

Development of Thai Tourism Communication and Representation: A Case Study of Osotho Magazine¹

Chavisa Cheyjunya²

Napawan Tantivejakul

Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Abstract

Tourism communication in Thailand has a long and continuous history. The Tourism Organization of Thailand played a central role in initiating and shaping tourism communication, alongside Osotho magazine, which functioned as a significant medium in directing and disseminating tourism narratives. This qualitative research, therefore, examines the historical development of tourism communication in Thailand and the evolving use of visual representations through Osotho magazine. The study employed historical research and autoethnographic methodology, analyzing Osotho issues published between 1961 and 2025, with a focus on the January issue of each year as it represents the mid-cycle publication and the New Year edition, which typically provides an overview of the annual operational direction. The analysis was guided by the conceptual frameworks of representation, agenda-setting, and place branding. The findings reveal that tourism communication in Osotho magazine has evolved over time in response to changing contexts which can be categorized into four key periods. (1) The Formative Stage, emphasizing policy communication and tourism promotional campaigns. (2) The Developing Stage, characterized by more diverse portrayals of Thai tourism and continued promotional efforts. (3) The Flourishing Stage, regarded as the golden era, focusing on the key term, ‘Amazing

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² Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Chavisa Cheyjunya at the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand or by email at : chavisach@gmail.com

Thailand' to convey Thai tourist attractions and (4) The Modern Stage, which featured the extension of campaign narratives, the presentation of unique Thai experiences, and the increasing use of influencers as a part of campaign communication. Across all four periods, these shifts reflect significant transformations in both tourism communication strategies and the construction of representations in Osotho magazine.

Keywords: tourism communication, representation, agenda-setting, Osotho magazine

Author Note

Chavisa Cheyjunya (M.A. Communication Arts, National Institute of Development Administration, 2021) is a doctoral student in communication arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Napawan Tantivejakul (Ph.D., Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, 2000) is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

The tourism industry represents one of the most rapidly expanding sectors of the global economy, generating substantial revenue for various countries. Its growth can be considered as a significant social phenomenon that has played a crucial role in driving economic development and has led to the extensive expansion of tourism across a wide range of countries and regions worldwide (Smith & Eadington, 1992).

Similarly, in the case of Thailand, the tourism industry constitutes one of the country's primary economic sectors, generating substantial revenue. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) report in 2024, Thailand ranked 47th out of 119 countries in the Travel and Tourism Development Index and was ranked 4th out of 8 countries within the ASEAN region (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2024). Tourism serves as

a crucial driving force in national development, functioning not only as a mechanism for macroeconomic stimulation and local income distribution but also as a means of projecting the country's distinctive image to the global community.

Tourism has deep historical roots embedded in human mobility, with travel undertaken for a variety of purposes. Among these, leisure and recreation have long been central motivations. As such, tourism holds significant meaning and plays an important role in both individual lives and broader cultural context. Furthermore, tourism is closely intertwined with communication, both in terms of real-world interactions related to travel and the mediated representation of tourism through various forms of media (Kaewthep, 2014). Communication, in this regard, plays a crucial role in promoting tourism development and enhancing the visibility and recognition of destinations.

The history of tourism communication in Thailand has a long-standing development. Tourism promotion was first implemented in 1936, with the aim of attracting tourists, providing services and accommodations, and maintaining tourist sites and facilities. Following the Second World War, the responsible agencies underwent several organizational and structural changes, including multiple renamings to better reflect their roles. As tourism was gaining increasing attention at the time, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat recognized the importance of developing and promoting the tourism industry in Thailand and subsequently established the Tourism Organization of Thailand (TOT), commonly known in Thai as 'Osotho.' This organization became widely recognized for its significant role in promoting tourism, encompassing various aspects such as the conservation and development of tourism resources. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.).

As part of efforts to communicate tourism news and information to Thai audiences, Osotho magazine was established in 1960 alongside the founding of the Tourism

Organization of Thailand, and has continued to operate to the present day (Thairath, 2018). Tourism communication in Thailand has been continuously promoted, with the Tourism Organization of Thailand (TOT) serving as a key agency in advancing domestic tourism, before being officially renamed the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The TAT can be regarded as a central driver of Thailand's tourism strategy, emphasizing the creation of meaningful tourism experiences and a commitment to sustainability, which constitute its core vision guiding overall operations (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.).

As the Osotho magazine is a documentary-style publication under the supervision of the Ministry of Tourism, the content it produces is subject to state-level selection and filtering. In other words, Tourism Authority of Thailand plays a significant role in shaping the direction of tourism communication for the development and promotion of Thai tourism across various dimensions. This includes its role in constructing representations of Thai tourism.

