



# MACQUARIE University

## Unlocking the Role of Proactive Motivational Processes in Driving Customer Engagement with Special Events in Thailand

By

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BBA, MBA

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing

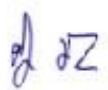
Faculty of Business and Economics  
Macquarie University

January, 2019

# Statement of Candidate

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I certify that the work embodied in this thesis, Unlocking the Role of Proactive Motivational Process in Driving Customer Engagement with Special Events in Thailand has not previously been submitted for any other higher degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University. To the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made. The research presented in this thesis was approved by the University of Tasmanian Ethics committee (Reference number: H0016086, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2016) and transferred and approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Supawat Meeprom (45167435)

January, 2019

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# Abstract

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Enhancing customer engagement creates both opportunities and challenges for scholars and practitioners, especially in the service sector. One critical service sector of global importance is tourism. Specifically, tourism plays a critical role in many economies, and, because of its large contribution to GDP growth, is receiving growing attention from academics and practitioners (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). Specifically, Thailand, as a preferred destination, is expected to continue its fast growth and become the third biggest market for visitors by 2027 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017).

Customer engagement, when viewed from an organisational perspective, is an organisation's strategies that encourage customers to connect to their service and brand, and stimulate long-term relationships. The potential outcomes of customer engagement include the attraction of new customers, reduced marketing budget activities, and a competitive advantage. The benefit of customer engagement from a customer perspective is the interaction through unique experiences with services and brands that serve to address their goals, and contribute to their subjective well-being.

This study develops a theoretical framework underpinned by proactive motivation theory and regulatory mode theory, proposing specific triggers for driving and fostering customer engagement with special event tourism. To uncover the underlying reasons for customer engagement with special events, proactive motivation theory is adopted to gain a deeper understanding of customers' reasons to attend and actively engage with a special event. Further, the role of regulatory mode orientation is adopted to gain a deeper appreciation of "can do" motivation as a key to fostering the relationship between customer's proactive motivation and engagement with a special event. In addition, this theoretical framework articulates the moderating role of self-image congruence and perceived event crowding in the

relationship between customer engagement with a special event and perceived special event quality.

To test the proposed effects, this study uses a quantitative research approach with data drawn from three distinct special events in Thailand – the Sukhothai Loy Krathong and Candle Festival, the Khon Kaen International Marathon, and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival. The findings advance knowledge in service marketing and tourism by offering theoretical explanations for the influence of drivers and consequences of customer engagement with a special event. In a practical context, this study also provides implications for tourism organisations to generate a better understanding of customers' perception of special event experiences.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Special events have become one of the largest and fastest growing parts of the global tourism industry (Getz & Page, 2016; Helgadóttir & Dashper, 2016; Mair & Whitford, 2013). A special event is created for a specific purpose related to business, sport, or entertainment, and to provide a unique experience outside the everyday tourism experiences (Getz, 2005; Getz & Page, 2016). Special events are unlike other tourism service products as they are available for a specific period of time and hold symbolic value in motivating special-interest activities (e.g., sporting events, cultural events, and entertainment events) (Getz & Page, 2016). Special events are cultural and social activities that attract customers and encourage them to learn the unique cultural aspects of the community or destination (Mariani & Giorgio, 2017).

With the continued growth of the special event segment of the tourism industry, competition is intensifying, and engaging customers in special events is seen as a key competitive strategy (Altschwager, Conduit, Bouzdine-Chameeva, & Goodman, 2017; Getz & Page, 2016; Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015). Engaged customers create a memorable experience for themselves, which can provide other benefits, such as building a relationship with the special event (e.g., loyalty and word of mouth) (Bornhorst, Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2010; Lee, Kyle, & Scott, 2012; Žabkar, Brenčič, & Dmitrović, 2010).

While engagement has received considerable attention in the literature, there is still limited appreciation about what motivates customers to engage with a service process or special event (Füller, Faullant, & Matzler, 2010; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Karpen, Bove, Lukas, & Zyphur, 2015). To illustrate, literature does suggest that customers engage with

superior products/services (e.g., luxury hotels and cars) to improve their social benefits (e.g., social status) (Karpen et al., 2015). Yet, while engagement is key, there may be different motives for maintaining or engaging with a service/product and different motives may lead to customer relationship outcomes that are quite different. For example, special events are often large scale, attracting large numbers of customers (Lee, 2014; Todd, Leask, & Ensor, 2017), and, as such, 'perceived crowding' could be a motivator or demotivator of customer engagement, and, therefore, could have either a favourable or unfavourable effect on customers overall perceived special event quality (Lee & Graefe, 2003; Mowen, Vogelsong, & Graefe, 2003; Noone & Mattila, 2009). As such, identifying key drivers or facilitators of special event engagement may help better understand the special event experience and customers' engagement in special events. For example, drawing on proactive motivation theory from the organisational behaviour literature, it is shown that proactive behaviour can produce individual benefits, such as enhanced goal achievement (cf. Fuller & Marler, 2009; Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). Meaning that participants who are motivated by a particular interest may seek to engage and shape their special event experience. Similarly, Parker et al. (2010) identify a set of motivational processes (e.g., customers' regulatory mode orientation and self-image congruence) that may affect their level of engagement.

Understanding the factors underpinning motivational processes is therefore crucial given their potential to influence customer engagement, and whether customers remain or leave the relationship. Understanding such motives also provides destination marketing organisations with a valuable input for designing their special events to target specific customers, and achieve their goals (Formica & Uysal, 1998; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012; Yürük, Akyol, & Şimşek, 2017). A number of customer engagement studies drawn from relationship marketing literature have called for research to extend knowledge around customer engagement and the factors that encourage/motivate customers to engage with services and products (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011; Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold, & Carlson, 2017). From a practical perspective, customer engagement and its outcomes, such

as the overall perceived quality of a special event, can lead to the development of long-term relationships between the event and customers (the current study assesses overall perceived quality but for the ease of discussion, the term perceived quality of a special event is used afterward). Understanding these factors, is therefore necessary to provide a holistic view of the inputs and outputs of engagement, which can enhance the profitability of the business, and, consequently, the economic development of the host country (e.g., Bornhorst et al., 2010; Wearing & Foley, 2017). This is especially important for tourism and economic development in developing countries (Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, & Taheri, 2015; Organ, Koenig-Lewis, Palmer, & Probert, 2015; So, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2016b).

Given the importance of research on tourism and customer engagement, investigation of individual motives is needed to induce a deeper understanding of why and how customers engage in tourism products and services. Further, this study provides knowledge on customers' engagement with special event offerings, and offers clearer insights into how motives may critically work together to influence perceived tourism product and overall perceived service quality. The outcome of engagement will manifest in the customer's actual behaviour (e.g., perception of special event quality), which specifically addresses the limitations postulated in the literature, which, to date, have only investigated behavioural intentions (e.g., revisit intention and word-of-mouth behaviour) (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015; Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2017; Song, You, Reisinger, Lee, & Lee, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to examine how special events foster customer engagement, and to explore the triggers and outcomes of customer engagement with special events.

## **1.2. RESEARCH GAPS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

As the economic contribution of the tourism industry, and, more specifically, special events, has continued to grow, destination marketing organisations have realised they have to search for methods to attract and retain more customers. To this end, scholars have focused their attention on the notion of customer engagement with tourism destinations and activities



(see Bryce et al., 2015; Getz & Page, 2016; Harrigan et al., 2017). Insights into customer engagement in a special event context can help destination marketing organisers to achieve higher levels of special event performance. This reflects an emerging perspective in the service marketing literature, which suggests that customer engagement may be a critical strategic tool that can be used to drive the competitiveness of a business (Roberts & Alpert, 2010). Specifically, customer engagement relates to the notion of customer experience, customer interaction, and customer motivation, which are critical and relevant to understanding consumers' behaviours that go beyond a purchase transaction (So et al., 2016b). Customer engagement is important, as customers can become active co-producers of value or destroyers of value for business (Bolton, 2016; Hollebeek, 2011a; van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). As such, understanding what helps special events promote customer engagement, and how destination marketing organisations can improve this engagement, is imperative.

Despite the increasing role and importance of customer engagement as a tool to build long-term relationships with customers, research into tourism addressing engagement with special events lacks details about the key drivers motivating customers to engage. Interestingly, the literature has focused on the behavioural engagement perspective, articulated as customer participation in the service and tourism domains (Bryce et al., 2015; Dong, Sivakumar, Evans, & Zou, 2015; Yim, Chan, & Lam, 2012). Yet, the current literature views customer engagement as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognition, affect, and behaviour (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013; Meshram & O'Cass, 2018). In advancing the literature, adopting the multidimensional construct of engagement provides an understanding of customer operant conditioning, psychological state, and behaviour components. Further, little attention has been given to identifying the role that travel motive and regulatory modes play in creating customer engagement.

Given the state of the literature on customer engagement and special events, the key contribution of this study is to develop a theoretical model of customers' engagement with a

special event. The grounding for the framework is supported by the service marketing and tourism literature (e.g., Jasmand, Blazevic, & de Ruyter, 2012; Taheri, Jafari, & O'Gorman, 2014; van Doorn et al., 2010), and draws heavily on customer engagement literature from the relationship marketing domain (Brodie et al., 2013; Bryce et al., 2015; So et al., 2016b). To further enrich the model, motivational theory will be drawn on from Parker et al. (2010), regulatory mode orientation (Kruglanski et al., 2000), self-image congruence (Sirgy et al., 1997), perceived crowding (Eroglu, Machleit, & Barr, 2005), and perceived service quality (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). The theoretical development of the research framework is comprehensively discussed in Chapter Three, and outlined briefly below in Figure 1.1. To expand the knowledge of customer engagement in special events, the four specific gaps and contributions to the literature are identified below.

*The first gap* in the literature is related to the role of personal goals as triggers of customer engagement. The literature supports the view that engagement is a goal directed activity (Higgins, 2006) and that these goals motivate individuals to engage (i.e., special events) to personalise their experience (Bryce et al., 2015; Dong et al., 2015; Stock, Oliveira, & Hippel, 2015). Previous research addressing the role of motives in engaging customers has focused on areas, such as financial services (e.g., Yim et al., 2012), service innovation (e.g., Stock et al., 2015), and customer visitations to destinations (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015). Other researchers in the tourism service context have examined customer engagement in an attempt to understand the customer experience (Bryce et al., 2015; Taheri et al., 2014).

However, these studies only appear to capture the behavioural dimension of engagement and neglect the cognition and affective components (see Brodie et al., 2013; So et al., 2016b). Focusing on only one aspect of customer engagement is a narrow view. Rather, it is necessary to consider a goal-driven process wherein proactivity in travel motives leads to motivational states to engage with specific tasks and activities (Parker et al., 2010). Therefore, understanding travel motives that drive a customer to proactively engage is required.

Customer engagement is not only driven by travel motives, but also by the self-starting behaviour (can do motivation) that regulates behaviours to engage with the focal object (Higgins, 2006; Orehek & Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, 2013). In other words, regulatory mode orientation affects motivational states that encourage individuals to strive to achieve goals in a task and activity domain (Parker et al., 2010; Sok, Sok, & De Luca, 2016). Given the nature of customers' regulatory mode orientation, it is important to understand whether specific customer characteristics influence special event selection, and, in turn, engagement in special event activities. This study is among the first to investigate how the joint effect of motivational orientations of locomotion and assessment fosters customer engagement with special event offerings. To address this gap, the following research question is posed:

*Research Question 1 (a):* To what extent are travel motives (reason to) related to customer engagement with a special event?

*Research Question 1 (b):* What role does a customer's regulatory mode orientation (can do) play in the relationship between special event travel motives and their customer engagement with special events?

By answering this research question, this study contributes to the customer engagement and tourism literature by identifying the "reason to" motivation for driving customer engagement with a specific special event (see Altschwager et al., 2017; Bryce et al., 2015; Hudson et al., 2015). This study extends the work of Fernandes and Remelhe (2016), Taheri et al. (2014), van Doorn et al. (2010), and Yim et al. (2012) by investigating how individual motives drive customers to engage with and interact with special events as service providers. This study advances the understanding of the optimum level of diverse travel motives that fosters customer engagement with special events. In addition, this study responds to the recent call for further research by Dong and Siu (2013) on the effect of self-regulation in helping to explain the active role of customer engagement. Further, this study extends the literature by integrating proactive motivation theory and regulatory mode theory to identify the "reason to" motivational forces leading to engagement with the special event offerings. Moreover, this

study provides comprehensive knowledge on how the joint presence of locomotion and assessment orientations (i.e., can do motivation) in explaining the conditions under which customers personalise their event experience through engagement.

*The Second gap* in the literature relates to the consequences of customer engagement, which shapes how customers perceive special event performance and their perception of quality. Many scholars have focused on customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (e.g., Brodie et al., 2013; Dwivedi, 2015; So, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2016a; So et al., 2016b; Thomas, Quintal, & Phau, 2018), whilst some scholars argue that the first consideration before customer satisfaction is the perceived quality of the service offering (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996). Delivering higher levels of service quality is of paramount significance as it not only generates positive behavioural intentions from customers, but also enhances firm performance (Dagger & Sweeney, 2007; Fornell et al., 1996; Ngo & O'Cass, 2013).

Whilst some scholars point out that customer engagement with brands/services is important to understanding how customers evaluate the quality of service offerings (So et al., 2016b), little research has investigated how the enactment of customer engagement facilitates perceived service quality. It is therefore important to study the relationship between engagement and perceived quality of special events, as stronger customer perceptions about the level of quality may lead to referral and repurchase intention. Given that the perceived quality of special events is a key element of special event offerings, it is surprising that, to date, no research has focused on providing insights into the performance of special event offerings from a customer's view at real-time evaluation. To address this gap, the following research question is posed:

*Research question 2:* To what extent is customer engagement with a special event related to their perception of the quality of the special event?

By answering this research question, this study advances understanding of how cognitive, affect, and the behavioural aspects of engagement contribute to the customers' final

assessment of the quality of a special event. This study addresses the call for research from Altschwager et al. (2017), and So et al. (2016b) and extends the work of Dong and Siu (2013) by identifying perceived service quality as a determinant of the actual future behaviour of the customer. This contribution is necessary, because it will offer a better understanding of how customers address their goals by engaging with tourism activities, such as special events (Altschwager et al., 2017; Hapsari, Clemes, & Dean, 2017; So et al., 2016b), and how this affects a customer's perception of special event quality.

*The third gap* in the literature relates to the second gap and concerns customer characteristics in the evaluation of a match or mismatch between the special event image and a customer's self-image (Sirgy et al., 1997). Reviewing the literature reveals that when customers perceive a high level of congruence between self-image and brand image, it will influence their attitudes, perception of quality, satisfaction, and loyalty (Jamal & Goode, 2001; Mazodier & Merunka, 2014). In contrast, if customers perceive incongruence, they may ignore or avoid those brands or services as they generate negative intrinsic motivation about themselves (Hogg & Banister, 2001). Within marketing literature, the role of consumer self-image congruence in assessing service quality is well documented (Ekinci & Riley, 2003; Kwak & Kang, 2009; O'Cass & Grace, 2008). However, the study of self-image congruence in a tourism setting (such as a special event context), still lacks understanding, particularly when considered in conjunction with engagement and evaluation of special event performance. Further, the literature provides little evidence related to the level of congruence between customer self-image and service image in stimulating customers to engage with service activities (Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013; Hedhli, Zourrig, & Chebat, 2016). Given the important role of customer perception of special event quality as a determinant of customers' future behaviours, it is important to understand if congruence between special event image and customer self-image enhances the relationship between customer engagement and customer assessment of special event quality. To address this gap, the following research question is posed:

*Research Question 3:* What role does customer self-image-special event image congruence play in the relationship between customer engagement with a special event and the perceived quality of a special event?

By answering this research question, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating the effect of self-image congruence on customer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event. This study responds to the recent call for further research by Boksberger, Dolnicar, Laesser, and Randle (2011), and Zhang, Fu, Cai, and Lu (2014), and the work of Hung and Petrick (2012) on the effect of self-image congruence in understanding consumer behaviour, specifically within the tourism domain. This study also contributes to proactive motivation theory by identifying the extent to which self-image congruence acts as a motivational factor (reason to motivation) explaining the conditions under which a customer may perceive higher quality as the consequences of their engagement in a special event.

*The fourth gap* in the literature relates to understanding the extent to which customers' perception of special event crowding can weaken or strengthen the effect of customer engagement on perceived special event quality. It is acknowledged in the service marketing literature that the perception of crowdedness impacts on customer consumption evaluation, such as attitude and satisfaction (Eroglu, Machleit, & Barr, 2005; Hwang, Yoon, & Bendle, 2012). However, previous research generates mixed results about the role of perceived crowding. For example, some studies suggest that customers may avoid or ignore a crowded condition, whereas some people may prefer to join in a crowded environment due to customer characteristics and motivations (Kim, Lee, & Sirgy, 2016). Within the literature, much research has focused on the influence of perceived crowding on post-consumption behaviour. However, research has not presented evidence concerning the contingency role of perceived crowding on the effect of customer engagement and the evaluation of special event quality. To address this gap, the following research question is posed:

*Research Question 4:* What role does perceived crowding at special events play in the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event?

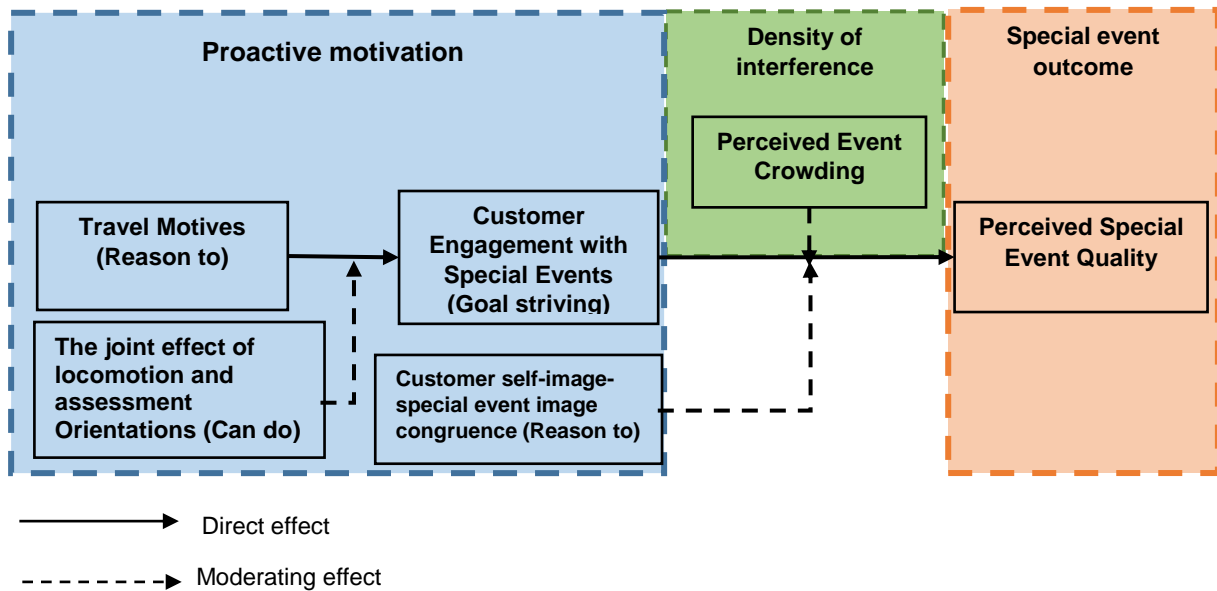
Since the primary goal of destination marketing organisations is to attract large numbers of customers to attend their special events, by answering this research question, this study contributes to the literature by exploring the contingency effect of perceived special event crowding on customer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event.

The research questions and contributions are conceptualised in the theoretical framework presented in Figure 1.1. As shown in Figure 1.1, the blue shaded area represents the proactive motivation processes, the green shaded area represents the density of interference or crowdedness, and the orange shaded area represents the perceived quality of a special event as a key output of proactive motivation processes and the density of interference at special events. Taken together, the purpose of this study is to develop and test a comprehensive theoretical framework to unpack customer engagement with special events by illuminating the mechanisms by which “reason to” and “can do” motivation factors influence customer engagement with a special event. To this end, this study links customer engagement with special events and factors related to proactive motivation theory, which, in turn, links with the customers’ perceived quality of a special event. This study further identifies environmental contingencies that may change the impact of customer engagement on perceived quality of a special event. Environmental contingencies are important as engagement with a special event may not be just the function of personality trait, but what happens around customers may contribute in explaining the outcome of engagement. The theoretical framework “Customer engagement with special event model: drivers and consequences” is shown in Figure 1.1.

Through the conceptual framework in this chapter and thereafter in the study, these terminologies and shaded areas are adopted to orient and help focus the reader’s attention on the primary building block of the conceptual framework. The theoretical framework is presented

fully in Chapter Three using the special event context in order to extend research in the service domain.

**Figure 1.1:**  
Customer Engagement with Special Event Model: Drivers and Consequences



Source: developed for this research

### 1.3. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The tourism industry plays an important role as a leading sector in the global economy and the economy of many developing countries, and contributes a critical source of employment in the service economy (O'Cass & Sok, 2015; Woo, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2018). For this reason, the growth of the tourism industry has resulted in challenges for destination marketing organisations as they strive to foster long-term customer connections. Despite advances in tourism marketing research to solve such challengers, little remains known about customer engagement in a tourism context, specifically that of special events. The research questions outlined above, are grounded in theoretical and managerial foundations drawn from the tourism marketing and service literature. Taking this into account, this study is justified; firstly, because it focuses on a unique context, specifically special events, and, secondly, because this context occurs in an emerging market, namely, Thailand, which has a growing



tourism industry that is characterised by a number of special events. Further justification for the chosen context and research focus is discussed below.

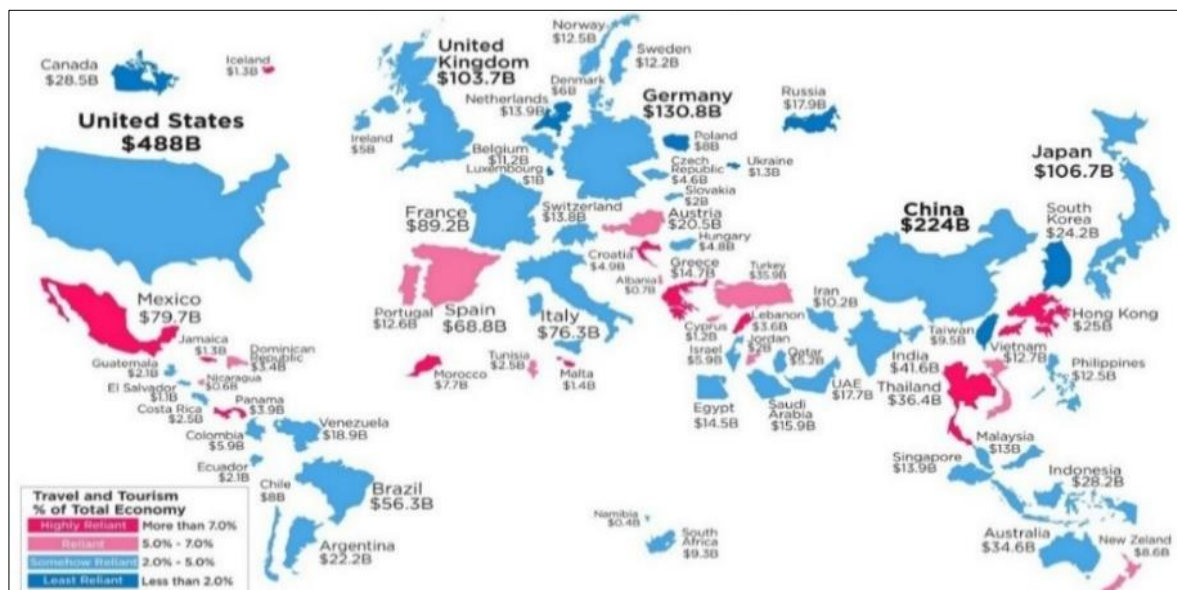
*First*, in an increasingly competitive service business environment (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Roy, Shekhar, Lassar, & Chen, 2018), many businesses need to develop strategies to offer customers superior experiences, one of which is engaging with customers (Kumar, Rajan, Gupta, & Pozza, 2017). The service sector includes construction, financial service, healthcare, retail and wholesale, informational and communication, manufacturing, and travel and tourism. Specifically, the tourism industry outperforms all other industries in the service sector (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018). In addition, the tourism industry is increasingly identified as one of the world's largest service sectors, experiencing rapid growth and contributing substantial annual revenues and employment to the global economy (Woo et al., 2018). The global performance of the tourism industry is around 8,272.3 billion USD (accounting for around 10.4% of GDP), offering employment to nearly 313 million people, which translates to 1 in 11 of the world's total employment (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018). The tourism industry is therefore a major pillar of the Global economy (O'Cass & Sok, 2015). In recognition of this, a number of countries have worked to improve their tourism destinations and create new tourism destinations in order to attract large numbers of customers and create additional sources of revenue for their country.

*Second*, with such growth, competition among tourism destinations is extremely fierce (Bornhorst et al., 2010; Woo et al., 2018). Destination marketing organisations have to create effective strategies to overcome competitors in order to generate tourism income for their country. Special events can be viewed as one tourism strategy that has a significant role to play in attracting customers in a short period of time (Connell, Page, & Meyer, 2015; Getz & Page, 2016). Special events can be categorised into business events, cultural events, sporting events, and entertainment events (Getz, 2012). During the past few decades, destination marketing organisations worldwide have employed special events to assist in expanding tourism productivity (Benur & Bramwell, 2015; McKercher, 2016). Specifically, the deployment

of special events as a tourism strategy can help destinations to expand the tourist season, improve the appeal of the destination for existing and potential target markets, and develop a strong destination image (Connell et al., 2015; Todd et al., 2017).

In particular, this strategic approach can contribute economic benefits in the off-peak tourist season (Getz, 2012). For example, the literature shows that iconic special events, such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, have a significant cultural reputation in attracting customers and contributing economic benefits, therefore driving the tourism industry in Scotland (Todd et al., 2017). The distinctiveness of special events can attract customers, enhance the customer experience, and encourage people to positively engage with special events (Connell et al., 2015; Getz & Page, 2016; Todd et al., 2017). Customer engagement with special events can be an indicator for the long-term success of a special event (Manthiou, Lee, Tang, & Chiang, 2014). Therefore, special event tourism not only enhances economic value to the hosting communities or countries, but also builds customer-event long-term connections (Brida, Meleddu, & Tokarchuk, 2017; Hudson et al., 2015).

**Figure 1.2:**  
Overview of the travel and tourism economy competitiveness



Source: World Economic Forum report (2017)

*Third*, Thailand has been considered to be an Asian Emerging Market (Asian Development Bank, 2015), and the service sector is acknowledged as the major sector of Thailand's economy with a GDP share of 55 percent (World Bank, 2018). Despite Thailand's unprecedented growth and competitiveness as a tourism destination in recent years, it has still retained its reputation among international travellers as an exotic and amazing location (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). According to the World Economic Forum report (2017), Figure 1.2 below indicates the overall size of the tourism industry value by country and indicates (via the pink colour) those countries that have a high reliance on their tourism industry. As presented in Figure 1.2. Thailand is expected to be the fastest growing destination for leisure-travel spending, and highly competitive in the travel and tourism industry (World Economic Forum, 2017). Thailand represents a unique cultural, social, traditional mix and is a festive kingdom, celebrating various national holidays, and hosting numerous regional and global special events throughout each year.

The special events sector in Thailand has become an increasingly popular platform for attracting large numbers of visitors which contributes to local/regional economic development. This point is supported by the fact that Thailand's special event generated 87.8% of direct tourism GDP in 2016 (DBS Group Research, 2017). In addition, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2017) reports the special events are able to generate more than 600,000 event customers and contributes over approximately US\$41.17 million in the economy. For these reasons, Thailand serves as an excellent research site to conduct the study. Therefore, understanding the role of customer engagement in special events in Thailand and extending the theory to this country context is worthy of examination. The different types of special event held in Thailand are discussed in Section 3.2 of Chapter Three.

#### **1.4. DEFINITIONS OF THE CONSTRUCTS OF INTEREST**

In order to facilitate understanding of the conceptual model of this research, it is important to ensure that the definitions pertaining to specific constructs of interest are

presented clearly in the study. The key constructs commonly employed in the literature, and which underpin this research are identified and defined in Table 1.1 below. Specifically, these constructs include various travel motives (learning, excitement, escape, social status, and family/friend togetherness motives), locomotion orientation, assessment orientation, customer engagement with a special event, self-image congruence, perceived special event crowding, and perceived quality of special event.

**Table 1.1:** Definition of constructs

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Learning motive	Study tours, performing arts, cultural tours, travel to festivals, visits to historic sites and monuments, folklore, and pilgrimages (Crompton & McKay, 1997).
Excitement motive	Seeking an exciting experience, curious, having thrills, and uniqueness of the event as well as the excitement of visitors to experience it (Backman et al., 1995; Foster & Robinson, 2010).
Escape motive	The desire to relax and refresh oneself mentally and physically from the everyday life stresses (Foster & Robinson, 2010).
Social status motive	An association with self-esteem, recognition, and the desire to attract attention from others, which is derived through the status given by travel (Kim & Lee, 2000).
Family/friends' togetherness motive	Spending time and enjoying festivals with family members and enhancing family and friend relationships (Crompton & McKay, 1997).
Locomotion orientation	Movement away from a current state to a new state with no necessary ultimate destination, direction, or place in mind (Kruglanski et al., 2000).
Assessment orientation	Motivation to critically evaluate available alternatives to ensure the decision-making quality to receive the best outcomes (Kruglanski et al., 2000).
Customer engagement with special events	A customer's personal active engagement with a special event as manifest in the affective, cognitive, and behavioural responses that meet and satisfy a customer's needs and goals (So, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2016b).
Self-image congruence	The degree of match or mismatch between a product/service image and a customer's self-image (Sirgy et al., 1997).
Perceived special event crowding	A psychological mindset that occurs when the demand from the number of people and objects within a defined space exceeds supply (Eroglu, Machleit, & Chebat, 2005).
Perceived special event quality	The consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988).

## 1.5. RESEARCH METHOD

To examine the relationship between the constructs of interest in Table 1.1 and test the hypotheses (see Chapter Three), this study used a quantitative research approach and questionnaire as the means of collecting data. The questionnaire was designed and

administered to a sample of respondents who were attending special events in Thailand. The respondents who had spent time at the special event were intercepted on site and asked to complete the questionnaire at the event site.

The questionnaire was developed by employing measures from the marketing and tourism literature, and, where necessary, modifying measures to suit the special event context. The first stage focused on item generation in order to indicate all the potential measurement items that tap the definition of the constructs. The second stage related to the examination of content validity of the measurement items, which were assessed by inviting experts in the marketing and tourism fields to judge the generated items. Following this process, the questionnaire was pilot tested, and the results used to refine the final version of the questionnaire.

To analyse the data, a three-stage analytical process was adopted. The initial phase focused on descriptive analysis to identify the profiles of the respondents. The second phase related to preliminary analysis in order to compute standard deviation (S.D.), skewness, and kurtosis for testing the normal data distribution of the construct of interest (Park, 2015). The final phase focused on hypothesis testing by using regression analysis, and process analytical approaches.

## **1.6. DELIMITATIONS OF SCOPE**

Although this study provides valuable insights, the scope and delimitations of this study should be considered. The delimitations explicitly define the boundaries within which this study is conducted, which limit the generalisability of the findings. First, this study focuses on the international customers' engagement with special events in Thailand, which is a developing economy. Therefore, the findings may only be applicable to other developing economies located in Asia with a culture similar to that of Thailand, meaning the application of findings to other developing economies should be attempted with care. Second, data were collected from international customers who engaged in special events, meaning the application of findings to

domestic customer engagement is not recommended. Third, this study focuses on engagement from the customers' perspective, meaning the findings may not be applicable to engagement from the perspective of a firm.

## **1.7. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research is organised according to the structure and guidelines for the presentation of a doctoral thesis, as espoused by Fisher (2007) and Perry (1998), who suggest that a five or six-chapter structure is acceptable. Hence, this thesis is organised into six chapters. Each chapter is briefly outlined.

Chapter One has provided a general introduction and overview of the research. In particular, this chapter has demonstrated the background of the research by identifying the topic of interest. It has also presented the research objectives and research questions, provided definitions of the constructs of interest, discussed the contribution of the research to theory building and practice, offered justification and highlighted the significance of the research, introduced the research method and analytical techniques, and explained the limitations of the research.

Chapter Two provides a review of the extant literature related to the topic of interest. Particularly, this chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature on customer engagement, including definitions and terms as well as the generic background on customer engagement in the service marketing and tourism domains. This chapter also justifies the relevant drivers and consequences related to customer engagement and highlights potential gaps in the extant literature.

Chapter Three underpins the theoretical foundation built in Chapter Two and constructs the conceptual model. The conceptual model proposed in this research investigates the collective drivers and consequences of customer engagement, as obtained from the review of

the literature. Based on the conceptual model, specific hypotheses are then developed in order to test and analyse the relevant theory, and address the research questions.

Chapter Four describes the research design adopted for this study. The methodology presents a detailed blueprint that guides the implementation of the research and describes the application of the quantitative approach. Specifically, it provides an explanation of the research paradigm, data collection technique, and anticipated data analysis methods. In addition, this chapter covers the development of the measures of the constructs, and sampling plan. Moreover, this chapter critically reviews the selected study site: special events in Thailand.

Chapter Five presents the findings and results of this research. It begins with preliminary data analysis computed in order to identify and assess the measures' psychometrics properties. This chapter also presents the results of testing the theoretical framework and hypotheses.

Chapter Six presents a comprehensive discussion of the research findings. In particular, the theoretical and practical implications are provided. Moreover, the limitations and directions and recommendations for future study are presented. The final section of this research presents a list of appendices and references.

## **1.8. CONCLUSION**

Service sectors, especially special event tourism, are striving to maintain a long-term customer relationship. Engaging customers in special events is seen to have an important role in encouraging ongoing interaction and building memorable experiences, which can provide other benefits, such as loyalty and word of mouth (Bornhorst et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2012; Žabkar et al., 2010). To this end, the service marketing and tourism literature suggests that customer engagement as value is received from the consumption experiences. However, customer engagement alone may not be sufficient to build a long-term customer relationship with the tourism business. In the special event context, understanding customer engagement

also requires insights into the reasons that motivate engagement, and how this influences the perceptions of the quality of the special event experience.

