Profiling Multinational Resort Hotel Tourists Visiting Thailand: A Segmentation Analysis

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Tourist resort hotels have been considered as one of the fundamental leisure tourism products in recent decades. In fact, resort style hotels are becoming popular accommodation segments in the tourism industry all around the world as a result of their special services and functions. Resort hoteliers need to understand their customers well so that they will serve better than the competitors. Thus customers will be attracted and retained. The purpose of this research is to understand resort hotel guests who using resort hotel accommodation in Thailand. One way to gain a better understanding of these customers is to explore them via segmentation, subdividing a large resort tourist market into clearly identifiable segments for the purpose of responding to the expectations of resort guests in the targeted segment. The following research findings present information on the segmentation of resort tourists visiting Thailand. The distinct segments are identified based on their push factors (the underlying reason to travel) and they are profiled with respect to demographics and travel behaviour. Additionally, each segment is compared in relation to the importance of pull factors (resort hotel attributes, products/services provided, and activities). Tourists who were visiting beach resorts located in various popular destinations from May to August 2012 were asked to complete a four-page questionnaire. The questionnaires were divided into five sections, mainly focused on push and pull factors. A total of 320 useable questionnaires were analysed. Factor analysis was employed first to discover the pattern of motivation variables (push factors), then the K-mean method of cluster classification was used to group tourists into similar clusters. Findings suggest four distinct clusters labelled as "escaper tourists", "conventional vacationers", "challenge journeyers" and; "spoil me travellers". Based on the results of the survey, this researcher has suggested resort positioning and marketing strategies that suit each segment i.e. 'hide away' resort for escaper tourists, 'family friendly' for conventional vacationers, 'adventure' resort for challenge journeyers and 'elite' resort for spoil me travellers.

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1. Introduction

Tourism has become a global phenomenon since international travel has emerged as a major revenue generating industry for many countries (WTO 2013). The tourism industry has been considered to be the largest and fastest growing industry in the world (WTTC 2013). Thailand, as a popular tourism destination, is one of those countries in which tourism has grown a main pillar of the economy. According to the the Government Public Relations Department, Office of the Prime Minister (2013), tourism continues to play a crucial role in Thailand's socio-economic development, accounting for about 7 percent of GDP.

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Chomsuan

It is a major source of foreign exchange, investment, employment generation, wages, and government revenue. The Minister of Tourism and Sports (2013) revealed that in 2012 around 22 million overseas tourists came to Thailand. These numbers are estimated to increase by 25% in 2013. A sizeable number of tourists visiting Thailand are expected to generate 600 billion baht (approximately 20 million U.S. dollars) for Thailand tourism industry sector.

Resort locations such as Phuket, Krabi and Pattaya, for example, swarm with multinational tourists every year. Thus resort hotels have been considered as one of the vital, service- oriented, leisure tourism products. In fact, they have come to dominate the accommodation segments of the world's tourism industry on the basis of their special services and functions. Today, the numerous tourist resort hotels located in Asia-Pacific's tourist destinations, including Thailand, have been increasing dramatically (Smith and Henderson 2008). Approximately 1,800 resort hotels (THMA 2008) are located in Thailand, ranging from domestic owner operated to world chain brands.

In many ways tourist resort hotels attract the potential tourists with their novel packages and enticing guest activity programmes. They continually seek ways to achieve a healthy flow of tourists, not only a significant number of tourists, but also the right type of tourists. A better targeting of the right segments results in more effective financial management (e.g. better sales revenue and, savings in advertisement spending), therefore it is paramount for resort marketing managers to know who their guests are and how they arrive at the decision of buying resort products and services.

There have been several focus tourism research contributions over the last decade dealing with different types of tourists; however, few researches have been narrowly focused on the resort hotel tourists, particularly Thailand where resort hotel business makes great contribution to the tourism sector of the country. Moreover, previous studies have mainly used others criteria as a segment base such as Demographics, geographic or behaviour instead this research has chosen Psychographics which could give more understanding the tourists in depth.

