

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter aims to review the related literature on international tourists in Thailand, travel motivations (push and pull factors), travel behaviors and trip characteristics of international tourists, and cross-cultural studies. Its purpose is to provide general knowledge and overall concepts regarding the theories and studies related to this research.

2.1 General Information of International Tourists in Thailand

Before reviewing related literature in the areas of travel motivations and travel behaviors of international tourists, it is interesting to provide general information of international tourists in Thailand. This information would provide a better understanding of the overview of the inbound markets. According to the TAT (2007), there was a total of 14,464,000 international tourist arrivals to Thailand with approximately 65% males and 35% females. The growth of the market during the past decade was not stable; slightly increasing and decreasing in some years due to external factors and global economic conditions. Among 14 million visitors, 38% were first-time visitors while the majority (62%) was repeat visitors. Most of them came to Thailand for leisure and holiday purposes (83%). Major tourists' age groups include 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54 years old, respectively. Major inbound markets are Southeast Asia, East Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia. Most of international tourists traveled independently (66%) while the rests (34%) traveled on group tours. The overall revenue generated from the inbound markets was approximately Baht 547,700 million. The average length of stay was approximately 9.19 days, however, Asian tourists seem to stay shorter or by 5.45 days compared to European and North American travelers. The average daily expense was Bath 4,120 with major spending on shopping, accommodation and food/beverage.

In addition to the above information provided by the TAT, there are several studies examining different aspects of international tourists in Thailand. Reviewing these studies would provide further insight into the inbound markets in Thailand setting. Tanapanpanich (1999), for example, examined international tourists' attitudes and impressions when visiting Thailand. The study found that most international tourists had good attitudes toward Thailand. They also appreciated Thai hospitality, Thai culture, and the beauty of national resources, particularly islands and beaches. The study indicated these destinations' attributes were regarded as important factors promoting repeat visit among international visitors. However, there were several issues that could negatively impact tourists' impression and needed attention from

concerned parties. These issues included safety/security concerns, tourism infrastructure, transportation, and cleanliness. Investigating demographic factors influencing international tourists in selecting tourist destinations in Thailand, Soda (2001) found that age, gender, income, education and country of origin had impacts on travel preferences of tourist destinations. The study distinguished international tourists to Thailand into 4 groups (historical, cultural, natural, and recreational groups), and each group had different travel characteristics and preferences in selecting tourist destinations. Different tourism programs and strategies were proposed to respond to the needs of different tourist groups. Tooyanon (2002) investigated travel satisfaction and consumption behaviors of international tourists in Thai restaurants. The study found that most tourists were highly satisfied with restaurants' services, a variety of products, food quality, food taste, and Thai hospitality. Those who stayed in Thailand more than 4 weeks were likely to have their meals at Thai restaurants 1-3 times a week, and they usually came with their friends for dinner. The study also revealed that the local media had influence on tourists' perceptions of Thai restaurants, and further reported that tourists with different demographics had different level of satisfaction, perceptions and consumption behaviors of Thai food. Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Mongknonvanit (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. The study provided important implications to enhance the level of tourist satisfaction toward tourism products and services.

With the above information, it is hoped that the current study examining travel motivations and tourist behaviors of international tourists to Thailand would extend/add to the existing information provided by the TAT and previous literature, particularly the information regarding travel-related behaviors and trip characteristics of international tourists from different regions. This would help industry practitioners understand more about travel related-behaviors of international tourist markets in Thailand setting.

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 factors. The concept of the theory describes that people are pushed to travel by internal motives (called push factors) and pulled to a destination by destination attributes/attractions (called pull factors) when making their travel decisions (Lam & Hsu, 2004). Thus, the concept is classified into two forces/factors (push and pull factors) indicating 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 associated with 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 details, 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 are useful in explaining the desire for travel, whereas the pull factor help explain the choice of destination (Crompton, 1979; Christensen, 1983). And these two factors are related to people's decision making for travel and leisure purposes. According to the literature, people's motivations to travel begin when they become aware of certain needs and perceive that certain destinations may have the ability to serve those needs. As such, academics argue that the investigation of travel motivations to a particular area is viewed as a critical variable to develop a successful marketing program to satisfy tourists' needs and expectations (Crompton, 1979; Cha et al. 1995; Jang & Wu, 2006). An understanding of tourist motivations for visiting a particular destination can help tourism marketers manage more appropriate marketing programs and attract more tourists to visit the area (Jang & Cai, 2002; Jang & Wu, 2006).

