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Heritage Sites as Tourist Attractions: A Case Study of Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Tourism Management

at

Lincoln University

by

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Lincoln University

2010

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Thongmala Phosikham

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the significant factors on international tourists' decision-making to visit Town of Luang Prabang and to identify the role of World Heritage status on international tourists' decision to visit the Town of Luang Prabang in Lao PDR.

The study was conducted in the Town of Luang Prabang over the months of April and May 2009. It employed the use of a quantitative research methodology with a self-administered questionnaire survey with international tourists who were eighteen years and over. The survey was conducted at Luang Prabang International Airport, Mount Phousy, Xieng Thong Temple, open-air night market, Internet shops and restaurants along the Mekong and Namkhan rivers.

The results of the research indicated that the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang plays a crucial role in attracting tourists to visit the town. However, while most of the participants stated that they travelled to the town of Luang Prabang because it is on World Heritage list, only one in three of the participants perceived themselves as 'heritage tourists'. The findings showed that this contradiction was associated with tourists' age and length of stay. Tourists who labelled themselves as 'heritage tourists' tended to be older and had a shorter length of stay in Lao PDR as well as on their total trip compared to tourists who did not call themselves heritage tourists. The study also found that older tourists were more knowledgeable about the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang before they started their trip and indicating that older tourists used more generating markers than younger tourists.

The study contended that younger people often travel to heritage sites but they do not label themselves 'heritage tourists'. It is suggested that younger tourists feel uncomfortable with name heritage tourists because they might think 'heritage' is related to some thing 'old'.

This study may help marketers to identify their markets and have more understanding that not all tourists to heritage sites have the same level of motivation for cultural heritage experiences and perceive themselves as heritage tourists.

Acknowledgements

List of Acronyms

ASEAN   =   Association of South East Asian Nations

GMS   =   Greater Mekong Subregion

ICOMOS   =   International Council of Monuments and Sites

Lao PDR   =   Lao People's Democratic Republic

NHEGS   =   Nam ha Eco-tourism

UNESCO   =   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

UNWTO   =   United Nations World Tourism Organisation

WHC   =   World Heritage Committee

WHS   =   World Heritage Site(s)

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Tourism has played a crucial role in the development of many countries all around the world and the rapid and sustained rise of tourism over the past 50 years is one of the most remarkable phenomena worldwide. According to Becken & Hey (2007), the number of international tourist arrivals has increased from 25 million in 1950 to 808 million in 2005. In 2007, international tourist arrivals grew to reach a new record figure of nearly 900 million. This figure represented nearly 52 million arrivals more than in 2006 (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer website, 2009).

Because of the rapid growth of international tourists and the high competition between many attractions in tourist destination regions, travel motivation and tourist attractions research has been fundamental in tourism studies and basic to tourism development. Knowledge of people's travel motivation and its association with destination selection plays a critical role in predicting future travel patterns (Jang & Cai, 2002). "The World Tourism Organization is often quoted as stating that over 40 per cent of all international travel has an element of heritage and culture associated with it" (cited in Boyd, 2008 (b): 283). It has been suggested by Shackley (1998) that World Heritage Sites (WHS) are often popular as tourist attractions since the World Heritage status has a significant impact on tourists' visit decision to such sites.

According to Shackley (1998: 205), "World Heritage Sites have the highest visibility of any cultural attractions in the world, and possess a symbolic value which may be disproportionate to their size or beauty". Shackley (1998) revealed that visitors to such sites deserve to receive and experience something that is special, something unique, and better than any thing they have visited before. While many tourism researchers suggested that World Heritage status plays a crucial role in attracting tourists to visit the sites, Hall and Piggin (2002) argued that it is the intrinsic qualities of the place that attract tourists rather than World Heritage status itself.

Currently, there are 878 WHS (UNESCO World Heritage website, 2009). Like most other South East Asian countries, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries host many heritage tourists every year. The GMS members of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and the Chinese province of Yunnan have their own unique and distinctive tourism attractions (Noypayak, 2000). The GMS are home to some of the world's must-see icons, and most of these are UNESCO-designated WHS. For example, Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the Town of Luang Prabang in Lao PDR, Pagan in Myanmar, Ayutthaya in Thailand, and Hue in Vietnam.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the significance of World Heritage status in attracting international tourists to the Town of Luang Prabang in Lao PDR.

1.2 Research objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1) discover the most significant factors on international tourists' decision-making to visit Luang Prabang; and

2) identify the role of World Heritage status on international tourists' decision to visit Luang Prabang.

1.2.1 Research questions

To achieve the main aim of this study, five fundamental questions are raised as follows:

1) Does its World Heritage status influence visitors' decisions to visit Luang Prabang?

2 Are MacCannell's (1999) concept of signs as tourist attractions and Leiper's (2004) concept of tourist attraction system applicable in Luang Prabang?

3) What are the sources of information used by international tourists in shaping their journey?

4) How does a visit to Luang Prabang fit into the tourists' total trip pattern?

5) Is there a significant association between socio-demographic characteristics and trip-related characteristics?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis contains seven chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 presents a contextual background on Lao PDR and tourism in Lao PDR, and introduces the Town of Luang Prabang and tourism in the town. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical background for conducting the research. Chapter 4 introduces the case study site and provide a detailed explanation of the specific research methodology. Chapter 5 presents the results of the field work carried out over a two-month period in the Town of Luang Prabang. Chapter 6 discusses the role of World Heritage status on international tourists' decision to travel to Luang Prabang, the differences and similarity between heritage and non-heritage tourists, older and younger tourists, and using the Town of Luang Prabang to explain MacCannell's (1999) and Leiper's (2004) tourist attraction model. Finally, in Chapter 7, conclusion and implications of the study are discussed and recommendations made.

Chapter 2

Contextual Background of Tourism in Lao People's Democratic Republic

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a contextual background of Lao PDR and the development of its tourism sector. The first section describes the historical background of the country, while section two examines tourism development in Lao PDR. The third section introduces the background of the Town of Luang Prabang and its tourism products and services.

2.2 Background

Lao PDR (commonly known as Laos) is located in the centre of the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia (see Figure 1 and Figure 2), with a population of 6,677,535, in a total area of 236,800 square kilometres (World fact book, 2009). Lao PDR shares borders with China to the north, Myanmar to northwest, Thailand to the west, Cambodia to the south, and Vietnam to the east (Lao National Tourism Administration, 2008).

Figure 1   Map of the Indochina Peninsula region
Source: http://www.fao.org/docrep/field/003/AC279E/AC279E15.htm

Figure 2   Map of Lao PDR

 Source: United Nations (2004)

In the golden age (14th-18th Century) Lao PDR was called the Kingdom of Lane Xang, and many of the historical sites and temples were built in this era. This golden age was followed by in-fighting for the throne and civil war weakened the kingdom, thus creating opportunities for new foreign aggressors to invade (Lao National Tourism Administration, 2008).

 Lao PDR was put under the French administration in 1893 (Lao National Tourism Administration, 2008). To recover its full rights and sovereignty, the Lao people started fighting against the French regime under the leadership of the Communist Party of Indochina (founded in 1930). In 1954, the independence of Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia was recognised.

Lao PDR was massively drawn into the Vietnam/American war (Harrison & Schipani, 2007). During this war, in bombing the portion of the Ho Chi Mint trail across Lao PDR, US forces dropped more bombs on Lao PDR than they did worldwide during World Wall II and Lao PDR became the most heavily bombed nation in history (Lao National Tourism Administration, 2008). Similarly, Hall & Ringer (2000) indicated that during the Vietnam War, Lao PDR became the most heavily bombed country on earth per capita.

 Lao People's Democratic Republic was established on 2 December 1975 (Lao National Tourism Administration, 2008).

Since 1986, Lao PDR has undertaken important reforms to introduce a market-based economy (Yamochi and Lee,1999). This led to the adoption of an 'open door policy' for external economic relation in 1990. Since the mid-1990s, the Lao government has set the target of poverty reduction, reducing its dependence on overseas development assistance and moving out of the category of 'less developed country' by 2020 (Lao People's Democratic, 2004: 1-4; cited in Harrison & Schipani, 2007). Tourism is one of the many sectors that the Government has considered as a tool for development of the country.

2.3 Tourism in Lao PDR

2.3.1 International visitor arrivals trends

Lao PDR opened its door to international tourists in 1989, and the country's first national tourism plan was published in 1990 (Lao PDR, 1990; cited in Harrison & Schipani, 2007). Tourism became a priority for economic development in 1995, and the second national tourism plan was published in 1998 (Harrison & Schipani, 2007).

According to Lao National Tourism Administration (2007), tourist arrivals in Laos have been increasing steadily from 1990 to 2007 (see Figure 3). In 1990, 14 400 visitors were recorded to have visited Laos. In 1995, 346 460 visitors were reported to have arrived in Laos. In 2000 this figure has grown to 737 208 arrivals, generating revenue of 113,898,285 US dollars.

However, the number of visitor arrivals decreased slightly from 737 280 in 2000 to 673 823 in 2001, and declined from 735 662 in 2002 to 636 361 in 2003. The main factors which influenced the decrease were the terrorist attacks on 11 September, 2001 in the United States and the spread of the SARS epidemic in Asia in the first quarter of 2003. Lao tourism recovered and visitor arrivals continued increasing from 894 806 in 2004 to 1 623 943 in 2007, generating total of revenue of 233 million US dollars.
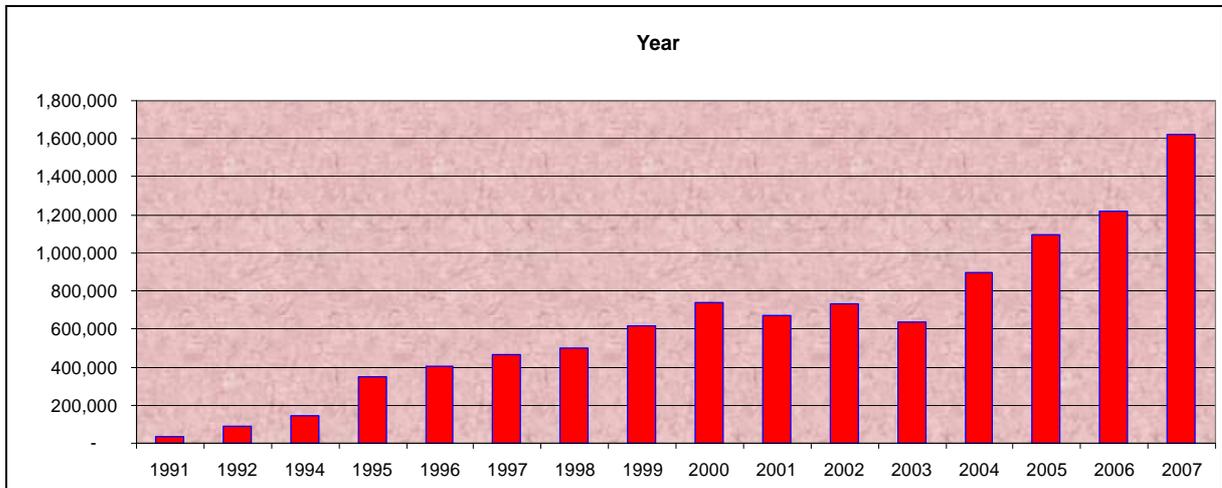
Figure 3   Total number of tourist arrivals to Lao PDR from 1991 to 2007

Source: Lao National Tourism Administration (2007)

2.3.2 Tourist generating countries

Lao National Tourism Administration (2007) indicated that 87% of total tourist arrivals in 2007 are nationals from Asia and the Pacific, mostly from other Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries (see Table 1). Tourists from Thailand represented the largest portion (58%) and fastest growth rate of visitors from this region, with an increase of about 40% in 2007. The main factor that influenced this growth was the opening of the second bridge across the Mekong River linking Mukdahane (Thailand) and Savannaket (Lao PDR) at the beginning of 2007.

Tourists from Europe in 2007 presented 9% of the total tourist arrivals. French tourists have been the largest group of European tourists from 2001 to 2007. In 2001, 21 662 French tourists were recorded to have visited Laos. This numbers had grown to 34 584 in 2007. Possibly, the reason that there were more French than other European tourists have visited Lao PDR because Lao PDR was colonized by France, and French tourists might want to experience the colonial heritage. As Laos tourism market has expanded, the number of tourists who are from the United Kingdom have been increasing significantly. In 2001, there were 15 722 visitors were from the UK; this figure doubled to 31 352 in 2007.

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The market share for the Americas in 2007 was about 4%, with a total of 61 463 tourists. The most significant markets from this region were the United States (45 991 visitors) and Canada (13 050 visitors). Lao National Tourism Administration (2007) reported that Government has prioritised Thailand, Japan and Australia in Asia, France, the UK and Germany in Europe, and the US and Canada in the Americas.

Table 1   Market share of international tourist arrivals by region (%) from 1996 to 2007

Market share of tourist arrivals by region(%),1996-2007

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Region	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Asia and Pacific	88.76	87.17	84.21	83.14	81.97	82.11	78.71	78.29	81.59	82.10	83.01	86.61
Europe	7.59	8.33	10.41	11.16	11.73	11.98	13.85	14.75	12.53	11.99	11.43	9.09
Americas	3.50	3.93	5.06	5.17	5.71	5.10	6.35	6.21	5.27	5.48	5.01	3.78
Africa and Middle East	0.15	0.57	0.32	0.53	0.59	0.81	1.09	0.75	0.61	0.42	0.55	0.51

Source: Lao National Tourism Administration (2007)

2.3.3 Purpose of visit

According to Lao National Tourism Administration (2007), holiday purpose ranked first from 2003 to 2007 (see

Table 2). In 2003, 79% of tourists reported that they visited Lao PDR for holiday. This percentage peaked in 2005 with 88%, before it dropped slightly to 80% in 2007. The most fluctuated percentages of purpose of visit was business. In 2003, business travellers represented 9% (second rank) of the total visiting purpose. The proportion of business travellers dropped to 4% in the following two years before it increased to 12.8% in 2006. This percentage plummeted to 1.7% in 2007. While the third ranking purpose was official, convention and seminar, visiting family was ranked fourth.

Table 2   Purpose of visit to Lao PDR (%), 2003-2007

Purpose of visit	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Business	9	4	4	12.8	1.7
Holiday	79	86	88	75.5	80
Visit family	3	2	2	2.8	5.3
Official, convention and seminar	5	2	2	5.2	8.6
Others	5	6	4	4.4	4.4
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: based on Lao National Tourism Administration (2007)

2.3.4 Major tourist attractions

Lao PDR is slightly larger than the UK in land area, and is rich in cultural and natural tourist resources; the greatest natural resource of Lao PDR is its large forest cover and 70 per cent of Lao PDR is covered with mountains and high plateaus (Hall & Ringer, 2000). According to Lao National Tourism Administration (2005), cultural and natural sites are the main tourist attractions in Lao PDR. In 2004, nature and culture-based tourism earnings were estimated to be around 54 million US dollar, out of the total income from all tourists of 188 million US dollar (Lao National Administration, 2005)

Yamochi & Lee (1999) pointed out that Lao PDR still has virtually untouched natural beauty and biological diversity. Historical sites such as Wat Phou Champasack, the Khmer ancient temple, was acknowledged by UNESCO as a WHS on 14 December, 2001 (Lao Tourism Organisation, 2008). The historic capital of Luang Prabang (which was declared as a WHS by UNESCO in 1995), and the cultures and traditions of ethnic minorities are a major tourist attraction in Lao PDR (Yamochi & Lee, 1999).

National Protected Areas are the main natural attractions (Lao National Tourism Administration 2005). There are 20 National Protected Areas. These areas cover 12.5 percent of the land areas of Lao PDR (Yamochi & Lee, 1999). Nature-based tourism and eco-tourism are implemented in these areas. The Nam ha Eco- tourism (NHEGS) in the Luang Namtha province is one of many well known eco-tourism sites in Lao PDR. Harrison & Schipani (2007) indicated that from 2001 until the end of 2005, the NHEGS operated 1331 tours, catered for 6801 tourists and brought in gross revenue of 137 794 US dollar.

2.4 Town of Luang Prabang: The background

The Luang Prabang province is 420 kilometres north of Vientiane, the capital city of Laos. There are 11 districts in the Luang Prabang province and the Town of Luang Prabang is the capital city of this province. Lane Xang (Land of a Million Elephant), the first Lao Kingdom, was established in 1353 in the area that now encompasses Luang Prabang (see Figure 5 for location and Appendix B for history). The fledging city-state became known as (Great) Luang Prabang after receiving a revered Buddha image called Pra Bang as a gift from the Khmer monarchy. "Luang Prabang remained the capital of Lane Xang until the kingdom's dissolution in 1694, though the monarchy remained intact there until 1975" (Orasith, 2004: 8).

According to the Governor of the Luang Prabang province (2007), in 2006, the total population of the province is 405, 949 and the population of the Luang Prabang town is 76,000, with a high density of 96 persons per square kilometre. The majority of Lao population, as well as of Luang Prabang are Buddhists (Orasith, 2004).

Heywood (2006) noted that in Lao PDR, as in much of Southeast Asia, religion and society are not separate; Buddhism is part of the way of life, and spiritual wellbeing is essential to personal and universal harmony. The same author explained that a temple (Wat) is a site for religious worship, a community centre, a place of education and of healing, and all young Lao men spend at least a few months of their lives as novice monks in a Wat. Lao art is entirely religious and is expressed in the proliferation of Buddhist temples. "The UNESCO report identified 34 Wats (monasteries) and 111 civic buildings for preservation, and classifies another 450 houses, making Luang Prabang the best-preserved traditional town of Southeast Asia" (Englemann, 1999; cited in Aas et al., 2005: 35).

