

The Push-Pull Motivation Factors of Generation Y Tourists and their Travel Intentions towards Thainess Tourism

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Abstract

This study explores the push-pull motivation factors of Generation Y tourists and their travel intentions towards Thainess tourism based on quantitative research. The close-ended questionnaire survey was used to collect data from 400 Thai Gen Y tourists and 343 valid responses were received to test the proposed model. Data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling approach. The CFA results present an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 790.388$; $df. = 397$; $RMSEA = 0.054$; $CFI = 0.928$; $TLI = 0.921$; $SRMR = 0.076$) The results reveal that the knowledge and social relations are push motivations, and the atmosphere is a pull motivation and that they all significantly affect the Thai Gen Y's satisfaction with travel in Thailand, with the atmosphere of a destination having the highest effect. This finding suggests that when Thai Gen Y tourists feel satisfied with their travel in Thailand, they are interested to specifically try the traveling for Thainess tourism program. The results of this research will guide tourism planners and lead to a better understanding of Thai Gen Y travelers' motivations, satisfaction, and travel intentions.

Keywords: Generation Y tourists; Push-pull motivations; Tourist satisfaction; Travel intention; Thainess tourism

Introduction

The total value of the international youth travel market was more than US\$333 billion in 2018 (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020). For Thailand, Generation Y or 'the Millennials' are a significant group, making up 44.64% of the Thai population (about 66 million in 2020) and rapidly

catching up with Generation X. Gen Y has been as the largest consumer group in the country (Thailand Board of Investment, 2021). Thailand's Gen Y have high incomes despite being young, and they are at the stage of life when they spend most of their earnings (Sopha, Jittithavorn, & Lee, 2019). In 2019, Thai Millennials or Gen Y's spent 1.37 trillion Thai baht (US\$41 billion), representing 13% of the national gross domestic product (Somruedi Banchongduang, 2019).

The tourism sector in Thailand generated up to 1.9 trillion Thai baht (US\$57 billion) of the country's revenue in 2019, with 39.7 million international tourist arrivals (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) declared 2015 as 'Discover Thainess' year to promote travelling in Thailand with an emphasis on the country's unique cultural treasures and the Thai way of life. The 'Discover Thainess' campaign was successful as it attracted 29.88 million international tourist arrivals and the tourism income earned by the country in 2015 was 2.23 trillion baht (US\$67 billion). Numerous studies have been conducted concerning Gen Y in tourism (Fyall, Leask, Barron, & Ladkin, 2017; Moscardo, Murphy, & Benckendorff, 2011); however, there has been no significant research published regarding Gen Y and this group's level of involvement in tourism, especially in Thailand.

Most studies on push-pull travel motivation in Thailand were conducted with foreign tourists, whereas this study focuses on domestic Thai travelers (Pattanapokinsakul & Pahkdee-Auksorn, 2017). Consequently, the objectives of this current study are (a) to take a more in-depth look at the Thai Gen Y travel intention toward Thainess tourism; and (b) to investigate the push and pull motivation factors of Thai Gen Y people on their satisfaction when travelling in Thailand and their travel intentions towards Thainess tourism. The research question then is "What are the push-pull motivation factors of generation Y tourists and their travel intentions towards Thainess tourism". This study delivers unique messages on this: (i) whereas most push-pull factors in the tourism discipline from foreigners' perspectives overlooking domestic tourists; (ii) it explores and develops a valuable niche area with Southeast Asian standards in the tourism industry while most studies are in the Anglo-Saxon paradigm; and (iii) it stresses one of the most contemporary and fast-arising tourist segments, Gen Y tourists that are a much higher portion in Southeast Asian countries than in western countries, considering the much younger demographic distribution overall.