This study aims to address a gap in existing literature on tourism communication, which has largely emphasized contemporary and digital tourism communication while overlooking longitudinal analyses of media in shaping tourism narratives. Accordingly, examining the development of Thai tourism communication through a historical analysis of the Osotho magazine provides a comprehensive understanding of tourism communication in Thailand. At the same time, it enables an exploration of how communication strategies, place branding, and representational practices have evolved across different historical periods.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the development of tourism communication in Thailand through Osotho Magazine.
2. To investigate the evolution of tourism representations through the Osotho Magazine.

Literature Review

Representation

Stuart Hall conceptualizes representation as the process of constructing meaning through description, imagery, reflection, or imagination that occurs within the human mind. It also involves the use of signs and symbols. In this sense, representation is the production of meaning through language, enabling individuals to make sense of the world, including people, objects, and events, as well as to express complex ideas. In other words, representation refers to the construction of meaning in both real world and imaginary world through the use of language (Hall, 1997a).

The process of representation is inherently complex, as it involves the use of images or symbols to convey intangible concepts. It operates within a system of representation that encompasses not only individual cognition but also a diverse and fragmented set of ideas that exist across different categories and are interconnected in complex ways. Meaning is constructed through the relationships between elements in the physical world, the realm of ideas, and the conceptual system, which functions to produce mental representations of these elements. Individuals possess distinct conceptual systems, leading to variations in how they interpret and assign meaning to the world. However, individuals within the same culture tend to share similar systems of meaning and representation due to common frameworks of thought. Thus, culture can be understood as a shared system of meanings and conceptual frameworks (Hall, 1997a).

Accordingly, drawing on Hall's conceptualization of representation as the production of meaning through language and signs, both the textual content and visual imagery presented in the Osotho Magazine require interpretation to uncover the underlying tourism-related meanings conveyed to readers.

Semiology

Signs function as intellectual artifacts that play a crucial role in the process of transformation through conceptual objectivation. This process refers to the way individuals construct and give form to ideas toward particular phenomena (Radford, 1998). Therefore, symbolic power refers to the power of representation or the capacity to construct, define, and classify phenomena. It operates as a form of cultural or semiotic power, involving the ability to shape how individuals or objects are represented in particular ways. As such, symbolic power constitutes an integral part of the system of representation (Hall, 1997b).

Kaewthep et al. (2000) explain that sign possess several key characteristics. First, it must have a physical form; that is, it must be tangible or perceptible through the human senses. Second, a sign must carry meaning beyond its physical form, which arises from the intention of human to convey a particular message. Third, it must be aware that the physical form functions as a sign.

Although signs are ubiquitous in daily life, an important question concerns whether a given object can be considered a sign. For an object to be classified as a sign, it must exhibit all three of the aforementioned characteristics. This enables the object to function within a social practice. In this sense, any object can potentially serve as a sign, provided that it involves a relationship between elements which is the relationship between the subject and the object. In other words, the object carries meaning beyond its physical properties and is interpreted through the perspectives of individuals, groups, society, or culture (Kaewthep et al., 2000).

The study of signs encompasses their emergence, development, transformation, and eventual disappearance (Krampen, 1987). In this regard, the study of signs comprises of the investigation of sign, system and culture.

Signs take various physical forms; however, their essential feature lies in their capacity to convey meaning. A sign is a product of human cognition, constructed through social and cultural processes. Therefore, understanding signs requires an understanding of the human agents who produce and assign meaning to them. However, signs do not exist in isolation but are organized systematically. The structured combination of signs constitutes what is referred to as a code or system. Different types of codes possess distinct characteristics and operate in accordance with specific rules, shaping how meaning is produced and interpreted. As signs are human constructs, they can be regarded as cultural products. Both signs and codes are created and employed within particular cultural contexts. When these contexts change, the meanings of signs and codes also shift accordingly. Thus, understanding culture is fundamental to interpreting the meaning of signs. At the same time, culture itself is sustained through the use of signs and codes, highlighting the interdependent relationship between sign systems and cultural context (Krampen, 1987; Kaewthep et al., 2000).

Previous studies have employed the concepts of representation and semiology to examine tourism communication across diverse contexts. Hunter (2016) investigated the representation of Seoul as a tourism destination through online photographs and compared with traditional projected images in order to explore the social construction of online destination images. The findings indicate that self-generated representations of travel experiences shared by individuals online are more effective in shaping destination image, as they complement and enhance the officially projected image of Seoul. While Cassel and De Bernardi (2021) explore the visual representations of Indigenous tourism in Sápmi through social media. The findings reveal that representations of Sápmi on social media actively shape its identity as a tourism destination through continuous reinterpretations of indigenous Sámi culture.

