historic and cultural sites, while 64.20 % of them are interested in visiting natural landscapes (Shenyang, 2005).

**Figure 7.1. Japanese tourists to China in the 2000s**



Source: Statistics of Japanese tourists traveling abroad (JTM, 2009)

The efforts to raise the number of Japanese travelers to China began in the late 1990s from both the Chinese and Japanese sides. In 1999, Beijing hosted the Sino-Japanese Cultural Exchange Conference attended by 5,000 Japanese tourists, which produced great repercussion in Japan. In 2000, CNTA put emphasis on introduction of activities with the theme of "New Millennium-China 2000" at the Japanese market, and continued its active promotion of main tourist products centering on the world heritage sites in China. On May 10, 2000, China's President Jiang Zemin and Vice President Hu Jintao received 5,000 Japanese tourists

participating in the Sino-Japanese Conference of Cultural Sight-Seeing and Exchanges. To promote the work, CNTA organized four large Japan-oriented promotion and exhibitions. In addition, other activities to promote tourist products were constant throughout China in the whole year in 2000. These activities, encompassing specialty promotion and publicity, were colorful with ardent appeal, receiving fairly ideal effects (Anonymous, 2007).

From the Japanese side, right after China's issuance of the Temporary Regulations upon Foreign-Controlled and Exclusively Foreign-Funded Travel Agencies, major Japanese travel agencies such as JTB, HIS, and JALPAK submitted applications for establishing new ventures in China (SinoCast China Business Daily News, 2003). In the downtrend of Japanese travelers, JATA set a goal to increase and expand the number of Japanese travelers to China to 4 million in 2009 (JATA, 2008).

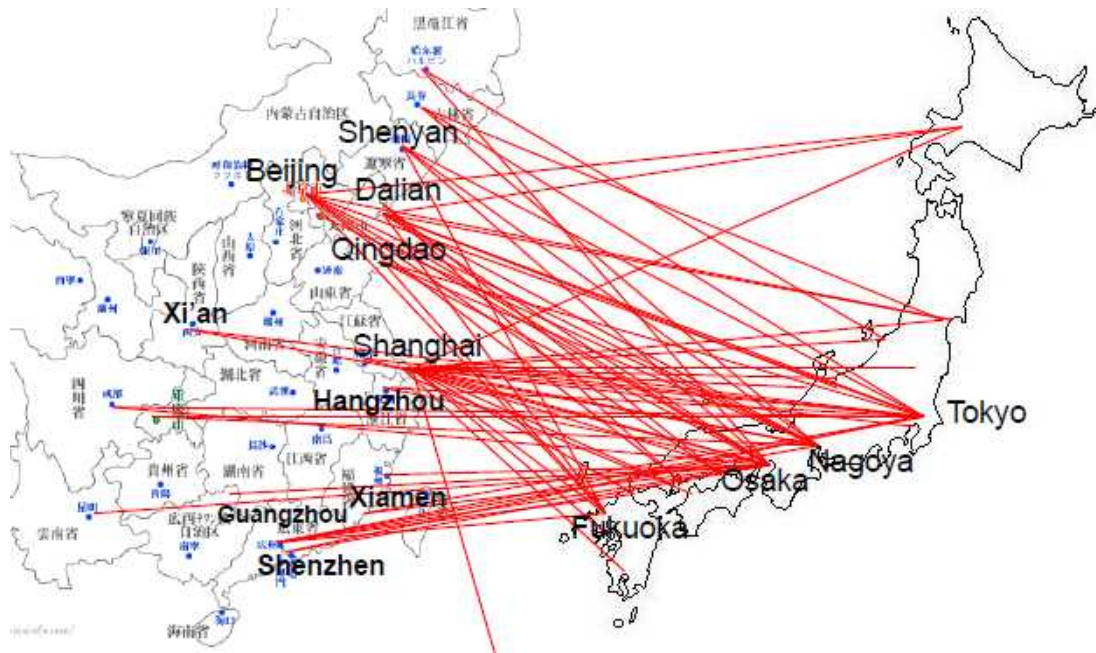
To explain the high volume of Japanese travelers to China, beside the efforts of the tourism industry of China and Japan, the dense network of air transportation is one of the main factors. According to Mr. Masato Takamatsu - Director and Vice President of the Japan Tourism Marketing Co. (JTM):

“In China, as many as 21 airports are directly connected by total of 828 flights per week from Japan. Although Shanghai's two airports, Pudong and Hongqiao, receive 37% of the flights from Japan, air traffic is widely distributed to Beijing and other regional airport such as Guangzhou, Dalian, Qingdao and Hangzhou. 17 airports in Japan serve as gateway to China, however, China-Japan traffic is heavily concentrated to four major international airports; 88% of total flights to China operate from Tokyo-Narita, Tokyo-Haneda, Nagoya and Osaka-Kansai airports” (Takamatsu, 2008).

The network of flights between Japan and China is shown as in Figure 7.2. These flights are scheduled for the convenience of Japanese business people who visit the offices and factories of their global operation. Also, they provide Japanese

tourists opportunities to visit tourist destinations around the region.

**Figure 7.2. Airline access between China and Japan**



Source: Takamatsu (2008)

Furthermore, China has succeeded in promoting various tourism destinations with diverse tourism products to Japanese travelers. Mr. Masato Takamatsu recognizes that:

“The line up of tours to China includes not only Beijing and Shanghai, but also a number of other cities and destinations in China. Travel agents are quite knowledgeable about destinations and tourist attractions in China. One of the reasons for the growth of Japanese tourist traffic to China over the last several years is that new destinations were introduced to the market and simultaneously new products to those destinations were added to the product line up. Therefore, even repeat visitors to China can always find new destinations they want to visit for their next trip” (Takamatsu, 2008).

However, the efforts by tourism stakeholders have been sometimes adversely affected by political and environmental problems in China, such as the SARS epidemics (2003) and anti-Japanese protests (2005). Even in 2008 when the Olympics Games was held in China, the number of Japanese tourists to China

decreased sharply due to the repercussions of a series of negative news stories about China such as the beating and detaining of Japanese journalists covering the suspected terrorist attack in Western China, and the dominance of the headlines in the Japanese media about food-poisoning incident involving pesticide-tainted dumplings imported from China, demonstrations in Tibet, protests surrounding the Olympic torch relay, the fallout from the Sichuan earthquake, and the pollution in Beijing (Tashiro, 2008).

## **7.2. South Korea**

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) is a statutory organization of South Korea under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and is commissioned to promote the country's tourism industry. KTO is in charge of global marketing as one of the major tasks (together with strategic tourism management, tourism competitiveness, and conventions) (KTO, n.d.b).

The specific divisions of global marketing are shown in Table 7.1. It is noticeable from Table 7.1 that there is a special team responsible for the Japanese travel market under the Overseas Marketing Department, which also manages a large coverage in Japan, with five representative offices of KTO in Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, Sendai, and Nagoya that can provide almost all necessary information to Japanese travelers (KTO, n.d.a).

**Table 7.1. The divisions of global marketing of KTO**

---

**Overseas Marketing Department**

- Marketing Strategy Team
- Japan Team
- China Team
- Asia & Oceania Team
- The Americas and Europe Team
- International Online Marketing Team
- 27 Overseas Offices

**Domestic Marketing Department**

- Domestic Tourism Promotion Team
- Domestic Online Marketing Team
- Industry Relations Team
- Provincial Promotion Offices
  - \* Gyeongsang-do Promotion Office
  - \* Chungcheong-do Promotion Office
  - \* Jeolla-do Promotion Office

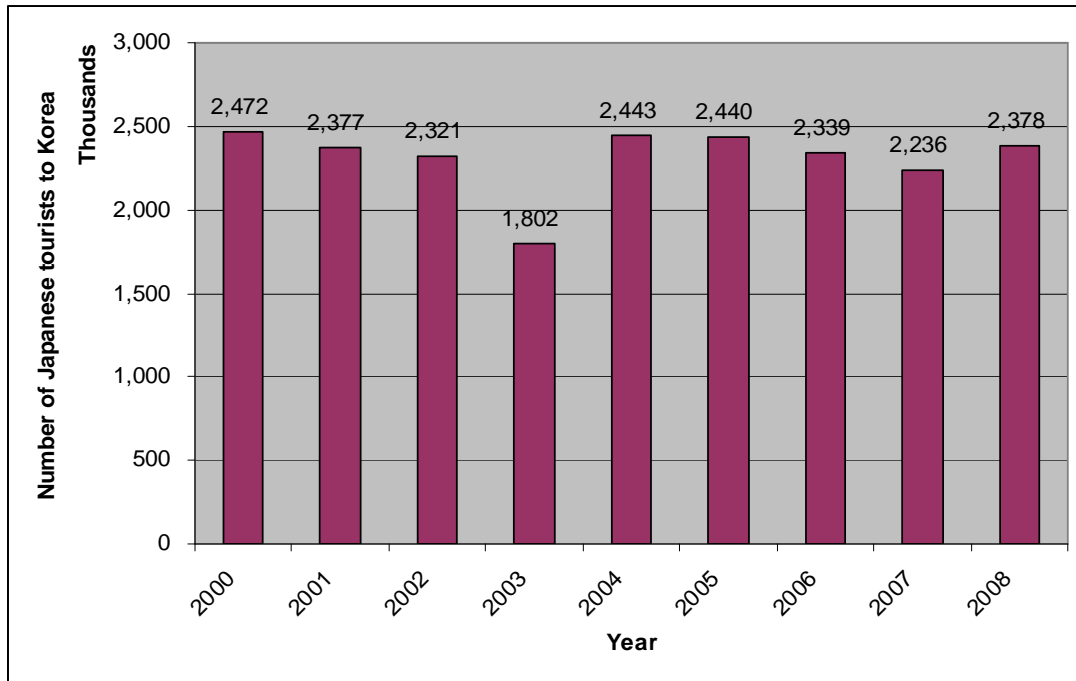
**Tourism Product Department**

- Green Tourism Team
  - Strategic Tourism Product Team
  - Events Marketing Team
  - Market Survey & Statistics Team
  - Brand and Advertising Team
  - Publications Team
  - Marketing Information Technology Team
- 

Source: KTO (n.d.b)

Japan has been the largest tourist market of South Korea. Japanese tourists have accounted for over 30 % of foreign tourists to South Korea, and have been stable at around 2.30 million since 2000, except for 2003 when the Japanese market was affected by SARS disease (see Figure 7.3).

**Figure 7.3. Japanese travelers to South Korea in the 2000s**



Source: Statistics of Japanese tourists traveling abroad (JTM, 2009)

Men in their 30s and 40s have long been the largest market segment among Japanese visitors to South Korea. A considerable proportion of male traffic is business people who fly to and back from South Korea every month or even more frequently. The proportion of female travelers has gradually grown over the years to 47 % now. Among female travelers, those in their 20s are the largest segment whose share accounts for 12.50 % of all Japanese visiting South Korea. Although women in their 20s have been on a decline since the peak in 1997, South Korea is one of a few destinations that have seen an increased share of young women among Japanese visitor arrivals (Takamatsu, 2008).

South Korea has been active in destination marketing since the early 2000s. Japanese travelers generally feel easy to visit South Korea because South Korea is

very near Japan, and prices are far lower than in Japan (UBCWiki, n.d.). Moreover, South Korea's destination marketing has greatly focused on the Japanese market. Mr. Yong-Il Kim, the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO)'s Executive Vice-President of Overseas Marketing stressed the importance of the Japanese market as follows: "We see Japan as one market and the rest of Asia as one market. Taken as a whole, Asia, excluding Japan, is our second largest market. Then comes the US" (Anonymous, 1999a).

The peak of South Korea's tourism campaign to the Japanese market was during 2004-2005. In this time, there was a Korean culture boom commonly called Hallyu (Korean wave) in Japan, sparked by television programs such as "Winter Sonata". The drama series broadcast by the Japan Broadcasting Corp. was a huge success in Japan. As a result, the number of Japanese tourists who visited South Korea in the first 10 months of 2004 increased nearly 40 % compared to 2003 due mainly to a "Korean boom" among Japanese people. Many Japanese tourists were believed to have visited the shooting locations of the drama in package tours and participated in events to see popular South Korean actors (Anonymous, 2004b). The Hallyu boom brought more than two millions Japanese tourists to South Korea in 2004. A steady increase of Japanese tourists visiting South Korea continued until April of 2004. As foreign relations issues regarding Dokdo Island and Japanese history books surfaced, fewer Japanese tourists visited South Korea since May 2005. However, on June 24, 2005, KTO funded the Choi Ji-woo Classic Drama Concert in Seoul and promoted it as a tour package. This concert was participated by many Korean stars preferred by Japanese women such as Lee Jung-hyun, Lee Jun-ho, Kim Bum-soo, and Lee Ji-soo. Approximately 2,000 Japanese tourists came to South

Korea regardless of the policy conflict between South Korea and Japan (KTO, 2005a).

Especially, KTO launched a three-month special campaign (from October 2005) in Japan to attract 50,000 Japanese tourists. KTO held a meeting with Japanese regional directors in September 2005, and tried to take into account all possible factors related to this campaign. The promotion materials for the campaign were categorized into various themes most appealing to the Japanese public in a form of a mass media portfolio, and were revealed to the Japanese public through the television, newspapers, magazines, and radio. Hallyu stars took an important part in this campaign through concerts and fan meeting sessions in Japan. Also, KTO made more efforts in other areas to attract Japanese tourists. One of these efforts was hosting a “Daejanggeum – April Snow” familiarization tours to introduce new tour sites and royal court cuisine of Korea (KTO, 2005b).

Also, South Korea’s efforts to increase the number of Japanese tourists were favored by the Japanese side, particularly tourism leaders and travel companies. In June 2005, the visiting Japanese Transport Minister Kazuo Kitagawa and South Korean Culture and Tourism Minister Chung Dong Chea released a joint statement calling for promoting tourism and cultural exchanges between the two nations. This statement called on the two nations to hold events to commemorate the Japan-South Korea Friendship Year 2005 and increase flights between Japanese and South Korean local cities (Anonymous, 2005). In October 2005, a group of 19 Japanese reporters visited South Korea to tour the filming locations of TV mini-series Daejanggeum to introduce popular Daejanggeum-related tourist destinations in South Korea to Japanese fans who watched the series on Japan’s NHK TV (KTO, 2008). Moreover,



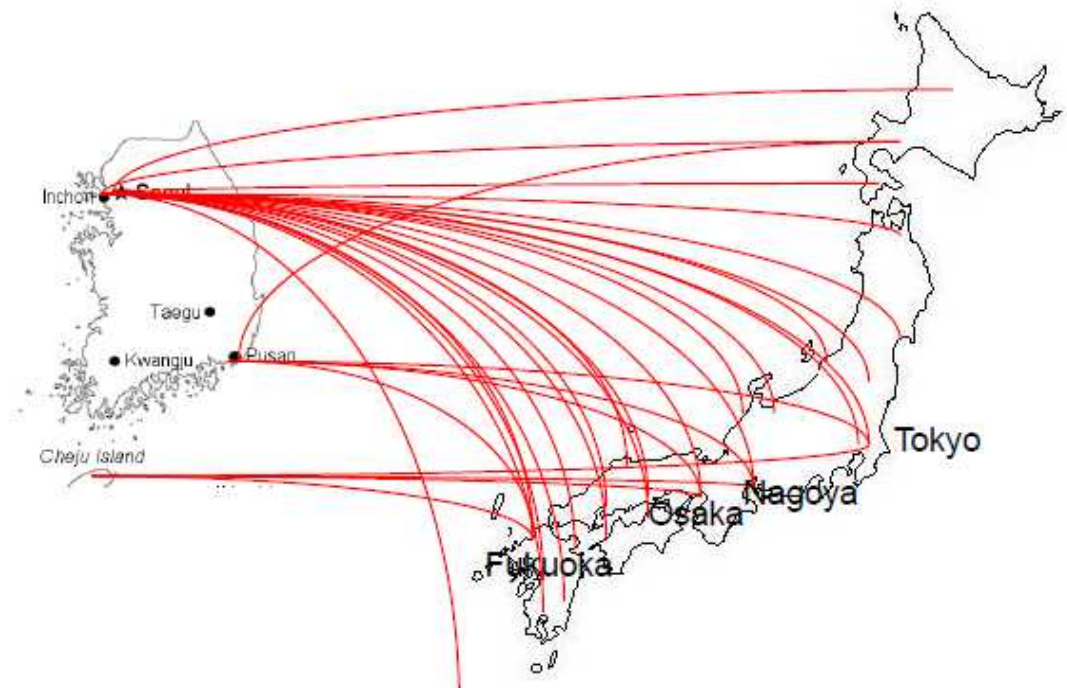
major Japanese travel companies such as JTB Corp. (JTB), Nippon Travel Agency Co. (NTA), and Kinki Nippon Tourist Co. (KNT) joined in exploiting the Hallyu boom. JTB sold tickets for “Winter Sonata” tour-featuring location sites to 1,500 people from August to October, 2004. NTA’s “Winter Sonata” tour has been sold to more than 4,000 people from September 2003 to November 2004 (Anonymous, 2004a).

However, after the “Korean Wave” peaked in 2004-2005, South Korea has made less effort to attract Japanese people to Korean culture. The Korean government is said to have depended too much on a handful of stars such as Bae Yong Joon and Choi Ji-woo (Takamatsu, 2008).

