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TOURISM CRIMINALITY CASE: THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

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The topic of the research is tourism criminality in Thailand. The research was done in winter 2009 and spring 2010.

The interview requests were sent to 32 persons who had travelled to Thailand in spring 2009. Out of this group five responded and four other persons were asked personally. Totally nine interviews were done. As the research method focused theme interviews were used. The requests were sent by Email and most of the interviews were done face-to-face.

The research investigated the respondents' knowledge about Thailand before going there. The main focus was to investigate what different types of criminality the respondents encountered in Thailand. Also the research tried to research how negative incidents affected the respondents' trips and the image of the destination.

The most common criminality experienced was minor cheating attempts. More serious criminality the respondents experienced personally was frauds and robberies. Also drugs and prostitution was seen very much. Mostly research had more positive outcome than negative.

Although negative incidents happened to the respondents the main image of the country stayed more positive than negative. The incidents did not affect the travelling enthusiasm of the respondents that much and most of them would travel back to Thailand if it was possible.

Keywords tourism, criminality, Thailand

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä	Minttu-Maria Iitola
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Tutkimuksen aihe on matkailurikollisuus Thaimaassa. Tutkimus tehtiin talvella 2009 ja keväällä 2010.

Haastattelu pyyntö lähetettiin 32 henkilölle, jotka olivat matkustaneet Thaimaahan keväällä 2009. Ryhmästä viisi suostui haastatteluun ja neljää muuta pyydettiin henkilökohtaisesti. Yhteensä tehtiin siis 9 haastattelua. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin teemahaastatteluja. Haastattelupyynnöt lähetettiin sähköpostin välityksellä ja suurin osa haastatteluista tehtiin kasvotusten.

Tutkimus selvitti vastaajien tietoa Thaimaasta ennen heidän lähtönsä. Pääsääntöisesti tutkimus keskittyi selvittämään mitä erilaisia rikollisuuden muotoja vastaajat löysivät Thaimaasta. Tutkimus yritti myös saada selville miten negatiiviset tapahtumat vaikuttivat vastaajien matkaan ja matkakohteen imagoon.

Yleisin rikollisuuden muoto, jota vastaajat kokivat, oli pienet huijausyritykset. Vakavampia rikoksia, joita vastaajat kokivat henkilökohtaisesti, ovat petokset ja ryöstöt. Huumeita ja prostituutiota vastaajat näkivät myös hyvin paljon.

Tutkimuksella oli enimmäkseen positiivisempi tulos kuin negatiivisempi. Vaikka vastaajille tapahtui negatiivisia sattumuksia, pääsääntöisesti Thaimaasta jäi positiivinen imago. Tapahtumat eivät vaikuttaneet vastaajien matkustusintoon ja suurin osa heistä matkustaisi takaisin Thaimaahan, jos heillä olisi siihen mahdollisuus.

ABSTRACT

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1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a huge industry in the world, it creates much of income and more and more destinations are created all the time. In Thailand tourism brings about 6 percent of the gross domestic product. In 2007 the tourism industry brought about 14 million tourists to Thailand, in 2009 the number of tourists has only reached about 12 million. Tourism is a positive thing, but it creates many of problems too. One area of problems that affects tourism and is created by tourism is the core of my thesis. (World travel and tourism council 2009)

The subject of my thesis is tourism criminality in Thailand. The idea to this subject came during a three month exchange in Rangsit, Thailand, in spring 2009. Tourism criminality in Thailand is nowadays more known, and it is starting to affect the image of the destination. In this thesis I will in detail explain what tourism criminality is and what areas of tourism criminality are affecting in Thailand. My research will be based on my own observations and the interviews of tourists who have met problems in Thailand.

1.1 Tourism in Thailand

Tourism in Thailand is growing all the time. The tourism arrivals have been rising since 1998, and the tourists even stay longer than earlier. In the last two years the number of arrivals has decreased. The reason for this is thought to be the political issues that are ongoing in the country. In 2008 the closing of Suvarnabhumi airport in Bangkok by the yellow shirts, made it impossible for some visitors to travel there and the riots in Pattaya and Bangkok in spring 2009 made the area less safe for the tourists. These political issues made the hotel reservations bookings decrease in Thailand in 2009. (Thai Websites 2009)

The Association of Finnish Travel Agents, also called as AFTA, made a research about package tours in 2008. The research shows that almost 20 percent of Finnish people went on a package tour that was made by airplane in 2008. That means about 989 000 travellers. The most popular destinations in Europe are still Spain and Greece. 41 percent of the package tours were to Spain, but the number of travellers has decreased since many travellers that before travelled to Canary

Islands are now travelling to Thailand instead. The selling of trips to long-distance destinations increased about 2 percent from 2007, but the selling was calmer than the year before. Thailand is the most popular destination of the long-distance travels, there were made 93 000 package tours in 2008. The amount of travels made there increased by almost 12 percent from the year before. (Rantapallo 2007; Smal Afta 2009)

The destination image of Thailand is generally identified to be of high class, and it offers tourists beautiful nature, interesting culture and hospitality. The country is easily accessible and it is possible to link other tourism destinations situated in the region to the trip. The destination offers hospitality with willingness to provide and to respond to the needs of the tourists by different activities. The destination offers activities from entertainment, health tourism and sports to shopping with reasonable prices. The tourists travelling to Thailand are more and more female, youth and retired tourists, who come from Europe and the Middle East. The things that help Thailand to improve tourism are the growing number of low cost carriers, the new technology in aviation shortening the time of travelling and more networking in aviation between different regions. (World Tourism Organization 2009)

1.2 Aim of the thesis

The aim of the thesis is to research what kind of tourism criminality can be found in Thailand and how tourists image of the destination changes when facing problems when travelling. The destination used as an example is Thailand, because of Thailand's popularity as a tourism destination for Finnish tourists nowadays.

The research is based on focused theme interviews' answers by students who have travelled there in the last few years and my own observations at the destination.

The reason why the thesis is done is to raise the awareness of the tourists of the dangers, even minor ones, of the destination they are travelling to.

1.3 Restrictions

The research was done among the students of VAMK, University of Applied Sciences in Vaasa. The university sends students to Thailand every year for a three-month exchange. The research was done by interviewing students who have travelled there in the last few years. The students travel much and to different areas of the country, and that is why they have more experiences of the subject than tourists staying only in one area for a shorter period. The reason why the research was done for this segment is that it may help when new students are travelling to Thailand from our school.

1.4 Structure

The first chapter of the thesis consists of the introduction, aim of the thesis, general information on tourism in Thailand and structure of the thesis. The second chapter consists of theory about tourism, tourists and destination image. The third part discusses tourism criminality in general and all the types of it. The fourth chapter presents the research methods. The fifth chapter is the main empirical study, which includes the research. The sixth chapter consists of the conclusion and improvement suggestions. The seventh chapter is summarizing the thesis.

2 TOURISM

Tourism can be defined in many ways, as an example World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who are "travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes." (Goeldner & Ritchie 2009, 7)

Already in the 1980s the Tourism Society in the United Kingdom made a definition of tourism that is often cited. The definition is "Tourism is the temporary; short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places there they normally live and work, and activities during their stay at these destinations; it includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visits and excursions'."(Youell 1998, 9)

Both definitions state that tourism means leaving the home area, where people usually live and act, to someplace else, but returning after a period of time. The time being away from home is short, and the stay in the destination is not permanent. The trip is not longer than one year. The trip to the destination usually involves activities that are related to tourism, and not so often done in the original place of resident. Tourism can also include excursions, when the tourist is only staying away from the place of resident for a day and return for the night. Tourism is not always only done for leisure purposes, but it is done also to do business. (Youell 1998, 9-10)

Based on the definitions presented above, a following definition of tourism was used in this thesis: Tourism can be thought to be leaving home for a specific time period to visit a destination outside the area where people usually affect. The trip may last from one day excursion up to one year. Tourism contains many different activities, which are not related to the usual weekday of the tourist.

The tourism industry has experienced a continuing growth under the last decade, and it is becoming one of the key sources of income for developing countries. Existing destinations are developing and new destinations are created for the growing number of tourists. The competition between destinations has led to growing development of destinations, and tourism industry has become a big competitor of other businesses such as oil export, food products and automobiles.

Tourism brings a lot of revenue to the destination countries, which offers countries more income to make their countries more sustainable. Sustainable tourism is a goal that particularly developing countries are trying to achieve. The world tourism organization is one of the associations that are helping the countries to make it true.

Since 1950 the international tourism has growth with the yearly rate of 6.5 %, which means that in 2005 the number of arrivals had increased from 25 million to 806 million tourists. In 2006 the rate of arrivals was only 4.6%, and the number of arrivals was 842 million. The profit of tourism has at the same time grown to hundreds of billion dollars, reaching 680 Billion US Dollars in 2005. The number of arrivals in 2020 is believed to reach over 1.5 billion people. (World Tourism Organization 2009)

2.1 Travel purposes

People travel much nowadays, much more than a hundred years ago, because it is so much easier nowadays. There are many reasons why people travel, such as pleasure and holiday, to visit relatives or friends, other personal matters and business travelling.

Business travelling is usually connected to a company sending an employee to handle business related issues in another city or country than the one where the company is situated. The main reasons from business travelling can be meetings, conventions, inspections and consultations. The trip can also include eating in a restaurant, shopping, sight-seeing and other activities. These activities are not the primary reason why the trip was made, but can still be one incentive on the trip.

Other reason for travelling is holiday and leisure. Tourists travel all over the world to go sight-seeing, relax, to do their hobbies and so on. Leisure travelling can also include secondary activities, such as shopping, going to conventions and visiting friends or relatives. These activities are still not the main reason to do the trip.

Further reasons for travelling can be visiting friends and relatives. These tourists travel from their place of residence to meet family members or friends to spend time and socialize with them. The trip can also include other activities that are not the main meaning of the trip, but are connected to the activities. These activities can be eating together in a restaurant, shopping, sight-seeing, and physical activities.

Other personal matters are also one purpose of travelling. It can include travelling to do hobbies, such as scuba-diving and golf, for health reason or shopping. The trip can include eating out and visiting friends or relatives, but they are not the primary reason for the trip. (Weaver & Oppermann 2000, 29-31; Goeldner & Ritchie 2009, 11)

As tourists become more educated and have more travelling experiences, the tourism industry must also develop itself to have what the tourists need. Tourists demand for example better accommodation facilities, more diverse activities and easier accessibility, which the providers have to develop all the time to respond to the needs of the tourists. (Youell 1998, 14)

2.2 Tourist and tourism motivations

The tourists are divided into four groups; domestic stayovers, international stayovers, international excursionists and domestic excursionists. A domestic tourist travels inside their country of origin, when international tourist leaves their own home country to travel. A stayover tourist stays at least for one night in the destination area, whereas the excursionist spends less than one night in the destination. (Weaver & Oppermann 2000, 48-49)

Another way of dividing tourists into different kinds of groups is to divide them based on Plog's typology on tourists' behaviour. The three different groups in this category are allocentrics, midcentrics and psychocentrics. Allocentrics are tourists that like to travel alone and not in groups. They enjoy travelling and exploration of different cultures, new experiences and are not afraid of taking risks. Allocentrics are independent travellers that have self confidence and adventurous minds. The opposite of allocentrics are psychocentrics. Psychocentrics like to travel in groups, and not alone. They travel to places that are familiar to them, risk-free and do not give new experiences. These travellers tend to be quite concerned, insecure and reserved when choosing the destination and on the trip. Midcentrics are the average tourists that have features from both allocentrics and psychocentrics. Midcentrics do not like to explore themselves, but follow after someone else has discovered something new. (Weaver & Oppermann 2000, 204; Youell 1998, 20)

The most used model of motivations for travelling is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow stated that there are five levels of needs that a person is trying to satisfy, all from basic needs to self-satisfaction.