Meanwhile, Djafarova (2017) highlights that studies on tourism representation have predominantly focused on visual elements and points out a significant gap in textual analysis, emphasizing that language plays a crucial role in representing tourism and shaping tourists' perceptions and attitudes toward destinations. Addressing this gap, Djafarova (2017) examines the use of figurative language in constructing tourism-related communication.

In the Thai context, Kongpolphrom and Tantivejakul (2026) investigate the representation of Thainess through the historical trajectory of the Tourism Authority of Thailand's public relations. The study analyzes TAT's campaigns targeting international audiences and demonstrates that the representation of Thainess has evolved over time. Specifically, it can be divided into three key phases. Across these phases, TAT's portrayal of Thainess has shifted from a heritage-focused concept to a more experiential and accessible framework, expanding to incorporate modern elements alongside themes of health, wellness, and sustainability.

In examining the development of tourism communication through Osotho magazine, this study adopts a semiotic framework to analyze how representations are constructed through both visual imagery and narrative descriptions. It focuses on identifying the signs employed to convey meaning, alongside an interpretation of the cultural perspectives underlying these representations. Such analysis is conducted through the researcher's own positionality, as an individual embedded within and participating in the cultural context of Thai society.

Agenda-setting

McCombs and Shaw explained the concept of agenda setting, which refers to the process by which the mass media repeatedly highlight and emphasize certain issues. This repeated emphasis influences how the public perceives issues as important. In other words, the more frequently an issue is covered by the media, the more likely the public is to regard it

as significant (Mohd Zain, 2014). Thus the role of mass media in agenda-setting is to focus public attention on a limited set of issues, as only selected topics can be presented among many competing ones (McCombs & Guo, 2014).

Agenda-setting has been applied across diverse social contexts, with its scope extended through both traditional agenda-setting effects and attribute agenda-setting effects. Both are concerned with the transfer of the ‘salience’ of content. Moreover, the transfer of attribute salience is not limited to news issues. It also encompasses the salience of various ‘objects,’ including social issues, public figures, political actors, or any entities that are emphasized in particular ways (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009).

Agenda-setting theory has been widely used to explain how media shape public perceptions by emphasizing the importance of particular issues. In the context of tourism communication, this perspective has been applied to understand how media representations influence national image. For instance, Luo QiuJu and Tong JuanJuan (2014) investigated the communication effects of mega-events by examining the French and Japanese pavilions at Expo 2010 Shanghai. The findings indicate that pavilions, as a form of media display, function as agenda-setting tools by highlighting specific narratives that contribute to national image construction and communication.

While Schweinsberg, Darcy and Cheng (2017) examine the agenda-setting and framing role of news media in protected areas. Also, Batuev, Thornton and Wolfson (2026) explored media agenda-setting and framing tourist risks of FIFA World Cup 2018 and found that media agenda-setting, framing and sensationalism had a substantial negative effect on perceptions of safety and willingness to return.

Therefore, implementing the agenda-setting framework is crucial for understanding how Osotho magazine constructs and prioritizes its communication content. It enables an

examination of how issues which are conceptualized as salient objects are transferred to audiences, shaping what readers perceive as important. Furthermore, the theory provides a framework for analyzing how agenda-setting processes have evolved over time, including shifts in the selection, emphasis, and framing of key issues across different periods. By applying this perspective, the study is able to identify which themes are foregrounded in each era, as well as to compare their continuities, differences, and transformations. Ultimately, agenda-setting theory facilitates a deeper understanding of the developmental trajectory of tourism communication within the Osotho magazine.

Beyond examining the agenda-setting role of Osotho magazine in Thai tourism communication, attention should also be given to understanding the magazine's role in constructing destinations as brands. In this regard, destinations are communicated as key brand attributes that contribute to differentiation of Thai tourism. This approach is essential for capturing the overall development of tourism communication in Osotho magazine, particularly in terms of how its strategies and representations have evolved over time.

Place Branding

Brands permeate all aspects of life, including 'places' or 'destinations' (Vuignier, 2017). A destination is closely associated with tourism products, services, and activities, all of which require interpretation and value attribution by tourists based on both the physical characteristics of the place and its overall attractiveness (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). Consequently, destinations can be conceptualized, branded, and promoted in the same way as other types of products and services (Anantachart, 2022).

