



Experience of International Long Stay Tourists in Phuket, Thailand

“A case Study of Retired International Tourists”

Helmi Hitula

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(International Program)**

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ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์ ประสพการณ์ของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติที่พำนักระยะยาวในจังหวัดภูเก็ต ประเทศไทย “กรณีศึกษาของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติผู้เกษียณอายุ”

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อระบุปัจจัยหลัก และแรงจูงใจซึ่งส่งผลต่อการเลือกจังหวัดภูเก็ต ประเทศไทย เป็นแหล่งพำนักอาศัยของกลุ่มนักท่องเที่ยวหลังเกษียณอายุชาวตะวันตก นอกจากนี้ ยังมุ่งศึกษาว่านักท่องเที่ยวกลุ่มนี้ได้รับสิทธิประโยชน์ใดๆ หรือไม่ จากการพำนักอาศัยในต่างแดน ซึ่งมีความแตกต่างด้านสังคม วัฒนธรรมและภาษา รวมถึงศึกษากิจกรรมที่นักท่องเที่ยวใช้ในการปรับตัวเพื่อเข้ากับสภาพแวดล้อมใหม่ด้วย

การศึกษาเรื่องนี้กระทำโดยใช้ระเบียบวิธีปรากฏการณ์วิทยา และเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลโดยการสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบมีวัตถุประสงค์และแบบสโนว์บอลหรือลูกโซ่ โดยใช้คำถามแบบปลายเปิดและคำถามแบบกึ่งมีโครงสร้าง เพื่อหาข้อมูลทางประชากรศาสตร์และทางสังคมเศรษฐกิจ รวมทั้งเพื่อหาข้อมูลเชิงลึกเกี่ยวกับประสบการณ์และกลวิธีในการปรับตัวของกลุ่มตัวอย่างด้วย

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ลักษณะทางภูมิอากาศ ค่าครองชีพต่ำ ความเป็นอิสระ และความเงียบสงบของจังหวัดภูเก็ตเป็นสิ่งดึงดูดนักท่องเที่ยวชาวตะวันตกผู้พำนักระยะยาวหลังการเกษียณอายุ แม้ว่านักท่องเที่ยวเหล่านี้ไม่ได้รับสิทธิประโยชน์ทางกายภาพหรือทางการเงินใดๆ จากการพำนักระยะยาวเลยก็ตาม ในทางตรงข้าม พวกเขากลับให้การสนับสนุนทางการเงินแก่ชุมชนที่ตนพักอาศัย ไม่ว่าจะเป็นการบริจาคเพื่อสาธารณกุศล สถานเลี้ยงเด็กกำพร้า และสถานสงเคราะห์คนชรา นอกจากนี้ นักท่องเที่ยวชาวตะวันตกผู้พำนักระยะยาวหลังการเกษียณอายุ ยังประสบกับปัญหาการถูกแบ่งแยก ความไม่เป็นมิตร และการขาดความเคารพนับถือจากผู้คนในชุมชนที่ตนอยู่อาศัย อย่างไรก็ตาม การกระทำดังกล่าวของชุมชนมิได้ทำลายภาพรวมของประสบการณ์เชิงบวกที่ผู้เกษียณอายุเหล่านี้ได้รับ ในแง่กลวิธีที่นักท่องเที่ยวผู้เกษียณอายุใช้ในการปรับตัวเพื่อให้เข้ากับสภาพแวดล้อมใหม่นั้น กลุ่มตัวอย่างระบุว่าแต่ละบุคคลต่างก็ประยุกต์ใช้กลวิธีในวิถีของตนเองโดยอาศัยการสังเกตและการทดลอง

งานวิจัยนี้เสนอแนะให้หน่วยงานราชการของจังหวัดภูเก็ตบังคับใช้มาตรการความปลอดภัย จัดเตรียมแผนงานด้านการให้สิทธิประโยชน์ และพัฒนาฐานข้อมูลทางสถิติเพื่อให้สามารถเข้าถึงตลาดนักท่องเที่ยวที่สร้างผลกำไรมหาศาลนี้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้นในอนาคต นอกจากนี้ยังเสนอแนะให้ผู้มีอำนาจสั่งการ เร่งตระหนักถึงประเด็นปัญหาด้านอาชญากรรม การทุจริตประพฤติมิชอบ มลภาวะและปัญหาสิ่งแวดล้อม เพื่อดำรงรักษาความน่าประทับใจของจังหวัดภูเก็ตไว้สืบไป

คำสำคัญ: นักท่องเที่ยวผู้พำนักระยะยาวหลังเกษียณอายุ กลวิธีในการปรับตัว ประสบการณ์ของนักท่องเที่ยว ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อ

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the main factors and motives that influence western retired international long stay tourist’s choice of Phuket, in Thailand, as a preferred destination. Further, the study investigates whether these tourists derive benefits from settling in a foreign country with such social, cultural and linguistic differences and the strategies they adopted in order to adapt to their new environment.

A phenomenology approach was used in the study and data collection was carried out using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Both open-ended and semi structured questions were used in order to obtain general demographic and socio-economic data, as well as to attain an in-depth understanding of the tourists’ experience and adaptation strategies.

The study found out that western retired long stay tourists are drawn to Phuket by its climate, low cost of living, freedom and tranquility that the destination has to offer. Though the tourists do not receive any financial or material benefits from their long stay, instead they offer financial benefits to the host community by supporting charity organizations, orphanages and old age homes. Furthermore, western retired long stay tourists face challenges of discrimination, antagonism and contempt from the host community. However these host reactions do not hamper the overall positive experience of the retirees. Pertaining to the strategy retirees adopted in order to adapt to their new environment, respondents indicated that each adapted in their own way by observation and trial and error.

The study recommends that Phuket Provincial Government implements security measures, provide benefit programs and develop a statistical database in order to successfully tap into this lucrative market better in the future. In addition, authorities are urged to address concerns of crime, corruption, pollution and environmental issues to help Phuket maintain its magic.

Key Words: Retired Long Stay Tourist, Retiree, Adaptation Strategies, Tourist Experience, Influential Factors.

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CONTENT

	Page
หน้าอนุมัติ	ii
บทคัดย่อภาษาไทย	iii
Abstract	v
Acknowledgement	vii
Contents	vii
List of tables	xii
List of figures	xiii
Acronyms	xiv
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	1
1.2 Aim of the Study	3
1.2.1 Aim of the Study	3
1.2.2 Objectives of the study	3
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Significance of the Study	4
1.5 Scope of the Study	5
1.5.1 Scope of Time	5
1.5.2 Scope of Geography	5
1.5.3 Scope of Demography	5
1.5.4 Area of Research	5
1.6 Summary	6
1.7 Definition of terms	6
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.1.1 The Tourist	8

2.1.2 The Tourist Experience	10
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CONTENT (CONTINUED)

	Page
2.1.3 Conceptual Framework of the Migration Decision Process	13
2.1.4 Theories of Migration	15
2.1.5 Social Constructivism Theory	20
2.2 Literature Review of International Cases	22
2.2.1 Scale of Demographic Change	22
2.2.2 Retired & International Retirement Migration	25
2.2.2.1 Attractions for retirees	27
2.2.2.2 Adaptability of retirees	28
2.2.2.3 Knowledge, culture and activities	28
2.2.3 Second Homes	29
2.3 Literature Review ASEAN	30
2.3.1 Tourism in South and South East Asia	30
2.3.2 Long Stay Tourism	33
2.3.2.1 Reasons for Japanese Moving	33
2.3.2.2 Incentives or factors for choosing destinations	34
2.3.2.3 Implications for Long Stay Tourism and IRM	34
2.3.2.4 Attraction of Chiang-Mai Province for Long Stay Japanese Pensioners	35
2.4 IRM and Long Stay Tourism	35
2.5 Summary	37
3 METHODOLOGY	39
3.1 Research Design	39
3.1.1 Qualitative Approach	39
3.1.2 Phenomenology	39
3.2 Study Population	42
3.3 Spatial Area	43

3.4 Sampling	44
3.4.1 Sample Size	44

CONTENT (CONTINUED)

	Page
3.5 Data Collection	45
3.5.1 Source of Data	46
3.5.2 Questionnaire Guide	46
3.5.3 Interviews	46
3.6 Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness & Ethical Aspects of the Study	47
3.7 Data Explication and Presentation	48
3.8 Summary	49
4 RESULTS	50
4.1 Introduction	50
4.1.1 Profile of Respondents	50
4.2 Results Objective 1 Analysis	52
4.3 Results Objective 2 Analysis	55
4.3.1 Social Benefits	56
4.3.2 Physical and Spiritual Benefits	58
4.3.3 Financial Benefits	59
4.4 Results Object 3 Analyses	61
4.4.1 Challenges upon arrival in Phuket	61
4.4.2 Challenge faced by Retired Long Stay Tourists Today	63
4.4.3 Social Interaction and Activities	63
4.4.4 Other Challenges	65
4.4.5 Overall Experience	66
4.4.6 Strategies used or adopted by Retired Long Stay Tourists	66
4.5 Summary	67
5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS	69

5.1 Conclusion	69
5.2 Discussions	73
5.3 Recommendations	80

CONTENT (CONTINUED)

	Page
5.4 Areas of further studies	82
5.5 Limitations	83
Bibliography	84
Appendix:	97
Appendix A - Consent Form	97
Appendix B - Questionnaire guideline for respondents	100
Vitae	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 : 3 Stylized levels of migration analysis	18
2.2 Differences and similarities between IRM and LST	36
4.1 Following is a Characteristic profile of the respondents as sited in the study.	51

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Conceptual model of the tourist experience	12
2.2 Total International Visitors Arrivals Member States	31
3.1 Map of Phuket Island – the study Area	43

LIST OF ACRONYMS

HSBC	: Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation
IUOTO	: International Union of Official Travel Organization
IRM	: International Retirement Migration
LST	: Long Stay Tourism (RLST – Retired Long Stay Tourists)
MITI	: Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Japan)
MM2H	: Malaysia My Second Home
MPI	: Migration Policy Institute
NESAC	: National Economic and Social Advisory Council
RM	: Retirement Migration
RISL	: Research Institute for Senior Life
TAT	: Tourism Authority of Thailand
WTO	: World Tourism Organization
UN	: United Nations

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The World Tourism Organization (2011: 2) reported over 940 million international tourist arrivals which generated receipts of approximately US\$ 919 billion for the year 2010. These figures are expected to continue growing due to the changing global population, increase in disposable income and the unstoppable phenomenon of human mobility. The report says that of the 940 million worldwide arrivals 477 million went to Europe, 249 million to other parts of the world and 204 million to the Asia Pacific area. According to Tourism Authority of Thailand (2011), Thailand received a staggering 15.8 million international tourists in 2010. This means that 7.8% of the 204 million who came to Asia Pacific visited Thailand. Thailand is therefore becoming a tourist hub within the ASEAN community including Retired Long Stay Tourism.

It is evident that the phenomenon of travelling across borders continues for those in search of leisure, work, pleasure, and other tourism related activities. In the tourism field, tourists are always in search of something new, something better, something different than what they are used to. Tourism therefore is no longer just about holiday and travel, but it has become a way of life or a lifestyle.

Furthermore, the HSBC Quality of life index's Expat Experience report (2010) reported selected Thailand as the best country in the world to live in, in terms of quality of life. The concept of "quality life" is what Retired Long Stay Tourists are in search of. According to Pornchokechai (as cited in Chaisawat & Tungsomboon 2007: 46), foreigners are the engines driving the property boom in Phuket. In 2006, foreign property investment outpaced that by Thai buyers by Bt 38 billion, (US\$ 1140 billion). Phuket is considered to be the fastest growing property market in the world and indicators predict that 2 million Europeans will seek property in Southern Thailand in the next 10 years, Permpoolsab (as cited in, Chaisawat & Tungsomboon 2007:46). The Thai National Statistics Institute predicts that immigration population in Thailand will rise by as much as 5.5 million people by 2010 (Chaisawat & Tungsomboon 2007:46). This growth is as

a result of this influx of migrants, retired tourists coming to look for a retirement haven, as well as those who are looking for business opportunities that Phuket and Thailand as a whole has to offer.

Long Stay is one of the latest tourism trends or niche market found in Phuket alongside adventure, health, spa & massage, medical and second home tourism.

The concept of Long Stay has its roots in Japan. It is derived from the Japanese word “*rongsutei*” which means staying longer at a destination than originally intended, to the point of making it a second home in order to experience living abroad and eventually returning to ones country of origin after that period (Japanese Long Stay Foundation, 2002). In the Japanese context the term focuses on those tourists who “complete their circle”, and eventually return to their home countries. Tourism Authority of Thailand (2001) defines Long Stay tourists as: oversees visitors to Thailand to spend their leisure time in the country for over one month but not exceeding one year.

Both definitions above agree with Theobald’s (1994) analysis of the word *tour*, which is derived from the *Latin* word ‘*tornare*’ and the *Greek*, ‘*tornos*’, meaning ‘a lathe or circle, the movement around a central point or axis’. When the words are combined, they suggest the action of movement around a circle. Therefore, like a circle, a tour represents a journey in that it is a round-trip, i.e., the act of leaving and returning to the point of origin. Therefore, one who takes such a journey can be called a tourist.” In this definition, particular attention is put on the word “circle”, in that tourists are expected to complete this circle.

In Thailand, Long Stay Tourism started off in 2001 in five (5) specifically identified provinces of Chiang Mai, Sukhothai, HuaHin, Cha-am, Kanchanaburi and Nong Kai (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2010). This concept quickly spread out to the rest of Thailand including Phuket.

Phuket Long Stay Tourism is mushrooming, signified by the increase in property markets, condominiums, long stay villas and so forth. Even though there is an increase in Long Stay Tourists, statistics and information on this market is nonexistent for Phuket at this stage. Secondly, there is lack of research on this phenomenon in Phuket. Furthermore, more and more retirees are looking to retire outside their home countries (Howard, 2007), making Phuket a sought after retirement destination. The Thai Government perceives Retired Long Stay Tourists to

have the potential of directing foreign currency into the county. The foreign currency earned helps to strengthen the economy. In addition, Long Stay Tourists create working opportunities for the local people and income generated especially from the service industry and the property market contributes significantly towards uplifting the host community's standard of living.

Chutima Sidasathian (2010) pointed out that there were about 12,946 (twelve thousand nine hundred and forty six) Long Stay Visa's issued in Phuket between January 2009 – 25 August 2010, an indication that there are Long Stay Tourists living in Phuket. What is not clear however, is how many of these are Retired Long Stay Tourists? What is drawing them to Phuket? How many of them actually return to their home country as per the definition of the term and if they do not return, why not? What do they do during their time here and what are they looking to get out of this type of mobility?

Due to the limited research that is available for retired long stay tourists, continued research can provide much needed information on what they expect while here in Phuket. Since it is a market that is being promoted in Phuket and other areas of Thailand, results obtained from this study can provide insight that can be adapted by other areas to avoid similar pitfalls if any.

1.2 Aim of the Study

1.2.1 Aim of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to explore factors that make retirees take such bold steps in their old age to travel hundreds of miles across oceans to settle in a foreign land, to understand their experiences, needs and benefits they derive from this move and how they actually adapt to their new environment using a phenomenological approach. These aims are of interest in order to improve retired long stay planning and to give would- be retirees' better and up to date information.

1.2.2 Objective of the study

- 1) To identify main factor/s influencing Retired International Long Stay Tourists choice of a destination.
- 2) To investigate the benefits Retired International Long Stay Tourists are derive from Phuket -Thailand

3) To capture the experience and identify the adaptation strategies that Retired International Long Stay Tourists have employed to fit into their new environment in Phuket.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are designed specifically to assist the study to achieve its objectives.

1) What are the main factors that influence Retired International Long Stay Tourists in their choice of a destination?

2) What benefits accrue to Retired International Long Stay Tourists in this kind of venture?

3) What have been the most significant adaptations that Retired Long Stay Tourists had to make?

1.4 Significance of the study

Tourism has become an unstoppable phenomenon that is growing at an alarming pace and affecting all nations, by posing challenges to governments and communities alike. Therefore it has become critical to understand the tourist's motives, behavior, needs and challenges so that better planning can be done for them by the different host countries and communities.

Constant research in this field will provide the Thai Government and the Phuket Provincial Authorities with vital information pertaining to the needs of this specific market and how best to meet these needs.

Secondly, the study will provide insight into pitfalls often avoided, or unknown for better planning and management of this market in the future, not only in Phuket, but in Thailand as a whole.

This research can serve as a basis for similar studies in other parts of Thailand, as well as other markets by covering areas not discussed in this study.

This study is exploring a field where little research has been done to date in Thailand; especially in Phuket and it can serve as a benchmark for future studies in this field.

Tourist experience has always been of interest to scholars as people's habits, behaviors, characteristics and life desires continue to change. These changes need to be researched continually to allow understanding and proper provisions to be made in advance if at all possible.

The results from this study will be twofold; firstly to give better insight and understanding into the lives of Retired Long Stay Tourists and secondly, to make recommendations on how to best plan , enhance and accommodate this special market in all aspects.

1.5 Scope of the study

1.5.1 Scope of Time

Primary data for the study was conducted from June 2011 – August 2011, and the entire study is expected to be completed by November 2011.

1.5.2 Scope of Geography

The area that the study focused on was Phuket, Thailand, especially Chalong, Rawai and Patong, being the most favored places by Long Stay Tourists.

1.5.3 Scope of Demography

The research at hand focused specifically on Retired Western International Long Stay Tourist (50 years and above), who have been living in Phuket - Thailand for 6 months or longer in order to understand their experience as Long Stay Tourists, their challenges, behaviors, adaptations and needs.

1.5.4 Area of Research

The research focuses on the latest trends in tourism being Retired Long Stay Tourists, and how this market is experiencing its new lifestyle in Phuket, by focusing on some of the most popular areas for retirees and Westerners, mainly Patong, Rawai and Chalong.

1.6 Summary

Tourism has become one of the most significant foreign currency generating industries worldwide and today this industry has grown not only in international travel, but in diverse markets that have come to be associated with it. As this industry continues to grow, host countries are under pressure socially and environmentally to keep up with these changes and to put measures in place to accommodate it and its diverse needs and expectations. Long Stay Tourism is just one of these new types of tourism that has burst onto the Asian market, and countries are scrambling to capitalize on this market with a specific interest on the Retired Long Stay Tourists.

These tourists have pensionable incomes and investments at their disposal and they are looking for retirement havens outside their home countries. They are no longer just heading to developed countries, but to developing countries where their pensions can buy them a quality lifestyle. One of these countries is Thailand, in South-East Asia. This study would thus like to explore this market in Phuket Thailand and make suggestions and recommendation to the Phuket Provincial Authorities how to best cater for it.

Understanding the evolution of this market will help the study to effectively answer the research objectives as set out at the beginning of this study. Chapter 2 will therefore continue to gain insight from other researcher concerning the topic by drawing on what other researchers have already found concerning this market or related fields.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Adaptation Strategies:

A slow, usually unconscious modification of individuals and social activities in adjustment to cultural surroundings.

Benefits

An advantage or profit gained from something.

Life Experience:

Active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge and or skills. An event or a series of events participated in or lived through.

An individual's life impact and what they go through during their lifetime, their joy, happiness, sadness, good and bad times, ups and downs, what they do and what makes life worth living to them.

Long Stay Tourism (Long Stay Tourist):

Is a term derived from the Japanese word "*rongsutei*," which means staying longer at a destination than originally intended, to the point of making it a second home in order to experience living abroad and eventually returning to one's country of origin after that period (Japanese Long Stay Foundation 2002). A long stay tourist therefore is someone who undertakes this activity.

Phenomenology:

Phenomenology is a way of unfolding the dimensions of human experience and how we exist in, live in, our world. It examines: What is distinct in each person's experience, what is common to the experience of groups of people who have shared the same events or circumstances. A method of learning about another person by listening to their descriptions of what their subjective world is like for them.

