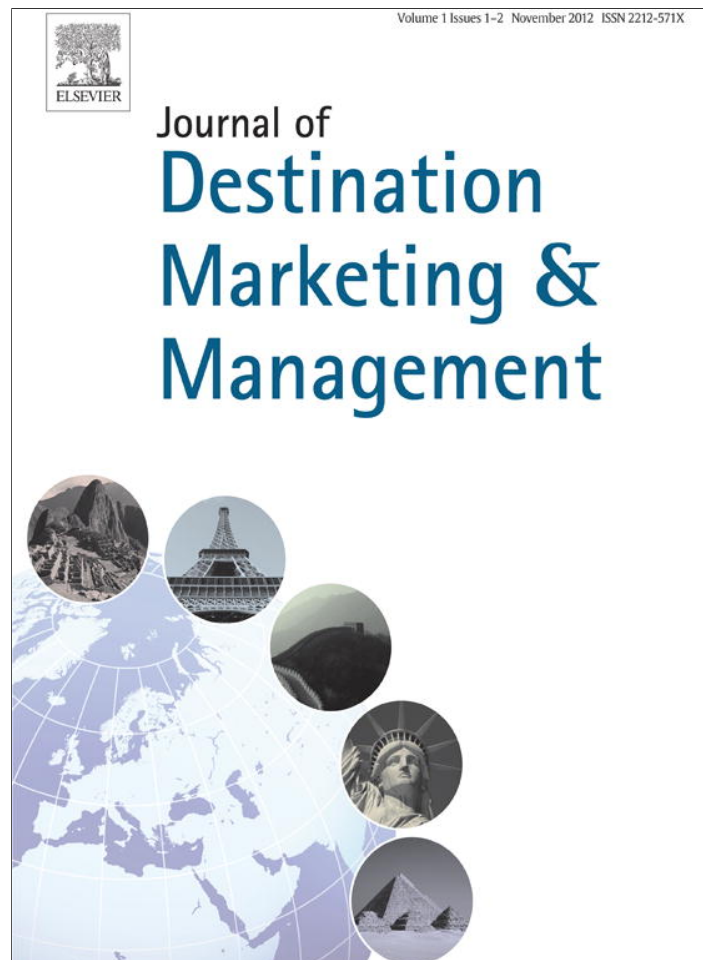


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Research Paper

Travel motivations and travel distance with temporal advance: A case study of Hong Kong pleasure travelers

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ABSTRACT

Although previous studies have examined different factors that affect travel demand and destination choice, tourism research has not investigated changes in such factors over time. This paper presents the findings of a study that examines the robustness of motivations and travel distance over time based on the 10 most popular overseas destinations for pleasure travel and utilizing data collected in an annual survey of Hong Kong residents from 2001 to 2010. The empirical findings indicated that for in most destinations, motivations to travel to the destinations remained unchanged over time. Similarly, results found participants did not necessarily travel further as time progressed. In addition, the study found that independent travel is an increasingly popular mode of travel.

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1. Introduction

Hong Kong is one of the most popular travel destinations in the Asia-Pacific region (Qu, Li, & Chu, 2000). At the same time, the city is also one of the largest tourist-generating markets in this region, after Japan, Taiwan, and Australia (Zhang, Qu, & Tang, 2004). The number of Hong Kong outbound travelers by air and sea increased from 13 million in 2004 to 15 million in 2010 (Hong Kong Tourism Board [HKTB], 2011). Moreover, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in Hong Kong increased from US\$26,092 in 2005 to US\$31,758 in 2010, and was the fourth highest in the Asia-Pacific region that year after Australia, Japan, and Singapore (World Bank, 2012). Given this large tourism market, along with a combined annual disposable income of US\$205,725 million across the Hong Kong population (Euromonitor International, 2012), the travel demands of Hong Kong residents should be of great interest to destination marketing organizations (DMOs) worldwide.

A number of studies have examined the factors influencing travel demand and destination choice. In relation to choice, researchers have proposed that traveler choices are influenced by different factors related to travel motivations (Crompton, 1979; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Kim, 2008; Sangpikul, 2008). In

general, people travel to particular destinations because these destinations satisfy their desire for such things as escape, relaxation, and spending time with family members and friends. Additionally, the inherent desire to travel is further stimulated and reinforced by destination attributes such as beaches, cultural attractions, shopping, and other attractions. Different motivational attributes result in different destination choices. Other studies have focused on the relationship between travel demand and distance, and have identified a lognormal pattern of travel demand (Greer & Wall, 1979), where demand declines exponentially once travelers notice a high demand. Furthermore, a number of studies have investigated modes of travel with respect to various socio-demographic and travel characteristics (Quiroga, 1990; Mok & Armstrong, 1995; Hyde & Lawson, 2003).

Travel demand to a destination should be maintained at a certain level as part of sustainable tourism and one way to achieve this is by creating and maintaining destination loyalty. Studies on destination loyalty have examined the factors that influence the “repeat” destination choices of travelers, including monetary (e.g. accommodation, air tickets) and non-monetary costs (e.g. time and effort), past visit history, different cultural experiences, safety, considerations and transport convenience (Oppermann, 2000; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Niininen, Szivas, & Riley, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Alegre & Juaneda, 2006; Chi & Qu, 2008). When tourists travel to familiar destination, they spend less time and effort organizing their travel than they would travel if they were traveling to an unfamiliar destination. Similarly, travelers who visit familiar destinations have a better understanding of price and quality than those traveling to unfamiliar ones.

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The objectives of this study are three-fold. First, the study argues that destination loyalty (or repeated destination choice) needs to be examined along with travel motivations. It is because travel motivation is a precedent to the establishment of destination loyalty. In order for a destination to be selected at the first place, the destination should satisfy travelers' motivation. This study makes an attempt to examine how distinguishable travel motivations to a destination will be from other destinations. As such, one of the study's objectives is to examine the robustness of travel motivations over time. While travel motivations may change with travel experience (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983), little is known about the robustness of travel motivations over time. Also, this study argues that repeated destination choice needs to be examined over increasing travel distance. Given that technological advancement and infrastructure development have reduced travel costs (Khadaroo & Seetana, 2008), travelers might travel further or cheaper. Thus, the second objective of this study is to examine the changes in distance over time. Although previous studies have well documented motivations to travel and destination choices, limited research has examined these factors (i.e. motivation and distance) from a temporal perspective. Such a perspective, usually expressed in terms of trends, is essential for identifying the long-term series of movements hidden in the raw data (Gonzalez & Moral, 1996). Hence, the third objective of this study is to explore travel characteristics of Hong Kong pleasure travelers. It includes travel mode and travel trend among the 10 most popular destinations.