Place branding has attracted significant scholarly attention due to the intense competition among destinations at both international and domestic levels. It involves the application of branding strategies to support and differentiate a particular destination. In this

sense, place branding can be understood as a phenomenon emerging from globalization, which has created markets that accommodate ideas, cultures, reputations, goods, and services (Hanna & Rowley, 2008).

Research on tourism communication from a place branding perspective has been widely explored. Tran and Rudolf (2022), for instance, conducted a systematic literature review on social media and destination branding in tourism, identifying five key research themes which are destination brand strategy, user-generated content, cognitive dimensions, affective dimensions, and behavioural dimensions. Their study also highlights emerging directions for future research in this field.

Similarly, Pritchard and Morgan (2001) examine tourism representations through the lens of destination branding by analyzing marketing campaigns in Wales. Their findings suggest that tourism representations within modern branding strategies are shaped by underlying historical, political, and cultural discourses. In addition, Foroudi et al. (2016) identify key indicators of effective place branding, emphasizing the roles of national culture and infrastructure in influencing tourists' preferences toward a destination.

The place branding perspective has been widely employed in tourism communication studies, as it reflects how destination identities are constructed and communicated as distinctive brands. Consequently, place branding is a key conceptual framework for explaining how tourism communication is constructed in Osotho magazine. It enables an analysis of the communication strategies employed to promote and attract tourism destinations, framing them as brands. By applying this framework, the study reveals how destinations are positioned, differentiated, and communicated to Thai audiences. Moreover, it highlights the particular dimensions of tourism that Osotho seeks to emphasize and promote across different periods.

History of Thai Tourism

In Thai context, Kaewthep (2014) explains that tourism can be divided into three periods according to its historical development.

First, tourism in the early period took the form of ‘travel,’ which occurred across all social classes. Such travel served various purposes, including political affairs, warfare, religious propagation, and trade. These journeys were driven by necessity rather than leisure, as travel during this period was inconvenient. Consequently, it was not undertaken for pleasure or recreation.

Second, tourism for the elites which began during the reigns of King Rama IV and King Rama V. This period was marked by significant Western influence, including both outbound travel by Thai elites and inbound travel, as foreign royal guests were invited to visit Thailand.

Third, the era of mass tourism emerged following the political transformation in 1932, when tourism was no longer confined to the elite. During this period, tourism became an important tool for nation-building under the national economic development plans. It played a significant role in national development, with three primary objectives; promoting tourism, accommodating tourists, and maintaining tourist sites. This reflects the increasing importance placed on tourism by the state, as well as its growth into a major industry generating substantial national revenue (Kaewthep, 2014).

Previous studies on Osotho Magazine have been widely conducted and approached from diverse theoretical perspectives. For instance, Chanogkun et al. (2022) examined the construction of tourism discourse for Thai nation-building through documentary features published in Osotho Magazine. Similarly, Pattananupong (1996) investigated the role of the magazine in promoting Thai tourism among both magazine’s members and the general public, highlighting the publication’s strengths in terms of content representation.

In addition, Kobcharoentham (2012) explored the historical development of Osotho magazine and analyzed its representation of cultural tourism content. The findings reflect both the historical trajectory of tourism and the role of the Tourism Organization of Thailand, demonstrating that the growth of Thai tourism has been shaped by multiple factors, including government policies, private sector initiatives, and public participation. Furthermore, Praphai (2020) studied Thai lifestyle tourism documentaries in the Osotho magazine with a focus on narrative descriptions that contribute to tourism promotion.

The existing literature collectively highlights the significant role of Osotho magazine in shaping tourism in Thailand. However, it has largely focused on specific aspects of content and representation in isolation, with limited integration of theoretical perspectives, as well as a lack of longitudinal analysis of the magazine in capturing the evolution of tourism communication over time. Building on prior research, this study employs a historical research and autoethnographic approach through documentary analysis of the magazine. The objective is to examine the historical development of tourism communication in Thailand, as well as the use of tourism representations in Osotho magazine, guided by the theoretical frameworks of representation, agenda-setting, and place branding.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach through documentary research, utilizing both historical research and autoethnography as its methodological frameworks.

Historical research is a qualitative approach that involves the systematic collection, evaluation, and interpretation of past events through documentary sources (Lune & Berg, 2021). In this study, it focuses on understanding the historical development of Osotho

magazine in chronological order by interpreting evidence, identifying relationships, and examining changes over time, with primary emphasis on the analysis of the publication.

