

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the literature related to Korean travel market, travel motivations, travel behaviors and trip characteristics, and tourist satisfaction. The purpose is to provide knowledge and understanding of the concepts related to the theories and studies focused in this research.

#### **2.1 Studies Related to Korean Travel Market**

In order to investigate the Korean travel market, it is important for researchers to review relevant literature to better understand the overall travel characteristics of Korean travelers. A review of literature indicates some published research relating to the Korean travel market.

Iverson (1997), for example, examined vacation planning characteristics between Korean and Japanese travelers in visiting Guam. The study found that Korean travelers were likely to employ a shorter decision time frame than Japanese travelers in making their destination decision due to cultural difference (nationality). With the difference in decision timing between Korean and Japanese travelers, the study suggested that tour operators catering for Korean travelers might become more aggressive in the provision of planning materials and timetables, and tour packages could be negotiated with substantial lead times in order to prepare marketing materials, particularly during peak periods. Using Pearce's Travel Career Ladder model to investigate Korean tourists' motivations to Australia, Kim (1997) found that Korean travelers were primarily motivated to travel to Australia to experience natural environmental setting. The study revealed that some aspects of Australia (e.g. Aboriginal history and culture) were little known, however, they were potential to attract Korean tourists. The study suggested that natural scenery, wildlife and outdoor activities as well as culture and friendliness of people should be emphasized when developing marketing programs for the Korean travel market to Australia. In the examination of diversity in Asian outbound travel industries by investigating five different Asian countries (i.e. Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan), March (1997) found some similarities and differences among the five market groups. In terms of travel similarities, the study revealed that most Asian travelers preferred to travel as groups, desired luxury and brand name shopping facilities, and disinclined to give direct feedback to the service providers about service quality. However, travel differences among these travelers included the ability and desire to speak English, eating patterns/travel patterns based on cultural and religious factors, level of adventurous independent spirit, overseas travel experience, consumer expectations and demands

about overseas travel. Due to variations among these Asian travelers, the study suggested different marketing approaches designed for these markets. Kim and Prideaux (1999) analyzed the need of supply-side of Korean inbound tourism to Australia and identified major issues of supply-side as perceived by Korean group incentive travelers including language barrier, transport systems, food service, and insufficiency of travel information/shopping. These areas require immediate attention from Australia's tourism industry in developing the type of tourism products that should be offered to Korean tourists. Chen and Hsu (2000) measured Korean tourists' perceived images of overseas destinations. By examining Korean travelers, the study indicated that the perceptions of travel cost, destination lifestyle, availability of quality restaurants, freedom from language barriers, and availability of interesting places to visit affected their choice behaviors. When targeting the Korean tourist market, especially the youth market, the study suggested that the marketing programs should emphasize on the five leading attributes namely, adventurous atmosphere, scenery, environmental friendliness, availability of tourist information and architectural style. Examining destination images among Korean outbound travelers, Chen (2001) found that Korean travelers perceived Asia Pacific and North American as an adventuresome image while Europe was perceived as many interesting places. The results showed that Asia Pacific countries were the most popular travel destination among Korean travelers. In order to attract Korean travelers, the authors suggested that the Asia Pacific countries should promote their destinations based on natural and scenic beauty attributes. Lee and Cox (2007) examined travel behaviors and lifestyle of Korean immigrants in Australia and identified four distinct groups which were 'Korean socializes & sports seekers', 'relaxation seekers', 'cultural & entertainment seekers', and FIT travel enthusiasts'. Results shown that the respondents who were more acculturated significantly differed in their travel lifestyle from those who were less acculturated. Another research by Lee and Sparks (2007) compared travel behaviors of two Korean groups (those residents in Australia and those residents in Korea) and found some travel differences between these two groups. The study showed that travel differences, though the same nationality, may occur as a result of migration. The findings indicated that those Korean who had migrated to Australia were more likely to prefer independent travel, take longer holidays and make travel arrangements without the aid of a travel advisor. The authors suggested that knowledge of consumers' diverse backgrounds can enhance opportunities for destination marketers to meet customers' expectations and promote appropriate marketing programs.