This study is among the first to focus on integrating proactive motivation theory and regulatory mode theory, to examine the drivers and consequences of customer engagement in a special event context. In the area of customer engagement, there are many critical issues that remain unanswered, such as the “reason to” and “can do” motivation to engage with the special event activities. “Reason to” motivation is embedded in travel motives and self-image congruence, whereas “can do” motivation is embedded in the combination effect of locomotion and assessment orientations rooted in regulatory mode orientation. Whilst such motivations may lead to engagement, customer behaviour may then be affected by factors such as perceived crowding. All these factors are evaluated to produce the consequences of customer engagement, namely, their perceived quality of the special event. The next chapter presents a literature review of the key construct of interest related to this study, namely, customer engagement.



# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Customers are a vital asset of any service and tourism business, and the development of long-term relationships with customers plays a critical role in achieving business success (Brida et al., 2017; Hudson et al., 2015). Such relationships may be generated via customer engagement with objects (brands/services), which has been found to create emotional bonds and positive consumption experiences (Hollebeek, 2011a). This suggests that understanding customer engagement with service offerings, and, importantly, the triggers underpinning engagement, is a strategic imperative to the achievement of positive customer outcomes, favourable service evaluations (van Doorn et al., 2010), and the potential generation of loyal customers (Casidy, Wymer, & O'Cass, 2018).

The key objective of this chapter is to provide a detailed assessment of the relevant literature in order to lay the foundation for the conceptual model of customer engagement to be presented in Chapter Three. Specifically, this chapter outlines the development of the concept of customer engagement within the marketing and tourism literature, with a particular focus on triggers for driving, and the consequences of customer engagement.

### **2.2. THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF ENGAGEMENT IN MARKETING AND TOURISM**

As noted in Chapter One (Section 1.2), engagement is a concept that is attracting considerable attention among researchers and managers in the marketing and tourism domains, as a strategic approach to facilitate predictive power of consumer behaviour (Brodie et al., 2011; Calder, Malthouse, & Schaedel, 2009; Pham & Avnet, 2009). The origin of the concept of engagement has its roots in a number of disciplines including sociology, psychology (e.g., Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Resnick, 2001), and

organisational behaviour (e.g., Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Kahn, 1990). More recently, engagement has gained momentum within the marketing and tourism domains (e.g., Brodie et al., 2011; Bryce et al., 2015; Harrigan et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2010; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). In the marketing and tourism studies, engagement can be used as a tool to establish long-term relationships between an organisation's brands and/or services and customers (see Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Harmeling et al., 2017; Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2018; Hollebeek, 2011b; So et al., 2016a,b). For example, if a customer has a positive experience with a brand/service/firm, this can result in customer loyalty and continuous engagement with the brand/service/firm, and the provision of feedback or referrals (Harrigan et al., 2018; Kumar et al., 2017).

While the engagement literature has grown, and the research focus expanded, some underlying issues have emerged. For example, within the engagement literature in marketing and tourism, there appears to be a noticeable level of inconsistency in the terms used. Some concepts employed to address the context-specific nature of engagement in the literature include customer/consumer engagement (e.g., Bowden, 2009; Brodie et al., 2013; Harrigan et al., 2017), customer engagement behaviour (e.g., Abdul-Ghani, Hyde, & Marshall, 2011; van Doorn et al., 2010), online and/or community engagement (e.g., Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; Baldus, Voorhees, & Calantone, 2015), consumer brand engagement (e.g., Hollebeek, 2011a,b; Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014), brand engagement (e.g., Sprott, Czellar, & Spangenberg, 2009), and tourist/visitor engagement (Bryce et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2018). Therefore, various conceptualisations of engagement with a focal object have been employed to underpin and develop the engagement literature.

Examining the different lenses applied to engagement not only highlights that different terms are applied, but also shows that these can be applied from differing perspectives. For example, Van Doorn et al. (2010) view engagement as a firm-centric perspective, conceptualising it as "customer engagement behaviour" (CEB), focusing on a customer-to-firm relationship and using the firm as the object of engagement. In a similar vein, Verleye,

Gemmel, and Rangarajan (2014) support the view that engagement is a customer's voluntary, discretionary behaviour with an object (brand/service/firm) focus. The study of Van Doorn et al. (2010), and Verleye et al. (2014) describe customer engagement behaviour as a vast array of behaviours including word-of-mouth (WOM) activity, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging, writing reviews, and even engaging in legal action. Hollebeek (2011a) conceptualises engagement as customer brand engagement, with a research focus on customer-brand-related interaction. Brodie et al. (2011) conceptualise engagement as the customer interaction with the brand/service/firm. The view of Brodie et al. (2011) focuses on service connections, and the co-creation of value between the customer and firm offering, which results in behaviour, such as loyalty and referral. Later, So et al. (2016b) extended the work of Brodie et al. (2011) and applied the concept of customer engagement to other service industries (i.e., hospitality and tourism brand) to examine the customer-tourism brand relationship. Consistent with So et al. (2016b), Harrigan et al. (2017) contributed to extending engagement knowledge by conceptualising and developing a scale proposed by So et al. (2016b), and Hollebeek et al., (2014) for application in the tourism context. Many service marketing and tourism scholars refer to the engagement construct as customer engagement (see Fernandes & Esteves, 2016; Harmeling et al., 2017; Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Romero, 2018; So et al., 2016a,b). As this study focuses on a special event context, which is within the service marketing and tourism domain, it is appropriate to adopt the term "customer engagement with a special event" throughout the study, which is a key for building long-term relationship with customers.

Along with the different terms applied and the conceptualisations of customer engagement in the service marketing and tourism literature, there are a range of diverse definitions; as shown in Table 2.1. Table 2.1 further presents details of the types of study, that is, whether they are conceptual or empirical in nature (see Brodie et al., 2011; Dwivedi, 2015; Hollebeek, 2011a, 2011b; Wirtz et al., 2013). Whilst scrutiny of Table 2.1 reveals that the concept of customer engagement in the literature has focused on various aspects (Harmeling

et al., 2017; Hollebeek, 2011b; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014), the psychological perspective appears to be the most commonly applied to explain customer engagement across differing contexts. Various scholars claim that customer engagement is a psychological state of mind, and the time a consumer invests in an object to satisfy their needs and goals (see Brodie et al., 2011; Higgins & Scholer, 2009; Sashi, 2012; Vivek et al., 2012). Indeed, Higgins (2006), and Higgins and Scholer (2009) assert that engagement is a psychological state with motivational properties, *“the state of being engaged is to be involved, occupied and interested in something. Strong engagement is to concentrate on something, to be absorbed or engrossed with it”* (Higgins, 2006, p. 442). Further, Brodie et al. (2011), and Vivek et al. (2012) present engagement as a psychological state generated through co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand/service) and intensity of customer’s interaction and participation. The psychological perspective has increased interest in the customer engagement literature because scholars believe that customers could not be engaged with a brand/service if those brands/services did not evoke positive feelings (Claffey & Brady, 2014; Franzak, Makarem, & Jae, 2014).

As shown in Table 2.1, defining engagement as a psychological construct is a widely adopted practice; however, the conceptualisation of engagement behaviourally is also prevalent (see Pansari & Kumar, 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010, Verleye et al., 2014). Some scholars propose that engagement should be viewed from a behavioural perspective and focus on communication methods between customer-to-customer interaction and customer-to-firm interaction (Kumar et al., 2010; Pansari & Kumar, 2017; van Doorn et al., 2010). The behavioural perspective of engagement has been proffered by the Marketing Science Institute (MSI: 2010), who define customer engagement as a customer’s behaviours towards brands or firms beyond purchase, comprising customer advocacy, interaction, and writing reviews. For example, van Doorn et al. (2010) define engagement as *“a customer’s behavioural manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers”* (p.254). The behavioural perspective of engagement therefore focuses on interactive

experiences within a specific context (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Verhoef et al., 2010), which manifests in customer added value to the firm, either directly (e.g., through purchasing) and/or indirectly (after purchase behaviour). The number of marketing and tourism scholars adopting the behavioural perspective of customer engagement, and employing empirical studies to test theories in order to better understand the antecedents of customer engagement behaviour (e.g., customer referral and advocacy) and the effect on firm performance, is increasing (see Pansari & Kumar, 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010; Verleye et al., 2014).

In challenging existing views, Table 2.1 shows that, more recently, scholars have argued for engagement to encompass a combination or integration of both psychological and behavioural perspectives (Harrigan et al., 2017; Hollebeek, 2011b; Hollebeek et al., 2014; So et al., 2016b). For instance, Hollebeek et al. (2014) conceptualise engagement as “*a consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions*” (p.154). The work of Hollebeek et al. (2014) suggests that a customer not only deploys their resource abilities (e.g., knowledge) to facilitate the purchase of a focal brand/service, but also involves cognition and investment of effort into a focal brand/service-related interaction. Consistent with this, So et al. (2016b) emphasise that customer engagement includes “*a customer's connection to a brand as manifested in cognitive, affective, and behavioural actions outside of the purchase situation*” (p.310). This view of customer engagement therefore includes psychological, cognitive, and behavioural aspects that are subject to personal, object-related, and situational factors (Baldus et al., 2015). These scholars believe that customer engagement must also have an enduring affective connection with a focal brand/service in addition to behavioural participation (Hollebeek et al., 2014; So et al., 2016b). Table 2.1 provides the comparison of definitions of customer engagement as presented in the extant marketing and tourism literature. Following this, section 2.3 will discuss the drivers of customer engagement embedded in the current study.

**Table 2.1:** Key definition of customer engagement in the marketing and tourism literature

Psychological perspective of engagement		
Authors	Concept	Definition
Algesheimer et al. (2005, p. 21)	Brand community engagement	Positive influences of identifying with the brand community through the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact/co-operate with community members.
Avnet and Higgins (2006, p. 8)	Engagement	The level of engagement can transfer post-decision to feeling right about reactions to a chosen product, which can increase the extremity of these reactions and even increase the product's price.
Patterson, Yu, and De Ruyter (2006, p.1)	Customer engagement	The level of a customer's various 'presences' in their relationship with the organisation. The presences include physical presence, emotional presence, and cognitive presence. Customer engagement consists of four components, namely, vigour, dedication, absorption, and interaction.
Bowden (2009, p. 72)	Customer engagement	Engagement is a psychological process model of the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty forms for a new customer of a service brand as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat customer purchase of a service brand.
Higgins and Scholer (2009, p. 112)	Strength of engagement	A state of being involved, occupied, fully adsorbed, or engrossed in something (i.e., sustained attention), generating the consequences of a particular attraction or repulsion force.
Sprott et al. (2009, p. 92)	Brand engagement	Engagement is an individual difference representing a consumer's propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves.
Mollen and Wilson (2010, p. 923)	Online brand engagement	The customer's cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value.
Abdul-Ghani et al. (2011, p. 1061)	Consumer engagement	Engagement is consumer commitment to an active relationship with a specific market offering.
Brodie et al. (2011, p.260)	Consumer engagement	A psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in focal brand relationships.
Hollebeek (2011a, p. 790)	Customer brand engagement	The level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related & context-dependent state of mind characterised by a specific level of cognitive, emotional & behavioural activity in brand interactions.
Wirtz et al. (2013, p. 229)	Customer engagement	The consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact and cooperate with community members.
Dwivedi (2015, p. 100)	Customer brand engagement	Consumers' positive, fulfilling, brand-use-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption.

**Table 2.1:** (continued)

<b>Behavioural perspective of engagement</b>		
Marketing Science Institute (MSI: 2010)	Customer engagement	A customer's behaviours towards brands or firms beyond purchase comprising of customer advocacy, interaction, and writing reviews.
Kumar et al. (2010, p. 297)	Customer engagement	The creation of a deeper, more meaningful two-way connection between the company and the customer, and one that endures over time, which leads to participation and purchase.
Roberts and Alpert (2010, p. 198)	Customer engagement	An engaged customer is one that is loyal to your brand and actively recommends your products and services to others.
Van Doorn et al. (2010, p. 254)	Customer engagement behaviours	The customer's behavioural manifestation towards the brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers.
Vivek et al. (2012, p. 133)	Customer engagement	The intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organisation's offerings or organisational activities, which either the customer or the organisation initiates.
Gummerus et al. (2012)	Online engagement	A behavioural manifestation towards the brand or firm that goes beyond transactions and includes all consumer-to-firm interactions and consumer-to-consumer communications about the brand.
Jaakkola and Alexander (2014, p. 248)	Customer engagement	Customers make voluntary resource contributions that have a brand or firm focus but go beyond what is fundamental to transactions, occur in interactions between the focal object and other actors, and result from motivational drivers.
Taheri et al. (2014, p. 322)	Visitor engagement	A state of being involved with and committed to a specific market offering.
Bryce et al. (2015, p.574)	Visitor engagement	Visitors' level of commitment and interaction with heritage offerings.
de Villiers (2015, p. 1955)	Customer brand engagement	People do have the cognitive capacity to simultaneously hold discrepant cognitions about "objects".
Pansari and Kumar (2017, p. 295)	Customer engagement	The mechanics of a customer's value addition to the firm, either through direct or/and indirect contribution.
<b>Combination of Psychological and Behavioural perspective of engagement</b>		
Sashi (2012, p.260)	Customer engagement	An affective as well as calculative commitment or trust and commitment between sellers and customers. Customer engagement occurs when customers have strong emotional bonds in relational exchanges with sellers.
Hollebeek et al. 2014 (2014; p. 154)	Customer brand engagement	A consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions.
So et al., (2014, p. 310)	Customer engagement with tourism brand	A customer's personal connection to a brand as manifested in cognitive, affective, and behavioural actions outside of the purchase situation.
Calder et al., (2016, p.40)	Customer brand engagement	The level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related & context-dependent state of mind characterised by a specific level of cognitive, emotional & behavioural activity in brand interactions.
Dessart et al. (2016)	Consumer engagement	Consumer engagement captures a consumer's psychological and behavioural focus to interact with brands and other consumers in social media.
Harrigan et al. (2017)	Customer engagement with tourism	A customer's personal connection to a brand as manifested in cognitive, affective, and behavioural actions with customer engagement with tourism brands.

### **2.3. DRIVERS OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT**

As previously noted, the engagement concept is rooted in academic disciplines, such as educational psychology and organisational behaviour (e.g., Bryson & Hand, 2007; Kahn, 1990). Research on customer engagement within the marketing and tourism disciplines is more recent (e.g., Harrigan et al., 2017; So et al., 2016b; Thomas et al., 2018), with a focus on a variety of contexts including social media (e.g., Alonso-Dos-Santos, Guardia, Campos, Calabuig-Moreno, & Ko, 2018; Brodie et al., 2013; Harrigan et al., 2018), branding (e.g., Dwivedi, Wilkie, Johnson, & Weerawardena, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014), service (e.g., Chathoth et al., 2014; Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Vivek, Beatty, Dalela, & Morgan, 2014), and tourism (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015; Taheri et al., 2014; So et al., 2016b). The extant research on engagement in the marketing and tourism literature has identified the specific characteristics of customer engagement and attempted to identify a nomological framework for customer engagement that incorporates the antecedents and its consequences (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2018). Examining both the drivers and consequence of customer engagement can assist in developing effective relationships between the customer and a firm's product and service offerings.

An examination of the customer engagement definitions presented in Table 2.1 shows that customer engagement with a particular brand/service results from motivational drivers (e.g., Algesheimer et al., 2005; Baldus et al., 2015; Higgins & Scholer, 2009; Hollebeek, Srivastava, & Chen, 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010). Based on motivational drivers, customers choose to invest their resources and expect to receive benefits from a focal brand/service interaction (Van Doorn et al. 2010; Vivek et al., 2012). If meeting expectations, the benefits from customer-brand interaction can enhance customer experiences with product and service offerings (Harmeling et al., 2017; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). For example, a customer perception of favourable service quality improves the customer-service relationship leading to customer referrals with the service among peers and friends (So et al., 2016b; Van Doorn et



al. 2010). For this reason, several researchers have sought to understand the triggers driving customer engagement, and why customers engage in the focal brand/service offerings.

### **2.3.1. Motivational forces driving customer engagement**

When considering the drivers of customer engagement, some scholars focus on gaining insights into the personal goals, resources, and expectations of value outcomes that motivate customers to engage (Vivek et al., 2012). In this regard, Van Doorn et al. (2010), and Hollebeek et al. (2014) suggest that engagement results from customer motivational drivers and individual characteristics that stimulate the consumer to invest time and effort with the firm's brand and service activities. Yet, the premise of whether customer motivational processes foster engagement with a specific context (e.g., brand, service, and tourism) remains empirically limited. Drawing on various motivational theories, Parker et al. (2010) propose a model of proactive motivation that captures a goal-driven process approach to proactive behaviour and facilitates the degree of engagement. Parker et al. (2010) identify two key motivational mechanisms underpinning proactivity. First, "reason to motivation" which focuses on the reasons why individuals select or persist with particular proactive goals, such as travel motives and self-image congruence. Second, "can do motivation", which concerns the perceived costs of action or self-starting behaviour (such as regulatory mode orientation). These motivational factors will now be discussed in turn.

#### **2.3.1.1. Travel motives**

Motives are a key factor underlying the determinants that arouse consumer behaviour to make or not make things happen (Albayrak et al., 2018; Higgins & Scholer, 2009). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), human motives refer to individuals' desires to actively achieve their needs and wants. Some scholars argue that consumer motives result from the integration of the cognitive, affective, and behavioural processes that serve to organise and regulate consumer behaviour (Puccinelli et al., 2009). In this sense, motives underpin consumer

behaviour and whether or not a customer will engage with a specific product/service (Puccinelli et al., 2009).

It could be assumed that if customers' motives are not satisfied through engagement, they will cease to engage with the focal object of engagement, such as a brand or service (Viswanathan et al., 2017). Whilst scholars have increased attention on understanding the triggers that motivate customers to engage with the brand or service in various contexts including hotel, airline, restaurant, social media, bank and insurance, and branding (see Fernandes & Remelhe, 2016; Vale & Fernandes, 2018), few have explored consumer travel motives as a driver of customer engagement within the tourism destination and special event contexts (see Altschwager et al., 2017; Bryce et al., 2015; Romero, 2018; Taheri et al., 2014).

Understanding customers' characteristics, interests, values, goals, and motives are important tenets of the tourism domain, and a key aspect in behavioural models of travel consumption (Chen & Chen, 2015; Gnoth, 1997; Prayag & Hosany, 2014). Specifically, a travel motive is a trigger or driving force prompting consumer behaviour and acts as a psychological state that arouses, directs, and integrates consumer decision-making, choice, and activity (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Leong, Yeh, Hsiao, & Huan, 2015). Various theoretical lenses can be used to understand travel motives; for example, Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow & Lewis, 1987), goal-directed behaviour (Bettman, 1979), Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking dichotomy (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987), push and pull factors (Crompton & McKay, 1997), and Pearce's leisure ladder (Pearce & Lee, 2005). Despite some differences, they are underpinned by the view that the study of travel motives is based on psychological needs and biological tendencies (Hung & Petrick, 2011b; Leong et al., 2015). Travel motives can thus assist to advance understanding of the reasons for travelling, what types of experience customers seek, and the types of activity they want (Paker & Vural, 2016; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Sangpikul, 2008).

An understanding of travel motives, especially in the context of special events, serves as a foundation for facilitating an effective marketing strategy and maintaining the competitive position of special events (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004; Hung & Petrick, 2011b; Lee & Hsu, 2013).

An examination of the travel motives prompting attendance at special events reveals that a variety have been identified (Kim & Prideaux, 2005) and measured in different special event contexts; as summarised in Table 2.2. For example, within the cultural, heritage, and art event contexts, Chang (2006) identify five key motivators for attending the Rukai cultural event in Taiwan; namely, equilibrium recovery, event learning and participation, novelty seeking, socialisation, and cultural exploration. Chang (2006) reports that cultural exploration is the most important reason for attracting tourists to the cultural event, yet not all customers have the same degree of interest in the event's cultural exploration. Matheson, Rimmer, and Tinsley (2014) identify escape from routine life as being the primary motive for attending the cultural Beltane Fire event in Edinburgh, followed by cultural exploration.

Similarly, Chang and Yuan (2011) examine tourist motives to attend a regional food festival in Texas, and identify drivers, such as food interest, wine interest, escape and event novelty, group socialisation (family/friend togetherness), external socialisation, and art performance. The study of Chang and Yuan (2011) suggests that although most people are drawn to the event for multiple reasons, the primary motive is to have fun. Kim and Eves (2012), however, argue that cultural experience (e.g., learning and authentic experience) and interpersonal relations (prestige and family togetherness) are the main reason for participating in special events based on food and beverages.

A similar observation can be made in the sporting event context, where Funk and Bruun (2007) investigate the motives of sport participants travelling internationally to compete in a hallmark Australian Marathon. The results indicate that the main reasons for participating in the event are cultural experience and knowledge learning, respectively, in addition to other motivational drivers, such as cultural learning inventory (e.g., food, transportation, and music). However, the study by Taylor and Shanka (2008) suggests that personal benefits or status is the primary motive for attending a sporting event in order to prove participants' self-esteem. This finding appears to contrast with those of Aicher et al. (2015), and Kaplanidou and Vogt (2010). Specifically, Aicher, Karadakis, and Eddosary (2015) find that a majority of participants

who attended a running event (Marathon event) needed to experience excitement when they are actively involved in the event activity. Their finding is consistent with that of Kaplanidou and Vogt (2010) who find that emotional meanings, such as excitement and enjoyment, are the greatest source of motives for attending a sporting event context. Given such variance, researchers suggest that motives must be considered within the contextual scope and context (see Crompton, 1979; Han & Hyun, 2018; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Yolal, Woo, Cetinel, & Uysal, 2012). As Nicholson and Pearce (2001) note *“people go to different events for different reasons and that the majority are going to a particular event for what it offers rather than to an event in general”* (p.458).

As demonstrated in Table 2.2, scrutiny of travel motives in the context of special events can be found in prior empirical studies. The common motives identified are escape and relaxation, exploration, socialisation, novelty or regression, family togetherness, excitement and entertainment, perception and learning, and prestige or social status. However, in view of the increasing internationalisation of both special events and competitive intensity, it is necessary to generate a finer grained understanding of the differences in motives that underpin the reasons for attending special events.

**Table 2.2:** Literature on customers' motives related to special event context

Author/s	Study context	Motive factors	Main findings
Crompton and McKay (1997)	Fiesta in San Antonio, Texas, USA	Socialisation, novelty, escape, family togetherness, exploration/learning.	Visitors' motives to attend different types of events are significantly different. Those attending food events are less motivated by cultural exploration and more motivated by novelty seeking than those in other groups.
Nicholson and Pearce (2001)	Four events in South Island, New Zealand	Excitement, socialisation, novelty, family togetherness, nostalgia.	To compare visitor motivations across four South Island events in New Zealand. The results of this study clearly show that visitors attend events for different motivations though there were some similarities across events.
Kim, Uysal, and Chen (2002)	Various special events in Virginia	Social/leisure, event novelty, escape, family togetherness, curiosity/learning.	The key findings indicate that escape and enjoyment are the most important motivations perceived by attendees.
Lee, Lee, and Wicks (2004)	Kyongju World Expo, South Korea	Socialisation, excitement, escape, exploration/learning, family togetherness.	Different clusters of visitors are significantly different with respect to five motivational dimensions. Culture and family seekers are the most motivated by family togetherness. Escape seekers are most motivated by escape and novelty and less by cultural exploration. Event seekers are motivated by event and socialisation.
Yuan, Cai, Morrison, and Linton (2005)	Wine and Food Event in USA	Escape, wine, socialisation, family togetherness.	Wine tasting is the most important reason for attending the festival. The family togetherness dimension is less important than the wine and escape dimension.
Chang (2006)	Aboriginal festivals in Taiwan	Equilibrium recovery, learning, novelty, socialisation, cultural exploration.	Cultural exploration is the most important factor attracting participants to local cultural festivals.
Kim, Borges, and Chon (2006)	Sporting event in Brazil	Family/ friend togetherness, socialization, site attraction, event attraction, escape.	This research examines festival attendees' motivational differences based on the level of their characteristics. The level of education, and the level of income did not have any effect on motivation. However, some of the motivation factors seem to vary across age level.
Schofield and Thompson (2007)	Naadam Festival, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Cultural exploration, family/ friend togetherness, socialization, sporting attraction, and local special events.	The key findings show that cultural exploration appears to be the most prominent among the motivation dimensions related to festival. As expected, the results show that cultural exploration was the strongest motivation because culture is a main theme of this festival.
Funk and Bruun (2007)	Gold Coast Airport Marathon	Cultural experience, knowledge learning, cultural learning inventory.	The key findings of this study show that international participants desired to experience and learn about Australian culture.
Park, Reisinger, and Kang (2008)	Food and Wine Festival, Florida (USA)	Taste, enjoyment, social status, change, meeting people, family, and meeting experts.	The seven factors that motivated first-time visitors to the festival were the desire to taste new wine and food, enjoy the event, enhance social status, escape from routine life, meet new people, spend time with family, and get to know the celebrity chefs and wine experts.
Taylor and Shanka (2008)	Sporting event in Canada	Achievement, social status, and socialisation.	The main results show that the motives related to an interest in attending the running event in Canada are social status and socialisation. In addition, there are different motives between first time and repeat participants. First time participants are motivated by social status, whereas repeat event participants are motivated by achievement.

**Table 2.2:** (Continued)

Author/s	Study context	Motive factors	Main findings
Smith, Costello, and Muenchen (2010)	Culinary Tourism Event	Push motives (food, event novelty, socialisation) Pull motives (food product, support services, essential services).	The key findings demonstrate that pull motives including food product, support services, and essential services are the key customer motives for attending culinary tourism events. Pull motives are related to the satisfaction of the customer whereas push factors had no or limited effect on the satisfaction of the event.
McDowall (2010)	Tenth Month Merit-Making Festival, Thailand	Family/friend togetherness, excitement, event novelty, escape.	This study compared motives for attending the event between residents and non-residents. The key motives for attending the event are escape for residents and event novelty for non-residents.
Chang and Yuan (2011)	The Old Town Spring Festival	Wine, escape/event novelty, food, known-group socialisation, external socialisation, art.	The results indicate that people attended the food festival varied among their characteristics. Wine and external socialisation are the main motives that drive people to attend the event which is associated with age.
Walmsley (2011)	Entertainment event	Escape, learning, socialisation, fun and enjoyment.	The key findings show that escape is a main priority for attending the entertainment event.
Kim and Eves (2012)	Food event	Cultural experience; interpersonal relation (e.g., social status and family togetherness), excitement; sensory appeal, and health concern.	The results indicate that demographic variables (gender and age) were related to some motivational factors and significant differences in the event associated with gender, age, and income.
Yolal et al. (2012)	Various International events	Socialisation, excitement, event novelty, escape, family togetherness.	Differences in motivation for the six different festival products were examined. Results indicate that different festival products have a significant effect on festival motivation.
Lee, Kang, and Lee (2013)	Shanghai China Expo	Cultural exploration, family togetherness, event attractions and enjoyment, socialisation, novelty, escape.	Different clusters of visitors are significantly different with respect to five motivational dimensions.
Matheson et al. (2014)	Beltane Fire Festival, Edinburgh	Cultural exploration and adventure, escape.	To identify motivations for attending the festival, different clusters of visitors are significantly different with respect to two motivational factors.
Kruger and Saayman (2015)	Live music event in South Africa	Escape, artist affiliation and unique experience, event novelty, socialisation, entertainment.	This study aims to explore Generation Y concert goers to various concerts held in South Africa. Artist affiliation and unique experience is considered the most important motive for Generation Y to attend the concerts, followed by entertainment, escape, socialization, and event novelty.
Aicher et al. (2015)	Running event	Knowledge, excitement and enjoyment, accomplishment, identification, introjection, external regulation, amotivation.	The results show that motivation to experience stimulation was the greatest source of driving people to attend a running event. This finding also identifies that participants interact with this type of event for the excitement and enjoyment the event offers.
Wong and Tang (2016)	Major sporting event	Novelty seeking, socialisation, leisure entertainment and enjoyment.	The results show that there are different motives based on spectator types (on-site paid, off-site spectators, on-site complimentary spectators). Socialisation motive is the main motive for on-site paid and off-site spectators. Leisure entertainment motive is the main motive for on-site complimentary spectators.

Such discrepancies highlight that, although classifications provide a basic framework for understanding travel motives (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Kim & Eves, 2012; Matheson et al., 2014; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012), the complex interplay of travel motives requires further investigation in specific tourism contexts, especially special events. Further, investigation can also enhance the understanding of the impact of motives on the post-consumption evaluation of travel experiences and consumer behaviour (see Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010; Han & Hyun, 2018; Hsu, Cai, & Li, 2010; Ji, Wong, Eves, & Scarles, 2016; Luo & Deng, 2008). More specifically, although the growing number of studies within the context of special events have noted the effect of travel motives on satisfaction and behavioural intention or loyalty (e.g., Funk, Alexandris, & Ping, 2009; Kim, Jang, & Adler, 2015; Lee et al., 2004), some studies posit that individual motives can explain customer engagement to understand the level of individual interactivity with their consumption experiences (Brodie et al., 2013; van Doorn et al., 2010). This is in line with Vale and Fernandes (2018), and van Doorn et al. (2010), who agree on the importance of motives in driving customers to engage, and suggest that the application of engagement can measure the actual behaviour of customers (Organ et al., 2015).

The body of work established by Taheri et al. (2014) considers cultural exploration motives (e.g., knowledge exploration, self-expression, enjoyment, recreation, person enrichment, and cultural capital) in order to understand the levels of engagement. The findings suggest that multiple motivations emerge from intrinsic (behaviour for its own sake) and/or extrinsic (behaviour for external rewards) motives, with differing motives affecting the customers' level of engagement with tourism activities. Importantly, Taheri et al. (2014), and Kim, Chiang, and Tang (2017) argue that whilst travel motives act as triggers of customer engagement with a tourism context, a context-specific set of measures is needed given that the usefulness of different types of travel motive are not uniform across varied tourism attractions and special events.

Capturing travel motives requires a motivational force perspective as it offers a superior diagnostic into how motives propel customers to engage with a focal object. For example,

regulatory mode orientation can facilitate an in-depth understanding of “can do” motivational force that reflects individuals' capacity to achieve, and their self-started behaviour in pursuing goals (Higgins, Kruglanski, & Pierro, 2003). Regulatory mode orientation will be further discussed below.

#### **2.3.1.2. Regulatory mode orientation**

Regulatory mode orientation is often used to generate a better understanding of personal motivation and behaviour (Higgins et al., 2003; Kopetz, Kruglanski, Arens, Etkin, & Johnson, 2012), and reflects a customer's traits or regulatory modes. Although the regulatory mode orientation was originally grounded in the social psychology literature (Higgins, 1997), it has been used in marketing to examine customers' decision-making strategies, and explain individuals' choice selection (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Higgins et al., 2003).

Regulatory mode theory, as noted by Kruglanski et al. (2000), refers to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural motivational patterns that influence the strategies adopted by individuals to achieve their goals. These strategies for goal attainment are influenced by two different motivational orientations: locomotion and assessment (Kruglanski et al., 2000). The locomotion orientation refers to a propensity for continuous action. Kruglanski et al. (2000) define locomotion orientation as, *“the aspect of self-regulation concerned with movement from state to state and with committing the psychological resources that will initiate and maintain goal-related movement in a straightforward and direct manner, without undue distractions or delays”* (p. 794). High locomotors exhibit individual traits, such as good time management skills, when addressing their needs, and demonstrate an enhanced ability to set goals and task priorities, which results in increased perceived control over their time (Amato, Pierro, Chirumbolo, & Pica, 2014; Mauro, Pierro, Mannetti, Higgins, & Kruglanski, 2009; Pierro, Giacomantonio, Pica, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2011). Furthermore, when it comes to selecting strategies to achieve their goals, individuals who are high on locomotion prefer to make simultaneous assessments of all available choices rather than engaging in a series of



sequential steps of comparison (Avnet & Higgins, 2003; Mannetti, Pierro, Higgins, & Kruglanski, 2012), and desire to engage and react positively to new experiences (Aaker & Lee, 2006; Avnet & Higgins, 2003; Kruglanski, Pierro, Higgins, & Capozza, 2007).

According to regulatory mode theory, the opposite mode to locomotion orientation is assessment orientation. Assessment orientation is defined as *“the comparative aspect of self-regulation concerned with critically evaluating entities or states, such as goals or means, in relation to alternatives in order to judge relative quality”* (Kruglanski et al., 2000, p. 794). Customers with an assessment orientation are characterised by individual traits, such as a fear of invalidity and negative decision outcomes, and are uncomfortable with ambiguity (Pierro et al., 2011). As a result, they are preoccupied with critical, analytical, and methodological evaluations of each incremental step identified in their journey to goal attainment (Chernikova et al., 2016; Higgins et al., 2003; Pierro, Presaghi, Higgins, Klein, & Kruglanski, 2012). These individuals focus on the need to make the correct decision via comparing and critically assessing all options and alternative choices at each stage of completing a task (Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000; Mauro et al., 2009; Pierro et al., 2013). Meaning, they are more extrinsically motivated towards activity, and attempt to avoid being immersed in the event, situation or activity when performing their assessment and comparison of alternate choices (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Pierro, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2006).

The literature on regulatory mode orientation has shown that both locomotion and assessment regulatory mode are relevant to goal pursuit in a variety of contexts, such as branding (e.g., Avnet & Higgins, 2003; Lee & Koo, 2015; Mathmann et al., 2017a), advertising (e.g., Pierro et al., 2013), service (e.g., Jasmand et al., 2012), and organisation (e.g., Amato, Baron, Barbieri, Belanger, & Pierro, 2017; Kruglanski, Pierro, & Higgins, 2016; Sok et al., 2016) among others. The review of prior studies further shows that while some studies have adopted a single dimension of regulatory mode orientation (either locomotion or assessment orientation) (Kruglanski et al., 2016; Kruglanski et al., 2007; Mathmann, Chylinski, de Ruyter, & Higgins, 2017), some studies suggest adopting both locomotion and assessment

orientations (Amato et al., 2017; Sok et al., 2016) to determine the level of complementarity (Chernikova et al., 2016; Jasmand et al., 2012; Pierro, Chernikova, Destro, Higgins, & Kruglanski, 2018). Indeed, a closer examination of the literature suggests that a customer's regulatory mode is not static, and customers can oscillate between orientations, with the level of motivation varying dependent on the given context (Jasmand et al., 2012). Pierro et al. (2018) suggest that a combination of high locomotion and high assessment provides optimal success in goal attainment, particularly when met with a need to engage with challenging activities (Jasmand et al., 2012; Kruglanski et al., 2010). Previous research has shown that individuals whose regulatory mode orientation comprises both locomotion and assessment traits demonstrate greater levels of task performance in a work setting and better performance in academia (Kruglanski et al., 2000). According to these scholars, a combination of high locomotion and assessment orientation, rather than a single locomotion or assessment orientation, is the key to building a strong capacity for successful goal pursuit (Jasmand et al., 2012). The combination of high locomotion and assessment orientation is termed "the joint presence of locomotion and assessment orientations" throughout the thesis. Attendance at a special event, particularly if unfamiliar to a customer, can be considered a challenging activity that presents several psychological, physical, and economic risks (Kim, Lee, Uysal, Kim, & Ahn, 2015; Kruger & Saayman, 2015; Mariani & Giorgio, 2017). Given this, the influence of personality characteristics and regulatory mode orientation on customer engagement and motivation to invest with a special event, warrants further investigation.