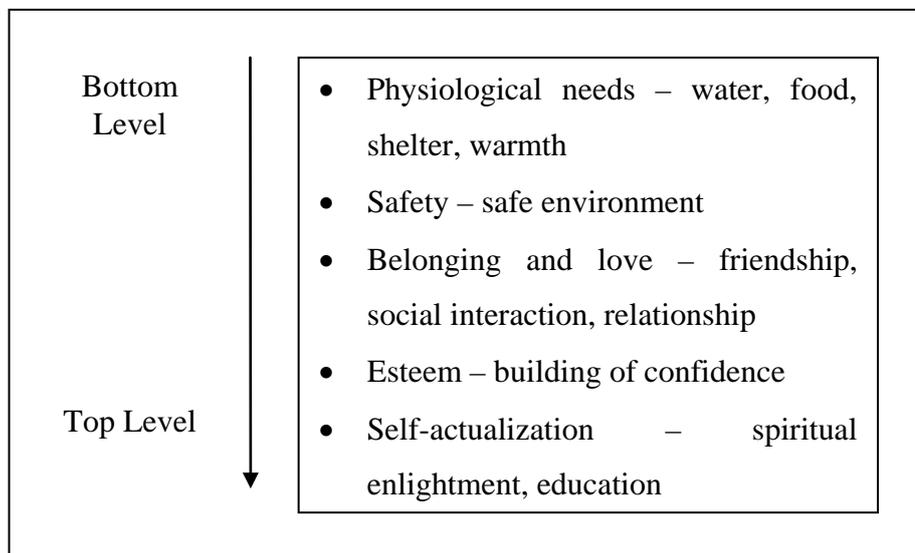


Table 1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Youell 1998, 19-20)

Most tourists who travel start with the basic needs, meaning that they need to have food, a possibility for clean water and a roof over their heads. After the basic needs are fulfilled the travelers move to the next level. The destination they are traveling to should be a safe place to go, as the tourists seek to find personal security as well as financial security. On the next level, tourists search for social interactions, love and friendship with other people when travelling. On the next level the tourists look for acceptance and self-esteem. Getting more travelling experience also boosts the tourists' esteem among other people. On the highest level the travelers seek for the feeling of being spiritually enlightened, meaning that they look for example for relaxation or new experiences, also learning a new language is one part of self-actualization. (Youell 1998, 19-20; Abraham Maslow 2009)

2.3 Destination image

Image of the destination is formed on the perception of the tourist on the destination or product. It is the compound of beliefs, attitudes and impressions of the destination that the tourists' as individuals or in larger groups have. Destination image is also one technique on creating more tourism demand to the destination. When the destination has created a positive image, it can use it to promote the good features of the place to tourists. It is a method used to attract new tourists to the destination. Destination image is one pull factor that can be crucial when decided where to travel and a positive image helps to motivate tourists to choose the preferred destination. (Youell 1998, 20; Weaver & Oppermann 2000, 124)

Image can be either descriptive or evaluative. Descriptive means when described a destination for example Hua Hin as being a Thai seaside resort, whereas evaluative means when the same destination Hua Hin is described to be charming and fascinating (Hua Hin 2009). Destination image is used as a marketing tool to promote the positive features of the destination.

Researches of image in tourism usually focus on market awareness and evaluation of the destination and the products it offers to be better informed of the destinations potentiality. It is very important that potential travellers know beforehand about the existence of the destination, which is easy for destinations that already are much known around the world, but a bigger problem for smaller locations that are not known of. Smaller destinations have to give a positive image of the place in order to become more known to travellers. If the destination has a negative image it will lead to tourists avoiding to travel there altogether. One problem is also that tourists, that have not obtained much of worldly experience, might suppose that all the destinations located in the same country have the same facilities and problems. This stereotyping can be very harmful to the image and it causes difficulties when tried to keep or obtain a positive image. (Weaver & Oppermann 2000, 109-110)

3 TOURISM CRIMINALITY

Tourism is a positive thing for many destinations, but it brings problems too. The positive sides of tourism are that it brings employment, raises income and gross national product, spreads development and many other things too gets better in tourism destinations. As the negative sides tourism is changing cultures, using a lot of resources and polluting, thus destroying the nature and it also is source of inflation. These examples of tourism impacts can be very real and might bring problems to tourism. Tourism also brings more criminality, prostitution and gambling, nonetheless it also produces conflicts in the society. It can be seen that areas that have much of tourists also have also higher crime rates. It shows that there is a linkage between tourism growth and criminality, although it is not the only excuse. Tourism crime is usually quite known and warned about in the areas that it is related to, and it is easy to blame tourism for many problems. The areas with growing tourism usually have a rising population rate too, which can affect the increase of crime rate. (Goeldner & Ritchie 2009, 31-33; Weaver & Oppermann 2000, 293)

Crimes committed by	Against whom	Examples of	Aim of the crime
Tourists	Other tourists, local people or tourism personnel	Robbery, pickpockets	Usually economical or social gain
Locals	Tourists	Assaults, petty theft, cons, crimes of distraction	Usually economical gain
Tourism industry	Visitors	Fraud, business misrepresentation	Economical gain
Organized crime	Tourism enterprise	Terrorism	Social gain

Table 2 Tourism/visitor crime taxonomy (Tarlow 2006, 96; Mansfeld & Pizam 2006, 4)

Tourism crime is not only committed by locals, but many tourists are also responsible for crimes that happen towards visitors. Tourists may even commit crimes towards destinations and locals or tourism personnel. Most tourism crimes happen towards tourists; these crimes are usually different from those that are committed by tourists themselves. The crimes that tourists usually commit are smaller, including robbing or pick pocketing. Tourists may also commit crimes that are sex-related, which are illegal in the residential country. The locals commit crimes that include assaults, conning people, theft and crimes of distraction. Tourism industry can also commit crimes towards visitors; these crimes are frauds and misrepresentation of the business. The gain for these crimes is usually economic; trying to get more money from tourists. Tourism brings different kinds of people together, people with different economic situations and cultures. Tourists are tempting victims, because of their wealthier lifestyles, which some locals hope to get for themselves. More insignificant ways of exploiting tourists are overpricing and begging, as more serious ways are theft, assaults and murder. (Tarlow 2006, 94-105; Weaver et al. 2000, 293)

Tourists, who usually get in trouble, are very easy for the criminals to spot. Tourists use clothing that identifies them to be visitor and not local people. The most revealing clothing or accessory is the fanny pack. Tourists may not know how to blend in the local culture; they can be recognized too easily from the crowd, thus become easily victims of crime. In some cases the skin color of the tourist might also be noticed by the local community. One thing that usually reveals a tourist is the language barrier, tourist do not usually speak the language when they enter a new country.

Some tourism criminality actions can be thought to be the tourist's own fault. Some people who leave for a holiday forget their common sense at home and relax too much. Tourists forget about security issues, leave their stuff unattended in public places, keep money in the back pocket and trust the local population too much. These crimes that happen to these people are mostly their own fault, because it should be remembered that everywhere can be found people that are unreliable and just there to get your money. Some crimes can occur, because of

alcohol or drugs are involved, also misunderstandings or conflicts in social interaction can lead to situations that can be categorized as crime. Many tourism crimes are not reported to the authorities, because tourists might feel that they cannot explain the crime well enough to the police, the realization of a crime towards the tourist is noticed much later or they feel that it is no use reporting the crime to the police. (Tarlow 2006, 94-105; Weaver et al. 2000, 293-294)

Criminality in the world is a very broad term and it consists of different kinds of criminal actions from pick pocketing to murder depending on the destination. Some criminal actions are linked to tourism and crime in these areas increase at the same time as the visitor amounts. Places that attract both tourists and criminals are usually places that are packed with businesses and people, such as bars and nightclubs. The fear of criminal actions is an ongoing issue for both the tourism industry and the local authorities.

3.1 Crimes of distraction

Crimes of distraction usually happen when tourists are in a state, where they are distracted by the environment or a person. Crimes of distraction usually happen on events or tourism sites, where is a lot of people and happenings. The category of crimes of distraction includes most commonly pick pocketing and credit card frauds. (Tarlow 2002, 46-48, 185)

3.1.1 Pick pocketing

The most common tourism crime is pick pocketing, because of the easiness. Many tourists keep their valuables in a place, which makes it easy for the criminals to take their money. Most pickpockets are professional and have done it for years; usually they work in groups. The group creates a distraction, where one distracts the tourist and the other takes the money. The groups always look for the easiest target; these are the tourists who have their valuables in a place where it is easy to take the money from. (Tarlow 2006, 94-105)

Becoming a victim of pick pocketing happens mostly in public places, where there are many people. Bus and trains stations are very popular places to get your possessions lost, also department stores and city streets can be potential places for pick-pocketing to happen. Most victims are women, in their thirties and use railways as a main transportation. Pick-pocketing occurs in escalators, when standing on the platform and on the train to those placed near the doors. The thefts usually happen in the busiest time of the day, when people are doing shopping. These thefts are done outside of the stations in the streets or stores. The victims are often distracted by the environment they are in or something else. Busy places with many people creates disturbance, and people are more concentrated on their surroundings than their belongings. Sometimes the victims are doing something else, like carrying packages or talking on the phone while the theft happens, thus not noticing what is happening around them. (Young 2009)

Trip Advisor travelling site has listed the top ten places and cities where tourists should be very careful with their belongings. In these places tourists should not only be careful with their possessions, but also be aware of other crimes of distractions that can affect their awareness of their wallets. Most of the cities in the list are European. The first on the list is Las Ramblas, which is a busy pedestrian walkway in Barcelona, Spain. The street is full of different kinds of performers, and there are people there around the clock. The street is a very good place to lose your bag. The second place is Rome, Italy, with a great deal of attractions that are distracting tourists while criminals take their cameras or bags. The third on is Prague, Czech Republic, where is a great deal of tourists all year around. Other cities found from the list are Madrid, Paris, Florence, Amsterdam and Athens. The only two cities that are not in Europe are Buenos Aires and Hanoi. All these destinations have a great deal of tourists yearly, which makes the occurrence of pick pocketing high, but it has not affected the amount of tourists much. (The Sunday Morning Herald 2009)

3.1.2 Credit card frauds

One type of fraud is credit card frauds and they can be classified into five categories; counterfeit credit card, lost or stolen cards, no-card fraud, non-receipt fraud and identity theft fraud. Counterfeit credit card means that criminals make fake cards using the newest technology to get all information the cards' magnetic stripe contains. Credit cards can be lost easily, but the amount of stolen cards is even higher. No-card frauds happen when people give their credit card information through the phone or internet sites to unreliable companies that are selling services or products that do not exist. Non-receipt frauds are not very common anymore, but basically it means that the card is stolen when it is mailed to your home from the bank. Identity theft frauds happen when criminals apply for a credit card using someone else's identity and information. (Spam Laws 2009)

Related to the credit card frauds, the city of Riga in Latvia has a great deal of bad publicity in 2009, because of credit card frauds and overcharging tourists. Travelling to countries with the possibility of credit card frauds, tourists are advised to avoid the areas where frauds are happening, in Riga the nightclubs and strip clubs around the city centre are the hot spots for crime. In Riga the drinks in the clubs can cost more than expected which is why the safest thing is to check the drink prices before ordering and paying with cash instead of credit card. It is also advised to not move around the city in the night alone or drunk. The credit card frauds in Riga were done without the knowledge of the visitor, or the visitor was drugged. (Iltalehti 2009; YLE 2009)

3.2 Robbery and theft

Different kinds of robberies can happen on streets, in hotels and on airports. Tourist robberies usually happen near hotels and other accommodating facilities, restaurants and tourist attractions. Street robberies usually happen when the tourist and the criminal end up in a place with no guards nearby. Two kinds of street robberies occur, armed robbery and simple robbery. Armed robbery happens when a tourist is threatened with a weapon or violence, with the aim of getting their valuables. In simple robbery the criminal does not use a weapon. Most of street robberies happen between midnight and 6am in dark side streets, for example when tourists are walking back to their hotels. (Mansfeld & Pizam 2006, 125-139)

Hotels are considered to be mostly safe places for tourists to leave their belongings to, but in many cases it has occurred that even hotels are not that safe. Tourists should not leave money or valuables in a visible place in the room, but keep them in a safety deposit box in the room or in the reception. The hotel might have a good security system that covers most of the premises, but theft can still happen. If valuables are left visibly in the room, on the table or in the luggage even the workers of the hotel can be so tempted that they become thieves. (Life Spy 2009)

After a long flight tourists are not as aware of things happening around them as they might be tired and more interested of the new country they see. This gives an opportunity to criminals to take people's luggage. Stealing luggage from the airport has become easier since the war on terrorism has started in the world. Airports have started to place the security guards in the gates to the airplanes, therefore leaving the area of luggage claim and check-in area unsecure. While waiting for the check-in or security passengers are distracted and non-observant to the things happening around them, which make it easier for thieves to take their baggage. (Tarlow 2006, 100)

3.3 Frauds

Frauds are done in order to benefit economically from tourists. Frauds consist of for example cons, credit card frauds, and business misrepresentation. Criminals that do frauds can use many different methods; they can pretend to be helpful citizens in the street corner, who actually tell you only lies and get you to do something that can cost you much, or they just copy your credit card while you are not watching. The internet is also a method used when the fraud is done; you might get an offer you cannot resist, but after you have paid the company for getting the offer it is revealed that the company is a hoax and you lose all the money for forever. Next chapters tell more about some frauds in tourism in detail.