Because Luang Prabang showed evidence of its unique combination of nature and architecture, UNESCO inscribed Luang Prabang on its World Heritage List in1995 under

criteria 2, 4 and 5 (see Appendix B.1). Under the given criteria of the World Heritage List, Luang Prabang is described as:

> "an outstanding example of the fusion of traditional architecture and Lao urban structures with those built by the European colonial authorities in the 19th and 20th centuries. Its unique, remarkably well-preserved townscape illustrates a key stage in the blending of these two distinct cultural traditions" (UNESCO World Heritage website, 2009).

As a result of the designation, a Heritage House was set up in Luang Prabang in 1996, according to UNESCO recommendations (Heywood, 2006). Aas et al. (2005) indicated that the Maison du Patrimoune (Heritage House) plays a key role in the restoration of the architectural heritage in the Town of Luang Prabang. Aas et al. (2005: 35) pointed out that "Under the UNESCO plan, there are three zones for preservation: the old town, a peripheral building zone in today's town with another across the Mekong, and natural zones along the Mekong and Nam Khan riverbanks". No building work can be carried out in the protected zone without permission from the Heritage House, and the people of Luang Prabang can come for help and advice on building and repairing housing.

Figure 4   UNESCO World Heritage Site plaque at Lao New Year Procession in Town of Luang Prabang

Photo: Thongmala Phosikham

Luang Prabang can be accessed by air, road and water. Northern Road No. 13 is the main route that people can make the one-day trip between Vientiane, the capital city, and Luang Prabang. This road also links Luang Prabang through northern provinces to the Chinese border. The Mekong River and its major tributaries play crucial roles for water transportation to other provinces and neighbouring countries. There are regular domestic flights to Vientiane and the northern provinces. Regular flights are also available from Luang Prabang to Chiang Mai and Bangkok (Thailand), and to Hanoi (Vietnam) on Lao Airlines, Bangkok Airways and Vietnam Airline (Lao National Tourism Administration, 2007).

Figure 5   Luang Prabang town

Source: Heritage House (2008)

2.4.1 Tourism in Luang Prabang

At the provincial level, as well as the national level, tourism is one of the many sectors that the Lao Government has considered as a tool for development of the country. The Luang Prabang Provincial Development Strategy, released on 18 March 2003, stated that Luang Prabang is to be developed as a tourism centre (Provincial Tourism Office, 2005). According to the Luang Prabang Governor (2007), the strategy is to develop Luang Prabang as a tourism centre for cultural, natural and historical sites, and to promote Luang Prabang as a linked land and a wonderful holiday town.

2.4.2 International visitor arrivals trends

There are more international visitors than domestic tourists in Luang Prabang (Provincial Tourism Office, 2008). The international tourist arrivals to Luang Prabang have increased steadily from 1995 to 2008 (data based on Heritage House Luang Prababang, and Provincial Tourism Office, 2008) (see Table 3). In 1995, 16 230 international visitors were recorded to have visited Luang Prabang. In 1997, this figure had grown to 30 769. According to the Provincial Tourism Office (2008), in 1998, 44 583 tourists were reported to have arrived in Luang Prabang. In 2003, this figure has grown to 78 129 arrivals. The tourist arrivals continued to increase from 151 703 in 2006 to 231 575 in 2008. The growth rate is 1426% over 13 years.

Table 3   **Total number of international tourist arrivals to Luang Prabang from 1995 to 2008**

Years	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Tourist arrivals	16230	19230	30769	44583	55307	65225	68250
Years	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Tourist arrivals	94846	78129	105513	133569	151703	186819	231575

Source: compile from Heritage House and Provincial Tourism Office (2008)

2.4.3 Tourist generating countries

The Provincial Tourism Office (2008) reported that from 2005 to 2007 the first rank of international tourist arrivals to Luang Prabang were from Europe (see Table 4). Tourists from the UK represented the largest portion of visitors from this region and the second biggest group was from France, followed by Germany. However, in 2008, the number of visitor arrivals from Asia and the Pacific became the first rank, although the number of European tourists visiting Luang Prabang has continued to increase.

Interestingly, there were differences in market distribution between Luang Prabang and Lao PDR as a whole. For example, in 2007, 9% of the total tourist arrivals to Lao PDR were from Europe while European tourists made up 43% of visitors to Luang Prabang. However, in the same year, while 87% of total tourist arrivals in Lao PDR were from Asia and the Pacific, the market share for this region was 40% in Luang Prabang.

According to the Provincial Tourism Office (2008), in 2008, 42% of total tourist arrivals were from Asia and the Pacific, overwhelmingly from other ASEAN countries. Tourists from Thailand represented the largest portion (64%) of ASEAN tourists, and the fastest growth rate of visitors from this region (increased about 202% since 2005). Perhaps the main factor that influenced this growth was the introduction of visa exemption among ASEAN countries in 2006 to boost tourism in the region. Visa-free policy among ASEAN nations was introduced in 2006 (ASEAN website, 2009). The opening of the second bridge across the Mekong River linking Mukdahane (Thailand) and Savannaket (Lao PDR) at the beginning of 2007 might be another reason for the fast growth rate of tourists from Thailand.

Tourists from Europe in 2008 represented 36% of the total tourist arrivals. British tourists have been the largest group of European tourists from 2005 to 2008. In 2005, 17 307 British tourists were recorded to have visited Luang Prabang. The numbers grew to 22 237 in 2008. French tourists have been the second largest group of tourists from this region, but it has the fastest growth rate of visitors from Europe (253%) since 2005. It is possible that there were more British than other European tourists because the Town of Luang Prabang received "the world most popular town gold award" from the UK's travel magazine, *Wanderlust,* (see Figure 6), though no data were gathered on whether British visitors knew of the award or the magazine.

According to Pongkhao (2008), Town of Luang Prabang had been selected anonymously by a number of tourists and tourism companies around the world through England's *Wanderlust* magazine as 'the world most popular town' among 615 tourists towns world-wide. The town

had won the honour for three consecutive years (2006, 2007 and 2008). Mr. Khamtanh Somphanvilay, Deputy Head of Luang Prabang Tourism Office, advised Pongkhao that the selection increased the number of tourist arrivals to Luang Prabang. As reported in the Tourism Report 2007-2008 (Provincial Tourism Office, 2008), the number of international tourists rocketed from 151 703 in 2006 to 231 575 in 2008.

The market share for the Americas in 2008 was about 18%. The most significant markets from this region were the US (21 859 visitors) and Canada (17 928 visitors).

Tourists from Africa and the Middle East in 2008 represented the smallest portion (3%) of total tourist arrivals. The largest markets from these regions were Israel (5 762 tourists) and South Africa (227 tourists).

Table 4   Market share of international tourist arrivals by region (%) from 2005 to 2008

Years

Regions	2005	2006	2007	2008
Asia and Pacific	32.61	34.56	39.51	42.21
Europe	53.09	45.94	43.24	36.09
Americas	12.85	15.52	16.36	18.67
Africa and Middle East	1.44	3.94	0.88	3.03
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Provincial Tourism Office (2008)

Figure 6   Wanderlust Gold Award plaque at Lao New Year Procession in Town of Luang Prabang

Photo: Thongmala Phosikham

2.4.4   Tourism related section development

It is evident that the Luang Prabang province has experienced a phase of rapid development in tourism-related sector since the mid 1990s (see Table 5). This corresponded with a rapid growth in international tourist arrivals. According to the Heritage House and Provincial Tourism Office (2008), in 1995, there were five travel agencies in Luang Prabang. This number rose to 11 in 2000, and then 36 in 2008.

In conjunction with the growth of travel agencies, other tourist facilities, such as accommodation and restaurants, also increased rapidly in the Luang Prabang province. In 1995, there were seven hotels in Luang Prabang. This number increased to 12 in 2000 and 32 in 2008. Guesthouses represent the largest portion and fastest growing type of accommodation in Luang Prabang. In 1995, there were four guesthouses. This number rose to 80 in 2000 and 236 in 2008 (179 guesthouses in Town of Luang Prabang). The majority of these guesthouses are developed from local houses because it was not easy to build new buildings due to the restriction of the Heritage House regulation.

Beside hotels and guesthouses, the number of restaurants in Luang Prabang also increased during the same period of time. In 1995, there were eight restaurants in the Luang Prabang province. This number increased to 43 in 2000, and 124 in 2008 (103 restaurants in the Town of Luang Prabang).

According to the Provincial Tourism Office (2008), in 1997, there were 29 tourist sites in Luang Prabang. This number increased to 70 in 2002, and 112 in 2008. The tourist attractions are classified into three categories: historical or archaeological attractions (9), cultural attractions (51), and natural attractions (52).

Table 5   The development of travel agencies, hotels, guesthouses and restaurants and tourist sites in Luang Prabang province from 1995 to 2008

Years	Number of Travel Agencies	Number of Hotels	Number of Guesthouses	Number of Restaurants	Tourist Sites
1995	5	7	4	8	-
1996	6	10	13	13	-
1997	7	10	19	22	29
1998	8	11	33	25	31
1999	10	11	64	34	42
2000	11	12	80	43	42
2001	12	13	108	57	54
2002	13	14	114	58	70
2003	21	12	123	65	70
2004	17	14	125	70	108
2005	17	17	146	75	109
2006	22	18	155	104	110
2007	28	21	203	104	111
2008	36	32	236	124	112

Sources: Adapted from Heritage House (2008) and Provincial Tourism Office (2008)

According to the Urban Development Office (2003), Luang Prabang has become a tourist attraction mainly because of its historic temples (around 32 of the original 66 built before the19th Century, are still standing). The city has outstanding five century-old monasteries, such as Wat Xieng Thong and Wat Visoun, and Luang Prabang also has the magnificent Royal Palace Museum. There are 751 houses on the preservation list.

Phouthonesy (2009) revealed that Town of Luang Prabang is a popular tourist destination because it is unique, beautiful, peaceful and safe, and its residents are kind and welcoming.

In this chapter the author introduced a general background of the country and tourism development in Lao PDR. The author first looked at the historical background of the country and examined tourism development in general. Then the author introduced the background of the field study, the Town of Luang Prabang and its tourism development. The next chapter will review existing literature on tourist attraction, tourist motivation and heritage tourism.

Chapter 3
Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept of heritage tourism and theoretical basis for conducting the research. The chapter will begin with a review of theoretical models of tourist attraction systems. Next, the idea of heritage will be reviewed. The concept that UNESCO WHS attracts tourists to the sites will also be discussed. Then definitions of heritage tourist and heritage tourism will be reviewed. The chapter will finish with a review of tourist motivation theories.

3.2 Tourist attractions – a theoretical perspective

Tourist attractions are important to the tourism production process as they are usually the motivating factor to visit specific destinations or places. Tourist attractions not only are competing for visitors with other attractions, they are also in the market for 'people's time' (Fyall et al., 2002). The managers of tourist attractions therefore need to understand their tourists, understand what draws them to the attractions, and understand what they are searching for. Some of the early studies of attractions include that by Gunn (1972), who defined an attraction as being magnetic; "if it does not have the power of drawing people..... it fails to be an attraction". The same researcher indicated that "sometimes natural and historic features have intrinsic attracting power" (Gunn, 1979:71). "While the total supply side of tourism exercises a pull on markets, the attractions of a destination are particularly influential in drawing visitors" (Gunn, 1988: 53).

According to Walsh-Heron & Stevens (1990), a visitor attraction is a feature in an area that is a place, venue or focus of activities and does the following: sets out to attract visitors, is a fun and pleasurable experience, is developed to realise this potential, is managed as an attraction to provide satisfaction to its customers, provides appropriate facilities and may or may not charge an admission.

MacCannell (1999: 41) defined a tourist attraction as "an empirical relationship between a tourist, a sight and a marker (a piece of information about a sight)". He also suggested that "tourist attractions are signs" (MacCannell, 1999: 109). Lew et al. (2008) indicated that, mostly, tourists interact with the advertised images, rather than a direct and unmediated experience of a site. MacCannell (1999) mentioned this as marker involvement because the tourist is more focused on the label that is attached to the attraction than the attraction itself.

According to Lew et al. (2008), attractions are perceived by tourists to be ranked above or below each other in importance. The hierarchy of attractions will differ between tourists based on the set of available attractions that a tourist is aware of, depth of knowledge that the tourist has of each attraction, and the tourist's personal interests (Lew et al., 2008).

This relates to Leiper's (2004) concept of a primary, secondary and tertiary attraction. Leiper (2004) indicated that a primary attraction influences a tourist's decision to visit the place where the nucleus is located. A secondary attraction is a feature or characteristic that is known about before tourist visit a place but which is not of enough significance to attract the tourists on its own. A tertiary attraction is something unknown pre-visit, but discovered by a visitor.

Leiper (1990; 2004) adapted MacCannell's (1999) tourist attraction model and discussed that a tourist attraction system comprises three elements: a tourist or human element, a nucleus (sight in MacCannell's model) or central element, and a marker or informative element. He stated that every whole tourist trip required at least one tourist, a nucleus, and information received by the tourist about the nucleus.

Instead of 'sights' in MacCannell's (1999) model, Leiper (2004) called it 'nucleus', which is a central element that might be any feature or characteristic of a place that a tourist visits or contemplates visiting. He stated that nuclei can range from larger spaces to narrower ones such as country, region, district, city, town, precinct, village, site, building, and individual rooms.

Leiper (2004) indicated that markers are items of information (oral, written words, pictures) received by a tourist about anything that could be the nucleus of an attraction. They are categorised as *generating*, *transit*, and c*ontiguous* markers. A generating marker is information received before setting out for the place where the nucleus is located, a transit marker is information received en route, and a contiguous marker is at the nucleus to which it relates. The former two types are referred to a detached marker, which mean that the information is separated from the sight.

Leiper (2004) suggested that tourists are pushed by their own motivation towards the places where they expect their needs to be satisfied. These might include the need for rest, relaxation, novelty, education, sunshine, self-esteem, or prestige. The motivation depends on information received from at least one detached marker, matching the individual's perception of need. This concept will be discussed more fully in the tourist motivation section. The next section introduces the term of heritage which is often a tourist attraction in many tourist destinations.

3.3 Heritage

The term 'heritage' is often vaguely defined, and means different things to different people.

"Heritage is a term that is frequently used in the tourism literature without an agreed meaning" (Fisher, 2000: 125). However, most researchers accept that "heritage is linked to the past, that it represents some sort of inheritance to be passed down to current and future generations, both in terms of cultural traditions and physical artifacts" (Hardy 1998; cited in Timothy & Boyd, 2003: 2). Hall and MacArthur (1996: 5) stated that "heritage is things of value which are inherited".

Similarly, Trotter (2001:144) stated that heritage should be simply defined as "that which a past generation has preserved and handed on to the present and which a significant group of the population wishes to handed on to the future". Timothy and Boyd (2003) and Trotter (2001) indicated that heritage can be divided into natural and cultural, tangible and intangible resources such as buildings, natural areas, objects in museums, ceremonies, and people's lifestyles. The heritage literature showed that heritage has many different levels which are personal, local, national and world levels (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Timothy, 1997).

Hall and MacArthur (1996) stated that different forms of heritage are significant to communities, groups and individuals depending on their values and attitudes and the nature of the heritage resource. Some groups of people want to preserve heritage because of its precious inherited pasts; some however prefer to share with outsiders and the world. In recent years, heritage and its preservation has become to be seen as significant. Larkham (1995) highlighted three core dimensions of heritage in the context of conservation and planning: preservation, conservation and exploitation. These concept dimensions ranged from the maintenance in mostly unchanged form, of the sites of major historical significance through restoration of the sites, to development of existing sites but still recognising heritage values.

Trotter (2001) pointed out that the notion and content of heritage has shifted from a predominant association with an aesthetic system to linking it to a way of life. In the present time, heritage is increasingly treated as a product. "The term 'product' is often used to describe different types of culture and heritage consumed by tourists, such as ruins, museums, historic sites, arts, and cultural performances" (Ho & McKercher, 2004: 255). This is obviously associated with the tourism industry, and it has been called as heritage tourism.

The next section will introduce World Heritage Sites and their role in attracting tourists.

3.4 World Heritage Sites

According to Lyon (2007), the concept of heritage enshrined in the World Heritage Convention of 1972 has developed over two or three centuries. The Convention established the World Heritage List, first as a means of recognising that some places are of sufficient importance as cultural or natural sites and are to be the responsibility of the international community, and second as a tool for conservation purposes.

"World Heritage Sites are identified as sites of outstanding global value that should be preserved for all humanity" (Reinius & Fredman, 2007: 841).World Heritage Sites (WHS) are registered by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the World Heritage Committee (WHC) considers as having outstanding universal value (UNESCO World Heritage website, 2009).

Receiving WHS status is an arduous and lengthy process, with a number of organisations, such a the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), providing expert advice to the WHC about the cultural and natural attributes of the sites under consideration (Maswood, 2000). Combining the notions of culture and heritage, ICOMOS (1999; cited in Soper, 2007: 97) offers the following definition stating cultural heritage:

> "Includes the natural as well the cultural environment. It encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collection, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long processes of historic development, forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities"

Cultural heritage sites are evaluated on their "historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological, or anthropological value" (UNESCO World Heritage website, 2003; cited in Hawkin, 2008:292). Natural heritage sites must be of "outstanding physical, biological, and geographic formation, habitat of threatened species of animals and plant and area with scientific, conservation, or aesthetic value" (ibid). Since the inception of WHS in 1972, WHC has convened annually to determine which sites will be added to the World Heritage List.

To date, the WHC has accepted the applications of 878 sites worldwide. These include 679 cultural, 174 natural, and 25 mixed (mixed being cultural and natural heritage sites) (UNESCO World Heritage Website, 2009). Within GMS countries, there are 15 WHS (10 cultural and 5 natural).