Autoethnography, by contrast, is a subjective approach that allows the researcher to draw upon personal experience to deepen understanding of a particular phenomenon, as well as to access insider meanings by engaging as part of the context under study (Custer, 2014). This study adopts three key components of autoethnography which are; (1) auto or self, which involves analyzing the researcher's experiences and perspectives, (2) ethno or culture, which examines representations in relation to the cultural context of the time and (3) graphy or process, which integrates the researcher's perspective with cultural analysis through descriptive narrative in accordance with autoethnographic methodology (Yana, 2022).

Coding and interpretation

This study employs qualitative textual analysis to examine the content of Osotho magazine, encompassing textual, visual, and communicative elements related to Thai tourism. A coding process is used to identify and categorize key themes, including tourism policy communication, representations through national leaders and celebrities, and various forms of tourism such as community-based, nature-based, and modern tourism. The analysis integrates deductive coding informed by theoretical frameworks with inductive insights derived from the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, the interpretation is guided by an autoethnographic perspective, incorporating the researcher's positionality and reflexivity with the socio-cultural context to extend the analysis beyond descriptive interpretation (Yana, 2022).

Data Sources and sampling

This study employs documentary sources, drawing on both primary and secondary data. The primary source is the Osotho magazine issues published between 1961 and 2025, totaling 65 issues. Purposive sampling was employed in accordance with the research

objectives. The selection criteria focused on issues that provide a summary of tourism developments in the preceding year and outline tourism directions for the year ahead. Accordingly, only Issue No. 6 (the January issue of each year) was selected for analysis. This issue was chosen because it serves as a mid-cycle publication and a New Year issue, typically presenting an overview of the magazine's operations and tourism communication. It should be noted that the publication cycle of Osotho magazine runs from August to September of the following year.

The secondary sources include books, academic texts, research studies, and official documents from government agencies, as well as information retrieved from online databases. All secondary materials were selected based on their credibility and clear citation. Data collection and analysis were conducted between March-May 2025.

Findings

The development of tourism communication and representational imagery in Osotho magazine can be divided into four key stages. Each stage reflects changes in both content representation and the magazine's operation. These shifts mark important turning points, resulting in distinct characteristics that define the magazine's approach to tourism communication in each era, as outlined below.

Figure 1

Tourism Communication Development of Osotho Magazine



The Formative Statge (1st Decade of Osotho Magazine - January Issues, Vols. 1–10, 1961–1971 [B.E. 2504–2514])

Tourism communication during this initial decade primarily focused on narratives of domestic tourist destinations, as well as key developments within the Thai tourism industry. A major portion of the content documented the royal visits of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) to various destinations. The magazine also presented perspectives from international visitors traveling in Thailand. For example, the ‘Visitors’ column featured narratives of foreign tourists and distinguished individuals visiting the country.

Figure 2

The Inside Front Cover of Osotho Magazine Featuring King Bhumibol Adulyadej



Moreover, the content also covers international tourism, presenting notable destinations abroad as well as distinctive and intriguing forms of tourism in various countries, thereby reflecting the role of Osotho magazine in broadening readers’ tourism experiences. At the same time, it also features tourism in Thailand, highlighting destinations, arts and cultural aspects, and the unique attractions that make these places worth the visit. Visual imagery is consistently incorporated across all columns, alongside coverage of significant domestic events and various advertisements included within the magazine.

Overall, the content encompassed significant events, collectively reflecting and reinforcing for readers the importance of Thai tourism. The publication also communicates the growth of the tourism industry from an economic perspective. Accordingly, tourism communication framed in terms of revenue generation and promotional campaigns can also be found in subsequent issues of Osotho Magazine.

Figure 3

The Inside Front Cover of Osotho Magazine Featuring Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat



From the researcher's perspective, as interpreted through the representation framework, the images and content presented during this early period emphasize the use of elite or high-status individuals as key agents in conveying tourism as shown in Figure 3. Another notable aspect is that the images presented in the January issues, which coincide with the New Year period, were predominantly used as greeting cards. These images often featured flowers alongside human figures, including prominent individuals associated with particular occasions, as well as individuals engaged in expressing Thai arts and culture. Examples include almsgiving scenes, traditional dance performances, and Miss Thailand in traditional attire. These visuals reflect conventional representations of Thai culture commonly portrayed in the magazine as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Representation of Thai culture



The Developing Stage (2nd-3rd Decade of Osotho Magazine- January Issues, Vols. 11–30, 1972–1991 [B.E. 2515–2534])

