



Determinants of Business Relationships between Thai and
Vietnamese Travel Agencies

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หัวข้อวิจัย	ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อความสัมพันธ์ทางธุรกิจระหว่างบริษัทตัวแทนการท่องเที่ยวของไทยและเวียดนาม
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งานวิจัยและวรรณกรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการตลาดเพื่อการสร้างความสัมพันธ์ทางธุรกิจอธิบายปัจจัย เช่น ความไว้วางใจ ความมุ่งมั่นในการทำงานร่วมกัน การพึ่งพาอาศัยกันและกัน ความร่วมมือ ความยืดหยุ่นในการทำงาน การสื่อสาร ความเข้ากันได้ขององค์กร เป็นต้น ซึ่งความสัมพันธ์ทางธุรกิจที่ดีจะนำไปสู่การสนับสนุนทางการตลาด ความสำเร็จทางการเงิน และความพึงพอใจในความสัมพันธ์ การเปลี่ยนแปลงในสิ่งแวดล้อมของธุรกิจท่องเที่ยว ได้แก่ การเริ่มต้นอย่างเป็นทางการของประชาคมเศรษฐกิจอาเซียนในปี 2558 และปัญหาทางการเมืองในประเทศไทย ทำให้มีความจำเป็นในการระบุปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อความสัมพันธ์ทางธุรกิจในบริบทของการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างไทยและเวียดนาม

การวิจัยแบบผสมผสานครั้งนี้ศึกษาข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างบริษัทตัวแทนการท่องเที่ยวไทย 207 ราย และเวียดนาม 114 ราย และใช้การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกกับบริษัทตัวแทนการท่องเที่ยวของไทย 5 ราย และข้อเสนอแนะของบริษัทตัวแทนการท่องเที่ยวของเวียดนาม 39 ราย เพื่อยืนยันปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อความสัมพันธ์ทางธุรกิจที่ได้จากผลการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ การวิจัยเชิงปริมาณใช้การวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยและการวิเคราะห์สมการถดถอยแบบพหุ โดยผลการวิจัยมีดังนี้ ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อการสร้างความสัมพันธ์ทางธุรกิจระหว่างบริษัทตัวแทนการท่องเที่ยวไทยและเวียดนามมีความแตกต่างกัน สำหรับบริษัทตัวแทนการท่องเที่ยวของไทย ปัจจัยที่สำคัญที่สุด คือ ความไว้วางใจ ปัจจัยที่สำคัญรองลงมา ได้แก่ ระบบงาน ความร่วมมือกัน การมีส่วนร่วม ความถี่ของการปฏิสัมพันธ์ และการแก้ปัญหาข้อขัดแย้ง สำหรับบริษัทตัวแทนการท่องเที่ยวของเวียดนาม ปัจจัยที่สำคัญ คือ การมีส่วนร่วม ความถี่ของการปฏิสัมพันธ์ และความมุ่งมั่นในการทำงานร่วมกัน การวิจัยนี้พบว่าความถี่ของการปฏิสัมพันธ์สามารถพยากรณ์ความสัมพันธ์ทางธุรกิจได้ดี เพราะมีความสัมพันธ์อย่างมีนัยสำคัญกับทุกองค์ประกอบของความสัมพันธ์

การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพใช้การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา โดยผลการวิจัยสนับสนุนผลการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ และเพิ่มเติมองค์ความรู้ในการปรับปรุงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างองค์กรและอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวไทยและเวียดนาม

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Inter-organizational or business-to-business relationship marketing literature reveals the importance of determinants such as trust, commitment, interdependence, coordination, flexibility, communication, and compatibility. As well, it is evident that worthy relationships lead to marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction. Since various environmental changes occur in tourism industry, such as the official commencement of ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, as well as political conflict in Thailand, it is essential to identify key determinants of business relationships in order to thrive in the Thai-Vietnamese business context.

This research compared quantitative data from 207 Thai and 114 Vietnamese travel agencies. In-depth interviews were conducted with five Thai travel agencies. In addition, recommendations from 39 Vietnamese travel agencies were utilized to verify determinants arising from quantitative analysis undertaken.

Factor analysis and multivariate regression analysis were applied to data. The findings indicate that there are cultural differences in Thai and Vietnamese business relationships. The most important determinant for Thai travel agencies is trust. Other significant determinants for Thais are formalization, coordination, participation, frequency of interaction, and conflict resolution. For Vietnamese agencies, important determinants are participation, frequency of interaction, and commitment. The findings suggest that frequency of interaction is a good predictor for any beneficial business relationship.

Content analysis of qualitative data supported the quantitative findings and this outcome enhanced marketing insight with regard to the improvement of interorganizational relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies.

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Researchers

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Thailand has a vision to become one of the top five tourist destinations in Asia, in so doing, enabling the country to generate more sustainable wealth. This objective is contained in the 2012-2016 National Tourism Development Plan, which aims to move Thailand's international competitiveness up at least 15 places and increase tourism income by at least 5 percent during the stated five-year period. According to tourism reports, tourist arrivals increased steadily from 11.5 million in 2005 to 26.6 million in 2013. The income from such tourism came mainly from Europe, with this followed by East Asia, ASEAN, the Americas, and Oceania (The Government Public Relations Department, 2011).

One of the key strategies in the 2012-2016 National Tourism Development Plan is to enhance Thai infrastructure and logistics, with this linking domestic and international tourism and accommodating more tourist arrivals. The tourism industry is essential for Thailand; thereby, the Thai government encourages necessary research in this area. With Thailand aiming to be the center of tourism in Asia, the National Research Council of Thailand highly responds by supporting related research in pertinent areas, such as effective international tourism management, policy and regulation development, destination development, and new target group expansion.

However, there are at least three challenges for both Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. The first challenge relates to the official commencement of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which encourages cooperation at the governmental level whereby less inconvenient regulations are expected in larger regional markets. Also, due to AEC openness, there will be many more competitors from other ASEAN countries entering the Thai tourist sector. Even so, for the tourism and hospitality industry, the AEC seems to offer a brighter future. With the international fences collapsing, it is anticipated that there will be more travelers for both business and recreational purposes. However, marketers in the field of tourism and hospitality will be confronted with new complexities. Particularly, major challenges are changes in the customer base and their behavior, the broader AEC economy, as well as increased competition. In relation to the latter point, a more competitive environment will force travel agencies to seek out international alliances as an

instrument to help preserve sales and profitability, as well as to boost their brand or reputation otherwise.

Table 1.1, as is shown below, indicates high business potential for Thailand arising from the arrival of Vietnamese customers. The numbers of Vietnamese tourists are increasing steadily, now being almost triple that of seven years ago (Department of Tourism - Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2014).

Table 1.1 International Tourist Arrivals in Thailand

Tourist arrivals	2013		2012		2011		2007	
China	4,637,335	1	2,786,860	1	1,721,247	2	1,003,141	4
Malaysia	3,041,097	2	2,554,397	2	2,500,280	1	1,551,959	1
Russia	1,746,565	3	1,316,564	4	1,054,187	4	279,771	16
Japan	1,536,425	4	1,373,716	3	1,127,893	3	1,248,700	2
Korea	1,295,342	5	1,163,619	5	1,006,283	5	1,075,516	3
India	1,050,889	6	1,013,308	6	914,971	6	506,237	11
Laos	976,639	7	975,999	7	891,950	7	521,062	10
Singapore	955,468	8	831,215	10	682,364	10	799,100	5
United Kingdom	905,024	9	873,053	9	844,972	8	746,422	6
Australia	900,460	10	930,241	8	829,855	9	638,126	7
USA	823,486	11	768,638	11	681,748	11	623,638	8
Germany	737,658	12	682,419	12	619,133	12	537,200	9
Vietnam	725,057	13	618,670	13	496,768	14	254,252	17
France	611,582	14	576,106	14	515,572	13	351,651	15
Indonesia	594,251	15	447,820	16	370,795	18	233,919	18

Source: (Department of Tourism - Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2014)

While the volume of Vietnamese tourists travelling to Thailand is high, the number of Thai tourists visiting Vietnam is not as high, as shown in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 Thai Tourist Arrivals in Vietnam

2014	2013	2012	2011
246,874	268,968	225,866	181,820

Source: (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2015)

In relation to the second challenge for both Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, academia and practitioners have reported the increase in the bargaining power of consumers and buyers. More particularly, the value of a lifetime customer

and the importance of preventing customer defection have become considerable factors in marketing management. Consider that marketing today is beyond creating, selling, and delivering superior products. It prioritizes the value creation and the maintenance of long-term relationships with customers while satisfying the objectives of all parties. Customer service, thus, has become the key component in marketing, especially for the tourism and hospitality industry. It is a high priority to improve service quality if travel agencies sincerely aim to prosper in the international marketplace since superior service quality can serve as a mode of differentiation that enhances competitive advantage. In delivering the customers' perceived values continuously, such agencies realize the importance of having cooperative alliances whereby all parties achieve success (Mehta, Takao, Mazur, & Anderson, 2013). In fact, relational partnerships, alliances, and relationship marketing practices, are increasingly popular in many industries, such as that of airlines, automobiles, computers, financial services, hospitality and, of course, travel and tourism (Mai, 2013).

With regard to improved customer relations, tourism scholars have concentrated on repeat visitation, which is seen as being a significant factor in increasing revenue and destination loyalty (Ahmad Puad Mat, Azizan, Maryam, & Ala'a Nimer, 2012). In this regard, previous researchers examined factors influencing repeat visitation and its major antecedents, such as satisfaction, perceived value, past experience, novelty seeking, and so forth. Of course, marketing theory increasingly emphasizes the importance of relationship marketing in managing business markets (Hougaard & Bjerre, 2009). Unsurprisingly, therefore, the proliferation of international tourism increasingly drives more and more collaborative agreements between travel agencies to safeguard customer satisfaction and repeat visitation. Consequently, success seems to be dependent on many factors, with this leading to the question of determinants that can successfully guide partnerships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. Thus far, the answer to this question is unknown as no previously-published research has examined the issues of managing alliances from the perspectives of travel agencies from both countries.

As for the third challenge facing Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, Voldnes, Grønhaug, & Nilssen (2012) reveal the congruence between international partners in terms of antecedents that are important for achieving satisfaction. However, several differences exist between how partners describe their own actions and how they perceive those of their counterparts. These differences are explained by cultural dissimilarities. Voss, Johnson, Cullen, Sakano, & Takenouchi (2006) also explain the importance of cultural sensitivity in international business relationships. For

instance, trust is a very important determinant for assessing marketing performance for Japanese firms relative to their US partners.

Since marketers aim to maximize their performance, relationship building is of increasing importance. Extant research has established that partnership phenomena vary cross-culturally in critical ways. It appears, thereby, that the investigation of key determinants cross-culturally will increase the insight of international business relationships and, as a direct result, enhance the ability of relayed players to manage these important relationships.

The three aforementioned challenges raise the following two questions:

- What are the determinants of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies?
- Which determinants are culturally similar or different?

The research enclosed in this report originated from the Ph.D. dissertation undertaking in 2010 of Dr. Mai Ngoc Khuong (Mai, 2012). He studied the determinants of interorganizational relationship marketing between Vietnamese and Thai travel agencies from the perspective of Vietnamese international travel companies. For the purpose of filling the knowledge gap of international business relationships for Thailand and Vietnam tourism industry, the research contained herein is in parallel to the seminal work of Dr, Mai Ngoc Khuong by contrasting the perspectives of Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies and applying qualitative research to verify the differences according to the lapse of time.

Research objectives

The objective of research presented in this report is as follows:

To identify key determinants of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies by contrasting the data from both countries.

Scope of research

This research focuses on determinants that guide relationship success between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. For this reason, a quantitative approach is the major method applied. However, since there is a wide gap between the timing of this research and when the research in Vietnam was conducted in 2010, in order to increase trustworthiness, qualitative research was applied to clarify the possible issues arising from a duration gap.

It is noteworthy that the unit of analysis for this research was at the corporate level, along with the target population being international travel agencies in Thailand and Vietnam that have relationships with Vietnamese and Thai travel partners, respectively.