Shackley (1998) argued that World Heritage status plays a crucial role in attracting visitors to the sites, and described WHS as a "magnet for visitors". The same author suggested that World Heritage status increases the popularity of a location or destination. Yan & Morrison (2007) conducted a research on visitors' awareness of World Heritage Listing in China and they stated that World Heritage List status proved to be related to tourists' visit purposes, activities patterns and socio-demographic characteristics. They asserted that Korean and Japanese visitors had much higher awareness of the World Heritage status of the destinations and were more likely to be positively influenced by these designations.

Another concrete example of their finding associated with socio-demographic characteristics is that independent travellers tended to be more knowledgeable of the WHS status than other types of tourists; this could be because they made more prior effort to become familiar with the destinations. Reinius & Fredman (2007) argued that protection status matters to tourists, and it affects the decision to visit the area, but the designation of a national park has a stronger effect on tourists than the labels of world heritage site and biosphere reserve.

Although it is often suggested that World Heritage status increases the recognition of a location or destination, Hall & Piggin (2001) asserted that increased visitation to heritage attractions as a result of WHS status is somewhat tenuous. Hall & Piggin (2002: 410) suggested that "the intrinsic qualities of the place itself may, by themselves, be a major factor in tourist visitation to the area, with World Heritage status having only a marginal affect on visitor numbers or relative attractiveness." In saying this, however, they acknowledged that WHS very often serve a sightseeing role and are an attraction for visitation to them and surrounding areas.

The notion that World Heritage status attracts tourists to visit the site is related to MacCannell's (1999) tourist attraction theory, which stated that the tourist is more focused on the label that is attached to the attraction than the attraction itself.

3.5 Heritage tourist and heritage tourism

3.5.1 A problematic definition

The term "heritage tourism", like heritage, still lacks a single accepted definition within the tourism literature. There are problems with the definition of "heritage tourist" and "heritage tourism" because there are too many different definitions given by different scholars and researchers. The following are some examples.

Timothy & Nyaupane (2009) stated that heritage tourism usually relies on built and living elements of culture, and refers to the use of both tangible and intangible past as a tourism resources. The definition of cultural and heritage tourism, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation [US], is "travelling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources" (Cultural Heritage Tourism website, 2009).

Similarly, Garrod and Fyall (2000) argued that all tourists who enter a space categorized as 'heritage' area are seen as heritage tourists or taken to be engaged in heritage-related activities, even if they are not aware that the place being visited is a heritage site or have not observed the artifacts presented. This is similar to the definition given to cultural tourists by McKercher (2002:30) that "a cultural tourist is defined as someone who visits, or intends to visit, a cultural tourism attraction, art gallery, museum or historic site, attend a performance or festival, or participate in a wide range of other activities at any time during their trip, regardless of their main reason for travelling".

However, Knudsen & Greer (2008) argued that heritage tourism is not only tourist activity in an area where historic relics are presented. It should also relate to motivation for visiting a site based on the place's heritage characteristics according to the tourists' perception of their own heritage. Poria et al (2001) further argued that heritage tourists include only tourists who are motivated by the heritage attributes of the sites and who consider the site to be part of their own heritage.

Garrod & Fyall (2001) and many other disputed the definition of heritage tourism by Poria et al. (2001) that a person visiting a place that is associated with someone else's heritage is not a heritage tourist because it made little sense from a management perspective, it was a demand-side definition, ignoring the perspective of those who really supply the heritage experiences for tourists. "Thousands of pairs of feet will cause trampling damage to an antique carpet regardless of whether the owners of those feet consider the carpet to be part of their own heritage" (Garrod & Fyall, 2001: 1050). The same authors also indicated that the mission of a heritage attraction is unlikely to provide good tourism experiences only to tourists who consider it to be part of their own heritage.

3.6 Tourist motivations

Understanding tourist motivations is seen as a significant aspect of both tourism management and academic investigation (Poria et al., 2004). Tourist motivation is a hybrid concept; it is a term borrowed from the individual orientation of psychology and applied to a specific domain of human action (Pearce et al.,1998). In order to clarify the role of travel motivation in the total picture of tourism demand, Pearce et al. (1998) stated that two questions must be answered: (1) "why do certain groups of tourists travel?" and (2) "why do people go to a certain place?" "The first question seeks to understand the individual psychology of the traveller, whereas the second requires us to describe the important features of a tourism destination and also to assess how well these features will satisfy the potential travellers' needs" (Peace et al.,1998: 39).

Push and pull motivation theory studied by many researchers (e.g. Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Klenosky, 2002) is useful for explaining tourist motivations. The concept behind the theory is that people are driven by internal motives (called push factors) and attracted to destination attributes (called pull factors) when making their travel decisions.

Most push factors are internal forces or intrinsic motivators (mainly social-psychological motives) that relate to the needs and wants of the tourists, for example, the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, excitement, prestige, health and fitness, relieving stress, doing different things, stimulating emotions and sensations, being an adventurer, having fun, increasing knowledge, knowing different cultures and lifestyles, enriching self intellectually, knowing new places, meeting interesting people, developing close friendships, going to places friends have not been, and talking with friends about the trip (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Correia & Valle, 2007).

Pull factors are those that emerge as a result of the attractiveness of a destination as perceived by tourists with the capacity to travel, such as beaches, recreational facilities, natural attractions, cultural attractions, and tourists' perceptions and expectations such as novelty, benefit expectation and marketing image, landscape, night-life, sports equipment, transport, lodging, weather, accessibility, gastronomy, security, distance, shopping facilities, relaxing atmosphere, social environment, hospitality, different ethnics, standard of living (Uysal & Jurowki, 1994; Correia & Valle, 2007). While push factors have proved useful for explaining the desire to go on a vacation, pull factors help explain the choice of destination (Crompton, 1979).

However, Jafari (1987: 152) argued that "there is already a wide range of literature dealing with such motivational propositions, but no common understanding has emerged." Even though two decades have passed, this claim may still be valid. In heritage tourism motivation, like other forms of tourism, researchers were classifying different concept when exploring tourists' motivation.

Cohen (1972) proposed a continuum ranging from mass tourists to drifters, in which the mass tourists have little authentic experiences while drifters seek for the most authentic experiences. Prentice et al. (1998) segmented visitors to urban heritage parks based on recreational tourism literature. McKercher & du Cros (2003) stated that heritage tourists can be segmented based on two dimensions such as motivation and experience. They discovered differences in three statements for motivation (educational/recreation, grow personally/relax, and learning culture/visit friends and relatives) and four statements for experience (shopping/visiting museums, visiting well known/obscure sites, shopping at local markets/shops selling brand name goods, researching the destination before visit/do not research). It is clearly seen that most of the tourist motivation literature studied by researchers differed from one another; however, in some degree, they are all related to push factors and pull factors.

3.6.1 Heritage tourist motivations

Davis (1994) indicated that contemporary heritage visitors are motivated by an association of educational interests and relaxation. Similarly, Moscardo (1996) noted that most heritage visitors wish to learn about the site; however, some of them seek to be educated and understand while others prefer only to be informed about the site. Timothy & Boyd (2003) stated that people visit heritage places to enhance learning, satisfy curiosity and feel nostalgia, grow spiritually, relax and get away from home. Poria et al. (2004) found the reasons for visiting places in which heritage is presented can be placed in three main groups: 'heritage experience', 'learning history' and 'recreational experience'. The first group is based on the link between the subject matter (i.e. heritage presented) and the tourists' perception of this material in relation to their own heritage. The second group is those with reasons that are linked to the site being a historic one where people are visiting to observe and learn. The third group identified contained those reasons that did not relate to the content of the material presented.

Nyaupane et al. (2006) categorized heritage tourists into three types based on their motivations: culture-focused, culture-attentive, and culture-appreciation. Culture-focused tourists had higher level of education and spent more time at the sites than culture-attentive and culture-appreciation tourists. While visiting the archeological sites was the primary activity for the culture-focused group, walking and taking photos were the most popular primary activities for the culture-appreciative group.

According to Timothy & Boyd (2003), there are two types of heritage tourists: passive and serious ones. Serious heritage tourists are those whose purpose is to have educational heritage experiences or a sense of personal nostalgia as their primary motivations, while passive visitors are simply there to see the world-famous sites. This is similar to McKercher's (2002) classification of cultural tourists based on their level of cultural significance (cultural motive) in their decision to travel to destinations. The significance of cultural tourism can be the main reason an individual chooses a destination, but it also can play a lesser role for others. McKercher (2002) categorised cultural tourists in five different types, namely, the purposeful cultural tourist, the sightseeing cultural tourists, the casual cultural tourist, the incidental cultural tourist, and the serendipitous cultural tourist.

Kerstetter et al. (2001) identified the types of tourists who progress from general traveler to focused or 'specialised' tourists (e.g., heritage tourists). In their research, heritage tourists were divided into three categories (low, medium, high), depending on their level of heritage specialisation. Their research found that highly specialised individuals were likely to report that they were motivated to learn about a historical period or event, to experience authentic elements in a historic destination and to consider the site's historic character in their decision to visit.

Heritage cultural tourists are frequently described as well educated, middle class, middle aged and knowledgeable of history (Light et al., 1994). The Travel Industry Association of the United Stated of America (1997; cited in Kerstter et al., 2001) stated that individuals with an interest in visiting heritage or cultural sites (i.e. heritage tourists) tended to stay longer (4.7 vs. 3.3 nights), spend more per trip, are more highly educated, and have higher average annual income than the general traveler. Similarly, Richards (1996) found that tourists who visited cultural attractions tended to be relatively well-educated people from a professional background and with high incomes.

Opposed to this, in a study of visitor to heritage parks, tourists having a strong interest in local history may have a lower socio-economic status (Prentice et al., 1998). Similarly opposed to the previous record, some studies found that younger tourists visited cultural heritage sites (Mason & Kuo, 2007; Saipradist & Staiff, 2007).

This chapter has reviewed literature on tourist attraction, heritage tourism and tourist motivation included heritage tourist motivation. This literature will be applied in this study in the discussion chapter.

Chapter 4
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the theoretical background to this research and presented an examination of earlier studies on heritage tourism. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the case study site and provide a detailed explanation of the specific research methods and tools used in this research. Initially, a description and rationale for the site selection is outlined. This is followed by a discussion on the methodological approach and justification for the present study. Then, a description of the data collection process and justification for selecting these tools follows. The limitations and their effect on the present study are also included, followed by a brief discussion of how the data were analysed.

4.2 Site selection

The field study was conducted in the Town of Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, between April and May 2009. The Town of Luang Prabang was selected as the study site for several reasons. Firstly, because heritage tourism and tourism in general plays a crucial role in Lao PDR's economy and national development, the author wanted to study a topic that will contribute both academically to the research on this form of tourism and also provide resourceful information for the Lao Government. Secondly, the more obvious reason is that the Town of Luang Prabang is the first World Heritage Site in Lao PDR; the author feels connected to it because she was born and has been living in this town. Being indigenous to Luang Prabang allowed the author easy access to the research site and to receive helpful cooperation from international tourists, as they consider the local people to be part of tourist attractions. Thirdly, the Town of Luang Prabang has always been a popular tourist destination in Lao PDR since the open-door policy was first introduced for international tourists in 1989, as well as in GMS regions since it was established in 1992.

4.3 Data collection

Data was collected from international tourists at various spots in the Town of Luang Prabang, including the departure areas of Luang Prabang International Airport, Mount Phousy, Wat Xieng Thong (Xieng Thong temple), the open-air night market, internet shops, and restaurants along the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers. Initially, the plan was also to collect data at Luang Prabang bus station, but on arrival in the Town of Luang Prabang, the author discovered that most tourists arrived at the bus station 5 to 10 minutes before their departures and did not have enough time to fill in the questionnaire. Therefore, the author decided not to collect data at this station.

Figure 7   Luang Prabang International Airport
Photo: Thongmala Phosikham

Beside the Airport, Mount Phousy and Wat Xieng Thong were chosen as data collection spots because they are two of many 'must see' tourist attractions in the Town of Luang Prabang. While Wat Xieng Thong is claimed to be the most beautiful Lao style architectural temple, Mount Phousy is the mountain in the middle of Luang Prabang town. There is a Luang Prabang saying that if outsiders (domestic and international tourists) do not visit these two sites during their visit to Luang Prabang, they have not reached Luang Prabang town.

Figure 8   Wat Xieng Thong

Photo: Thongmala Phosikham

Figure 9   View from Mount Phousy

Photo: Thongmala Phosikham

The night market, internet shops, and restaurants, on the bank of the Mekong and Nam Khan
rivers were chosen as data collection sites because these places are popular spots for tourists

as well. The night market is not only where local people come to sell local food, textiles and other handicrafts, but also serves as a meeting place for most people who come to town, either to eat, shop or just meet friends. Similarly, internet shops are the places where tourists share their travelling experiences with their friends and families back home. Most tourists who visit Town of Luang Prabang visit restaurants along the bank of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers for eating, drinking, reading, relaxing and watching the sun set. The most important reason that other tourist spots were chosen for data collection besides the airport is to reduce sample bias as not all tourists travelled by air.

Prior to the data collection, permission to conduct the survey at these sites was obtained from related authorities, provided the author did not hassle tourists. For example, the author did not actually talk to tourists who were eating at the restaurants, but waited until they were finished and then invited them to participate in the survey nearby the restaurants.

Figure 10   Night market
Photo: Thongmala Phosikham

Figure 11　A restaurant on the bank of Mekong river
Photo: Thongmala Phosikham

4.4　Quantitative techniques

To achieve the research objectives of this study, a quantitative approach with a self-administered questionnaire survey was used in. Babbie (2007:244) stated that "survey research is probably the best method available to the social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly." The same author also pointed out that a self-administered survey is low cost, faster, involves less interviewer bias, and has a higher rate of anonymity and privacy to encourage respondents to answer sensitive issues. However, Babbie also stated that self-administered questionnaires may be less effective than in-depth interview for complicated questions.

4.4.1 Questionnaire design

Questionnaire items were created based on the literature review and theoretical framework. The questionnaire was composed of three types of instruments. The five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strong disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to find out the significant factors that bring international tourists to Town of Luang Prabang. This scale was also used to rank the importance of source of information that influence tourists' trip decision-making. A Tick list response was used to find out the types of information sources that were used by international tourists, amount of time in Luang Prabang, visiting frequency, whether they were visiting other WHS, knowledge about World Heritage status, travel companion, religions, age groups and sex. Open-ended responses were used to measure the amount of time in Lao PDR, amount of time on the total trip, to find out the nationality and the current country of residence of the respondents.

A copy of the research questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

4.5 Implementation of questionnaire survey

Between April and May 2009, male and female international tourists who were18 years and over were invited to participate in a self-administered questionnaire survey at departure areas of Luang Prabang International Airport and other spots that were mentioned earlier. Convenience sampling was conducted in this research. The author introduced the title and objectives of the research to international tourists and gave them the information sheet then explained if they ask questions. Then the author gave those who wished to participate the questionnaires and asked them to answer questions. Over the two-month period, 380 surveys were completed. The surveys were conducted seven days a week.

During the data collection period, most flights departed Luang Prabang International Airport only in the morning and the afternoon. Consequently, data was collected at the airport during these times, and it was gathered again at other tourist spots for the rest of the day. The author found that tourists who left Town of Luang Prabang on the early morning flights participated less in the survey because some of them were busy with their breakfast after check-in time.

Some data were collected at Wat Xieng Thong and Mount Phousy. From survey experience, some tourists refused to participate in the survey when they were invited as soon as they reached the top of Mount Phousy after climbing 328 steps (and in April, which is usually the

hottest month of the year in Laos). However, after having rested and seen the views of Luang Prabang town from Mount Phousy, the tourists were more willing to participate in the survey.

After a long day, the author went to restaurants on the bank of Mekong and Nam Khan rivers, sat down and had a fruit juice, appreciated the beautiful view of the river and mountains and took pictures of the sunset. The author also continued the survey there and most of tourists who can speak English participated in the study.

4.6 Limitations of the implementation process

During the process of data collection, there were factors that limited the research. Firstly, the study was conducted in English. A number of the tourists had limited knowledge of the English language and they were not able to participate in the survey. This may have affected the sample by excluding those who did not speak English, since many of them are from other parts of Asia. This problem occurred because it was too expensive to translate the questionnaire into other languages.

A second limitation was using the departure area of the airport and other tourist spots to collect data from international tourists. Tourists had very short time after they checked in before departure. In other tourist spots, although the majority of international tourists were very friendly and interested in the survey participation, some of them had to leave the areas before survey completion because their companions wanted to move to other attractions or they had to follow their tour guide.

In addition, a non-probability sampling method was used; therefore, the results presented here can not be presumed to reflect the characteristics of all international tourists to the Town of Luang Prabang.

4.7 Analysis of data

Following collection, the data were entered directly into a computer spreadsheet. Analysis was done by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 14. The descriptive statistic tools were used to analyse the demographic data, trip-related characteristics, sources of information, features attracting tourists, and the knowledge of international tourists about the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang and the importance of World Heritage Sites in shaping international tourists' journeys to the region. A Pearson

product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the association between the time spent in total trip and length spent in Lao PDR. Cross-tabulation and chi-square tests were calculated to investigate if there were significant statistical differences between heritage and non-heritage tourists, younger and older tourists, short-stay and long-stay tourists in terms of demographic characteristics, trip-related characteristics, motivational factors, and knowledge of World Heritage status. The statistical significance level was defined at P = .05.

Chapter 5

Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from analysing the data collected from international tourists in Town of Luang Prabang between April and May 2009. The chapter is divided into four different sections. The first section describes the demographic characteristics of international tourists to Luang Prabang. The next section illustrates travel patterns and sources of information used by tourists. The following section describes the factors affecting international tourist's decision-making to visit the town. The final section discovers the knowledge of international tourists about World Heritage status of Luang Prabang and discusses the role of WHS in attracting tourists to travel to the region.

