

EXPLORING INDIAN TOURISTS' MOTIVATION AND PERCEPTION OF BANGKOK

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Indians increasingly travel to foreign countries in a large number every year. To date, there are no studies focusing on this group of tourists. This study thus investigates the Indian tourists' motivation and perception of Bangkok, Thailand. The study shows that both push and pull factors stimulate these Indians to travel. The most important motivations are to have fun, followed by to enjoy the beautiful environment, scenery, and beaches. Based on 20 motivations, four core typologies of Indian tourists are found: Novelty Seeking, Stress Busting/Fun, Achievement, and Family Oriented/Education. Family and/or friends and the Internet are perceived by Indian tourists as important sources in trip decision making.

Keywords: *Indian tourist, tourist's motivation, tourist's perception, Bangkok, Thailand*

JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1

INTRODUCTION

One of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry is city tourism (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007). Destination marketers make extensive efforts in marketing the city and retaining tourists to maintain their position in the marketplace. The success of destination marketing lies in their ability to compete, brand a city, understand visitors' perceptions and

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expectations, provide value, and manage the total visitor experience (Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007; WTO, 2005).

The study of destination image reveals tourists' perceptions of travel destinations. Understanding tourists' expectations can be used to improve the destination's attributes, and develop marketing strategies to compete with other travel destinations (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2007). Motivation forms the travel destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004) which affects the pre-purchase destination selection process (Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Mongkhonvanit, 2008).

Thailand is a well known international travel destination for its long history, rich culture, beautiful natural resources, and the hospitality of Thai people (Meng, Tepanon, & Uysal, 2006). International tourists around the world visit Thailand all year round. Among travelers from South Asia, Indian tourists are the most prevalent in Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2007). Not only is the Indian outbound traveler a substantial market (Market Research Division of Government of India, 2007), but there is also an increasing number of Indian middle class travelers who have higher purchasing power (ITB Berlin, 2007). This study, therefore, aims to examine Indian tourists regarding their trip motivations for and perceptions of the Bangkok area of Thailand to gain a better understanding of Indian tourists' behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination Image

Image was formed from two major sources, which were stimulus factors and personal factors. Stimulus factors consisted of external stimuli (information sources), physical objects, and previous experiences. Personal factors included social (age, education, marital status, and others) and psychological characteristics of the perceiver (values, motivations, and personality) (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Beerli and Martin (2004) proposed a model of the formation of destination image. Tourists formed the destination image from information sources and personal factors.

Motivation

Push and pull factors are a well-proven approach in analyzing tourists' motivations (Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Josiam, Kinley, & Kim, 2005; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). According to Dann (1981), push factors

were internal drives or the desire for travel such as the need for escape, the need for novelty, or the need for self-esteem. Pull factors were the attractiveness of travel destinations which motivated tourists to visit such as beaches, shopping centers, or friendliness of locals. The study of Yurtseven (2006) indicated that perceptions of tourist destination's service quality by tourists were not homogeneous. Therefore the provided services should be designed according to type of tourists. Tourists could be grouped by their motivation factors. Hanqin and Lam (1999) found five push factor groupings which were named as knowledge, prestige, enhancement of human relationship, relaxation and novelty. Six pull factor grouping were hi-tech image, expenditure, accessibility, service attitude and quality, sightseeing variety, and cultural links group. Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Brown (2001) found six groupings of tourists who visited Thailand which were special interests, cultural attractions, deals on tour promotion and currency exchange, good value of food/shopping/things to do, Buddhism, and natural attractions. Josiam and Frazier (2008) also showed that genealogy or the practice of tracing a family's history was one of the reasons that motivated people to travel to visit friends and relatives or to seek and document lineage, cultural background, and history.

Information Sources

Besides motivation, tourists also formed the destination image from information sources. Tourists obtained travel information from a number of sources. There were five primary sources of information, which were memory (e.g., past experiences), personal sources (e.g., family/friends), independent sources (e.g., government), marketing sources (e.g., advertising), and experiential sources (e.g., product trial) (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 1995).

