



Foreign Travellers' Museum Motivation and Museum Service Quality in Thailand: Comparison of Solo Female and General Travellers

Tattawan Duantrakoonsil^a, Earl L. Reid^b and Hae Young Lee^{b*}

^aDepartment of Hospitality Management for Cruise Lines Business, College of Tourism and Hospitality, Sripatum University Bangkok 10900, Thailand

^bDepartment of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Graduate School, Kyungsung University, Busan, 608-736, South Korea

*Corresponding author. E-Mail address: hylee1228@gmail.com

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Abstract

Despite the increasing interest in solo female travellers on museum visit in Thailand, related topics have not received adequate attention from researchers. In this regard, this study attempted to explore the overall museum experience by identifying the nature of visit motivation and service quality assessment. For differentiated strategies, this study further examined the differences between solo female travellers and general travellers toward motivation and service quality components. This study identify the principal constructs of the museum motivation and museum service quality dimension, using the method by a factor analysis with a varimax Kaiser Normalization rotation which was conducted on the proposed structure of each item. The evaluation of internal consistency reliability for each of factors was also used by Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Lastly, binary logistic regression analysis was executed (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1989). To expose the differences in museum motivations (escapism, learning, social and family interaction, and curiosity) and museum service quality components (facilities, staff services, and exhibition experience) based on the solo female traveller and general travellers. Results showed that solo female travellers and general travellers have similar motivations to visit museums. However, escapism, learning, and curiosity motivation were more related to solo female travellers, while social and family interaction was more associated with general travellers. Regarding the components of museum service quality, staff services and exhibition experience were more positively related to solo female travellers, while facilities was the most important element to general travellers.

Keywords: Solo Female Traveller, Motivation, Museum Experience, Museum Service Quality, Thailand Museum

Introduction

Museums, as important historical and cultural resources, increase the attractiveness of tourism destinations by enticing potential travellers to a specific destination. Museums play a precarious role in preserving cultural heritage by connecting the past to the present (Duantrakoonsil, Reid, & Lee, 2017; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Huo & Miller, 2007). Many tourism destinations make great efforts to promote their museum resources in order to enhance their competitive advantage. Museums, specifically, dedicated to continue meeting travellers' expectations by providing better amenities and services. Many travellers have also shown continued supports by including museum visits in their tour itineraries (Cheng & Wan, 2012).

Given the richness of historical and cultural features in Thailand, museum tourism is a great important to the Thai tourism industry. Currently, there are more than 1,400 museums spread all over Thailand, each with a specific interest. Thai museum tourism has consistently ranked first among the types of cultural tourism in Thailand (TAT Tourism Market for Women, 2016; Thai Museums Database, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, 2018). In addition, the roles of the institute of Thai museums are to serve society and to be an important driving force in Thai tourism development (Desvallées & Mairesse, 2010; Narksuwana & Roswarnb, 2016).

Another issue related to museum tourism is the increase in solo travellers. In reality, the changing global demographics have increased the number of solo female travellers going on holidays (Rosenbloom, 2012).



According to research of in Asian and Pacific markets, Tourism Authority of Thailand 2016 found that a market potential for foreign solo female travellers in Thailand, based on the finding that 30% of foreign travellers chose to travel and study in cultural tourism in Thailand, particularly by the temples, museums and historical sites. When considering the solo female market in today's world, there is higher potential than before (TAT Tourism Market for Women, 2016).

