

Understanding Chinese Tourists' Motivations for Visiting Buddhism-Related Attractions in Phuket, Thailand

Yu Wang¹

Panuwat Phakdee-auksorn²

Abstract

Buddhist temples are symbols of Thai cultural identity that attract many domestic and international visitors, but studies of visitors' motivations for visiting Buddhism-related attractions are very rare. This study focuses on Chinese tourists visiting Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket and examines their travel motivations by using push-and-pull factors as a theoretical framework. The findings revealed that cultural motives were perceived as the most significant factors, higher than the other four push motives (religion and spirit, novelty, leisure, and family). In contrast, "Theravada Buddhism culture" and "history of Theravada Buddhism" were the most attractive pull factors that influenced Chinese tourists.

Keywords: Buddhist tourism, Chinese outbound tourist, Religious travel motivation, Culture tourism

¹ MBA, Student, Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus wcbkzywy@msn.com

² Assistant Professor, Dr., Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus pphakdeeaauksorn@gmail.com

การศึกษาแรงจูงใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน ที่มีต่อการท่องเที่ยวในแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเชิงพุทธศาสนา ในจังหวัดภูเก็ต ประเทศไทย

Yu Wang³ภาณุวัฒน์ ภักดีอักษร⁴

บทคัดย่อ

วัดเป็นสัญลักษณ์ซึ่งแสดงอัตลักษณ์ของวัฒนธรรมไทยที่มีพลังในการดึงดูดนักท่องเที่ยวทั้งภายในประเทศและต่างประเทศ อย่างไรก็ตาม การศึกษาเกี่ยวกับแรงจูงใจของนักท่องเที่ยวซึ่งเดินทางไปยังแหล่งท่องเที่ยวทางศาสนาพุทธเหล่านี้ยังมีค่อนข้างน้อย งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาแรงจูงใจของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีนที่เดินทางไปเยี่ยมชมสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวสำคัญทางศาสนาพุทธในจังหวัดภูเก็ต โดยมีทฤษฎีปัจจัยผลักดัน-ดึงดูดเป็นกรอบแนวคิดการวิจัย ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ปัจจัยผลักดันด้านวัฒนธรรมเป็นเหตุผลสำคัญมากที่สุด ตามด้วยปัจจัยด้านความเชื่อทางศาสนา และจิตวิญญาณ การแสวงหาความแปลกใหม่ การพักผ่อนหย่อนใจ และ ครอบครัว ในขณะที่เดียวกันก็พบว่า วัฒนธรรมพุทธแบบเถรวาท และประวัติความเป็นมาของพุทธศาสนาแบบเถรวาท เป็นปัจจัยดึงดูดสำคัญที่มีอิทธิพลสูงต่อนักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน

คำสำคัญ: การท่องเที่ยวเชิงพุทธศาสนา, นักท่องเที่ยวชาวจีน, แรงจูงใจการท่องเที่ยวเพื่อศาสนา, การท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม

³ นักศึกษาปริญญาโท สาขาวิชาการจัดการบริการและการท่องเที่ยว (นานาชาติ)
คณะกรรมการบริการและการท่องเที่ยว มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์วิทยาเขตภูเก็ต
wcbkyzwy@msn.com

⁴ ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.คณะกรรมการบริการและการท่องเที่ยว มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์
วิทยาเขตภูเก็ต pphakdeauksorn@gmail.com

Introduction

Religious Tourism

According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), more than half of the world's population practice a religion. The Asia-Pacific region is one of the important religious places with myriad religious sites (World Tourism Organization, 2011). In the article, "Religious tourism in Asia and the Pacific," the WTO suggested that the countries in Asia Pacific should take a new perspective on religious tourism as a resource for scenic holiday resorts.

The religious tourism market has a large economic potential. In mass tourism, religious travel seems to be a small part of the whole journey industry, but recently the market for pilgrimages and faith-based tourism for devotees has increased has been growing (Berkwitz, 2002; Reader, 2007; Piewdanga et al., 2013). In addition, global tourists are interested in cultural and historical meanings rather than a single religious purpose when they visit holy sites (Vukonic, 1996). By considering religious sites as holiday destinations, tourists are able to experience the the footprint of great art, and architectural styles, and other resources and attractions found at holy sites. Hence, both secular and pilgrimage tourists become interested in religious tourism.

Religious tourism generates economic benefits through donations and the sale of souvenirs, beverages, and informational materials and audio products at the religious sites; some places also supply accommodation for tourists (Finney et al., 2009). Tourists like to purchase souvenirs during religious trips, especially those who plan a visit only once in their lifetime (Kasim, 2011). The souvenir purchases can produce millions of dollars in income at some religious sites (Fleischer, 2000). In some areas, visitors to religious sites are the main source of local income. Hence, religious tourism is a critical tool in helping under-developed areas, creating income

and jobs that stimulate the local economy and help the development of the local community (Philp & Mercer, 1999; Hill, 2002; Nyaupane & Timothy, 2010; Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Such income may help preserve traditional culture as well (Kasim, 2011; Wong et al., 2013).