Tourists with more travel experience usually used online channels for both searching and purchasing travel products (Jun, Vogt, & MacKay, 2007). When other information sources were perceived less reliable, word of mouth strongly had influenced in the decision making especially with the complex products' purchase (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995). Promotional tools affected perceived quality of the destination (Mohamed, 2008). Media such as film (Kim & Richardson, 2003) and advertising pictures (Smith & MacKay, 2001) as well as tour operators' brochures (Abd El Jalil, 2010) could impact the tourists' perception because consuming media created an expectation that would be compared to the actual travel experience (Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson, 2005).

Louvieris and Oppewal (2004) described that travelers had different preferences for the channel choice in the information search and purchasing stages. Björk and Jansson (2008) revealed that a tourist who had a strong habit or automated sequences of learning would look for less information about his/her upcoming trip than the one with a weak habit.

Internet had increasingly gained popularity among Americans and Europeans. There were more than 64 million Americans or 30% of the U.S. adult population used Internet for travel information search and two thirds of them or 42 million booked travels via Internet (Werthner & Ricci, 2004). This trend was expected to increase both in the information search and purchasing stage in the near future (Buhalis, 1998; Werthner & Ricci, 2004). In addition, the more one frequently used the Internet, the more chance of that person would become an online shopper (Li & Buhalis, 2006).

Thailand Characteristics

Thailand's image has been studied by several researchers in different directions. Rittichainuwat et al. (2001) studied seven dimensions of Thailand's international travel image, which were (1) social and environmental problems, (2) safe travel destination, (3) adventure activities and scenic natural beauty, (4) rich culture, (5) good-value cuisine and hotels, (6) easy access, and (7) good shopping. This study examined various components of Thailand. However, some researchers selected only one travel component as a study area. Vieregge, Phetkaew, Beldona, Lumsden, and DeMicco (2007) studied mature travelers to Thailand on the preferences and attributes of hotels. The study found that the top factors influencing hotel selection among mature travelers which were cleanliness, good value for money, easy access to beach, location, personnel on duty, price of accommodation, airport transfer, multilingualism, well-lit areas, and luggage assistance.

The motivation in selecting Thailand as a travel destination also has been investigated along with the study of its image. These motivation dimensions were: special interests; cultural attractions; deal on tour promotion and currency exchange; good value food, shopping, and things to do; Buddhism; and natural attractions (Rittichainuwat et al., 2008). Some studies focused on motivations of a specific nationality of the travelers on Thailand trips. Sangpikul (2008) studied the motivations of Japanese senior on taking Thailand trip. The study revealed dimensions of push and pull factors which were: three push dimensions (novelty and knowledge seeking, rest and relaxation, and ego-enhancement); and four

pull dimensions (cultural and historical attractions, travel arrangements and facilities, shopping and leisure activities, and safety and cleanliness).

NEED FOR STUDY

Thailand is a famous international travel destination. In 1991, the ancient cities in Thailand, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, were declared World Heritage sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Since then they have become attractive to international and domestic tourists (Peleggi, 1996). In addition to its well known historical attractions, Thailand also has an excellent reputation in world-class accommodations, especially the beach resorts in Phuket, Samui, Krabi, Pattaya, and Hua Hin. Tourists enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities such as canoeing, snorkeling, scuba diving, yachting, hiking, and golfing. Undoubtedly, filmmakers have chosen beaches in Thailand as the locations for film shootings such as *The Beach* and *The Man with the Golden Gun*.

Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand and the winner of Travel + Leisure's 2010 World's Best Cities with the highest score of 90.30/100. Six characteristics of the city are rated including sights, culture and arts, restaurants and food, people, shopping, and value (Travel and Leisure magazine, 2010). The must-see tourist attractions in Bangkok are the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Temple of Reclining Buddha, and the Temple of Dawn. Thailand also markets itself as a shopping paradise. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) launched the Amazing Thailand Grand Sales campaign in 2005 to create a shopping paradise image of the country (Meng et al., 2006).