This study analyzes data from a series of annual surveys of travel demand for international pleasure travel among Hong Kong residents. The purpose is to examine whether travel motivations and distance vary over temporal advance using the 10 most popular international destinations based on aggregated data. Having introduced the background of this research, the following section reviews the published literature on issues relating to outbound travel. After that, there is a section to discuss the data collection and analysis. The final section summarizes the findings and offers suggestions for future research. This study contributes to the literature on travel and tourism by addressing the aforementioned gap in the research on destination choice and travel demand by exploring the destination choices of Hong Kong outbound travelers from a temporal perspective. Furthermore, it aims to investigate variations in motivation among travelers to different destinations. It thus provides new insights into the international travel trends of Hong Kong residents, which in turn could help travel industry managers and DMOs worldwide to target Hong Kong pleasure travelers, to understand changes in travel demand for international destinations, and to establish appropriate operations and marketing strategies for Hong Kong travelers.

2. Literature review

This section reviews existing research on factors associated with travel demand and destination choice.

2.1. Destination loyalty and travel Motivations

Destination loyalty conceptually incorporates customer loyalty in the marketing literature on tourism destinations. Conventionally, loyalty embraces two aspects: behavioral and attitudinal (Dick & Basu, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Mimouni-Chaabane & Volle, 2010; Bianchi & Pike, 2011). Repeat purchase or revisit to a travel destination is the basis of behavioral loyalty. Due to difficulties in measuring actual behavior, the loyalty literature commonly measures intention, to purchase again which the

theory of planned behavior theoretically overarches (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudinal loyalty, however, reflects attitudinal preference or commitment towards to product, service, or destination. While behaviorally loyal customers may be swayed by better alternatives (Minami & Dawson, 2008), attitudinally loyal customers stay with the service provider or destination regardless of situational influences and marketing efforts (Carpenter, 2008). Thus, it is important to focus on true loyalty, a balance between behavioral and attitudinal loyalty.

The destination loyalty literature postulates two factors that determine the extent to which destination loyalty can be established and maintained: satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008; Kim, 2008; Mendes, Valle, Guerreiro, & Silva, 2010) and destination brand equity (McDowall & Ma, 2010; Bianchi & Pike, 2011). In the literature, destination loyalty is commonly measured by the intention to revisit and willingness to spread positive word-of-mouth. Revisit and recommendation to others are critical in a competitive tourism destination market (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), as retaining existing customers is less expensive than acquiring new customers (Chaudhry, 2007; Mendes et al., 2010). Given that travel motivation plays an important role played in destination loyalty by tourist satisfaction (Bramwell, 1998; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), a discussion of the role of travel motivation in destination selection follows.

2.2. Travel motivations and destination selection

Among the literature on the significance of motivations (i.e. pull and push motivations) on travel destination selection, Um and Crompton's (1990) travel destination choice model provides one of the original theoretical bases. Their two-stage model is based on the notion that attitude toward a destination is a useful predictor of destination selection. Travelers select a tourism destination by comparing perceived facilitators and perceived inhibitors. Travelers tend to have a more positive attitude toward a tourism destination when the destination satisfies specific motivation for pleasure travel.

Consequently, a plethora of studies has investigated how different types of travel motivations (i.e. pull and push motivations) affect travel destination selection (Crompton, 1979; Cha, McCleary, & Uysal, 1995; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Keating & Kriz, 2008; Kim, 2008). Pull motivation factors are related to the external and cognitive aspects of a destination, such as beaches, cultural attractions, shopping, and natural scenery. Push motivation factors are related to the internal, emotional aspects of travel, such as the desire for rest and relaxation, escape from routine, adventure, excitement, and family unity. Push motivation factors are considered to be directly related to destination loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Other studies have examined the destination selection process in terms of preferences by, arguing that destination preference shares similar traits with travel motivation (Manfredo, Driver, & Tarrant, 1996; Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009).

These motivations have been further examined with regard to culture (You, O'Leary, Morrison, & Hong, 2000; Zhang et al., 2004; Kao, Patterson, Scott, & Li, 2008; Rittichainuwat, 2008). You et al. (2000) compared UK pleasure travelers with Japanese pleasure travelers, and found that UK travelers rated enhancing knowledge, visiting friends and relatives, being together as a family, finding excitement, and experiencing a new and different lifestyle higher than their Japanese counterparts. Japanese pleasure travelers, meanwhile, viewed relaxation as more important than travelers from the UK. You et al. (2000) further found that UK travelers sought after outdoor sport activities, culture and heritage activities, sightseeing and shopping, people-interactive activities, low-priced food and accommodation, and exotic atmospheres more than Japanese travelers, who sought more after

personal safety and hygiene. Findings of another study conducted by Kao et al. (2008) showed that push factors for Taiwanese people traveling to Australia included meeting new people, getting away from home, and experiencing the prestige of travel, whereas pull factors included sunshine and scenery, a good value place to visit, famous attractions, a good environment for family travel, and safety. Zhang et al. (2004) identified Hong Kong residents as preferring destinations with safety, a familiar atmosphere, and less demanding activities as pull factors.

While research on travel motivation has grown from a cultural perspective, the topic of travel motivation has received limited attention from a temporal perspective. Given that preference is closely related to motivation (Hsu et al., 2009; Manfredo et al., 1996), the robustness (or frailty) of travel motivation can be derived from the existing literature on destination preference. Zajonc and Markus (1982) proposed that preferences are composed of affective and cognitive factors, and affective factors would play a dominant role in preference change. They posited that changes in preference can be attributed to prolonged exposure to, and increasing knowledge of, products, but changes in preference would hardly occur via through changes only in cognitive factors. In contrast, Moschini (1991) attributed changes in consumer preferences to changes in consumer awareness about the product.

In tourism research, travel career ladder (TCL) theory postulates changes in travelers' motivation with their travel experience (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Pearce & Lee, 2005). Based on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory of motivation, the TCL theory posits that motivation to travel is developed from relaxation needs; safety and security needs; relationship needs; self-esteem and development needs; through to self-actualization and fulfillment needs according to travelers' accumulated travel experiences. In contrast to the TCL theory, Pearce and Lee (2005) found empirically that novelty, escape and relaxation, relationships (with travel companions), and self-development are core travel motivation factors regardless of travel experience. The finding indicates that travel motivations are constant and robust, rather than ascending from lower to higher levels, as suggested by TCL theory. In conclusion, the literature on motivation and preference provides inconclusive findings about the robustness of motivation with temporal advance. Furthermore, in a recent destination study, Chi and Qu (2008) suggested the necessity of a temporal approach to understanding repeat destination selection behavior.

