

English for Communication Affecting Decision Making of Foreign Tourists: A Case Study of Cultural Tourism in Thailand

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Abstract:

Decision making has significant importance for tourists; therefore, this study is an attempt to highlight the factors effecting on decision making process of tourist. The objective of this study is to examine the role of English language communication in tourism decision making. This study examined the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making. Questionnaire was used for data collection after adapting measures from previous studies. Data were collected from the tourists in Thailand. As the focus of the current study is cultural tourism, therefore, only cultural tourists were selected as respondents. 700 questionnaires were distributed among tourists and 350 were returned. Results of the study shows that English language communication has positive role in tourist decision making. Better English language communication has positive role to enhance tourist decision making power. Moreover, English language communication has positive effect on collaboration with local people. Further, collaboration with local people shows positive role to promote cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment. Increase in cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment increases the tourist decision making.

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INTRODUCTION

Decision making is most important part of every organization. The strategies of organizations are also based on the decision making. It has key importance for the organizations. Correct decision making is always requiring for the success of organizations as well as various tasks among the companies. Decision making is most important area which has vital role in the performance as given in previous investigations (Beiragh et al., 2020).

Therefore, decision making is vital which has most influential role.

Decision making is not only important in organizations, it is also important among the individual people. On daily basis individual people also make various decisions related to their personal life. Moreover, individual people also make decisions based on various other routine activities. In the person's smooth life, decision making has key importance because the success of various decision

is having significant importance in a person's life. Number of scholars also shows the relationship between decision making of an individual (Phillips, Lifford, Edwards, Poolman, & Joseph-Williams, 2019; Wang, 2020).

Along with the daily activities of an individual, decision making is important among the tourists. In tourism industry, decision making is important for the tourists which visits different countries. As the world is full of various beautiful places to visit. That is why the tourists has to decide the important and most attractive place to visit. Particularly, within a specific country, tourists has to decide the most attractive place to visit. As the current study is based on the Thailand tourism, therefore, in Thailand, there are number of places to visit for the tourists, in this direction tourist required decision making to visit any specific place (Kerdpitak & Heuer, 2014; Lian, Yu, Wang, & Hou, 2017; Stanujkic, Karabasevic, Smarandache, Zavadskas, & Maksimovic, 2019). Moreover, in Thailand, tourism places are increasing with the help of Thai government. According to the estimations, Thailand will be on the fifth position in 2030 as one of the biggest destinations for tourism as it is given in Figure 1.

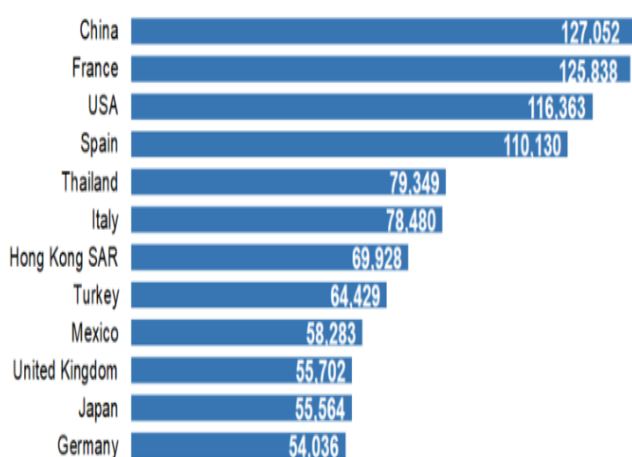


FIGURE I.

Biggest Tourism Destination in 2030

Source: Euromonitor International

As the decision making is important for tourists, therefore, this study is an attempt to

highlight the factors effecting on decision making process of tourist. According to this study, English language communication is most important for the tourist. Decision of tourist is also dependents on the communication and English language skills. Better English language skills provides better communication skills. Therefore, English language is major for decision making by the tourists. Here, the English language is based on the two way. First the English language skills of tourists and second the English language skills of local people. English language communication of the tourist helps to discuss the issues with local people of concerned country and take guide for the decision making to visit any place. In this case, the English language communication skills are important for both tourists and local people. If the English language communication is weak by the tourists, then they cannot communicate with local people for guidance and decision making will suffer. On the other hand, if the local people have low level English language communication, it will also affect negatively on decision making because local people will not be able to guide them properly. As previous scholars show the relationship between English language communication and tourism (Putra, 2018; Tarnopolsky, 2017).

