

# A Study of Eco-Tourism Promotion in Phetchaburi Province

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the eco-tourism potentials in the Phetchaburi province in Thailand. Thailand's tourism industry accounts for a significant portion of the country's economic development. The tourism sector contributed around 17.64 percent of overall GDP in 2019, with 39.30 million tourist arrivals. Ecotourism is becoming increasingly popular in Thailand. Thailand boasts a diverse range of natural resources, including flora and fauna. Ecotourism values sustainable development and agriculture is a fundamental and dynamic element of Thailand's economy and its way of life, and it plays a significant role in the country's identity. Crompton Model was used in this study to analyze other destination factors that will be accountable for promoting eco-tourism in this location. The study used secondary data from various articles and other resources to understand the eco-tourism status in the selected province. From the secondary data, it was found that to promote ecotourism in the Phetchaburi province, both push and pull factors of Crompton's model need to be applied. Other elements that can influence travelers to visit Phetchaburi province in order to promote ecotourism include their mindset toward the place, recommendations from friends and family, satisfaction levels from prior visits, and intention to revisit to that particular place. This study can assist tour operators and other businesses in promoting ecotourism in the identified area. Future studies need to include primary data to understand the mindset and the behavior of tourist as well as locals in context of ecotourism.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Phetchaburi province, Thailand, Tourism management

## INTRODUCTION

Thailand's tourism industry contributes a major share of Thailand's economic development. Tourism is the third main source of income for Thailand in the service sector after automobiles and automotive parts followed by agriculture. The tourism sector contributed approximately about 17.64% in 2019 of the total GDP as the number of arrivals accounted for was 39.30 million and it was more from the year 2018 which had 38.27 million arrivals (CEIC, 2019). TAT's new tourism marketing idea, 'Amazing Thailand,' focuses on numerous categories in which it would attract tourists from all over the world to enjoy Thailand in specific areas such as weddings and honeymoons, luxury and community-based tourism, sports and cuisine. (TAT, 2018). Domestic tourism in Thailand has showed significant growth, generating 18.4 billion US dollars in 2019, up from 6.6 billion US dollars in 2000, with an annual growth rate of 5.87 percent (Knoema, 2019). In 2019, China was the leading source of tourists, followed by India, Russia, and Korea. In January 2019, Chinese visitors accounted for 40.98 percent, followed by Indian tourists who accounted for 6.60 percent, and Korean visitors who accounted for 5.29

percent. The number of Russians who visited Thailand was predicted to be 5.77 percent (ATTA, 2020).

Ecotourism is becoming increasingly popular in Thailand. Thailand boasts a diverse range of natural resources, including flora and fauna. There are about 1,000 mammal species, as well as marine and bird species (Eslami & Roshani, 2009). According to the International Ecotourism Society, ecotourism can be defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment while improving the well-being of local people (TIES, 2015). Furthermore, trekking, river rafting, nature photography, bird watching, river rafting, and safari day and night trips were among the ecotourism activities available, with wild animals sighted during the day (Auesriwong, Nilnoppakun, & Perawech, 2015). Most developing countries currently embracing ecotourism and conservation development techniques, as ecotourism prioritizes sustainable development. It is evident that agriculture is an integral and dynamic part of economy and way of life of Thailand and it plays a significant role in country's identity (Stem et al., 2003). "Agrotourism: Green Tourism in Thailand" was created to provide readers, naturalists, general tourists, and agricultural tourists. The goal was to give people a personal experience of this unique way of life, as well as to help them learn more about Thai agriculture and goods, develop a better appreciation of the Thai way of life, and enjoy visiting to greener regions as part of promoting sustainable tourism (Maraphot, & Somboon, 2016).