Religious tours will grow in the future. The powerful influence of spiritual enrichment will motivate both religious and general tourists when making travel decisions. Such travel is obviously growing significantly, with more tourists seeking a balance between sight-seeing and religious performance during their tours (Vukonic, 1996; Kasim, 2011).

Phuket as a case study

Phuket is a famous tourist destination in Thailand. This island attracts international travelers all year long, because it combines marine resources, beautiful sightseeing sites, famous Thai temples and other cultural activities (Peleggi, 1996). Buddhist temples are symbols of the Thai culture (Schedneck, 2015), Chalong temple in Phuket is a must-see attraction. It is the biggest and most architecturally interesting religious shrine of 29 temples in Phuket. The stupa (“chedi” in Thai) at Chalong temple allegedly holds the relics of the Buddha relics. The temple’s walls and ceilings are well decorated with paintings and gems. People also come here to pay respects to two deceased monks, Luang Pho Chaem and Luang Pho Chuang, who used herbal healing to treat the illnesses and injuries in the 19th century. The temple has a peaceful and beautiful atmosphere. Both local people and tourists come here to pray and to show respect to the Buddha and the monks. Another type of religious shrine in Phuket is Chinese temples. There is also the famous annual September-to-October vegetarian festival held in 10 Chinese temples, such as including Sanjao Sam San Chinese Temple,

and the Shrine of the Serene Light Chinese Temple. Local people and tourists come to the Chinese temples to pray and to make a wish. Another Buddhist religious shrine, the so-called the Big Buddha, is located on the mountain of Phuket. Tourists come here to view the southern part of Phuket Island, the sea and beaches. Buddhism-related attractions and Buddhist religious activities in Phuket have unique and distinct features, which vary from one temple to another, so visiting Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket is a very popular activity both for group package tours and independent tourists.

Chinese tourists visit temples in Phuket

Since 2011, the volume of Chinese visitors who travel to Thailand has grown gradually. China has become the top source of foreign tourists for Thailand. The steady growth on economy and the rising incomes makes China becomes a huge potential market. More Chinese tourists are shifting from group tourism to individual exploration and consumption (Keating & Kriz, 2008).

As 20% of Chinese visitors to Thailand visit Phuket (C9 Hotelworks, 2013), many of them visit Chalong Temple, the Big Buddha, Pranangsang Temple, the temple of the Golden Buddha and other Buddhism-related attractions. Buddhism-related attractions are must-see attractions for Chinese group tourists and a popular stop on the itinerary of Chinese individual tourists. Lang et al (2014) indicated that people worship in temples more than other religious sites. Many tour operators and travel agencies make Buddhist sites significant cultural attractions by advertising in Thailand and China. Chinese tourists who have interest in visiting these places like to choose an itinerary that embraces both marine islands and cultural attractions. Many tourists prefer to join the schedule of a tour group because they have language and transportation difficulties.

Literature Reviews

Push-and-Pull motivations in religious travel

The theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970) indicates that tourist demand and tourists' travel behavior starts from motivations such as relaxation, self-esteem and self-fulfillment. Religious tourism has existed since antiquity. People travelling to a religious shrine or holy place for the purpose of doing religious rituals, and such as self-purification or other activities based on self-religious belief, can be defined as religious tourism. Holy cities and sacred sites are popular destinations for religious tourists, for instance: Mecca, Karbala, Jerusalem and Varanasi.

Previous research on religious tourists' motivations indicated that there are both "push" and "pull" dimensions influencing a tourist's decision making. Push-and-Pull motivation is a two-stage model, which predicts travelers' destination selections (Dann, 1977). The concepts of push-and-pull factors are not mutually exclusive. Many empirical studies of people's travel motivations stemmed from the use of these two interrelated theories.

Push factors are socio-psychological potential motives that direct a tourist to select a travel destination from an initial desire; these internal personality characteristics are classified as escape, novelty, cultural, historical enrichment, social interaction and other psychological need from inside (Hua & Yoo, 2011). And these diverse motives are the main driving force which influences travelers' decisions and behaviors (Uysal, Li, & Sirakaya-Turk, 2008).

Previous studies revealed that pilgrim tourists are motivated by religious or spiritual feelings. The "new age" religious travelers are more focused on exploring a deep need for self-actualization need (Hill, 2002), as well as recreation and educational interests (Hughes et al., 2013). Recently, several studies have proposed "stimulus-avoidance" motivation, which means escape from family, friends

and society to seek spiritual relaxation (Choe et al., 2013) and some desire to experience cultural differences (Shani et al., 2007; Chand, 2010; Simone-Charteris & Boyd, 2010; Svoboda et al., 2013). Besides, the “new age” religious travelers are well educated, culturally and environmentally aware. They are seeking both knowledge of religious beliefs and self-knowledge, as well as travelling as a hobbyies and for other reasons (Zhou & Wang, 2006).