Quality of life

The Oxford Dictionary defines this term as a general excellence of standards, levels or degrees of fineness one aspires to achieve. It can also be defined as distinctive attributes or improvements one wants to make.

Retired International Tourists (RIT)

One who is no longer employed but receiving a pensionable income from investment or Government Grants, who chooses to spend their retirement time in another country permanently, or on a temporary basis.

Retiree:

One who has retired from an occupation or profession, or who has permanently stopped working, or one who withdraws from work for rest or seclusion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The concept of Long Stay Tourism is gaining popularity, however there is little research and insight into this market to really understand and cater for it properly that's why it is critical to understand the driving forces behind this market. This chapter synthesizes previous researcher's studies for enhancement.

The Migration Policy Institute (2006, p. 2) identified various factors that they considered to have an influential effect on the movement of International Retirement Migration. These factors included climate, cost of housing, population growth, access to needed services (low income tax rates), accessibility of coastline and other recreational areas. Other researchers (Howard, 2007, Breuer, 2005, Morales, 2010) have gone further to be more specific in terms of the needed services stating that these can include medical services, low cost of living, less congested areas, peaceful political and economic stability. Others (Morales, 2005, Amin & Ingman, 2009) have found that people are drawn to areas where they have prior positive experiences.

The following section takes a deeper look into previous studies through literature review by looking at the concept of tourism and tourist typologies, theories migration that over the years have influenced human mobility, behavior and motives, International Retirement Migrations (IRM), Retirement Migration and Retiree Mobility, Second Homes and Long Stay Tourism.

2.1.1 The Tourist

The most accepted and widely used definition of a tourist was proposed by the International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO) in 1963 and approved in 1968 by the World Tourist Organization (WTO), (Cohen, 1984.). It states that "International tourists are temporary visitors staying at least twenty-four hours in the country visited and the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings, a) leisure, (recreational, holiday, health, study, religion and sport), b) business (family mission and meetings), IUOTO, (1963: 14). Hunziker and Krapf (Mhlanga, n.d) on the other hand defined tourist as people who travel the sum of the phenomena and the relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-

residents, *insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity*

Due the increase in human and tourist mobility, the term tourist / tourism has become blurred. Researchers are being challenged to keep up with the fast pace of terms being applied to describe tourists in their varied categories to a point of asking where to draw the line when it comes to the distinction. Interesting to note, is that tourists themselves are distinguishing themselves from one another.

Historically tourism has evolved and has become a much sought after past time activity. This evolution has brought with it expectations from tourists and challenges for the destinations. The expectations from the tourist point of view drove Cohen, (1972) to study the tourist experience. Cohen examined the tourists experience by interrogating the nature of a tourist and defined tourists as “travelers for pleasure”, who cannot be described as general types. He also alerted readers to the fact that types of tourists are based on the place and significance of their experience in their total world – view, their relationship to a perceived “centre” and the location of that centre. He identified and classified the tourists into two main categories based on degrees of institutionalization, according to their unique needs and expectations. The institutionalized tourists, is made up of organized mass and individual mass tourists - who desire comfort and safety. Non- institutionalization tourists comprise of drifters and explorers who follow their own path. Cohen did not only look at the types of tourist, but he went further to look at the tourist’s expectations when they arrived at their destinations. He grouped them grouping them into five categories, namely: diversionary, recreational, experiential, experimental and existential tourists. In 1979, Cohen amended his typologies.

He proposed that tourists search for pleasure, by undertaking modern pilgrimage or experimental travel. They search authenticity or the alternative lifestyle but might not be totally immersed in foreign culture. It is the existential who become totally immersed in the foreign culture.

Further to Cohen’s typologies, Plog (1972) identified psycho-centrics, mild centrics, and allo-centrics. Smith, (Choibamroog n.d.) identified seven types of tourists, charter, mass, incipient, usual, offbeat, elite, explorers. Boorstin and later Turner & Ash, (Cohen 1975), noted that tourism is an aberration, a symptom of the malaise of the age, and that tourist want

superficial, contrived experiences (Cohen, 1975: p. 179). However MacCannell (Cohen 1975) did not agree with Boorstin's findings, claiming rather that tourist demand authenticity.

Adding to the discussion on typologies, Wickens (2002) argues that these typologies neglected the voice of the tourist and he believes that different tourist types experience the same host community in different ways. In his study, he went on to identify five micro-types of tourists characterized by the dominant themes of holiday and or activity. Wickens (2002) came with the individual mass tourist, the cultural heritage type, the raver (who are confined to the beaches and night life), Shirley Valentines (romantic experience) and the heliolatrous types (those looking for sunshine).

From the discussion on tourist typologies, it is apparent that a tourist is a short term visitor who eventually returns to his/her place of origin. However, today there are many tourists who have started off in one of these categories, but eventually stay longer than the original intended time frame of one year.

2.1.2 Tourist Experience

The world is witnessing the emergence of the experience economy, Pine & Gilmore, (Quan & Wang, 2004) and tourism is one of the pioneer examples of the experience economy. Since the 1970's, this phenomena has caught the attention of scholars as reflected in the social sciences literature researched in the last three decades by scholars like (Cohen, 1979, Ryan, 1997a,b; Urry, 1990) and others. Scholars that have defined, studied tourism and the tourist experience have brought to light better understanding and many definitions of these terms.

Many researchers (Quan & Wang, 2004) have defined "tourism experience in various ways: Graburn, defines "tourism experience as a temporality, central to the tourism experience, which begins with the ordinary and progresses into the heightened moments and return to the ordinary. Jennings, proposes that it is something that it is beyond the chronological dimensions, Cary, views it as "a tourist moment", Urry, defines it as the "tourist gaze", while McCabe and Foster, term it as a socially constructed term whereby the meaning of the tourist experience is associated with multiple interpretation from social, environmental and activity components of the overall experience. Barthes, Boorstin, Turner & Ash, perceive tourism as another example of cultural decadence which views the tourist experience as a superficial and trivial quest for the pseudo-events and artificial attractions. MacCannell however countered this definition believing

that the experience is a meaningful modern ritual involving a quest for authenticity. Munt and Uriely (Choibamroong n.d.), on the other hand built on Boorstins pseudo-event by defining it as a simulation focusing around “hyper real experience” and the “other”-MacCannell’s quest for authenticity.

Therefore the tourist experience is depicted as an obscure and diverse phenomenon constituted by the individual and it can be seen from two perspectives or approaches. Firstly, tourists experience is viewed as a social science and secondly as a marketing /management approach. Within the social sciences, the tourist experience has become one of the most studied areas of tourism.

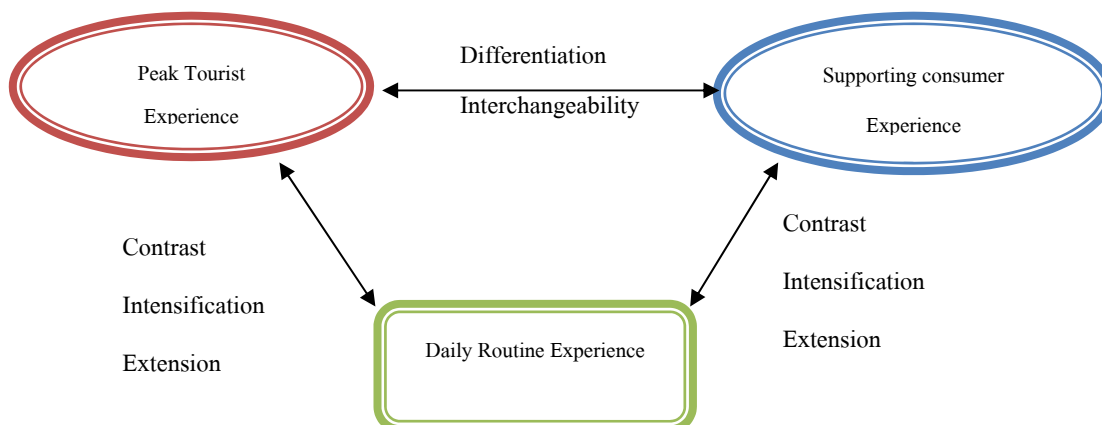
Quan and Wang draws attention to five variances of the tourist experience quoted from earlier researchers of the tourist experience.1) from a phenomenological approach, tourism focuses on the subjective experience from a stand point of the naïve tourist (Cohen & Neumann). The tourist experience as perceived from a Durkeimian approach which is equated to a quasi – religion, pilgrimage-like sacred journey, (Graburn, & MacCannell) which offers escape from the profane responsibilities and daily drudgery. 3) Tourist experience is also considered as a subjective psychological process. It is treated as the objective that can be studied in a positivist method, (Pearce, Lee & Compton), 4) it can be viewed as a critical approach that regards the tourist experience as an institutional pleasure-seeking activity resembling the opiate of the modern tourist (Van), and 5) tourist experience as a particular type of gaze, incorporating the powers of institutions of tourism industry and mass media (Urry), trained and shaped by cultures, value and dominated discourses such as romanticism.

Similarly, Uriely (Quan & Wang 2004) identified four conceptual developments in the tourist experience. The developments comprise 1)A turn from differentiation – de-differentiation of everyday life, and tourist experience. 2) A shift from generalizing to pluralizing conceptualizations. 3) Transformed focus from the toured objects to the tourist subjective negotiation of meaning and 4) movement from contradictory and decisive statement to relative and complementary interpretations which looks at the dimensions of the tourist evaluation of their personal experience.

Further Quan & Wang, 2004, notes that the tourist experience is purified as the experience that is in sharp contrast or opposing to the daily experience. They identified a peak

tourist and supporting consumer experience. The study revealed that if the supporting experience goes sour; the total tourist experience would be spoiled. Based on their findings and discussions, they proposed a two dimensional model of the peak and supporting experience.

Figure2.1 Conceptual model of the tourist experience



Sour: adopted from Quan & Wang, (2004 :300)

The peak refers to the experience of the attraction that constitutes the major motivations for tourism, while the support experience is that of gratifying basic consumer needs like eating and sleeping. The difference between these two experiences is elaborated through their relationship to the daily experience.

Relating further to the daily experience, Parker (Quan & Wang 2004), identified three types of relationship between work and leisure. The three types are extension, opposition and neutrality. What tourist experience is in sharp contrast to the daily experience, or the extension of the daily experience, or intensification of the daily experience, while supporting consumer experience is characterized by extension and at times by intensification of the daily experience. The two approaches are interchangeable.

How each component of the tourist experience contributes to tourist satisfaction (experience) partly depends on degrees and types of expectations and the tourist's adaptability to their new environment, Ryan (1994). The above approaches are not far from Vygotsky's (Molden at. el. 2006) social development theory of 1962, where he identified that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development, in that "every function of one's

cultural development appears firstly on a social and later individual level (between people and inwardly)”. Therefore humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction with each other, between their experiences and ideas and their environment they find themselves in.

From the discussion above it is clear that the tourist experience is regarded as the peak tourist experience being in sharp contrast to the daily experience. Therefore the relationship can be summarized by oppositions between daily and peak experiences, ordinary vs. extra ordinary, routine vs. unusual, familiar vs. novel, profane vs. the sacred. It is important to note from the above discussions that the tourist experience is crucial in all areas of the sense of the word, from the onset of searching, until the experience is (experienced) or attained.

People travel because they have identified a “gap” or “need” in their lives that they believe needs to be met, others travel because they long to experience different kinds of bodily or spiritual pleasure (Cohen, 1972) while others travel to experience change, (Smith, 1978) however in the end, each one of these, are “individuals” with different needs and desires and each experiences the environment differently.

2.1.3 Conceptual Framework of the Migration Decision

Wiseman (Stallmann & Espinoza, 1996) provides a useful conceptual framework of retirement migration. The retirement decision is a step by step process approach with different factors for each step. The process begins with an evaluation of satisfaction with current living arrangements – which includes 3 factors namely:

- Triggering mechanisms – personal changes and external factors which can be push or pull factors. Tourism or previous experience can serve as a pull factor in this step.
- Evaluation factors – which of the triggering factors might or might not make the move feasible?
- The type of move – ones evaluation is done, a decision to move or not to move is taken, taking into consideration the following: will the move be abroad, same country but different area, seasonal or permanent?

Wiseman & Roseman (Stallmann & Espinoza, 1996) noted that once the decision to move is made, the destination for the move is selected and tourism experiences may play a role, providing information on potential sites. The search for destination places is influenced by

vacation experiences and many retirees consider only those locations where they have vacationed and to which they have developed strong attachments. However, there are retirees who move without prior vacation experience, but rely on word of mouth from friends who have travelled before.

Litwak & Longino Jr. (1987) also discussing the decision process, pointed to three kinds of moves which tend to occur among the aging in a modern society:

- when they retire
- when they experience moderate forms of disability
- when they have major forms of chronic disability.

Massey et al., (1993) concluded that after a person has migrated, triggering mechanisms may again come into play to cause him/her to consider another move as retirees continue to age, health declines, widowed or their financial situation becomes less secure. However in Litwak & Longino Jr. (1987) they conclude that once a person has moved they were unlikely to anticipate a return move unless there are ties back to the home community where they can get care.

Taking a deeper look into the triggers of the decision to migrate, Dwyer (2000) states that these have been the focus of attention for demographers' and economists for a long time. Through qualitative interviewing he identified five loose clusters of triggers that are behind the motivational decision of the European retiree migrants. The clusters include:

- Economic issues - work, lower living cost;
- Family issues - proximity of family, domestic care, marriage effect;
- Welfare state issues - health care services;
- Life course issues - wish to be buried 'at home'; and
- Regional issues - regional appeal, climate, and so on.

Dwyer (2000) found that health care is a strong and recurrent theme in decision making by retirees and the climate is not necessarily the most important factor in the decision to undertake overseas migration. While health might deter the older retirees from moving, younger retirees might move because their health is still good. On the other hand, King and Patterson's survey (Torkington, 2010) on the British retired migrants in Tuscany showed that the retirees'

move to Tuscany was also influenced by factors as outlined by Dwyer (2000) namely: work, family links, antipathy to UK, and a positive image of the culture in Tuscany.

Furthermore, factors determining migration decision vary based on the age of the elderly. The elderly migrate to avoid high cost of living, income and property tax, whereas the younger elderly migrate to states with warmer climate, favorable government policies regarding income tax and welfare spending. Health is another determining factor in retirement migration decision. While Litwak & Longino (1987) emphasized family ties and health condition as determining factor in the decision to move, in a later study Longino, et al. (1991) suggested that income might have a buffering effect on this relationship. In another study by Bulmash et al. (2003) they examined the impact of factors such as income level, health status, life expectancy, unemployment rate, capacity utilization, S&P 500 Returns on the retirement decision of the population between the age groups 55-64 and 65 & older over a period of 29 years between 1971-2000.

They found that age group 55-64 - income level, life expectancy, unemployment rate and capacity utilization influence the retirement decision. For the age group 65 & older - income level, health status, capacity utilization and unemployment rate were the factors influencing retirement decision. Bulmash et al. (2003) found that health status is not a significant factor influencing the retirement decision.

It is clear that there are many factors affecting the decision process for retirees to migrate or not to migrate. It is also clear that every one might be influenced by one or more of the factors listed above, while at the same time, each individual may prioritize which factor carries more weight for them.

2.1.4 Theories of Migration

Research on international migration is plentiful, and many theories exist that explain the causes and perpetuation of this phenomenon. For the benefit of adding value to this study, this section will therefore discuss theories of migration from the viewpoint of Massey (1993; 1994; 2003), Lee et al (2008), Hou et al (2011) and Rystad (1992) and others.

Researchers have defined migration in several ways: Lee, et. al. (2008) defined migration as a multifaceted process that maybe either a cause or consequence of changes in socioeconomic status or other characteristics, and that factors that may course migration are practically infinite.

Boyle & Halfacree (Hou et. al 2011) defines migration as a movement of a person (a migrant) between two places for a certain period of time'' and depending on the length of time involved, migration can be either temporary or permanent. Raystad (1992) defines it as a permanent phenomenon rather than a temporary movement (distinguishing four main groups, permanent residence, temporary workers, refugees and illegal aliens).

Migration characteristics is said to influence one's knowledge of distant opportunities, the ability or willingness to respond to spatially distant opportunities, and the prospects of gaining from it. On the other hand, place characteristics are prominent in explaining migration in terms of opportunities that the distance has to offer, Massey (1993). Dogan & Goss's study (Lee, Toney & Berry, 2008) points out that while education occupation and income are among the most common variables in the analyses of migration in modern societies, research is ambiguous as to whether high status individuals are more likely to migrate than low status individuals. Furthermore, education, occupation and income are fundamental sources for individuals in modern society and combined are recognized as key determinants of an individual's overall social status. The study also notes that migration rate is higher in males than in females and that married people are less likely to migrate than individuals.

McKenzie & Rapoport (2007) pointed out that international migration is costly and initially only the middle class of the wealth distribution may have both the means and incentives to migrate. Massey (2003) notes that studies have consistently shown that international migrants do not come from poor isolated places that are disconnected from the world markets, but from regions that are undergoing rapid change as a result of their incorporation into global trade, information and production networks. Therefore international migration does not stem from a lack of market development, but from the development of markets themselves. Massey et al. (1993) in the study of "Theories of International Migration: outlined several theories that explain migration (micro, meso and macro theories) and also admitted at the same time that the theories might contradict each other because they use different scales of space and time. Massey on the other hand identifies four dimensions of migration: that of time frame, locus of action, level of analysis, and cause versus effect. At the same time he also points out that these distinct subgroups of study prevent complete understanding of the migration process.

Below in figure 1 is a comparative outline of the migration theories of Massey (1993), namely: micro-which takes into account values, desires and expectancies, meso – which centers on collectives and social networks, macro (or neoclassical) - focusing more on opportunity structures.

The traditional neoclassical theory (macro theory) explains migration as the result of geographic discrepancies in the supply and demand of labor. This movement is "mirrored" by capital: investment moves from capital-rich to capital-poor areas. According to Massey et al (1993), individuals decide to migrate because of a cost-benefit calculation. People move to where their output is most valuable, where they will receive the most benefits. This theory centers mostly on the movement of labor migration and wages.

The micro theory on the other hand is more on values or desires and expectancies. This theory encompasses the life of comfort, wealth, improvement and leisure which the retirees are seeking. The meso theory is all about social networks and ties. Other theories that Massey et al (1993) looked at included dual labor market theory - which looks at the demand of labor rather than supply. World Systems Theory – which examines the essentially capitalist economy since the 16th century, and that its structural needs must be satisfied by migration. This theory might explain migration patterns, but there is relatively limited research in this area.

Table 2.1: 3 Stylized levels of migration analysis (Massey et al. 1993)

MICRO	MESO	MACRO (neoclassical)
Values or desires & expectancies	Collectives & Social networks	Opportunity structure
<i>Individual values and expectancies</i>	<i>Social ties</i>	<i>Economics</i>
Improving and securing, survival	Strong ties- family & households	Income and unemployment differentials
wealth	Weak ties – network of potential movers, brokers and stayers	<i>Politics</i>
status		Regulations of spatial mobility through nation state and internationals regimes
comfort		Political repression
stimulation		Ethnic, national and religious conflict
autonomy	<i>Symbolic ties –</i> kin, ethnic, national, political and religious organizations, symbolic communities	<i>Cultural settings</i>
affiliation and morality		Dominant norms and discourses
	<i>Content of ties transaction-</i> obligations, reciprocity and solidarity, information, control and access to resources of others.	<i>Demography and ecology</i>
		Population growth, availability of arable land
		Level of technology

From his studies, Massey (2003) outlined several theoretical truths about international migration:

- International migration does not stem from a lack of economic growth and development but from development itself.
- Immigration is a natural consequence of broader processes of social, political, and economic integration across international borders

- When they enter developed capitalist nations, immigrants are generally responding to a strong and persistent demand that is built into the structure of post-industrial economies.
- Immigration that surprises many people is that migrants who enter a developed country for the first time generally do not intend to settle there permanently.
- International migration is often less influenced by conditions in labor markets than by those in other kinds of markets
- International migrants accumulate experience abroad, their motivations change, usually in ways that promote additional trips of longer duration, yielding a rising likelihood of settlement over time.
- International migration is that it tends to build its own infrastructure of support over time. As a result, migratory flows acquire a strong internal momentum make them resistant to easy manipulation by public policies.
- Immigrant flows do not last forever—they have a natural life that may be longer or shorter but are necessarily of limited duration.