However, despite the great increase in solo travellers, there is a lack of academic interest and research effort. Most travel research has focused mainly on defining the concept of solo travellers and their demographic or travel-related characteristics (Wilson, 2004). In addition, though museums have been becoming the major travel attraction for solo female travellers, there remain insufficient articles concerning an understanding of solo female travellers' museum visits. Moreover, the overall assessments of customers toward the given service are as service quality (Oliver, 1980; Rust & Oliver, 1994). Any business considers the service quality which plays a serious role for the success because it provides the mainly customer loyalty or satisfaction (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Above all, an understanding of what motivational forces influence museum visits of solo female travellers and how they evaluate their museum experience is important for museums to manage better service and upgrade the museum experiences of travellers. Thus, this study sought to (1) identify the main motivations of solo female travellers visiting museums and (2) verify their evaluation of museum experiences in Thailand through the lens of museum service quality. Specifically, drawing upon various prior studies related to museum tourism, and different motivations such as escapism, learning, social and family interaction, and curiosity were proposed. Further, based on Harrison and Shaw's (2004) museum experience model, facilities, staff services, and exhibition experience were proposed as three important services elements encountered during a museum service experience. Additionally, this study explored how motivational and service quality components vary between solo female travellers and general travellers. The results of this research could offer recommendations for museum managers and destination marketers to implement more successful management schemes that can meet traveller expectations of service quality.

Literature Review

Solo Female Traveller

Nowadays, one of the important aspects of global travel is the increase of the number of solo travellers traveling on holidays (Rosenbloom, 2012). Definitions of a solo traveller as a traveller who travels alone and does not depend on other travellers whether are married or with children, is open to new problems. Chiang and Jogaratnam (2006) also found that most females take single trips and also explore new experiences, acquire new knowledge of the world and have a strong disposition to travel alone.

Most solo female travellers show a different travel patterns compared to general travellers, since they differ in their preference and travel behavior due to the different travel motives or values. Some recent research on museum tourism claimed that nowadays solo travellers are more common than in the past, especially female travellers. Sookprecha (2015) explained that female travellers are a new-generation female who tends to be more interested in arts and culture, with economic power and a high educational background.

Museum Tourism in Thailand

Certainly, Thailand is a country so wealthy in cultural and historical resources that it attracts the intellectual curiosity of travellers. Indeed, many travellers interested in Thailand's diverse history and traditions, as well as



the lives of Thai people, visit museums to gain a genuine understanding of Thailand (Narksuwana & Roswarnb, 2016). Nowadays in Thailand, there are 1,473 museums and 42 branches of national museums spread all over the country (Thai Museums Database, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, 2018). All museums are effectively introducing in Thailand by exhibiting and introducing various artifacts from the past. However, in general, museum service in Thailand does not do enough to attract solo female travellers because, as public sector operations, museums do not pay much attention to solo female travellers' expectations of the experience. Rather than providing proper services, museums operate in ordinary and traditional ways under the guise of pursuing the public interest.

Museum Motivations

Motivations are the psychological or physiological forces representing individual's basic desires and needs (Kawashima, 1998). Motivation, as an internal force that determines an individual's behavioral direction, can also be explained as the cause of the individual's action or behavior. Motivation has been found to be useful in a variety of areas because we can predict efficiently future personal behavior by identifying motives. To create appropriate marketing strategies for driving the desired behavioral response from the individual, businesses and organizations have focused on the differences in motivational factors for each individual.

Many researchers in museums tourism field have mentioned the importance of visit motivations. For instance, Prentice, Guerin, and McGugan (1998) discovered that the most important influences on traveller decisions for visiting museums were induced by their motivations, such as a travellers' desire to learn, be entertained on their holidays, as well as social family meeting and visiting specific exhibitions. Gil and Ritchie (2009) said that differences in traveller motivations evoke differences in the evaluation of museum service property. As well, Brida, Pulina, and Riaño (2012) found that solo female travellers' museum motivations are related to their demand to find self-experience.

Moreover, research in museum travel has identified several specific motivations such as escapism (Brida, Disegna, and Scuderi, 2014; Gil & Ritchie, 2009; Prentice, Davies, and Beeho, 1997; Slater, 2007), learning (Brida et al., 2014; Prentice et al., 1997; Slater, 2007), social and family interaction (Brida et al., 2014; Brida et al. 2012; Prentice et al., 1997; Slater, 2007), curiosity (Brida et al., 2014; Brida et al., 2012; Gil and Ritchie, 2009; Prentice et al., 1997; Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011; Slater, 2007).