Bergheim (2005) reveals the top five Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates from 2006 to 2020, with India ranked as the highest growth center, followed by Malaysia, China, Thailand, and Turkey. India is one of the biggest potential outbound markets (expresshospitality.com, 2001). The statistic from the India Bureau of Immigration also shows that Indian outbound travelers form a lucrative market. Every year Indians travel to foreign countries in a large number, which has increased dramatically, reported at 6.21 million Indian outbound visits in 2004, 7.18 million in 2005, and 8.34 million in 2006 (Market Research Division of Government of India, 2007). Due to the country's economic growth, there are more middle class Indians who have more purchasing power than ever before. They are well educated and knowledgeable in English; therefore traveling to foreign countries is more feasible (ITB Berlin, 2007).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) (2007) reveals that Thailand has strong tourism growth potential. The country had a 20% increase of international arrivals and ranked third in Asia and the Pacific region to receive the high market share (US\$ 12,423 million) after China (US\$ 33,949 million) and Australia (US\$ 17,840 million) in 2006.

The Police Department of the Thai Immigration Bureau shows that Indian international arrivals increased by 15.89% or 443,528 arrivals in 2007, up from 382,702 arrivals in 2006. The majority of arrivals are by air (420,968 out of 443,528). Indian travelers spend an average of six days during their stay in Thailand. Indian tourists often chose Thailand as one of their preferred travel destinations because of the shopping. Thai and Indian governments cooperated in adding more flights between the countries with the goal to increase the number of seats to 10,000 per week within three years, resulting in more flights to Bangkok from Bangalore in 2006, and from Kolkata, and Hyderabad in 2007 (TAT, 2007).

This growth is a business opportunity for destination marketers to increase the market share, since there is a trend of increasing the Indian market that already has shown demand for travel and increased purchasing power to spend for the trips. Of the countries making up South Asia, Thailand has the greatest share of Indian travelers. To capitalize on this business opportunity, hospitality professionals need to study Indian travelers' motivations and perceptions. However, there is no current research reported on the Indian travel market. This study, therefore, examined Indian tourists regarding their trip motivations for and perceptions of the Bangkok area in Thailand to gain better understanding of Indian tourists' behavior.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purposes of the study were to: 1) identify Indian tourists' demographics and travel patterns; 2) examine Indian tourists' motivation to take the Bangkok area trip; 3) examine the level of importance of information sources.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire

Accordingly, the questionnaire was based on information from the literature review. It was available in English, Hindi, and Gujarati. The last two languages are the most widely spoken in India. The double

translation method was applied by bilingual experts (English/Hindi, English/Gujarati) to address any issues concerning miscommunication. The questionnaire content was also validated by researchers who are specialized in the area of consumer behavior. The questionnaire was then adjusted in content and format based on the suggestions of researchers and Indian tourists for content validity and reliability. Adjustment was made to the six-page-questionnaire after the first tryout at Suvarnabhumi International Airport since its length had impact to the willingness of the respondents to participate. The questionnaire then was reduced its size to four-page-survey. The involvement construct as well as the questions about Bangkok's characteristics and competitiveness were removed.

Sample Selection, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

The study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects prior to the field study. The sample was a convenience sample of 300 Indian tourists who visited the Bangkok area of Thailand during July 24-August 14, 2008. The total of 150 usable responses was obtained. A self-administered survey was used to collect data at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok. The study was conducted during different departure flights, days, and times to reduce bias. On average, 13 flights per day depart Suvarnabhumi International Airport to the following airports in India: Delhi Indira Gandhi International Airport, Calcutta Airport, Guwahati Airport, Bombay Santa Cruz International Airport, Hyderabad Airport, Madras International Airport, Bangalore Airport, and Gaya Airport.