During the second stage of Osotho Magazine, in addition to the continued presence of tourism-related content covering both domestic and international destinations, there was a inclusion of content reflecting the organization’s core policy directions. These emphasized the restoration and preservation of national arts and culture, traditions, customs, and historical sites. Also, the publication incorporated government policies related to tourism, highlighting the alignment between tourism promotion and broader state agendas as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Policy Announcement of Tourism Organization of Thailand



Furthermore, during this stage, the magazine emphasized the natural beauty of landscapes and tourist destinations. It also featured alternative forms of tourism, such as camping in natural settings, reflecting the emergence of more diverse tourism practices. The descriptive style of this period is characterized by figurative and evocative language that parallels visual imagery. Such narrative techniques work in tandem with photographic representations to enhance aesthetic appreciation and reinforce the emotional and sensory appeal of tourism destinations as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Representation of Desnition's Natural Beauty



In the 1980 issue, it was found that the Tourism Promotion Organization had been renamed the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), as indicated on the magazine's front cover. Following this change, there was an increased inclusion of content related to the core policies of the TAT, replacing the previously featured policy content of the magazine. Nevertheless, the publication continued to retain the name 'Osotho.'

Toward the later phase of the Developing Stage, it was also observed that a new recurring column, titled 'Within the Tourism Industry,' appeared consistently in every issue. This column provided content related to the tourism situation in Thailand and the overall situations of the Thai tourism industry. It presented statistical accounts of tourism growth over the preceding year, outlined projected tourism revenue targets, and discussed various

government policies associated with tourism development. In addition, the column ‘Tourism Calendar’ was introduced, offering information on tourism activities aligned with festivals and major events throughout the year.

Another category of content pertains to the television programs of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). This column presented broadcasting schedules of key tourism-related programs, enabling interested readers to follow such content through television as an alternative media channel. This reflects the efforts of the Tourism Authority of Thailand to integrate print media with television as part of its broader communication strategy.

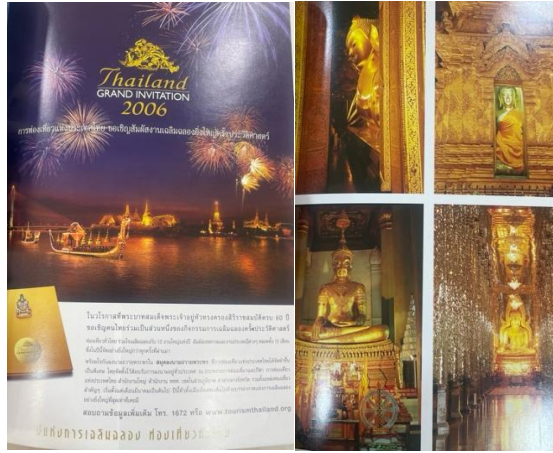
The Flourishing Stage (4th-5th Decade of Osotho Magazine- January Issues, Vols. 31–50, 1992–2011 [B.E. 2535–2554])

This period can be considered a significant turning point in the communication development of Thai tourism, marked by the ‘Amazing Thailand’ campaign in 1995. This initiative was launched in response to the increasingly competitive global tourism market, with the aim not only to attract international tourists but also to stimulate domestic tourism growth.

Importantly, the campaign also functioned as a communicative platform that conveyed messages of national unity and collective effort. It emphasized the value of Thailand’s cultural heritage, highlighting arts, traditions, and historical sites as integral components of the Thailand’s tourism identity. These elements were reflected through tourist destinations and further communicated in the magazine. The Osotho magazine portrayed Thailand tourism festival as a representation of the collaborative efforts of multiple sectors. In this sense, the ‘Amazing Thailand’ campaign can be interpreted as a projection of the grandeur and cultural richness of Thai tourism to the international community.

Figure 7

Representation of Amazing Thailand

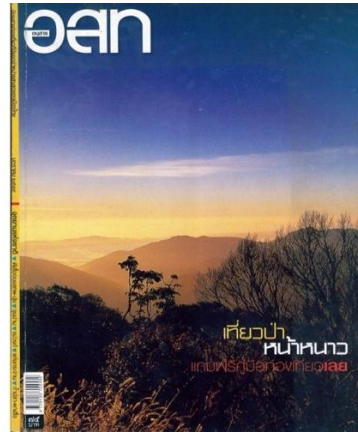


The researcher also observes that ‘amazement’ is constructed not only through depictions of natural beauty but also through representations of luxury, grandeur, and cultural richness. For instance, images of golden Buddha statues situated within ornately decorated temples convey a sense of magnificence and visual splendor as shown in Figure 7. Additionally, the frequent use of terms ‘Amazing’ to describe districts and tourist destinations further reinforces this shift in representational style.

