

A COMPARISON OF MOTIVATIONS BETWEEN ISLAND TOURISTS VISITING PENGHU, TAIWAN, AND PHUKET, THAILAND

Chi-Ming Hsieh
Department of Community, Agriculture,
Recreation and Resource Studies
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

Sung Hee Park
Michigan State University

Abstract.—The island tourism market is a major growth segment in international tourism. The islands of Penghu, Taiwan, and Phuket, Thailand have become major tourism destinations for Taiwanese tourists, who have had an economic impact on the local communities of these islands. The objectives of this study were to develop a profile of Taiwanese tourists visiting Penghu and Phuket based on their socio-demographic characteristics and travel behaviors, and to identify and compare the importance of their push and pull motivations. Using factor analyses, this study identified four push (*discovery, relaxation, togetherness, and escape*) and five pull motivation factors (*facilities, natural resources, promotion, cost, and revisitation and special events*). Among them, *relaxation* and *natural resources* were the most important push and pull motivations, respectively. Taiwanese tourists who traveled to Phuket had stronger travel motivations across four motivation factors (*discovery, facilities, natural resources, and promotion*) than those who traveled to Penghu.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Island tourism has played a significant role in the overall economies of many Pacific islands, in some cases accounting for more than 50 percent of export earnings (Shaw and Williams 1994, Lockhart 1997). For some all-island states, international tourism contributes the largest percentage of their gross national product (Harrison 2001). Most tourism

destination islands provide a wide variety of natural resources and activities for tourists.

Around the world, Phuket, Thailand, is a well known island tourism destination. Tourism in Phuket accounts for 33 percent of Thailand's total tourism revenue; approximately 5 million international tourists visited Phuket in 2006 (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2006). An estimated 400,000 Taiwanese visited Phuket in 2006, making Phuket one of the most popular foreign island destinations among Taiwanese. The largest island in Taiwan, Penghu, has also long been a popular domestic tourism destination that brings in approximately 430,000 Taiwanese tourists every year (Taiwan Tourism Bureau Ministry 2006).

Islands dependent on tourism economies vary in their size, land area, location, resource base, level of economic development, and extent to which they rely on tourism and the consistent inflow of direct foreign investment for economic growth (Riaz and Michael 2005). Prideaux and Crosswell (2006) suggest that it is important to understand tourists' motivations and post-visit satisfaction levels when planning for and marketing tourism destinations. They also point out that lack of knowledge about visitor motivations and consequent weaknesses in planning and marketing are evident in many small-island destinations and may seriously impede future development of the island tourism industry.

Researchers have noted that there are multiple motivations behind tourists' decisions to travel (Crompton 1979, Kozak 2002). In addition, tourists might have different reasons for choosing domestic or international vacations. Crompton (1979) emphasized the importance of both push and pull factors in shaping tourist motivations and choice of vacation destinations. Push factors are origin-related and refer to the intangible, intrinsic desires of the individual traveler (e.g., the desire for escape, rest and relaxation,

adventure, health, or prestige). Pull factors are mainly related to the attractiveness of a given destination and its tangible characteristics, such as beaches, accommodation and recreational facilities, and cultural and historical resources (Uysal and Jurowski 1994).

Taiwanese tourists interested in visiting domestic and foreign island destinations emerge as a significant market segment, but that segment has not drawn strong attention from tourism researchers. Thus, this study investigates the motivations and travel behaviors of Taiwanese tourists related to their choice to travel to either Penghu or Phuket. The objectives were to: (1) develop a profile of Taiwanese island tourists based on their socio-demographic characteristics and travel behaviors; (2) identify the relative importance of specific travel motivations of Taiwanese tourists choosing Penghu or Phuket; (3) identify the underlying dimensions of both Taiwanese push and pull motivations for travel to the two islands; and (4) identify differences between the derived push and pull factors between the two island travel groups.

2.0 METHODS

This study used convenience sampling and targeted travel groups organized by travel agents. In July and August 2007, data were collected from Taiwanese travel groups visiting Penghu, Taiwan, and Phuket, Thailand. Three hundred eighty self-administered questionnaires were collected on-site from a tourist population of 700 for a response rate of 54.7 percent. This total consists of 180 questionnaires from 350 Penghu visitors (response rate of 51.4 percent) and 203 of 350 questionnaires from Phuket visitors (response rate of 58.0 percent). The questionnaire had three parts and contained 37 items about travel motivations, seven questions about socio-demographic characteristics, and six questions about travel behaviors and destination choices. The 37 motivation items were developed based on a review of relevant literature.

