

An Exploratory Study on Tourism Authority of Thailand Organizational Image Attributes

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Abstract

This research identified the attributes that construct the Tourism Authority of Thailand's (TAT) organizational image and explored the current positioning of each attribute. This research was separated into two phases. The first phase used qualitative, exploratory and inductive research to obtain attributes that constitute the TAT's organizational image. This process is an arbitrary process (Dowling, 1988). There were forty-two attributes generated from the first phase. The second phase mostly used quantitative research to examine the importance level and TAT current performance level of each image attribute considered by both TAT internal and external stakeholders. The survey data was collected during September – December 2014. The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) was used as the analysis tool. The researcher also extended the analysis by using Paired Sample t-test, which is an additional benefit of the existing data. The result of the IPA helped to identify which attributes emerge important based on the opinion of TAT stakeholders, as well as knowing the positioning of each image attribute. The result of Paired Sample t-test showed all attributes have a significant difference between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score. The importance's mean score of each attribute is higher than the performance's mean score. This implied that TAT has room for improvement its performance in all attributes. Furthermore, there is some confusion among TAT stakeholders, especially on the perceived service and functionality attributes. Thus, The TAT needs to emphasize and clarify its current roles and responsibilities. Otherwise, the stakeholders will have the wrong expectations of the TAT organization.

Keywords: corporate image, organizational image, National Tourism organization image, Tourism Authority of Thailand image, importance-performance analysis.

Introduction

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is an important national tourism organization (NTO), which plays a significant role. Nowadays, there is intense competition in tourism worldwide. TAT needs to get collaboration and cooperation from all levels, both domestic and international to create a competitive advantage over its competitors. Therefore, TAT has to project the most positive image to all stakeholders in order to get the trust, cooperation, collaboration, participation and/or co-creation from stakeholders to achieve its goal. Thus, its perceived image is important or even crucial.

However, the TAT will not know its present images held by its stakeholders unless it examines the perceived images from its stakeholders. Carlivati (1990) mentioned that awareness of these attributes and its current positioning on each attribute is crucial because it can give insight about the organization's strengths and weaknesses. The availability of vital information beforehand is crucial to the success of developing future plans and actions, and which must be in line with the current situation that meets the balanced needs and wants of stakeholders. Besides, the TAT itself can get benefits from this research, all tourism concerns, including Thailand economy as a whole may get benefits from this research.

Research Questions and Objectives

There are a lot of researches which examined aspects of corporate image, brand image and destination image but fewer have examined the image of the national tourism organization. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What attributes constitute the TAT's organizational image?

RQ2: Which TAT image attributes are felt important by stakeholders?

RQ3: Which TAT image attributes are performed well in the opinion of stakeholders?

The primary objectives of this research are as follows:

RO1: To obtain an overview of attributes which construct the TAT's organizational image as disseminated by TAT.

RO2: An examination of TAT image attributes considered important by TAT internal and external stakeholders.

RO3: To evaluate TAT image attributes that are performed in delivering the stated attributes by TAT internal and external stakeholders.

The secondary objectives of this research are as follows:

RO4: To compare between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each TAT image attribute evaluated by TAT internal stakeholders.

RO5: To compare between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each TAT image attribute evaluated by TAT external stakeholders.

Review of Literature

The literature review could give ideas and guidelines on how the previous researchers conducted the studies on the corporate image and developed the corporate image attributes, as well as, listed the relevant attributes from previous researches, which are useful to the present study. Most practitioners conducted their researches by separated to two phases. The first phase used qualitative, exploratory and inductive research to obtain image attributes. The second phase mostly used quantitative research.

Earlier, the image merely meant the tangible things, such as logos, pictures and corporate identities. It also emphasized one-way communication from the corporate body to the stakeholders. The following are examples of image's definition from different scholars. Dowling (1986) gave the definition of image as the set of meanings by which people remember, describe and relate to an object is known. Dowling (1988) mentioned that an organization serves diverse publics that have different interactions with the company. Each of these groups is likely to hold a different company image. Hence, a company does not have an image; but it have multiple images. Dichter (1992) gave the concept of image as "it describes not individual traits or qualities, but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others (p. 54)." van Rekom (1997) explained that corporate image usually starts from an organization's identity. The organization's identity is perceived and interpreted by stakeholders, whereas the corporate image resides in the stakeholders' heads, organization's identity resides within the organization. The actual image may be different from the desired image.

Later, researchers started to realize that corporate image is a dual process and it is complicated. Fombrun (1996) mentioned that sometimes a corporate image accurately mirrors the organization's identity; more often than not, it can be distorted (a) as the company tries to manipulate its public through other forms of self-presentation and the advertising, or (b) the unofficial statements of employees to peers, analysts and reporters (rumor). Williams and Moffitt (1997) mentioned in their research that the company's logo, copy platform, name or other graphics is no longer defined the corporation's image but, the corporate image is a result of a complex impression formation process which has combined many factors, such as the company's reputation and the stakeholders' experience. Corporate image is a product of multifaceted impression formation process. Organization image constructs from the combination of multiple factors in various ways. Many scholars have mentioned that these multiple factors may include personal factors, such as the extent of personal impact felt; environmental factors, such as demographic characteristics of an audience member; business factors, such as being a supplier or customer of the company; and social factors, such as maintaining friends who represent the company. These factors could combine in some processes of impression formation to form the overall company image. Some of these factors may be more important than others to determine the overall company image, whereas others might play only a minimal role. Riordan, Gatewood and Bill (1997) also mentioned that the diverse stakeholders selectively process the various informational cues or signals given by the organization to satisfy their needs and interests. Corporate image becomes an overall perception of stakeholders toward the organization, at least partially based on its capacity to provide or meet for his/her particular interests and needs. Kazoleas, Kim and Moffitt (2001) gave the definition of image as the result of messages sent by the organization and other intentional and unintentional social, personal lived experiences, historical, and material factors through the complex and multifaceted struggle of attributes processed by individual. Varadarajan, De Fanti and Busch (2006) emphasized that corporate strategies will be transformed to the employees' action as its result to the corporate image as well. Furthermore, Minkiewicz, Evans, Bridson, and Mavondo (2011) supported Bosch, Venter, Han, and Boshoff (2006) that stakeholder's perceived corporate image through an organization's strategic, or in other words, vision and mission.

The literature: LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996): Cues used by customers evaluating corporate image in service firms: An empirical study in financial institutions. The researchers mentioned a set of five factors which have the potential to influence customers' perception of the corporate image in service organizations. These factors are:

(1) The corporate identity (2) Reputation (3) The offers of service (4) The Physical environment and (5) The Contact personnel.

The literature: Kazoleas, Kim, and Moffitt (2001): Institutional image: A case study. They explored the institutional image of a Midwestern state-supported university in USA. Most of their 30-item images in the questionnaire were related to the institution's services, functionalities and physical environment.

The literature: Arpan, Raney, and Zivnuska (2003): A cognitive approach to understanding university image. They examined the attributes of image of ten major universities in the USA and looked for the differences in use of image criteria among different groups of respondents. Their dimensions of images under the "Academic" and "Athletic" used in this research can be considered as the university's services and functionalities.

The literature: Lee (2004): Corporate image examined in a Chinese-based context: A study of a young educated public in Hong Kong. The significant factors of this research can be listed as follows: Perceived corporate dynamism, Perceived quality of products and services, Perceived corporate management, Perceived financial prospect, Perceived advertising and marketing activities, Perceived treatment of employees, and Perceived social responsibility.

The literature: Davies, Chun, da Silva, and Roper (2004): A corporate character scale to assess employee and customer views of organization reputation. They used focus groups, such as senior managers, students, employees of business school, and group of experts in reputation field, to generate related items. They also reviewed from secondary sources, such as companies' vision, mission and advertising to check the commonality words used to express the organizations' character towards internal and external organization.

The literature: Minkiewicz, Evans, Bridson, and Mavondo (2011): Corporate image in the leisure services sector. From the list of variables, sub-variables and attributes used by Minkiewicz et al. (2011), it included the Mission/Vision and Employees.

Based on a review of the relevant literature, the researcher found four interesting factors, which are seen as relevant and applicable to TAT's organizational image. The first factor is "Perceived Organization's Reputation" adopted from LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996). The second factor is "Perceived Vision and Missions" adopted from Davies et al. (2004) and Minkiewicz et al. (2011). The third factor is "Perceived Management & Employee" adapted from contact personnel of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996) and Varadarajan et al. (2006). The fourth factor is "Perceived Service & Functionality" adapted from service offering of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996), Kazoleas et al. (2001), Arpan et al. (2003), Choy (1993), and Morrison, Braunlich, Kamarudding, & Cai (1995).

