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A Study of Senior Tourist Behavior in Nakhon Pathom Province

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates travel motivation of Thai elder tourists in Nakhon Pathom Province. The results of the study from the analysis revealed that there were personal and external factors which need to be considered before travelling. Factors in this research were chosen from other relevant studies in travel motivation and there were 400 respondents participated in the study: tourists in Nakhon Pathom. Significant variables are a variety of tourism destination and recreation, cleanness of city, toilet, and available tourism media. The great majority of them attend cultural sites and visit relatives.

Keywords: *Travel Motivation, Elder Tourists in Nakhon Pathom*

INTRODUCTION

According to the statistics of World Trade Organization (WTO), the number of elderly tourists or grey hair travelers will be growing rapidly until 2020. The immense socio-graphic change has drawn out the transformation of tourism industry and its service quality. The impact spreads throughout the world destination and encounters new parameter of service quality and destination management to satisfy this type of tourist. While the demand and number of senior tourist is increasing, the infrastructure in tourism industry is still limited. The potential to improve destination capacity is needed to be studied and fostered for higher competitiveness. The research area in this study is Nakhon Pathom Province while the research survey focuses on seniors Thai who spend their journey at various tourist destinations in Nakhon Pathom Province during December 2017-February 2018.

LITERATURE & THEORY

The research covers three principles related to the study of senior tourist behavior: tourist motivation from both intrinsic and extrinsic aspect, common senior tourist behavior, and tourism in Nakhon Pathom. This chapter illustrates the general concept about tourism industry in Nakhon Pathom and tourist motivation. Tourist destinations in Nakhon Pathom are research area to gather data from respondents.

Tourist Motivation

Motivation is defined as the final result of human need. Tourist motivation is therefore generated and delivered from psychological reason which tourist takes into his or her account for decision making to travel (Kotler et al., 2005). The researches in tourist motivation have been conducted by scholars from different time with different academic background such as anthropology, sociology, economics, and psychology (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Gnoth, 1997). Destination including its attractiveness is the principle thing in tourism industry. Kozak (2002) mentions that final conclusion of tourist motivation leaves the shortcut to success in tourism industry for related tourism stakeholders. Then, the understanding of tourist motivation can identify tourist perception toward



destination and helps match tourist with favorite destination. The development in destination has driven the research in tourist motivation. Additionally, Crompton (1979) suggests that it is easy to do the study by asking the question on who, what, when, and where to the visitors. However it is more interesting to ask “why”. “*Why question*” can determine the value, motivation, and perspective of tourist toward a destination.

Dating back to half a century, Plog drew out the tourist motivation figure in 1967. This study dealt with the allocentric-psychocentric aspect. Allocentric traveller is the one who is non-adventurous and remains conservative. They are very less curious to experience a new place. On the contrary, the psychocentric tourist is an experience seeker and world explorer. They are ready to learn new cultures and take a risky circumstance. Moreover, Plog illustrated tourist whose character is in the middle between allocentric and psychocentric, *the mid centric tourists*. To conclude, the theory of tourist motivation presented by Plog can draw out the understanding of one’s personal background and perception towards travelling that covers some example of preferable destination. Pearce et al. (1983) link the theory of tourist motivation to Maslow’s hierarchy. This ladder presents the level human needs divided from basic to the highest level. At the bottom, Maslow illustrates the basic human need or physiological need: food, water, air, clothes, and medicines. Safety is the second factor to survive as human prefers to stay in stable and trustable situation. Then, relationship and interaction with society stands for the third factor to live. Lastly, the most important factor in Maslow’s hierarchy influences role in the tourist motivation is the top two highest of the summit: self – esteem and self – actualization. These aspects are varied and lead to the argument and study in socio – psychological reason in tourist motivation (Dann, 1977).