### **Problem Statement**

In comparison to many other countries, Thailand has embraced ecotourism as a tool for social and economic development. In addition, ecotourism has had a positive impact in Thailand by increasing the number of international tourists that come to enjoy ecotourism experiences (Leksakundilok, 2004; Dearden & Harron, 1992). Ecotourism attracts a big number of visitors who want to experience natural areas, however there are still certain regions in Thailand that are under-explored and under-utilized (Pornprasit, & Rurkkhum, 2019). Thailand's ecotourism is primarily limited to the south, but other parts of the country have the potential to become ecotourism destinations for visitors (Pattanapokinsakul, & Phakdee-auksorn, 2016). Therefore, the researcher used Phetchaburi province in Thailand as a study location to identify its prospects for ecotourism; to assess whether the destination characteristics of Phetchaburi province can fit in ecotourism or not.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to focus on destination characteristics to boost ecotourism. The study wants to understand the ecotourism potentials of Phetchaburi province with the help of the Crompton Model.

### **Research Questions**

1. Does Phetchaburi province have destination characteristics to boost ecotourism?
2. Does Phetchaburi province can fit in ecotourism using Crompton Model?

## **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study is to boost the eco-tourism industry in Phetchaburi and with the help of the Crompton Model and to evaluate other destination characteristics that are going to be responsible for the promotion of eco-tourism in this region. This study wants to provide the economic benefits overall for the tourism industry in Thailand, represent the cultural value of this region, and improve the destination's image.

## **Scope of the Study**

This study wants to discuss the detailed study and analysis of the promotion of eco-tourism, using one different area – Phetchaburi as an example. This study focuses on tourism development and construction exploration of the Phetchaburi region. In this study, previous case studies, related research on eco-tourism, Crompton's model of motivation by analyzing push or pull factors will be used to determine the suitability of this province to check the possibility for eco-tourism destination status. Therefore, this study is based on documentary research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Ecotourism**

According to Leksakundilok (2004), Ecotourism is a contentious topic that has been explained and disputed in various forms over time. The simplest explanation for ecotourism is that it is made up of two words: "ecology" and "tourism," which are described by Anomasiri, in 2004. According to the International Ecotourism Society (TIES), which states that ecotourism is “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people” (TIES, 2015). Ceballos & Lascurain (1996) explained that travelling to largely undistributed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of admiring, studying, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas. Boyd and Butler (1993) explained that Ecotourism must be totally based on a thorough grasp of both ecosystems and tourism mechanisms. The roots of ecotourism can be traced back to two factors: first, the preservation of natural resources. Second, recreation activities use natural resources to address the demand for human tourism. Likewise, Lindberg and McKercher (1997) also explained that ecotourism is based on nature and sustainable resources.

### **Ecotourism in Thailand**

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) stated that “a visit to any particular tourism area with purpose to study, enjoy, and appreciate the scenery, natural and social as well as the lifestyle of the local people, based on the knowledge about and responsibility for the ecological system of the area” (TAT, 1996). As previously stated, Thailand is rich in natural resources, flora, and fauna, as well as cultural impact, which attracts tourists to visit and explore various parts of the country (Dearden & Harron, 1992). There are many popular activities in Thailand which are very famous among the locals and foreigners such as trekking, biking, bird watching, cultural study, natural study etc. (Eslami & Roshani, 2009).

In Thailand, there are two types of forests: evergreen forests and deciduous forests. Phetchaburi province was chosen as the study region for this subject because it has an evergreen forest that includes tropical evergreen forest, pine forest, mangrove forest, and coastal forest. This type also has their own tropical rain forest, semi-evergreen forests and hill evergreen forest (RFD, 2009). It all started since 1994-1995 when ecotourism started under the name of Kanthonthiao Choeng Anurak which states that the conservation of tourism. In 1998, it was renamed as Kanthongthiao Choeng Niwet which states that ecological tourism (Leksakundilok, 2004). Ecotourism does not specify that it was created for the sole purpose of tourism, but also for environmental preservation, economic development, and improvement. In 1998, the National Ecotourism Policy was restated as National Ecotourism Action Plan 2002-2006 in 2001 (NEP, 1998). Moreover, TAT indicated three essential aspects in terms of income distribution: public knowledge of natural and environmental conservation, visitor satisfaction, and local community participation (TAT, 2017).

TAT policies regarding ecotourism mentioned three main issues and concerns which are as follows:

- i. Ecotourism expansion in order to provide income for local residents and all regions.
- ii. Conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, natural resources, and the environment, while maintaining Thai identity through ideology.
- iii. To encourage public participation in tourism promotion.

