



Push-pull factors and behaviors of tourists to Tongchom Market, Mae La Noi District, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This quantitative research aims to 1) discover the relationship of tourism behaviors and personal characteristics (gender, age, education level, occupation, and average monthly income) of tourists in Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, and also sought 2) to analyze the importance of push-pull factors and marketing mix in the tourism of the same area. The data were collected by way of a survey questionnaire with a sample of 385 tourists visiting Tongchom market, Mae LA Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, as respondents. Purposive sampling was used in the selection process. Data analysis included mean, standard deviation (SD), descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics. The results found that the tourist behavior in choosing a tourist destination has the highest relationship with personal characteristics, specifically age, and this was followed by one's occupation. From an overall perspective, the respondents gave importance to push factors at a high level, but mostly focused on their escapism and relaxation needs followed by their desire to see and learn new things in an exotic destination. Overall, the respondents gave importance to pull factors at a high level, by mostly focusing on the personal and location safety features followed by the convenience image of the place. The respondents gave importance to the marketing factors at the highest level of response, by mostly focusing on the identity of the tourist attractions presented to the tourists, which was followed by the affordability, disposable income and price factor. The results showed an understanding of internal needs, push-pull factors from tourist attractions and the marketing mix of Tongchom market tourism, so that entrepreneurs may beneficially apply these results to serve Thai consumers based on internal needs and the unique characteristics of Tongchom market as a tourist attraction.

Keywords: Push factors, pull factors, Tongchom market, Mae La Noi, Mae Hong Son, Thailand.

Background and Significance of Problems

Tongchom market is a market that is promoted by the Thai government, which has a policy to operate in the domestic market by targeting it to uplift the community and the market in every corner of the city in order that it should become a desired place to sell products directly to the local people and especially tourists. The Ministry of Commerce through the Department of Internal Trade has therefore implemented a community marketing program for local businesses under the name "Tongchom Market" to develop or upgrade markets that sell agricultural products, handicrafts, OTOP artworks, and consumer products of local communities, goods produced by farmers, community state groups, SMEs and people in the community or nearby areas. The policy also promotes Tongchom market as a market which has beautiful landscapes and quality goods to offer, including accurate weighing-scales, reasonable prices, along with maintaining the local arts and cultures and sustaining community identities and ways of life. Tongchom market is another way to create careers, jobs, and incomes for people in the community. It is a place that



people, whether locals or foreign visitors, must visit to spend time and 'feel' the local culture and the unique way of life of the villagers. It is a joint operation with all sectors of society to make the local economy strong and sustainable. This will allow entrepreneurs to apply cultural capital to create more brands. The knowledge factor will occur only when entrepreneurs are grouped together to create a network, exchange knowledge, and generate a fair bargaining power (Pasu Chai wayru and Chitphong Aisanont, 2016).

Tongchom market in Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province is also known as "Kad Tai" and is another market that is interesting from a touristic perspective. Those who go to spend time there such as tourists will experience the presentation of local products, souvenirs, and local savory food in a Thai locality, which is basically a traditional community in the Mae La Noi area, and can experience things such as Sen Ko rice, Nao Sao bean, Tam Jin, Jin Long, Pang Mo, Wong sweets, etc. Furthermore, the tourists feel the way of life and the performing arts of the Thai people, which emphasize Thai Yai dressing styles. These aspects can be considered as an tremendous strategy that can attract both Thai and foreign tourists (Vorasiha Ekgnarong, 2018) and can create positive tourists' impression and their need to return to visit the market continuously (Chantaburee, 2016). Entrepreneurs, therefore, need to know the customer requirements well. The market segmentation according to personal characteristic variables in each aspect is important in specifying target customers (Sareerat, 1995). Using the appropriate marketing mix will help respond to tourists satisfaction. Besides, push-pull factors can motivate the satisfaction with the behavior that aims to travel to a specific place (Pimolsompong, 2007). The researcher, consequently, is interested in studying the Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, by focusing on the relationship of tourism behaviors and personal characteristics of Tongchom market tourists. The level of importance of push-pull factors and marketing mix in the tourism of Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, are analyzed so that entrepreneurs can get to better know and understand important information needed from the Thai consumers'. The needs are classified by personal characteristics and use the research results to strategically manage the tourism of Tongchom market so that it can be suitable for the desires of tourists.

Research Objectives

- To find the relationship of tourism behaviors and personal characteristics of tourists to Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province.
- To analyze the importance of push-pull factors and marketing mix factors in the tourism of Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province.