*In spite of the limited published literature*, the above studies has revealed some interesting results about travel behaviors and trip characteristics associating with Korean outbound travelers; providing a better insight into the travel related behaviors of the target market. However, with the existing literature, no attempt has been made to investigate travel motivations (by using push and pull motivations) of Korean outbound travelers in visiting Southeast Asia destinations. This presents research opportunities to further investigate the Korean travel market, especially their motivations to visit Thailand.

### **General Information of Korean Inbound Travel Market to Thailand**

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007) by the Market Intelligence Division has provided some information regarding Korean inbound travelers to Thailand. The information would provide a better insight into the market and may be used to support the results of the current study. According to the TAT (2007), there were a total of 1,075,516 Korean arrivals to Thailand with 58% were males and 42% were females. The growth of the market during the past decade was not stable; slightly increasing and decreasing in some years. Most Korean travelers to Thailand were first-time visitors and came to Thailand for leisure and holiday purposes (rest/relaxation). Major age groups include 25-34 and 35-44 years old. Most of them came to Thailand by group tours while the non-group segment has been increasing during the past few years. The income generated from this segment was approximately at Baht 28,865.47 million. The average length of their stay was 5.77 days and daily expense was at Bath 4,651 with major spending on shopping, accommodation and food/beverage. Popular cities among Korean travelers include Bangkok, Ayutthaya, Pattaya, Chiang Mai and Phuket. **In spite of limited information available about this market**, it is hoped that the results of the current study (research work) will reveal and add more useful information into the Korean inbound travel market to Thailand. This would help industry practitioners understand more about Korean tourists' behaviors and can develop more effecting marketing policies and strategies for their targets.

## **2.2 Concept of the Theory of Push and Pull Motivations**

The theory of push and pull motivations, developed by Dann (1977), is one of the useful theories widely used to examine tourist motivations (Crompton, 1979; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Jang, Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2004). Dann (1977) made a significant contribution in suggesting two factors motivating people to travel and to go to a particular destination. The two factors are called push and pull motivational factors. The concept of push

and pull motivations theory describes that people are pushed by internal motives (called push factors) and pulled by destination attributes/attraction (called pull factors) when making their travel decisions (Lam & Hsu, 2004). This concept is classified into two forces/factors (push and pull factors), which indicate that people travel because they are pushed and pulled to do so by some forces or factors. Push factors (internal motives) are mainly considered to be socio-psychological motives that predispose people to travel, while pull factors (destination attributes) are those that attract people to choose a particular destination (Lam & Hsu, 2004).

In detail, push factors are the factors (or internal forces) that motivate or create a desire to satisfy a need to travel (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Most of the push factors are internal forces or intrinsic motivators that relate to the needs and wants of the traveler, e.g. the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, excitement, prestige, health and fitness, and social interaction (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Klenosky, 2002). According to the literature, push factors can help explain why people travel, which is related to internal motivational driving forces.

With regard to pull factors, they are related to external factors that effect where a person travels to meet his or her needs or desires (You et al. 2000). In other words, pull factors can be recognised as destination attributes/attractions that respond to and reinforce inherent push motivations (McGehee, 1996; Zhang, Yue, & Qu, 2004). Uysal and Jurowski (1994, p. 844) stated that 'pull factors can be those that emerge as a result of the attractiveness of a destination as it is perceived by those with the propensity to travel'. They may include both tangible resources such as beaches, mountains, recreation facilities, natural attractions, culture and historical attractions, as well as travelers' perceptions and expectations such as novelty, benefit expectations, and marketing image (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). You et al. (2000) argued that pull factors can help explain why people decide to visit a particular destination.

