

# 行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

## 以資源基礎理論觀點探討旅行業策略聯盟績效

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計畫主持人：張德儀

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**Performance Evaluation of Strategic Alliances among Travel**

**Agencies: A Resources-based View**

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## 以資源基礎理論觀點探討旅行業策略聯盟績效

### Performance Evaluation of Strategic Alliances among Travel Agencies: A Resources-based View

計畫編號：NSC92-2416-H-328-002

執行期限：92年8月1日至93年7月31日

主持人：張德儀 高雄餐旅學院旅運管理系

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#### 摘要

本研究旨在以資源基礎之觀點，探討旅行業策略聯盟之績效。以 Miller and Shamsie(1996)提出之資源分類，由資源互補性之觀點，將資源區分為財產基礎資源與知識基礎資源，探討旅行業間之互補性資源與策略聯盟績效間之關係，是否透過關係資本之中介角色，進而影響策略聯盟績效。爰此，本研究首先回顧相關理論文獻及實證成果，以瞭解各變數之意涵與概念。其次，建立資源互補性與策略聯盟績效因果關係之觀念性架構，進行業者深入訪談，並參酌業者經營現況，依旅行業之特質進行問卷設計。調查對象係以設立於台北市，曾參與 PAK 聯盟之綜合與甲種旅行社之高階經理人，最後，運用線性結構(LISREL)分析財產基礎資源互補性、知識基礎資源互補性之前因變項，透過關係資本影響旅行業之策略聯盟績效。研究結果可提供旅行業之經營提出有用之決策資訊，同時對於管理者掌握公司之競爭優勢與經營策略 研擬提供具體之方向。

**關鍵詞：**策略聯盟績效、資源基礎理論、關係資本、旅行業

#### Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate the performance of strategic alliance among travel agencies from resource-based view. The study based on classification of resources by Miller and Shamsie (1996) that classified firm resources into property-based resources and knowledge-based resources. The complementarities of property-based resources and complementarities of knowledge-based resources are the independent variables. In addition, relationship capital acted as determines the quality of relationship in the collaboration. We consider three key aspects of relationship capital, namely, trust, commitment and information exchange, and they are mediating role. And strategic alliance performance is a dependent variable. This study explores the integrating model of resources-based theory and the performance of strategy alliance. First, according to the literature review, we realize the fundamental concepts and empirical relationships among resources based theory, relationship capital and strategy alliance performance. Second, we establish the conceptual framework, and conduct deep interview with practitioners. We also consider the managerial condition to design

questionnaire. Furthermore, the research investigates the causal relationship among property-based resources, knowledge-based resources, relationship capital and strategy alliance performance by using LISREL analyzes. Finally, the result of this study will provide top management with useful information and the suggestions would be provided for the managers of tourism industry.

Keywords : strategy alliance performance, resources based theory, relationship capital, travel agency

## ***Introduction***

Today, there are more and more enterprises help their competitiveness through strategic alliance (Artz and Brush, 2000). Since travel industry is a multiple-business industry that it has to combine airline companies, hotels, scenic and recreation spots, and even other travel agencies to accomplish services. Therefore, strategic alliance is popular in Taiwan travel industry. Because most of travel agencies in Taiwan are middle or small enterprises that their resources like capital, size and number of employees are smaller comparing with other industry. If sales of an individual travel agency cannot reach economy of scale, it often seeks opportunities to cooperate with other travel agencies to increase rates of forming travel group. Such joint and cooperative operation by several travel agencies to meet market competition is called PAK in travel industry (Tsai, 2001). The primary purpose of PAK is to integrate resources of participant members to enlarge outbound quantity and increase economy of scale. Usually the leading company of PAK is airline or travel agency. The leading company should find suitable PAK member companies to jointly sell travel products. PAK alliance has existed in travel industry in Taiwan for many years. However, there are few researches to explore its performance. The research, therefore, is trying to explore performance of strategic alliance from view of resources-based theory.