In conclusion, 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). Thus, its application to examine travel motivations of international tourists in previous studies should provide a useful approach to understanding a wide variety of different needs and wants that influence tourists' motivations in visiting a particular destination. Today, many researchers have employed it to investigate travel motivations of international tourists in different settings such as domestics travel, overseas holidays and other tourism activities (e.g. Klenosky, 2002; Jang & Cai, 2002; Kim, 2003, Hsu & Lam, 2003; Jang et al. 2004; Jang & Wu, 2006). Since the focus of the current study aims to examine travel needs and the factors attracting international tourists to Thailand, therefore, the push and pull motivations theory seems to be appropriate and relevant to the purpose of this study.

2.3 Studies Related to 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. Some of them have been reviewed, for example, Cha, McCleary, and Uysal (1995), 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 relation to Thai context, a review of literature indicates a few studies have examined travel motivations of international tourists to Thailand. Among them, Varma (2003), for instance, examined push and pull factors between U.S. and Indian tourists. The study disclosed that U.S. and Indian tourists had differences in relation to push and pull factors. When traveling, the U.S. tourists were more likely to be motivated by exciting experiences while the Indian tourists were primarily stimulated by relaxation motives. The study also revealed that both groups had differences in the perceptions of destination attractiveness (pull factors) such as cultural activities, inexpensive environment, leisure activities, cuisine and safety. Different

marketing strategies were suggested for each market. Cheewarungroj (2005) investigated travel motivations of ASEAN tourists to Thailand. The results indicated that some demographic variables, such as age, income, travel experience, had impacts to travel motivations (push and pull factors) among ASEAN tourists. For instance, ASEAN tourists aged 46 or above were more likely to be motivated to travel by relaxation motive than other groups, and tourists with different income level also revealed differences in travel motives and destination attractions. The study reported that first-time visitors perceived knowledge seeking as a major motivation while repeat visitors placed novelty experience as major motivations, and they also had differences in the perceptions of sightseeing variety in Thailand. A recent study by Sangpikul (2008) revealed an interesting result regarding travel motivations of Korean travelers to Thailand. The finding indicated that many Korean travelers were primarily motivated to travel by 'fun & relaxation motives' while the 'attraction variety & costs of travel' were perceived as major attraction drawing them to Thailand. To attract Korean travelers, marketing themes relating to the relaxation motivations and a variety of tourism programs were suggested.

To sum up, the literature has shown that pervious studies focusing on the push and pull motivations provide a useful and practical approach for understanding travel needs and wants of people as well as where they desire to go for holiday. The results of these studies imply that the conceptual framework of push and pull factors can be applied to examine travel motivations of different groups of tourists (domestic and international tourists). Although there are a number of travel motivation studies in international context (suggesting the importance of travel motivation studies), few studies have been conducted in relation to Thai context. Given the useful concept in understanding travel needs and wants of the target tourists and the need for tourism business to satisfy travelers' needs and expectations in a competitive global tourism, more research in this area (travel motivations of international tourists) is encouraged, particularly the studies comparing travel motivations of different target markets visiting a particular destination (e.g. Thailand).

2.4 Tourist Behaviors

Tourist behavior is the behavior or the process that consumers or tourists search, select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and wants (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). The subject of 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 tourists' behaviors and their travel characteristics in order to satisfy travelers' needs and meet their expectations. Thus, it is argued that the understanding of tourist behavior is important for tourism marketers to make marketing activities more successful.