Pull factors are related to external elements and cognitive aspects of a destination, such as the features and attributes of a designated destination, including the level of hospitality, historical and cultural heritage, shopping, and natural scenery. This also includes significant factors such as the distance to markets, service levels, affordability, tourism policies, tranquility and security (Morakabati, 2011). For instance, festivals are more attractive than the content of religious events due to festival details such as costumes, music, color and unique activities (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Shuo et al., 2009).

Consequently, the study used these push factors and pull factors as motivation constructs to examine Chinese tourists’ motivation towards Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket.

Methodology

The target group for this research is Chinese mainland tourists who visit Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket. Buddhism-related attractions in this study are the Theravada Buddhist temples, Buddhist shrines and Buddhist festivals which with a strong featuresstrong religious devotion, and also withother unique characteristics to attract tourists (Nolan & Nolan, 1992). There was no research or statistical data showing the population of Chinese mainland tourists visiting Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket. Because the number of Chinese tourists was unknown, therefore, the survey was

selected using the Accidental Random Sampling formula of Cochran (1977) to find the number of samples. Therefore, the sample population of this study comprised 400 Chinese mainland tourists. Moreover, there are 29 Buddhist temples spread around the island. On the advice of tour operators and travel agencies in Phuket, the following sites are the favorite attractions for both group and individual tourists from mainland China: Chalong Temple, Phuket Big Buddha, and Four-faced Buddha Shrine at Promthep Cape, Ladthiwanaran Temple, Si Sunthorn Temple, Phra Thong Temple, Thep Krachonchit Temple, and Phra Nang Sang Temple.

The questionnaires were collected at the aforementioned sites and also at Phuket international airport. The survey was designed to keep the abalance of betweenmale and female in gender group. The formal survey on data collection was taken from October to December 2014. Only tourists who had been to Buddhist-related attractions were chosen to answer the questionnaire. Finally, a total of 400 completed questionnaires were selected from the returned questionnaires.

Survey Instrument

This study applied quantitative methods data collection through questionnaire. The survey instrument is based on previous research and was composed by push-and-pull motivational parts, as suggested by Chand (2010). Based on the scale and methodology developed by various authors in a review of the literature (Chang & Chiang, 2006; Musa & Sim, 2010; Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2012; Drule et al., 2012), a set of 30 motivation items were generated to reflect eight broad identities related to push motivations: religious, spirit, leisure, family, novelty, culture and impulse. The pull motivation part included 24 items in the following categories: Attraction

Attribute, Community, Advertising, and Facility Services (Shuo et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2013). Social-demographic data were compiled from the following variables: gender, age, occupation, education, and marital status, and income, residence in China, religion, and travel companions. In order to avoid results biased toward either gender, the numbers of male and female tourists selected were approximately equal in order to avoid results biased toward either gender (Irwin, 1980). The survey utilized a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranking tourists' motivations concerning Buddhism-related attractions as: 5=highest, 4=high, 3=neutral, 2= low, 1=lowest, this measurement has been used in religious motivation studies by Zamani-Farahani & Musa (2012), Drule et al. (2012), and Musa & Sim (2010). So as to identify the reasons tourists visited Buddhist shrines, with reference to translation of the survey instrument, the questionnaire was back-translated from English into Mandarin to ensure equivalence and to minimize linguistic nuances, as recommended by Zamani-Farahani & Musa (2012), and Chang & Chiang (2006).

The data analysis was processed with SPSS 20.0 software. The study used descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, factor analysis, and parallel analysis to rate scale items with identified general push-and-pull motivational factors.

Result

The profile of respondents in Table 1 shows social-demographic profile of Chinese tourists. Numbers of male and female respondents were equal. The 20-30 age group represented at one-third (33.0 %) of the entire sample. In terms of occupation, one-quarter (25.0%) of respondents stated that they were employees in private companies. With regard to educational background, just under half (42.0%) of respondents had an undergraduate degree. The majority of respondents were married (74.5%). In terms of monthly house-

hold income, just under one-third (29.8%) of respondents' monthly incomes were in the range of 2,100-4,000 RMB, while over a quarter (26.8%) earned 4,100-6,000 RMB monthly. Reflecting the population census, just under a quarter of the tourists (22.5%) were from the northern China, and a similar number (22.0%) were from southwestern China. In terms of religion, well over half of the respondents (68.0%) had no religious belief, while the Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism believers were, respectively, just under one-fifth (17.3%) and less than one-tenth (7.5%) of all respondents. Finally, over one-third (35.5%) of respondents tended to visit Buddhist-related attractions in Phuket as a couple, while those who came with friends and special interest groups were just over a quarter (27.8%) and just under a quarter (23.5%) of all visitors, respectively. Less than one-twentieth (4.3%) of the respondents said they came alone.