Theoretical Framework

The researcher adapted the corporate image management model from Chattananon and Trimetsoontorn (2005) as shown in Figure 1. This model is very comprehensive. It integrates information of the corporate image into one model. The original model merely focused on customers. However, the corporate image is not only seen by customers. It

could be seen by everybody who can be affected by an organization's actions. Thus, the researcher extends the original model from customers to stakeholders. This corporate image management model comprises of two parts. One is the organizational part and the other is the stakeholder part. The creation process of corporate image begins from corporate personality. It consists of the corporate's philosophy, core values and mission. These elements are communicated within the organization from the corporate management team through corporate strategy, their visions, products/services, corporate structure and corporate identity structure. Corporate identity consists of (a) management and employee's behavior – especially to front line staffs (b) symbols – such as logo, pictures and physical evidence (c) communication – there are three communication levels. The first one is primary communication; it is communication through products/services, employee's behavior and marketing behavior. The second one is secondary communication, which is formal corporate communication such as advertising, publicity and public relations. The third one is tertiary communication, which is the corporate's uncontrollable communication, such as word of mouth, competitors' news and the opinion leaders or opinion from experts. This could be considered as its reputation.

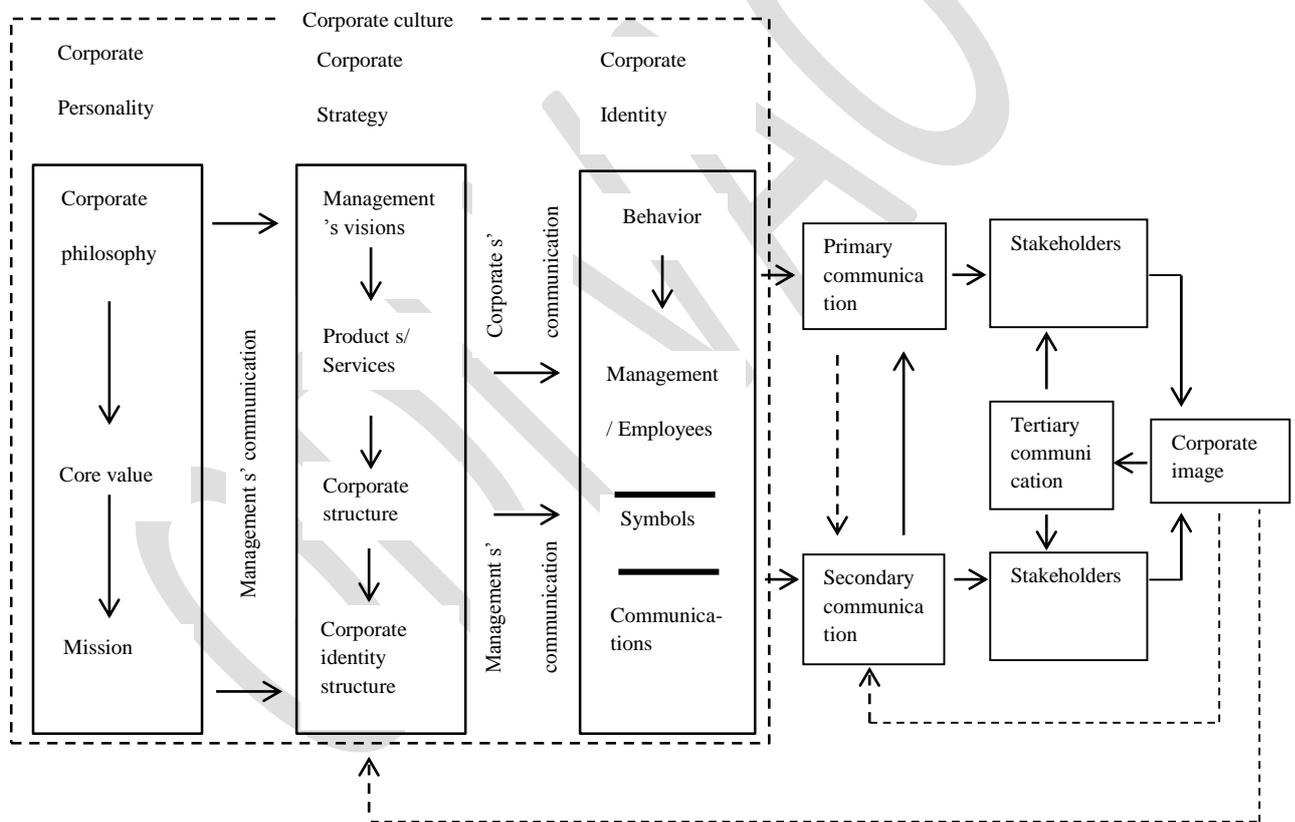


Figure 1 Adapted from corporate image management model

Source: Adapted from Chattananon, A., & Trimetsoontorn, J. (2005). Corporate image management. *Thai Journal of Development Administration*, 45(2), 127-156.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is based on the corporate image management model. The researcher derived the corporate image from the following dimensions.

- Corporate personality; through its mission, since the organization's mission can be found from secondary data.
- Corporate strategy; through corporate visions and its products and services.
- Corporate identity; through management and employees' behavior.
- Communication; through the organization's reputation.

Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework. It consists of two parts, which are projected images by the organization and perceived images by stakeholders. This is similar to the corporate image management model, which comprises two parts. One is the organizational part and the other is the stakeholder part. This is in line with Wan and Schell (2007), who mentioned that people perceive an organization's image through the organization's communication efforts with its various publics. However, image is not solely controlled by the organization, but it is the result of a dual process that involves both the organization's projected image and the publics' consumption of that image. Also, Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) mentioned that a brand image is not simply affected by the organization's communication activities alone. "It is the understanding consumers derive from the total set of brand-related activities engaged in by the firm (Park et al., 1986, p. 135)". This can be considered analogous to corporate image or organizational image. It can be derived from the total set of related activities that stakeholders have with the organization – in another word, its service and functionality.

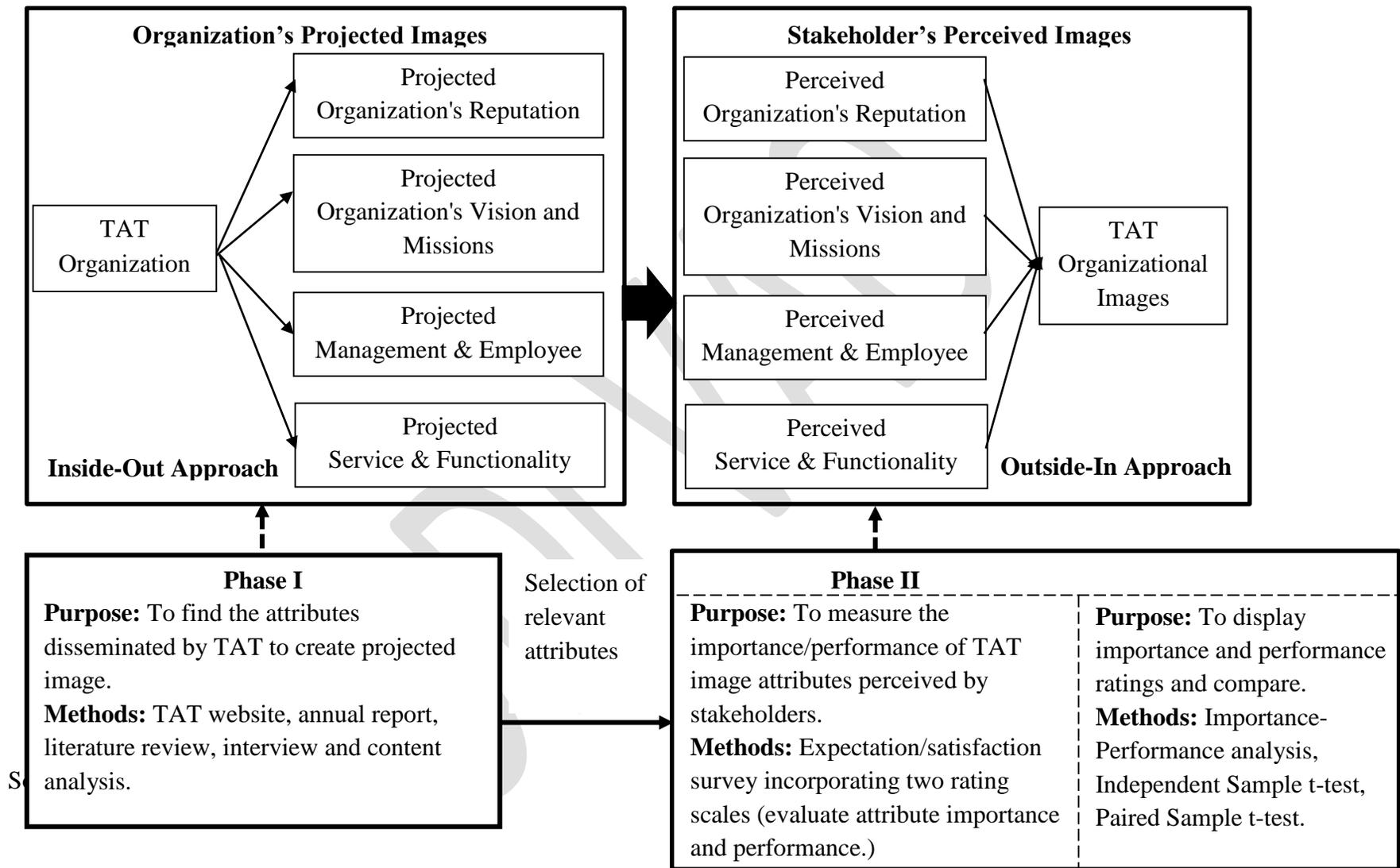


Figure 2 . Conceptual framework of TAT organization's projected images and stakeholder's perceived images