An extensive list of personality characteristics can be identified in the motivation literature, such as that drawn from marketing (Cui & Wu, 2016; Jasmand et al., 2012; Xia & Suri, 2014) and tourism (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Hung & Petrick, 2011a; Kim & Ritchie, 2012). A closer look at the literature demonstrates that personality characteristics have a role to play in how customers seek feelings of achievement through their brand/service consumption activities (Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012; Hung & Lu, 2018; Li & Cai, 2012). For example, among the personality characteristics identified in the literature, self-image

congruence has been recognised as influencing consumption decisions as consumers are motivated to reinforce their self-concept through preferring, consuming, and engaging with brands/service/tourism offerings that contribute to achieving this goal (Graeff, 1996; Harrigan et al., 2018; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011; Sprott et al., 2009). The role of self-image congruence as a motivational force for customer engagement is explored in greater detail below.

#### **2.3.1.3. Customer's self-image, special event image congruence**

A review of the literature reveals self-image congruence as a motivator of customer engagement, which refers to the degree of match or mismatch between a product/service image, and a customer's self-image (Mannetti et al., 2004; Sirgy et al., 1997). Although self-image congruence originated in social psychology literature, the role of self-image congruence has been employed in a variety of domains to explain and predict customers' purchase motivation and behaviour (Mannetti, Pierro, & Livi, 2004; Sirgy et al., 1997). Research demonstrates that self-image congruence is valuable in explaining customers' reactions to product offerings and the brands they purchase and consume (Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Malär et al., 2011; Nyffenegger, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Malaer, 2015). It is also advocated that self-image congruence is an important driver in the creation of longer-lasting consumer-brand relationships (Malär et al., 2011; Reimann, Castaño, Zaichkowsky, & Bechara, 2012).

According to the literature, the role of self-image congruence is identified along four distinct dimensions including (1) actual self-image (e.g., how customers see themselves), (2) ideal self-image (e.g., how customers would like to see themselves), (3) social self-image (e.g., how customers think others see them), and (4) social ideal self-image (how customers would like to be perceived by other people) (Sirgy, Grewal, & Mangleburg, 2000). Self-image congruence studies are found to predominantly explore the individual actual, and ideal self-image dimensions (Shamah, Mason, Moretti, & Raggiotto, 2018), which serve as a powerful predictor of customer motivation to consume a product that reflects their personal self-image

(Ekinci, Dawes, & Massey, 2008; Malär et al., 2011). This is especially so because scholars believe that the social components of self-image congruence are strongly correlated with the actual and ideal self-image components and can be equally relevant (Ahn, Ekinci, & Li, 2013; Beerli, Meneses, & Gil, 2007; Ekinci & Riley, 2003; Shamah et al., 2018).

An examination of self-image congruence in the marketing and tourism literature indicates that the concept can be viewed from two perspectives. The first views self-image congruence as affecting the customer decision-making process, which can be used as a predictor of consumer's consumption decisions, such as product preferences (Branaghan & Hildebrand, 2011; Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani, & Fan, 2016), and product choice (Ahn et al., 2013). The second perspective reflects the influence of self-image congruence on the post-consumption evaluation of a brand/service experience. To illustrate the first perspective, Sirgy et al. (1997) argue that a customer has strong preferences for products or brands that exhibit a high level of self-image congruence. Similarly, Gupta and Pirsch (2006) argue that perceiving a strong congruence with a brand will lead to the customer generating a positive attitude and purchase intention towards that brand. Thus, it is suggested that a customer has preferences for, and purchases products that exhibit a higher level of congruence (Lee, 2009; Sirgy, Grzeskowiak, & Su, 2005).

However, Malär, Herzog, Krohmer, Hoyer, and Kähr (2018) argue that the congruence between brands and customers may not always produce a positive reaction. For example, Ahn et al. (2013) examine the relationship between self-image congruence and choice selection in the tourism context and determine that self-image congruence is not significantly related to destination choice. Further, the findings of Ahn et al. (2013) are inconsistent with the study of Hung and Petrick (2012) who determine that self-image congruence does influence choice in a cruising context. The potential reasons for this inconsistency might be not only the different types of tourism activities, and tourism destinations, but also the use of different self-image congruence measures. While the study of Hung and Petrick (2012) follows the gap score

measurement<sup>1</sup> of Sirgy (1982), Ahn et al. (2013) follow Sirgy et al. (1997) with the direct self-congruence measure version<sup>2</sup> (global assessment approach).

As previously noted, the second perspective of self-image congruence considers the concept from a consequence perspective of consumer behaviour. This perspective investigates the benefits of extending the concept to customer's post consumption experience, such as satisfaction (e.g., Ekinici et al., 2008; Jamal & Al-Marri, 2007), perceived quality (e.g., Chebat, Sirgy, & St-James, 2006; Kwak & Kang, 2009), loyalty (e.g., Haj-Salem, Chebat, Michon, & Oliveira, 2016; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012), and affective response (Liu, Li, Mizerski, & Soh, 2012; Malär et al., 2011; Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin, & Grohmann, 2015). That is, capturing the match or mismatch between customer's self-image and product image after products or services have been consumed. For example, Back (2005) examines the role of self-image congruence in predicting customers' perception of service providers. Back (2005) argues that the congruence between hotel customer image and hotel brand image leads to increased customer satisfaction towards the hotel, which results in hotel brand loyalty. In the same vein, Jamal and Goode (2001) have conducted a research with luxury products, specifically in the context of precious jewellery purchases in the UK market, and argue that consumers perceiving high levels of image congruence are more likely to be satisfied than those with low levels of image congruence.

Of these two perspectives, the first perspective appears to have received the most support from researchers for two reasons. First, self-image congruence is found to motivate a customer to consume a brand/service through the activation and operation of the self-

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<sup>1</sup> The traditional measure of self-image congruence or discrepancy scoring developed by Sirgy (1982) is captured on a semantic differential scale. The traditional approach of scale measurement widely used bipolar adjective pairs, which consists of items, such as sophisticated/unsophisticated, rugged/delicate, exciting/calm, modern/traditional. These items are developed from self-concept measures, which are commonly based on psychology personality measures.

<sup>2</sup> The global assessment of the self-image congruence scale version, developed by Sirgy et al. (1997), is a new measurement to overcome a gap score limitation (see Ahn et al., 2013). The direct measurement approach captures the self-image congruence experience directly. The direct measurement approach focuses explicitly on the match between customer's self-image and brand/product image. The use of written information to compare the congruence between customer's self-image and brand/product image ensures a greater level of self-image congruence (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004).

consistency motive (Sirgy et al., 1997). In this sense, self-image congruence is the key driving force that determines the customers' choice selection to purchase products or service (Ahn et al., 2013; Hosany & Martin, 2012; Kressmann et al., 2006). Second, self-image congruence provides a diagnostic tool for the customer-brand/service fit that permits the prediction of customer's activation, operation, and future behavioural intention (Harrigan et al., 2018; Hollenbeck & Kaikati, 2012; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012). For instance, Geissler and Rucks (2011) argue that engaging in a personally relevant service experience is perceived as more important from a customer's view. The position advanced by the study of Geissler and Rucks (2011) appears to support the results commonly observed in the service marketing and tourism literature. For example, Ma et al. (2013) find that when a customer establishes a positive connection with a brand/service, it enhances the experience of satisfying their personal needs or goals, and elicits interest or a favourable brand/service impression. Further, it increases the level of active engagement with the brand/service, which impacts the customer-brand long-term connection. Thus, it can be seen that the degree of customer-brand/service congruence is influenced by motivation and emotion as determined by the psychological and behavioural responses of consumers. Emphasis is therefore given to examining motivational force from the customer's self-image, and brand/service image congruence perspective.

A closer examination also reveals that customers tend to engage in psychological and behaviour patterns in a way that increases their self-concept (Ekinici et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2012; Morhart et al., 2015). Sprott et al. (2009) have developed a valid scale measurement of self-concept in brand engagement, with findings suggesting that customers have the ability to establish links between brands and their self-concept, which influences their brand perception, interest, preference, and repurchase intention. More recently, Harrigan et al. (2018) argue that customer engagement with a brand can explicitly influence both the consumer's self-image and the brand's image. Given this, examining motivation for engagement by drawing on the self-image congruence concept is critical, since the degree of congruence can influence customers' perceptions of the brand/service quality and experience superiority.

In summary, consumers are motivated to engage with products that they feel fit with their decision-making and own identity and self-image (cf. Gagné & Deci, 2005). A review of the marketing and tourism literature shows that self-image congruence is increasingly gaining support in the marketing and tourism context (Boksberger et al., 2011; Harrigan et al., 2018; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012), yet research capturing its role in motivating customer engagement remains very limited, particularly with regard to particular contexts such as special events. For example, self-image congruence has been viewed as a motivation to engage with special events to satisfy the need for social identification (Graeff, 1996; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2008); an antecedent to the post consumption evaluation of a brand/service consumption, such as satisfaction, loyalty, and preference (Haj-Salem et al., 2016; Huber, Eisele, & Meyer, 2018; Malär et al., 2011; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; Roy & Rabbanee, 2015); or a contingency (i.e., moderator) affecting the service offerings effect of other post-consumption evaluation of service offerings, such as perceived value (O'Cass & Grace, 2008). To this end, understanding the motivational forces for customer engagement is a critical issue.

To further support customers' propensity to engage with service offerings, Goulding (2000) argues that service products have unique characteristics, such as process and performance. A variety of service products (especially tourism products), are delivered in a physical environment that influences the motives of customers, perceived crowding, customer interest, and engagement (Bateson, 1992). Indeed, aspects of the physical environment, such as crowding, can affect customer motivation and emotional engagement with a tourism site, resulting in a variety of responses, such as stress, fun, enjoyment, or enthusiasm. The perception of crowding can explain why some consumers respond negatively in their behavioural response, and some positively (attendance, participation, and desire to stay or ignore), to a crowded environment (Baker & Wakefield, 2012; Wakefield & Blodgett, 2016). These discrepancies highlight why researchers should consider diverse consumer motives in the service and tourism setting (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003), and why there is a need when

measuring motivational forces on customer engagement, to give greater emphasis to capturing the specific dimensions, such as perceived crowding, that exist in the tourism context, in this instance, special events.

## **2.4. PERCEIVED CROWDING**

Whilst a primary goal of marketing managers is to attract the optimum number of customers to their product (Eroglu, Machleit, & Barr, 2005; Machleit, Eroglu, & Mantel, 2000), this can result in perceived crowding, which Stokols (1972) defines as a psychological mindset that occurs when the demand from the number of people and objects within a defined space exceeds supply. Machleit et al. (2000) argue that the density of a crowd can restrict and interfere with an individual's goals and activities and result in a negative evaluation of that space's atmosphere. According to Machleit, Kellaris, and Eroglu (1994), perceived crowding consists of two dimensions, human crowding and spatial crowding. Perceived human crowding is based on the number of people as well as the social interactions in a given area, while perceptions of spatial crowding result from restricted physical movement based on the amount of merchandise, fixtures, and their configuration within a given space (Eroglu et al., 2005b; Li et al., 2009).

Closer examination reveals that the perception of crowding can have both negative and positive effects on customers' emotional responses and their evaluations of an environment across a wide range of service marketing and tourism areas (e.g., Eroglu et al., 2005a; Hui & Bateson, 1991; Lee & Graefe, 2003; Li et al., 2009). However, much research has demonstrated that perceived crowding largely generates a negative response outcome (e.g., Kim & Park, 2008; Kim & Runyan, 2011; Van Rompay, Galetzka, Pruyn, & Garcia, 2008; Yildirim & Akalin-Baskaya, 2007). For example, within the context of retailing, Eroglu and Machleit (1990) examine customer perceptions of crowding while shopping, with the results showing that higher levels of perceived crowding led customers to feel increased levels of negative outcomes during the shopping process, due to a perception of restricted movement.



In addition, some scholars suggest that a higher level of perceived crowding in a retail store (either human or spatial density) can decrease the time spent at the store, reduce impulse buying (Lee, Kim, & Li, 2011; Li et al., 2009), and produce a negative evaluation of service providers due to the customer feeling uncomfortable with the service process (Robson, Kimes, Becker, & Evans, 2011). Furthermore, Baker and Wakefield (2012) examine customers' emotional reaction to perceived crowding to explain the influence on patronage intention in the retailing service setting. The findings suggest that perceived crowding influences a customer's personal psychological state of mind and can increase feelings of stress, whilst simultaneously reducing feelings of shopping excitement and enjoyment, and decreasing the level of patronage intention (Baker & Wakefield, 2012).

While much research suggests that perceived crowding has a negative impact on the customer consumption experience, there are studies to contradict this. For example, some studies show that perceived crowding can generate a positive impact on particular consumers because they need to enhance their social status and social interaction (Baker & Wakefield, 2012). Eroglu and Harrell (1986) developed a conceptual framework reveals that when a certain amount of customer intimacy is needed, customers tend to pursue high environmental density. Meaning human crowding can contribute positively to the emotion of customers, their evaluation of the consumption experience (Pons, Giroux, Mourali, & Zins, 2016), and their spending patterns (van Rompay et al., 2012) due to varying customer motives for engagement, customer characteristics, and consumption contexts.

Despite inconsistencies in perceived crowding research within the marketing literature (Song & Noone, 2017), the crowding concept has been transferred and investigated in the tourism domain in order to better understand customers' responses to their perceptions of crowding (Fleishman, Feitelson, & Salomon, 2004; Ryan & Cessford, 2003). For example, tourism studies have investigated the influence of perceived crowding on various aspects of post-consumption behaviour, such as the evaluation of life satisfaction or happiness, customer satisfaction, quality, restriction of physical body movement, traffic flow, perceived and actual

time spent shopping, along with the desire to interact with other people or event organisers (Kim et al., 2016; Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000; Zehrer & Raich, 2016). However, as with the marketing literature, previous perceived crowding research in the tourism domain also presents inconsistent findings. For example, Popp (2012) explores the impact of crowding on tourist's experience and evaluation towards the heritage city, Florence, Italy. The findings from tourist interviews reveal that high density crowding negatively affects tourist reactions and lead to feelings of stress and dissatisfaction with the destination site. This suggests that tourists who perceive crowding to have a negative impact on their level of stress, may try to avoid engagement with that destination (i.e., historic tourist cities) (Popp, 2012). Yet, other research suggests that tourists can enjoy interacting with a crowded environment, and generate a positive evaluation of an attraction site.

An analysis of perceived crowding literature therefore suggests that while some customers tend to avoid crowded environments and decide to stop interacting with a service offering, others seek to actively engage with a crowded environment as they desire to increase social interaction and improve social status in a particular context. The primary goal of destination marketing organisations is to attract more customers to visit their tourism destination and engage with activities, such as a special event, to create a unique customer experience (Kim, 2014). This suggests a need for further research in order to clarify how perceived crowding may affect customer engagement and their final evaluation of a special event offering, and, subsequently, influence the destination marketing organisations performance.

## **2.5. PERCEIVED QUALITY OF SPECIAL EVENT**

The perceived superior quality of a brand/product from a customer's perspective is of paramount importance as it can create a competitive advantage for a firm (Buttle, 1996; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Parasuraman, 1997). Therefore, customers' perception of service quality has become an essential measurement of actual service consumption experience (Bolton & Drew,

1991; Chen & Chen, 2010). The perceived service quality literature has received much attention from both marketing academics and managers in the past three decades (Caro & Garcia, 2007; Wu, Cheng, & Ai, 2018).

An analysis of the literature shows that perceived service quality can be rooted in the disconfirmation paradigm, which argues that the quality of service is determined by comparing customers' expectations of service against their perception of what they actually receive (technical quality) (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1996), and how they received it (functional quality) (Grönroos, 1984). Grönroos (1984) also highlights that perceived service quality results from evaluation of the holistic bundle of a product/service offering. The criterion of functional quality is claimed to be a greater necessity than technical quality, the reason being that a negative feeling generated from, for example, a poor perception of employee-customer interaction (functional quality), can outweigh evaluations of products and services that meet high quality standards (technical quality) (Grönroos, 1984). Likewise, in a sample of services firms, Lovelock, Patterson, and Wirtz (2011) point out that perceived service quality is evaluated post consumption according to individual customer's own perception of quality, and their own personal traits and goals. Perceived service quality is therefore an important element in customer evaluation of service offerings (Brocato, Baker, & Voorhees, 2015; So et al., 2016b).

A closer examination of the literature shows that there are various approaches to service quality perceptions. For example, Zeithaml (1988) defines quality of service as the consumer's assessment about a brand, product or goods overall excellence or superiority. Presenting a similar perspective, Bitner and Hubbert (1994) present the definition of service quality as *"the customer's overall impression of the relative inferiority and superiority of the organisation and its services"* (p. 77). Parasuraman et al. (1988), recognise the perception of service quality as multi-dimensional, and established the SERVQUAL measurement instrument, which recognises tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Although the integrity of the SERVQUAL instrument has been questioned in the literature (e.g.,

Brady & Cronin, 2001; Crompton & Love, 1995; Dabholkar, Thorpe, & Rentz, 1996; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Rust & Oliver, 1994), it remains a universally employed conceptualisation of customers' perception of service quality (e.g., Chen & Chen, 2010; Ngo & O'Cass, 2013; So et al., 2016b; Su, Swanson, & Chen, 2016). The reason being, is that this conceptualisation identifies the five core principles that customers can use to evaluate the quality of a service offering (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Among these different perspectives of perceived quality of service, a common theme in this literature is the view that the measurement of actual interaction in service encounters reflects a customer's perceptions of and feelings about their entire service encounters (e.g., Chan & Baum, 2007; Chen & Chen, 2010; Dong & Siu, 2013). Importantly, Roy et al. (2018) state that perceived service quality improves the customer-service relationship leading to sustainable competitive advantage, such as customer behavioural intention and loyalty. Perceived quality of service is critical since it is a significant determinant of the service-customer relationship and customer experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Roberts, Varki, & Brodie, 2003; So et al., 2016b). Considering that customer's perceived quality of special event offerings is a priority for managers, its measurement from the customer perspective must be addressed (Fernandes & Cruz, 2016; Klaus & Maklan, 2012). This is particularly critical in contexts such as tourism, where experiences are the core of the product or service (Yuan & Wu, 2008).

## **2.6. CONCLUSION**

Proactive motivational orientations have been identified as key reasons driving customer engagement with a focal object, as such, studying the customer decision-making process to enhance understanding becomes a critical issue. Understanding the output of customer engagement with a focal object can help to understand customers' perceptions of service quality and also foster customer-service long-term connection and relationship. However, as identified in Section 1.3 (in Chapter One), the specific process through which

customer engagement contributes to perceived quality remains largely unclear. This Chapter has presented a review of the literature outlining the background of the customer engagement concept and the definitions of customer engagement. Further, investigation has been given to triggers for driving and fostering customer engagement, with the literature review suggesting that customer engagement results from motivational drivers and regulatory mode, yet how customers actively engage with a specific object, such as service and brand, remains unclear. Such a lack of clarity might be due to the inconsistent and tautological manner in which customer engagement has been viewed in the extant literature.

The theoretical lens of motivational theories has been used to investigate the role of proactive motivation and regulatory mode theories in customer engagement. The service marketing literature, especially in the tourism sector context, has never investigated the role of customer traits in a customer's proactive engagement with a tourism product. Therefore, appropriate application of proactive motivation and regulatory mode orientation concepts in a tourism context, in this instance, special events, is important to understanding customer expectations and satisfaction with their goals and needs.

To better understand customers in the engagement process, the role of self-image congruence and perceived crowding have also been examined as they can influence customer motivation to engage, and their perceptions of service quality. As demonstrated in the literature review, self-image congruence reflects the match or mismatch between the customer self-image and the product image. This concept is valuable for understanding the motives for customers to interact with a special event offering. The literature review identified that a closer fit between the customer self-image and product image, is more likely to enhance customer engagement with a focal object and result in perceived high value and quality of service offerings. The review of literature also justified the need to further investigate the role of perceived crowding on customer engagement, and perceived quality of outcomes in the leisure and tourism domains. This is vital considering that the main goal of tourism organisations is to attract a large number of customers to visit their host destination, yet the review of literature

suggests that the perceived density of crowding in an environmental space could produce either a positive or negative customer response towards the tourism destination. Therefore, such factors may be viewed as either an impediment or a facilitator of customer engagement, depending on the customer characteristics.

Building on the foundation this Chapter presents, further theoretical and hypothesis development are provided in the following Chapter in order to cement the role of proactive motivation, regulatory mode orientation, and self-image congruence in driving customer engagement, and how they interrelate with perceived event crowding to translate into customer's perceptions of service quality.

## Chapter Three

### Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

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#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

The Tourism industry has been developing globally to become one of the fastest growing industries (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). Despite the economic and political challenges across the world, the sector continues to expand, create more jobs, and advance economies. Among so many favourable destinations, Thailand has become one of the most preferred destinations because of its rich cultural values and distinctive tourist attractions (Liu, Li, & Parkpian, 2018). One of the key marketing approaches adopted by tourism organisations in Thailand is organising special events to illustrate cultural values and heritage.

A special event is created for a specific purpose related to business, sport, and/or entertainment, and to provide a unique experience outside the everyday tourism experiences (Getz, 2005; Getz & Page, 2016). Getz (2008) believes that special events are unique because of discrete interactions among the settings, people, and management systems including the design elements and the program. The unique distinguishing feature of special events is that they are never the same, and that the customer has to be present in the environment, engage in the experience, and personalise the experience to fully enjoy the special event (Organ et al., 2015). While a primary requirement of special events is satisfying customer needs through engagement (Mair & Whitford, 2013; Manthiou et al., 2014), the literature does not provide clarification on what type of motives regulate customers' behaviours and motivate them to engage with a special event. Further, the literature provides little evidence to explain if differing motives contribute equally to engaging customers with different special events.

Chapter One, section 1.2, introduced the research questions and identified gaps in the literature. Chapter Two, section 2.2, reviewed the current literature to provide the backbone of

the research and support the proposed gaps presented in Chapter One. Chapter Three presents the theoretical model grounded in the customer engagement literature and proactive motivation theory to address the primary research questions introduced in Chapter One. Proactive motivation theory focuses on how individuals achieve their goals. More specifically, the theory addresses the “reason” that forces individuals to engage with a focal object, and individuals “can do” behavioural approach to achieving their goals. To this end, the following research questions were developed in Chapter 1:

Research Question 1 (a): To what extent are travel motives (reason to) related to customer engagement with a special event?

Research Question 1 (b): What role does a customer’s regulatory mode orientation (can do) play in the relationship between special event travel motives and their customer engagement with special events?

Research question 2: To what extent is customer engagement with a special event related to their perception of the quality of the special event?

Research Question 3: What role does customer self-image-special event image congruence play in the relationship between customer engagement with a special event and the perceived quality of a special event?

Research Question 4: What role does perceived crowding at special events play in the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event?

The discussion and development of the theoretical framework is presented in two sections in this Chapter. First, Section 3.2 focuses on defining special events and provides an overview and background of special events in Thailand (the country context for the study). Second, Section 3.3 explains the primary building blocks of the model, which includes three subsections. Section 3.3.1 focuses on defining the underlying components in the context of special events. Section 3.3.2 focuses on hypotheses development in terms of the direct effects:



the role of reason to motivation (travel motives) as triggers for driving customer engagement with a special event, which creates hypotheses 1 and 2 to address RQ1a. This section also presents the role of customer engagement with a special event and their perception of special event quality (RQ2), and presents hypothesis 3 to answer RQ2. Section 3.3.3 focuses on hypotheses development in terms of the moderation effects: the role of “can do” as triggers for fostering customer engagement with a special event, and creating hypotheses 4 and 5 to address RQ1b. In addition, this section brings in the role of customer self-image-special event congruence and perceived crowding of special event playing in the relationship between customer engagement with a special event and perceived quality of a special event, and presents hypotheses 6 and 7 to answer RQ3 and RQ4, respectively. Section 3.4 closes the chapter with concluding comments.

### **3.2. SPECIAL EVENTS IN THAILAND**

Special events play a significant role in the tourism industry because they provide opportunities for leisure, social, and cultural experiences (Getz, 2008; Getz & Page, 2016). Given the nature of special events, tourism organisations in many countries use them to market the host destinations and attract people by providing additional unique experiences (Getz & Page, 2016). Thus, there are a variety of themes and types of special events, such as those demonstrating the cultural and social values of the host country that have developed to offer unique customer experiences. Therefore, given the specific country context and focus on special events within Thailand as the country context, a background of special events in Thailand is provided here to frame the study before developing the theory and hypotheses in subsequent sections.

The literature provides a range of definitions for a special event, such as that presented by Getz (2005), and Getz and Page (2016) in Section 3.1., and Getz’s (2008) comprehensive definition for special events, viewing them as public activities to celebrate and deliver opportunities for unique leisure, social, or cultural experiences that are outside the usual range

of choices, or beyond everyday life. There is common agreement among scholars that special events occur once in a lifetime, or infrequently in a limited period of time, to deliver iconic experiences with unique cultural, traditional, and social presentations for visitors (Bowdin, O'Toole, Allen, Harris, & McDonnell, 2006; Jago & Shaw, 1998; Oklobdžija, 2015; Way & Robertson, 2013).

Special events vary in size, scope, and content (Getz & Page, 2016), and can encompass sporting events, entertainment and music festivals, and art and cultural events (Arcodia & Barker, 2003; Mair & Whitford, 2013). The Thai tourism associations and companies organise a variety of special events with different themes and sizes. These special events are enriched by Thai cultural values, native cuisine, and a tradition of friendliness and hospitality (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017; Williams et al., 2007). Some of the most appealing special events are the Sukhothai Loy Krathong and Candle Festival, the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival, and the Khon Kaen International Marathon. Given this fact, these special events were selected because of their popularity and most important events in Thailand (the Thai Embassy, 2019; Worlds Marathons, 2018). Further, the different nature of these special events provide insights of if determinants of engagement and similar contingencies in different context vary. The Sukhothai Loy Krathong and Candle Festival is a significant national cultural special event in Thailand, organised at the Sukhothai Historical Park (UNESCO World Heritage site) (Pacific Asia Travel Association, 2016). This special event attracts a large number of both domestic and international tourists, with more than 300,000 tourists visiting over four days (Bangkok Post Public Company Limited, 2017).

Another of Thailand's cultural events is the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival. This special event is also a cultural event, under the concept of 'millions of blooms'. According to the Centre for Economic and Business Forecasting report, Chiang Mai is reportedly booked out with tourists during the special event (Centre for Economic and Business Forecasting, 2018; Fry, Nieminen, & Smith, 2013). The Khon Kaen International Marathon is considered to be a major special event held in Thailand. This sporting event is the largest and greatest

marathon in Thailand (Worlds Marathons, 2018). In 2017, this special event attracted more than 50,000 runners from 40 nations (Khon Kaen International Marathon, 2018). For these reasons, these three special events in Thailand are considered important in the development of Thailand's tourism economy. Moreover, people go to different special events for different reasons (Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). Therefore, these three special events are appropriate examples to represent distinctiveness of cultural and sporting events in Thailand. In this sense, the details of each special event are presented below.

### **3.2.1. The Sukhothai's Loy Kratong Candle Festival**

Even though the Loy Kratong festival is now celebrated throughout Thailand, it originated in Sukhothai, which is the first Thai capital and the most famous historical park (about 1000 years old). The special event features several activities including floating of the traditional lanterns, fireworks, Thai traditional folk dancing, and a spectacular light and sound presentation. The core concept delivered in this special event is demonstrating the authenticity of local cultural heritage and values, Thai daily life, and lifestyle (see pictures 3.1). Pictures 3.2 and 3.3 demonstrate customer engagement with the special event to experience Thai lifestyle, and practically learn cultural values via cooking local food, producing local handicrafts, and practicing local dancing. Thereby suggesting that customers who visit this event and engage in its activities wish to learn new things and explore new experiences and lifestyle.

**Picture 3.1:** Example of light, sound, and folk dancing at the event



**Picture 3.2:** Example of customers experiencing Thai Folk dancing



**Picture 3.3:** Example of cooking authentic Thai food and creating handicrafts by customers



### 3.2.2. The Chiang Mai International Flower Festival

The Chiang Mai International Flower Festival is Thailand's greatest flower show that aims to marry ancient and modern floral art to exemplify the traditions of the ancient Lanna Kingdom. The special event features a parade of floats made with local colourful flowers, beautiful hill tribe girls dressed in traditional clothing, local dancers who perform traditional dancing all the way along the parade route, and a beauty contest. Overall the special event aims to present the integration of the nature and culture of Thailand. As illustrated in pictures 3.4 and 3.5, the special event allows customers to dress up in traditional costumes and join in



traditional Thai dances. Given that the special event is an integration of nature and culture, it provides an opportunity to escape from daily routine life and experience excitement that may happen once in a lifetime.

**Picture 3.4:** Example of the event parade



**Picture 3.5:** Example of marrying nature and tradition by dressing up in traditional costumes and local flowers



### 3.2.3. The Khon Kaen International Marathon

The Khon Kaen International Marathon is the annual sporting event that draws marathon runners to this North-eastern part of Thailand. The marathon will take runners on a path through cultural attractions and multiple local landmarks. Participants are inspired by the cheering local audiences dressed in colourful costumes, and exciting music and songs. As

shown in pictures 3.6, the event allows tourists to experience and explore new excitement, interact with other people who have similar interests, and increase their social status by winning the competition and receiving a unique medal gift.

**Picture 3.6:** Example of the marathon route and the marathon medal



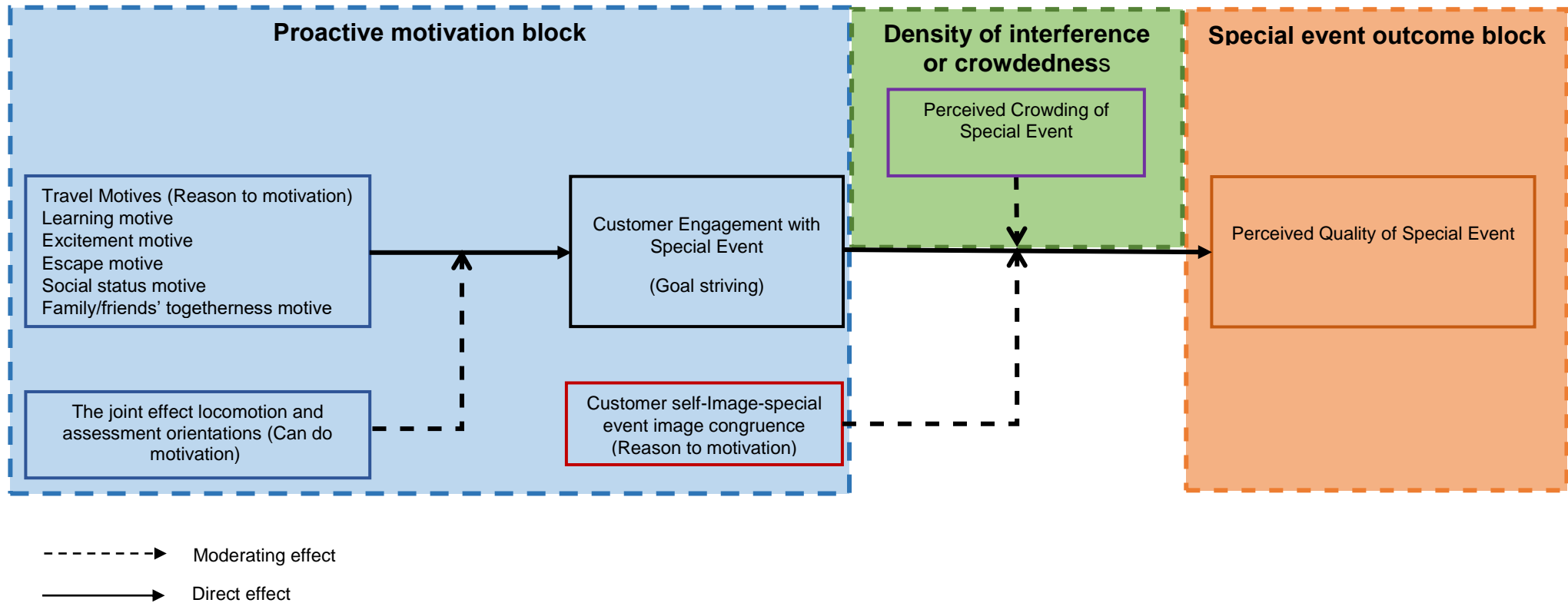
**Picture 3.7:** Example of the marathon route and the marathon runners



### 3.3. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in Chapter One, the theoretical framework is advanced to address the research questions. Further, based on the discussions in Chapter Two, Figure 3.1 identifies the motivational forces driving the customer engagement processes and perceived special event crowding as critical inputs into the perceived quality of a special event as the focal outcome of customer engagement. Figure 3.1 presents the theoretical framework developed for this study. The blue shaded area represents the interaction of travel motives (reason to motivation) and regulatory mode orientation (can do motivation) in driving and creating the conditions necessary for customer engagement with special events. Customer self-image-special event image congruence represents a specific “reason to” force that influences decision to engage with a special event and contributes to a customer’s perceived quality of a special event. The green shaded area represents the moderating component that examines the role of perceived crowding in facilitating the ability of customers to achieve or not achieve their goals in special events where the level of crowding may be a key condition. The orange shaded area represents a direct outcome of engagement in the form customers perceived level of special event quality. In the sections that follow, emphasis is given to unpacking this theoretical framework in a stage-by-stage manner by defining the components in the context of special events, articulating how and why the focal constructs embedded in each construct are logically tied, and culminating in the development of a framework for customer engagement with special events.

**Figure 3.1:**  
Customer Engagement with Special Event Model: Drivers and Consequences



Source: developed for this study



### 3.3.1. Model development Stage, 1: Definition of the underlying component

Special events are designed to address customers' needs (Yolal et al., 2016). Satisfying these needs might be triggered intrinsically or extrinsically and vary from learning new things to interaction with a particular space or socialising with others. However, an important point to understand is that each customer has to be present in the environment and engage with the special event and everything associated with it in order to enjoy the unique once in a lifetime experience. Drawing on So et al. (2016b), customer engagement in this study is defined as a customer's affective, cognitive, and behavioural responses towards the special event that meets and satisfies customers' needs and goals.