In the current study, we found that on strategic alliance related topics, scholars usually explored factors that affect performance of strategic alliance form many different views of theories, for example, Organization Learning Theory (Barkema et al., 1996), Resources-Based Theory (Hitt et al., 2000, Afuah, 2000), Social Network Theory (Baum et al., 2000, Gualati, 1999), Knowledge-Based Theory (Inkpen & Dinur, 1998; Kale et al., 2000), Transaction Cost Theory (Gulati, 1995, Parkhe, 1993) and Game Theory (Parkhe, 1993). Among these theories, “Resources-Based” view that emphasizes on review of internal resources of enterprise has been deemed as a way to understand industry structure and its competitive advantages. Resources-Based view emphasizes that the factor affecting company’s competitive strategy is company’s accumulated resources not competitive environment. In other words, that is “how many resources a company has, how much they will succeed”.

However, when a company finds their own resources not competitive (that is, easy to imitate, no value, not scarce and has substitution), they will seek a company from outside that has valuable resources to form an alliance. The purpose of such behavior is to integrate resources of other enterprises to make up their own insufficient values or enhance competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). Therefore, it is more appropriate to measure performance of alliance from resource-based view (Das, 2000). Besides, in the past, there were many scholars who explored effects of complementarities of resources on performance of strategic alliance from resources-based view (Sarkar et al., 2001). But the scope of resources contains too many things that if we not classify resources, we may not precisely point out in analyzing results of researches which resources really affect performance of alliance and further to offer effective management connotation. Miller and Shamsie (1996) divided resources according to obstacles of imitation of resources into property-based resources and knowledge-based resources. We will take advantage his classifications of resources to measure separately the effects of different type of resources on performance of PAK alliance in travel industry.

Based on above problems of research, the article is organized as follows: We initially review prior theory and research pertaining to resources based theory, relationship capital and performance of alliance. We then develop hypotheses about the relationship between relationship capital and performance of alliance among alliance members in travel industry. Next, we present the methods and results to explore the hypothesized causal relationships among the theoretical construct, we estimated and evaluated the structural portion of the model. Finally, we conclude by discussing the implications for services marketing researchers and managers.

## *Literature review and Hypotheses*

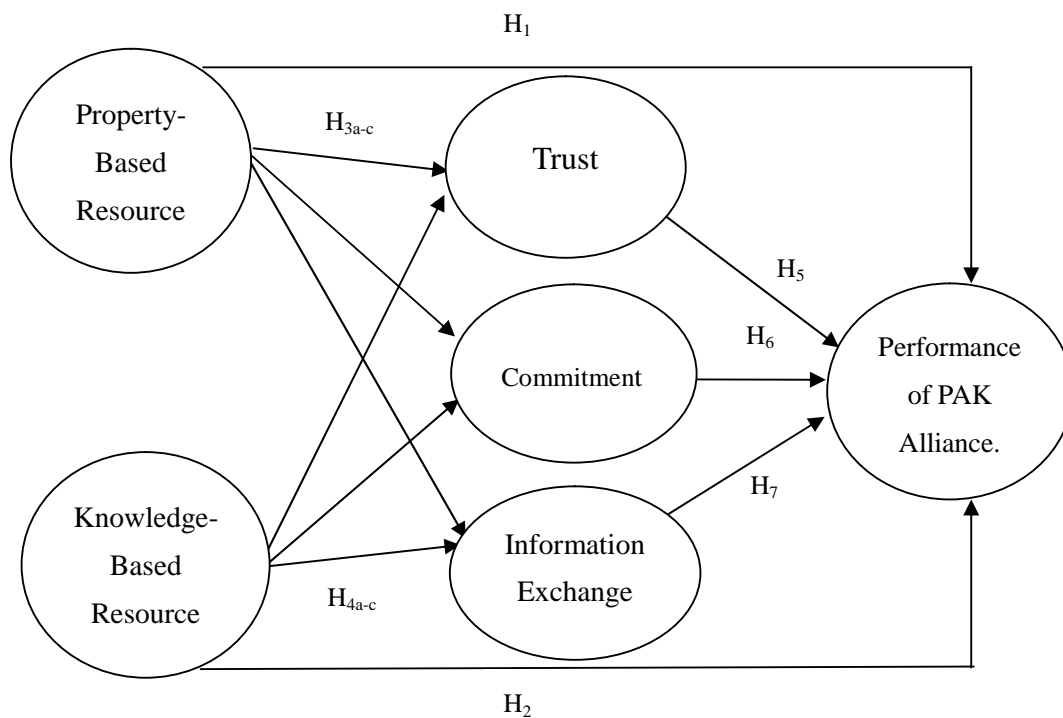
### **Complementary Resources vs. Performance of Alliance**

Since Penrose (1959) offered resources-based conception, a lot of literature concerning strategic management began to mention that when an enterprise gained complementary resources, they would further to create values. In the field of alliance, some researches have explained importance of complementarities of resources on strategic alliance. Parkhe (1991) also thought that complementarities of resources were the reasons why a strategic alliance existed. The partners could be interdependent and help the formation, development and effectiveness of alliance. The complementarities of resources emphasize on reciprocal extent among partners and differences of technology, resources and capability that could generate synthetic effects of alliance among partners.