Research Methodology

This research focused on the attributes that construct the TAT's organizational image. There was hardly any previous academic research that identified the attributes of the national tourism organization's image. Therefore, at the first phase of this study, preliminary research was carried out to generate a list of attributes. The researcher reviewed the relevant literatures and explored TAT's documents and its websites - such as its mission, vision and strategies. An inside-out approach was applied, five selected TAT executives/managers were interviewed to look for the TAT's projected image's attributes. These processes provided the initial list of attributes generally projected by the TAT organization to its stakeholders. Side by side, TAT manager's opinion and content analysis of TAT's vision, mission statements, operational policy and objectives in the corporate plan for 2012-2016, and the TAT annual report 2012, as well as the information from related websites were used to confirm the initial attributes. Table 1 shows list of the initial attributes. These are the answers of the RQ1: What attributes constitute the TAT's organizational image? Then, the second phase used the previous result to construct a questionnaire. At this stage, it involved both qualitative and quantitative research. A survey instrument is a structured questionnaire.

The final questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part related to the respondent's socio-demography. These data include gender, age, marital status, education level, household income (per month), number of years that the respondents have known TAT and the respondents' role in the tourism sector (for the respondents whom are TAT external stakeholders) or the position in the TAT organization (for the respondents whom are TAT internal stakeholders). The second part is the respondent's opinion of the importance and performance of TAT's organizational image attributes. Attribute importance is generally regarded as a respondent's general assessment of the significance of an attribute. The levels of importance and performance were measured on a five-point Likert scale. The scales of the levels of importance are from unimportant to very important (*1= unimportant, 2= of little importance, 3= neither or/nor important, 4= important, 5= very important*). The scales of the levels of performance are from extremely poor to excellent (*1= extremely poor, 2= below average, 3= average, 4= good, 5= excellent*). As well as, a "*0= no basis for judgment*" is also provided for performance rating. Because some stakeholders may not have a clue to make a judgement on the particular performance attributes. The "*0= no basis for judgment*" is excluded from the performance mean score calculation. The third part is the respondents' comments and suggestions. This part allowed respondents to express their opinions. They could identify the other important attributes which were not yet mentioned in part II. Also, they needed to indicate the level of importance as well as evaluate TAT's current performance toward these attributes. The questionnaire was developed in the English language first and then translated into Thai. Both options were selected to use in the actual fieldwork to suit the convenience of respondents. The researcher applied both online questionnaires by sending through email and paper based questionnaires were disseminated through the coordinator within the organization/association. Under some circumstances, the researcher made a personal request to administrators or secretaries of tourism associations to see if there was a possibility to attend their meetings - such as monthly meetings or quarterly meetings. Then, the researcher participated in their meetings and self-administered questionnaires to collect data. The primary data were collected during September – December 2014.

Respondents

The population relevant to this research is Thailand tourism stakeholders. According to Freeman (1984), a stakeholder was defined as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives. Thus, tourism stakeholders are any groups or individuals involved, interested in, can affect or be affected by tourism. Tourism stakeholders have many types of different and diverse groups. Within the context of this research, the researcher classified the respondents of this research into two categories: TAT internal stakeholders and another is TAT external stakeholders.

The researcher classified TAT internal stakeholder according to their positions. The researcher designed to collect data from all position levels. However, it depended on the respondents' convenience and availability. The researcher classified TAT external stakeholders in three majors groups. They are (1) private sector - suppliers in tourism sector, (2) public and government sector – supporters in tourism sector, and (3) teachers in the tourism field – supply human resources to tourism businesses.

Pretest and Reliability Test

The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for reliability measurements. LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996) accepted coefficients greater than or equal to 0.7 in their research. In general, at least 20-30 sets of questionnaires should be collected in order to do a pretest and calculate the Cronbach alpha coefficient for reliability measurement. The researcher conducted a pretest by using data obtained through self-administered printed questionnaires while attending a workshop on developing occupational standard and professional qualifications for tourism, hotels and restaurants. There were 32 data sets. They were used to calculate the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the reliability measurement by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program, 17.0 version. The Cronbach alpha coefficient indicated that scales within this questionnaire have sufficient internal consistency. All scales have a Cronbach alpha coefficient higher than 0.80. Table 2 provides its reliability test result.

Table 1.

List of Possible Factors and Attributes of TAT's Organizational Images

Factors: Perceived Organization's Reputation based on LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996)	
Attributes	References
1. Innovative Organization	Choy (1993); Lee (2004); Davies et al. (2004); Minkiewicz et al. (2011). TAT's Operational Policy of the Year 2012-2016.
2. Leadership Organization	Choy (1993); Davies et al. (2004); Zahra and Ryan (2005); Minkiewicz et al. (2011)
2.1 Opinion leader in Thailand tourism Industry	TAT managerial judgment
2.2 Leader of tourism industry, especially in marketing field	TAT managerial judgment
3. Trustworthy Organization	Alexander (1971); Davies et al. (2004); Minkiewicz et al. (2011)
4. Transparent Organization	Lee (2004); van den Bosch et al. (2005)
5. Modern Organization	Davies et al. (2004); Minkiewicz et al. (2011); TAT

	managerial judgment
6. Learning Organization	TAT's House Model Diagram; TAT managerial judgment
7. Digital Organization	TAT annual report 2012; TAT managerial judgment
8. Dynamic Organization	TAT managerial judgment
9. Good Governance Organization	TAT's Operational Policy of the Year 2012-2016; TAT managerial judgment
10. Corporate Social Responsibility	TAT managerial judgment
11. Happy Workplace Organization	TAT managerial judgment

Factors: Perceived Vision and Missions based on Davies et al. (2004); Minkiewicz et al. (2011)

Attributes	References
1. TAT is an excellent tourism marketing organization. - TAT is an excellent in modern marketing of tourism	TAT's Vision of the Year 2008-2011 & 2012-2016. TAT's Objectives of the Year 2012-2016; TAT managerial judgment
2. TAT plays a vital role in driving Thailand's economy. - National significance	TAT's Vision of the Year 2008-2011 & 2012-2016. TAT managerial judgment
3. Professionally operate tourism marketing strategies. - Professional organization in tourism marketing of Thailand	TAT's Objectives of the Year 2008-2011 & 2012-2016. TAT managerial judgment
4. Accepted by stakeholders in the local tourism industry.	TAT's Objectives of the Year 2008-2011.
5. Accepted by stakeholders in the international tourism industry.	TAT's Objectives of the Year 2008-2011.
6. A leadership in the tourism industry in the Asia-Pacific region	TAT's Objectives of the Year 2008-2011.
7. Organization's management system meets an international standard. - To be an organization of operational excellence.	TAT's Missions of the Year 2008-2011. TAT's Mission of the Year 2012-2016; TAT 's Objectives of the Year 2012-2016; TAT managerial judgment;
8. Staff are marketing professionals. -TAT is full of experts and skillful personnel in marketing. This attribute was moved to be under the perceived of management & employee factor.	TAT's Missions of the Year 2008-2011; TAT managerial judgment
9. TAT provides happiness to the societies and local communities	TAT managerial judgment

Factors: Perceived Management & Employee adapted from contact personnel of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996); Varadarajan et al. (2006)

Attributes	References
1. Competent staff. - Professional staff. - Staff are marketing professionals. -TAT is full of experts and skillful personnel in marketing.	Adapted from contact personnel of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996); Varadarajan et al. (2006) TAT's Missions of the Year 2008-2011; TAT managerial judgment
2. Knowledgeable staff.	Adapted from contact personnel of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996); Varadarajan et al. (2006)
3. Friendly staff.	Adapted from contact personnel of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996); Varadarajan et al. (2006)
4. Courteous staff.	Adapted from contact personnel of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996); Varadarajan et al. (2006)
5. Staff with service minded.	TAT managerial judgment