From the researcher’s perspective, the images and representation styles conveyed during this period evoke a stronger sense of novelty and modernity. This is reflected in the use of more vibrant and saturated color schemes, contrasting color pairings, and the adoption of collage techniques as a visual strategy for communicating tourism. At the same time, the typography of the magazine underwent a noticeable transformation as shown in Figure 8. The letterforms shifted from previously rigid, tangular styles to more rounded shapes, conveying a more modern contemporary aesthetic. This revised typographic style closely resembles the Erawan typeface, which gained popularity in Thailand during the late 1990s (Suveeranont, 2024).

Figure 8

The New Typography of Osotho Magazine



Another notable shift in Osotho Magazine is the introduction of postcard-style layouts within the publication. These feature images of tourist destinations ranging from natural landscapes to cultural and traditional destinations presented as detachable postcards. From the researcher's viewpoint, this design functions as an engaging participatory technique, encouraging reader interaction while also enabling the content to be collected and circulated.

The Modern Stage (6th Decade of Osotho Magazine- January Issues, Vols. 51–65, 2012–2025 [B.E. 2555–2568])

Figure 9

Representation of Thailand as A Land of Abundance



During the sixth decade of Osotho magazine, tourism promotion campaigns in Thailand experienced significant growth. This included the continuation of the Amazing Thailand campaign, as well as the introduction of annual tourism promotion initiatives aligned with significant national agendas. These campaigns consistently communicated representations of Thailand as a land of abundance, rich in cultural traditions, and characterized by the friendliness, warmth, and hospitality of its people. Such representations highlight distinctive national attributes that differentiate Thailand from other destinations, reinforcing its unique identity within the global tourism landscape. Within the magazine, tourism narratives during this period placed a stronger emphasis on cultural tourism and community-based tourism, reflecting a shift toward more localized and experiential forms of travel as shown in Figure 9.

Furthermore, in the sixth decade, content related to the magazine's television programs, which had previously been broadcast in parallel, was no longer evident. Instead, QR codes were introduced to connect readers to the magazine's Facebook platform, reflecting the broader transition from traditional broadcast media to new media. In 2014, Osotho magazine was also published in an electronic format, allowing readers to access its content through an application.

In this modern era of tourism, the content also began to foreground perspectives associated with younger generations. This includes the incorporation of sustainable tourism narratives, particularly those articulated by generation Z environmental advocates, highlighting their role in environmental campaigns.

Additionally, it was found that, in this stage, artists, actors, and celebrities were increasingly featured as part of tourism promotion strategies, thereby enhancing the appeal and visibility of the magazine as shown in Figure 10. The use of these individuals as 'idealized

role models,' differed from those in the early period, which primarily featured national leaders or members of the Royal Family as representative figures.

Figure 10

The Use of Celebritites and Content Targeting Generation Z



Discussion

During the formative stage of tourism development, tourism in Thailand was not yet widely recognized. As a result, the primary objective of Osotho magazine was to promote tourism as a mechanism for driving national economic development and tourism being mobilized as an tool of nation-building, reflecting its role in national development (Kaewthep, 2014). Moreover, the communication of tourism policies presented in Osotho magazine during this period reflects the principles of agenda-setting theory. As McCombs and Guo (2014) argue, mass media which in this case, Osotho magazine play a crucial role in selecting and emphasizing particular issues, thereby shaping public attention and rendering those issues salient to the broader audience.

The use of images depicting national leaders in the communication of Thai tourism functions as representations of idealized role models and authority within the Thai sociocultural context. As such, these images are mobilized as symbolic references to

legitimize and persuade audiences so as shaping perceptions of tourism through associations with power, virtue, and social hierarchy (Kaewthep, 2000).

During the second period of Osotho magazine, tourism was still characterized by mass tourism, relying heavily on promotional persuasion to attract visitors to Thailand. As a result, the content presented in the magazine during this time became increasingly diverse, encompassing both tourism promotion campaigns and the presentation of individual-level travel experiences. The tourism promotion during this period can also be explained as place branding articulated through both the physical characteristics of the place and its overall attractiveness (Anantachart, 2022).

From the researcher's perspective, the visual presentation of Osotho magazine conveys tourism experiences across multiple dimensions, with a particular emphasis on the beauty of nature, in line with place branding principles that position a destination as a set of brand attributes (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). This representation appears more diverse compare to the earlier periods, which primarily relied on the use of idealized role model as tools for tourism promotion.

