

Chapter 3

Research Methodologies

This chapter aims to describe research methodologies employed to investigate travel motivations and travel behaviors of Korean travelers. The objective of this chapter is to discuss about population, sample size, sampling method, research instrument, pre-testing, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Population and Sample Size

The population in this study were Korean travelers who were visiting Thailand for holiday and leisure purposes both group and individual travelers whose age were 20 years old and above. Since the population or Korean tourists visiting Thailand each month is unknown (in term of exact numbers/arrivals) and the elements in the population have no probabilities for being equally selected as the samples, non-probability sampling by a convenience sampling method was deemed to be appropriate for this study (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). According to the statistical report by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2007), the average number of Korean tourists visiting Thailand each month was approximately 83,000 people (given population). Based on the statistical estimation such as published sample size table (see Cavana et al., 2001), the samples of 400 people seemed to be appropriate for the above given population.

3.2 Research Instrument

The research instrument (questionnaire) to investigate travel motivations of Korean travelers was developed from a comprehensive review of relevant literature focusing on push and pull motivation theory (i.e. Zhang & Lam, 1999; Huang & Tsai 2002; Kim, 2003; Jang & Wu, 2006). Most of the questions were based on previous research. Only some questions, particularly regarding to pull factors (destination attractions) were modified to apply to research objective and location site of Thailand. This is because destination attractions could be different from one country to another (Kozak, 2002). In this study, the destination attractions of Thailand may be different from other countries due to country background/location/environment. For the parts of tourist behavior and travel satisfaction, the questions developed for these sections were reviewed from the literature (e.g. Baloglu & Uysal 1996; Danaher & Arweiler, 1996; You & O'Leary, 1999; Prideaux, 2000; Horneman et al., 2002), and some questions were revised to meet research

objectives and the target sample. The draft questionnaire was also reviewed by tourism scholars who provided helpful comments and feedback to revise and develop appropriate questionnaire.

The questionnaire was originally designed in English and carefully translated into Korean language by academic scholars specializing in Korean and English languages. The questionnaire consisted of 4 sections, i.e. 1) demographic characteristics 2) travel behaviors and trip characteristics and 3) travel motivations (push and pull factors) and 4) tourist satisfaction with Thailand's destination attributes. Each section is briefly presented as follow:

1) Section one - demographic characteristics: This section consisted of 6 questions asking about general information of the research respondents: i.e. gender, age, marital status, education, occupation and income.

2) Section two – travel behaviors and trip characteristics: This section consisted of 16 questions asking the research respondents about their travel behaviors and trip characteristics, e.g. number of visits to Thailand/overseas destinations, trip planning, tourism activities, travel expenses, accommodation choice, information search, and the likelihood of revisiting Thailand. The respondents answered the questions from a set of multiple choices. Most questions required one answer, however, some may require one or more answers.

3) Section three - push and pull factors: There were 2 sub-sections in this part. The aim of push section was to investigate the travel motives of Korean travelers to travel abroad. The push items (13 items) were mainly concerned about the socio-psychological motives (e.g. knowledge seeking, novelty seeking, adventure experience, new cultural learning). They were measured by having respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements describing their reasons for traveling abroad. For example, participants were asked “I travel abroad because I want to see something new and exciting”. Then, they could answer the question by indicating their level of agreement or disagreement based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). Many studies examining travel motivations used the 5-point Likert scale to measure travel motivations since the length of the scale is deemed to be appropriate for expressing the level of opinions (Kozak, 2002; Jang & Wu, 2006). For the part of pull factors, the aim was to identify what destination attributes attracting the respondents to visit Thailand. The pull items (13 items) were mainly associated with the features or attractiveness of Thailand (e.g. culture, beaches, food, shopping). They were measured by having the respondents indicate their agreement or disagreement with the questions asking them about the attractions in Thailand. For example, participants were asked “Do you think Thai

culture is an important factor attracting you to Thailand.” Then, they could indicate their level of agreement or disagreement based on the 5-point Likert scale, the same scale with push factors.

4) Section four – tourist satisfaction: This section consisted of 15 questions asking the respondents to assess or express their satisfaction toward Thailand’s destination attributes, e.g. quality of tourism attractions, cleanliness of food, tourist facilities, accommodation, transportation, etc. The respondents were asked to indicate the level of their satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale (1=very dissatisfied to 5= very satisfied). The 5-point Likert scale has been widely used in assessing tourist satisfaction since it allows the respondents to express appropriate level of satisfaction (Prideaux, 2000; Horneman et al., 2002).

3.3 Pre-testing

According to Cavana et al. (2001), researchers should conduct pre-tests to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research instrument before gathering data. In this research project, there was a pre-test conducted before final data collection. The test was conducted with 30 Korean travelers in Bangkok to obtain feedback on the clarity and appropriateness of questions. Based on the pilot test, some modifications (e.g. wording, revision of sentences) were made to ensure respondents could better understand the questions and choose appropriate answers. In addition, a reliability test by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was also performed to determine the inter-item consistency reliability of the research instrument (Cavana et al., 2001). Based on the pre-test result, the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was calculated for push factors, pull factors and tourist satisfaction sections (based on Likert scale sections) which was 0.79, 0.81, and 0.75, respectively. The value of the alpha exceeded the recommended/acceptable level of 0.70 by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994); suggesting no further revision of the research instrument. With these methods, it ensured that the questionnaire was ready for data collection.

3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected when the research respondents were visiting Thailand during June and July 2008. If the respondents traveled independently, and they could speak and understand some English, the research team would ask them if they were interested to participate in the survey. In case of group travelers, the respondents were approached and informed about the purpose of the research by the assistance of tour guides (local guides) who accompanied the groups. Respondents were asked if they would be interested to participate in the survey. Once they agreed, questionnaires were distributed on site and collected by researcher team. All respondents received small souvenirs for their participation. With the limitation of researcher

team, time constraint and funding, the survey was undertaken in central and eastern regions which were Bangkok, Ayutthaya and Pattaya. These cities are recognized as ones of the popular tourist cities among Korean travelers (TAT, 2007). A total of 400 questions were collected and used for data analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analysed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Data analyses were implemented through five steps which are discussed as follows. It should be noted that a 0.05 level of significance was employed in all of the statistical assessments in this study.

Firstly, descriptive statistics (i.e. mean, frequency, percentage) were used to provide general information and travel behaviors of the respondents. *Secondly*, descriptive statistics (i.e. mean and standard deviation) were used to rank the push and pull items (individual items) in terms of the importance to see which items served as major push and pull items. The push and pull items were ranked from the most important item (highest mean) to the least important item (lowest mean). In addition, descriptive statistics were used to present the results of tourist satisfaction by ranking mean score. *Thirdly*, the principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation approach was performed to determine whether any underlying push and pull factor dimensions would emerge among the travel motivations of Korean travelers. Factor analysis was chosen because it is a statistical approach used to analyze interrelationships among a large number of variables and to explain the variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions/factors (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2006). In particular, factor analysis with varimax rotation approach is the most popular orthogonal factor rotation method, and generally considered superior to other orthogonal factor rotation methods in achieving a simplified factor structure (Hair et al., 2006). *Fourthly*, a bivariate correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between push and pull factors. The bivariate correlation analysis was chosen because this is a statistical method used to measure the association between two variables, and it is also appropriate for interval scale (Cavana et al., 2001). In this study, it aimed to identify the relationship between push and pull factors. *Finally*, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was undertaken to examine if there were mean differences in the push and pull factors across the demographic subgroups, and to examine if there were mean differences in tourist satisfaction among respondent subgroups.