Vietnamese travel agencies utilized in this research project were obtained from a list provided by the office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Ho Chi Minh City. This list consisted of 237 companies (Mai, 2013). However, there is no definite number of Thai-Vietnamese travel agencies provided by the office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Thailand. According to the Association of Thai Travel Agents, there were only 33 Thai travel agencies offering tour programs in Vietnam. Since the number of Thai travel agencies with Vietnamese partners could not be confirmed with certainty, researchers selected samples from the entire population. In this context, the number of usable samples in Vietnam was 114, and that in Thailand was 207.

Once samples were obtained, qualitative study was applied to clarify the associated variables. As well, five Thai travel agencies were interviewed in 2014-2015, and Dr. Mai Ngoc Khuong provided recommendations from 39 Vietnamese travel agencies.

Hypotheses

After careful consideration, researchers arrived at two hypotheses, as are stated below:

H1: Independent variables including commitment, communication, conflict resolution, coordination, flexibility, formalization, frequency of interaction, importance of relationships, interdependence, organizational compatibility, participation, and trust are positively associated with marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction.

H2: Dependent variables including marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction are well explained and predicted by the independent variables.

Limitation

The findings of this research should be seen within the context of several limitations, which could provide the basis for additional research. First, the duration

gap between timing of the first and second research projects is wide. Therefore, a qualitative method was applied to increase robustness and to add the depth of knowledge to the findings of this report. Second, the research undertaken was aimed primarily to explore more about relationship aspects in the Thai and Vietnamese context, even though variables regarding business relationships are numerous and widely studied. However, the resultant efforts give rise to fragmented research. Third, the samples of Thai and Vietnamese agencies were somewhat different. There would be some arguments if they were comparable. Fourth, since the research was focused on the perception of travel agencies, it would be more comprehensive if contrasting all of that with the opinions of tourists as well. Finally, the research did not explore the impact of each determinant that has a tendency to change through relationship transition (Luo & Kumar, 2013). However, a partial suggestion, although merely from a Thai perspective, indicates that the length of any business relationship is significantly related with financial success and relationship satisfaction.

Definition of research terms

Business relationships are formal and informal plans and activities that Thai and Vietnamese travel partners have accomplished together for long-term benefits pertaining to companies, customers, employees, and other stakeholders.

Commitment refers to “an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it; that is, the committed party believes the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

Communication refers to the formal and informal sharing of accurate, adequate, credible, meaningful, and timely information exchanged between partners (Anderson & Narus, 1990). This is for the purpose of planning, goal setting, and operating. Thus, the exchanges of meaning and information will include day-to-day, tactical, and strategic issues (Leonidou, Palihawadana, & Theodosiou, 2006).

Conflict resolution refers to mutual attempts in reducing or clearing conflict, disagreement, frustration, and tension, among the business partners that arise from possible incompatibility of goals, aims, ideas, and values. The conflicts also arise from the act of one party that deters the others from gaining necessary resources, or if one party conducts activities exclusively for their own advancement.

Coordination or cooperation refers to “similar or complementary coordinated actions taken by firms in interdependent relationships to achieve mutual outcomes with expected reciprocation over time” (Anderson & Narus, 1990).

Financial success refers to the positive impact of a relationship on financial benefits, such as increased revenue and lower marketing cost (Berry, 1995). In addition, there are other forms of benefit that lead to improved future revenue and profit streams, such as new contracts, faster and better services, as well as co-creation that increases values and enhances competitiveness (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003).

Flexibility refers to the extent to which partners respond to each other with regard to requests made during ever-changing circumstances. The extent to which one party in a business relationship will make substantial investments, such as in the form of adjusting strategies, structures, processes, and procedures, in order to best fit the needs, capabilities, and objectives of the other party (Crotts & Turner, 1999).

Formalization refers to the degree to which the rules prescribing desired behaviors and the role responsibilities of each party are formulated (Mai, 2013).

Frequency of interaction refers to the amount of contacts and tourist exchanges between agencies (Mai, 2013).

Importance of the relationships refers to the extent to which the partner’s staff members perceive that the business relationship is critical (Mai, 2012).

Interdependence refers to a partner's perception of his dependence, with this being relative to his partners' dependence on the associated relationships (Anderson & Narus, 1990). It reflects the degree to which one party needs to maintain business cooperation and participation with his partner in order to achieve their desired goals.

Marketing support refers to the degree of marketing effort that business partners contribute to arrive at mutual success, such as an appropriate budget, plus joint activities (order processing, product design, and training), as well as adequate shared resources (human, information, and technology), and so on.

Organizational compatibility reflects mutual goals and objectives, as well as similarity in operating philosophies and corporate culture (Mai, 2013). All of this leads to the enhancement of partners’ effectiveness and competitiveness.

Participation refers to “the extent to which partners engage jointly in planning and goal setting. When one partner's actions influence the ability of the other to effectively compete, the necessity for participation in specifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations increases” (Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

Relationship satisfaction refers to a positive affective state reflecting the degree to which one party in a business relationship fulfills his partner's expectations in terms of financial, behavioral, and other pertinent issues.

Trust refers to a belief of one party in a business relationship that the behavior of the other party is honest and fair, and that he will perform actions resulting in positive outcomes, as well as him preventing actions that will result in negative outcomes.

Contribution

This research is an attempt to enhance the body of knowledge regarding the key determinants of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, which is done by contrasting relevant data from both countries. The determinants of business relationships developed in the research were based on relationship marketing from which knowledge mostly develops within Western cultures. The findings from this research suggest that developing a long-term relationship is necessary for Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies and that they must be aware of cultural differences.

Findings from Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies were quite different. However, they are indicative rather than conclusive. Though Thailand and Vietnam have several shared cultures and have shared a long history, differences are revealed and should be acted upon as a precaution for international tourism management and relationship marketing. This insightful issue should be investigated further for the development of long-term relationships with travel agencies located in other AEC countries.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY AND RELATED RESEARCH

Business or interorganizational relationships

Business or interorganizational relationships are based on the concept of business alliances, which is a vital form of relationship marketing. These can be defined as collaborative efforts between two or more organizations that share financial and strategic resources with the purpose of achieving mutually compatible objectives that they could not accomplish alone (Hunt, Lambe, & Wittmann, 2002).

Interorganizational success can be grouped into four categories (Hunt, et al., 2002). First, the *resource-based view* focuses on the role of heterogeneous and imperfectly mobile resources. Associated success derives from partners sharing resources and developing idiosyncratic resources during the partnership period. Second, the *competence-based view* focuses on the role of interorganizational capabilities. Success in this capacity derives from partners developing a capability for securing, developing, and managing alliances. Third, the *relational factors view* focuses on characteristics of the interorganizational relationship. Here, success derives from the partnership that has certain characteristics, such as cooperation, trust, commitment, and communication. Finally, the *competitive advantage view* focuses on marketplace positions. Success in this instance results from co-producing market offerings that have superior value or lower costs. That is to say, every party achieves better competitive advantage status.

Building and maintaining interorganizational relationships has long been acknowledged as beneficial for international businesses. However, a prerequisite for relationship success is the satisfaction of involved parties who are usually embedded in different cultures. In turn, this leads to the differences in relationship expectations and satisfaction (Voldnes, et al., 2012). Interestingly, Voldnes, et al. (2012) found that Norwegian and Russian partners describe their own as well as their partners' actions and emphasize aspects of their relationship differently. Since interorganizational relationships are not stable, they evolve in line with the partners' characteristics, relationship contents, and situations, too (Börjeson, 2015). Clearly, it is important to understand the cross-cultural determinants of interorganizational relationships.

Furthermore, Hofstede (2015) explains national culture that, in turn, affects corporate culture through the seminal and widely-used six-dimension model. The associated attributes are Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism,

Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Pragmatic (long-term) versus Normative (short-term) Orientation, and Indulgence versus Restraint. Each of these characteristics is summarized below.

Power Distance

Power Distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

Individualism versus Collectivism

Individualism represents a preference for a loosely-knit society in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families. In contrast, collectivism represents a preference for a tightly-knit society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Masculinity versus Femininity

Masculinity represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Such a society at large is competitive. In contrast, femininity represents a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life. Such a society at large is consensus-oriented.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance represents the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, thereby creating beliefs and institutions in a bid to avoid the uncertain future.

Pragmatic (long-term) versus Normative (short-term) Orientation

Societies who score low with regard to this dimension prefer to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. On the other hand, those which scores high take a more pragmatic approach: Those of the latter cohort encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

Indulgence versus Restraint

Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. In obvious contrast, restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

Ratings for preceding cultural dimensions are presented in Table 2.1 on the next page for the two countries of interest in this research project.

Table 2.1 The national culture of Thailand and Vietnam

	Power Distance	Individualism versus Collectivism	Masculinity versus Femininity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Pragmatic versus Normative	Indulgence versus Restraint
Thailand	64	20	34	64	32	45
Vietnam	70	20	40	30	57	35

Source: (Hofstede, 2015)

According to Hofstede's analysis, Thailand and Vietnam are similar in terms of having societies that represent high power distance, collectivism, and femininity, yet are different in terms of uncertainty avoidance and short-term or long-term orientation.

As might well be apparent, the preceding cultural similarities and differences form the board context in which collaborating Thai and Vietnamese tourist agencies must operate in attaining and maintaining associations of mutual benefit.

The focal objective of relationship marketing is to increase customer's commitment through the process of offering better value on a continuous basis at a reduced cost. Thus, relationship marketing is necessary since it leads to improved performance (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechhoff, & Kardes, 2009). Relationship marketing, besides market share, focuses on customer retention and share of customer heart. This can be achieved partly within the organization and partly through partnerships with suppliers and even competitors (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2002). The concept is widely utilized. However, Sheth & Parvatiyar (2002) argue that the paradigms guiding disciplined enquiry can be judged by the ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (study of reality), and methodology (enquiry process). Especially, in international contexts, specific constructs may be required to explain certain phenomenon.

Under ever-changing circumstances, rising consumer power and pressures from increasing competition, especially for ASEAN businesses due to the official commencement of the AEC markets, this research addresses the importance of interorganizational relationships and relationship marketing; thereby, the researchers intend to confirm determinants of relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. As such, successful relationships can ensure the growth of market share, as well as of profitability and reputation, for both parties. Through a systematic study of previous research, influential variables of successful relationships were selected carefully. Figure 2.1 on the next page portrays the determinants and indicators of successful business relationships.

Conceptual framework

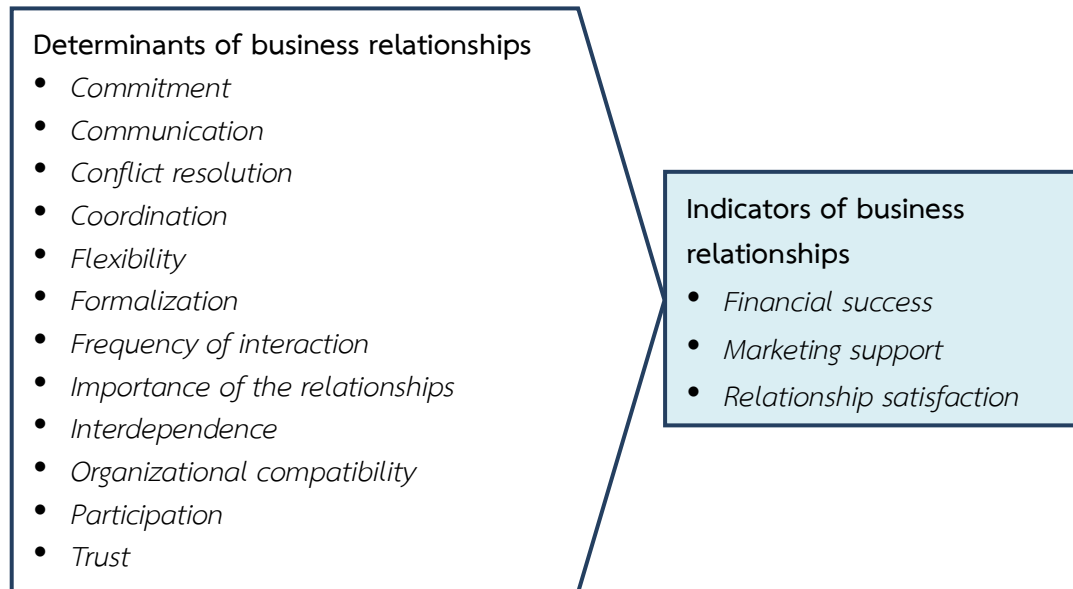


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework of business relationships

In business relationships, consider that performance satisfaction, or the degree to which any business transaction meets the organizational goals or performance expectations of each partner, is very critical (Crofts & Turner, 1999). Buyers or suppliers primarily need to satisfy their partners' organizational requirements so as to achieve business relationship success. Otherwise they risk becoming marginalized. Partners that deliver superior benefits will be highly valued; they will commit themselves to establishing, developing, and maintaining relationships with such partners (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

As a consequence, this research conceptualized three aspects that reflect successful business relationships, as are expressed below.