Definition of Term

- Push factors are defined as features or factors that cause psychological motivation or the internal needs driving tourists to go sightseeing.
- Pull factors are defined as Tongchom market characteristics, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son Province, that motivate tourists to make a decision to buy products and services.
- Tourist behaviors are defined as actions or behaviors shown through the body, thoughts or feelings in response to the stimulus of tourists traveling to Tongchom market for its characteristics.



Scope of the Study

- Data collection: This research comprises collected data from tourists aged over than 20 who have visited the Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province
- Research variables: The independent variables are personal characteristics of tourists, including gender, age, education level, occupation, and average monthly income. The dependent variables used are tourism behaviors, push-pull factors, and the various marketing mix factors.

Related concepts on Tongchom market

The government has a policy to focus on strengthening the domestic or local economy, solving the living problem, increasing purchasing power in the local area, and linking production into the market, and creating balance through driving policies and operations in the form of "civil state". Tongchom market is thus considered as a tool to drive policy of strengthening the economy. It is a way to create careers, jobs, and provide incomes for people in the community. The Ministry of Commerce and other sectors are the institute that drives the policy of improving Tongchom market concretely to be the community market that sells products with quality, reasonable price, maintained identity, and precise weight. This is the highlight that will attract people in the community and neighborhood, including tourists to come to use the service and to buy more local products, especially during various festivals. As a result, the income will be circulated back to the community sustainably (Nicolaidis, 2015a). The government set the target for the whole country to have 77 Tongchom markets per year, 231 places within 3 years (2016-2018). While, Kad Tai Mae La noi is the third Tongchom market in Mae Hong Son province, located at the city shrine intersection in the supervision of the Municipality of Mae La Noi Subdistrict, Mae La Noi district.

Consumer Behavior Concepts

The marketing concept was formulated during the 1950s and although it seems logical, marketers never considered this concept earlier. Assael (1995) provided two reasons why marketers did not use this concept earlier. The first was that marketing institutions were not sufficiently developed to accept the marketing concept prior to the 1950s. Advertising and distribution were geared for the mass production and mass marketing strategies of that time. Second, the implementation of the marketing concept required diverse facilities for the promotion and distribution of products that will meet the needs of small diverse market segments. The production and marketing focused on before the 1950s, was therefore concerned with economies of scale (Assael, 1995).

The Royal Institute Dictionary (2011) indicated that a consumer means a buyer or a person receiving a service from the business entrepreneur, or a person who is offered or persuaded by the business entrepreneur to purchase a product or receive a service, including those who use a product or who receive a service from the business entrepreneur. Consumers have a desire to buy and abandon the product in 3 steps during the 3 steps of consumption process, namely the before buying step, the purchase step, and the post-purchase step (Solomon, 2013), in which consumers will decide and act on the search, purchase, use of products / services (Etzel, Walker and Stanton, 2001). This study of tourist behaviors in Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, is a study on factors affecting making decision to visit Tongchom market, including the travel frequency, the time spent on each trip, the favorite tourism activity and its



expense, the service payment form, the purpose of tourism, and information sources. These are the behaviors necessary for the study of individual expressions in making a purchase decision and choosing the form of tourism activities. This will be useful to entrepreneurs in using strategic planning to monitor changes in decision to use the service and arranging distribution channels to meet the tourists' needs, which leads to success in creating profits for entrepreneurs (Samerjai, 2007). To be a successful seller of products and services, organisations need to understand consumer needs and behaviours and draft their marketing strategies to incorporate such behavioural needs of consumers as a high priority .

Push-Pull Factor Concepts

Push and pull factors are factors which either forcefully push or pull people into a migration. A push factor is forceful factor which relates to the country from which a person migrates. It is generally some problem which results in people wanting to migrate or travel elsewhere. Different types of push factors exist. A push factor is in a way a flaw or distress that drives a person away from a certain place. A pull factor is something concerning the country to which a person migrates or travels to. It is generally a benefit that attracts people to a certain place. Push and pull factors are usually considered as north and south poles on a magnet, and are critical to consider in effective marketing drives. It is also critical to consider all stakeholders in marketing drives (Nicolaidis, 2015b).

The motivation push and pull factors are driven by the inner motivation of each person, called the push factor and the external attraction influenced by the location or nature of the destination, is called the pull factor (Dann, 1981). Presently, push and pull factors are used for tourism or the sign-gestalt paradigm, invented by Tolman (1959). The researcher recognizes the importance of push and pull factors, therefore the motivation push and pull factors of tourists in Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province are studied with the idea that the difference in internal demands and unique characteristics of destinations will result in different forms of tourism spending (Miller, 1996; Douglas, 2001). The researcher uses social push factors, i.e. relaxation and release from stress or freedom, good health, self-rewarding, and self-indulgence, and tangible pull factors, i.e. products, convenience image, and personal and location safety. These are push-pull factor variables which are important towards the tourism of Tongchom market.