3.3.1 Cons and con artists

Con artist is short for confidence artist, and that is basically what they do. They try to get people to trust in them for at least until they can get access on people's money. Con artist are very convincing and charming when talked to, and they can make people think that they have known each other a longer time than in reality.

Con artists sole intention is to make money by cheating people. Con artist make people think that they are participating in some deal that saves them money or makes money, when actually people are losing money. Con artists use people's weak points as weapons, such as lack of companionship, insecurity, sickness or naivety. The most important thing to a con artist is to perform a perfect con, and to make the person conned totally unaware of the wrong and right aspects of the deed.

Con artists usually look suitable for the situation. They do not have a distinctive look that makes them identifiable from the group, but they try to blend in as well as they can. Con artists wear clothing that makes them look that they belong and makes them look as real as possible. In the banking world con artists might wear a suit that makes them more professional looking, when in other scams they wear clothes suitable for that situation. Many people think that all con artists are men, but that is not true; many women also work as con artists. (HowStuffWorks 2009)

3.3.1.1 Thailand gem scam

One of the most known scams in Thailand is the gem scam. Usually the scam starts when a tourist meets a nice local near a tourist attraction, who proposes to them to take them to a gem stone store kept by government. The idea is that they tell that the shop sells Thai blue sapphires and other precious stones that the tourist can sell at home and make a full profit. This is a con and it usually leaves the tourist with overpriced jewellery and less money than before. One way to recognize the scam is to remember that Thai people are really quite shy and do not usually start talking to strangers in the streets. The con artists are very friendly and not too pushy, which makes them seem more reliable than they are. This scam has been ongoing in Thailand for more than a decade, because of the authorities' passivity to do something about it. These kinds of scams happen mostly in the Bangkok area.

A list has been made of how the scam usually works; this same experience has happened to a number of people. The scam starts when the tourist is sitting in a tuk-tuk, which is a typical vehicle used in the centre of Bangkok to get around. The driver then tells the tourist that the place they are going to is closed and gives an explanation of some kind. Then the driver of the tuk-tuk tells that they are specialized in taking tourist around the city, and that there is a promotion that the government has set up, to sell gems to tourist. On the way the tourist usually meet by coincidence a younger man that can be well dressed, older man or another tourist. All these different types of people are con artists that tell the tourist the same thing that the tuk-tuk driver, therefore confirming that the driver is telling the truth. The men can identify being a student or working for the government, whereas the tourist tells that he buys jewellery and gems from Thailand, sells them at home and then the money he gets funds his trips back to Thailand. After that the tourist is taken to the gem store, where they are told that they can get a 100-150 percent profit by selling the bought jewellery at home. The deal is sealed with a warranty, which is a paper where the salesman writes that if there is something wrong they will offer full money back. This is then stamped with an official looking stamp. This is the whole scam in brief. This is one of the most traditional and used scams in Thailand. (2Bangkok 2009)

3.3.2 Business misrepresentation

The definition by yourdictionary.com of misrepresentation is “Intentionally or unintentionally stating something that is untrue. Misrepresentation can create a liability if it is relied on by someone who suffers a loss as a result. The failure of a seller to identify known structural flaws in a home is a case of misrepresentation.” (Your Dictionary 2009)

Misrepresentation in business is one type of fraud. Usually it happens so that a tourist gets to know that they have won a vacation or that they get a really good deal on a trip, but they cannot get all the information about the trip before paying the company. When the company asks money first, it usually means that it is a travel scam. The announcements of good deals or winning come usually from a company that is pretending to be a legal business. In Canada travel scams are fourth most regular type of consumer fraud. The total losses yearly are about ten billion US dollars.

Misrepresentation companies usually first ask a person for credit card number before providing the information of the offer, after they will send the details the offer will tell that there are restrictions and conditions that will make the trip cost more and it may even make the trip not possible to take. Another thing the companies do is ask for the credit card information, tell it will be charged, but the money is refunded later on. In many cases the money is never refunded.

There are some helpful rules that should help when separating the scams from the real offers. Firstly it helps being sceptical towards the announcements that tell that “You are chosen from a larger group”. Second do not pay anything before getting all the information about the trip in writing. The information tells the total price, penalties if there is a cancellation or a change to the trip, and also exact details of all the modules in the package. Do not call numbers that can cost much money, if it is not sure that it is necessary. Do not take offers that pressure the buyer and do not give enough time for you to evaluate the offer. (The Expositor 2009)

3.4 Drugs

Drug tourism implies a destination that becomes more popular because of its easy access to drugs. Drug tourism is not a new trend, but its roots can be found already from renaissance. Drug tourism has changed with the world and today's drug tourism is more related to clubbing and raves than before. Drugs are a part of the experience of rave culture, as is the contemporary dance music, and the users are now the common youth. The segment of drug using and clubbing is men and women who are under 30 years old.

In the Netherlands it is legal to use mild drugs in the coffee shops that specialize in offering the customers cannabis, magic mushrooms, marijuana seeds and different kinds of smoking devices. The coffee shops have strict rules that they have to follow to stay open, such it is forbidden to sell hard drugs or alcohol as well as selling to someone underage. Also the customer cannot buy more than 5 grams of hashish or cannabis seeds at a time. Drug tourism brings more tourists to the Netherlands, but in other countries the selling of drugs is thought to be generating more social problems that are linked to criminality and it is encouraging people to use more drugs. This is also thought to lead to the expansion of drug trafficking around the world.

Drug tourism is thought to be one form of adventure tourism, because it takes the tourist on a trip to the unknown without the knowledge if they are coming back or not. It is also risk taking when consuming drugs, because there is the possibility of getting caught by the authorities, which could lead to being prosecuted. Using and buying drugs can also be hazardous; there is the possibility of getting robbed or becoming a victim of violence, if being at the wrong place at the wrong time. (Blackman 2004, 174-177; Swarbrooke & Beard 2003, 49, 312)

In many poor countries tourism is an important source of income and a wish of better future. Destinations want to offer tourists whatever they want and desire. Many, who come to India, come there not only because of the intriguing culture, warm climate, exotic dishes and places, but also for the cheap cannabis. Tourists who visit the mountain villages in Thailand often want to try opium. In Peru or Bolivia the high-class and cheap cocaine can give added value for the trip.

The drug tourists can by their own actions weaken the possibilities of the local people to live according to their traditions. Drug traffic, prostitution and other criminal actions often go hand in hand. There is no business in going to the area of the drug dealers in the evening hours. For the tourist the sampling of drugs feels guiltless, but it may also increase the drug usage of the local people. When there are drugs available for tourists, it is easier for the locals to get their hands on them too. The countries that produce and passage drugs have a great deal of drug addicts. In the southern countries there is a little knowledge of drugs effects and no support for the drug addicts, like in the western countries.

The opium crops in Thailand were destroyed mainly in the 1970's, but the crops can now be found from Myanmar and Laos, where opium is being smuggled to the mounting villages in Thailand. One reason why opium is being smuggled to the villages is the continuing interest of tourists to try opium on their trips there. Many men in these countries smoke opium and some even use heroin, when the women take care of the family and livelihood. The worse come to worse if both parents of the family become addicts, when the responsibility to take care of the family is on the children. Even children can be drug addicts; parents may give them opium or heroin to keep them quiet and calm.

The unfortunate tourists, who use drugs on their trips, can get caught and end up in the local prison. Even though using drugs can feel quite risk-free, somebody always gets caught. Destinations want to show this way to other countries that the problem is taken seriously and fought against. (Huumeboikotti 2009)

3.5 Prostitution

Prostitution is related to sex tourism, and it is as defined by Martin Oppermann “considered as the exchange of sexual activity for payment”. (Oppermann 1998, 1)

The United Nations made a research in 2008 which tells that there is about 2.5 million sex workers in the world, of which 80 percent is women and underage. Estimation of money circulating around prostitution is about 20.5 billion. When travelling abroad the line between a holiday romance and sex tourism is hard to define. In many developing countries for example in the Caribbean and Africa prostitution is made to seem more romantic; sex and company is not paid for with cash, but the expenses are taken care of with other ways. The service is paid by offering meals, buying clothes and giving presents. Anyway this is paying for company and sexual favours.

The biggest risks in sex tourism are the possibility of being infected by a sexually transmitted disease such as HIV, the danger of getting caught and prosecuted on sex tourism, because it is illegal in many countries, and also the danger is that the sex tourists may become a target for blackmailing or robbery. (Iltalehti 2009; Swarbrooke & Beard 2003, 48)

There are different kinds of prostitution; in Southeast Asia prostitution is divided into three categories which are high-class prostitution, tourism services and poverty prostitution. There are very few pimps in Southeast Asia. High-class prostitutes supply services to national rich and upper-class customers and businessmen from abroad. These high-class prostitutes have usually middle- or upper-class backgrounds, and they have the possibility to have a successful profession somewhere else or they might work prostitution as a side job alongside another career. These workers usually get to hold most or even all of their income. About 2 percent of women working as prostitutes stay in the business only a short time and are very well paid. These women get out of the business or they are bought buy a man who maintain them after that.

Prostitutes functioning in the tourism service are usually independent workers or they are tied to a bar, where they work. The customer who wants the services of the prostitute has to pay the bar to get the prostitute. Often the prostitutes are able to discuss about the price with the customers themselves, meaning that they can also get a part of their earnings themselves. 38 percent of the women in prostitution are in a situation where they really need the money they get for their services. These women might have background that has driven them to the business or they might have been sexually abused in their childhood, been a victims of incest or may have an emergency that has made them get the money with different means. These emergencies can include a violent partner, getting fired, or having children with special needs.

The poverty prostitution is the worst part. Prostitutes working in a brothel, where they are treated like slaves, and they have to pay back their primary acquisition fee to get free. These prostitutes clientele is usually domestic. 60 percent of women that work as prostitutes are poor and may have no other way of getting money. Many of the women in this part are physically forced into prostitution. The sources of these percentages are from a large amount of scientific studies, from agencies that offer services to those who work as prostitutes and try to get out of the business, and also from experts. (Oppermann 1998, 6-7; © Prostitution Research & Education, San Francisco 2008)

3.6 Assaults

There are different kinds of definitions to assault, and there are different kinds of assaults. Assault is thought to be an illegal attempt to hurt somebody physically with force or violence, because of anger or some other reason. An assault can be hitting somebody with a fist or just making a threat in a way that can be thought to be dangerous or insulting at that time. Intention of assault, actual violence attack at somebody and pointing a gun at a person are all types of assault. When a threat or violence attack hurts the person, the crime becomes more serious and can lead to more severe troubles.