Museum Service Quality

Museum service quality can be considered as the overall assessment of travellers toward the museum service (Harrison and Shaw, 2004; Oliver, 1980; Rust and Oliver, 1994). Since travellers estimate their overall experience based on service quality, numerous researchers have endeavored to reveal the nature of museum service quality. First, Falk and Dierking (1992) understood the quality of service of museum experiences with the three components of physical, personal, and social. The relationships of three primary contexts of Dirsehan (2010) were also outlined as interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality. Furthermore, Harrison and Shaw (2004) offered the three major elements of museum service to be facilities, staff services, and exhibition experience. They contended that visitors consider the entire experience based on the quality of three service elements. Huo and Miller (2007) also examined the relationship of satisfaction and the three quality elements of venue features; facilities, staff services, and exhibition experience of the Samoan museum. The qualified importance of museum staff on satisfaction was supported by their results.



Facilities

Facilities can be understood as the physical environment of a museum experienced by a traveller. Physical environment is important because it is directly connected to traveller satisfaction and easily leads to revisit and return. According to Cronin and Taylor (1994) mentioned that facilities are physical cues that consumers can most intuitively evaluate. Lockyer (2002) debated that hotel guests pay specific consideration to physical facilities when they evaluate their accommodation experience. In the museum context, Cheng and Wan (2012) that travellers to museums are marked by facility aspects in terms of physical environment. Moreover, De Rojas and Camarero (2008) discussed that the physical component of service quality is a direct cause of satisfaction and positive emotion.

Staff Services

Staff service is a comprehensive evaluation of human services, and customers experience through communication (Harrison and Shaw, 2004). Several researchers have identified the importance of people in the service delivery procedure as it is their actions that make a big impression on the perception of the whole service quality. In relation to, Huo and Miller (2007) concluded that the customer service skills of museum staff play a critical role in increasing travellers' levels of satisfaction. Cheng and Wan (2012) also approved that staff services attributes, such as responsiveness and kindness, lead to museum visitor satisfaction. Similarly, Alcañiz, Rodrigo, Romero, and Fuentes (1996) also explained that staff services are most strongly linked to the satisfaction and return visit of museum visitors.

Exhibition Experience

Exhibition experience usually influences travellers' evaluations in relations of outcomes of the service process. The museum experience concerns the entire experience and includes the personal context such as motivations, hopes, attentions, faiths, previous knowledge and experiences (Falk and Dierking, 1992). In this respect, Harrison and Shaw (2004) recommended that exhibition experience can increase museum visitor satisfaction, which leads to recommendation and revisit. De Rojas and Camarero (2008) also confirmed that a positive assessment of a traveller's experience to be an outcome assessment of service quality. They advised that exhibition experience serves to increase positive emotions and satisfaction.

Methods and Materials

Data Collection

Data were collected by accidental sampling from solo female foreign travellers and general foreign travellers who visited the top 10 popular museums in Thailand such as Hellfire Pass Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Museum of World Insects and Natural Wonders, Erawan Museum, Hall of Opium Museum, Anek Kuson Sala (Viharnra Sien), Siriraj Medical Museum, Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles, Black House–Ban Si Dum, Suan Pakkad Palace Museum. Trained interviewers obtained permission from the museums and individually accessed travellers to solicit responses. A total 400 questionnaires were gained during January to March 2018 in the limited cooperation and limited time from the respondents, all of which were retained. Interviews were held during business hours, 9 am. to 6 pm., from Tuesday to Sunday. The sample was divided into two groups after collecting all the questionnaires. Based on this, data collected travellers were included in the solo female traveller group (n = 200), and comprised the data from general traveller group (n = 200).



