

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and tables of percentage. The results contained four parts as follows:

Part 1: Personal information of the respondents

Part 2: The factors influencing the foreigner's decisions to join The Middle Way meditation retreat

Part 3: Their satisfaction with The Middle Way meditation retreat

Part 4: Their opinions and suggestions.

4.1 PERSONAL DATA OF THE RESPONDENTS

In first part of the questionnaire, there were questions asking about the respondents' personal data.

Table 1. Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	20	40%
Female	30	60%
Total	50	100%

Table 1 indicates that from 50 respondents, there were 20 male and 30 female respondents.

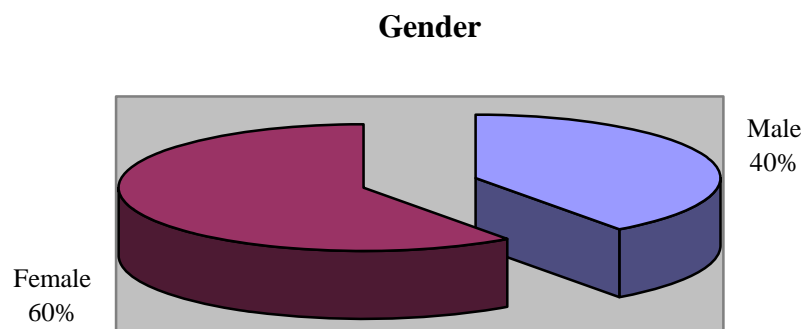


Table 2. Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 26	4	8%
26-30	3	6%
31-35	4	8%
36-40	4	8%
41-45	6	12%
Over 45	29	58%
Total	50	100%

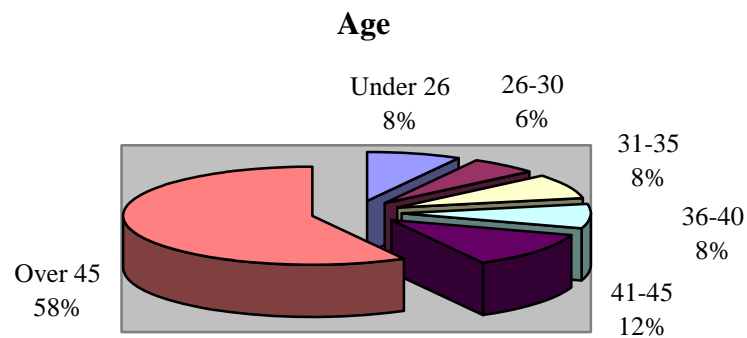


Table 2 indicates that there were 4 respondents who were under 26 years old, 3 respondents aged between 26-30 years old, 4 respondents aged between 31-35 years old, 4 respondents aged between 36-40 years old, 6 respondents aged between 41-45 years old, while more than half of them (29 respondents) were over 45 years old. The result shows that there are people from all ages interested in meditation.

Table 3. Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	19	38%
Married	25	50%
Divorce / Separated	1	2%
Widow	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Marital Status

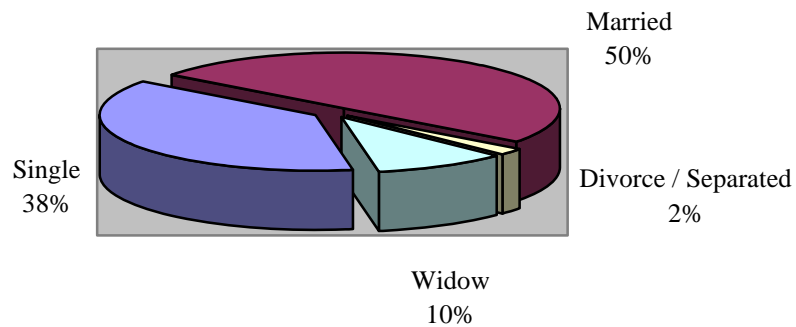
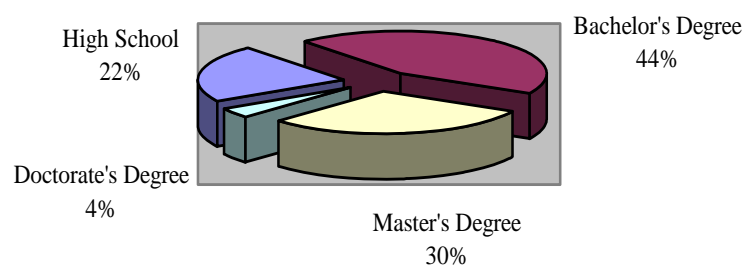