Assaults can be either simple or aggravated. A simple assault means that the intention of the crime is not to do any other damage or injury, and simple assault is usually punished in the law with a fine or imprisonment. Aggravated assault means that the intention of the crime is not only to assault a person, but there is also another motivation for the crime. In aggravated assault the threat is usually done with a deadly weapon, such as a knife or a gun. Aggravated assault is most likely done with an intention to rape, kill or rob. It is also punished more severely than simple assault. (The free dictionary 2009; Free Advice 2009)

Sexual assault includes child sexual abuse, rape, attempted rape, incest, sexual harassment and many other things. Sexual harassment is not only when a person gets raped, but sexual assault is inappropriate behavior that can happen to anyone. Sexual assaults do not only happen to women and children; men can be also victims of sexual assault. Many times assault means that the victim loses their own power and control to decide for themselves, when the assaulter takes the control of the situation. Sexual assaults can be very different from each other, but they all have the same intentions. Child sexual abuse happens in a situation where the child is bullied, forced or manipulated by an adult or another child into sexual activity. Many times the offender uses their own authority in the action, as well as position of trust, which means that there is not needed to use physical force.

Rape is forced sexual intercourse with a victim without asking for permission. It is an act of violence, where sex is used as the weapon. Stranger rape is when the victim does not recognize their offender from before. Acquaintance rape happens between a victim and offender who know each other from before. The offender can be a friend, living partner, neighbor and co-worker. 84 percent of rapes are acquaintance rapes, among people who know each other or even trust and love each other. Date rape happens between people who are dating, and often in date rape victim is forced or manipulated emotionally into the act. Sexual harassment can be an inappropriate sexual request or comment, and it can be verbal or physical. Sexual harassment is done quite subtle way, with a comment that suggests sex, with inappropriate touching, unsuitable jokes or straight request for sexual intercourse. Sexual harassment usually happens in location where people are in a close contact, such as school or work place. (Department of commerce 2009)

Assaults are usually linked to robberies, because usually offenders are after the tourists' money. Assaults can happen when travelling, which is why tourists are advised to not to move alone at nights in a neighborhood they are not familiar with. It is better to move around with a friend and be aware all times of the surroundings where you are. At night it is better to avoid narrow streets with less light, but stay on the well lit busy streets, with more people. When suspected that someone is following you, ask for help or call the police; do not hesitate to make noise. Assaulters are usually after tourists money, if asked for your purse, do not give it, but throw it somewhere and run the other way. It is better to wear clothes that are bright and makes you noticeable, because criminals do not want to draw any attention to them. Wallet should be kept inside your jacket or purse, but all money should not be kept in the same place. (EHow 2009; Ezine Article 2009)

3.7 Murders

The definition by law of murder “The killing of another human being under conditions specifically covered in law”. Murders have different kinds of motives and they are categorized by the severity of the act. Murder that is premeditated out of hatred, planned before hand or happens during another severe crime, for example a robbery, are thought to be more serious crimes and they are called in some countries first-degree murder. A murder that is intentional, but is not planned, is considered less severe. This is called second-degree murder. The punishment for a crime like murder differs from country to country and the severity of the act affects to the severity of the punishment. Usually the criminal is sentenced to prison or in some countries criminal can even be sentenced to death. If a person who is not intending or has not plan to kill another human being, but ends up killing someone, the act is thought to be manslaughter. (Answers 2009; Dictionary 2009)

A tourist can be murdered in almost everywhere in the world, but the murder rates in destinations usually have only a little affect on tourism rates. Anyway a tourist getting killed or assaulted on the trip is much less likely to happen than the tourist ending up robbed. The murder victims in a destination are usually locals. Economical crimes, such as robberies and thefts, increase when the tourist season is on, whereas the murders and assaults are not related to the season. Murdering of a tourist has a bigger affect on tourism than minor crime such as theft and robbery. Higher possibility of getting assaulted or killed on a trip in a specific destination affects to the decision of the traveller to make the trip. Usually tourists try to find a destination that is said to be safe to travel to. Many times the opinion of the media of a destination has a big impact on tourists’ decisions. (Wall & Mathieson 2006, 247; Mansfeld & Pizam 2006, 108-109)

3.8 Effects of criminality to the destination image and tourists' needs

As a requirement and an essential feature for a successful destination is to have a favourable image. If a destination lacks of positive image, it will be that much harder for the destination to attract more tourists. Although destinations can offer a variety of choices to tourists it does not help if the destination image is negative. Developing a positive image takes time and money, and it might not even work. Usually image cannot be ruined in a short time but it takes a long time to create the negative image for the destination.

As Maslow states in the hierarchy of needs tourists' are secondly trying to find a safe place to travel to. After they have all the physiological needs fulfilled they need to know that the destination is a safe for them personally as well as financially. People are in their life trying to find a safe environment where they are free of threats that can harm them either physically or emotionally. What they need is to have a safe environment to be and stay at, and insurances should be covered. Also it is important that they are financially secured. If these needs are not fulfilled and people feel unsecure in their situation they do not start thinking about the upper levels of the needs hierarchy before these needs are secured. When a destination has an unsafe or undetermined environment, tourists' cannot be sure if it is safe to travel there. (Butler and Airey 2005, 232-3; Abraham Maslow 2009)

Positive image is created with many different features. For a destination to have a positive image the destination should fulfil all the components in the needs hierarchy. If the safety needs are not fulfilled possibly the tourist will try to find another destination that will be safe enough and thus fulfil all the needs of the tourist. Image is the one thing that tells the tourist about the safety of the destination. Image is compounded with different pictures that the tourist is getting beforehand from other people, media and Internet, and also on the trip itself. The images can change from what they were before the trip into more positive as well as more negative. The threat of criminality can affect the image of the destination and make the destination seem unreliable, less appealing and aversive to the tourist that is looking for a safe environment. Criminality can lower the

motivations of tourists to travel to a destination, which then affect the image of the destination. Criminality can weaken a positive image, produce insecurity and decrease reliability of a destination. On the other hand, criminality, at least minor one, can be forgotten in the minds of the tourists, if it does not cause much harm. Tourists might even accept it as a feature that a country possesses.

Criminal actions	Examples of	Most popular scenes of the crime	Effect on the image
Crimes of distraction	Pick pocketing, credit card frauds	Busy streets and stations, markets, shops and nightclubs	Minor effect
Robbery	Armed robbery and simple robbery, theft	Hotels, quiet streets, airports	Moderate effect
Frauds	Con and fraud, business misrepresentation	Close to tourist attractions, Internet	Moderate effect
Drugs	Dealing, trafficking	Raves, nightlife	Minor to major effect
Prostitution	High-class prostitution, tourism services and poverty prostitution	Nightlife, brothels, streets	Moderate to major effect
Assaults	Simple, aggravated and sexual assaults	Quiet streets	Major effect
Murders		Almost everywhere in the world	Major effect

Table 3 Different kinds of criminality, where they can be found and the effect to the image

Based on the theory written, the crime types have been given a grade on how they affect the image of the destination. The grades are minor, moderate and major effect.

4 RESEARCH METHODS

Research can be investigating a subject that is unknown for some extent or completely new to the writer. Research can be done to increase knowledge of a particular problem, issue, setting or phenomenon. The research is done to gather more information, which can be analyzed and in the end it can give a solution to a particular problem. Research is done primarily to search for new knowledge of a specific subject and the main aim is discovering something that was previously unknown. When conducting the inquiry the researcher should be careful, critical about things they find, objective to the results and logical. Research is finding new facts about a subject, examining and testing the subject and also expanding the knowledge and refining the ideas the research products. (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton 2000, 2-3; Jennings 2001, 445; Veal 2006, 2)

There are three different kinds of researches; descriptive research, explanatory research and evaluative research. Descriptive research is mainly finding out what something is and describing it. The main aim of the research is to explain what the phenomenon is and who is doing it, but it does not explain the reasons for the event or action. Descriptive research is the most common way of making research in the tourism field. It is used, because the area of tourism is quite new, the field of tourism is changing all the time and there is usually a gap between the research and the actual action. Descriptive research can for example describe tourism patterns and tourist behaviors; it can also include making of market profiles. When descriptive research seeks to describe what something is, explanatory research seeks to explain why and how some things are the ways they are. Usually explanatory research is done when there exists only a small amount or no information about the subject. Explanatory research is trying to understand and enlighten the behavior of the tourists, and explain why they do what they do. It is mainly answering to a question, which for example is “Why is the tourism destination or activity so popular among tourists?” The third research type is evaluative research. Evaluative research focuses on creating an opinion of the efficiency of different policies or programs. Evaluative research is used for example when searching if a hotel is measuring up and meeting the required

standards in performance or making a cost efficiency research on a promotion campaign of a particular tourism facility. Research can also be forecasting. The research is forecasting phenomena or the human actions that are resulting from the happening. The main focus in the research is to find out what the result of the phenomenon is and who the results affect. (Jennings 2001, 17-19; Veal 2006, 3-5; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 1997, 134-135)

In my research mostly descriptive research is used, but also to some extent explanatory research. The aim of the research is to explain first generally what tourism criminality is and then define the types of tourism criminality that can be found in Thailand. These definitions are from the descriptive research. Secondly the research aims to explain how the criminality types found from Thailand affect the image of the destination. This is done by examining how the respondents' opinions of the destinations' image have changed after experiencing criminality on their trip to Thailand.

4.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods

There are two main research methods used in the tourism and leisure business; qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research is an empirical research where the data gotten is not in number form, but in words, whereas in quantitative research the main data comes in numbers. The settings for the research are different in both methods; the situation where quantitative research is done is usually controlled, impersonal and even manipulative when the situation where the qualitative research is done is quite the opposite. Qualitative research situation is more natural, more personal and there is interaction between the researcher and the respondent.

The main idea of quantitative research is to confirm existing information and theory. The main aim of qualitative research is to get information that can be helpful when developing an existing theory. The process of quantitative research is very rational and strict while qualitative process relies more on intuition and is more flexible. Both methods have their strengths and weaknesses. Quantitative research can reach more people and get more answers because the survey is made

very simple for the public. In contrast the qualitative research gets more versatile answers, but has less answerer's. Many times when making a research both methods are used and the answers gotten then combined to get as much information as needed to make the research ideal. (Finn et al. 2000, 8)

In this method chapter I will be concentrating more on informing about qualitative methods. This is because the research is done with interview method, which is a form of qualitative research. Also for comparison a short chapter of quantitative methods will be included.

4.2 Quantitative methods

One way of gathering quantitative information is a survey. A survey is a standardized method where questionnaires, interviews and observations are done to a sample group that is a part of a larger group of people. In survey method standardized means that all the respondents are asked the same questions in exactly the same way. The most common survey method is the poll-surveys, but also E-surveys, post surveys and controlled surveys are used.