To investigate differences between Taiwanese tourists visiting a domestic island, Penghu, and a foreign island, Phuket, the study compared socio-demographic characteristics, travel behaviors, and travel motivations

between the two groups. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the tourists' profiles and travel behaviors. Factor analysis was conducted to identify the push and pull motivational dimensions of the respondents. An independent sample *t*-test was used to determine whether significant differences existed on the mean scores for each item and on the factors related to the two groups' travel motivations.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics

Of the 383 sampled tourists, 56.1 percent were female and the majority (74.4 percent) was between 20 and 40 years old. Most of the respondents had an education level equivalent to or above a college degree (88.6 percent). Approximately half of the respondents were single (52 percent) and the other half were married (48 percent). Respondents' occupations were categorized as blue-collar workers (29 percent), white-collar workers (27.2 percent), and professionals (20.9 percent). More than half of the respondents (66.8 percent) had personal monthly incomes between US \$607 and US \$1,788. Visitors mainly came from central (39.6 percent) and northern (33.4 percent) Taiwan. Significant differences were observed between the two groups in the categories of age, marriage status, and income. Penghu respondents included more young, single, and low-income people than did Phuket respondents.

3.2 Travel Behaviors

The majority of the respondents who visited Penghu (61.7 percent) and Phuket (80.3 percent) had visited the respective island previously. *Friends* and *family* were the two most often reported groups of traveling companions for visitors to both Penghu (65.9 percent and 58.1 percent, respectively) and Phuket (70.8 percent and 68.3 percent, respectively). With regard to the number of traveling companions, the respondents of Penghu (38.9 percent) and Phuket (38.4 percent) tended to travel with 5 to 10 people. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents from Penghu (72.8 percent) were on a 3 day/2 night trip and more than half of the respondents (57.1 percent) from Phuket were visiting for 5 days/4 nights (Table 1).

Table 1.—Travel-related behaviors of respondents by trip location (n=383)

Characteristics	Penghu % (N = 180)	Phuket % (N = 203)
Number of previous visits		
0	38.3	19.7
1	31.1	27.1
2	16.2	18.2
3 or more	14.4	35.0
Type of trip companion*		
Family	58.1	68.3
Friends	65.9	70.8
Classmates	34.6	28.2
Colleagues	39.7	36.1
Arranged by travel agency	11.7	18.3
Group size		
1-4 people	26.1	34.5
5-10 people	38.9	38.4
11-20 people	21.7	23.2
21 people and more	13.3	3.9
Length of trip		
3 days and 2 nights	72.8	4.9
4 days and 3 nights	18.3	31.6
5 days and 4 nights	2.2	57.1
Other	6.7	6.4
Information source*		
Previous trip experience	25.0	19.7
Family/friends	59.7	59.6
Magazines/newspaper	42.6	60.1
TV/radio	38.1	43.8
Travel agency	25.0	34.0
Internet	46.6	47.3
Other	2.2	3.0

*Multiple responses permitted

3.3 Travel Motivations between the Two Islands

Of the 37 motivation items on the instrument, there were significant differences between visitors to Penghu and Phuket on only 15; Table 2 shows the rankings and mean scores for perceived importance of push and pull motivations and associated t-values and significant levels for these 15 items. Taiwanese tourists reported stronger motivations to visit Phuket than Penghu based on the “push” factors of reducing stress/getting away from job or school, learning something new or increasing knowledge, finding thrills and excitement, rediscovering themselves, and shopping. Respondents were also more strongly motivated to visit Phuket than Penghu based on the “pull” motives of good air quality, spacious beaches, good undersea views, a clean living environment, the proper season in which to travel to the specific island, good service quality, safety and security of facilities, recommendations from the media, exotic features, and recommendations from a travel agency. Overall, Taiwanese tourists had significantly stronger push and pull motivations to visit Phuket as a tourist destination than Penghu. The greatest differences ($p < .001$) were for the “push” motive to learn something new or increase knowledge, and the “pull” motive of the island’s exotic features.