While Massey et al. (1993) concentrated mostly on labor and international migration, Lee in his study (Hou et al, 2011) draws the reader's attention to Ravenstein's "Laws" of migration, in which he observed that human migration is influenced by Push–Pull effects. Currently, the Push–Pull model is the most common models used to interpret human migration. This model regards migration as the consequence of the interaction between the push effects at the place of origin and the pull effects at the destination. Push effects (or socio-psychological according to Dann 1977) are the negative factors or motives that compel people to leave their place of origin. For example, push effects include a lack of work opportunities, the difficulty of finding a spouse, a decline in natural resources or increase in the prices paid for them, oppression due to political beliefs and natural disasters. On this factor, Dann (1977) emphasizes that travel is a response to what is missing (or lacking) creating that pull factor which eventually drives a person to something that will satisfy that desire.

Pull effects, on the other hand, are the positive aspects of the destination that attract people to it. Better development and work opportunities, higher incomes, a good educational system and a comfortable climate are all examples of pull effects. This Push–Pull model can be used to analyze most types of migratory behavior, and it offers a solid theoretical framework to explain population migration. However, it does not fully account for the migration of individuals.

Adding to the Push-Pull Model, Compton (1979) identified the Seven Push Motivations Theory of: the desire to escape, escape from mundane environment, explore and evaluating oneself, relaxation, less constrained behavior, enhancement of kinship relations and facilitation of social interactions (novelty and education).

It is clear from the above discussions that international migration has a strong impact of political, social and economic consequences on both the host and receiving country. Although the consequences of migration are self-evident, the underlying causes of migration are not necessarily always clear. Many theories compete to explain the fundamentals behind the movement of human capital. However, migration being a complicated occurrence can only be understood thoroughly through rigorous study (Massey, 1993). Therefore it is important to note that the most complete understanding of international migration comes not from one individual theory, but from an understanding of a combination of research and theory on international migration. Thus the importance of continues research in all areas of human movement cannot be over emphasized.

2.1.5 Social Constructivism Theory

Social theory seeks to explain change in society—how it develops, what factors facilitate and inhibit it, and what results from it. Change becomes possible because people and states can start thinking about each other in new ways and thus create new norms that may be radically different from old ones. Constructivists therefore look at change through the analysis of social interaction, (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010).

Society is socially constructed by people; it does not exist in isolation. Therefore the most important aspect of relations is social and not material. Society is constituted by ideas, not by material forces. It is a human invention or creation not of a physical or material kind but of a purely intellectual and ideational kind. It is a set of ideas, a body of thought, a system of norms, which has been arranged by certain people at a particular time and place. According to constructivist philosophy, the social world is not a given: it is not something ‘out there’ that exists

independently of the thoughts and ideas of the people involved in it. History is not an evolving external process that is independent of human thought, (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010; Boghossian, 2001).

Human beings rely on ‘understanding’ of each other’s actions and assigning ‘meaning’ to them. In order to comprehend human interaction, we cannot merely describe it in the way we describe physical phenomena we need a different kind of interpretive understanding. In social theory, constructivists emphasize the social construction of reality, (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010).

Social structures have three elements: shared knowledge, material resources, and practices. Social structures are defined, in part, by shared understandings, expectations, or knowledge. Everything involved in the social world of men and women is made by them (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010). The social world is a world of human consciousness: of thoughts and beliefs, of ideas and concepts, of languages and discourses, of signs, signals and understandings among human beings, especially groups of human beings, such as states and nations. The social world is an inter-subjective domain: it is meaningful to people who made it, live in it, and who understand it because they made it and they are at home in it.

Ideas are widely shared among people, and regardless, they must be widely shared to matter; nonetheless they can be held by different groups, such as policy makers, social groups or society. Tannenwald (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010) notes that ideas are mental constructs held by individuals, sets of distinctive beliefs, principles and attitudes that provide broad orientations for behavior and policy. There are many different kinds of ideas, namely: ideologies or shared belief systems, normative beliefs, cause-effect beliefs, and policy prescriptions, (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010).

Copeland (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010) points to one major problem that people face in society: which is uncertainty. Uncertainty is about the present and future intention of others. At any given moment, there may be peace and quiet and then something drastic happens to disrupt that peace. The problem of uncertainty is significantly increased by the fact of deception. Constructivists tend to assume that social interaction between people is always sincere and that states genuinely attempt to express and understand each others’ motives and intentions. However there is a pervasive element of deception in the relations between many forms of society. In other words, are states and people really peaceful or do they merely pretend to be peaceful?

The focus of social constructivism is on human awareness or consciousness and its place in world affairs. The social world is a world of human consciousness: of thoughts and beliefs, of ideas and concepts, of languages and discourses. Humans are a very plastic species - in other words, individual are constructed from the society and times in which they live. To say of something that it is socially constructed is to emphasize its dependence on contingent aspects of our social selves, (Jackson & Sorensen, 2010). It is to say: this thing could not have existed had we not created it; and we need not have created it at all, at least not in its present form, had we been a different kind of society, had we had different needs, values, or interests, we might well have created a different kind of thing. There are certainly many things, and facts that are socially constructed in the sense specified by this core idea: money, citizenship and newspapers, for example. None of these things could have existed without society; and each of them could have been constructed differently had we so chosen, (Boghossian, 2001).

The idea of Long Stay was proposed by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and approved by the Thai Government in 1998. As per Social Construction Theory, that's what society does, it creates opportunities and things that others can have and or enjoy. At the same time, the concept has created a "new type of society" in Phuket, that of retired long stay tourists. This theory also points to other factors that will be discussed in the findings of the study.

2.2 Literature Review of International Cases:

2.2.1 Scale of Demographic Changes and the ageing population:

In 1900 Centre for Strategic & International Studies reported that only 4% of the US population was over 65. In 1950 8%, in 2000 13% and by 2040 it is expected to be 20% (Ryan & Trauer, 2003). In the same study, Grandmaster in Aging reported that one in every eight Americans is 65 years or older and by 2020 it will be one in every sixth, and this number is expected to double between 2000 – 2030. The report continues by stating that Europeans and Japanese are graying even more rapidly, and that by 2050 those older than 80 are expected to equal or surpass those younger than 20 years in Germany, Japan, and Italy, if current trends are sustained. On such trends, Germans working age population could in the next 5 decades fall by 43%, France by 25% Italy by 47% and Japan by 36 %.

Global ageing is a trend that is fundamental, irreversible and is transforming the world (stated in his key note address to the Second Plenary of the Commissions of Global Ageing, I.K. Gujral, and former PM of India). He highlighted one major concern/problem particularly in the developing world, of developing policies to take care of the elderly while forecasting a possible scenario that an ageing world will be a world in a slow and protracted economy decline.” For him the means through which such scenario could be defeated is by means of globalization, technology and the free movement of people. Thus the signs of significant population change and movement are already upon the world, Ryan & Trauer, (2003).

The emergence of global population aging as one of the most important demographic trends in the world today has stimulated scholars to give increased attention to social, political and economic implications. The United Nations (2007) edition of World Population Ageing identifies 4 salient aspect of Global Population Ageing (Ryan & Trauer, 2003). The aspects are that the population aging:

- Is at an unprecedented rate: that is throughout history, the elderly made up 5% of the population and that in no region did the elderly ever comprise more than one tenth of the population before 1950.
- Is pervasive, meaning that the per cent of the population aged 65 and above is projected to triple from 2000-2050.
- Is enduring and lastly,
- Have profound consequences. From the UN (2007) edition, the report states that in 2000 the oldest population was exclusively European and Japanese however this is expected to change by 2030 as Russia, China, Canada, US, Brazil, Argentina, Chili, Australia and other Asian countries follow suit.

In the Asian region, they are just starting to experience population aging. However, the number of people aged 65 and above is expected to grow over the next 50 years and it is estimated that for the region the population will increase by 314% from 207 million (in 2000) – 857 million in 2050, and 430 % in Southeast Asia. Japan has the oldest population of any major country (Ogawa & Matsukura, 2005) and it is expected to maintain that place, as its elderly

continue to age rapidly. China on the other hand draws attention to its demography because of its 1.3 billion population (Chen F. & Liu G, n.d.).

In the forth coming decade of the 21st Centaury tourism will face change, which will emanate from different factors mainly, Technological, Social, Political and Economic. The source of change can be unexpected, like Sep. 11 2001 or developmental. There is one powerful source of change that is sending long term warning signals of transitions yet to occur, and that is Demographic Change (Ryan & Trauer, 2003)

Societal development and socio-demographic changes have always had an impact on mobility and migration and demographers continue to ask the question, “Why do people move?” This is not likely to be different in the twenty first century Rojek & Opaschowski (Ryan & Trauer, 2003). However traditional mobility has been seen as possessing two facets: Basic needs – of work, education, housing and mobility based on a desire to be away from home for pleasure, or mobility of touristic nature Urry (Ryan & Trauer, 2003). Tourism has produced tourism nomads in search of something different in a temporary home away from home setting. Yet tourism has been referred to as the experience industry of the 21st Century and it is part of a societal framework that includes Sociopolitical Agenda’s (policies, registrations, freedom and rights to travel), Economic Concerns local and global, Environmental Issues, local and global, Socioeconomic Aspects (age, gender, education, income professional status/work, household structure and time budget) and lastly, Socio-cultural Factors (lifestyle, values and beliefs). All these are important when considering trends within tourism and experiential mobility. However socio-cultural factors or psychographic, specifically those of the lifestyle concept are generally thought to be more influential in shaping the demand for tourism than the previously domineering socioeconomic and demographic indicators (Born et. al. 2000, Ryan, 2003a)

These figures are particularly important to this study, because the study observe a very interesting phenomenon of International Retirees coming to settle in Asia, while at the same time, Asia is faced with a rapidly increasing elderly population. Of concern are the challenges International Retirees are posing to the governments of the Asian countries as the region itself tries to deal with its elderly. All the above changes can have a negative or positive effect on the movement of people around the globe, and part of that move is for IRM, other forms of Migration and Long Stay Tourism. Alternatively, demographic and social changes, societal framework and

traditional mobility will continue to impact and have an effect on human movement. (Uhlenberg, 2009)

2.2.2 Retired & International Retirement Migration

Retiring in a country where living expenses are considerably inexpensive is becoming a preferred option for many retirees. International Retirement Migration (IRM) is not unique only to US seniors. It has become a popular trend throughout Europe, (Koch-Schulte, 2008, Howard, 2007). The general perception that the retirement migration of retirees to overseas is “amenity-led” migration and that the retirees are simply motivated to move because they anticipate a pleasant and enjoyable lifestyle in the destinations, is being questioned by the latest IRM research. The rising cost of health and living are just some of the strong push factors for seniors to migrate to a foreign land after retirement.

While a vast amount of literature is available on the migration patterns of the general population, research is lacking on why the elderly people move. Specifically there are only a few studies that address this question, “Why do elderly people move to foreign countries?” Perhaps research on this topic is severely lacking because of the newness of this type of elderly migration. However the increasing popularity of the elderly international migration is drawing the attention of gerontologists, sociologists, as well as policy makers, (Amin & Ingman, 2009).

To understand what motivates migration at different stages of old age, Litwak and Longino (1987) developed a typology of elderly migration model. They applied the life course model and suggest that older people move because of the institutional pressure resulting from the modern technology and kinship structures. They identified three types of moves that reflect the changing conditions at different stages of life-course namely: amenity-seeking, assistance-seeking, and disability-impelled. The *amenity-seeking* migration happens early in retirement for a small minority of retired persons who are in good health and are affluent.

Similar to Litwak & Longino (1987), Wiseman & Roseman (1979) developed a typology of elderly migration based on their decision making processes. According to this typology, “movement to amenity” is the type of migration where the elderly people plan about it well in advance before retirement. The push and pull factors that Wiseman & Roseman (1979) attributed to their typology involved environmental stress, reduced difference in the middle class lifestyle between suburban and urban location and increased income. On the other hand Amin & Ingman

(2009) identified recreational opportunity, scenic beauty, pleasant climate, friendly culture, lower crime rates, and lower cost of living as pull factors for the amenity seekers. Decision for this type of migration involves vacation experience, or knowledge about the retirement communities in the destination. This move is usually made by married couples.

Koch-Schulte (2008), citing Williams et. al., discussed four major reasons for the growth of IRM: The reasons include: increased longevity, early retirement, increased flow of lifetime income, and exposure to foreign countries. Due to the increase of longevity and the change of retirement age (or increase of early retirement), a growing number of retirees expect to live another 15-20 years after their retirement. The increased flow of lifetime income and accumulation of wealth provides a wide variety of retirement options and strategies to retirees. Additionally their increased knowledge and information about foreign countries and the experience of visiting them during their earlier years help retirees to consider retirement in a foreign country as an option.

Retired Migration and IRM are the closest studies that can be reviewed. They have similar characteristics to those affecting the retired long stay tourists.

Following, the study looks at some International Retirement Migration studies that have been done of German senior citizens in the Canary Islands, (Breuer 2005), Swedish retirees in Spain, (Gustafson 2002), British retirees in the Mediterranean, (Mason 2002), lifestyle migrations in central Portugal, (Sardinha 2011), and US Citizens: Retirement Migration to Los Cabos, Mexico.

These studies have centered mostly on Europeans and Americans in Europe, Mexico and Spain, however the findings have shed some light on what attracts the retirees to these destinations, especially the coastal towns, how they adapt, their knowledge of local culture and activities that they participate in. Thus, the rest of the world still has a great deal of research work on this market, but it can learn from what has been achieved from prior so far.

In 2005 Breuer studied the differences between German seasonal and permanent residents in Spain. He realized that the generic concept of tourism required close examination. He observed an intrinsic contradiction between generic definitions of a tourist with that of the migrants under study. The same concern was raised by Gustafson's 2002. He studied Swedish residents in Spain who consider themselves as Spanish residents. These Swedish visitors objected

strongly against the term tourist when being spoken off. They preferred to be called residents, even though they only spend a few months in Spain and return to Sweden at some point. Gustafson termed this “*anti-tourism phenomena*”. Mason (2002) and Sardinha (2011), on the other hand didn’t dwell too much on the issue of “residence”. However from their studies; one can conclude that these migrants also prefer the term “residence” as opposed to tourist. Haug et al., (2006) came across these *anti-tourism phenomena* in their study of the Norwegians. They preferred to be called residents. However, when they dined out and pursued leisure activities, they took a touristic approach because they believed that they had to be treated “special”.

From the above, it can be clearly stated that tourists encompass a variety of individuals with different motives, needs and desires. Of importance to this study is to understand what type of tourists are long-stay tourists and what do they look for – or expect when they get to their destination and if in anyway, do they display similar behaviors. The above study’s findings are discussed under the following categories.

2.2.2.1 Attractions for retirees:

Climate, health, cost of living, previous positive experience and connection to the choice destination are just some of the factors that draw retirees back to these destinations during their retirement (Breuer 2005; Gustafson 2002; Manson 2002; Sardinha 2011; Morales 2010). Whereas economic factors is also a generally accepted reason for this move, Breuer and Gustafson point out that most European retirees do not move because of direct economical necessities of working life. Their move is rather a strategy for coming to terms with transition from professional to retirement life.

Breuer argues further that retirement migration can be explained by both amenity and disengagement, which states that as people grow older their behaviors, activities they participate in and social interactions change. In this case the warm weather in Spain becomes the pull factor for retirees, followed by health issues, cost of living and other less important factors. On the other hand with the Americans retiring to Mexico, economic factors emerged as the major reason for making the move, followed by the natural environment and the friendliness of the Mexican people (Mason, 2002). Haug et al. (2006), in their study of the Norwegians in Spain, found that they are more attracted to Spain because of the existing home-from home icons of familiarity, in that they were able to join other Norwegians in familiar surroundings that provided

security and comfort. For the Norwegians, the infrastructure functioned as an environmental bubble (Cohen 1972, 1977).

Just as each individual is unique and has an essential biological inner nature which each has to discover and realize, even so each one is drawn and motivated by different needs, reasons and motives. These factors within individuals is what makes them special and worth studying, because each one or groups, will highlight different motives that drive them or motivate them to do whatever it is that they desire to do.

2.2.2.2 Adaptability

Like the Swedish in Gustafson's study, the Norwegians also wanted to dissociate themselves from tourists, by adopting a more Norwegian lifestyle in Spain, going about their day as they would in Norway, and wherever possible contacting other Norwegians for work that need to be done, claiming more reliability. This sentiment was observed by Nash (1970) in his study of the American residents in which he detected that there was a negative attitude towards the locals. Gustafson (2002) found that the Swedish were more accommodating of the locals. The British, German and Dutch in Portugal, adopt the same concept, of joining communities with similar backgrounds as it made them feel safer (Sardinha, 2011).

2.2.2.3 Knowledge, culture and activities

Gustafson's (2002) Swedish respondents showed knowledge of Spain, their immediate vicinity and local conditions. Haug et al. (2006) found that while the Norwegians equipped themselves with the knowledge of the destination, they avoided buying Spanish clothes and dressing like the Spaniards. Both groups of respondents believed that the food, wine and attractions are what they love about Spain. They eagerly attend tourist attractions or cultural activities, but as tourists. Breuer (2005) discovered that German residential migrants believed that the Spaniards lacked environmental awareness but were more tolerant. The seasonal migrants tolerate shortcomings, but also tend to voice their dissatisfaction, or preferred to go to Germany for treatments they considered serious. Where the Swedish had difficulties defining themselves in terms of norms and customs in Spain, the Norwegians were sure that they wanted to be treated special, as tourists, even though they do not regard themselves as such. The peacefulness and freedom of Spain cannot be over emphasized. The Norwegians regarded Spaniards as noisy and messy, disorganized, difficult to handle and they did not take care of their gardens. Therefore,

what one society may consider as important, doesn't necessarily mean that it is also considered important in another society.

Much of the review on retirement migration looked at Europe as this is where most of the studies have been done so far. However there are some recent studies in Thailand, of Western retirees (Howard, 2007; 2009) which will be discussed later under the ASEAN literature review.

Despite the significance of various forms of migration, these forms of migration remain poorly understood and collectively conceptualized (Amit, 2007). Previous research has attempted to link these forms of mobility using umbrella concepts such as retirement, leisure, amenity-seeking or seasonal migration, counter-urbanization and second homes. As a result of their restricted scope none of these conceptualizations have succeeded in uniting the various elements of what is believed to be a wider phenomenon (O'Reilly & Benson, 2009). The other reason for lack of retirement migration research is given by Casado-Diaz et al., & Williams et al. (Koch-Schulte 2008), who notes that statistics and definitions vary widely amongst countries and jurisdictions, making it difficult to perform research.

From the above literature, the study notes that more research needs to be done to effectively understand and be able to accommodate IRM much better. Secondly, human mobility creates interesting phenomena that still needs to truly be understood as to why humans move about. What is their motives, what do they get out of it. In the past, humans moved because they were looking for grazing for their animals, settling areas and for water and economic reasons. Even now that they have these things available, humans continue to move and set new trends and patterns of human mobility.