The main advantage of survey method is that it can help to gather plenty of information; survey method has many respondents who can be asked many questions. The method is very effective; it saves time and effort and the schedule and costs can be estimated quite accurately. A questionnaire is easy to send to many people. To have a successful survey the questionnaire should be well planned so that the information can be easily dealt with and the results analyzed with the help of a computer. Statistical analysis programs and reporting methods to help researchers have been created. Interpreting results can be more complicated in this method. The information gathered can be shallow and the study is thought to be theoretically quite simple. When analyzing the results, there is no way of knowing how seriously the respondent has answered and if they have been careful and honest when answering. Making a good questionnaire takes time and demands much knowledge and skills from the researcher. The biggest weakness is that people do not answer the questionnaire. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 188-190)

4.3 Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods in a research are often used in situations where the main centre of the attention in the research is on finding out meanings and attitudes towards something specific. This can also be a reason for using the quantitative method, but mainly it is practiced in qualitative research. Qualitative methods are used also when the research is trying to build an investigating theory rather than testing an existing theory. Qualitative method is used in situations when the researcher must accept they cannot decide themselves the concept, terms and topics of the research, because the main subject of the study defines them. Often qualitative method is used when the attention is on interaction between members of a group. (Veal 2006, 99)

The types of methods used in qualitative research are different kinds of interviews, observations and text analysis. Interviews are the main method when gathering information for a qualitative research. In an interview the researcher is in a direct verbal contact with the respondents. Interviews are usually informal and in-depth individual interviews, but interviews can also be done to groups. The method has its pros and cons; most useful aspect of the method is its flexibility in the interview situation. The researcher has the possibility to change the order of the questions to suite best that interview and there are more possibilities to interpret the answers than in questionnaires. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 199-201)

There are three main types of interviews; structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview. Structured interview is closely related to the survey method. Structured interview has the same kind of standardization and planned schedule as surveys. The structured interview is design is such way that it asks the same exact questions from all the respondents, but in verbal discussion that is made in person. Structured interview provides quantitative information that is analyzed and reported the same way as surveys. The second interview method is semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview presents specific questions to the respondents, but the method gives the researcher the permit to inquire the subject more profoundly. The method is much more flexible than an

unstructured interview although it uses also key questions. In the method the researcher may influence the answers as the researcher has the possibility to select the questions. The third method is unstructured interview. The word unstructured is leading to wrong conclusion, because in the end an interview cannot have any structure at all. Unstructured interview is also called depth interview, exploratory or qualitative interview and it is closer to a conversation than any other method. The semi-structured and unstructured methods give more qualitative information. (Finn et al. 2000, 73-75)

Interviews as research method are chosen because of many reasons, which are important for the research. In the interview the respondent is given the potential to tell things that are related to them as freely as possible. The respondent is the person in the research that is creating different meanings and is the active side. Mainly the respondent is the subject of the research and the most important participant. When making a research of a subject that is quite unknown and has not been explored much before, it is difficult for the researcher to know beforehand what the answers are going to be. Many times the result is to be inserted in a larger concept. It is possible in interviews to see the respondents, their expressions and gestures. The respondents can tell more of themselves and of the subject than the researcher is anticipating. The researcher can then use these different features in the interpretation of the results. One of the reasons to choose the interviews is because the researcher knows that the subject gives a great deal of answers that are diverse and give different kinds of opinions. Interviews can make the answers clearer and even deepen them. The researcher can for example ask for explanation for the presented opinions and use additional questions if needed. Interviews are sometimes used when subjects that are sensitive and difficult are researched. Though it is argued that it would be more appropriate in these situations to use questionnaires, because then the respondents can stay anonymous and intentionally remote. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 199-201)

4.4 Choosing the research method

Researches can be made by using different methods. The choosing of a methodology is based on the knowledge that the researcher is looking for and from whom it is looked from. It is important to the researcher to find a method that is most useful and suitable for this particular research. The research can be made with interview, questionnaire or observation method. If wanted to find out how people act in public the used method is direct observations. When explained what people do in their personal life, the methods used can be interviews, questionnaires, and diary techniques. When defining what people think, feel, how they experience things or the beliefs they have the method used are interviews, questionnaires and attitude scales. When the research is trying to explain the answerers capabilities, intelligence or personality, the method used are standardized tests, such as IQ test. Different methods use different amount of time and other resources, and it is important to choose a method that is appropriate for the research and uses the time suitable for the research.

Other reasons that can affect on the decision of method are previously made research, the availability of information, validity and reliability. If a research is based on a previously made research, the choosing of a method can relate to the method used in the earlier one. The researcher must decide if the method in the earlier study should be the same, if it should be improved or if a completely different method would suite this research better. Accessibility and availability of information that is essential for the research is one reason that can affect the choosing of a method. Sometimes even the accessibility to the data can affect to the making of the research. On the contrary the unavailability of information can shape the making of the research and direct it to new information sources. (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 178-181; Veal 2006, 116-117)

I chose as my research method theme interviews. Theme interview is one of the semi-structured interview methods. I chose it, because I am researching the experiences of the respondents on the criminality in Thailand. The interview focuses on subjects that are related to criminality and how the respondents experienced it. My interview also focuses on the changes in the destination image after experiencing criminality in Thailand. One reason to choose interviews is the possibility to gather deeper information and get more experiences than in survey method. The interviews are done individually.

Theme interview is also called the focused interview. The method differs quite much from other methods; firstly in the beginning the researcher has gathered a group of people that have all experienced some situation or happening. The researcher has been preliminary investigating the subject or phenomenon, gathered information about important features such as the structure, processes and the entity of the subject. With this preliminary study the researcher has made assumptions about the situation and the consequences to the respondents. The researcher then develops framework for the interview based on the study. The interview is then aimed to the subjective experiences of the respondent of the phenomena, which the researcher has analyzed already beforehand. Focused interview is focused on different themes that are then discussed in the interviews. The research does not require an experiment that has been attained experimental to the whole group, but it assumes that all individuals have experiences, thoughts, beliefs and feelings that can be researched with this method. The method emphasizes the experiences of the respondents and also their definitions of the phenomenon. The method gives the respondents the freedom to express themselves, and does not tie them to answer to specific preliminarily appointed questions. The interpretations of the respondents are important and the meanings they find from the subject. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 47-48)

4.5 Validity and reliability

“Validity is the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied.” (Veal 2006, 41)

In tourism research it is harder to get a high validity, because in tourism study the focus is on person's behaviour and attitude. Researchers are mainly dependent on person's own experiences and reports of the phenomenon. Responses are given in the form of interviews or surveys. The research methods can be unreliable which leads to tourism researches being infrequently as reliable as other subjects' researches. The validity could be higher if the inquiring could be more detailed to find more of the subject, but that can be expensive if done on a larger scale.

Other means of explaining validity is to say that it is investigating whether the method used to research the subject is really researching the subject it is supposed to research. (Veal 2006, 41; Finn et al. 2000, 28)

The concept of validity comes from quantitative research. In qualitative research the structure validity is in the main focus. The researcher has to document how they have ended up categorizing and describing the world of the respondents' just the way they did it. The researcher needs to be able to explain convincingly the reason for using this particular method. If another researcher uses the same method, but still ends up in different conclusion, the method should not anyway be considered to have weaknesses.

Triangulation in validity can also be used. Triangulation means that in a research where only one method is used, which in this case is interview, the gathered information is compared to information gotten from other sources. When a specific unity is gotten, it can be concluded that the information, concept or interpretation gotten from the respondent has been affirmed. In this case it should be also remembered that peoples' thoughts of a phenomenon can change after a short time.

One way of confirming the validity of a method is to choose a group where the respondents' participation in the method can be affirmed from other sources, such as books. This is done to make the sources more reliable. Other way of validating is to indicate how the interpretation of the researcher and the interpretations of the respondents' correspond to each other. This method is called determining loyalty. To determine the loyalty there should be used member check. In this method the respondents' get to be acquainted with the interpretations of the researcher. This is often used in the researches of anthropologists and sociologists.

In qualitative research validity aims to verify. Verifying means that the researcher openly tells their own opinion and tells which alternative interpretations have been abandoned. This kind of validating is done throughout the whole research and not only in the end of the research. It is also suggested that during the reporting of the answers there can be made references to other sources such as literature. Not all the responds need to be validated through literature, because that can prevent the progress of the research. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2000. 188-190)

In my research I focused on the respondents' behavior towards Thailand after experiencing something negative on their trip and what they now think about it. The validity of this research could have been higher if my interviews would have been more accurate and if they had been done with a more quantitative approach; with a survey or questionnaire rather than a focused theme interview. The interviews made the research more valid, because the respondents could always ask if they did not understand the question, which lead to getting an answer to all the questions in the research. The respondents had had different incidents, but also all of them had encountered the same phenomena, which can also increase the validity.

“Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later day with a different sample of subjects. “
(Veal 2000, 41)

The model of reliability comes from natural sciences, there the making of a research again in the same conditions where the situation is correctly controlled the research should give the same results. This is hardly the situation in tourism research, because all people are different and experience things differently. One respondent's image of a situation or a phenomenon might be correct, but the image is only from one persons' perspective when other people might have a different picture of the phenomenon. The experiences of the respondents of the phenomenon can change over time as the group changes and people change their behaviour or attitude. When making the research to the sample group in different locations, even though it would be in the same region or country, the answers might be totally different. This might be a result of the physical and social environment being different in different areas. This means that the researcher should be very careful when making assumptions that are based on the empirical research. Measures can be taken to make sure that the level of generalization of the results only refers to the subject of the study, at the time and the place where the research was made.

Reliability can also be described as being about the steadiness of the responses gotten with the research method used in the empirical research. When using a questionnaire the questions should get the same information from the same respondent every time they are asked. Reliable questions in a research should be clear and simple, and give the same answer even if asked in different situations. Ethnography is a huge problem in the field of reliability. The researcher being a human being and collecting the information that is gotten from the research is the problem. Humans as observers make the research very unreliable. This is being corrected with the researcher referring their impact and participation in the research. Other way of getting more reliable results is to have more than one researcher. (Veal 2006, 41; Finn et al. 2000, 28)

The interview requests were sent to 32 people, but only 5 responded and 4 were asked personally. The backgrounds of the respondents are quite the same, which can increase the reliability, because the respondents have mutual interests and quite the same lifestyles. The reliability of this research could have been higher if the research would have been done earlier. The things that affect the reliability in this research are the difference of the experiences that the respondents had and the different attitudes of the respondents. People even experience things differently, which also has affected the reliability. The fact that almost every respondent travelled to Thailand over eight months ago also affected the results, because they have started to forget the things that happened there and how they felt and acted in these different situations. This research was not done so that it could be repeated, but to investigate the experiences of a specific group to make the research problem more understandable.

5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In this part the responses and answers that I collected are analyzed and reported. In the reporting the results should be easy to understand, the information should be correct and they should reflect the phenomenon in a clear way. The report should be written so that a person that is not familiar before of the phenomenon can also understand and get a clear picture of it.

The interview requests were sent by email to 32 people in total of which five responded. Other four I had asked personally before. The response rate was 25%. The interviews were done in February 2010. The focused interviews were done in places that were suitable for both parties; three interviews were done in the school, one in the city library, one at a work place of the respondent and two at homes' of the respondents. One of the interviews was also done by phone and one through the Internet. Two of the interviews were done in English and the rest was done in Finnish. The interviews lasted from 10 to 20 minutes.

The results are reported in the same order as they were mainly asked in the interviews. The main focus of the research is to survey the different experiences of the respondents in Thailand that are connected to criminality and seeing how the different incidents affected the image of the destination. The results are mainly presented in a verbal form, using also tables as an assistive aid.

5.1 General information of the respondents

In this part I will not be using the respondents' names, but give general information on the backgrounds of the respondents. Things that are included in this part are firstly genders, ages and occupations of the respondents. Other questions are more concerned in travelling to Thailand; questions are when the respondents travelled to Thailand and was this their first time in Thailand. Last question has also the option to tell if they have travelled back there after the school exchange.

Four of the respondents were male and five were female. The ages of the respondents range from 22 to 27, the average age of the respondents being 24.5.

Seven of the respondents are still studying at VAMK, University of Applied Sciences in Vaasa, whereas one respondent has already started another school and one is currently working. Four of the studying respondents also work beside school.

Seven of the respondents travelled to Thailand for three months from the school in the spring of 2009, from February to May, one of the respondents had their exchange in the spring 2008, also from February to May and one in the winter of 2008, from January to April.

One of the respondents had travelled there before the school trip for six times, and one had travelled back there after the exchange. For the other seven respondents this was their first and only trip to Thailand for now.

5.2 Image of the destination

This question is inquiring the knowledge and pictures the respondents had of Thailand before leaving for the exchange.