One important study related to the push and pull motivations theory was indicated by Crompton (1979) who agreed with Dann's basic idea of push and pull motives but further identified nine motives: seven push motives and two pull motives (Jang & Cai, 2002). The seven push motives (socio-psychological motives) were escape, self-exploration, relaxation, prestige, regression, kinship-enhancement, and social interaction while the two pull motives were novelty and education (Jang & Cai, 2002). Following Crompton's initial empirical effort in examining people's travel motivations, many studies have employed push and pull factors to examine tourists' motivations in different settings such as nationalities (e.g. Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Zhang & Lam, 1999), destinations (e.g. Jang & Cai, 2002; Kim & Prideaux, 2005; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), and tourist segments (Bieger & Laesser, 2002; Jang et al. 2004). The common push factors that were frequently identified in previous studies may include knowledge-seeking,

ego-enhancement, self-esteem, social interaction, rest and relaxation, family togetherness, while the pull factors were natural environment, cultural and historical attractions, cost of travel, tourist facilities, and safety (Zhang & Lam, 1999; Klenosky, 2002; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Jang & Wu, 2006). As noted, tourism researchers have found the push and pull motivations theory as a useful approach to measure tourists' motivations. Because push factors have been useful in explaining the desire for travel, whereas the pull factor help explain the choice of destination (Crompton, 1979; Christensen, 1983). In addition, researchers argued that travel patterns can be distinguished by the push and pull factors influencing vacation destination choices (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Jang and Cai (2002) stated that findings from research examining tourists' motivations by using push and pull factors should provide useful insight into the target market and help tourism marketers in planning effective marketing strategies such as product development and advertisement. To date, the push and pull motivations theory seems to be widely recognised as a useful framework for examining the motivations underlying tourists and their travel-related behavior (Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Klenosky, 2002). Many researchers, thus, have employed it to investigate travel motivations of international tourists in different settings (e.g. Klenosky, 2002; Jang & Cai, 2002; Kim, 2003, Hsu & Lam, 2003; Jang et al. 2004; Jang & Wu, 2006).

***In conclusion***, the push and pull motivations theory seems to be widely discussed and recognised by tourism researchers as a useful and appropriate approach to examine tourist motivations (Klenosky, 2002; Lam & Hsu, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). This is because the push and pull motivations theory seems to provide a simple and intuitive method for explaining tourists' motivations and their travel-related behaviors, as well as helps explain why people travel and where they go (Dann, 1977; Klenosky, 2002; Jang & Wu, 2006). Researchers rationalize that the push and pull motivations theory has been primarily utilized in studies of tourist behavior because the push factors are the socio-psychological motives that help explain the desire to have a vacation, while the pull factors are the motives stimulated by the destination and explain the choice of destination (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Klenosky, 2002). More importantly, the push and pull factors have been regarded as a useful framework for examining the different forces that influence a person to consider taking a vacation and the forces that attract that person to select a particular vacation destination (Klenosky, 2002). Thus, the application of the push and pull motivations theory to examine travel motivations of Korean travelers in this study should provide a useful approach to understanding a wide variety of different needs and wants that influence their motivations in visiting Thailand. Moreover, it appears that there is no empirical study employing the push and pull motivations theory to

investigate travel motivations of Korean travelers to Thailand. Therefore, the push and pull motivations theory is considered to be appropriate and relevant to the purpose of this study.

### **2.3 Studies Related to the Push and Pull Motivations**

Several studies (e.g. Yavuz, Uysal, & Baloglu, 1998; Zhang & Lam, 1999; Huang & Tsai, 2002; Jang & Cai, 2002; Jang & Wu 2006) have been conducted using the push and pull motivations theory to investigate travel motivations and tourist behaviors. These studies provide useful implications to tourism marketers in formulating appropriate strategies to attract a target market. Cha, McCleary, and Uysal (1995), for example, explored the travel motivations of Japanese overseas travelers by focusing on the push factor approach and segmented them into three distinct groups: sport seekers, novelty seekers, and family/relaxation seekers. The result of the study disclosed that there were different motivation factors found among Japanese overseas travelers, and it was possible to cluster or segment Japanese overseas travelers based on their motivations. The authors suggested that, when marketing to Japanese overseas travelers, these three different groups should be recognised, and different types of advertisement should be considered. For instance, advertising the Super Bowl or other sports would be appropriate to the sport seeker group while advertising the adventure or knowledge related trips should be suitable to the novelty seeker group. Zhang and Lam (1999) investigated Mainland Chinese visitors' motivations to visit Hong Kong and disclosed that the most important push factors influencing the Mainland Chinese people to visit Hong Kong were 'knowledge', 'prestige', and 'enhancement of human relationship' motives. The most important pull factors or attractions of Hong Kong were 'hi-tech image', 'expenditure, and 'accessibility'. This study implied that the Mainland Chinese travelers perceived Hong Kong as a unique, modernized, friendly, and convenient place for holidays. The study suggested that concerned parties should build Hong Kong's image as a high-tech multinational city in the world to Chinese people via various accessible media.