Questionnaire and Instrument

Based on previous researches (Harrison and Shaw, 2004; Huo and Miller, 2007; de Rojas and Camarero, 2008), all estimations were modified to suit the museum tourism context. A five-point Likert scale with 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree) was used to measure the proposed items. The questionnaire was composed of sections; trip information, museum motivation, museum service quality and the demographic factors of travellers.

Data Analysis

To identify the underlying dimensions of museum visit motivation and museum service quality, a principal elements factor analysis with a varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was first conducted on the proposed multiple items of motivation and museum service quality. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was also used to assess the internal consistency reliability for each of the factors from this analysis. Finally, binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to assess the differences in museum visit motivations (escapism, learning, social and family interaction, and curiosity) and service quality perceptions (facilities, staff services and exhibition experience). As recommended by Hosmer and Lemeshow (1989), the classification table summarized the results of the logistic regression of the observed dependent variable with a binary variable which is one of the summary statistics proposed methods.

Results

1. Factor Analysis of Museum Motivations

Factor analysis was conducted to examine the underlying dimensions of motivations for travellers visiting museums. Table 1 shows the results of the factor analysis conducted on dimensions related to travellers' museum visit motivations. All items museum motivations were factor analyzed using the extraction method by a principal elements analysis with a varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation. The factor analysis resulted in four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and the final explaining 78.49% (solo female travellers) and 82.66% (general travellers) of the variance. The factors with factor loadings above 0.4 and were retained for additional analysis. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to assess the internal consistency reliability for each of the factors from the analysis. The alpha of each factor of solo female travellers ranging from 0.65 to 0.86 and 0.59 to 0.93 for general travellers.

**Table 1** Factor analysis results of travellers' museum motivations

Group	Motivations	Factor Loading	Eigen Value	% of Variance	Communality	α
Solo Female Travellers	Learning		2.07	22.99		.77
	To learn more about culture	.86			.75	
	For intellectual enrichment	.83			.74	
	To broaden one's general knowledge	.74			.61	
	Social & Family Interaction		1.83	20.28		.86
	To spend time with family and friends	.84			.85	
	To accompany a friend/family member	.93			.89	
	Curiosity		1.63	18.12		.75
	To satisfy one's curiosity	.90			.85	
	To try something different	.87			.84	
	Escapism		1.54	17.10		.65
	A general day out	.72			.66	
	Getting away from normal routine	.90			.83	
	Cumulative Variance Explained			78.49		
	General Travellers	Learning		2.55	28.37	
To learn more about culture		.85			.85	
For intellectual enrichment		.84			.91	
To broaden one's general knowledge		.83			.84	
Curiosity			1.88	20.87		.70
To satisfy one's curiosity		.82			.73	
To try something different		.76			.75	
Escapism			1.71	19.02		.79
A general day out		.88			.87	
Getting away from normal routine		.80			.81	
Social & Family Interaction			1.30	14.40		.59
To spend time with family and friends		.95			.91	
To accompany a friend/family member		.59			.72	
Cumulative Variance Explained				82.66		

2. Factor Analysis of Museum Service Quality

Factor analysis was continually performed to identify the underlying structures of museum service quality. Table 2 shows the results of the factor analysis conducted on dimensions related to travellers' perceived museum service quality. All museum service quality items were factor analyzed using the extraction method by a principle components analysis with a varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation. The factor analysis resulted in three underlying factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and the final explaining 70.27% (solo female travellers) and 74.44% (general travellers) of the variance. The factors with factor loading above 0.4 and were retained for additional analysis. Also, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to assess the internal consistency reliability for each of factors from the analysis. The alpha of each factors of solo female travellers ranging from 0.66 to 0.83 and 0.65 to 0.88 for general travellers.