The data was analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive analysis, including frequencies and means, were calculated. Factor analysis also was utilized used to identify the dimensions of motivations that influence Indian tourists in making their decision to visit the Bangkok area.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Objective 1: To identify Indian tourists' demographics and travel patterns

Over half of Indian tourists who visited the Bangkok area were males on an average age of 38 or in the early adulthood (20-45 years old) (Zgourides, 2000). Three-fourths of the tourists were married and they had bachelor's or master's degrees.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of Indian tourists

Demographics		N	(%)
		(150)	
<i>Gender</i>	Male	112	75.2
	Female	37	24.8
<i>Marital status</i>	Married	106	76.3
	Single	33	23.7
<i>Residency (city of India)</i>	Mumbai (Maharashtra state)	41	42.3
	Banglore (Kanataka state)	4	4.1
	Pune (Maharashtra state)	6	6.2
	New Delhi (Delhi state)	29	29.9
	Punjab state	11	11.3
	Rajasthan state	6	6.2
<i>Mother tongue</i>	Hindi	83	59.3
	Gujarati	10	7.1
	Marathi	10	7.1
	English	7	5.0
	Panjabi	6	4.3
	Others	24	17.2
<i>Age</i>	18-19	7	5.2
	20-45	89	65.9
	46-65	32	23.7
	66 and over	7	5.2
<i>Employment status</i>	Employed	53	35.6
	Self-employed	55	36.9
	Retired	11	7.4
	Student	19	12.8
	Housewife	8	5.4
	Other	3	2.0
<i>Education</i>	High school	17	11.4
	College	68	45.6
	Post graduate degree	40	29.5
	Doctorate/Professional degree	20	13.4
<i>Household income</i>	INR25,000-50,000	43	30.7
	INR50,001-75,000	23	16.4
	INR75,001-100,000	10	7.1
	INR100,001-125,000	17	12.1
	INR125,001-150,000	16	11.4
	INR150,001 or more	31	22.1

Note. Totals differ due to missing data.

Nearly three-fourths of tourists were from Mumbai and New Delhi where Hindi language was widely used. The majority were self-employed and employed by companies. The household income was evenly distributed among all categories (currency exchange rate in July 2008, US\$1 = INR42.80). The findings illustrate the travel patterns of Indian tourists. There were slightly more visitors who purchased package tours than those who traveled independently. Interestingly, there are also a higher numbers of first-time travelers than repeat travelers. These Indian tourists visited Bangkok area for their vacations by either traveled alone or with spouses. The average length of their stay was six days. They reported their trip spendings mostly on clothing (INR17,329), followed by electronics (INR12,069), and handicrafts/souvenirs, (INR10,617), respectively (average spending/trip/household) (currency exchange rate in July 2008, US\$1 = INR42.80).

Table 2 Travel patterns of Indian tourists

Travel patterns	N (150)	(%)	
<i>Travel arrangement</i>	Independent travel	65	43.6
	Package tour	84	56.4
<i>Type of tourists</i>	First-time	79	53.0
	Repeat	70	47.0
<i>Purposes</i>	Vacation/Leisure	97	65.1
	Honeymoon	9	6.0
	Won an incentive/bonus	5	3.4
	Sponsored by business	23	15.4
	Attend convention/meeting	9	6.0
	Other business	6	4.0
<i>Travel with</i>	Alone	61	41.2
	Husband/Wife	57	38.5
	Friends	12	8.1
	Family	18	12.2
<i>Length of stay</i>	5.88 days (min1,max50)	147	SD 5.842
<i>Spending</i>	Electronics	23	INR12,069
	Clothing	48	INR17,329
	Handicrafts/Souvenirs	34	INR10,617

Note. Totals differ due to missing data.