In relation to Thai context, there were several studies examining travel behavior of international tourists in Thailand. Some of them were reviewed, for example, Sirirrot (2002) explored international tourists' decision making of accommodation on Kao San Road and indicated two types of decisions making regarding accommodation selections among international tourists. The first type was pre-decision made before traveling to Thailand, and the second one was onsite-decision (making decision when arriving). The major factors influencing accommodation choice was price, followed by quality, location and services. In addition, the study found that most tourists were generally satisfied with the accommodation in Kao San area. However, the pollution and traffic seemed to be major concerns among international tourists staying in Kao San area. 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 (approx. 8-14 days) than other groups. Major spending was spent on accommodation (approx. 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, Yenkurtauch 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 (Thai and foreign) 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 spent 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 when visiting Chiang Mai. 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. Different marketing campaigns were proposed separately for local and foreign markets.

Based on the above literature, different aspects of international tourists' related-behaviors were investigated, and it seems that tourists with different cultures or countries may have different travel behaviors and preferences. Moreover, several tourism scholars argue that nationality or culture may affect tourist behavior (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995); suggesting different tourist markets should be examined. In relation to international tourists to Thailand, researchers have not yet examined and compared international tourists' travel behaviors and trip characteristics in terms of regional base or geographical region (i.e. Asia, Europe, North America). This suggests more research work is needed in this area in order to better understand international tourists' travel behaviors when visiting Thailand. Understanding travel related-behaviors of different target groups should help tourism business design more effective and appropriate marketing strategies for each market or region. In this study, **it hypothesizes that international tourists with different geographical regions (hypothesis 1) and different demographic characteristics (hypothesis 2) may have differences in travel behaviors and trip characteristics.**

2.5 Cross-Cultural Studies in Tourism

In this study, it aims to examine and compare travel motivations and travel behaviors of different tourist groups (i.e. Asia, Europe, North America). This indicates that the current study is dealing with cross-cultural studies which are the studies of two or more different cultures/countries; suggesting related literature on cross-cultural studies should be reviewed. In tourism literature, there are several cross-cultural studies relating to travel motivations and travel behaviors of international tourists (examining two or more countries). Reviewing these studies would provide some ideas relating to travel motivations and/or tourists' behaviors of international tourists.

Lee (2000), for example, compared travel motives of Caucasian and Asian visitors to visit a cultural Expo in Seoul. The study found differences in motivations between Caucasian

(Americans and Europeans) and Asian visitors (Koreans and Japanese). The results indicated that Caucasian visitors were generally had higher motivations than Asian visitors when attending cultural events; they differed with respect to three motivations including 'cultural exploration', 'novelty' and 'event attraction'. Yet, some similarities were found between Koreans and Japanese in relation to 'escape and socializations', and also between Americans and Europeans regarding 'cultural exploration'. Other similarities and differences were also found between Caucasian and Asian visitors attending cultural Expo event. Different marketing strategies were proposed for Asian and Caucasian groups based on their cultural influences/backgrounds. In an examination of travel motivations between two groups, Kim and Lee (2000) found Japanese and American travelers differed in prestige/status, family togetherness, and novelty, while they were similar in relation to knowledge seeking and escape motives. The findings indicated that Japanese tourists tended to show more collectivistic characteristics in seeking travel motivations, while Americans tended to show more individualistic characteristics. The study suggested important marketing implications when targeting these two markets by focusing on cultural differences. You, O'Leary, Morrison, and Hong (2000) also compared travel motivations between UK and Japan. The results indicated that UK and Japanese travelers differed on both push and pull factors. For instance, the similarity was found in novelty and knowledge seeking (push factor), while the differences were reported that the UK travelers seemed to be motivated by 'family, friends being together', and Japanese traveler were more likely to be motivated by rest and relaxation motivations. With regard to destination selection (pull factor), the UK travelers perceived seeing people from different background as major attraction whereas the Japanese rated historical places as important factor for them. Interestingly, the study also discussed that, in relation to push and pull factors, Western travelers in some aspects were more similar to each other than Asian travelers, and needed attention when marketing Western and Asian customers/tourists. Comparing travel motivations between Asian and American students, Kim and Jogaratnam (2002) found many similarities in the perceptions of travel motivations (focusing on push motivations) between two groups. However, the study also disclosed some differences in relation to travel motives such as 'get away from demands at home', 'indulging luxury', and 'participation in physical activity'. The study suggested that segmenting international student market based on ethnical groups seemed to have applications to tourism marketers. In addition to travel motivations, there are several studies investigating different tourists' travel behaviors. Fridgen (1996), for instance, reported that British tourists visiting North America ranked shopping and taking pictures as most preferred activities, whereas French tourists ranked local foods and dining as the most preferred activities. Fridgen (1996) further