Table 2 Factor analysis results of travellers' perceived museum service quality

Group	Museum Service Quality	Factor Loading	Eigen Value	% of Variance	Communality	α
	Staff Services		2.33	25.93		.83
	Staff are always helpful and courteous	.79			.71	
	Staff are willing to take time with visitors	.88			.81	
	Staff are well informed to answer visitors' requests	.84			.72	
	Exhibition Experience		2.08	23.08		.78
Solo	I consider the visit to the museum to have been an authentic experience	.65			.63	
Female	Appropriate content of knowledge was presented	.86			.77	
Travellers	The exhibition was enjoyable	.87			.83	
	Facilities		1.91	21.26		.66
	There is sufficient space in the museum for visitors	.77			.61	
	The venue is near an accessible public transportation stop	.75			.59	
	Facilities such as the restrooms and for those with special needs are sufficient	.77			.61	
	Cumulative Variance Explained			70.27		
	Exhibition Experience		2.54	28.28		.88
	I consider the visit to the museum to have been an authentic experience	.82			.81	
	Appropriate content of knowledge was presented	.86			.83	
	The exhibition was enjoyable	.81			.81	
	Staff Services		2.33	25.91		.85
General	Staff are always helpful and courteous	.71			.74	
Travellers	Staff are willing to take time with visitors	.84			.79	
	Staff are well informed to answer visitors' requests	.80			.75	
	Facilities		1.82	20.25		.65
	There is sufficient space in the museum for visitors	.73			.68	
	The venue is near an accessible public transportation stop	.76			.64	
	Facilities such as the restrooms and for those with special needs are sufficient	.67			.62	
	Cumulative Variance Explained			74.44		

3. Logistic Regression Analysis

Logistic regression analysis, a special form of loglinear modeling, is a useful technique that can be used when the dependent variable is dichotomous. Logistic regression analysis has widely used to predict dependent variables based on the role or relationship of independent variables (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989; Morgan and Teachman, 1988; Tansey, White, Long, and Smith, 1996).

The results of logistic regression analysis of museum motivations between solo female traveller group (coded as 1) and general traveller group (coded as 2) were indicated in Table 3. The goodness-of-fit of the model was good with -2 log likelihood value of 415.24 and chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 139.28$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$), indicating that four museum visit motivations may provide a significant predication for predicting two different travel groups. The explanatory power of the logistic regression equation was confirmed by Cox and Snell R^2 (.29)



and Nagelkerke R^2 (.39). Generally, it was found that overall explanatory power of the logistic regression equation was 29% – 39%.

All motivational variables were statistically significant for the prediction of travel groups. Estimated coefficients of escapism ($B = -.78$, Wald = 10.37, $p < .001$), learning ($B = -.91$, Wald = 14.62, $p < .001$), and curiosity ($B = -.77$, Wald = 8.15, $p < .001$) were negative, while social and family interaction coefficient ($B = 1.82$, Wald = 59.75, $p < .001$) was positive. Such results suggest that out of all variables related to museum visit motivation, escape, learning, and interest are more related to solo female travellers, while social and family interaction is deeply associated with general travellers.

Table 3 Summary of logistic regression results of museum motivations

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	sig	Exp (B)
Escapism	-.78	.24	10.37	1	.00	.45
Learning	-.91	.23	14.62	1	.00	.40
Social & Family Interaction	1.82	.23	59.74	1	.00	6.14
Curiosity	-.77	.26	8.15	1	.00	.46
Constant	3.54	.99	12.54	1	.00	34.45
-2Log likelihood = 415.24 ^a / Cox & Snell R Square = .29 / Nagelkerke $R^2 = .39$ / $\chi^2 = 139.27^{***}$ (df = 4)						

Table 4 shows that the results of logistic regression analysis of museum service quality between solo female traveller group (coded as 1) and general traveller group (coded as 2). The goodness-of-fit of the model was good with -2 log likelihood value of 478.05 and chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 76.47$, df = 3, $p < .001$), indicating that three museum service quality may provide a significant predication for predicting two different travel groups. The explanatory power of the logistic regression equation was confirmed by Cox and Snell R^2 (.17) and Nagelkerke R^2 (.23). Generally, it was found that overall explanatory power of the logistic regression equation was 17% – 23%.