Objective 2: To examine Indian tourists' motivation to take the Bangkok area trip

The motivation that Indian tourists reported when deciding to take the trip to the city of Bangkok ranged from the highest mean score of 4.04 to the lowest mean score of 3.22. Top ten motivations were both push factors (the psychological needs that motivate tourists to travel) and pull factors (the unique attributes of the travel destination that motivate tourists to visit). Push factors were to have fun, to see and experience a new destination(s), to do something exciting, to reduce stress, to escape from the routine of work or life, and to learn new things. Pull factors were to enjoy the beautiful environment, scenery, and beaches, to go to Thailand/Bangkok, to enjoy shows and entertainment, and to enjoy international travel experiences.

Referring back to Indian tourists' demographic profiles, they were mostly leisure travelers (65%), so it was common to see the push factors such as to have fun (ranked first on the top ten motivation raking), or to enjoy the beautiful environment, scenery, and beaches (ranked second on the top ten motivation raking) as the travel motivations. This finding supported research by Hanqin and Lam (1999) who found both push and pull factors motivated people to travel. However, the finding was different from the study of Sangpikul (2008), which indicated that Japanese senior travelers were motivated to visit Thailand by cultural and historical attractions, whereas, the result of these Indian tourists suggested that they were more motivated by the beautiful environment, scenery, and beaches ($M = 4.04$) than historical attractions ($M = 3.56$). Perhaps the age difference between Indian tourists and senior Japanese tourists had an impact on their different travel destination preferences. Moreover, the study of Rittichainuwat et al. (2008) showed that tourists who visited Thailand were motivated the most by the desire of seeing people from different cultures, seeing interesting cultural and historical attractions, and taking a trip to Thailand worth the value for money.

To go to Thailand/Bangkok, the pull factor, was an influential motivator. Ng, Lee, and Soutar (2007) studied cultural distance and intention to visit travel destinations of Australian travelers. The study found that the more geographical and cultural distance from travelers' home country, the less likely they would visit. Therefore, it might infer that Indian tourists were comfortable enough to visit Thailand where there was less geographical and cultural distance. Non-stop flights from New Delhi, India to Bangkok, Thailand were just four hours. Thai culture had also been influenced by Indian culture in many ways as evidenced from

architecture of Thai temples, religions, Thai food, and traditional therapies like massage. The study was also consistent with the study of Master and Prideaux (2000) stating that smaller gap of the cultural differences (e.g., shopping habits, cuisine, and language) was desirable even though these differences did not significantly impact satisfaction.

Table 3 Mean scores of Indian tourists' motivation on taking Bangkok area trip

Motivation	N	s.d.	Mean
To have fun	141	1.04	4.04
To enjoy the beautiful environment, scenery, beaches	141	0.96	3.95
To see and experience a new destination(s)	145	0.96	3.88
To do something exciting	140	1.02	3.85
To go to Thailand/Bangkok	143	1.03	3.83
To reduce stress	139	1.14	3.82
To escape from the routine of work or life	144	1.12	3.81
To learn new things	141	0.94	3.73
To enjoy shows and entertainment	143	1.11	3.73
To enjoy international travel experiences	142	1.00	3.70
To enjoy a stage where I can afford an international trip	133	1.13	3.62
To visit difference places in one trip	142	1.07	3.60
To take all inclusive tour	131	1.22	3.57
To talk about the trip after returning home	141	1.14	3.56
To visit historical places, ancient ruins, temples, palaces	143	1.12	3.56
To be together with my family	130	1.26	3.52
To be together with friends	131	1.15	3.38
To go places my friends/relatives have not visited	130	1.25	3.35
To meet new friends (in new destination)	135	1.22	3.26
To take advantage of travel agent/airlines promotion	130	1.22	3.22

Factor analysis was employed to identify the underlying dimensions of the 20 motivations. From 20 motivations, four core dimensions that influence Indian tourists in making the decision to visit the Bangkok area were determined including; Novelty Seeking, Stress Busting/Fun,

Achievement, and Family Oriented/Education (see Table 4). The result of factor analysis was generally supported by the study of Josiam and Frazier (2008), Hanqin and Lam (1999), Rittichainuwat et al. (2008), Sangpikul (2008) and Yoon and Uysal (2005). For the purpose of interpretation of factors, a loading cut-off of 0.65 was adopted in this study. The reliability analysis test was conducted, which gives a value of Cronbachs alpha where the value of “1” suggests perfect reliability and any score above 0.65 is considered acceptable. Each core dimension was described as following.