Positive images	Negative images
Popular tourist resort	Tourist Trap - Too many tourists
Amazing beaches and paradise islands	It is not as beautiful everywhere as in the bigger tourist resorts
Good climate	Poor and undeveloped - People living in the jungle
Safe and Good	Unstable internal politics
Hospitable people	Mixed up and weird

Table 4 Adjectives and descriptions the respondents gave in the interviews

Only the one male who had travelled to Thailand before had a clear picture of the country before leaving to Thailand and he thought that the country had changed a lot since his first trip to Thailand in 1995. The respondent thought that tourism had changed the country in a negative way. Other respondents had little information about the country; mostly they got their information from others that had been there before for a holiday or exchange.

Generally Thailand was thought to be a popular holiday resort; there are amazing beaches, paradise islands and a hot climate. In a negative way the destination was thought to be a tourist trap, with too many tourists. One of the respondents had found out about the country beforehand, and he knew that the country would have beautiful places, but not everywhere. Two of the respondents thought that the

country would be very poor and undeveloped country, with people living in the jungle. So the expectations of the respondents were not very high.

The country was thought to be safe and good, with people that treat you well. One of the respondents thought that the country would be mixed up and weird, and there would be many people. One of the respondents had learned beforehand that the country is very different from Finland and that the internal politics there are somewhat unstable, which was concerning her. Mostly the respondents had not examined the country beforehand, but travelled there to find out, so they did not have any expectations.

5.3 Unpleasant and threatening situations experienced by the respondents

In this part I am writing about the different situations that the respondents experienced on their trip. Firstly I have made a table of the different situations that the respondents mentioned. I have divided the answers of the male respondents and female respondents into different sections, to get the different experiences of the genders.

Criminality that the respondents experienced	Where?	Male respondents	Female respondents
Cheated in	Taxis	4	5
	Markets	4	5
	Hotels	2	1
Pick pocketing, Credit card frauds	Markets, streets	0	0
Robberies	Hotel	1	1
	Streets	0	1
Drugs	Nightlife, tourist resorts	3	4
Prostitution	Tourist resorts	4	5
Paedophilia	Tourist resort	0	1
Con artists	Bangkok city	0	2
Threatened		0	2
Violence		0	0

Table 5 The criminality the respondents experienced

Generally all the male and female respondents were involved in mostly in incidents where they were tried to be cheated in various ways. These cheating attempts happened in taxis, markets and hotels.

All the male respondents found themselves in situations where they were tried to be cheated in taxis and the markets. The most common was that the taxi drivers tried to get more money from them, by not agreeing to use a taximeter or trying to drive a longer route to the destination. These taxi drivers were usually situated near places with more tourists. All male respondents had also been tried to be cheated in the market places by the salespersons. They were given prices that are also called tourist prices, which are usually much higher than the price that the salespersons are asking for local people to pay.

“Taxi drivers always tried to get more money, especially those near shopping centres. Also in market places they tried to get more money from the tourists, but really it is so that there are many places there where they have different prices for locals and tourists. “

For two male respondents hotels were also places where they were cheated. Prices were higher and they felt that they had to hide their valuables in the room, when leaving the hotel for other activities. One of these respondents had a room with two other travellers whose money was stolen from the room in a hostel situated in a tourist resort.

All female respondents also experienced that they were tried to be cheated in the taxis and on the markets. The respondents felt that they could not trust the taxi drivers; they never knew if the driver would drive straight to the destination, without going around before to make it more expensive.

“Once taxi driver took us to a wrong place that he was supposed to although he knew where he was taking us and this happened more than once. Another time the same happened although we had the address written in Thai for the driver, but he just drove around in circles. Also once coming home from a nightclub a taxi driver took us to a scary place where there were drugs and other weird things, but gladly in the end we got away from there. “

One of the respondents stated that often when travelling with a taxi in a group, the price went up all of a sudden from the one that was agreed on before leaving. Some respondents thought that they could not trust the taxi drivers, if the taxi drivers would not use the taximeter and would give a precise sum, the respondents just did not agree with that. They felt that the taxi drivers were always trying to get more money, at least in the Bangkok area.

“Once in a taxi, when we were on our way to the bus station to catch a bus to Kanchanaburi, the taxi driver was very nice and spoke very good English. The driver wanted to drive us all the way to Kanchanaburi and he promised us a cheap price, but really we had no idea if the price actually was going to be cheap. After the driver insisted and he would not take No for an answer, we had to make up a friend waiting for us in the city to get out of the situation to change to another taxi that would take us to the station. I felt that the taxi driver was unreliable and the situation threatening. And after all it was much cheaper to go with the bus to Kanchanaburi than it would have been with the taxi. “

In the markets all the female respondents felt that they were cheated by the salesperson by asking for a tourist price that was usually double from the normal price. The respondents felt they were cheated in the prices at least in the beginning when they did not know what everything cost. Prices were thought to be much higher in the tourist resorts. One of the respondents also said that their landlord in their accommodation tried to cheat the whole group in electricity bills and water bills, but he was caught.

“When you shop in different places and you see what the prices are, you’ll see what different things cost. In shops they try to over cost you so much, but you know already that it does not cost that much. You really bargain a lot. The question is if you pay it or if you go and buy it from somewhere else. The cheating did not happen in real shops, those that have a proper register, where everything has bar codes on them. There they do not try to cheat, but when you go to markets, it is different. “

One problem mentioned in the theory was not fortunately experienced by the respondents. None of the male respondents experienced pick pocketing or credit card thefts; at least one said that they had been warned about it. The respondent said that when going out they did not take any extra things with them and were careful with their belongings when moving outside. He felt that it helped when travelling in a bigger group with people who knew how to be prepared in an urban city with millions of people and tourists. Also none of the female respondents experienced pick pocketing or credit card frauds, but they said that they were warned before leaving about them.

“Actually I was quite warned about pick pocketing. For example in Khao San Road and in other places where there are a lot of westerners there also happens a lot of pick pocketing. I took care of my bag all times so that it was always where I could see it and as close to me as possible. “

One of the female respondents had had a good luck and did not have any serious experiences of something criminal. Anyway she felt somewhat threatened in tourist destinations.

“It was the way they looked at me, I got the feeling that they were checking if I would be a good target to rob. It was not their gestures or acts, but more the way they looked at me and behaved around me, that made me feel threatened. “

One of the respondents also felt threatened when her money was stolen from her bag in the hostel she was staying at in a hotel resort. The money was stole from her room, when she was away. Her other room mate had her money stolen, although they both had hidden them, because they felt that they had to leave some money there just to be safe if something happened to them outside. One other respondent had experiences on robbery. Her friends' whole bag was stolen when they were on a tourist street Khao San Road in Bangkok and also three other exchange students were robbed with scooters outside their accommodation in the campus area.

Two of the respondents mentioned an incident that can also be found in the theory. They had been in a fraud which included a con artist. The respondents had been in the country for only a week and they think that they seemed easy targets. The con artist was a woman who helped them when they were reading a guide book on a corner in Bangkok.

“She looked like a professional person who was selling boat trips through the agency or something like that, but in the end she was just a fraud who was dressed in a professional way and tried to cheat tourists. The people she targets to are tourists who look kind of naïve and have just come to Bangkok. These people want to see different things and do not understand anything that is happening around them. I guess there are many of those kinds of people in Thailand who dress in nice clothes and speak good English and try to find some victims to cheat. “

The respondents were taken for a boat trip on the Chao Praya River, which was very expensive and did not go as was planned. The driver of the boat was supposed to take them to see many places, which he did not. On the boat trip the girls felt themselves very threatened and did not know how to be polite enough to ask the driver to take them back. The driver was also very threatening and unreliable, and he stopped the boat in the middle of the river on the way back to ask for a tip for the driver. The situation was very scary for the respondents, because they did not know what was going to happen next.

“On that boat ride I really felt uncertain about what was going to happen. We had really a small place to move in and we were on a boat and on that dirty river. That was the problem. We were scammed in so many ways on that 30 minute time so you really did not know what was going on anymore and it felt like you lost control. I felt really threatened there.”

Two forms of criminality mentioned in the theory were seen much in the destination; drugs and prostitution. Anyway the existence of prostitution in Thailand is very known of generally. All male respondents mentioned seeing prostitution and three mentioned seeing drugs in the country. All respondents saw prostitution and drugs quite much; mostly they saw it in the tourist resorts and in the nightlife. One respondent mentioned seeing a brothel in the locals' area too, but mostly it was centred in the tourist resorts. This is what one respondent said about drugs and prostitution:

“Yes, I saw drugs almost everywhere there, especially in the tourist resorts, but not more than in all the other places where I been to. I think that there was more prostitution than in other places; well in Bulgaria Sunny beach there were almost as much prostitution than in these Thailand's tourist resorts. “

The female respondents also mentioned seeing drugs in the destination quite much. Drugs were usually available for tourists', but for the locals too. Two respondents had not experienced much, only they had seen some marihuana and pot, but not any other harder substances. Others had seen more and felt that it was everywhere.

“It was obviously there for the tourists, the locals did not use, but they were creating that atmosphere where it is easier for the tourists to think that “Hmm, were on a holiday, it is available, let's do it!” And it was there. I did not see much of it just in certain places. “

Prostitution was also very much seen by the female respondents in the tourist resorts and almost everywhere in Thailand. One respondent also said that she saw a case of paedophilia there once.

“I saw an older farang (white western male) walking with a teenaged Thai boy. The man was really holding the boys' shoulders hard, and they were walking together and that boy looked so worried. And I felt that that was a case of paedophilia. I felt sick when I saw that and I still feel sick when I think about it. I feel that boy would have seemed happy, if it was someone like his stepfather, but I do not think it was. “

None of the male respondents felt anyway threatened or frightened on their trip. They felt that the locals are peaceful and nonviolent. Two of the respondents saw that the locals can be restless too; the riots of the yellow and red in the April of 2009 affected also their stay in the country. The female respondents also stated that they did not feel that threatened in Thailand. One of the respondents stated that she could not see any violence or weapons in the destination, which made her feel safer.

5.4 The reliability of the police in Thailand

In this part the question is of the reliability of the police and authorities in Thailand. I am asking the respondents if they got the feeling in Thailand that they could trust the police.

Police and authorities in Thailand		Male respondents	Female respondents
Trust		1	0
Did not trust		3	5
Reasons why not to trust	Bribery	2	2
	Corruption	1	3
	Language barrier	0	1

Table 6 The reliability of the police in Thailand and the reasons why

Most respondents felt that they could not trust the police; one respondent stated that he could not trust the local police, but he could trust the tourist police. Only one respondent felt that he could trust the police in principle; he thought that if he got into trouble he could always bribe the police. Bribery was also one reason that made three other respondents feel that the police was unreliable. Bribery is mostly connected to corruption which was a reason for at least four other respondents felt that the authorities cannot be trusted. One of the respondents felt that the police could not be trusted because they could not speak any English. One of the female respondents also said that she felt that if caught in a situation the police would always be on the locals side, which made her feel that the police in unreliable.

“Well I would not trust them at all. Maybe it is, because I have read that they can be corrupted and that they are always on the locals’ side. Besides they can be bribed. I just had the feeling that they cannot be trusted. “

The locals in the country had told one of the respondents not to help if they saw an accident, because the police can accuse you for the causing of the accident. Other advice she was given was that if the police want to search your bags, you should not let them investigate the bag themselves, but to open it yourself, because if you give your bag to them they can plant something in your bag and ask for bribery for it.

Some of the respondents had been in a situation with a police, but the situation had resolved in the end. One situation with the police resolved when the police found out that the group was studying in the local school, the respondent stated that if they had not found that out he do not know what would have happened. The other situation with another respondent was when a taxi driver drove in the wrong direction on a one way street and the police stopped them. The passengers were told that they had to pay the ticket for the taxi drivers' mistake, but they refused and in the end did not have to pay it.

“No I did not trust them. Once in the evening we were going to a nightclub, we were three girls, and then the police stopped the taxi. They were talking something in Thai, which we did not understand and we had to get out of the car and they searched us. They checked everywhere, especially the bags. After you felt like why did this happen, because no one explained to us why and what for we are being searched. “

The respondent who got money stolen from her hotel room told that the police came to check out the situation, but they did not speak any English and did not speak a word with the victims.