TAT policy framework in National Ecotourism Policy is as follows:

- i. To form a committee charged with marketing the tourism business.
- ii. The newly formed group will be in charge of creating plans to enhance the tourism business.
- iii. The committee is in charge of promoting tourism through advertising and media publicity, resolving problems and issues, and providing ecotourism training programs for people from various organizations.
- iv. More research initiatives should be conducted in order to improve ecotourism in Thailand.
- v. Organize ecotourism-related activities and seminars, such as the Thai Tourism Youth Conservation Project, to raise ecotourism awareness.

## **Phetchaburi Destination Characteristics**

### **Climate**

The hottest month in the Phetchaburi province is April, when temperatures reach 29.2°C, and the hottest month is January, when temperatures drop to below 25°C.

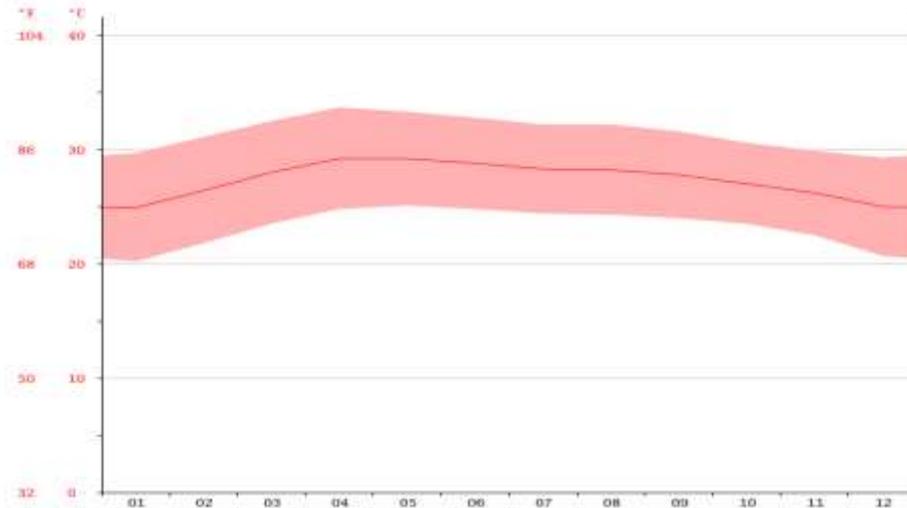


Figure 1: temperature at the province (Source: Thailande.com)

Table 1: Rainfall data in the Phetchaburi province

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Avg. Temp (°C)	24.9	26.4	28	29.2	29.2	28.8	28.3	28.2	27.8	27	26.2	25
Min. Temp (°C)	20.2	21.8	23.5	24.8	25.1	24.8	24.4	24.3	24	23.5	22.5	20.7
Max. Temp (°C)	29.7	31.1	32.5	33.7	33.3	32.8	32.2	32.2	31.6	30.6	29.9	29.3
Avg. Temp (°F)	76.8	79.5	82.4	84.6	84.6	83.8	82.9	82.8	82.0	80.6	79.2	77.0
Min. Temp (°F)	68.4	71.2	74.3	76.6	77.2	76.6	75.9	75.7	75.2	74.3	72.5	69.3
Max. Temp (°F)	85.5	88.0	90.5	92.7	91.9	91.0	90.0	90.0	88.9	87.1	85.8	84.7
Precipitation / Rainfall (mm)	6	13	24	48	113	100	122	126	191	249	116	17
	Hot	Hot	Hot	Hot	Cold	Cold	Wettest	Wettest	Wettest	Wettest	Driest	Driest

Source: Thailande.com

The above chart explains that period from May to November are the wettest time in this province with light and heavy rainfall and on the other side from December to April are the driest time in which there are only limited or little showers. The hottest month is in this province is April and coldest month is December.