All components of museum service quality were statistically significant for the prediction of travel groups. Estimated coefficients of staff services ($B = -.51$, Wald = 5.54, $p < .05$) and exhibition experience ($B = -1.24$, Wald = 27.65, $p < .001$) were revealed to be negative, while facilities coefficient ($B = .51$, Wald = 4.15, $p < .05$) was appeared to be positive. Such results indicate that out of all variables associated with museum service quality, staff services and exhibition experience are related to solo female travellers, and conversely, facilities is associated with general travellers.

Table 4 Summary of Logistic Regression results of museum service quality

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	sig	Exp (B)
Facilities	.51	.25	4.14	1	.04	1.66
Staff Services	-.51	.21	5.54	1	.01	.60
Exhibition Experience	-1.24	.23	27.65	1	.00	.28
Constant	4.89	.95	26.24	1	.00	133.88
-2Log likelihood = 478.04 / Cox & Snell R Square = .17 / Nagelkerke $R^2 = .23$ / $\chi^2 = 76.47^{***}$ (df = 3)						



Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to (1) identify the underlying dimensions of solo female traveller motivations and (2) explore the overall museum experience of solo female travellers through their responses toward museum service in Thailand. To better understand the nature of visit motivation and service quality assessment, proposed motivational forces and quality components of solo female travellers were compared with those of general travellers. Specifically, four museum motivation elements (escapism, learning, social and family interaction, and curiosity) were suggested as major motivational forces for museum tourism. Based on Harrison and Shaw (2004)'s museum experience model, three specific elements (facilities, staff services, and exhibition experience) were also suggested for the evaluation of the museum service experience.

The results revealed differences among the four museum visit motivations between solo female travellers and general travellers: escapism, learning, social and family interaction, and curiosity. Solo female travellers were found to have strong learning, escapism, and curiosity motivations while the social and family interaction motivation was weak that related literatures in group of this traveller want to learn and see as much as they can during a travel to a museum (Bianchi, 2016). On the contrary, general travellers showed high social and family motivation and low learning, escapism, and curiosity motivations.

Of the suggested elements, facilities, staff services and exhibition experience played important roles in the tourist museum experience and have direct influences on both types of travellers. Specifically, solo female travellers considered staff services and exhibition experience as important components in the evaluation of museum service. However, facilities did not have an effect on the estimation of museum services for solo female travellers. On the other hand, general travellers considered facilities as important while staff service and exhibition experience did not have an effect on their evaluation of museum service.

Conclusion and Suggestions

As solo travellers visiting museums are motivated in a variety of ways, museum managers need to pursue segmentation strategies centering on visit motivation. That is, solo female travellers considered escapism, and learning and curiosity as important factors, whereas they did social and family interaction less important. On the other hand, general travellers place more importance on social and family interaction than other museum motivations, museum manager should make some entertainment events and social with shared attentiveness that can be more attract more travellers such as non-face-based social activities using social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, etc.).

In addition, solo travellers and general travellers differed with regards to the quality of service attributes that they consider when visiting museums. First, solo travellers considered the level of staff services and experiential services, while they were not significantly affected by physical facilities. However, general travellers were more concerned about physical facilities, but less so with staff services and experience. Strengths should be made to make a museum space for communication and interaction, not simply a place to passively appreciate displays. It should be to pay attention the space arrangement and various events that enable communication. Museum managers, therefore, need to consider a differentiation strategy that emphasizes distinct qualities of service attributes for each group of travellers. As for suggestions, what is needed are the development and coordination between museums, the marketing department of the Thai tourism authority and the Thai government of publicizing new special



events or interesting activities, and the simultaneous promotion of the special discount admission through foreign media, mainly focused on the unique Thai identity of the museums in Thailand. It would increase the tourism competitiveness of Thailand by increasing the number of foreign tourists visiting the museums, as well as tourism revenue.

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