2.2.3 Second Homes

Within the literature concerning Long Stay Tourism, quite often there is mention of Second Homes. Again this concept, just like many others used to describe tourism and tourist trends, is pointing to people who move with the intention of setting up a home for holiday purposes, either in their own country (but a different area) or in a different country where the weather and scenery is more appealing to them. Second homes studies (Gustafson, 2008; Breuer, 2005; Kaltenborn, 2009; Ono, 2005) relate retirees and migration. Rye in his study describes Second Homes as a "curse and blessing" phenomenon which stimulates the local economy in the

short or at times longer periods of time. He notes that Second Home owners bring with them a new lifestyle and different perceptions which at times can and may lead to social and cultural tensions. Kaltenborn (2009) points out that people decide on second homes based on lifestyle, attachments to the place, activity preference or economic identity-affordability and so forth.

Breuer, 2005; Gustafson, 2008; Kaltenborn, 2009, all point to the importance of environmental impact in relation to second homes and how communities are being sidelined to make way for these lucrative markets. Second Home owners do not perceive any negative impacts. They rather point to the economic benefits, disposable incomes at their disposal and job creation opportunities. Communities on the other hand point to changes of lifestyle, disturbances to wildlife, pollution and other landscape impacts that such developments bring with them.

Second Homes in Asia have become extremely popular in countries like Malaysia, and Vietnam, where foreigners can own land, to Singapore and Thailand where they can own property, but cannot own land. In each country “even though the concepts are similar to almost the same”, the markets are targeted under different concepts. In Malaysia they use terms like “the grey hair program”, or My Second Home, while in Thailand it is more under Long Stay tourism. Whatever the term used maybe, the concept still remains the same, that of Second Home Seekers, Holiday Home seekers (which can be permanent or on a temporary basis).

2.3 Literature Review: ASEAN

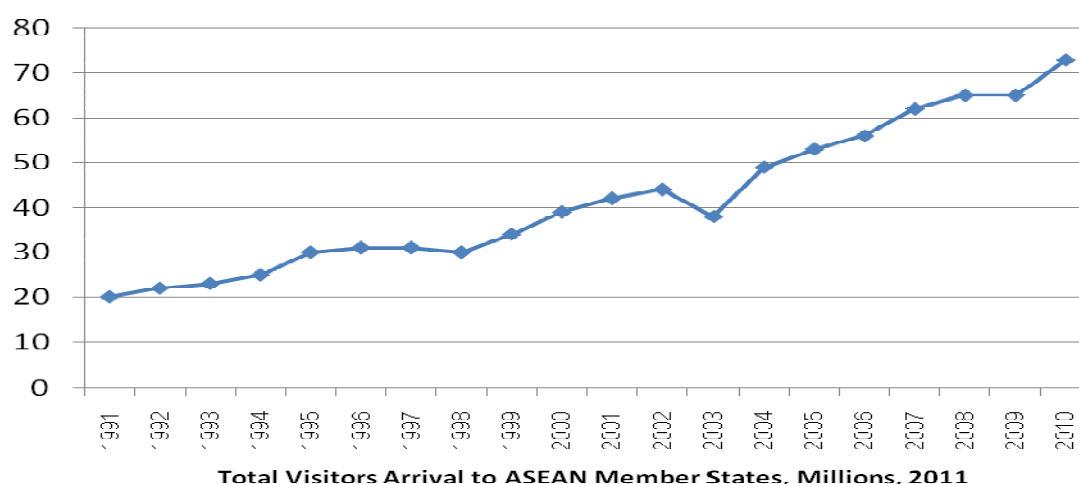
2.3.1 Tourism in South and South East Asia

South East Asia is currently one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the world with a staggering record of 73 million arrivals to ASEAN in 2010, an 11% increase from 2009. Of the 73 million, 47% is contributed to Intra-ASEAN of which Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand where the top recipients of the majority of these arrivals, followed by Indonesia, Philippines and other countries (Brunei, Cambodia, and Burma). This increase can be attributed to low cost carriers, free visa policies, ongoing marketing campaigns and improved quality of transportation and infrastructure (TAT, 2011). Being abundantly blessed with sandy beaches, coral reefs, thousands of islands and rich cultures, ASEAN has a competitive advantage over many world tourist destinations.

Although one of the most dynamic, fascinating and fastest growing region, ASEAN is also considered to be the most problematic tourism region with ongoing economic, political, racial, forest challenges, other environmental issues (hotel development which has lead to demand outstripped by supply), localization, globalization issues and lack of differentiation (Conference report 2, 2001). ASEAN and Asia in general tend to replicate the same environmental mistakes in the development process. This is re-emphasized by the fact that ASEAN and Asia continue to pursue the touristic dollar, prioritizing expansion of tourism infrastructure ahead of the pressing needs of the domestic population, leading to many starting to view tourism as a passport to development factors, while others regard it as an anti-development, and there are those who view it as the most effective means of spreading economic activities.

In spite of the tourism opportunities that in a way have put many ASEAN countries on the map, the region is still faced with other challenges like unplanned development, environmental degradation and damaged coral by recreational activities. (e.g. in Pattaya and Patong in Thailand, Candi Dasa –Bali in Indonesia and BatuFerringi on Penang Island in Malaysia). These unplanned developments of coastal tourism in Asia have resulted in and will continue to have negative impacts on the coastal environment. Another challenge faced by ASEAN is the “hub and gateway” - which country within ASEAN is best suited to be the hub and or gateway for Asia.

Figure 2.2 Total International Visitors Arrivals Member States



Source: ASEAN Tourism Ministers meeting 2011

In the midst of all this, is Thailand which is considered as Asia's most popular destination, affordable, with rich historical and culinary culture, attractions, shopping, hotels and resorts especially in Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket and Chiang-Mai. Thailand considers tourism as a key service industry, which contributed 5.27% in 2003 and 6.7% in 2007 of the GDP. ASEAN and East Asia countries are Thailand's most major tourist markets, making up 63% of International Arrivals in 2005, mainly of Indonesia, 1.6%, Japan 10.35, Korea 7.06%, Malaysia 11.88%, Philippines 1.61% and Singapore with a 5.62%, being the six most tourism sources to Thailand and inbound tourism (Chang, Sriboonchitta & Wiboonpongse, 2009).

In Southern Thailand, is the beautiful and most visited Island of Phuket, which attracted over 3 million tourists in 2007 (TAT, 2007) of which 55% came from Japan and Malaysia, and others came from UK, USA, Australia, Germany, Scandinavia, and the markets just continue to grow, from the Middle East, Russia and China. With this increase in tourism markets and competition from neighboring countries, Thailand has started targeting specific markets e.g. Golf Tourism, Medical Tourism, Buddha Tourism, Second Homes and Long stay Tourism (TAT, 2007)

Thailand has been at the forefront of retirement and second homes development especially in Phuket and the Andaman Coast, but with tourism growth in the entire ASEAN and Asia, competition is also rife for this market, from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam (CD. Richard Ellis, 2007). Ellis, 2007, speaking from the Property point of view draws the reader to the challenges faced by Phuket to attract more of this market because of its strict restrictions on foreign ownership of property, restriction on working, and limited scope of resale and increase levels of crime leading to gated communities. On the other hand, Malaysia, Thailand's number one competitor in this area is more relaxed in their requirements of property ownership and 10 year visa's. In Malaysia, foreigners are allowed to own land and can borrow money to fund property purchases and a tax free income, which is not the case in Thailand. Singapore has another strategy and that is they have designed two resorts where foreigners are allowed to lease land for 99 years. In Vietnam, they can lease for 50 years. With these challenges, the question to Thailand is "how flexible is Thailand prepared to become to really get in on this lucrative market of Long Stay and Second Homes?", Hongsrnagon, 2002.

2.3.2 Long Stay Tourism

This section focuses on studies done on long stay in Asia and Westerners in Thailand. The discussion looks specifically at areas which relate to this study and its objectives, in order to add value to what has already been discussed. Studies that will be looked at are from Mayumi Ono (2008)-Japanese in Malaysia, the Long Stay Foundation of Japan (1992), Long Stay Program in Thailand (TAT, 2001), Hongsrnanagon (2002, 2005), Na Phairee (2005), Howard (2007, 2009), and Chantarasuwan (2002).

Hongsrnanagon (2002, 2005) looks at the Japanese Long Stay Tourist in Thailand while Ono (2008) investigates Long Stay Tourists in Malaysia and the evolution of the term Long Stay. Ono (2008) draws attention to the main reason behind the formation of the “*Rongsutei Zaidan*” – Long Stay Foundation in 2002: which came about as a result of the ageing Japanese society. This change has put pressure on the welfare, medical and pension system of Japan. Therefore as a strategy to secure their retirement lives, Japan is motivating its elderly to live abroad which they can do comfortably with their pensions (Research Institute for Seniors 2005:107). Both Ono and Hongsrnanagon point out that the aim is to pursue their “*ikigai*” that which makes life worth living (Gordon Mathews, 2008). In Japanese society, throughout ones life, work is the main objective of “*ikigai*” which changes after retirement to activities such as travel – long stay tourism, and other hobbies. Many of these retirees have an affordable pension plan giving them high purchasing power in countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Hawaii, being the favorite destinations for Japanese Long Stay Tourists.

2.3.2.1 Reasons for Japanese Moving

In his study Mayumi Ono (2002) pointed out 4 main reasons for Japanese moving to Malaysia. The reasons comprise of: 1) Yearning for a life in the South – low cost of living, easy visa systems, comfort and security. 2) Pursuit of “*ikigai*” after retirement – playing golf and doing volunteer work, 3) extension of the expatriates experience – people returning to a place because they had worked there before and treasure the good memories and 4) Seeking care givers abroad – it is cheaper to get care givers who are kind and friendly to come in and take care of them.

Hongsrnanagon (2005) also identified four reasons, namely: 1) The ageing society phenomena, 2) Changing social structure in Japan – they no longer have to co-habit with family

members, elderly living alone and now do what they want and many choose to travel, 3) Pension fund – which provides them with security for themselves and their offspring's and 4) Increasing preference to Long Stay overseas – to cherish oneself during a second life, to set up ones new life goal, to revive and renew their marriage relations and to get a chance to learn more about foreign cultures. There are similarities here, in that both studies point out Japanese elderly move abroad because they are free of daily obligations and have time and money to take care of themselves. They choose places that fit in their pension plans and people that can take care of them. They pursue those things they wanted to do but could not because of work commitments.

These are slightly different from what the IRM and IR studies have indicated with regards to Westerners in the earlier discussion. However similarities lie in the fact that low cost of living plays a role. This is understandable because these people no longer have a steady income, but rely on their pensions, savings and investments that they had made over the years while still working.

2.3.2.2 Incentives or factors for choosing their destination

Ono (2002) found that the Japanese retirees choose destinations with good climate and geography, good living environment, low cost of living, good living environment, efficient visa systems, availability of care givers, satisfaction from “ikigai” activities and existence of Japanese communities. Hongsranagon identifies three R's, rest, relaxation and recuperation and 4 A's, accessibility, accommodation, attraction and actors, which Thailand offers. These characteristics attract the Japanese market. Both authors pointed out the volunteer factor as important as the Japanese want to share their knowledge with their communities they are living in. Climate, cost of living, and good living environment are commonalities amongst the retirees in most of the studies quoted here.

2.3.2.3 Implications for Long Stay Tourism and IRM

Ono (2002), addresses 5 implications of Japanese long stay tourism which Hongsranagon did not touch on. The implications includes: 1) Correlation between economic globalization, long stay tourism and IRM – which reflect Japanese economic expansion and growth of Japanese international tourists. The motive lies in the pre-retirement life that is many settle in familiar places based on their previous experience. 2) Tourism as a pattern of life: the Japanese move has brought change to how people experience international tourism and what they

are seeking. The Japanese are not seeking sightseeing but rather “the experience” of daily life in their new environment. They no longer identify themselves as tourists, but as residents. 3) Transitional habitation and changing household formation: – a transitional lifestyle has developed in which people live in multiple places called “multi-habitation” pursuing a peripatetic lifestyle. Such life styles have affected family structures. 4) Economic designs for financial security and sustainability in post retirement life: – economic aspect is one of the important factor in Japanese Long Stay and IRM. With the concerns that face the Japanese social security and welfare, moving to Malaysia becomes a strategic move for financial security, stability and sustainability. Finally, 5) seeking wellbeing and wellness: – which centers on a satisfying quality of life.

2.3.2.4 Attractiveness of Chiang-Mai Province for Long Stay Japanese Pensioners.

Hongsranagon (2002) concentrated on aspects that are specific to Thailand by questioning the readiness of the region, specifically Chiang-Mai for the Japanese Long Stay tourists, if Thailand wants to take full advantage of this market.

She notes that Chiang-Mai has great potential because it has what the pensioners are searching for, which is: accessibility, accommodation options, attractions – including the Lanna Culture and other activities which contribute to the long stay tourism sector. Hongsranagon identifies one shortage that Chiang-Mai has which needs to be rectified, and that is lack of activities between the Japanese and the local communities. She believes the provision of such activities can reduce the adjustment period to their new environment. She also identified some activities which can be put into practice e.g., educational and cultural programs and training the locals in other beneficial areas like dressmaking handiwork and so on.

This is an area not really touched on by all the other studies that were discussed and one which Hongsranagon urges the Thai Government to pay attention to if they are to effectively compete with other countries – that is to provide for the needs of this niche market.

2.4. IRM and Long Stay Tourism

In the introduction of this study the researcher observed that the term Long Stay Tourism differs from other terms like IRM that are being used to describe retirees that are moving abroad. However besides the slight differences there are similarities to the two terms. Unclear distinction can cause confusion though and as such it is proposed to reconsider the terms and draw a clear

distinction between the type of tourists who should be called Long stay, Expats and IRM in the Thai context.

The definition of IRM according to Williams, King & Warnes, (Koch-Schulte, 2008), states: IRM is a highly selective migration process which redistributes (retired) individuals and their concomitant incomes, expenditures, health and care needs across international boundaries. According to the Long Stay Foundation of Japan (Ono, 2008), their definition states that it is - leisurely staying abroad to live in a place for longer period, learning the culture and living style of that country and to promote international goodwill / friendship through the contribution to the society while holding their living resources in Japan”.

Below is an outline of differences between International Retirement Migration (IRM) and Long Stay Tourism.

Table 2.2 Differences and similarities between IRM and LST

Similarities	Differences
Both involve travels across international boundaries.	LST- is centered more on tourism, where the original idea was more on Japanese retirees sharing their knowledge and experiencing life abroad) IRM- includes all retirees
Both involve retirees who have disposable incomes to survive on while living abroad.	LST - used more in Asian Context IRM - used more in the Western Context
Both look at enhancing their life while abroad in terms of rest and dedication to rejuvenation.	LST- is more culture and community based (which was the principle concept) but is not always the case as some do not integrate or have contact with the community. IRM does not need to integrate. In most cases they have their own communities.
In both cases retirees remain in the same country (even place) for several years.	IRM – one need not necessarily return to home country. LST , one is expected to return to their home county after their period is over (but many do not return)

The respondents call themselves expatriates, or residents, and very few are really aware of the term Long Stay Tourists. From the above it is clear that the original concept of Long Stay as ideally conceptualized in the Japanese context has in the meantime been adapted and utilized for other purposes as well than what it was intended for. In the case of this study respondent's referred to Phuket as their home, a clear indication that already contradicts the definition of the term. They refer to themselves as expatriates, retirees or residents of Phuket.

2.5 Summary

In conclusion, the research has found that humans have been travelling across borders since the 1950's, and this trend is expected to continue and grow as more people start searching for ways to quench their desires of fulfilling what they believe is "something missing" in their lives. This behavior has led to tourism becoming one of the world's fastest growing industry and one of the biggest earners compared to other industries. With its growth, tourism has brought new markets, trends and challenges to countries and their communities.

The studies above observed the experiences of retirees in different settings and how in each case, they all have preferences and different needs. The researcher also picked up on the interesting factors of human movement and the needs for host communities to put better measures in place to accommodate these growing trends and markets. The different study's also pointed to diverse perspectives of retirees on their host communities and how they themselves perceive their roles they play. Of course it cannot be denied that tourism and especially IRM, RM, Long Stay and Amenity Migration contribute in a major way economically to host communities. However, it is also evident that they have their down side or impacts as perceived by the host communities in terms of environmental impacts. Retirees tend mostly to choose the beaches, privatizing them and leaving little for the local communities. Given their retirees high purchasing power, they tend to take advantage of so many things locals perceive as important to them.

Long Stay tourism in Phuket, Thailand is no different from the other "movement phenomenon" because it also hinges on property development, beach house accommodations, relocation of locals to other areas so space can be made for these major projects and other service demands that come with retirement packages.

It is important to note though that since Phuket is still at its beginning stages of Long Stay Tourism, there is still time to make sure so many measures are in place in terms of environment and best practices in order to make sure Phuket preserves as much as it can for future generations, while at the same time making sure that they provide for this increasing market.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses procedures and methodology adopted in this study to collect the required data. A qualitative phenomenology approach was applied in order to effectively answer the objectives of the research. The chapter will concentrate on areas from where vital sources of information to enhance the study came from, being primary and secondary data sources, and the importance of carefully screening and attracting the right respondents from the population of Retired Long Stay Tourists. Finally, the chapter will discuss sampling methods and the envisaged data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

According to Creswell, (2003,) there are three possible approaches to research 1)qualitative approach *where knowledge claims are based on constructivist perspective-individuals experience*, 2)quantitative approach *which makes use of post-positivist claims for developing knowledge* and 3)mixed methods approach *knowledge which is based on pragmatic grounds*. Creswell further focuses on the different strategies in each method, being experiments and surveys in quantitative research, ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological and narrative research in qualitative and sequential, concurrent procedures and transformative procedures in the mixed methods approach.

3.1.1 Qualitative approach

As mentioned previously, this study adopted a qualitative approach based on the phenomenological strategy (qualitative, phenomenology because the research wants to answer the question Why, Moore (2006).

3.1.2 Phenomenology

The term was conceived by Edmund Husserl, a German Philosopher in the mid-1890. At first it was referred to as a "*phenomena*" meaning the theory of appearances fundamental to empirical knowledge especially sensory appearances. It was used in the philosophical field by various philosophers including G.W Hegel who wrote "*Phenomenology of Spirits in 1807*"and

Franz Brentano in 1889 in *“Descriptive Psychology”*, Woodruff (2008). It was adopted and discussed by other thinkers extensively in the 20th Century and used in diverse fields such as education, music, religion, architecture, theater, ethnicity, film, politics, geography, psychology, ecology, ethnology and finally in medicine Lester (1999). At that time, Edmund Husserl defined phenomenology as *“the science of the essence of consciousness, centered on the defined trait of intentionally approached explicitly in the first person”* (Woodruff, 2008).

The idea behind pure phenomenological research is more to describe rather than explain (Plummer, 1983; Stanley & Wise, 1993). Phenomenology gathers information within the actual context in which it is happening. It is able to provide sought after “human behavior characteristics” from the perspective of the individuals, because it centers mainly on anthropology which is a science study of the origin, behavior, physical, social and cultural development of the human race.

Phenomenology can also be defined as *“the way humans make sense of the world around them”* Saunders et.al. (2009: 116). It starts from a perspective free of hypotheses or preconceptions Husserl (1970). Woodruff (Husserl, 1970) explained that all experience various types of experiences including perception, imagination, thoughts, emotions, desires, volition and actions and the domain of phenomenology is the range of experiences including all these.

Classical phenomenology experience can be active or passive. Therefore phenomenology practices three distinguished methods mainly 1) humans describe a type of experience just as one finds it in one’s own past experience, referring to pure description of a lived experience. 2) Humans interpret a type of experience by relating it to relevant features of context, and 3) it analysis the form of a type of experience Woodruff (Husserl 1970).

Qualitative phenomenology research therefore examines the life experience or the lived experience of individuals or groups in an effort to understand and give meaning, to their actions and ways of doing things i.e. “the lived experience” phenomena. The aim of phenomenological research therefore is to gain an understanding of the essential truths of the lived experience because the method believes that truth and understanding of life can emerge from people’s life experience. This method helps to answer the question “why” human beings act and behave the way they do, Moore, (2006).