5.2 Demographic characteristics

The section develops a profile of international tourists interviewed in Town of Luang Prabang. The profile includes respondents' current region of residence, current country of residence, nationality, age, gender and religion.

5.2.1 Current region of residence

The number of international tourists who participated in the research was 380. As shown in Figure 12, the larger proportion of participants (44.5 percent) were from Europe, overwhelmingly from the UK. Participants from Asia accounted for 21.2 percent, 17.1 percent from Australasia, 15.9 percent from Americas, and 1.3 percent from the Middle East.

In contrast, the Provincial Tourism Office (2008) reported that, in 2008, the largest proportion of visitor arrivals (42.1%) to Luang Prabang was from Asia and Pacific. The second largest portion (36.9%) was from Europe, followed by the Americas (18%), and Africa and the Middle East (3%)

Figure 13 shows the comparison between data collected in this study and those reported by the Provincial Tourism Office (2008).

Current region of residence
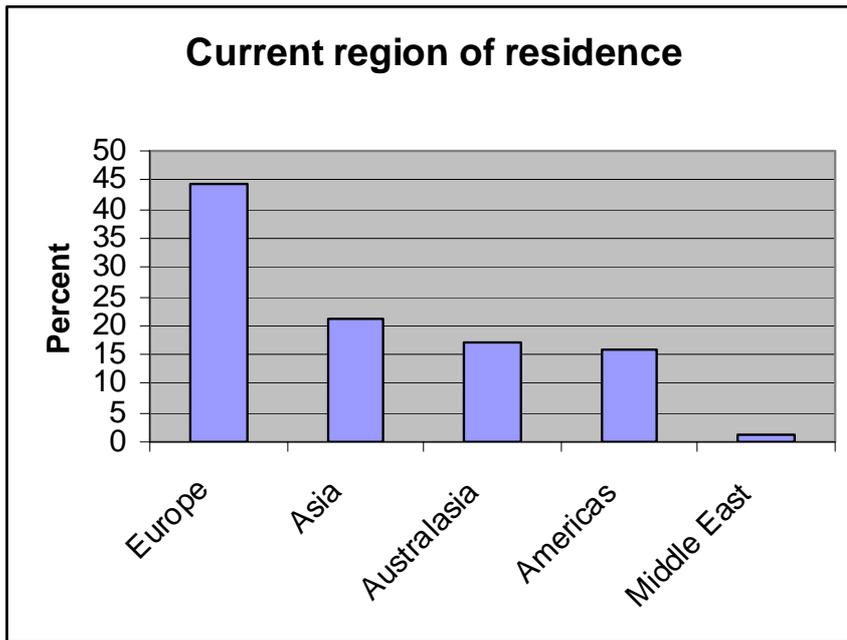
(N= 380)

Figure 12   Current region of residence
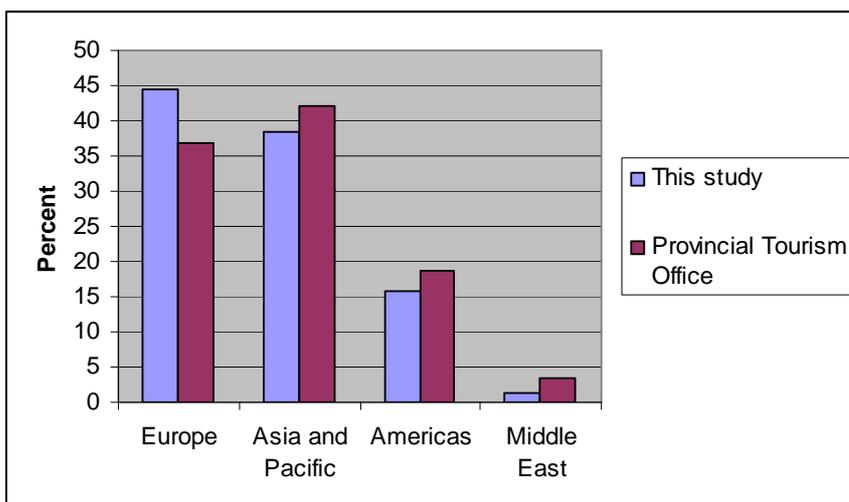
Figure 13   Comparison of current region of residence

5.2.2 Current country of residence

The research included both tourists' nationality and country of residence because some of them live in other countries than their own.

Survey results showed that participants in this study were diversified. International tourists from 34 different countries were represented. Even though the share of international tourists arrivals was dominated by the European countries, more participant reported that they were from Australia (15.5 percent) followed by the UK (14.5 percent), the US (11.6 percent), and France (8.4 percent).Thailand was 5.3 percent and Singapore was 4.2 percent. They were the only two Asian countries in the top eight tourists' current country of residence.

Table 6   Current country of residence

Countries	Number of Tourists	Share (%)	Countries	Number of Tourists	Share (%)
Australia	59	15.5	Canada	12	3.2
UK	55	14.5	Switzerland	11	2.9
USA	44	11.6	Ireland	9	2.4
France	32	8.4	China	9	2.4
Germany	21	5.5	New Zealand	6	1.6
Thailand	20	5.3	Israel	5	1.3
The Netherlands	17	4.5	Other European countries	24	7.1
Singapore	16	4.2	Other Asian countries	10	2.6
Japan	13	3.4	Other countries in Americas	4	1.1
Vietnam	13	3.4		380	100.0
Total					

5.2.3 Nationality

As reported earlier, 380 international tourists from 34 different countries participated in this research. However, there were only 32 nationalities. In general, the proportion of tourists' nationalities were similar to the percentage of tourists' current country of residence. Australian tourists presented the largest nationality (15.8 percent). British tourists were the second largest group (15.3 percent), followed by American (13.4 percent) and the French (9.2 percent). However, despite the fact that 16 participants (4.2 percent) stated that they were

living in Singapore and three participants were from Cambodia, none of them were Singaporean or Cambodian nationals. Moreover, there were numbers of tourists' current country of residence than numbers of nationalities such as China, Thailand and Vietnam. This showed that many tourists living in countries located in Asia were non-nationals.

Table 7   Nationality

Nationalities	Number of Tourists	Share (%)	Nationalities	Number of Tourists	Share (%)
Australian	60	15.8	Japanese	12	3.2
British	58	15.3	New Zealander	11	2.9
American	51	13.4	Swede	6	1.6
French	35	9.2	Israelis	5	1.3
German	29	7.6	Austrian	4	1.1
Dutch	21	5.5	Vietnamese	4	1.1
Canadian	17	4.5	Other European	19	5.1
Thai	15	3.9	Other Asian	5	1.4
Irish	12	3.2	Other Nations from Americas	4	1.1
Swiss	12	3.2		380	100.0
Total					

5.2.4 Age and gender

Only international tourists who were 18 years and over were included in this research. The finding showed that female tourists represented a larger proportion of tourists than males: 53.2 percent of the participants were female and 46.8 percent were male.

Over 50 percent of tourists were under 35 years of age. As shown in Figure 14, the 25-34 age group had biggest proportion (35.8 percent) of participants. While tourists aged 35 - 44 years were the second biggest group, tourists who were 65 years and over presented the smallest portion (5 percent) in this study.

This finding was similar to previous studies conducted by Orasith in 2004 and the Lao National Tourism Administration in 2007. According to Orasith (2004), in 2004, 60 percent of international tourists who visited Luang Prabang were in their 20s and 21 percent were in

their 30s. Similarly, Lao National Tourism Administration (2007) reported that in 2007, 44.8 percent of international tourist arrivals to Laos were in their 20s and 21.7 percent were in their 30s. This showed that there were more younger international tourists travelling to this country.

Age of tourists
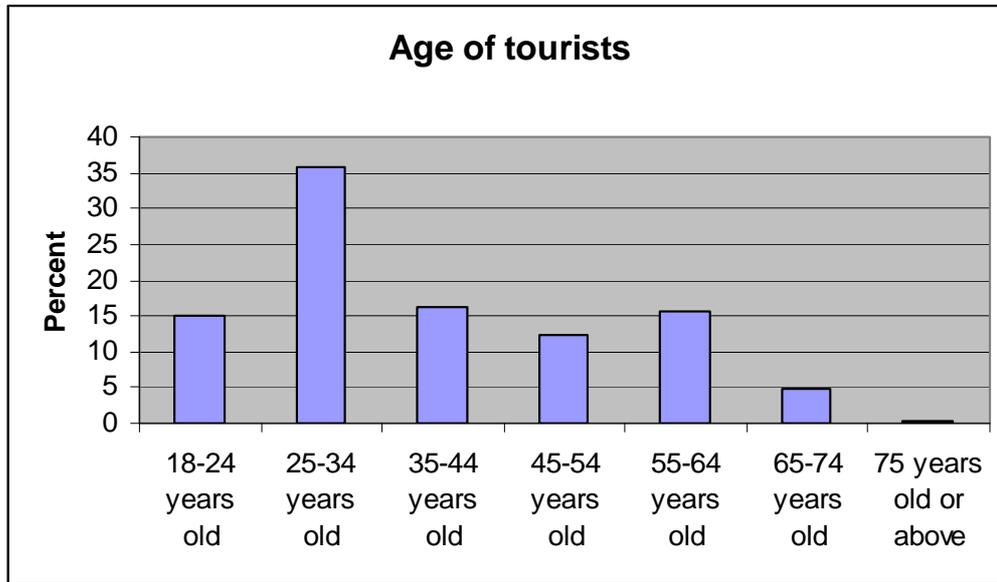
(N=380)

Figure 14   Age groups

5.2.5 Religion

Some tourism literature stated that tourists often seek to visit their own heritage places such as religious sites. There are many Buddhist temples in the Town of Luang Prabang so that this question was raised in order to learn if more Buddhist tourists visited the town than other groups.

In this research, while Christian was the largest religion group (47.6 percent) of participants, the second largest group (35.8 percent) reported that they had no religion. Buddhism was the third largest religion group (7.4 percent), and 3.4 percent of tourists did not want to respond about their religion.
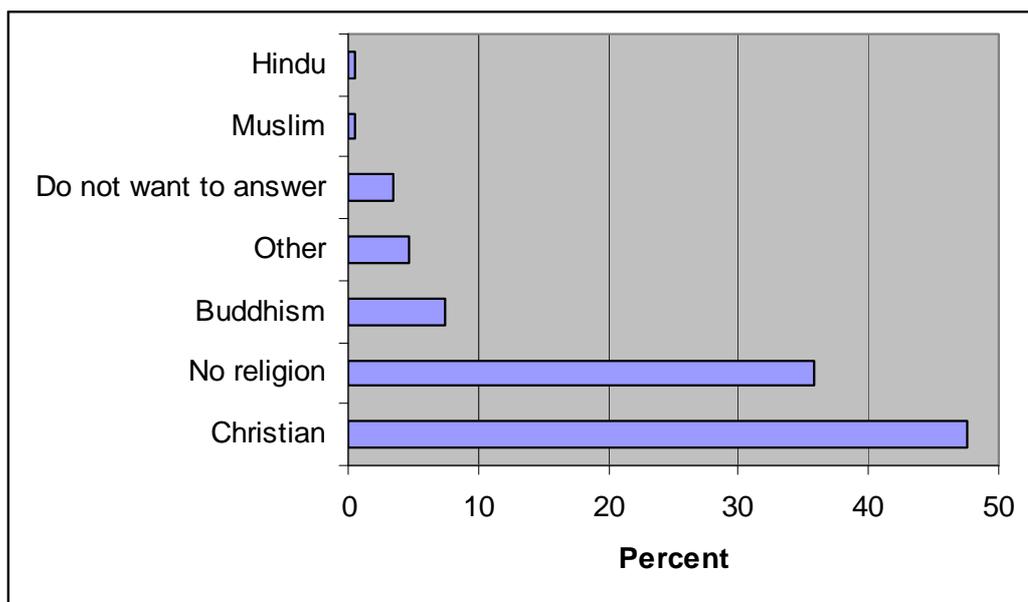
(N=380)

Figure 15 Religion

5.2.6 The association of demographic characteristics and length of stay in Lao PDR

The Chi-square statistic was used to test the statistical significance of the association between the demographic characteristics of international tourists (sex, age and current region of residence) and the time spent in Lao PDR.

Before running Chi-square test, length of stay in Lao PDR and some of the demographic characteristics were regrouped into fewer categories: Length of stay was re-grouped into two, Age into two, and Current region of residence into three.

From the output of cross-tabulation of demographic characteristics and time spent in Lao PDR, only Age and Current region of residence were significant at the .05 level. The results of the tests indicated that there is a significant association between age and time spent in Lao PDR ($X^2 = 16.4$, df = 1, N = 380, p = 0.000). This means that younger tourists stayed in Lao PDR longer than their older counterparts. The tests also showed a significant association between Current region of residence and Length of stay in Lao PDR ($X^2 = 9.06$, df = 2, N = 380, p = 0.011). The finding showed tourists who were from the Asia Pacific and Middle East region spent less time in Lao PDR than tourists who were from Europe and the Americas.

However, there is no significant association between gender and time spent in Lao PDR.

5.3 Tourists' travel patterns and information sources

This section describes the travel patterns of international tourists and source of information used by tourists in the following format: trip types and composition of tourists, length of total trip, length of stay in Lao PDR, length of stay in Luang Prabang, frequency of visit to Luang Prabang, tourists' travel patterns in GMS countries, sources of information used by tourists, and the importance of certain information sources in planning tourists' trip to the Town of Luang Prabang.

5.3.1 Trip types and composition of tourists

In this research, there were more independent tourists than package tourists. A total of 12.4 percent of participants indicated they were part of a group tour and 87.6 percent stated that they were independent tourists.

International tourists who travelled with their partners made up the highest proportion (41.8 percent), followed by tourists with friends (28.4 percent) and those travelling alone (15.8 percent). Those who travelled with others (such as siblings, colleagues, and recently met tourists) accounted for 8.9 percent. Tourists who travelled with partners and children were the smallest group which represented only five percent.
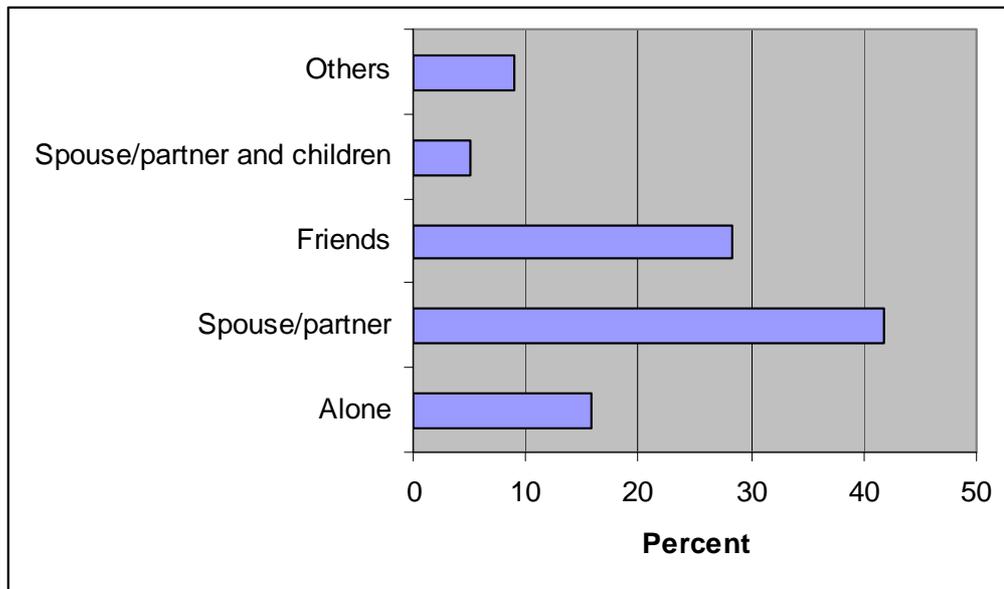
(N=380)

Figure 16   Composition of tourists

5.3.2   Time spent in total on this trip by tourists and proportion of their trip in Lao PDR

When 380 respondents were asked about the length of their total trip, the responses ranged from 1-290 nights. More than half (55.3 percent) of the respondents spent 20 nights or less, almost a third (29.4 percent) spent between 21 and 70 nights, and 15.3 percent spent more than 70 nights.

Out of their total trip, 213 (56 percent) respondents stated that they spent 40% or less in Lao PDR, and 86 (22.7 percent) participants reported spending 81-100% of their total trip time in this country.

To investigate if there was a statistically significant association between the Time spent in total and Length spent in Lao PDR, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed. There was a positive correlation between the two variable, $r = .36$, $n = 380$, $p = 0.000$, with a longer time spent on total trip associated with long time spent in Laos. This indicated that tourists who spent longer time in their total trip also stayed longer in Lao PDR.