Market Mix Concepts

Marketing is simplistically defined as 'putting the right product in the right place, at the right price, at the right time.' The use of a marketing mix is an excellent way to help ensure that 'putting the right product in the right place' will happen. The marketing mix is a crucial tool to help understand what products or services can offer and how to plan for offering a successful products (Bennett, 2001). The marketing mix is most commonly executed through the 4 P's of marketing (Martin, 2014). If businesses don't understand it in detail, or at all, then there is a fairly firm chance that they are missing out on the key elements that will ensure scalable success from the ground up and it has been said many times that if the businesses don't know their target market well enough, the business will unavoidably fail (The Marketing Mix, 2016).

Marketing strategy is the main concept used to consider the key elements in responding to the market appropriately. It begins with the trade in the tourism market, since there must be something that will offer products and services to customers, including setting a reasonable price, finding effective ways of delivery, managing distribution channels, and finding ways to communicate in

order to inform and stimulate the purchase by promoting the marketing, which called is termed the “Marketing mix or 4Ps’, i.e. product, price, place, and promotion.

Nonetheless, due to the nature of the tourism business of Tongchom market which has a unique product offering list of local products and food, the researcher, used the 4Ps plus 3 marketing factors, i.e. people, physical evidence, and process (Chaiyuth, 2017) also known as the ‘Service Marketing Mix or 7Ps’. As shown in Figure 1 there are marketing control variables entrepreneurs use to respond to the target customer satisfaction (Kotler, 2003).



Figure 1. Service Marketing Mix (Hitesh Bhasin, 2019)

Through its successful use of a balanced marketing mix, the area addresses a need felt by specific niche segments. Traditional distribution methods are balanced by unique products and updated promotional strategies. This ensures that the brand message reaches the right people at the right time and in the right way, including strong distribution channels over promotional activities. Nonetheless, it needs to come after a clear plan and strategy has been decided upon by relevant stakeholders.

Travel behavior of Tongchom Market of Thai tourists

The outstanding motivation for people travelling to the destination is that it is known for its influence, motivation, and push and pull factors. These are the 2 main motives that explain why consumers are driven by motivation variables to make travel decisions. They are attracted by the features of various places (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Balogly and Uysal, 1996). Concepts, driving factors and attracting factors are methods that indicate the main motivation factor (Jang and Cai, 2002) and have a relationship with each other. Crompton and Mckay, (1997) found that relaxation and pampering, enjoyment, distress/time-out, unwinding/rejuvenation and regeneration are all an important motivation factors that can be defined as push factors which drive tourists to come to the market on holidays.

Push factors are more important than pull factors as they tend to stimulate tourists to stay in community accommodation and women especially are more likely to be taken in with these factors more so than men (Bryan Chun-Man Cheung, 2012). In addition, there are findings from research on the nature of interaction that influence the perception of tourists in terms of service quality (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996). The tourists often consider the quality of services they receive from evaluating traders in Tongchom market (Christopher and Lauren, 2002) and marketing mix strategies.

The services 7Ps will be linked to the behavior of choosing a tourist destination. It was found that the 7Ps service marketing mix strategy in all 3 aspects affected decision making and include products and physical aspects which all have a positive effect, while marketing promotion has a negative effect on purchasing decisions (Patikan and Chansom, 2012). The selection of tourist

attractions varies according to gender and occupation and most people based on education factors opted to use different personal characteristics as criteria for segmentation of the consumer markets (Chau-in, Pintathong and Thitipramote, 2012)

Research Conceptual Framework

This research Push-Pull Factors and Behaviors of Tourists to Tongchom Market, Mae La Noi District, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand had the conceptual framework used in the research as follows in figure 2 below:

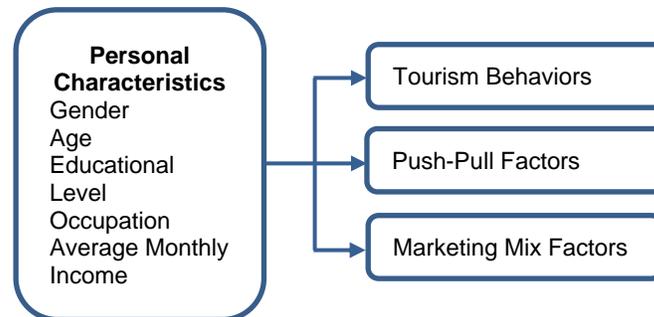


Figure 2, Research framework

From the above conceptual framework, the followings were hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: *The Tourism behaviors of Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, are related to personal characteristics.*