### Location

Phetchaburi is a city located in western Thailand with a Myanmar border. Ratchaburi, Samut Songkhram, and Prachuap Khiri are among the Thai provinces with which it has local borders. Phetchaburi is home to a number of tourist sites, as well as a mountain range and a national park (Department of National Park, DNP Thailand). From the 8th century, Phetchaburi was regarded an old royal city, and in 1860, King Rama IV constructed a palace near the city called Khao Wang, which is today known as Phra Nakhon Khiri. This province is divided into eight districts, which are subdivided into 93 blocks, which are further subdivided into 681 villages. Phetchaburi province has a total size of 6,225.1 km and a population of 474,192 people. In

addition, Phetchaburi province is a largest domestic producer of salt. Moreover, various facilities may be fetched in order to reach Phetchaburi province. For example,



Figure 02: Phetchaburi Map (Source: The German Thai Link, Phetchaburi)

**By train:** Phetchaburi has a train station, so visitors from Bangkok can take the train to the province. Hua lump Hong station is where the train departs.

**By Van:** Van services are also available, and every hour, a van service departs between Victory monument and Mochit terminal station for Phetchaburi.

**By bus:** Bus services are also available and from Mochit terminal, Ping klao bus terminal to Phetchaburi province.

### **Thailand Royal Project- Chang Hua Mun**

Chang Hua Mun is located in the Tha yang district of the province of Phetchaburi. Chang Hua Mun is a Thai royal project started by Late King Bhumibol in 2008, when two parcels of land near the Nong Seua Reservoir were purchased (Barrow, 2017). The original land measurement size was 120 Rai, which is equal to 47.5 acres, but it was later increased to 130 Rai, which is equal to 51.3 acres. Earlier, these plots were once unproductive and undesirable due to soil erosion and chemical contamination, but they have now been restored and transformed into a decent agriculture field as well as a proper animal shelter. This location is a great representation of environmentally friendly farming. The name "Chang Hua Mun" was registered in 2009 for this farm in Tha Yang district, Phetchaburi province, based on a story about how the King

received gifts of vegetables, including some small scale and size potatoes. Later, he presented to the farmers of Phetchaburi province to use as breeding stock. The Chang Hua Mun literally translates to "potato weighing." Chang Hua Mun is 60 kilometers from Cha-Am in the Tha Yang district of Phetchaburi province. The land access to this location will provide a delightful Phetchaburi farming countryside experience (Barrow, 2017; Changpauk, 2014).

## Parks

In Phetchaburi province there are two major national parks available such as:

### **Kaeng Krachan National Park**

With a total coverage area of 2,915 square kilometers, Kaeng Krachan National Park is Thailand's largest national park. In addition, reservoirs, forests, dams, lakes, waterfalls, caves, and mountains surround it. For the entrance fees, foreigners need to pay 300 THB (children pay 200 THB) and Thais need to pay 100B (children pay 40 THB) as of November 2013. In addition, one can take their personal vehicle inside the park, which are charged an additional 30 THB fee, as well as 30 THB per night if you plan to camp. (Thai national park).



(Source: Thailand connect)

### **Khao Nang Phanthurat Forest Park**

Khao Nang, which is also in the province of Phetchaburi, is encircled by the park, which is followed by the Khao Nang Phanthurat information Pavilion, Phanthurat's crematory, looking glass, and Phra sang's Bath.



(Source: Bangkok.com/Khao Nang Phanthurat forest park)

## Resorts

In Phetchaburi province there are enormously resort available but, in this study, we use only some eco base resorts such as:

### Alongkorn Farm And Resort



(Source: sawadee.com/hotel)

## Thai Diamond Land Kaeng Krachan



(Source: Booking.com)

## Thanatthicha Buri Lake Resort and Spa



(Source: thanatthicharesort.com)

## Waterfalls

### Par La U Waterfall

Par La U waterfall which is also located in Kaeng Krachan national park, has 16 levels and flows all year because it is surrounded by two other waterfalls, Huai Palao Falls and Chonalanath Falls (Thailand.sawadee.com).



(Source: Phetchaburi/caves-waterfalls)

### **Pha Nam Yod Waterfall**

Pha Nam Yod waterfall is a natural attraction in the province of Phetchaburi, and it's located on the Ang Kaew hill. With a height of 35 meters and a breadth of 15 meters, this waterfall resembles a three-layer umbrella. This waterfall is lovely, with clear water, and it was a bit cooler during the rainy season.