Table 1:. Social-demographic profile of Chinese tourists

Variable	Description	N=400	
		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	200	50.0
	Female	200	50.0
Age	under 19 years	4	1.0
	20-30 years	132	33.0
	41-50 years	90	22.5
	51-60 years	69	17.3
	31-40 years	68	17.0
	61 years and up	37	9.3
Occupation	Employees of private companies	100	25.0
	State-owned enterprise employees	61	15.3
	Self Employed/ Entrepreneur	53	13.3
	Retired	47	11.8

Variable	Description	N=400	
		N	Percentage
	unemployed	33	8.3
	public servants	30	7.5
	teacher	21	5.3
	Professionals	20	5.0
	Students	17	4.3
	journalist	8	2.0
	housewife	6	1.5
	guide	4	1.0
Education	Bachelor degree	168	42.0
	Diploma	128	32.0
	Secondary	55	13.8
	Master degree	21	5.3
	Primary	17	4.3
	No education	10	2.5
	Doctor degree	1	0.3
Marital status	Married	298	74.5
	Single	84	21.0
	Divorced	18	4.5
Monthly income. (RMB)	2100–4000 RMB	119	29.8
	4100–6000 RMB	107	26.8
	6100-8000 RMB	52	13.0
	8100-10,000 RMB	44	11.0
	under 2000 RMB	42	10.5
	Above 10,001 RMB	36	9.0
Residential region in China	North	90	22.5
	Southwest	88	22.0
	East	57	14.3
	South	49	12.3
	Central	43	10.8

Variable	Description	N=400	
		N	Percentage
Religion	Northeast	42	10.5
	Northwest	31	7.8
	Non-religion	272	68.0
	Mahayana -Buddhism	69	17.3
	Thiravada Buddhism	30	7.5
	Christian	22	5.5
	Taoism	7	1.8
Travel	Spouse	142	35.5
companions	Friends	111	27.8
	Special interest group	94	23.5
	Family/relatives	32	8.0
	Alone	17	4.3
	Chinese tourists	4	1.0
Total		400	100%

Chinese tourists' push-pull motivations for visiting Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket.

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of Chinese tourists' motivation of in terms of Push factors. Based on the mean score of 30 items, Chinese tourists agreed most strongly that they wanted "to experience exotic customs and atmosphere" ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.009$) and "to increase my understanding of Thai culture" ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.058$).

Many Chinese tourists also agreed that they came "to visit historical heritage sites to gain knowledge" ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.042$), and they also felt that "after immersion at Buddhist sites, I will be a better person" ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.794$). Many of the respondents also wished "to experience a colorful lifestyle, to see new things, and to listen new stories while I am here" ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.600$), "to relax

and enjoy a holiday and slow down my pace of life" ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.086$), "to take photos with beautiful nature and architecture" ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.570$), "to experience the mystery of religion and experience life as in the past" ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.597$), and "to purify my spirit at this miraculous religious place" ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.038$). Many also agreed, "It is more fun to come here with others than alone" ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.923$) and perhaps more controversially, "I believe praying in front of a Buddha image produces miracles" ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.063$).

Chinese tourists' perceptions were rather neutral on suggestions that they were motivated by desires such as "to redeem my bad karma" ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.079$), "to get away from daily stress in this quiet Buddhist site" ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.665$), "to visit this Buddhist site together with my family" ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.002$), "to spend more time with family" ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.891$), "compared with the beach, the Buddhist site is more peaceful" ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.714$), "being close to Buddha makes me feel fulfilled" ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.011$), "To teach my children about Buddhist religious culture" ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.970$), "a friend told me this Buddhist site is a "must-do" ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.124$), "I heard about this famous attractions so I want to have it in my done list" ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.551$), "to seek spiritual comfort and intrinsic happiness" ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.124$), "to learn the ancient art of Theravada Buddhism" ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.763$), "to buy something meaningful as a Buddhist religious souvenir" ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.423$) and "to do research on Thai religious culture" ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.673$).

Therefore twenty-four out of thirty motivational factors in this research had a mean score in excess of three (above neutral). Standard deviations were mostly between 0.57 to 1.55. In fact, almost half of the factors had mean scores over four (that is, more than high motivation).

Table 2:. Descriptive analysis of Chinese tourists' motivation of Push factors Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.873	0.877	30

Table 2 Continued

Chinese tourists' motivation of Push factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
To experience exotic customs and atmosphere.	4.24	1.009
To increase my understanding of Thai culture.	4.22	1.058
To visit historical heritage sites to gain knowledge.	4.17	1.042
After immersion at Buddhist sites I will be a better person	4.00	0.794
To experience a colorful lifestyle to see new things, and to listen new stories while I am here.	3.85	0.600
To relax and enjoy a holiday and slow down my pace of life.	3.79	1.086
To take photo with beautiful nature and architecture.	3.70	0.570
To experience the mystery of religion and experience life as in the past.	3.67	0.597
To purify my spirit at this miracle religious place.	3.64	1.038
It is more fun to come here with others than alone.	3.50	0.923
I believe praying in front of Buddha image produces miracles.	3.46	1.063
To redeem my bad karmas.	3.12	1.079
To get away from daily stress in this quiet Buddhist site	3.12	0.665
To visit this Buddhist site together with my family.	3.08	1.002