Hypothesis 2: *Tourists with different personal characteristics have a different importance level of push-pull factors and marketing mix factors in tourism.*

Research Methodology

The sample of quantitative research of push-pull factors and behaviors of tourists to Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, was 385 tourists who have traveled or have tourism experience in the Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province. Due to unknown population numbers, the W. G. Cochran's sample calculation formula was used by determining the confidence level of 95 percent and allowing the error (E) to not exceed 0.05 and the proportion of the population the researcher random is $P = .50$. To be different from other studies, this research was begun with gathering the data from information sources, i.e. traders and entrepreneurs in Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, and then collecting the data from tourists (consumers) travelling in Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province.

In this research, the researcher collected the data by using a five point Likert rating scale questionnaire and then tested the reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which had the reliability ranged between 0.835-0.966, which is considered to be an acceptable reliability for the questionnaire (Greater than 0.07) (Sangpikul, 2013). When the data were finally collected



successfully, the data were analyzed by using the statistical package for the social sciences program. The data analysis was divided into 2 parts as follows.

Part 1: Finding the relationship between tourism behaviors and personal characteristics of tourists to Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, by using non-parametric Inference statistics, that is Chi-Square distribution to test the correlation between variables

Part 2: The study of the level of push-pull factors and the marketing mix factors that are important to the tourists' sightseeing selection by using descriptive statistics, i.e. mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD), in analyzing the data on push-pull factors and marketing mix data

Results

The chi-square was used to test the relationship between the tourism behaviors of Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, and personal characteristics, comprising genders, ages, educational levels, occupations, and average monthly incomes. It was found that following variables had the statistical significance at a level of 0.05, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Results of the relationship between the tourism behaviors of Tongchom market and personal characteristics, which has the statistical significance at the level of 0.05

Tourism behaviors of Tourists to Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province		Chi-Square
Genders	Individuals affecting travel decisions	.416*
	Total expenses of each travel	.448*
	Travel styles	.971*
Ages	Individuals affecting travel decisions	.000*
	The travel frequency	.000*
	The time spent in each travel	.000*
	Interesting product categories	.717*
	The purpose of purchasing products	.023*
	Info. sources for receiving news in choosing tourist attractions	.417*
Educational Levels	Tourism seasons and festivals	.033*
	The time spent in each travel	.443*
	Forms of tourism	.024*
	Total expenses of each travel	.517*
	The purpose of purchasing products	.083*
	Info. sources for receiving news in choosing tourist attractions	.915*
Occupations	Tourism seasons and festivals	.000*
	The travel frequency	.000*
	The time spent in each travel	.024*
	Forms of tourist attractions	.027*
	The purpose of purchasing products	.030*
	Info. sources for receiving news in choosing tourist attractions	.003*
Average Monthly Incomes	The travel frequency	.000*
	The time spent in each travel	.000*
	Total expenses of each travel	.000*
	Forms of payment for goods and services	.105*

The analysis results of the level of importance of the push-pull factors and marketing mix factors in the tourism selection of Tongchom market, Mae La Noi district, Mae Hong Son province, found that tourists to Tongchom market paid more attention to the push factors – favorable tourist



attractions - at a high level (Mean = 4.19, SD = 0.47). When considered each aspect, it was found that tourists paid attention to clean tourist attractions at a highest level (Mean = 4.63, SD = 0.48), followed by the favorite of identity tourist attractions at a high level (Mean = 3.75, SD = 1.14). For the pull factors of Tongchom market towards tourists, overall, the tourists paid attention to the pull factors at a high level (Mean = 3.97, SD = 0.28). When considering each aspect, it was found that tourists paid attention to the personal and location safety aspects at the highest level (Mean = 4.68, SD = 0.47), the convenience of the tourism travel at a highest level (Mean = 4.50, SD = 0.70), the convenience of relaxing places in tourist attractions at a high level (Mean = 4.32, SD = 0.68), the image of tourist attractions at a high level (Mean = 3.66, SD = 0.73), the variety of products distributed in tourist attractions at a high level (Mean = 3.59, SD = 1.18), and local performing arts with the identity of tourist attractions at a moderate level (Mean = 3.06, SD = 1.12) in turn.