It is evident that this is the best method to be applied to this research because the aim is to explore and investigate the “life experience” of the Retired International Long Stay Tourists living in Phuket. The investigation of how they experience Long Stay is from the onset of thought, idea, to finally making and taking the decision to track around the globe and eventually settle in Phuket Thailand.

No method ever goes without challenges. Currently phenomenological research is not well understood especially in tourism research, Pernecky & Jamal (2010). It has been interchangeably with hermeneutics (involving the written text, but everything in the interpretative process). Further the method lacks guidance in the few studies that made use of it, Pernecky & Jamal (2010). One of the challenges faced by phenomenology is that it comes in a free form that is not pre-determined (Moore 2006). It is therefore difficult to set up mechanisms of this method in advance because there is no preset format to help set the data in neat easy manageable format (Moore 2006). Secondly, it is not always possible to know what is important at the time of doing the interview and what will later turn out to be irrelevant information. Further, the method is time consuming, needs a very good listener, who is patient and willing to sit through long interviews and listen to what the respondents have to say. Winning the confidence of the respondents and assuring them that it is all for a good cause also has to be done skillfully and expertly so that the correct information is extracted from the respondents. Lastly, transcribing the data and making sure that you actually have the right information to answer the objectives can also take its toll. There is also the question of reliability and validity of data collecting instrument that needs to be taken into consideration, Pernecky & Jamal (2010).

In his study “Phenomenology of Tourist Experience”, Cohen (1979), was criticized by Pernecky & Jamal (2010) that his study lacked reference to the rich tradition of phenomenology and theoretical justification. As such these are just some of the challenges this study has to be aware of and avoid.

3.2 Study Population

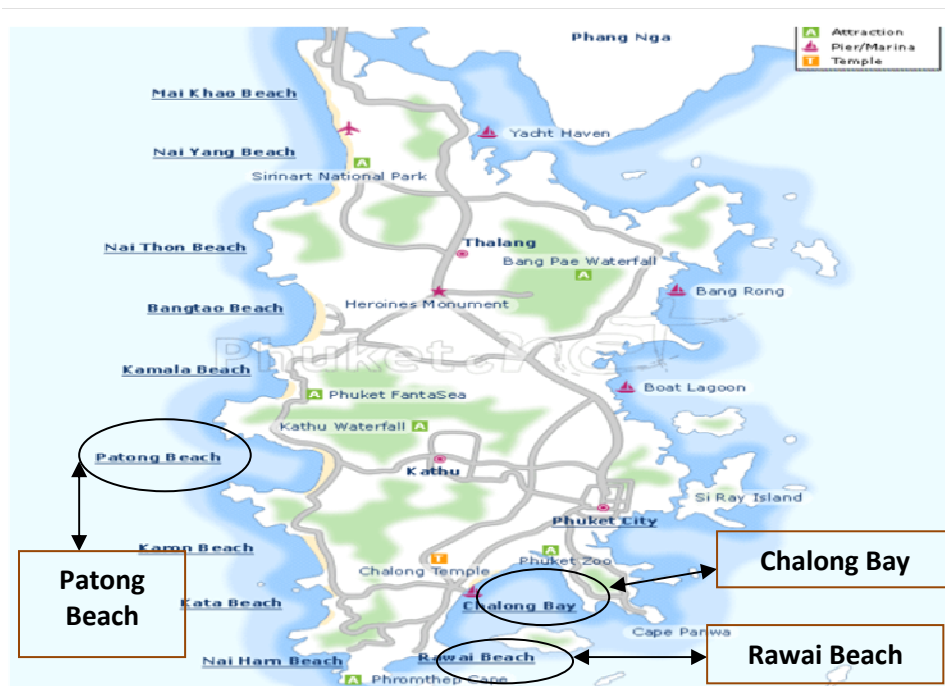
Saunders et al. (2009: 212) defines population as the full set of cases from which a sample is taken. The study on hand notes that there are many kinds of Long Stay Tourists in Thailand. Chutima Sidasathian (2010) pointed out that there were about 12,946 Long Stay Visa's issued in Phuket between January 2009 – 25 August 2010. However, this study focuses only on Retired Long Stay Tourists and not on long stay in general. In order to identify the suitable respondents a snowball method was used. A key respondent was introduced to the researcher, they in turn introduced another respondent and so forth. With this in mind, the researcher set to interview respondents who fit the following characteristics.

- Respondents had to be 50 years and older.
- Have lived in Phuket for 6 months or longer.
- Retired
- From any Western country.

The reason for choosing this group is: they have lived their lives and have gained and stored up experiences and knowledge that they can share with the world, academically and scientifically so that behaviors are understood and recorded for future references. It is also important to note that human movement is one of the oldest “trade” that still exists today that has in actual fact never stopped, but one that still draws interest as to why people continue to embark upon it at times permanently, even moving from developed countries to less developed countries, or even to disaster zones. What triggers this move? Is it sudden, or something that was planned for years, months or a couple of days? It will be interesting to find out what the deep underlying reason and decisions are for making such moves.

3.3 Spatial Area:

Figure 5 Map of Phuket Island – the study Area



Source [http:// www.phuket.net](http://www.phuket.net)

Phuket is one of Thailand's most exotic islands located in the Andaman Sea. The island boasts rich natural reserves, affluent unique culture, natural beauty and hospitality, which makes it a sort after tourist destination. The tourist can enjoy the South-east monsoon: May – October and the North-east monsoons (which is the rainy season) November – April. Phuket has a small population of 345,067, compared to the 4 million tourists (TAT-Tourist Authority of Thailand, 2010) that visit each year.

The research was conducted on the beautiful Island of Phuket, Thailand. Data collection focused mainly around the areas of Rawai, Patong and Chalong. Through observation the researcher observed a high concentration of Westerners in these areas, of whom some fall under the category of Retired Long Stay Tourists.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is a strategy used to recruit participants that will take part in the study, (Cone & Foster 2003). It is a process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample the research may fairly generalize the results back to the population. There are two methods or types of sampling techniques namely: probability sampling (also called systematic or probabilistic sampling, and non- probability sampling (or convenience sampling), Creswell, (2003).

Saunders et al, (2009) defines probability sampling as a sample where the chance or probability of each case being selected from the population is known and is usually equal for all cases, while non-probability is just the opposite. Within non-probability sampling, there are several procedures that can be adapted mainly purposive and theoretical sampling. Purposive sampling looks at interviewing people who are relevant to the research questions, and theoretical sampling looks more at interviewing respondents until the research reaches saturation.

This study adopts the non-probability sampling method and within that, purposive sampling. This method enables the researcher to use judgment to select cases that best assist in answering the research question at hand Saunders, et al, (2009). According to Neuman (2005), this method is used mostly when a researcher is working with very small samples or when the research wants to select cases that are particularly informative. Bryman (2008), points out another side of sampling, called theoretical sampling method which enables a researcher to gather data based on “*in-depth understanding*”. As such, theoretical sampling can also be used because the research will look at reaching saturation levels when gathering data.

Correct sampling is critical to this study because the aim is to collect rich data, therefore by using purposive sampling, the study eliminates those subjects that are irrelevant and only concentrate on those who will be able to provide the desired information.

3.4.1 Sample Size

In order to find the right respondents for this study, a snowball method was used. A main or key respondent was introduced to the researcher. This key respondent after being interviewed was asked if there are other long stay retirees that might be interested in participating in this study. An introduction was done for the next respondent and the next and so forth. To establish that the right respondents were being referred and used for the study, a mini demographic

questionnaire was first put to the respondents before the initial interview could be conducted. This provided the right information pertaining to age, length of stay, retiree status income factors and other information as later pointed out in the study. The next section focuses on data collection.

3.5 Data Collection

A variety of data collection methods can be used in phenomenological based research, including interviews, conversations, participant observations, action research, focus meetings (groups) or analysis of personal text, Plummer (1983). However this study concentrated on interviews, (semi structured and in-depth) for an in-depth analysis and understanding of the individual's life experience, their behaviors, actions, motives and true experience.

The semi-structured interview was to enable the researcher to get specific responses to answer the objectives of the research, and the in-depth interview was to allow the respondent to talk at great length about their feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values and experience that brought them to that final decision, in the case of this study, to adapt a "Long Stay" form of lifestyle, thus providing answers needed to understand this market. This process was done via face to face interviews for a period of three months from June – August 2011.

One main disadvantage of interviews is that it is time consuming and very resource intense as per Plummer, (1983). Of importance in this type of research however is the fact that the researcher can always go back and reconfirm the data should it appear that there is missing information. Unlike quantitative data which does not allow for this flexibility, qualitative data gives the researcher a second opportunity to confirm and clarify facts.

There are several barriers to this way of data collection, Moore (2003). He points out that many respondents (or humans in general) are unaware of their attitudes and beliefs as these are part of the human subconscious mind. As such it needs skills to get people to articulate things that are not part of their daily thoughts. Secondly he points out that people have a fear of being shown up. No one wants their self image to be crushed in any way. Lastly he points out that respondent will tend to be polite and provide answers they "believe, or feel" the interviewer wants to hear.

Creswell (2003) points out other challenges that the researcher has to take into consideration for example, where is the best place for the interview to take place? Are there activities in the area that might disrupt or hinder the flow of the interview in any way? Further

Moore (2006) emphasizes the importance of the researcher to be well versed with the topic at hand, have a background of interview skills and be a good listener. Most importantly, the researcher must be able to put the respondents at ease, encourage and boost their confidence and encourage the respondents to talk at length about their experience. In all this it is critical to show interest and to urge or encourage the respondent to speak.

3.5.1 Sources of data

In order to effectively analyze and provide the necessary information for this study, the study relied on Primary Data (data that the researcher collected in order to answer the objectives of this study.) and Secondary Data, (data which the researcher sourced from other researchers and prior research that was done on the same study or similar, related studies). Primary Data was obtained from Retired International Long Stay Tourists in Phuket via a mini questionnaire (to establish the right demographic profile) followed by in-depth interviews.

The Secondary Data was sourced and compiled from previous studies, research articles, books and on-line information centers.

3.5.2 Questionnaires Guide

Saunders et al. (2009), notes that there was no predetermined list of questions when it comes to in-depth interviews. However a basic questionnaire guide was designed from ideas obtained from the literature review, research objectives and questions of the study. In phenomenology, the idea is to get details on the lived experience of the individual. Therefore, respondents were allowed to speak at length and from their narration more question developed for probing and clarity.

3.5.3 Interviews

At this point, the study discusses where and how the interviews were conducted. Respondents were contacted by telephone supplied by first informant and date and time for the interviews was arranged. For convenience sake, the respondents were given a free choice to meet at a place where they felt comfortable. The only request from the interviewer was to meet where it was quite to provide a conducive environment for talking.

At the initial encounter, the researcher explained to the respondents the reason for the interview and assured them that information received was for academic purposes only and that confidentiality was guaranteed. Depending on the information the respondents shared, interviews lasted from between 1 hour to 2 hours. The data was collected over a period of 3 months (June-August) at which stage the study found that the respondents were providing more or less the same information or what is known as a saturation level.

The data was collected as previously mentioned by interviews, where the researcher made use of written notes (taking notes as the respondents spoke about their experience) and recording. The recording was done to enable the researcher to concentrate and pay attention to what was being said and probe where necessary. The recording was later used for review and transcribing.

3.6 Reliability, Validity, Trustworthiness and Ethical Aspects of the study.

Reliability of the study can be contributed to the following factors. Firstly all the interviews were recorded with the exception of one respondent who was not comfortable with the interview being recorded in spite of the fact that it was explained to them that the study was for academic purposes, their identity will remain anonymous, and that the recording will not be listen to by a third party, however in this case, intense notes were taken as the respondent spoke and sufficient information was gathered and the respondents privacy was respected. Secondly, all respondents received the same opening questions, and elaboration occurred upon factors that respondents discussed for clarity, and more information. As interviews intensified, each individual brought up different aspects which were then applied to other respondents to compare their experiences and find out how they dealt with it compared to other respondents.

Validity measures the trustworthiness of the responses and analysis that will be discussed. During the interviews, respondents were allowed to respond without much interruption, except for clarity and more information when and where needed. After the interviews, times was spend reconfirming the answers that were recorded for validation purposes and to establish that what the researcher understood is precisely what the respondent meant. This was a form of re-validation of the information provided, taking into consideration that respondents are always travelling and they might not be available at a later stage

In order for the study to account for the trustworthiness of the responses and results that are shared in this study, the study will make use of direct quotes from the respondents to back up the discussions that will take place concerning each objective. In cases where issues might be too sensitive, respondents numbers as indicated in the profile list above will also not be used to avoid any nationality being directly targeted or prejudiced against based on what they have shared with this study. As previously discussed, all interviews with the exception of one where recorded, thus direct quotes are on hand and will be used to strengthen the discussions put forth by the study.

Ethical consideration was assured to the respondents in that the study will not reveal their true identity, but the study will merely use the term “respondent” to report the findings. The respondents were also informed that the recording will not be passed on to a third party, and that all information obtained will be used for academic purposes – for completing the study on hand.

3.7 Data Exploitation and Presentation

Interviews were recorded and at the same time, notes were made to ask more questions or to get clarity about statements made throughout the interview. At this point the study has “cluttered” data, disorderly, as the researcher takes in as much information as possible, therefore the data now needs to be reorganized into usable data and divided into separate categories taking into account the objectives of the study, and eventually linking all the data together and to the study.

Lester, (1999), points out two useful methods that the researcher adopted to explicate the data. The researcher read the information from other literature and form themes. Taylor-Powell & Renner (2008) suggest a method based on listening, recording the transcribed data and noting things that was said. Based on the objectives, themes were formed to make sure that the correct information had been received to enable the researcher to answer the objectives of the study.

The researcher paid particular attention to what the respondents actually said about their experience. What did they feel? What did they do in each situation? How they dealt with the situations they faced” How did that make them feel? How do they live and what do they do daily. Where do they shop and why? What did they enjoy eating? How do they support themselves and what do they plan to do afterwards.

Further to the statements mentioned above, the researcher also made use of Seidel's (1998) three characteristics. They include: noticing things (this was used to observe respondents attitudes and reaction to questions). The second aspect is collecting things. There was not really things to collect in terms of physical items, but more in terms of thinking about what was said. The third aspect was to think about what was said and the impact it made on the respondents lives. All this information was compiled together and findings will now be discussed more in detail in chapter 4.

3.8 Summary

Although extensively used in other fields, phenomenological research is a relatively new approach to research in the tourism (Pernecky & Jamal 2010). This method has flourished to produce diverse theoretical perspectives and has been used more recently to study the lived experience. Today it can be considered as a valuable research means which has its place in tourism. Further phenomenological research can be a critical instrument into further exploring how experiences may be gendered, classed, sexed, raced, aged and how these pre-givens can dictate how humans experience tourism, (Pernecky & Jamal 2010).

This chapter outlined essential concepts which contributed to finding answers to this study. Identifying the right design, population, sample and sample size, provided the study with a clear path to collecting data. The process also provided better understanding and knowledge of the importance of the links between all the above concepts to the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The main objectives of this study were to identify influential factors of retired international long stay tourists in their destination choice, investigate the benefits they are deriving from Phuket and to capture their experience and adaptation strategies they employ to fit into their new environment. This chapter will therefore present the results obtained from the research.

4.1.1 Profile of the respondents

The researcher gathered demographic information of the respondents by interviewing 13 males and 2 females from 8 nationalities, but most were from the USA. Respondents' age ranged between 50-75 years with the average age being 61 years. This age range agrees with Howard (2007) in his study of Westerner retirees in Thailand. This indicates that there are more and more retirees from different backgrounds retiring in various parts of Thailand. Table 1:, gives more information about each respondent.

Twelve (12) visited Thailand before deciding to return and settle on a more permanent basis (and they specifically visited Phuket), three (3) have never visited Thailand before but when they arrived here they were mesmerized by the beauty of Thailand and they decided to stay on. Though they make visits to their home countries they spend most of their time in Phuket and touring the rest of Thailand.

Respondents are well educated: five (5) have a tertiary qualification such as a degree level of education, the other ten (ten) 10 have attended and completed secondary education. A significant number have many years of work experience, ranging from 20 years onwards.

The income levels of the respondents are high, ranging from 60000 – over 100000 Baht (US\$ 1935 – 3226) per month, indicating that they have purchasing power and are able to afford their lifestyle here comfortably.

All the respondents consider Phuket as their permanent home. Some visit their families in their home countries; others don't even visit, preferring to visit other countries besides their country of origin.

Table 4.1 Following is a Characteristic profile of the respondents as sited in the study.

Respondents	Gender	Age	County	Status	Previous Visit	Income/Baht
1	F	57	USA	Married	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
2	F	58	USA	Single	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
3	M	75	USA	Single	No	+ 60 000 p/m
4	M	76	IRL	Married/Thai	No	+ 60 000 p/m
5	M	58	AUS	Married/Thai	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
6	M	65	UK	Single	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
7	M	50	FIN	Married/Thai	No	+ 60 000 p/m
8	M	50	GER	Married/Thai	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
9	M	59	GER	Married/Thai	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
10	M	65	UK	Married/Thai	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
11	M	58	SA	Single	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
12	M	64	FRA	Married	Yes	+100 000p/m
13	M	50	USA	Single	No	+ 100 000p/m
14	M	56	USA	Single	Yes	+ 60 000 p/m
15	M	73	AUS	Single	Yes	+ 100 000 p/m

Source: Primary data respondents

The profile of the respondents shows diverse backgrounds. This gives rise to their different views on aspects and objectives of this study. This brings the study to a brief discussion and concept of social human experiences for better understanding of the results which will follow.

Sociologist have for many years looked to understand the “human experience as a social experience”. That is, what humans are and do: it is because of others, and those who hurt or harm other in anyway, contribute to how the people affected will behave, therefore social interaction is at the heart of human experience as people continue to influence each other, (Hobbs and Blank,

1985). Human's nor individual's experience can be understood independently of each other. It is therefore important to note that socialization (or social aspects) shapes one's life, lifestyle, personality, society and the culture that they live in. Socialization is thus an ongoing process, resulting in the self also being ongoing and constantly influenced and being influenced by others they interact with.

People from different backgrounds and gender have different social experiences and expectations. However when they come into a new society, they are expected to adapt or conform to their new surroundings. In view of the respondents of this study, there are more males than females. The males partner up with Thai spouses/partners because they feel they are much more manageable and accommodating. Howard (2007) on the other hand found that there are more males, and their one main reason for moving to Thailand was due to the availability of sexual partners. These social factors therefore provide the different outcome or outlook of individuals from different backgrounds and society on certain aspects of life in their new society.

In the following section, the study will elaborate and discuss each objective based on the findings and responses of the respondents. At this point the study would like to re-emphasize that the sample size was relatively small, however the respondents have provided vital data for analysis.

Objective one will be discussed in a straight forward manner by pointing out the factors as provided by the respondents. The second objective is divided into 3 sub-categories of social, physical/spiritual and financial. In objective three, will also be subdivided into 3 categories, positive, negative and overall experience.

4.2 Results – Objective 1

Objective 1: To identify the main factors influencing Retired International Long Stay Tourists choice of a destination:

The first contributing factor that all respondents emphasized as being a major influence for their move was their income. They are able to live comfortably on their pensions and not worry about inflations and social struggles most retiree face: of poverty deprivation (living below what they have been used to), housing and living arrangements (moving in with their children or maybe old age homes), health problems (due to un-favorable weather

conditions), and from independence to dependence (where they depend on their children for financial support), which Hobbs & Blank (1985) came across in their study as many challenges faced by retirees in their home countries.