From view of practices, to understand which resources are key resources that may really affect performance of alliance has very important meaning for operators because they

could be criteria for operators to look for alliance partners. However, resources include visible and invisible resources and contain so broadly. Most of the past researches that explored performance of alliance from the angle of resource emphasized on the relationship between the complementarity of the whole resources and performance of alliance (Sarkar et al., 2001). It was difficult for researchers and operators to understand clearly which resources were the key resources that really affected performance of alliance. We adopt the viewpoint of Sarkar( 2001 )to define complimentary of resources among alliance partners as the extent alliance partners offer their unique advantages and valuable resources. Besides, resources can be divided into property-based and knowledge-based resources.

From viewpoint of complementarities of resources, the research is trying to explore the effects of five variables including complementary of property-based resource, complementary of knowledge-based resource and relationship capital (trust, commitment and information exchange) on performance. The structure of research is shown as Figure 1. The structure takes complementary of property-based resource and complementary of knowledge-based resource as independent variables, performance of alliance as dependent variable and relationship capital (trust, commitment and information exchange) as mediating variable to explore relationship among three parties.



**Figure 1 Hypothesized Model**

## *Methodology*

### **Sample and Data Collection**

The data collection is focused on travel agents that joined the PAK and had ads on tourist magazines or ordinary newspapers during January through April, 2003. We sent questionnaires to top management were persons who were asked to fill questionnaires or answer in interview.

Total 800 questionnaires were mailed, 336 questionnaires were returned, the rate of returning is 42%. Among 322 returned questionnaires, there were 31 invalid questionnaires and 291 valid questionnaires. Members of PAK alliance had to answer according to their real feeling about partners of alliance.

### **Analytical Procedures**

To examine the effects of complimentary of resources on relationship capital (include trust, commitment, Information Exchange) and performance of PAK alliance, the hypothesized model was tested using LISREL 8.12 (Jöreskof and Sörborn, 1993). First, confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the adequacy of the measurement model, including the reliability and convergent and discriminate validity of the measures. Next, to test the hypothesized causal relationships among the theoretical constructs, we estimated and evaluated the structural portion of the model.

### **Measurement**

To remain consistent with previous research, the measures were taken or adapted form previous studies. In addition, we made a slight modification by changing the wording of items to fit the features of travel industry. Complimentarily of resources among alliance partners was operation as the extent alliance partners offer their unique advantages and valuable resources. Besides, it divided resources according to their inimitability into complimentarily of property-based resources and complimentarily of knowledge-based resources. The three dimensions of property-based resources were measured by a 6-item scale. Of these items, we were adapted from Sarkar et al.(2001) and Anderson & Narus (1990) research. Complimentary of property-based resources scale to measure brand image, flight seats acquisition and capital. Knowledge-based resources was measured with a six-dimension 12-item scale adapted from Sarkar et al.(2001) and Anderson & Narus (1990). Knowledge-based resources scale to measure the ability of group control, product design, operating group, access, price adjustment and marketing.

To assess the alliance partners trust, we used four items adapted from Sarkar et al.(2001) work. Commitment was measured with four items adapted from Sarkar et al.(2001) and

Anderson & Weitz's (1992) research.(e.g., "strong loyalty to PAK was the greatest", "followed by commitment members willing to make to help plans of successful"). To assess Information Exchange, we used four items that measured the items, adapted from Sarkar et al.(2001) and Heide & John's(1992) research. Finally, we included a four-item, measure of performance of PAK alliance based on Sarkar et al. (2001) research. All items were measured on five-point "strongly disagree-strongly agree" scale.