In addition to the marketing campaigns by South Korea, Japanese travelers to South Korea are influenced by the network of air traffic between the two countries as illustrated in Figure 7.4. According to Mr. Masato Takamatsu – Director and Vice President of the Japan Tourism Marketing Co. (JTM):

“Japanese visitors' gateways in Korea are limited to four international airports including Jeju and the port of Busan. Nearly 80% of flights from Japan to Korea arrive at two airports in Metropolitan Seoul, Incheon and Gimpo. On the other hand, currently 25 airports in Japan have total of 478 scheduled flights per week to Korea. The flights connecting local airport in Japan and Seoul provide convenience to travelers in both countries. Japanese who live far from the major international airports find such flights a window open to the world. They use these flights not only to visit Korea but also to travel farther to other international destinations via Incheon airport as a hub” (Takamatsu, 2008, from JTM’s Website).

**Figure 7.4. Airline access between South Korea and Japan**



Source: Takamatsu (2008)

However, 4 airports in South Korea having direct flights to Japan is modest compared to 21 airports in China. The limited number of airports receiving Japanese travelers makes it difficult to introduce diverse tourism destinations in South Korea to Japanese travelers. Mr. Masato Takamatsu found it hard to have information of spectacular views of Southern Korea coast or natural wonder of Jingdo. Consequently, most of Japanese travel companies' product lines up are limited to tours to Seoul, Busan and Jeju, and customers who want to visit and stay in other destinations in South Korea must have their itinerary arranged individually.

Takamatsu (2008) told the following story:

"I visited a few travel agents and asked the travel consultant if they offer any package tours to Korean historical cities such as Buyeo and Gyeongju. Their answers were almost identical: They first look puzzled when they heard 'Buyeo' and Gyeongju. Obviously, they are not familiar with these destinations. After finding out that I am looking for package tours to somewhere other than Seoul or

Busan, they kindly tell me that a majority of travelers to Korea go to Seoul and some to Busan, Chungcheon and Jeju, but few go to other destinations in Korea. And finally they suggested I should arrange itinerary individually or buy a package tour to Seoul and make a day excursion trip from Seoul” (Takamatsu, 2008, from JTM’s Website).

### **7.3. Thailand**

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is an agency belonging to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports responsible for the promotion of Thailand’s tourism. TAT supplies information and data on tourist areas to the public, publicizes Thailand with the intention of encouraging both Thai and international tourists to travel in and around Thailand, conducts studies to set development plans for tourist destinations, and co-operates with and supports the production and development of personnel in the field of tourism. In Japan, TAT has three (3) representative offices in Japan (Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka), more than the number of its overseas representative offices in any other country. The policy and marketing plan of TAT is stated as including:

- Promoting and developing the operation on proactive marketing strategies for increasing the new markets as well as the niche markets. This is in order to attract more quality tourists to visit Thailand.
- Promoting cooperation in all levels domestically and internationally on promotion for the development of tourism markets. This aims to get rid of all hindrances in the tourism industry and pave the way for Thailand to be the tourism hub of Southeast Asia (TAT, n.d.a).

After the rapid expansion of tourism during 1980s, Thailand’s positive tourism image began to decline in the mind of visitors, primarily due to the negative publicity

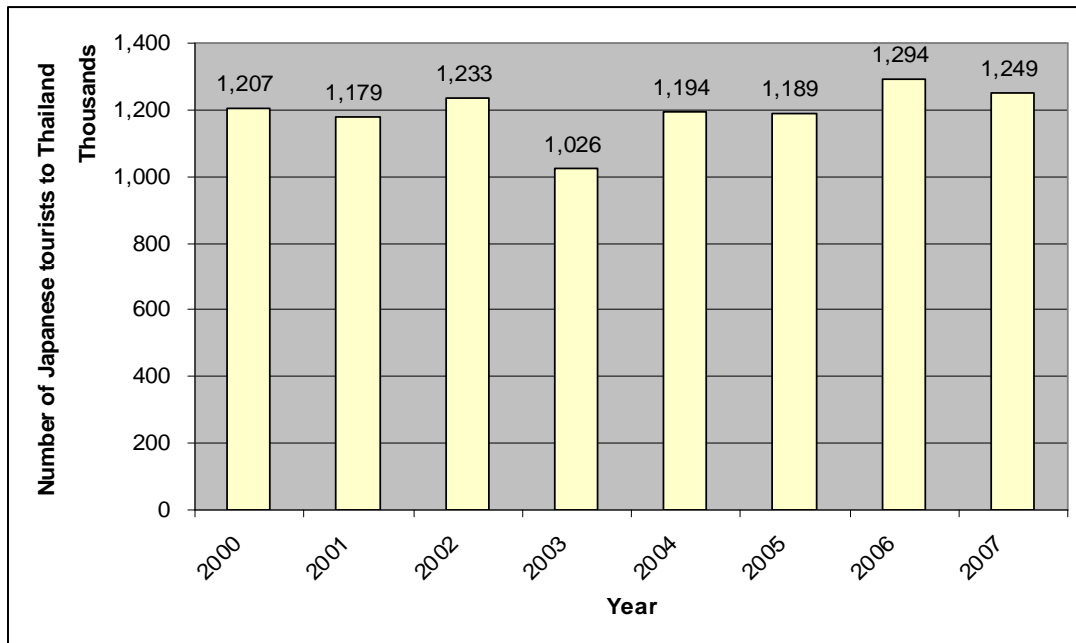
surrounding its image problems related to AIDS, the sex industry, and environmental neglect at some attractions. In the given context, TAT embarked on a tourism recovery program, whose first objective was aimed at high spending Japanese tourists (Chon, Singh, & Mikula, 1993).

In 1997, TAT began a national marketing plan to boost national earnings from tourism. This campaign was envisaged as part of an overall government effort to recover from the Thai economic downturn. Using the catchy slogan “Amazing Thailand”, TAT designed a marketing campaign that covered many aspects of the tourism products and services sought by international visitors and organized in nine themes: (1) Amazing shopping paradise; (2) Amazing tastes of Thailand; (3) Amazing culture and heritage; (4) Amazing world heritage; (5) Amazing natural heritage; (6) Amazing Thai arts and lifestyle; (7) Amazing sports; (8) Amazing agricultural products; and (9) Amazing gate way (Jantararat & Williams, 2000).

In the 2000s, the number of Japanese tourists to Thailand has been stable at the level of just above 1 million, making Thailand among the five destinations most preferred by Japanese travelers (see Figure 7.5), just standing behind China, South Korea, and Hong Kong (JTM, 2009). In 2007, Japanese visitors to Thailand totaled nearly 1.25 million, stayed an average of 7.54 days and spent an about USD 131 per person per day. Japanese tourists annually contributed about USD 12.30 billion in tourism revenue and foreign exchange earnings to the Thai economy. Japan has been the largest source of business travelers to Thailand, and the second largest source market after Malaysia (TAT, n.d.b). Although most Japanese visitors to Thailand are mainly from 35 to 44 years old, the biggest growth has been in the number of elderly retirees (The National News Bureau of Thailand, 2009). According to Sritama (2009),

the top five tourist attractions for Japanese travelers are Bangkok, Phuket, Chang Mai, Ayutthaya, and Pattaya, and 64.10 % return to Thailand at some point.

**Figure 7.5. Japanese travelers to Thailand in the 2000s**



Source: Statistics of Japanese tourists traveling abroad (JTM, 2009)

Since the late 1990s, Thailand has taken strong measures to draw high-end Japanese tourists. In 1999, TAT started targeting Japanese MICE business by allocating about USD 135,000 to the Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA) to take quarterly trips for contacting prospective clients in Japan (Anonymous, 1999b). In 2002, in a business mission to Japan headed by Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand Somkid Jatusripitak, TAT signed a memorandum of understanding with 19 Japanese companies who committed to send their employees to travel in Thailand. Moreover, special tour packages costing at least 10,000 baht a day were offered to chief executives of 200 Japanese firms. Furthermore, TAT signed agreements with more than 20 Japanese tour operators to increase the number of

Japanese travelers to Thailand. Under these agreements, TAT supported the tour operators in their marketing activities while the operators were required to increase the number of Japanese tourists to Thailand by 5 - 20 %. Also on this occasion, TAT held the first-ever official seminar in promoting long-stay tourism in Thailand. This program was aimed at Japanese retirees, highlighting the country's infrastructure, hospitality, and medical care (Intarakomalyasut & Maneerungsee, 2002; Maneerungsee, 2002). In 2002, Thailand achieved a peak of over 1.23 million Japanese travelers in 2002 (JTM, 2009).

After the peak in 2002, Thailand faced the difficulties caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak and the war in Iraq in 2003. In such a context, TAT held road shows in Osaka, Fukuoka, and Tokyo, and signed an agreement with 17 Japanese travel companies, which committed to bringing 40,000 tourists to Thailand during June – September 2003 (Intarakomalyasut, 2003). In 2004, the re-emergence of Avian Flu and the historical tsunami hitting Phuket caused more challenges to Thailand's tourism. Given the context, the TAT Osaka office worked with local agents in Osaka where up to 70 % Japanese tourists to Thailand came from and a FM media network which consisted of 38 stations to promote a concert in a campaign dubbed "Save Phuket". Before the tsunami, Phuket's beachfront resorts were popular among Japanese families while young professionals and single travelers tended to stay in budget accommodations on the resort islands. However, after the tsunami, few Japanese traveled to Phuket because of safety concerns which tended to be higher among couples with children. Therefore, the TAT Osaka office focused on wooing young professionals and women to the island (Hemtasilpa, 2005). The number of Japanese tourists to Thailand kept the level of over 1 million in 2003,

2004, and 2005 (JTM, 2009).

Right after achieving a new record of nearly 1.30 million Japanese visitors in 2006, Thailand had to deal with a drop of confidence in Thailand's safety due to growing unrest in the South and fears of further incidents in Bangkok such as the Dec 31, 2006 bombings. To promote exchanges between Thailand and Japan, the Japanese and Thai governments designated 2007 as the Thailand-Japan Tourism Exchange Year (Theparat, 2007c). In April 2007, the Thai Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont led a business mission to Japan to promote tourism, trade, and investment as part of the celebrations of the 120th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations. On this occasion, TAT launched the Royal Initiative Discovery, a tourism campaign intended to promote new attractions related to the Royal Projects in such provinces as Chiang Mai, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Nakhon Pathom, Sakon Nakhon, and Phetchaburi. More extensive tourism campaigns were also staged throughout the year targeting golfers and teenagers. TAT also teamed up with 16 Japanese tour operators to cope with the downtrend of Japanese tourists to Thailand due to the concerns about security and the strong baht (Theparat, 2007a). In the meetings, Japanese tour operators encouraged the Thai government and the TAT to jointly invest in more advertising and public relations activities to deliver positive messages about Thailand to Japanese tourists because the news reports and broadcasts by the Japanese media about Thailand had been mostly about the Thai government coup, which was a terrifying and sensitive issue for Japanese tourist. For example, Mr. Yuji Funayama, the Board Chairman of JTB Ltd. urged the Thai government to speed up addressing safety concerns in order to convince more Japanese tourists, particularly among the retirees to visit Thailand. He also urged Thai authorities to clearly present existing

tourism spots on their uniqueness and distinctiveness from other countries (Theparat, 2007b). Also on this occasion, Mr. Suwit Yodmani, Thailand's Minister of Tourism and Sports highlighted that Thailand considered Japanese tourists to be quality tourists, and that Thailand could still increase the number of Japanese people coming to Thailand to play golf, to participate in long stay programs, to partake in chic and trendy pastimes, and to engage in MICE activities (TAT, 2007).

In 2007, Thailand set a goal of receiving 2 million Japanese tourists by 2010, targeting three niche groups: senior citizens, women, and students. During 2007, Thailand collaborated with NTT communication in live broadcasting by broadband cable. The program was "Thailand International Boat Race Championship" held in Ayutthaya. TAT invited the team from Sendai City to participate in the boat race. The program was broadcast via cable TV and Internet. TAT also worked with Nintendo, the major game software maker, to produce tourism game software by which users could search for sightseeing spots, hotels, restaurants, etc. in Thailand. Moreover, TAT decorated the JR Yamanote line with Thailand's advertisement campaign from August to October 2007. Furthermore, TAT organized "Thailand Week" at Ueno Park in Tokyo (The Royal Thai Embassy, 2007). To promote Japanese long-stay groups, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports negotiated with local agencies to provide automatic life insurance coverage for long-stay groups in Thailand as the liability is not covered by Japanese insurers. The Ministry also negotiated with Japanese authorities to increase flights between Thailand and Japan and allow airlines to use Haneda airport, instead of landing at Narita International Airport only (Theparat, 2007d). Up to April 2008, there were 141 weekly flights from 5 Japanese airports to Thailand, including Osaka, Nagoya, Fukuoka, and Hiroshima (TAT, 2008).



In consideration of the importance of Japanese women to Thailand based on the 2007 statistics that 313,937 Japanese women visited Thailand, TAT focused the year 2008 on Japanese female professionals, working and retired people (Anonymous, 2008). In 2009, TAT continued enhancing its promotion to attract Japanese visitors. According to Mr. Anake Srishevachart, President of the Thai-Japan Tourist Association, Japanese tourists are very sensitive to political and security issues and Thailand is still unsafe in their view. Moreover, he stressed that

"The Japanese market is high-end tourists. They have high purchasing power even amid the current recession because most of them have huge savings. If we can restore their confidence, they will come back because Thailand is one of the top destinations in the market" (Chinmaneevong & Theparat, 2009, from Bangkok Post's Website).

In the first step of a major publicity and promotional campaign designed to restore Japanese travelers' confidence in Thailand, 20 Japanese media flew in to visit Thailand in January 2009. This familiarization trip was intended to give the media a chance to see that Thailand has been back to normal, and to reassure Japanese tourists that Thailand remains a safe and attractive destination that is also the world's best value-for-money brand as announced by the 2008 Country Brand Index. Most importantly, Thailand's Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva led a Thai delegation comprising representatives of TAT, Department of Export Promotion, and Board of Investment for the "Thailand Road Show" in Tokyo in order to restore visitors' and investors' confidence in Thailand (The National News Bureau of Thailand, 2009). On this occasion, TAT met the representatives of Japanese travel companies, tourism associations, and government bodies to discuss a plan to restore tourism traffic between the two countries. TAT also apologized to Japanese travelers for the many problems that disrupted tourism in Thailand. In this campaign, TAT focused on three

target groups: wealthy and middle-aged tourists, families, and youth travelers (Sritama, 2009).

#### **7.4. Hawaii**

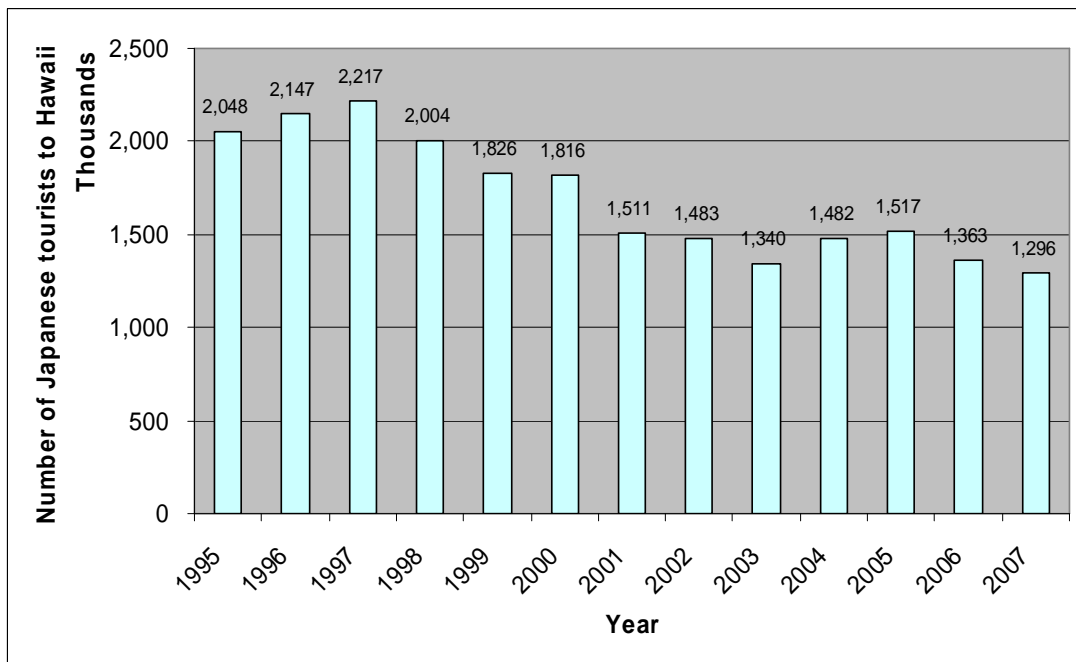
The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) is a leading agency advocating for Hawaii's tourism industry, responsible for creating a vision and overseeing tourism from a statewide perspective. The revenue source of HTA is from the Tourism Special Fund – a set percentage of the transient accommodation tax collections that is assessed on hotels, vacation rentals and other accommodations. HTA is tasked for destination marketing, sporting events, tourism product development, and conventions. HTA oversees the efforts to market and promote Hawaii to the world in both the leisure and business segments. These efforts are designed to help HTA achieve its goal of increasing visitor expenditures (HTA, n.d.).