Another study conducted by Jang and Cai (2002) reported that 'knowledge seeking', 'escape', and 'family togetherness' were the most important factors to motivate the British to travel abroad. However, 'cleanliness & safety', 'easy-to-access', and 'economical deal' were considered the most important pull factors attracting them to an overseas destination. The findings from comparing the push and pull factors across seven international destinations (USA, Canada, South America, Caribbean, Africa, Oceania, and Asia) as perceived by the British travelers indicated that each region had its own strengths and weaknesses in terms of its position in the minds of British travelers. The authors suggested that knowledge of people's motivations

and its associations with their destination selection is critical to predict their future travel patterns, and the findings could be used for destination product development and formation of marketing strategies.

In addition to examining overseas travelers, there were some studies employing the push and pull motivations theory to investigate the travel motivations of domestic tourists. For instance, Kim et al. (2003) examined the travel motivations of visitors to visit Korean national parks. They found that the most important push factors influencing Korean people to visit the national parks were 'appreciating natural resources and health', followed by 'adventure and building friendship', 'family togetherness and study', and 'escaping from everyday routine' respectively, while the most attractions of the national parks (pull factors) were 'accessibility and transportation', 'information and convenience of facilities', and 'key tourist resources'. These findings implied that visitors to national parks in Korea were likely to consider the parks to be valuable recreational resources that provide important opportunities to appreciate natural resources or enhance health or build friendship. The authors suggested that the park administrators should recognise the needs of different groups of visitors (students, families, and older people), and develop the products responding to each group. More interestingly, the authors did not only provide a useful implication to Korean national park administrators but also to the park administrators of other countries who want to target Korean nature-based tourists. Another study focusing on domestic tourism conducted by Zhang, Yue and Qu (2004) explored the motivating factors of domestic urban tourists in Shanghai, China. The study showed that 'prestige' and 'novelty' were regarded as the top two important push factors of domestic tourists, while 'urban amenity' and 'service attitude and quality' were the most important pull factors of Shanghai appealing to domestic tourists. The result also reported that the 'prestige' (push factor) and 'urban amenity' (pull factor) had an impact on domestic tourists' satisfaction. One important finding from the study indicated that the pull factors like 'service attitude and quality', 'urban amenity', 'expenditure' and 'hi-tech image' may influence the tourists' likelihood to recommend Shanghai to their relatives and friends. In order to promote Shanghai, the authors recommended positioning Shanghai as a city of unique cultural and economic image as well as improve the service quality in Shanghai in order to attract the domestic tourists.

In addition to identifying major push and pull factors influencing people to travel, the literature also indicates that the perception of push and pull factors could be varied depending demographic characteristics. Some studies (Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Kim et al., 2003) have argued that it is possible to find some differences in the push and pull factors among different demographic subgroups of tourists and market segment could be developed. Based on the

literature and in relation to the current study, **this study predicts that Korean travelers with different demographic characteristics may have differences in push and pull factors - hypothesis 1.**

*To sum up*, the literature has shown that previous studies focusing on the push and pull motivations theory provide a useful and practical approach for understanding tourist behavior and the factors influencing them to visit a particular destination. The results of previous studies imply that the conceptual framework of push and pull factors can be applied to examine travel motivations of both domestic and international tourists. It is hoped that the results from the current study should provide important implications in helping destination planners plan and execute effective marketing strategies to meet the needs and expectations of the target market. Since the perception of push and pull factors could vary from one market to another (Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Kim et al., 2003), therefore, it is worth to examine the perception of push and pull factors among Korean travelers to Thailand. The results would be useful for tourism operators to develop appropriate products for the target markets.