### **Reliability and Validity**

All of the scales have almost been naturalized in prior studies, and a scale validation procedure was accomplished using the confirmatory factor analysis, construct reliability analysis and inter-correlations analysis for this study's six variables. The purpose of this portion of the analysis was to identify and omit poorly performing items for the reflective measures.

To purify further the multidimensional measure of scales, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis in which we loaded the indicators on their appropriate dimensions. We uses the PRELIS2 to change raw materials into covariance matrix then used confirmatory factor analysis to test construct validity of measurement model (including aggregation validity and discriminate validity) (Hair et al., 1995; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The reliability of scales were determined by computing Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , which is a measure of internal consistency reliability. All scales have acceptable  $\alpha$  values ranging between 0.7199 and 0.8814. The measures demonstrated excellent reliability, as all  $\alpha$  s were well above the commonly used threshold value of .70 (Hair et al., 1995).

Convergent validity is demonstrated for all construct measure because all  $\rho$  indices are above .50, which suggests that the variance captured by underlying latent construct is greater than the variance due to measurement error (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). On discriminate validity, as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981), In this test , a construct is empirically distinct if the average variance explained by that construct's items is greater than the construct's shared variance with every other construct(i.e., the square of intercorrelation). For example, Property-Based Resource demonstrates discriminate validity because its average variance extracted ( $\rho = .76$ ) is greater than the square of its correlations with Knowledge-Based Resource ( $.539^2 = .29$ ), trust ( $.316^2 = .10$ ), Commitment( $.461^2 = .21$ ), Exchange of Information ( $.411^2 = .17$ ) and Performance of PAK Alliance ( $.421^2 = .18$ ). We conclude that all measures exhibited construct validity.



**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for Construct Measures**

Measurement Item <sup>a</sup>		Mean	SD	Factor loadings
<b>Property-Based Resource(PBR)</b>		3.67	0.58	
brand image	PR1	3.88	0.69	0.60
	PR4			0.76
flight seats acquisition	PR2	3.98	0.62	0.62
	PR5			0.73
capital	PR3	3.20	0.91	0.46
	PR6			0.53
<b>Knowledge-Based Resource(KBR)</b>		4.04	0.49	
ability of group control	KN1	3.98	0.59	0.64
	KN7			0.64
ability of product design	KN2	4.04	0.59	0.71
	KN8			0.70
ability of operating group	KN3	4.01	0.65	0.67
	KN9			0.72
ability of access	KN4	4.21	0.57	0.57
	KN10			0.63
ability of price adjustment	KN5	3.88	0.73	0.48
	KN11			0.58
ability of marketing	KN6	4.14	0.59	0.67
	KN12			0.64
<b>Trust</b>		3.74	0.82	
	TR1	3.77	0.92	0.87
	TR2	3.71	0.90	0.87
	TR3	2.58	0.87	0.22 <sup>b</sup>
	TR4	2.48	0.92	0.23 <sup>b</sup>
<b>Commitment</b>		3.83	0.61	
	CO1	3.88	0.69	0.78
	CO1	4.01	0.67	0.72
	CO1	3.91	0.69	0.80
	CO1	3.52	0.92	0.84
<b>Exchange of Information (EOI)</b>		3.94	0.57	
	IN1	4.05	0.67	0.68
	IN2	3.95	0.66	0.66
	IN3	3.82	0.71	0.62
<b>Performance of PAK Alliance (PA).</b>		3.60	0.50	
	PA1	3.58	0.65	0.66
	PA2	3.65	0.68	0.64
	PA3	3.79	0.69	0.62
	PA4	3.38	0.67	0.49

a. subjects responded to all measurement items using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

b. poor loadings, dropped the item

**Table 2  
Construct Reliability and Intercorrelations  
for the Complete Set of Constructs**

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Property-Based Resource	(.76/.79)					
2. Knowledge-Based Resource	.539**	(.82/.88)				
3. Trust	.316**	.411**	(.77/.79)			
4. Commitment	.461**	.559**	.674**	(.79/.83)		
5. Exchange Information	.411**	.529**	.553**	.683**	(.77/.79)	
6. Performance of PAK Alliance.	.421**	.492**	.460**	.639**	.592**	(.70/.72)

Note : The diagonal entries are reliability estimates. The first entry inside the parentheses is Fornell and Larcker's (1981) index of the average variance extracted by the construct ( $\rho$ ), the second is Cronbach's index of internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha$ ).