To spend more time with family.	3.07	0.891
Compared with beach, the Buddhist site is more peaceful	3.03	0.714
Being close to Buddha makes me feel fulfilled	3.01	1.011
To teach my children about Buddhist Religious culture.	3.01	0.970
Friend told me this Buddhist Site / festivals is a “must-do”	2.94	1.124
I heard about this famous attractions so I want to have it in my done list	2.83	1.551
To seek spiritual comfort and intrinsic happiness.	2.81	1.124
To learn ancient arts of Theravada Buddhism	2.78	0.763
To buy something meaningful as a Buddhist religious souvenir.	2.73	1.423
To research on Thai religious culture.	2.64	0.673

The twenty-four items have been restructured by factor loading. A principal component analysis with Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization was conducted on the rating scale items and Eigenvalues exceed 1.0. Using 0.4 as a significant factor loading, only factors with more than 0.4 loading were retained and included in the factor identification (Chang & Chiang, 2006), see Table 3. The reliability coefficient of each factor ranged from 0.7 to 0.855, which was considered acceptable. As stated in the methodology section, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test was 0.773, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p=0.000$), and approx. Chi-Square was 6103.668 indicating that this data was acceptable for factor analysis. The factor model was deemed to be satisfactory. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.. The factor loading of Chinese tourists' push motivations

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.773
Approx. Chi-Square	6103.668
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity df	171
Sig.	0.000

Table 3 Continued

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha 0.855

Table 3 Continued

Pattern Matrix					
	Factor loading				
Factor/ items	1	2	3	4	5
1. religion and spirit (RS) ($\alpha=0.866$) (mean=3.338)					
To seek spiritual comfort and intrinsic happiness.		0.871			2.81
To redeem my bad karmas.	0.700				3.12
To purify my spirit at this miracle religious place.	0.686				3.64
After immersion at Buddhist sites I will be a better person	0.662				4.00
Being close to Buddha makes me feel fulfilled	0.633				3.01
I believe praying in front of Buddha image produces miracles.	0.607				3.46
2. culture ($\alpha=0.951$) (mean= 4.209)					
To visit historical heritage sites to gain knowledge.		0.982			4.17
To increase my understanding of Thai culture.		0.946			4.22

Pattern Matrix						
Factor/ items	Factor loading					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
To experience exotic customs and atmosphere.		0.937				4.24
3. novelty ($\alpha=0.719$) (mean=3.740)						
To experience the mystery of religion and experience life as in the past.			0.880			3.67
To experience a colorful lifestyle to see new things, and to listen new stories while I am here.			0.783			3.85
To take photo with beautiful nature and architecture.			0.608			3.70
4. leisure ($\alpha= 0.851$) (mean=3.359)						
To get away from daily stress in this quiet Buddhist site				0.949		3.12
Compared with beach, the Buddhist site is more peaceful				0.943		3.03
It is more fun to come here with others than alone.				0.614		3.50
To relax and enjoy a holiday and slow down my pace of life.				0.455		3.79
5. Family ($\alpha=0.925$) (mean=3.052)						
To visit this Buddhist site together with my family.					0.809	3.08
To teach my children about Buddhist Religious culture.					0.761	3.01
To spend more time with family.					0.730	3.07
Eigenvalues	6.180	3.498	2.176	1.340	1.179	
Variance explained(%)	32.52	18.41	11.45	7.05	6.20	

Pattern Matrix					
	Factor loading				
Factor/ items	1	2	3	4	5
Cumulative variance (%)	32.52	50.93	62.39	69.44	75.65
Cronbach's Alpha	0.866	0.951	0.719	0.851	0.925
Average mean score	3.338	4.209	3.740	3.359	3.052
"Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization."					
a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.					
Note: Only factor loading > 0.5 are shown.					

For the 24 items having eigenvalues greater than 1, the internal consistency of each factor was examined with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A value of 0.7 was chosen as adequate internal consistency. (Zmani-Faeahani & Musa, 2012). Factors with Cronbach alpha value less than 0.7 were dropped from future analysis. One factor had 3 items (Friend told me this Buddhist Site is a "must-do", I heard about this famous attraction so I put it on my to-do list, to buy something meaningful as a Buddhist religious souvenir). Another factor had two items (To learn the ancient art of Theravada Buddhism; To do research on Thai religious culture). These had Cronbach alpha value of less than 0.7, and were therefore dropped from further testing. The deletion of these items reduced the measurement items for Chinese tourists' push motivations for visiting Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket from 24 to 19.