The time spent in Laos out of total trip
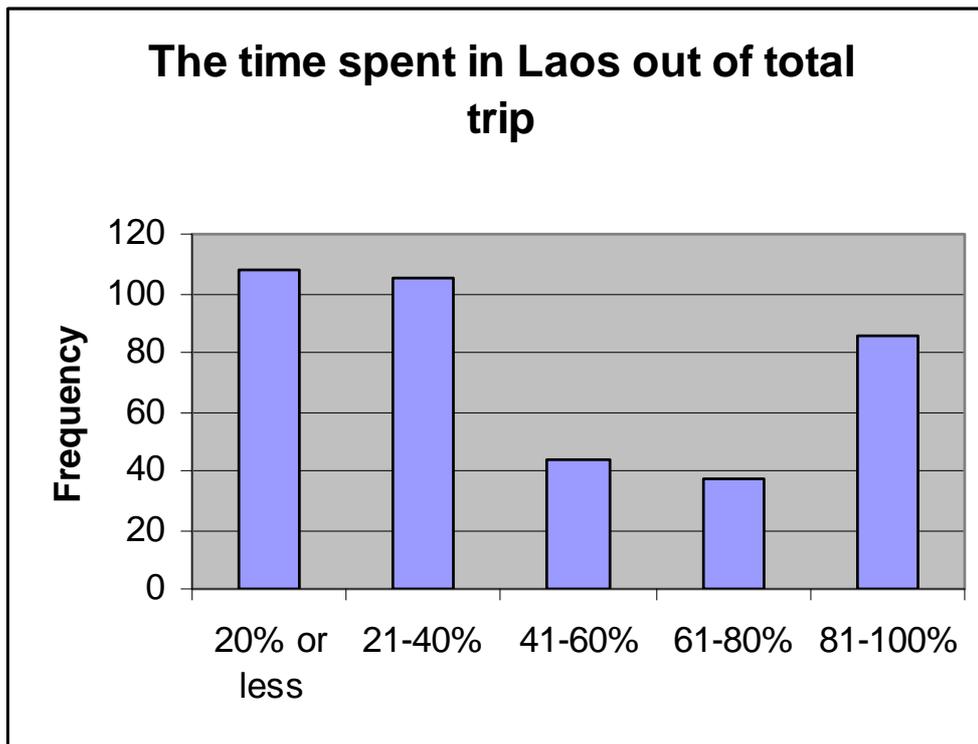
(N=380)

Figure 17 Proportion of tourist total time spent in Lao PDR

Table 8   Correlations between Total travelling time and Length of stay in Lao PDR

		Total travelling time on this trip	Length stay in Laos on this trip
Total travelling time on this trip	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 . 380	.366** .000 380
Length stay in Laos on this trip	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	366** .000 380	1 . 380

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5.3.3 The time spent in the Town of Luang Prabang

The results indicated that the majority of participants in this research stayed in Luang Prabang longer than other places in Lao PDR. This suggested that Luang Prabang is an important tourist destination not only in Lao PDR but also in the region. Out of 380 respondents,221 people (58.4 percent) stated that they spent 61-100 percent of their time in Luang Prabang during their visits to Lao PDR. Only 138 respondents (36.3 percent) spent 21-60 percent of

their time in Lao PDR to stay in Luang Prabang, and only 21 respondents (5.3 percent) indicated that they spent 20 percent or less of their time in Luang Prabang while they were visiting Lao PDR.

Time spent in Luang Prabang out of time spent in Laos
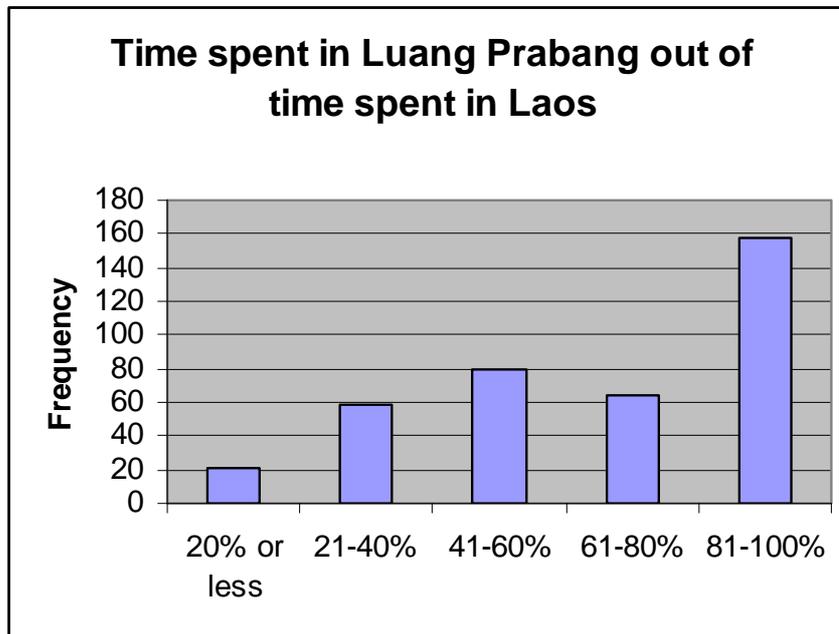
(N=380)

Figure 18   Time spent in Luang Prabang out of time spent in Lao PDR

5.3.4 Frequency of tourists' visit to Town of Luang Prabang

In this research, there were many more first-time tourists than repeat tourists; more than 84 percent of respondents came to Luang Prabang for the first time, and 10.8 percent were visiting Luang Prabang for their second time. Only 4.7 percent of participants reported that they visited this town three times or more.

5.3.5 The association of trip-related characteristics

To investigate if there was a significant association between Frequency of visit, Composition of tourists and Time spent in Lao PDR, Chi-Square statistic was used. The results of the tests showed that there was a significant association between Frequency of visit and Time spent in Lao PDR ($X^2 = 4.81$, df = 1, N = 380, p = 0.028). The finding suggested that repeat visitors spent longer time in Lao PDR than first time visitors. The tests indicated no significant

association between Composition of Tourists and time spent in Lao PDR (X² = 3.62, df = 1, N = 380, p = 0.57).

5.3.6 Travel patterns of international tourists to the Greater Mekong Subregion countries on this trip

Respondents were asked which other GMS countries they had visited and planned to visit during this trip. Twenty point five percent selected Lao PDR as their only destination, 68.7 percent shared the same trip with Vietnam, 64.4 percent with Thailand, 57.8 percent with Cambodia, 24.9 percent with China, and 15 percent with Myanmar.

More than half (55.0 percent) of tourists visited Thailand before they came to Lao PDR. Thirty-six percent and 29.4 percent of respondents have already visited Vietnam and Cambodia (respectively) on this trip.

The results showed that Thailand was the main entry point for participants who travelled to this region. However, there was an almost equal split between Vietnam and Cambodia, and this showed a diverse travel route taken by tourists.

Table 9   Travel patterns of international tourists to countries on this trip

Countries	Percentage of travel patterns in GMS countries on this trip					Number of tourists
	Visited	Plan to visit	Have no plan to visit	Have not decided	Total (%)	
Thailand	55.0	9.4	32.8	2.8	100.0	360*
Vietnam	36.0	32.7	28.9	2.5	100.0	367*
Cambodia	29.4	28.4	37.9	4.2	100.0	377*
China	15.4	9.5	67.6	7.6	100.0	371*
Myanmar	6.6	8.4	75.5	9.5	100.0	380

* Number of tourists were different due to the exclusion of tourists from those countries

5.3.7 Sources of information used by international tourists in planning their trips to Luang Prabang

Respondents were asked their source of information for their trip to Luang Prabang. More than 91% of respondents used a travel guidebook (e.g. Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, Travelfish Guide) in planning their journey to Luang Prabang. 'Internet' (75.8 percent) stood out as the second largest information source used by the tourists, followed by 'Friend/relative' (68.4 percent), 'Travel agent/tour operator' (45.3 percent), 'Book/magazine' (38.2 percent), 'Television/radio' (19.5 percent), 'Newspaper' (18.7 percent) and 'Others' (5.3 percent). The other sources included previous trip, map and exhibition. (This was a multiple-answer question, therefore percentages total more than 100 percent).

Table 10   Sources of information used by international tourists

Sources	Used		Not use		
	% of Tourists	Tourists' Number	% of Tourists	Number of Tourists	Total % of Tourists
Travel guidebook	91.6	348	8.4	32	100.0
Internet	75.8	288	24.2	92	100.0
Friend/relative	68.4	260	31.6	120	100.0
Travel agent/ tour operator	45.3	172	54.7	208	100.0
Book/magazine	38.2	145	61.8	235	100.0
Television/radio	19.5	74	80.5	306	100.0
Newspaper	18.7	71	81.3	309	100.0
Other	5.3	20	94.7	360	100.0

(N= 380)

5.3.8 The importance of certain information sources in planning tourists' trip to Luang Prabang

When the international tourists were asked to report their sources in order of their importance, the results in Table 11 were obtained. This table supported the results in Table 10.

The sources of information most often used were also ranked the most important sources. The majority of respondents ranked 'Travel guidebook' as a very important source. This is double the next highest ranked 'Friend/relative' and 'Internet'. These were the first three very important sources of information for the respondents in planning their trips to Luang Prabang. Interestingly, in most tourism research Word of mouth is usually reported as the most important source of information by a majority of respondents. Perhaps Luang Prabang is fairly new to international tourists that most of their friends or families have yet to visit.

Table 11 Importance of certain information sources in planning tourists' trip to Luang Prabang

| Sources | Level of importance (%) | | | | | |
	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Unimportant	Not at all important	Total (%)
Travel guidebook	48.4	27.6	11.6	2.4	10.0	100.0
Friends/relative	25.5	21.1	16.3	2.6	34.5	100.0
Internet	23.4	27.6	18.2	2.6	28.2	100.0
Travel agent/tour operator	12.4	11.1	12.1	4.7	59.7	100.0
Book/magazine	5.5	11.8	16.1	1.6	65.0	100.0
Television/radio	1.1	4.2	6.1	2.1	86.6	100.0
Newspaper	1.3	3.4	5.3	2.4	87.6	100.0
Other	1.6	1.3	.5	.3	96.3	100.0

(N= 380)

5.4 Significant factors that influence international tourists to Luang Prabang

This section notes the factors that influenced international tourists' decision-making to visit Luang Prabang.

5.4.1 Factors attracting international tourists to Luang Pranbang

The factors listed in Table 12 are intrinsic motivators that relate to the needs and wants of the tourists. In this research, 91 percent of respondents reported that they visited Luang Prabang because they wanted to enhance their knowledge and experience of Laos. Even though 85.4 percent of tourists focused on cultural motivators, only little more than one third (37.1 percent) of respondents felt they were 'heritage' tourists. This is similar to previous research conducted at cultural sites in Europe and Australia by Richards (2002), who found that although the surveys were conducted at cultural sites, cultural tourists were found to be in the minority among the respondents; only 27 percent indicated that their trip could be classified as a cultural holiday.

Table 12   Push factors that influence international tourists to Luang Prabang

| Factors | % of level of tourists' agreement in each factor | | | |
	Strongly agree /Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Total (%)
I want to enhance my knowledge and experience of Laos	91	7.1	1.9	100.0
I want to see how Lao people live	85.5	12.1	2.3	100.0
I am interested in a variety of tourist attractions	77.9	13.9	8.2	100.0
I am a 'heritage' tourist	37.1	39.5	23.4	100.0

(N=380)

5.4.2 Features attracting international tourist to Luang Prabang

When international tourists were asked to indicate the level of importance of certain features in their decision-making to visit Luang Prabang, the results in Table 13 were obtained. 'Natural scenery and landscape' was a very important feature for 86 percent of the participants to travel to Luang Prabang. While 80.8 percent indicated that 'Cultural and historical places/sites' and 'Friendliness of people' were important features attracting tourist to Town of Luang Prabang, 76.6 percent selected 'Politeness and honesty of Lao people' as important in their decision to choose this destination.

However, 15.6 percent of participants said that 'Reasonable price of goods and services' are unimportant, and 14.5 percent stated 'Ethnic diversity' is also less important for their decision-making to travel to Luang Prabang.

Table 13   Importance of features on tourists' decision to visit Laung Prabang

Features	Level of importance (%)			
	Very important/ Important	Somewhat important	Unimportant/Not at all important	Total (%)
Natural scenery and landscape	86	12.4	1.6	100.0
Friendliness of people	80.8	16.6	2.6	100.0
Cultural and historical place/sites	80.8	16.3	2.9	100.0
Politeness and honesty of Lao people	76.6	18.9	4.5	100.0
Safety and security	72.4	20.0	7.6	100.0
Lao temple	63.7	29.1	7.2	100.0
Clean environment	61.1	30.0	9	100.0
Lao arts and architectures	57.6	33.9	8.4	100.0
Reasonable price of good and services	56	28.4	15.6	100.0
Ethnic diversity	55.3	30.3	14.5	100.0

(N=380)

5.5 The role of World Heritage status

This section reports the knowledge of international tourists regarding the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang, and the importance of the World Heritage status in attracting tourists to visit the town as well as the region. The tourists' travel pattern to other WHS in the region will be described in this section.

5.5.1 Awareness of Luang Prabang's World Heritage status.

In this research, 357 respondents (94 percent) were aware at the time of the survey that Luang Prabang was a World Heritage site while, only 23 people (6 percent) did not know. Of the 357 respondents, more than 70 percent knew that Luang Prabang was on the World Heritage List before they started their trips, 20.2 percent discovered this information during the trip but before they arrived in Luang Prabang, and only 9.5 percent heard of Luang Prabang's status after they arrived in the town.

When those aware participants were asked about the likelihood of their visiting Luang Prabang if it was not a WHS, 35.3 percent indicated they would not have visited the town, 51 percent said that there was a very low chance to visit, and only 2 percent stated that there was a high chance to visit even if Luang Prabang was not a World Heritage Site. This indicates that WHS was very important in the decision-making of the majority of these tourists.

An interesting finding is that while the majority of respondents would not have visited Town of Luang Prabang if it was not a WHS, only 37.1 percent of respondents agreed they were 'heritage' tourists. This may indicate a contradiction between tourists' self-definition and their behaviour. A WHS carries with it a broader meaning to visitors than just heritage.

Table 14 Tourists' knowledge of Luang Prabang being on the World Heritage List

Discovery	Percentages	Number of tourists
Before the trip started	70.3	251
During the trip but before arriving in Luang Prabang	20.2	72
After arriving in Luang Prabang	9.5	34
Total	100.0	357

Table 15 Likelihood of tourists' visiting Luang Prabang if it was not a WHS

Chance to visit Luang Prabang	Percentage	Number of tourists
Would not have visited	35.3	126
Very low	51.0	182
Low	10.9	39
High	2.0	7
Very high	.8	3
Total	100.0	357

5.5.2 The patterns of international tourists to the WHS in the GMS region

Forty-eight international tourists (12.7 percent) stated that they did not visit nor plan to visit other WHS on their trip besides the Town of Luang Prabang. A total of 87.3 percent of respondents visited or planned to visit at least one other WHS.

Besides the Town of Luang Prabang, international tourists also visited and/or planned to visit other WHS in the region. Angkor Wat in Cambodia was the most frequently visited by respondents. More than half (56.8 percent) of respondents stated that they were visiting this WHS on this trip. The second most frequently visited WHS was Hoi An Ancient Town in Vietnam (48.9 percent), followed by Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements in Laos (40.2). The WHS least frequently visited on this trip was the Historic town of Sukhothai in Thailand (15.7 percent), although some tourists remained undecided about whether they would visit this WHS.

Table 16   Travel patterns of international tourists to the WHS in the region on this trip

World Heritage Sites	Percentage of travel patterns to WHS in the region on this trip				
	Visited	Plan to visit	Have no plan to visit	Have not decided	Total (%)
Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements (Laos)	32.6	7.6	51.3	8.4	100
Angkor Wat (Cambodia)	28.4	28.4	39.2	3.9	100
Hoi An Ancient Town (Vietnam)	21.8	27.1	45.3	5.8	100
Complex of Hue Monuments (Vietnam)	15.8	19.5	55.5	0.2	100
Historic city of Ayuttaya (Thailand)	15.0	7.4	69.5	8.2	100
Temple of Preach Vihear (Cambodia)	10.8	9.7	65.8	13.7	100
Historic town of Sukhothai (Thailand)	8.9	6.8	72.6	11.6	100

(N=380)

5.5.3 The Importance of WHS in shaping international tourists' journeys to the GMS region.

More than two-thirds (69.2 percent) of the 380 respondents stated that they did not visit this region because of the WHS. Only 117 people (30.8 percent) indicated that they travelled to the region because of the WHS. Even though one in three of participants stated that they travelled to this region because of the WHS, 35.3 percent stated that they would not have visited Luang Prabang, and 51 percent stated very low chance of their visiting this town if it was not on the WHS lists.

When those tourists who visited the region because of the WHS were asked to indicate the level of importance of certain WHS in planning their trips, they stated as below (see Table 17). A result of 88.9 percent of respondents reported that the Town of Luang Prabang was important in shaping their journey to this region.

Apart from the Town of Luang Prabang, 64.1 percent rated Angkor Wat in Cambodia as the most important WHS. All other sites rated less than 20 percent. The least important WHS was the Temple of Preach Vihear in Cambodia; 49.6 percent stated that this WHS was not at all important in shaping their trip to the region.

Table 17   Importance of certain WHS in planning tourists' trip to this region

World Heritage Sites	Level of Importance (%)					
	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Unimportant	Not at all important	Total (%)
Town of Luang Prabang (Laos)	48.7	40.2	5.1	.9	5.1	100.0
Angkor Wat (Cambodia)	47.9	16.2	3.4	.9	31.6	100.0
Hoi An Ancient Town (Vietnam)	17.1	22.2	15.4	6.0	39.3	100.0
Historic city of Ayuttaya (Thailand)	17.1	12.8	13.7	7.7	48.7	100.0
Historic town of Sukhothai (Thailand)	16.2	6.0	14.5	12.0	51.3	100.0
Vat Phou and Aassociate Ancient Settlement (Laos)	13.7	21.4	17.9	11.1	35.9	100.0
Complex of Hue Monument (Vietnam)	12.8	23.1	16.2	1.7	46.2	100.0
Temple of Preach Vihear (Cambodia)	9.4	13.7	13.7	13.7	49.6	100.0

(N=117)

5.5.4 The comparison between heritage and non-heritage tourists

The Pearson Chi-square tests were used to investigate whether there were significant statistical differences between heritage and non-heritage tourists in terms of demographic characteristics, trip-related characteristics, the use of information sources, motivational factors, and the knowledge of World Heritage status.