Literature Review

Thainess Tourism and Gen Y

The launch of the '2015 Discover Thainess' campaign by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) aimed to make 'Thainess' a globally recognized brand. Thainess encourages tourists to join the local activities of 'must see', 'must do', 'must buy', and 'must taste'. The TAT was encouraging tourists to experience the distinct entity and characteristic of the Thai people and the nation's cultural assets or 'Thainess', which can be characterized in seven unique aspects, namely: Thai way

of life, Thai festivity, Thai fun, Thai food, Thai wellness, Thai wisdom, and Thai Art (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016). The Thai Government campaigns have encouraged Thai people to take pride in their culture and be aware of the importance of the Thai way of life, especially young Thai people who have become more interested in their Thai identity (Pongajarn, van der Duim, & Peters, 2014). Gen Y is more attuned to environmental concerns (Thach & Olsen, 2006), and globally (Heaney, 2007) and socially aware (Sullivan & Heitmeyer, 2008) than previous generations. Gen Y value status and freedom, and they grew up surrounded the Internet, so they are media and technology savvy (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Push-Pull Tourism Motivations and Tourist Satisfaction

The push motivations to travel can be categorized into three types: (i) knowledge motivations; (ii) social motivations; and (iii) recreational motivations (Correia & Pimpão, 2008). The knowledge motivation refers more specifically to the need to do and learn new things as well as to explore different cultures and places. The social motivation includes the need to visit places that friends had not been to, telling friends about these vacations, and developing close friendships. The recreational motivation includes motivations related to personal well-being, such as stress relief, escape from routine and physical relaxation, presented as physical rewards (Zhang, Oh, & Lee, 2021).

Pull motivation is useful for explaining the actual destination choice. Pull factors are those that attract the individual to a specific destination once the decision to travel has been made (Isa & Ramli, 2014). The pull motivations to travel can also be categorized into (i) facility motivations; (ii) core attractions; and (iii) landscape motivations. The first includes weather, accessibility, gastronomy, relaxing atmosphere, and social environments. The second includes shopping facilities, nightlife and sports, while landscape motivations include the natural environment and landscapes. Tourist satisfaction is an important factor in the success of destination marketing because it influences the destination choice, the consumption of products and services, and revisit behavior (Lim, Kim, & Lee, 2016). Satisfaction from products or services affect consumer loyalty, and the satisfaction that tourists experience in a specific destination is a determinant of revisiting (Kim, Lee, & Yoon, 2012). Past studies have found many push-pull motivations factors that influence tourist satisfaction (Preko, Doe, & Dadzie, 2019). The current research focuses on push-pull motivation factors influencing the Thai Gen Y and their relationships with the satisfaction of travelling in Thailand. Based on this empirical review, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

Hypothesis 1: Push motivation factors influence the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand

H1-1: Knowledge motivation influences the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand

H1-2: New experience motivation influences the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand

H1-3: Social relation motivation influences the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand;

H1-4: Recreational motivation influences the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand.

Hypothesis 2: Pull motivation factors influence the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand

H2-1: Attraction motivation influences the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand;

H2-2: Facility motivation influences the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand;

H2-3: Atmosphere motivation influences the satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand.

Travel Intention

Travel intention is understood as the possibility of travelling to a destination, and it highlights one's intent to travel or commitment to travel (Ma, Chow, Cheung, Lee, & Liu, 2018). To confirm the relationship between travel motivation and tourist satisfaction, Preko et al. (2019) studied travel behavior in Ghana and found that youth tourist satisfaction may influence behavioral intention in confirming the same destination choice (Lai, Hitchcock, Lu, & Liu, 2018). The satisfaction levels of Gen Y may influence their travel intention. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed, and the conceptual model is shown in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 3: The satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand influences travel intention towards Thainess tourism.