Therefore, English language communication has influence on tourist decision making. The English language communication has influence on tourist decision making through different ways. Generally, English language communication has effect on the collaboration with local people by the tourist. There is an important relationship between English language communication and collaboration with the local people. The effect on collaboration with the local people has influence on the tourist place assessment. As before visits, tourist take decision to visit most attractive places. Moreover, collaboration with local people effect on tourist decision making for the cultural event assessment. Hence, both tourist place assessment and tourist event assessment have effect on tourist overall decision making.

Thus, objective of this study is to examine the role of English language communication in tourism decision making. This study examined the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making. Various studies examined the English language communication in tourism industry (Ghany & Latif, 2012; Kostić-Bobanović & Gržinić, 2011; Zhao & Intaraprasert, 2013), however, the effect of English language communication is not examined in relation to the decision making and the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making is also not elaborated by the previous investigations. Therefore, this study providing vital contribution to the tourism industry. Theoretical framework in Figure 2 shows the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making.

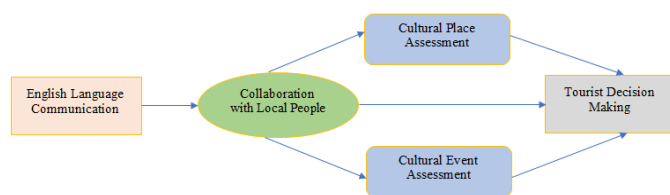


FIGURE II.

Theoretical framework of the study showing the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. English Language Communication and Collaboration with the Local People

Communication is one of the acts of transmission of meanings from one object or group to another with the help to use of jointly understood signs, symbols, as well as semiotic rules. The key steps intrinsic to all communication are the formation of communicative motivation or reason. Communication is most important between two parties. Better communication lead to the better relationship between two parties. In this context, better communication lead to the better collaboration by tourists with the local people of Thailand. Strong communication between two parties has positive role to enhance the collaboration. Therefore, communication is the base of good collaboration between two parties (Ban & Oyabu, 2019; Erkan & Erkan, 2015; Blake, Leach, Robbins, Pike, & Needleman, 2013; Davenport, Henderson, Mosca, Khuri, & Mentzer Jr, 2007). Collaboration of tourists with local people is very beneficial to visit different places. Therefore, the English langue should have good quality by both particles including tourists and local people of Thailand for the better purpose of communication. It is vital because English language in tourism industry is most important role to play (Gülsün, Yıldız & Yılmaz, 2017; Ghany & Latif, 2012). Hence, Thailand tourism industry should focus on English language communication to promote cultural tourism. Hence, this discussion lead to the below hypothesis;

Hypothesis 1. English language communication has positive effect on collaboration with local people.

2.2. Collaboration with the Local People, Cultural Place Assessment and Tourist Decision Making

Any place which is rich with cultural values and people want to visit is called cultural place. It is always the part of tourist's activities and remain the attractive place for people. However, people should know about these places to visit. If the people have no idea about these places, they will not visit, and it

will effect negatively on tourism activities. The countries always try to enhance the awareness among the people to visit these places and encourage them to discuss with other people along with the other countries. In cultural tourism, cultural places are very important for the tourists and it has central important in cultural tourism (Cabeça, Gonçalves, Marques, & Tavares, 2019; Landorf, 2019).

Better collaboration with local people has relationship with cultural place assessment. As local people of the concerned country guide the tourist to select places for visit. They guide the people towards better places and most famous places. Moreover, better cultural place assessment lead to the better decision making by the tourists. As more the knowledge by the tourist regarding the cultural places, more will be the decision-making ability to take decision for better place. As the decision-making tourism is important that is why both the collaboration with local people and cultural place assessment is important for decision making (Dinçer & Yüksel, 2019).

Hypothesis 2. Collaboration with local people has positive effect on cultural place assessment.

Hypothesis 3. Cultural place assessment has positive effect on tourist decision making.

Hypothesis 4. Cultural place assessment mediates the relationship between collaboration with local people and tourist decision making.