2.3. Distance decay and related temporal changes

Besides travel motivation, another stream of research on destination selection has focused primarily on proximity to the origin market, with studies suggesting that travel demand decreases as distance from the origin market increases (Bull, 1991; McKercher & Lew, 2003; Cai & Li, 2009). Drawing on the traditional supply and demand curves, the distance-decay model suggests that travelers are less likely to travel as the value of the cost variables (e.g. time, money, and distance) increases (Bull, 1991). Greer and Wall (1979) empirically identified a lognormality between distance and travel demand, where demand increases up to a certain distance and then afterward decreases exponentially. McKercher and Lew (2003) suggested a distance-decay curve where a secondary peak appears after the effective tourism exclusion zone (ETEZ) between 2500 and 4500 miles from Hong Kong. The ETEZ refers to the zone where no travel demand occurs owing to the geographic inaccessibility or unattractiveness of the destination. Destinations located before the ETEZ in their study included Korea, Bangkok, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Tokyo, Osaka, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur. Destinations located in the

secondary peak included the east coast of Australia, certain European cities, and the west coast of North America. As empirically found in McKercher and Lew's (2003) study, distance is a significant determinant of Hong Kong travelers' destination choices.

Given that time constraints and costs play a proxy role in relation to distance in the distance-decay model, it is reasonable to assume that travelers' perceptions of the proxy variables will change over time. That is, introducing new technology (e.g. microchip-embedded passports or more comfortable airplanes) and developing infrastructure (e.g. new airports, improved highways or direct flight routes) enable people to travel relatively less expensively and more conveniently (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2008). In this respect, with the introduction of technological advancements and developments, travelers would perceive particular destinations to be relatively closer than before. Given the need for a temporal approach to destination research, this study uses the travel behavior of Hong Kong residents to different destinations as a sample in order to examine the changes in travel distance over time.

2.4. Travel modes

Travel mode refers to the manner in which travelers choose to travel, such as on a package tour or independently (Mok & Armstrong, 1995). Travelers on package tours purchase transportation, accommodation, and other elements related to their travel through a travel agent, whereas independent travelers organize their own bookings and other travel arrangements.

The choice of travel mode has been found to be associated with travel characteristics (e.g. motivation, and preferences) and socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age and nationality). The major difference between independent and package travelers is that the former prefer flexibility in their itinerary, while the latter prefer convenience. Independent travelers enjoy the experience of planning the details of their vacation and tend to have freedom in selecting vacation elements. They also tend to perceive a destination as safe if they feel comfortable when traveling there independently (Hyde & Lawson, 2003). Compared with independent travel, the main reasons for participating in package tours include a comprehensive way of traveling, personal safety, and convenience (Quiroga, 1990). Similarly, Wong and Kwong (2004) found that the most important criterion for Hong Kong travelers in selecting a package tour was safety, followed by guaranteed departure, the service quality of the travel agency, and a relaxing itinerary. Consequently, older travelers tend to join package tours.

In terms of country of origin, Mok and Armstrong (1995) found that package tours were the most popular travel mode for Hong Kong residents. Indeed, more than 90% of Hong Kong international travelers joined such tours in their study. In contrast, Hyde and Lawson (2003) reported that 92% of British and 75% of American travelers to New Zealand were independent travelers.

While views on travel mode choice are well established in terms of travel and socio-demographic characteristics, previous research has expressed mixed views on trends in modes of travel. Hyde and Lawson (2003) posited that independent travel is a growing sector of worldwide tourism, whereas Wang, Hsieh, and Huan (2000) postulated that package tours are prevalent in Asia. Few studies, however, have attempted to analyze trends in modes of travel over time.

2.5. Hypotheses

A plethora of research has examined travelers' destination choices along with travel motivation and distance. While destination loyalty studies have examined the repeated destination

choices of travelers, scant research has investigated the temporal aspects of destination loyalty. Since traveler preferences can change over time (Zajonc & Markus, 1982; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Moschini, 1991), repeat destination choices may not be robust from a temporal perspective. Based on the literature review on motivation and distance in destination selection, the present study postulates the following hypotheses:

H1. Travel motivation to a tourism destination will change with temporal advance.

H2. Temporal advance will be positively correlated with travel distance.

3. Method

The data used in this study were collected from annual domestic tourism surveys on pleasure travel among Hong Kong residents during the period 2001–2010. The sampling approach involving modified random-digit dialing was used to produce a list of telephone numbers. The sample procedure in each year started with generating a list of eight-digit telephone numbers based on the latest version of the Hong Kong telephone book. The last two digits of each number were then truncated and replaced with two independently generated numbers. This formed a new telephone number, which was used to invite Hong Kong residents to take part in the survey. Respondents who agreed to participate, all of whom were at least 18 years old, then completed a telephone survey lasting around 15 min. The questionnaire, originally prepared in English, was translated into Chinese and then back translated into English to evaluate semantic equivalence and accuracy.

The topic-specific questions included in the survey concerned the respondents' travel experience in the past 12 months with regard to (i) international (overseas) destinations excluding China and Macau, (ii) motivation, (iii) travel mode, (iv) expenditure, (v) trip duration (i.e. how many nights the traveler was away from home in total on the trip), (vi) length of stay (i.e. how many nights the traveler stayed at the destination), and (vii) size of travel party. In addition, respondents' demographic information was collected. The travel motivation variables measured were "rest and relaxation" (relaxation), "spending time with family and friends" (family time), "getting away from the daily routine, role obligations, stress, and troubles" (getaway), "discovering new places and things" (new discovery), and "meeting different people" (meet people). A five-point Likert scale was used, with 1 being *very unimportant* and 5 being *very important*. Questions relating to travel motivation were included from the 2005 survey onwards. In this study, travel demand in each year was computed as a ratio of trips to a destination against overall international trips. This ratio was also used as a proxy of the destination's popularity.

4. Findings and analysis

This section discusses the demographic profile of the Hong Kong pleasure travelers and identified the 10 most popular international destinations. The hypotheses were then tested and the results analyzed to achieve the first and second objectives. After that, an exploratory approach was taken to investigate the travel characteristics of each destination.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the Hong Kong residents. The respondents were mainly male (62.3%), from a household of three to four people (54.9%), aged 26–45 (51.1%), and had received a high school education or below (50.8%) with a

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of Hong Kong pleasure travelers.