During this period, both visual imagery and descriptive narration function to communicate ways of life and tourism experiences within communities, as well as to present local cultures. The narrative style employs figurative language to portray the beauty of nature, enabling readers to engage in a deeply immersive experience. As Hall (1997a) suggests, language is used to convey images, thoughts, and internal mental processes, serving as a bridge between representation and meaning-making. This finding is also consistent with the study by Prapphai et al. (2020), which examined descriptive narration in Osotho magazine for tourism promotion and found that it encompasses environmental description, emotional expression, word choice, and the use of figurative language.

Tourism communication during the Flourishing stage reflects an agenda-setting process that emphasizes the importance of tourism promotion campaigns, particularly large-scale tourism events (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009). It also coincides with the emergence of the Amazing Thailand campaign, which highlights the attractiveness of Thailand's tourist destinations in line with the principles of place branding (Anantachart, 2022).

In addition, images are used to represent the sense of wonder and grandeur of Thailand's tourist destinations. These images function as signs that enable viewers to associate these destinations with feelings of magnificence, beauty and exploration, consistent with Radford (1998) concept of how individuals construct and articulate ideas about specific phenomena.

For the Modern Stage, the Amazing Thailand campaign has continued to be used as a key policy for promoting Thai tourism. Its core focus lies in communicating the Thai way of life and unique Thai identity, as well as emphasizing the specific attractiveness of different destinations. This approach aligns with the concept of place branding, which reflects the overall perceptions, thoughts, feelings, associations, and expectations that people hold when they encounter or experience a particular place (Van Ham, 2008).

Furthermore, with a strong emphasis on Thainess, the content increasingly represents local destinations and distinctive Thai identity, which emerge as key agendas of this period. This, in turn, reflects how the magazine frames the image of Thai tourism and articulates the importance of promoting tourism from this perspective, thereby supporting the principles of the agenda-setting framework (McCombs & Guo, 2014). This is also consistent with prior research by Pattananupong (1996), which indicates that Osotho magazine plays a significant role in promoting and shaping the direction of Thai tourism.

During this period, tourism communication shift back to the use of idealized role models. However, instead of political leaders or members of Royal Family, popular artists and

actors are employed. This shift reflects broader cultural changes and evolving social values within the Thai context.

Conclusion

This study identifies four key developmental stages of Osotho magazine that reflect shifts in tourism communication in Thailand, the Formative Stage, which emphasized awareness of tourism policies and industry significance, the Developing Stage, marked by increasing diversity in content, particularly cultural tourism, the Flourishing Stage, characterized by the ‘Amazing Thailand’ campaign and the promotion of tourism wonder, and the Modern Stage, which highlights contemporary styles, targets younger audiences, and incorporates celebrities in tourism promotion. These stages demonstrate the dynamic evolution of tourism communication in response to socio-cultural and policy changes.

For theoretical implication, the findings contribute to the understanding of representation by illustrating how tourism narratives and identities are constructed and redefined over time. In terms of agenda-setting, the study highlights the role of state-affiliated media in prioritizing specific tourism themes aligned with national strategies. From a place branding perspective, the results reveal how Thailand’s destination image has been strategically developed through shifting symbolic meanings, from cultural heritage to experiential and modern tourism. This finding is consistent with previous research by Kongpolphrom and Tantivejakul (2026), which demonstrates that Thai tourism campaigns from TAT have progressively transitioned from cultural representations toward experience-based and alternative tourism.

Practically, the findings offer implications for tourism communicators and policymakers by emphasizing the importance of adaptive communication strategies, the

integration of cultural and contemporary elements, and the strategic use of influential figures to enhance destination appeal and relevance across different audience segments.

Limitation and Suggestion for Future Study

This study employs a historical research approach in conjunction with autoethnography, integrating both objective and subjective perspectives. However, the researcher selected Osotho magazine as the primary data source and focused exclusively on new year issues in order to capture an overall picture of the publication. As a result, the analysis reflects only the perspective of the sender. Furthermore, the study is limited to a single type of medium, the Osotho magazine, which may not fully reflect the broader ecosystem of tourism communication across other media platforms such as digital or audiovisual channels.

To achieve a more comprehensive understanding, future research could include other issues of the magazine. Additionally, examining the audience's perspective such as their opinions and attitudes toward the magazine's communication practices would provide further insights. Also, future research should incorporate comparative analyses with other tourism-related publications to further examine how tourism representations are constructed across different media platforms. To enhance the completeness of the study, other research methods may also be employed to offer a broader and more holistic view of the subject.

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