Prior to the tests, respondents were divided into two groups (heritage and non-heritage tourists) by using the level of their agreement to the statement: *I am visiting LPB because I am a 'heritage' tourists*. The heritage tourists were those who agreed with the statement (aggregated from the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' categories) and the non-heritage tourists were those who disagreed (aggregated from 'neutral', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' categories). This method was also used for dividing the importance of features in Luang Prabang (important/unimportant) before running Chi-square tests in this section.

From the output of cross-tabulation of the demographic characteristics and trip-related characteristics, only Age and Length of stay were statistically significant differences between 'heritage' and 'non-heritage' tourists (see Table 18). Heritage tourists tended to be older than non-heritage tourists (x^2 = 21.07, df = 1, N =380, p = 0.000). The finding showed that heritage tourists spent a shorter time in Laos (x^2 = 5.01, df = 1, N =380, p = 0.025) and on their overall trip (x^2 = 13.02, df = 1, N =380, p = 0.000).

The results showed no significant statistical differences between the two types of tourists in terms of Gender, Current region of residence, Religion, Travel composition, Frequency of visit and the Use of information sources.

The Chi-square tests indicated that heritage tourists were more aware of the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang (x^2 = 6.46, df = 1, N =380, p = 0.011), and they were more likely to visit this region because of its WHS (x^2 = 4.86, df = 1, N =380, p = 0.027).

The Chi-square tests also revealed some differences between the two groups in terms of the motivational factors that attracted them to Luang Prabang. As shown in Table 18, a greater percentage of heritage tourists (92 percent) wanted to see how the Lao people live compared to the non-heritage tourists (81.6 percent). Cultural and historical places/sites were the primary attraction in Luang Prabang for heritage tourists (91.5 percent). They were also more likely to state that Lao temples was an important factor (78.7 percent), compared to non-heritage tourists (54.8 percent).

 Similarly, more heritage tourists (71.6 percent) said Lao art and architectures were important attracting features, compared to non-heritage tourists (49.4 percent). A larger percentage of heritage tourists reported Ethnic diversity as important (65.2 percent), compared to the non-heritage tourists (49.4 percent). There were no significant statistical differences between the two groups for the rest of the factors, such as Natural scenery and landscape, Friendliness of

people, Politeness and honesty of Lao people, Clean environments, and Reasonable price of good and services.

Table 18   Chi-Square tests on heritage/non-heritage tourists with age of tourists, WHS awareness, time spent in Laos and total trip, and trip type

WHS awareness and trip-related characteristics		Heritage tourists	Non-heritage tourists	X²	P- value
WHS awareness	Before the trip started	78.1%	65.5%	6.46	0.011
	During the trip or after arriving	21.9%	34.5%		
Visit GMS region	Because of WHS	37.6%	26.8%	4.86	0.027
	NOT because of WHS	62.4%	73.2%		
Time spent in Laos	1-6 nights	59.6%	47.7%	5.01	0.025
	7-90 nights	40.4%	52.3%		
Time spent in total trip	30 nights or less	87.2%	71.1%	13.0	0.000
	More than 30 nights	12.8%	28.9%		
Trip types	Package tourist	11.3%	13.0%	Non sig	
	Independent tourist	88.7%	87.0%		
Age	Under 35 years	35.5%	59.8%	21.07	0.000
	35 years or above	64.5%	40.2%		

Table 19   **Chi-Square tests on heritage/non-heritage tourists with factors attracting tourists to Luang Prabang**

Features		Heritage tourists	Non-heritage tourists	X²	P-value
Cultural and historical places/sites	Important	91.5%	74.5%	16.53	0.000
	Unimportant	8.5%	25.5%		
Lao temples	Important	78.7%	54.8%	21.92	0.000
	Unimportant	21.3%	45.2%		
Lao arts and architectures	Important	71.6%	49.4%	17.99	0.000
	Unimportant	28.4%	50.6%		
Ethnic diversity	Important	65.2%	49.4%	9.04	0.003
	Unimportant	34.8%	50.6%		
Safety and security	Important	72.3%	72.4%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	27.7%	27.6%		
Reasonable price of good and services	Important	56.7%	55.6%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	43.3%	44.4%		
Clean environment	Important	58.9%	62.3%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	41.1%	37.7%		
Natural scenery and landscape	Important	84.4%	87.0%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	15.6%	13.0%		
Politeness and honesty of Lao people	Important	77.3%	76.2%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	22.7%	23.8%		
Friendliness of people	Important	78.0%	82.4%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	22.0%	17.6%		
Want to see how Lao people live	Agree	92.2%	81.6%	8.06	0.005
	Disagree	7.8%	18.4%		

5.5.5 The comparison between younger and older tourists

The Pearson Chi-square tests were used to investigate whether there were significant statistical differences between younger tourists (under 35 years) and older ones (35 years or above) in terms of demographic characteristics, trip-related characteristics, and the knowledge of World Heritage status.

From the output of cross-tabulation of the demographic characteristics and trip-related characteristics, only Current regions of residence, Length of stay, and Trip type were statistically significant between younger and older tourists (see Table 20). Tourists who were living in Asia Pacific and the Middle East were older than those who were living in Europe and the Americas ($p = 0.008$).

The finding showed that younger tourists spent longer time in Laos and in their total trip than their older counterparts ($p = 0.000$). Older respondents tended to participate in package tour more than younger ones ($p = 0.014$). It is noted that there were more older male tourists than female tourists. The p-value for the difference between the two groups was 0.053, which was close to being a significant value at the level of $p= 0.05$.

Chi-square tests indicated that older tourists were more aware of the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang ($p = 0.000$). As shown in Table 20, a greater percentage of older tourists stated that Lao arts and architecture and Cultural and historical places/sites were important motivations for them to visit Town of Luang Prabang ($p = 0.000$). A larger percentage of older tourists (60.4 percent) said Ethnic diversity was an important factor, compared to younger tourists (50.3 percent).

The older tourists also more likely stated that 'Safety and security', 'Reasonable price of good and services' and 'Clean environment' were important reasons on tourists' decision-making to visit Luang Prabang ($p = 0.007$, $p = 0.012$, $p = 0.013$). It is noted that older tourists (68.4 percent) said Lao temples was an important feature, compared to younger respondents (59.1 percent). The p-value for the difference between the two groups was 0.057, which was close to being a significant value at the level of $p =0.05$.

Table 20   Chi-Square tests on younger/older tourists with type of tourists, WHS awareness, and time spent in Laos and total trip

WHS awareness and trip-related characteristics		Under 35 years	35 years or above	X²	P- value
WHS awareness	Before the trip started	58.4%	81.5%	22.87	0.000
	During the trip or after arriving	41.6%	18.5%		
Visit GMS region	Because of WHS	27.5%	34.2%	Non sig	
	NOT because of WHS	72.5%	65.8%		
Time spent in Laos	1-6 nights	42.0%	62.6%	16.14	0.000
	7-90 nights	58.0%	37.4%		
Time spent in total trip	30 nights or less	62.7%	92.0%	46.13	0.000
	More than 30 nights	37.3%	8.0%		
Trip types	Package tourist	8.3%	16.6%	6.01	0.014
	Independent tourist	91.7%	83.4%		
Tourists	Heritage	25.9%	48.7%	21.07	0.000
	Non heritage	74.1%	51.3%		

Table 21   Chi-Square tests on younger/older tourists with factors attracting tourists to Luang Prabang.

Features		Under 35 years	35 years and above	X²	P-value
Cultural and historical places/sites	Important	72.5%	89.3%	17.20	0.000
	Unimportant	27.5%	10.7%		
Lao temples	Important	59.1%	68.4%	3.61	0.057
	Unimportant	40.9%	31.6%		
Lao arts and architectures	Important	46.6%	69.0%	19.43	0.000
	Unimportant	53.4%	31.0%		
Ethnic diversity	Important	50.3%	60.4%	3.97	0.046
	Unimportant	49.7%	39.6%		
Safety and security	Important	66.3%	78.6%	7.17	0.007
	Unimportant	33.7%	21.4%		
Reasonable price of good and services	Important	49.7%	62.6%	6.34	0.012
	Unimportant	50.3%	37.4%		
Clean environment	Important	54.9%	67.4%	6.19	0.013
	Unimportant	45.1%	32.6%		
Natural scenery and landscape	Important	87.0%	85%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	13.0%	15.0%		
Politeness and honesty of Lao people	Important	74.1%	79.1%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	25.9%	20.9%		
Friendliness of people	Important	77.2%	84.5%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	22.8%	15.5%		
Want to see how Lao people live	Agree	84.5%	86.6%	Non sig	
	Disagree	15.5%	13.4%		

5.5.6 The comparison between short-stay tourists and long-stay tourists in Lao PDR

The Pearson Chi-square tests were used to investigate whether there were significant statistical differences between short-stay tourists (1-6 nights) and long-stay tourists (7-90 nights) in terms of demographic characteristics, trip-related characteristics, motivational factors, and knowledge of World Heritage status.

From the output of cross-tabulation of the demographic characteristics and trip-related characteristics, only Age, Length of stay in total trip and Types of tourists were statistically significant between short-stay and long-stay tourists in Laos. Short-stay tourists tended to be older than long-stay tourists ($p = 0.000$). The finding showed that short-stay tourists were more likely to call themselves 'heritage tourists' than long-stay tourists ($p = 0.025$), and long-stay tourists in Laos spent longer time in their total trip ($p = 0.000$).

Chi-square tests showed that short-stay tourists were more likely to report that they visited the GMS region because of the WHS ($p = 0.001$). However, there were no significant statistical differences between the groups of tourists in terms of gender, Luang Prabang World Heritage status awareness and trip types.

The results showed a greater percentage (86.4 percent) of short-stay tourists rated 'Cultural and historical places/sites' as their primary motivations to visit Town of Luang Prabang ($p = 0.004$). Short-stay tourists also more likely to rate 'Lao temples' as a significant feature ($p = 0.006$). It is noted that a larger percentage of short-stay tourists (62.1 percent) reported 'Lao arts and architectures' as an important factors compared to long-stay tourists (52.7 percent) wandting to see how the Lao people live was another primary motive for short-stay tourists ($p = 0.001$).

There were no significant statistical differences between the two groups for the rest of the features: Ethnic diversity, Safety and security, Reasonable prices of good and services, Clean environment, Natural scenery and landscape, Politeness and honesty of Lao people, and Friendliness of people.

Table 22   Chi-Square tests on shorter-stay/longer-stay tourists with type of tourists, ages, WHS awareness, and time spent in Laos and total trip

WHS awareness and trip-related characteristics		1-6 nights	7-90 nights	X²	P- value
WHS awareness	Before the trip started	73.5%	66.9%	Non sig	
	During the trip or after arriving	26.5%	33.1%		
Visit GMS region	Because of WHS	38.4%	22.5%	11.18	0.001
	NOT because of WHS	61.6%	77.5%		
Tourists	Heritage	42.4%	31.3%	5.01	0.025
	Non heritage	57.6%	68.7%		
Time spent in total trip	30 nights or less	92.9%	59.9%	58.64	0.000
	More than 30 nights	7.1%	40.1%		
Trip types	Package tourist	15.2%	9.3%	Non sig	
	Independent tourist	84.8%	90.7%		
Age	Under 35 years	40.9%	61.5%	16.14	0.000
	35 years or above	59.1%	38.5%		

Table 23   Chi-Square tests on shorter-stay/longer-stay tourists with factors attracting tourists to Luang Prabang.

Features		1-6 nights	7-90 nights	X^2	P-value
Cultural and historical places/sites	Important	86.4%	74.7%	8.27	0.004
	Unimportant	13.6%	25.3%		
Lao temples	Important	70.2%	56.6%	7.59	0.006
	Unimportant	29.8%	43.4%		
Lao arts and architectures	Important	62.1%	52.7%	Non sig	0.065
	Unimportant	37.9%	47.3%		
Ethnic diversity	Important	55.6%	54.9%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	44.4%	45.1%		
Safety and security	Important	72.2%	72.5%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	27.8%	27.5%		
Reasonable price of good and services	Important	56.6%	55.5%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	43.4%	44.5%		
Clean environment	Important	59.6%	62.6%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	40.4%	37.4%		
Natural scenery and landscape	Important	86.4%	85.7%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	13.6%	14.3%		
Politeness and honesty of Lao people	Important	74.2%	79.1%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	25.8%	20.9%		
Friendliness of people	Important	79.3%	82.4%	Non sig	
	Unimportant	20.7%	17.6%		
Want to see how Lao people live	Agree	91.4%	79.1%	11.57	0.001
	Disagree	8.6%	20.9%		

5.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the author presented the results of the research. The author first described the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The number of international tourists who

participated in the research was 380; including female (53.2%) and male (46.8%) of respondents. Over 50% of the respondents were under 35 years of age; and the largest proportion of the participants (44.5%) were from Europe.

Next, the author illustrated travel patterns and sources of information used by tourists. In this research, there were more independent tourists (87.6%) than package tourists (12.4%). The length of their total trip spent by respondents ranged from 1-290 nights; a percentage of 20.5% selected Lao PDR as their only destination, and 79.5% share the same trip with other GMS countries. The sources of information most often used by respondents were travel guidebooks (91%), the Internet (75%), and friend/relative (68%).

Then the author identified the factors affecting international tourists' decision-making to visit the town of Luang Prabang, and tourists' knowledge about Luang Prabang's World Heritage status and its role in attracting tourists to the region. More than 90% of respondents stated that they visited the Town of Luanag Prabang because they wanted to enhance their knowledge and experience of Laos. While 86% of respondents rated 'Natural scenery and landscape' as an important feature attracting tourists, 80% selected 'Cultural and historical places/sites' and 'Friendliness of people' were important. The research found 94% of respondents were aware at the time of the survey that Luang Prabang was a WHS. Of these, more than 70% knew Luang Prabang's World Heritage status before they started their trips.

A key finding was that while the majority of respondents stated that they visited the town of Luang Prabang because of its World Heritage status, only one in three respondents agreed they were 'heritage tourists'. The research found this contradiction related to respondents' age and length of stay. The next chapter will discuss the role of WHS in attracting tourists, compare the characteristics of heritage and non-heritage tourists, older and younger tourists, and then use the town of Luang Prabang to explain tourist attraction models.

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this research is to identify the significant factors that influenced international tourists to visit Town of Luang Prabang. The research was based on the theoretical framework that different types of people have different motives when they travel to tourist destinations. This chapter discusses the role of World Heritage status on international tourists' decision to visit Luang Prabang, the differences and similarity between heritage and non-heritage tourists, older and younger tourists, and using Town of Luang Prabang to explain MacCannell's (1999) and Leiper's (2004) tourist attraction models.

6.2 The role of World Heritage Site status

Reinius & Fredman (2007) stated that WHS are identified as sites of outstanding global value that should be preserved for all humanity. Shackley (1998) pointed out that once the sites are on the World Heritage List, they are raised to the status of global icon, and that WHS have the highest visibility of any cultural attractions in the world and play a significant role in attracting tourists.

This research found that World Heritage status indeed attracted people to the Town of Luang Prabang; 94 percent of the 380 respondents were aware at the time of the survey that Luang Prabang was a WHS. Approximately, 97 percent of respondents who knew the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang stated that they visited this town because it was on the World Heritage List, supporting the arguments of Shackey (1998).

Research has often shown that people visit heritage places to enhance their learning, satisfy their curiosity and feeling of nostalgia, grow spiritually, relax and get away from home (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). According to this research, most participants claimed knowledge enhancement and experience of Laos as the primary reasons for their visit to Town of Luang Prabang. Observing the lifestyle of the Lao people and viewing cultural/historical places,

natural scenery and cultural landscape were obvious features that international tourists would like to experience during their visit to the town.

Surprisingly, even though most of respondents regarded Luang Prabang's World Heritage status, and intangible and tangible heritage as crucial reasons for them to visit Luang Prabang, only one in three perceived themselves as 'heritage tourists'. This illustrated an interesting contradiction between tourists' self-definition and their behaviour. This raised the question, "*What made this contradiction*?" This is discussed in the following section.

6.3 The different and similar characteristics between heritage tourists and non-heritage tourists

This research found that there are some differences between heritage and non-heritage tourists in terms of age, knowledge of World Heritage status, length of travel, and motivation to visit the town. On the other hand, both groups also share some common motivational factors that attracted them to the site.

6.3.1 Heritage tourists

International tourists in Luang Prabang who called themselves 'heritage tourists' tended to be older than non-heritage tourists; the majority were 35 years old and above. This is consistent with Light et al.'s (1994) heritage cultural tourists which are described as well educated, middle aged and knowledgeable of history. Heritage tourists spent a shorter time in Lao PDR as well as in their total trip: 87 percent spent less than 30 nights in their total travelling, and 60 percent stayed in Lao PDR between one and six nights.

The heritage tourists were knowledgeable about the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang before they started their trips, and tended to visit the GMS region because of the WHS in the region. Perhaps they had made more prior attempt to do research on the destinations before they started their journey. This showed that WHS as very important for them when they planned their trip to this region. It has often been mentioned that heritage tourists are more highly educated people and knowledge enhancement is their main purpose to travel to heritage places. Consequently, they often search for the worth places to visit in order to meet their travel motivation.

In terms of motivational factors, Seeing how Lao people live, Cultural and historical places, Lao temples, Ethnic diversity, and Lao arts and architectures were the primary motivations for heritage tourists to visit the Town of Luang Prabang. This fits into Timothy & Boyd's (2003) serious heritage tourists because their purpose is to seek educational heritage experiences. This finding is also consistent with MacKercher's (2002) purposeful tourists, Kerstetter et al.'s (2001) specialised cultural tourists and Nyaupane et al.'s (2006) culture-focused tourists.