Customer engagement has benefits for both customers and organisations. The positive advantages for customers engaging in special events appear to be customising the experience to their own needs to enjoy the special event more, and improving their remembered experience quality of the special event over time (Manthiou et al., 2014; Organ et al., 2015). For organisations, engaged customers demonstrate positive behaviours towards the organisation, such as casting favourable words about the company and repeat visitation (Bryce et al., 2015; Tjørndal, 2018; Zhang, Gordon, Buhalis, & Ding, 2018).

While the literature around engagement is advancing, it still lacks understanding of what triggers engagement, and what personality characteristics induce engagement. In this setting one possible path to explore this lack of understanding may be through proactive drivers of behaviour. Proactive motivation theory provides a foundation and logical explanation to overcome these shortcomings in the literature. Proactive motivation theory explains what reasons stimulate individuals to engage in specific behaviours and how they control the situation to satisfy their needs (Bindl, Parker, Totterdell, & Hagger-Johnson, 2012; Raub & Liao, 2012). Proactive motivation is defined as *"make things happen rather than watching things happen, which involves aspiring and striving to bring about change in the environment and/or oneself to achieve a different future"* (Parker, Bindl & Strauss, 2010, p. 828). In simple terms proactive motivation explains the "reason to" and "can do", whereby the reasons drive or motivate customers to engage in a special event, and the customer's capability to engage

affects their achievement of the goal set for experiencing the event (self-regulation and/or self-efficacy). The goals of travelling might be triggered by internal or external motives, such as learning new things, escaping from daily life and being with others, or achieving social status and recognition. Travel motives in this study reflect customers' perception of their reasons for engaging in special event offerings, and to strive to achieve their goals (cf., Graves, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Weber, 2012; Parker et al., 2010).

This study focuses on five key dimensions of the "reason to" motivation: learning, excitement, escape, social status, and family/friends' togetherness motives. The learning motive is defined as gaining knowledge, learning new things, and developing the skills and understanding related to special events (Crompton & McKay, 1997). The excitement motive refers to reaching an exciting experience and the thrills and uniqueness of the special event (Backman et al., 1995; Foster & Robinson, 2010). While the escape motive is defined as pursuing relaxation and refreshment of oneself mentally and physically from the everyday life stresses (Foster & Robinson, 2010), the social status motive represents increasing self-esteem, recognition, and the desire to be distinguished from others (Kim & Lee, 2000). Finally, the family/friends' togetherness motive refers to spending time and enjoying a special event with family members and friends (Crompton & McKay, 1997).

While customers are motivated to achieve their goals and engage in a special event, their levels of engagement might be conditionally based on personality characteristics that regulate their behaviour by dictating the extent, intensity, willingness, and ability to engage in the required type of behaviour (cf., Higgins et al., 2003). Regulatory mode theory, as an extension of proactive motivation theory, provides the foundation for explaining why, when, and how customer traits in terms of "can do", contribute to achieving goals and encourage engagement in a special event (cf., Parker et al., 2010).

Regulatory mode theory explains how individuals assess the goals, decide on which goal to pursue, and commit to achieving the selected goal (Chernikova et al., 2016; Higgins et al., 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). As explained in Chapter Two, section 2.3.1.2, locomotion and assessment orientations are two components of regulatory mode theory and explain the

“can do” motivation, where emphasis is on the personality characteristics and how these condition customers to engage in certain behaviours (Higgins et al., 2003). Locomotion orientation, is defined in this study as customers’ ability to move away from a current state to a new state with no necessary ultimate destination, direction, or place in mind (Kruglanski et al., 2000). Assessment orientation represents a motivation to critically evaluate available alternatives to ensure the decision-making quality and that the best outcomes are obtained (Kruglanski et al., 2000). These personality characteristics may have important implications for customer engagement as they complement each other, regulate, and condition customers’ behaviour to assess and select the type, and the number of activities in the event that will satisfy their needs (cf., Avnet & Higgins, 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2007). As engaging with a special event offering poses the regulatory mode orientation, this study proposes that the joint effect of locomotion-oriented and assessment-oriented enhances customer engagement.

While regulatory mode orientation may act as the boundary conditions to regulate customers’ behaviours and explain when the effect of motives on engagement is stronger, it is also necessary to identify other boundary conditions that enhance or attenuate the effect of customer engagement on their assessment of the special event offerings. How customers assess the event and its quality as a result of their engagement, may depend on the level of congruency between their self-concept and the special event-image, and their perception of the environment. Self-image congruence represents the degree of match or mismatch between a product/service image and a customer’s self-image (Sirgy et al., 1997). The broad concept of fit in goal pursuit concerns the relation between an individual’s regulatory orientation to an activity, and the manner in which that activity is pursued (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Parker et al., 2010). Fit makes people engage more strongly in what they are doing and feel right about it (Higgins, 2006). When individuals perceive congruency between their self-image and special event image, they feel more comfortable as it intensifies the level of interest, fun, enjoyment, and value received, which translates into an assessment of the perceived quality of the special event.

While customer self-image-special event image congruence may act as a catalyst to intensify the effect of customer engagement on their perceived quality of the special event, perceived crowding may negatively affect this relationship. Perceived crowding is defined as a psychological mindset that occurs when the demand from the number of people and objects within a defined space exceeds supply (Eroglu et al., 2005a). Environmental elements, density of interference, or the crowdedness of the environment may condition engaged customers to assess the quality of a special event (Lee & Graefe, 2003; Luque-Gil, Gómez-Moreno, & Peláez-Fernández, 2018). Crowding and density can interfere with the individual's ability to control the situation and achieve their goals (Gramann, 1982). The rationale for these relationships is outlined in section 3.3.2 to 3.3.3 below.

### **3.3.2. Model development, Stage 2 - Hypotheses development: The direct effects**

#### **3.3.2.1. Reason to motivation (travel motives) and customer engagement in special events in Thailand**

Travel motives are important determinants of travelling and can explain the reason why an individual travel (Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015; Sangpikul, 2008). The literature review in Chapter Two, Section 2.3.1.1 revealed that customers travel for different reasons. They travel to advance their knowledge about cultures and experience authentic cultural values and tradition (Chiang, Wang, Lee, & Chen, 2015; Jovicic, 2016). However, some travel to escape from daily life or just because they have to take a holiday as prescribed by their job description (Tsui & Fung, 2016; Yousefi & Marzuki, 2012). Considering the motives behind travelling, customers will participate in different activities to satisfy a specific need (Lo & Lee, 2011; Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Rittichainuwat et al., 2008). In many situations, these activities are considerably aligned with the motives that encourage them to engage with a special event (Park et al., 2008; Pegg & Patterson, 2010).

In special events, customers engage in a variety of practices because they are enthusiastic about learning and advancing their general knowledge about cultural values,

traditional foods and arts, as well as history. Therefore, these customers are driven by learning motives to engage in special events. They seek to optimise their interactions with staff, engage with different activities in the special event, and socialise with other customers in order to exchange ideas and develop knowledge about the cultural values and traditions. These customers concentrate on, and become absorbed in the activities they participate in at special events to the point where they may even forget about time.

However, some travel because they seek relaxation or hope to experience something new and different that separates them from their daily life and decreases their daily stress. These customers are driven by escape motives, and desire to find somewhere to relax and enjoy participating in activities that allow them to rest and decrease their stress and fatigue (Chung, Koo, & Kim, 2014; Han & Hyun, 2018). These types of customers engage in activities that provide them relaxation, such as dancing, taking part in a parade, and enjoying traditional food (Altschwager et al., 2017; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Building on the discussions on travel motives in Section 2.3.1.1., and the themes of special events in Section 3.2, the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle Festival and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival are identified as cultural events. The nature of these cultural events represent cultural values and demonstrate the genuine Thai nature and social implications of ritual and festivity. Moreover, customers are motivated to visit special events with friends and family to enrich and amplify the engagement experience for everyone. This argument is further supported by the contention raised by Brida et al. (2014), and Kim and Eves (2012) that attending special events with friends, family, and partners is an important motive for customers to visit cultural events and become actively involved in the atmosphere and activities of the special event offerings. Given that, proactive motivation to engage with these two cultural events encourages activities that are relaxing, decrease stress, and enhance general cultural knowledge. Drawing on proactive motivation theory, it is argued that customers therefore need a strong "reason to" engage with specific special events. Thus, we expect both groups of customers who are motivated by

learning, escape, and family/friend togetherness, to engage more in the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle Festival, and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival. Therefore,

*H1a: Learning motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle Festival and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).*

*H1b: Escape motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle Festival and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).*

*H1c: Family/friend togetherness motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle Festival and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).*

As discussed in Section 2.3.1.1, different themes of special events stimulate different motive factors among customers (Yolal et al., 2012). Sporting events are also different to a cultural event. The nature of sporting events, especially Marathons provides physical activities, and/or venerate attractions related to these activities (Chen, 2010). Evidence from prior research suggests that, sometimes, customers wish to experience something exciting and thrilling or that improves their social status. Thus, customers who require thrills and greater physical activity may engage in sporting events (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008; Funk, Toohey, & Bruun, 2007; Mansfield, 2007). Additionally, these customers engage with sporting events that offer them enjoyment, pleasure, and an exceptional lifetime unique experience. This argument is further supported by Chen (2010) and Robertson and Pope (1999) who argue that increasing the psychological motive (similarly excitement motive) of sporting events allows customers to engage in enjoying the special event activities. It is expected that, as the excitement motive increases, these customers feel enthusiastic and passionate, and become completely engrossed in the special event (Altschwager et al., 2017; So et al., 2014; Vivek et al., 2012).

Customers who are motivated by a desire for social status try to shape their identity and image, improve their social self-concept, and express themselves to achieve peoples' recognition (Guosong, 2009; Muntinga, 2013; Tsai & Men, 2017). In addition, customers with

a high level of social status towards sporting events are encouraged to engage with sporting event activities, such as fundraising, purchasing merchandise and socialising with people and staff at the special events, as well as helping other customers to achieve their goals (e.g., Chen, 2010; Smith & Stewart, 2007). In this sense, these customers are likely to engage more with the Khon Kaen International Marathon that allows them to achieve recognition because the nature of this marathon provides the physical activity, vicarious achievement, athletes, and competition.

In line with prior research (e.g., Foster & Robinson, 2010), however, customers who travel because of family, friends, and togetherness do not engage as deeply with sporting events. The contention advanced by Foster and Robinson (2010) is that the family and friends' togetherness motive may not foster proactive customer engagement with sporting events as they do not wish to be distracted by anything that keeps them away from their family and friends. These customers gain joy, excitement, and relaxation from being with their family and friends and devote their time to their family and friends and do not participate in sporting event activities.

Building on the above discussion, it is also suggested that the strongest effect of excitement and social status motives occurs on the Khon Kane International Marathon rather than on the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle Festival or the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival. Underpinned by the proactive motivation theory, it is argued that customers therefore need a strong "reason to" engage with specific special events. We expect that the positive association between travel motives stimulates engagement with special events. Therefore,

*H2a: Excitement motive is positively related to engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).*

*H2b: Social status motive is positively related to engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).*

### **3.3.2.2. Customer engagement and perceived quality of special events**

As discussed in section 2.5 (Chapter Two), perceived quality is a relatively global evaluation (Molinari et al., 2008). It depends on customers' experience with the focal objects, such as brand or tourism product (Brocato et al., 2015; Ngo & O'Cass, 2013; So et al., 2016b). Drawing on Zeithaml (1988), perceived quality of special events is defined as the consumer's judgment about a special event's overall excellence or superiority. The reason for a relationship between customer engagement and perceived quality of the special event appears to be that customers who are highly engaged, enjoy every moment of the special event (Tanford & Jung, 2017; Williams, Germov, Fuller, & Freij, 2015; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). They enthusiastically participate in activities and are excited about the experience. The joy, enthusiasm, and excitement customers perceive by being in the event leads them to be happy and believe that they have spent quality time in the special event (Crowther, 2010; Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006). Thus, they evaluate the experience more favourably. Further, because engaged customers pay attention to all aspects of the event and get absorbed in the event, they understand the value of the event. This understanding encourages customers to evaluate the quality of the event more favourably. Engaged customers interact with the firm and other customers, and, in this way, share their own experience. The accumulation of all these positive experiences motivates them to value the special event with superior quality, therefore;

*H3: Customer engagement with the special event is positively related to the perceived quality of the special event.*

### **3.3.3. Model development, Stage 3 - Hypotheses development: The moderation effects**

#### **3.3.3.1. The moderation effects of “can do” motivation on the relationship between motives and customer engagement with special events**

The “can do” comprises the joint effect of motivational orientations of locomotion and assessment motivation (Higgins et al., 2003; Jasmand et al., 2012; Pierro et al., 2018). The discussion undertaken in Section 2.3.1.3 argues that locomotion and assessment orientation complement each other because locomotion-oriented people are intrinsically motivated to



engage in several different activities without assessing each activity with a great deal of care. However, assessment-oriented people are extrinsically motivated to carefully assess activities, and meticulously compare current and desired states to ensure that goals are achieved (e.g., social status and family/friends togetherness) (see also Jasmand et al., 2012; Pierro et al., 2018). The literature suggests that when assessment and locomotion are combined, their combination compensates for the shortcomings of each, and enables individuals to achieve a better result as they assess and act at the same time, and are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to achieve their goals (cf., Pierro et al., 2006).

Those customers who are highly motivated to achieve their goals and satisfy their need for travelling, engage in the special events when they increase the ability for a motivational challenge in the process of multiple goals. This ability comes from assessing alternatives and acting on the basis of careful assessment. Customers with greater locomotion-assessment behaviours demonstrate a stronger ability to function in completing a task and successfully achieving goals because they assess carefully and act purposefully (Kruglanski et al., 2010). Those customers with greater assessment and locomotion behaviours, pursue multiple goals and are eager to initiate actions and continuously keep on pursuing activities, while also wisely controlling their effort and resources (Jasmand et al., 2012). As elaborated by Kruglanski et al. (2010), the joint (or combined) effect of locomotion orientation and assessment orientation emphasise on just do the right things that help customer successful self-regulation when strive their goal. Thus, customers with strong the combined effect of locomotion orientation and assessment orientation may increase high levels of motivation to achieve goals, combined with high levels of ability to achieve goals, interact and enable customers to become engagement such as absorbed in the event and achieve the highest levels of enjoyment from the special event. The joint effect of joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations will result in greater levels of travel motives which will more strongly influence their engagement with a special event. Therefore,

*H4a: The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between learning motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of learning motive and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and the Candle Festival, and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).*

*H4b: The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the escape motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the escape motive and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).*

*H4c: The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the family/friend togetherness motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the family/friend togetherness motive and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).*

*H5a: The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the excitement motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the excitement motive and engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).*

*H5b: The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the social status motive and engagement such that greater levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the social status motive and engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).*

### **3.3.3.2. The influence of customer self-image-special event image congruence**

Research in marketing and tourism shows that customers often purchase a brand or product to express their identity and increase their self-esteem (Aaker, 1999; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; Sirgy, Johar, Samli, & Claiborne, 1991). In the purchase process, customers consciously or unconsciously assess brands according to the congruency between the attributes of the brand and their own self-image (Lau & Phau, 2007; O'Cass & Grace, 2008). Customers usually engage in such assessments because they want to shape their image and match behavioural expressions and personal attributes to the brand image (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Han & Hyun, 2017; O'Cass & Grace, 2008; Parker & Collins, 2010). As discussed in Section 2.3.1.3, the concept of self-image congruence related to self-motives explains the reasons for customers' self-image congruence based on self-consistency and self-esteem (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Sirgy et al., 1997). In this regard, the literature suggests that customer self-image-special event image congruence may facilitate reasons for attending and engaging with special event offerings (Kwak & Kang, 2009).

Indeed, the literature suggests that the degree of self-image congruence can be seen as the motivational factor to drive customer decision making process (Ahn et al., 2013). The evidence from previous research suggests that the different levels of congruence between customer self-image and service image may motivate customers to engage with a service consumption experience, and subsequently affects the perceived quality of service offerings (Ekinci & Riley, 2003; Ekinci et al., 2013; Hedhli et al., 2016). In this sense, when customer self-image-special event image congruence is favourable then proactive engagement can be encouraged to stimulate, which helps them to perceive the quality of special event offerings. As such, customer self-image-special event image congruence may not directly affect the perception of the special event but acts as a contingency that can change the effect of customer engagement on the customer evaluation of special event quality.

Higher levels of congruency will increase the effect of customer engagement on the perceived quality of a special event because when customers perceive higher levels of

customer self-image-special event image congruence, they will feel right in the special event and believe that their choice of special event is correct, thereby sustaining their current goal orientation (Avent & Higgins, 2003; Higgins et al., 2003). As such, in the presence of high levels of self-image-special event image congruence, engaged customers will develop a greater understanding of special event attributes, and match them with their beliefs and experiences of the special event. Through their engagement, they develop a stronger relationship with the special event and advance a greater customer's special event reputation. As such, under the condition of high engagement and high image congruency, the synergy between engagement and customer self-image-special event image congruence increases their perception of the quality of the special event.

O'Cass and Grace (2008) provide evidence from the retail industry to show that customers elicit more favourable evaluations of store service quality when they feel that a shopping mall image is consistent with their self-image. Other studies, by Ha and Im (2012), and Hedhli et al. (2016), show that customer's self-image and service image strengthen the relationship between engaging with service encounter and evaluations of service experience. For example, when customers are feeling match between their self-image, service image, they may react to engage with the service provides, and this in turn reinforces the pleasure and memorability of service experience. Drawing on prior research, a customer with high self-image congruity with the special event who are motivated to engage with the special events will likely increase his or her perception of the special event quality. Thus, customer self-image-special event image congruence may interact with engagement because it serves the facilitating condition under which customer actions can be behaved in his or her self-image to match the special event image that influences the perceived quality of the special event. Therefore,

*H6: Customer self-image-special event image congruence moderates the relationship between the customer engagement with the special event and the perceived quality of the special event, such that the relationship between customer engagement and the*

*perceived quality of the special event is stronger when the level of customer self-image-special event image congruence is higher, than when it is lower.*

### **3.3.3.3. The influence of perceived crowding of special events**

In tourism services and special event settings, the success of special events is achieved through attracting and motivating a large number of visitors to attend the special events and host destinations (Ferdinand & Williams, 2013; Kim et al., 2016; Shi, Zhao, & Chen, 2017). While attracting large numbers of customers to a special event is the ultimate desire of the organisers of the event, it raises concerns in relation to crowding and the possible negative impact on customer behaviour and their assessment of the event through crowding (Lee & Graefe, 2003; Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012; Pons et al., 2016).

The literature on the impact of crowding on customer behaviours provides mixed findings. While some argue that crowding may negatively affect consumption experience and diminish customer satisfaction (e.g., Kim & Runyan, 2011; Raajpoot, Sharma, & Chebat, 2008; Zehrer & Raich, 2016), others acknowledge its positive influence on the consumer consumption experience (e.g., Huang, Huang, & Wyer, 2017; Kim et al., 2016; Lee & Graefe, 2003; Mowen et al., 2003; Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012). These inconsistent results raise the concern if perceived crowding directly affects customer behaviours, or if it acts as a contingency that conditions customer behaviours.

It is possible that when the event is crowded, engaged customers fail to personalise the special event experience to their needs (Lee & Graefe, 2003). Further, it is also possible that busy environments prevent customers from interacting with each other or the special event attributes. The evidence from prior studies shows that when customers perceive crowding is high, they feel less freedom of movement and it motivates them to leave the busy environment (Song & Noone, 2017; Whiting, 2009). Thus, they fail to develop a strong understanding about the special event (Filingeri, Eason, Waterson, & Haslam, 2017; Neuts & Nijkamp, 2012). Moreover, crowded special events may prevent customers from participating in the activities

provided by the event designer or they may have to wait a long time to experience activities; thus, they fail to maximize the enjoyment perceived from the special event. Filingeri et al. (2017), and Needham, Rollins, and Wood (2004) use tourism activities that display high levels of crowding and are similar to special events in terms of attracting large crowds, to argue that perceived high crowding changes the levels of enjoyment, attention, and pleasure of the customers. Further, while the levels of customers' interaction or engagement related to tourism activities would be changed due to the level of crowding, the level of perceived quality of the tourism services and special events may also have changed (Lee & Graefe, 2003; Mehta, Sharma, & Swami, 2013; Rathnayake, 2015). When customers desire to leave or ignore to attend special event, they cannot achieve their goal and inability to evaluate the quality of the special event.

Building on the above discussion, under crowded conditions, engaged customers may perceive less value from the event and their perception of the quality of event drops. However, when the event is not very crowded, customers will find the opportunities to select the activities they like the most and personalise the experience to their needs. It is also possible that in less crowded events, customers interact with people and staff and develop a greater understanding of the meaning of the activities included in the event. Perhaps, in a less busy environment, higher levels of understanding open the door for customers to develop an emotional connection with the event and they perceive a higher level of quality of the event. Thus, it is expected that under the condition of less crowded event, engaged customers perceive higher levels of value from the event and their perception of the quality of event increases. Therefore,

*H7: Perceived special event crowding moderates the relationship between the customer engagement with the special event and the perceived quality of the special event, such that the relationship between customer engagement and perceived quality of the special event is stronger when the level of customer perceived special event crowding is lower, rather than when it is higher.*

### **3.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has developed the theoretical framework and the hypotheses. The model incorporates both direct and moderation paths to show how customers may engage in special events, and what contingencies may enhance their engagement or impede their assessment of the event as the consequences of their engagement in the special event performance. As shown in Figure 3.1, this study applied proactive motivation theory and regulatory mode theory to establish the conditions that justify the proposed relationships between the variables of interest.

Proactive motivation theory demonstrates the connection between “reason to” and “can do” motivation in order to find the way that customers strive to achieve their goals. More specifically, this study intends to identify the reasons that drive engagement or condition customer engagement and evaluation of the event. Simultaneously it seeks to identify the “can do” or the ability and customer traits that condition engagement in the events. With its focus, the study contributes in understanding the main reasons that customers engage in a special event and what may enhance their engagement or impede their understanding of the consequences of engagement. Further, the study sheds light on the puzzling effect of crowding on the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of the event. The evidence from the theoretical framework and conceptual model in Chapter Three provides a guideline for the research methodology adopted for the current research, which will be presented in Chapter Four.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## RESEARCH DESIGN

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### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The research objectives and questions were identified in Chapter One. Chapter Two presented the discussion on relevant bodies of literature pertaining to the focal constructs of this study, and provided the foundation for development of the conceptual framework and research hypotheses presented in Chapter Three (Figure 3.1). Researchers argue that connecting the objectives, questions, and hypotheses of a study to the appropriate research methods is a critical issue (Bono & McNamara, 2011; Davis et al., 2013). In marketing and tourism areas, the key hallmarks, and specific implications of a study are to understand the body of knowledge by predicting and explaining the behavioural characteristics in a variety of marketing and tourism contexts and addressing the research questions (Dwyer, Gill, & Seetaram, 2012; Neuman, 2014). To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses of the study, Bono and McNamara (2011, p.659) believe it is necessary to *“match your design to your question, match construct definition with operationalization, carefully specify your model, use measures with established construct validity or provide such evidence, choose samples and procedures that are appropriate to your unique research question.”*

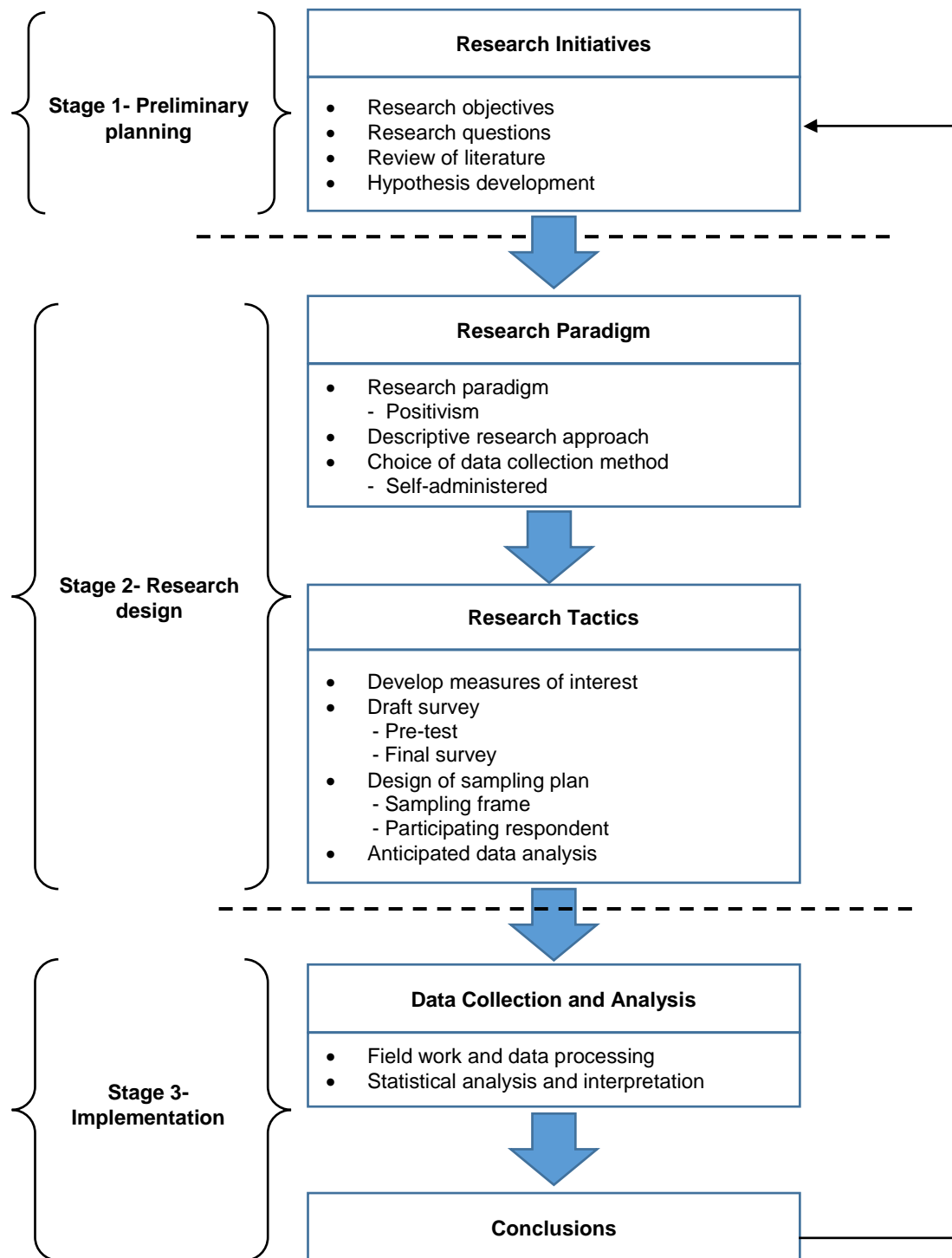
Therefore, this chapter outlines the research design applied in this study to investigate the research questions identified in Chapter One and test the hypotheses identified in Chapter Three. This chapter begins with a discussion of appropriate research procedures and the development of suitable steps undertaken to design and implement the study that ensures the success of the research.



## **4.2. RESEARCH PLANNING PROCESS**

The development of the research design is a critical task and is viewed as a blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The research planning process is a systematic approach to decision-making throughout the research process (Aaker, Kumar, Leone, & Day, 2016; Malhotra, 2014). As such, an appropriate research design is essential for data collection, sampling, and analysis (Aaker et al., 2016). This study adopted the research design framework outlined by Aaker et al. (2016). As illustrated below in Figure 4.1, the research design includes three crucial stages, namely, the preliminary planning, the research design, and the implementation.

**Figure 4.1:** Research design process



Source: Adapted from Aaker et al. (2016)

### **4.3. STAGE ONE: PRELIMINARY PLANNING**

Aaker et al. (2016) advocate a number of tasks in the preliminary planning stage to be undertaken including problem identification, development of research questions and hypotheses, and justification as well as contribution of the proposed research. The information concerning these tasks was provided in Chapter One, where the research objective and questions, and justification for the study were identified. Chapter Two presented an extensive review of the pertinent areas of the literature. Chapter Three presented a theoretical foundation and established the research model presented in Figure 3.1. Given that these processes have been demonstrated, the research design is developed and presented below.

### **4.4. STAGE TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN**

Building on the preliminary planning stage, the research design stage develops the guidelines for selecting the sampling plan, determining the data collection method, developing the measures of constructs, and anticipating the data analysis techniques (Aaker et al., 2016; Malhotra, 2014). As indicated in Figure 4.1, the research design stage focuses on two critical issues, namely, the research paradigm that underpins the research approach adopted for this study and the data collection methods, and, secondly, the research tactics, which involves developing the measures of the constructs of interest, development of the sampling plan, and selection of appropriate data analysis techniques.

### **4.5. RESEARCH PARADIGM**

The research paradigm is considered the principal orientation that guides the design and implementation of the research process and development of the theory (Neuman, 2014). In social science research, there are two major research paradigms, namely, positivism and interpretivism (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Positivist research advocates predicting situations by testing predefined hypothesis, which is often applied in quantitative research (Neuman, 2014; Proctor, 2005). Researchers have embraced quantitative methods to develop, build, and test

theories (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Robson & McCartan, 2016). The primary significance of the positivist research paradigm in quantitative methodology is to employ a theory to frame and, thus, comprehend the research problem (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). Within the positivist research paradigm, the researchers distance themselves from the research subjects to ensure an objective or absolute truth from the data collected and analysed (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

In contrast, interpretivist research considers the truth or knowledge in terms of social phenomena that are relative to their given context, adopting the view that people make sense of this phenomena from their own interpretations (Aaker et al., 2016; Proctor, 2005). Notably, interpretivist research proposes that reality is the product of the people's interaction with their environment and the cultures in which they live (Proctor, 2005). The study of phenomena in their natural setting is a crucial and distinguishing point of the interpretivism paradigm (Jonker & Pennink, 2010).

The starting point to develop an effective and efficient research design is to place it within a suitable paradigm that then underpins every part of the research process, from the research design and data collection to the data analysis methods (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001; Malhotra, Hall, Shaw, & Oppenheim, 2008). For this research, the researcher seeks to examine customer engagement through investigating motivational processes (e.g., travel motives, regulatory mode orientation, self-image congruence), perceived special event crowding, and perceived quality of special events; as outlined in Section 3.3 of Chapter Three. The conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three reflects a number of hypotheses developed from a review of related research, the majority of which displays a quantitative approach. Consistent with these studies, a positivist research paradigm was adopted in this research to address the research questions and objectives, and test the hypotheses.

#### **4.5.1. Research approach**

The research approach is a master plan that is used to implement the research and address the research objectives and research questions (Aaker et al., 2016). More specifically, the research approach includes strategic decisions about the sources and types of information to be gathered, and the processes that the researcher will adopt and follow to collect the data to test the theory (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2014; Zikmund et al., 2014). An appropriate research approach not only ensures the methodological consistency of the empirical investigation, but also determines the time and cost-effectiveness of the study (Brown, Suter, & Churchill, 2013).

The selection of the research approach depends on the nature of the proposed study (Aaker et al., 2016), namely, whether it is exploratory, descriptive, or causal. Researchers adopt exploratory research methods when there is no prior information on a particular problem (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011). In exploratory research, researchers use inter alia, expert surveys, pilot surveys, secondary data, qualitative interviews, unstructured observations, and quantitative exploratory multivariate methods. In other words, the data analysis can use either qualitative or quantitative techniques in order to address the research problems and research questions (Hair, Celsi, Ortinau, & Bush, 2017; Malhotra, 2014).

In contrast, descriptive research is a quantitative methodology that uses a set of scientific methods and procedures to gather primary data to address the research problem (Hair et al., 2017). In general, descriptive research determines the frequency of the phenomenon or the relationship amongst the phenomena. Moreover, it investigates the hypotheses that the researcher has developed and uses statistical techniques to analyse data and draw conclusions (Brown et al., 2013; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Descriptive research is suitable when research objectives consist of determining the degree of association between the variables (Hair et al., 2017). Finally, causal research seeks to generate a model with cause-and-effect relationships among two or more variables from primary data (Hair et al., 2017). Causal research is appropriate when the research objectives comprise the need to understand

which constructs are the cause, and which constructs are the effect in relation to the phenomena of interest (Hair et al., 2017). Given that the hypotheses developed in Chapter Three predict relationships, this research employs a quantitative research technique using a descriptive research method to understand the relationships between the variables of interest.

#### **4.5.2. Data collection method**

As identified in Stage Two of Figure 4.1, choosing an appropriate data collection method is an essential task in the research design process (Aaker et al., 2016). In marketing research, there are three common techniques to collect primary data – survey, observation, and experiment (Malhotra, 2014; Zikmund et al., 2014). Based on the nature of this study, the survey method was adopted. Surveys are an approach to primary data collection grounded in interaction and communication with a sample (Zikmund et al., 2014). There are several reasons underpinning the choice of the survey method for this study. Firstly, survey techniques are appropriate when researchers understand what type of information is needed to assess the variables of interest (Cavana et al., 2001; Sekaran & Bougie, 2011). Secondly, collecting data using survey methods is cost effective on large size samples (Groves et al., 2009). Finally, previous studies in marketing and tourism research have used surveys as the key method of collecting data (Lee & Kyle, 2012; Nyffenegger et al., 2015; O'Cass & Sok, 2015; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012; Sangpikul, 2008).

Implementation of the survey method can generally take three forms – person-administered, electronic-administered, and self-administered (Aaker et al., 2016; Malhotra, 2014). The person-administered survey approach requires direct contact between the respondents and the researcher, who uses face-to-face communication to question participants (Zikmund et al., 2014) and records the answers in a predetermined structure (Hair et al., 2017). According to Robson and McCartan (2016), the person-administered survey approach obtains high response rates but is a costly and time-consuming method. Importantly, the person-administered survey may contain participant bias. In contrast, the electronic-

administered technique can decrease participant bias and enhance the speed of administration, however, there are high set-up costs and confidentiality issues (Moutinho & Chien, 2007). The self-administered approach to data collection requires the respondents to read the instrument (e.g., survey questionnaire) and record their responses themselves (Hair et al., 2017). Whilst the self-administered technique can achieve high response rates and obtain a large amount of data (Groves et al., 2009), if the survey is too long, the response rates may be low (Malhotra, 2014). Considering the challenges related to each survey approach, this study adopted the self-administered approach, as explained and justified next.