To promote Hawaii globally, HTA has contracted with marketing organizations in five major market areas: North America, Japan, Europe, Asia (outside Japan), and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand). For the Japanese market, HTA contracted with J Compass doing business as Hawaii Tourism Japan (HTJ) for marketing management services. Specifically, HTJ provides Hawaii's tourism representation and destination marketing in the Japanese market through travel trade, promotions, event marketing, familiarization tours, public relations and public affairs, advertising (through Dentsu, Inc.), Web development, and consumer and trade shows (HTA, n.d.).

Japanese tourists have for a long time shared a large part in the total visitors to

Hawaii. The number of Japanese tourists to Hawaii started growing at high rate of around 30 % in the early 1970s from below 200,000 travelers annually. In 1970, Japanese tourists shared 8 % of the total visitor count. By 1990, the share had grown to 21 % with about 1.50 million (LaBarge, 2002). During 1995-1997, the annual numbers of Japanese tourists to Hawaii kept the levels of over 2 million, topping at over 2.20 million in 2007, or about 33 % of the total visitors to Hawaii (see Figure 7.6).

**Figure 7.6. Japanese tourists to Hawaii**



Source: Visitor Statistics of Hawaii (Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism of Hawaii, n.d.), and Statistics of Japanese tourists traveling abroad (JTM, 2009)

As part of Japan's overseas travel encouragement policy mentioned in the section 1.7.1, the investments of Japanese firms in Hawaii's tourism industry beginning from the early 1970s greatly contributed the growth of Japanese travelers

to Hawaii. By 1990, the Japanese had established a closed system getting money from Japanese visitors not only for hotel rooms but also for eating, shopping, golfing, transportation, and entertainment. This system was based on a network of Hawaii-based subsidiaries in construction and car rental companies, an insurance company, a dry cleaning chain, a dairy company, at least 21 independent restaurants and 4 bakeries, at least 20 shopping centers, and a minimum of 21 golf courses (Time, 1973; LaBarge, 2002). According to Nishiyama (1996), Hawaii is such a comfortable destination that it has become one of the “domestic destinations” for repeat visitors as a result of a sense of familiarity and affinity with the local Japanese population in Hawaii. JTB plays a big role in bringing Japanese travelers to Hawaii. In 1997, JTB brought in almost 500,000 Japanese visitors to Hawaii, nearly a quarter of the total of Japanese tourists of the year (Paiva & Derek, 1998).

However, the number of Japanese tourists to Hawaii constantly decreased during 1998-2003 to just above 1.34 million in 2003 (see Figure 7.6). The Asian economic crisis and the recession of Japan’s economy were regarded among the major causes of this decrease. In additions, Gomes (1998) evaluated that Hawaii had offered Japanese travelers the same old picture when

“Repeat visitors seek new attractions. Baby boomers yearn for more cultural enrichment but want less sun and sand. Japanese travelers crave shopping with value. Cruise-ship passengers desire rest and relaxations on land. And convention groups want activities outside of meetings” (Gomes, 1998, p.1).

Since 1998, Hawaii has made strong efforts to revive the Japanese market. Konishiki, a retired sumo wrestler from the island of Oahu, Hawaii was used as Hawaii’s spokesman in a new advertising campaign for the Japanese market. Billboards of the sumo star were being rolled out around Japan showing him

sprawled on a beach, with the caption: “Big Relax, Big Hawaii” (Carlton, 1999). However, the situation continued worsening. The September 11, 2001 event made the Japanese too scared to fly. According to the General Manager of JTB Hawaii Inc. Yujiro Kuwabara, in addition to being concerned about safety, Japanese travelers worried about what the American people might think if they arrived to seek relaxation in a time of international crisis. To relieve the concerns, Hawaii Governor Ben Cayetano made a personal appeal to the Japanese in Japan to persuade Japanese travelers to abandon their long-held perception of staying at home by sending the message: “We appreciate your concern, but we also think it’s very appropriate for you to come back” (Pinkston & Fujii, 2001). His mission to Japan was timed to coincide with a big ads campaign of USD 7 million to promote Hawaii as ready-to-please with full-page ads in all five major Japanese dailies carrying an appeal from Cayetano addressed “Dearest Citizens of Japan” (Dawson & Prasso, 2001).

When the number of Japanese tourists to Hawaii in 2002 was still on a downtrend, the outbreak of SARS and the war in Iraq in 2003 sharpened the crisis. Given the context, in 2003, the Hawaii Tourism Authority redirected nearly USD 4 million in funds from long-term marketing campaigns to short-term promotions, allocating USD 9 million for the Japanese market (Spector, 2003). The Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) launched a large-scale marketing strategy in Japan. The strategy started with an advertising blitz in major newspapers in Japan conveying a message that Hawaii is the best, safest, and coolest place to vacation during the summer. The advertisements included the Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle’s photo and a message from her. Hawaii also made collaborative efforts with

Japanese wholesalers to focus on new package deals to Hawaii. Moreover, the campaign called for HVCB and its agents to work with travel agents in Japan, teaching them how to sell Hawaii for the summer (Natarajan, 2003). Despite continuous marketing efforts, the number of Japanese travelers to Hawaii decreased by 10 % as compared to 2002 (Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism of Hawaii, n.d.).

In 2004, the Hawaii Tourism Japan (HTJ) office started its operations with an office headquartered in Tokyo. HTJ also opened a local liaison office in Hawaii working closely with the Tokyo office to coordinate familiarization and press tours from Japan and to disseminate new information about Hawaii to the Japanese market. Especially, HTJ launched its 2004 Hawaii marketing campaign titled “6 Islands, 6 Surprises”. The concept emphasizes the individual characteristics of the six major Hawaii islands, including arts and culture to showcase Hawaii’s diversity while also revealing attractive attributes yet to be discovered by Japanese travelers (HTA, 2004). HTJ had a USD 7.3 million budget to bring 1.50 million Japanese tourists to Hawaii in 2004, targeting active senior citizens, wedding and honeymooning couples, single women, and mothers and daughters. The rationales for targeting these segments of Japanese travelers are indicated in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2. Segments of Japanese tourists targeted by Hawaii's 2004 "Six Island, Six Surprises" marketing campaign**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Segments</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>1</b>	Active senior citizens	This group has time and money to spend. Hawaii's good infrastructure, safety, weather and culture make it a favorite with this age group, which are inclined toward long stays.
<b>2</b>	Wedding and honeymooning couples	About 25,000 Japanese couples come to Hawaii to get married annually. Each couple brings at least eight others as part of the group. However, most couples head to Tahiti or Las Vegas for the honeymoon, wanting to escape friends and family in Hawaii. The new campaign promotes neighbor islands as secluded resorts ideal for honeymoons.
<b>3</b>	Single women	Typically in their 30s and 40s and with high disposable income, these women want to take a vacation they can brag about. They want themed vacations and the new promotion focuses on Hawaii's arts and culture, nature hikes and eco-tours.
<b>4</b>	Mothers and daughters	It's a growing trend for mothers to take trips with their daughters. They do things together during the vacation and spend more quality time with each other. The new campaign promotes Hawaii as ideal for such bonding trips – where it's safe for women, they can learn hula and quilting and shop together. Usually such trips end up being at least a week long and expensive.

Source: Natarajan (2004)

According to the Executive Director of HTJ, Takashi Ichikura, the above segments of Japanese travelers have money but are looking at other destinations, and HTJ wanted them to come back to Hawaii (Natarajan, 2004). He stressed that this promotion campaign is based on knowledge of the Japanese consumer, which is different from the previous campaigns mainly based on concepts generated in Hawaii

and then adapted to Japan without consideration given to the Japanese consumer's preference (Natarajan, 2004).

In establishing 2005's annual marketing plan, HTJ evaluated that the number of travelers to Hawaii was growing, but had been near the limit of growth, so it was necessary to raise the quality of tourists, in terms of length of stay, spending, etc. Compared to other resort destinations, Hawaii was weak in the images of "unique", "has traditions", and "is mysterious" that required enhancing images unique to Hawaii based on its original culture and history. The communication concept for 2005 is "Discover Aloha - Six Islands, Six Surprises" emphasizing Hawaii's unique tradition and historical facts to convey in-depth charm and the Aloha Spirit of Hawaii expressed as in the box below

<b>A</b>	<b>Akakai:</b>	<b>Compassion. Respecting others</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Lokahi:</b>	<b>Cooperation. Helping others out</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Olu'olu:</b>	<b>Joy. Tender feelings toward others</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Ha'aha'a:</b>	<b>Humbleness. Being humble with regard to others</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Ahonui:</b>	<b>Patience. Accepting others</b>

Communication targeted all the audience groups. However, PR and magazine ads were enhanced targeting active seniors, families, and weddings as quality markets. The campaign execution was based on using TV commercials, print media, and Web sites: TV commercials were to create interest among the audience, while the print media were to tell more in-depth stories, and the Web site followed peripheral information, thereby building a multifaceted campaign that took advantage of media characteristics (HTJ, 2005.).

In 2006, HTJ continued its efforts to re-brand Hawaii as a sophisticated



destination worth traveling by spending more time and money to improve the quality of its visitors. Moreover, HTJ enhanced travel trade communication on educating the travel trade in what Hawaii has to offer. The long-term goal is to create and establish new markets by communicating the advantages offered only by Hawaii and new reasons for visiting the islands. HTJ continued to communicate that Hawaii's authentic culture, tradition and history to convey in depth the charm and Aloha Spirit of Hawaii. The campaign was advertised on television, radio, and magazine advertisements in Japan. Moreover, HTA cooperated with JCB (a Japanese credit card company) to promote the "*Discover Aloha Hawaii*" campaign, which targeted JCB cardholders. During the Golden Week and summer, JCB promoted "*Aloha Shirt Present*" campaign (to take advantage of the government's energy saving suggestion of wearing light clothing while increasing room temperatures to save air conditioning) (HTA, 2006; HTJ, 2005).

Hawaii enjoyed a rebound of Japanese tourists in 2004 and 2005 consecutively with the growth rates of 11 % and 2 % respectively, after 6 years of continuous decline. However, in 2006 Hawaii suffered a decrease of 10 % as compared to 2005, and the downtrend is continuing at time of writing (Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism of Hawaii, 2009). According to the Executive Director of HTJ, the decline of available airline seats from Japan to Hawaii, higher fuel surcharges, and rising hotel charges discourage Japanese travelers (Wilkening, 2007). In 2007, the total air seats from Japan to Hawaii were 1,828,672 while Japanese travelers only took up about 1.3 million seats (HTJ, 2009). Moreover, according to the Director of HTJ' Honolulu Office, Hawaii has to compete with new destinations such as Eastern Europe, Vietnam and Dubai (Letman, 2007).

During 2007-2009, Hawaii continued enhancing the “*Discover Aloha Hawaii*” campaign, aiming at increasing shoulder season arrivals, average length of stay, and spending of Japanese travelers. The priority of this campaign continued to be the high-end travelers including romance visitors (for weddings, honeymoons, and vow renewals), multigenerational families (baby’s first trip and reunions), and active seniors (retirement, birthdays, and anniversaries). The major components of the integrated programs of consumer and trade marketing of the campaign are described in Figure 7.7 and 7.8 with various activities during the year (HTJ, 2009).

**Figure 7.7. The integrated program of consumer marketing of HTJ**



Source: The Hawaii Tourism Japan (HTJ, 2009)

**Figure 7.8. The integrated program of trade marketing of HTJ**



Source: The Hawaii Tourism Japan (HTJ, 2009)

## **Chapter VIII – Discussion**

This chapter discusses the results of researching the issues stated in Chapter I, regarding (1) the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers, (2) the national tourism destination management, and tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam, and (3) the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers. For each research issue, this chapter discusses policies for Vietnam to improve its image in Japan as a tourism destination.

### **8.1. The Images of Vietnam as a Tourism Destination for Japanese Travelers**

#### *8.1.1. The attribute-based images*

According to the arguments serving as the hypotheses about the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers withdrawn from the preliminary phase of research (see Table 5.3), the results of the attribute performance of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers (see Table 5.5)

- Strongly support the arguments that Vietnam is a destination of low prices, delicious cuisine, and rich culture; and that the situations of service quality, health care system, infrastructure, and cleanliness in Vietnam are poor;
- Support (at a lower level compared to the above) the arguments that Vietnam may represent new experiences, friendly people, many beautiful natural landscapes, famous and interesting history, many handicrafts/small attractive items, impressive national characters, relaxing atmosphere, interesting local ways of life, good traditional fine arts, bright economic prospect, many

tourist attractions, and exciting traditional performances;

- Clarify that Vietnam can suggest many knowledge, adventure, and career/business opportunities, and many unique souvenir products; and
- Do not indicate clear support for the arguments that Vietnam is a destination of good shopping places, many beautiful seaside resorts, beautiful beaches, personal safety, political stability, easy accessibility to other regional destinations, many beautiful architectural buildings, nice climate, good spa and massage services, and many world heritages.

Moreover, the results of comparing the attribute-based images in the perceptions of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not provide the following inferences:

- The fact that Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam appreciated delicious cuisine, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, handicrafts/small attractive items, bright economic prospect, and many tourist attractions more than those who had not been to Vietnam further confirms the strengths of Vietnam in these attributes;
- The fact that those who had been to Vietnam also had higher opinions of Vietnam regarding political stability, personal safety, and career/business opportunities, but all at low levels opens some limited hope with great difficulties for Vietnam to be able change the poor images of Vietnam in these important attributes;
- The fact that those who had been to Vietnam expressed stronger negative reaction to the situation of cleanliness in Vietnam than those who had not

been to Vietnam reveals that cleanliness is a serious problem facing Vietnam's tourism.

Based on the above findings, it is still not possible to fully know what images can serve as the strong attractors of Vietnam for Japanese travelers, because the importance of these attributes in the Japanese mind has not been clear and perceptions of a place do not necessarily reveal their attitudes towards that place (Kotler, 2002), and consumer satisfaction is a function of both expectations related to certain important attributes and judgments of attribute performance (O'Leary & Deegan, 2005). Therefore, further analyses of the attribute performance of Vietnam in consideration of the importance of the attributes can help decide the beneficiary images Vietnam should promote and the negative images Vietnam should improve in order to attract Japanese travelers. The results of the importance-performance analysis suggest that:

- The beneficiary images Vietnam should keep up its good work in include: low prices, delicious cuisine, rich culture, new experience, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, knowledge opportunities, impressive national characters, relaxing atmosphere, interesting local ways of life, and good traditional fine arts; and
- The negative images Vietnam should improve include: cleanliness, health care system, service quality, personal safety, political stability, and architectural buildings;

Surprisingly, the fact that good shopping places, beautiful seaside resorts, and beautiful beaches are in the group of low priority for Vietnam is explained by the

modest importance of these attributes when Japanese consider traveling abroad. Perhaps, shopping is part of a Japanese traveler's trip because of the "*omiyage*" tradition as discussed in the section 3.1.2, but is not the purpose of the trip. The modest importance of beautiful seaside resorts and beautiful beaches may be explained by the small segment of Japanese travelers who travel just for enjoying sun and sea. For large number of Japanese travelers visiting sea destinations such as Hawaii, Phuket, Bali, and Guam, beside enjoying sun and sea, other important motivations include playing golf, tennis and other kind of sea sports, participating in cultural and entertainment activities (folk songs, folk dances, and night club shows, etc.), and seeking comfort for physical relief and mental relaxation from high quality service and new environment as discussed in the section 3.1.2.

Also, it is noticeable that while the Vietnamese side is strongly confident about the situation of safety in Vietnam, which is shown in the result of the brief survey presented in the section 5.1.4, and some Japanese travel managers also mentioned safety as a comparative advantage of Vietnam, Japanese travelers expressed serious concerns about their personal safety in Vietnam. Through the interviews with VNAT's tourism administrators and what the researcher gained from 4 years working for VNAT, there is a difference in the perception of safety between the Vietnamese side and Japanese travelers: while the Vietnamese side think of safety as a factor mostly concerning the macro environment including conflicts, terrorist attacks, and political instability that have been rampant in many countries such as the US, Iraq, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, etc. since the early 2000s; Japanese travelers think of safety a factor related more to daily problems such as cleanliness, (in)convenience, and cheating, etc. It is also noticeable that there is some evidence

that the strengths of Vietnam such as famous and interesting history and bright economic prospects are regarded as not important by Japanese travelers.

The results of comparing the attribute importance held by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and that held by those who had not reveal that Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam are more ready to travel than the other group when attaching significantly more importance to new experience and adventure opportunities, and do not care much about local ways of life, friendliness, good traditional fine arts, and famous interesting history. Those who had not been to Vietnam are more demanding when attaching significantly more importance to knowledge opportunities, cleanliness, beautiful architectural buildings, good traditional fine arts, beautiful beaches, many tourist attractions, unique souvenir products, and bright economic prospect than the other group. Importantly, this comparison suggests that in order to attract more demanding Japanese travelers, Vietnam needs to improve the images regarding the climate, beaches, and architectural buildings, in addition to the situation of personal safety, political stability, cleanliness, health care system, and service quality as required by those who had been to Vietnam. The factor analyses also reveal that while 'Novelty' is the factor most explaining the description variance of those who had been to Vietnam. 'Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture' is the most important factor for those who had not been to Vietnam, and 'Novelty' stands behind 'Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture', 'Natural and Built Tourist Attractions' in this case.