Table 3 shows that of 50 respondents, 19 of them were single, 25 were married, 1 was divorce or separated, and 5 of them are widow.

Table 4. Educational Level

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
High school	11	22%
Bachelor degree	22	44%
Master degree	15	30%
Doctoral degree	2	4%
Other	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Educational Level



According to Table 4, foreigners who join The Middle Way are considerably well-educated. Most of the respondents (44%) held a Bachelor's degree, followed by Master's degree (30%), High School Diploma (22%), and Doctorate's degree (4%).

Table 5. Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Self-employed	6	12%
Freelance / Consultant	3	6%
Company employee	14	28%
Government service	8	16%
student	3	6%
unemployed	6	12%
Others	10	20%
Total	50	100%

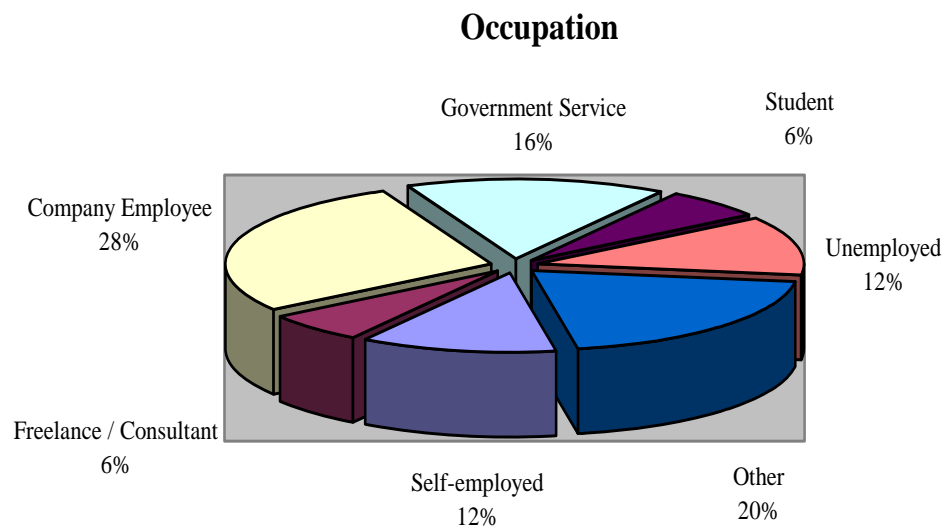


Table 5 indicates the occupation of the respondents; 12% of the respondents were self-employed, 6% were freelancers or consultants, 6% of them worked for government service, 6% were students, 12% were unemployed, while 20% of them were housewives or retired. It is interesting that most of the respondents (28%) were company employees. This is probably because these people work hard; thus, they might need meditation practice to relieve their stress.

Table 6. Annual Income (from every source)

Annual income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than US\$ 10,000	12	24%
US\$ 10,000 – 25,000	8	16%
US\$ 25,000 – 40,000	9	18%
More than US\$ 40,000	21	42%
Total	50	100%