## **2.4 Relationships between Push and Pull Motivations**

As noted, push factors are internal motives that influence people to travel while pull factors are those that related to destination attractions that respond to and reinforce push factors (McGehee, 1996; Zhang et al., 2004). These two factors have been generally characterised as relating to two separate decisions made at two separate points in time – one focusing on whether to go, the other on where to go (Klenosky, 2002). For example, once people have the desire to travel abroad to experience something new and exciting (push factors - internal motives), they would then consider where to go or what to see, e.g. Asia, Australia, Europe or North American (pull factors - destinations attractions). Thus, it's generally viewed that push factors precede pull factors (Dann, 1977; Klenosky, 2002). However, while these two factors are viewed as a separating stage in travel decision making, it is becoming increasingly evident that they should not be viewed as operating entirely independent of each other (Crompton, 1979; Klenosky, 2002; Kim et al., 2003). Several researchers (Cha et al., 1995; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994) argued that push and pull factors should not be considered separately but they are rather as fundamentally related to each other. More importantly, researchers noted that while the internal forces (motives) push people to travel, the external forces (destination attractiveness) of the destination itself simultaneously pull them to select that particular destination (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Cha et al., 1995). Similarly, Dann (1977) argued that a tourist who is in the process of deciding where to go may also take into consideration various pull factors which correspond adequately to their



motivational push. Uysal and Jurowski (1994) tested this relationship between push and pull factors, and reported a correlation between push and pull factors. For example, they found that rural areas and small town (pull factors) seemed to attract tourists who had the needs for experiencing a change or a simple and easy life style. The results suggested that tourists who wanted to escape either a personal and/or an interpersonal environment may be attracted by areas with limited activities and inexpensive tourism products. In the study of Kim et al. (2003), the results were also similar to Uysal and Jurowski's (1994) study which indicated a relationship between push and pull factors. They reported that significant correlations were observed among the majority of push and pull factor dimensions. The study revealed that pull factor 'key tourist resources' and 'information & convenience of facilities' both had significant positive correlations with all of the push factors. In addition, pull factor 'information & convenience of facilities' was found to be correlated with push factors 'family togetherness', 'appreciating natural resources', and 'escaping from everyday routine' but not to 'adventure'. The results also revealed that pull factor 'accessibility & transportation' was significantly correlated to push factor 'appreciating natural resources & health', suggesting that the desire (or motive) to experience/appreciate nature and enhance one's health may be facilitated or supported by the availability of accessibility and transportation options at particular national park.

According to the literature, the present study assumes that push and pull factors are correlated to each other, and they are not entirely independent of each other. In other words and to relate to the current study, the reasons to travel (push factors) of Korean travelers are argued to be related to the attractiveness of destination attributes of Thailand (pull factors). Therefore, **it can predict that the travel motives (push factors) of the Korean travelers are related to the destination attractions of Thailand (pull factors) – hypothesis 2.**

## 2.5 Tourist Behaviors

Tourist behavior has been a major topic for decades for hospitality and tourism practitioners. Contributions have been made from various aspects to understand tourist behaviors such as destination choice, mode of transportation, travel expense, accommodation, and leisure activities. In tourism studies, tourist behavior is a fundamental but critical subject affecting the development of marketing strategies and product development (Chen & Hsu, 2000). Today, many scholars have investigated tourist behaviors as well as travel/trip characteristics in order to satisfy travelers' needs and to meet their expectations.