6. Integrity and honesty staff.	TAT managerial judgment
7. Staff has relationship as family member.	TAT managerial judgment
8. Staff works innovatively and creatively.	TAT managerial judgment
9. Staff has strategic thinking.	TAT managerial judgment
10. Good reputation of Governor and Directors.	Adapted from contact personnel of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996); Varadarajan et al. (2006)
11. Teamwork and networking	TAT managerial judgment
Factors: Perceived Service & Functionality adapted from service offering of LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996); Kazouleas et al. (2001); Arpan et al. (2003); Choy (1993); Morrison et al. (1995)	
Attributes	References
1. Ability of promoting and marketing tourism industry, including initiate tourism campaign and organize road shows.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 8; TAT managerial judgment
2. Ability of publicizing Thailand in terms of natural beauty, historical site, archeological finds, history, art and culture, sports, technological evolution, including other activities that attract tourist.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 8
3. Ability of providing convenience and safety to tourists.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 8
4. Ability of promoting good understanding and hospitality between people and between countries by using tourism.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 8
5. Ability of initiation tourism development, and to develop basic elements and facilities for tourists.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 8&9; TAT managerial judgment
6. Ability of coordination between public and private sectors.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 9; TAT managerial judgment
7. Ability of providing tourist information.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 9; TAT managerial judgment
8. Ability of providing manpower training for Thailand tourism industry.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 9; TAT managerial judgment
9. Ability of doing market research.	TAT Act B.E.2522 (1979), Section 9; TAT managerial judgment
10. To be an excellent center of tourism marketing.	TAT 's Objectives of the Year 2012-2016;
11. To be a center of value creations.	TAT 's Objectives of the Year 2012-2016;

Source: Created by the author based on the findings.

Table 2.

Summary of Reliability Statistics Test Result

Reliability Statistics

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
IMP_ORGREP	.897	12
IMP_VISMIS	.922	8
IMP_MANEMP	.940	11
IMP_FUNSER	.920	11

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
PERF_ORGREP	.930	12
PERF_VISMIS	.925	8
PERF_MANEMP	.958	11
PERF_FUNSER	.924	11
ALL_IMP	.973	42
ALL_PERF	.976	42
ALL_IMP+PERF+OVERALLIMAGE	.977	85

The explanation of the following scales:

IMP_ORGREP – Level of importance of perceived organization's reputation
IMP_VISMIS – Level of importance of perceived vision and missions
IMP_MANEMP – Level of importance of perceived management & employee
IMP_FUNSER – Level of importance of perceived service & functionality
PERF_ORGREP – TAT's current performance of perceived organization's reputation
PERF_VISMIS – TAT's current performance of perceived vision and missions
PERF_MANEMP – TAT's current performance of perceived management & employee
PERF_FUNSER – TAT's current performance of perceived service & functionality
ALL_IMP – All attributes of level of importance
ALL_PERF – All attributes of TAT's current performance
ALL_IMP+PERF+OVERALLIMAGE – All attributes

Statistical Treatment of Data

The second phase of the study, which is quantitative research, was interpreted by a using statistical computer for statistical analysis and Microsoft Excel Program, 2010 version. The collected questionnaires from respondents were checked upon completion. Then, data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program, 17.0 version. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for reliability measurement.

In this research, the levels of importance and performance were measured by the five point Likert scales. Scoring was arranged from the highest score to the lowest score with the respective meanings as follows:

- 5 = Very Important (or Excellent)
- 4 = Important (or Good)
- 3 = Neither Or/Nor Important (or Average)
- 2 = Of Little Importance (or Below Average)
- 1 = Unimportant (or Extremely Poor)

To answer research question number 2, the mean score of the levels of importance for each image attribute was calculated. Then, the researcher interpreted the levels of importance according to five levels by using mean score. The same process was conducted to answer research question number 3, but using the performance score.

$$\frac{\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Minimum Score}}{\text{Level of Importance (Performance)}} = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.8$$

Therefore, the importance and performance levels were determined by the range of mean score as follows:

Mean Score	Importance Level	Performance Level
1.00-1.80	Unimportant	Extremely Poor
1.81-2.60	Of Little Importance	Below Average
2.61-3.40	Neither Or/Nor Important	Average
3.41-4.20	Important	Good
4.21-5.00	Very Important	Excellent

The IPA is used as an analysis tool to interpret the results. The radar charts were used to present data in graphic by using the mean score of each attribute.

Data Presentation and Critical Discussion of Results

The researcher received 279 completed and valid responded questionnaires from TAT internal stakeholders and 285 completed and valid responded questionnaires from TAT external stakeholders. The grand total is 564 data sets. Descriptive analysis described the socio-demographic of the respondents by using the quantity and percentage, since the respondents of this research were classified into two major categories, TAT internal stakeholders and TAT external stakeholders. Thus, the descriptive analysis was explained by categories.

The TAT internal stakeholder's data were collected during the 7th October – 14th November 2014 with the help from the coordinator in the TAT organization. A total of 279 data sets of completed and valid questionnaires were received.

The TAT outsider stakeholder's data were collected during the 4th September – 29th December 2014. A total of 285 data sets of completed and valid questionnaires were received. The majority of the respondents were from the “private sector” with 56.2%. There were 97 respondents who worked in the “public and government sector”, which accounted for 34.1% of total TAT outsider respondents. The last group of respondents was “teachers in the tourism field”. There were 28 respondents, who accounted for 9.8% of total TAT outsider respondents.

To answer the RQ2: Which TAT image attributes are felt important by stakeholders?, the mean score of the importance levels of each attribute was calculated. Then, the interpretation

was determined by the range of mean scores. The result presented in Table 3, Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6.

To answer the RQ3: Which TAT image attributes are performed well in the opinion of stakeholders?, the mean score of the performance levels of each attribute was determined. The mean score was calculated by excluding zero rated score from the calculation. The interpretation was determined by the range of mean scores. The result presented in Table 3, Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 3 shows the analysis of the perceived TAT organization's reputation attributes. This table can be read and interpreted in conjunction with Figure 3. Figure 3 shows the radar chart of the perceived TAT organization's reputation attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. By considering the important level, the mean score of most attributes falls in the "Very Important" range. The TAT's performance level of most attributes falls in the "Average" range.

The following attributes have low performance mean score. They are "A good governance organization" attribute, "A dynamic organization" attribute, "A digital organization" attribute, "Innovative organization" attribute and "A transparent organization" attribute. Figure 4 shows the importance-performance grid of the perceived TAT organization's reputation attributes of combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. All attributes fall in the quadrant "B" – Keep Up The Good Work. By the way, the position of the "A good governance organization" attribute is nearest to the border line. It is almost cross to the quadrant "A" - Concentrate Here. Thus, the TAT should put more effort and pay more attention to this attribute.

Table 3.

The Analysis of the Perceived TAT Organization's Reputation Attributes

Attributes	Level of Importance						TAT's Current Performance					
	TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders		TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders	
	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level
Innovative organization	4.23	Very Important	4.00	Important	4.11	Important	3.14	Average	3.08	Average	3.11	Average
Opinion leader in Thailand tourism industry	4.58	Very Important	4.24	Very Important	4.41	Very Important	3.64	Good	3.34	Average	3.48	Good
A leader of tourism industry, especially in marketing field	4.62	Very Important	4.40	Very Important	4.51	Very Important	3.80	Good	3.45	Good	3.62	Good
A trustworthy organization	4.68	Very Important	4.32	Very Important	4.50	Very Important	3.82	Good	3.55	Good	3.69	Good
A transparent organization	4.49	Very Important	4.25	Very Important	4.37	Very Important	3.16	Average	3.05	Average	3.11	Average
A modern organization	4.33	Very Important	4.16	Important	4.24	Very Important	3.19	Average	3.22	Average	3.20	Average
A learning organization	4.28	Very Important	4.12	Important	4.20	Important	3.14	Average	3.21	Average	3.17	Average
A digital organization	4.18	Important	3.98	Important	4.08	Important	3.09	Average	3.03	Average	3.06	Average
A dynamic organization	4.09	Important	3.96	Important	4.02	Important	3.11	Average	3.00	Average	3.05	Average
A good governance organization	4.46	Very Important	4.21	Very Important	4.33	Very Important	2.99	Average	3.07	Average	3.03	Average
A corporate social responsibility	4.43	Very Important	4.29	Very Important	4.36	Very Important	3.43	Good	3.24	Average	3.34	Average
A happy workplace organization	4.43	Very Important	4.25	Very Important	4.34	Very Important	3.18	Average	3.32	Average	3.25	Average

Source: Created by the author based on the field work data.