Secondly, retirees' were attracted to Phuket because of its beauty, climate, food, the beauty and friendliness of the Thai people and the freedom that Phuket had to offer. Calmness, tranquility, peace, diverse Asian culture, natural settings, beaches and the weather, were also other factors that pulled retirees to settle in Phuket. This was summed up in the respondents' expression, *"something special and magical"*. They could not explain the expression, but all they know is that they only found it in South East Asia especially in Thailand.

"When one retires, it's like "what now" life seems to have "stopped" so unexpectedly, so when there is nothing more to wake up to in the morning – job wise, then you start looking to what you can do with your life, and what better way to spend it then travelling and doing things that you always wanted to do, reading, relaxing, appreciating nature and the beauty of people and environment out there."

Thirdly, the retirees found the lifestyle affordable, comfortable, more relaxed, worry free and just fun. Phuket was like a huge magnet that was pulling and inviting them. The cost of living and climate agree with previous studies done in coastal areas (Gustafson 2002; Manson 2002; Breuer 2005; Sardinia 2011; Howard, 2007; 2009) as pull factors for retirees. This was established during their travels, and as time for retirement came, the decision to travel to Thailand, Phuket became more the favorable option. Prior travel thus provided a "mind map" of Phuket which created a "comfort retirement place" in the minds of retirees during their travels and which eventually manifested when retirement came. One respondent said: *"we had an opportunity to settle in Singapore, but being retired, it is extremely expensive"*.

It was interesting to meet three respondents who have never visited Thailand, or Phuket before, but once they arrived in Phuket, they have never left again. They mentioned *"beauty, the simple lifestyle, at that time – about 21 years ago, the money was good and it provided a comfortable life"*. Another of the three respondents just loves and enjoys travelling around Thailand to discover its beauty. He assists in documentaries of rare plant life and Thailand has plenty to offer in this area. They noted that the travel helps them to get away from Phuket, because Phuket has now become too *"cosmopolitan, losing that innocence that once existed."* At

the same time they noted that change has to come, *“but the change on Phuket was too fast and too sudden”*. As in previous studies, respondents have visited their destination (some ones, others more than ones), before deciding to settle permanently.

A fourth pull factor brought forth was health reasons. *“I believe that Phukets’ warm and pleasant climate has been extremely good to me and it has made me stronger. I feel more energized and active and I’m just enjoying my life. I could not have made a better choice for myself”*. Other respondents agreed being more specific stated: *“There are no serious diseases in Phuket like malaria and others, health wise it provides a good health climate, but this is slowly being compromised due to over development and the many car gases and sewage systems that are not controlled, just being dumped into the sea.”* One respondent pointed out a concern over the medical facilities though, that they are becoming more expensive as they are being centered more on tourists.

Property investment was a pull factor for another respondent who attended an overseas property promotion of Macau and that’s how they found themselves in Thailand for the first time. They invested in property and returned a few years later on a permanent basis. Job loss was another factor, while other respondents were actually drawn by the Tsunami in 2004, came as volunteers, and then returned to their country for a while before returning permanently to Phuket.

The strategic geographical position of Phuket was also cited as a factor, as this allowed the responded to have easy access to many other Asian countries from Thailand. *“I enjoyed travelling and Thailand, especially Phuket is strategically positioned for me and at that time, Phuket was exceptionally beautiful, with less traffic and no pollution. Today however it has become so different, over populated with cars and sewage issues which are adding to environmental concerns.”*

An interesting pull factor that also came to light was friends. Three of the respondents were invited by friends to join them on a tour and that’s how they landed up in Phuket.

Lastly, the way the Thai people enjoy and celebrate life in terms of festivities and their many activities that they practice yearly was also one factor that drew another respondent. Today he spends more time in Phuket than Europe.

Push factors that respondents pointed out include previous travels, which provided the first entry interest point and the one that set the wheel in motion for the desire to retire in Phuket. The final travel decision was then accompanied by factors like change of lifestyle. *“I was looking for a place that is comfortable, quiet, peaceful and beautiful to spend my retirement. Another noted “We wanted to get away from big cities, the noise and all the traffic.” “I needed to get away from the lack of freedom, bureaucratic and tax issues back home.” “I wanted to get away from rise of crime and Phuket was just the place. Yes there is crime here, but that’s petty crime compared to what is happening at home. I can leave my house for a month, come back and still find everything intact. Back home this is no longer the case.”*

From the pull and push factors discussed above it is clear that Phuket has diverse and attractive features that draw people to its shores, from the literature review this study can identify with most of the retirees pull and push factors that other researchers have identified. Objective 1 is in line with the factors that are outlined in the migration and push & pull theory. Individuals are just that, “individual” and unique each in their own way, as the study found, each one was drawn to Phuket for different reasons. As it was, even today people still move based on certain needs in their lives and these differ from one person to the next. In case of retired long stay tourists, as per migration theory, they fall in the micro level of values, desires and expectancies.

4.3 Results Objective 2

Objective 2 To investigate the benefits Retired International Long Stay Tourists derive from Phuket -Thailand.

Benefits can be defined as something that is good or advantageous to an individual or group of people. In the case of this study, benefits have been divided up into three main categories, social, physical or spiritual and financial benefits. Social benefits refer to those benefits that individuals can participate in to pass their time, activities they can do and clubs or societies they belong to in order to exchange knowledge, ideas and share their experiences. Physical or spiritual benefits are those that cater to an individual’s physical body, soul and mind, and financial benefits would be those that provide any form of incentives or monetary rewards.

4.3.1 Social Benefits:

In most cases the respondents have indicated that Phuket has a relatively easy way of life, however it is not so easy to integrate because of vast cultural, linguistic and social differences between the retired long stay tourists and the Thai's. The majority of the retired long stay tourists have indicated that they have taken Thai language courses and given up in the process, others keep going but also indicate the challenges they face as the language itself is challenging. In the end however when you can communicate even just a little bit, that makes it all worthwhile.

As Hobbs and Blank (1985) note in their *Sociology and the Human Experience* book, this is where integration comes in of visitors into the society they have come to adapt as their own. How they are accepted and treated within that society will determine how they will behave and continue to behave. It is also a known psychological factor that what an individual experiences first, tends to become the founding principle of how they will progress and behave from that point onwards. Will it be with caution or will they boldly go out there and do what needs to be done.

Secondly 13 of the respondents indicated that they "feel" they are not really accepted by their Thai hosts because they continue to feel the contempt, prejudice and antagonism directed towards them. Some are bothered by the term "*farang*" which means foreigner. To the retirees, it just sounds more "*alien*" than if they had to use another term. As one respondent remarked, "*I guess that's the term they have devised for us and we just have to accept it, ones again because that's what we are,*" *foreigners in Thailand.*

These perceptions tend to create a barrier between the host community and the long stay tourists, in that retired long stay tourists become reserved and withdraw into their little groups instead of mixing with the communities they are living in. Those that are married to Thai spouses seem to have their share of challenges as they have to deal with the wives' relatives. At times this doesn't always work out well, so they become estranged, but continue to support their spouses. There are those who are extremely happy with their Thai spouses and even so, still find the language and certain customs a challenge they have not mastered as yet.

The other 2 respondents indicated that they don't seem to have much worries and challenges. They go about their days as usual and making the most of what Phuket has to offer in all aspects. Looking more at the positive side of society, they have come to accept that each

society is different and the best thing one can do is to learn as much as you can and learn to fit in and take it one day at a time.

Regarding the actual social benefits that retirees perceive to have in Phuket, it was stated clearly that these are more from the destination point of view or the individuals themselves. Respondents pointed out that to keep themselves busy they join social clubs where they share their experiences in Phuket. These are either on the internet, where they get to meet other Westerners, or in forms of local social clubs where they meet to exchange books, business idea, and to just share what they have been up to since the last time they met. Others are involved more in the communities to help disadvantaged children through the charities and orphanage support they organize. This gives them a sense of gratification giving back to the community and helping to develop the children who might otherwise not have an opportunity had this assistance not come their way.

Beaches, even though lately overcrowded and at times polluted, still provide a relaxing time for some who would take their pets and stroll along the beaches, thinking and reflecting on life. Golf clubs provide relaxing areas where respondents just go and hit a few balls and now and then take part in some tournaments. One respondent said *“Golf has become so expensive, again because of tourists, you pay a huge yearly fee and other fees daily, but there is no proper management of the clubs. There are no games or competitions arranged for the members and it’s more like each member is on his/her own.”*

Tennis, kayaking, shopping, travelling to other destinations and movies are other past time activities respondents readily partake in to keep themselves busy. One respondent noted, *“I used to enjoy snorkeling around Phuket, not anymore because the sea around Phuket has become polluted and many fish and corals have died. I don’t like taking the long boat trips to other islands, so I just don’t do it anymore.”*

Other social benefits that respondents have pointed to being offered by Phuket as a destination include: the Westernization effects that Phuket has. This gives them access to many of the things they are used to back home. The western community that they can interact with, the freedom they can enjoy daily doing what they desire to do without much restriction (due to the easiness of the Thai lifestyle), ease of access to other islands and Asian countries from Phuket. There are also some good massage parlors, restaurants and local dining areas that they frequent

even though these have become extremely expensive for expatriates, long stay tourists and retired long stay tourists.

Social benefits bring out the concept of social constructivism theory of uncertainty. The Long stay program was created to provide a haven for retirees, but now that they are here, they do not feel “welcome”. The theory asked a question “are societies/people really peaceful or do they pretend to be peaceful?” A similar question can be asked concerning the program in Phuket, “was it really created because Phuket wants retirees to retire in Phuket or not?” This question is asked based on the responses that retirees feel they are not really welcome as they sense a great deal of antagonism from their hosts. As a result there is not really much interaction between locals and retirees.

4.3.2 Physical and Spiritual Benefits:

In the Conceptual Model of the tourist, Quan & Wang (2004) and Ryan (2002) suggested that the tourist experience needs a physical body. The body has the components that have to perceive, receive, experience and live the experience. In this context, a physical benefit is anything that affects a human body, positively or negatively. Spiritual benefits refer to the soul part of the human being and how this is impacted by the outside world that is going on around individuals. Respondents perceive Phuket as a quite, tranquil place, good for their body, mind and soul in every aspect. The beaches provide a place to stroll and exercise, nature offers that tranquility and stress free life. A few respondent remarked as follows: *“I left big cities to find peace and tranquility”, “I was looking for a peaceful lifestyle”, I was looking for a change of life where things are not so fast and stressful.” “You can go away and leave your house and know that nothing will happen,” I can walk about or drive about Phuket even late at night and no one will bother me or cause me harm in anyway,” I enjoy the peace, just sitting here and observing what is going on around me.” There is no stress; I could not have chosen a better place to retire.* Retirees believe Phuket has provided that peace and tranquility which enables them to live a life of peace, free from stress and the entire daily rush of big cities.

Spiritually, some respondents practice the Buddha religion and do a great deal of meditation and yoga for their minds. *Meditation keeps my mind sharp and it helps me to concentrate much better especially at my age. The Buddha religion is good for me, I am at peace*

and it helps me to remain positive. Being positive also helps them to remain healthy, and in a good state of mind.

Other physical activities respondents partake in often include golf, tennis, and walking. Therefore it can be safely said that the tourist experience engages all senses (Ryan, 2002), and that tourism is an epicurean experience of ego, mind and body which can be positive or negative, depending on the individual. Ryan, (2002) goes on to say that tourism encompasses pleasure but pleasure alone is not enough motives for tourism. Therefore leisure becomes a search for meaning, finding something you love creates both meaning and pleasure. Meaning leisure embraces physical, mental, social and spiritual concepts which results in pursuit of inner freedom, self worth, humor and inward peace.

Within the context of this study, the freedom, stress free life, comfort provide that inner peace and pleasure and as a result meaning and worth to respondents being in Phuket. When asked if they would leave due to all the negative aspects that they have indicated the response was *“Mind you, there is no place I would rather be right now. I’m happy here and this is my home.”*The peak in this case, can be contributed to the fact that these respondents are currently or have currently attained their peace, tranquility and the perfect, desired and dreamed of retirement life.

4.3.3 Financial Benefits

The respondents indicated that they did not perceive themselves as getting any tangible or direct financial benefits from Phuket. However they believe that Phuket as a destination is offering them intangible benefits in terms of: comfortable homes, a good comfortable lifestyle, low cost of living, a more enriching lifestyle than they would have had had they retired in their home countries, a good climate and weather for their frail health, beautiful beaches, food and freedom, and just the entire package of living a life that is affordable in their retirement years.

On the contrary, retirees believe that they were the ones providing benefits to Phuket by contributing economically. Most of the respondents support orphanages financially on a monthly basis, not only in Phuket, but in other areas around Phuket. Those who have investments contribute financially in the form of taxes. Others help communities protect their natural beauty. They show them how special their areas are in terms of appreciating nature and the beauty of Phuket that is still there, untouched and undisturbed by the influx of tourists. One respondent

explained as follows: *“I will invite people to visit Phuket, but will not stay in Phuket, I will take them to the North and South of the country where beauty is still pure, but then again you do not want all the tourists there, because this can also destroy the nature that is being preserved if there are too many tourists visiting at the same time, that’s what tourists do.”*

A few respondents mentioned that *“it is more like we are being taken advantage of by the Phuket Government because of our purchasing power, in that whenever an incident happens involving Thai’s and foreigners, the foreigners are made to pay even if all evidences indicate that the Thai person was at fault. There is no law that protects the interest of foreigners in Phuket. You are considered a foreigner in their country and you just have to pay up to avoid hefty charges or going to jail for something that you did not do.”* Another respondent said *“I know many foreigners who have lost so much in dubious schemes which appeared genuine, and when they reported the incidents to the police nothing was done, you were told mai-pen-rai (a term often used to basically say nothing much that can be done, that’s life, don’t worry), and that was that, as a result some resort to unethical manners of survival.”*

On the same issue other respondents noted *“It’s like we are being punished for coming to Phuket, and not to stay on the wrong side of the law, bribes and corruption come into play so you get yourself out of a tight situation, and that is very bad.”*

A few respondents aired their concerns and disappointments because the beaches have become dirty, and overcrowded. Construction is taking place at an alarming rate and pollution has become the order of the day in many areas of Phuket. *“These negative incidents are having a profound impact on major benefit factors that pulled them to Phuket in the first place.”*

What some of them would like to do is find a job (because they believe although retired or semi-retired, they are still able to work and contribute positively to the society they are living in). However, this is extremely difficult and in most cases impossible. Therefore they just channel their energies in coming up with creative ways to keep themselves busy as previously mentioned with charities, social clubs, sports and so forth.

Financial benefits, might not always be possible for any government especially towards retirees from other countries because the host country has to deal with its own elderly. However, there are minor indirect financial contribution that a host country can provide for example, less taxes on those who have invested their pensions in property and other businesses, or as one

responded suggested, *a retiree discount card which they can take advantage of when they go shopping or for medical treatment and so on.* Such gestures will send a message that the government of Phuket welcomes and appreciates the contribution these retirees are providing to Phuket as their new home, and encourage more retirees to choose Phuket as a retirement destination above other countries.

As competition intensifies around this market especially in Asian countries, Phuket and Thailand as a whole, will be forced to look at alternative means and ways to effectively provide and offer better benefits to long stay retirees if they want to remain the number one destination choice in the future.

4.4 Results Objective 3

Objective 3: To capture the experience and identify the adaptation strategies that International Long Stay Tourists have employed to fit into their new environment in Phuket.

Cohen (1972) notes that people may desire different modes of touristic experiences. Tourism experience is a unique phenomenon in its own way, therefore individuals even though in the same place, can have different experiences and outlook on the same things that affect them. This may result in each person giving a different “touristic experience” encounter from each other and different from what they originally had envisaged. To effectively answer the last objective, the study discusses four different aspects that emerged from the respondents.

4.4.1 Challenges upon arrival in Phuket

The 13 respondents experience started with their first visit to Phuket during their travels. This set a “retirement “destination when the time came. One respondent said *“when on holiday, you do not see what you see when you come to stay here on a more permanent basis, then reality kicks in and the paradise images start to dwindle.”*

The first challenge that respondents encountered upon arrival was the language barrier, and the diverse aspects of Thai culture. There are two concepts that pose challenges for many retirees and westerners in general the “*mai-pen-rai*” phrase (which means it doesn’t matter), and “*saving face*” (Thai people do not admit to a wrong, will not tell you they cannot do something, or that they do not understand) this is considered as losing face to admit to any form of incapability, they just say yes, but the outcome is not what you had requested.

One respondent remarked that they felt lonely, frustrated and had a temper which they had to deal with. They stated: *“you have to learn to forget how the rest of the world really operates and redirect yourself to the Thai way of life.”* Another respondent remarked: *“You quickly come to learn about the contempt and dishonesty that is hidden behind the smile”* said another respondent.” While another said: *“I cannot seem to fit in no matter how I try, their lifestyle is just so different, but I’m learning”* *“I feel lonely and out of place”* *I had such a temper and had to learn to deal with it, because Thai people were not moved by it, on the contrary, it offended them and it made me even more angry, but with time I learned that I’m just frustrating myself, no one is paying attention to me”*.

Those respondents who have been in Phuket for a long time mentioned that *“at that time there were few European/American products available, that was hard, but with time and development that came to Phuket, things started to get better.”* These are just some of the challenges encountered by respondents concerning their first experience in Phuket.

The visa runs (a system where foreigners including retirees had to travel out of Thailand to neighboring countries to get a visa extension done every 30 days before it was changed for retirees.) was another challenge that respondents had to deal with because they did not really understand the principle, but now they have their retirement visa’s and this has made things much easier. With time, these challenges have been turned into positive energy. Respondents started taking Thai lessons and learning from the locals. Those who used to have tempers and are frustrated learned to smile and dealt better with their tempers. From this point of view, those frustrating, stressful moments have been turned into positive things and as one respondent confirmed *“you eventually learn to use common sense and to observe what locals are doing and just following suite, you will be much happier, while another notes, learn to accept that you are in Thailand, things are different, develop a positive attitude and live a stress free life.”*

4.4.2 Challenges faced by Retired Long Stay Tourists today:

The second set of challenges faced by long stay tourists can be subdivided further into three categories: from the Government perspective, socially and others.

In terms of Government operations, respondents felt that government policies are weak and are not friendly towards long stay tourist. *“There is too much inconsistency and many corrupt government officials”*. Many are becoming concerned about the instability of the Thai government. Those who have investments receive unexpected and un-scheduled taxes. They never seem to know when they will increase or not. This all comes to light as they deal with officials in their visa applications or queries and they have to go to the police station for assistance. A few respondents remarked: *Phuket has terrible, disorganized traffic rules and regulations. “Pray that you never get into a road accident in Phuket, no matter how wrong the Thai person is, you as a foreigner have to pay up.* One respondent reciting an incident said: *A friend of mine was driving and did not see this motorbike coming without lights. Well he was involved in an accident and when he came to look it was two children, now, why do children who cannot drive be allowed to drive? Nevertheless, my friend had to pay for the accident even though it was not really his fault.”* This results in injustice towards foreigners. Most respondents mentioned the traffic rules and regulations especially concerning motor bikes, and the fact that even Thai car drivers feel their time is more important than others, thus drive recklessly. In the process many accidents that could have been avoided happen. Sadly in all this, if a foreigner is involved, they are always the “ones at fault”.

4.4.3 Social Interaction and activities

Long stay respondents prefer to stay near the coastal areas, where they can enjoy the beaches and accessibility to tourist activities on offer. They do not consider themselves as tourist though, preferring to be called residents or expatriates. Many have little local contact, preferring to rather keep to themselves and minding their own business or interacting with others around their community. There are those who like spending time with locals, leaning about their daily lives, learning Thai cooking and helping the community where they believe they can contribute. One respondent spends time using his passion for music to occupy his time. The rest of the time is spent exploring the beauty of Phuket and Thailand because they travel around Thailand and to other Asian countries.