Factor 1: Novelty Seeking. Indian tourists visited the Bangkok area to enjoy the beautiful environment, scenery, and beaches, to learn new things, to see and experience a new destination(s) and be able to see the new destinations in one trip.

Factor 2: Stress Busting/Fun. Indian tourists wanted to travel to reduce stress, or do something fun and exciting with friends.

Factor 3: Achievement. This group of people wanted to travel in order to feel a sense of achievement in their lives such as going to places that their friends/relatives have not visited, or having trips internationally. They also traveled with package tours.

Factor 4: Family Oriented/Education. This group consisted of Indian tourists who went to the Bangkok area to spend time with families. Traveling with family may encourage them in taking advantage of travel agent/airlines promotion. For them, visiting the historical places, ancient ruins, temples, and palaces was suitable and provided educational activities for their families, especially their children.

Table 4 Factor analysis of Indian tourists' motivation on taking Bangkok area trip

Motivation	Factor loading
<i>Factor 1: Novelty Seeking</i> Alpha = .889; explained variance = 42.519	
To enjoy the beautiful environment, scenery, beaches	.776
To see and experience a new destination(s)	.748
To go to Thailand/Bangkok	.638
To visit difference places in one trip	.617
To learn new things	.600
To enjoy shows and entertainment	.541
To visit historical places, ancient ruins, temples, palaces	.526
To enjoy international travel experiences	.497
I have reached a stage where I can afford an	.456

international trip	
To have fun	.418
<i>Factor 2: Stress Busting/Fun</i> Alpha = .874; explained variance = 7.733	
To reduce stress	.817
To do something exciting	.736
To have fun	.690
To be together with friends	.679
To talk about the trip after returning home	.558
To escape from the routine of work or life	.510
To enjoy shows and entertainment	.452
To meet new friends (in new destination)	.401
<i>Factor 3: Achievement</i> Alpha = .881; explained variance = 7.361	
All inclusive tour	.779
To go places my friends/relatives have not visited	.718
To meet new friends (in new destination)	.706
I have reached a stage where I can afford an international trip	.625
To talk about the trip after returning home	.547
To enjoy international travel experiences	.492
To take advantage of travel agent/airlines promotion	.456
To go to Thailand/Bangkok	.403
<i>Factor 4: Family Oriented/Education</i> Alpha = .679; explained variance = 5.171	
To be together with my family	.795
To take advantage of travel agent/airlines promotion	.594
To visit historical places, ancient ruins, temples, palaces	.504

Objective 3: To examine the level of importance of information sources

Respondents were asked to give a rating on a five point Likert Scale, in which one (1) indicated “unimportant” and five (5) indicated “extremely important.” Table 5 shows the mean scores of each information source ordered by the most important to the least important. Family and/or friends and the Internet were perceived by Indian tourists as important sources in trip decision making. According to Engel et al. (1995), consumers were influenced by word of mouth in several situations such as when they purchased complex products, when other sources were perceived as low credibility, or when there were strong social ties between information transmitters and receivers.