5.5 The affect of different situations to the trip

In this part the respondents could tell how the different incidents affected their trip and stay in Thailand.

Did incidents affect your trip	Male respondents	Female respondents
Yes	0	2
No	2	2
Somewhat	2	1

Table 7 The effect of incidents to the trip in Thailand

The overall answer is that negative incidents did not affect the trips of the respondents in a radical way. For two answerers who did not have any serious incidents the feeling was that when something happened to others they also felt sorry for them, and if affected they mood, but usually the feeling did not stay. It also taught them to be more careful on their travel. One other respondent only stated that he learned and after that started to know what to do in different situations. One of the male respondents thinks now that he got used to the different cheating attempts.

“You got used to all of it, and now after when I think about it, it is actually quite funny. Not the robberies or thefts, but the minor cheating attempts, where the locals tried to take the Westerners money. “

The respondent, who had travelled to Thailand many times before said about the negative things like this:

“I feel that it is a pity that the country has turned out to be what it is. On the trip I just had to keep the right attitude, because things were not changing for better. “

The female respondent who was robbed stated that the incidents did not ruin her trip. At the time of different incidents she had a bad feeling, but overall the incidents did not have a radical effect on the trip. She also stated that she learned; after a while she started seeing how things work and became more prepared to meet different upcoming situations. One female respondent also thinks that the incidents only brought some extra thrill to the trip.

The two respondents who had been involved in the fraud with the con artist had little different opinions. One of the respondents said that after an incident she felt down.

“You go on a vacation and try to spend nice time and enjoy it, but then the locals cheat you and then you do not feel so nice about the culture and how the people behave anymore. But again not everybody is like that. Some of the people try to make a living on tourism by cheating on the tourists in various ways. “

The other respondent felt that the incidents affected her trip, and she learned from the incident.

“It reminded me that I’m blond and I’m in Thailand. I should be more careful about what I say to people and who I talk to. It made me very aware that being scammed is so easy there. You are a target because you are not Thai, and because you are not South-East Asian. They see you are not from there and they go for you. “

She thought that looks appeal to locals; because tourists look like that they are not from around there. The respondent felt that she became more and more angry and annoyed, because she learned from every situation and the next situation was a different kind of scam. On the trip she started thinking that how many different ways the locals have for scamming and that made her angry, because it seemed endless.

5.6 The affect of the different situations to the image of the destination

In this part the respondents answered to the question did the incidents affect their image of the destination?

Did the image change	Male respondents	Female respondents
To positive	3	1
To negative	1	4

Table 8 The incidents affect on image

Those respondents, who had had bigger incidents happening to them, had a more negative image of the country. One of the respondents who had been in on the boat trip stated, that she is now aware that all the major, larger tourist destinations have scammers everywhere there. She said that she was aware of that before, but it felt sometimes that the whole population is against you, except good friends.

“It affected my image, because I saw the Thai people as very dishonest people, who always have a smile on their face.”

For her these incidents made the image more negative, although she thought that not Thailand itself is bad, but the way people treat each other is something she does not agree with in anyway.

The other respondent on the boat trip got a more negative image of the destination, because before leaving to Thailand she did not really think that there would be things that would harm her in any way or people who would try to take more money from you than you are supposed to pay. She did not realize that it would be possible, before she got into a trap and was cheated.

The respondent who had her money stolen from her room stated that her image of the destination became more negative; she got a more negative picture of the country and the people. She felt that there were people who you could trust, but then there were people that when looking at them you immediately knew that they would be some kind of frauds or con artists who are going to try to cheat you.

The respondent who had been to Thailand six times before, thought that his image of the destination has become worse on the last few trips, but this exchange period destroyed it a little more. At the latest now on this last trip, he realized that tourism has left its mark and the authentic Thailand is hard to find.

Those respondents who had no bigger incidents happen to them had gotten slightly or much better image of the destination. One of the respondents said that he feels more threatened in a subway in Stockholm or Helsinki than in Sky train in Bangkok. He felt that the religion is so strong in Thailand that locals do not pick a fight. He thought that the Thai people are a peace loving nation, although the riots in Bangkok affected its image by creating a picture of the country having an unstable political situation. Anyway his image was positive in all other ways. One other respondent mentioned the ongoing political situation, but he said that he understood it better after the locals told him the reason for the riots.

“It cleared things when I talked with the locals about the ongoing political situation. I found out what the riots were all about; the red shirted and the yellow shirted. It cleared to me that the country will be in big problems in the near future. As a culture and tourism destination the country has a good image, there were some really beautiful resorts that were much nicer and more peaceful than others. “

The same respondent also wondered why he had been so lucky on the trip.

“I think I just was lucky, or then I have the appearance, I don’ know what it is. In other destinations I have always done something I was not supposed to for example walk to the hotel all by myself in the dark night. Of course once I was tried to be taken to a brothel in a tourist resort, but when you say to them persistently enough that I am not going in there, now take me back to the hotel or else, then somehow things just arrange. I do not know how, but I have been lucky to be able to avoid these different situations, although I’ve heard what has happened to others. “

One male respondent had gotten a positive image of the country, because nothing bad happened to him. Also one female respondent had a good image of the country, because nothing happened to her personally and she also felt that minor criminality can happen everywhere else too. She felt that she could not trust all the people in Thailand, but some people were okay.

One respondent did not have any incidents, but she felt that she would never go back to those places which she got a bad picture of, such as Pattaya with its prostitution and Hua Hin. She did not get a bad picture of all the places; there are just some places she would never want to go back to. She stated:

“The bigger the tourist trap and the more tourism is a livelihood in the destination, the less you could trust people to be genuinely interested or thought the best for you. In places with less tourism I felt that the helpfulness and friendliness of the people was genuine.”

5.7 Travelling back to Thailand

In this part the respondents were asked if they would travel back to Thailand if they had the chance.

Would you travel to Thailand again if you had the possibility?	Male respondents	Female respondents
Yes	3	4
No	1	1

Table 9 The respondents answers to travelling back to Thailand

Most of the respondents said that they would go back to Thailand if they got the opportunity. Only two respondents said that they would not.

One respondent that said that she would travel there, because there are still many places she has not seen. She thought that the second trip would be much easier.

“Now you know what to look out for and you what not to say and what you can say. It is very fun for the locals to scam you and after a while you accept it. It is just Thailand. After a while you know how to respond to it better than before. You know it is all a part of a game.”

One respondent, who had had negative incidents happen to her, said that she would travel there, but to different places.

“I would like to go back to Thailand again someday, because now I do not feel anything bad about the things that happen. Only that it was a good life experience. If I went again, I would definitely be more aware about all the things happening around me. “

One other male respondent who was there the first time in winter 2008 has travelled back there in the winter 2009 and thinks that he would want to go back, but also he would go to different places there than before.

Two female respondents said that they could go back if they had the possibility, but they would choose other destinations there and avoid the places they did not like. The one respondent who had travelled to Thailand many times before said that he could travel back to Thailand, but it is not his first option anymore. He thinks that next time he could fly to Bangkok, stay there for a while and then continue his trip from there to another country. One male respondent is going back to Thailand in April 2010.

There were two respondents who would not like to go back to Thailand. The female respondent got enough of Thailand on the trip.

“No, I would not want to pay to travel back there. I did not feel that the country was so pleasant and there is definitely too much tourism. I would rather put my money to something else. “

The other respondent said that if somebody paid, he could go, but he himself would not want to travel to a place he has stayed for three months before and almost seen everything. If he had money and time, he would not go to the same country, but choose another destination.

6 CONCLUSION

The image of Thailand is still quite unknown to the travelers. They have only the information that they get from the tourists that have travelled there for only few weeks and been to the same place the whole time. Thailand is seen to be a sunny paradise with beautiful islands and beaches, but also a tourist trap with too much people and where they only meet other tourists. There is so much to Thailand that the tourists only get to know by travelling there to see for themselves.

Minor criminality in popular tourist resorts is increasing. Destinations that create a lot of tourism also attract people who are only interested in cheating tourists' money. This is not a new phenomenon and it happens all over the world, in some places more than others. Often tourists are warned about pick pocketing and credit card frauds when travelling to different destinations, but the criminality types are increasing and improving to cover many types of tourism. Now they also use cons and frauds, where tourists are cheated by overpricing and empty promises. Mostly tourists pay much for something they never will see or experience.

In Thailand the most common criminality types found are cheating and overpricing. Cheating happens mostly in taxis, market places and hotels, which are just the places where tourists' mostly move. Also tourists' are very often warned on the possibility of pick pocketing and said to be careful with their belongings in the areas where many people move, especially tourists. Con artists also move much in the tourist areas, because there they can find the best victims. One reason why tourists get cheated much in Thailand is that they are so much different looking than Asians that they become easy targets. Also when travelling there is so much new and different things to see and experience that tourists do not even realize that they should be more careful and more aware of things happening around them.

The hospitality business is big in Thailand and the local people in Thailand treat tourists' very well, because they are a big source of income. Tourists', who have just entered the country, often do not realize that they are being cheated with prices that are double or more from the original. Whereas tourists' who have

travelled to Thailand more than once or stayed there for a longer time, know the prices and see when they are tried to be cheated. They have gotten used to it, or know how to handle it better. All of the respondents said that they were either cheated or attempted to be cheated by taxi drivers and in the markets. There were three respondents who felt also cheated by hotels, and also some had been in robbery where they had been taken their money from the hotel room. This can lead to tourists never trusting to leave anything in the rooms, which can ruin the trip, when they have to be careful with everything all the time.

The things that mostly have affected tourism in Thailand in the last few years are the financial situation in the world, but even more the unstable political situation in Thailand. The political problems have lead to riots that have affected to tourism and decreased the amount of tourists' in Thailand. The riots in 2009 affected also the stay of some of the respondents and gave them a feeling that everything is not that stable in the country and that these riots will lead into bigger problems in the future. In April 2009 when the riots erupted in Bangkok, the amount of tourists' decreased majorly, from the years before. While working with this research, Thailand has gotten in new problems and there is now in March and April 2010 been ongoing riots in Bangkok that have been more violent, and even more serious than before. The riots will probably lead to the image changing to worse, but the general effect of the riots to tourism cannot be seen yet.

Bangkok Post wrote in 2009 about the tourism in Thailand and how it is in problems at this hour. The financial situation in the world and the unstable political situations have even been critical issues in the country and have lead to many meetings between the tourism businesses. These meetings have concluded that there should be made strategies and financial packages to help the tourism businesses to survive the financial recession. The tourism industries in Thailand have forgotten the problems that have affected the business for a longer time. These problems include illegal tour guides and taxis, groups who use frauds to cheat tourists and false business operators who use their time on cheating and taking advantages of tourists. Usually these problems include fake tour guides and taxi drivers who scam tourists from the moment they arrive.

These criminality problems are destroying the image of the country and its people. The problems are not addressed yet, but some improvements have been made to make the stay of tourists better. The Suvarnabhumi airport authorities have started to banish the illegal tour guides and black market taxis from the airport, which is a good beginning on dealing with the whole situation if it stays that way. One problem is that many authorities benefit from the scammers actions, because often they can be working together with them or just looking the other way, because they can get some of the profits. (Bangkok Post, 2009)

Drugs and prostitution in Thailand are creating demand and also bringing bad publicity. Prostitution is one of the biggest businesses in the bigger tourist resorts. Although it can be seen as a feature of the country, it can also be a feature that keeps tourists away at least from some places. Even though both drugs and prostitution are illegal in Thailand, it is available for travelers all over the country. Almost all of the respondents felt that drugs and prostitution is available in the tourist resorts. Some only saw some mild drugs, but it was seen that it was made easy for the tourists to buy and get drugs in Thailand. Prostitution was seen by all the respondents, in many different forms.