	Number (N=3108)	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	1171	37.7
Male	1937	62.3
<i>Age</i>		
18–25 years old	465	15.0
26–35 years old	750	24.1
36–45 years old	838	27.0
46–55 years old	585	18.8
56–65 years old	287	9.2
66 years old or above	135	4.3
Missing	48	1.6
<i>Education level</i>		
Less than high school	456	14.7
High school	1123	36.1
Some college or university	350	11.3
College/university	987	31.8
Postgraduate degree	176	5.7
Missing	16	0.4
<i>Monthly household income</i>		
HK\$9999 (US\$1299) or below	166	5.3
HK\$10,000 (US\$1300)–19,999	436	14.0
HK\$20,000 (US\$2600)–29,999	477	15.3
HK\$30,000 (US\$3900)–39,999	419	13.5
HK\$40,000 (US\$5100)–49,999	282	9.1
HK\$50,000 (US\$6400)–59,999	207	6.7
HK\$60,000 (US\$7700)–69,999	101	3.2
HK\$70,000 (US\$9000) or above	336	10.8
Missing	684	22.1
<i>Household size</i>		
1	202	6.5
2	649	20.9
3	827	26.6
4	912	29.3
5	334	10.7
6	93	3.0
7 or more	33	1.1
Missing	58	1.9

Note: Household income in US dollars is for reference only.

monthly household income of between HK\$10,000 and HK\$39,999 (42.8%) (US\$1 = HK\$7.8).

The 10 most popular international destinations were identified and are summarized in Table 2. The aggregated data showed Bangkok to be the most popular destination over the decade (13.1%), followed by Taipei (12.4%), Tokyo (9.6%), Seoul (7.4%), Hokkaido (5.1%), Singapore (4.9%), Osaka (3.1%), Sydney (3.0%), Kuala Lumpur (2.7%), and London (2.7%). Unlike other destinations in this study, which were all cities, Hokkaido is the northernmost island in Japan, where the well-known city of Sapporo is located. In this study, however, Hokkaido was considered equivalent to the other destination cities, to reflect the respondents' opinions appropriately and reduce complexity.

Over the 2001–2010 period, Bangkok, Taipei, Seoul, and Singapore showed decreasing demand, while Tokyo and Hokkaido, and Osaka showed increasing demand. Travel demand for Sydney, Kuala Lumpur was almost constant, while London's demand decreased slightly. Variation in rank over the decade was examined based on the coefficient of variation (CV), which is a quotient of the standard deviation divided by the mean. While the standard deviation should be understood in the context of the mean, the CV has the advantage of versatility among different means. The higher the CV value, the more demand fluctuated over the decade. Bangkok showed the highest CV at 49.9, followed by Tokyo at 40.5, Taipei at 38.8, Hokkaido at 34.1, Sydney at 28.6, Singapore at 26.8, Seoul at 26.4, Kuala Lumpur at 18.9, Osaka at

Table 2
Travel demand and ranking of the 10 most popular international destinations.

Destination	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Aggregated
Bangkok	17.4 (1)	19.1 (1)	21.2 (1)	19.3 (1)	13.3 (1)	13.5 (1)	12.1(2)	9.5 (3)	13.0 (1)	9.7 (2)	13.1 (1)
Taipei	11.9 (3)	14.6 (2)	15.3 (2)	10.4 (2)	13.3 (1)	10.8 (3)	12.1 (2)	13.2 (1)	11.2 (2)	14.1 (1)	12.4 (2)
Tokyo	11.5 (4)	3.4 (5)	3.5 (5)	6.6 (4)	11.2 (3)	11.8 (2)	12.5 (1)	11.2 (2)	8.5 (3)	7.0 (4)	9.6 (3)
Seoul	12.6 (2)	3.4 (5)	3.5 (5)	7.1 (3)	6.6 (4)	7.3 (4)	7.4 (5)	7.2 (4)	5.6 (5)	8.1 (3)	9.6 (4)
Hokkaido	0.4 (10)	6.7 (4)	7.1 (4)	3.8 (6)	6.1 (6)	3.8 (7)	8.1 (4)	3.0 (7)	6.5 (4)	5.6 (5)	7.4 (5)
Singapore	3.6 (5)	9.0 (3)	9.4 (3)	2.8 (7)	5.1 (7)	6.3 (5)	4.0 (6)	4.7 (5)	5.4 (6)	4.1 (6)	5.1 (6)
Osaka	0.8 (9)	2.2 (7)	1.2 (10)	1.4 (9)	3.1 (9)	2.3 (9)	3.4 (7)	4.0 (6)	4.7 (7)	3.6 (7)	4.9 (7)
Sydney	2.8 (6)	2.2 (7)	3.5 (5)	0.0 (10)	6.6 (4)	4.5 (6)	2.5 (8)	2.7 (9)	2.9 (9)	2.5 (10)	3.1 (8)
Kuala Lumpur	2.4 (8)	2.2 (7)	2.4 (8)	4.7 (5)	2.0 (10)	2.0 (10)	2.3 (9)	2.2 (10)	3.1 (8)	3.4 (8)	3.0 (9)
London	2.8 (6)	2.2 (7)	2.4 (8)	2.8 (7)	4.1 (8)	3.3 (8)	2.3 (9)	3.0 (7)	1.6 (10)	2.7 (9)	2.7 (10)

Note: Numbers indicate percentage of demand to total international travel. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the ranks among different destinations in a year.

Table 3
Trends in independent travel to the 10 most popular destinations.

Destination	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Aggregated
Bangkok (%)	23	18	22	22	31	61	55	66	58	61	47
Taipei (%)	42	54	54	45	38	51	66	60	51	55	54
Tokyo (%)	30	67	67	43	64	59	59	53	74	69	58
Seoul (%)	6	33	33	0	23	17	14	10	16	13	13
Hokkaido (%)	0	0	0	25	25	7	18	25	55	42	28
Singapore (%)	71	25	25	60	100	76	63	58	79	96	71
Osaka (%)	50	50	0	33	50	22	31	75	62	85	57
Sydney (%)	14	50	33	0	100	72	75	64	54	100	71
Kuala Lumpur (%)	0	50	50	20	25	50	45	11	57	74	45
London (%)	17	100	100	83	88	85	73	92	100	87	82
Average (%)	25	45	38	33	54	50	50	51	61	68	53

Note: Each number indicates the percentage of individually organized trips to the total number of trips to a destination.

16.7, and London, the lowest, at 15.2. This finding indicates that travel demand to Bangkok was the least stable, while that to London was the most stable over the study period.

The aggregated data also showed that more than half of all trips to Taipei, Tokyo, Singapore, Osaka, Sydney, and London were organized independently. In contrast to Mok and Armstrong's (1995) study showing that 27.5% of Hong Kong pleasure travelers chose independent travel, more travelers (i.e., overall 53% of Hong Kong pleasure travelers) have been organizing their trips independently in recent years (see Table 3).