First, the self-administered method has been commonly used by academics in marketing and tourism studies similar to this research (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015; Chen & Chen, 2010; Verleye et al., 2014; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Second, the advantages of the self-administered approach eliminate the threat of interviewer bias. Third, a survey is distributed to respondents in a paper-based format (Converse, Wolfe, Huang, & Oswald, 2008), meaning the participants can complete the survey by themselves in their own time, and deposit it at a specified location when completed (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Further, the self-administered technique can help the researcher gain access to larger samples with less start-up costs.

The self-administered surveys can be gathered through a variety of approaches including mail, intercept, and drop-and-collect (Malhotra, 2014). All these methods are commonly adopted by marketing researchers (e.g., Carlson & O'Cass, 2011; Lee, 2014; O'Cass & Grace, 2008; Roy & Rabbanee, 2015). This research adopts an intercept approach in order to collect data. Compared to mail and drop-and-collect, the intercept approach has several advantages, such as being able to reach a large group of respondents in a very short time with lower cost, and the ability to collect quality respondent data (Aaker et al., 2016; McDaniel & Gates, 2015). The intercept approach is appropriate as it enables researchers to recruit potential respondents over a relatively short period of time, and allows respondents to seek further explanation of the survey if required (O'Cass & Grace, 2008). For example, the intercept approach allows researchers to collect data from potential respondents in public

zones, such as a shopping centre, where they can be intercepted and asked to complete the survey on the spot (McDaniel & Gates, 2015).

In light of the identified advantages of the intercept approach and its use in previous research (e.g., Dunning, Pecotich, & O'Cass, 2004; Eroglu et al., 2005a; O'Cass & Grace, 2008), the primary data for this study were collected by means of the intercept approach at special event sites within Thailand. The on-site intercept technique was administered over three days at two special events (e.g., the Sukhothai's Loy Krathong and Candle festival, and Chaing Mai International Flower festival) and over two days at the Khon Kaen International Marathon. Domestic visitors were not considered for the study. To minimize bias and ensure the representativeness of the sample population particular, every attempt was made to ensure that the instructions were clear and simply stated when developing the draft survey for pilot testing. In doing so, the intercept technique was appropriate as it enabled the receipt of information directly from customers regarding their views, and their actual perceptions and experiences with the special events (Dawson et al., 1990; Wakefield & Baker, 1998). In summary, onsite interception of customers at special events was deemed an appropriate data collection method for this study as it allowed for a higher response rate, the collection of quality respondent data, at low cost, and provided quick respondent completion times in a time-constrained situation.

#### **4.6. RESEARCH TACTICS**

As part of the research design process depicted in Figure 4.1, Aaker et al. (2016) reveal that research tactics need to be developed to outline the development of measures of constructs, questionnaire development, the design of the sampling plan, and the anticipated data analysis methods. These critical issues are detailed in the following sections.

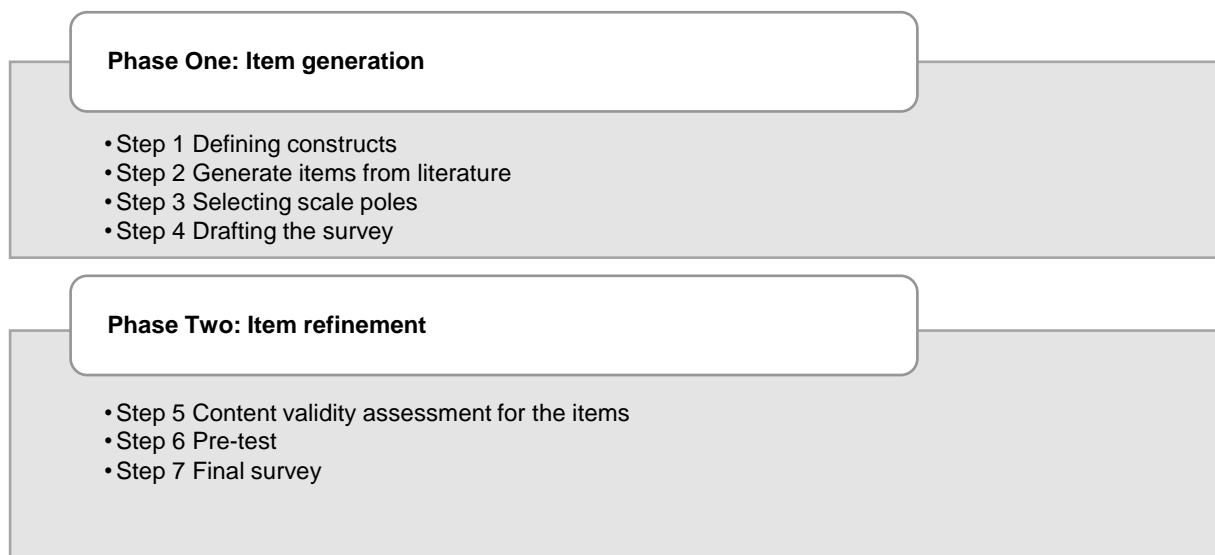
##### **4.6.1. The development of measures of constructs**

After the approach to data collection is determined, developing the measures of variables is the next step in the research process. Developing the measures of constructs is



crucial to ensuring the capture of the focal constructs of this research (Malhotra, 2014). In addition, the development of measures is needed to help respondents communicate, understand, and answer information requisites, and help the author to analyse and interpret data to answer the research questions, and thus to achieve the research objectives (Aaker et al., 2016). As presented in Figure 4.2, this study adopted the two-phase measurement development procedure proposed by Churchill and Iacobucci (2006), and Netemeyer et al. (2003) as the underpinning guide for the development of measures of constructs.

**Figure 4.2:** Two-Phase questionnaire development process



Source: Adapted from Churchill and Iacobucci (2006); Netemeyer et al. (2003)

As identified in Figure 4.2 above, questionnaire development encompasses two main phases. Phase one includes four steps, namely, to define the key terms of the constructs of interest that were sought from the literature (Step One), generate items from the review of relevant literature (Step Two), select scale poles and formatting (Step Three), and create a draft questionnaire (Step Four). Phase two includes three steps, namely, inviting expert judges to evaluate the content validity of constructs of interest and to assess item retention or removal (Step Five), produce an initial questionnaire for pretesting the resultant refined questionnaire

(Step Six), and, after pretesting, refine and produce the final survey (Step Seven). The final questionnaire is presented in the Appendix.

#### **4.6.1.1. Phase One: Item generation**

##### **4.6.1.1.1. Step One: Defining the constructs**

The first step in the process of measurement development is defining constructs. As previously discussed, definitions of the eleven pertinent constructs were developed based on the review of literature relevant to this study. The focal constructs of this research, as shown in Chapter Two, are a variety of travel motives; learning, excitement, escape, social status, and family and friend togetherness, locomotion orientation, assessment orientation, customer engagement with special event, self-image congruence, perceived special event crowding, and perceived special event quality. The conceptualisation details of these eleven constructs were presented in Chapter Three (Section 3.3) and their definitions are provided below in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** Definition of constructs

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Learning motive	Study tours, performing arts, cultural tours, travel to festivals, visits to historic sites and monuments, folklore, and pilgrimages (Crompton & McKay, 1997).
Excitement motive	Seeking an exciting experience, curious, having thrills, and uniqueness of the event as well as the excitement of visitors to experience it (Backman et al., 1995; Foster & Robinson, 2010).
Escape motive	The desire to relax and refresh oneself mentally and physically from the everyday life stresses (Foster & Robinson, 2010).
Social status motive	An association with self-esteem, recognition, and the desire to attract attention from others, which are derived through the status given by travel (Kim & Lee, 2000).
Family/friends' togetherness motive	Spending time and enjoying festivals with family members and enhance family and friend relationship (Crompton & McKay, 1997).
Locomotion orientation	Movement away from a current state to a new state with no necessary ultimate destination, direction, or place in mind (Kruglanski et al., 2000).
Assessment orientation	Motivation to critically evaluate available alternatives to ensure decision-making quality to receive the best outcomes (Kruglanski et al., 2000).
Customer engagement with special events	A customer's personal active engagement with a special event as manifest in affective, cognitive, and behavioural responses that meets and satisfies customer's needs and goals (So et al., 2016b).
Self-image congruence	The degree of match or mismatch between a product/service image and a customer's self-image (Sirgy et al., 1997).
Perceived special event crowding	A psychological mindset that occurs when the demand from the number of people and objects within a defined space exceeds supply (Eroglu, Machleit, & Chebat, 2005).
Perceived quality of special event	The consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988).

#### **4.6.1.1.2. Step Two: Generating items**

After defining the constructs of interest, the next step is generating items for the focal constructs of the study. Within business and marketing research, there are two suggested approaches to generating items – deductive and inductive methods (Hinkin, 1998; Neuman, 2014). Deductive scale development refers to the generation of an initial set of items based on a review of the literature containing similar research contexts. An inductive approach derives items from asking a potential sample of respondents to address questions (e.g., feelings about companies or organisations, or how they feel about post-consumption evaluations) and then generating the items based on their answers (Hinkin, 1998). Barbieri et al. (2010) suggest that a combination of both deductive and inductive strategies be used, in order to deliver good scale performance.

Drawing on Churchill and Iacobucci (2006), and Netemeyer et al. (2003), this study adopted a deductive approach to generate a pool of items for each construct of interest. That is, appropriate measurement items for inclusion in this study were identified from a review of the literature containing similar research contexts (and, where necessary, adapted to better fit this research context) (as discussed in Chapter Two). The following section provides the initial measures sourced from previous studies.

#### *Measuring travel motives*

As discussed in Section 2.3.1.1 of Chapter Two, travel motives explain the reason why customers' need to attend special events, and there are a variety of travel motive attributes, such as socialisation, excitement, novelty, escape, family/friend togetherness, perception and learning, exploration and atmosphere, nostalgia, and prestige (e.g., Crompton & McKay, 1997; Hung & Petrick, 2011; Lee et al., 2004; Park & Yoon, 2009). Building on the travel motive literature, this study considers five distinct factors of travel motives that have been examined in tourism and special event studies; learning motive, excitement motive, escape motive, social status motive, and family/friend togetherness motive. All the measurement items for these motive factors were sourced from previous research in tourism and special event contexts.

### *Learning motive*

Building on prior research in line with its focus on learning new things from special events, this study measured the learning motive using a three-item scale. A three-item scale was adapted from the work of Park and Yoon (2009) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

#### *I am attending this event:*

- to explore new places
- to experience new and different lifestyles
- to learn new things, and increase my knowledge

### *Excitement motive*

Building on prior research in line with its focus on exciting experiences from special events, the excitement motive was measured by a four-item scale. A two-item scale was adapted from the work of Lee et al. (2004) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

#### *I am attending this event:*

- to experience the excitement offered by this event
- to enjoy the event activities and atmosphere

Two new measures specific to this study were developed for the excitement motive to overcome the weaknesses of existing measures found in the literature. In the development of new measures, as suggested by O'Cass, Heirati, and Ngo (2014), the relevant literature was reviewed to generate an initial pool of items that fitted the conceptualisation of this construct as shown in Table 4.1. The two newly developed measures are presented below:

#### *I am attending this event:*

- to visit a once-in-a-lifetime event
- to visit famous cultural and historical attractions

### *Escape motive*

Building on prior research in line with its focus on relaxing from the everyday life stresses, the escape motive was measured by a two-item scale. A two-item scale was adapted from the work of Hung and Petrick (2011) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

*I am attending this event:*

- to have fun
- to escape (e.g., routine work)

### *Social status motive*

Building on prior research in line with its focus on relaxing from the everyday life stresses, the escape motive was measured by a two-item scale. A two-item scale was adapted from the work of Hung and Petrick (2011b) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

*I am attending this event:*

- to do something that impresses others
- to go somewhere that my friends haven't been (attended yet)

### *Family/friend togetherness motive*

Building on prior research in line with its focus on enhancing the relationship with family and friends or relatives, the family/friend togetherness motive was measured by a two-item scale. A two-item scale was adapted from the work of Lee et al. (2004), and Leong et al. (2015) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

*I am attending this event:*

- to spend time with my family/friends
- to create good memories with family/friends

### *Measuring locomotion orientation*

Building on prior research, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.5.2), and focusing on its conceptualisation as approaching a task and expending effort to move quickly on to the next step without critical evaluation, direction or place in mind, locomotion orientation was measured by a 9-item scale adapted from the work of Jasmand et al. (2012). Examples of the items are presented below:

- I feel excited just before I am about to reach a goal
- By the time I accomplish a task, I already have the next one in mind

### *Measuring assessment orientation*

Building on prior literature, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.5.2), and focusing on its conceptualisation as undertaking a task with critical comparison of alternative states and goals to judge their relative worth, assessment orientation was measured by a 9-item scale adapted from the work of Jasmand et al. (2012). Examples of the items are presented below:

- I like evaluating other people's plans
- I am a critical person

### *Measuring customer engagement*

Building on prior literature, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.3), and focusing on its conceptualisation as customers' personal active engagement with a special event, customer engagement was measured by a 32-item scale. A 32-item scale was adapted from the work of Dessart et al. (2016), So et al. (2016b), and Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

- I like to learn about this event
- When attending this event, I forget everything else around me

### *Measuring customer self-image-special event image congruence*

Building on prior literature, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.7), and focusing on its conceptualisation as a congruence between special event image and customer self-image, self-image congruence was measured by a 9-item scale. A 9-item scale was adapted from the work of Malär et al. (2011), Morhart et al. (2015), and Sirgy and Su (2000) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

- The personality of this event is consistent with how I see myself
- The personality of this event is consistent with how I would like to see myself

### *Measuring perceived special event crowding*

Building on prior literature, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.8), and focusing on its conceptualisation as a perception of crowding at a special event site, perceived special event crowding was measured by a 6-item scale. A 6-item scale was adapted from the work of Machleit et al. (2000) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

- The event site seems very crowded to me
- There are a lot of people at the event site

### *Measuring perceived quality of special event*

Building on prior literature, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.6), and focusing on its conceptualisation as the customer's judgement of a special event's overall excellence or superiority, perceived special event quality was measured by a 3-item scale. A 3-item scale was adapted from the work of Cronin et al. (2000) to fit the context of this study. Examples of the items are presented below:

...the quality of the event is...

- Poor..... Excellent
- Inferior.....Superior
- Low standard..... High standard

#### *Demographic and past experience of the special event*

Data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents were collected including gender, age, nationality, educational level, and occupation. Respondents were asked to indicate their gender (male or female) using a dichotomous format. Respondents were invited to provide their age in the survey, whilst nationality and occupation were identified using eight options that required the respondents to tick one. The level of education was also a multichotomous format question, ranging from primary school to postgraduate degree. Respondents were asked to provide details about their past experience of the special event using a dichotomous format.

##### **4.6.1.1.3. Step Three: Selecting scale poles**

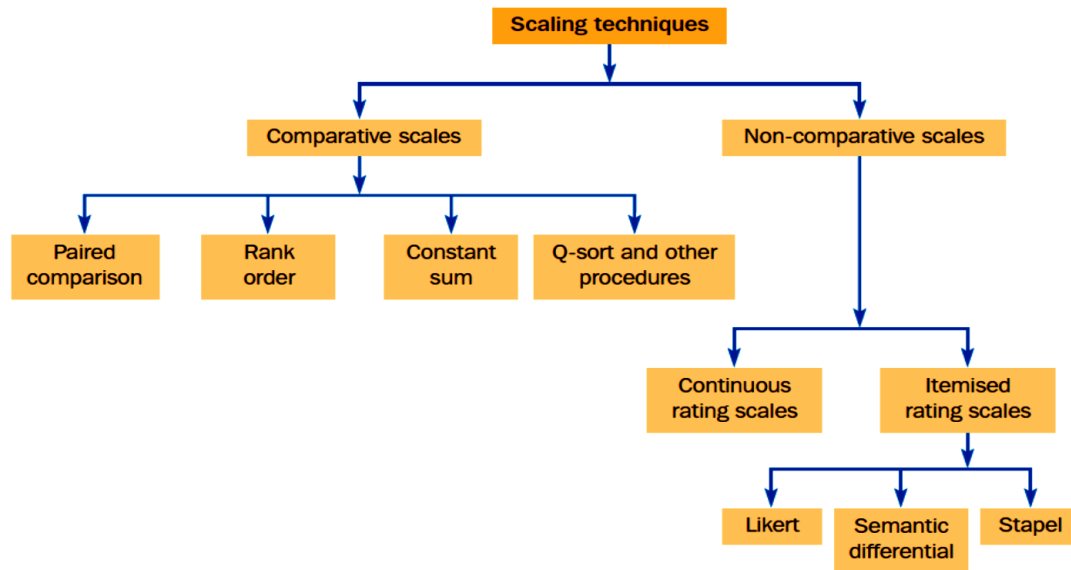
Step three in phase one of the two stage questionnaire development process requires selection of the scale poles to be employed in a study. The importance of selecting an appropriate scale is commonly recognised in the literature (Malhotra, 2014). Sarantakos (2012) suggests that scale poles are commonly applied in marketing and consumer behaviour research for several reasons: (1) scale poles provide a high level of precision and reliability, (2) the use of scale poles can allow an academic scholar to make comparisons between sets of data, and (3) scale poles allow for simplicity of collection and analysis of data. According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), two scale pole approaches are generally applied in marketing and consumer behaviour research, these being comparative scales and non-comparative scales.

In comparative scaling, the participants are asked to compare differences between stimulus objects. On the other hand, in the non-comparative scaling, the participants need to assess an individual object independent of other objects in the stimulus set that the researcher is studying (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Figure 4.3 represents different types of comparative and non-comparative approaches. Of these types, the semantic differential scale and Likert scale are revealed to be the most contemporary and most reliable scale pole techniques (Albaum, 1997; Neuman, 2014). Of these, Likert scales are commonly used in marketing research where



they are found to be relatively easy to construct, administer, and comprehend by potential respondents (Aaker et al., 2016). In addition, crafting them is particularly appropriate for a self-administered survey (Hair et al., 2017).

**Figure 4.3:** Different types of comparative and non-comparative approaches



Source: Adopted from Malhotra and Birks (2007 p.342)

A Likert scale is frequently expanded beyond the original five-point format to a seven-point scale (Aaker et al., 2016), with the most popular scale poles being agreement (strongly agree to strongly disagree), degree or extent (not at all to very much), frequency (never to always), and similarity (like me to not like me) (Clark & Watson, 1995). As advocated by Malhotra and Birks (2007), “selecting an appropriate rating scale is a necessary first step in developing a good measurement instrument; establishing statistical reliability and validity through a multi-step testing and retesting process should be accorded the highest priority in selecting a scale” (P.360).

In this study, Likert scaling was adopted for all constructs due to its predominance in previous marketing and tourism research (e.g., Assaker, Vinzi, & O'Connor, 2011; Dong & Siu,

2013; Nyffenegger et al., 2015; O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2013). Aaker et al. (2016) suggest that an odd number of response categories (no less than three, and no more than nine) are appropriate when using Likert scales so that respondents can adopt a neutral position. Kline (2013) recommends using a seven-point scale to enhance reliability, and thus a seven-point Likert scale was adopted in this study. Table 4.2 illustrates the scale poles that were selected. The constructs of self-image congruence, perceived special event crowding, locomotion orientation, and assessment orientation were measured via seven-point scale poles of 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. As suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003), the use of different scale formats may decrease the covariation observed among constructs. Thus, the five distinct travel motive constructs were measured through scale poles of 1= not at all important and 7=very important. Customer engagement was measured through scale poles of 1= completely disagree and 7= completely agree. Finally, the measures of perceived quality of special event construct were measured through a nine-point scale, which represents very poor and excellent, inferior and superior, and low standard and high standard. The use of a nine-point scale of perceived quality of special event construct was based on the original authors scale pole formats.

**Table 4.2:** Scale poles of research constructs

The scale pole to measure travel motives								
Not at all Important						Very Important		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
The scale pole to measure self-image congruence, locomotion orientation, assessment orientation, and perceived event crowding								
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
The scale pole to measure customer engagement with special events								
Completely Disagree						Completely Agree		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
The scale pole to measure perceived quality of special events								
Poor								Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Inferior								Superior
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Low standard								High standard
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Source: Developed for this study

#### **4.6.1.1.4. Step Four: Drafting the questionnaire**

Having completed the item generation and selection of scaling and formatting for the questionnaire, as noted in Figure 4.2, step four required drafting the questionnaire. As shown in Table 4.3, the initial draft questionnaire comprised 81 items to measure the 11 main constructs collected in this study's theoretical domain (a variety of travel motives: learning, excitement, escape, social status, family/friend togetherness, locomotion orientation, assessment orientation, customer engagement, perceived quality of special event, self-image

congruence, perceived special event crowding), and 6 items for demographics and past experience.

**Table 4.3:** Sources and initial number of multi-items for each construct

Constructs of interest	Items	Adapted from: sources
Learning motive	3	Park and Yoon (2009)
Excitement motive	4	2 items from Lee, Lee and Wick (2004)
Newly developed measures for this study		2 items building on the definition of Backman et al. (1995) and Foster and Robinson (2010)
Escape motive	2	Hung and Petrick (2011b)
Social status motive	2	Hung and Petrick (2011b)
Family/friend togetherness motive	2	Lee et al. (2004); and Leong et al. (2015).
Locomotion orientation	9	Jasmand et al. (2012)
Assessment orientation	9	Jasmand et al. (2012)
Customer engagement with special event	32	Dessart et al. (2015), So et al. (2016b); and Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012)
Customer self-image special event image congruence	9	Malär et al. (2011); Morhart et al. (2015); and Sirgy and Su (2000)
Perceived special event crowding	6	Machleit et al. (2000)
Perceived quality of special event	3	Cronin et al. (2000)
Demographics and past experience		
Demographics	6	
Total	87	

Source: Developed for this study

#### **4.6.1.2. Phase Two: Item refinement**

##### **4.6.1.2.1. Step Five: Content validity assessment for the items**

As mentioned in Figure 4.2, the fifth step in the second phase of the two-stage questionnaire development process is an assessment of the measures content validity by expert judges. According to Neuman (2014), content validity is the degree to which the content of an instrument obtains sufficient coverage of what it intended to measure, meaning it represents an appropriate sample of the topic of study and theoretical domain. Content validity is a judgment by the expert in the areas of research (Judd, Smith, & Kidder, 1991). This study followed the procedure for assessment of the content validity of the item pool suggested by

Carlson and O'Cass (2010), and Flatten, Engelen, Zahra, and Brettel (2011), which involved (1) defining the key constructs; (2) examining the structure, form, and content of each item; (3) employing multiple expert judges in marketing and tourism; and (4) pre-testing the measurement items. First, the focal constructs of this study were clearly defined according to the conceptualisation of the key concepts from the literature (Netemeyer et al., 2003). An extensive review of the relevant bodies of literature, including marketing and tourism literature, provided the principal source for defining these focal constructs.

Second, the questionnaire structure, form, and content of each item were examined, including ensuring consistency, accuracy, specificity and clarity of meaning, avoiding double barrelled items, and deleting redundant items (Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995). The pool of items was then assessed and refined. As discussed above, organising the survey structure, form, and content of all the items in the measures was undertaken as part of content validity assessment. Swain, Weathers, and Niedrich (2008) suggest that negatively worded items in a survey can make the respondents more confused and prove more difficult to answer than positively worded items, therefore negatively worded items can create greater misresponse. Furthermore, negatively worded items can lead to response bias (Weijters, Cabooter, & Schillewaert, 2010) and have been shown to reduce the validity of survey responses and generate systematic errors to an item (DeVellis, 2017; Netemeyer et al., 2003). For example, perceived crowding research in a marketing and tourism context conducted by Gahwiler and Havitz (1998) found that respondents did not answer negatively worded items. In this case, five items were eliminated because of mixed factor loadings. Gahwiler and Havitz (1998) also suggest that measurement items may require modification and careful rewording. In order to reduce the bias response, negatively worded items were changed into positively worded formats. As such, some negatively worded items of perceived special event crowding measures were replaced with positively worded items.

As recommended by Netemeyer et al. (2003), item measurement requires proper conceptualisation of the constructs and what it is intended to measure. All initial items drawn

from the literature were examined by the researcher and his supervisory team. As a result, two main constructs: locomotion orientation and assessment orientation were trimmed. Measurement items were critically evaluated and grouped into items that tapped the conceptual definition of the constructs of interest, as shown in Table 4.1. A closer examination was then undertaken to refine, delete, and validate all items. This trimming process was cautiously undertaken and based on the theoretical definition and the conceptual definition of constructs (McMullan, 2005), in order to retain consistency with the literature and meanings from the original conceptualisations. The aim of the trim approach is to judge the quality of the measurement items and retain the constructs of interest (Stanton, Sinar, Balzer, & Smith, 2002). After the refining and trimming processes, the draft questionnaire was submitted to a panel of expert judges. Third, the draft survey was assessed by the expert judges to ensure that items were suitable for the purpose of measuring the constructs of interest (Neuman, 2014).

The procedure outlined by Ngo and O'Cass (2009) was followed whereby ten expert judges within the marketing, consumer behaviour, and tourism disciplines were employed. The panel of expert judges was asked to evaluate consistency between the definition and the measurement of the constructs. After receiving feedback from the expert judges, decisions about which items to delete or retain were made. Both the locomotion and assessment orientations consist of nine items each, 18 in total, which was considered unnecessarily long. Hence, the locomotion orientation and assessment orientation constructs were reduced from nine to five items each – ten in total. Of the 87 initial items, 26 items were removed based on the suggestions and comments from these expert judges. Consequently, 61 items were retained in the refined item pool. After confirmation from the expert judges, the draft survey was developed for use in pre-testing with typical respondents.

**Table 4.4:** Refined item pool and demographic items

Constructs	Changed made	Modified item pool	Outcome
Learning motive	Unchanged		3
Excitement motive	Unchanged		4
Escape motive	Unchanged		2
Social status motive	Unchanged		2
Family/friend togetherness motive	Unchanged		2
Locomotion orientation	4 items removed and trim of a 2- item pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Just do it - is in part a reflection of ME.</li> <li>I focus on “getting on with it” to make things happen.</li> </ul>	5
Assessment orientation	4 items removed and trim of a 5- item pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I prefer to wait and evaluate all possible choices thoroughly before deciding how to act.</li> <li>Do the right thing – describes me.</li> <li>I have a tendency to keep thinking without leaping/rushing.</li> <li>I have a desire for careful analysis to be accurate and make the ideal choice.</li> <li>I favour a strategy that allows me to make as many comparisons as possible to arrive at the best decision.</li> </ul>	5
Customer engagement	14 items removed based on expert panel's feedback.		18
Self-image congruence	4 items removed based on expert panel's feedback.		5
Perceived special event crowding	Unchanged		6
Perceived quality of special event	Unchanged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>...the quality of the event is... Poor.....Excellent Inferior..... Superior Low standard .....High standard</li> </ul>	3
Demographics and past experience			6
Total			61

#### 4.6.1.2.2. Step Six: Pre-test

After completing the content validity assessment, a pre-testing of the draft questionnaire was conducted. The pre-testing was undertaken to identify the problems and weaknesses of survey questionnaires regarding readability and understandability (Aaker et al., 2016). It also offers proxy data for selection of a probability sample (Blumberg et al., 2014). Some scholars suggest that pre-testing helps to identify problems in the questionnaire

(Churchill & Iacobucci, 2006; Malhotra, 2014). Moreover, this process allows researchers to improve the reliability of the questionnaire (Malhotra, 2014).

A convenience sample was employed for pre-testing through the recruitment of 40 English native speaker postgraduate students studying at the University of Tasmania. This number was chosen for the pilot study based on the argument of Malhotra (2014) that approximately 40 samplings are adequate for a pretesting process. The respondents were asked to give feedback on clarity regarding the length of time the questionnaire took to complete, wording, any instructions that were unclear, and if they found it easy or hard to understand and answer questions.

In the pre-testing, respondents were given the cover letter (see Figure 4.4) to better understand the purpose of the study, then assigned the questionnaire to complete, and the time for completing the questionnaire was recorded. The pre-testing revealed no particular problems with the aforementioned issues (Hair et al., 2017; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The conclusion of the pre-testing survey resulted in the retention of all items in the final survey.

**Figure 4.4:** Example of cover letter

My name is Supawat Meeprom, I am a PhD student at the University of Tasmania, Australia. I am inviting you to participate in my PhD project which focuses on **special event experiences in Thailand**. Your participation will enable the research team to identify potential methods for enhancing special event experiences, and help make a positive contribution to Thailand's special event industry.

If you agree to participate, please now complete the enclosed survey and return it to the researcher. Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. This project adheres to the guidelines of the ethical review process of the University of Tasmania. All information will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic research purposes only.

Source: Developed for this study

#### **4.6.1.2.3. Step Seven: Final questionnaire**

As outlined in Figure 4.2, preparation of the final questionnaire is the last step in the two-phase questionnaire development process. Having completed the pilot testing for the questionnaire instrument, it was concluded that the results represented all measurement items

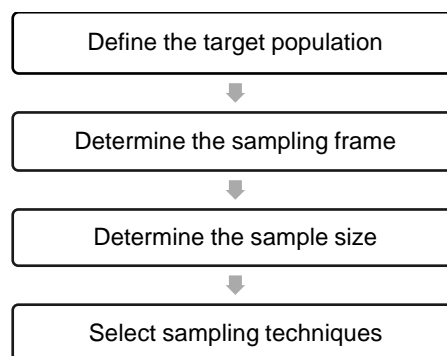


and subscales including a measure of central tendency and dispersion of individual items, skewness, kurtosis, and reliability scores. As recommended by Churchill and Iacobucci (2006), the reliability ranged between 0.85 - 0.97, exceeding the 0.70 threshold, and was thus considered an acceptable level of reliability. The final questionnaire consisted of 62 items, which is also shown in the Appendix.

#### **4.6.2. Designing the sampling plan**

Determining an appropriate sample is an important process for the success of any study. The key concepts of the sampling plan are the population (the group of target participants who could be subjects of the study) (Aaker et al., 2016) and the sample (locating potential respondents who are included in the research and developed as the sample plan from whom the data are collected) (Cavana et al., 2001). Following these principles, the researcher developed the sampling plan involving the definition and identification of the respondents, estimation and justification of the sample size, and recruitment method of the sample. The population for this study was specifically related to special event tourism in Thailand. The importance of studying tourism and special events in Thailand was identified in Chapter One (Section 1.3). The sampling design process involves four steps to create a sampling design process as adapted from Malhotra and Birks (2007) and presented in Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5:** The sampling design process



Source: Adapted from Malhotra and Birks (2007)

#### **4.6.2.1. Define the target population**

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), the sampling design process begins with identifying the target population, which is the group of people or objects that the researcher seeks to investigate. The target population must be defined accurately (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). In this research, the target population was identified and defined as international customers who have attended special events in Thailand. In line with previous research (e.g., de Guzman et al., 2006; Lee, 2000; Lee et al., 2004; McDowall, 2011), international customers were deemed appropriate for this study in order to understand *why international customers choose special events in Thailand and how they proactively engage with special event offerings in order to address their goals and satisfy their needs*. As suggested by Aaker et al. (2016), an appropriate population is important because a poorly defined population can produce misleading results for a study, and respondents should be over 18 years old. The population of this study was therefore defined as those 18 years of age and older that fit the screening criteria of being an international customer attending the Loy Kratong and Candle Festival, the Chiang Mai Flower Festival, and the Khon Kaen International Marathon, which were deemed suitable to test the research model and hypotheses discussed in Chapter Three.

#### **4.6.2.2. Determine the sampling frame**

The sampling frame is a representation of the elements of the target population (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The sampling frame of this research consisted of international respondents drawn from the Loy Kratong and Candle Festival, the Chiang Mai Flower Festival, and the Khon Kaen International Marathon (Table 4.5) and discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.2). A letter of permission in order to access the special event sites was obtained from the relevant event organisers (e.g., Director of the event site, Director of the city council, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand).

**Table 4.5:** Major special event sites

	<b>Loy Kratong and Candle Festival</b>	<b>Khon Kaen International Marathon</b>	<b>Chiang Mai Flower Festival</b>
<b>Location</b>	Sukhothai City Upper-central part of Thailand	Khon Kaen City North-eastern part of Thailand	Chiang Mai City Northern part of Thailand
<b>Period</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2016	29 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2017
<b>Type of event</b>	Cultural event	Sporting event	Cultural event

Source: Developed for this study

#### 4.6.2.3. Determine the sample size

After determining the sampling frame, the next stage of the process was determining the size of the sample. The sample size refers to selecting the number of respondents needed, in order to provide the researcher with enough data to support valid analysis and theory development. The sample size can help the researcher in terms of estimation, reliability, response rate, budget, and interpretation of the analysis results (Aaker et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2017). According to Aaker et al. (2016), there are two primary methods for determining sample size, the valid statistical procedure and judgment technique. Aaker et al. (2016) state that while the researcher can benchmark a desired sample size against sampling of previous studies, it may be constrained. These critical issues were all considered when determining the sample size and number of efficient respondents required for this study. Additionally, Malhotra (2014) argues that sample size can involve several qualitative and quantitative considerations. Following the suggestion of Aaker et al. (2016), this study used an examination of similar research within the disciplines of consumer behaviour and tourism to determine an appropriate sample size.

As indicated in Table 4.6, based on a review of research published in top-tier journals, many similar studies achieved a final sample size ranging from 150 to 1,000. This research selected 165 respondents for each special event (for a total of 495) as an appropriate sample size, which is consistent with previous research focusing on tourism products, branding, customer behaviour, and customer engagement. Therefore, the sample size and

characteristics are consistent with prior studies (see Table 4.6). Detailed information about the sample size is in provided in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.6:** Review of sample size and data collection approach

Authors	Focus of research	Data collection method	Sample size
Murphy et al. (2000)	Perception and behavioural intention	Convenience	610
Kleijnen et al. (2007)	Perceived value	Convenience	375
Carlson and O'Cass (2010)	Behavioural intention	Convenience	518
Chen and Chen (2010)	Behavioural intention	Convenience	477
Martínez-Ruiz et al. (2010)	Customer satisfaction	Convenience	358
O'Cass and Ngo (2012)	Customer value	Convenience	155
Chen and Phou (2013)	Loyalty	Convenience	428
Dong and Siu (2013)	Customer service experience	Convenience	366
Jiang, Yang and Jun (2013)	Consumer behaviour	Convenience	550
Sun et al. (2013)	Loyalty	Convenience	573
Verleye et al. (2014)	Customer engagement	Convenience	413
Amaro and Duarte (2015)	Consumer behaviour	Convenience	1732
Bryce et al. (2015)	Visitor engagement	Convenience	768

Source: Developed for this study

**Table 4.7:** Locations and surveys distributed

Number	Event names	Location	Period	Survey Distributed
1	Loy Kratong and Candle Festival	Sukhothai City	10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2016	165 international respondents
2	Khon Kaen International Marathon	Khon Kaen City	29 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017	165 international respondents
3	Chiang Mai International Flower Festival	Chiang Mai City	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2017	165 international respondents
Total				495 ≈ 500

Source: Developed for this study

In summary, the target respondents of this study were international respondents, three special events were selected as the sites for data collection (see Table 4.7), and 500 survey questionnaires were distributed in total. The researcher expected that errors in the data collected would not exceed 20 percent. Incomplete questionnaires, for instance from participants who skipped or did not answer some questions, constitute the sources of errors in the self-administered survey (Blair et al., 2013) and were eliminated from the analysis process.