(Source: Phetchaburi/caves-waterfalls)

### **Namtok Tho Thip**

This waterfall is regarded as one of the most magnificent in the Kaeng Krachan national park. It is made up of nine layers of shade trees. It provides a beautiful view of the mountains, foggy clouds, evergreen trees, birds, and animals. The bird and butterfly observation path will begin at Km. 0 near the Khao Sam Yot Checkpoint and end at Km. 18 near the Khao Sam Yot Checkpoint. Butterflies can be spotted on both sides of the highways or at salt licks between Km. 10 - 12 whereas birds can be spotted near the Huai Sam Yot Reservoir, not far beyond the checkpoint, where many species of waterbirds live. The nature study route begins at Km. 18, and between Km. 18 and 27, the Park's indigenous bird species, the Ratchet-tailed Treepie, can be seen which can be seen only here in Thailand. Namtok Tho Thip is located 15 kilometers from Khao Phanoen Thung. Visitors can arrive by car, then hike for another 4 kilometers to

access the waterfall. Kayaking in Kaeng Krachan Dam is a great way to visit a tourist attraction deep in the jungle.



(Source: Phetchaburi/caves-waterfalls)

## Caves

Phetchaburi province has a large number of caves because this area is largely covered with mountains, forests, waterfalls and lakes. The following are some of the well-known caves in this area:

### Khao Lunag Cave

Khao Luang cave is the most beautiful and largest cave in the region, and is located in the province of Phetchaburi. Wat Tham Klae is the name of the temple that is located there. There is a hole in this cave that allows light to enter the cave and illuminate the Buddha pictures.



(Source: thailand.sawadee.com)

### Khao Tao Mo Cave

Khao Tao Mo cave has an area of 40,000 square kilometers, and there is a hall-like room within it. This cave is bordered by the Khao Tao Mo Hill, which is ringed by a large reservoir.



(Source: thailand.sawadee.com)

Some other caves administered by Kaeng Krachan National Park which falls in Phetchaburi province

- a) Hua Chang cave
- b) Kang Kao cave
- c) Tham Khao Pakarang
- d) Wiman cave

### **Crompton Model**

This study incorporated Crompton's "Push and Pull model of Motivation" which was established in 1979, and it is strongly supported by this research article. Tourists can choose their next destination site based on two primary elements, according to the article.

### **The push-pull framework**

The push model of motivation comes from within travelers, and the decision to visit a particular location is based on internal behavior or attributes (Dann, 1977). Crompton's push-pull conceptual perspective is an important concept for determining why tourists choose a particular location for their experiences and various activities. The Crompton framework is appropriate for explaining traveler behavior since it is simple to apply and effective (Chen & Chen, 2015). In general, the main motivators for people to visit an ecotourism destination are the desire for escape, adventure, relaxation, and self-exploration. These characteristics significantly impact passengers' decisions to travel to an ecotourism destination (Prayag & Hosany, 2014). In addition, visitors might be influenced to feel serene and obtain a new experience by a sense of family unity, adventure, and excitement, which can lead them to a specific site (Beh & Bruyere, 2007).

The pull model of motivation is based on external forces that entice tourists to visit a specific location. Travelers might use the pull elements such as scenic beauty, cultural attraction, sports events etc. to motivate themselves when choosing a destination. In general, parks, caves, waterfalls, scenic beauty, and resorts influence how travelers see certain places, and they play a crucial role in determining which ecotourism destinations they want to visit (Lee, 2009). Large number of tourists are attracted through the positive image of ecotourism through the scenic beauties, historical places and recreational areas. The success of any ecotourism destination is greatly dependent on the willingness of visitors to return to see the waterfalls and scenic landscapes (Bowen & Clarke, 2002).