Socio – psychological reason can be called as push and pull factors which influence people to go on travelling (Dann, 1977). Push factor is intrinsic motivation and pull factor is extrinsic motivation. Two of these factors have impact on tourist whether decide to travel (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). It is important to consider these motivations; push and pull factors determined in this study how elderly tourist engages with tourism in Nakhon Pathom. Push factor refers to mental influence that tourist takes into account for decision making to take a trip. Some people want to escape from daily routine. Iso-Ahola (1982) callsthis type of tourist as “escape-seeker”. They wish to regress to the state of childhood when travelling or even to calm their mind. Family can share a time together to build strong relationship. The mutual cultural exchange can be one of factors that motivate people to travel. Alegre and Pou (2007) arguethat push and pull factors are related to the length of stay, type of activity, and purpose of visit. However, Baloglu and Uysal (1996) describethat pull factors are emerged in the outcome of destination attractiveness perceived by tourist. In other word, pull factor stands for a wide range of attractiveness, culture and heritage, fine weather, safety, destination’s political situation, and travel cost. Moutinho (1987) adds that tourist affected by pull factors will learn the way to spend money and travel, especially the way to make a travel decision. Their personality might change after previous trip. The research tickles the study in tourist future behavior because one of push and pull factors that motivate elderly Thai people to travel in Nakhon Pathom and the way to fulfill their expectation and satisfactory. In addition, Ryan & Deci (2000) discover that tourist motivation can be divided into the level of motivation; how much push and pull factor weights on tourist’s decision making and what kind of push and pull factors that tourist take into their account before travelling. Ryan (2002) states that the mutual relationship between push and pull factors. Neulinger (1974) and Csikszentmihalyi (1975) headed to the large extent of the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This study is detailed in two types of tourist motivation including its sub concept to find out how it works on tourist’s perception. The effect is derived from both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic Travel Motivation

This motivation is derived from one’s mind to fulfil expectation and satisfactory. This pleasure is an immediate satisfaction derived from activity in tourism. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) portrays intrinsic motivation as a sense of flow. Life is guided and motivated by two awards: psychic entropy and flow. Psychic entropy refers to



mental disorder that people try an effort to overwhelm such uncomfortable feeling and to relax. In term of tourism, elderly Thai tourist might love to stay in a peaceful atmosphere or far away from home. To conclude, intrinsic motivation stands for the collection of gender, generation, nationality, academic background, religion, and marital status (Olson & Peter, 1996). Their domination affects directly elderly Thai tourist’s free time and income. These mentioned factors which is generally called demographic characteristics, have a great impact on tourist behavior and how they manage their stay (UNWTO, n.d.).

Perceptions and Needs

Term and scope of perceptions toward travelling are defined and argued by scholars. Tourist perception is figured out by tourist satisfaction (Ryan, 1997). For the need in travelling, the study emphasizes personal people’s need. Iso – Ahola (1980) explains that people develop themselves and fulfil their desire by travelling. He remarks that travel strengthens the level of self – determination: principle element in intrinsic motivation. He finds that people who seek to fulfil their personal need always spend holiday to maintain this feeling. The hierarchy of Maslow is also adapted to tourist perceptions and needs. Beard and Ragheb (1983) declare four elements of tourist perception based on the hierarchy of Maslow. These four aspects tickle instinct, personal needs and goals.

The Intellectual Component

Tourist discovers himself/herself and his/her preference while learning new things outside his home.

The Mastery Component

Tourist wants to achieve dream, self-challenge, self-master, and compete with others. In general, people set different goal in travel, this aspect, therefore, is varied.

The Social Component

Tourist regards journey as the way to build relationship with friends and to get intra–personal linkage. Travel also builds the esteem from friends, family, and peer.

The Stimulus – Avoidance Component

Tourist escapes from stressful situation derived from society and daily routine. Peaceful moment and calmness are the point of this component.

Extrinsic Travel Motivation

Other impact on people’s decision to take a trip is a pleasure. Ryan and Deci (2000) arguethat extrinsic motivation stands for external factor. Extrinsic motivation, the secondary aspect, influences intrinsic motivation or the primary factor too. Both of motivation has a mutual relationship and enriches each other (Calder & Staw, 1975). The extrinsic motivation can be divided into three aspects: economic, supply, and society.

Economic Aspect

The economic situation plays major role to people on making decision to take a trip. People, in general, prefer spending money on travelling during leisure time (Ryan, 2005). Economic factor has immense influence on the way tourist consumes and manages the length of stay.