The end result revealed five main factors in Chinese tourists' push motivations. These five factors accounted for 75.65 percent of variance in the data, with each factor accounting for more than six percent of variance. The factors met acceptable criteria for reliability, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.7 in all cases and this was further supported by the result of parallel analysis (Table 4), which

showed five components with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (19 variables \times 400 respondents), see Table 5 (Sekaran & Bougie, 1992). Finally, difference with the eight categories of push motivation factors (Pilgrimage, Spirit, Leisure, Family, Social, Novelty, Culture and Impure.) in the questionnaire, the final factor analysis has restructured the religion motivation and spirit motivation into one factor, and the social motive has been put into the leisure factor, and impulse visit group have been eliminated for its mean value was less than 2.61. Finally, the five dimensions were labeled as Religion and Spirit (RS), Culture, Leisure, Family and Novelty, and their Cronbach alpha values were 0.866, 0.951, 0.719, 0.851 and 0.925 respectively, which indicated good contributions of the items for the factors. The mean score of the culture dimension was 4.209, followed by novelty with 3.740, leisure with 3.359 and RS with 3.338. The family dimension was the lowest, with a mean score of 3.052.

Table 4:. Parallel Analysis of push motivation factors

Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis (Version 2.5)

Number of variables: 19

Number of subjects: 400

Number of replications: 100

Eigenvalue #	Random Eigenvalue	Standard Dev
1	1.418	.042
2	1.330	.030
3	1.270	.024
4	1.216	.024
5	1.173	.020

Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis

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Table 5:. Comparison of eigenvalues from PCA and criterion value from parallel analysis (Push Factors)

Component Number	Actual eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from parallel analysis	Decision
1	6.180	1.418	Accept
2	3.498	1.330	Accept
3	2.176	1.270	Accept
4	1.340	1.216	Accept
5	1.179	1.173	Accept

Table 6 presents the descriptive analysis of Chinese tourists' pull motivations for visiting Buddhist-related attractions in Phuket. Based on the mean score of 22 items, Chinese tourists had the highest agreement that they were attracted by "Theravada Buddhism Culture" ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.734$), and "History of Theravada Buddhism" ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.800$).

Many Chinese tourists also agreed with "The religious attraction I visited in Phuket was unique and magnificent" ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.999$); "The features of Buddhist-related attractions as architecture" ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.978$); "The interpretation of the tour guide" ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.823$); "Thai worship of Buddha" ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.023$); "Atmosphere" ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.980$), "Golden Buddha" ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.897$); "We can see the real local residents still doing their Buddhist worship and important religious activities at this site" ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.953$); "Landscape" ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.878$); "Mural" ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.887$); "The admission fee is free so I came to visit this famous site to add value to my trip" ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.995$); and "Hall" ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.869$).

Chinese tourists' perceptions were rather neutral on their interest in "Chanting" ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.911$); "Less commercialized" (M

=3.30, SD=0.783); “Pagoda” (M =3.29, SD=0.794); “The exhibition display of antique relics” (M =3.27, SD=0.810); “Sculpture” (M =3.27, SD=0.775); “The guidepost in Buddhist sits” (M =3.25, SD=0.790); “Monks” (M =3.23, SD=0.780); “Buddhist music” (M =3.20, SD=0.733); and “The advertising of this Buddhist site and festival were appealing to me” (M =3.10, SD=0.678).

ThereforeOverall, twenty-two of the pull motivation variables in this research had mean scores in excess of three (above neutral). Standard deviations are mostly from 0.68 to 1.02. In fact, half of them had mean scores over four (above high motivation). This implies that the survey instrument was suitable to use for the setting ofexploring Chinese tourists’ pull factor motivations.

Table 6:. Descriptive analysis of Pull factors influencing Chinese tourists’ motivationsof Pull factors

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.886	0.887	22

Table 6 Continued

Chinese tourists’ motivation of Pull factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Theravada Buddhism Culture	4.39	0.734
History of Theravada Buddhism	4.37	0.800
The religious attraction I visited in Phuket was unique and magnificent.	3.87	0.999
Architecture	3.76	0.978
The interpretation of the tour guide	3.75	0.823
Thai worship to Buddha	3.74	1.023
Atmosphere	3.68	0.980
Golden Buddha	3.55	0.897

Chinese tourists' motivation of Pull factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
We can see the real local residents still doing their Buddhist worship and important religious activities at this sites.	3.50	0.953
Landscape	3.47	0.878
Mural	3.47	0.887
The admission fee is free so I came to visit this famous site to add value to my trip.	3.45	0.995
hall	3.42	0.869
Chanting	3.33	0.911
Less commercialize	3.30	0.783
Pagoda	3.29	0.794
The exhibition display of antique relics.	3.27	0.810
Sculpture	3.27	0.775
The guidepost in Buddhist sits	3.25	0.790
Monks	3.23	0.780
Buddhist music	3.20	0.733
The advertising of Buddhist Site and festival is appealing to me.	3.10	0.678