### *8.1.2. The holistic images*

The holistic images withdrawn from the empirical research further clarify the attribute-based images. Accordingly, the delicious cuisine of Vietnam is well known among Japanese travelers. In addition, traditional long dresses (“Ao dai”) are the most well-known iconic item of Vietnam. Also, Vietnam is commonly believed to be a destination of low prices. Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi are naturally the most well-known attractions mentioned by both the Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not because these are the two biggest centers of Vietnam in the south and the north. Ho Chi Minh City seems more famous possibly because it is the biggest city in Vietnam with more economic activities, a denser network of flights, and an easier accessibility to Angkor Wat (Cambodia), and other ASEAN destinations.

Noticeably, Ho Chi Minh City is more famous among those who had not been to Vietnam, but Hanoi is more mentioned as a city with unique characteristics of Vietnam by those who had been to Vietnam. Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam usually held that Ho Chi Minh City is similar to any other Asian cities, while Hanoi is typically Vietnamese. It is also noticeable that the central region of Vietnam is also emphasized by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam as a distinctive tourism region with such famous attractions as the former capital of Hue, Nha Trang City, Hoi An Ancient Town, and Da Nang City. Importantly, that Hue and Ha Long Bay are chosen as the most distinctive attractions of Vietnam by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam, and that those who had not been to Vietnam only virtually know about these places suggests that these two attractions should be

among the major foci in the advertising programs for the Japanese market.

Moreover, the fact that the unique attractions are distributed rather equally among the south (Ho Chi Minh City, Me Kong Delta, Cu Chi Tunnels, and War Museum), the center (Hue Former Capital, Hoi An Ancient Town, Da Nang City, and Nha Trang Seaside), and the north (Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, and Sa Pa) facilitate the zoning of Vietnam into three zones of attractions for Japanese travelers. According to the theory of the relationship between the distance from an originating market and the area of a destination (Takamatsu, 2007), the shorter distance one travels, the smaller area a destination covers. In consideration of the short time flying from Japan to Vietnam (4-5 hours), the three zones of Vietnam can be three tour packages for Japanese travelers to increase repeaters who do not have much time for a several-week trans-Vietnam tour with various attractions, but can visit one zone in a several-day trip. When the researcher talked with Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam, he realized that for those who had been to Vietnam only once, not many people visited all the three zones, usually the north or the south only; and Japanese people who had visited all the three zones of Vietnam are usually businessmen who have many travel opportunities, and students and seniors who have time for long travel.

The holistic images also confirm the results of the attribute-based images about the negative images of Vietnam regarding poor infrastructure, safety, and cleanliness. The poor infrastructure of Vietnam shown in the facilities of the airports in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, the inconvenient domestic transport system, and the poor drainage system makes it difficult for Vietnam to persuade well-off travelers. More seriously, the actions of pocket-lifting, street begging, cheating, and robbing, etc.

make Vietnam less attractive in the eyes of ordinary Japanese travelers. Moreover, noisy, crowded, and messy streets, and polluted and dirty environment can make Japanese travelers afraid of Vietnam. Cleanliness is among the greatest problems Vietnam has to tackle, because this is one of the biggest concerns of Japanese travelers. In addition, the undisciplined habits of Vietnamese people such as throwing waste freely, not queuing in the line, and not following public transport regulations may make Japanese travelers have an uncomfortable feeling.

In a talk with Prof. Ogata Masakatsu, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, a former Vice President and Executive of JNTO, about Japanese travelers when the author of this dissertation did his master's thesis, he held that there are three levels of concerns for travelers when considering a visit to a destination: Safety, Inconvenience, and Disrespect. These levels are set according to the following rationale:

Firstly, it is obvious that if a traveler is worried about the situation of safety of a place, that traveler will never think of a trip to that destination. That also explains why tourism can usually not develop in a land of wars/conflicts. Therefore, *Safety* is the first level issue of concern, or the fundamental and most serious one;

Secondly, when a destination is safe, it can draw attention of travelers, but the number and types of visitors are based on the convenience that destination can offer. Therefore, newly-emerged destinations with poor infrastructure and services are mainly interested by explorers with limited budgets and lower demand for convenience; well-off visitors who have high spending capacity and want to enjoy comfort usually travel to high class destinations with fully-developed infrastructure

and good services. Therefore, *Inconvenience* is the second level of concern;

Thirdly, the issue of how a traveler is treated may decide his/her attitude toward a destination. For well-off and noble travelers, the satisfaction of material comfort is only part of their travel motivation, the (dis)respect of his/her personal status has a strong influence on their decision. Therefore, *Disrespect* is the third level of concern.

According to the above discussion, the negative images of Vietnam regarding infrastructure, safety, and cleanliness indicates that Japanese travelers still have concerns about Vietnam at the serious level – Safety and Inconvenience. As discussed by Kotler (2002) and Chacko (n.d.), an overall image implies a whole set of beliefs about a place, not an attribute in separation. The credibility of the positive attributes of Vietnam may diminish rapidly if visitors feel that their personal safety is threatened. With poor infrastructure, Vietnam can not fulfill the expectations of Japanese travelers about these positive attributes. For example, the good feeling from a beautiful natural landscape may breakdown if something uncomfortable happens during their trip. In such a situation, Vietnam has not been an attractive destination for general Japanese travelers although in their mind Vietnam is a destination of rich culture, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, relaxing atmosphere, impressive national characters, interesting local ways of life, and good traditional fine arts. However, Vietnam may be a destination for Japanese travelers seeking for novelty including business opportunities.

The above finding indicates that the suggestion by Cooper (2000) that new marketing strategies “should be to attract precisely those tourists who are most able to cope with infrastructure problems or who desire an economy-class experience” (p.

176) still maintains its value in the case of Japanese travelers until now. However, the success of the APEX Vietnam in attracting Japanese travelers reveals that while attracting a large number of Japanese young travelers, Vietnam can still attract Japanese senior well-off travelers if there is an active participation of Japanese travel companies with appropriate planning. This finding also support the idea stated by Money and Crofts (2000) that “success in Japan usually requires working with established companies and systems rather than trying to work around them” (p. 15).

#### *8.1.3. The effects of different information sources*

The results of the effects of different information sources emphasize the strong effects of relatives and friends (words of mouth), travel guidebooks, television, pamphlets/brochures, and internet. While the role of words of mouth and television has been widely recognized, the role of travel companies through the importance of travel guidebooks and travel pamphlets/brochures is stressed in the case of Japan. Moreover, while words of mouth are an organic source of information, all the other sources are more touristic-commercial sources (television and internet may be organic or touristic-commercial). There is one characteristic in common among these sources that they are all semi-dynamic/semi-controllable independent sources, so Vietnam can affect them to serve its purposes.

The results of the effects of different information sources also reveal that the tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam have had unclear influence on the images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind. This belongs to the responsibility of Vietnam because the tourism promotion and marketing is a dynamic/controllable source of information. Moreover, world travel fairs as the most common means of

the tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam have little influence. This finding may be explained by the opinion of Mr. Nguyen Phu Duc, Chairman of the Vietnam Tourism Association (VITA) and a former Vice Chairman of VNAT, world travel fairs are an occasion for travel companies to find partners rather than that to promote the images of a destination.

Finally, the fact that all the selected information sources have stronger influence on Japanese travelers who had not been to Vietnam in forming the images of Vietnam in their mind can be explained by the role of the real experiences of those who had been to Vietnam. Because of the effect of their real experiences, the role of the other information sources becomes less important. Noticeably, that the promotion and marketing of Vietnam has some significant influence on those who had not been to Vietnam implies two facts: first, this information source has had some effect on the images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind; and second, these effects are not positive and strong enough to persuade them to visit Vietnam.

#### *8.1.4. The attitudes of the non-reply Japanese travelers*

58 % of Japanese respondents answering the paper questionnaire and about 25 % of Japanese respondents answering the online questionnaire were those who had some interest in the topic – especially those who had been to Vietnam. In addition, 42 % Japanese travelers who were requested to answer the paper questionnaire and 75 % Japanese travelers who were requested to answer the online questionnaire, but did not answer had one or more of the following characteristics:

- (1) Being unlikely to participate in any survey;

(2) Being not ready to fill in the questionnaire because it may be time-consuming for them; and

(3) Having no interest in the topic of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers.

For those who have the first and/or second characteristic(s), it is difficult to predict their opinions of Vietnam as a tourism destination - they may be interested in traveling to Vietnam or they may not. Therefore, there is some rate of error in the results of the images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind. However, in this dissertation the images of Vietnam is approached from multiple angles - not only statistical analyses but also other channels of information such as Japanese travel guidebooks and brochures, and comments from Japanese airline and travel managers. Therefore, the error caused by non-response rate has been minimized. For those who have only the third characteristic, the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination in their mind are predicted to be unclear or likely to be negative. Some Japanese travelers frankly said that because they knew little about Vietnam, they could not answer the questionnaire.

## **8.2. The National Tourism Destination Management, and Promotion and Marketing of Vietnam**

### *8.2.1. The national tourism destination management of Vietnam*

Firstly, the history of the national tourism management organization, especially after the start of the ‘*Doi Moi*’ process in 1986 to now, reveals that Vietnam has problems with placing the position of this organization in the administrative system: Should it belong to the Ministry of Culture, or the Ministry of Trade, or stand as an

independent organization under the Prime Minister? From 1990 up to now, VNAT has experienced all three statuses. According to Mr. Pham Trung Luong, Deputy Head of the Institute of Tourism Development Research, the approach to the position of tourism in Vietnam has problems – tourism is identified as a spear-head economic sector, but is in fact ignored; as a result the national tourism organization has been separated to become independent, then again merged into other ministries several times.

In South Korea, KTO belongs to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and in Thailand, TAT is part of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, but these national tourism organizations work efficiently to promote their countries' tourism (see sections 8.3.2 and 8.3.3). In Vietnam, while the organizational and legal framework for tourism management has been established and; the large number of travel and hotels of all the types of ownership indicates that Vietnam's tourism has developed to become a real industry, the problem does not lie in the status of VNAT but how VNAT is supported in fact and how it works.

Referring to the support for VNAT, the conflicting needs and wants between VNAT and the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggest that the support VNAT can receive is the result of political evolution, in which the decision is inclined to favor the ministry with stronger voice in the political system. The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the core ministries of the government, while VNAT is an organization established after the war, emerging since the '*Doi Moi*' process started in 1986, and having an unstable status since its establishment. Although Vietnam's tourism is identified as a spear-head industry of the national

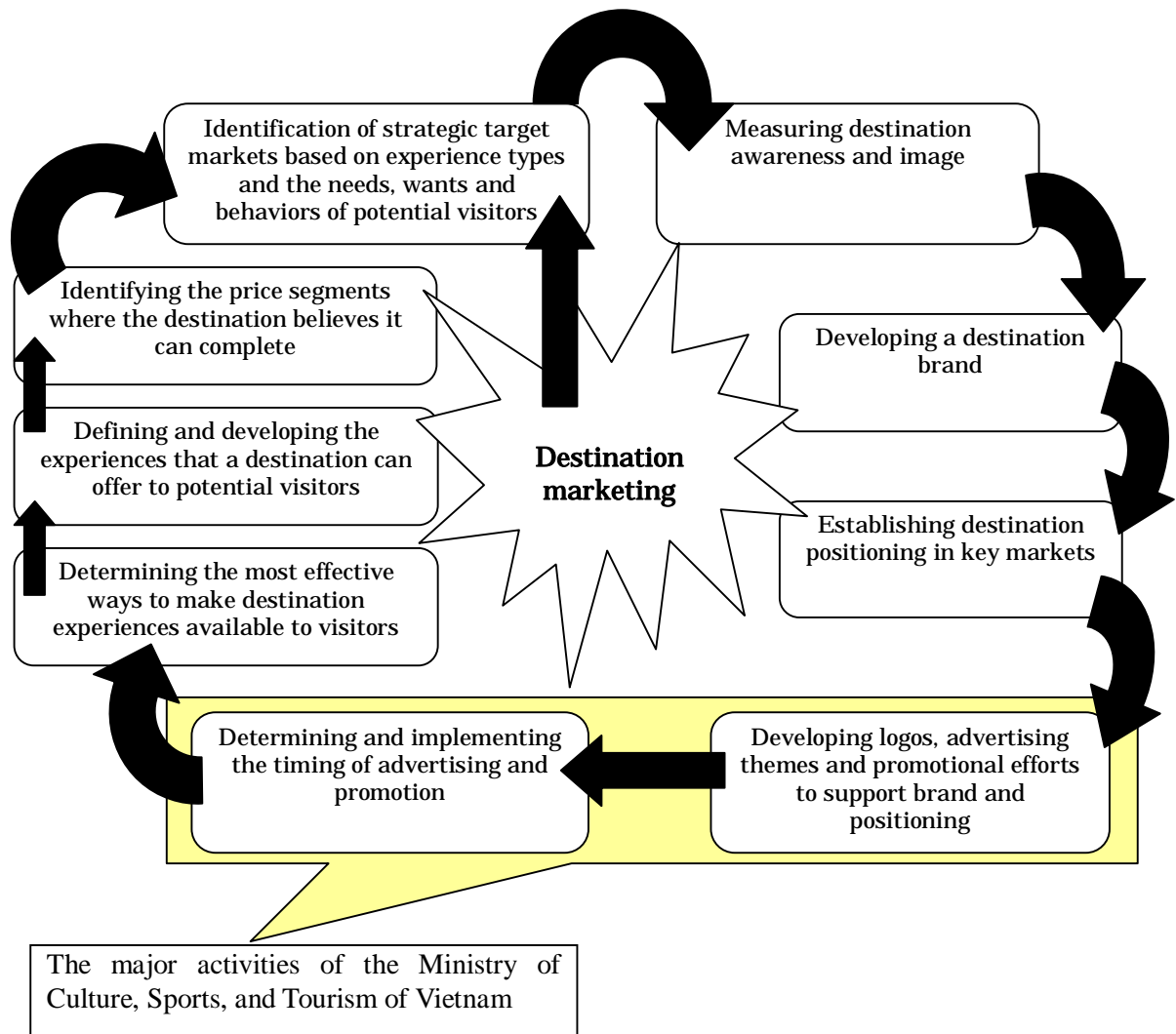


economy, tourism has not been able to prove such an important role yet. Therefore, the development of Vietnam's tourism has to depend on the development of other sectors. In fact, there have been considerable advances resulting from the increasing integration of Vietnam into the world economy, such as the exemption of visas for citizens of fifteen (15) countries including Japan. However, this is an unavoidable trend when Vietnam wants to enhance cooperation and exchanges with other countries. In the given context, the only way for VNAT to receive greater support from the administrative system is to prove its important role through the impressive performance. Nevertheless, in the given context, VNAT can not prove its important role, and this is further discussed in the next section.

#### *8.2.2. The national tourism destination promotion and marketing of Vietnam*

The analysis of the Tourism Law of Vietnam reveals that there is no formal public organization in charge of tourism destination marketing in Vietnam. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, particularly VNAT is only in charge of tourism promotion, one of the least important tasks of tourism destination marketing as pointed by Kotler (2002). According to the theory of tourism destination marketing, particularly the elements of destination marketing, VNAT mainly deals with determining and implementing the timing of advertising and promotion (see Figure 8.1), occasionally initiates logos and advertising themes, and implements promotional efforts.

**Figure 8.1. The elements of tourism destination marketing and the major activities of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Vietnam**



With promotion activities separated from many important steps of the wider process of tourism destination marketing, it can be said that there has not been true tourism destination marketing in Vietnam. There is a lack of many necessary steps serving as the foundations for the activities of VNAT, including the measuring of destination awareness and image as done by this dissertation, developing a destination brand, and establishing destination positioning in key markets. To some extent, VNAT has participated in determining the most effective ways to make

destination experiences available to visitors, and defining and developing the experiences that a destination can offer through the activities of the Travel Department. However, no price segments are identified for tourism promotion campaigns. Promotion programs are the same for all the segments, even for all the foreign markets, no matter it is Japan, South Korea, or France. Because the tourism promotion of Vietnam is not placed within a process of tourism destination marketing, its effectiveness is limited, no matter what organ is in charge of this task.

The conflicting opinions about what, general country images or tourism destination images, should be prioritized in the tourism promotion of Vietnam reveal a confusion of Vietnam about the roles of general national image and tourism destination image. General national images of Vietnam should be promoted to make the world understand more about Vietnam, because tourism destinations are seen as dynamic and historical units with specific identities characterized by hegemonic and other discourses, which all produce a notion of what the destination is and represents at the time (Saarinen, 2004). Moreover, successful tourism promotion is dependent on a broad range of external influences, and tourism promotion does not have a major impact on the perceptions of travelers and that other sources of information (television, friends, magazines, internet, books, pictures, movies, etc...) have a much greater bearing on the formation of destination image (Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007).