Table 2.—T-test results of motivations that are significantly different between Taiwanese tourists visiting Penghu and Phuket Islands

Items	Penghu		Phuket		t-value	p-value
	Rank	Mean*	Rank	Mean*		
Push items						
To reduce stress and get away from job or school	1	4.52	1	4.66	2.479	p ≤ .05
Learning something new or increasing knowledge	2	3.91	2	4.19	3.475	p ≤ .001
Finding thrills and excitement	3	3.71	3	3.91	2.311	p ≤ .05
Rediscovering myself	4	3.21	4	3.47	2.740	p ≤ .01
Shopping	5	2.57	5	2.85	2.769	p ≤ .01
Pull items						
Good air quality	1	4.11	1	4.32	2.680	p ≤ .01
Spacious beaches	2	4.05	2	4.26	2.713	p ≤ .01
Good undersea view	3	3.97	4	4.17	2.387	p ≤ .05
Clean living environment	4	3.94	3	4.18	2.603	p ≤ .01
Proper season to travel here	5	3.84	5	4.02	2.215	p ≤ .05
Good service quality	6	3.79	6	4.00	2.405	p ≤ .05
Safety and security of facilities	7	3.74	8	3.99	2.570	p ≤ .05
Recommendation from media	8	3.51	9	3.69	2.111	p ≤ .05
Exotic features	9	3.35	6	4.00	7.715	p ≤ .001
Recommendation from travel agency	10	3.16	10	3.37	2.382	p ≤ .05

*Mean score: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

3.4 Push and Pull Motivation Factors for Both Islands

Because the respondents in this study were all the same nationality, it is also instructive to consider all respondents' reported push and pull factors related to the choice of an island destination for tourism travel. Factor analysis identified four push motivational dimensions related to the island destination choices—*discovery*, *relaxation*, *togetherness*, and *escape*—which together accounted for 59.0 percent of the explained variance. Fourteen items turned out to be the most important; together they had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.80. Five items related to *discovery* contributed heavily to the first factor, had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 and an eigenvalue of 4.12, and accounted for 17.9 percent of the variance explained. *Relaxation* consisted of four items (Cronbach's alpha of 0.67, eigenvalue of 1.66, and 15.5 percent of the variance). Three items associated with *togetherness* loaded on the third factor (0.65, 1.38, 12.9 percent). Two items related to *escape* loaded on the fourth factor (0.72, 1.10, 12.6 percent). Of the four underlying push factors, *relaxation* and *togetherness* emerged as the two most important, as shown by the mean importance scores of 4.3 and 4.0, respectively (Table 3).

In addition, factor analysis identified five pull motivational dimensions: *facilities*, *natural resources*, *promotion*, *cost*, and *revisitation and special events*, which cumulatively accounted for 65.0 percent of the variance explained. Individual factors had Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from a high of 0.91 to a low of 0.62. The overall reliability of a 23-item scale resulted in a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.91. Five items pertaining to *facilities* loaded on the first factor, had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 and an eigenvalue of 8.12, and accounted for 15.8 percent of the variance explained. Factor 2 (*natural resources*) consisted of five items (Cronbach's alpha of 0.69, eigenvalue of 2.95, and 15.4 percent of the variance). Six items dealing with *promotion* loaded on the third factor (0.80, 1.60, 13.8 percent). Four items associated with *cost* loaded on the fourth factor (0.84, 1.24, 12.1 percent). Factor 5 (*revisitation and special events*) included three items (0.62, 1.04, 7.9 percent). Of the five underlying pull factors, *natural resources* and *facilities* were the two most important, as shown by the mean importance scores of 4.22 and 3.92, respectively (Table 4).

Table 3.—Results of factor analysis performed on push motivations

Push domains and items*	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean
Factor 1: Discovery		4.116	17.89	0.761	3.87
Experiencing different cultures	0.846				
Experiencing exotic food	0.689				
Learning something new or increasing knowledge	0.683				
Rediscovering myself	0.616				
Finding thrills and excitement	0.467				
Factor 2: Relaxation		1.660	15.52	0.665	4.30
Experiencing different or new life-style	0.736				
Being physically or emotionally refreshed	0.734				
To reduce stress and get away from job or school	0.633				
Seeing nature	0.577				
Factor 3: Togetherness		1.382	12.99	0.652	4.00
To be together with family	0.816				
Meeting new friends/local people	0.732				
To spend time with relatives or friends	0.641				
Factor 4: Escape		1.104	12.61	0.718	2.60
Escaping from ordinary/responsibilities	0.847				
Shopping	0.833				
Total variance explained			59.01		