1) **Financial success.** The main reason for any collaborative effort is that partners aim for better financial performance (Arnett, et al., 2003), as well as any other benefits that facilitate financial success, such as faster processes, better services, and co-creation that increases values and competitiveness (Arnett, et al., 2003; Powers & Reagan, 2007). The positive financial outcomes, per Mai, 2013, include:

- The potential sales and profit;
- The customer willingness to pay a price premium;
- Sales growth; and,
- Lower costs.

2) **Marketing support.** Competition in an international context requires continuous search by a business person for products, processes, and technologies that add competitive value to their own offerings. As such, procurement strategy is one of the most important elements in delivering superior value to its customers. Consequently, organizations seek out partners who are enthusiastic to provide marketing efforts, such as budget allocations, joint activities, customer databases, technology, and so on, to achieve better mutual goals (Palmatier, Scheer, Evans, & Arnold, 2008). As well, it can be stated that enabling reciprocal value creation is focal for service businesses and interorganizational relationships (Grönroos, 2011).

3) **Relationship satisfaction.** Satisfaction is a positive affective state reflecting the degree to which a party in a business relationship fulfills his interacting partner's expectations of financial, behavioral, and other issues. As a prerequisite of behavioral intention, satisfaction or positive perception and feeling towards the relationship outcome are crucial factors in maintaining business relationships. Satisfied partners are willing to prolong relationships and contribute further resources for reciprocal success (Arnett, et al., 2003; Colgate & Danaher, 2000; Leonidou, et al., 2006; Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, & Evans, 2006; Wilson, 1995).

Since international partners are embedded in different cultures, they tend to perceive expectation, behavior, and satisfaction differently (Voldnes, et al., 2012). In that way, the differences may increase uncertainty that can destabilize relationships. Since the satisfaction of all parties is a prerequisite for a successful partnership, it is also a predictor for successful working relationships. Still, antecedents of relationship satisfaction are required to determine successful cross-cultural business relationships. These include trust, commitment, interdependence, coordination, information sharing, communication quality, conflict resolution, long-term orientation, (Voldnes, et al., 2012), as well as participation, formalization, flexibility, importance of relationships, organizational compatibility, and frequency of interaction.

The nature of business relationships

The nature of business relationships is reflected in resource dependence theory and transaction cost theory (Heide, 1994). The key principle of resource dependence theory is that organizations need to reduce uncertainty and manage dependence by means of establishing formal or semiformal links with other organizations. The fact is that most organizations are not internally self-sufficient and

the ultimate organizational goal is survival; hence, they develop a relationship in order to acquire resources that other parties possess (Leonidou, et al., 2006). Since co-investments in physical or human assets dedicated to a relationship cannot be redeployed easily, these give rise to a safeguarding problem with regard to minimizing the risk of subsequent opportunistic exploitation. Once any interorganizational resources exchange takes place, related parties enforce obligations to fulfill the mutuality of interest that exists between the aforesaid parties. However, the relationships cannot exist without adaptation owing to changing circumstances (Heide, 1994).

The key principle of transaction cost theory is that there are potential costs associated with carrying out safeguarding, adaptation, and evaluation processes. Therefore, the related investments constitute interdependence because their partners are irreplaceable or replaceable only at a cost (Heide, 1994). As opposed to the resource dependence theory, transaction cost theory stresses the efficiency of relationship management, which is the result of handling three major dimensions (Leonidou, et al., 2006). These are presented below.

1) transaction-specific investments; that is, physical or human resources assigned to a specific relationship as safeguarding mechanisms that would reduce the risk of opportunistic exploitation;

2) external uncertainty, which gives rise to an adaptation to curtail unpredictable contingencies; and,

3) internal performance ambiguity, which brings about an assessment to ascertain compliance with the contractual agreement. Hence, a business relationship involves real costs associated with carrying out (or opportunity costs for not taking) proper safeguarding, adapting, and evaluating measures. The major weakness of this paradigm has been its persistence in using any sort of transaction costs to explain any observed inter-organizational behavior.

As might be obvious, interorganizational relationships exist largely to create sustainable values for an organization, its customers and other stakeholders, as well as to ensure long-term success. For several decades, the relational concept has replaced the traditional marketing paradigm (Grönroos, 1994; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). Even so, the concept exists with many arguments. For instance, long-term relationships are believed to provide customer life-time value (Shekhar & Gupta, 2008), as well as reduce costs, and increase focus on the co-creation of values. Of course, customer retention relies on trust, commitment, interdependence, and

cooperation (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). Importantly, added values must reflect customer needs and also provide profits for both parties (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996).

Relationship marketing

A major shift in marketing theory and practice from traditional to relationship paradigms occurred largely due to intense competition, plus the increasing importance of personal interaction, in addition to technological advancement, and environmental changes (Aijo, 1996). The shift is so dramatic that a plethora of related research has been delivered in the past decades. Though there are some controversial issues, no one can deny the benefits of relationship marketing. Technological advancement drives the needs to monitor consumer behavior. As an example, some businesses must track their customers in real time. Higher and cheaper technology enhances rapid production and delivery, better improvement and imitation of products, as well as convenient communication channels. Also, technology helps businesses to increase customer values, reduce service mistakes, and provided better support interactions with individual customers (Berry, 1995).

The term “relationship marketing” first appeared in a 1983 paper by Leonard L. Berry. Today, relationship marketing is used to describe a glut of research to do with marketing relationships existing between a firm and customers, buyers, suppliers, employees, and regulators (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997). Three renowned definitions of this concept are presented below.

1) Berry (1995, p.236; 2002, p.61) defined relationship marketing as “attracting, maintaining and—in multi-service organizations—enhancing customer relationships.”

2) Grönroos (1994, p.9) defined relationship marketing as “establishing, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises.”

3) Morgan and Hunt (1994, p.20) defined relationship marketing as “establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges. Moreover, a successful relationship basically requires commitment and trust among related parties.”

However, all of the preceding three definitions were considered to be broad. Sheth & Parvatiyar (2002), therefore, clarified the concept by explaining that there were at least three aspects unique to relationship marketing. First, it has to be a one-to-one relationship between the marketer and the customer. Second, it is an interactive process and not a transaction exchange. Ore specifically, marketing is

founded on the principle of exchange and transactions; yet, relationship marketing is all about interaction and activities; thus, it is co-production and co-consumption. Third, relationship marketing is a value-added activity through mutual interdependence and collaboration between suppliers and customers.

As might be apparent, not every organization needs to maintain long-term relationships with its customers and suppliers. The practice of relationship marketing is most applicable to a service business under the following conditions: 1) there is an ongoing desire for the service; 2) the customer controls selection of the service supplier; and, 3) there are alternative suppliers and switching from one supplier to another is common (Berry, 2002). Few businesses intend to sell “one-time” services and have a total control of customer demand and service package. Since the aforementioned conditions do exist, it is essential not to just attract new customers but to build relationships with them. The nature of service provides the opportunity to customize the relationship. Berry (1995) suggested five basic strategies for relationship marketing, as are presented in summary below.

- Developing core service to build relationships;
- Customizing service to serve specific requirements of individual customer;
- Offering augmented benefits;
- Pricing to encourage customer loyalty, and,
- Utilizing internal marketing to inspire employees to perform excellent services.

By learning specific characteristics and requirements of individual customers, and capturing their needs, service businesses can deliver services more precisely in alignment with customer value in specific circumstances. In so doing, they provide an incentive to remain as customers rather than “starting over” with other suppliers. Also, service augmentation provides an opportunity to differentiate from competitive offerings. For example, a business could provide genuine extra service that is not yet available from competitors.

Grönroos (1994) provided an additional, integral element of relationship marketing, with this being the promise concept. For instance, a firm gives promises to persuade passive customers to act in a given way. The promises may attract new customers and, accordingly, build initial relationships. But if promises are not kept, the relationship cannot be maintained and enhanced. Thus, fulfilling promises is a fundamental means of achieving customer satisfaction, retention, and long-term profitability. Another key element is trust, or a willingness to rely on an exchange partner. Its meaning reflects a belief or confidence in the partner’s trustworthiness

that results from the expertise, reliability or intentionality of that partner. It also reflects uncertainty and vulnerability because either party can control the other's actions. Relational exchanges include sharing of benefits and burdens, as well as adjustments to both benefits and burdens over time. Opportunism is quite unlikely in this type of relationship, especially when partners communicate regularly with, is satisfied with, is dependent on, or has a long-term orientation of, its business relationship. Relational exchange implies the existence of relational norms, Since the norms guide agreeable relationship behaviors, they constrain a partner's ability to act opportunistically (Doyle, 2010).

Critics of the relationship marketing concept are numerous, with these ranging from many in academia who doubt its theoretical concept, though to practitioners who see more resources spent than tangible benefits gained from implementing relationship marketing programs. Plus, there are consumers who dislike relationship marketing attempts (Palmer, 2002). It is also suggested that there are sound reasons to explain the emergence of this concept and of the needs to adapt relationship strategies to facilitate the impact of environmental changes (Palmer, 2002). The declining levels of customer loyalty may be seen as evidence of the futility of relationship marketing programs, or these reflect the needs for a more focused attempt at retaining customers or partners.

Many organizations believe that relationship marketing can deliver long-term benefits because the personal or close relationships can enhance customer satisfaction, trust, and positive attitudes towards service quality (Schakett, 2009). In the hospitality business context, Grönroos (2011) suggests that fruitful business is derived from tourists' satisfaction. Since the satisfaction is all about collective feelings from good experiences with related businesses (such as travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, or theme parks), it is understandable that those businesses must rely on each other. In this manner, strategic partnerships are more likely to occur.

It stands to reason that selecting a partner is a very delicate process. Organizations need to understand thoroughly the nature of a prospective partner if any subsequent relationship is to thrive. Good partners are those with shared goals, identity, and values (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2010). Consider that:

- Organizational goals determine what organizations want to achieve;
- Identity reflects the nature of business and how it is perceived by insiders and outsiders; and,
- Values determine shared beliefs, which everyone in a specific organization understands and may not be fully understood by outsiders.

Since characteristics of good partners may vary in different industries, cultures, or countries, these potential and actual differences suggest the need to study relationship marketing beyond the western context from which it came. Naturally, there are numerous determinants related to business relationships. As well, much research confirms the importance of trust and commitment in creating relationship values (Zabkar & Brencic, 2004). However, this research aimed to identify the determinants of business relationships in a Thai and Vietnamese context. Thus, variables such as coordination, communication, conflict resolution, flexibility, formalization, frequency of interaction, importance of relationships, interdependence, organizational compatibility, and participation, were measured as well.

Commitment

Commitment refers to an exchange partner's belief in the importance of an ongoing relationship. The partner will warrant maximum effort at maintaining it; that is, the committed party believes the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Therefore, mutual commitment is a foundation of cooperative relationships and determines who will become the stayers and leavers in business relationships (Crofts & Turner, 1999). Commitment, consequently, reflects a belief that partners in business relationships will bring future values or benefits (Wilson, 1995), as well as sacrifice resources and present benefits, or reduce requirements, in order to prosper in the long run (Leonidou, et al., 2006). Accordingly, commitment implies the importance of relationships.