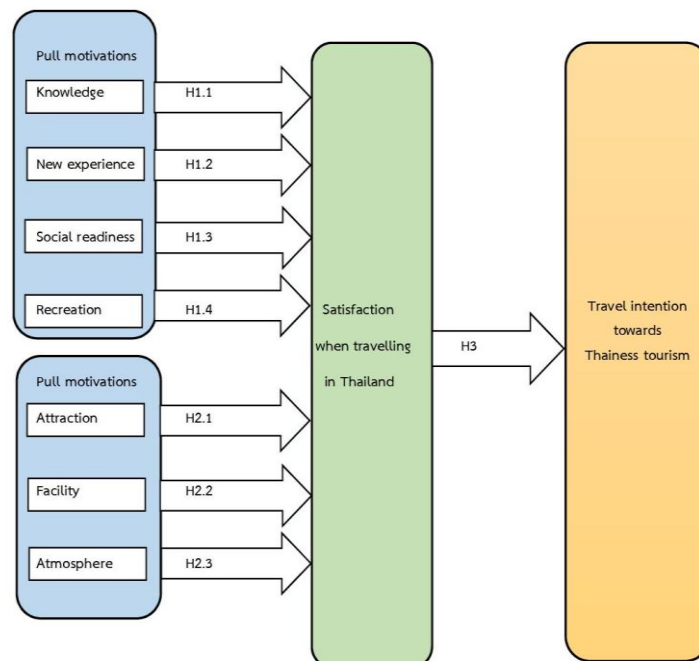


Figure 1 The conceptual model for the study

Research Methodology

Respondents

The researchers distributed a total of 400 questionnaires through both online and personal contacts among undergraduate and graduate degrees students at two universities in Bangkok. The students at both undergraduate and graduate levels were conveniently approached by the researchers after finishing their classes. Moreover, online via Google doc was distributed to the students' email and social networks with the help of the researchers' colleagues. It took the students not more than 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire of though the online cannot be estimated but we assume that it took the same time. Furthermore, students in graduate program mostly are working youth and their age range is within 36 years old. Hence, the age range of the respondents is in Gen Y because the nature of Thai students is direct from high school to bachelor's degrees, and some also continue to their master's after their undergraduate programs. The target population of this study is Gen Y individuals living in Thailand aged between 17 and 36. It has been reported that the critical sample size of 200 is sufficient enough to generate statistical power for data analysis (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Hence, the sample size of 400 is sufficient to represent the large Gen Y population. After cleaning the data, the final sample size was 343 usable questionnaires from Thai Gen Y respondents living in Bangkok with 85.75% response rate. Table 1 presents the sources from where each question of the research instrument was adapted.

Table 1 Summary of the research instruments

Variable	Source	Number of questions
Push motivation factors	Adapted from Correia and Pimpao (2008); Crompton (1990); Dann (1977)	15
Pull motivation factors	Adapted from Correia and Pimpao (2008); Crompton (1990); Uysal and Hagan (1993)	16
Satisfaction	Adapted from Cham, Ng, Lim, and Cheng (2018).	3
Travel intention toward discovering Thainess tourism	Self-developed and adapted from Doosti, Jalilvand, Asadi, Pool, and Adi (2016)	7

Fifteen questions measured push motivations and 16 questions measured pull motivations using a five-point Likert scale. The instrument measuring push motivations was adapted from Dann (1977); Crompton (1990); Correia and Pimpao (2008), and that for the pull motivations was adapted from Crompton (1990), and Correia and Pimpao (2008). Three questions measured satisfaction were adapted from Cham et al., (2018) using a five-point Likert scale. Finally, 11 questions measured travel intention about 'Discover Thainess Tourism'. These were developed by the authors based on the Thainess Tourism characterized into seven unique aspects.

Data Collection

Data collection took place during January to February 2019. A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted with 40 Gen Y respondents to enhance its validity and reliability. To ensure reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for all variables. It was found that Cronbach's alpha values were greater than 0.7, which are acceptable and deemed to be adequate for reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Before analyzing relationships among research variables in the proposed conceptual framework, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed with push motivations and pull motivations in order to group these motivations into distinct factors.

Results

Profile of Respondents and Descriptive Findings on Tourist Behavior

A high proportion of the survey respondents were female (62.7%), had a bachelor's degree as their education level (70.3%), and worked as employees in private companies (57.7%). About half of the respondents earned a monthly income of between 30,000 baht to more than 45,000 baht (50.8%) and were single (56.9%). In terms of age categorization, the majority of respondents were 31-36 years old, the "upper Gen Y", while the "mid Gen Y", aged 24-30 years represented 21.6% and the "younger Gen Y" aged between 17 and 23 years, represented 36.4%. Gen Y respondents travel domestically 1-3 times per year (55.1%), and many travels whenever they want to (53.1%). The Gen Y respondents prefer sea and beach when they travel in Thailand (57.1%), and they rely on online reviews when choosing an actual destination (57.1%). Gen Y respondents mostly travel in Thailand for leisure (91.3%). When travelling in Thailand, Gen Y respondents prefer to travel with friends and coworkers (39.7%) and have a 3-days trip when travelling in a country (45.5%). Nearly half spent more than 1,500 baht per day, excluding accommodation (42%). As for the cost of accommodation when travelling in Thailand, half of the respondents spent more than 1,500 baht per night (50.4%). Finally, a few of them prefer to visit local markets and find local food to eat (18.9% and 18.0% respectively). Table 2 shows the estimated correlation matrix for the latent variables.