The twenty-two items have been restructured by factor loading. The principal component analysis with Varimax with Kaiser Normalization was conducted on the rating scale items and Eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. Using 0.4 as a significant factor loading, only factors with more than 0.4 loading were retained and included in the factor identification (Chang & Chiang, 2006). The reliability coefficient of each factor ranged from 0.7 to 0.886 which was considered to be acceptable. As stated in the methodology section, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test was 0.874; the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p=0.000$); and the approximate Chi-Square was 3358.617, indicating that data were

acceptable for factor analysis. The factor model was deemed to be satisfactory. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Factor analysis of pull motivations

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.874
	Approx. Chi-Square	3358.617
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	231
	Sig.	0.000

Table 7 Continued

Rotated Component Matrixa						
	Component					Mean
Factor/ items	1	2	3	4	5	
1. artistic characteristics ($\alpha=0.850$)(mean=3.359)						
hall	.835					3.415
Mural	.746					3.470
Pagoda	.733					3.285
Sculpture	.695					3.265
2. facility & service ($\alpha=0.723$)(mean=3.353)						
Less commercialize		.715				3.303
The direction in Buddhist sits		.653				3.250
The exhibition display of antique relics.		.627				3.268
The admission fee is free so I came to visit this famous site to add value to my trip.		.555				3.445
The interpretation of the tour guide		.514				3.753
The advertising of Buddhist Site and festival is appealing to me.		.416				3.098

Rotated Component Matrixa						
	Component					Mean
Factor/ items	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Buddhist environment (α =0.763)(mean=3.589)						
Buddhist music			.674			3.203
Landscape			.634			3.473
Atmosphere			.545			3.680
Golden Buddha			.514			3.553
The religious attraction I visited in Phuket was unique and magnificent.			.477			3.868
Architecture			.453			3.758
4. Buddhist activities (α =0.722)(mean=3.450)						
Chanting					.716	3.738
We can see the real local residents still doing their Buddhist worship and important religious activities at this sites.					.638	3.500
Thai worship to Buddha Monks				.637		3.333
				.561		3.230
5. culture (α =0.845)(mean=4.377)						
Theravada Buddhism Culture					.898	4.385
History of Theravada Buddhism					.894	4.370
Eigenvalues	6.958	2.021	1.372	1.331	1.250	
Variance explained(%)	31.629	9.184	6.238	6.050	5.682	
Cumulative Variance (%)	31.629	40.813	47.052	53.101	58.783	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.850	0.723	0.763	0.722	0.845	
Average mean score	3.359	3.353	3.589	3.450	4.377	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.						

For the 22 factors having eigenvalues greater than 1, the internal consistency of each factor was examined with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The value of 0.7 was selected as an adequate internal consistency, following the method suggested by Zmani-Faeahani & Musa (2012).

The final results revealed the five main factors in Chinese tourists' pull motivations. These five factors accounted for 58.783 percent of the variance in the data with each factor accounting for more than five percent of the variance. The factors met acceptable criteria for reliability, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.7 in all cases. This was further supported by the results of parallel analysis (Table 8), which showed five components with eigenvalues exceeding the corresponding criterion values for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size, with 22 variables \times 400 respondents in Table 9 (Sekaran & Bougie, 1992). This required some changes in the four categories of pull motivation factors (attraction attributes, local community, advertising and facilities' services) in the questionnaire. The final factor analysis restructured the "advertising" factors and "facilities' services" factors into one group, and "local community" was grouped into a new factor. The "Buddhist activities", "attraction attributes" factors have been separated into three new factors: "artistic characteristics," "Buddhist environment" and "culture". Finally, the five dimensions were labeled as: "artistic characteristics," "facility services," "Buddhist environment," "Buddhist activities," and "cultural factors," and their Cronbach's alpha values were 0.850, 0.723, 0.763, 0.722 and 0.845, respectively, which indicated good contributions of the items to the factors. The mean score of culture dimension was 4.377, followed by "Buddhist environment" with 3.589, "Buddhist activities" with 3.450, "artistic characteristics" with 3.359, and the "facility services" dimension had the lowest mean score of 3.353.

Table 8: Parallel Analysis of pull motivation factors

Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis (Version 2.5)

Number of variables: 22

Number of subjects: 400

Number of replications: 100

Eigenvalue #	Random Eigenvalue	Standard Dev
1	1.444	.038
2	1.372	.029
3	1.315	.025
4	1.262	.023
5	1.218	.021

Monte Carlo PCA for Parallel Analysis

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Table 9: Comparison of eigenvalues from PCA and criterion value from parallel analysis (Pull Factors)

Component Number	Actual eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from Decision parallel analysis	
1	6.958	1.444	Accept
2	2.021	1.372	Accept
3	1.372	1.315	Accept
4	1.331	1.262	Accept
5	1.250	1.218	Accept

Conclusion

The demographic profile of Chinese tourists visiting Buddhism-related attractions

The description analysis of the social-demographic and trip-related characteristics revealed that the majority of Chinese tourists are werein the age groups 20-30 and 41-50 years old. The 'respondentsare werealmost all educated to bachelor or diploma

degree level. The majority of their occupations were: private employee, state-owned enterprise employee, and self-employed. Most of them are remarried, and over half have no religious belief. Most respondents' monthly household incomes were lower than 6000 RMB. They were from the North China and Southwest China. Finally, respondents preferred to visit Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket as a couple, with friends and in special interest groups.