The geographically closest destination to Hong Kong was Taipei, which is within a 501–1000-mile radius, followed by Bangkok and Seoul within a 1001–1500-mile radius; Tokyo, Singapore, Osaka, and Kuala Lumpur within a 1501–2000-mile radius; Hokkaido within a 2001–2500-mile radius; and Sydney within a 4501–5000-mile radius. The most distant destination was London, within a 5501–6000-mile radius from Hong Kong (see Table 4). In general, average trip duration and average length of stay at destinations increased as distance grew. While a trip to Seoul was the shortest in trip duration (average 4.5 days), Seoul was the third closest destination to Hong Kong. In absolute value, travelers spent least on trips to Taipei (around HK\$6100; 5.2 days of duration; 4.6 days of stay; 4 people traveling together). However, travel to Singapore was the most economical when trip duration, length of stay, and party size were considered (around HK\$7500; 6.1 days of duration; 5.3 days of stay; 6 people traveling together).

Table 5 summarizes the perceived importance of motivations for traveling to each destination in the period 2005–2010. As per the aggregated average, relaxation and family time were considered the most important motivation factors, while meeting people was considered least important for travelers to the 10 most popular destinations.

4.1. Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1. "Travel motivation to a tourism destination will change with temporal advance" was tested on the basis of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, often called as Spearman's rho, indicates the correlation of two ranking data. The five travel motivation factors were firstly ranked based on the perceived importance of travel motivations to each destination in every year. The rank correlation coefficients from all possible pairs, which are 15, and the significance in rank correlation coefficients were computed (see Table 6).

The investigators then examined whether or not the ranks among years 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 were significantly correlated. If the ranks of the travel motivations were constant over time, all paired ranks would be significantly correlated. Thus, a series of a binomial tests was conducted in order to examine the significance of correlations. Given the small sample size ($N=15$), the appropriateness of a nonparametric test can be justified. For the binomial test, the 15 rank correlation coefficients per destination were coded with a dichotomous value (i.e. 0 for insignificant correlation; 1 for significant correlation). Then a binomial test was conducted to test the stability of the rank coefficients per destination (see Table 7). In other words, the binomial test examined whether 99.9% of rank correlation coefficients belong to either a significant correlation group or to an insignificant correlation group.

Bangkok, Taipei, Tokyo, Hokkaido, Sydney, and Kuala Lumpur showed that 99.9% of their rank correlation coefficients belong to a significant correlation group. It implies that the travel motivations to these destinations were constant and did not vary over time. In contrast, Seoul, Osaka, and London showed that 99.9% of

Table 4
Distance to and travel characteristics of the 10 most popular destinations.

Destination	Average trip duration (unit: days)	Average length of stay (unit: days)	Average party size (unit: people)	Average expenditure (unit: thousand HK\$)
1. Bangkok (1020 miles from HK)	5.2	4.4	5	7.0
2. Taipei (503 miles from HK)	5.2	4.6	4	6.1
3. Tokyo (1793 miles from HK)	6.5	5.2	4	17.1
4. Seoul (1294 miles from HK)	4.5	3.8	5	9.5
5. Hokkaido (2149 miles from HK)	7.1	5.8	5	26.1
6. Singapore (1614 miles from HK)	6.1	5.3	6	7.5
7. Osaka (1549 miles from HK)	5.7	3.9	3	16.8
8. Sydney (4586 miles from HK)	13.9	12.1	3	24.9
9. Kuala Lumpur (1570 miles from HK)	5.4	4.6	3	10.8
10. London (5976 miles from HK)	23.7	17.3	3	29.3

Note: Arrows indicate the proximity of a destination to Hong Kong.

their rank correlation coefficients belong to an insignificant correlation group, implying that the travel motivations to these destinations varied over time. Given that some destinations provide support for Hypothesis 1 while others do not, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2. “Temporal advance will be positively correlated with travel distance” was tested by Spearman’s rho between the temporal variable (i.e. year) and the mean of a log-nominal distribution of travel distance. Given that the travel demand in each year has a log-nominal distribution, the mean of the long-nominal distribution of travel distance will increase if travelers travel further. Due to the small sample size ($N=10$), a regression analysis was not considered adequate; thus, the correlation between two variables (i.e. year and the travel distance) was examined. The mean and median of travel distance in each year is summarized in Table 8. Spearman’s rho shows that the temporal variable was not correlated with the travel distance ($N=10$, $\rho=0.491$, $p=0.150$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

4.2. Individual destinations

Bangkok showed the largest variation in travel demand over the 10 years, with a CV of 49.9. This indicates that the selection of this destination by Hong Kong travelers has fluctuated, over time implying weak destination loyalty. After peaking in 2003, demand for travel to Bangkok showed a downturn (see Table 2). Interestingly, the demand for independent travel to Bangkok started to increase after overall travel demand to the city declined significantly in 2005 (see Table 3). Bangkok also showed a distinct change in travel mode from package tours to independent travel. The main reasons Hong Kong travelers chose Bangkok included spending time with family and friends, rest and relaxation, and getting away from the daily routine. Discovering new places was not as important as other motivation factors. In contrast, Sangpikul (2008) found that Japanese travelers to Thailand perceived novelty-seeking to be as important as relaxation. This finding supports the idea that travelers from different cultural backgrounds have different motivations for traveling to the same destination. Except for getting away, the perceived importance of motivations for traveling to Bangkok was constant over the six years (Welch’s $F(5, 110.450)=4.095$, $p=0.002$); that is, compared

to other years, getting away from the daily routine was less important for traveling to Bangkok in 2008 (see Table 5).

Travel demand for Taipei was constant with little variation over the decade. Most trips to Taipei were organized independently, and discovering new places was as important as spending time with family and friends and relaxation. One plausible explanation for this finding is that discovering new places may lead travelers to organize their trips independently so that they have more freedom to experience new things and places than when participating in a package tour. Although Taipei is close to Hong Kong and travel there is relatively cheaper than to Bangkok, overall demand for Taipei was not as high as for Bangkok. Of travelers to Taipei, the perceived importance of the motivating factors of relaxation, getting away from the daily routine, and meeting different people changed over the six years (Welch’s $F(5, 119.970)=2.422$, $p=0.039$ for relaxation; Welch’s $F(5, 116.175)=6.516$, $p < 0.001$ for getting away from the daily routine; Welch’s $F(5, 116.345)=2.358$, $p=0.044$ for meeting different people). In particular, over the six years the perceived importance of relaxation was the lowest in 2010, and getting away from the daily routine was the lowest in 2008 (see Table 5). The perceived importance of getting away from the daily routine was lower than spending time with family and friends in 2008, whereas it was higher in 2006 and 2009. The implications of this finding are twofold. First, travel motivations to Taipei were inconsistent over the six-year period. Second, given that little variation was observed in travel to Taipei, travel demand for Taipei was less likely to be associated with changes in travel motivation.