Some respondents enjoy beach walks, massages, yoga, shopping, which is plentiful around the island. Relaxing is the reason they are here, and this activity is well enjoyed. Those who are still active spend time checking the stock markets and managing their portfolios. Dining out has been reduced because retirees believe Phuket has over a short period of time become extremely expensive. Retirees believe they are charged like tourists in spite of the fact that they have lived here for long, spend money here and even pay taxes. In spite of all this, they are still considered tourist thus the name “long stay tourist”.

At the same time retired long stay tourist respondents remarked that in spite of this growth and improvement, from a social perspective, there are also challenges they have to deal with. The beaches have been a major draw card to Phuket for many of the respondents. They still feel that today, that draw card is losing its magic, beaches are dirty and not taken care of. Phuket people don't seem to take this seriously as nothing is done even though many tourists have complained about it.

The respondents also believe that the society is very prejudiced towards foreigners, for their high purchasing power. *Locals have an anti-foreigner syndrome, “picked up especially when they use the term farang”*. This has led to very little contact with locals, leading more long stay tourists learning to mind their own business and just doing things on their own instead of relying on the locals for help (except at business places and shopping malls).

Another social hindrance is that retired long stay tourists find the Thai people very relaxed and laid back. Thai do not respond and are very casual. On a social level language, corruption, dishonesty, *mai-pen-rai*, and saving face were also pointed out as hindrances (these were already discussed in the previous section). Moreover, respondents pointed out that Thai people are crafty and cunning. They hide their true identity behind their smiles, making it difficult to make friends as you don't really know how sincere they are.

The last concern was that: *“Thai people are being consumed by greed and pride, something that is busy eating away at the society and corrupting the ones magical treasure Phuket had, its people. People are not friendly anymore, they are sad and do not smile anymore like in the before.”*

One respondent remarked *“The Phuket society has become so money centered that everything is centered on money. “I’m not saying they should not make money, but everything has become too much about money, money and tourism, that they are losing focus of other important factors of tourism that needs their attention and the people who are contributing positively to the economy.”* No one abides by the laws anymore; there are no boundaries or limits, and schemes against foreigners have become the order of the day.

4.4.4 Other challenges

Finally, those who have employees from the local communities mentioned that *“they are lazy and lack training”*. Asked why they do not train them, one respondent said *“Yes you train them and for a few weeks everything is going well, and then they just give up and do not do it anymore. They look after their bodies, but not their work places, they just cannot clean. On the other hand, young people are losing the Thainess that their parents are practicing and it is so sad that they like to listen to all this junk music and they do not want to listen to Thai music which is so beautiful. They are becoming louder and are more westernized in their minds. A few other respondents noted that “it seems as if foreigners are being taken advantage of and not really appreciated as contributors to the economy”*

The other challenge respondents raised concerns the fact that Phuket is developing at an extremely alarming pace. This is destroying nature and the environment in the process, and it seems the Phuket Government Authorities don’t seem to pay too much attention to all these developments. One respondent who has invested in property said: *“I’m concerned about my investment, whether in the end it will pay off or be a loss given the current rate at which property development is taking place in Phuket,”* while another believes that *“Phuket still has an opportunity to attract wealthy tourists, meaning that Phuket needs more property to cater for this market.*

The above challenges dwelt more on the extreme and negative responses. However not all the respondents agreed with these negative sentiments. One respondent said, *“Foreigners are also at fault, the way they treat the Thai ladies is not good and should not be accepted or tolerated. They seem to have no respect for Thai women. Most of these problems that were mentioned are also as a result of foreigners encounters with the wrong type of Thais’, and as a result of their experience, they attribute that to the rest of the Thai people in Phuket.*

Another respondent notes *“Yes Phuket has its share of problems, every country has, compared to many counties Phuket has a sound system, but they need to be aware of all these underhanded activities that are raising their ugly heads. Another respondent said “We have to learn to respect the Thai way of life and being more positive towards Phuket because this is our home now.” I have Thai friends, and many Thai people that I come across are generally friendly. “They are probably also feeling we have invaded their space and fear losing their country”,* responded another.

4.4.5 Overall Experience

People experience the same place or circumstance differently. The study noted that there are extremists and realist tourists. There are those who chose to look on the bright side of things, and those who decide to concentrate on the negative factors because of their experience. There were three more questions posed to respondents during the interview. The first question was:

“What would make you leave Phuket? The response was: the challenges as discussed earlier including rise in cost of living, rise in crime, political instability, corruption, bribery, sewage pollution, uncontrolled destruction of the natural environment, hostility towards foreigner, continued harassment on the roads and treatment of foreigners as money bags.

The secondly question was: If you had another chance to start your retirement destination search all over again, where would you go and why? All respondents without a second thought replied: *Note, “this is the best place right now, there is no other place that I would rather be right now than right here in Phuket, Phuket is my home and I’m here to stay, for now at least.”*

When asked to rate their overall experience most of the respondents indicated that overall it was positive, in spite of the hindrances and all the hurdles that they had to overcome, they are happy here in Phuket. There was only one respondent who said he did not like Phuket. Had it not been for his wife he would not be in Phuket because it is no longer authentic. Several respondents, however mentioned they would leave Phuket for much quieter areas, either North or Southern Thailand, where people are more friendly and authentic.

4.4. 6 Strategies used or adopted by Retired Long Stay Tourists

With regards to adaptation it is observable that human instinct kicks in and retired long stay tourists use their senses and ability to deal effectively with adapting to their new environment. Just as respondents experienced Phuket differently, they also learned to adapt

differently. When first asked what they did to adapt, many respondents said they did not have to do anything. With a little prompting on this question however, the following came to light:

“Adapting was easy for me because I have been to Phuket several times before returning to retire here. I started learning all I could from observing what locals are doing and also attending some Thai language classes to be able to understand and communicate the basics”

Others noted: *“We have learned to be positive and look at the positive things in life. Life has so much to offer and we are going to enjoy it”*.

While yet another commented: *“I have learned to take one day at a time and just learn what I can that day and apply it to my life. Even though it is difficult to keep up, I have learned to take one day at a time, be patient, aware of my surroundings and being cautious of happenings around me at all time. I avoid any form of conflict especially with locals as this can have negative consequences. I started off learning the Thai way and realizing that adaptation is a gradual process. It does not happen overnight, but takes time and patience.”*

People in Phuket are not rushing off to anywhere; they are content and take life one day at a time. Adapting to this way of life has brought some form of peace and a different outlook for retirees. They have become calmer, and more appreciative of life. Being used to the rushing Western way of life, this calmness is a welcome gesture.

These are few strategies that retired long stay tourists have adapted to help them deal with the change in lifestyle. Where respondents thought they did not do anything to adapt (they were not really conscious of it), they did do something, even though they considered it insignificant. The study noted that there wasn't one specific strategy that was adapted, but it all depended on individuals choosing what they believed was the best way for them to adapt.

4.5 Summary

The chapter presented views of retired long stay tourists from different countries. Respondents came from diverse backgrounds and had different experiences. They offered different reasons for choosing Phuket which including climate, affordable lifestyle, security, freedom and the friendliness of the Thai people.

In terms of benefits, retirees do not get any financial benefits from Phuket, but that they are offer benefits to Phuket in forms of expertise rendered charities and taxes that they pay. Socially Phuket offers the retirees a wonderful peaceful environment. The drawbacks range from not being welcomed to antagonism by hosts. Nonetheless, retirees still believe that this is the best place for them right now. Their overall experience was positive.

Concerns that retirees articulated can hinder the proper and full growth of this market. In the hospitality and tourism industry, word of mouth is a very powerful tool, and any negative word of mouth can keep potential visitors away. Even if they come, they tend to be cautious and might not stay long.

In the next and final chapter, the conclusion, discussions and recommendations are drawn.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the conclusion, discussions, and recommendations. The discussions take into account each objective and link them to the literature review. Furthermore the chapter proposes recommendations that provide much needed insight into the retirees market, and add value to better management and planning for Phuket. Moreover recommendations will assist in further research in similar areas in other parts of Thailand and the rest of the ASEAN.

5.1 Conclusion

The study used a snowball sampling to gather primary data, and because of the process the sample size was very low. However enough information was gathered to respond to the objectives and questions as set out at the beginning of this study. There was diversity amongst the respondents in terms of education, age and nationality. Limitation was evident in the gender aspect, as most of the respondents were males. They responded more positively and willingly.

Retired Long Stay tourists do not really consider themselves as long stay tourists, but as expatriates or residence of Phuket. They do not consider themselves tourists, but as part and parcel of Phuket even though they recall that from the locals point of view they will always be considered and seen as foreigners, or “*farangs*” as they are called by the locals.

Secondly, the term Long Stay is indistinct in that the original idea applied to retirees who travelled across borders “to interact with the community, learn, share, impart knowledge and rejuvenate their life as they have been working all the time and this was seen as a time for them to catch up on things they were not able to do while working,” (Long Stay Foundation, 1992). Today this concept is being used for all different types of tourist groups, and it is important that a clear distinction be made so that future studies are much more centered and directed to the desired and precise market it is supposed to target.

Long Stay tourism is closely related to International Retirement Migration, which looks at retirees moving to other countries either for pleasure, leisure or residence on a part or full time basis.

The major difference though between the terms is that where Long Stay Tourism centers on leaning and knowledge sharing, it is not the same concept in International Retirement Migration. In respect of IRM visitors are not expected to interact with the community if they do not want to. However both terms focus on retirees and the fact that they travel to other countries and places in search of an enriching lifestyle.

Pertaining to typologies of tourists' agreement is being reached that there are too many interlinking terms and all seem to be directed and focused on the same thing. That is why Cohen, (1972) stated that because different kinds of people may desire different modes of touristic experience, the tourist then does not exist as a type. Nevertheless, tourism studies will continue to captivate the minds of researchers as tourism continues to develop rapidly adding more and more adjectives to the types of tourist as they continue to embark on more newer and different forms of tourism. Retired long stay tourists can be grouped under elite and incipient (Smith, 1989), psycho-centrics (Plog, 1973) and more of the alternative lifestyle (Cohen, 1979) because of the nature of activities that they participate in and the availability of resources they have.

According to Dann's 1977 push and pull factors, it is clear that Phuket has enough diverse resources and environmental beauty to attract tourists to its shores, especially long stay tourists. Respondents indicated that the main pull factors for them to Phuket were the climate, warmer weather, beautiful environment, investments, beaches, the culture and that something special unique to Phuket. On the other hand, push factors are issues and challenges they face in their own countries, increased crime, high living costs, lack of freedom and cold weathers which become unpleasant for retirees. For Phuket though, there are also challenges that the province has to deal with in terms of managing the influx of tourists and those who would adopt a long stay lifestyle.

Currently Phuket is booming in property, hotels, villas and condominiums in order to accommodate retirees and other tourists. Permpoolsab (as cited in Chaisawa & Tungsomboon, 2008) noted that indicators are predicting that 2 million Europeans will seek properties in Phuket. Whether this figure has been reached or not, it is not possible to say at the moment, but from the property market in Phuket the researcher observed increase in property and tourists (according to Ministry of Sports and Tourism, Thailand received 15.8 million tourists in 2010, of which about 4 million came to Phuket).

At the same time, Phuket is faced with environmental issues of pollution, sewage and environmental degradation as the scramble for land to accommodate these demands continues to rise. Most of the high spending tourists are leaving and more will be leaving because the place is becoming too overcrowded. A few respondents actually voiced this concern, stating that Phuket has started to attract low spenders and are slowly losing high spenders who ones graced Phuket because of the negative treatment they received at the hands of the locals. Phuket is thus at a very critical stage where it should seriously look at its plans and future desires, where it wants to be and work towards that. On top of this Phuket is phased with challenges from other Asian countries who have started to capitalize on the Long Stay Market, thus challenges are not only internally, but external as well.

In terms of benefits, respondent indicated that there were no financial benefits for them in Phuket, but there are benefits in terms of the weather, climate, westernized community, beautiful homes, crime free environment, and the freedom they enjoy daily. Contrary to this the respondents believe they are providing more benefits to Phuket than what they are receiving in terms of supporting orphanages, old age homes, several charities and taxes that investors contribute to the Phuket economy. This is evident as outlined by Pornchokechai, (as cited in Chaisawat &Tungsomboon, 2008) “foreigners are the engines driving property boom in Phuket, out pacing Thai buyers by 38 billion in 2006”.

The above issues as pointed out by the respondents are part and parcel of the many social problems that have plagued societies for years and when ignored and not promptly tackled, spirals out of control and lead to even bigger problems. In the end it becomes extremely difficult to rectify them.

From the findings, it does not necessarily mean that negative social problems lead to negative experience, because as the respondents indicated, in spite of the challenges they may be facing, they still believe Phuket is the right place for them right now. Due to outlined challenges, retired long stay tourists are sending out early warning signals for the authorities. Currently from this study and from other social platforms, there is a relatively negative experience of Phuket from those who are living in Phuket and those who have left. However, because of the “good

experience” retired long stay tourists had they would like to see authorities take matters into their hands, so that Phuket would not become like Pattaya.

In recent discussions by NESAC (as cited in Phuket News, 2011), Mr. Samphantharak on Corporate Social Responsibility noted the following, “Tourism is developing at an alarming rate in Phuket, leading to the islands degradation and those who are supposed to enforce the law have been negligent – things are out of control. Phuket tourism will improve if local people will follow the laws. Local business people need to develop a socially responsible corporate ethic, as this is the key to fixing many of Phukets problems. Another member of the committee, Mr. Huangthanapan says, “Phuket is aware and accepts problems but do not fix them and this has become a culture, as most of these problems are created by Phuket people, therefore the law must be enforced with no compromise.”In another report, the president of the Phuket Tourism Association aired his concern that Phuket is attracting quantity tourists and not quality tourists, and at the same time quality of service is failing, because whereas tourists use to stay 4-5 days in Phuket, this has reduced to about 3 days.

A report by a Dutch consulting company noted that water pollution, a concern also voiced by the respondents is becoming a problem and that Phuket will be faced with water issues in the future as the three reservoirs will not be enough to provide and cater for the ever expanding resident’s population of Phuket. Some water resources have been infected with E.Coli and this can pose a problem for the island in the future.

The study acknowledges that the problems as pointed out by the respondents are not unique and that the authorities are well aware of them, however due to factors beyond their control, these will take time to resolve. In the meantime, these issues are affecting tourism in a negative light and causing doubts in the minds of retired long stay tourists, to stay in Phuket or start searching for another place?

Finally, in spite of all the negative observations and antagonism that retired long stay tourists feel from their host community, they believe Phuket is still the best place for them to be right now. They would not exchange it for anything. Overall experience is believed to be positive in spite of the challenges and hurdles that long stay tourists have to face while living here. They have conditioned themselves to ignore discomfort and just take life as it comes, one day at a time.

5.2 Discussions

It is clear that humans will continue to move, cross borders and find means and ways to quench or satisfy the desires in them. These desires can be for pleasure, work, leisure or whatever reason that motivates them to pack up and go. From a sociological perspective, researchers want to understand human behavior, phenomenologically; they want to understand the experience of the tourists. From a community point of view locals need to understand why retirees are drawn to Phuket how they can share their space.

Behavior is defined by (Oxford Dictionary) as a response of an individual or group to an action, environment, person or stimulus. McColl (as cited in Choibamroong, n.d.) defines Consumer behavior as the action a person takes towards purchasing and using products and services including the decision making process that proceeds and determines those actions, and it flows from 3 main sources, desire, emotion, and knowledge. Alternatively humans are seen as a society, which is made up of these sources, resulting in a society being considered as a system, because a society cannot exist without people, fact is people make up society. Knowledge is considered as a product of humans which is socially and culturally constructed Ernest (as cited in Kim, 2001). Learning on the other hand is a social process. For retired long stay tourists, this process of crossing borders is a new learning, adjusting and adapting process, acquiring knowledge of their new county and assimilating or not assimilation into a new society, with different and new ways of doing things. All these facets shape and form human behaviors, perceptions and experiences through life.

This study agrees with the definitions and concepts above firstly because retired long stay tourist acted on their desire of finding an affordable lifestyle for themselves outside their home countries. Secondly, today retirees are well travelled and have gained a wealth of knowledge about people and places, which enabled them to adapt to their new society in Phuket by learning how to manage their emotions better. With time, the retirees have acquired knowledge about their new surroundings and the responses they gave were based on what they have experienced and are still experiencing as they continue to integrate in the Thai society.

Human experience is considered as a social experience, because much of what humans are and do is because of others. How people behave in the end is as a result how others around them contribute towards that behavior. Therefore social interaction is at the heart of the human

experience (Hobbs & Blank, 1985). Each Society has a culture (ways of thinking, feelings, behaviors) passed on from generations. Culture contains knowledge, beliefs, morals, customs, skills and laws, and it is considered static and dynamic at the same time. In order to participate in a society's culture one must experience the process of socialization. Socialization is the process that transforms the organism into a social being. It's this socialization process that shapes personalities, culture, and human behavior which is more culturally acquired than it is biologically. Therefore it is culture that accounts for the observable differences amongst human grouping, and its culture that represents a unique way of life, with unique combinations of values, rules and roles. Culture is a way of life, that strives to meet the needs of its people, that's why culture shock has such significant impacts, and why cultures are different because of its continues striving to meet the recurring needs of its people.

As retirees attempt to integrate and continue to socialize with the Thai community, they are shaped by what they experience, feel and go through. Some have managed to fit in well; others have picked up resentment, antagonism and contempt. These actions have a negative effect on the society of Phuket as a whole. The Thai people have showed contempt on one hand and the retirees have withdrawn to themselves on the other. Therefore, in such a case their actions will also have an effect on the socialization process of Phuket. The Thai culture is unique and as observed from the study, some retirees had challenges adapting to it. However since they have chosen to retire here in Thailand, they had to learn to adapt to the Thai way of life. As a result, the process of culture and socialization continues between the two parties.

Furthermore, it is generally assumed that if you provide it, people will turn up to experience, enjoy, and want to be part of it. That's the one main interesting part of tourism. What countries create in terms of tourism draws people to its shores. In this case, Thailand has opened an opportunity for retirees to come to Thailand and experience Thailand as "guests". This invitation can be seen as a pull factor to those who desire to spend their rest of their retirement days in Phuket.

When such invitations are made public, and people start to take up these opportunities, countries should than go the extra mile to put policies and measure in place to make sure that such invitation live up to the original ideas and plans. These policies should include things like protection, security, safety and benefits people will derive from taking up this invitation. There is

a concern voiced by some respondents who have been in Phuket for a long time, where they said: Phuket should again draw high paying tourists and not always mass tourism, as there are two different markets. The Japanese market for example, is concerned about their personal safety, security, hygiene, and very sensitive to crime. They have in the meantime dwindled, as security has been compromised. However considered as one of the major Asian markets still in the future for many Asian countries, it will be beneficial for Phuket to implement policies of safety and security for these markets to make sure they continue to return. Failure to implement such policies can result in retirees looking for alternative countries, where they feel they are well taken care of and their interests protected.

Philippines for example is the only country with dedicated government agency dealing with retirees, PRA (Philippines Retirement Authority) which was formed in 1985 to attract foreigners and Philippines who live abroad to return and retire in the Philippines. This way, they are able to formulate policies specific to this market. In the case of Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia though, their retirement programs are undertaken by tourism authorities (Padojinog & Rodolfo. 2003). In all this, Thailand has many advantages above other countries because it is considered as the Model of Tourism Marketing and Promotion (Padojinog & Rodolfo, 2003), it has been named the top destinations to live in terms of the quality of life (HSBC Quality of life Index, 2010), Expat 2006, predicts that Thailand's immigrant population will rise by as much as 5.5 million by 2010, therefore, they can capitalize on these strength in order keep the majority of this market.

From the discussions above, below focus is placed on addressing the objectives that have been set out in the study.