As shown in many literatures, heritage tourists, especially religious heritage tourists, do visit religious places for religious purposes. For instance, Christian tourists visit Israel and Buddhist tourists travelled to Lumpini in Nepal to seek religious activity experiences in such authentic religious setting. However, in this research, heritage tourists who were non-Buddhist also rated Lao temples as an important factor for their visit to Luang Prabang.

In this context, heritage tourists might perceive Lao temples as a general form of Lao arts and architectures, a Lao cultural and historical place and the opportunity to see local people praying and offering food to the monks as part of Lao traditional cultural life without having to engage in the religious activity. Even though these tourists did not participate in Buddhist religious activity in Town of Luang Prabang, they were still called 'cultural heritage tourists.' According to Nyaupane et al.(2006), cultural heritage tourists are defined not by the activity they partook, but by the setting of the site they visited, and their motivations to visit the site seemed more valuable.

In spite of the fact that there were a number of differences between heritage and non-heritage tourists, the groups did not differ significantly on all motivational features in Town of Luang Prabang when they planned their trips: Natural scenery and landscape, Safety and security, Friendliness of people, Clean environment, Politeness and honesty of Lao people, and Reasonable price of good and service.

6.3.2 Non-heritage tourists

International tourists who did not label themselves as 'heritage tourists' tended to be younger (less than 35 years old). These non-heritage tourists spent longer time in Lao PDR as well as in their total trip. The majority of them stayed in Lao PDR from seven to 90 nights. A significant percentage of 28.9 percent spent more than 30 nights in their total travelling, compared to heritage tourists, at 12.8 percent.

More than half (65.5 percent) of this tourist group were aware that Luang Prabang has a World Heritage Status before they started their trips, and 34.5 percent of them knew of this

during the trip or after they arrived in the town. A greater percentage of non-heritage tourists stated that they did not visit the GMS region because of its WHS. So why did they visit? This was not a question that was asked but one that should be addressed in the future research regarding heritage tourism.

In terms of motivational factors, Seeing how Lao people live, Cultural and historical places, and Lao temples were also the primary factors for non-heritage tourists to travel to Town of Luang Prabang, although there was a smaller percentage of them stated this compared to Heritage tourists. (81.6 percent vs 92.9 percent), (74.5 percent vs 91.5 percent) and (54.8 percent vs 78.7 percent). It is clearly seen that there were not much different between heritage and non-heritage tourists in terms of 'pull' features of Luang Prabang attracting them to visit this town. Both of them shared a common interest in the intangible and tangible heritage of Luang Prabang. They were all knowledgeable about the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang before they departed on their trips and visited WHS.

The finding of the research showed that there were more non-heritage tourists than heritage tourists who visited at least one other WHS in the region beside Town of Luang Prabang. The study found 48 respondents (12.7 percent) visited only Town of Luang Prabang (one WHS) while 87.3 percent visited or planned to visit at least one other WHS in the region on their trip. This is interesting; it tells us something about WHS but what?

While 73 percent of the respondents who visited only Town of Luang Prabang defined themselves as heritage tourists, 27 percent of them did not. However, merely 32 percent of the respondents who visited or planned to visit at least one other WHS beside Town of Luang Pragang perceived themselves as heritage tourists. This finding indicated that more heritage tourists chose to visit the Town of Luang Prabang as their only WHS destination than non-heritage tourists. Conversely, more non-heritage tourists visited more than one WHS on their trip, compared to heritage tourists. This confirmed that the WHS status of Luang Prabang is significant in attracting tourists who visited only town of Luang Prabang than another group.

The only clear differences between heritage and non-heritage tourists related to their age and length of stay. It can therefore be concluded that people who defined themselves as heritage tourists were older and spent shorter time in Lao PDR and in their total trip than the non-heritage tourists.

As can be seen that the significant difference between heritage and non-heritage tourists is age, the next section will investigate the characteristic of different age groups.

6.4 The different and similar characteristics between older and younger tourists

There are some differences between older tourists (35 years and above) and younger tourists (under 35 years) in terms of gender, current regions of residence, knowledge of World Heritage status, length of travel, source of information, and motivation to visit the town. However, they also shared some common motivational factors that attracted them to Town of Luang Prabang.

6.4.1 Older tourists (35 years and above)

This research found that there were more male tourist (52 percent) than female (48 percent) in this age group in this sample. This finding was similar to a study by Kaufman & Weaver (2006) who reported that although women still constitute a larger share of the heritage tourism market, more older men travelled to heritage sites.

Older tourists spent a shorter time in Lao PDR as well as in their total trip. The majority of them spent less than 30 nights in their total trip and stayed in Lao PDR between one and six nights. The finding showed that older tourists were more knowledgeable about WHS status of Luang Prabang before they started their trip, and that they were more likely to participate in package tour (16.6 percent) compared to younger tourists (8.3 percent). This also mean that older tourists planned a shorter trip and followed their plans to visit the 'must see sites' rather than wandering around without a fixed itinerary. This may also be why older people defined themselves as heritage tourists. They visited destination because of a specific interest in heritage rather than younger people who have no fixed destination in mind. A larger percentage of older tourists lived in Asia Pacific and the Middle East, compared to those who lived in Europe and the Americas; perhaps older people prefer to travel to places nearer to their country, particular if the time they have to travel is short.

Regarding information sources, this research found older tourists were more likely to use a tour operator or travel agency. Perhaps older tourists felt more secured when they obtained information about destinations through a tour operator because they might think there was more creditable information and they could make their trip flow as they had planned due to their shorter trip preference. Tours are also likely to be booked through travel agencies.

This research found a clean environment, and the safety and security of Luang Prabang was more important to older tourists. This showed that older travellers were more conscious about their health and safety or their wellbeing while they were travelling. A surprising finding in this research was that "Reasonable price of good and services' was also important for older tourists when they planned their journey to Town of Luang Prabang. Heritage cultural tourists are frequently described as well-educated, middle class, middle age and knowledgeable of history (Light et al, 1994). Perhaps the recent world economic crisis may constrain older tourists' financial capacity, they still need high quality services (of goods, accommodation, transportation) while they were travelling.

Besides the motivational features of Luang Prabang that mentioned above, Cultural and historical places, Lao temples, Ethnic diversity, and Lao arts and architectures were the primary motivation for older tourists to visit the Town of Luang Prabang. These motivational categories were similar to those indicated by the heritage tourists.

Even though there were some different preferences in terms of motivational factors for older and younger tourists' decision to visit the Town of Luang Prabang, there were also some common factors, namely, Seeing how Lao people live and Natural scenery and landscape of Luang Prabang town.

6.4.2 Younger tourists (less than 35 years old)

Literature has shown that more younger tourists visit cultural heritage sites (Mason & Kuo,2007; Saipradist & Staiff; 2007; Richards, 2001) and more women visited heritage sites (Kaufman & Weaver, 2006; Mason & Kuo, 2007). The finding in this research supported these studies. The samples of this research included female (53.2 percent) and male tourists (46.8 percent), younger tourists (50.8 percent) and older tourists (49.2 percent). This finding is similar to the studies by Mason & Kuo (2007) at the Stonehenge WHS in the UK and by Saipradist & Staiff (2007) at Ayuttaya WHS in Thailand.

Younger tourists spent a longer time in Lao PDR as well as in their total trip. The majority of them stayed in Lao PDR between seven and 90 nights and a greater percentage of them spent more than 30 nights in their total trips. A total of 58.4 percent of younger tourists knew about the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang before they started their trips, and 41.6 percent of them knew about this during the trip or after they arrived in the town.

As to the source of information, this finding demonstrated that the majority of respondents (91 percent) found information on Luang Prabang from travel guidebooks. Most of the travel guidebooks (eg.Lonely Planet and Travelfish guide) stated the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang. This information source was the most popular for international tourists to this region. The finding was similar to previous studies conducted by Orasith in 2004 and by Saipradist & Staiff in 2007.

Previous studies showed that many travellers and tourists often rely on advice from guidebooks to construct their itineraries. Cultural texts and guidebooks have the power to shape, frame, and define a place and its people, and, inturn, play a significant role in influencing the opinions and perceptions of their readers" (Young, 2009:157). In this research, participants might view cultural information that was written in travel guidebooks as an important motivation to visit Town of Luang Prabang.

This research found that younger tourists used travel guidebooks more than their older counterparts, and friends/relatives were a more influential source of information when they planned their trip. That word of mouth was a popular information source among younger tourists might be explained by the fact that they often travelled as backpackers or explorers in new tourist destinations such as Lao PDR. Young (2009) stated that using a guidebook is a marker of one's independence as a traveller and of one's status as not being part of the mass tourism phenomenon. Guide books may be purchased for reasons other than descriptions of sites at the destinations, such as information on accommodation and places to eat. Internet is also a popular source of information used by the participants. It shows that in the current high technological era, the internet has become a powerful information source that can reach all types of tourists.

In terms of motivational factors, even though there were significant statistical differences between older and younger tourists rating Cultural and historical places, Lao temples, Ethnic diversity, Safety and security, Clean environment as important motivation factors for them to travel to the Town of Luang Prabang, but the items are broken out individually older and younger tourists respond quite similarly in terms of importance of each feature. It is evident that there were not much difference between older and younger tourists in terms of motivational features of Luang Prabang attracting them to visit the town. Both groups shared common interests in the intangible and tangible heritage of Luang Prabang. They all visited the WHS and were knowledgeable about Luang Prabang's World Heritage status before they started their trips.

A question was raised as to why younger tourists did not call themselves heritage tourists but they often travel to heritage places. It may be that younger tourists feel uncomfortable with the name "heritage tourist" because they might think 'heritage' is related to some thing 'old'. However, they still visited the sites, perhaps because they trusted the labels or brands given to the sites by WHC, and they might also visit more places at the destinations because they had a longer length of trip.

This partly supportsthe claim by MacCannell (1999) that a tourist is more focused on the label (WHS) that is attached to the attraction than the attraction itself because the respondent were also fascinated about attractions (features of Luang Prabang) when they planned their trip. In this research, while participants listed: Natural scenery and landscape, Lao people's way of live, Cultural and historical places/sites as important attraction features to Town of Luang Prabang, they also regarded its World Heritage status as significant.

6.5 Tourist attractions: Town of Luang Prabang

Collier (2003) indicated that tourist attractions are those elements which attract a tourist to a particular region and there are two main types of attractions such as sites and events. The same author also stated that site attractions can range from a whole country or region to a city, town or specific attraction such as a piece of architecture, and can be either natural or constructed including landscapes, cultural, historic or religious areas, a people's way of life, and archaeological sites.

The results of this research showed the validity of Collier's (2003) concept of both natural and cultural tourists site attractions in Town of Luang Prabang. While 86 percent of the respondents indicated that 'Natural scenery and landscape' was very important or important feature attracting tourists to Luang Prabang, 85.5 percent stated that they visited the Town of Luang Prabang because they wanted to see how Lao people live. Around 81 percent of the respondents indicated that 'Cultural and historical places/sites' and 'Friendliness of people' are the important factors. This indicated that both the natural and the cultural features of Luang Prabang play crucial roles in attracting its visitors.

Because Town of Luang Prabang showed evidence of a unique combination of nature and architecture, an important crossing point of cultural influences on developments in architecture, arts monuments and town planning, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list on 2 December 1995 (Heywood, 2006). Receiving a label as UNESCO's WHS makes such site a resonant positioning and image branding (Boyd, 2008). "The brand is obvious here, namely that of examples of outstanding value worthy of universal recognition for their cultural and/or natural heritage" (Boyd & Timothy, 2006: 58).

WHS are often the icons used to market destinations, and they are often successful in drawing tourists to the sites. As discussed earlier, the majority of respondents were knowledgeable about the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang, and this fits in with Leiper's (1990,2004) and MacCannell's (1999) informative element of their tourist attraction models. They indicated that a tourist attraction system comprises three elements: a tourist or human element, a nucleus or central element, and a marker or informative element (information received by the tourist about the nucleus). As it was stated in the literature review that Markers are items of information which can be oral, written words, and pictures received by tourists about the sights. Markers are categorized as generating, transit, and contiguous markers. A generating marker is information gathered before departure, a transit marker is information received en route, and a contiguous one is at the nucleus to which it relates.

"The use of markers should be closely related to the needs of the tourist and to motivation. In the case of cultural attractions, those travelling for these reasons should be more strongly stimulated by them as generating markers" (Richards, 2002: 1052). The finding of the current study supported the arguments of Richards (2002) that more heritage tourists knew about Luang Prabang's World Heritage status before their departures, and that the degree of cultural heritage motivation among 'heritage tourists' varies from those who did not label themselves 'heritage tourists.' It this case, it might be argued that the stronger the cultural heritage

motivation, the more likely it is that cultural heritage attractions will be used as generating markers.

The literature suggests that available time is a causal factor of the decision to use markers and travel to the attractions. "Those staying a short time might be expected to concentrate on the must-see sites of the destination, and will have less time available for exploring and using onsite markers to guide their consumption" (Richards, 2002: 1053). The same author stated that, the use of different information sources as markers also varied with length of stay and tourist characteristics. Again, the current research found a positive relationship between the length of stay and the types of information used, and this in turn should have an effect on the markers came across by the tourists.

Generating markers were significantly more likely to be used by older tourists and those who stayed shorter in Lao PDR, from one to six nights. The younger tourists were more likely to know about the WHS status of Luang Prabang during their trip and until they arrived at the destination. To be more precise, 58 percent under the age of 35 used generating markers, compared with 81 percent of those over the age of 35. Longer-stay tourists used transit and site markers more than shorter-stay tourists may be that they have more time available to explore the destination.

Richards (2002) stated that the use of different information sources as markers also varied with the length of stay. He found tourists who stayed in destination for two weeks or more were likely to use guidebooks and Internet, while the use of newspapers, television, and radio varied little with length of visit. The result of this study partly supported Richards's (2002) finding. This research found tourists who stayed in Lao PDR from seven to 90 nights used travel guidebooks more than those who spent between one to six nights in the destination. However, the use of the Internet and 'word of mouth' varied little with length of stay, while tourists who stayed shorter in Laos were more likely to use tour operator, newspaper, television and radio. Presumably, tourists who stay longer want to search for less well-known attractions because they want to see everything in destination region more than just the must-see sights so that they are more likely to obtain information from travel guidebooks since they are easy to carry and tourists can read any time they want (before departure, during the trip, or at the sites).

The evidence presented here showed the significant support to the tourist attraction system model as proposed by MacCannell (1999) and Leiper (2004). The findings of this research have a number of practical implications on those involved in cultural heritage attraction management and marketing. The individual attractions need to pay more attention to the use of markers by tourists, and the diversity in marker use within their potential markets. Importantly, the majority of cultural heritage tourists make the decision to travel based on generating markers. Tourists whom cultural heritage attractions are less likely to be the primary reason for travel to the destination tended to use more transit markers and contiguous markers.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the significant factors on international tourists' decision-making to visit the Town of Luang Prabang and to identify the role of World Heritage status on international tourists' decision to visit this town. The aim of this final chapter is to integrate the data presented in previous chapters, recall the research questions and discuss whether the thesis finding answered those questions. Firstly, the chapter reviews what this research set out to do by recalling the main research questions of the thesis. Next, it presents a summary of the key findings and links them to existing theories. Finally, research limitations are summarized and recommendations made for future research and managerial implications.

7.2 The research questions guiding this thesis

It is important to revisit the aim and questions set out for the research to ensure that they have been answered. The main aim of this study was to discover the significant factors for international tourists' decision to visit Town of Luang Prabang. It was expected that the results of the research could explain the tourism theory proposed by MacCannell (1999) and Shackley (1998) who stated that tourist attractions are signs and Wold Heritage status acts as an attraction. It was also expected that the results of the study might provide resourceful information for the Lao Government and other tourism stakeholders in Luang Prabang, give them better understanding about the nature of the tourists to the region so that they could set appropriate tourism strategy to better manage the markets.

To achieve the main aim of this study, five fundamental questions were raised:

1) Does its World Heritage status influence visitors' decision to visit Luang Prabang?

2) Are MacCannell's (1999) concept of signs as tourist attractions and Leiper's

   (2004) concept of tourist attraction system applicable in Luang Prabang?

3) What are the sources of information used by international tourists in shaping their journey?

4) How does a visit to Luang Prabang fit into the tourists' total trip pattern?

5) Is there a significant association between socio-demographic characteristics and trip-related characteristics?

The next section will provide a summary of the finding in relation to the above stated questions and whether these were answered.

7.3   Summary of the research findings

With regards to the first question, the study concludes that the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang influences its visitors' decision to visit the town. There is a strong evidence in the Town of Luang Prabang that the majority of international tourists that visit the town knew its World Heritage status before they started their trip and they visited the town because it was on the World Heritage list. The study also found those tourists would be unlikely to visit the town if it was not a WHS. This finding supports Shackley's (1998) arguments that once many sites are on the World Heritage List, they are raised to the status of global icon and World Heritage Sites have the highest visibility of any cultural attractions in the world and play a significant role in attracting tourists.

This finding also answered the second question asked: whether the MacCannell's (1999) concept of signs as tourist attractions and Leiper's (1990; 2004) concept of tourist attraction system are valid in Town of Luang Prabang. MacCannell (1999: 109) stated that "tourist attractions are signs." He explained that tourists are more focused on the label that is attached to the attraction than the attraction itself. The results of this study partly supported this claim because while participants reported attraction themselves (features of Luang Prabang included: Natural scenery and landscape, Lao people's way of live, Cultural places/sites) were important features attracting them to travel to the town, they also said World Heritage status (label) was significant as well, and they would have been unlikely to visit if not for WHS.