In this regard, there are two kinds of commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), as are presented below.

- Commitment that is brought about by sharing, identifying with, or internalizing, the organizational values: and,
- Commitment that is brought about by a cognitive evaluation of the instrumental worth of a continued business relationship, as can be seen to arise by adding up the gains and losses, pluses and minuses, or rewards and punishments.

Commitment is an essential element for successful long-term relationships. It will lead to an increase in sales and profits, a greater chance of customer retention, and improved customers' willingness to refer and recommend. Relationship marketing literature suggests that satisfaction, trust, relationship value, and commitment are the key variables for successful business relationship management.

However, potentially, each variable is related with one another, and that might lead to collinearity. For example, trust and relationship value are influential predictors of commitment (Walter, Mueller, & Helfert, 2000).

Communication

Communication refers to the formal and informal sharing of meaningful and timely information (Anderson & Narus, 1990). Effective communication practice will facilitate performance outcomes (Crotts & Turner, 1999). Therefore, the exchanges of meaningful data and information will include day-to-day, tactical, and strategic issues (Leonidou, et al., 2006). For that reason, communication between partners requires aspects, such as communication quality, types of information sharing, and systems that can facilitate joint planning and goal setting (Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

Business communication focuses not only on the amount and frequency of exchanges, but also the usefulness of information (Palmatier, et al., 2006). Racela & Thoumrungroje (2014) explain that marketing orientation is strongly related with communication frequency and quality, but only communication quality is related to coordination and performance outcomes. Further, the usefulness or communication quality seems more important given that the frequency of interactions may suggest problems, or might even cause conflicts (Blenkhorn & MacKenzie, 1996). In fact, scholars suggest that communication is a prerequisite of trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Thus, both formal and informal information exchanged between partners should be meaningful, accurate, adequate, credible, and timely.

Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution refers to mutual attempts in reducing or clearing conflict, disagreement, frustration, and tension among business partners, which arise from the incompatibility of goals, aims, ideas, and values. Conflicts also arise from the act of one party that deters the others from gaining necessary resources or come about because one party conducts activities exclusively for his own advancement. Conflict can also be caused by structural factors (e.g. competition for the same resources) and/or attitudinal factors (e.g. different opinions and expectations). Having conflicts is favorable and unfavorable. Conflict is unfavorable since, potentially, it reduces relationship satisfaction. It is due to the fact that disagreement, frustration, and tension, may create an impression that the partner is preventing goal achievement,

having disapproval with regard to existing arrangements, and also creating uncertainty in fulfilling economic and non-economic goals (Leonidou, et al., 2006).

The hostility and bitterness resulting from disagreements not being resolved agreeably lead to unfavorable consequences, such as relationship dissolution. However, when disputes are resolved amicably, such disagreements can be referred to as “functional conflict” since they prevent stagnation, stimulate interest and curiosity, provide a means for problem solving, and arrive at solutions (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Given that a certain amount of conflict is expected, an understanding of how conflicts are resolved is very important. The impact of conflict resolution on a business relationship can be productive or destructive. Thus, the manner in which partners resolve any conflict has implications for partnership success (Mohr & Spekman, 1994). Since conflicts commonly occur, it can be seen that commitment and coordination in conflict resolution will enhance relationships (Claycomb & Frankwick, 2010; Medina-MunÄoz & GarcöÂa-FalcoÂn, 2000).

When parties engage in joint problem solving, a mutually satisfactory solution might be reached. In this manner, the resolution will enhance partnership success. Partners often attempt to persuade each other to adopt particular solutions to the conflict situation. These persuasive attempts, generally, are more constructive than the use of destructive conflict resolution techniques (such as coercion, domination, or confrontation), which are seen as counter-productive, especially as these will strain the partnership (Mohr & Spekman, 1994).

Coordination

Coordination or cooperation refers to “similar or complementary coordinated actions taken by firms in interdependent relationships to achieve mutual outcomes with expected reciprocation over time” (Anderson & Narus, 1990). The definition was expanded by Morgan and Hunt (1994) by emphasizing the pro-active aspect of coordination. That is, partners are expected not only to work together in order to achieve shared goals, but also to go beyond their assigned role and responsibility to serve the partners and their consumers.

Coordination reflects a desire to accomplish both intra- and inter-firm goals by sharing advantages in favor of future success. It implies an attitude characterized by joint effort, team spirit, and mutual collaboration, all of which is expressed in the form of common actions and/or adaptations. In addition, cultivating a cooperative

climate between partners has a favorable effect on satisfaction through the elimination of negative feelings, as well as the increasing emphasis on positive outcomes (Leonidou, et al., 2006). For instance, a hotel might coordinate with travel agents through actions such as providing them with up-to-date and timely information (such as notifying them of rooms available, prices, sales promotions), or responding to travel agencies' requests and questions in a prompt fashion. That attitude and actions can contribute to relationship success across sectors. As well, coordination can influence overall relationship success and satisfaction with marketing support in the tourism industry (Medina-MunÄoz & Garc  a-Falco  n, 2000).

Furthermore, coordination is influenced directly by both commitment and trust. Partners committed to the relationship will be cooperative and shall desire to maintain trustworthy relationships since the combination of coordination, trust, and commitment allows the partners to ensure reciprocal benefits (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In the international tourism industry, partners are expected to provide coordinated action since coordination will promote service quality and effective competition within networks (Crofts & Turner, 1999). Consequently, it will promote relationship success.

Flexibility

Flexibility refers to the extent to which partners respond to the requests of each other during ever-changing circumstances. This refers to the extent to which one party in a business relationship will make substantial investments in the form of adjusting strategies, structures, processes, and procedures, in order to best fit the needs, capabilities, and objectives of the other party (Crofts & Turner, 1999).

It can be stated that flexibility or adaptation occurs when one party in a relationship alters its process, system, or other fundamental items, to accommodate the other party. When partners make adaptations, they expect that such behavior will be influential, as might vary over the life of business relationship. In the early stages, it will be a means to develop trust; in the mature stage, it will expand and solidify the relationship, as well as create barriers for entry of competitors (Wilson, 1995).

Flexibility in business relationships tends to involve substantial adaptations in structures, processes, systems, or strategies in order to accommodate the partners' objectives, needs, and capabilities. Such adaptations are necessary in bonding and cultivating trust because substantial investments utilized in adaptations send a strong

message regarding the values of long-term relationship, plus create a level of confidence that the partner is willing to accommodate future needs or resolve conflicts arising from the relationship (Leonidou, et al., 2006).

Most adaptation can be categorized as being reactive, which is expensive generally and can have a negative effect on sales and profit. However, well-planned adaptation can result in substantial advantages for both parties. For example, the adaptation of a sales process might create a shortened sales cycle, improved resource allocation, and a faster return on investment, which leads to stronger business relationships (Viio & Grönroos, 2014).

Formalization

Formalization refers to the degree to which the rules prescribing desired behaviors and the role responsibilities of each party are formulated (Mai, 2013). While constructs such as non-retrievable investments, shared technology, and adaptations tend to either strengthen or weaken a relationship, their interaction may create a force to sustain the relationship. Formalization, such as a document, contract, and guidelines, can create a structural bond, which is a vector of forces that create impediments to termination of the relationship. In the tourism industry, travel agencies and partners normally set up the boundary of their services, reservation and payment system, joint training, and service and safety standards. Structural bonds develop over time as the level of the investments, adaptations, and shared technology grows until the point where it is difficult to terminate a relationship. Therefore, formality relates to commitment to the continuance of a relationship (Wilson, 1995). It is also a basis for trust formation (Hartmann & Slapničar, 2009).

Frequency of interaction

Frequency of interaction refers to the amount of contact and tourist exchanges between agencies (Mai, 2013). It suggests the intensity of interaction (Palmatier, et al., 2006). This is because company visits and tourist exchanges imply financial success and satisfaction due to business coordination. In the tourism industry, travel agencies normally work with several suppliers. Therefore, the numbers of tourist exchanges will reflect the intensity of their relationships. Moreover, international travel agencies visit their partners to maintain their relationships and to discuss their joint activities, as well as talk about new business

opportunities. However, this variable is less studied in the area of business relationship.

Importance of the relationships

The importance of relationships refers to the extent to which staff members of an organization perceive that the business relationship is critical to the organizational mission (Mai, 2013). Thus, the importance of a relationship depends upon the necessities of having business partners and the level of bargaining power of each party (Blenkhorn & MacKenzie, 1996). Property of power consists of organizational (competitiveness), individual (knowledge, skills, or reputation), or relational (relationship or outcomes) elements of power (Meehan & Wright, 2012).

Interdependence

Interdependence refers to a partner's perception of his dependence relative to his partners' dependence on the relationship (Anderson & Narus, 1990). It reflects the degree of a person's need to maintain cooperation and participation with his partner in order to achieve their desired goals. Interdependence reflects in the partners' shared objectives. It implies a desire for reciprocity (Wilson, 1995). In turn, this will contribute to better performance (Chattananon & Trimetsoontorn, 2009).

Interdependence derives from the concept of power imbalance, which refers to an ability to get the partners to do something that they would not do normally. In addition, power has an ability to harm other parties through the legal system. Partners who do not deliver what is promised are not paid until the consumer's complaints are resolved. However, such an ability to seek redress on behalf of the harmed customers may not be as readily available in lesser developed countries (Crofts & Turner, 1999). Power imbalance is very common in business relationships. Although the higher power party usually commands more benefits, the party with lesser power may not desire to leave the relationship because the dependency offers a better situation than could be obtained otherwise.

Interdependence also derives from industrial organization theory. Transaction costs determine how a firm organizes its activities. Thereby, they influence how a transaction occurs, and how a firm chooses or leaves a relationship. The party with less power is willing to maintain a relationship or become a loyal partner. The party with more power will exercise control. As long as organizational power is balanced,

relationship management will be bilateral and partners will be equally interested in maintaining a long-term relationship. When the power is imbalanced, and one party gains at the expense of the other, the relationship becomes less stable (Blenkhorn & MacKenzie, 1996). Note that the less advantaged party may choose to 1) maintain status quo, 2) partially or completely withdraw from the relationship, 3) form coalitions, 4) extend the power network, or (5) enhance status of the more powerful party (Ganesan, 1994).

Relationship marketing emphasizes the concept of co-creation or joint value creation because value is created when customers experience products or services (Grönroos, 2011). Thereby, interdependence and coordination are factors inducing better creation, delivery, and service quality.

Organizational compatibility

Organizational compatibility or similarity reflects mutual goals and objectives, as well as similarity in operating philosophies and corporate culture (Mai, 2013). This will lead to the enhancement of partners' effectiveness and competitiveness. In order to minimize structural and attitudinal conflicts and achieve long-term success, partners must be compatible in terms of goal, identity, and value (Kotler, et al., 2010). Compatibility also reflects in sharing behavior because if either party is better off, or having imbalance of power, it is difficult to sustain a long-term relationship (Palmatier, et al., 2006).

On the basis of congruence theory, effective relationship building requires interorganizational compatibility. This refers to the sharing of common experiences, values, principles, and strategies between business partners. Organizations with comparable products and services, as well as similar objectives and cultures, can easily achieve successful business partnerships and interorganizational integration. Compatibility can arise from existing work practices and values or through the sharing of information, as well as via synergy across partnering organizations. However, complementary resources unnecessarily lead to positive performance and stronger relationship since compatibility is a multi-dimensional construct composed of technical, cultural, and strategic components (Rajaguru & Matanda, 2013). Thus, to achieve organizational compatibility, partners must have similar technological infrastructure (technical compatibility), cultural fit (cultural compatibility), and shared goals and objectives (strategic compatibility).