In relation to Thai context, there are several studies examining tourist behavior of international travelers visiting Thailand. For example, Laksanakan (2003) investigated travel behaviors and trip characteristics of international visitors to Phuket and found that most respondents were male travelers aged between 25 – 34 years old. Many of them were Asian travelers with college degree. Their average annual income was approximately US\$ 5,000. Most of them were first-time travelers and visited Phuket for relaxing purpose. Many of these travelers were couples and spent approximately 4-7 days in Phuket. However, European travelers seemed to stay longer (e.g. 8-14 days). Major spending was based on accommodation (Baht 3,501 – 4,500) while other spending (e.g. food, shopping) was approximately Baht 1,001 – 2,000 per person per day. The study found that tourists with different backgrounds (e.g. nationality, education, occupations, income) would have different travel characteristics. Investigating Thai and international tourists' behaviors visiting Chiang Mai, Yenkontaich and Lougepanitpitak (2004) revealed travel behavior differences between Thai and foreign tourists in many aspects including type of food, souvenirs, accommodation, destination choice, spending, and travel preferences. However, the study found that most of them received travel information about Chiang Mai from their friends and relatives. Sansartji (2005) examined travel behavior of foreign tourists after the Tsunami disaster in the southern Thailand and found that most of the samples were repeat visitors traveling for holiday and leisure purposes. They chose to visit Thailand due to low cost of living and beautiful natural attractions (e.g. islands and beaches). Most of them spend approximately more than one week in Thailand with primary spending on shopping, accommodation and food/beverage. A recent study by Taworn (2007) found some differences of travel behaviors between Thai and international tourists. The study revealed that most of them visited Chiang Mai because of natural attractions. Thai tourists came here with their friends while many international tourists traveled alone. Both groups preferred city hotels. Thai tourists received travel and accommodation information from their friends and relatives while foreign tourist mostly relied on Internet information. In relation to accommodation selection, the study indicated that both groups had different perspectives in terms of prices, location, quality and services.

**Based on the literature**, different aspects of international tourists' behaviors were investigated, and tourists with different culture and/or demographic characteristics seem to have different travel behaviors and travel preferences. Moreover, several tourism scholars argue that nationality or culture may affect tourist behavior (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995); suggesting individual market should be examined. In relation to Korean travelers to Thailand, researchers have not yet examined their travel behaviors and trip characteristics, and there seems to be a lack

of empirical study (research work) to understand Korean travelers' behaviors/trip characteristics in Thai context, and this suggests further exploration for this market. In this study, **it hypothesizes that, in accordance with the above literature, Korean travelers with different demographic characteristics may have different travel behaviors and trip characteristics - hypothesis 3.**

## **2.6 Tourist Satisfaction**

Customer (tourist) satisfaction is the result of the evaluation and comparison the perceived performance of goods/service with expectation (Hill, 1986 cited in Heung & Cheng, 2000). Expectations are compared with actual perceptions of performance as the goods or services are consumed (Bitner, 1990). If performance exceeds expectations, the result is customer satisfaction, however, when expectations exceed performance, the result is customer dissatisfaction (Bitner, 1990; Heung & Cheng, 2000). As noted, tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of goods and services, repeat visits, and word-of-mouth publicity (Fornell, 1992; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). A review of literature indicates a number of studies have been conducted in order to measure tourist satisfaction in different areas of the tourism industry. However, only the literature relevant to research purpose (assessing tourist satisfaction with specific destination attributes) has been reviewed as follows.

Danaher and Arweiler (1996), for instance, examined tourist satisfaction in New Zealand and found that tourist with different cultural backgrounds had different satisfaction levels with transportation, accommodation, outdoor activities and attractions. The study revealed that the high level of overall tourist satisfaction with New Zealand vacation appeared to be determined by the level of satisfaction with activities and attractions in which tourists participated. The study suggested that travel operators maintain or enhance customer satisfaction, especially in the areas of outdoor activities and tourism attractions. Master and Prideaux (2000) examined culture and vacation satisfaction of Taiwanese tourists visiting Southeast Queensland. The findings indicated most Taiwanese tourists believed that culture did not play a major role in determining their satisfaction levels. The study reported that Taiwanese speaking staff, the availability of slippers and twin beds at accommodation, and longer shopping hours were important factors for holiday satisfaction among Taiwanese tourists. In spite of cross-cultural difference between visitors (Taiwanese) and hosts (Australians), most of them seemed to be satisfied with their holiday experience in Southeast Queensland. Kozak (2001) compared tourist satisfaction between British and German tourists) in visiting Mallorca and Turkey. The study found that British tourists were