The purpose of this research is to understand resort hotel guests who using resort hotel accommodation in Thailand. One possible way to doing that is to segment them based on their push motivations then profiles them according to demographic factors and trip related behaviour. Additionally, several aspects, i.e. pull factors, between segments are compared in order to acquire the differences among them. Consequently, the paper initially outlines the related literature around the idea of resort hotels, travel push and pull theory and segmentation of tourists. The methodology, including questionnaire design and construct, sample and procedures, sample size are then introduced as well as data analysis. This is then followed by the results and a discussion of the result with recommendations to resort business. Finally, limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resort Hotels

There have been many investigations on resort hotels (e.g. Ayala 1991; Bender-Stringam 2008; Callan and Bowman 2000; Costa, Glinia, Goudas and Panagiotis, 2004;Ford and Bach 1997; Glinia, Costa, Mavromatis, Tsitskari and Kalaitzidis 2004; Henderson 2005;

Juwaheer and Ross 2003; Pin-Ju and Shin-Yi 2011; Smerecnik and Andersen 2011; Thomas 2002). Callan and Bowman (2002) completed a comprehensive research on 38 hotel selection attributes to verify their influence on older guests' choices of accommodation. Thomas (2002) used action research inside resort community to study on the inefficiency of customer service training programme and its subsequent impact on new and repeated visitors to that resort site. Juwaheer and Ross (2003) used a modified version of the Servqual model to measure the service quality in the hotel industry in Mauritius in an attempt to understand guests' expectations toward such services. Most of prior studies focused their research on the supply side of research area rather than demand dimension. In other words, many researchers have focused their studies on accommodation and services assessment rather than the resort clientele itself. This research could be considered as the demand side of resort hotel study because it is directly related to resort hotel tourists in various aspects such as their travel motivations and other related characteristics.

2.2 Travel Push and Pull Theory

The push and pull framework has been most extensively used in the study of travel motivation and segmentation studies (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Eppenson, 1983; Yuan and McDonald, 1990; Frochot and Morrison, 2000; Sarigollu and Huang 2005; Pesonen, 2011). Dann (1997) made a significant contribution in suggesting two scales of push motivation: anomie and ego-enhancement. Anomie refers to "the individual who clearly is affected by the social situation in which he finds himself" (Dann 1977, p. 186). Ego-enhancement is based upon the individual's need for social recognition. Crompton (1979) agreed with Dann's basic idea but went further to identify seven push factors for travel. They were escape, exploration, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinships and social interaction. Moreover, Crompton also defined pull factors as extrinsic motivators drawing tourists to the destination. In summary, people travel because of push factors which are normally referring to internal forces and at the same time tourists are pulled by external forces such as the attractiveness of a destination's attributes to go to a particular place (Uysal and Jurowski 1994). These factors are relevant in the current study, not only in terms of a fundamental understanding of resort hotel tourists' motivations, but also as a starting point and guide to a resort hotel tourist segmentation base.

2.3 Segmentation of Tourists

Segmenting tourists is an effective way of marketing tourist products to fit various clientele groups. The ultimate goal of marketing is to achieve sales, but more importantly to repeat sales of patrons because it will lead to real and sustained achievement. No exception for resort hotel business only satisfied tourists repeat purchase (revisit), and tourist satisfaction is a result of understanding them very well and serving them with the right things. The discoveries and issues underlying segmentation are useful in attempting to understand a wide variety of different needs, wants and various characteristics among tourist groups. It is accepted that there are many variables that can be used for a clustering base. Kotler (1991) classified several variables into four main categories: namely, demographics (age, gender, education, household type); geo-graphics (trip origin, trip destination) psychographics; (personality, life-style, values, motives); and behaviour (length of stay, frequency of stay, tourist activity, travel companion). Many researchers attempted to follow Kotlers' guidance for their segmentation studies; however, they differed in the categories on which they based their focus. For example,

Dodd and Bigotte (1997); Field (1999); Jeffrey and Xie (1995); and Kim et al (2003) used demographics as their clustering base, while Andreu, Kozak, Avci, and Ciffer (2006); Becken et al., (2003); Fuller and Matzler (2008); Jang et al., (2007); Moscrado (2004); Sellick (2004); Thyne et al (2004) focused on psychographics.

Having reviewed past research under tourism segmentation study of Thailand, it is very limited studies have been investigated on tourist segmentation. Among few attempts relating around the idea of segmentation, those few focus on different tourism product segments or different angles, for example in Campiranon and Arcodia's (2007) work, MICE (Meeting, Incentives, Conference, Event) market is central of theirs interest, while on-line traveler is of interest to Hoontakul and Sahadev (2008). Sanpikul (2008) focused his work on US senior traveler visiting Thailand. The work of Rittichainuwat (2011), despite the fact that she was interested in classifying tourists based on travel motivation, resembles this research the most. Hers classified tourists are general tourists, not specific to resort hotel guests, and she focused only on domestic tourists (Thai), and did not include foreign tourists in her study. So far none have been found segmenting international resort hotel tourists visiting Thailand. This research attempts to fill that missing gap by researching the resort guests who are international while they were holidaying inside the resorts through segmentation.