Participation

Participation refers to “the extent to which partners engage jointly in planning and goal setting. When one partner's actions influence the ability of the other to effectively compete, the need for participation in specifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations increases” (Mohr & Spekman, 1994). In the tourism and hospitality industry, travel agencies often request information, plus ask for assistance from hotels, airlines, and other related business (Medina-MunÄoz & Garc  a-Falco  n, 2000). Important aspects of participation, such as formulating joint goals, planning all related activities, and taking part in major decision making, will lead to relationship satisfaction. Participation establishes mutual expectations. Also, if cooperative efforts are specified these explain that international partners can cultivate trust and relationship satisfaction through frequent and two-way communication (Mohr & Spekman, 1994); Johnston, Khalil, Jain, and Cheng (2012). In effect, trust and satisfaction will facilitate joint planning of marketing activities.

In a study of relationship between hotels and travel agencies, Medina-MunÄoz and Garc  a-Falco  n (2000) support the majority of determinants, with these including trust, commitment, coordination, communication quality, conflict resolution, information exchange, interdependence, and participation. Also, the combined effect of the determinants can predict the overall success and satisfaction with marketing support.

Trust

Trust refers to a belief of one party in a business relationship that the behavior of the other party is honest and fair, and that he will perform actions, which will result in positive outcomes, as well as prevent actions that will result in negative outcomes. Trust has both cognitive and affective properties. In business relationships, cognition is the belief that the partner is competent, and this shall affect the feeling that the partner is reliable (Abdul, Gaur, & Pe  aloza, 2012).

Trust exists when one has confidence that a partner is reliable and has high integrity, which is associated with such qualities as consistency, competence, honesty, fairness, responsibility, helpfulness, and benevolence. Since organizations strive to reduce uncertainty in decision making, they are likely to search for a partner who has supplementary information to make key decisions, can predict the consequences of those decisions, and has confidence in those decisions. In this

manner, trust decreases uncertainty since the partner has confidence that the trustworthy party can be relied upon (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). However, some scholars suggest that in developed countries trust is based largely on past experience while, in developing countries, it is based on the partner's effectiveness, his institution, the influence of social norms, and information available by way of personal networks. For that reason, trust is dependent on more variables in developing countries (Abdul, et al., 2012).

Wilson (1995) describe elements of trust in strategic partners as 1) a belief that exchange partners will deliver only benefits, 2) a willingness to depend on reliable partners, 3) a belief that the partners will satisfy upcoming needs, 4) an anticipation that the partners will fully cooperate and treasure their relationships, and 5) a belief that the partners' commitment or promises are reliable, and that the relationships will enable the attainment of their mutual goals.

It is clear, here, that trust is an essential component of commitment since trust involves a belief that a relationship partner will act in the best interest of the other. In summary, trust is a belief in partners' integrity and that related partnerships will give rise to preferable outcomes, as well as safeguarding partners from uncertainty (Leonidou, et al., 2006). Therefore, trust in business relationships can be seen as a foundation in the international travel industry (Crotts & Turner, 1999). So it is that we can perceived commitment and trust as inseparable key variables in business relationships because, per (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) these attributes encourage marketers to:

- Cooperate with exchange partners;
- Sacrifice short-term alternatives in favor of the expected long-term benefits; and,
- Believe that their partners will not act opportunistically

In concluding the literature review on relationship marketing and business (interorganizational) relationships, the researchers applied three dependent variables with these being marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction, as well as identifying twelve independent variables, being commitment, communication, conflict resolution, coordination, flexibility, formalization, frequency of interaction, importance of relationships, interdependence, organizational compatibility, participation, and trust. This could be used to explain the business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Researchers examined twelve determinants derived from the literature with regard to business or interorganizational and relationships marketing, as appear in the following list.

- Commitment;
- Communication;
- Coordination;
- Conflict resolution;
- Flexibility;
- Formalization;
- Frequency of interaction;
- Importance of relationships;
- Interdependence;
- Organizational compatibility;
- Participation; and,
- Trust.

In so doing, the researchers found that these factors play important roles in providing values, which lead to enhanced marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction. Thereby, we hypothesize that:

H1: Independent variables including commitment, communication, conflict resolution, coordination, flexibility, formalization, frequency of interaction, importance of relationships, interdependence, organizational compatibility, participation, and trust are positively associated with marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction.

H2: Dependent variables including marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction are well explained and predicted by the independent variables.

Research setting

This research originated from the 2010 PhD research of Dr. Mai Ngoc Khuong (Mai, 2012) who studied the determinants of interorganizational relationship marketing between Vietnamese and Thai travel agencies from the perspectives of Vietnamese international travel companies. For the purpose of filling the knowledge gap of international business relationships for Thailand and Vietnam tourism industry, parallel research summarized in this report contrasts the perspectives of Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. Also, it applied qualitative research to verify the differences according to the time lapse.

This research focuses on the determinants that guide business relationship success between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. For this reason, the major method applied is a quantitative approach. However, since there is a wide gap with regard to time between the first and second study (note that the research in Vietnam was conducted in 2010), qualitative research was applied in order to increase trustworthiness, as well as to clarify any issues occurring during the aforementioned gap.

The unit of analysis for this research was at the corporate level with the target population being all international travel agencies in Thailand and Vietnam that have Vietnamese and Thai partnerships, respectively. The number of Vietnamese travel agencies was obtained from a list provided by the office of Tourism Authority of Thailand in Ho Chi Minh City, which consisted of 237 companies (Mai, 2013). However, there was no definite number of Thai-Vietnamese travel agencies provided by the office of Tourism Authority of Thailand in Thailand, and only 33 Thai travel agencies were listed by the Association of Thai Travel Agents as offering tour programs in Vietnam and/or for Vietnamese tourists. Since the number of Thai travel agencies working with Vietnamese partners could not be confirmed, this research selected samples from the entire list of Thai travel agencies registered with the office of Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Research tools

Given that research undertaken in relation to this report was in parallel to research conducted by Dr. Mai Ngoc Khuong, the same research tool used by Dr. Mai Ngoc Khuong was applied. In this case, though, the questionnaire was designed in English. Then, it was translated into Vietnamese for collecting data in Vietnam and

also translated into Thai for the collection of data in Thailand. While maintaining understandability, careful back translation was applied to reduce any potential variation in the meaning (Usunier, 1998). Later, the Thai-version questionnaire was double checked by a Business-English lecturer at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University.

Dr. Mai formulated questions that are on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). There were five dependent variables including marketing support, financial benefits, business success, relationship performance satisfaction, and overall success of the interorganizational relationships. Also, as mentioned earlier, there were twelve independent variables. The questionnaire was systematically designed and tested for its validity and reliability.

First, the determinants arose from the literature review related to relationship marketing and interorganizational relationship. In order to avoid the halo effect, nearly half of the statements in the questionnaire were reverse-worded. To safeguard trustworthiness, the draft questionnaire was reviewed by Dr. Mai's colleagues, with these being an expert in tourism marketing and development in Bangkok, two lecturers in the field of tourism, and his Ph.D. supervisor. All measures were pretested. Originally, the questionnaire was pretested with a group of 17 Vietnamese travel agencies in Ho Chi Minh City having relationships with Thai travel partners. The responses from the pretest were reviewed and analyzed. The reliability of the measures was tested with Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The measure of interdependence of the Vietnamese-Thai relationship had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.679, which is considered acceptable. All other variables were above 0.800. Thus, the dependent and independent variables had very good internal consistency.

For the comparative research, data from both countries was analyzed to recheck the reliability. In previous research, Dr. Mai applied exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and a split-half method; therefore, the reliability from both research projects are fairly different.

In this research, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for flexibility was below 0.700; and the coefficient for importance of the relationship was negative; flexibility and importance of the relationship were removed from further analysis. Initially, the independent variables were reduced to ten variables.

The reliability coefficients before and after factor analysis are displayed in Table 3.1, which appears on the next page.

Table 3.1 Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	Mixed	Thailand	Vietnam	Mixed after FA	Thailand	Vietnam
Marketing support	0.727	0.864	0.544	0.752	0.801	0.716
Financial success	0.703	0.868	0.532	0.788	0.788	0.779
Relationship satisfaction	0.833	0.935	0.626	0.855	0.892	0.769
Trust	0.781	0.875	0.705	0.735	0.588	0.795
Commitment	0.467	0.415	0.463	0.712	0.674	0.765
Interdependence	0.635	0.776	0.273	0.812	0.867	0.639
Coordination	0.805	0.896	0.673	0.905	0.871	0.888
Communication	0.643	0.625	0.695	0.760	0.740	0.810
Participation	0.697	0.779	0.651	0.812	0.794	0.836
Formalization	0.659	0.865	0.424	0.823	0.882	0.736
Flexibility	0.387	0.657	0.289	0.612	0.806	0.214
Conflict resolution	0.526	0.403	0.328	0.754	0.763	0.651
Importance of relationship	Negative value			Negative value		
Compatibility	0.720	0.856	0.469	0.814	0.862	0.725
Frequency of interaction	0.754	0.827	0.641	0.730	0.760	0.687

Moreover, multicollinearity, or high inter-correlations among variables, has become a major concern in the multivariate regression analysis. The researchers used the variance inflation factor (VIF) to characterize the level of collinearity (Becker, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Völckner, 2014), in order to reduce the unstable set of predictions: it is too easy or too difficult to yield significant variables; or negative coefficients occur where they should not. The variables, which yield VIF (Variance inflation factor) values under 5, are accepted for regression analysis as the rule of thumb for VIF. However, VIF values under 10 are still considered acceptable by many scholars (O'Brien, 2007).

To eliminate potential problems, factor analysis was applied and the dependent variables were reduced to three variables, being marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction. After checking multicollinearity (as displayed in Appendix A), marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction yielded VIF values less than 5. For independent variables, communication and organizational compatibility were removed from the data set because VIF values

were more than 10, with this showing that they were highly correlated with other independent variables. Trust, commitment, interdependence, participation, formalization, conflict resolution, and frequency of interaction all yielded VIF values less than 5, and coordination yielded a VIF value of less than 10.

For the qualitative study, a semi-structured schedule was designed from the quantitative findings. Five Thai travel agencies were interviewed to contrast with the recommendations of 39 Vietnamese travel agencies provided by Dr. Mai, which was done in order to clarify the differences in significant variables.

Data collection

The first research project (being the Vietnamese quantitative study) was completed in 2010. Data collection in Thailand was carried out in 2014. The self-completed questionnaires were sent to more than 500 Thai travel agencies. At first, these were sent through electronic mail and, later, the 50 questionnaires were delivered to the offices in Bangkok. Subsequently, there were 207 usable questionnaires collected in Thailand. Mostly, the respondents in Thailand were located in Bangkok. The respondents in Vietnam were 59 percent from South of Vietnam, 28 percent from North of Vietnam, and 13 percent from the central area. In relation to the five interviews, these were conducted in Thailand during 2014-2015, and recommendations from 39 Vietnamese travel agencies were provided by Dr. Mai from his previous research. The characteristics of samples are displayed in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 The characteristics of samples

Characteristics	Thailand		Vietnam		Mixed	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Respondents' job position						
- CEO or owner	18	8.7	41	36.0	59	18.4
- Marketing director	8	3.9	38	33.3	46	14.3
- Deputy marketing director	16	7.7	9	7.9	25	7.8
- Marketing staff	165	79.7	26	22.8	191	59.5
Location of company	207	64.5	114	35.5	321	100
Number of full-time staff						
- 1-15	51	24.64	40	35.09	91	28.35
- 16-30	112	54.11	38	33.33	150	46.73
- 31-45	34	16.43	9	7.89	43	13.40
- More than 45	10	4.83	27	23.68	37	11.53

Table 3.2 The characteristics of samples (Continue)

Characteristics	Thailand		Vietnam		Mixed	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Number of part-time staff						
- 0	137	66.18	6	5.26	143	44.55
- 1-15	55	26.57	79	69.30	134	41.74
- 16-30	15	7.25	20	17.54	35	10.90
- 31-45	0	0.00	1	0.88	1	0.31
- More than 45	0	0.00	8	7.02	8	2.49
Age of company						
- 1-5 years	92	44.44	43	37.72	135	42.06
- 6-10 years	72	34.78	38	33.33	110	34.27
- 11-15 years	37	17.87	16	14.04	53	16.51
- More than 15 years	6	2.90	17	14.91	23	7.17
Age of relationship						
- 1 year and less	31	14.98	9	7.89	40	12.46
- 2-4 years	136	65.70	44	38.60	180	56.07
- 5-7 years	33	15.94	27	23.68	60	18.69
- More than 7 years	7	3.38	34	29.82	41	12.77

As can be seen, the majority of travel agencies have 16-30 full-time staff and no part-time staff. In the main, they are young agencies (1-5 years in business) and have 2-4 years in partnership. The characteristics of Thai and Vietnamese samples are different in a few aspects. Most agencies in the Thai sample employ full-time staff and no part-time staff, while agencies in the Vietnamese samples employ less full-time staff, with the majority having part-time staff. Generally, Thai respondents were in junior positions. However, the responses from three Thai owners and two senior marketing staff confirm the quantitative findings.