more likely to be satisfied with almost all individual attributes than German tourists visiting both destinations. The findings indicated that the gaps between German and British tourists' satisfaction levels appeared for the level of language communication, availability of local transport services and level of prices. In relation to Thai context, Rittichainuwat et al. (2002) examined the impact of travel satisfaction on the likelihood of travelers to revisit Thailand and found differences in travel satisfaction between first time and repeat visitors as well as among travelers with different demographic profiles. The study revealed that, for example, the Asian travelers had the lowest travel satisfaction on all travel satisfaction factors (lodging, tourist attractions, transportation, foods and environment/safety) than their European and North American counterparts while female travelers had a lower level of satisfaction on the environment and safety than male travelers. The study concluded that the higher satisfaction travelers have toward their trips, the more likely they would revisit the destination. Investigating the relationship between cultural/heritage destination attributes and overall satisfaction at Virginia Historic Triangle (USA), Huh and Uysal (2003) found a relationship between destination attributes and overall satisfaction with cultural/heritage experience. The study also revealed that overall tourist satisfaction could be varied by gender, length of stay, past experience and decision time to travel. The authors suggested that destination marketers should be able to know which destination attributes they should highlight or downplay in allocating resources to increase tourist satisfaction. A recent study by Hui, Wan and Ho (2007) assessed satisfaction of different tourist groups visiting Singapore. The study found that accommodation and food was significant for North American's overall satisfaction while attraction was significant for European and Asian tourists. Culture seemed to be important for Oceania tourists. However, Asian tourists seemed to be very disappointed with lack of interesting nightlife, natural spots and attractive urban sightseeing in Singapore. Since there is no single factor appealing to all different tourist groups, the study suggested Singapore should have a balanced approach to satisfy different needs and preferences.

***In sum***, despite there are several published studies of tourist satisfaction, however, most of them were undertaken in international setting. Little (published research) is known regarding international tourists' satisfaction with Thailand's destination attributes, particularly the major tourist segment like the Korean inbound travel market to Thailand. It is generally argued that different tourist groups (i.e. gender, age, nationality) may have different satisfaction levels with destination attributes (Huh & Uysal, 2003; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Hui et al., 2007). Since, the Korean travel market is one of the important segments for Thailand's tourism industry, the lack of related studies in this area creates opportunity for future research. Based on the literature,

tourists with different cultures and/or demographic characteristics may have different levels of satisfaction with destination attributes, therefore, **this study predicts that Korean tourists with different demographic characteristics may have different level of satisfaction with Thailand's destination attributes – hypothesis 4.**

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework and Conclusion

**To finally conclude,** the overview of the literature indicates research gaps and opportunities associated with travel motivations, travel behaviors and travel satisfaction of Korean travelers to Thailand. It is hoped that examining travel motivations and their travel related behaviors would help extend the existing knowledge by fulfilling the gaps in the literature, and help better understand the travel characteristics of the Korean travel market. Moreover, the results would provide tourism practitioners (government and private sectors) with helpful information to develop appropriate marketing programs as well as tourism products to meet the targets' needs and expectations.

In this study, push and pull factors (dimension of travel motivations) are used to explain travel motivations of Korean travelers to Thailand, and they are established as dependent variables as well as tourist behaviors and travel satisfaction. A review of literature indicates that demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, education, income) have been found to be associated with travel motivations (push and pull factors). Hence, these variables are established as the independent variables that may be related to travel motivations, travel behaviors and satisfaction of Korean travelers. Thus, these relationships, based on the literature, will be used as a conceptual framework developed for this study as shown below (relationship between independent and dependent variables).

### Independent variables

(demographic characteristics)

### Dependent variables

(travel motivations)

(tourist behaviors)

(travel satisfaction)