Objective 1 : To identify Retired International Long Stay Tourists main influential factor/s in their destination selection:

Influential factors were perceived by the respondents to be something special and magical, climate, weather, strategic geographical position of Phuket, people, culture, beauty of beaches, low cost of living, comfort, freedom and stress free environment. These factors agree with the literature review done by (Gustafson, 2002; Breuer, 2005; Mason, 2002; Sardinha, 2011) and others. However these studies did not concentrate much on the investment factor, which was one of the reason one respondent came to Phuket, because they had invested in

property during their younger days. Even though not directly mentioned or discussed however, retirees in these studies in a way have invested in their properties which they stay in when they go on holidays to the different islands they go to during the colder weathers in Europe.

Secondly something special and magical was another different factor from previous studies. There is a magical culture, magical captivating way of life in Phuket and the rest of South East Asia. The entire culture of Southeast Asia is different from the rest of the world, because they have a different distinctive culture which sets them apart and gives them their own distinctiveness. In Phuket this can be attributed to the fact that Thailand has never been colonized and this has set them apart from the rest of the nations that have been under colonial rule. Looking at the history therefore, this creates pride for Thai people and for other nationalities this can be misinterpreted or viewed as arrogance, but not necessarily so, it could also be looked from a perspective of heroism and how overconfident they are that they were able to hold their own through all that was going on around them. This is not necessarily a wrong thing, but if Phuket is set to become the major tourist province, it has to learn to accommodate the many diverse cultures that have ascended upon it without losing much of its culture and magic.

Natural environment was another draw card for long stay tourists. It is critical that Phuket learn from previous studies and move swiftly to avoid similar situations of degradation, pollution, natural environment destruction. Currently, according to the respondents that have been in Phuket for over 10 years, the beauty of Phuket over a short period of time has diminished tremendously, but it seems not much attention is being paid to this once vital draw factor. The same problems of fast property markets, targeting of coastal properties improper infrastructures where the same issues mentioned in reviewed studies concerning Spain, Portugal and Mexico. Sadly, these destructions once done can never be reversed. However these problems can be avoided, and in the process help Phuket become a better place, not only for the tourists, but to the Phuket community.

Lastly, retired long stay tourists move to Phuket to get away from their dislike of certain aspects in their countries, lack of freedom, heavy tax measure, bureaucratic ways and crime. The quality of life they can have in Phuket on their pensions, which they could not do had they stayed in their home countries, were just a few of those things that were emphasized.

One can thus clearly see that Phuket is strategically and geographically well positioned for retired long stay tourists, it has the much desired and sort after aspects of climate, beauty, food, people, way of life, the western community and delicacies (western food) that retired long stay tourists can enjoy and so forth. This is all good and well, but Phuket Provincial Authorities must also be aware of their neighboring competitors who are starting to offer similar attraction at lower prices and much friendlier environment.

Objective 2 : To investigate the benefits Retired International Long Stay Tourists are deriving from Phuket -Thailand.

There are no financial benefits for retired long stay tourists. Indirect benefits have been pointed out in terms of pull factors already discussed in objective 1. Much of the literature available does not specify any specific benefits retirees receive from their host communities. Thus Phuket offers intangible benefits in the form its culture, people, space and beauty. These provide a desirable environment that meets the needs and desires of the tourists that are coming. One benefit that retired long stay tourists have pointed out as one that needs urgent attention is that of security and protection for them, as they believe they are not being protected, claiming the *“Thai law is anti-tourists.”*

Another benefit that retirees have pointed to is one of an *“identification card”*, specifically for retired long stay tourists and or expats, as they believe they are “citizens” of Phuket and should no longer be categorized and treated as tourists. Such a card will benefit them in areas like medical and shopping discounts.

Unlike the Westerners that Howard (2007) found who at times find it difficult to manage their finances, retirees in Phuket are not too concerned, as their pensions and investments are providing them with enough financial means to cover their daily needs. However retirees did not hesitate to point out though that should the cost of living continue to rise, this might change and cause them to relocate to alternative cheaper places.

Objective 3: To capture the experience and identify the adaptation strategies that International Long Stay Tourists have employed to fit into their new environment in Phuket.

The investigation revealed a great deal of negative experiences that the long stay retirees have expressed. In spite of these sentiments, the overall experience is a wonderful one. For most, Phuket is home and there is no other place they would want to be right now. Only two respondents stated that they wanted to leave Phuket because it has become too overcrowded, people have become very unfriendly and the experience lack authenticity. They prefer to move to the North or South of Thailand where nature is still untouched. So it can be seen that human behavior is shaped by much more than just the negative things people go through in life. In this case the retirees pointed out that besides all the negative things which are spoiling the beauty of Phuket, there is still hope, there is still beauty here that can be rekindled and revived, there's still that magic that will continue.

Earlier the study touched on the aspect of culture and that culture is a way of life, and that each nation has its culture. Culture is a vital part of human behavior, as it continues to shape people, the way they think, behave and socialize with each other. Culture itself is made up of three components, ideology, which holds the beliefs, ideas and shared values, technology, the skills, crafts, arts and needs for survival, and finally social organization, rules, regulations, roles and relationship.

All these facets combined form the society of Phuket. It is thus expected that people will conform to the society they are in regardless of their beliefs. It can be that there is total conformation, or part conformation especially on the part of the retired long stay tourists. Long stay tourist's coming to Phuket, come with their own beliefs, values, expectations and ideas, they come from different societies and into a new one, therefore it is natural to say that there would be an adjustment or conformation that will take place in order to fit in and adapt to their new environment.

In order to do this, long stay tourists will have to respect and accept certain things of the Thai culture that they might not agree with in order to live comfortably here. Alternatively, they can withdraw from Thai society as Emerson (1803-1882) noted referring to immigrants in the US, "people resented and feared the increasing number of foreign immigrants (resulting in

hostility and antagonism) this leads to segregation and setting up of “specific, separate” neighborhoods.”

Thai society is a unique society in that they have never been colonized, and as previously mentioned their actions can be mistakenly interpreted as arrogant or proud, and not many other societies can easily identify with it. However, this is either something that one would have to learn about and adapt, or as Emerson stated, withdraw, while still living in Phuket, but enclose yourself with the familiar.

From the Thai point of view as one respondent mentioned *“because they have never been colonized, they are scared that we are here to take over their country, as such the antagonism towards not only long stay retirees, but foreigners in general.”* Long stay tourism thus have an effect on the culture and community of Phuket and the concerns of the locals can be identified with from other studies that have pointed out that antagonism does occur because of insecurities from the locals. The locals feel they now have to serve the foreigners who have all the money and purchasing power which they, the locals do not have. One respondent said: *“I can identify with the locals, because some foreigners really treat them badly, so they, foreigners are also to blame for the hostility.”*

All said, experience in the end is a composition of all that an individual does, chose to do and how they chose to see it and the way they chose to live it. From the respondents it is clear that they believe they can still make a good life for themselves here in Phuket. With the help of the Phuket Authorities in providing security, better rules and regulations for road users, better management of visa runs (which has been welcomed especially with the retirement visa) things can change for the better. Respondents urged that Phuket carefully take note of petty crimes that is on the rise, because if left unmanaged, can ruin society.

Regarding adaptation strategies, respondents mentioned, that because they had travelled before settling, adapting was not really a factor except for the language and the culture that was and still is a challenge for them.

Finally, people can live in harmony if they “chose” to, by adopting an attitude of reverence, respect and humility towards each other. Respondents have indicated that to really adapt, you have to make an effort in whichever way possible, be it learning a language to communicate, helping the community you are living in, adjusting yourself and or your behavior

to fit into the new society, or whatever it is that you as an individual need to do to. It is never easy because you are from a different background, different way of doing things, *“ I have a military background and things always used to be done in a certain way, fast, meticulous, precise, but here it is all so relaxed, that was hard for me at the beginning, but I have learned to live with it and accept.”*

5.3 Recommendations

This study identified a few factors from respondents that Phuket Authorities can take note of in order to improve its service for the retiree.

Firstly it is important to make a clear distinction between long stay retirees, long stay tourists and expatriates. Instead of combining “long stay statistics” a clearer division needs to be made in terms of how many are retirees (long stay program), how many are expatriates, and how many are residents. What makes them so different from each other, and how can they be identified for better studies in the future. To outline what benefits and attractions will be put in place for retired long stay tourists and how to manage this market so that better records are available. Most importantly, is how the public and academics can access this information.

Environmental issue have become major concerns worldwide because man is going about building, cutting down every tree in sight, adding more and more to the global problems that are there instead of starting to protect the environment with what is left. The respondents feel Phuket Authorities are not doing enough to help the environment. There must be stricter rules on buildings, cutting down of trees especially the endangered species and so on. It is also highly recommended that a proper sewage infrastructure system be put in place, as currently sewage is being pumped wherever.

Pollution is another concern that needs to be addressed. People do it so unconsciously. Authorities must create a culture of consciousness especially towards the environment and benefit of Phuket. A respondent who has a daughter who is an environmentalist notes *“every time my daughter comes, she is so sad to see how the environment is deteriorating”*. It is sad, *but if Phuket does not wake up to what is happening and how serious it is for the island, in a few years, this beautiful island is going to be destroyed.*

Phuket must continue enhancing the socio-cultural factors that have been draw cards for the sustainability of the island. T the destination's detriment corruption, bribery and pity crime are creeping in, or have already crept into Phuket society. Uncurbed crime, corruption and bribery grows, spreads and eventually becomes so deeply rooted into society that it becomes difficult to combat it completely. These activities later become reasons for people leaving their homes of many years in search of other safer places. If Phuket wants to continue to be that preferred and desired destination, it would have to seriously start dealing with these problems in order to avoid them jeopardizing the effort many Thai people are making to keep Phuket on the best destination map.

Phuket must not lose its magic; therefore it is important the authorities become consistent in dealing with Thai's and foreigners in the same way. *"There is nothing wrong with saying you are wrong or that you cannot do something, we are all humans and it is a learning process. Thai people have to learn that all humans make mistakes and it is through these that we learn to be better people, they must learn to look at the bigger picture out there."*The magic includes the smile, friendliness and acceptance of others, *"we are not here to take anything away from the Thai people."* noted another respondent.

Much of the concerns pointed out especially of road regulations are applicable here, that rules and regulations be followed and adhered to regardless who breaks them. It does not mean only foreigners cause accidents. Everyone is prone to making mistakes, and the best way to grow and enhance a society is by acknowledging these mistakes and finding common grounds to resolve them effectively in the best interest of the entire society. If the precedent is made that Thai's can always walk away unaccountable for road accidents, eventually people will take it for granted and become even more reckless.

Phuket Provincial Authorities can also come up with better policies for the retiree market if they are serious in being the preferred destination. These policies can include matters of safety and security for retirees, benefits in every area that can entice them to choose Phuket above other destinations, knowing that they will be welcome and taken care of while in Phuket.

Finally Phuket must realize that yes, it has the magic, but it has to look after the retirees that have made it their home, and that magic that is drawing people to its shores. Asia as an area is becoming more and more competitive and there are more opportunities opening for retirees in

other parts of Asia. At the same time, Phuket must start to draw the high spending guests it ones had instead of package tours that do not really spend much in Phuket. Things are becoming more and more expensive that those who can afford travel to other Asian countries for shopping instead of spending money in Phuket.

5.4 Areas of further study

It will be more beneficial in future if statistical information for retired long stay Tourists can be recorded to provide better and diverse methods of study. Qualitative study provides in-depth understanding of the individual or group, but quantitative data can at times provide information that people might withhold when being spoken to face to face. If at all possible a deeper study for a longer period of time on this market can be undertaken to ascertain and bring more light on the experiences of this market and how to capitalize on it.

From the literature review done, this seems to be the only study done specifically on this market in Phuket (unless there are specific Thai studies that covered this area already), however there are other studies done in other parts of Thailand, (Westerners in Thailand, Howard, 2007/2009), UdonThani (Planning of IRM and Expats, Koch-Schulte, 2008), and Chiang-Mai (Activities Arrangement in Chiang-Mai Province, (Long Stay Japanese Pensioner Tourists, Hongsranagon, 2002; 2005) mentioning Phuket, but not one specifically targeting Phuket alone.

However, one factor which needs further researching is that “*something special and magical*”, to find what it is and to enhance it to the benefit of Phuket in the future. It might be that there are people out there who are aware of this concept which this study was not able to reach, as such could make an interesting study for Phuket and Thailand to discover “*this something special and magical*”. It could also be that it is a combination of all the above pull factors that have been discussed, or something completely different.

Recommendations in terms of further studies can include but not limited to Planning measures that are in place for the Retired Long Stay Tourist and their effectiveness, Challenges Phuket faces verses its neighboring competitors for this market. Statistical data for this market and Policy measure that the Provincial Government is putting in place to protect this market. Other studies can be in the area of: Perception of the community on Retired Long Stay

Tourists and or Tourism and what financial benefits retirees expect to get from Phuket. Lastly, relationships between Retired Long Stay Tourists and Thai Locals, just to mention a few.

5.5 Limitations

Time was a factor in the study and the study acknowledges if it had more time, and was able to extend beyond Phuket alone, that more information could have been gathered.

Secondly, it was a challenge finding respondents because of lack of statistical data, as well as other information that could make it easy to contact Retired Long Stay tourists. A database of this market will be extremely helpful in future studies if proper planning, management and policies are to be implemented.

Lastly, fear of uncertainty as to what the information will be used for was another challenge in spite of the fact that a clear document explaining the use of this information was provided. Being in a foreign country people tend to tread lightly and not draw undue attention to themselves.

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APPENDEXES



Appendix -A

Prince of Songkla University, PSU Campus, Thailand

MBA - School of Hospitality and Tourism

QUESTIONNAIRE - GUIDELINE

Research Topic:

**EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL LONG STAY TOURIST IN PHUKET,
THAILAND**

“A case study of Retired Long Stay International Tourists”

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data and information to assist in completion of a Thesis in Masters of Business Administration in Hospitality & Tourism (International Program), Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism at Prince of Songkla University – PSU Phuket Campus, Phuket, Thailand. The data and information collected will be used for Academic purposes only and all collected data will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation

Miss. Helmi Hitula:

Researcher: Student Number

5330120042

Contact Details: Tel:

0802033675

**Research Project Title: Experience of International Long Stay Tourists in Phuket,
Thailand: “A case study of Retired International Tourist”**

Researcher: Helmi Hitula

Consent Form:

This consent form is both for you as the respondent and for me as a researcher that the contents herewith are for the purpose of academic research, and all information provided will be considered and handled with confidence. Please feel free to ask any questions that are not clear to you and they will be gladly addressed.

The Purpose of this research is to explore the experience of Retired International Long Stay Tourists in Phuket Thailand. The research will explore in particular the following questions:

- What precisely drew you to Thailand and not another destination?
- What benefits are you deriving from this type of venture?
- What do you as a Retired International Long Stay Tourist expect from Thailand-Phuket?
- How did you adapt to your new environment, your experience, anxieties and joy.

In short, the researcher would like for you to share your experience and to obtain an understanding of why you chose Thailand-Phuket. The research also aims to understand this market and how best your needs are being met and what you would like to see more.

The benefit to the study would be a better understanding of this market and to recommend and suggest to the Thai Government and future researchers what Retired International Long Stay Tourists would like to see, of have while in Thailand.

The interviews are in-depth and will last about 1 hour to 1hour 30 minutes, depending on the information that you will be sharing. The primary means of recording information will be through taking notes and tape recording as means of data clarification for the researcher. Please also note that this information is privy only to the researcher and will not be released to a third party. Your name will not be used in the physical research report that will be drawn up as a result of this interview.

Your signature on this will be an indication that you have read and understood the content therein and that you agree willingly to participate in this research. Please also note that at anytime you are

free to terminate the interview or refrain from answering questions you prefer to omit during the interview without prejudice or consequences.

This research has been approved by: Prince of Songkla University, Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, MBA International Program, Phuket Campus, and any concern about this project that you might have can be addressed to the MBA Office of Prince of Songkla University, e-mail: wanthida31@gmail.com Tel: 66 - 76276213

Participants Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Demographic Information:

The questionnaire will be divided into two parts. The first part is for personal information and the second part the detailed –in-depth interview

Part 1 Personal Information

1. **Country of Origin:** _____
2. **Gender:** Male Female
3. **Age:** _____
4. **Occupation before retiring:** _____
5. **Education:** _____
6. **Have you visited Thailand before deciding to return on a Long Stay basis?**
Yes **No**
7. **How long have you been living in Phuket now?**
 6 months 1- year More than 1- years
8. **Are you renting or you own your own place?**
Own **Renting**
9. **Is your country / government (back home) contributing to your monthly/pension support?**
Yes **No**
10. **In which bracket does your income fall monthly? (Baht)**
 10 000 – 30 000 30 000 – 50 000 50 000 – 100 000
 Over 100 000

In-depth Interview:

Research Objective 1:To identify Retired International Long Stay Tourists main influential factor/s in their destination choice.

Question: 1

While you were planning your relocation, what were some of the factors, challenges and choices that had a major impact on your decision as to where to go?

Question 2

Can you recall the incident or activity that triggered your decision to move to Phuket?

Question 3

If you had been to Phuket before deciding to move here on a more permanent basis, what was it that had a major impact on your destination choice? (Contributing factor?)

Research Objective 2:To investigate benefits Retired International Long Stay Tourists are deriving from Phuket - Thailand

Question 1:

Comparing where you come from and now here in Phuket, what benefits are there for you here in Thailand which made your move worthwhile?

Question 2

Can you describe a typical day for you in Phuket? What all do you do, how you spend your time, activities.

Question 3

What has been one of the most memorable days for you since you have been here in Phuket?

Research Objective 3:To identify the adaptation strategies that Retired International Long Stay Tourists have employed to fit in their new environment in Phuket.

Question 1:

Moving is always a challenge as there are numerous factors that one has to take into consideration. How did you eventually deal with these changes, and what did you do to adapt to your current living environment?

Question 2:

Narrate how you first experienced Phuket on your arrival, and what adaptations you had to make.

Question 3

What are some of the difficulties / challenges that you face / faced ?

Question 4

Over all, what would you say of your experience since you have been in Phuket? Good / bad experience: Please explain

What is distracting for you / disturbing to you??

What would you change if given an opportunity??

Where would you want to be right now if you had an opportunity to rethink your decision?

Open question for clarity:

These were done to clarify statements or answers given during the interview so as to make sure that the interviewer understood and recorded precisely what the respondent said.

Other questions:

Open questions followed the above questions depending on what the responses are that respondents gave. This helped to dig more and find, or get more information.

The research is all about your experience, what you do daily, how you spend your time, activities, and challenges, your fears, anxieties, concerns, thoughts and ideas. Is there anything else that you would like to add that you believe will be to the advancement of this study?

Thank you for your time and assistance in contributing to this research. It is highly appreciated.

VITAE

Name: Helmi T. N. Hitula

Educational Attainment:

Degree	Name of Institution	Year of Graduation
Diploma (Hospitality & Tourism)	Les Roches, Hotel Management School (Switzerland)	1994
Management Development Program	University of Stellenbosch (South Africa)	1996
Bachelor in HRM	Polytechnic of Namibia, Namibia	2007

Scholarship Awards:

TICA – Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency	2010-2011
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Work – Position and Address

Institution	Position	Address
Kalahari Sands Hotel	F.O. Supervisor	Windhoek, Namibia
(Sun International Hotels)	F.O. Manager	
	Restaurant Manager	
	F & B Manager	
Polytechnic of Namibia	Commercial Manager	Windhoek, Namibia
(Namibia Hotel& Tourism School)		

List of Publications: H. T.N. Hitula andAphirom, Promchanya (2011). *Experience of International Long Stay Tourists in Phuket, Thailand: (A case Study of Retired International Tourists).*

International Conference on Humanities & Social Sciences, Transforming Research for Sustainable Community, October 3-4, 2011, Hatyai, Thailand.