2.3. Collaboration with the Local People, Cultural Event Assessment and Tourist Decision Making

Cultural events could comprise family customs or various religious ceremonies, however, individuals are strongly encouraged to seek an event representing a culture different from own culture which also attract the tourist from different countries along with the different religions. Cultural event assessment includes the knowledge about various cultural events in the specific country and make a decision to choose best suitable event for the visit. Therefore, there is a relationship between collaboration with local people and cultural event assessment. Better collaboration with the local

people supports to conduct better cultural event assessment. Because a tourist does not know about one country cultural events therefore, it requires better information for assessment. Previous studies also show the importance of cultural events for tourism (Kim, Whitford, & Arcodia, 2019; Rodríguez-Rangel, Sánchez-Rivero, & Sánchez-Martín, 2016). Furthermore, increase in the cultural event assessment has positive effect on tourism decision making. Better assessment of cultural elements shows better results for decision making. Therefore, collaboration with local people has positive effect on cultural event assessment and cultural event assessment has positive effect on tourist decision making which lead to the below hypotheses. Here, cultural event assessment is treated as mediating variable by following the instructions of Baron and Kenny (1986).

Hypothesis 5. Collaboration with local people has positive effect on cultural event assessment.

Hypothesis 6. Cultural event assessment has positive effect on tourist decision making.

Hypothesis 7. Cultural event assessment mediates the relationship between collaboration with local people and tourist decision making.

2.4. Collaboration with the Local People and Tourist Decision Making

Previous results of the studies discussed that collaboration with local people has indirect effect on decision making with the help of cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment. This section shows that collaboration with local people has direct effect on tourist decision making. Similar to the indirect relationship, it is evident that collaboration with the local people provide the information to the tourists for better decision making. As better decision making always required best information (Wafik et al., 2017; Hamid, Shahid, Hameed, Amin, & Mehmood, 2019; Li, Wang, & Hu, 2019; Maghsoodi, Mosavat, Hafezalkotob, & Hafezalkotob, 2019). Therefore, collaboration with local people provide better information for decision making.

Hypothesis 8. Collaboration with local people has positive effect on tourist decision making.

III. METHOD

This study used quantitative research approach. While using quantitative research approach, primary data were collected. Primary data were collected from one point of time, thus, this study followed cross-sectional research design. This research design is suitable in the current nature of the study (Lou et al., 2010). This study used tourism industry of Thailand. More specifically, in tourism industry, cultural tourism was selected. The unit of analysis was individuals in which tourist was the point of investigation. Only the cultural tourists were selected in this study as this study is focused on cultural tourism. In cultural tourism, tourists always required decision making along with the other tourists because to visit the cultural places as well as cultural events, tourists require guidelines to choose any cultural event and cultural place.

Therefore, in this study, a survey questionnaire was designed for data collection. To measure the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making, data were collected through questionnaire. Five variables were measured in this study which include; English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making. After development of questionnaire, it was distributed among the cultural tourists all over the Thailand. Questionnaires were sent to the tourists with the help of simple random

sampling (Kaur, Patil, Shirk, & Taillie, 1996; Siuly, Li, & Wen, 2011) which is suitable to collect the data to check the effect on English language communication on tourist decision making. 700 questionnaires were distributed among tourists. Remainders were sent to the tourists who did not respond. Three remainders were sent after the gap of one week. Finally, total 350 questionnaires were received and used for data analysis. Furthermore, Likert scale was used for data collection which was divided into two major sections. First section was based on information of respondents and second portion was based on the scale items related to the key variables; English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making.

After the collection of data, all the responses from the respondents were entered in the excel sheet to carry out the analysis by using statistical tool. Finding of the study was approached with the help of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) by using Partial Least Square (PLS) (Hameed, Basheer, Iqbal, Anwar, & Ahmad, 2018; Henseler & Chin, 2010; Henseler et al., 2014; Henseler & Fassott, 2010) which is the recommended for data analysis. However, PLS-SEM require clean data without missing value as well as outlier. Therefore, missing value in the data was examined (Aydin & ŞENOĞLU, 2018). Furthermore, outlier in the data was also examined. Both the outlier and missing values are given in Table 1.