Data analysis

Quantitative study. Marketing research is used in planning, control, and business prediction. Regression and correlation analyses, thus, play a key role in analyzing associated problems. This research is interested in examining the determinants of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies; therefore, multivariate regression analysis and factor analysis were applied since multivariate regression models support the prediction of such relationships. When

marketing researchers use regression models, typically, they assume that the regression coefficients are constant and that the same regression equation can satisfactorily describe the population. If not addressed adequately, it may lead to inaccurate results and inappropriate conclusions (Becker, et al., 2014).

Collinearity refers to the non-independence of predictor variables, especially in multiple regression analysis. It is a common feature of any descriptive data set and can be problematic for parameter estimation because it inflates the variance of regression parameters and, potentially, leads to the wrong identification of relevant predictors in a statistical model. In regression analysis, if variables are highly correlated or VIF values are high, the regression model will be very sensitive to changes in the variable set, and coefficients may be in the opposite direction of the theoretical suggestion (positive, instead of negative, and vice versa). Collinearity, in effect, is a severe problem. Across disciplines, different approaches have been developed to address collinearity, with these ranging from clustering of predictors, threshold-based pre-selection, through to latent variable methods, and well as shrinkage and regularization (Dormann et al., 2013). The research related to this report applied factor analysis to eliminate the problem. Basically, the items reductions yield better VIF and Cronbach's alpha values.

Qualitative study. Content analysis following the research framework was applied to explain rich descriptions of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. The business context and the time difference between the aforementioned first and second research projects related to this report were considered to confirm the accuracy and trustworthiness of results and inferences (Creswell, 2007).

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The findings of research undertaken in preparation of this report were divided into two main parts, being the quantitative and qualitative results. For the quantitative analysis, a T-test and an F-test were applied to check the differences in the opinions towards interorganizational relationships between countries, and the differences in the characteristics of samples. Further, multivariate regression analysis, using only variables that were freed from collinearity conflicts, was applied to identify variables affecting business relationships. The findings confirm the key factors cited in the literature regarding interorganizational or business relationships, such as the impact of trust and participation. Furthermore, research results also confirm the effects of cultural differences in business relationships and relationship marketing.

The qualitative results derive from the content analysis of five Thai in-depth interviews and recommendations from 39 Vietnamese agencies. The interview questions were designed after careful review of the quantitative results and the associated findings largely confirm pre-existing knowledge.

Quantitative results

The characteristics of samples

Researchers were particularly interested in the relationship between the age of any relationship and the relationship outcomes (such as marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction). The analysis show significant differences only in the opinions of Thai travel agencies, as is displayed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 F-test of travel agency characteristics

Age of relationship	Mixed		Thailand		Vietnam	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
Marketing support	4.908	**	1.897		0.843	
Financial success	1.942		4.939	**	0.458	
Relationship satisfaction	1.823		3.281	*	2.289	

The findings indicate that for Thai travel agencies the age of relationship affects financial success and relationship satisfaction, especially for those that have 5-7 years in relationships.

Thai and Vietnamese opinions toward business relationships

There are significant differences in the opinions toward business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, as is displayed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 T-test of independent variables

Independent variables	t	Sig
Commitment	-0.825	
Communication	-7.244	***
Conflict resolution	-6.566	***
Coordination	-9.876	***
Formalization	1.454	
Frequency of interaction	-0.308	
Interdependence	-12.107	***
Organizational compatibility	-1.431	
Participation	3.483	***
Trust	-7.212	***

When equal variances assumed

Vietnam n =114; Thailand n = 207

The findings imply the necessity of Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies to adjust their values to maintain long-term relationships. However, in t-test and regression analysis, negative values occurred where these should not have done so (the literature explains positive relationships between independent and dependent variables). This indicates the need for further analysis.

Determinants of relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies

After clearing multicollinearity from the data set, the researchers applied multivariate regression analysis, and later applied the same to the data from each country in order to contrast the key determinants affecting the business relationships, as well as to confirm the differences between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies. The summaries of the findings displayed in Table 4.3-4.5, as are presented *in situ* below.

Marketing support

With regard to Table 4.3, the findings indicate significantly important determinants in creating **marketing support**. Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies have disagreement in relation to the important determinants. For Thai travel agencies, there are five significant determinants. Ranging from the highest to the lowest coefficients, these are **trust**, **formalization**, **frequency of interaction**, **commitment**, and **interdependence**. Nevertheless, the coefficients for **commitment** and **interdependence** are negative, which are results against the previously-supported concept in relationship marketing literature. For Vietnamese agencies, only **frequency of interaction** is significantly related to marketing support, and since the coefficient (.411**) is higher than that of the Thai perception (.141***), it implies that **frequency of interaction** is more important for the Vietnamese agencies.

Table 4.3 Determinants affecting marketing support

Marketing support	Mixed			Thailand			Vietnam		
	B	t	Sig	B	t	Sig	B	t	Sig
(Constant)	0.551	1.814		1.174	6.189	***	-0.688	-0.752	
Commitment	-0.003	-0.035		-0.140	-2.612	**	0.101	0.696	
Conflict resolution	0.077	1.842		-0.042	-1.659		0.207	1.836	
Coordination	0.011	0.184		0.033	0.615		0.071	0.646	
Formalization	0.235	2.829	**	0.485	9.154	***	0.061	0.334	
Frequency	0.229	3.400	***	0.141	3.530	***	0.411	2.857	**
Interdependence	-0.103	-1.701		-0.258	-4.885	***	-0.138	-1.098	
Participation	-0.064	-0.747		-0.086	-1.836		0.070	0.318	
Trust	0.490	4.059	***	0.584	6.480	***	0.412	1.889	
	R ²	0.388		R ²	0.821		R ²	0.242	

Moreover, the predicting power of the Thai data ($R^2 = 0.821$) is higher. In fact, it is higher in the case of every dependent variable (marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction). This might well be due to the fact that the Thai data set is larger on comparison to the Vietnamese data set.

Financial success

As is evident in Table 4.4, the findings indicate significantly important determinants in creating **financial success**, although Thai and Vietnamese agencies have disagreement with regard to the important determinants.

Table 4.4 Determinants affecting financial success

Financial success	Mixed			Thailand			Vietnam		
	B	t	Sig	B	t	Sig	B	t	Sig
(Constant)	0.609	3.315	***	1.239	6.260	***	0.386	0.806	
Commitment	0.153	3.540	***	-0.003	-0.047		0.170	2.225	*
Conflict resolution	0.107	4.213	***	0.116	4.276	***	0.063	1.068	
Coordination	0.047	1.272		0.290	4.888	***	0.015	0.255	
Formalization	0.044	0.888		0.132	2.324	*	-0.084	-0.866	
Frequency	0.159	3.926	***	0.184	4.370	***	0.173	2.299	*
Interdependence	-0.049	-1.329		-0.416	-7.205	***	0.025	0.380	
Participation	0.375	7.229	***	0.256	5.037	***	0.545	4.713	***
Trust	0.011	0.148		0.137	1.390		-0.008	-0.074	
	R ²	0.569		R ²	0.772		R ²	0.462	

For Thai travel agencies, there are six significant determinants. Ranging from the highest to the lowest coefficients, these are **coordination**, **participation**, **frequency of interaction**, **formalization**, **conflict resolution**, and **interdependence**. However, the coefficient for **interdependence** is negative again. For Vietnamese travel agencies, **participation**, **frequency of interaction**, and **commitment** are significantly related to financial success.

In general, there are more determinants affecting financial success than have an impact upon marketing support and relationship satisfaction. However, Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies share the same perception towards **participation** in creating financial success and **frequency of interaction** in creating marketing support and financial success.

As mentioned earlier, the **frequency of interaction** is rarely studied. This finding can expand existing knowledge to do with business relationships and relationship marketing.

Relationship satisfaction

From what can be seen in the contents of Table 4.5, the findings indicate significantly important determinants in creating **relationship satisfaction**.

Table 4.5 Determinants affecting relationship satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction	Mixed			Thailand			Vietnam		
	B	t	Sig	B	t	Sig	B	t	Sig
(Constant)	0.728	4.145	***	0.800	4.216	***	1.157	2.756	**
Commitment	0.180	4.316	***	0.009	0.168		0.321	4.800	***
Conflict resolution	0.039	1.621		-0.020	-0.785		0.046	0.886	
Coordination	-0.056	-1.608		0.011	0.207		-0.012	-0.233	
Formalization	0.051	1.067		0.024	0.448		-0.041	-0.487	
Frequency	0.139	3.559	***	0.001	0.020		0.214	3.245	**
Interdependence	0.042	1.204		-0.118	-2.226	*	0.015	0.263	
Participation	0.198	3.992	***	0.081	1.736		0.109	1.077	
Trust	0.249	3.574	***	0.862	9.550	***	0.048	0.481	
	R ²	0.557		R ²	0.809		R ²	0.423	

However, Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies have some disagreement with the important determinants. However, there are fewer determinants that can significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

The results presented in the preceding table also indicate that, for Thai travel agencies, **trust** is very important. By itself, trust seems to be the best predictor of relationship satisfaction since the other significant determinant, **interdependence**, yields a negative coefficient. For Vietnamese agencies, in contrast, **commitment** and **frequency of interaction** are important.

There are interesting issues arising from the quantitative results:

1. The findings from analysis of data related to Thai travel agencies confirm the importance of **trust** in relationship marketing. It has significantly affected marketing support and relationship satisfaction. However, for this data set, trust is not significantly important for Vietnamese travel agencies, with this result implying the impact of cultural differences. This issue also emerged during the interviews with Thai travel agencies.

For instance, three Thai agencies explained their incisiveness in having commitment with Vietnamese agencies, though they were fairly satisfied with their partners. They explained trust issues as a

consequence of their own bad experience and that said to exist through rumors in Thailand and of the international tourism industry.

2. For Vietnamese travel agencies, **frequency of interaction** is more crucial in relationship marketing. It can predict all dependent variables (marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction). This issue also emerged in qualitative analysis.

Thai respondents indicated that Vietnamese travel agencies were very diligent. They visited or contacted them very often.

Vietnamese respondents indicated that Thai partners should send more tourists.

3. There are two shared significant determinants between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, with these being participation and frequency of interaction. **Participation** significantly affects financial success, and **frequency of interaction** significantly affects marketing support and financial success. Also, **frequency of interaction** seems to be a good predictor. It is significantly related with all dependent variables.
4. The findings from analysis of data related to Thai travel agencies yield negative coefficients for **interdependence**. It has a significantly negative effect on marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction.
5. In summary, the findings point out the prospect of cultural differences in the relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies through the key determinants:

Marketing support:	Trust (T)	Frequency of interaction (V)
Financial success:	Coordination (T)	Participation (V)
Relationship satisfaction:	Trust (T)	Commitment (V)

Qualitative results

Thai interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted to mediate the time lapse between the data collection in Vietnam and that for Thailand. Five Thai travel agencies were interviewed. The interview period was between ten minutes to two hours. Knowledge from the interviews confirms results gleaned from the quantitative study. The summary of the interviews is as follows:

1. **Trust.** Trust is the biggest issue for Thai travel agencies. Two of them had bad experiences yielding both minor and major incidents. As a result, they

managed all tour programs in Vietnam by themselves and contacted suppliers (hotel, transportation, and restaurants) separately. They had more confidence paying directly the sites and services used by them. They believed that the tourism industry anywhere was full of dishonest behavior. Consequently, they had to work with caution, even though they never had major conflict with their Vietnamese partners. Two agencies believed they needed written agreements. It was apparent that qualitative findings supported the quantitative finding, such as the significant importance of **formalization** for Thai travel agencies. Nonetheless, others believed that documents could not stop completely the troubles that arise in cross-border tourism. Many times trouble came from the partners' staff, the parties that their partners worked with, or the parties related to travelling programs, such as airport staff.