As already noted, Psychographics has been accepted as a basis for segmentation in tourism literature. Lots of evidences from prior research claim that tourists can be grouped into various segments, thus it will lead to the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Tourists using resorts accommodation can be segmented in various groups based on Psychographics (travel motivations).

Additionally, many researchers have developed their studies utilizing benefit segmentation and defined pull factors as benefits that tourists are seeking for. Pull factors that can be recognized as destination attributes that respond to and reinforce inherent push motivations (Uysal and Jurowski, 1994). The major conclusion from those research e.g. Gitelson and Kerstetter 1990; Froucot 2005; Hu and Yu 2006; Huang and Sarigollu 2007; Molera and Albaladejo 2007; Park and Yoon 2009, are different benefits sought by visitors can usually be achieved through different product forms including activities. Thus another two hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 2: There is difference between segments in relation to pull factors.

Hypothesis 3: There is a clear distinction between the activities engaged by different segments of tourists.

3. The Methodology

This study was quantitative in nature and utilized the survey research method to study resort tourists motives (push factors) with resort attributes, products and services the resort provided (pull factors that draw tourists).

Chomsuan

3.1 Questionnaire Design and Construct

This research is decided to design and administer its own questionnaire; however, the questionnaire was developed and constructed by reviewing both the related literatures and previous studies focusing on push and pull motivation and adapting survey design and items with important changes needed in order to suit the research aim of this study. Questions were raised concerning the motivation factors; 23 items reflected to the seven-theme motivational factors identified by Crompton (1979); 18 items covered with three components of resort hotel attributes classified by Jeffries (1971). Besides that the researcher also consulted previous studies as the source of survey design and items such as Kau and Lim (2005), Rudet et al. (2011), and Inbakaran et al. (2011).

A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data from resort tourists who were visiting beach resort hotels located in various popular destinations in Thailand such as Phuket, Krabi, Samui, Ranong and Chonburi from May to August 2012. The questionnaire consisted of five parts. Part 1 measured push factors (main reason to travel); Part 2 measured pull factors (resort characteristics which have an effect on tourists decision making when choosing resort to stay); Part 3 measured activities resort tourists would like to join while staying at the resort, Part 4 measured various aspects regarding tourists' opinions and preferences to the particular resort they stayed, such as their overall satisfaction and intention to revisit; Finally part 5 gathered demographical data. The first four parts were designed with a five-point Likert scale assessment i.e. ranging from 'disagree' (1) to 'agree' (5) for part 1, 'unimportant' (1) to 'important' (5) for part 2; 'not at all desirable' (1) to 'very desirable' (5) for part 3, while the last part used nominal scale.

Questionnaires were distributed to resorts that agreed to participate in the study (11 out of 17), and 900 set of questionnaires in total were dispersed across all participating resorts that varied in number between 50-100 sets. They were left for four months before being gathered to return. The anonymous questionnaire was given to resort guests over 18 years old, complying with a standard ethics requirement. The questionnaire was given either the last day of the trip before their departure while they were waiting for checkout time or during the time they were waiting for their foods at the resort bar/restaurant. In total, 736 resort hotel tourists answered and the filled questionnaires were mailed return (82% response rate). However, the large numbers of uncompleted questionnaires (416) were eliminated because of an excessive of missing data, thus only 320 questionnaires (35%) were usable.

3.2 Sample and Procedures

Given that this was a newly developed questionnaire, the researcher completed a pilot study before launching the whole lot in selected resorts and with the tourists who were hanging around tourist destinations. Importantly, they were asked whether they had any experiences visiting resorts in Thailand before. If so they were allowed to fill out the questionnaires. On the strength of the feedback from the pilot study, adequate modifications were made in the questionnaire concerning the right understanding of respondents; however no significant importance was given for that in this research.

There was not any set selection criterion for hotels, in terms of the ownership structure. That is the samples were not selected based on whether they are independent or branded/chain hotels; however, there was a deliberate attempt to capture only hotels at

and above the 3-star level, and those with lots of foreign tourists stayed in. Fourteen resorts located beach area were targeted as the main participants in the study. They were initially contacted by telephone once permission was obtained (only 11 resorts agreed to participate in the project); a request letter with an information sheet and a set of questionnaires were dispatched. The letter briefed resort management personnel on the content material including the administration procedures. Resort staff were advised to select respondents conveniently; however care was taken to ensure that a certain category of tourists (e.g. either male or female sex) was not being over represented in the sample, although, in some cases this was not feasible. Most of questionnaires were left with resort staff rather than being left without supervision so that they were administrated. Moreover, during four month time of study period (May to August 2012), resorts were regularly contacted to update the information about the progress of data collection. This way ensured that questionnaires were filled out and fully returned result as scheduled.