TABLE I.
Data Statistics

	No.	Missing	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
ELC1	1	0	3.56	4	1	5	1.12	-0.596	-0.399
ELC2	2	0	3.571	4	1	5	0.916	-0.559	-1.422
ELC3	3	0	2.955	4	1	5	1.985	-1.498	-0.589
ELC4	4	0	3.459	4	1	5	1.232	-0.724	-0.495
ELC5	5	0	3.321	4	1	5	1.231	-0.926	-0.306

ELC6	6	0	3.563	4	1	5	1.994	-0.623	-0.508
CLP1	7	0	3.563	4	1	5	1.172	-0.715	-0.469
CLP2	8	0	3.59	4	1	5	1.351	-0.868	-1.621
CLP3	9	0	3.556	4	1	5	1.228	-0.704	-0.537
CLP4	10	0	3.466	4	1	6	1.268	-1.835	-0.41
CLP5	11	0	2.93	4	1	6	1.976	-0.59	-0.459
CPA1	12	0	4.138	4	1	5	0.918	0.959	-1.063
CPA2	13	0	4.037	4	1	5	0.988	0.05	-0.869
CPA3	14	0	3.399	4	1	5	1.153	-0.841	-0.399
CPA4	15	0	2.922	2	1	5	1.095	-1.261	1.431
CPA5	16	0	3	4	1	5	1.209	-1.42	-0.267
CEA1	17	0	2.993	4	1	5	1.2	-1.432	-0.259
CEA2	18	0	2.998	4	1	5	1.059	-0.439	-0.744
CEA3	19	0	3.045	4	1	5	1.99	-1.395	-0.261
CEA4	20	0	4.224	4	3	5	0.703	-0.949	-1.346
DM1	21	0	4.16	4	3	5	0.733	-0.112	-0.261
DM2	22	0	4.09	4	3	5	0.748	-1.202	-0.148
DM3	23	0	4.16	4	3	5	0.748	-1.178	-0.272
DM4	24	0	4.004	4	3	5	0.72	-0.069	-1.006
DM5	25	0	4.284	4	3	5	0.708	-0.921	-0.47

Note: ELC = English Language Communication; CLP = Collaboration with Local People; CPA = Cultural Place Assessment; CEA = Cultural Event Assessment; DM = Tourist Decision Making

IV. FINDINGS

Measurement model of PLS is given in Figure 3. Results are given in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4. Figure 3 shows that English language communication is measured by using six scale items. Collaboration with local people is measured by using five items. Cultural places were measured by using five times; however, three items were removed due to low factor loadings below 0.4 and two items was retained. Cultural event assessment was measured by using four scale items. Finally, decision making was measured by using five scale items and one was removed. All the scale items were maintained above 0.4.

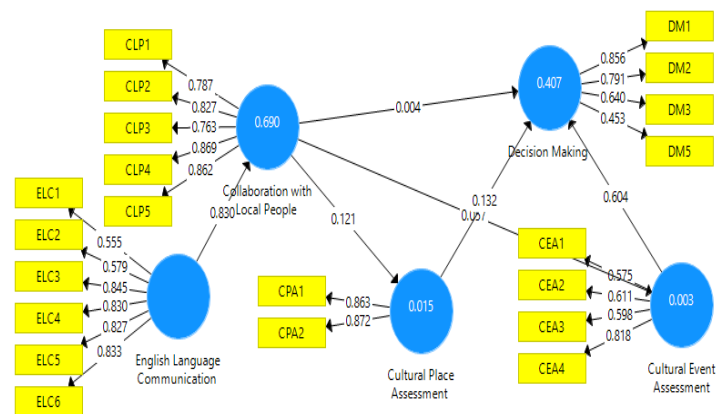


FIGURE III.
Measurement Model

TABLE II.
Factor Loadings

	Collaboration with Local People	Cultural Event Assessment	Cultural Place Assessment	Decision Making	English Language Communication
CEA1	0.575				
CEA2	0.611				
CEA3	0.598				
CEA4	0.818				
CLP1		0.787			
CLP2		0.827			
CLP3		0.763			
CLP4		0.869			
CLP5		0.862			
CPA1			0.863		
CPA2			0.872		
DM1				0.856	
DM2				0.791	
DM3				0.64	
DM5				0.453	
ELC1					0.555
ELC2					0.579
ELC3					0.845
ELC4					0.83
ELC5					0.827
ELC6					0.833

Note: ELC = English Language Communication; CLP = Collaboration with Local People; CPA = Cultural Place Assessment; CEA = Cultural Event Assessment; DM = Tourist Decision Making

Table 3 shows that Collaboration with Local People has composite reliability (CR) 0.913, Cultural Event Assessment has CR 0.891, Cultural Place Assessment has CR 0.859, Decision Making has CR 0.787 and finally, English Language Communication has CR 0.886. Furthermore, average variance extracted (AVE) for all variables; English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making is above 0.5. Cross-loading was used for discriminant validity shown in Table 4 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