Tourists give an importance to the marketing mix factors of tourists towards overall tourism at the highest level (Mean = 4.54, SD = 0.01). When considering each aspect, it was found that tourists paid attention to the physical environment of the tourist attractions at the highest level (Mean = 4.59, SD = 0.49), followed by the importance of the tourism expenses at a high level (Mean = 4.48, SD = 0.50)

Discussion

From the study of the tourism behaviors of tourists to Tongchom market, the classification by personal characteristics, consisting of gender, age, education level, occupation, and average monthly income, found that individuals affecting Tongchom market tourism depended on personal characteristics – mainly their age. It may be because Tongchom market is a local market representing local identities. As a result, the majority of people interested in the area are middle-aged tourists. This was in line with the research of Pornthip Boonthitham (2012), which found that tourists with demographic factors, such as different ages, influenced tourism decisions. The peoples' ages gave the diverse importance to the service marketing mix factors - the distribution and the process toward consumers, including tourism methods and patterns. In addition, it was found that different levels of education were influenced by push factors - the need for relaxation and a sense of freedom. This derived from the people with different levels of education having different needs, caused by knowledge variances in each level of education received while studying at differently places so that their own needs are different to those of others.

Additionally, each tourism expense depends on personal characteristics, and then of course one's average monthly income. This was in accordance with the research results of Benjawan Uchupongamorn (2009), which found that income was related with easy travel incentives, a good communication, an emotional need, a social need, travel companies availability, and an effective information service center.

The Travel frequency depended on personal characteristics - ages, occupations, and average monthly incomes of respondents. This was consistent with the research results of Benjawan Uchupongamorn (2009), which found that personal characteristics – the age – related to the cultural tourism motivation and the psychological motivation, possibly because the timing of travel with a variety of activities had different periods related to them. There was a reason for responding to the individual needs in each age, each level of education, each occupation, and each average monthly income. In general, there are 2 forms of payment for goods and services: the cash payment and credit cards. Subsequently, people of different ages, education levels, and incomes will tend to select different tourism activities. This resulted in different forms of payment according to the price and the location of each tourism activity. This was in line with the research results of



Chukit et al. (2018), studying push-pull factors and Thai consumers' behaviors in choosing to use day spas, which found that the time of each trip depended on personal characteristics, such as the age and the average monthly income, because pull factors - time - affected the vacation in the tourism travel each time.

The age factor determined the age of each person, including job responsibilities and incomes, which seasons and festivals in tourism depended on personal characteristics such as occupation. Pull factors - seasons and festivals - in the tourism of Tongchom market affected each occupation of the tourists traveling according to the seasons in different ways. For holidays encouraging people to travel, people with different occupations chose a different travel period. In addition, it was found that information sources in the selection of tourist attractions depended on the personal characteristics of their occupation since the pull factors of news published through various media related to personal characteristics of occupation in selecting channels to receive information which ultimately guided travel selection aspects. This was in accordance with the study of Siripen Yiamjanya (2012), which found that people with difference in ages, incomes and educational levels sought information differently. For receiving marketing mix data in distribution forms of the Tongchom market towards the notion of tourism selection, tourists gave priority to different channels of information, and this was most probably due to different occupations having different types of people with similar ideas.

Conclusion

The study of push-pull factors and behaviors of tourists to Tongchom Market, Mae La Noi District, Mae Hong Son Province discovered that the market must be watched closely, there is a factor in attracting tourists who are interested in traditions, culture and identity of tourist attractions. Furthermore, most tourists who travel are female from a middle age and up grouping. Travel time depends on holidays in the festival periods and the suitable seasons in tourism. Entrepreneurs in the market, the community must watch and should receive support from relevant government sectors such as the Department of Internal Trade and the Ministry of Commerce which should promote and develop local businesses, commercial identity and community identity so that it becomes stronger and sustainable. It is ready to accommodate tourists who are traveling including support for convenient transportation. Accommodation in the community was found to be sufficient to serve tourists that will be a driving factor for tourists to travel to the area in the future and on a sustainable basis (Bramwell, & Lane, 2010).

Recommendations

1. From the findings, it was found that personal characteristics, the age and the occupation of travelers, are related to the tourism season and their travelling frequency. The researcher therefore suggested marketing strategies for community enterprise groups and accommodation owners in the community so that entrepreneurs can use them. Target markets are specified into 2 groups: 1) the first working groups is a group of 23-to-60-year-old persons who are mostly civil servants and state enterprise employees, and 2) the second group, an elderly group is a group of persons who are older than 60 years of age, for example, commonly the butler, housekeeper, and retirees.

2. Further research should be added from use of a qualitative method by gathering the data with focus group to confirm the results of the study on marketing strategic guidelines for Tongchom market, in terms of providing services and distributing products. This will enable entrepreneurs to use these guidelines for determining management strategies in accordance with consumer behavior for further sustainable business operations to sustainability.



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