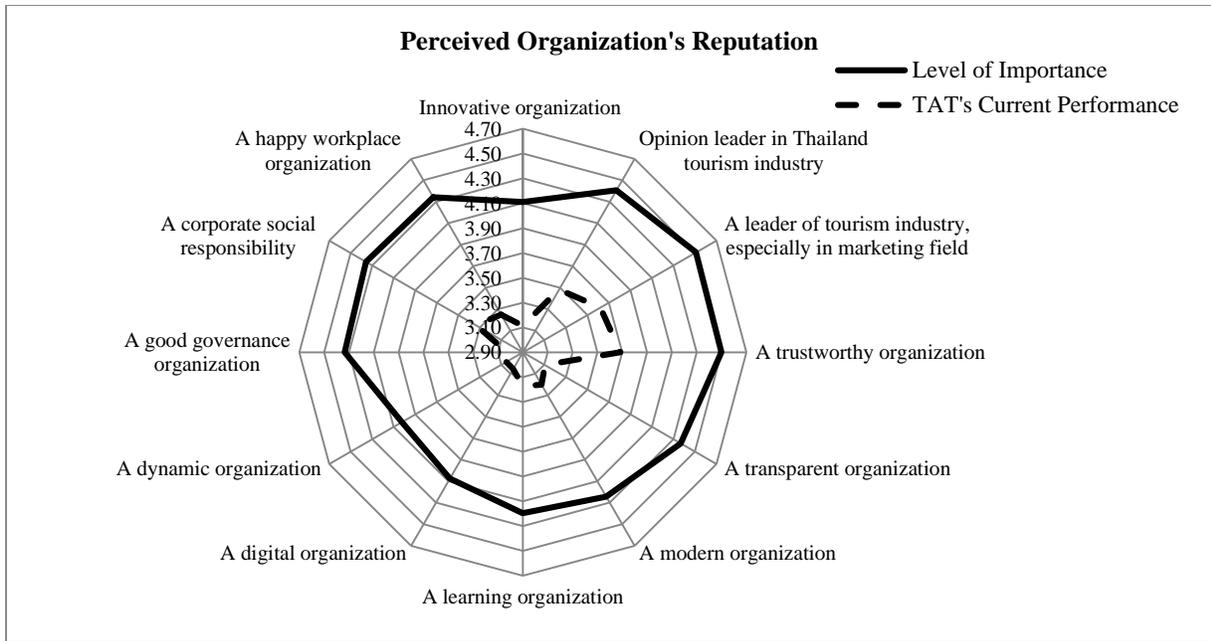


Figure 3 Radar chart of the perceived TAT organization's reputation attributes combined TAT Internal and external stakeholders
 Source: Created by the author.

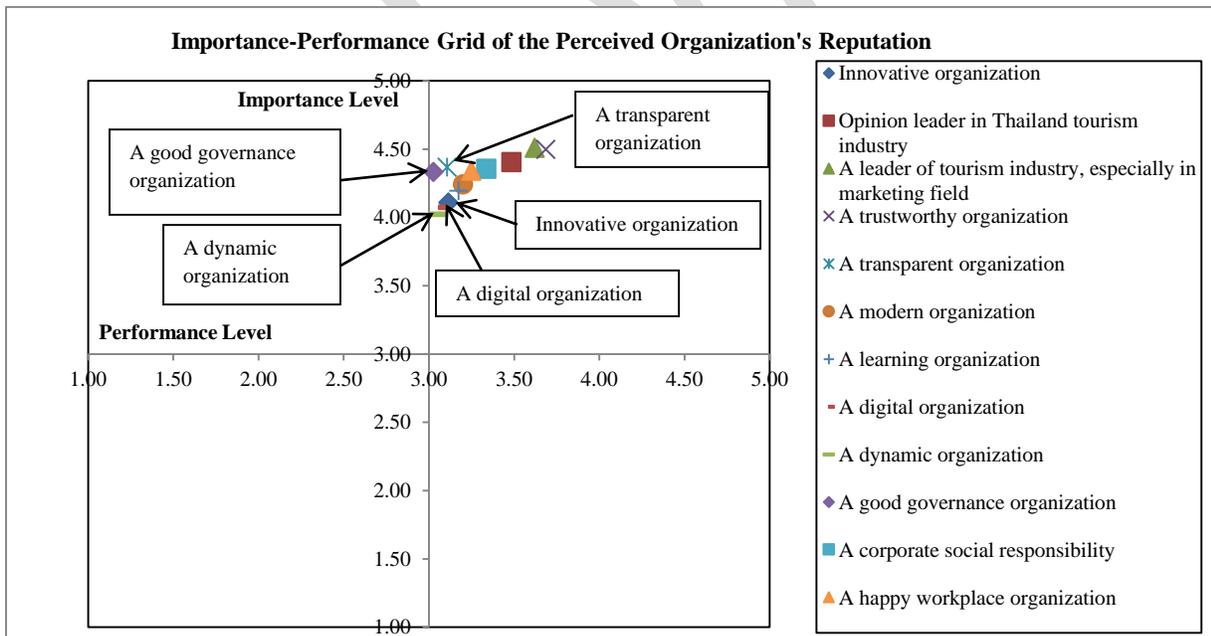


Figure 4 Importance-Performance grid of the perceived TAT organization's reputation attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders
 Source: Created by the author.

Table 4.

The Analysis of the Perceived TAT's Vision and Mission Attributes

Attributes	Level of Importance						TAT's Current Performance					
	TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders		TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders	
	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level
An excellent in modern marketing of tourism	4.61	Very Important	4.32	Very Important	4.46	Very Important	3.51	Good	3.35	Average	3.43	Good
Plays a vital role in driving Thailand's economy	4.67	Very Important	4.45	Very Important	4.56	Very Important	3.96	Good	3.48	Good	3.72	Good
A professionally operate tourism marketing strategies	4.58	Very Important	4.40	Very Important	4.49	Very Important	3.59	Good	3.39	Average	3.49	Good
Accepted by stakeholders in the local tourism industry	4.54	Very Important	4.24	Very Important	4.39	Very Important	3.72	Good	3.41	Good	3.56	Good
Accepted by stakeholders in the international tourism industry	4.41	Very Important	4.28	Very Important	4.35	Very Important	3.64	Good	3.35	Average	3.49	Good
A leadership in the tourism industry in the Asia-Pacific region	4.40	Very Important	4.33	Very Important	4.36	Very Important	3.58	Good	3.36	Average	3.47	Good
Organization's management system meets an international standard. Able to be an organization of operational excellence	4.39	Very Important	4.24	Very Important	4.31	Very Important	3.14	Average	3.20	Average	3.17	Average
Provides happiness to the societies and local communities	4.35	Very Important	4.19	Important	4.27	Very Important	3.55	Good	3.22	Average	3.38	Average

Source: Created by the author based on the field work data.

Table 4 shows the analysis of the perceived TAT's vision and mission attributes. This table can be read and interpreted in conjunction with Figure 5. Figure 5 shows the radar chart of the perceived TAT vision and mission attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. By considering the important level, the mean score of most attributes falls in the "Very Important" range. TAT internal stakeholders rated the performance of most attributes in "Good" range, whilst TAT external stakeholders rated the performance of most attributes in "Average" range. The critical attribute, which got the lowest performance mean score is the "Organization's management system meets an international standard. Able to be an organization of operational excellence" attribute. Figure 6 shows the importance-performance grid of the perceived TAT's vision and mission attributes of combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. All attributes fall in the quadrant "B" – Keep Up The Good Work.

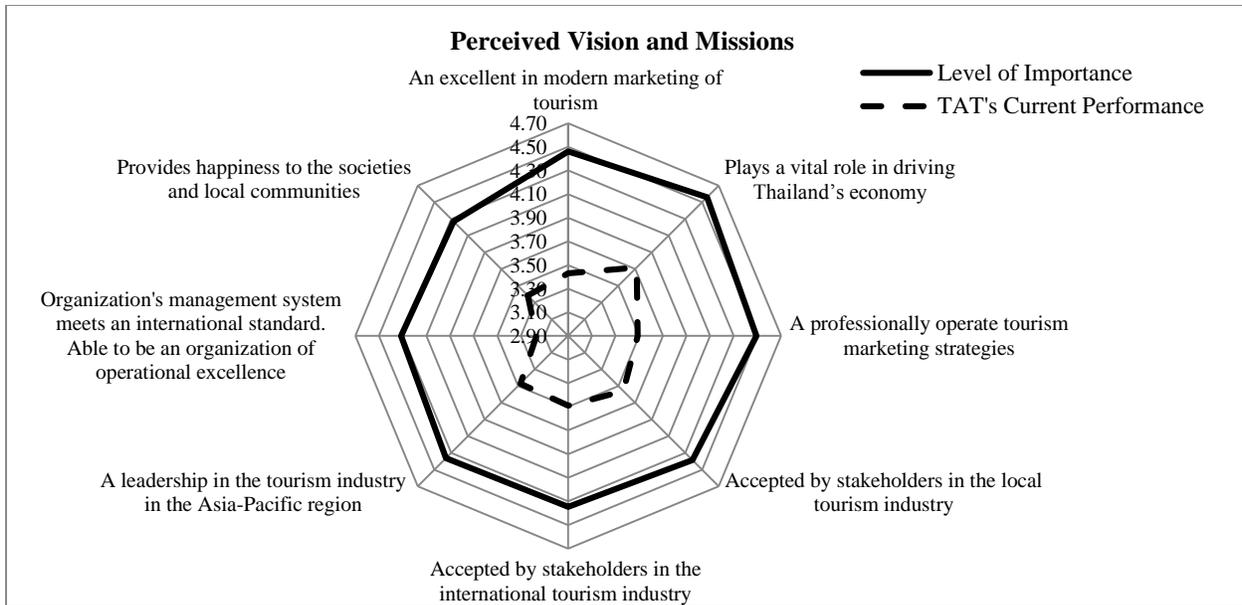


Figure 5 Radar chart of the perceived TAT's vision and mission attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders
 Source: Created by the author.