TABLE III.
Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	(AVE)
Collaboration with Local People	0.88	0.883	0.913	0.677

Cultural Event				
Assessment	0.662	0.863	0.891	0.433
Cultural Place				
Assessment	0.671	0.671	0.859	0.752
Decision				
Making	0.657	0.793	0.787	0.493
English				
Language				
Communication	0.85	0.883	0.886	0.571

Note: ELC = English Language Communication; CLP = Collaboration with Local People; CPA = Cultural Place Assessment; CEA = Cultural Event Assessment; DM = Tourist Decision Making

TABLE IV.
Cross-Loadings

	Collaboration with Local People	Cultural Event Assessment	Cultural Place Assessment	Decision Making	English Language Communication
CEA1	0.333	-0.575	-0.145	-0.192	0.045
CEA2	0.362	-0.611	-0.105	-0.212	0.085
CEA3	-0.611	-0.598	-0.147	-0.164	0.037
CEA4	0.1	0.818	0.094	0.662	0.127
CLP1	0.787	0.506	0.132	0.047	0.632
CLP2	0.827	0.865	0.061	0.063	0.699
CLP3	0.763	0.851	0.101	0.04	0.646
CLP4	0.869	0.899	0.127	0.024	0.729
CLP5	0.802	0.858	0.081	0.052	0.705
CPA1	0.114	0.123	0.863	0.187	0.12
CPA2	0.097	0.145	0.872	0.205	0.104
DM1	0.016	0.675	0.158	0.856	0.066
DM2	0.033	0.383	0.153	0.791	0.062
DM3	0.01	0.283	0.207	0.64	0.03
DM5	0.155	0.228	0.161	0.453	0.107
ELC1	0.373	0.025	0.153	0.054	0.555
ELC2	0.373	0.019	0.159	0.062	0.579
ELC3	0.737	0.089	0.061	0.108	0.845
ELC4	0.738	0.039	0.125	0.068	0.83
ELC5	0.689	0.091	0.084	0.101	0.827
ELC6	0.706	-0.005	0.075	0.005	0.833

Note: ELC = English Language Communication; CLP = Collaboration with Local People; CPA = Cultural Place Assessment; CEA = Cultural Event Assessment; DM = Tourist Decision Making

According to the Figure 4, the effect of collaboration with local people was examined on English language communication was examined on cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment. Moreover, the direct effect of collaboration with local people was examined on

decision making. Finally, the direct effect of cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment was examined on decision making. Results in Table 5 shows that English language communication has positive effect on collaboration with local people. It is found that collaboration with local people has positive effect on cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment. Moreover, collaboration with local people has positive effect on decision making. Finally, cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment has positive effect on decision making. These results were obtained by examining the instructions of previous studies (F. Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & G. Kuppelwieser,

2014; Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012; Henseler et al., 2014; Ul-Hameed, Mohammad, & Shahar, 2018).

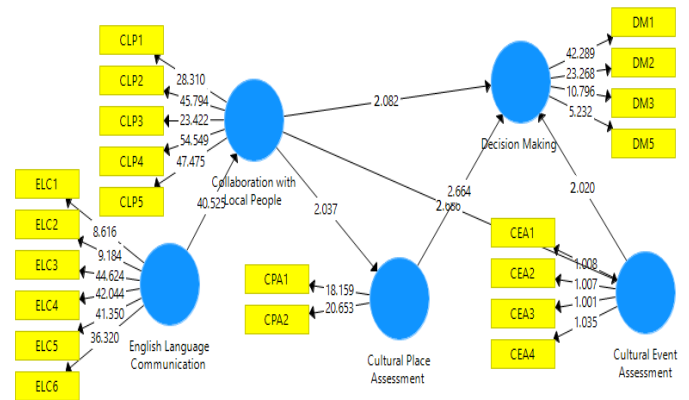


FIGURE IV.
Structural Model

TABLE V.
Direct Effect Results

	(O)	(M)	SD	T Statistics	P Values
Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Event Assessment	0.057	0.023	0.012	4.686	0
Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Place Assessment	0.121	0.121	0.06	2.037	0.042
Collaboration with Local People -> Decision Making	0.004	0.001	0.001	4.082	0
Cultural Event Assessment -> Decision Making	0.604	0.137	0.15	4.02	0
Cultural Place Assessment -> Decision Making	0.132	0.137	0.05	2.664	0.008
English Language Communication -> Decision Making	0.83	0.833	0.02	40.525	0