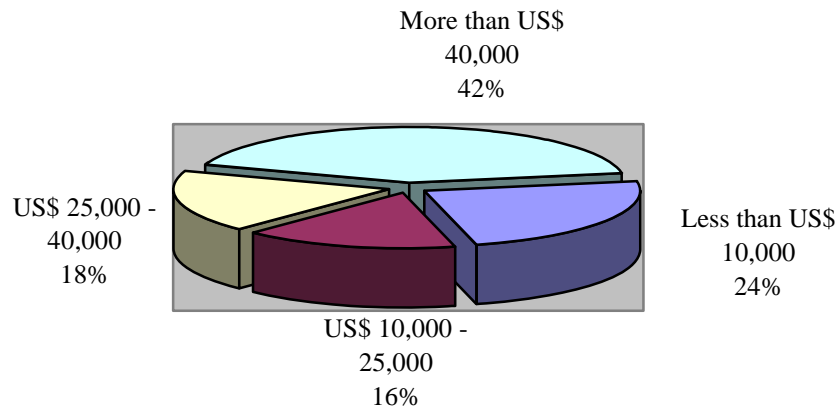
Annual Income

Table 6 indicates that most of the respondents (42%) earn more than US\$ 40,000, followed by less than US\$ 10,000 (24%), US\$25,000 – 40,000 (18%), and US\$ 10,000 – 25,000 (16%). We may also say that 60% of the respondents have an annual income of more than US\$ 25,000. This amount of money is relatively high, especially when compared to Thai nationals' income. One reason could be that in order to join The Middle Way, the respondents needed to pay for the transportation to come to Thailand (except those who already resided in Thailand). Thus, they need to have enough money to cover all the expenses.

Table 7. Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Buddhism	25	50%
Christianity	16	32%
Islam	2	4%
Hinduism	2	4%
Other	5	10%
Total	50	100%

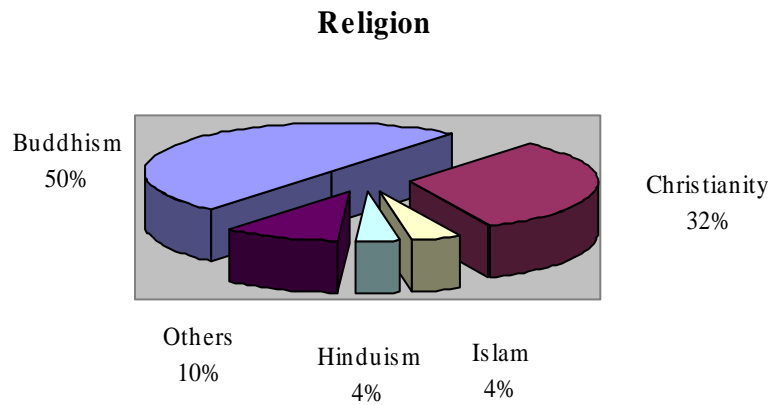


Table 7 shows that of the 50 respondents, half of them were Buddhists. This is probably because Buddhists tend to have a background in meditation in their religious context. Other than Buddhists, 32% of the respondents were Christian, 4% were Islamic, 4% were Hindu, and the rest 10% had other beliefs or no religion.

Table 8. Country of Residence (By continent)

Country of residence	Frequency	Percentage
Thailand	0	0%
Asia	24	48%
Oceania	7	14%
Europe	10	20%
America	5	10%
Africa	4	8%
Total	50	100%

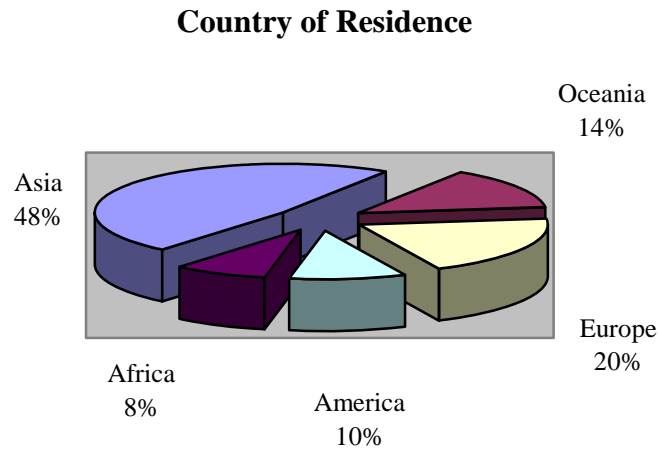


Table 8 indicates that most of the respondents (48%) resided in Asia (none of them resided in Thailand), 14% were from Oceania, 20% were from Europe, 10% were from America, and 8% of them were from Africa.