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## *Analysis and Results*

The results of survey showed that more than 50% travel agents had less than 20 employees. That means travel agents in Taipei that participated in PAK are small enterprise that have less employees. Regarding established years of travel agents, 6-8 years are the most, about 19.9%, followed by 3-5 years, 19.6, more than 20years 14.8%. 47.4 % travel agents are major agents of airline companies while 52.6% travel agent's not major agents of airline companies. 66% travel agents participated in contracted PAK (needed down payment and guarantee payment) while 34% travel agents participated in non-contracted PAK. The means that most travel agents participated in PAK alliances through contracted cooperation. 27.5% PAKs are Airline company-led PAKs while 72.5% are travel agent -led PAKs. Airline company-led PAK usually invite travel agents that are well-known in markets or have large business quantity to participate. But most of travel agents in Taiwan are small size and own small capital, so when those travel agents feel their resources insufficient, they are prone to organize PAK with other travel agents to combine their resources together and create profits.

### **Hypotheses Testing**

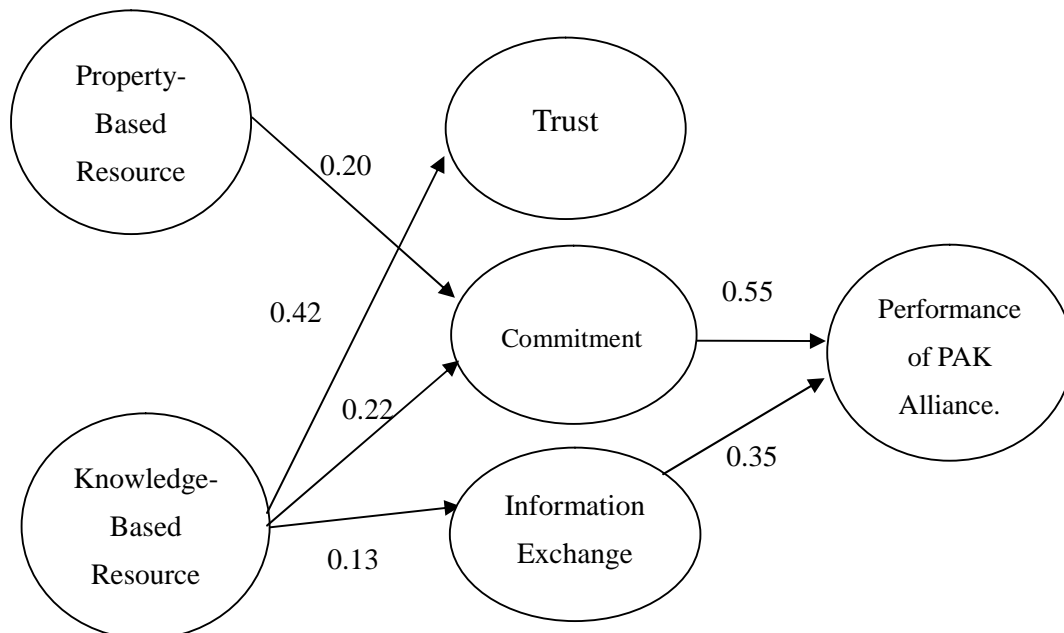
The overall confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the proposed measurement relationships were consistent with the data. Consequently, the Hypothesized structural model was next estimated using LISREL 8.12 (Jöreskof and Sörborn, 1993), with the measurement model being run simultaneously. Fitting the model to the data resulted in acceptable goodness-of-fit indices (GFI) is 0.88 while adjusted goodness-of-fit (AGFT) is 0.82. Root mean square residual (RMR) is 0.027; comparative fit index (CFI) us 0.9; increment fit index (IFI) is 0.9.  $\chi^2(194) = 413.98$ ,  $p < .001$ . According to above-mentioned indicators, most of indicators good fit of the model.

These indicate good fit of the model but not necessarily support for all seven hypotheses. Support for the hypotheses was examined via the significance of the individual path coefficients reported in the Table 3. Consequently, the hypothesized model was modified by deleting these paths. The revised model is presented in Figure 2. Estimation of the revised model resulted in a fit that was still good: GFI=.88, CFI=.90, RMR=0.026,  $\chi^2(194) = 415.98$ ,  $p < .001$ . The revised model is preferable, however, because it is more parsimonious in that it has 4 less path ; its model fit is jest as good. In addition, all the other hypothesized paths were statistically significant, indicating support for H4a-c, H3b, H6 and H7.