Tokyo is further from Hong Kong than Bangkok and Taipei and is relatively more expensive to visit. Travel demand for Tokyo fluctuated over the 10-year period, with a large CV of 40.5. Demand dropped in 2002 and 2003 but increased in the following years, though dropping again since 2007. Trips to Tokyo were generally organized independently, with a pattern of growth observed (see Table 2). Besides spending time with family and relaxation, travelers to Tokyo identified getting away from the daily routine and discovering new places to be important travel motivations. Their perceived importance of these motivation factors was also consistent over the observation period, although in recent years demand for travel to Tokyo from Hong Kong has seen a downturn.

Seoul, on the other hand, is closer and less expensive to travel to than Tokyo (see Table 4). Yet the current demand trend for

Table 5
Perceived importance of motivations for visiting the 10 most popular destinations in the period 2005–2010.

Destination	Motivations	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Aggregated
Bangkok	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.20	4.28	4.16	4.11	4.19	4.20	4.19
	<i>Family time</i>	3.84	3.81	3.96	3.74	4.00	4.15	3.94
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.60	3.96	4.02	3.24	3.93	3.47	3.75
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.20	3.35	3.63	3.50	3.53	3.36	3.45
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.52	2.57	2.57	2.45	2.65	2.36	2.53
Taipei	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.20	4.26	4.18	4.32	4.29	3.94	4.17
	<i>Family time</i>	3.80	3.95	4.09	3.94	4.08	3.90	3.97
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.68	4.19	3.64	3.32	4.10	3.82	3.78
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.64	3.56	3.57	3.58	3.59	3.64	3.60
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.68	2.84	2.39	2.47	2.90	2.74	2.66
Tokyo	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.43	4.11	4.22	4.18	4.21	4.33	4.23
	<i>Family time</i>	3.90	4.06	4.05	4.11	4.24	4.21	4.10
	<i>Getaway</i>	4.05	3.62	3.81	3.47	4.05	3.90	3.78
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.71	3.38	3.83	3.40	3.71	3.59	3.60
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.67	2.53	2.69	2.38	2.66	2.62	2.59
Seoul	<i>Relaxation</i>	3.58	4.14	4.06	4.07	4.16	3.86	4.01
	<i>Family time</i>	3.83	3.90	4.00	3.93	4.12	3.87	3.94
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.18	3.76	3.77	3.41	4.25	3.58	3.69
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.73	3.45	3.60	3.55	3.80	3.53	3.59
	<i>Meeting people</i>	3.17	2.66	2.60	2.48	3.00	2.96	2.78
Hokkaido	<i>Relaxation</i>	3.91	4.20	4.32	4.08	4.46	4.06	4.22
	<i>Family time</i>	3.82	3.76	4.08	4.00	4.14	4.06	4.02
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.82	4.00	3.95	3.33	4.21	3.90	3.93
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.45	3.53	3.71	3.92	3.96	3.81	3.76
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.09	2.60	2.55	2.83	2.79	2.74	2.64
Singapore	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.60	4.08	4.16	3.63	4.21	4.04	4.08
	<i>Family time</i>	4.50	4.00	4.32	3.84	4.04	3.78	4.03
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.40	3.88	4.05	2.89	4.00	3.70	3.70
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.80	3.68	3.68	3.58	3.83	3.43	3.66
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.80	2.60	2.53	2.79	2.88	2.57	2.68
Osaka	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.33	3.67	4.44	4.25	4.38	4.10	4.23
	<i>Family time</i>	3.50	4.22	4.25	3.75	3.86	4.00	3.95
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.67	3.22	4.19	3.31	4.05	4.00	3.82
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.67	3.56	3.94	3.69	3.90	3.45	3.72
	<i>Meeting people</i>	1.83	2.89	2.50	2.44	2.76	2.50	2.55
Sydney	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.09	4.22	4.08	3.82	4.31	4.07	4.11
	<i>Family time</i>	3.82	4.00	4.00	4.45	4.08	3.86	4.03
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.30	3.44	3.25	3.27	4.17	4.00	3.58
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.50	3.44	3.17	3.55	3.67	3.21	3.42
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.92	2.50	2.83	2.73	2.75	2.79	2.73
Kuala Lumpur	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.25	4.38	4.27	4.22	4.21	4.00	4.18
	<i>Family time</i>	4.25	3.88	4.45	4.44	4.21	3.89	4.15
	<i>Getaway</i>	3.75	3.88	3.64	3.22	3.86	3.58	3.65
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.00	3.63	3.73	3.22	3.71	3.32	3.48
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.75	2.38	2.64	3.11	2.79	2.63	2.71
London	<i>Relaxation</i>	4.13	3.92	4.09	4.33	4.43	3.93	4.11
	<i>Family time</i>	4.00	3.62	4.09	3.92	4.14	4.13	3.97
	<i>Getaway</i>	4.00	3.92	4.18	3.50	3.71	3.93	3.88
	<i>New discovery</i>	3.38	3.77	3.91	3.92	3.43	3.60	3.70
	<i>Meeting people</i>	2.75	2.85	2.64	2.33	2.71	2.47	2.61

Note: Number on a five-point Likert scale (1=very unimportant; 5=very important).

Seoul shows a slight decrease. In 2001, demand peaked before declining drastically in subsequent years (see Table 2). Tokyo and Seoul showed similar demand in 2001 and a similar decline in the period 2002–2003. Since then, travel demand for Tokyo has fluctuated, while demand for Seoul has been almost steady, though with lower demand. The significant difference between the two destinations was mode of travel, with most trips to Tokyo being organized independently, while trips to Seoul were predominantly package tours. Travelers to Seoul in 2009 perceived getting away from the daily routine as the most important motivational factor (Welch's $F(5, 57.869)=5.643, p < 0.001$). Once again, this finding implies a weak link between motivational

factors and travel demand. While motivational factors in 2009 were idiosyncratic in relation to other years (see Table 5), no difference in travel demand was observed for Seoul in that year (see Tables 2 and 3).

Hokkaido showed little variation in demand over the decade (see Table 2). Most travelers joined package tours, unlike other Japanese destinations where increasing numbers of travelers were organizing independent trips. Although Hokkaido is further away and three times more expensive than Singapore, the two destinations showed similar demand patterns (see Table 4). Motivations for traveling to Hokkaido were similar to those for Tokyo and Seoul.

Table 6
Spearman's rank coefficients of motivations among destinations.