Supply Aspect

Another important role in extrinsic motivation is supply side in tourist industry. As tourists seek for the quality that is worth for their budget, continuous development in tourism supply side is challenging for stakeholders. Supply side covers the offered products in tourism area. Tourist products refer to all things consumed tourist’s stay. Specifically, tourist destinations are related with activities tourist participates in including various type of accommodation. Tourist product can be both tangible and intangible: bundle of activity, service, and benefit and satisfaction for final visitors’ experience (Medlik & Middleton, 1973). Tourist products are categorized into five components: tourist attractions, facility, accessibility, tourist image, and price. Additionally, Pine and Gilmore



(2002) focused on the experience derived from further tourist product: entertainment, education, aesthetic value, and escapism. Hjalager (2002) proposed that the process to keep experience up should be steadily and frequently updated due to the shift in tourism trend.

Social Aspect

Aristotle stated that human is social animal, therefore the main influence that people take into consideration for making decision to travel is family, peer, social class, and culture. Social role in tourism is like the two sides of coin. Many travelers let social role influence their decision making while some other rely on their own reason (Kotler, et al., 2005).

Gnoth (1997) proposed three elements as basic concept for tourist motivation which includes motivation, expectation, and then attitude. The relation between these terms and attempt is that travel motivation plays role in attitude toward a visit. Then, tourist’s expectation of visiting can affect their perception toward visiting also. To conclude, travel motivation generates and empowers the relationship between expectation and attitude.

Elder Tourist Behavior

WTO declares that the number of elderly tourist will be increasing rapidly until 2020. This demographic change widely raises complex demand, different holiday purpose, and also traditional holiday. The lower birth rate echoes the trend in aging tourism.

Many scholars left the concept of being senior, but the definition of aging tourist is blurred. García and Martorell (2007) define two characteristics of being senior: age and retirement. Generally, people become retiree at the age of 60-65. They turn into tourist with physical sufficiency, more free time, and more financial resource. Fleischer & Pisam displayed the motivation of senior tourists that they travel for relaxing, socializing, seeing new destination, and seeking for experience.

Common characteristic of senior tourist and the way they consume during the trip is figured out as following. They have a broad range of accommodation choice and prefer travel with family as a life companion. The stay of aging tourist lasts longer than another trip of various life cycles: 1-3 nights, 4-5 nights or up to 9 nights (VVAA, 2009). Their chosen mean of transport is always a private car following by plane and train (Prideaux et al., 2001). They somehow choose a destination from word of mouth and tour package stands for the best choice for senior tourist (Ryan, 1995). Elderly tourist is always appealed by destination that is “accessible” because they consider this context as a symbol of “high quality of destination and service” (Franco, 1999).

Success in senior-oriented tourism requires the creation of decisive tourist product that synergizes the need of elderly people from different background: rich and poor, firm and disabled, educated and uneducated, for example. Potential development covers the accessibility of destination, marketing and branding of tourism supply side.

Relevant Studies and Discussion

There are Thai scholars conducting the research on elder tourism or grey tourism issue as follows:

Sangsakorn, K. et al. (2011) found that tourism elements for senior tourist such as accessibilities, amenities, value and facilities still need more development to welcome that group of tourist whereas the information is not accessible and relevant groups of interest do not consider elder tourists as target.

Sibi.P.S (2017) perceived grey tourism as an opportunity to create new market chain. Even though grey tourism may refer to “place specific” with high demand in quality and comfort.

Alen, Dominguez and Losada (2012) found that. People with saving money, high salary, full of travelling experience, and being healthy, are always not in seasonal travel.

All of findings and arguments in these studies are the guideline to conduct this research



METHODS

The study was conducted under a quantitative method whereas number of the samples was 400 elder tourists in Nakhon Pathom during December 2017 - February 2018. The research question was formulated based on concept of elder tourist behavior and travel motivation as following:

-Questionnaire for Senior Tourist Motivation Research-

The objective of this research is to find out the motivation of Thai senior tourist in decision making to travel to Nakhon Pathom.

On behalf of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, your response will be kept privately and only aggregated information will be published in research only. Thank you for your support!