Table 9. How Did They Find Out about The Middle Way

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Word of mouth	28	56%
Brochure / guidebook	2	4%
Search engine / Website	17	34%
DMC satellite channel	3	6%
Total	50	100%

According to Table 9, most of the respondents (56%) heard about The Middle Way from people they knew, followed by search engine or website (34%), DMC satellite channel (6%), and the rest (4%) found The Middle Way in brochures or guidebooks.

The researcher also found that 90% of the respondents joined The Middle Way for the first time. However, all of the respondents had learned about the benefits of meditation, and 75% of them had practiced meditation before.

4.2 INFLUENCING FACTORS

In this part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to rate the factors influencing their decision to join The Middle Way meditation retreat.

Table 10. The Factors Influencing the Foreigner's Decisions to Join The Middle Way

Factors		The degree of importance					Mean
		Most important 5	Important 4	Quite important 3	Not so important 2	Not important 1	
1	Accessibility to the site	23 46%	13 26%	9 18%	4 8%	1 2%	4.06
2	Atmosphere of the site	34 68%	12 24%	3 6%	1 2%	0 0%	4.58
3	Accommodation and facilities	19 38%	17 34%	12 24%	2 4%	0 0%	4.06
4	Safety	31 62%	10 20%	4 8%	5 10%	0 0%	4.34
5	Meditation technique / method	31 62%	15 30%	0 0%	4 8%	0 0%	4.46
6	Class duration	20 40%	14 28%	12 24%	3 6%	1 2%	3.98
7	Class size	21 42%	6 18%	14 28%	5 10%	1 2%	3.82
8	Course reputation	27 54%	14 28%	8 16%	1 2%	0 0%	4.34
9	Instructor's credibility	29 58%	16 32%	4 8%	1 2%	0 0%	4.46
10	Costs & Fees	14 28%	14 28%	17 34%	3 6%	2 4%	3.70