However, from the view of tourism destination marketing, tourism destination image, to some extent, has a comparative independence and should be designed separately to support the process of bringing the right tourism products of a country to visitors. The process of building general national images takes time, and needs the participation of various sectors such as culture, politics trade, sports, etc. Promoting

general images of a country does not immediately help this process, resulting in low efficiency of tourism marketing strategies. For example, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism prioritized in broadcasting the images of Vietnamese seas, the central highlands, and Phu Quoc Island on CNN in the Asia – Pacific area, including Japan. However, Mr. Nguyen Van Tran, General Director of the APEX Vietnam held that only a small proportion of Japanese visitors like the central highlands, and Phu Quoc Island. Instead, they prefer to visit cultural heritage, shopping, and beauty services. In this case, wrong products were brought to potential visitors. Nevertheless, marketers should carefully consider the recommendation that destination marketing organizations can and should go beyond traditional mainstream media to communicate their brand message, because mainstream media play little or no part in the formation of respondents' image (Hanlan & Kelly, 2005). Tourism destination marketing has distinctive channels to approach potential visitors, beside the mainstream media broadcasting general images.

In consideration of a country in the transition from a centralized command economy to a market economy as Vietnam has been since 1986, the acceptance of foreign individuals and entities to participate as a contractor in tourism destination promotion programs and the cooperation between VNAT and travel companies in world travel fairs and exhibition can be, to some extent, considered an advance in Vietnam tourism's public management. However, these advances are still modest, far from enough to efficiently support the development of the tourism industry. Since 2006, only a few noticeable contracts with some TV channels such as CNN, BBC have been conducted. The other programs have been carried out with great difficulties caused by the slow-pace and complicated administrative procedures. This

fact also indicates that the public-private partnership in the tourism destination promotion of Vietnam is still in a very primitive form because of the rather closed system of the public sector. In such a closed system, the Ministry of Finance is a “super” ministry which in fact can decide and supervise the operations of the other ministries through the tool of budget allocation. As far as such a system still remains, there is little hope for a significant increase of budget allocated for tourism promotion, and for basic improvements of time-consuming financial procedures. In such a system, no long-term strategy can work efficiently and Vietnam is still “a strategic planner’s paradise – for plans on paper that is” (Cooper, 2000, p.175) like a decade ago.

Moreover, the poor quality of staff is a big problem of VNAT. In fact, every year there are short training courses of tourism destination marketing lectured by Vietnamese and foreign experts from such countries as Singapore, Thailand, and Spain, etc. However, while staff can gain knowledge and experience with time, the rigid mechanism for tourism promotion still remains: As in the former centralized command economy before 1986, administrative staff work according to slow-paced administrative orders and complicated procedures without strong motivation and pressure, while tourism enterprises operate based on the Law of Enterprises and are driven by the active market mechanism with profit purposes.

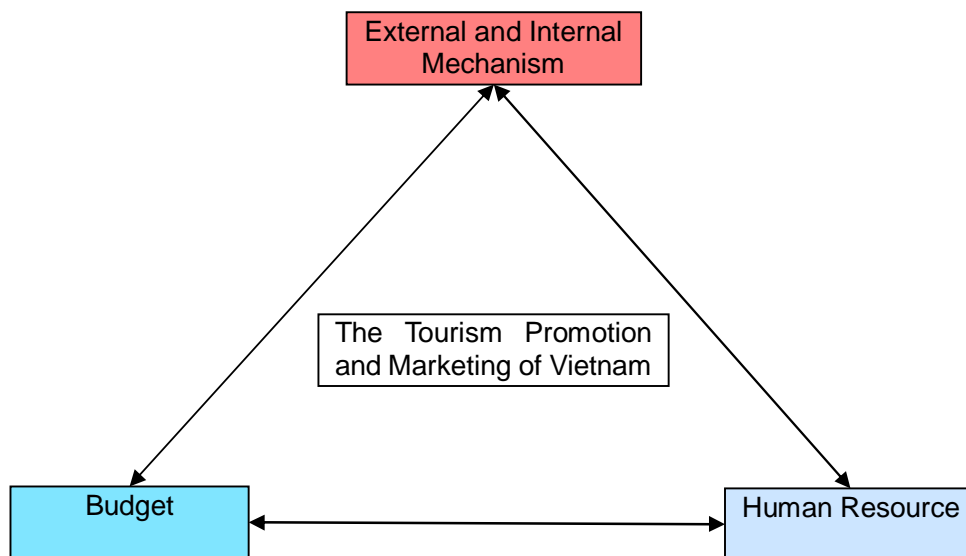
Furthermore, the Law of Vietnam’s Representative Offices in Foreign Countries is an effort to regain the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over international exposure but unfortunately is a drawback for the tourism industry, because tourism promotion in a foreign country is led by an ambassador from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who is unlikely to understand the distinctive fundamentals of tourism

promotion and there is therefore no guarantee that tourism promotion will receive enough consideration. Even more importantly however, the rigid centralized system inherited from the command economy has never fully broken down. In such a system, the private sector hardly has a role. Therefore, the private sector should help itself rather than seek for significant support from the public sector in the area of tourism promotion. Certainly, it may take more than another decade to reveal the inefficiency of the embassy-led tourism promotion of Vietnam to be able to hope for a significant change.

The opinions of the highest ranking leaders of the Vietnamese government such as the former Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, Deputy Prime Minister Vu Khoan, and Chairwoman of VNAT Vo Thi Thang further confirm that the tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam is bound in a triangle of obstacles as described in Figure 8.2. This triangle includes external and internal mechanism as the top angle, the others bottom angles are budget and human resource. The external mechanism refers to the modest substantive support the national tourism organization can receive from the other related ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Finance. The internal mechanism refers to the organization and operation of the national tourism organization itself, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and VNAT. The inefficient mechanism and small budgets make it hard to recruit, train, and keep good staff. Similarly, unprofessional staff and inefficient mechanism hinder the increase of budgets for tourism promotion and marketing; and to some extent, low budgets and unprofessional staff can slow the process of reforming the external and internal mechanism. Although it is not easy for the tourism promotion and marketing professionals of Vietnam to escape from these

problems, the best solution should come from a radical reform of the external and internal mechanism, because once this lock has been opened, the problem of low budgets can be resolved by the support of the private sector, or foreign partners. In a system of favorable mechanisms and sufficient budgets, it is also not difficult to recruit, train, and keep good staff.

**Figure 8.2. The triangle of obstacles for the tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam**



The “*Impressive Vietnam*” campaign, though criticized for its lack of promotion activities, can be considered the first active move of the public sector in cooperating with the private sector. According to the model of critical preconditions of collaboration by Jantararat and Williams (200) (see Figure 2.6) and the proposed framework for destination marketing alliance formation by Wang and Xiang (2007) (see Figure 2.7), this effort takes place when the market crisis as an external force puts high pressure on the industry, which in this case will force VNAT to actively collaborate with private tourism companies. Nevertheless, while the current

mechanism remains, success can not be guaranteed because the leadership of VNAT is still bound by the triangle of obstacles as described in Figure 8.2.

Regarding the establishment of Marketing and Competitiveness Groups within VNAT, this effort is just limited to seeking general proposals at domestic level rather than actively reaching out to foreign markets. The groups mainly concentrate on studying foreign travelers in Vietnam rather than tapping potential travelers in their own countries. If this approach is examined under the framework of the model of destination image and its relationship introduced by Tasci and Gartner (2007) (see Figure 2.8), the images of Vietnam in the perceptions of foreign travelers can only be explored during their visits in Vietnam, while their pre- and post-visit images are not considered, and this approach is far from enough to create a strong foundation for a marketing strategy aimed at a specific market like Japan.

Referring to the promotion of the national tourism destination images of Vietnam to the world, the currently used slogan “Vietnam – the Hidden Charm” reveals an old way of thinking. As commented by Prof. Leo Jago of Victoria University (Australia) and the Research Director of the Australian Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC), few travelers will choose to visit Vietnam by hearing this slogan, because it does not suggest anything specific and clear about Vietnam. Ms. Ton Nu Thi Ninh, a former Vice Chairwoman of the National Assembly’s Committee of Foreign Affairs suggests that Vietnam has never had a clear common message for tourism promotion. She notes that while other destinations have clear and confident messages such as “Malaysia – Truly Asia”, “Uniquely Singapore”, and “Incredible India”, the “Vietnam – the Hidden Charm” slogan does not convey any typical characteristic of Vietnam. She adds that it is a



matter of winning or failing, there is little room for being humble (Thanh Phong, 2008). Mr. Vo Anh Tai, Director of Saigontourist Travel Company, one of the top ten travel companies of Vietnam, complains that this slogan is not supported by specific images, so foreign travelers do not understand what the hidden charms are about. He adds that the national tourism destination promotion should be able to introduce the unknown distinctive characteristics of Vietnam as a tourism destination for travelers (Tin moi, 2009).

As for the national tourism destination promotion of Vietnam for the Japanese market, the annual participation in JATA and road shows around this participation are not enough to position the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers in Japan because world travel fairs have little influence on the images of Vietnam in Japan as found by this dissertation. Moreover, as noted by Mr. Nguyen Phu Duc, Chairman of the Vietnam Tourism Association (VITA) and a former Vice Chairman of VNAT, world travel fairs are an occasion for travel companies to find partners rather than to promote the image of a destination. Moreover, Mr. Masato Takamatsu, Director and Vice President of the Japan Tourism Marketing Co. (JTM), claimed that Vietnam's tourism marketing to specific market segments in Japan, and the provision of information for visitors, media and travel companies are very limited and unprofessional. Therefore, other channels with stronger influence on Japanese travelers such as travel guidebooks, television, pamphlets/brochures, and internet should be added for use in the national tourism destination promotion of Vietnam. In addition, as pointed out by Mr. Nguyen Van Tran, the General Director of APEX Vietnam, promotion activities that are not based on long term plans but only on occasional single activities can not create a strong position of Vietnam in the

Japanese market.

The contacts between the representatives of Vietnam's tourism and JATA within the "Visit World Campaign" are good opportunities for Vietnam to cooperate with the travel industry of Japan. However, all these contacts are limited to general discussion and proposals, no action plan is implemented. In consideration of the important role of Japanese travel companies in bringing Japanese travelers to the world, VNAT should have acted as a convener to establish a working group of the Japanese market, looking for ways to strengthen the tourism industries of Japan and Vietnam.

According to the annual promotion activities of Vietnam to the Japanese market compared to those to other markets, such as Korea, China, Taiwan, ASEAN (Malaysia and Thailand), Western Europe (Germany, France, Spain, England), the Japanese market has never received more priority than any other market although it has been considered a target market by the Strategy for Tourism Development of Vietnam 2001-2010 (The Government of Vietnam, 2002). This policy of Vietnam is different from that of Korea and Hawaii which regard Japan as one market and the rest of Asia as another market. Thailand also emphasizes on the importance of the Japanese market by establishing 3 tourism representative offices in Japan, more than any other source market, with various regular and timely marketing campaigns. Three reasons may explain the situation of Vietnam: First, financial constraint limits national promotion and marketing activities in Japan; second, Vietnam's tourism marketers can not do anything more than participating JATA's annual world travel fairs in Tokyo and organizing some activities around this event; and third, beside Japan, Vietnam has too many equally important target markets, including China, ASEAN, United States, France, Germany, Britain, Korea, Northern Europe, Australia,

and New Zealand (The Government of Vietnam, 2002), which leads to an inefficient large stretch of limited resources, including human and financial capital.

Regarding the issue of the segment Vietnam should prioritize, both Vietnam Airlines (preferring the young traveler segment) and travel companies preferring the senior segment have suitable reasons for their arguments. Because Japanese travelers to Vietnam are mostly aged from twenty (20) to forty (40), many of them are students and females (CPV, 2007), Vietnam Airlines should focus on the young segment to increase airline customers. However, because young visitors usually travel as backpackers who do not use the travel services, the travel companies should focus on the senior segment.

This dissertation recommends that promotion programs should prioritize in the senior segment together with creating favorable conditions for the young segment. The young segment is less demanding, suitable for the current development level of Vietnam's tourism, and contributes a large number of visitors, thus benefiting the travel industry as a whole. As discussed in the section 3.1.1, youngsters, especially females are also those who are particularly eager to travel overseas (Kono, 2008). However, Vietnam should raise the quality of travelers in the long term together with upgrading the development level of the tourism industry. The senior segment contributes to the development of high standard travel services targeting well-off travelers. In Vietnam, although the general development level of the tourism industry is still low, there have been high standard tourist areas and a number of prestigious travel companies such as APEX Vietnam, Saigontourist, etc that can satisfy the strict demand of well-off Japanese travelers. The effect of senior segment-prioritized marketing campaigns may also help attract the young segment which is more ready

to travel. Moreover, JATA prioritizes in the youth market – 20's and 30's and senior market in its "Visit World Campaign", in which Vietnam is chosen as one of the key markets.

### **8.3. The Experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in Attracting Japanese Travelers**

#### *8.3.1. China*

The legal status and organization of CNTA is somewhat similar to that of VNAT before 2008, when VNAT was directly under the Prime Minister. However, the major difference lies in the Department of Tourism Promotion and International Liaison whose operation is not only limited to organizing promotional activities for key tourist regions, destinations, and routes like VNAT, but is also expanded to examining and approving foreign travel agencies to be established in China and instructing the operation of China's tourist institutions stationed abroad. Another important difference is that China has a large network of 18 overseas offices, two (2) of which are in Tokyo and Osaka. However, both the operations of CNTA and VNAT cover only tourism destination promotion, which is one of the least important tasks of tourism destination marketing.

Perhaps, the factors that most explain the large number of Japanese travelers to China include the advantage of China as a huge economy with various opportunities for business people who frequent between China and Japan through the dense network of air transportation, and the strong attraction of China through well-known cultural heritage. These factors make the Chinese market very attractive for Japanese travel companies, leading to their active operations in bring Japanese travelers to

China through their branches in China.

However, the political problems, especially those between Japan and China, are a major hindrance to the flow of Japanese travelers to China. In this aspect, Vietnam has some comparative advantage over China.

### *8.3.2. South Korea*

Different from VNAT and CNTO whose tasks are limited to tourism promotion, KTO strongly emphasizes on global marketing. The functions of the divisions and teams of global marketing indicate that KTO has paid attention to the major specific elements of tourism destination marketing such as market survey and statistics, brand and advertising, and marketing information technology. In addition to the marketing strategy team, KTO has a team particularly in charge of the Japanese market, which is considered the number one for South Korea. The large coverage on the Japanese land of KTO with five representative offices in Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, Sendai, and Nagoya demonstrates the priority of South Korea in the Japanese market.

The “Hallyu boom” was a special phenomenon contributing to the boom of Japanese travelers to South Korea, especially females during 2004 - 2005. However, KTO was very active in arranging and coordinating its marketing activities related to this phenomenon. Not only limited to organizing general events related to the “Hallyu boom”, but KTO also promoted these events as tour packages such as the Choi Ji-woo Classic Drama Concert in Seoul on June 24, 2005. Moreover, the active role of KTO was shown in its three-month special campaign (from October 2005) in Japan using various means such as meetings with regional directors, advertising in

television, newspapers, magazines, and radio, and holding fan meeting sessions with Hallyu stars to lengthen the “Hallyu boom” in Japan. Furthermore, like in China, major Japanese travel companies played an important part in bringing Japanese travelers to South Korea.

Although the “Hallyu boom” phenomenon has passed, with the active operations of KTO and the advantages of short distance from Japan, South Korea will be likely to remain one of the top destinations for Japanese travelers. Four (4) airports in South Korea having direct flights to Japan is only a small number if compared to twenty one (21) airports in China, but not a small number if compared to other countries such as Thailand and Hawaii. Moreover, the fact that 25 airports in Japan have a total of 487 scheduled flights per week to South Korea facilitates the travel of Japanese citizens from various localities, not only those who live near international airports.

### *8.3.3. Thailand*

Regarding the role of TAT, the most prominent feature is that it is established to focus on proactive marketing strategies to develop new markets for Thailand. The purpose of proactive marketing strategies is also clearly stated as to attract more quality tourists to visit Thailand. The other important feature is that TAT functions to unite the tourism industry for concerted actions for the development of tourism markets. The purpose of this operation is also clearly stated as to clear hindrances and pave the way for Thailand to be the tourism hub of Southeast Asia.

In fact, TAT has led all the efforts of Thailand in developing tourism markets

since the early 1990s, in which high spending Japanese tourists are prioritized. The TAT-led “Amazing Thailand” campaign with the specific themes as the distinctive images of Thailand is a model VNAT should learn from. Like CNTA and KTO, Thailand also has a large coverage in Japan with its representative offices in Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka. What should be noted is that the measures taken by TAT are always aimed at specific targets. For example, once MICE travelers and retirees are specified as high-end Japanese visitors, TAT allocated funds for the Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (TICA) to take quarterly trips for contacting prospective MICE clients in Japan, and signed a memorandum of understanding with 19 Japanese companies who committed to send their employees to travel in Thailand. Also, TAT has promoted a long-stay tourism program in Thailand aimed at Japanese retirees, highlighting the country’s infrastructure, hospitality, and medical care. The statistics that most Japanese visitors to Thailand are mainly from 35 to 44 years old, and the biggest growth has been in the number of elderly retirees indicate that Thailand has succeeded in attracting well-off Japanese travelers because these two groups of Japanese travelers have high spending capacity. It is also noticeable that while TAT prioritizes in high-end Japanese travelers, it also targets young travelers.