3.2.1 Sample Size for Factor and Cluster Analyses

There are 17 items in the instrument that have been used to conduct factor analysis. According to a 15:1 N/p Ratio as suggest by Tabachick and Fidell (2007), the number of cases should be 255 (15*17) band to be considered valid. This study was done using 320 cases, a very statistically acceptable number. Conversely to factor analysis, there are no rules of thumb about the sample size necessary for cluster analysis; however, there are some suggestions. Kaufman and Rousseeuw (1990) suggested K-mean cluster analysis assuming a large sample size of more than 200, while Krzanowski (2002) recommended at least 100. Apart from rule of thumb, Zikmund et al. (2012, p.436) also recommended for novices a thoughtful consideration in getting an appropriate sample size. "Using sample size similar to the sample size used in the previous studies provides the inexperienced researcher with a comparison of other researchers' judgment". Having reviewed some selected tourism segmentation studies in recent times, the majority of the past studies have been done with less than 500 cases. In light of the reason above, it can be said with confidence that a sample size of 320 should be sufficient to segment the resort tourist market.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were coded into an SPSS data file using 18th version. Table1 presents the data analyses process. Data were analysed in three major stages. First, a factor analysis with a varimax rotation approach was used to group the push factor with similar characteristics to determine a set of push dimension. Typically, factor analysis is implemented because it allows data reduction and substantive interpretation (Chuchill and Iocobucci, 2002). Second, cluster analysis was conducted on the resultant factor scores for the purpose of subdividing a whole resort guests into homogeneous tourist segments. Particularly, the K-means cluster method, which is quite commonly used in several tourist segmentation research e.g. Huang and Sarigollu (2007);Tsitsou and Vasioti (2006); Andreu, Kozak, Avci and Cifter (2005). At the third stages, segment characteristics were delineated by univariate statistical procedures. Especially, the differences between segments in terms of the importance of pull factor, demographics, trip-related behavior were identified by using the appropriate analysis techniques, including analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Chi-square analyses. These techniques were used for the purpose of validation and segment profiling. In this research, ANOVA was used to identify if there were any differences among the clusters in respect to the

pull factors and activities. Additionally, Chi-square analysis was used to explore the differences between clusters, in terms of the categorical variables, such as demographics and travel behavior.

Table1. Data Analysis Procedure of the Study

Data Analysis	Results
Factor Analysis on push factors	The push factors were extracted Instrument validated and evaluated
Cluster Analysis (K-means method)	Identified resort hotel tourists segments
Analysis of Variance (One way ANOVA)	Described the segments in relation to other variables such as pull factors and engagement activities.
Cross tabulation Analysis (Chi-square)	Described the segments in terms of demographics and trip-related behaviour variables.

4. Analysis and Results (Findings)

4.1 Factor Analysis

A factor analysis was used to identify the underlying structure of the 23 variables reflecting various aspects of push factor. The variables were reduced to 17 during the analysis (6 items disregarded because two main reasons: (1) they were highly correlated with others; or (2) they were not correlated with others at all. The analysis was rerun using the same technique. Principal Component Analysis with a Varimax rotation was used with a predetermined Eigen value of 1, and factor loadings greater than 0.5 were retained (see table 2). A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test measuring the adequacy of sampling was conducted (produced a p-value of .926) and provided evidence that the sample used for the study was adequate. Three factors were extracted, which accounted for 69.18 % of total variance. They were labeled as: (1) 'challenge Journey', (2) 'escape trip', and (3) 'simply relax vacation'. These were name based on the common characteristics of the items included. Internal consistency for each of the scales was examined using Cronbach's Alpha. Conbach's Alphas for the three factors were highly above the minimum value of 0.50, which is considered acceptable for research in its exploratory stage (Nanally, 1978). Their range was 0.791, 0 .894, and 0.917 (see table 2)