noted that trip lengths differed between Europeans and Japanese tourists. Europeans tourists tended to stay longer than Asian tourists due to travel distance and cost of travel. Sussmann and Rashcovsky (1997) found differences in the usage of travel information sources between British and Canadian travelers. The study reported that, in order of importance, British travelers used information sources from their friends, past experiences, and travel agents, respectively. While Canadians preferred to use information from their friends, brochures, and travel agents. The study highlighted the need for careful market segmentation for the two groups. A recent study by Kim and Prideaux (2005) also found interesting results on cultural differences in travel motivations and tourist behaviors among American, Australian, Japanese and Chinese travelers. For example, American and Australian travelers appeared to rate 'culture and history' as more important motivations than Asian travelers (Japanese and Chinese), and they were more likely to stay at a particular destination for a longer period of time. The study also indicated Asian travelers were more interested in shopping and dining than other leisure activities when traveling overseas. Like You et al. (2000), Kim and Prideaux (2005) noted that Asian tourists showed some similarities within the group on travel behaviors rather than Western tourists. Also, Western tourists were more similar to each other in some travel aspects. Different marketing strategies were discussed to serve each market segment, and emphasis was given on the understanding of cultural backgrounds of different tourist groups.

To conclude, the above literature provides a better understanding of cross-cultural studies in relation to the differences on tourist motivations and related-travel behaviors among international tourists. According to the literature, tourists from different backgrounds may have different travel needs and motivations due to several factors such as cultural differences, perceptions, beliefs and expectations (Kim & Prideaux, 2005). Since the current study deals with international tourists' motivations and behaviors, reviewing previous cross-cultural studies may help researchers and marketers to better understand the differences in travel needs and behaviors among international tourists, and this may enhance both efficiency and effectiveness in international tourism marketing (Kim & Lee, 2000). This also helps them be aware of cross-cultural differences in international tourism setting and carefully design or develop tourism programs corresponding to the needs of the target customers. Given the increasing competition in the regional tourism (Southeast Asia) and complex tourists' behaviors, this presents research opportunities for further studies (including for the current research project) to investigate travel motivations of international tourist groups by examining two or more different tourist groups. In this study, **it is predicted that international tourists with different geographical regions (hypothesis 3) and different demographic characteristics (hypothesis 4) may have**

differences in travel motives (push factors) and the perception of Thailand's destination attractions (pull factors).

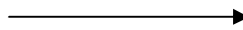
2.6 Conceptual Framework and Chapter Conclusion

To finally summarize the chapter, the overview of the literature indicates several research gaps and opportunities for further studies on international tourists in Thailand setting. This may include travel motivations and travel behaviors of international tourists, particularly a comparative study to get better insights of the travel differences among international tourists in different settings or destinations. It is hoped that examining travel motivations and tourist behaviors would help extend the existing knowledge by fulfilling those gaps in the literature, and helps generate a better understanding of travel characteristics of international tourist markets, especially in Thailand scope. Moreover, the results are expected to provide tourism practitioners (e.g. government and private sectors) with useful information to develop appropriate marketing programs and tourism products to meet the targets' needs and expectations, and be able to attract them to Thailand.

In this study, push and pull factors were regarded as the main framework and they were used to explain travel motivations of international tourists to Thailand. This is the main focus needed to be found out from the research. Consequently, they were established as dependent variables as well as tourist behaviors (outcomes of the research). In addition to the geographical variable (tourists' regional base such as Asia, Europe), a review of literature indicated that demographic variables such as gender, age, education, and income have been frequently found to be associated with travel motivations (push and pull factors) and/or tourist behaviors. Hence, these variables (tourists' region base, gender, age, education, and income) were established as independent variables that might influence travel motivations and tourist behaviors. Finally, the conceptual framework, based on the above relationships, was developed for this study as shown below (relationship between independent and dependent variables).

Independent variables

gender, age, education, income
tourists' regional base (e.g. Asia, Europe)



dependent variables

travel motivation (push and pull factors)
travel behavior