Leiper's (1990; 2004) tourist attraction system comprises three elements: a tourist or human element, a nucleus or central element, and a marker or informative element. The study concludes that this tourist attraction system model is valid in the Town of Luang Prabang. In this case, while international tourists to Luang Prabang are human element in Leiper's (1990; 2004) tourists attraction system model, features of Luang Prabang are the central element and the knowledge of international tourists about the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang is informative element. The informative element is information received by the tourists about the attractions or destinations. This related to the third question about sources of information used by international tourists in shaping their journey.

This research found that Travel guidebooks was the most popular source of information used by respondents (91 percent) when they planned their journey to Town of Luang Prabang. The Internet (75 percent) stood out as the second largest information source used by the tourists, followed by Friend/relatives (68 percent). While some (45 percent) of the respondents searched information about Luang Prabang through travel agent/tour operator, less people (19 percent) learned about the town through television/radio and newspaper (18 percent). The current research found a relationship between tourists' ages and the types of information used. The finding showed younger tourists used travel guidebooks more than older counterparts and friends/relatives were more a influential source of information for them when they planned their trip. On the other hand, older tourists used travel agent/tour operator more than younger tourists when they planned their trip.

With regards to the fourth question, which aimed to explore how a visit to Luang Prabang fitted into the tourists total trip pattern, the study discovered that there were travel pattern made by international tourists within GMS countries and found the relationship between tourist characteristics and time spent in their trip. The results showed tourists' total trip spending time ranging from 1-290 nights. Fifty-five percent of respondents spent 20 nights or less on their total trip, 30 percent were spending between 21 and 70 nights, and 15 percent spent more than 70 nights for their total trip. The study found 20 percent of respondents selected Lao PDR as their only destination, and 80 percent shared the same trip with other GMS countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, China and Myanmar. The result showed tourists who spent longer time in their total trip also stayed longer time in Lao PDR. The majority of respondent stayed in Luang Prabang longer than other places in Lao PDR. This showed that Luang Prabang is an important tourist destination not only in Lao PDR but also in the region.

The answer to the fifth question whether there is an association between socio-demographic characteristics and trip-related characteristics found some interesting associations. The finding showed tourists who were from Asia Pacific and the Middle East region spent shorter time in Lao PDR than tourists who were from Europe and Americas. Older tourists more likely to call themselves 'heritage tourists' than younger tourists and they stayed a shorter time in Lao PDR as well as in total trip than younger tourists.

7.4 Research contribution

The results of this research have contributed both theoretical and practical benefits. In the theoretical aspect, the study helps to explain MacCannell's (1999) concept of signs as tourist attractions and Shackley's (1998) argument that World Heritage status acts as an attraction is accurate in the Town of Luang Prabang. In the same way, the present research confirms that Leiper's (1990; 2004) tourist attraction system model is applicable in Luang Prabang town.

However, this study found that not all tourists who visited the Town of Luang Prabang (WHS) perceived themselves as heritage tourists, although they travelled to the town because it was on the World Heritage list. This showed that there is a contradiction between tourists' behaviour and self-definition in heritage tourism. The results of this study found this contradiction related to tourists' ages and length of stay. The study concluded that people who defined themselves as 'heritage tourists' were older and spent shorter time in Lao PDR as well as in their total trip than people who did not define themselves as heritage tourists. It may be that younger tourists visited the sites because they trust the labels or brands given to the sites by international organisations since the attractions would not receive such status if they do not have good quality and meet criterion, and they might also visit every places in the destinations because they had longer length of trip.

In practical terms, the results of this research is of benefit to Lao PDR, especially Luang Prabang, and other GMS countries, as well as any country with the WHS. The results of this study clearly indicated that the World Heritage status of Luang Prabang played a crucial role in attracting international tourists to visit the town. Along side with WHS branding, tangible and intangible cultural features of Luang Prabang were also significant factors drawing Luang Prabang's visitors. This means that being on World Heritage Site list appears to be an important advantage to support destination marketing. However, all cultural heritage features of Luang Prabang should be well preserved since WHS status might be of less value if the quality of the town's characteristics is diminished.

What this study did not show was the meaning attached to the sign 'World Heritage Site'. An assumption was made that the meaning is related to heritage. This study, however, raises questions about that assumption.

This study may help marketers to identify their markets and have more understanding that not all tourists to heritage sites have the same level of motivation for cultural heritage experience or perceive themselves as heritage tourists. This insight might affect strategies for marketing.

This study may also assist marketers to recognize that different groups of tourists use different information source and behave differently in trip planning as well as during their trip.

7.5 Future research

It is possible to identify some opportunities for future research emerging from this thesis. Firstly, there is a need to know the background of the tourists who travel to heritage places if they also visit non-heritage sites, especially the tourists who do not call themselves heritage tourists. The second is indicator for tourists' knowledge enhancement from visiting the sites to investigate what they learn before and after visiting. The third is the need to know if tourists are interested in site preservation, especially at WHS in order to prolong the sites' outstanding value that obviously attracts tourists to such sites.

Research should use both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to ensure tourists provide deep information especially about cultural heritage which is insufficient to obtain the data by using only one research method. The questionnaire should be translated into many languages in order to reduce sample bias and encourage more participation in the research.

Research must also be conducted on the meaning of World Heritage Status to visitors. The findings show that tourists visit the Town of Luang Prabang because it is a World Heritage Site even if they do not consider themselves to be heritage tourists. This raises the question of why the WHS status attracts them. Is it because while they are not heritage tourists (what sort of tourists do they consider themselves to be?) they have a general interest in heritage; or is it because they believe that a WHS will also provide them with the non-heritage facilities that they desire?

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Appendix A

Research questionnaire

Questionnaire

You are invited to participate in a study called "Heritage Sites as Tourist Attractions: A Case Study of Luang Prabang, Lao PDR" by completing the following the questionnaire.

The aim of the study is to discover what are the most significant factors on international tourists' decision making to come to Luang Prabang.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and you will not be identified as a respondent. You may decline to answer any question, and you can also withdraw any information you have provided up until you complete the survey. If you complete the questionnaire, however, it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the study and consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

This questionnaire contains three sections. Please respond to all the statement in each section as frankly and accurately as you can by following the instructions at the beginning of each section.

Section A: Significant factors that make international tourists travel to Luang Prabang.

1. Please <u>circle one number</u> (1-5) that best fits your agreement in each item.					
I am visiting Luang Prabang because:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I want to enhance my knowledge and experience of Laos	1	2	3	4	5
I want to see how Lao people live	1	2	3	4	5
I am a 'heritage' tourist	1	2	3	4	5
I am interested in a variety of tourist attractions	1	2	3	4	5

2. Below is a list of possible features found in Luang Prabang. Please <u>circle one number</u> (1-5) that indicates how important that factor was in your decision to visit Luang Prabang.

	Not at all important	Unimportant	Somewhat important	Important	Most important
Cultural and historical places/sites	1	2	3	4	5
Lao temples	1	2	3	4	5
Lao arts and architectures	1	2	3	4	5
Ethnic diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Natural scenery and landscape	1	2	3	4	5
Reasonable price of goods and services	1	2	3	4	5
Friendliness of people	1	2	3	4	5
Politeness and honesty of Lao people	1	2	3	4	5
Safety and security	1	2	3	4	5
Clean environment	1	2	3	4	5

Section B. Travel characteristics and sources of information.

1. How long are you travelling in total on this trip?................................... night(s)

2. Which of the following countries have you visited or plan to visit on this trip?
(please tick one box for each country)

	Visited	**Plan to visit**	**Have no plans to visit**	**Have not decided**
China ……………..	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Burma/Myanmar …..□ 1		□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Thailand ………… ..□ 1		□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Cambodia ………...	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Vietnam …………..	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4

3. How long have you stayed in Laos on this trip? .... night(s)

4. How long have you stayed/will you stay in Luang Prabang on this trip? (please tick one box)

  One night ………………………………… □ 1

  Two nights .... □ 2

  3 to 4 nights .... □ 3

  5 to 7 nights .... □ 4

  More than one week ....□ 5

5. Including this trip, how many times have you visited Luang Prabang? (Please tick one box)

  First visit .... □ 1

  Two times .... □ 2

  Three times....................................... □ 3

  More than three times .... □ 4

6. Who are you travelling with on this trip? (Please tick one box)

Alone .... □ 1

Spouse/Partner .... □ 2

Friends .... □ 3

Children .... □ 4

Spouse/ Partner and child(ren) .... □ 5

Other (please specify) _____ □ 6

6.a Are you part of a tour group? (Please tick one box)

Yes ……………………………………………... □ 1

No …………………………………………… □ 2

7. Are you aware that Luang Prabang is a the World Heritage site? (Please tick one box)

Yes .... □ 1

No ....□ 2 (If no please skip to question 10)

8. When did you discover that Luang Prabang is on the World Heritage List?
(Please tick one box)

Before you started your trip ....□ 1

During your trip but before arriving in Luang Prabang... □ 2

After you have arrived in Luang Prabang .... □ 3

**9. What would have been the likelihood of your visiting Luang Prabang if it was not
   a World Heritage Site?** (Please tick one box)

Very high .... □ 1

High .... □ 2

Low ……………………………………… □ 3

Very low ……………………………….. □ 4

Would not have visited ………………… □ 5

10. Which of the following places have you visited or plan to visit during this trip? (Pleas tick as many as apply)

	Visited	Plan to visit	Have no plans to visit	Have not decided
Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements (Laos) ……………	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Angkor Wat (Cambodia)	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Temple of Preach Vihear (Cambodia)	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Historic city of Ayuttaya (Thailand)	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Historic town of Sukhothai (Thailand)	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Complex of Hue Monuments (Vietnam) ..	□1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4
Hoi An Ancient Town (Vietnam)	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4

11. Did you plan to visit this region because of the World Heritage sites here?
(Please tick one box)

Yes ……………………….. □ 1 (If yes, please answer question 12)

No …………………………… □ 2 (If no, skip question 12 and go to question 13)

12. Please indicate how important the following World Heritage Sites were in shaping your itinerary (journey)? Please indicate the importance with the scale below:

Very important (5)   Important (4)   Somewhat important (3)

Unimportant (2)   Not at all important (1)

World Heritage Sites	Importance
Town of Luang Prabang (Laos)	
Vat Phou and Associate Ancient Settlement (Laos)	
Angkor Wat (Cambodia)	
Temple of Preach Vihear (Cambodia)	
Historic city of Ayuttaya (Thailand)	
Historic town of Sukhothai (Thailand)	

Complex of Hue Monument (Vietnam)	
Hoi An Ancient Town (Vietnam)	

13. Please indicate with **a tick in the left** hand box below **which** of the following information **sources you have used in planning your trip to Luang Prabang.** Then please use the right hand box, **rank the importance** of each information source influenced you most when you made decision to visit Luang Prabang by suing the following scale of:

Very important (5)   Important (4)   Somewhat important (3)

 Unimportant (2)   Not at all important (1)

Information Sources	Used	Importance
Travel guidebook (e.g. Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, Travelfish Guide)		
Travel agent/tour operator		
Book /magazine		
Friends/relatives		
Television / radio		
Internet		
Newspaper		
Other …………………………….		

Section C. Demographic characteristics.

1. What is your current country of residence?..

2. What is your nationality? ....

3. What is your sex ? (Please tick one box)

Male .... □ 1

Female .... □ 2

4. Which age category do you fit into? (Please tick one box)

18 – 24 years old .... □ 1

25- 34 years old .... □ 2

35 – 44 years old .... □ 3

45 – 54 years old .... □ 4

55 – 64 years old .... □ 5

65 – 74 years old .... □ 6

75 years old or above .... □ 7

5. What is your religion? (Please tick one box)

Buddhism …………………………................... □1

Christian …………………………………… □ 2

Muslim ……………………………………… □ 3

Hindu ………………………………………….. □ 4

Other (Please specify) _____ □ 5

No religion …………………………………. □ 6

Do not want to answer ……………………… □ 7

That completes the survey.
Thank you very much for your time.

A.1 Information sheet

Research information Sheet

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are invited to participate in a survey that constitutes a part of Masters of Tourism Management thesis at Lincoln University, New Zealand.

The research study I am undertaking is called "Heritage Sites as Tourist Attractions: A case Study of Luang Prabang, Lao PDR". The purpose of this research is to discover what are the important factors on international tourists' decision making to visit Luang Prabang.

The research is conducted using a questionnaire survey. This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. You should only complete the survey if you are 18 or above.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of participants will not be made public without their consents. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the following steps will be taken:

The study's finding will be presented as the form of total and percentages for large groups of people. Self-administered questionnaires will be kept in a secure storage facility at Lincoln University. Finally, the electronic data used for analysis will be kept in a password-protected file.

The research is being carried out by Thongmala Phosikham who was born and lives in Luang Prabang. Her contact details are:

The Faculty of Environment, Society and Design
P. O. Box 84
Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand 7647

Telephone: (64) (3) 3253 820
Fax: (64) (3) 325 3857
Email: phosikht@lincoln.ac.nz

She will be pleased to discuss any concerns you have about participation in the research. If you choose, you may also contact her supervisors (Dr. David Fisher and Dr. Joanna Fountain). Their contact details are:

The Faculty of Environment, Society and Design
P. O. Box 84
Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand 7647

Telephone: (64) (3) 325 3820
Fax: (64) (3) 325 3857
Email: David.Fisher@lincoln.ac.nz
Email: Fountaij@lincoln.ac.nz

The research has been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Appendix B
A history of Luang Prabang

Once called Muang Sua and later, Muang Luang, the town was founded in the 6th Century AD by ethnic Thai from northeastern China. Having been forced out of their ancestral lands these tribesmen had migrated southward and settled along the great rivers of Southeast Asia. Muang Luang then served as a staging post on a trading route between China and India.

Muang Luang first rose to prominence in the 14th Century, under Prince Fa Ngum. In 1353 he established it as the capital of his kingdom, Lane Xang, the Kingdom of a Million Elephants. At its zenith the kingdom included Sip Song Pan Na. Lan Na (Chiang Mai) and northeastern Thailand, stretching from modern Thailand to Yunna province in China.

Fa Ngum was heavily influenced by both Khmer culture and Khmer political structure. As a child he had been raised in Khmer territory and was later married to the daughter of the Khmer king. On his accession to the throne Fa Ngum summoned a delegation of religious experts, artists and scholars from Angkor. They arrived in Muang Luang with the famous *Pa Bang*, a golden statue of the Buddha which had, according to legend, originally been crafted in Ceylon in the 1st century AD. The golden statue became the guardian of the city, and two centuries later Muang Luang took the name of Luang Prabang.

Fa Ngum eventually abdicated in favor of his son, Oun Heuan (more commonly known as Samsentai) and left him a solid and well organized kingdom. Samsentai consolidated this legacy, ruling over a period of peace and overseeing the construction of numerous temples. In a census taken during his reign the population of Lane Xang number 300,000.

After the city took the name of LPB in 1563, and under King Saysettatirat, for strategic reasons, it lost its capital city status to Vientiane. The latter was less susceptible to attack from the neighboring Burmese. Despite the fact that LPB still served as the sovereign's principal residence, it became a town of mainly religious importance. It nevertheless remained a significant trading thoroughfare. Tradesmen heading towards the China Sea or the Gulf of Thailand passed through LPB, bringing gold, spices, silk and rhinoceros horn. Despite this, and unlike some other Asian trading towns, no commercial quarters were ever established.

Following the death of King Souligna Vongsa in 1690 Lane Xang split up into two states in 1707 then finally into three separate states in 1713: Vientiane and its vassal state of Xieng Khuang, LPB, and Champasak. At its most powerful at the end of the 17th century, the fracturing of the old kingdom merely created three weak entities. All three states became easy prey to military raids from their more powerful neighbors. In 1753 LPB was invaded by the Burmese and ransacked for the first time in its history.

At about this time appears the earliest written evidence of European contact with the region: the journal of the Dutchman, Van Wuysthoff and an account by Marini, an Italian. The town became known to the French about a century later. Henri Mouhot, famous for having revealed Angkor to the outside world, died in LPB in 1861. Six years later the city saw the arrival of the *Mission d'exloration du Mekong*, led by Doudard de Lagree and Francis Garnier. Raids by Ho bandits from China were frequent then, and in 1892 a despairing king of LPB asked for France's help.

Using this call for help and historical Vietnamese territorial claims over the region as a pretext, the French promptly moved in and annexed the three Lao kingdoms - with the Mekong as a natural border- to the *Union d'Indochine*. This de facto appropriation was further entrenched through the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1893. It acknowledged France's 'right' to unhindered movement over the newly acquired territories, and the freedom to establish its own consulates and colonial trading posts. If the treaty did actually safeguard the Lao region from invasion by its belligerent neighbors – thereby establishing the territorial boundaries of the current Lao PDR, it also robbed Lane Xang of a sizeable chunk of its historical lands west of the Mekong.

LPB became the capital of a new province of Indochina. In 1947 it regained its honorific title as the Royal Capital of Lao. In 1995 UNESCO declared LPB a World Heritage Site. This distinction confirms, through the concerted action of local, national and international authorities, a real motivation to preserve this wonderfully serene city. The title is justified not only by the many beautiful temples in LPB but also by its traditional wooden dwellings, the old colonial style houses and the natural environment that encases it in a perfect harmony of plant and stone. *Source: MCTPC & IUCN, 2000.*

(Source: MCTPC & IUCN, 2000; cited in Orasith, 2004)

B.1 The Criteria for World Heritage Site Selection

	Cultural criteria						Natural criteria			
Operational Guidelines 2002	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
Operational Guidelines 2005	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(viii)	(ix)	(vii)	(x)

The Town of Luang Prabang Criteria: (ii) (iv) (v)

Selection criteria:

  i.   to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
  ii. to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
  iii. to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
  iv. to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
  v.   to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
  vi. to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
  vii. to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
  viii. to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
  ix. to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
  x.   to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

Source: base on UNESCO World Heritage Website (2009)
http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria