

TOURIST MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION: THE CASE STUDY OF TRANG PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate tourist motivation and satisfaction in Trang province, Thailand. The target population of this study was tourists who traveled to Trang. Onsite survey was conducted with convenience sampling method. This study found that “trying new food” was the most important factor with respect to all the push factors, followed by “being physically active” and “seeing as much as possible” whereas “reliable weather” was the most important factor among all the pull factors, followed by “outstanding scenery” and “visiting natural attractions. Additionally, “a variety of natural attractions” was considered to be the highest with respect to satisfaction, followed by “a peaceful and restful atmosphere” and “security and safety”. Furthermore, “ease of communication in your own language”, “friendliness of people”, “overall value for money”, and a “peaceful and restful atmosphere” were strong indicators that tourists intended to revisit Trang. The results of this study will have significant implications for destination competitiveness and the type of product development and marketing that is undertaken to attract tourists to Trang. Once the destination has identified the primary motivators that boost travel demand, generate high satisfaction and an intention to return from both Thai and international tourists, the destination is in a far stronger position to develop appropriate travel products and to market these products and the images associated with them in a manner that maximizes the destination’s appeal in targeted market.

Keywords: Motivation, Satisfaction, Tourist behavior, Intention to Return, Trang

1. Introduction

Thailand has been promoted as a tourist destination for many decades, the result of this action being that Thailand is notorious and visited by many tourists. One of Thailand’s biggest sources of income is tourism, and perhaps this is one reason why Thailand is so well known around the world ([1]). Tourism contributes approximately 928,199 million baht to the Thai economy ([2]).

In the southern part of Thailand, Trang is a coastal province which has a long, beautiful coastline stretching along the Indian Ocean. Trang has not only natural attractions (e.g. Muk Island - Emerald Cave, Pak Meng Beach, and Le Cave) and cultural attractions (Sino - Portuguese architecture, and Phraya

Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi Museum) but also a variety of festivals (e.g. Cake Festival, Roast Pork Festival, and Underwater Wedding Ceremony). Trang has been promoted as a tourist destination for many years, however, compared with Phuket, Phang-Nga, and Krabi, (located on the same coastline, the Andaman Sea), Trang is the least focused and least successful in terms of revenue generated from the tourism sector. Even though Trang has both natural and cultural attractions, famous festivals and interesting activities, the number of tourists who traveled to Trang in 2006, were in total 726,373: 656,007 Thai and 70,366 foreign tourists, compared to 1,616,545 Thai and 2,882,779 foreign tourists who traveled to Phuket in that same year. Psychology and