Destination	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Bangkok					
2005	0.900*	0.900*	0.900*	1.000**	1.000**
2006		1.000**	0.700	0.900*	0.900*
2007			0.700	0.900*	0.900*
2008				0.900*	0.900*
2009					1.000**
Taipei					
2005	0.900*	1.000**	0.900*	0.900*	1.000**
2006		0.900*	0.700	1.000**	0.900*
2007			0.900*	0.900*	1.000**
2008				0.700	0.900*
2009					0.900*
Tokyo					
2005	0.900*	0.700	0.900*	0.700	0.900*
2006		0.900*	1.000**	0.900*	1.000**
2007			0.900*	0.800	0.900*
2008				0.900*	1.000**
2009					0.900*
Seoul					
2005	0.500	0.500	0.700	0.100	0.700
2006		1.000**	0.900*	0.700	0.900*
2007			0.900*	0.700	0.900*
2008				0.400	0.800
2009					0.600
Hokkaido					
2005	0.975**	0.975**	0.821	0.975**	0.921*
2006		0.900*	0.700	1.000**	0.821
2007			0.900*	0.900*	0.975**
2008				0.700	0.872
2009					0.821
Singapore					
2005	0.900**	0.800	0.900*	0.900*	0.900*
2006		0.900*	0.800	1.000**	1.000**
2007			0.900*	0.900*	0.900*
2008				0.800	0.800
2009					1.000**
Osaka					
2005	0.359	0.667	0.667	0.975**	0.763
2006		0.800	0.900*	0.300	0.667
2007			0.900*	0.700	0.975**
2008				0.600	0.821
2009					0.821
Sydney					
2005	0.975**	0.900*	0.900*	0.700	0.700
2006		0.975**	0.872	0.821	0.821
2007			0.800	0.900*	0.900*
2008				0.500	0.500
2009					1.000**
Kuala Lumpur					
2005	0.921*	0.872	0.947*	1.000**	0.975**
2006		0.667	0.763	0.921*	0.975**
2007			0.975**	0.872	0.800
2008				0.947*	0.872
2009					0.975**
London					
2005	0.763	0.763	0.763	0.975**	0.763
2006		0.763	0.526	0.616	0.368
2007			0.289	0.667	0.763
2008				0.821	0.526
2009					0.821

* Significant at $p=0.05$.

** Significant at $p=0.01$.

Demand for Singapore peaked in 2003 before declining (see Table 2). Travelers to Singapore rated rest and relaxation as the most important travel motivation. Length of stay and travel expenditure were similar to those for Bangkok, although

Singapore is further from Hong Kong (see Table 4). Interestingly, high demand was identified during the period 2002–2003, during which time trips to Singapore were mostly packaged. Since then, most trips to Singapore have been independently organized, with constant but low demand. The perceived importance of relaxation and getting away were the lowest in 2008 over the six years (Welch's $F(5, 46.621)=3.274, p=0.013$ for relaxation; Welch's $F(5, 44.251)=3.302, p=0.013$ for getaway). No clear match between changes in perceived motivational factors and travel demand was identified. Also, the findings in relation to Singapore provide further support for the increasing demand for independent travel.

Osaka, Kuala Lumpur, and London showed steady but low demand (see Table 2). Osaka was as expensive to travel to as Tokyo, although it is closer to Hong Kong. Trip motivations for Osaka were similar to those for Tokyo and Seoul. More travelers also organized independent trips to Osaka.

Modes of travel to Kuala Lumpur showed severe fluctuations between independent travel and package tours (see Table 3). In general, trips there were organized mainly in package tours, but increasing independent travel can be observed in recent years. Motivations for traveling to Kuala Lumpur were similar to those for Tokyo. Furthermore, while closer and cheaper to travel to than Tokyo, travel demand for Kuala Lumpur was much lower than for Tokyo (see Table 4).

Travel to Sydney and London showed some similarities. Most trips to these cities were independently organized and were among the most expensive, with a longer average length of stay. These destinations are more distant from Hong Kong, and travel demand to them was not noticeably high. Travelers to Sydney rated getting away from the daily routine lower than spending time with family and friends and relaxation, whereas travelers to London rated getting away from the daily routine as highly as spending time with family and friends and relaxation.

5. Discussion

This study examined travel demand for the 10 most popular destinations among Hong Kong residents in relation to travel mode, distance, and motivation. An important finding is the weak relationship between push motivation and travel demand. That is, participants showed almost identical motivations for travel regardless of destinations. Spending time with family and friends, relaxation, and getting away from the daily routine were all important, whereas meeting different people was least important across the 10 destinations. This finding implies that motivational factors are not strong enough to explain traveler destination choices for the 10 most popular destinations. If destination selection (Crompton, 1979; Cha et al., 1995; Kim, 2008) was dependent on motivation (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), travelers would have shown different motivations for selecting each destination. If motivations were identical, they would have chosen the least expensive destination (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006). Thus, the finding from this study suggests that travel motivations are insufficient to explain destination selection.

This study also found robustness in travel motivations over time, except for Seoul, Osaka, and London. This implies that most destinations have a clear destination identity that is associated with push motivations. In other words, the reason why travelers choose the destinations (e.g. to fulfil their motivations) is almost fixed and will remain unchanged. Thus, the finding also implies that once a destination is established as a place where travelers can fulfill their travel motivations, the reason for travelers to select the destination is more likely to remain unchanged. Thus,

Table 7
Binomial tests for grouping of significance of correlations among motivations.

Destination	Group	Category	N	Observed proportion	Exact sig. (1-tailed)
Bangkok	Group 1	Significant correlation	13	0.867	0.000 ^a
	Group 2	Insignificant correlation	2	0.133	
	Total		15	1.000	
Taipei	Group 1	Significant correlation	13	0.867	0.000 ^a
	Group 2	Insignificant correlation	2	0.133	
	Total		15	1.000	
Tokyo	Group 1	Significant correlation	12	0.800	0.000 ^a
	Group 2	Insignificant correlation	3	0.200	
	Total		15	1.000	
Seoul	Group 1	Insignificant correlation	10	0.667	0.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	Significant correlation	5	0.333	
	Total		15	1.000	
Hokkaido	Group 1	Significant correlation	9	0.600	0.000 ^a
	Group 2	Insignificant correlation	6	0.400	
	Total		15	1.000	
Singapore	Group 1	Significant correlation	11	0.733	0.000 ^a
	Group 2	Insignificant correlation	4	0.267	
	Total		15	1.000	
Osaka	Group 1	Insignificant correlation	11	0.733	0.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	Significant correlation	4	0.267	
	Total		15	1.000	
Sydney	Group 1	Significant correlation	7	0.467	0.000 ^a
	Group 2	Insignificant correlation	8	0.533	
	Total		15	1.000	
Kuala Lumpur	Group 1	Significant correlation	9	0.600	0.000 ^a
	Group 2	Insignificant correlation	6	0.400	
	Total		15	1.000	
London	Group 1	Insignificant correlation	14	0.933	0.015 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	Significant correlation	1	0.067	
	Total		15	1.000	

Note: Test proportions=0.999.