It is also noticeable that TAT has regularly signed business agreements with Japanese potential clients, including Japanese firms and travel companies with specific commitments. These practices of TAT are what that has not been done by VNAT. Instead, in each business trip to Japan, VNAT only works with JNTO and the leaders of JATA through general memoranda without targets and measures of performance. In addition, TAT has been quick in responding to the crises, which was shown in its various measures to cope with the concerns about safety due to such

adverse events as unrests, bombings, political upheavals in Thailand. In these efforts, TAT is strongly supported by the participation of the leaders of Thailand, usually the Prime Minister, or Deputy Prime Minister in its marketing events.

The problems regarding unrests, bombings, political upheavals in Thailand are the major obstacles for Thailand in attracting Japanese travelers. The seriousness of Japanese travel companies toward these problems of Thailand implies that TAT has succeeded in teaming up with Japanese partners to increase Japanese travelers to Thailand. As advised by Money and Crofts (2000), “success in Japan usually requires working with established companies and systems rather than trying to work around them” (p. 15). In this aspect, Vietnam has to learn a lot from Thailand.

#### *8.3.4. Hawaii*

The role of the Japanese market to Hawaii is similar to that to South Korea: in Asia, Japan is a major market and the other part of Asia is another. In addition, if travelers from North America to Hawaii are not taken into account, Japanese travelers contribute the largest share in the total of foreign travelers to Hawaii and South Korea. However, the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) is distinct from TAT, KNTA, CNTA, and VNAT in two points: firstly, its funding is based on the transient accommodation tax collections assessed on hotels, vacation rentals, and other accommodations; secondly, the task of marketing Hawaii is contracted with advertising corporations in the major market areas. In this mechanism, the fund for HTA is based on its performance – the more travelers enjoying tourist services, the more budget HTA has for its operations. Moreover, the contract-based marketing mechanism with native partners who deeply understand the distinctive characteristics



of the markets makes the work of HTA more “entrepreneurial”, and easy to be evaluated. With these characteristics, HTA works as an enterprise entrusted by the Hawaii tourism industry to market Hawaii in the major markets.

Through Dentsu Inc., one of the largest advertising corporations in the world, doing business as Hawaii Tourism Japan (HTJ) for marketing management services, HTA does not need representative offices along Japan like CNTA, KTO, and TAT. Instead, through the large network of Dentsu Inc. in Japan, HTA can easily approach Japanese travelers by various ways such as travel trade, promotions, event marketing, familiarization tours, public relations and public affairs, and advertising. In consideration of the uniquely Japanese business practices which are usually difficult to understand for foreigners as discussed in section 3.1.3, the use of a reliable Japanese partner to approach Japanese customers is possibly the most effective way of promotion. In fact, all the possible channels to approach Japanese travelers (such as television, radio, newspapers, guidebooks, magazines, posters, billboards, and internet) and all the possible marketing strategies such as package tour catalogs, travel fairs, special events, and familiarizations trips as mentioned by Nishiyama (1996) and Nardi and Wilks (2007) in the section 3.1.3 have been used to market Hawaii in Japan. Moreover, the fact that the Japanese has a closed system, getting money from Japanese visitors not only for hotel rooms but also for eating, shopping, golfing, transportation, and entertainment, etc. shows that major Japanese travel companies play a big role in bringing Japanese travelers to Hawaii. Marketing Hawaii in Japan is conducted not only by the Japanese, but also for the Japanese.

In terms of image creation, the building of the “*Discover Aloha – Six Surprises*” communication concept is typical for image building of any tourism destination. It

was based on the evaluation of the weaknesses of the images of Hawaii regarding traditions, mystery, and uniqueness. Therefore, it emphasizes Hawaii's unique tradition and historical facts to convey in-depth charm and the Aloha Spirit of Hawaii in specific terms to re-brand Hawaii in the perception of Japanese travelers. This communication concept has been broadcast widely in Japan through various channels and strategies as mentioned before, targeting all the audience groups with the focuses on such quality segments as seniors, families, and weddings.

Overall, according to the theory of tourism destination marketing, the model of marketing Hawaii in Japan demonstrates all the elements of tourism destination marketing as proposed by Ritchie and Crouch (2005) (Figure 2.2). Also, the case of Hawaii reveals an inter-dependent public-private relationship in tourism destination marketing, because the budget for marketing Hawaii is directly based on the performance of the tourism industry. The performance of HTA in its turn plays an important part for that of the tourism industry. This relationship, according to the framework for destination marketing alliance formation proposed by Wang and Xiang (2007) (see Figure 2.7), is strategy oriented based on strategic networks of stakeholders depending on each other.

#### *8.3.5. A recommendation of the models for Vietnam*

If CNTA, KTO, TAT, and HTA are compared with each other, the following features are identified:

- CNTA is more administration-oriented than cooperation-oriented, and tourism destination marketing is limited to promotion activities;

- KTO and TAT highly prioritize tourism destination marketing in Japan, and are directly involved in the tourism destination marketing process, and actively cooperate with the private sector;
- All the organizations have a large coverage in Japan: while CNTA, KTO, and TAT have representative offices along Japan, HTA contracts with a large Japanese advertising corporation to cover all the Japanese land.

When compared to CNTA, KTO, TAT, and HTA, VNAT is most similar to CNTA. However, Vietnam can not have the advantage as a huge economy for Japanese investors like China, which draws frequent business travelers and facilitates the high number and large coverage of direct flights. Vietnam also does not have so many famous cultural and historical heritage attractions like China. In addition, the distance from Japan to China is shorter than that to Vietnam. Moreover, with the strong interest of major Japanese travelers in the Chinese market, China can be more administration-oriented than cooperation-oriented, but still attract large numbers of travelers. Finally, although the model of Hawaii works effectively, it is too romantic to think of this model applied in Vietnam because of the current problems of Vietnam regarding the low level of tourism development, the lack of budget, the rigid administration, the loose public-private partnership, the modest support of the Japanese travel business system, and most importantly the old way of thinking of the country leaders influenced by tens of years of in the centralized socialist economy.

All things considered, this dissertation suggests that VNAT should learn from the models of KTO and TAT for its organization and operations, especially paying attention to the following:

- Expanding its function to cover all the elements of tourism destination marketing, from identifying strategic markets to identifying the price segments where the destination believes it can compete according to the elements of tourism destination marketing proposed by Ritchie and Crouch (2005) (see Figure 2.2) instead of focusing only on promotion activities;
- Enhancing the public-private partnership in tourism destination marketing, in which VNAT plays an active part in promoting the markets for the private sector, and the private sector in its turn contributes funds for tourism destination marketing activities and participates in establishing marketing strategies for the market; and
- VNAT should play a leading role in teaming up with major Japanese travel companies to find specific measures and seek for stronger commitments from the Japanese travel industry to raise the number of Japanese travelers to Vietnam.

Moreover, the models of KTO and TAT indicate that no matter what ministry the national tourism organization belongs to, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (like the case of KTO) or the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (like the case of Thailand), the important factor is how the national tourism organization works. Although representative offices in Japan are important for tourism destination marketing, it is unrealistic to recommend that Vietnam open representative offices in major cities of Japan, because of the obstacles in the Vietnamese system. Instead, this task should be laid on the role of the Embassy of Vietnam in Japan, and most importantly, VNAT should actively work with JATA to enhance the presence of the

images of Vietnam in Japan. JATA has chosen Vietnam as one of the key markets in its “Visit World Campaign”, it is a good opportunity for Vietnam. The analysis of CNTA, KTO, and TAT reveals that cooperation of Japanese travel companies is also important, because they are the bridge between Japanese travelers and Vietnam as a tourism destination. In addition, Vietnam could learn from the cases of the “*Amazing Thailand*” campaign and “*Discover Aloha – Six Surprises*” communication concept of Hawaii in building tourism destination images with specific themes and clear messages to potential customers.

## **Chapter IX – Conclusion**

This chapter concludes the dissertation by summarizing the major findings regarding the three stated research issues: (1) the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers; (2) the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam; and (3) the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers. In the final part, this chapter articulates the contributions, analyzes the limitations, and suggests further studies to develop the results of this dissertation.

### **9.1. The Major Findings**

#### *9.1.1. The images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers*

Most generally, this dissertation strongly supports the argument that Vietnam is a destination of low prices, delicious cuisine, and rich culture for Japanese travelers. Also, in the perception of Japanese travelers, Vietnam may represent new experiences, friendly people, many beautiful natural landscapes, famous and interesting history, many handicrafts/small attractive items, impressive national characters, relaxing atmosphere, interesting local ways of life, good traditional fine arts, bright economic prospect, many tourist attractions, exciting traditional performances, many opportunities of knowledge, adventure, and career/business, and many unique souvenir products. Referring to the negative images, this dissertation supports the arguments that the situations of service quality, health care system, infrastructure, and cleanliness in Vietnam are poor. Moreover, this dissertation reveals that Japanese travelers did not indicate clear support for the arguments that

Vietnam is a destination of good shopping places, many beautiful seaside resorts, beautiful beaches, personal safety, political stability, easy accessibility to other regional destinations, many beautiful architectural buildings, nice climate, good spa and massage services, and many world heritages.

This dissertation also indicates that Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam appreciated delicious cuisine, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, handicrafts/small attractive items, bright economic prospect, and many tourist attractions more than those who had not been to Vietnam, which further confirms the strengths of Vietnam in these attributes. In addition, Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam had higher opinions of Vietnam regarding political stability, personal safety, and career/business opportunities, but all at low levels, which opens some limited hope with great difficulties for Vietnam to be able change the poor images of Vietnam in these important attributes. However, Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam expressed stronger negative reaction to the situation of cleanliness in Vietnam than those who had not been to Vietnam, which implies that cleanliness is a serious problem facing Vietnam's tourism.

The results of the importance-performance analysis suggest that the beneficiary images Vietnam should keep up its good work in include low prices, delicious cuisine, rich culture, new experience, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, knowledge opportunities, impressive national characters, relaxing atmosphere, interesting local ways of life, and good traditional fine arts. The negative images Vietnam should improve consist of those regarding cleanliness, health care system, service quality, personal safety, political stability, and architectural buildings.

The results of comparing the attribute importance of the attributes held by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and that held by those who had not been to Vietnam reveal that Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam are more ready to travel than the other group when attaching significantly more importance to new experience and adventure opportunities, and did not care much about local ways of life, friendliness, good traditional fine arts, and famous interesting history. Those who had not been to Vietnam are more demanding when attaching significantly more importance to knowledge opportunities, cleanliness, beautiful architectural buildings, good traditional fine arts, beautiful beaches, many tourist attractions, unique souvenir products, and bright economic prospect than the other group. This comparison suggests that in order to attract more demanding Japanese travelers, Vietnam needs to improve its not-very-positive images regarding the climate, beaches, and architectural buildings, in addition to the situation of personal safety, political stability, cleanliness, health care system, and service quality as also required by those who had been to Vietnam.

The factor analysis generally describes the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers in seven factors including: (1) Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture; (2) Natural and Built Attractions; (3) Safety and Hospitality; (4) Novelty; (5) Cleanliness and Services; (6) Comfort and Low Prices; and (7) Geographical Location and Business Opportunities. In comparing the perception of Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and that of those who had not been to Vietnam, while 'Novelty' is the factor most explaining the description variance of those who had been to Vietnam. 'Cuisine, Shopping, and Culture' are the most explanatory factor for those who had not been to Vietnam, and 'Novelty' stands behind 'Cuisine,



Shopping, and Culture’, ‘Natural and Built Tourist Attractions’.

The results of the holistic images add some specific descriptions to the attribute-based images. Noticeably, Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi are the most famous attractions mentioned by both the Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not. Ho Chi Minh City is more famous among those who had not been to Vietnam, but Hanoi is more mentioned as a city with unique characteristics of Vietnam by those who had been to Vietnam. It is also noticeable that the central region of Vietnam is also emphasized by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam as a distinctive tourism region with such famous attractions as the former capital of Hue, Nha Trang City, Hoi An Ancient Town, and Da Nang City. Hue and Ha Long Bay were chosen as the most distinctive attractions of Vietnam by Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam, but those who had not been to Vietnam only virtually know about these places. This finding suggests that these two attractions should be among the major foci in the advertising programs for the Japanese market. Moreover, based on the characteristics of Japanese travelers who usually do not have much time for long travel and the fact that the unique attractions are distributed rather equally among the south (Ho Chi Minh City, Me Kong Delta, Cu Chi Tunnels, and War Museum), the center (Hue, Hoi An, Da Nang City, and Nha Trang), and the north (Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, and Sa Pa), this dissertation recommends that Vietnam should be zoned into three areas of attractions serving as three package tours for Japanese travelers.

The results of the holistic images also confirm and specify the results of the attribute-based images about the negative images of Vietnam regarding infrastructure, safety, and cleanliness. Therefore, this dissertation concludes that Vietnam has not

been an attractive destination for Japanese travelers although in their mind Vietnam is a destination of rich culture, friendliness, beautiful natural landscapes, relaxing atmosphere, impressive national characters, interesting local ways of life, and good traditional fine arts. However, Vietnam has been a destination for Japanese travelers seeking for novelty including business opportunities, and can still attract Japanese senior well-off travelers if there is an active participation of Japanese travel companies with appropriate planning. In addition, the strong effects of travel guidebooks, television, pamphlets/brochures, and internet suggest that Vietnam should focus on promoting its images through these information sources.

#### *9.1.2. The national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam*

Regarding the national tourism destination management of Vietnam, the organizational and legal framework for tourism management has been basically established. The large number of travel and hotel companies of all the types of ownership indicates that Vietnam's tourism has developed to become a real economic sector, not like the period before 1986 when there were only a small number of public tourism companies serving the officials of the State and CPV, and foreign experts from the socialist bloc. However, Vietnam has problems with placing the position of the national tourism organization – VNAT in the administrative system. The question “Should it belong to the Ministry of Culture, or the Ministry of Trade, or stand as an independent organization under the Prime Minister?” is still being debated among administrators.

The role of VNAT in the administrative system demonstrates the political

evolution of Vietnam. In this system, the early established ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Security, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are more favored, have super powers, and outweigh the efforts of newly established and dependent organizations like VNAT. Although Vietnam's tourism is identified as a spear-head industry of the national economy, but tourism has not been able to prove its important role yet. The development of Vietnam's tourism has to depend too much on the support of other sectors, which is still modest. While there have been signs of advances in the support VNAT is receiving from other sectors in Vietnam as an unavoidable trend when Vietnam wants to enhance integration and exchanges with other countries, great obstacles are still hindering the performance of VNAT, especially shown in national tourism destination promotion and marketing.

There has not been true tourism destination marketing in Vietnam. No focal public organization is particularly in charge of tourism destination marketing in Vietnam. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, particularly VNAT is only in charge of tourism promotion, one of the least important tasks of tourism destination marketing. Moreover, the promotion activities are carried out separately from many important steps of the process of tourism destination marketing. Because the tourism promotion of Vietnam is not placed within a process of tourism destination marketing its effectiveness is limited, no matter what organ is in charge of this task.

Also, in tourism destination promotion, the role of promoting tourism destination images has not been considered appropriately. The International Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the organ in charge of tourism image promotion prioritizes general national images without considering the characteristics of particular target markets, which leads to a situation

that inappropriate products can be offered to a particular market.

Although having recorded some advances in tourism destination promotion shown in the annual participation in world travel fairs and the cooperation with the private sector including foreign partners, Vietnam is still facing great difficulties caused by the rigid system characterized by slow-pace and complicated administrative procedures. In such a system, there is little hope for a significant increase in the budgets allocated for tourism destination promotion, and for basic improvements of time-consuming financial procedures. In such a system, no long-term strategy can work efficiently and Vietnam remains “a strategic planner’s paradise – for plans on paper that is” (Cooper, 2000, p.175) like about a decade ago. In such a system, unprofessional promotion staff work according to slow-pace administrative orders and complicated procedures without strong motivation and pressure. In addition, because of the strong influence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in controlling the activities of public organizations of Vietnam in foreign countries, an establishment of tourism representative offices of Vietnam in foreign target markets is unrealistic in the near future. Overall, the tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam is bound in a triangle of obstacles including rigid external and internal systems, budgetary restrictions, and lack of human resources. Although it is not easy for the tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam to escape from these problems, the best solution should come from a radical reform of the external and internal administrative system.

The “*Impressive Vietnam*” campaign, though criticized for a lack of promotion activities, can be considered the first active move of the public sector towards cooperating with the private sector. Nevertheless, while the current mechanisms

remain, success can not be significant because the leadership of VNAT is still bound by the triangle of obstacles. The recent efforts of VNAT in enhancing tourism destination marketing efforts by establishing marketing and competitiveness groups are just limited to seeking general proposals at domestic level rather than actively reaching out to foreign target markets. The currently used slogan “*Vietnam – the Hidden Charm*” has been criticized as suggesting nothing specific and clear about Vietnam. The annual participation in JATA and road shows around this participation are not enough to position the images of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers in Japan. This research suggests that VNAT should act as an active convener to establish a working group of the Japanese market, looking for ways to strengthen the tourism industries of Japan and Vietnam in the favorable context that JATA has chosen Vietnam as a key market in its “*Travel World Campaign*”.

In consideration of the development level of Vietnam’s tourism, the characteristics of the segments of the Japanese markets, and the prioritized segments of the “*Travel World Campaign*” of JATA, this dissertation supports the argument that both the young segment of travelers in their 20s and 30s, which contribute a large share of total travelers to Vietnam, and the senior segment, which mainly includes high quality travelers are important for Vietnam. However, priority should be put in the senior segment together with creating favorable conditions for the young segment. The effect of senior segment-prioritized marketing campaigns may also help attract the young segment which is more ready to travel.