Part 1: General Information

1.1 Gender: Male Female **1.2 Age:**years old

1.3 Average Income/month

- Less than 5,000 THB 5,001-10,000 THB
- 10,001-15,000 THB Higher than 15,001 THB

Part 2: Travel Motivation

2.1 Purpose of Travel to Nakhon Pathom

- To relax To visit relative
- To learn history and culture To practice religious activity
- Other, please specify

QUESTION	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree Nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Nakhon Pathom is great place for senior tourist					
2. Variety of tourist					



destination	
3. Satisfied service from staff	
4. Enough parking lot	
5. Reasonable price	
6. Cleanness of destination and toilets	
7. Safety and security in destination	
8. Convenient mean of transport	
9. Available tourist information from Nakhon Pathom tourism authorities and private sectors	
10. Attractive tourism promotion and special offers from Nakhon Pathom tourism authorities and private sectors	
11. Free and available media for Nakhon Pathom tourism promotion (brochure, guidebook, etc.)	
12. Attractive and suitable activities for senior tourist	
13. Friendliness of local	
14. Clear traffic signal	
15. Nakhom Pathom tourism helps conserve culture and tradition	
16. Word of mouth influences your travel decision	



17. Social conflict affects your travel decision

RESULTS

There were 400 senior tourists in this research, divided into 186 male and 214 female with the average age of 63. Their average income per month was between 10,001-15,000 THB. The great majority of elder tourist visit Nakhon Pathom for religious reason ($\bar{x}=4.07$, $SD=.990$). Then, the most attractive travel product of Nakhon Pathom was the variety of tourist destination ($\bar{x}=4.07$, $SD=.776$). The table 1 describes the detail of each travel motivation variable.

Motivation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<i>Purpose of Travel to Nakhon Pathom</i>			
1. To relax	3.58	.960	.059
2. To visit relative	4.05	.600	.051
3. To learn history and culture	3.67	.863	.053
4. To practice religious activity	4.07	.990	.085
<i>Travel Product</i>			
1. Nakhon Pathom is great place for senior tourist	3.41	1.246	.077
2. Variety of tourist destination	4.07	.776	.067
3. Satisfied service from staff	3.57	.895	.055
4. Enough parking lot	3.54	.973	.083
5. Reasonable price	3.72	.758	.047
6. Cleanness of destination and toilets	3.76	.945	.081
7. Safety and security in destination	3.17	1.292	.080
8. Convenient mean of transport	3.07	1.410	.121
9. Available tourist information from Nakhon Pathom tourism authorities and private sectors	3.68	.933	.080
10. Attractive tourism promotion and special offers from Nakhon Pathom tourism authorities and private sectors	3.31	1.007	.062
11. Free and available media for Nakhon Pathom tourism promotion (brochure, guidebook, etc.)	3.76	.762	.065
12. Attractive and suitable activities for senior tourist	3.42	1.058	.065
13. Friendliness of local	3.10	1.088	.093
14. Clear traffic signal	3.18	.816	.050



15. Nakhon Pathom tourism helps conserve culture and tradition	3.21	.802	.069
16. Word of mouth influences your travel decision	3.17	.878	.054
17. Social conflict affects your travel decision	3.45	.796	.068
11. Free and available media for Nakhon Pathom tourism promotion (brochure, guidebook, etc.)	3.48	.923	.057
12. Attractive and suitable activities for senior tourist	3.38	.844	.072
13. Friendliness of local	2.92	.761	.047
14. Clear traffic signal	3.49	.989	.085
15. Nakhon Pathom tourism helps conserve culture and tradition	3.29	1.007	.062

TABLE 1

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This chapter gives the conclusion of finding in research questions, conclusion of relevance, and limitation of the finding. There were 400 senior tourists in this research, divided into 186 male and 214 female with the average age of 63. Their average income per month was between 10,001-15,000 THB. A great majority of elder tourist visit Nakhon Pathom for religious reason. Then, the most attractive travel product of Nakhon Pathom was the variety of tourist destination.

For future researchers, they are recommended to conduct research related to community and tourists. As the result shows that there is less contact among tourist and local, it is interesting to conduct a research that can strengthen the hands-on tourism and experience exchange. The practical recommendations are given for related stakeholders in NakhonPathom tourism such as government, tourist planners, and private sectors. The finding in this research is useful for them to increase quantitative and qualitative development. They can figure out the strangeness and weakness of NakhonPathomtourism from this dissertation and formulate the promotion strategy to attract new travellers as well as bring the previous travellers back to visit Thailand again. Regarding the research outcomes, relevant stakeholders in leisure and tourism can build up some tourism campaigns or festival to strengthen relation or interaction among tourist and community.

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