Table 2 Estimated correlation matrix for the latent variables and Cronbach's alpha

	Cronbach's alpha	Knowledge	New experience	Social relation	Recreation	Attraction	Facility	Atmosphere	Satisfaction	Travel intention
Knowledge	0.85	1								
New experience	0.83	0.25	1							
Social relation	0.85	0.46	0.51	1						
Recreation	0.76	0.05	0.61	0.41	1					
Attraction	0.84	0.56	0.24	0.58	0.13	1				

	Cronbach's alpha	Knowledge	New experience	Social relation	Recreation	Attraction	Facility	Atmosphere	Satisfaction	Travel intention
Facility	0.85	0.05	0.51	0.37	0.39	0.48	1			
Atmosphere	0.79	0.08	0.63	0.36	0.59	0.26	0.62	1		
Satisfaction	0.86	0.45	0.47	0.55	0.38	0.40	0.27	0.47	1	
Travel intention	0.85	0.30	0.51	0.42	0.38	0.17	0.32	0.48	0.57	1

Factor Analysis

Push motivations with high loadings result in the following four push factors: knowledge motivation, new experience motivation, social relation motivation, and recreation motivation. This research also found three pull motivations with high loadings: attraction motivation, facility motivation, and atmosphere motivation. Table 3 indicates the Exploratory Factor Analysis on Push-Pull Factors. Satisfaction was derived from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) by combining three factors: satisfaction with decision to travel, my choice is a wise one, and my travel experience is satisfactory. Satisfaction represented 78% of total variance.

Table 3 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) on Push – Pull Motivation Factors

Exploratory Factors	Loading	Mean	S. D.	% Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Knowledge Motivations				16.513	0.849
Increasing knowledge	.851	3.78	.902		
Exploring different local cultures & lifestyles	.856	3.68	.890		
Enriching myself intellectually	.826	3.68	.944		
New Experience Motivations				19.179	0.830
Visiting new places	.769	4.39	.696		
Amusement/ Enjoyment	.781	4.40	.709		
Doing different things	.789	4.28	.754		
Stimulating emotions/ sensations	.745	4.32	.731		
Social Relation Motivations				19.464	0.846
Meeting interesting people	.615	3.76	1.022		
Being an adventurer	.682	3.98	.956		
Going to places where my friends haven't been	.773	4.05	.963		
Telling my friends about the vacation	.831	3.87	1.072		
Developing close friendship	.703	3.99	.964		
Recreational Motivations				14.610	0.764
Relieving stress	.802	4.62	.618		
Physical relaxation	.832	4.59	.655		

Exploratory Factors	Loading	Mean	S. D.	% Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Escaping from routine	.753	4.30	.889		
Attractions Motivations				21.681	0.836
Social environment	.554	4.02	.832		
Distance	.513	4.07	.840		
Shopping	.742	3.73	1.023		
Night life	.870	3.34	1.214		
Sport equipment	.891	3.17	1.228		
Transports	.461	4.18	.838		
Facility Motivations				20.315	0.845
Gastronomy (art of food and dining)	.813	4.17	.826		
Accommodation	.832	4.28	.763		
Hospitality or Standard of Service	.602	4.09	.815		
Accessibility	.731	4.29	.784		
Security	.572	4.55	.673		
Atmosphere Motivations				19.907	0.791
Landscape	.462	4.29	.709		
Natural environment	.770	4.47	.601		
Relaxing atmosphere	.745	4.52	.692		
Weather	.756	4.34	.738		
Exoticness	.631	4.19	.852		
Satisfaction				78.004	0.859
I am satisfied with my decision on travelling in Thailand.	.894	4.26	.649		
My choice about travelling in Thailand is wise.	.893	4.17	.654		
My experiences when travelling in Thailand is satisfactory.	.862	4.29	.638		
Travel Intention				54.470	0.854
I would like to try Street Food or Food at Night Market. (Thai Food)	.769	4.35	.627		
I would like to join local festivals in the area. (Thai Festivity)	.790	4.19	.708		
I would like to go to temple fair or market fair (Ta Lad Nut) of the area. (Thai Fun)	.785	4.30	.683		
I would like to visit floating markets or local communities or villages. (Thai Way of Life)	.784	4.30	.666		
I would like to visit Wat or temples or historical parks. (Thai Arts)	.722	4.23	.746		
I would like to visit museum or local cultural learning center. (Thai Wisdom)	.679	4.13	.776		