### *9.1.3. The experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers*

The analyses of the organization and operations of CNTA, KTO, TAT, and HTA in this dissertation reveal that CNTA like VNAT is more administration-oriented than cooperation-oriented, and tourism destination marketing is limited to promotion activities. KTO and TAT highly prioritize tourism destination marketing in Japan, are directly involved in the tourism destination marketing process, and actively cooperate with the private sector by themselves while HTA contracts with a large Japanese advertising company. All these organizations have a large coverage in Japan: While CNTA, KTO, and TAT have their representative offices along Japan, HTA uses the large network of a Japanese advertising corporation.

This dissertation suggests that VNAT should learn from the models of KTO and TAT, especially paying attention to expanding its function to cover all the elements of tourism destination marketing, from identifying strategic markets to identifying the price segments where the destination believes it can complete. Moreover, VNAT should enhance the public-private partnership in tourism destination marketing, in which VNAT plays an active part in promoting the markets for the private sector, and the private sector in its turn can contribute funds for tourism destination marketing activities and participate in establishing marketing strategies for a target market. VNAT should also play a leading role in teaming up with major Japanese travel companies to find specific measures and seek for stronger commitments from the Japanese travel industry to raise the number of Japanese travelers.

Furthermore, the models of KTO and TAT indicate that no matter what ministry the national tourism organization belongs to, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism

(like the case of KTO) or the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (like the case of Thailand), of paramount importance is how the national tourism organization works. Although representative offices in Japan are important for tourism destination marketing, it is unrealistic to recommend Vietnam to open representative offices in major cities of Japan for the time being, because of financial and administrative obstacles. Instead, hope should be laid on the Embassy of Vietnam in Japan. In addition, Vietnam could learn from the cases of the “*Amazing Thailand*” campaign and “*Discover Aloha – Six Surprises*” communication concept of Hawaii in building tourism destination images with specific themes and clear messages to attract potential customers.

## **9.2. The Contributions, and Limitations and Recommendations for Further Studies**

### *9.2.1. The contributions*

To the academic study of tourism destination marketing and tourism destination image, this dissertation has applied a comprehensive methodology for identifying and improving tourism destination image in the actual context of Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers. As analyzed in Chapter IV, this methodology is distinctive from the existing literature on the image of Vietnam as a tourism destination in the following points:

- First, this dissertation studied the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers from both groups: those who have been to Vietnam and those who have not been to Vietnam. The perceptions of these two groups were compared with each other;

- Second, this dissertation measured the attribute-based images of Vietnam by scaling its performance based on a set of relevant attributes. The attribute importance was also scaled to carry out attribute importance-performance analysis. A preliminary phase of research was conducted to distil the construct most relevant to Vietnam as a tourism destination for Japanese travelers;
- Third, this dissertation explored holistic images of Vietnam based on a set of open-ended questions to discover functional, psychological, and unique images of Vietnam in the Japanese mind;
- Fourth, to recommend marketing policies for Vietnam, this dissertation took a realistic approach based on analyzing the shortcomings of the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam according to the theories of tourism destination marketing; and
- Fifth, suggested practical measures to improve the images of Vietnam in Japan were based on analyzing the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers.

To Vietnamese tourism-policy makers in Vietnam, this dissertation reveals the position of Vietnam as a tourism destination in the Japanese market by clarifying the beneficiary and negative images in Japan and uncovering the factors most able to explain the motivation of those who had been to Vietnam, and suggests policies for attracting more Japanese travelers in terms of segments and media types. Moreover, this dissertation indicates that the national tourism promotion and marketing of Vietnam is bound in a triangle of obstacles including external and internal



administrative systems of the national tourism organization, budgetary restrictions, and human resource limitations; and that there has not been true tourism destination marketing in Vietnam, but only tourism destination promotion that has been carried out separately from many important steps of the process of tourism destination marketing. Furthermore, this dissertation recommends that VNAT should learn from the models of KTO and TAT, especially paying attention to expanding its function to cover all the elements of tourism destination marketing, enhancing the public-private partnership in tourism destination marketing, and playing a leading role in teaming up with major Japanese travel companies to find specific measures and seek for stronger commitments from the Japanese travel industry to raise the number of Japanese travelers. Also, this dissertation points out that although representative offices are important for tourism destination marketing, it is unrealistic to recommend that Vietnam open representative offices in major cities of Japan for the time being.

#### *9.2.2. The limitations and recommendations for further studies*

Firstly, this dissertation does not make comparisons of the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers between genders, age groups, occupations, and travel experiences, which are significant for segmenting Japanese travelers. Because one of the overall purposes of this dissertation was to identify the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers, this dissertation only focused on comparing the perceptions of the images of Vietnam between Japanese travelers who had been to Vietnam and those who had not, in order to look into the strengths and weaknesses of Vietnam.

Secondly, there was a dominance of young respondents less than 40 years old (70 %) in the sample of 523 Japanese travelers. This limitation can be rectified by seeking for more senior respondents or randomly decreasing the number of young respondents who have already answered the questionnaire. However, the lack of time and budget did not allow for an increase of senior respondents. Moreover, because Japanese travelers aged from 20 to 40 are currently the major segment of Japanese travelers to Vietnam, this sample may be suitable in the case of Vietnam for the time being. Multiple methods to unveil the images of Vietnam in the perception of Japanese travelers, including analyzing Japanese travel guidebooks and brochures, and the opinions of Japanese airline and travel managers were used to reduce this shortcoming.

Thirdly, there might be an occupational bias in the statistical results caused by the 49.61 % share of students in the sample. The second largest share (30.65 %) of employees in the sample is not considered occupational bias because employed people occupied 48.14 % of the population (61.506 millions/127.770 millions) according to the population census of Japan in 2005 (The Statistics Bureau of Japan, n.d.). In total, students and employees accounted for 80.26 % of the sample. Therefore, the sample of the Japanese respondents in this dissertation was characterized by students (nearly half) and employees (nearly one third). Similarly to the second limitation, expert consultations and analyses of other sources of data used in this dissertation can, to some extent, mitigate this shortcoming.

Fourthly, researching the experiences of China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hawaii in attracting Japanese travelers was mainly based on the observation of the tourism promotion and marketing activities of these countries available worldwide in

the internet, books, and newspapers, without field-studies and contacts with inside informants. Therefore, underlying issues, especially shortcomings, may not have been fully revealed. This is different from studying the national tourism destination management, and promotion and marketing of Vietnam, when the data from both secondary sources and fieldtrips were obtained to analyze the research issue.

Finally then, in consideration of the limitations, this dissertation suggests that further research should be done to shed more light on the results, focusing on: (1) randomly surveying more Japanese respondents to examine and supplement the statistical results; (2) comparing the perceptions of Japanese travelers in different groups of gender, age, occupation, and travel experiences; (3) discovering the shortcomings of major tourism destinations for Japanese travelers in marketing to the Japanese travel market. Also, a tourism marketing strategy of Vietnam to the Japanese market should be built based on the findings of this dissertation.

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## **Appendix A - The Questionnaire for Japanese Travelers**

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to participate in our survey designed for a research in the field of tourism in Vietnam, supported by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. In this survey, approximately 200 people will be asked to complete a questionnaire. It will take approximately 10 minutes.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. It is very important for us to learn your opinions.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact:

Mr. Le Tuan Anh

Tel.: 080-6415-9360

E-mail: [anhle07@apu.ac.jp](mailto:anhle07@apu.ac.jp)

Thank you very much for your time and support.



## QUESTIONNAIRE

*This questionnaire is designed for a research in the field of Vietnam's tourism and Japanese tourists, supported by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. The researcher would be very grateful for your assistance in answering the following questions:*

**1. How important is each of the following factors of a tourism destination when you consider traveling abroad? Please, circle the appropriate number from 1 to 5 representing the scale from “very unimportant” to “very important”.**

No.	Factors	Very unimportant	← Neutral →	Very important
1	Beautiful natural landscapes	1	2 3 4	5
2	Good quality of service	1	2 3 4	5
3	Low prices	1	2 3 4	5
4	Nice climate	1	2 3 4	5
5	Many tourist attractions	1	2 3 4	5
6	Beautiful architectural buildings	1	2 3 4	5
7	Good infrastructure	1	2 3 4	5
8	Many world heritage sites	1	2 3 4	5
9	Beautiful beaches	1	2 3 4	5
10	Personal safety	1	2 3 4	5
11	Delicious cuisine	1	2 3 4	5
12	Many unique souvenir products	1	2 3 4	5
13	Rich culture	1	2 3 4	5
14	Good traditional fine arts	1	2 3 4	5
15	Good places for shopping	1	2 3 4	5
16	Beautiful seaside resorts	1	2 3 4	5
17	Political stability	1	2 3 4	5
18	Cleanliness	1	2 3 4	5
19	Many knowledge opportunities	1	2 3 4	5
20	Bright economic prospect	1	2 3 4	5
21	Friendliness toward Japanese people	1	2 3 4	5
22	Good massage and spa services	1	2 3 4	5
23	Famous and interesting history	1	2 3 4	5
24	Handicrafts/small attractive items	1	2 3 4	5
25	Exciting traditional performance	1	2 3 4	5
26	Many adventure opportunities	1	2 3 4	5
27	Interesting local ways of life	1	2 3 4	5
28	Relaxing atmosphere	1	2 3 4	5
29	New experience	1	2 3 4	5
30	Impressive national characters	1	2 3 4	5
31	Good health care system	1	2 3 4	5
32	Many career/business opportunities	1	2 3 4	5
33	Easy accessibility to other regional tourism destinations	1	2 3 4	5

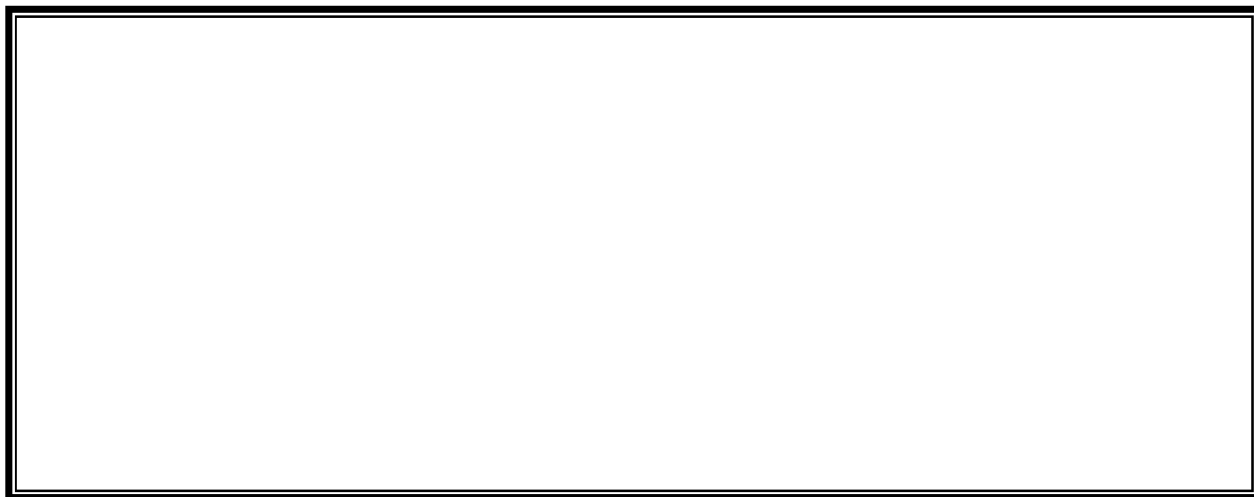
*To be continued in the next page*

**2. How much do you agree with the following statements about Vietnam? Please, circle the appropriate number from 1 to 5 representing the scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.**

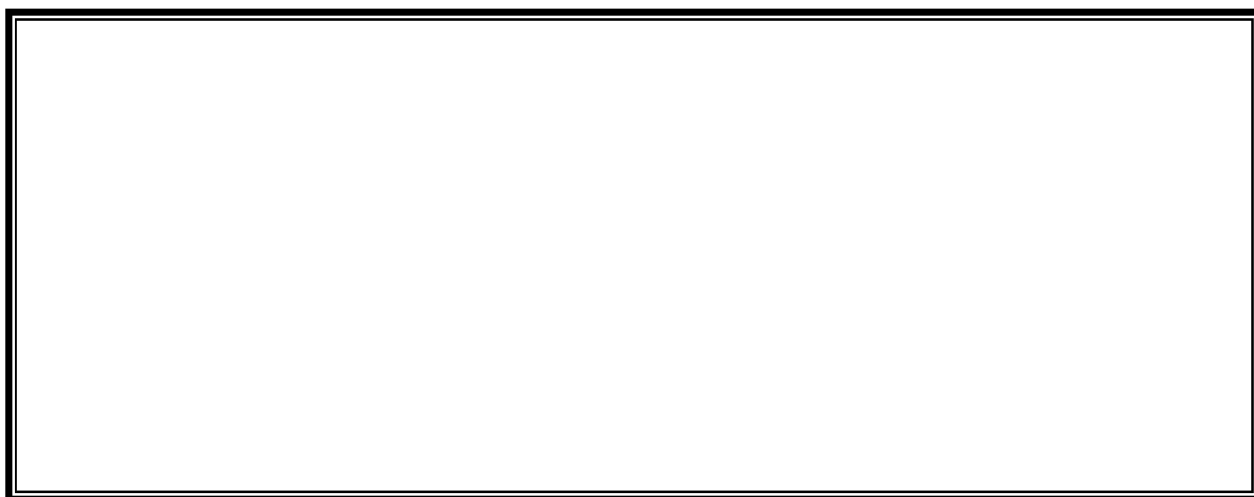
No.	Statements	Strongly disagree	←	Neutral	→	Strongly agree
1	Vietnam has many beautiful natural landscapes	1	2	3	4	5
2	Service quality is good in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
3	Prices in Vietnam are low	1	2	3	4	5
4	The climate in Vietnam is pleasant	1	2	3	4	5
5	Vietnam has many tourist attractions	1	2	3	4	5
6	There are many beautiful architectural buildings in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
7	Infrastructure is good in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
8	There are many world heritage sites in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
9	Vietnam has many beautiful beaches	1	2	3	4	5
10	You are safe in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
11	Cuisine in Vietnam is delicious	1	2	3	4	5
12	There are many unique souvenir products in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
13	Vietnam is rich in culture	1	2	3	4	5
14	Vietnam has good traditional fine arts	1	2	3	4	5
15	There are many good places for shopping in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
16	Vietnam has many beautiful seaside resorts	1	2	3	4	5
17	Vietnam is politically stable	1	2	3	4	5
18	It is clean/hygienic in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
19	You can gain much more knowledge in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
20	Vietnam has a bright economic prospect	1	2	3	4	5
21	Vietnamese people are friendly	1	2	3	4	5
22	Massage and spa services are good in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
23	Vietnam has a famous and interesting history	1	2	3	4	5
24	There are many handicrafts/small attractive items in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
25	Vietnamese traditional performance is exciting	1	2	3	4	5
26	You can have many adventure opportunities in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
27	Vietnamese ways of life are interesting	1	2	3	4	5
28	There is a relaxing atmosphere in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
29	You can have many new experiences in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
30	Vietnamese national characters are impressive	1	2	3	4	5
31	Vietnam has a good health care system	1	2	3	4	5
32	You can have many career/business opportunities in Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5
33	It is easy to access other regional tourism destinations from Vietnam	1	2	3	4	5

*To be continued in the next page*

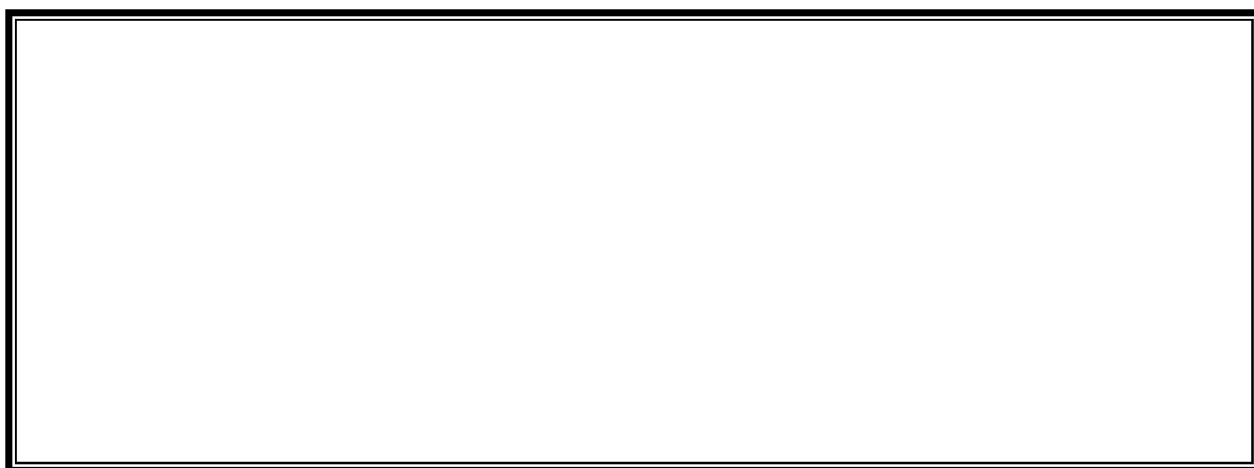
**3. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Vietnam as a tourism destination?**



**4. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Vietnam?**



**5. Could you please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Vietnam?**



*To be continued in the next page*

6. How much do the following information sources influence your image of Vietnam as a tourism destination? Please, circle the appropriate number from 1 to 5 representing the scale from “not influential at all” to “strongly influential”.