**Table 3 Standardized Estimates and t Values for Hypothesized and Revised Models**

Relationship	Standardized Estimate	t Value	Hypotheses test
<b>Hypothesized model</b>			
PBR→Trust ( $\gamma_{11}$ )	0.10	0.88	not Supported H3a
KBR→Trust ( $\gamma_{12}$ )	0.42	3.71*	Supported H4a
PBR→Commitment ( $\gamma_{21}$ )	0.19	2.13*	Supported H3b
KBR→Commitment ( $\gamma_{22}$ )	0.22	2.58*	Supported H4b
PBR→Information Exchange ( $\gamma_{31}$ )	0.07	0.67	not Supported H3c
KBR→Information Exchange ( $\gamma_{32}$ )	0.13	1.98*	Supported H4c
PBR→PA( $\gamma_{41}$ )	0.08	0.7	not Supported H1
KBR→PA( $\gamma_{42}$ )	0.01	0.06	not Supported H2
Trust→PA ( $\beta_{11}$ )	0.13	0.81	not Supported H5
Commitment →PA( $\beta_{12}$ )	0.55	2.36*	Supported H6
Information Exchange→PA( $\beta_{13}$ )	0.37	2.12*	Supported H7
$\chi^2(194) = 413.98, p < .001$			
GFI=.88, CFI=.90, RMR=0.027			
<b>Revised model</b>			
KBR→Trust ( $\gamma_{12}$ )	0.42	3.73*	
PBR→Commitment ( $\gamma_{21}$ )	0.20	2.13*	
KBR→Commitment ( $\gamma_{22}$ )	0.22	2.58*	
KBR→Information Exchange ( $\gamma_{32}$ )	0.13	2.22*	
Commitment →PA( $\beta_{12}$ )	0.55	2.36*	
Information Exchange→PA( $\beta_{13}$ )	0.35	2.10*	
$\chi^2(194) = 415.98, p < .001$			
GFI=.88, CFI=.90, RMR=0.026			

Note : \*Estimate significant at the 0.05



Model Fit: GFI=.88, CFI=.90, RMR=0.026

$\chi^2 = 415.98 (d.f.=194)$

**Figure 2 Revised Model and Standardized Estimates**

## ***Discussion and Implications***

According to empirical results, the complementary of property-based resource and complementary of knowledge-based resource could not significantly affect performance of alliance. In the research, the higher complementary of property-based resource was, the more members were willing to commit to PAK while its effects on confidence and information exchange were not significant. When members were conscious that they need to depend on knowledge-based resources of other members to reach target performance of PAK, they would more cherish relationship among members, trust other members and were willing to contribute their resources to alliance and exchange of related information.

If members of PAK are willing to contribute their resources voluntarily to alliance they participate, it will enhance performance of alliance. Besides, If members could communicate frequently, exchange of related information, have common sense on policy-decision, it will be helpful to performance of alliance containing the quality of organizing travel groups, enhancement of image of company, accomplishment of target quantity of organizing travel groups and increases of profit. Therefore, when members have loyalty to PAK, are willing to contribute their own labor force and resources, send capable persons to carry out PAK plans and are willing to commit the success of PAK plans, then quality of services in organizing travel groups and corporate images could be enhanced, targeted quantity of travel groups could be reached and bring profit to their companies.

The research only explored the outbound PAKs. Future researches may conduct follow-up explorations into inbound PAKs. They may also compare different travel products to see if there is difference in needed resources to allow operators understand what resources partners of inbound alliances and outbound alliances should have to help leaders of alliances to look for suitable partners of alliance. Besides, our governments are strongly developing inbound travels. So we may see the flourishing of inbound travels in short time. The researcher hence suggests that follow-up researches explore the performance of inbound alliances. Secondly, after reviewing related literature of strategic alliance, we found that many scholars explored performance of strategic alliance from different view points of theories. Therefore the researcher suggests that follow-up researches explore from different view points or try to cut in related topics from different view points and explore factors that affect performance of travel agent alliance. By doing so, we may precisely learn factors that affect performance of alliance and provide operators with suggestions on selecting partners of alliance and enhancement of performance of alliance.

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