*Cronbach's alpha= 0.80

Table 4.—Results of factor analysis performed on pull motivations

Pull domains and items*	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean
Factor 1: Facilities		8.116	15.76	0.908	3.92
Good food sanitation	.824				
Professional medical equipment	.811				
Clean living environment	.802				
Safety and security of facilities	.752				
Good service quality	.733				
Factor 2: Natural resources		2.945	15.42	0.692	4.22
Spacious beaches	.843				
Limpid sea	.822				
Beautiful scenery and landscapes	.786				
Good air quality	.726				
Good undersea view	.701				
Factor 3: Promotion		1.599	13.79	0.799	3.58
Festival events	.729				
Recommendation from media	.695				
Exotic features	.618				
Recommendation from travel agency	.596				
Recommendation from Internet	.583				
Proper season to travel here	.582				
Factor 4: Cost		1.242	12.14	0.843	3.46
Inexpensive products	.832				
Low-price travel package	.808				
More discount promotion	.720				
Inexpensive food	.615				
Factor 5: Revisitation and special events		1.042	7.86	0.621	3.43
Revisiting the destination	.783				
Family oriented destination	.681				
Attending international sport events	.531				
Total variance explained			64.97		

*Cronbach's alpha= 0.91

3.5 Push and Pull Motivational Factors between the Two Islands

An independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the four push and five pull factors between the two groups of island tourists. Four motivation factors—one push and three pull—were significantly different between the two groups: *discovery (push)*, *facilities (pull)*, *natural resources (pull)*, and *promotion (pull)*. The Taiwanese tourists who traveled to Phuket had stronger travel motivations across these four factors than those who traveled to Penghu. However, both groups had the same rankings, based on the mean importance ratings, for these four motivation factors. For example, both groups showed the highest mean scores on *natural resources* and the lowest mean scores on *promotion* (Fig. 1).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Identifying motivation factors is central to tourism behavior studies (Iso-Ahola 1982). It is necessary to understand the motivational and behavioral differences that create tourists' satisfaction and repeat visits. A comparison of tourist motivations and behaviors across different destinations can help policy makers, planners, and marketers of island destinations establish their own marketing strategies to attract visitors.

The major finding in this study is that Taiwanese travelers to Penghu and Phuket significantly differ on motivation items, including *learning something new or increasing knowledge*, *finding thrills and excitement*, *rediscovering myself*, *good air quality and undersea view*, *spacious beaches and clean environment*, *exotic features*, *safety and security of facilities*, and