No.	Information sources	Not influential at all	← Neutral →	Strongly influential
1	Travel guidebooks	1	2 3	4 5
2	Travel brochures	1	2 3	4 5
3	Travel agents	1	2 3	4 5
4	World travel fairs	1	2 3	4 5
5	Real experience in Vietnam	1	2 3	4 5
6	Internet	1	2 3	4 5
7	Television	1	2 3	4 5
8	Newspapers	1	2 3	4 5
9	Magazines	1	2 3	4 5
10	Relatives and friends (Word of mouth)	1	2 3	4 5
11	Education	1	2 3	4 5
12	Books	1	2 3	4 5
13	Tourism promotion of Vietnam (Sports and cultural events, travel fairs and exhibitions, etc)	1	2 3	4 5

7. Please, tick (X) in the appropriate boxes or write the information about you:

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age: *(Please, write the number of your age)*
3. Occupation:
 

☐ Travel agent
☐ Student
☐ Researcher/Teacher

☐ Public worker
☐ Company employee
☐ Self employee
☐ Housewife

☐ Other, please specify:.....
4. How many times you have traveled abroad over the past 10 years?
 

☐ None
☐ Once
☐ 2-3 times
☐ 4-5 times
☐ 6-9 times
☐ 10 times +
5. How many times have you traveled to Vietnam over the past 10 years?
 

☐ None
☐ Once
☐ 2-3 times
☐ 4-5 times
☐ 6 times +

*Thank you very much for your kind assistance!*

*If you are interested in further information about the research, please e-mail to [anhhtle07@apu.ac.jp](mailto:anhhtle07@apu.ac.jp).*

(The Japanese Version)

このアンケートに協力していただける皆様へ

この度、ベトナム国際観光振興機構（Vietnam National Administration of Tourism）の支援により、ベトナム観光についてのアンケート調査を行っております。この調査では、200 人前後の回答を必要としているため、皆様のご協力をお願いしております。お忙しいとは存じますが、時間の許す限り、この調査にご協力頂ければ幸いです。質問は答え易いように選択肢を用意しておりますので、10 分前後で終える事ができると思います。この調査にご協力下さいますようお願い申し上げます。

もし、あなたがこのアンケートにお答えいただく際に、不快に感じる項目や答えづらい項目がございましたら、その質問は飛ばしていただいて結構です。あなたの率直な意見が非常に役立ちますので、よろしくお願い致します。

また、今回のアンケートで御回答頂いた情報に関しましては、厳しい監督の下で管理し、この研究以外の用途には使用いたしません。もしこの調査に関して、質問などございましたら、遠慮なく下記の連絡先までお知らせください。

立命館アジア太平洋大学

アジア太平洋学専攻

アジア太平洋研究科博士後期課程

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## ベトナム旅行に関するアンケート

このアンケートは、ベトナム国際観光振興機構 ( Vietnam National Administration of Tourism ) の支援により、ベトナムの観光産業と日本人旅行者の研究のために行っており、今回は日本人の方をお願いしています。このアンケートに協力して下さることを心より感謝申し上げます。

1 . 以下の質問の中であなたが外国へ旅行する際に重要と思う項目を、「最も重要でない」ものから「最も重要である」と思うものまでを 5 段階で評価し、該当する数字に を付けてください。

No.	項目	最も 重要でない	← 普通 →	最も 重要である
1	美しい自然 景観	1	2 3 4 5	5
2	ホテル、レストランなどのサービスの良さ	1	2 3 4 5	5
3	価格の手頃さ	1	2 3 4 5	5
4	快適な気候条件	1	2 3 4 5	5
5	観光地の数	1	2 3 4 5	5
6	美しい建造物や建築様式	1	2 3 4 5	5
7	電話、交通手段などのインフラ整備の良さ	1	2 3 4 5	5
8	世界遺産登録地	1	2 3 4 5	5
9	美しい海岸や浜辺	1	2 3 4 5	5
10	安全	1	2 3 4 5	5
11	食べ物のおいしさ	1	2 3 4 5	5
12	ユニークなお土産	1	2 3 4 5	5
13	その国の文化の豊かさ	1	2 3 4 5	5
14	伝統的な美術	1	2 3 4 5	5
15	買い物に適した場所	1	2 3 4 5	5
16	美しいシーリゾート ( Sea Resort )	1	2 3 4 5	5
17	政治の安定	1	2 3 4 5	5
18	清潔さ	1	2 3 4 5	5
19	新しい知識を学べる機会があること	1	2 3 4 5	5
20	経済の見通しが明るいこと	1	2 3 4 5	5
21	日本人に対して友好的かどうか	1	2 3 4 5	5
22	エステやマッサージなど充実した SPA サービス	1	2 3 4 5	5
23	有名で、興味深い歴史があるかどうか	1	2 3 4 5	5
24	手作りの小物や絹織物など、かわいい雑貨	1	2 3 4 5	5
25	伝統的な演劇や音楽などパフォーマンス	1	2 3 4 5	5
26	冒険をするチャンスがあること	1	2 3 4 5	5
27	興味深い生活様式	1	2 3 4 5	5
28	リラックスできる環境	1	2 3 4 5	5
29	新しい経験を積めること	1	2 3 4 5	5
30	その地域に住む住民の態度や国民性	1	2 3 4 5	5
31	病院など医療機関や医療制度の整備	1	2 3 4 5	5
32	仕事に役立つための機会があるかどうか	1	2 3 4 5	5
33	周辺国への旅行が容易かどうか	1	2 3 4 5	5

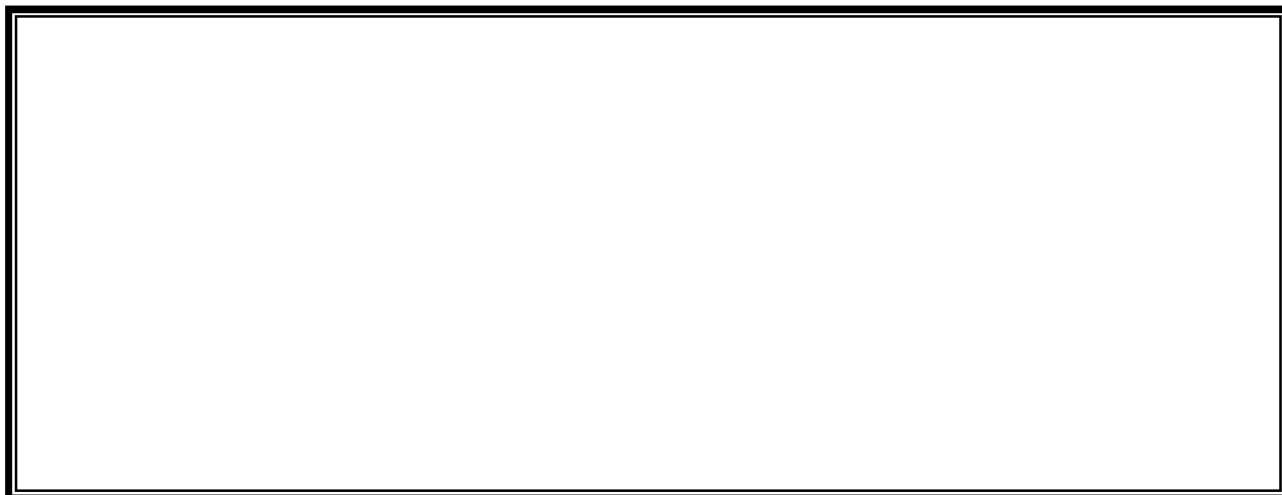
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2. あなたはベトナムに関する以下の項目にどの程度賛成できますか？「全く賛成できない」から、「全面的に賛成する」までの5段階で評価し、数字を で囲んでください。

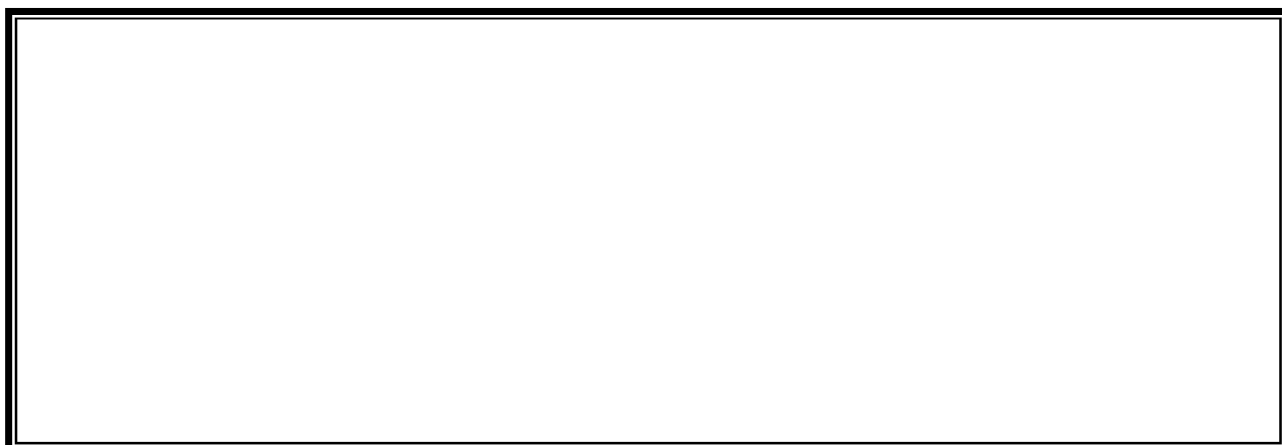
No.	項目	<div> <div>← 普通</div> <div> <div>← 全面的に 賛成する</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>全く賛成 できない</div> </div>				
1	ベトナムには美しい自然や景観がたくさんある	1	2	3	4	5
2	ベトナムのサービスの質は高いと思う	1	2	3	4	5
3	ベトナムの物価は安い	1	2	3	4	5
4	ベトナムの気候は穏やかだ	1	2	3	4	5
5	ベトナムには様々な観光地がある	1	2	3	4	5
6	ベトナムには美しい建造物がたくさんある	1	2	3	4	5
7	ベトナムは電話や交通などインフラが整っている	1	2	3	4	5
8	ベトナムには世界遺産がたくさんある	1	2	3	4	5
9	ベトナムには美しい海岸や浜辺がたくさんある	1	2	3	4	5
10	ベトナムは安全である	1	2	3	4	5
11	ベトナム料理はおいしい	1	2	3	4	5
12	ベトナムにはお土産になる製品がたくさんある	1	2	3	4	5
13	ベトナムには豊かな文化がある	1	2	3	4	5
14	ベトナムには伝統的な美術がある	1	2	3	4	5
15	ベトナムは買い物する場所がたくさんある	1	2	3	4	5
16	ベトナムにはたくさんのシーリゾート（Sea Resort）がある	1	2	3	4	5
17	ベトナムは政治的に安定している	1	2	3	4	5
18	ベトナムは清潔な国である	1	2	3	4	5
19	ベトナム旅行によって多くの事を学ぶことができる	1	2	3	4	5
20	ベトナムの経済的な見通しは明るい	1	2	3	4	5
21	ベトナム人は日本人に対して友好的である	1	2	3	4	5
22	ベトナムはエステやマッサージなどのスパが充実している	1	2	3	4	5
23	ベトナムには有名で興味深い歴史がある	1	2	3	4	5
24	ベトナムには手作りの小物などかわいい雑貨がある	1	2	3	4	5
25	ベトナムの伝統芸能は興味深い	1	2	3	4	5
26	ベトナムでは様々な冒険ができる。	1	2	3	4	5
27	ベトナム人の生活様式は興味深い	1	2	3	4	5
28	ベトナムにはリラックスできる環境がある	1	2	3	4	5
29	ベトナムで様々な新しい経験ができる	1	2	3	4	5
30	ベトナム人の態度や国民性は素晴らしいと思う	1	2	3	4	5
31	ベトナムの病院など医療環境や医療制度は充実している	1	2	3	4	5
32	ベトナム旅行により仕事に役立つ何かが得られる	1	2	3	4	5
33	ベトナムから周辺国へ容易に旅行できる	1	2	3	4	5

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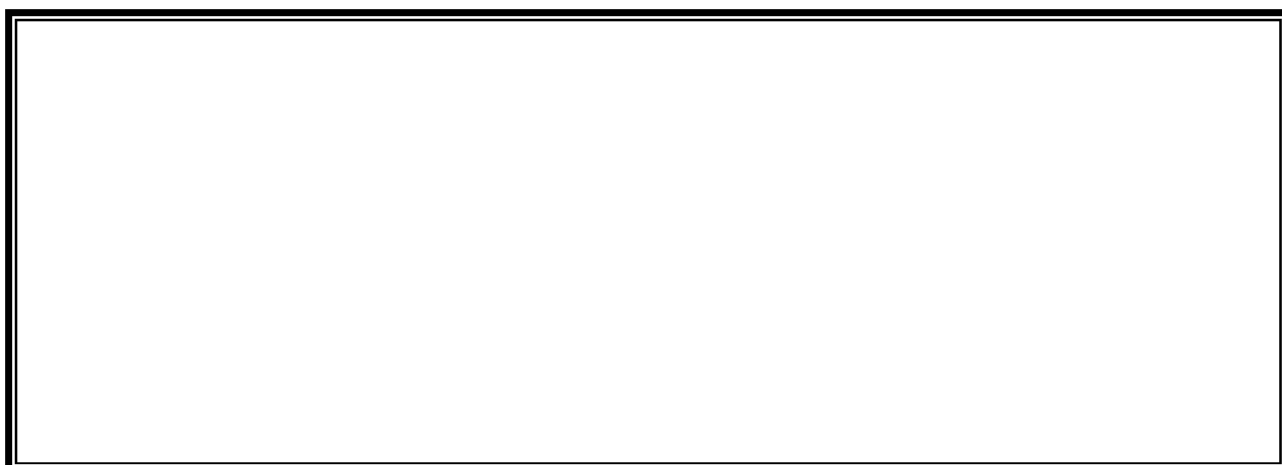
3. ベトナムへ旅行すると考えたときに、どのようなイメージが思い浮かびますか？



4.ベトナム旅行に関し、あなたが感じたベトナムの雰囲気や、まだ行った事がない方はベトナムと聞いて浮かんでくるベトナムのイメージを自由に描写してください。



5. ベトナム旅行を考える時に思い浮かぶ、ベトナム独自の観光スポットを思いっただけ挙げてください。



次のページに続きます



6. 以下の項目に関し、それぞれの項目は、あなたにとって 旅行先としてのベトナムのイメージにどのくらい影響をあたえますか？「全く影響がない」から「強く影響する」までの5段階で評価し、数字を で囲んで下さい。

No.	項目	全く影響がない ←		普通	→	強く影響する
1	旅行ガイドブック	1	2	3	4	5
2	旅行パンフレット	1	2	3	4	5
3	旅行代理店	1	2	3	4	5
4	世界旅行博 ( World Travel Fairs )	1	2	3	4	5
5	ベトナム観光の経験	1	2	3	4	5
6	インターネット	1	2	3	4	5
7	テレビ番組	1	2	3	4	5
8	新聞	1	2	3	4	5
9	雑誌	1	2	3	4	5
10	家族、親戚、友人 ( 口コミ )	1	2	3	4	5
11	学校教育	1	2	3	4	5
12	本	1	2	3	4	5
13	ベトナムによる観光振興策(スポーツや文化的なイベント、旅行フェアや展示会など・)	1	2	3	4	5

7. 最後に、あなたに関する情報に X のチェックを付けてください。

- 性別: ☐ 男性 ☐ 女性
- 年齢: \_\_\_\_\_ 才
- 仕事:
 

☐ 旅行代理店 ☐ 学生 ☐ 教師/研究者

☐ 公務員 ☐ 会社員 ☐ 自営業 ☐ 主婦

☐ その他 :.....
- あなたは最近 10 年間に、何回海外旅行をしたことがありますか？
 

☐ 0 回 ☐ 1 回 ☐ 2-3 回 ☐ 4-5 回 ☐ 6-9 回 ☐ 10 回以上
- あなたは最近 10 年間に、何回ベトナムを訪れましたか？
 

☐ 0 回 ☐ 1 回 ☐ 2-3 回 ☐ 4-5 回 ☐ 6 回以上

アンケートにご協力くださりましてありがとうございました。

もし、この研究にご興味がありましたら右記にご連絡ください。[anhlt07@apu.ac.jp](mailto:anhlt07@apu.ac.jp) .

## Appendix B – The Slogans and Logos of Vietnam's Tourism

### 1. The current slogan and logo of Vietnam's tourism



### 2. The slogan and logo used in 2004-2005



### 3. The logo used in 2000-2005<sup>5</sup> with the slogan 'Vietnam – the Destination for the New Millennium'



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<sup>5</sup> The slogans *Welcome to Vietnam* and *Vietnam – the Destination for the New Millennium* with their logos were used in parallel in 2004-2005.