The Internet also influenced the decision-making of Indian tourists to visit Bangkok. Buhalis's study (1998) and Werthner and Ricci (2004) supported that the Internet became an important source in searching for travel information since tourism was a unique and intangible product and travelers could not see the actual product during the pre-purchase process. Therefore, they relied solely on the online information search for planning, searching, purchasing, and amending their travel. Louvieris and Oppewal (2004) indicated that although talking to friends or relatives (traditional channels) was regarded as more important than the Internet and travel shops for the preparation of holiday in the information search stage, the Internet was an important source during the purchasing stage. Li and Buhalis (2006) found that there is a trend that consumers perceive benefits from eChannels which are expected to increase both in the information search and purchasing stage in the near future.

Table 5 Mean score of the importance of information sources in decision-making on Bangkok area trip

Information sources	N	s.d.	Mean
Family and/or friends	132	1.13	3.66
Internet (Email, Website)	122	1.10	3.49
Travel magazine	119	1.16	2.79
Travel agent	125	1.33	2.76
Movie/TV series	118	1.27	2.64
Commercial ads (TV, Radio)	120	1.11	2.53

IMPLICATIONS

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)

TAT has two offices in India (New Delhi and a representative office in Mumbai). The offices should launch the campaigns to promote the hidden, or little known values such family activities. TAT should also include this information in TAT's website.

There are numerous fun things to do in Pattaya and the Bangkok area, such as taking a safari tour, visiting a crocodile farm, or playing water sports. Some Indian tourists mentioned participating with these activities but some others had not even been acquainted with them. They perceived Pattaya as having only a few family activities which are overshadowed by the night life entertainment. Therefore, TAT should promote those aspects

of the destination that provide variety of activities for families. In the meantime, the city of Pattaya should improve their zoning regulations. The adult entertainment area should be clearly separated so as not to overlap with the family-friendly areas.

Rather than treating tourists as being a homogeneous group of Indian tourists, TAT needs to treat them as distinctive segments (novelty seeking, stress busting/fun, achievement, and family oriented/education). Advertisement should be launched specifically for each group by designing ads to be content-based or geared toward a group's main motives. For example, visiting beautiful environments and beaches is the main motive of the novelty seeking group, therefore the ad should emphasize the natural sceneries, so that the ad can stimulate the needs of the novelty seekers to travel. The ads should be presented in both English and Hindi and advertised through websites which the tourists indicated as an important travel resource. The ads, however, should not be overstated, because this will create unreasonably high expectations for tourists. Furthermore, TAT should organize familiarization trips (Fam trips) for officers of local travel magazines and tour companies in India. Thailand will receive benefits from publicity through these sources which local Indian people trust.

Thai government

Thai government should also encourage Thai movies/TV series to go international so they might promote Thai tourism and remind repeat tourists about their previous trips to Thailand. Thai movies/TV series are expected to stimulate the needs of travelers in coming to Thailand. Inviting Indian film and TV producers to shoot films/TV series in Thailand is also recommended because the Indian film industry is the largest in the world and Indian movies are shown worldwide. Thailand would gain more tourists from many countries.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that the Indian tourists had been influenced by both push and pull factors in their decision making of their trips to Bangkok, Thailand. Four distinctive Indian tourists' segments were novelty seeking, stress busting/fun, achievement, and family oriented/education. They created the images of Bangkok area from the information that they obtained from their family and/or friends as well as

from the Internet. Implications are beneficial to TAT and Thai government for future marketing strategies.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study paves the way for a number of interesting future studies: the difference in travel motivation between first time and repeat Indian tourists, the difference in travel motivation between genders, and the impact of the information sources on the perception of Indian tourists toward Bangkok and Thailand.

LIMITATIONS

The major drawback of this paper is data collection. Access to the departure lounge where respondents had time to complete the survey was denied causing a low response rate. Another limitation of this study is inability to generalize the findings to all Indian tourists since majority of Indian tourists were from Mumbai and New Delhi. In addition to this, the sample was drawn from visitors who departed through Suvarnabhumi International Airport from July 24 – August 14, 2008. This may cause possible non-representation for year round tourists and tourists using other modes of transportation. Lastly, this study was limited to examine only key tourism components and key attributes.

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