2. **Partners.** Thai travel agencies had about 5-10 year relationships with a Vietnamese agency. The reason Thai agencies had one key Vietnamese partner was that it was easier to communicate with one instead of many. Thai agencies were fairly satisfied with their partners, but they always did business with other travel agencies on account of their expertise, which is a common practice in tourism industry.
3. **Requirement.** All Five Thai travel agencies complimented Vietnamese travel agencies about their professionalism. However, each had a specific requirement.
 "One agency admired her partner's diligence and trustworthiness, but she wanted the partner to be more creative and proactive, especially in terms of marketing support. She would like to work with agencies that had more flexibility because tourism was a service business. Agencies frequently needed to adjust their plans to satisfy their customers."
 "Another agency mentioned the importance of kindness towards each other. She believed older generation Vietnamese were more trustworthy and better business partners."
4. **AEC commencement.** When mentioning the commencement of the imminent AEC, Thai agencies were confident with their expertise. They believed Vietnam had good potential. But Thai tourists had many choices. Vietnamese agencies needed to come up with new attractions to draw Thai tourists.

“An agency mentioned her positive feeling towards Vietnamese agencies. She believed in working with ASEAN people because they are of the same kind.” This remark indicates affective trust towards other AEC members.

Recommendations from 39 Vietnamese travel agencies

The summary of recommendations arising from interviews conducted with Vietnamese travel agents is as follows:

1. **Coordination.** Fifteen Vietnamese travel agencies required business coordination, and four Vietnamese travel agencies mentioned coordination at the government level. However, this determinant is not significant in the quantitative analysis.
2. **Participation.** About five Vietnamese travel agencies mentioned the need for participation. They expressed it in terms of joint pricing, promotion, and new product design. In the quantitative analysis, participation significantly affects financial success. Its coefficient (.545***) is much higher than that of frequency of interaction (.173*), and commitment (.170*), with these results showing the importance of participation.
3. **Frequency of interaction.** Five Vietnamese travel agencies mentioned the benefit of frequency of interaction. They expressed it in terms of contact, visits, and FAM (familiarization) trips. It is noteworthy that in the quantitative analysis frequency of interaction significantly affects all dependent variables (marketing support, financial success, and relationship satisfaction).
4. **Trust.** There were no comments indicating trust and formalization in Vietnamese recommendations. Also, most comments were rational and business-oriented. Very few were affect-oriented.
5. In conclusion, most agencies had positive views towards their partners, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the Thai tourism industry. Since more Vietnamese tourists visit Thailand, Vietnamese travel agencies needed more coordination, participation, and frequency of interaction from Thai partners, as well as from the Thai and Vietnamese tourism authorities.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

The analysis of determinants affecting the business relationship between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies confirms and reveals new leads in understanding the associated business relationship. Specifically, there are three key premises in Thai and Vietnamese business relationships, with these being cultural differences, trust versus coordination, and frequency of interaction.

Cultural differences

The influence of cultural differences in Thai and Vietnamese business relationship are demonstrated by the research and outcomes referred to in this report. The analysis of national culture in the Hofstede study (2015) clarifies differences in Thai and Vietnamese characteristics that, in turn, influence their managerial practices. Thailand has a high score in uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, it is easier for Thai people to feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and this creates beliefs and institutions to avoid them. The research reflects this quality in the Thai travel agencies' priority with regard to business relationships, trust and formalization. This is because trust is a belief in partners' integrity and a safeguard from uncertainty (Leonidou, et al., 2006). As well, formalization (such as documents or contracts) gives the agencies power to claim their rights through the legal system.

On the other hand, Vietnam has demonstrated a low score in relation to uncertainty avoidance, and a higher one with regard to long-term orientation. The research also reflects these qualities in Vietnamese travel agencies' priorities in business relationship. For example, when they mentioned the political turbulence in Thailand, they only hoped that the Thai government solved the problems as soon as possible. They wanted to resume their business at the same level as they had before. They did not mention fear or resentment as a consequence of the incident.

Trust vs Coordination

Trust is acknowledged as the most critical determinant in relationship marketing (Crotts & Turner, 1999; Heffernan, 2004; Hunt, 1990) since trust can lead to

effective communication (Anderson & Narus, 1990), commitment (Crotts & Turner, 1999; Walter, et al., 2000), coordination (Crotts & Turner, 1999), relationship value (Walter, et al., 2000), and so on. However, the quantitative findings reveal different sets of determinants affecting Thai and Vietnamese business relationships, especially when confirmed by results emanating from the qualitative study. Differences in the findings may indicate weakness in the research tools. Even so, they instigate the necessity to understand if the determinants can be applied to Thai and Vietnamese relationship in other industries, or to that of other members of AEC countries.

Frequency of interaction

Frequency of interaction is defined in terms of the amount of contact and tourist exchanges. So, it is different from communication frequency that had more related literature (Blenkhorn & MacKenzie, 1996; Racela & Thoumrungroje, 2014). This research suggests the importance of the frequency of interaction for the betterment of cross-border inter-agency relationships in the tourism industry.

Recommendations

Theoretical implications for business relationships and relationship marketing, mainly, are to do with cultural orientation. Cultural differences can lead easily to misconceptions about each other's intentions and behaviors (Voldnes, et al., 2012). The research makes clear that there are cultural differences in business relationship between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, even though Thailand and Vietnam have maintained relationships for hundreds of years and share similar cultural characteristics.

Managerial implications emphasize the necessity for Thai and Vietnamese managers to pay more attention to meanings conveyed through conversation and business practices. It is indicative that Vietnamese travel agencies need to develop effective trust, and also to maintain better personal relationships with Thai agencies. These factors could be precedents of relationship satisfaction and commercial success. As for doing business with Vietnamese travel agencies, the findings reveal that Thai agencies should understand the necessity of coordination, participation, and frequency of interaction. Furthermore, as Vietnamese travel agencies suggested co-creation of tourism services, Thai travel agencies have to be knowledgeable of the characteristics and needs of Vietnamese tourists.

Directions for the future study

The research undertaken and presented in this report adds to the body of knowledge regarding the key determinants of business relationships between Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies, having done so by contrasting the results of analysis applied to data from both countries. Although there was a time gap between the Thai and Vietnamese data collections, the related findings were in alignment with the qualitative study. The determinants of business relationships developed in the research project were based on business relationships and relationship marketing from which knowledge mostly develops within Western cultures. The findings from this research suggest that developing a long-term business relationship is necessary for Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies and that they must be fully aware of cultural differences.

Findings from Thai and Vietnamese travel agencies were quite different. They are indicative, rather than conclusive. Qualitative analysis reveals that Vietnamese travel agencies were more pragmatic than Thai agencies in relation to the connecting business relationship. It is inquisitive that Vietnamese travel agencies already perceived trust as a basis of partnership formation. Thereby, their requirements are geared towards methods to make relationships more productive, such as coordination, participation, and frequency of interaction. On the contrary, Thai agencies that had at least five years in a business relationship with Vietnamese partners still did not trust their partners fully. This indication suggests that, in international tourism management and relationship marketing, the differences should be acknowledged and that more interpretation of intentions and behaviors are required. Also, the managerial implications should be investigated further to verify contextual determinants for the development of long-term relationships with travel agencies from other AEC countries.

Moreover, the findings yield negative coefficients of some determinants, such as commitment and interdependence. These results infer that further study is necessary in order to confirm whether both of those determinants, in fact, are negatively related to the effectiveness of an inter-agency business relationship, or if these explain specifically the Thai and Vietnamese tourist agency relationship.

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Appendix

Appendix a

Multicollinearity

Coefficients ^a								
Model - Vietnam		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.268	0.406		0.660	0.511		
	Commitment	0.151	0.063	0.156	2.388	0.019	0.706	1.417
	Interdependence	0.186	0.053	0.222	3.505	0.001	0.749	1.335
	Coordination	0.356	0.034	0.651	10.328	0.000	0.757	1.321
	Participation	0.102	0.098	0.089	1.047	0.297	0.416	2.405
	Formalization	0.191	0.080	0.191	2.389	0.019	0.471	2.125
	Conflict resolution	-0.065	0.050	-0.078	-1.300	0.196	0.841	1.189
	Frequency	-0.003	0.064	-0.003	-0.048	0.962	0.737	1.357

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

Coefficients ^a								
Model-Thailand		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.089	0.143		0.621	0.535		
	Commitment	0.168	0.038	0.122	4.438	0.000	0.700	1.428
	Interdependence	0.128	0.041	0.156	3.144	0.002	0.215	4.646
	Coordination	0.251	0.039	0.350	6.436	0.000	0.179	5.576
	Participation	0.230	0.033	0.269	7.002	0.000	0.360	2.775
	Formalization	0.248	0.037	0.284	6.675	0.000	0.293	3.417
	Conflict resolution	-0.062	0.019	-0.104	-3.255	0.001	0.516	1.939
	Frequency	-0.006	0.030	-0.008	-0.185	0.853	0.322	3.106

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

Appendix b
F-test and T-test

ANOVA - Mixed						
Relationship period	Mixed	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Marketing support	Between Groups	5.321	3	1.774	4.908	0.002
	Within Groups	114.190	316	0.361		
	Total	119.511	319			
Financial success	Between Groups	1.138	3	0.379	1.942	0.123
	Within Groups	61.941	317	0.195		
	Total	63.079	320			
Relationship satisfaction	Between Groups	0.941	3	0.314	1.823	0.143
	Within Groups	54.340	316	0.172		
	Total	55.281	319			

ANOVA - Thailand						
Relationship period	Vietnam	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Marketing support	Between Groups	0.964	3	0.321	1.897	0.131
	Within Groups	34.199	202	0.169		
	Total	35.163	205			
Financial success	Between Groups	2.248	3	0.749	4.939	0.002
	Within Groups	30.804	203	0.152		
	Total	33.052	206			
Relationship satisfaction	Between Groups	1.533	3	0.511	3.281	0.022
	Within Groups	31.452	202	0.156		
	Total	32.984	205			

ANOVA - Vietnam						
Relationship period	Thailand	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Marketing support	Between Groups	1.749	3	0.583	0.843	0.473
	Within Groups	76.092	110	0.692		
	Total	77.841	113			
Financial success	Between Groups	0.371	3	0.124	0.458	0.712
	Within Groups	29.655	110	0.270		
	Total	30.025	113			
Relationship satisfaction	Between Groups	1.265	3	0.422	2.289	0.082
	Within Groups	20.268	110	0.184		
	Total	21.533	113			

T-test

Independent variables	Location	Mean	SD	Opinion	Independent variables	t	Sig
Trust	Vietnam	3.278	0.573	Neutral	Trust	-7.212	***
	Thailand	3.686	0.428	Agree	Commitment	-0.825	
Commitment	Vietnam	4.003	0.591	Agree	Interdependence	-12.107	***
	Thailand	4.045	0.325	Agree	Coordination	-9.876	***
Interdependence	Vietnam	2.831	0.684	Neutral	Communication	-7.244	***
	Thailand	3.667	0.534	Agree	Participation	3.483	***
Coordination	Vietnam	2.627	1.048	Neutral	Formalization	1.454	
	Thailand	3.539	0.606	Agree	Conflict resolution	-6.566	***
Communication	Vietnam	3.251	0.553	Neutral	Compatibility	-1.431	
	Thailand	3.694	0.507	Agree	Frequency	-0.308	
Participation	Vietnam	3.900	0.498	Agree	When equal variances assumed Vietnam n =114 Thailand n = 207		
	Thailand	3.698	0.498	Agree			
Formalization	Vietnam	3.904	0.573	Agree			
	Thailand	3.815	0.490	Agree			
Conflict resolution	Vietnam	2.895	0.687	Neutral			
	Thailand	3.440	0.724	Agree			
Compatibility	Vietnam	3.566	0.540	Agree			
	Thailand	3.659	0.572	Agree			
Frequency	Vietnam	3.893	0.571	Agree			