#### 4.6.2.4. Select sampling techniques

As shown in Figure 4.5, the next step is the selection of the sampling techniques. A non-probability, convenience sampling technique was adopted for this study (Zikmund et al., 2014). Convenience sampling refers to units of people who are most conveniently available to the researcher. The respondents are selected because they happen to be in the right place at the right time (Malhotra, 2014). The use of convenience sampling is appropriate for this study because of its ease of application and rate in receiving the needed information (Aaker et al., 2016; Zikmund et al., 2014). In addition, this technique has been broadly employed by other marketing and tourism scholars in similar research (e.g., Lee, 2000; Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004; McDowall, 2011). Table 4.8 presents the advantages and disadvantages of each sampling technique.

**Table 4.8:** Comparison of strengths and weaknesses of sampling techniques

Sampling design	Advantages	Disadvantages
Convenience: the most convenient sample or economical sample units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No need for list of population and very low cost.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unrepresentative samples likely.</li></ul>
Judgment: an expert selects the sample to fulfil a purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sample guaranteed to meet a specific objective.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bias due to expert's beliefs may make sample unrepresentative.</li></ul>
Quota: The researcher classifies the population by pertinent properties, determines the desired proportion of quota.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires no list of population.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduces bias in researcher's classification of subjects.</li></ul>
Snowball: Initial respondents are selected by probability samples; respondents are obtained by referral from initial respondents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Useful in locating members of rare populations and low cost.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High bias because sample units are not independent.</li></ul>

Source: adapted from Zikmund et al. (2013)

For this study, convenience sampling was applied at the special event sites where customers were intercepted and invited to participate in the study. The locations selected for intercept were exit doors, and rest areas, which provided the researcher with access to high foot traffic areas and allowed flexibility for the researcher to come and go with ease on various

dates and at different times within the duration of the event. Due to the nature of special events occurring over a limited duration of time, the researcher hired research assistants (Postgraduate research students) to help with questionnaire delivery and data collection. The research assistants were trained and versed in the research purpose and how to collect the data.

The sample size for this study was estimated based on the suggestion of Aaker et al. (2016) who believe a sample can be selected based on prior similar studies; as justified in the previous section. To obtain the data, 500 questionnaires were distributed in total within the three special event sites. They were also informed by agreeing to participate in the study. When customers agreed to participate in the study, a paper-based questionnaire was administered to complete the questionnaires. Of the 500 questionnaire forms supplied, 450 questionnaires were returned.

#### **4.6.3. Anticipated data analysis techniques**

As shown in Figure 4.1, the last step in stage two of the research design process is data analysis. The anticipated data analysis techniques involve identifying the suitable data analysis approaches. As this research adopted positivistic, descriptive techniques employing a survey to collect the data for testing the hypotheses, quantitative methods were deemed appropriate for data analysis. Therefore, after data collection preliminary analyses will be used to compute the psychometric properties of the constructs reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016). To evaluate the reliability of individual measurement items, the factor loading of each item should be greater than the benchmark level of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2016) across the international data set to support convergent validity.

To evaluate the measurement model internal consistencies, this study will assess composite reliability values for each latent construct. The acceptable benchmark with values should be well above 0.70 across the data set to demonstrate that the measures in this study are robust and reliable (Hair et al., 2016). Similarly, all average variance extracted (AVE)

scores recommend a benchmark of 0.50 across data sets to provide further support for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2016; O'Cass, Ngo, & Siahtiri, 2015). Discriminant validity will be assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE and all corresponding correlations. The Fornell-Larcker criterion is a commonly accepted procedure to evaluate discriminant validity where each latent variable should share more variance with its own block of indicators than with any other latent constructs from the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Hence, the AVE value of a latent construct is confirmed as higher than the variable's squared correlation with any other latent construct. On completion of the preliminary analyses, the analysis to test the hypotheses will be undertaken.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the theoretical model posits relationships among a set of multiple constructs. To test the direct effects and interaction effects, as presented in Figure 3.1 (Chapter Three), the main and moderation effects are investigated through the employment of regression analysis (e.g., Destro et al., 2016; Mathmann et al., 2017b; O'Cass & Choy, 2008). In addition, this study employs a moderated regression analysis. The moderating effects are examined by following the recommendations of Aiken and West (1991), Esmark and Noble (2018), and Jasmand et al. (2012). Multicollinearity can present a critical issue as one construct may have high correlations with other constructs that may translate to inflated standard errors. Then, the moderating effects are investigated via the mean-centred interaction variables to create interaction terms (Aiken & West, 1991). Lastly, the moderating effects are plotted graphically by using a simple slope test; as suggested by Spiller et al. (2013).

#### **4.7. STAGE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION**

The third and final stage of the research design process, as presented in Figure 4.1, is the implementation stage. According to Aaker et al. (2016), this stage involves consideration of the research budget and the timeframe for gathering the data in Thailand. The budget plan includes the cost of travelling, the cost of survey printing, gifts, and telephone call expenses in

Thailand. In addition, the approval of the ethical consideration needs to ensure that the research has been conducted according to ethical standards.

#### **4.8. CONCLUSION**

This chapter developed a compressive discussion of the research methodology applied in this study. This chapter provided the justifications for the adoption of the research methodology that can be drawn upon to answer the research questions identified in Chapter One and the hypotheses established in Chapter Three. Following prior research, this study used the positivism-based descriptive research approach for data collecting and analysis. In doing so, three special events in Thailand were regarded as a suitable context for the present research. Further, through the implementation of the on-site intercept approach, customers who attended the special events and who were actively involved in special event activities were targeted. A paper-based questionnaire instrument was considered to be the most suitable method to address the hypotheses posed in Chapter Three. This chapter also presented the development of the questionnaire instrument process to ensure that it would accurately measure the focal constructs under investigation. The empirical analyses are undertaken and discussed in the next chapter.



# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

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### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter One, the research objectives and questions that underpin this research were identified. Driven by the research objectives and questions, a review of the literature was undertaken and presented in Chapter Two. Building on the foundation presented by the review of relevant literature, individual hypothesis related to the theoretical framework (as shown in Figure 3.1) were constructed in Chapter Three. To shed light on the research questions and hypotheses, Chapter Four presented a detailed explanation of the methodology and research design which encompassed issues including sampling, the data collection technique, and the measures of constructs of interest.

To examine the precision and significance of the theoretical model constructed in Chapter Three, several analytical stages were undertaken, for which the results are presented in this chapter. This chapter starts with the preliminary analysis including the sample profile, descriptive analysis, and reliability and validity tests of the measurement model. Preliminary analysis and descriptive statistics are shown in Section 5.2. Following this, the results of the hypothesis testing are discussed in Section 5.3. The chapter closes with a summary of the hypotheses results and additional analysis in Sections 5.4 and 5.5, respectively. The conclusion of this chapter is presented in Section 5.6.

### **5.2. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS**

As noted in Chapter Four (Section 4.6.2.4), the field work to collect the data for this study was conducted in Thailand, on-site at special events using a self-administered survey via an intercept approach. The importance of special events in Thailand as an appropriate

destination for the current study was discussed in Chapter One (Section 1.3). The surveys were distributed to 500 visitors at three special event sites and 450 respondents returned their surveys. After screening the 450 surveys, 39 surveys were excluded from analysis due to a high number of missing answers. At the conclusion of data analysis, 411 useable surveys were used, representing a 91 percent response rate, which is more than the 40-90 percent general response rates reported in previous studies (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015; Carlson & O'Cass, 2010; Li & Cai, 2012). Thus, non-response bias was not an issue in this study.

The preliminary data analysis comprised seven important tasks. First, reporting the profile of the respondents is presented in Section 5.2.1. Second, computing the descriptive statistics and psychometric analysis. The descriptive analysis includes central tendency (i.e., mean) and measures of dispersion (i.e., standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) discussed in Section 5.2.2. Section 5.2.3 presents the assessment of the measurement model. Sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 present the reliability and validity tests. Finally, missing data and common method variance are detailed in Sections 5.2.6 and 5.2.7, respectively.

### **5.2.1. Profile of the respondents**

The profile of the respondents is categorised into seven groups encompassing past experience, gender, age, nationality, educational level, occupation, and time spent at the event. The sample size for this study was 411 respondents, 261 responded to cultural events (134 respondents for the Loy Kratong and Candle festival, and 127 respondents for Chaing Mai International Flower festival), and 150 responded to sport event (the Khon Kaen International Marathon). As presented in Table 5.1, the majority of the respondents (77.60%) were first-time tourists to the special events. The participants were 41.10% male and 58.90% female with ages between 19 and 85 years, with the average age being 34 years. The respondents were asked to indicate their original country. The countries comprised China, the USA, Australia, European Countries (e.g., the UK, the Netherlands, and France), Russia, and other (e.g., Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore). The majority of the respondents were from the UK and other European countries (36.50%). In terms of employment, the respondents were

predominantly employed in administration (43.60%) and students (18.50%). The majority of the respondents held an undergraduate degree (34.30%), followed by a postgraduate degree (29.90%), and high school level (15.80%). Detailed information of the sample profile is presented in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1:** Profile of the respondents

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Sample (%) (n = 411)</b>	<b>Loy Kratong (%) festival (n = 134)</b>	<b>Flower festival (%) (n = 127)</b>	<b>Marathon (%) (n = 150)</b>
Past experience				
First time visited	319 (77.60%)	121 (90.30%)	111 (87.40%)	87 (58.00%)
Repeat visited	92 (22.40%)	13 (9.70%)	16 (12.60%)	63 (42.00%)
Gender				
Male	169 (41.10%)	63 (47.00%)	43 (33.90%)	63 (42.00%)
Female	242 (58.90%)	71 (53.00%)	84 (66.10)	87 (58.00%)
Age				
Under 20	12 (2.90%)	4 (3.00%)	7 (5.50%)	1 (0.70%)
20 – 29	210 (51.10%)	76 (56.70%)	87 (68.50%)	47 (31.30%)
30 – 39	88 (21.40%)	35 (26.10%)	19 (15.00%)	34 (22.70%)
40 – 49	38 (9.20%)	6 (4.50%)	4 (3.10%)	28 (18.70%)
50 – 59	27 (6.60%)	7 (5.20%)	2 (1.60%)	23 (15.30%)
60 and over	36 (8.80%)	6 (4.50%)	8 (6.30%)	17 (11.30%)
Nationality				
China	19 (4.60%)	4 (3.00%)	13 (10.20%)	2 (1.30%)
USA	61 (14.80%)	10 (7.50%)	37 (29.10%)	14 (9.30%)
Australia	30 (7.30%)	8 (6.00%)	15 (11.80%)	7 (4.70%)
UK and European countries	150 (36.50%)	89 (66.40%)	29 (22.80%)	32 (21.30%)
Russia	5 (1.20%)	-	5 (3.90%)	-
Other	146 (35.50%)	23 (17.20%)	28 (22.00%)	95 (63.30%)
Occupation				
Student	76 (18.50%)	18 (13.40%)	40 (31.50%)	18 (12.00%)
Employee (administration)	179 (43.60%)	73 (54.50%)	42 (33.10%)	64 (42.70%)
Business owner	53 (12.90%)	11 (8.20%)	14 (11.00%)	28 (18.70%)
Retired	35 (8.50%)	6 (4.50%)	10 (7.90%)	19 (12.70%)
Unemployed	21 (5.10%)	9 (6.70%)	10 (7.90%)	2 (1.30%)
Home duties	4 (1.20%)	-	-	4 (2.70%)
Other	43 (10.50%)	17 (12.70%)	11 (8.70%)	15 (10.00%)
Educational level				
Primary School	4 (1.00%)	2 (1.50%)	-	2 (1.30%)
High School	65 (15.80%)	17 (12.70%)	12 (9.40%)	36 (24.00%)
Vocational or technical	34 (8.30%)	12 (9.00%)	12 (9.40%)	10 (6.70%)
Diploma	44 (10.70%)	15 (11.20%)	16 (12.60%)	13 (8.70%)
Undergraduate Degree	141 (34.30%)	29 (21.60%)	54 (42.50%)	58 (38.70%)
Postgraduate Degree	123 (29.90%)	59 (44.00%)	33 (26.00%)	31 (20.70%)

### 5.2.2. Descriptive statistic results

As indicated in Table 4.3 in Chapter Four (Section 4.6.1), the key constructs comprise travel motives, namely, learning, excitement, escape, social status, and family/friends' togetherness, locomotion orientation, assessment orientation, customer engagement with special events, customer self-image-special event image congruence, perceived special event crowding, and perceived quality of special event. All constructs were measured using multiple items, modelled as unidimensional constructs on seven-point scales. The descriptive statistics of the measure of the constructs were evaluated and are presented in Table 5.2.

The mean and the standard deviation (SD) were calculated to assess the central tendency and dispersion. In addition, skewness and kurtosis were computed to examine the distribution of respondents (Park, 2015). Skewness shows the degree of symmetry of distribution and it should be between  $\pm 1$  to represent normal distribution of data (Joanes & Gill, 1998). Specifically, negative values for skewness mean that the left tail is longer than the right tail and positive values of skewness mean the right tail is longer than the left tail. Kurtosis measures the thinness of the tails of probability distribution and should range in the domain of  $\pm 3$  (Park, 2015).

Table 5.2 represents the descriptive analysis of all the items of each construct. The items related to learning, excitement, escape, social status, and family/friend togetherness motives are MO1 to MO13. Items measuring locomotion orientation are LO1 to LO5, and assessment orientation AO1 to AO5. Customer engagement with special events are items CE1 to CE18. Items representing customer self-image-special event image congruence are SIC1 to SIC5, and items measuring perceived special event crowding are PC1 to PC6. Finally, the items measuring the perceived quality of a special event are PEQ1 to PEQ3.

The descriptive statistics indicate that the means for all items ranged from 3.62 to 6.80; the smallest mean is related to an item in the perceived special event crowding construct and the highest mean is for an item in the perceived quality of special event construct. Table 5.2 further shows that the SD ranged from 1.17 to 2.07, with the smallest SD in the excitement

motive construct and the highest SD in the social status motive construct. The calculated standard deviations indicate that the data points are spread over a large range of values. Furthermore, Table 5.2 presents the scores for the skewness of items, which ranged from -1.42 to 0.10 and kurtosis ranged from -1.40 to 1.55, thereby supporting a normal distribution of data (DeVellis, 2017).

**Table 5.2:** Descriptive statistics results

Constructs		Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>Learning Motive</b>					
MO1	To explore new places	5.66	1.25	-0.85	0.52
MO2	To experience new and different lifestyles	5.62	1.28	-0.90	0.55
MO3	To learn new things, and increase my knowledge	5.74	1.25	-0.98	0.52
<b>Excitement Motive</b>					
MO4	To experience the excitement offered by this event	5.62	1.20	-0.93	0.97
MO5	To enjoy the event activities and atmosphere	5.73	1.17	-0.76	-0.03
MO6	To visit a once-in-a-life time event	5.55	1.43	-0.92	0.22
MO7	To visit famous cultural and historical attractions	5.68	1.38	-1.42	2.00
<b>Escape Motive</b>					
MO8	To have fun	5.60	1.32	-1.12	1.31
MO9	To escape (e.g., routine work)	4.88	1.84	-0.76	-0.39
<b>Social Status Motive</b>					
MO10	To do something that impresses others	3.68	2.06	0.07	-1.36
MO11	To go somewhere that my friends haven't been (attended yet)	3.80	2.07	-0.04	-1.40
<b>Family/Friends Togetherness Motive</b>					
MO12	To spend time with my family/friends	5.04	1.90	-0.93	-0.20
MO13	To create good memories with family/friends	5.50	1.64	-1.35	1.29
<b>Locomotion Orientation (LO1 to LO5)</b>					
LO1	When I decide to do something, I can't wait to get started	5.36	1.26	-0.66	0.17
LO2	Most of the time my thoughts are occupied with the task I wish to accomplish	5.08	1.24	-0.43	-0.15
LO3	I enjoy actively doing things, more than just watching and observing	5.43	1.23	-0.65	-0.08
LO4	Just do it – is an apt reflection of me	5.04	1.40	-0.62	-0.09
LO5	I focus on "getting on with it" to make things happen	5.28	1.25	-0.73	0.54
<b>Assessment Orientation (AO1 to AO5)</b>					
AO1	I prefer to wait and evaluate all possible choices thoroughly before deciding how to act	4.98	1.26	-0.33	-0.42
AO2	Do the right thing – describes me	5.21	1.26	-0.54	-0.09
AO3	I have a tendency to keep thinking without leaping/rushing	4.82	1.32	-0.43	-0.08
AO4	I have a desire for careful analysis to be accurate and make the ideal choice	5.09	1.31	-0.63	0.23
AO5	I favour a strategy that allows me to make as many comparisons as possible to arrive at the best decision	5.04	1.33	-0.65	-0.10

**Table 5.2:** Descriptive statistics results, continued...

Constructs		Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>Customer engagement with special events (CE1 to CE18)</b>					
CE1	I identify strongly with this event	4.53	1.52	-0.38	-0.37
CE2	This event embodies what I believe in	4.30	1.62	-0.34	-0.65
CE3	This event is like a part of me	4.36	1.62	-0.38	-0.54
CE4	I like to learn about this event	5.28	1.42	-0.77	0.29
CE5	I pay a lot of attention to anything about this event	4.95	1.48	-0.68	0.16
CE6	Anything related to this event grabs my attention	4.86	1.49	-0.59	-0.11
CE7	When attending this event, I forget everything else around me	4.51	1.63	-0.46	-0.49
CE8	Time flies when I am attending this event	4.86	1.55	-0.65	-0.03
CE9	When attending this event, I do not want to leave	4.81	1.57	-1.00	-0.33
CE10	I feel happy when I am attending this event	5.43	1.34	-1.00	1.09
CE11	I get pleasure from attending this event	5.46	1.28	-1.07	1.55
CE12	Attending this event is like a treat for me	5.24	1.46	-0.98	0.74
CE13	I am interested in anything about this event	5.23	1.37	-0.65	0.04
CE14	I find this event interesting	5.57	1.23	-0.92	0.78
CE15	I feel enthusiastic about this event	5.48	1.24	-0.81	0.41
CE16	I like to get involved in discussions with other people at this event	4.53	1.67	-0.45	-0.51
CE17	I enjoy exchanging ideas with other people at this event	4.59	1.68	-0.49	-0.51
CE18	If I have a useful idea on how to improve event quality and service, I will let the event organisers or workers know	5.03	1.49	-0.71	0.21
<b>Customer self-image special event-image congruence (SIC1 to SIC5)</b>					
SIC1	The personality of this event is consistent with how I see myself	4.57	1.43	-0.64	0.24
SIC2	The personality of this event is a mirror image of me	4.21	1.51	-0.38	-0.32
SIC3	The personality of this event is close to my own personality	4.33	1.49	-0.46	-0.34
SIC4	The personality of this event is consistent with how I would like to see myself	4.44	1.53	-0.46	-0.34
SIC5	The personality of this event is a mirror image of the person I would like to be	4.43	1.48	-0.45	-0.28
<b>Perceived special event crowding (PC1 to PC6)</b>					
PC1	The event site seems very crowded to me	4.16	1.67	-0.21	-0.89
PC2	There are a lot of people at the event site	4.78	1.58	-0.50	-0.50
PC3	There is a lot of foot traffic at the event site	4.47	1.65	-0.45	-0.60
PC4	I feel cramped at the event site	3.68	1.69	0.06	-0.92
PC5	The event site does not have an open, airy feeling to it	3.62	1.91	0.10	-1.25
PC6	The event areas feel confining	3.67	1.81	0.04	-1.13
<b>Perceived quality of special event (PEQ1 to PEQ3)</b>					
PEQ1	The quality of this event is "Poor"....."Excellent"	6.80	1.42	-0.47	0.20
PEQ2	The quality of this event is "Inferior"....."Superior"	6.78	1.38	-0.39	-0.03
PEQ3	The quality of this event is "Low Standard"....."High Standard"	6.78	1.39	-0.56	0.75

Note: Travel motives, self-image congruence, locomotion orientation, assessment orientation, perceived event crowding, and customer engagement with special events items were measured using a 7-point scale. Perceived quality of special event items were measured using a 9-point scale.

### 5.2.3. Measurement assessment

The quality of the measurement model was assessed through reliability and validity tests (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012). Construct reliability assessment routinely focuses on composite reliability as an estimate of a construct's internal consistency, which is more powerful compared to traditional reliability, such as Cronbach's alpha, because composite reliability does not restrict the number of items in the scale (Hair et al., 2016). As suggested by Hair et al. (2016), a composite reliability value below 0.60 demonstrates a lack of internal consistency reliability. Similarly, the quality of each indicator is important and is assessed based on the factor loadings of the items, which should be higher than 0.40 (Hair et al., 2016). The average variance extracted (AVE) explains the variance explained by the latent variable and should be higher than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2016). The individual indicator loadings, critical t-values, correlations, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs of interest are presented in Table 5.3.

As shown in Table 5.3, the factor loadings for all the items ranged from 0.50 to 0.96, which were greater than the benchmark value of 0.40 proposed by Hair et al. (2016). Further, Table 5.3 shows the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). As presented in Table 5.3, the composite reliability of all the constructs ranged from 0.82 to 0.96, which were also greater than the recommended level of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2016). In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) of all the constructs ranged from 0.51 to 0.89, which meet the benchmark proposed by Hair et al. (2016). In summary, the results of the measurement assessment show that there is no problem of construct reliability.

**Table 5.3:** Results of psychometric analysis

Items		Factor loadings	t-values
<b>Learning Motive</b>			
(AVE= 0.78, CR= 0.91)			
MO1	To explore new places	0.87	46.80
MO2	To experience new and different lifestyles	0.90	77.80
MO3	To learn new things, and increase my knowledge	0.88	60.68
<b>Excitement Motive</b>			
(AVE= 0.65, CR= 0.88)			
MO4	To experience the excitement offered by this event	0.80	33.36
MO5	To enjoy the event activities and atmosphere	0.84	50.65

Table 5.3: (continued)

Items	Factor loadings	t-values
MO6 To visit a once-in-a-life time event	0.81	40.40
MO7 To visit famous cultural and historical attractions	0.77	22.76
<b>Escape Motive (AVE= 0.70, CR= 0.82)</b>		
MO8 To have fun	0.83	57.82
MO9 To escape (e.g., routine work)	0.83	57.82
<b>Social Status Motive (AVE= 0.89, CR= 0.94)</b>		
MO10 To do something that impresses others	0.94	134.50
MO11 To go somewhere that my friends haven't been (attended yet)	0.94	134.50
<b>Family/Friends Togetherness (AVE= 0.87, CR= 0.93)</b>		
MO12 To spend time with my family/friends	0.93	106.10
MO13 To create good memories with family/friends	0.93	106.10
<b>Locomotion orientation (AVE= 0.54, CR= 0.86)</b>		
<i>In general in life</i>		
LO1 When I decide to do something, I can't wait to get started	0.68	16.87
LO2 Most of the time my thoughts are occupied with the task I wish to accomplish	0.67	15.77
LO3 I enjoy actively doing things, more than just watching and observing	0.75	22.24
LO4 Just do it – is an apt reflection of me	0.80	25.18
LO5 I focus on "getting on with it" to make things happen	0.78	25.35
<b>Assessment orientation (AVE= 0.61, CR= 0.89)</b>		
<i>In general in life</i>		
AO1 I prefer to wait and evaluate all possible choices thoroughly before deciding how to act	0.82	35.78
AO2 Do the right thing – describes me	0.76	26.59
AO3 I have a tendency to keep thinking without leaping/rushing	0.73	15.97
AO4 I have a desire for careful analysis to be accurate and make the ideal choice	0.81	31.85
AO5 I favour a strategy that allows me to make as many comparisons as possible to arrive at the best decision	0.76	22.16
<b>Customer engagement with special events (AVE= 0.51, CR= 0.95)</b>		
<i>In thinking about (event name)</i>		
CE1 I identify strongly with this event	0.68	21.55
CE2 This event embodies what I believe in	0.71	22.55
CE3 This event is like a part of me	0.70	22.22
CE4 I like to learn about this event	0.69	20.27
CE5 I pay a lot of attention to anything about this event	0.74	27.95
CE6 Anything related to this event grabs my attention	0.73	21.91
CE7 When attending this event, I forget everything else around me	0.72	21.49
CE8 Time flies when I am attending this event	0.78	37.14
CE9 When attending this event, I do not want to leave	0.78	31.07
CE10 I feel happy when I am attending this event	0.76	29.74
CE11 I get pleasure from attending this event	0.77	29.36
CE12 Attending this event is like a treat for me	0.69	16.10



**Table 5.3:** (continued)

Items	Factor loadings	t-values
CE13 I am interested in anything about this event	0.81	35.55
CE14 I find this event interesting	0.76	30.91
CE15 I feel enthusiastic about this event	0.78	35.57
CE16 I like to get involved in discussions with other people at this event	0.50	11.39
CE17 I enjoy exchanging ideas with other people at this event	0.59	17.10
CE18 If I have a useful idea on how to improve event quality and service, I will let the event organisers or workers know	0.57	13.98
<b>Customer self-image-special event image congruence (AVE= 0.82, CR= 0.96)</b>		
<i>Thinking about this (event name)</i>		
SIC1 The personality of this event is consistent with how I see myself	0.89	66.61
SIC2 The personality of this event is a mirror image of me	0.90	69.29
SIC3 The personality of this event is close to my own personality	0.91	58.38
SIC4 The personality of this event is consistent with how I would like to see myself	0.92	112.09
SIC5 The personality of this event is a mirror image of the person I would like to be	0.88	46.30
<b>Perceived special event crowding (AVE= 0.55, CR= 0.88)</b>		
<i>Thinking about this (event name)</i>		
PC1 The event site seems very crowded to me	0.76	7.51
PC2 There are a lot of people at the event site	0.84	12.66
PC3 There is a lot of foot traffic at the event site	0.78	8.98
PC4 I feel cramped at the event site	0.73	5.61
PC5 The event site does not have an open, airy feeling to it	0.62	4.91
PC6 The event areas feel confining	0.62	4.66
<b>Perceived quality of special event (AVE= 0.75, CR= 0.86)</b>		
<i>In thinking about (event name)</i>		
PEQ1 The quality of this event is "Poor"....."Excellent"	0.95	102.64
PEQ2 The quality of this event is "Inferior"....."Superior"	0.96	136.41
PEQ3 The quality of this event is "Low Standard"....."High Standard"	0.95	94.95

#### 5.2.4. Convergent validity

Convergent validity represents the degree to which each item is associated with its intended construct (Hair et al., 2012). Convergent validity assessment involves two criteria: (1) the composite reliability of a construct should exceed the 0.60 benchmark (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and (2) the AVE of a construct should exceed the 0.50 benchmark (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As presented in Table 5.4, the composite reliability of all constructs ranged

from 0.82 to 0.96, and the AVE for all constructs ranged from 0.51 to 0.89, which are higher than the acceptable limits of 0.60 and 0.50, respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Taking these into account, the results presented sufficient evidence of satisfactory convergent validity.

#### **5.2.5. Discriminant validity**

Discriminant validity represents the degree to which measures of a given construct differ from measures of other constructs within a model (Hair et al., 2012). Two criteria for assessing the discriminant validity were employed in this research. First, Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that if the correlation between each construct is less than the square root of their respective AVE estimates, there is strong support for discriminant validity. The findings shown in Table 5.4, indicate that the square roots of all AVEs are higher than the correlation between the corresponding constructs, supporting the existence of discriminant validity. Second, discriminant validity is evident when the correlation between the two constructs is not greater than their respective reliability estimate (Ngo & O'Cass, 2013). As shown in Table 5.4, the composite reliabilities of all the constructs range from 0.82 to 0.96, which are higher than their corresponding correlation value. Taken together, these results exhibit satisfactory discriminant validity.

**Table 5.4:** Descriptive analysis of constructs

Constructs	Mean	SD.	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Gender	-	0.49	-	-														
2. Age	34	13.67	-	-	0.20													
3. Nationality	-	1.57	-	-	-0.04	0.06												
4. Learning motive	5.67	1.11	0.91	0.78	0.03	-0.01	0.02	(0.88)										
5. Excitement motive	5.64	1.00	0.88	0.65	0.05	-0.03	0.03	0.69	(0.81)									
6. Escape motive	4.88	1.84	0.82	0.70	-0.03	-0.15	-0.04	0.30	0.38	(0.84)								
7. Social status motive	3.74	1.96	0.94	0.89	0.08	-0.07	0.09	0.04	0.14	0.29	(0.94)							
8. Family/Friends togetherness	5.27	1.66	0.93	0.87	0.05	-0.04	0.03	0.28	0.37	0.27	0.31	(0.93)						
9. Locomotion orientation	5.24	0.94	0.86	0.54	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.23	0.27	0.13	0.15	0.26	(0.73)					
10. Assessment orientation	5.03	1.01	0.89	0.61	-0.06	-0.01	0.08	0.28	0.35	0.17	0.09	0.21	0.41	(0.78)				
11. Customer engagement	4.95	1.05	0.95	0.51	0.04	-0.04	0.07	0.41	0.51	0.29	0.30	0.39	0.34	0.36	(0.71)			
12. Self-image congruence	4.40	1.34	0.96	0.82	0.05	0.02	-0.01	0.31	0.35	0.20	0.32	0.26	0.25	0.22	0.68	(0.91)		
13. Perceived event crowding	4.06	1.27	0.88	0.55	0.02	-0.02	0.05	-0.11	-0.07	0.07	0.35	0.11	0.07	0.09	0.17	0.29	(0.74)	
14. Perceived quality of event	6.78	1.33	0.86	0.75	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.25	0.28	0.11	0.13	0.18	0.31	0.29	0.41	0.27	0.17	(0.86)

Note:

CR is composite reliability; Diagonal entries are the square root of AVE; others are the correlation coefficients;  $p < 0.01$

### **5.2.6. Missing Data**

Missing data is a concern in data analysis (Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Missing data occurs when the respondents leave survey questions unanswered, and is quite common in social science and marketing research (e.g., DeConinck et al., 2010; Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011). In marketing research, Kamakura and Wedel (2000) suggest replacing the missing observations by using the mean score on the variance. While Norusis (2000) postulates that the missing data problem is resolved by removal of the said survey. In addition, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) assert that missing data is a less significant problem if less than 5 percent of data is missed. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), to maximise the quality of the analysis, the surveys with more than 5% missing data were eliminated from the data analysis process. To deal with the data sets in which some of the data are missing, the items with no answer were treated as missing values. The missing data imputation of this study followed Žabkar et al. (2010) who suggest that the missing data that remained could be deemed as missing completely at random. If data is missing completely at random, missing data can be replaced with unbiased estimates that reflect the nonsignificant value of less missing completely at random. The maximum likelihood approach of missing data can be replaced by testing in SPSS, which provides the least bias in the missing data.

### **5.2.7. Common method bias**

Since the data were collected via the self-administered method, the test of common method variance (CMV) was used to ensure that common method bias is not a potential issue. According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), the common method variance is a potential problem in the field of social science research, such as marketing, as it can produce measurement error, which may impact the measurement method, structural parameter estimates, as well as the significance of hypotheses testing. Common method variance occurs when a single respondent answers all the items about the measure of constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Given these concerns related to common method variance, the threat of common method bias was tested using Harman's single factor approach.

To test for common method bias using Harman's single factor approach, the items encompassing the eleven constructs of interest were entered in SPSS and analysed using the exploratory factor analysis method (Carlson & O'Cass, 2012). Harman's one-factor tests did not produce a single factor, which is evidence against the existence of a single source of variance that is shared among the constructs (Podsakoff & Organ 1986). SPSS extracted eleven factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 explaining 70.58% of variance. The first factor accounted for 27.92% of variance. As one factor did not account for the main proportion of variance, it could be concluded that common method variance was not an issue (O'Cass & Ngo, 2012).

### **5.3. HYPOTHESES TESTING**

Consistent with previous studies, a series of linear regression analysis was performed to examine the hypotheses embedded in the model developed in Chapter Three (e.g., Látková & Vogt, 2012; Mathmann, Chylinski, Higgins, et al., 2017; O'Cass & Choy, 2008; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). To assess each path, the beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ),  $R^2$ , changes in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2$ ), and statistical significance (*F tests*) were evaluated. In doing so, the demographics including gender, age, and nationality were entered as the control variable. Beta coefficient shows the strength of the path,  $R^2$  shows the strength of predictability of the model,  $\Delta R^2$  shows the changes in predictability of the model if a new variable is added to the model, and, finally, the *F* test shows the statistical significance of the paths.

Section 5.3.1 presents the results of the analysis for the proposed direct relationships. Section 5.3.2 represents the results of the moderation effects between constructs. Section 5.4 shows the summary of hypothesis testing. Finally, this study undertakes additional analyses, which is presented in Section 5.5. The additional analyses are undertaken to provide deeper insight into the contingency role of customer self-image-special event image congruence and perceived special event crowding in the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of special event across two themes of special event.

### 5.3.1. Hypotheses with direct relationships (H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2a, and H3)

To examine the direct relationships among the constructs of interest, linear regression modelling was adopted (Látková & Vogt, 2012; O'Cass & Choy, 2008). Hypothesis one is examined through model one. Hypothesis 1a stated that the learning motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle Festival, and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events). As shown in Table 5.5, the result confirms hypothesis 1a. The standardised beta coefficient for the relationship between learning motive and engagement with the cultural events is positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.37$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 6.54$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ). Hypothesis 1b predicted that the escape motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events). As shown in Table 5.5, contrary to our expectation, this hypothesis is not supported ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 1.56$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 1c predicted that the family/friends' togetherness motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events). The examination of the path supports this hypothesis ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 4.63$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ).

Hypothesis two is examined through model two. Hypothesis 2a predicted that the excitement motive is positively related to engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event) and hypothesis 2b predicted that social status motive is positively related to engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event). The findings presented in Table 5.5 for these two hypotheses support the predicted relationships for both hypotheses 2a ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3.15$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ ), and 2b ( $\beta = 0.46$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 5.32$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ).