4.2 Cluster Analysis (K-Means)

To segment resort hotel visitors of Thailand, cluster analysis (K-Means) was used on the push factors. The three extracted push factors used to generate the cluster solution were the independent variables of the analysis. A solution of four segments seemed reasonable. Cluster group differences were compared using Chi-square analysis for nominal data (in part 5 of questionnaire) or one way ANOVA for interval data (in the first four parts of questionnaire). This research found rejecting the null hypothesis in a one way ANOVA with the data meaning that there are significant differences among cluster means, consequently further analysis is called for. In order to figure out which cluster means are different from each other, Scheffle's post hoc test was then performed. In fact, there are two options available between Scheffle's and Turkeys, but Scheffle's method was chosen over Tukey's because of the theoretical expectation that it is a more conservative measure that includes in its solution (all possible pair-wise comparisons)

and adjusts the family-wise rate to ensure minimization of type one errors (Hays, 1988). The profiles of each cluster according to the results of the analysis are explained below.

Cluster 1 (An Escaper Tourist) *N*= 90

Cluster 1 is the largest cluster group, containing a relatively equal percentage numbers of male and female, 52% and 48%. The working age ranging from 35 to 54 years is the majority (85%), while the ages between 18-24 years do not appear in this cluster. The cluster group members are highly educated; most of them (67%) had degree from university. Moreover, 67% of people who had the doctoral degree are members of this cluster.

Cluster 1 included both 'couples with children' (44%) and 'couples without children' (28%). One interesting feature is that although they are identified as having children, they prefer their holiday without children. One third are working in trade and related jobs. Half of the respondents who are employed as service workers are members of this cluster. A predominant nationality of this cluster member is European. Australian tourists are the least when comparing only among big three tourist groups: European, America and Australian. Members of Cluster 1 are regular visitors to resort. Only 10% said they are new to a resort. Their usual length of stay is between one to two weeks. One fifth traveled with partners at the same proportion they pointed out that they were travelling with family and friends with children. Some enjoyed trip with colleagues, 9%. Friends and relatives are also the good sources of resort information for this cluster; however, almost one third used travel agencies to help them with acquiring resort information. They had a large amount of money spent while staying, 43% spent 15,000-25,000 baht per day (approximately 500 -830 USD).

Regarding pull factors, peaceful atmosphere and privacy is matter for this cluster.   They prefer remaining in a resort while on holiday; however, they are not much engaged in any activities offering by the resort.

Cluster 2 (A Conventional Vacationer) *N*= 87

This cluster comprises a predominantly male population (61%). Cluster members are dispersed across the whole of age range from adolescent to adult, not over 64 years. However, most are sorted into an age range of 35-44 years, representing around 66% of the cluster. More than half had a technical/vocational education, whereas nearly half graduated from university. Similar to Cluster 1, they are a couple with children, around 47% of cluster. Around 20% indicated that they are single parent. Almost one third are employed in civil service positions, while one quarter indicated that they are self-employed. More than one third came from America. Half of Thai respondents are included in this cluster. Approximately 70% have been to a resort in Thailand from two times up to more than five times for the past three years, while nearly 30% said this was their first visit. Nearly half said that they had stayed at a resort 1-2 weeks, while not less than 35% said they would stay just a short period of time, less than a week. Contrasting Cluster 1, they travel with their children when on holiday as family with children, were identified as travel companions for this cluster. Nearly half sought out resort information from friends and relatives, while resort websites were also a vital channel; 27% of cluster members searched via the Internet. Their usual spending was around 10,000-20,000 baht a day (approximately 330-660 USD); hence they are considered a moderate spender compared with other clusters

Chomsuan

As 'conventional vacationers' are family-oriented, they highlight pull factors concerning family issues. In regards to activities they are quite similar to 'Escaper tourists' and 'Spoil me travelers' that is that they quite enjoy for non-active activities more than active one.

Cluster 3 (A Challenge Journeyer) *N*= 80

Similar to Cluster 1, the Escaper group, the challenge journeyer group is gender balanced, made up of men 53% and women 47%. The cluster members here are the youngest group, including a large proportion (86%) of teens and young adults whose ages range between18 to 34. Over 55 years old seems not belong to this cluster. Most are technical/vocational graduates. Obviously, this cluster has the highest percentage of single members (77%), not greater than 7% revealed they have children. They are employed as clerical officers. Freelance jobs and self-employed are their professions as well. Furthermore, 15% of cluster members are students. Most of them are Australian and American tourists, while tourists from Europe are in small numbers. This group is likely to be new face to resort guests, as almost half revealed that this was their first visit. Apart from being novices, compared to others they are the least frequently visiting guests. None had visited resorts in Thailand more than three times during the past three years. A large number of cluster members have a short stay, no longer than one week, and they are hardly found visiting for more than 2 weeks. Nearly 60% enjoyed the trip with friends and some (15%) love travel solo. Most trusted the Internet in seeking for resort information. However magazines were another way of searching. They were light spenders, with more than half spending less than 10,000 baht (330 USD). No one spent more than 20,000 baht (660 USD) a day while staying at resort.