^a Alternative hypothesis states that the proportion of cases in the first group < 0.999.

^b Indicates insignificant rank correlation.

Table 8
Values of mean and median of a log-nominal distribution of travel distance.

Year	Mean	Median	Standard deviation
2001	1535.89	1294	1229.79
2002	1487.14	1020	1176.57
2003	1530.69	1020	1236.04
2004	1443.24	1020	1122.96
2005	1862.04	1549	1481.50
2006	1753.61	1549	1361.65
2007	1627.61	1549	1158.98
2008	1643.64	1549	1301.97
2009	1582.61	1549	1108.89
2010	1599.37	1294	1264.53

Note: Unit in miles.

Seoul, Osaka, and London do not appear to have a clear destination identity.

Another finding is the increasing trend toward independent travel for all destinations except Seoul. This finding differs from previous studies of Hong Kong international travelers, which identified a preference for package tours over independent travel (Mok & Armstrong, 1995; Zhang et al., 2004). Although this study did not analyze the factors influencing travel mode choice, previous studies have suggested that travelers purchase package tours for the reasons of safety, value for money, and convenience (Mok & Armstrong, 1995; Zhang et al., 2004).

While this study did not examine why package tours are the prevailing travel mode to Seoul, it may be because, of the 10 most popular destination cities in eight different countries, Hong Kong travelers are more likely to have difficulties communicating when traveling to Thailand, Japan, and Korea, where neither English nor Chinese are official languages. Previous literature has proposed that a destination's language has a significant impact on traveler choice of prospective destinations and preparations for travel (Cohen & Copper, 1986; Basala & Klenosky, 2001). Similarly, Reisinger and Mavondo (2005) indicated that socio-cultural risks and language barriers can increase anxiety and lower travel intentions. These destinations thus share similar difficulties in communication (or levels of convenience) for Hong Kong travelers. Korea, however, seems to fall into the "double jeopardy" trap of not having a clear advantage over Japan, which is commonly perceived to be a safe destination, or Thailand, which is perceived to be a relatively inexpensive destination. Thus, participating in package tours to Seoul would counteract these weaker aspects and yield a higher level of perceived safety and a more comprehensive and convenient way to travel.

It is believed that people are able to travel for less cost as time passes owing to cheaper and faster transportation and advances in information technology (e.g. the emergence of online travel agents) (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2008). But increased travel demand for distant destinations was not observed over the 10-year period of this study. While a decreasing trend in travel demand for a destination close to Hong Kong (i.e. Bangkok) was observed, a shift in demand from closer to more distant

destinations was not evident. Indeed, eight of the 10 most popular destinations over the decade from 2001 to 2010 were located within a 2500 mile radius of Hong Kong.

6. Implications and conclusions

This study examined the 10 most popular international destinations from Hong Kong based on an analysis of data collected over the decade from 2001 to 2010. In addition, trends in travel demand for a destination, modes of travel, and variance in travel motivations and distance were identified. Since limited research has been conducted on outbound travelers over a period of multiple several years, this study makes a meaningful contribution to the literature by empirically examining the popularity of international destinations.

Although this study is limited in scope in terms of sampling, the findings suggest a number of insights for DMOs in the destination. Among the managerial implications of this study are that DMOs should not take current market demand for granted. While push motivations were found to be almost constant over time, motivation did not adequately explain changes in demand. Destinations with decreasing demand should therefore change their marketing strategies to attract more travelers. This study also suggests that push motivations are almost identical across destinations, and their perceived relative importance remains almost constant over time. Thus, destinations with decreasing changes demand should develop new pull factors that travelers would prefer and effectively communicate these to potential visitors.

Thailand currently promotes its cultural and natural attractions, along with friendly services, through its online channel (*Amazing Thailand, 2010*). Given that Hong Kong travelers to Bangkok identified discovery of new places as less important than relaxation, Thai DMOs may need to change their marketing strategy for the Hong Kong market by focusing on rest and relaxation as motivations for traveling to Thailand.

Japan, on the other hand, should promote getting away from the daily routine and discovering new places as motivations for Hong Kong travelers. While destinations in Japan are distant and travel to Japan is expensive, this study observed an increasing demand for Japan as a destination. Highlights on the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) website (*JNTO, 2010*) project mainly natural and cultural attractions, which would appear to suit the desires of Hong Kong travelers.

Similarly, Korean DMOs may want to pay more attention to safety and convenience factors. Despite the increasing trend towards independent travel, more increasing numbers of Hong Kong travelers joined package tours on their trips to Seoul. Although this study did not identify the reasons travelers preferred package tours, findings from prior studies suggest that Korea does not have the same advantages as its counterparts of Japan and Thailand (*Chon, 1991; Qu & Brown, 2001; Kim & Morrison, 2005*). Thus, DMOs in Korea may need to prepare their destinations so that Hong Kong travelers feel more comfortable traveling independently. Since language barriers are a major social factor preventing travelers from visiting certain destinations (*Beerli & Martin, 2004*), Korean DMOs could prepare English-or Chinese-medium signage to cater to the needs of Hong Kong travelers.

As more and more travelers organize trips to Singapore independently, Singaporean DMOs may need to prepare for the increasing trend toward independent travel. This may include setting up more tourist centers and providing information about destination attractions on leaflets and brochures. Because independent travelers enjoy the freedom of their itinerary, they tend

to search for more information as they approach their destination. More information prepared in a medium that Hong Kong travelers prefer could be distributed near places of accommodation.

7. Limitations and future research

Although the annual domestic tourism survey of pleasure travel among Hong Kong residents enables a longitudinal approach to the topic, the present results apply only to Hong Kong pleasure travelers. A further limitation of this study is a possible non-response bias, since some Hong Kong residents contacted declined to participate in the survey. Also, while this study included five push motivations discussed in prior studies, examining additional motivations could be useful. Moreover, including push motivations in the survey would have allowed a more insightful interpretation of the findings. Thus, further research exploring these issues in detail would be worthwhile. Finally, future research using a time-series approach would not only validate the findings of this study, but would also be appropriate for examining the robustness of the destination loyalty model. Also, the influence of temporal advance on travel demand can be examined in different market segments in future research. The interaction between the travel advertisements of destinations in Hong Kong media and travel demand to the destinations would be an interesting future research direction.

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