Hypothesis three is examined through model three. Hypotheses 3 predicted that customer engagement with the special events in Thailand has a positive relationship with the perceived quality of the special event. The findings presented in Table 5.5 show that the standardised beta coefficient for the relationship between customer engagement with the

special events is positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 8.92$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ), thus this finding supports hypothesis 3.

**Table 5.5:** Results of direct effect relationships tests

	Dependent variables		
	Model 1 Customer engagement with cultural events	Model 2 Customer engagement with sporting event	Model 3 Perceived Quality of Special Event
<b>Control variable</b>			
Gender	0.03 (0.54)	-0.07 (-0.92)	0.03 (0.56)
Age	-0.07 (-1.32)	0.04 (0.57)	0.04 (0.86)
Nationality	0.01 (0.16)	-0.05 (-0.67)	-0.02 (-0.52)
<b>Independent variables</b>			
H1a: Learning motive	0.37 (6.54***)		
H1b: Escape motive	0.09 (1.56 n.s.)		
H1c: Family/friends togetherness motive	0.26 (4.63***)		
H2a: Excitement motive		0.25 (3.15**)	
H2b: Social status motive		0.46 (5.32***)	
H3: Customer engagement with the special events			0.41 (8.92***)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.30	0.35	0.17
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.29	0.33	0.16
<b>F-value</b>	18.50***	15.77***	20.21
<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>	0.30	0.35	0.17***

Notes: \*p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001; standardised regression coefficients are reported.

Additional analysis conducted to compare the effect of motives across the two different events. In comparing the cultural and sport events, findings in Table 5.6 support that the hypothesised motives proposed in this study are the most accurate representation of motives that determine customer engagement for each event.

**Table 5.6:** Comparing travel motives of cultural event and sport event

Statement	Cultural event (n = 261)		Sport event (n = 150)		Result
	$\beta$	t-value	$\beta$	t-value	
Learning motive -> customer engagement	<b>0.20</b>	<b>2.46**</b>	-0.00	-0.01	Stronger for cultural events
Escape motive -> customer engagement	0.02	0.32	0.00	0.01	Not supported for either
Family/friend togetherness motive -> customer engagement	<b>0.18</b>	<b>3.28***</b>	0.15	1.90 <sup>†</sup>	Stronger for cultural events
Excitement motive -> customer engagement	0.20	1.77	<b>0.35</b>	<b>4.90***</b>	Stronger for cultural events
Social status motive -> customer engagement	0.13	2.42**	<b>0.43</b>	<b>4.65***</b>	Stronger for sport event

### 5.3.2. Hypotheses for moderation relationships (H4a, H4b, H4c, H5a, H5b, H6, and H7)

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Mathmann et al., 2017b,c; Destro et al., 2016), the moderation effects are performed using Model 1 in PROCESS (Hayes, 2012). Further, following prior research (e.g., Aiken & West, 1991; Esmark & Noble, 2016; Jasmand et al., 2012; Mathmann et al., 2017b,c), a simple slope analysis was used to graphically show the moderation effect at one standard deviation below (-1 SD) and one standard deviation above (1 SD) the moderation effect. To better understand this moderation effect, the Johnson-Neyman “floodlight” approach suggested by Spiller et al. (2013) was used to identify the area of significance (or non-significance) for the moderation effect (Hayes & Matthes 2009; Miller et al., 2013).

#### 5.3.2.1. Hypotheses H4a, H4b, H4c, H5a, and H5b: the moderation effect of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations.

Hypothesis 4a predicted that the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between learning motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of learning motive and engagement with the Sukhothai’s Loy Kratong and the Candle Festival, and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events). As shown in



Model 1 of Table 5.7, the moderation effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations and learning motive is positive and significant as  $\beta = 0.10$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.57$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ ).

Hypothesis 4b predicted that the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the escape motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the escape motive and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events). As shown in Model 2 of Table 5.7, the moderation effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations and escape motive is positive and significant as  $\beta = 0.13$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.66$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ ).

<b>Table 5.7:</b> The moderation effect of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations for cultural events			
	<b>Customer engagement with cultural events</b>		
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
<b>Control variable</b>			
Gender	0.08 (0.76)	0.07 (0.66)	0.11 (1.03)
Age	-0.01 (-1.92)	-0.01 (-1.14)	-0.00 (-0.84)
Nationality	0.01 (1.57)	0.01 (0.19)	0.01 (0.24)
<b>Moderation effects</b>			
The joint effect of LO and AO	0.03 (0.58)	0.02 (0.43)	0.02 (0.50)
Learning motive	0.32 (5.64***)		
H4a: LM x (LO x AO)	0.10 (2.57**)		
Escape motive		0.11(1.76 n.s.)	
H4b: ES x (LO x AO)		0.13 (2.66**)	
Family/friends togetherness motive			0.26 (5.00***)
H4c: FF x (LO x AO)			0.14 (3.20**)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.32	0.32	0.33
<b>F-value</b>	14.95***	15.03***	15.60***
<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>	0.02**	0.02**	0.03**

Notes: \* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; standardised regression coefficients are reported.

LM = Learning motive; EX = Excitement motive; ES = Escape motive; SS = Social status motive;

FF = Family/friends togetherness motive; LO = Locomotion orientation; AO = Assessment orientation.

Hypothesis 4c predicted that the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the family/friend togetherness motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the family/friend togetherness motive and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events). Model 3 of Table 5.7 shows that the moderation effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations and family/friends togetherness motive is positive and significant as  $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3.20$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ ).

The simple slope analysis confirms the moderation factors of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations on the relationship between the learning motive (H4a), escape motive (H4b), and family/friends togetherness motive (H4c), and customer engagement with the cultural events. As shown in Figure 5.1, the effect of the learning motive on customer engagement is stronger for high rather than for low levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations. Using the Johnson-Neyman "floodlight" approach, it shows that the positive effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations was only significant for an index higher than -1.51 (SE 0.09,  $t\text{-value} = 1.97$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.05$ , LLCI = 0.00, ULCI = 0.35). The results of the floodlight analysis confirmed that customers who have a higher learning motive to interact with cultural events have higher engagement with cultural events when customers also have a greater level of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations. Taken together, these findings provide support for Hypothesis 4a.

**Figure 5.1:** The moderation effect of the learning motive and the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations on engagement with cultural events

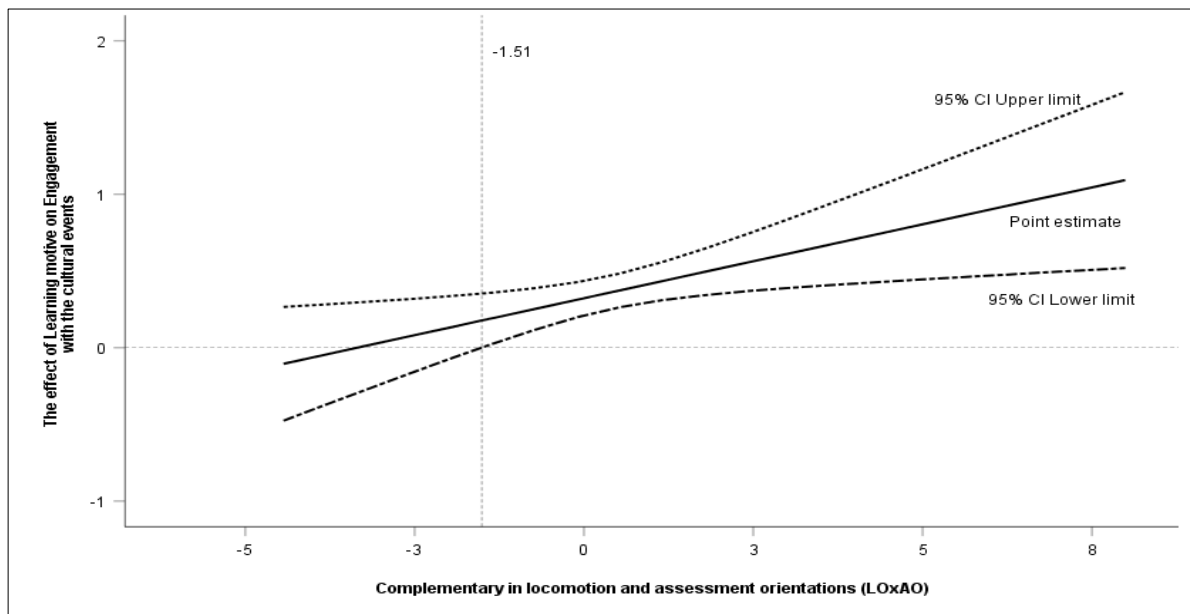
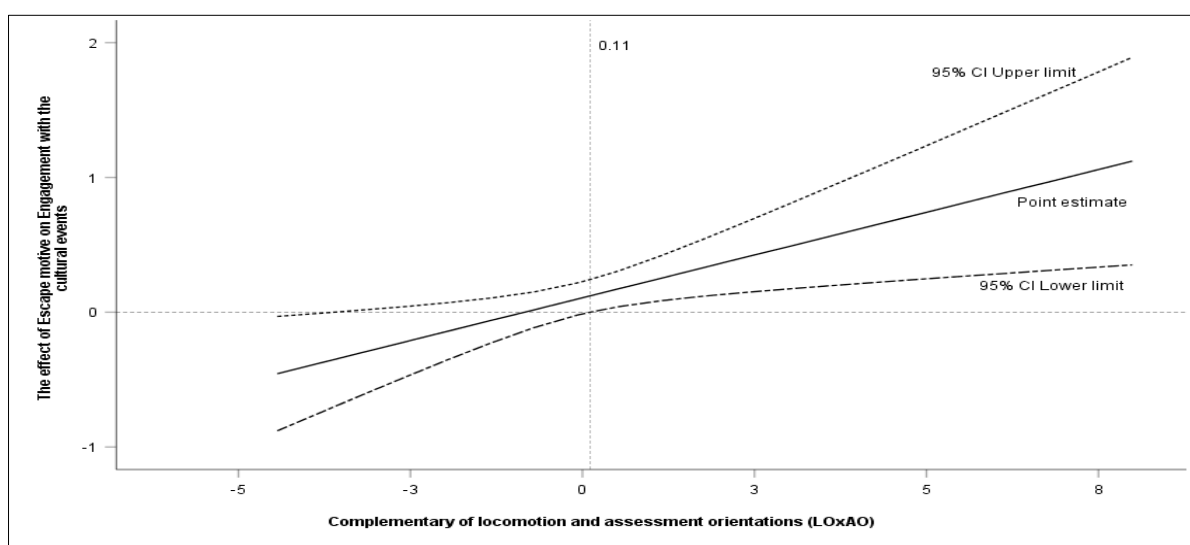


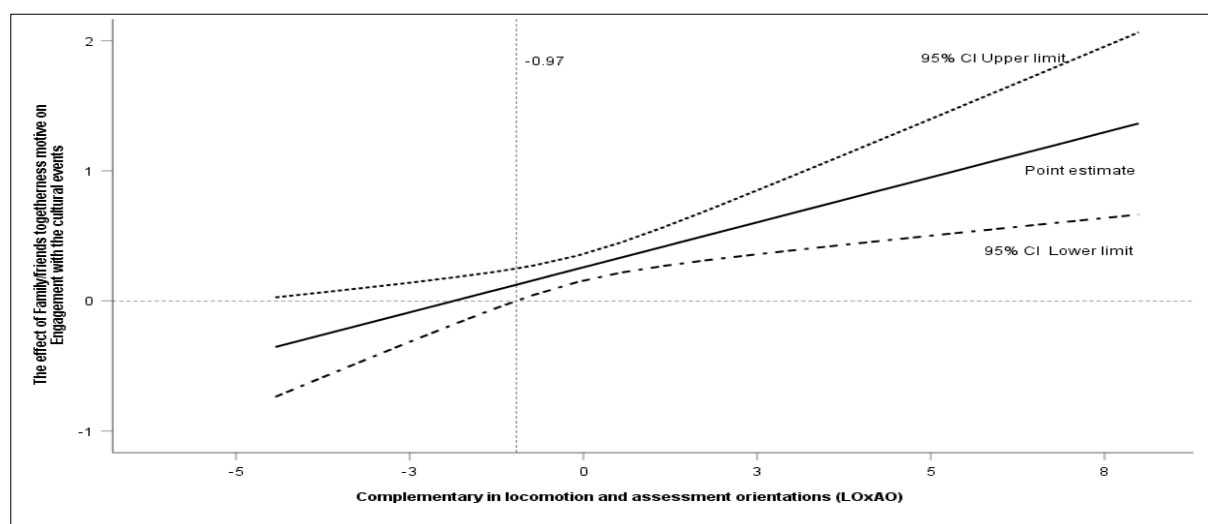
Figure 5.2 illustrates that a significant difference exists in engagement with cultural events across the levels of escape motives for levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations above 0.11 (SE 0.06,  $t$ -value = 1.97,  $p$ -value = 0.05, LLCI=0.00, ULCI= 0.24) or higher, but not for scores less than 0.11. Taken together, these findings provide support for Hypothesis 4b.

**Figure 5.2:** The moderation effect of the escape motive and the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations on engagement with cultural events



As shown in Figure 5.3, the effect of the family/friends' togetherness motive on customer engagement is positive and significant in engagement with the cultural events across the levels of the family/friends togetherness motive for levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations above -0.97 (SE 0.06, *t-value* = 1.97, *p-value* = 0.05, LLCI = 0.00, ULCI = 0.25) or higher, but not for any of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations that score less than -0.97. Taken together, these findings provide support for Hypothesis 4c.

**Figure 5.3:** The moderation effect of the family/friends togetherness motive and the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations on engagement with cultural events



Hypothesis 5a predicted that the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the excitement motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the excitement motive and engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event). As shown in Model 1 of Table 5.8, the moderation effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations and excitement motive is positive and significant as  $\beta = 0.18$ , *t-value* = 2.30 (*p-value* < 0.05).

Hypothesis 5b predicted that the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the social status motive and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the social status motive and engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event). Model 2 of Table 5.8 shows that the moderation effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations and the social status motive is positive and significant as  $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.01$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ).

**Table 5.8:** The moderation effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations for sporting event

	Customer engagement with sporting event	
	Model 1	Model 2
<b>Control variable</b>		
Gender	0.04 (0.24)	-0.12 (-0.79)
Age	0.00 (0.11)	0.01 (1.43)
Nationality	0.10 (1.81 <sup>†</sup> )	-0.04 (-0.79)
<b>Moderation effects</b>		
The joint effect of LO and AO	-0.06 (-0.77)	-0.02 (-0.30)
Excitement motive	0.52 (6.28 <sup>***</sup> )	
H5a: EX x (LO x AO)	0.18 (2.30 <sup>*</sup> )	
Social status motive		0.65 (7.63 <sup>***</sup> )
H5b: SS x (LO x AO)		0.16 (2.01 <sup>*</sup> )
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.26	0.33
<b>F-value</b>	8.30	11.84 <sup>***</sup>
<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>	0.03 <sup>*</sup>	0.02 <sup>*</sup>

Notes: \*p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001; standardised regression coefficients are reported.

LM = Learning motive; EX = Excitement motive; ES = Escape motive; SS = Social status motive;

FF = Family/friends togetherness motive; LO = Locomotion orientation; AO = Assessment orientation.

A simple slope test using floodlight analysis was undertaken to further confirm the moderating role of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations on the relationship between the excitement motive (H5a) and the social status motive (H5b), and customer engagement with the sporting event. As shown in Figure 5.4, the results of the floodlight analysis show that the positive effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations was significant for an index higher than -1.36 (SE 0.13,  $t\text{-value} = 1.98$ ,

$p\text{-value} = 0.05$ ,  $LLCI = 0.00$ ,  $ULCI = 0.52$ ), but not for any of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations that score less than -1.36. The results of floodlight analysis presented that customers who have a higher excitement motive to interact with the sporting event have higher engagement with the sporting event when customers behave more in the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations. Taken together, these findings provide support for Hypothesis 5a.

**Figure 5.4:** The moderation effect of the excitement motive and the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations on engagement with sporting event

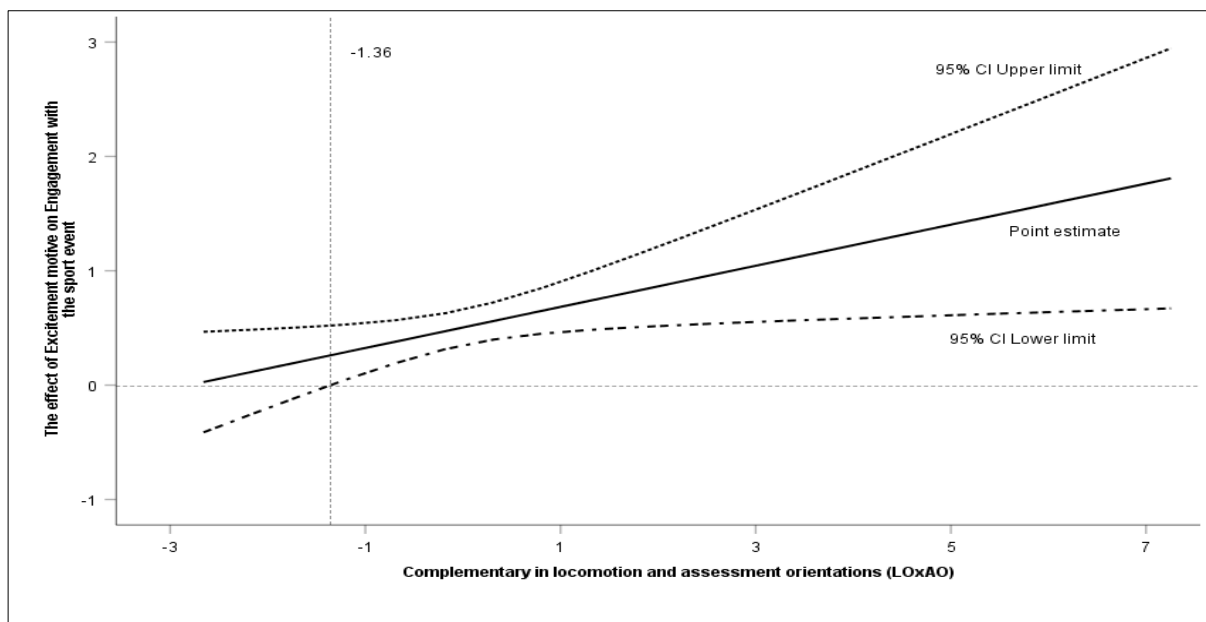
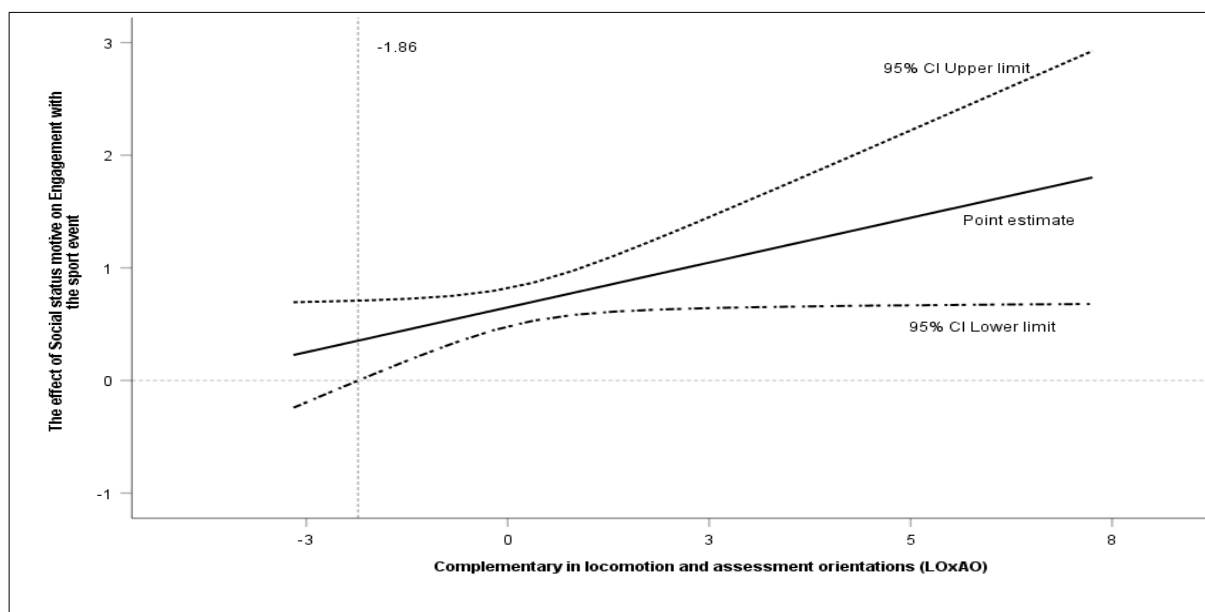


Figure 5.5 illustrates that the effect of the social status motive on engagement is stronger for high than for low levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations. The results show that the positive effect of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations was only significant for an index higher than -1.86 (SE 0.178,  $t\text{-value} = 1.98$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.05$ ,  $LLCI = 0.000$ ,  $ULCI = 0.71$ ). The results of floodlight analysis confirmed that customers who have a higher social status motive to interact with the sporting event have higher engagement with the sporting event when customers behave more in the joint effect of

the locomotion and assessment orientations. Taken together, these findings provide support for Hypothesis 5b.

**Figure 5.5:** The moderation effect of the social status motive and the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations on engagement with sporting event



### 5.3.2.2. Hypotheses H6 and H7: the moderating effect of customer self-image-special event image congruence and perceived special event crowding

Hypotheses 6 predicted that customer self-image-special event-image congruence moderates the relationship between customer engagement with special events and the perceived quality of special events, such that the relationship between the customer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event is stronger when the level of customer self-image-special event image congruence is higher, than when it is lower. As shown in Model 1 of Table 5.9, the interaction between customer self-image-special event image congruence and customer engagement with special events is not significant ( $\beta = 0.01$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 0.15$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ), thus providing no support for Hypothesis 6.

**Table 5.9:** The moderating effects of customer self-image-special event image congruence and perceived special event crowding

	Perceived quality of special event	
	Model 1	Model 2
<b>Control variable</b>		
Gender	0.07 (0.58)	0.10 (0.82)
Age	0.00 (0.87)	0.00 (0.79)
Nationality	-0.02 (-0.53)	-0.03 (-0.71)
Moderation effects		
Customer engagement (CE)	0.55 (6.56***)	
Self-image congruence (SIC)	-0.01 (0.15)	
H6: CE x SIC	0.01 (0.15 n.s.)	
Customer engagement (CE)		0.54 (8.82***)
Perceived special event crowding (PC)		0.08 (1.34)
H7: CE x PC		0.15 (2.70**)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.17	0.18
<b>F-value</b>	8.54***	9.40***
<b>ΔR<sup>2</sup></b>	0.01	0.01

Notes: † < .10, \*p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001; standardised regression coefficients are reported.

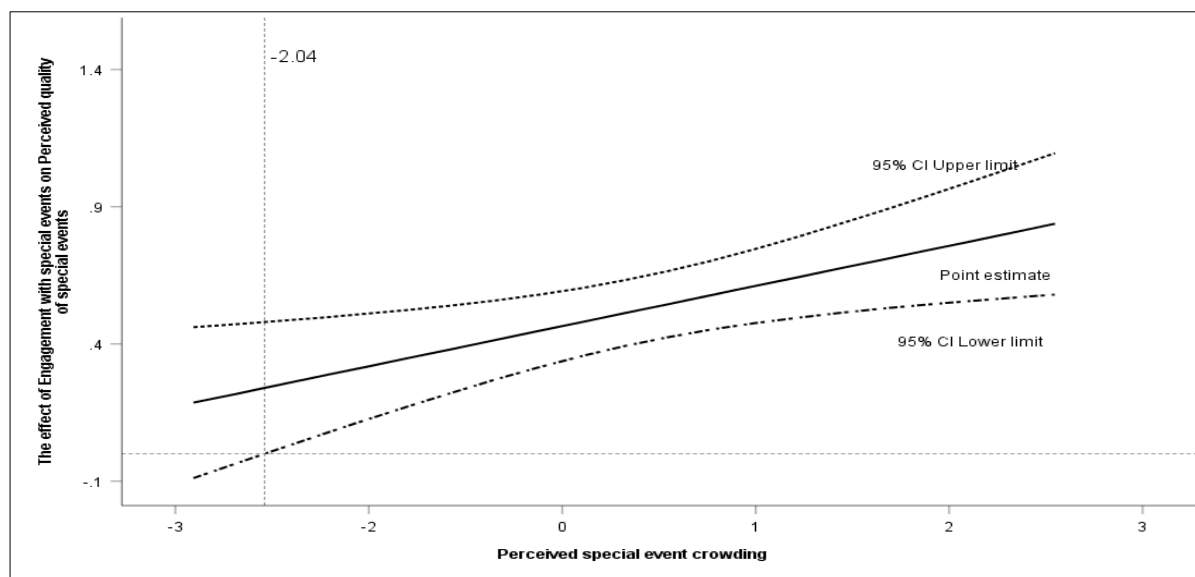
Hypotheses 7 predicted that the positive influence of customer engagement on the perceived quality of a special event is stronger when perceived special event crowding is low than when it is high. As shown in Model 2 of Table 5.9, the interaction between customer engagement and perceived special event crowding is positively and significantly related to the perceived quality of the special event ( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.70$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ ).

As demonstrated in Figure 5.6, the floodlight approach suggested by Spiller et al. (2013) was used to identify the area of the perceived special event crowding in which the effect of customer engagement on the perceived quality of special events is significant. The results showed a significant effect of customer engagement with the special events for any perceived special event crowding value of -2.04 (SE 0.12,  $t\text{-value} = 1.97$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.05$ , LLCI = 0.00, ULCI = 0.48) or higher (engagement with the special events had a stronger, positive relationship with the perceived quality of the special event the higher the perceived special event crowding the item was rated), but not for any perceived special event crowding rating lower than -2.04. While the moderation effect of perceived crowding is strong and significant,



this hypothesis is not supported, because the moderation effect of perceived special event crowding is positively stronger when the level of customer perceived special event crowding is higher, rather than when it is lower.

**Figure 5.6:** The moderation effect of engagement with special events and perceived special event crowding on perceived quality of special events



#### 5.4. SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES RESULTS

The preceding analysis (Section 5.3) of the proposed conceptual model (shown in Figure 3.1) revealed support for the majority (10/13) of the hypotheses, while a minority (3/13) of the hypotheses were not supported. The results presented in Section 5.3.1 show that Hypotheses H1a, H1c, H2a, H2b, and H3 were supported. In section 5.3.2, the results indicate that five moderation hypotheses were supported (Hypotheses H4a, H4b, H4c, H5a, and H5b), but hypotheses H1b, H6, and H7 were not supported. Thus, in total, ten hypotheses were supported, and three hypotheses (H1b, H6, and H7) were not supported. Table 5.10 presents a summary of the hypotheses results of the direct and moderation model.

**Table 5.10:** Summary of hypotheses results

No.	Hypothesis	Result
H1	a Learning motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).	Supported ( $p < .001$ )
	b Escape motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).	Not Supported (n.s.)
	c Family/friend togetherness motive is positively related to engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).	Supported ( $p < .001$ )
H2	a Excitement motive is positively related to engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).	Supported ( $p < .01$ )
	b Social status motive is positively related to engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).	Supported ( $p < .001$ )
H3	Customer engagement with the special event is positively related to perceived quality of the special event.	Supported ( $p < .001$ )
H4	a The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between <u>learning motive</u> and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the <u>learning motive</u> and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and the Candle Festival, and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).	Supported ( $p < .001$ )
	b The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the <u>escape motive</u> and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the <u>escape motive</u> and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).	Supported ( $p < .001$ )
	c The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the <u>family/friend togetherness motive</u> and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the <u>family/friend togetherness motive</u> and engagement with the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong and Candle and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival (i.e., cultural events).	Supported ( $p < .001$ )
H5	a The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the <u>excitement motive</u> and engagement, such that greater levels of the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the <u>excitement motive</u> and engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).	Supported ( $p < .05$ )
	b The joint effect of the locomotion and assessment orientations moderate the relationship between the <u>social status motive</u> and engagement such that greater levels of The joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations increase the effect of the <u>social status motive</u> and engagement with the Khon Kean International Marathon (i.e., sporting event).	Supported ( $p < .05$ )
H6	Customer self-image-special event image congruence moderates the relationship between the customer engagement with the special event and the perceived quality of the special event, such that the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of the special event is stronger when the level of customer self-image-special event image congruence is higher, than when it is lower.	Not Supported (n.s.)
H7	Perceived special event crowding moderates the relationship between the customer engagement with the special event and the perceived quality of the special event, such that the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of the special event is stronger when the level of customer perceived special event crowding is lower, rather than when it is higher.	Not Supported in proposed direction ( $p < .01$ )

## 5.5. ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

The hypothesis testing presented in the previous section, shows that the moderating effect of customer self-image-special event image congruence and perceived special event crowding were not supported. To gain more insight into the moderating effect of customer self-image-special event image congruence (H6) and perceived special event crowding (H7), the two themes of special events were separated and an additional analysis was conducted for cultural event and sporting events.

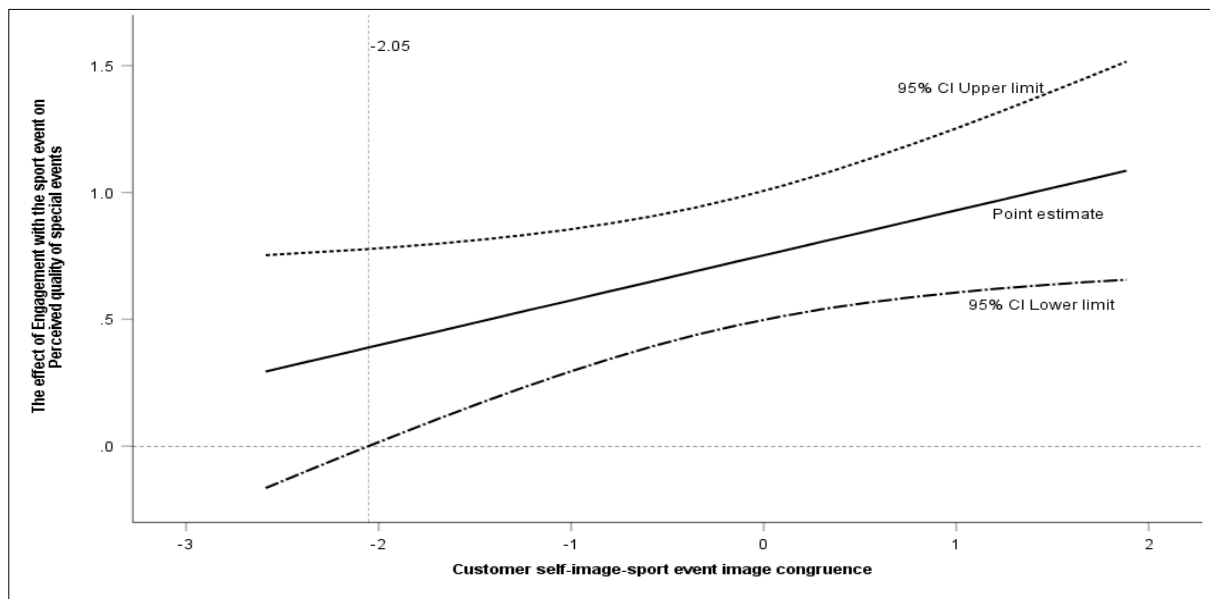
In fact, while H6 and H7 were not supported when the special events are combined for analysis purposes ( $n = 411$ ), the same does not apply when special events are separated into cultural events ( $n = 261$ ) and sporting event ( $n = 150$ ). As shown in Table 5.11, it appears that the customers' self-image-special event image congruence is not a contingency for cultural events as the moderation effect is not significant ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $t\text{-value} = -1.37$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). In contrast, as shown in Table 5.11, it appears that the moderation effect of customer self-image-special event image congruence for the sporting event is significant ( $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.13$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ).

Further, the simple slope analysis using the floodlight approach confirms that the moderating role of customer self-image-special event image congruence plays a role in the relationship between engagement and the perceived quality of special event within the sporting event context. As shown in Figure 5.7, the results indicate that the positive effect of customer self-image-sporting event image congruence was only significant for an index higher than -2.05 (SE 0.20,  $t\text{-value} = 1.98$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.05$ , LLCI = 0.00, ULCI = 0.78). The results of floodlight analysis confirmed that customers who have higher engagement with the sporting event have higher perceived quality of special event when their congruence between their self-image and the sporting event image is also greater.

**Table 5.11:** The moderating effects of customer self-image-special event image congruence

	Perceived quality of special events	
	Model 1 Cultural events	Model 2 Sporting event
<b>Control variable</b>		
Gender	0.17 (1.07)	-0.04 (-0.20)
Age	-0.01 (-1.30)	0.00 (0.31)
Nationality	0.05 (0.90)	-0.21 (-3.19***)
<b>Moderation effects</b>		
Customer engagement (CE)	0.40 (3.60***)	0.75 (5.86***)
Self-image congruence (SIC)	0.11 (1.03)	-0.10 (-0.75)
CE x SIC	-0.08 (-1.37)	0.20 (2.13*)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.17	0.28
<b>F-value</b>	8.54***	9.33***

Notes: \*p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001; standardised regression coefficients are reported.