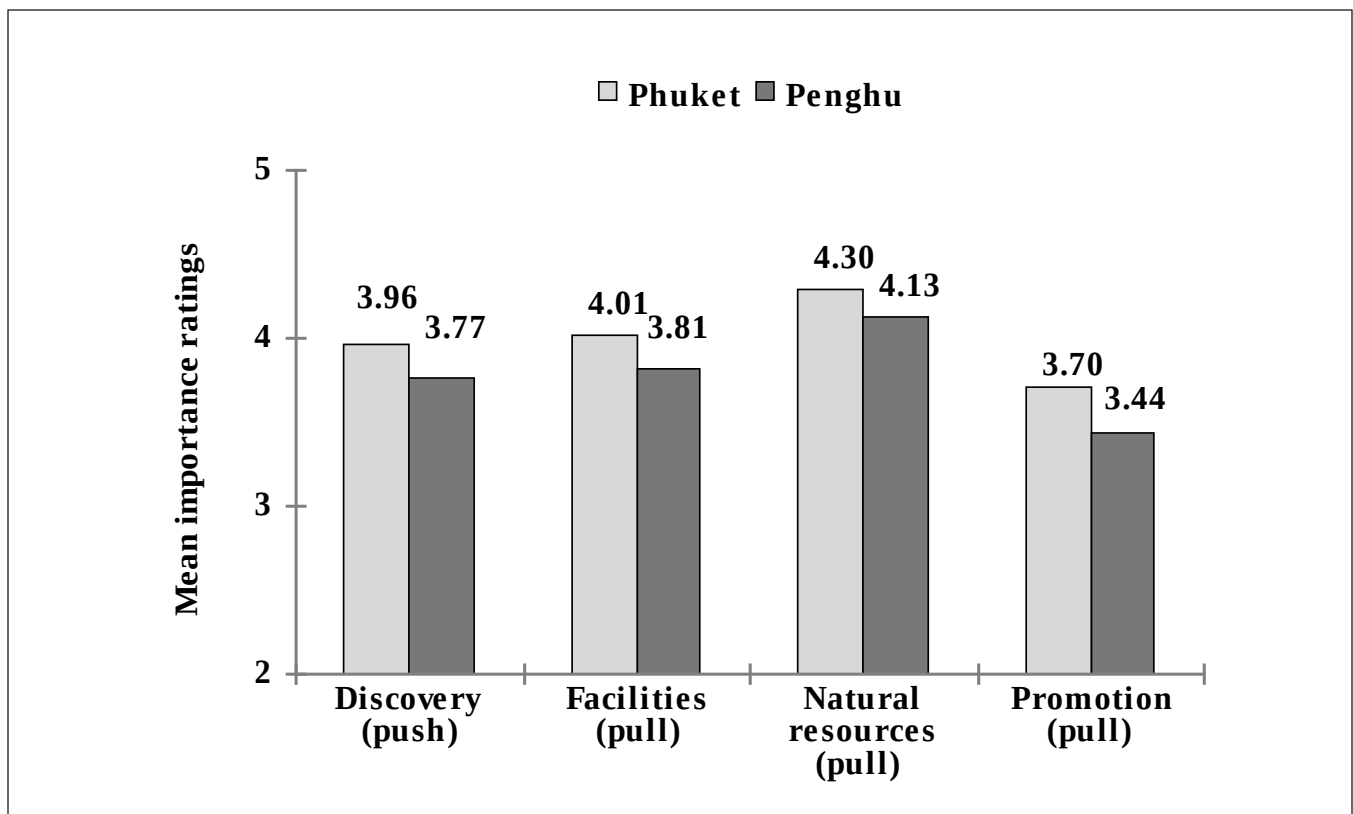


Figure 1.—T-test results of factors that are significantly different for tourists visiting Penghu and Phuket.

recommendation from media and travel agency. While both Penghu and Phuket tourists traveled with friends and family and acquired information via family/friends and the Internet, Phuket tourists were more likely to be repeat visitors and to have acquired travel information from magazines or newspapers.

In comparing the travel motivations of Taiwanese tourists, the study finds that Phuket has more attraction (pull) factors than Penghu. Planners and marketers therefore may want to try to differentiate Penghu from other island tourism destinations and to concentrate on highlighting Penghu's unique resources to shape its own niches in the competitive island tourism market. On the other hand, Phuket may want to emphasize the great attractiveness of the island's natural resources and facilities to draw more Taiwanese tourists and encourage them stay longer. Effective positioning and proper marketing strategies based on these findings could help both Penghu and Phuket increase their market share.

This study's findings are limited in representing the entire island tourism population in Taiwan. First, the research employed a convenience sample to collect data from tourists using tour packages arranged by travel agencies. In addition, because all respondents were the same nationality, the factor analysis considers tourism to both islands rather than tourism to each island separately. Nonetheless, this study does contribute to the limited research available on island tourist motivations across countries.

5.0 CITATIONS

Crompton, J. (1979). **Motivations for pleasure vacation.** *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6, 408-424.

Harrison, D. (2001). **Islands, image and tourism.** *Tourism Recreation Research*, 26(3), 9-14.

- Iso-Ahola, S.E. (1982). **Toward a social psychological theory of tourism motivation: A rejoinder.** *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12, 256-262.
- Kozak, M. (2002). **Comparative analysis of tourist motivations by nationality and destinations.** *Tourism Management*, 23(3), 221-232.
- Lockhart, D.G. (1997). **Islands and tourism: An overview.** In Lockhart, D.G., and Drakakis-Smith, D. (Eds.). *Island Tourism: Trends and Prospects*. London: Cassell.
- Prideaux, B., and Crosswell, M. (2006). **The value of visitor surveys: The case of Norfolk Island.** *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 12(4), 359-370.
- Riaz, S., and Michael, M. (2005). **Modelling international tourism demand and volatility in small island tourism economies.** *The International Journal of Tourism Research*, 7(6), 313-333.
- Shaw, G., and Williams, A. (1994). **Critical Issues in Tourism: A Geographical Perspective.** Oxford: Blackwell.
- Taiwan Tourism Bureau Ministry. (2006). **Statistics release: visitor statistics.** Retrieved June 21, 2007, from <http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/english/statistics/release.asp>
- Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2006). **Tourism Statistics.** Retrieved August 14, 2007, from http://www2.tat.or.th/stat/web/static_tst.php.
- Uysal, M., and Jurowski, C. (1994). **Testing the push and pull factors.** *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21, 844-846.