Overall analysis shows that this cluster differs mostly from those three other clusters, particularly, in terms of pull factor. 'Challenge Journeyers' are mostly involved in active and adventurous activities. They prefer to spend most time going out the resort.

Cluster 4 (A Veteran, Spoil me traveler) *N*= 63

Here again, there is no difference in gender for this cluster: 52% are men and 48% are women. Travelers who are aged between 18 and 34 do not appear in this cluster membership. Most of them ranged between 55 and 64 years of age. One hundred percent of age 65+ sample are in this cluster; consequently, they are the oldest cluster. They have varied educational levels. From primary up to master's degree could be seen for this cluster. However, most claimed that they attained technical/vocational qualification. The majority are couples with no children living with them. Interestingly, 17% said they were single. Most of them are self-employed and skilled workers. A great numbers said they are retired and do house duties. Most are American and European, 40% and 25% respectively. Unlike the above cluster, few come from Australia. They are the most frequent visitors to resorts. They appear to be experienced visitors, nearly 90% visited resort more than two times. No one had visited just once in the prior three years. Besides, they are long-stay visitors. More than one third had a more than 2 week stay. They have partners as travel companion. Even though, they are likely to be travelling with family, they are rather with mature family than family having children. They do not travel with work colleagues. Friends and families and travel agents are their options when seeking resort information. Less than 10% used electronic channels such as the Internet. Obviously, they are heavy spenders while staying at resort, with nearly 20% of them spending more than 25,000 baht a day (approximately 830 USD).

'Spoil me travelers' are very close to 'Escaper tourists' regarding the pull factors they place emphasis on and differ mostly from 'Challenge Journeyers' in regards to activities they are engaged in more often (passive, low impact) and to activities they are engaged in less (active and adventure).

Table 2   Factor Loadings for push factors

	Factor1	Factor 2	Factor3
Factor1:Challenge Journey			
Gain an exciting experience	.819		
Discovering myself	.785		
Seeking new experience	.781		
Sounds impressive to others	.775		
Be myself/being free	.712		
Visiting new places	.707		
To learn new things	.688		
To find thrills	.685		
Enjoy novelty life	.591		
Factor2: Escape Trip			
Get away from home		.963	
Seek release from work pressure		.892	
Escape from routine life		.800	
Seek peaceful life		.581	
Factor3: Simply Relax Vacation			
Spending time with family/friends			.727
Reward myself			.606
Being physical active			.589
To physically/mentally relax			.573
Eigenvalues	7.784	2.800	1.592
Variance (%)	45.79	16.47	6.92
Cumulative Variance (%)	45.79	62.26	69.18
Cronbach's Alpha	.917	.894	.791
Number of items	9	4	4

4.3 Summary of Findings

The key findings gathered and presented in chronological order of the series of the analysis could also be reported in the research context of the research hypotheses at the outset as follows.

	Hypothesis	Results
H1	Tourists using resorts accommodation can be segmented in various groups based on Psychographics (travel motivations).	Supported
H2	There is a difference among segments in relation to pull factors.	Supported
H3	There is a clear distinction between the activities engaged in by different segments of tourists.	Supported

5. Discussion and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion of Travel Motivation (Push factor)

Having carefully considered an investigation of travel motivation through push factors, several researchers have made an attempt to find out what reasons cause people to travel and always come up with subtle differences resulting naturally from the differences of their study contexts and research foci. For example, Crompton (1979) identified seven psychological reasons forming as push factors: namely, escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. On the other hand, Pearce (1993) proposed five elements: relaxation, stimulation, relationships, self-esteem and development and fulfillment. More recent research regarding the analysis of the push and pull travel motivations such as Kim et al. (2003) and Mohammad and Som (2010) have also shown their results in different categorized push factors e.g. Kim et al. categorized tourist push factors into four domains: family togetherness and study, appreciating natural resources and health, escaping from every routine and adventure, and building friendship. Mohammad and Som classified into eight factors: 'fulfilling prestige', 'enhancing relation', 'seeking relaxation', 'enhancing social circle', 'sightseeing variety', 'fulfilling spiritual needs', 'escaping from daily routine' and 'gaining knowledge'

The results of the present study revealed that three categories of push factors: "challenging journey", "escape trip" and "simply relax vacation" were considered as essential motivation stimulating tourists visiting resort hotels in Thailand. As mentioned earlier, the results may vary from one study to others as contexts differ. In spite of the fact that there was a different in number of extracted push factors i.e., Crompton (7), Pearce (5), Kim et al (4), Mohammad and Som (8) and this study (3), these five classified categories are the same in terms of being intrinsic motivations and all based on the intangible desire of the individual traveler.

Apparently, all of those factors can basically be applied into two broad, but concise reasons as proposed by Iso-Ahola (1982). He pointed out that there are two motivational forces that influence tourists: (1) the desire to leave the everyday environment behind, and (2) the desire to obtain psychological rewards through travel in a contrasting environment. Moreover, that also corresponds with the arguments of Krippendorf (1987) who claimed that relaxation and escape motivations are the two most basic psychological drives for tourists. Hence, tourists always decide to travel when there is a need to escape or to find relaxation in another territory or country. Similar to Dann's (1977) work, two discrete reasons to explain why people travel is anomie and ego-enhancement. The first refers to the desire to get away from all mundane activities in normal life. The second is the need to self-fulfill one's life in some ways and be recognized as a result of travel experience.

This study's finding are consistent with those of previous studies that is the critical ingredient of the push factors included two forces in deed: to leave (escape from mundane affairs) and to obtain (take pleasure in something from traveling).

5.2 Discussion of Resort Tourists' Segmentation

The four cluster identified in the research: "Escape Tourists", "Conventional Vacationers", "Challenge Journeyers", "Spoil Me Travelers". The segments differ from each other in motivations, preferred resort attributes, travel behavior, and socio-demographic factors. The first and largest segment, Cluster 1, the "escaper tourists" have a strong motivation for reasons related to "getting away" from routine life and work pressure. This cluster resembles "Escaper seekers" in Andreu et al. (2005), who studied British tourists visiting Turkey on the basis of motivation to travel. Based on their findings "getting away" is very important travel motivation of this cluster. Resorts could promote "get away" holidays with the theme of getting away from the everyday routine. Regarding demographics and trip related characteristics, resort tourists belonging to this segment, (escaper tourist) are predominantly well-educated and working age. They might be holding high ranking position or handling a high level of responsibility at workplaces. At the same time, a majority of cluster members are couples with children. Responsibility at work and parental roles in the upbringing of their children may cause stress to them; consequently, they want to find release from such pressures. Leisure travel is one solution to escape from routine life. Positioning as a "hide away" resort filled with a unique retreat program could draw this segment to come. Resorts should focus to create an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity for them.

The second cluster is considered as family-oriented visitors who love to travel with their family including children who resemble "Active conventionalists" in Inbakaran et al. (2011). However, this comparison is only based on demographics profile; their travel motivation was not to be compared as in Inbakaran et al.'s work, which did not study and mention about travel motivation in terms of push factors. These people tend to select resorts that allow the parents to relax and enjoy themselves at the same time have activities for children. Hence, targeting this segment resort should take into consideration their travelling parties: children. Resorts may position themselves as "Family friendly resorts."

Cluster 3 labelled as the "Challenge Journeyers" seemed to be the ones who wanted to enjoy their resort stay with something extraordinary. Therefore, it is recommended that the resorts which are interested in this segment need a highly innovative idea in keeping with special product/service offerings for these cluster members in order to draw them back as return guests. In profiling the clusters it is found that there are a substantial number of students and self-employed in this segment, which might explain why this segment spend not much money on accommodation and other related travelling costs. Off-season packages with discounts or breakaway package for school holidays may be attractive. This group is comparatively similar to the "A variety seeker" as proposed by Huang and Sarigollii (2007) as it consists of a higher percentage of students and self-employed in the cluster. However, this comparison is limited in focus only on some demographic characteristics; they (the challenge journeyers and the variety seekers) may be different in many other ways.

The fourth cluster 'A spoil me traveller' contained the middle age people and those in late adulthood. As distinct from stage of life and travel motive the cluster needs a special marketing and management focus that differ from the rest of the clusters. Members of this segment can easily be canvassed by resort that can provide senior-friendly resort recreational products. Many retirees belong to this segment, thus landscape design for elderly has to be taken into account. Moreover, health care services for elderly may be

needed. Because they are patrons, it is easy to reach them if only resorts have an effective customer data base management. Loyalty programs such as membership cards that offer a privilege benefit should be used as this keeps them coming back and encourages them to spread good words. Providing the psychic benefit of making them feel special is very important for these people. To serve this group resort could create resort for elite as resort positioning. This group has the appearance of 'veterans' as proposed by Sharma (2008). However, several dissimilarities are apparently found between them (the spoil me and veterans) due to the different study base focus. While Sharma focused his study on domestic tourists as resort guests in Australia, this study is on international tourists as resort guests in Thailand.

6. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This research presented segmentation and profiling of resort hotel tourists visiting Thailand. The clustering of travel motivation (push factors) proved to be a viable means of segmenting the tourism market and provided some useful findings; however there are a number of limitations that are important to mention.

(1) Hotels (and tourists) were not selected based on a random sampling method; this would introduce some level of selection bias. Given the non-probability sampling used, not every resort had a chance to be selected as a unit sample. In fact, chosen resorts are only one form of resort (beach resort). Those are located within some geographic region; other regions with no beach resort situated were not included in study. In addition locational factors of the resorts may have an effect on the results. Travel motivations and tourists' characteristics may differ from place to place, for example tourists who choose to travel around the northern region of Thailand may be drawn to its presence of unique culture. They would like to see such as antique temples, hill tribes and unique traditional handicrafts, while those like to visit southern part may be pulled by nature beauty of beaches. Tourists travelling around those different regions would possibly be different by their characters. Hence, further research should take this into consideration.

(2) Because the instrument of study is a self-administered questionnaire, tourists could fill it in at their own convenience without being inspected by the managerial resort staffs for data collection. Lots of returned questionnaire (around 400) were incomplete, as a result producing the relatively small sample size. This is likely to restrict the generalizability of the findings to the larger populations. Increasing the sample size leads to improvement in the ability to generalize the research outcomes.

(3) Initially, there was an intention to distribute four versions of questionnaire, English, Thai, Chinese, and Japanese in the hope that there would be a high chance of those tourists who are not English speakers joining the research. Apparently, only the English version was used because all resorts rejected to work with the other three languages. The given reason is that it is too difficult to manage. Those three nationalities seem to be less convinced to join the study project; consequently the data at hand are not sufficient to allow for comparisons relating to those nationalities. For example, investigating differences between Asian and Western tourists could not be made. Evaluating the differences among segments linked to this issue would also be of interest for future research.

(4) The sampling was performed in a limited period of time during low season. There may be the impact of season on tourists' motivations and behavior, so it would have given rich data and more accurate interpretation if research was conducted in tourist peak and shoulder season as well. One possible strand of future research should look into.

(5) The use of a quantitative approach alone does not lead to an in-depth understanding of tourist motivation and segmentation. Qualitative techniques such as in depth and face to face interviews would provide richer data associated with these issues. Unfortunately, due to several constraints this study was limited to only quantitative analysis. One important constraint is that lack of staff. The researcher alone without staff could not be able to travel across dispersed regions where resorts located to conduct all interviews.

7. Conclusion

This paper has begun a research agenda focusing on the characteristics of resort hotel tourists who visit resorts in Thailand. Using psychographics as the clustering base alone has not allowed profound profile identification of segments; therefore demographics and tourists' behavior have also been used to enrich tourists profiling. In order to achieve segmenting task, factor and cluster analysis were conducted. The four segments emerged: the escaper tourists, the conventional vacationers, the challenge journeyers and the spoil me travelers and were profiled respectively. The cluster groups differed significantly when comparing the push factors, as well as the basis of reasons choosing a holiday resort (pull factors) by statistical technique (ANOVA and Chi-square test). The escaper tourist cluster was the largest segment and likes to enjoy their holiday with no children. The spoil me traveler was the smallest but the most spending cluster. The conventional vacationer is likely family-oriented. The challenge journeyer is the least promising customer to resorts. Knowledge of this tourist segmentation, especially based on psychographic characteristics allows the resort operators to develop suitable and fitting marketing strategies in order to attract whole or part of each segment. Although useful resort tourist information is gathered through this and previous studies and could help resorts to pinpoint the type of resort products/services that would go well with the identified resort guest segments, the need of further research still remain. It is desired and contemplated that future research attempt should go to the relationship between those two dimensional factors. Using pull factors (resort attributes) to segment tourists in combination with push factor will produce the knowledge on interaction between the push and pull motivations to psychographic segmentation. Apart from that the differences between Asian tourist and Western tourists segment as its different cultural realm is another interesting area.

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