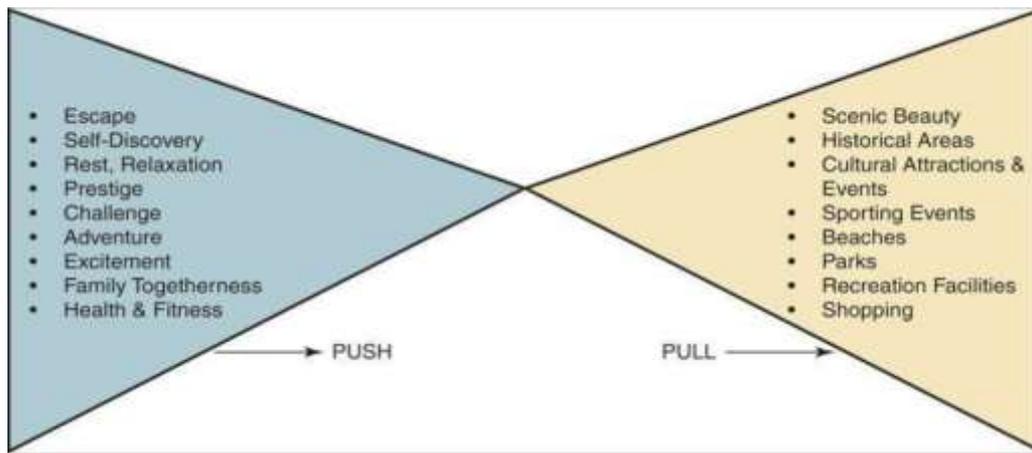


Figure 1: Crompton's push and pull motivation factors model (Source: fhtm.uitm.edu.my)

### Previous Studies Examining Push Factors And Pull Factors

Author	Push factors	Pull factors
Yuan & McDonald (1990)	Escape, relaxation, and hobbies are the most contributors for ecotourism.	Location, climatic condition and budget hotel are motivational factors for promotion of ecotourism.
Uysal & Jurowski (1994)	Sports and cultural experience influence ecotourism.	Entertainment, resort, outdoors, natural sites, parks and heritage sites contribute maximum benefits for ecotourism industry.
Turnbull & Uysal (1995)	Cultural experience, sports and prestige are the motivational push factors among travelers	A heritage, comfort, relaxation, resort, outdoor resources, waterfalls, caves, rural and inexpensive areas are destination pull factors.
Baloglu & Uysal (1996)	Sport and activity seekers and beach resort seekers are the motivational push factors identified.	
Sirakaya & McLellan (1997)		To promote ecotourism local hospitality and services, trip cost and convenience, perception of a safe environment, recreation and sporting activities, unusual and distant vacation spot are destination pull factors.