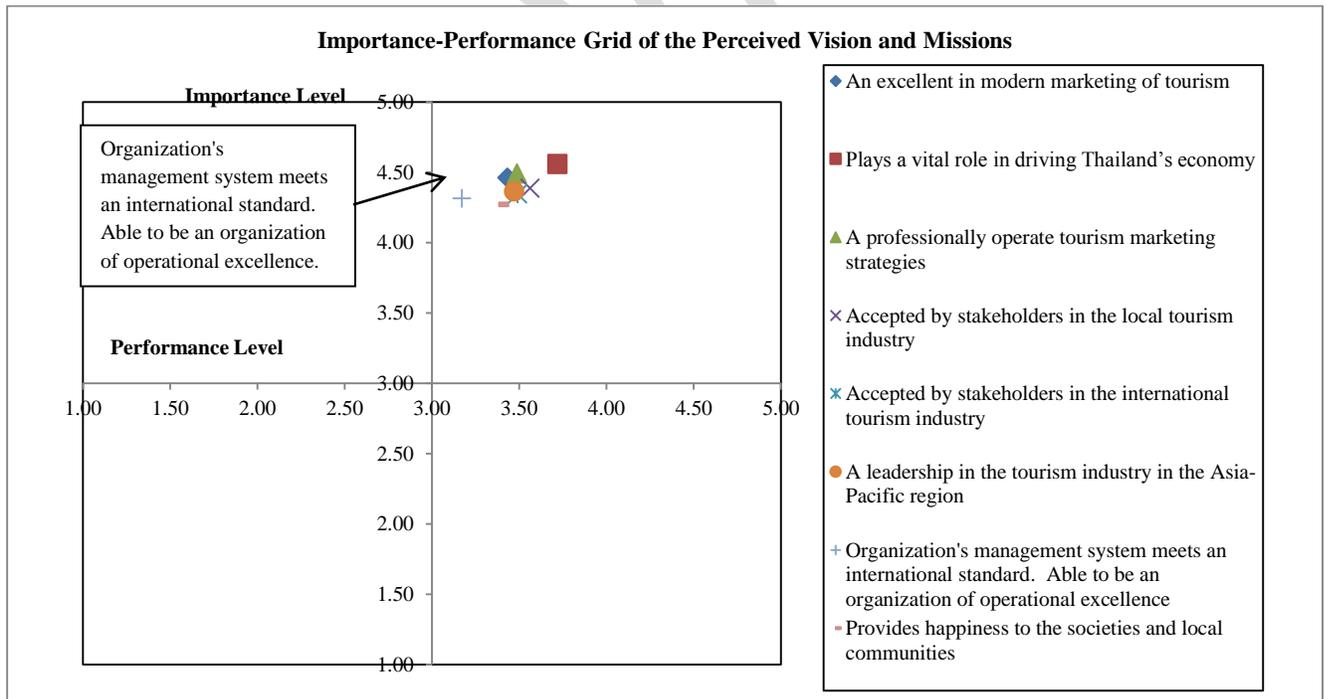


Figure 6 Importance-Performance grid of the perceived TAT's vision and mission attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders
 Source: Created by the author.

Table 5.

The Analysis of the Perceived TAT's Management & Employee Attributes

Attributes	Level of Importance						TAT's Current Performance					
	TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders		TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders	
	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level
Staff are marketing professionals	4.52	Very Important	4.28	Very Important	4.40	Very Important	3.48	Good	3.31	Average	3.40	Average
Staffs are knowledgeable	4.41	Very Important	4.31	Very Important	4.36	Very Important	3.56	Good	3.36	Average	3.46	Good
Staffs are friendly	4.43	Very Important	4.32	Very Important	4.37	Very Important	3.77	Good	3.34	Average	3.55	Good
Staffs are courteous	4.33	Very Important	4.25	Very Important	4.29	Very Important	3.67	Good	3.36	Average	3.51	Good
Staffs are service minded	4.55	Very Important	4.40	Very Important	4.47	Very Important	3.78	Good	3.37	Average	3.57	Good
Staffs have integrity and honesty	4.61	Very Important	4.39	Very Important	4.50	Very Important	3.39	Average	3.23	Average	3.31	Average
Staffs have relationship as family member	4.33	Very Important	4.13	Important	4.23	Very Important	3.59	Good	3.22	Average	3.41	Good
Staffs work innovatively and creatively	4.39	Very Important	4.29	Very Important	4.34	Very Important	3.27	Average	3.21	Average	3.24	Average
Staffs have strategic thinking	4.49	Very Important	4.31	Very Important	4.40	Very Important	3.34	Average	3.32	Average	3.33	Average
Good reputation of governor and directors	4.33	Very Important	4.24	Very Important	4.28	Very Important	3.59	Good	3.39	Average	3.49	Good
Has a good teamwork and networking	4.52	Very Important	4.38	Very Important	4.45	Very Important	3.46	Good	3.32	Average	3.39	Average

Source: Created by the author based on the field work data.

Table 5 shows the analysis of the perceived TAT's management & employee attributes. This table can be read and interpreted in conjunction with Figure 7. Figure 7 shows the radar chart of the perceived TAT's management & employee attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. By considering the important level, the mean score of most attributes falls in the "Very Important" range. TAT internal stakeholders rated the performance of most attributes in "Good" range, whilst TAT external stakeholders rated the performance of all attributes in "Average" range. Figure 8 shows the importance-performance grid of the perceived TAT's management and employee attributes of combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. All attributes fall in the quadrant "B" – Keep up the Good Work.

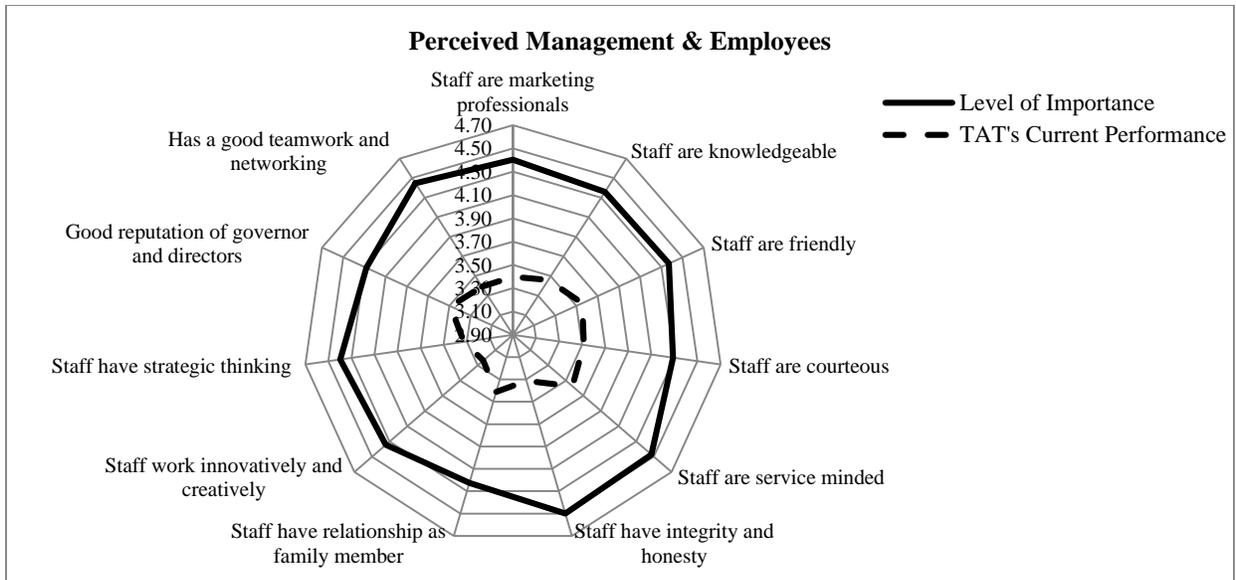


Figure 7 Radar chart of the perceived TAT's management & employee attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders
 Source: Created by the author.