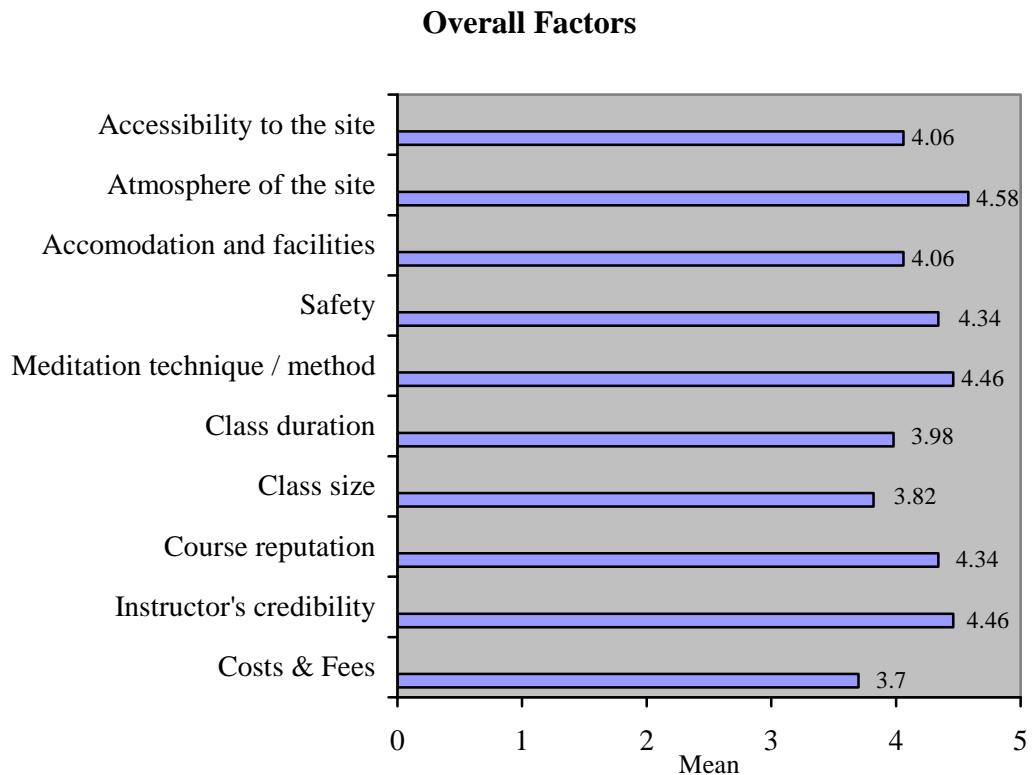


Table 10 indicates the degree of importance in each factor that affected the respondents' decisions to join The Middle Way. The result shows that the most significant factor was the atmosphere of the meditation site with the score of 4.58, followed by the meditation technique (4.46) and the instructor's credibility (4.46), safety (4.34) and the course reputation (4.34), the accessibility to the site (4.06) and the accommodation and facilities (4.06), the class duration (3.98), and the class size (3.82). The least important factor was the costs and fee (3.70).

4.3 SATISFACTION WITH THE MIDDLE WAY MEDITATION RETREAT

In this part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to rate the satisfaction with the place, the course, the instructor and the staff members after the retreat ended. Table 11 -13 indicates the respondents' satisfaction with The Middle Way in each aspect.

Firstly, satisfaction with the place:

Table 11. Satisfaction with the Place

Factors		The degree of satisfaction					Mean
		Extremely agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Extremely disagree	
		5	4	3	2	1	
Satisfaction with the place							
1	The site is easy to come to.	10 20%	23 46%	15 30%	2 4 %	0 0%	3.82
2	The physical atmosphere of the site is pleasant.	39 78%	11 22%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4.78
3	The accommodation is comfortable.	14 28%	36 72%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4.28
4	The place is clean.	37 74%	13 26%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4.74
5	I feel that the site is safe from danger.	26 52%	24 48%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4.52

The highest level of satisfaction was given to ‘The physical atmosphere of the site is pleasant’ with the score of 4.78. The result shows that 78% of the respondents strongly agreed and 22% of the respondents agreed that the atmosphere at Suan Pa Himmawan is pleasant. Nobody disagreed or felt undecided.

The second highest level of satisfaction with the place was ‘The place is clean’ with the score of 4.74, followed by ‘I feel that the site is safe from danger’ with the score of 4.52, and ‘The accommodation is comfortable’ with the score of 4.28. The least satisfactory element was rated at 3.82 on ‘The site is easy to come to’.

Secondly, satisfaction with the course:

Table 12. Satisfaction with the Course

Factors		The degree of satisfaction					Mean
		Extremely agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Extremely disagree	
		5	4	3	2	1	
Satisfaction with the course							
6	The meditation technique does not oppose my personal belief.	34 68%	15 30%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	4.64
7	I can follow the instructor’s teaching easily.	21 42%	20 40%	9 18%	0 0%	0 0%	4.24
8	The duration of the entire course is appropriate.	27 54%	22 44%	0 0%	1 2%	0 0%	4.50
9	The size of the class is appropriate.	27 54%	22 44%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	4.52
10	The admission fee is reasonable.	29 58%	21 42%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4.58

The highest level of satisfaction was given to 'The meditation technique does not oppose my personal belief' with the score of 4.64. The result shows that 68% of the respondents strongly agreed and 30% of the respondents agreed with this point. Only one of the respondents disagreed.

The second highest level of satisfaction with the course was 'The admission fee is reasonable' with the score of 4.58, followed by 'The size of the class is appropriate' with the score of 4.52, and 'The duration of the entire course is appropriate' with the score of 4.50. The least satisfactory element was rated at 4.24 on 'I can follow the instructor's teaching easily'.

According to the result, we may conclude that most of the respondents were satisfied with the meditation technique taught at The Middle Way. However, sometimes they felt it was not very easy to follow the teaching. The class size, the entire class duration, and the registration fee were regarded as reasonable.

Finally, satisfaction with the instructors and staff members:

Table 13. Satisfaction with the Instructors and Staff Members

Factors		The degree of satisfaction					Mean
		Extremely agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Extremely disagree	
		5	4	3	2	1	
Satisfaction with the instructors and staff members							
11	The instructors have good knowledge and skill in meditation.	43 86%	5 10%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	4.82
12	The instructors’ teaching style is pleasant.	36 72%	13 26%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	4.7
13	Staff members provide good hospitality.	46 92%	2 4%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	4.88
14	Staff members are supportive.	40 80%	9 18%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	4.78
15	English communication ability of instructors and other staff members is practical.	30 60%	16 32%	4 8%	0 0%	0 0%	4.52

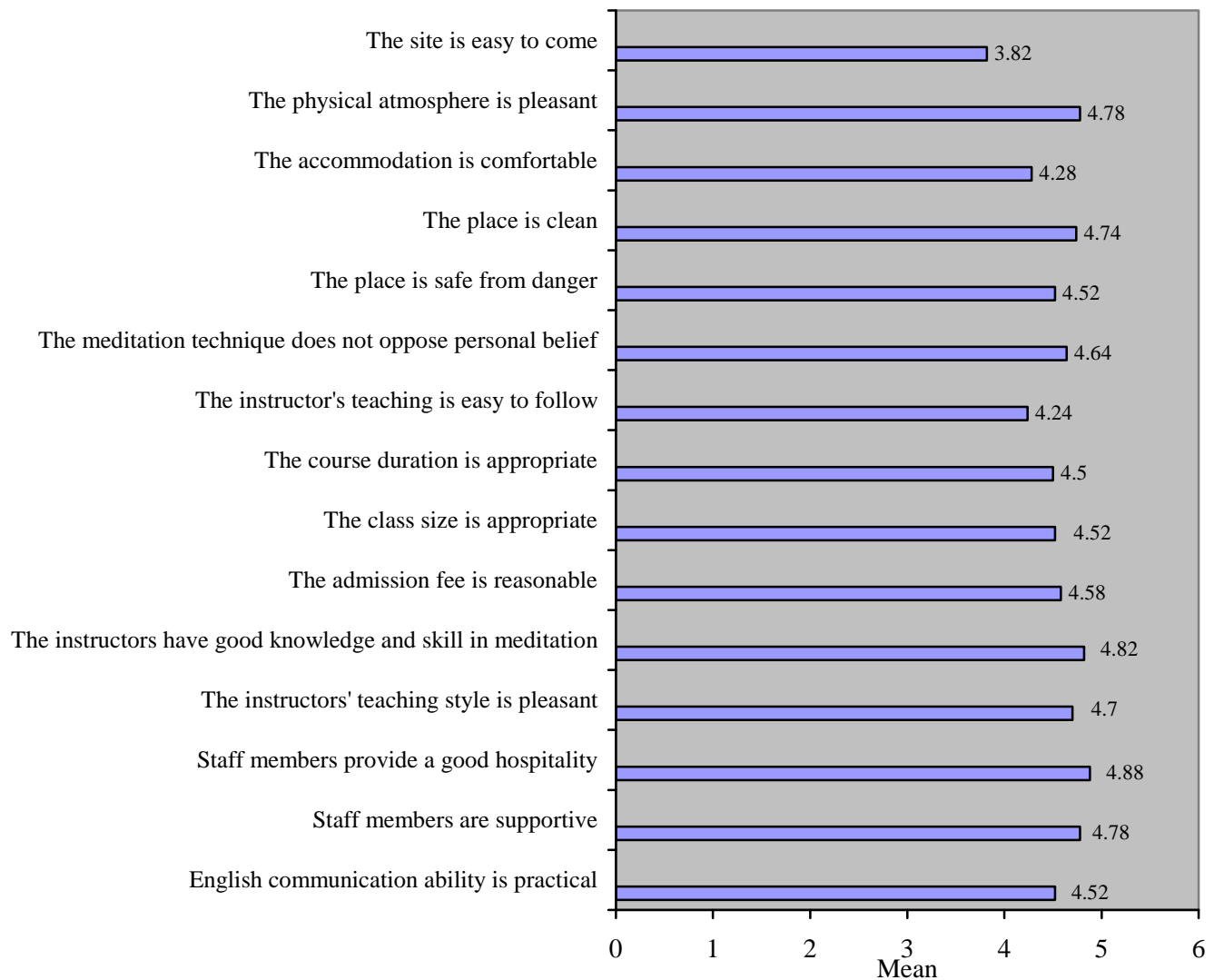
The highest level of satisfaction was given to ‘Staff members provide good hospitality’ with the score of 4.88. The result shows that 92% of the respondents strongly agreed and 4% of the respondents agreed with this point. Only 4% of the respondents felt undecided.

The second highest level of satisfaction with the instructors and staff members was ‘The instructors have good knowledge and skill in meditation’ with the score of 4.82, followed by ‘Staff members are supportive’ with the score of 4.78, and ‘The instructors’ teaching style is pleasant’ with the score of 4.7. The least satisfactory element was ‘English communication ability of instructors and other staff members is practical’ with the score rated at 4.52 which is considerably high.

In conclusion, the respondents were satisfied with the instructors and the staff members. They felt that the instructors and the staff members were polite, attentive, and friendly. One interesting point is that even the non-Buddhist respondents felt satisfied with the Buddhist monk instructors. They agreed that the instructors had good knowledge and skill in meditation as well as good understanding about western culture and thoughts.

For the overall satisfaction, the respondents were most satisfied with the hospitality of the staff members (score = 4.88), followed by meditation expertise of the instructors (score = 4.82), the physical atmosphere of Suan Pa Himmawan (score = 4.78), and the supportive staff members (score = 4.78).

Overall Satisfaction



4.4 OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The last part of the questionnaire asked about the respondents' feedback after joining The Middle Way, as well as their opinions and suggestions for future improvement.

Table 14. Intention to Continue Meditating

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	90%
Maybe	0	0%
No	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 14 indicates that most of the respondents (90%) had the intention to continue meditating after the class ended while 10% of the respondents would not.

Table 15. Intention to Join The Middle Way Again

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	82%
Maybe	3	6%
No	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Table 15 indicates that most of the respondents (82%) had the intention to join The Middle Way again, 6% may join, but 12% would not.

Table 16. Intention to Recommend The Middle Way to Others

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	100%
Maybe	0	0%
No	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 16 indicates that all of the respondents (100%) were willing to recommend The Middle Way to others.

In this part, the respondents were also requested to provide opinions and suggestions for the improvement of The Middle Way. 29 of 50 respondents skipped this open-ended question. 7 respondents stated that they are already satisfied with The Middle Way. The other 14 respondents provided the constructive suggestions which can be concluded as follows:

- There should be a library providing meditation books or media.
- There should be an assistant to take care of senior people who come alone or need help with medication.
- There should be an interpreter or interpreting device for those who are not very good in English.
- The Middle Way should also open the meditation retreats in other languages such as Chinese, so that more people will also benefit from teachings of The Middle Way.
- Each meditation session should be a bit shorter.
- The duration between breakfast and lunch should be at least five hours.
- The website should provide more information and interactive media such as downloadable basic Dhamma teachings.

In summary, this chapter showed the results of the findings of factors influencing the foreigner's decisions to join The Middle Way meditation retreat, their satisfaction, and their opinions and suggestions. All of the results are shown in 16 tables, together with charts and detailed explanation for each of them. In the next chapter, summary, discussion, conclusion and recommendation for further study will be presented.