Appendix c
Multivariate regression analysis

Coefficients ^a									
Model	Mixed	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.	Collinearity	
		B	Std. Error	Beta				Toleranc	VIF
MS	(Constant)	0.551	0.304			1.814	0.071		
	Trust	0.490	0.121	0.417		4.059	0.000	0.187	5.339
	Commitment	-0.003	0.072	-0.002		-0.035	0.972	0.776	1.289
	Interdependence	-0.103	0.061	-0.120		-1.701	0.090	0.397	2.520
	Coordination	0.011	0.061	0.016		0.184	0.854	0.247	4.049
	Participation	-0.064	0.086	-0.053		-0.747	0.455	0.392	2.548
	Formalization	0.235	0.083	0.199		2.829	0.005	0.398	2.513
	Conflict	0.077	0.042	0.095		1.842	0.066	0.741	1.350
	Frequency	0.229	0.067	0.213		3.400	0.001	0.505	1.980

Coefficients ^a									
Model	Vietnam	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.	Collinearity	
		B	Std. Error	Beta				Toleranc	VIF
MS	(Constant)	-0.688	0.914			-0.752	0.454		
	Trust	0.412	0.218	0.284		1.889	0.062	0.318	3.140
	Commitment	0.101	0.146	0.072		0.696	0.488	0.670	1.493
	Interdependence	-0.138	0.126	-0.114		-1.098	0.275	0.671	1.490
	Coordination	0.071	0.110	0.089		0.646	0.520	0.377	2.650
	Participation	0.070	0.221	0.042		0.318	0.751	0.412	2.430
	Formalization	0.061	0.184	0.042		0.334	0.739	0.446	2.240
	Conflict	0.207	0.113	0.171		1.836	0.069	0.828	1.208
	Frequency	0.411	0.144	0.283		2.857	0.005	0.737	1.357

Coefficients ^a									
Model	Thailand	Unstandardized		Standardized		t	Sig.	Collinearity	
		B	Std. Error	Beta				Toleranc	VIF
MS	(Constant)	1.174	0.190			6.189	0.000		
	Trust	0.584	0.090	0.602		6.480	0.000	0.106	9.451
	Commitment	-0.140	0.053	-0.102		-2.612	0.010	0.597	1.674
	Interdependence	-0.258	0.053	-0.325		-4.885	0.000	0.206	4.849
	Coordination	0.033	0.054	0.048		0.615	0.539	0.148	6.744
	Participation	-0.086	0.047	-0.103		-1.836	0.068	0.288	3.478
	Formalization	0.485	0.053	0.571		9.154	0.000	0.234	4.269
	Conflict	-0.042	0.025	-0.073		-1.659	0.099	0.471	2.121
	Frequency	0.141	0.040	0.194		3.530	0.001	0.303	3.302

Model Summary				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error	
0.623	0.388	0.372	0.486	

ANOVA ^b				
Model	Sum of	df	Mean	Sig.
Regression	18.861	8	2.358	4.197
Residual	58.980	105	0.562	0.000
Total	77.841	113		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: MS (Marketing support)

Model Summary				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error	
0.492	0.242	0.185	0.749	

ANOVA ^b				
Model	Sum of	df	Mean	Sig.
Regression	18.861	8	2.358	4.197
Residual	58.980	105	0.562	0.000
Total	77.841	113		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: MS (Marketing support)

Model Summary				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error	
0.906	0.821	0.814	0.179	

ANOVA ^b				
Model	Sum of	df	Mean	Sig.
Regression	28.844	8	3.606	112.607
Residual	6.276	196	0.032	0.000
Total	35.120	204		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: MS (Marketing support)

Model	Mixed	Coefficients ^a					Collinearity		
		Unstandardized	Standardized	t	Sig.		Toleranc	VIF	
B	Std. Error	Beta							
FS (Constant)	0.609	0.184		3.315	0.001				
Trust	0.011	0.073	0.013	0.148	0.882	0.187	5.350		
Commitment	0.153	0.043	0.149	3.540	0.000	0.783	1.277		
Interdependence	-0.049	0.037	-0.078	-1.329	0.185	0.398	2.515		
Coordination	0.047	0.037	0.095	1.272	0.204	0.247	4.050		
Participation	0.375	0.052	0.428	7.229	0.000	0.396	2.528		
Formalization	0.044	0.050	0.052	0.888	0.375	0.405	2.468		
Conflict	0.107	0.025	0.182	4.213	0.000	0.743	1.345		
Frequency	0.159	0.041	0.204	3.926	0.000	0.511	1.956		

Model	Vietnam	Coefficients ^a					Collinearity		
		Unstandardized	Standardized	t	Sig.		Toleranc	VIF	
B	Std. Error	Beta							
FS (Constant)	0.386	0.479		0.806	0.422				
Trust	-0.008	0.114	-0.009	-0.074	0.941	0.318	3.140		
Commitment	0.170	0.076	0.195	2.225	0.028	0.670	1.493		
Interdependence	0.025	0.066	0.033	0.380	0.705	0.671	1.490		
Coordination	0.015	0.057	0.030	0.255	0.799	0.377	2.650		
Participation	0.545	0.116	0.526	4.713	0.000	0.412	2.430		
Formalization	-0.084	0.096	-0.093	-0.866	0.389	0.446	2.240		
Conflict	0.063	0.059	0.084	1.068	0.288	0.828	1.208		
Frequency	0.173	0.075	0.192	2.299	0.023	0.737	1.357		

Model	Thailand	Coefficients ^a					Collinearity		
		Unstandardized	Standardized	t	Sig.		Toleranc	VIF	
B	Std. Error	Beta							
FS (Constant)	1.239	0.198		6.260	0.000				
Trust	0.137	0.098	0.146	1.390	0.166	0.105	9.531		
Commitment	-0.003	0.055	-0.002	-0.047	0.962	0.637	1.570		
Interdependence	-0.416	0.058	-0.541	-7.205	0.000	0.205	4.878		
Coordination	0.290	0.059	0.432	4.888	0.000	0.148	6.743		
Participation	0.256	0.051	0.319	5.037	0.000	0.289	3.462		
Formalization	0.132	0.057	0.162	2.324	0.021	0.239	4.185		
Conflict	0.116	0.027	0.208	4.276	0.000	0.490	2.043		
Frequency	0.184	0.042	0.262	4.370	0.000	0.322	3.106		

Model Summary					ANOVA ^b				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error		Model	Sum of	df	Mean	Sig.
0.754	0.569	0.558	0.296		Regression	35.877	8	4.485	0.000
					Residual	27.164	311	0.087	
					Total	63.041	319		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: FS (Financial success)

Model Summary					ANOVA ^b				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error		Model	Sum of	df	Mean	Sig.
0.679	0.462	0.421	0.392		Regression	13.859	8	1.732	0.000
					Residual	16.166	105	0.154	
					Total	30.025	113		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: FS (Financial success)

Model Summary					ANOVA ^b				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error		Model	Sum of	df	Mean	Sig.
0.879	0.772	0.763	0.195		Regression	25.494	8	3.187	0.000
					Residual	7.521	197	0.038	
					Total	33.014	205		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: FS (Financial success)

Coefficients ^a									
Model	Mixed	Unstandardized		Standardized Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity		
		B	Std. Error				Toleranc	VIF	
RS	(Constant)	0.728	0.176		4.145	0.000			
	Trust	0.249	0.070	0.312	3.574	0.000	0.187	5.339	
	Commitment	0.180	0.042	0.185	4.316	0.000	0.776	1.289	
	Interdependence	0.042	0.035	0.072	1.204	0.230	0.397	2.520	
	Coordination	-0.056	0.035	-0.122	-1.608	0.109	0.247	4.049	
	Participation	0.198	0.049	0.241	3.992	0.000	0.392	2.548	
	Formalization	0.051	0.048	0.064	1.067	0.287	0.398	2.513	
	Conflict	0.039	0.024	0.071	1.621	0.106	0.741	1.350	
	Frequency	0.139	0.039	0.189	3.559	0.000	0.505	1.980	

Coefficients ^a									
Model	Vietnam	Unstandardized		Standardized Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity		
		B	Std. Error				Toleranc	VIF	
RS	(Constant)	1.157	0.420		2.756	0.007			
	Trust	0.048	0.100	0.063	0.481	0.631	0.318	3.140	
	Commitment	0.321	0.067	0.435	4.800	0.000	0.670	1.493	
	Interdependence	0.015	0.058	0.024	0.263	0.793	0.671	1.490	
	Coordination	-0.012	0.050	-0.028	-0.233	0.816	0.377	2.650	
	Participation	0.109	0.101	0.124	1.077	0.284	0.412	2.430	
	Formalization	-0.041	0.085	-0.054	-0.487	0.627	0.446	2.240	
	Conflict	0.046	0.052	0.072	0.886	0.378	0.828	1.208	
	Frequency	0.214	0.066	0.280	3.245	0.002	0.737	1.357	

Coefficients ^a									
Model	Thailand	Unstandardized		Standardized Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity		
		B	Std. Error				Toleranc	VIF	
RS	(Constant)	0.800	0.190		4.216	0.000			
	Trust	0.862	0.090	0.915	9.550	0.000	0.106	9.451	
	Commitment	0.009	0.053	0.007	0.168	0.867	0.597	1.674	
	Interdependence	-0.118	0.053	-0.153	-2.226	0.027	0.206	4.849	
	Coordination	0.011	0.054	0.017	0.207	0.836	0.148	6.744	
	Participation	0.081	0.047	0.101	1.736	0.084	0.288	3.478	
	Formalization	0.024	0.053	0.029	0.448	0.654	0.234	4.269	
	Conflict	-0.020	0.025	-0.036	-0.785	0.433	0.471	2.121	
	Frequency	0.001	0.040	0.001	0.020	0.984	0.303	3.302	

Model Summary				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error	
0.746	0.557	0.546	0.281	

ANOVA ^b				
Model	Sum of	df	Mean	F
Regression	30.790	8	3.849	48.722
Residual	24.488	310	0.079	
Total	55.278	318		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: RS (Relationship satisfaction)

Model Summary				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error	
0.650	0.423	0.379	0.344	

ANOVA ^b				
Model	Sum of	df	Mean	F
Regression	9.100	8	1.138	9.607
Residual	12.433	105	0.118	
Total	21.533	113		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: RS (Relationship satisfaction)

Model Summary				
R	R Square	Adjusted	Std. Error	
0.900	0.809	0.802	0.179	

ANOVA ^b				
Model	Sum of	df	Mean	F
Regression	26.691	8	3.336	104.052
Residual	6.285	196	0.032	
Total	32.976	204		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency, Interdependence, Commitment, Conflict, Coordination, Formalization, Participation, Trust
b. Dependent Variable: RS (Relationship satisfaction)

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2011 Effective Sales Promotion in Modern Retailing: Consumer and Managerial Perspectives

2010 Problems of Credit Card Usage in Thailand

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Inter-organization relationship (IOR), Tourism and Hospitality

Research

- Mai Ngoc Khuong (2012). Determinants of financial benefits of inter-organizational relationship marketing between international travel companies. Proceedings of the International Conference on Marketing Studies (ICMS2012), Bangkok, Thailand. August 17-19, 2012.
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2015 Factors influencing on Intention to Receive Medical Treatment in Thailand:
The Case Study of Republic of the Union of Myanmar

2011 Structural Modeling for Arab Medical Tourism