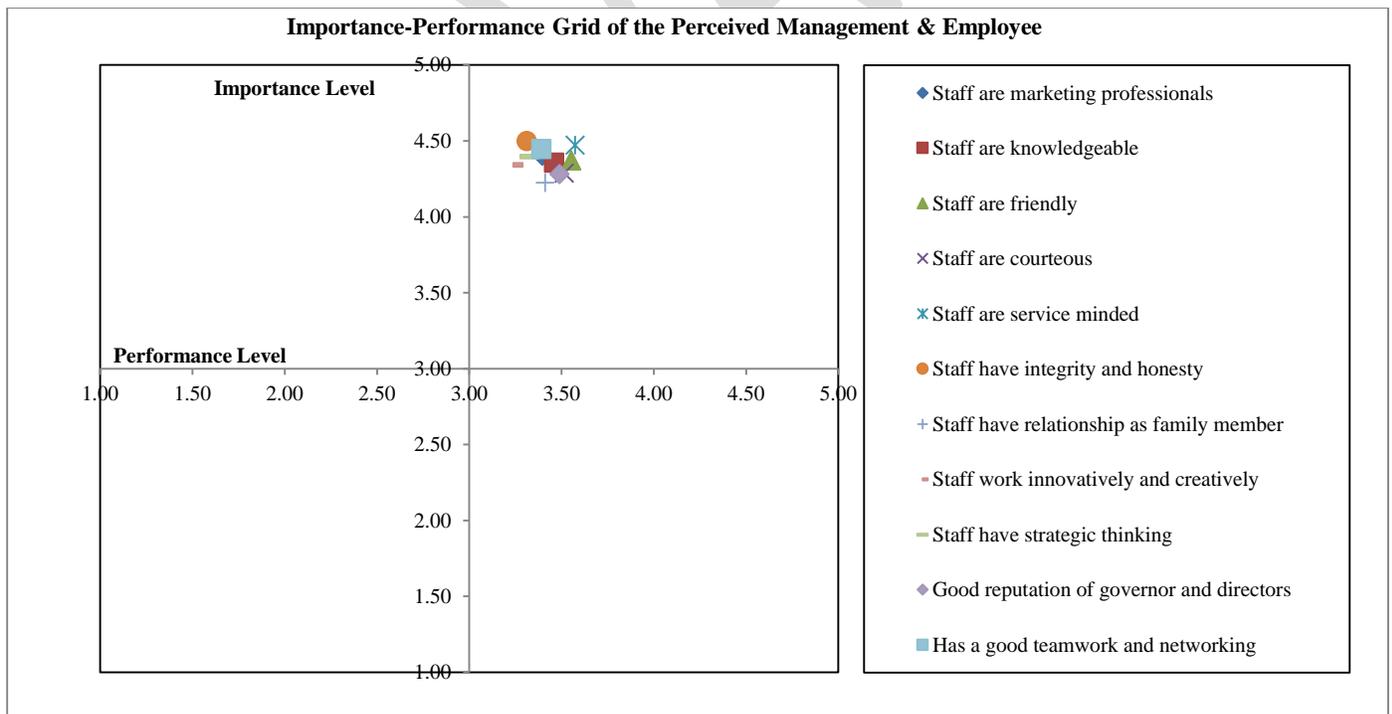


Figure 8 Importance-Performance grid of the perceived TAT's management & employee attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders
 Source: Created by the author.

Table 6

The Analysis of the Perceived TAT's Service & Functionality Attributes

Attributes	Level of Importance						TAT's Current Performance					
	TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders		TAT Insider Stakeholders		TAT Outsider Stakeholders		Combined TAT Insider & Outsider Stakeholders	
	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Important Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level	Mean Score	Performance Level
Promote and market tourism industry, including initiate tourism campaign and organize road shows	4.61	Very Important	4.48	Very Important	4.54	Very Important	4.08	Good	3.56	Good	3.82	Good
Publicize Thailand in terms of natural beauty, historical site, archeological finds, history, art and culture, sports, technological evolution, including other activities that attract tourist	4.68	Very Important	4.54	Very Important	4.61	Very Important	4.18	Good	3.72	Good	3.95	Good
Provide convenience and safety to tourists	4.03	Important	4.24	Very Important	4.14	Important	3.29	Average	3.08	Average	3.18	Average
Promote good understanding and hospitality between people and between countries by using tourism	4.42	Very Important	4.47	Very Important	4.45	Very Important	3.82	Good	3.46	Good	3.64	Good
Initiate tourism development, and to develop basic elements and facilities for tourists	4.17	Important	4.28	Very Important	4.22	Very Important	3.40	Average	3.15	Average	3.27	Average
Coordinate between public and private sectors	4.35	Very Important	4.41	Very Important	4.38	Very Important	3.80	Good	3.31	Average	3.55	Good
Provide tourist information	4.76	Very Important	4.57	Very Important	4.66	Very Important	4.33	Excellent	3.67	Good	4.00	Good
Provide manpower training for Thailand tourism industry	4.00	Important	4.18	Important	4.09	Important	3.39	Average	3.23	Average	3.31	Average
Do market research	4.32	Very Important	4.35	Very Important	4.34	Very Important	3.58	Good	3.40	Average	3.49	Good
Be an excellent center of tourism marketing	4.70	Very Important	4.43	Very Important	4.57	Very Important	3.69	Good	3.38	Average	3.54	Good
Be a center of value creations	4.18	Important	4.25	Very Important	4.22	Very Important	3.21	Average	3.30	Average	3.26	Average
Overall Image							3.60	Good	3.37	Average	3.48	Good

Source: Created by the author based on the field work data.

Table 6 shows the analysis of the perceived the TAT's service and functionality attributes. This table can be read and interpreted in conjunction with Figure 9. Figure 9 shows the radar chart of the perceived TAT's service and functionality attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. By considering the important level, the mean score of most attributes falls in the "Very Important" range. TAT internal stakeholders rated the performance of most attributes in "Good" range, whilst TAT external stakeholders rated the performance of most attributes in "Average" range. Figure 10 shows the importance-performance grid

of the perceived the TAT's service and functionality attributes of combined TAT internal and external stakeholders' data. All attributes fall in the quadrant "B" – Keep up the Good Work.

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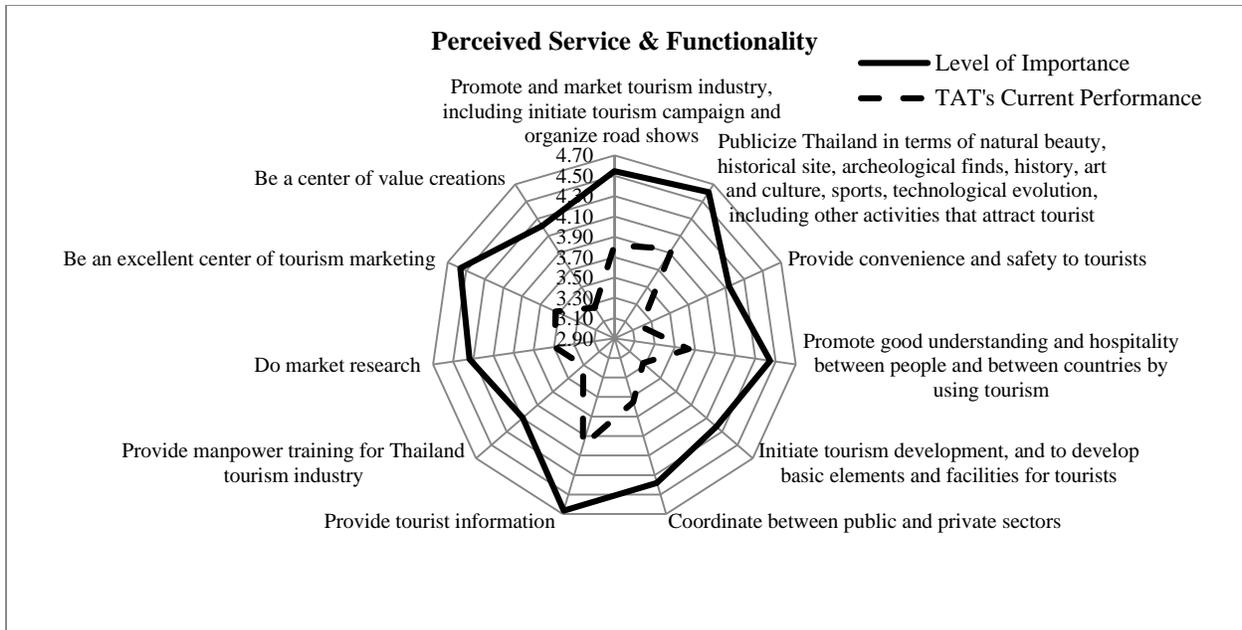


Figure 9 Radar chart of the perceived TAT's service & functionality attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders
Source: Created by the author.