One big feature that makes Thailand less trustworthy is the fact that the police and authorities cannot be trusted. In almost everywhere in western world the police are the institute to turn to when in need of help, whereas in Thailand the police is so corrupted and bribed that their trustworthiness is very low. When something happens in Thailand tourists have not got anyone to turn for help, if the police are already on the locals' side. From the respondents of this research only one felt that the police can be trusted, other eight felt that they could not depend on the help of the police if it was needed.

Mostly the different incidents did not affect the respondents' trips, of course at the time they felt down, but generally they enjoyed their trips. These incidents helped them mostly to learn; learn how to behave, what to do and what not to do to, stay away from problems and have a good trip. The respondents were in the country much longer than an average tourist, which gave them more time to see and experience as well as time to recover from any incidents that they confronted.

The image of the destination changed to slightly more negative for most of the respondents. 55 percent of the respondents got a slightly or more negative image of the country. Respondents that had a more negative picture after the trip thought that they felt that there were not many people they could trust. The general feeling was that the more popular the destination the less they could trust the locals to be genuinely friendly and ready to help without an ulterior motive. They also felt that in some places in every corner there is someone who is trying to cheat you, and that it is a vicious never ending circle where they just get away from one scammer to meet the next around the corner. It was also felt that the authentic Thailand has been overruled by the tourism and it is hard to find the real Thailand and its culture nowadays.

Those 44 percent of the respondents that got a positive image of the country felt that they had been lucky on the trip and nothing too serious had happened to them. Some of them felt that minor criminality can happen everywhere, and that it is just a feature that the country possesses. Mostly they felt good about the country, but there were some destinations there they would not want to go back to again. Generally the respondents did not feel the country being a violent place and they did not feel threatened there, which makes the image more positive.

Although the respondents experienced many different and even negative incidents in Thailand, it has not affected their Thailand travelling enthusiasm and many want to travel back there again. Thailand has become popular with the tourists and many of them travel there again and again. Although the flights to Thailand are rather expensive, the country itself is cheap and it has all the features that tourists are looking for; sun, sea and sand. 77 percent of the respondents from the research would travel to Thailand again if they had the possibility. In this figure there are also those respondents who felt most negative towards the country, because of the scamming and frauds they encountered on their trip. Although they think that the image is more negative, they still find the positive things that make them want to travel there again and see new places that they did not have time to see on their first trip.

6.1 Improvement suggestions

Image of the destination should be kept more positive than negative. As Maslow states in the hierarchy of needs, that if the safety needs are not fulfilled the tourist will try to find another destination where he or she can find the environment that is safe enough. Minor criminality can be acceptable, but when tourists' start to understand that almost everywhere they go that they are tried to be overpriced or scammed they start to get more disappointed and start looking for other destinations to go to.

To start thinking about the well being of the tourists' the country can make the destination more safe and welcoming for them. The most popular destinations should nip the problem from the bud and start informing tourists about the illegal businesses that are trying to scam them their money. This might be hard, but the legal businesses are also suffering from the acts of the scammers.

Although tourists are warned about all sort of criminality there are so many ways to scam people, that they cannot even understand it. When a tourist is being scammed in many ways and do not get treated fair in the destination, they start to tell about it to other people. This kind of word-of-mouth way of promoting can be very harmful although done in a small scale. Tourists tell other tourists which can be helpful when encountering problems in the destination, but also it might change the minds of new tourists of travelling to the destination altogether.

The authorities of Thailand cannot be trusted much, because they are not on the tourists' side. Thailand has tourist police in tourist resorts, which can be helpful if they are available. In Bangkok the only option when something happens are the local police because the tourist police there are very invisible and since the local police do not speak English and are corrupted, they might not even try to help you. The language barrier in the country is high and the authorities rarely speak English, which prevents the tourists to tell their side of the story. It also helps the locals to blame the tourists for everything.

The country should start acting to become more reliable. This could be done by trying to prohibit the working of illegal tour guides, businesses and taxis. The scale of these different scammers is huge, they can be found from everywhere, which makes it even harder. At least tourists should be warned of the dangers of the scammers, and not only decide not to talk about them. The tourists will start to think that there is not anyone they can trust, which makes the image of the destination untrustworthy and negative.

Image of Thailand is still quite positive; this is because most of the things that new tourists know about Thailand are the positive things. As of now the country is still quite safe; terrorism is not found from there and tourism murders are very rare. The riots have gotten the safety image down, because the people are not seen as peaceful anymore and the unstable situation in the country can be seen threatening.

Suggestions for improving the image and the safety features in the country:

1. Thailand and its government should start thinking about how the different scammers will affect the image of the destination in the long run.
2. Tourists should be warned of the different criminality types, firstly to take good care of their belongings and then how to recognize an attempt to scam you.
3. Legal businesses should be given some kind of “tourist friendly” mark that would tell the tourists that the businesses are officially permitted to do the job and that they can be trusted to give the tourists the product for a reasonable and legal price.
4. All bigger airports should banish the illegal tour guide and taxi businesses, because airports should be safe environments for the tourists to come to and get services that are legal.
5. The tourist police should be more available and more hospitable, so that there is someone for the tourists who listens and helps when in need.

It is hard to change a whole country and its culture, but starting from somewhere to begin to make the country more secure and reliable for tourists is something Thailand would need. Although the riots and unstable situations in Thailand are decreasing the reliability of the country, the actions are not done towards the tourists, but towards the government. The more threatening features are the ones aimed at the tourists, such as cheating and conning. These can become the things that the tourists remember when they go home. Living in a paradise for few weeks, and still meeting snakes that are after you all the time, can affect the image of the destination in a very negative way.

7 SUMMARY

The research was done in the winter 2009 and spring 2010. The purpose of this research was to find out the types of criminality that are most commonly found from Thailand. The research also focuses on finding out what kind of images the respondents had of Thailand before leaving there and how the image changed when experiencing criminality in the destination. The reason why the research is done is to raise awareness of the dangers, even minor ones, of Thailand for the tourists' that are travelling there.

Thailand was used as an example, because the VAMK, University of Applied Sciences in Vaasa sends every year groups to Thailand for an exchange period. The most common exchange to Thailand is the Star Module, which is designed for the business students and the hospitality students. The exchange starts every year in February or March and lasts three months.

The theory of the research firstly concentrated on defining tourism, travel purposes and the tourism motivations, also including the image of the destination. The main theory part informs about different types of criminality that can be found from tourism destinations and also all over the world. The types start from minor criminality and goes to major and more serious criminality. The different types of criminality were also used as a helping device when making the interviews and when analyzing the results.

The requests were sent to 32 people in the module that travelled to Thailand in the 2009, and seven of this group was interviewed for this research. One respondent had travelled to Thailand with a group already in the spring 2008 and one was a student who travelled to Thailand in the winter of 2008. The response rate was quite low, but there were many who did not think they would be helpful to the research, because nothing happened to them. The interviews were done in February of 2010. Since the research was done with a qualitative method; focused interview method was used, there were more information in the answers than there would have been if it was done with a quantitative method. This makes the responses more valid.

The interviews were done so that the questions would be easy to answer, but that the respondents could not just answer with a yes or a no. This was used to find more information and to find out the respondents real opinions and feelings. The answers gotten from the respondents varied, some gave more information than others. There were still many answers that all the respondents gave; many had experienced similar situations. All of the questions were answered in the interviews. This made the answers more valid.

The outcome of the research was both negative and positive. The country was seen safe, but there were features that made the respondents feel that everything was not always so good. The most common criminality types found from the country are cheating attempts in taxis, markets and hotels. Also con artists and robberies were experienced by some respondents. Also the riots of 2009 were a factor that was discussed. The image of the country became more negative with over half of the respondents, because of the criminality and negative incidents that some of the respondents encountered. The local people of the country were seen unreliable and also the respondents felt that the police was so corrupted that they cannot be trusted. Other ways the image was seen positive and safe. There is not seen much violence towards the tourists, which is positive. Also there are many features in the country, which makes it a perfect place to travel to.

Most of the respondents would travel to Thailand if they had the chance, which informs that although the respondents experienced negative incidents the country itself is seen so interesting that those incidents could be disregarded. The incidents that happened on the trip are seen as something that is educational and would help if travelled there again, because now the respondents know what situations to avoid and also how to behave in those situations.

This research gives out good information for those how are planning to travel to Thailand. The information gives examples of situations that can occur on their trip. The examples can also be helpful and support the new tourists on their trip. They can learn from the research what to avoid and how to handle negative incidents. The negative things are often hidden and things are not talked about, because the destination wants to keep its positive image. I did this research to warn and raise awareness of tourists to not to do the same mistakes I and so many other have done on their trips. I hope that this research could be used also a guideline, when making new researches or creating guide books for those travelling to Thailand.

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APPENDIX 1

Focused interview

1. Gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
2. Age?
3. Occupation?
 - a. Student
 - b. Worker
 - c. Other, which?
4. When were you on the trip to Thailand from the school?
5. Was this the first time?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No, then how many times before?
6. What kind of picture did you have about the country before leaving?
7. During your stay in Thailand, what kind of unpleasant situations, where you felt in some way threatened or cheated, did you experience?
8. Did you feel that you could trust the police and authorities in Thailand?
9. How did these incidents affect your trip?
10. How did these incidents affect your image of the destination?
11. Would you travel there again if possible?

APPENDIX 2

Teemahaastattelu

1. Sukupuoli
 - a. Nainen
 - b. Mies
2. Ikä?
3. Toimi?
 - a. Opiskelija
 - b. Töissä
 - c. Muu, mikä?
4. Milloin olit Thaimaan matkalla koulun kautta?
5. Oliko tämä ensimmäinen kerta?
 - a. Kyllä
 - b. Ei, montako kertaa aikaisemmin?
 - c. Oletko käynyt siellä sen jälkeen?
6. Minkälainen kuva sinulla oli Thaimaasta ennen lähtöäsi?
7. Koitko Thaimaan matkan aikana epämukavia tilanteita, missä tunsit itsesi jossain määrin uhatuksi tai huijatuksi?
8. Tuntuiko sinusta siltä, että Thaimaassa poliisin tai viranomaisiin pystyi luottamaan?
9. Miten nämä tapahtumat vaikuttivat matkasi kulkuun?
10. Miten nämä tapahtumat vaikuttivat siihen imagoon, joka sinulla oli Thaimaasta?
11. Matkustaisitko sinne uudestaan, jos se olisi mahdollista?

APPENDIX 3

All the background information of the respondents in the order that they were interviewed:

Respondent 1 is a 25 year old woman and she is still studying in the Vaasa University of Applied sciences. She was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2009 for 3 months. This was her first time in Thailand.

Respondent 2 is a 23 year old woman and she is still studying in the Vaasa University of Applied sciences. She also works beside school. She was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2009 for 3 months. This was her first time in Thailand.

Respondent 3 is a 24 year old man and he is still studying in the Vaasa University of Applied sciences. He was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2009 for 3 months. This was his first time in Thailand.

Respondent 4 is a 25 year old woman and she has graduated from the Vaasa University of Applied sciences and is currently working full-time. She was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2008 for 3 months. This was her first time in Thailand.

Respondent 5 is a 24 year old man and he is for now studying in the Vaasa University of Applied sciences. He was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2009 for 3 months. This was his first time in Thailand.

Respondent 6 is a 27 year old man and he has graduated from the Vaasa University of Applied sciences and is currently studying in another school. He was in Thailand from the University in the winter-spring 2008 for 4 months. This was his first time in Thailand, but he has travelled back there after his trip.

Respondent 7 is a 22 year old woman and she is still studying in the Vaasa University of Applied sciences. She also works beside school. She was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2009 for 3 months. This was her first time in Thailand.

Respondent 8 is a 27 year old man and he is working full-time. He has not graduated yet from the University of Applied sciences. He was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2009 for 3 months. This was his sixth time in Thailand.

Respondent 9 is a 24 year old woman and she is still studying in the Vaasa University of Applied sciences. She was in Thailand from the University in the spring 2009 for 3 months. This was her first time in Thailand.