Chinese tourists' push-pull motivations for visiting Buddhism-related attraction in Phuket

This research sought to determine the push-and-pull motives of Chinese tourists who visited Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket. The findings showed that relatively few respondents said they were interested primarily in the religious and spiritual aspect of visiting Buddhist sites in Phuket, while the majority offered reasons of culture, novelty, leisure and family motives that conform to most previous studies about religious tourism (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005; Shuo et al, 2009; Kasim, 2011; Hughes et al., 2013). Similarly, Drule et al. (2012) suggested that Buddhist sites are not only places of worship but also heritage sites and places of cultural importance (Peleggi, 1996). This can be recognized by visitors as producing additional value in the travel.

Chinese tourists' push motivations were categorized as five factors: "religion and spirit," "cultural," "novelty," "leisure," and "family." The findings showed that relatively few respondents said they were interested primarily in the religious and spiritual motive of visiting Buddhist sites in Phuket, while the majority offered reasons of culture, novelty, leisure and family motives.

Certainly, the study reveals a new insight into Chinese tourists' motivation for visiting Buddhism-related attractions. Cultural

motives, including “to experience exotic customs and atmosphere”, “to increase my understanding of Thai culture,” and “to visit historical heritage sites to gain knowledge,” were perceived as the most significant motives, and were higher than the other four push motives i.e., religion and spirit, novelty, leisure, and family).

Furthermore, the pull factor analysis indicated that the Buddhist attractions in Phuket have architectural features which attract people primarily due to their “cultural features” (i.e., Theravada Buddhism culture, history of Theravada Buddhism) but followed by “Buddhist environment” (i.e., Buddhist music, landscape, atmosphere, the Golden Buddha, “the religious attraction I visited in Phuket was unique and magnificent”, and architecture features. “Buddhist activities” (i.e., chanting, seeing the real local residents doing their Buddhist worship and important religious activities at this sites, Thai worship of Buddha, monks). The study was structured as a significant model that shows how the pull factors of Buddhist sites attract Chinese tourists in a different way than secular religious tourism activities (Tilson, 2005; Shuo et al., 2009; Kasim, 2011; Hughes et al, 2013). Foremost, for Chinese tourists, Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket are unique in terms of culture, history, architecture and interaction with guides and local communities.

The results show that artistic characteristics and a facility’s services did not attract tourists strongly, perhaps because heritage management and the services of Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket lack organization. From a secular perspective, the practical management of a religious site should provide more information about the “cultural and historical components of Theravada Buddhism”. Even though the interpretation of tour guides created highly positive perceptions for Chinese tourists, the interpretation service still needs to enrich the topics of aesthetic, historic and artistic features. This could help to foster an emotional connection between tourists

and the site and topics being interpreted (Hughes et al., 2013).

Recommendations

As stated by Lang et al. (2014), temples are not only designed for worship but also to appeal to potential visitors. To attract worshippers and visitors, the Buddhist sites must offer attractive goods and accessible services. Compared to Buddhist attractions in other places, Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket have one principal advantage in that they combine sea view, relaxation, worship and meditation together. It Phuket is a great destination for people who want to get combine both mental and physical relaxations and recreation. Based on the research results regarding Chinese tourists' push-and-pull motivations, tour planners and managers should design a unique travel schedule in Phuket which can fulfill both these different motivations and help people to achieve a healthy physical and psychological development.

On the other hand, the heritage management of Buddhist-related attractions could be improved and the Buddhist activities could adopt more innovative approaches, adding value to the religious, educational, cultural, novelty and leisure appeal that suits tourists' needs. Buddhist religious tourism in Phuket as a significant cultural tourism pattern still offers many opportunities for improvement. The facilities and services should be improved because there is still a lack of Buddhist activities that attract tourists to extend their length of stay or motivate them to revisit. Further sensitivity will be required in an effort to enrich tourists' participation experience (Chang & Chiang, 2006). If the services provided at these sites were developed, the local culture and history would be revived, and Buddhism-related tourism would be better known.

Consequently, as tour operators in Phuket cooperate with local communities to improve their management to meet the needs of

tourists, Buddhism-related attractions in Phuket could become more distinctive and attractive. The local communities may get be able to attract more economic development as well. Regardless of Buddhist cultural boundaries, the Buddhist tourism motivational scale developed in Phuket can be transferred to other places in Thailand and Buddhist countries.

Limitations

One limitation of this research was that it focused on Phuket; the research area could be expanded to include the northern and central regions of Thailand. Buddhism-related attractions in these regions are also very popular and famous. Furthermore, because of the data collection time, the Vegetarian Festival in Phuket was missed. The study of tourists' motivations to visit the Vegetarian Festival is worthy of being investigated in the future.

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