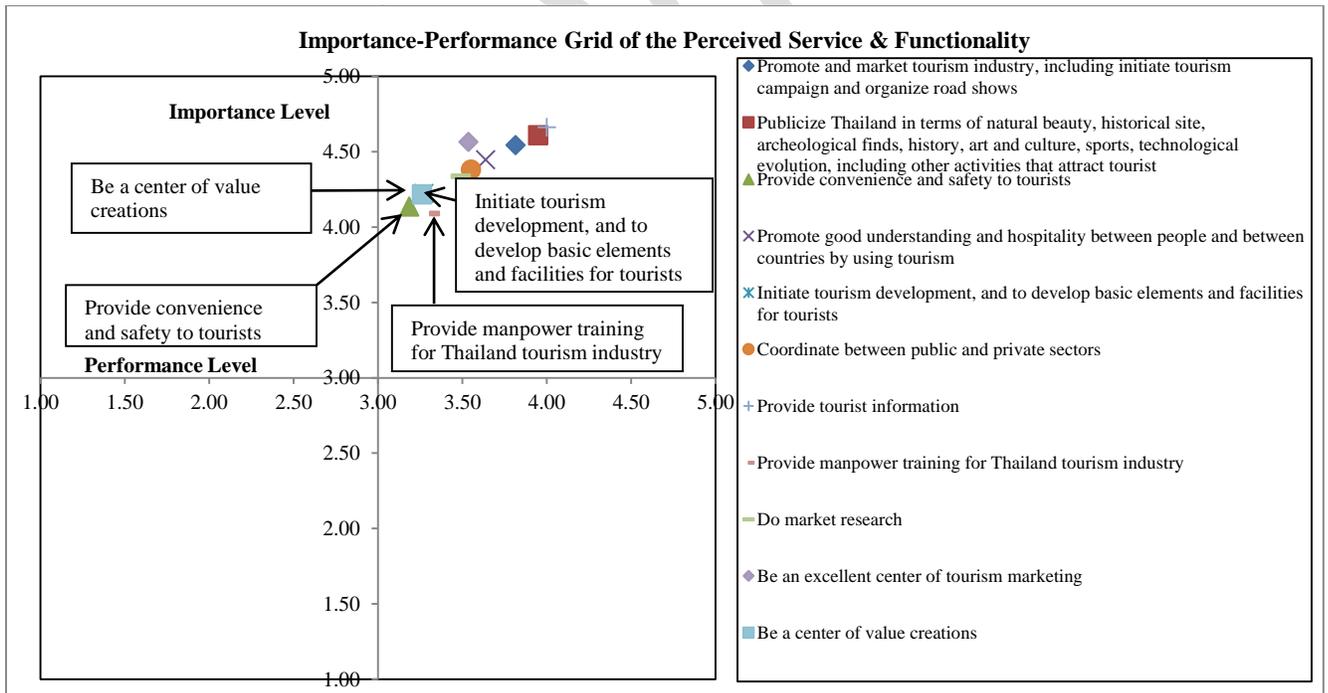


Figure 10 Importance-Performance grid of the perceived TAT's service & functionality attributes combined TAT internal and external stakeholders
Source: Created by the author.

It would be interesting to investigate whether there is any significant difference between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each attribute rated by TAT internal stakeholders and TAT external stakeholders. Thus, the researcher extended the analysis. It is an additional benefit from the existing data. This could be assessed by using Paired Sample t-test with the following hypotheses.

H1o: There is no significant difference in the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each image attribute rated by TAT internal stakeholders.

H1a: There is a significant difference in the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each image attribute rated by TAT internal stakeholders.

H2o: There is no significant difference in the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each image attribute rated by TAT external stakeholders.

H2a: There is a significant difference in the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each image attribute rated by TAT external stakeholders.

To achieve the secondary objectives of this research;- RO4: To compare between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each TAT image attribute evaluated by TAT internal stakeholders and RO5: To compare between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score of each TAT image attribute evaluated by TAT external stakeholders. The interpretation is based from the Paired Sample t-test. If the calculated result is less than 0.05, then we reject the null hypothesis. It means that the attribute has a significant difference between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score with a 95% confidence interval. If the calculated result is greater than 0.05, then we accept the null hypothesis. It means that the attribute has no significant difference between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score with a 95% confidence interval. From the calculated result, all paired-attributes have Sig. (2-tailed) less than 0.05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis. All attributes have a significant difference between the importance's mean score and the performance's mean score rated by TAT internal, stakeholders and TAT external stakeholders. The importance's mean score of each attribute is higher than the performance's mean score. This implied that TAT needs to improve its performance in all attributes.

Conclusion

According to the importance and performance rating results of TAT's stakeholders' opinions, there was no attribute which got the importance rating equal or below the "Neither Or/Nor Important" level, as well as TAT's performance of each attribute was rated in a range of "Average", "Good" and "Excellent" level.

The Importance-Performance Analysis result shows that most attributes fall in the quadrant "B". It means that TAT should keep up the good work on those attributes. However,

the most critical attribute is “A good governance organization”. According to TAT internal stakeholders’ opinion, the “A good governance organization” attribute falls in the quadrant “A”. It means that TAT should concentrate on this particular attribute as its first priority. There were some attributes located near to the border line between the quadrant “B” and “A”. Thus, TAT should focus on the following attributes as its second priority; the “A dynamic organization” attribute, the “A digital organization” attribute, the “A transparent organization” attribute (this is in line with TAT external stakeholder’s comment that “TAT should have more transparency in budgeting and project management. The TAT organization seems to be below average when compared with world standards in the transparency attribute.”), the “Innovative organization” attribute (this is in line with TAT external stakeholder’s comment that “TAT should have more innovative marketing when compared with Singapore. Singapore has less tourism sites but it can attract more tourists.”, “TAT should have marketing innovation” and “TAT should innovate in the dissemination tourism information which should be faster and up to date.”), The “Organization's management system meets an international standard. Able to be an organization of operational excellence” attribute (this is in line with TAT internal stakeholder’s comment that “TAT needs to change its staff's attitude, develop human resources, good governance and improve the quality of its working system.”)

The result of Paired Sample t-test showed all attributes have a significant difference between the importance’s mean score and the performance’s mean score. The importance’s mean score of each attribute is higher than the performance’s mean score. This implied that TAT needs to improve its performance in all attributes.

Furthermore, there is some confusion, especially on the perceived service and functionality attributes. Thus, TAT needs to emphasize and clarify its current roles and responsibilities. Otherwise, the stakeholders will develop the wrong expectation towards the TAT organization.

Recommendation

The following are recommendations.

- 1) TAT should pay more attention and put more effort to the “A good governance organization” attribute as its first priority.
- 2) TAT should focus on the following attributes as its second priority; the “A dynamic organization” attribute, the “A digital organization” attribute, the “A transparent organization” attribute, the “Innovative organization” attribute, and the “Organization's management system meets an international standard. Able to be an organization of operational excellence” attribute.
- 3) TAT should urge the (group of) person who (are) is in charge of updating the Tourism Authority of Thailand Act. It should clarify, reflect on and update the current roles and responsibilities of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.
- 4) TAT should not just simply repeat the Tourism Authority of Thailand Act, B.E.2522 (1979) in its annual report, because it is not up to date information nor reflect the current TAT’s roles and responsibilities. When this report is disseminated to TAT stakeholders, it can lead to being misunderstood and develop the wrong expectation towards the organization.

5) TAT should study to find the best communication channels for its stakeholders in order to improve its corporate image position. As well as, it is important to keep monitoring and measuring its efficiency and effectiveness of corporate image position improvements. The researcher can suggest one communication channel. TAT should have an organized representative or spokesman in every tourism association. The spokesman or TAT representative must attend monthly/ quarterly meetings and have 10-20 minutes sessions to present, disseminate or update about TAT's information as well as a Q&A session. This could help to create a more collaborative and open atmosphere. The representative can help to clarify the correct roles and responsibilities and bring back inputs received from meetings to discuss within the TAT organization. If the representative can clearly answer members' questions during Q&A sessions, then it could bring more transparency and trust to the TAT organization. This could address a TAT external stakeholder's comment that "there is a widely held belief among Thailand Tourism businesses that the TAT relates poorly and does not help businesses nor keep them informed of strategies planned. Better inform action and coordination with these businesses would provide more effective results."

Recommendation for Future Study

Since the corporate image keeps changing from time to time, it is good to keep monitoring it. As a result of this research, there is some confusion about TAT's current roles and responsibilities among TAT stakeholders. Thus, any future study can focus on finding the right kind of communication channel for TAT's stakeholders, as well as finding out how TAT can improve its good governance and transparency. Furthermore, the future study can find out whether the positive image of organization has any relationship with creating the trust, cooperation, collaboration, participation and/or co-creation from stakeholders.

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