Communication

->

Collaboration

with Local

People

Note: ELC = English Language Communication; CLP = Collaboration with Local People; CPA = Cultural Place Assessment; CEA = Cultural Event Assessment; DM = Tourist Decision Making

After the assessment of direct effect of variables, this study examined the indirect effect as shown in Table 6. The indirect effect of Collaboration with Local People was examined between English Language Communication and Cultural Place Assessment. Moreover, the indirect effect of Collaboration with Local People was examined between English Language Communication and Cultural event Assessment. The indirect effect of

Collaboration with Local People between English Language Communication and Cultural place Assessment is significant with t-value 2.017. However, the other indirect effect is insignificant. The r-square value is 0.407 which shows weak effect (Chin, 1998) and showing that all the variables; English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment are expected to bring 40.7 change in decision making.

TABLE VI.
Indirect Effect Results

	(O)	(M)	SD	T Statistics	P Values
English Language Communication -> Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Event Assessment	0.047	0.019	0.069	0.682	0.495
English Language Communication -> Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Place Assessment	0.101	0.101	0.05	2.017	0.044
English Language Communication -> Collaboration	0.004	0.001	0.044	0.082	0.935

with Local People -> Decision Making Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Event Assessment -> Decision Making	0.034	0.037	0.015	2.255	0.036
English Language Communication -> Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Event Assessment -> Decision Making	0.028	0.031	0.031	0.913	0.362
Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Place Assessment -> Decision Making	0.016	0.016	0.004	3.99	0.120
English Language Communication -> Collaboration with Local People -> Cultural Place Assessment -> Decision Making	0.013	0.014	0.009	1.528	0.127

Note: ELC = English Language Communication; CLP = Collaboration with Local People; CPA = Cultural Place Assessment; CEA = Cultural Event Assessment; DM = Tourist Decision Making

V. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to examine the role of English language communication in tourism decision making. For the achievement of the objective, this study examined the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making. Questionnaire was used for data collection and data were collected from the tourists in Thailand. Outcomes of the study provided most important results for the tourism industry. It is found that; the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making is most important to boost the cultural tourism in Thailand. Improvement in this relationship through different strategies provided the vital insights to enhance cultural tourism in Thailand. It is found that; English language communication has positive role in tourist decision making. Communication through English language is the most influential factor which can increase the decision making of tourist coming from different countries with different speaking languages. Better English language communication has positive role to enhance tourist decision making power. Furthermore, English language communication has positive effect on collaboration with local people. Better English language communication has the potential to promote collaboration with local people which causes to increase the tourist interest and ultimately effect in a positive way on tourist decision making. Further, collaboration with local people shows positive role to promote cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment. Better collaboration with local people increases the quality of cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment. Increase in the quality of cultural place assessment and cultural event assessment increases the tourist decision making.

5.1. Implications of the Study

This study has vital implications for the literature because this study examined the valuable relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making. It is evident that; this relationship is not examined in the previous investigation which shows that this relationship has contribution to the tourism industry. Especially, in context of cultural tourism, this relationship is vital. Moreover, the decision making in relation to the English language communication among tourists is not investigated. Hence, this study has vital role to show the importance of English language communication between tourist and local people of the concerned country. Furthermore, this study contributed by examining the indirect effect of Collaboration with Local People between English Language Communication and Cultural Place Assessment. This study also contributed by examining the indirect effect of Collaboration with Local People between English Language Communication and Cultural event Assessment. Finally, the relationship between English language communication, collaboration with local people, cultural place assessment, cultural event assessment and decision making provided valuable practical implications for the management of Thailand tourism industry. Especially, it is vital for management of cultural tourism. It is suggested that management should enhance English language communication to promote cultural tourism.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Limitations of the study could be the future directions. First limitation of this study is that; the study collected the data all over the Thailand, however, it is quite tough to collect data from whole Thailand and to cover the whole population. Therefore, it is important to conduct the next study based on one of city from which the researcher can

cover the whole population. It will provide the accurate results as compared to the current study. Furthermore, according to the previous investigations of sampling technique, area cluster sampling could be used on widespread population and to cover the maximum population by dividing the population based on various clusters. Therefore, while examining the similar relationship in the tourism industry, the scholars should use area cluster sampling rather than to use simple random or any other sampling technique.

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