

TITLE: The Perception and Travel Motive of Thai Tourists Towards Maechaem District in Chiang Mai as a Holiday Destination

AUTHOR: Miss Suvitcha Sritan and Dr. Preeda Chaiya

UNIVERSITY: Mahasarakham University **DATE** 2015

ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions and travel motives of Thai tourists towards a holiday destination of Maechaem Community in Chiang Mai. The study adopted a mixed method. Qualitative data from interviews with 45 Maechaem Community residents aimed to help identify the variables selected in the survey and to supplement interpretation of the results from the survey. The study used convenient sampling technique to select 400 Thai tourists and utilized a survey questionnaire to collect the quantitative data. ANOVA, Factor Analysis, Multiple Correlation, Multiple Regression, and Multinomial Regression techniques were used to test the gaps between the perceptions and travel motives and statistical significances across the independent and dependent variables and the research hypotheses. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

The research findings indicate that most Thai tourists highly rated all the perception attributes that affected their travel motives and decision making in visiting Maechaem Community ($\bar{X} = 5.14-5.77$). The first five most importance perception factors influencing their travel motives are 1) tourist attraction beauty, 2) fertility and richness in nature, 3) responsibility for tourists, 4) owning local identity, and 5) service sincerity respectively. All Thai tourists' socio-demographic factors, such as their different genders, ages, occupations, and regions, have no statistically different perception of all importance and motivation attributes on the whole at the statistical significance level of .05. The component of physical environment was found to be the most important powerful variable affecting the Thai tourists' travel motives, followed by the two components of public utility readiness and welcoming and identities of tradition, art, and culture respectively at the statistically significant level of .05.

Key words: tourists' opinion, perception, motive, Maechaem Community, Chiang Mai