Exploratory Factors	Loading	Mean	S. D.	% Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
I would like to take Thai massage or Thai herbal spa or Thai organic products. (Thai Wellness)	.619	3.92	.836		

Travel intention was derived from the EFA by combining seven factors: plan to try Thai food, to join or to observe Thai festivals, Thai fun, Thai way of life, Thai arts, Thai wisdom, and to try Thai wellness (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016). Travel intention represented 54.47% of the total variance. Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs shown above are greater than 0.70, therefore it can be concluded that all constructs are reliable with ranges between 0.764 and 0.859. For validity testing, the CFA reveal that the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are greater than 0.50, which is adequate (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). The CFA results present an acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 790.388$; $df. = 397$; $RMSEA = 0.054$; $CFI = 0.928$; $TLI = 0.921$; $SRMR = 0.076$) based on the suggestions by Hu and Bentler (1999). Several goodness-of-fit indices are presented and discussed. Table 4 indicates Goodness of fit for the measurement model of the study.

Table 4 Goodness of Fit for the measurement model

Fit index	Model value	Accepted value	Result
χ^2 / df	790.388 / 397 (1.99)	< 2	Passed
CFI	0.928	> 0.90	Passed
TLI	0.921	> 0.90	Passed
RMSEA	0.054	< 0.08	Passed
SRMR	0.076	< 0.08	Passed

The current study conducted both EFA and CFA for reconfirmation and deleted EFA to use CFA. The software used for data analysis is called "mPlus". The results reveal that the proposed model fits the data well and confirms the validity of constructs in the study. The χ^2 statistic indicates that the model fits the empirical data well with the norm χ^2 statistic (χ^2 / df) being 1.99, which is less than 0.3 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The other goodness-of-fit indices show a good overall model fit with a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.928 and a Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) of 0.921, which is greater than the 0.08 required for a good fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.054 and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) 0.076, which is less than the 0.09 desired for a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Hence, the results of the CFA confirm the significant correlated factors as well as being a good model fit with the empirical data. Table 5 indicates estimated values of satisfaction and travel intention.

Table 5 The estimated values of satisfaction and travel intention

Latent variable	Estimate	Two-tailed		
		S. E.	Est./S. E.	P-Value
Satisfaction	0.46	0.04	10.68	0.00
Travel intention	0.45	0.04	10.82	0.00

Structural Equation Model Test

A structural equation model (SEM) test with maximum likelihood estimation was utilized to test the relationship among the research variables or constructs of the study. Table 6 presents the result of model fit measurement.

Table 6 Result of model fit measurement

Factors	χ^2 /df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	P-Value
Knowledge	0/1	1.000	1.007	0.000	0.000	0.998
New experience	0/1	1.000	1.009	0.000	0.000	0.995
Social relation	1.224 /2	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.009	0.542
Recreation	0/ 1	1.000	1.007	0.000	0.000	0.989
Attraction	0/ 1	1.000	1.006	0.000	0.000	0.998
Facility	0/ 1	1.000	1.007	0.000	0.000	0.987
Atmosphere	0/ 1	1.000	1.011	0.000	0.000	0.994
Satisfaction	0/ 1	1.000	1.006	0.000	0.000	0.996
Travel intention	20.645 /13	0.991	0.989	0.041	0.030	0.080

The results of CFA reveal that the overall model fit is good. Results from the SEM to test the research hypotheses (H1-H3) are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Coefficient	P value	Result
H1: Push motivation factors influence the satisfaction of travelers in Thailand	0.259	0.001**	Supported
H1.1: Knowledge motivation has a positive effect on satisfaction			
H1.2: New experience motivation has a positive effect on satisfaction	0.118	0.211	Not supported
H1.3: Social relation motivation has a positive effect on satisfaction	0.267	0.000**	Supported
H1.4: Recreational motivation has a positive effect on satisfaction	0.050	0.501	Not supported
H2: Pull motivation factors influence the satisfaction of travelers in Thailand	0.014	0.887	Not supported
H2.1: Attractions have a positive effect on satisfaction			
H2.2: Facilities have a positive effect on satisfaction	-0.105	0.249	Not supported
H2.3: Atmosphere has a positive effect on satisfaction	0.329	0.000**	Supported

Hypothesis	Coefficient	P value	Result
H3: Satisfaction of travel influences travel intention	0.617	0.000**	Supported

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

The structural model of this study fits the data well and leads to the partial acceptance of hypothesis 1 for push factors and hypothesis 2 for pull factors, and the full acceptance of hypothesis 3 for the effect of satisfaction to travel intention, with the unsupported hypotheses being 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, and 2.2. For push factors, the study reveals that Thai Gen Y tourists with higher “knowledge motivation” feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand (H1.1) according to the standardized coefficient estimate of 0.259. In addition, those with “social relation motivations” are also more satisfied with their travel in Thailand (H1-3) with standardized coefficient estimate of 0.267, and both statistically significant at the 1% level. However, the results do not find any significant effect of “new experience motivations” (H1.2) and “recreational motivations” (H1.4) (p-value more than 0.05).

Therefore, there are two push factors: knowledge motivations and social relation motivations that significantly influence satisfaction of travel in Thailand. The study also found that the effect of “social relation motivations” (0.267) on satisfaction is stronger than the one of “knowledge motivations” (0.259). This suggests that Thai Gen Y tourists feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand because it can enhance their social relationships with others. For pull factors, the study found that Thai Gen Y tourists who weighted the importance of the “atmosphere” of tourist destination highly feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand (H2.3, - standardized coefficient estimate of 0.329 and a statistical significance at the 1% level). However, the results do not indicate any significant effect from “attraction motivation” (H2.1) and “facility motivation” (H2.2) with p-values of more than 0.05. Thus, there is one pull factor, atmosphere motivation, that significantly influences satisfaction with travel in Thailand.

This finding suggests that Thai Gen Y tourists feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand because of the good atmosphere of local tourist destinations. The study also found that satisfaction with travel in Thailand of Thai Gen Y tourists positively influences travel intention (H3) with standardized coefficient estimate of 0.617 and a statistical significance at 1% level. This finding suggests that when Thai Gen Y tourists feel satisfied with their travels in Thailand, they are interested to travel to gain more from Thainess tourism, which includes Thai food, Thai festivals, Thai fun, Thai way of life, Thai arts, Thai wisdom, and Thai wellness, and was promoted by TAT in 2015 as the seven gems of Thainess. Figure 2 illustrates the structural model of the research hypothesis testing results with standardized coefficient estimate.

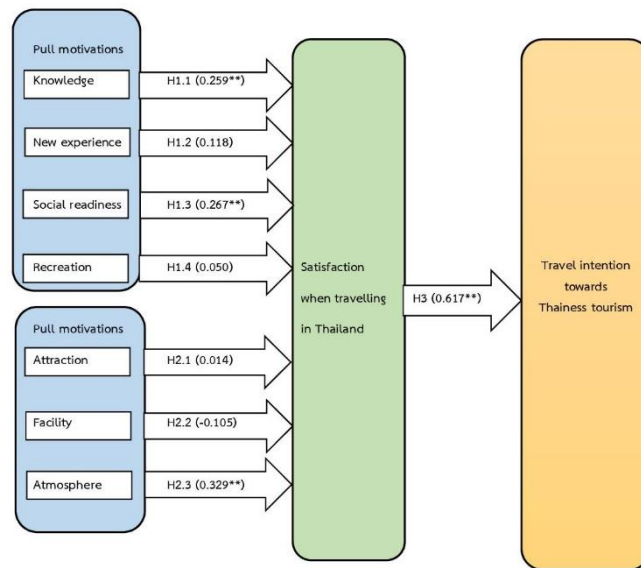


Figure 2 The structural model of the hypotheses results with standardized coefficient estimate

Discussion and Conclusion

The push-pull motivation factors related to Thainess Tourism have been largely overlooked by Thai scholars, especially in the tourism marketing field. Therefore, the current study contributes to existing knowledge by examining the relationships between push-pull motivations, tourist satisfaction, and tourist travel intention among Thai Gen Y, as well as, proposing a conceptual model of travel intention towards Thainess tourism. This research identified three push factors: knowledge, new experience, and social relations. The four pull factors were found to include recreational, attractions, facility, and atmosphere. Using SEM to analyze the data reveals that the travel intentions of Thai Gen Y towards Thainess tourism are influenced by satisfaction and push-pull motivations, namely: knowledge, social relation, and atmosphere. The study also discovered that the effect of ‘social relation motivation’ on satisfaction is stronger than ‘knowledge motivation’. This suggests that Thai Gen Y tourists feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand because it enhances their social relationships with others.

For pull factors, the study anticipated that Thai Gen Y tourists who weigh the importance of the “atmosphere” of tourist destination would feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand. However, the results do not find any significant effect of ‘attraction motivations’ and ‘facility motivations’ on satisfaction with travel in Thailand. However, there was one pull factor, atmosphere motivation that significantly influences satisfaction with travel in Thailand. This suggests that Thai Gen Y tourists feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand because of the good atmosphere of tourist destinations. The satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelers in Thailand positively influences travel intention towards Thainess tourism. This finding suggests that when Thai Gen Y tourists feel satisfied with their travel in Thailand, they know these as the seven gems of Thainess.

Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

Push-pull motivation factors related to Thainess Tourism are largely overlooked by the Thai scholars especially in the tourism marketing field. Therefore, the current study contributes to the existing knowledge by examining the relationship of push-pull motivations, tourist satisfaction, and tourist travel intention among Thai Gen Y, as well as, proposing a conceptual model about travel intention towards Thainess tourism. Using factor analysis, this research could identify 3 push factors: knowledge, new experience, and social relations. The 4 pull factors were found to include: recreational, attractions, facility, and atmosphere. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyze the data reveals that travel intention of Thai Gen Y towards Thainess tourism could be influenced by satisfaction and push-pull motivations, namely: knowledge, social relation, and atmosphere. The study also discovered that the effect of “social relation motivations” on satisfaction is stronger than “knowledge motivations”. This suggests that Thai Gen Y tourists feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand because it enhances their social relationship with others. Hence, the result is in accordance with Preko et al. (2019) findings on domestic youth tourism motivation and travel intention in Ghana that push-pull factors affect travel intention.

For Pull Factors, the study anticipated that Thai Gen Y tourists who weigh the importance of the “atmosphere” of tourist destination would feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand. However, the results do not find any significant effect of “attractions motivations” and “facility motivations” to satisfaction with travel in Thailand. There was one Pull Factor that is atmosphere motivation that significantly influences satisfaction of travel in Thailand. This finding suggests that Thai Gen Y tourists feel more satisfied with their travel in Thailand because of the good atmosphere of tourist destinations. Moreover, Correia and Pimpao (2008), Uysal and Hagan (1994), and Crompton (1990) also found that atmosphere is an important push motivation factor. The satisfaction of Thai Gen Y travelling in Thailand positively influences travel intention towards Thainess tourism. This finding suggests that when Thai Gen Y tourists feel satisfied with their travel in Thailand, which includes Thai food, Thai festivals, Thai fun, Thai way of life, Thai arts, Thai wisdom, and Thai wellness, as promoted by Tourism Authority of Thailand in 2015 as seven gems of Thainess. The result of this study is similar to Preko et al. (2019) which found that tourist satisfaction positively and significantly affects travel intention of young tourists, but different from an earlier study of Cham et al. (2018) which found a positive effect but insignificant results.

Limitations and Further Study

The methodology can be improved by conducting qualitative methods and comparative studies with neighboring Southeast Asian countries. To increase knowledge within the tourism marketing field, further research should be undertaken by replicating the study with respect to surveying Thai travelers of different generations and separating each generation into sub-age groups.

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