## PROPOSED MODEL

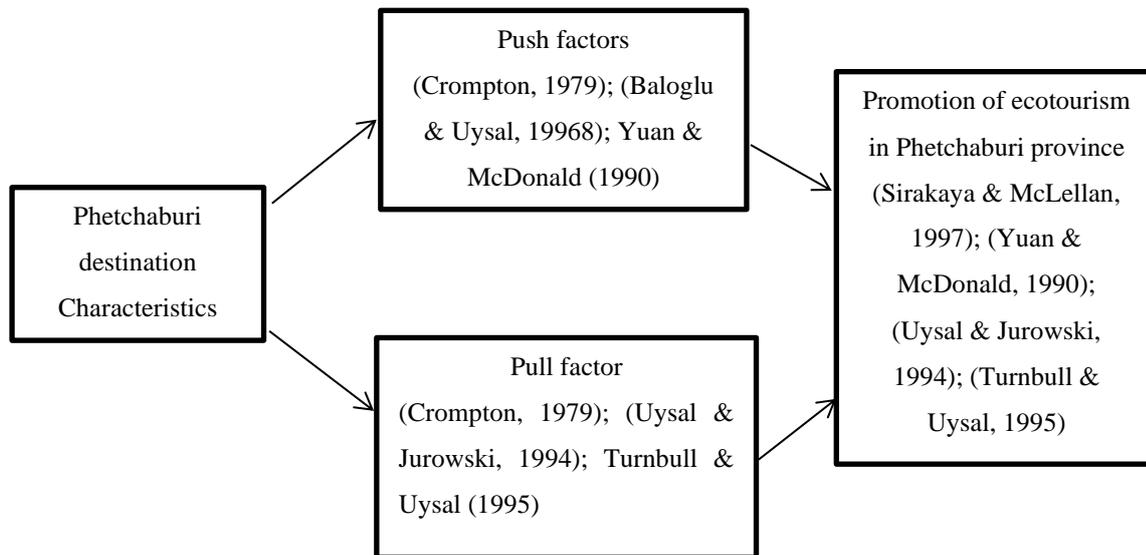


Figure 2: An established research design for this study

## METHODOLOGY

The study used qualitative research methods. Because of the nature of qualitative studies, this approach places more importance on explaining variables in terms of either definitions, conceptual explanations, notes or other forms that narrate field conditions. For the study the researcher selected the location is in Phetchaburi. Data were taken from previous articles and website and analyzed the push and pull factor to understand whether the destination characteristics can boost ecotourism in Phetchburi province. This researcher used secondary data for the study. For secondary data researcher used various website articles, journals and information that is useful in the research process.

## DISCUSSION

When the world is focusing more on sustainable environment, countries need to give priority towards ecotourism. Ecotourism can boost the tourism sector and the country can gain economically. Due to this there is a need for more recognized push factors to attract more travelers in Phetchaburi province to promote greater and effective ecotourism. In order to promote eco-tourism, push factors are used to encourage travelers to visit local markets. A case study of similar field by Kanyapat Phattanapokinsakul and Panuwat Phakdee-auksorn (2015) being taken to justify cultural activities, educational improvement, historical information, obtaining new experience, and leisure are all things that particular areas can offer, and Phetchaburi province, which has numerous natural resources, national parks, cultural activities, and Flora and Fauna, can do the same.

At the same time, there is a need to use pull factors to promote more and effective ecotourism in Phetchaburi province, to attract more travelers. The perception of travelers toward the destination is vital, since a positive image of a location might become the most important aspect (Prayag & Hosany, 2014). In addition, other aspects that can influence travelers to visit

Phetchaburi province in order to promote ecotourism include their attitude toward the place, recommendations from friends and family, satisfaction levels from prior visits, and intention to return to that particular place (Darnell & Johnson, 2001).

## **LIMITATION OF THIS STUDY**

The limitation of this study is that it is documentary in nature and supported by literature review and past related research. This study doesn't include data survey and analysis model otherwise results would have been more solid and realistic. Due to minimal time, the study could not interview local business to understand their mindset about the ecotourism. However, this research study is still very much useful for tour operators and travel agents in Thailand from this paper can capitalize the market for eco-tourism travelers.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

Sustainability has become increasingly important in economic and social development projects around the world. A walk in the rainforest, for example, is not ecotourism unless it benefits the environment and people who live there; similarly, a rafting excursion is only ecotourism if it generates awareness and funds to help conserve the watershed (Untamed Path, 2007). As a result, ecotourism is directly tied to environmental conservation and development. Phetchaburi destination characteristics can promote ecotourism. Ecotourism in Phetchaburi province can be boosted by identified push factors such as escape, sports, leisure, hobbies, and resort seekers. Parks, waterfalls, caverns, natural attractions, heritage sites, accessibility of access, and climatic conditions have all been recognized as pull factors that can strengthen and promote ecotourism in Phetchaburi province. The promotion of ecotourism in Phetchaburi province is linked to the destination's push factors. In addition, Phetchaburi destination characteristics pull factors and promotion of ecotourism in Phetchaburi province has a strong relationship.

### **Recommendation**

This research is perfect for boosting eco-tourism in Phetchaburi areas that are rich in natural resources and high in flora and fauna. It will also aid in the development of tourism in that state and throughout the country. This will increase currency reserves while also providing job possibilities for local folks. This research will help a specific location become known as a tourist destination for entertainment, leisure, and other recreational activities. In addition, The Thailand royal project in Phetchaburi will provide cultural information and boost the general image of Thailand. This study will be very useful for tour guide operators or travel agencies that organize tours for both domestic and foreign tourists, as it will identify areas in Phetchaburi province where travel agents and operators can capitalize in order to boost eco-tourism, as this area is extremely rich in eco-tourism and has ample potential to generate income for the entire province. To enhance eco-tourism, this location requires a strong marketing campaign.

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