**Figure 5.7:** The moderation effect of engagement with the sporting event and customer self-image-sporting event image congruence on perceived quality of special events

The further examination of the moderating effect of perceived special event crowding for each event revealed greater insight into the findings. As shown in Table 5.12, the moderation effect of perceived cultural event crowding is positive, but not significantly related to the perceived quality of cultural events ( $\beta = 0.10$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 1.26$ ,  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ). Conversely,

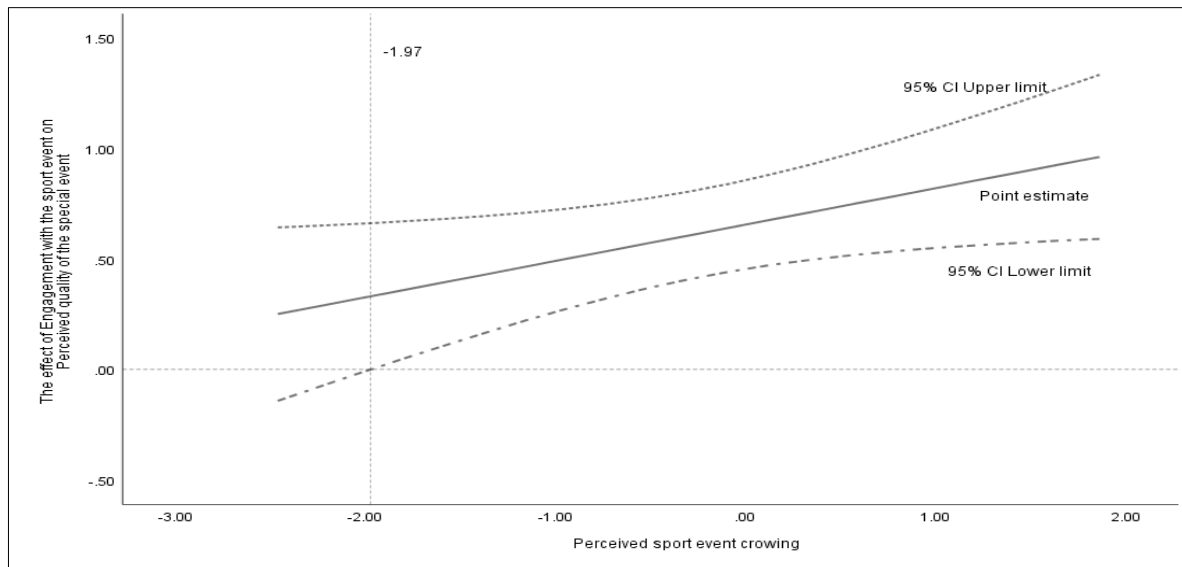
the moderation effect perceived that sporting event crowding is positively and significantly related to the perceived quality of the sporting event ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2.15$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). As shown in Figure 5.8, the results of floodlight analysis suggest that the relationship between customer engagement and perceived quality of sporting event is more strongly significant when perceived sporting event crowding is high than when it is low for an index higher than -1.97 (SE 0.17,  $t\text{-value} = 1.98$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.05$ , LLCI = 0.00, ULCI = 0.66). The results of floodlight analysis confirmed that customers who have higher engagement with the sporting event have higher perceived quality of the event when the level of special event crowding is greater. Surprisingly, high density special event crowding generates a positive impact on the context of special events in Thailand, especially sporting event settings.

**Table 5.12:** The moderating effects of perceived special event crowding

	Perceived quality of special event	
	Model 1 Cultural event	Model 2 Sporting event
<b>Control variable</b>		
Gender	0.20 (1.29)	-0.06 (-0.30)
Age	-0.01 (-1.07)	0.00 (0.50)
Nationality	0.04 (0.81)	-0.20 (-2.89***)
<b>Moderation effects</b>		
Customer engagement (CE)	0.50 (6.40***)	0.66 (6.45***)
Perceived special event crowding (PC)	0.17 (2.21*)	-0.07 (-0.70)
CE x PC	0.10 (1.26)	0.16 (2.15*)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.18	0.28
<b>F-value</b>	9.40***	9.07***

Notes: † < .10, \*p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001; standardised regression coefficients are reported.

**Figure 5.8:** The moderation effect of engagement with the sporting event and perceived sporting event crowding on perceived quality of sporting events



## 5.6. CONCLUSION

The results of the data analysis testing the hypotheses were presented in this chapter. The data analysis process began with an examination of the preliminary assessment of profiles of the sample, as well as the descriptive statistics of all the indicators, missing data, and common method bias. The preliminary analysis presents 411 respondents who attended special events in Thailand. The assessment of the measures reliability and validity were examined, and the results met the recommendations established by previous research (e.g., Hair et al., 2012). Then the regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses. Further, process analysis and simple slope analysis were used to test the hypotheses regarding the moderation components. Further, the additional analyses were considered to provide better understanding as to why some hypotheses were not supported (the moderation components), which were tested in path coefficients across the two themes of special events. The results show that the majority of the hypotheses were supported. The results obtained from the data analyses presented in this Chapter offer a fundamental backdrop for the discussion of the theory developed and the implications; as detailed in the next Chapter.

# CHAPTER SIX

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

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### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

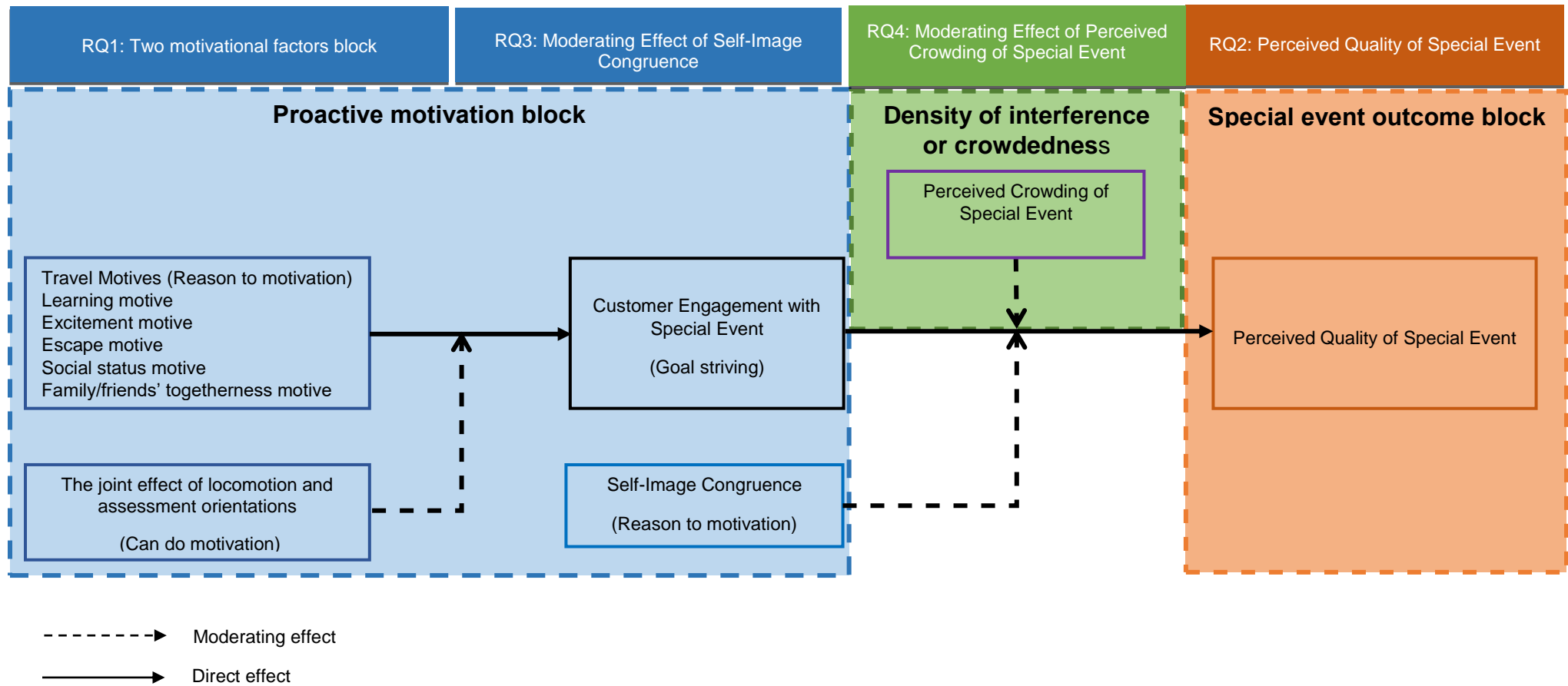
A key motivation for this study was to respond to the ongoing calls by researchers for a greater understanding of the effect of customer engagement within the context of tourism and hospitality (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015; Dong & Siu, 2013; Dong et al., 2015; So et al., 2016b). These calls in the tourism literature are driven by the continued growth and economic contribution of tourism services (Woo et al., 2018). With increasing growth of tourism, many tourism businesses have faced challenges in fostering long-term customer connections for their services. Thus, the search for marketing strategies addressing customers' motivational orientation and delivering a superior tourism experience is paramount.

This study sought to integrate multi-focal literature and address specific research gaps identified in Chapter One to advance knowledge of customer engagement in the special event tourism context. To achieve this, theories pertaining to proactive motivation were integrated to explain the relationships between the "reason to" and "can do" motivation that encourages engagement with a special event, and influences achievement of the individuals' goals. More specifically, this study drew on proactive motivation theory to investigate whether different motives drive customer engagement with themed special events (cultural and sport), and whether particular regulatory mode orientation fosters engagement. In addition, the study identified the role of self-image-special event image congruence and perceived crowding to unlock customer engagement and their assessment of special event quality.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the results presented in Chapter Five, followed by a discussion of the theoretical contributions and implications of the study for managers. The chapter is organised in four sections. Section 6.2 discusses the results of the study, while

Figure 6.1:

Customer Engagement with Special Event Model: Drivers and Consequences



Source: developed for this study



Section 6.3 highlights its theoretical contributions and its practical implications for customer engagement with special events. Section 6.4 presents an outline of the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research, and section 6.5 concludes the chapter.

## **6.2. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

To test the proposed model (Figure 6.1), four research questions were presented in Chapter One which were addressed through seven hypotheses in Chapter Three. The results were presented in Chapter 5. The findings are discussed, with reference to Figure 6.1, in detail below.

### **6.2.1. Discussion of the results for research question 1**

Research Q1 addresses “What role does an individual’s regulatory mode orientation play in the relationship between special event travel motives and their customer engagement with special events? To find the answer to this question, it was broken down into two sub-questions to understand how “reason to” and “can do” interact to determine customer engagement. Thus, RQ1a aimed to examine the direct relationship between motives (reason to) and RQ1b aimed to understand the significance of any moderating effect of regulatory orientation (can do) on the path from motives to engagement. RQ1 is shown in Figure 6.1 (Blue block).

#### **6.2.1.1. Discussion of the results for RQ1a**

Guided by proactive motivation theory (Parker et al., 2010), this study conceptualises five motives for travel based on the goals of learning, excitement, escape, social status and family and friend togetherness, – it then tests the effects of each motive on customer engagement. In examining these effects proactive motivation theory is deemed an appropriate theory because these motives provide distinct reasons for customers to engage with special events as well as the ability to engage with special events. The results support this hypothesis, indicating significant differences based on different ‘reasons to’ engage in different types of

special events. For special cultural events, customers are motivated to engage to enhance their learning (tested in H1a) and to share time with family and friends (tested in H1c). While both motives encourage respondents to engage with cultural events, the learning motive has a comparatively greater influence on the behaviours of proactive engagement, such as deciding to attend and engage with unique events based on their cultural or heritage reputation. This leads to the finding that cultural motivation influences the level of engagement. This is also supported by Bryce et al. (2015) in the sense that customers expect, seek or value the presentation of the physical enduring elements of the cultural and heritage attraction included in a special event.

Interestingly, the escape motive does not affect customer engagement in the case of cultural events (tested in H1b). One possible explanation for this result is that people who travel to 'escape' may prefer to relax and recover from the tensions and stresses of daily life through other forms of travel experiences and special events. This is an unexpected and important finding, as the escape motive for attending and engaging with cultural events is a strong focus of tourism marketing and the literature concerning special events. This result is different to previous research on special events, which found that the escape motive creates a sense of freedom or a feeling of relaxation by lessening the physical and mental stress experienced in more routine environments (e.g., Kim et al., 2002; McDowall, 2010; Matheson et al., 2014). Possibly, engaging in the various activities involved in such events takes away the relaxation these travellers seek and therefore they prefer to avoid engagement in these events. These unexpected results also indicate that travel orientation towards cultural and heritage events may not satisfy customers seeking escape from their mundane environment and wanting to diminish their mental fatigue.

When examining the relationship between social status motives and engagement with the Khon Kaen International Marathon (i.e., sporting special event) the findings show that customers are more proactively engaged in order to show their status (tested in H2b). Importantly, the social status motive has higher proactivity associated with commitment,

emotional connection and even behavioural devotion to the sporting special event. This concurs with previous studies showing that social status drives customer engagement through the sharing of consumption experiences about service encounters, which increases the prestige and self-expression potential associated with the event (e.g., Wei et al., 2013). Excitement motive also appears to be strongly reason to motivation for engaging with the Khon Kaen International Marathon (tested in H2a). Customer can improve their joy, enthusiasm and increase the absorption of the sporting event offerings.

#### **6.2.1.2. Discussion of the results for RQ1b**

Prior research has also examined the benefits of acknowledging these travel motives in terms of driving customers to engage with tourism services across a wide range of tourism activities (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015; Romero, 2018; Taheri et al., 2014). Furthermore, the literature has recognised that individual self-regulation, such as regulatory mode orientation, is an important factor in increasing proactive engagement in individual behaviours (Bindl & Parker, 2011; Dong & Siu, 2013; Mathmann et al., 2017b). However, no research attention has been given to the implications of the motivational orientation of the regulatory mode in fostering engagement with special event settings. In relation to this literature, the findings of the present study show that the underlying motivation to engage with either a cultural event or a sporting event (travel motives) may not on their own be sufficient to reinforce engagement if the “can do” aspect of proactive motivation that regulates customer behaviours is missing.

The findings of this study show that the effect of the motives of learning, escape and the family and friends’ togetherness motive on engagement with cultural events becomes stronger when the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations is high, but weaker when the joint effect of locomotion and assessment orientations is low (tested in H4a-c). Similar results can be shown for the sporting event studied. The evidence further shows that the effect of excitement and social status motives on engagement become stronger when the effects of the locomotion and assessment orientations is high but become insignificant when it is low (tested in H5a-b). These insights contribute to a better understanding of the significance of the joint

presence of the 'reason to' and 'can do' motivations as being conducive to engagement with special events. Overall, in answering to RQ1 it is concluded that different motives enforce engagement with specific special event and regulatory orientation conditions the path from individual motives to engagement.

### **6.2.2. Discussion of the results for research question 2**

Research Question Two (RQ2) asks, to what extent is customer engagement with a special event related to customers' perception of the quality of the event? RQ2 is shown in Figure 6.1 (Orange block). Hypothesis 3 was developed to examine this relationship and help answer this research question. The findings of the study indicate that increasing engagement with special event offerings (e.g., affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects of engagement) is positively associated with customers' evaluation of the special event's reputation, which translates into a perception of higher quality for the special event. These findings are consistent with the argument that customer engagement influences the evaluation of services, such as perceptions of quality of services offered in the context of hospitality. For example, studies have shown that customers can acquire a favourable attitude towards a service or brand, which tends to increase the positive evaluation of the services offered. Specifically, the more strongly customers are engaged with the focal service, the more strongly they experience this effect: customers' increased level of engagement influences the perceived quality of services (Higgins & Scholer, 2009; So et al., 2016b). The findings of the current study expand on the previous literature, which had been limited to investigating how customer engagement enhances perceived quality in the context of special events. These findings also advance prior understandings, as the literature on engagement and experience quality has found that customers prefer to consume services that deliver superior quality to maximise the value of these highly memorable experiences' (e.g., Bornhorst et al., 2010; Chen & Chen, 2010; Žabkar et al., 2010). Overall, in answering RQ2 it is concluded that engagement with special event is a strong determinant of perceived special event quality.

### **6.2.3. Discussion of the results for research question 3**

Research Question Three (RQ3) investigates role customers' self-image–special event image congruence plays in the relationship between customer engagement with a special event and the perceived quality of the event. RQ3 underpins the proactive motivational processes presented in the theoretical framework in Figure 6.1 (Blue block). Hypothesis 6 was developed to address this research question specifically. Prior research has indicated that self-image congruence is an important building block for motivating customer decision-making, facilitating customers' judgment of a focal service to produce favourable consumer responses, satisfaction, attitude and loyalty (Ahn et al., 2013; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Liu et al., 2012; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; Morhart et al., 2015). However, the role that customer self-image–special event image congruence might play in fostering customer engagement on perceived quality of special events has remained unexplored.

It was expected that customer self-image–special event image congruence might moderate the relationship between customer engagement with special events and their perceived quality. However, the findings of this study provided no support for this hypothesis, showing no significant relationship between customer engagement with special events or the perceived quality of special events and customer self-image–special event image congruence. These findings suggest that customer self-image–special event-image congruency produces no beneficial effect on the path from customer engagement to perceived quality of special events. Given this result, additional analysis was undertaken to find the answer for this unexpected result to understand if the discrepancy may have resulted from the differing themes of the special events concerned. The additional analysis presented in this study shows that, for cultural events, the congruence between customer self-image and cultural event image did not impact the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of the special event. On the contrary, customers who attended the sporting event studied (the Khon Kaen International Marathon) and who possessed high levels of congruence between

their self-image and the image of the sporting event were motivated to engage actively with the event offerings, thereby increasing their perception of this event's quality.

One explanation for the inconsistency among these two special event themes might be due to the aim of attending in the special event. Those attending cultural events aim to satisfy their need for learning and being with family rather than enhancing their own image. These customers have no existing benchmark for their self-image–special event image congruence as the content is unknown and unfamiliar prior to consumption. In contrast, the sporting event attendees decide to attend the event because they wish to strengthen their image and expose their image showing that they enjoy physical activities and fitness. The inconsistent results associated with the different themes of special events are consistent with the argument of Malar et al. (2018), in that congruence between brands and customers may not always produce positive reactions. The potential reasons for this inconsistency might not only relate to the different types of special events. Relying on their proactive motivations, an individual could be motivated towards engagement because the individual–environment fit represents greater compatibility between personal attributes (skills, knowledge, values and preferences) and activities (Bindl & Parker, 2011; Parker & Collins, 2010). These findings extend the boundaries of the existing research on service marketing and tourism by revealing the mechanism through which self-image–special event image congruence works with customer engagement in the context of a sporting event to foster customer perceptions of event quality.

#### **6.2.4. Discussion of the results for research question 4**

Research Question Four (RQ4) investigates the role that perceived crowding at special events plays in the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event. Research question 4 underpins the theoretical framework set out in Figure 6.1 (Green block). In answering this research question, the results of the present study contribute to knowledge about special events by understanding more precisely when and at what levels special event crowding blocks the fulfilment of customer goals and decreases the perceived

quality of special events. The existing literature on crowding highlights the importance of the number of customers in a service encounter or tourism site being consistent with the customers' decisions to interact or engage with the services offered (Popp, 2012; Zehrer & Raich, 2016). In fact, density may be a condition of the interactions with the services offered at a given location. Although this conclusion has been widely documented in the literature, limited attention has been given to the ways perceived crowding may influence customer engagement with special events. This study advances the state of knowledge and theory relating to perceptions of special event crowding by introducing a theoretical perspective that addresses the density of interference (or crowding). The study hypothesised that a level of perceived crowding would moderate the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event. However, the results of the study provided no support for this hypothesis and indicated that the interaction between customer engagement and the level of special event crowding is related to the perceived quality of a special event in a significant positive correlation. This unexpected finding suggests that high crowding at a special event motivates customers to engage with and enjoy the crowd experience. Therefore, when the event is crowded, engaged customers tend to evaluate the quality of the event more highly.

However, this hypothesis (H7) was not supported either, thus diverging from the findings of previous literature. To shed light on this effect and to understand this condition across different events, an additional analysis was conducted that distinguished between cultural events and sporting events. The findings for cultural events indicated that a high density of cultural event crowding has a positive impact but does not affect the relationship between customer engagement and the perceived quality of the special event in a significant way. However, for the sporting event, people attending the Khon Kaen International Marathon were more likely to engage with the crowd experience and perceive the event as being of good quality. This result is consistent with the motive of social status mentioned in 6.2.1.1. Social status is the main 'reason to' motivation for engaging with the sporting event: these participants want to be seen, so the more crowded event, the better. The results of the study are

inconsistent with most prior studies on crowding, which indicated that customers avoid interaction with service encounters and generate negative affective responses in reaction to highly crowded physical environments (e.g., Kim & Park, 2008; Kim & Runyan, 2011; Van Rompay et al., 2008). However, the findings of the current research are consistent with a few other studies that found that density positively contributes so long as it facilitates excitement and enjoyment among a specific group of customers (e.g., Kim et al., 2016; Pons et al., 2016). Thus, this study makes an important contribution to the service marketing and tourism literature and complements the crowding literature by linking the literature pertaining to engagement with special events and the density of interference to that discussing the influence of engagement and the perceived quality of special events. Thus, in answering RQ4 it is concluded that crowding may affect the path from engagement to perceive quality of a special event, but this does not occur in all situations in that its impact may differ based on the type of special event.

### **6.3. IMPLICATIONS**

This study provides new insights into service marketing, customer engagement, and destination marketing within the context of special events in the world's most popular tourist destinations, such as Thailand. Prior research on customer engagement has rarely investigated why individuals' engage in a special event, nor the conditions that regulate their engagement behaviours. This study is among the first to shed light on this important issue and critically investigate the role of "reason to motivation" (i.e., travel motives and customer self-image-special event image congruence), "can do motivation" (i.e., the joint presence of locomotion and assessment orientations), and perceived special event crowding in driving goal striving (i.e., customer engagement with special events). As tourism services such as special events have specific and unique service characteristics (e.g., unique contents, activities, and services) some have argued they require distinctive theories of service marketing and engagement theories (Bryce et al., 2015; Dong et al., 2015; Stock, Oliveira, & Hippel, 2015).



Within this setting, customer engagement with a special event provide superior tourism service experience that help customers goal achievement and enhance long-term memories seemed to be a logical starting point to develop a theory of customer engagement with a special event. The findings further underscore the need to unlock the potential of customer engagement to perceive the superior quality of special events. The results of this study also enhance the understanding of the motivational orientation process and engagement theory. In this section, a number of theoretical and managerial implications deserve acknowledgement and discussion.

### **6.3.1. Theoretical implications**

First, this study contributes to the measurement of key concepts of customer engagement in service marketing context such as special event tourism and its role in decision-making related to special event evaluations. The literature review presented in Chapter Two (Section 2.2) outlined different views of customer engagement and discussed definitions and conceptualisations of customer engagement across a wide range of areas. This examination indicated that while some researchers define and conceptualise customer engagement from a psychological perspective focusing on emotion, feeling and intrinsic motivation towards a focal brand and product (e.g., Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Dwivedi, 2015; Wirtz et al., 2013), as well as the participation of other customers in the event environment (e.g., Bryce et al., 2015; Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Van Doorn et al., 2010), the current study integrated the psychological and behavioural perspectives on engagement in extending the application of engagement into tourism special events. This position reflects the contention of some researchers that an integrative psychological and behavioural view is essential to depict the combination of an enduring psychological connection with a particular brand with the behavioural participation or co-creative value to the organisation, which together result in a strong relationship between customers and brands or services (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011, So et al., 2016b).

Further, much of the research on tourism services to date has simply focused on the behavioural engagement component. For example, Romero's (2018) focuses on tourism service experience and view customer engagement as customer-to-customer and customer-to-service provider interactions. Similarly, the view of engagement presented by Ben-Shaul and Reichel (2018) includes customer participation activities such as peer-to-peer product recommendation and interacting with tourism services on social media. However, the current study goes beyond a pure focus on actions to combine the psychological and behavioural perspectives on customer engagement. Using the unique special event context this research responds to the call from researchers to extend empirically grounded engagement research (Hollebeek et al., 2014; MSI, 2010; So et al., 2016b; Vivek et al., 2012).

Second, this study contributes to the service marketing and special event literature by presenting a framework to better understand customer engagement and its drivers and consequences. Specifically, this study is the first to develop a conceptual framework in special event tourism about how customer engagement is motivated. This connection of motives and engagement represents a key challenge for special event tourism marketers. Extending the existing literature, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of customer engagement with special events as informed by literature from travel motives, customer engagement, regulatory mode theory, self-image congruence, perceived crowding, and perceived quality. While previous studies have identified the critical issue of drivers of customer engagement with a focal service, they do not specify the extent that fostering customer engagement actually influences the perceived quality of service offerings at the special event. This study brings proactive motivation and regulatory mode orientation theories to unlock customer engagement within the context of special events. This investigation is motivated by the call for greater attention to the active role of customer engagement in tourism contexts (Chathoth et al., 2014; Dong & Siu, 2013). Although previous scholars underlie the importance of this issue, the role of travel motives in fostering engagement has provided ambiguous results about why different travel motives may lead to higher or lower engagement among customers

(Bryce et al., 2015; Romero, 2018; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Contrary to prior studies that consider different 'reason to' motivations for customer proactivity to engagement based on their characteristics and services, brand or activities (De Vries & Carlson, 2014; Strauss & Parker, 2014), this study argues that customers with motives of proactive learning, being with family and friends, excitement, and social status are motivated to engage with specific special event selections. For example, special events (e.g., cultural events) provide distinct opportunities based on event activities and presentations. The findings reveal that significant differences in travel motives exist among special event customers with respect to attending different types of special events. Therefore, the theoretical development supported by the findings of this study recognises a divergence in the relationship between various travel motives and engagement in special events with different themes.

However, travel motives alone do not uniquely determine the level of engagement with special events. Previous research has also noted that 'can do' motivational forces, such as regulatory mode orientation, play a crucial role in strengthening proactive motivation to increase the level of engagement with activities (Parker et al., 2010). Nevertheless, how this orientation affects the customer's proactive engagement with a focal service still remains a black box (Dong & Siu, 2013). No research to date has investigated how regulatory mode theory is moderated in practice, in terms of how proactive inclination towards engagement plays a role in shaping the positive motivational processes and establishing self-starting behaviour in relation to special events. Existing studies based on regulatory mode theory tend to concentrate on the central concept of locomotion and assessment orientations, which have been covered heavily in the organisational behaviour literature (e.g., Pierro et al., 2012; Sok et al., 2016). This study has argued on a theoretical level that deploying the locomotion and assessment orientations jointly (Jasmand et al., 2012) embodies a customer's capacity to strive for goals in a special event offering. Customers who believe in their capabilities to engage with the special event are willing to invest more effort, encouraging them to overcome any difficulties they encounter. At the same time, they derive more value from customer

engagement, such as enjoyment, and feel more comfortable engaging and interacting with the special event offerings. As such, it is argued that 'can do' motivation makes the customer more comfortable with their motives for travel (i.e., their 'reason to' motivations), and reinforces the opportunity for engagement with a special event. However, if customers do not believe in their ability to engage, they are less likely to interact with the special event offerings: they are not likely to enjoy and pay attention to the special event, and may even be dissatisfied with their experience in relation to the goal for attending the special event. The findings add to proactive motivation theory and its application in tourism services, in that the concept of regulatory mode orientation provides significant theoretical value to interpret the powerful interaction of the 'reason to' and 'can do' motivations as contributors to engagement with special events. This study takes this theory in a new direction, particularly in the context of customer engagement with special events.

Third, this study also furthers the aims of previous studies on proactive motivation by highlighting the role of the environmental – personal fit to motivate individual engagement with tasks and activities (Parker et al., 2010). Previous research has not examined whether fit between customers perceived self-image and the special event image reinforces the impact of engagement on special event evaluations, such as perceived quality. The findings suggest that the role of customer self-image - special event image congruence did not moderate the relationship between customer engagement with a special event and perceived quality of a special event. This could perhaps be due to customers evaluating the attractiveness of a special event using criteria such as special event content and activities offered, rather than evoking symbolic meaning in customers' self-image, special event image alignment. Despite this finding, it does contribute to the literature by providing additional analysis that separate different types of special events. This contribution assists to receive a full and accurate picture of the moderating effect of customer self-image and special event image on the relationship between customer engagement and perceived quality of special events. Specifically, specific types of special event may encourage customers proactive motivation to engage for self-

interested reasons with the specific types of special events which results in greater perceptions event.

In this sense, the study enriches theory by showing how the effect of engagement on the perceived quality of a special event is significantly reinforced when customers in a specific special event perceived a fit between their self-image and the event image. This view is consistent with Harrigan et al. (2018) and Yim et al. (2007), who indicated that services are perceived to be of more interest to a customer the more closely the services are related to the self, and that the presence of an interaction with service activities may improve the perceived quality of the focal service. This study draws on the point made in previous research that the more congruent the customer self-image is with the image of the special event, the more engagement with the special event is reinforced along with its perceived quality.

Another important theoretical finding in this study, which has received little prior recognition within tourism and special event research, is the link between the role of perceived crowding and consumer engagement and the perceived quality of a special event (Lee & Graefe, 2003; Kim et al., 2016; Wickham & Kerstetter, 2000). Surprisingly, the literature on perceptions of crowding has been largely confined to retail contexts and with a very limited number of studies on crowding in tourism and special event domains (e.g., Baker & Wakefield, 2012; Eroglu et al., 2005a,b; Huang et al., 2017; Li et al., 2009). Moreover, there has been a distinct lack of studies examining whether customers' perceptions of crowding can decrease the level of proactive engagement with service offerings (i.e., at a special event) and whether it affects their perceived quality. The current research makes contributions to enhancing our understanding of the moderating effects of perceived crowding in the context of special event tourism.

This study advances a better understanding of how perceived special event crowding contributes to the level of customer engagement through the theoretical lens of proactive motivation for engagement and the density of crowding. This study suggests that perceived crowding at a special event is not a barrier to customer engagement with special event

offerings nor does it necessarily block the achievement of a customer's goals. Through the customer engagement relationship, customers are motivated to interact with a crowd and engage in social interaction to enhance their enjoyment of the event in an exciting atmosphere, especially at sporting events. In other words, large crowds at a sporting event can be a source of motivation to engage more, and customers may become a part of the crowd as being necessary to their goal of enjoyment, which can enhance the perceived quality of the event. These findings are contrary to the studies of Lee et al. (2011) and Robson et al. (2011), who argued that customers who perceive a high level of crowding avoid interacting and reduce the time they spend consuming the service, which generates a negative evaluation of service providers due to the customer feeling uncomfortable with the service process. However, the finding of the current study is supported by previous studies by Baker and Wakefield (2012) and Pons et al. (2016), studies that noted that high crowding can motivate customers to interact in service offerings because they need to enhance their social status and social interaction, which enhances their evaluation of the consumption experience. This study extended the boundaries of the current theory on customer engagement, suggesting that appropriate crowding can further reinforce the impact of customer engagement on the perceived quality of some special events. Accordingly, by drawing on reason to motivation (e.g., travel motive and customer self-image and special event image congruence), can do motivation (regulatory mode orientation), perceived crowding of special events and perceived quality of special events, this study contributes to the services marketing and tourism literature by demonstrating that these proactive motivations make a difference in customer engagement with a special event.

Overall, this study also offers important theoretical contributions to both the special event and engagement literature. Prior research on customer engagement has predominantly focused on a brand or firm as the focal object of engagement (e.g., Dwivedi, 2015; Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Verleye et al., 2014), while customer engagement has not received adequate scholarly attention in the context of special events and tourism. As discussed in Chapter One,

special events are a popular and an emerging sub-industry of the service and tourism industry, as they inject a substantial economic contribution within a short period (Connell et al., 2015; Getz & Page, 2016). The current study is among the first attempts to investigate customer engagement issues empirically in the context of special events; the previous literature has predominantly focused on customer engagement towards a single product, service or tourism destination. This study advances the engagement literature by using multiple special events across different themes (e.g., cultural and sporting events). Special events with each theme are all present in Thailand, along with very different reputations for each event focusing on different market segments. To a large extent, therefore, these events represent the globally competitive landscape of the special event market. Thus, the findings of this study have critical implications for engagement theory in that they provide a new view to our understanding of how customers engage and evaluate special events in an additional marketing context other than social media, service brands (e.g., financial, hotels, and airlines), museums and the heritage domain. These relationships can thus be generalised to other marketing, service marketing and tourism contexts that relate to the various special event themes.

### **6.3.2. Managerial implications**

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this study offers important implications for destination marketing organisations and special event organisers in terms of understanding the main customer motivations to engage with specific special events. Further, the study provides insight for managers on how to promote special events by taking account of the key nature of the event and potential customers' characteristics. It also helps event organisers understand how to manage crowds at special events sites.

First, the results of this study offer guidance to managers of special events on underlying reasons why customers engage in different special events. Event managers are advised to ensure that they understand the motives driving customer engagement with the theme of the specific event as well as the engagement potential of each motive (Taheri et al., 2014) under particular circumstances. As the findings of this study show, customers have

different reasons for attending various special events (i.e., cultural and sporting events). Specifically, customers who are mainly motivated by the learning potential of cultural events (i.e., the Sukhothai's Loy Kratong Candle Festival and the Chiang Mai International Flower Festival) still need to be offered a variety of content and background information concerning the events to generate knowledge and stimulate curiosity. Thailand's cultural events, in particular, have distinguishing characteristics that can be spotlighted in terms of their authenticity and cultural richness. A snapshot of the cultural values may trigger customer curiosity. The content of the cultural events should be entertaining and pleasant for customers who wish to learn about other cultures or religions or the history of religious events the vision behind the special event and builds cultural event differentiations accordingly.

Cultural events in Thailand, in particular, are unique events for customers. The findings of this study indicated that the motive of being with family and friends is one of the most important aspects for customers engaging with cultural events. The cultural themes that may focus on family may also provide a foundation and interest for families who wish to adopt these values in their own life and strengthen the ties and relationships with families and friends. Therefore, the use of promotional material for the cultural event must offer learning opportunities concerning unique cultural and traditional experiences, and highlight the variety of opportunities to spend time with family and friends.

For sporting events, such as the Marathon, the findings of this study emphasise that social status is identified as the most critical 'reason to' motivation for engaging with sporting events. Perhaps event managers can organise activities in a way that allows customers to improve their status or expose themselves to others more and show off their achievement. Sporting events, such as the Khon Kaen International Marathon, are perfect opportunities to show the sense of status for which these customers are looking for. This is because these customers need to show their achievement in the marathon or competition to other people. In addition, a medal or certificate of their achievement in the sporting event, indicating each customer's name and their participation, may also be distributed to attendees to be shared



with others via social media and in person once they return home. Furthermore, this study also found that the excitement motive is one of the 'reason to' motivations that increases the level of engagement. An exciting sporting event experience offers an opportunity to extend emotional experiences into other activities, such as the collective atmosphere surrounding the event. Customers may feel the difference in the environment around the event without knowing what it is.

In unlocking the ability of customers to engage with the special event, the findings of this study suggest that event organisers should communicate with customers about how they can maximize the achievement of their goals for attending (e.g., seeking excitement, knowledge, prestige, and status etc). The event organisers must recognise the valuable interplay of the regulatory mode, such as locomotion and assessment orientations, and create conditions conducive to successful alignment. Such a customer–event fit has additional positive outcomes, such as proactive engagement with special events, emotional connection and satisfaction, which will subsequently maximize the positive experience.

Second, the findings of this study also provided event organisers with insight into methods for improving customer perceptions of special event quality, which is subsequently key to the hospitality and tourism sectors provision of high quality service. Customers' perceived quality of the special events can be retained in memory, and in turn influence customer's behavioural intentions (e.g., revisit other special event in Thailand and positive referral related to special event in Thailand to other people). In particular, event managers should develop distinctive, special event quality by performing well in a variety of sections such as offering learning programs, event activities, and environment surroundings. For example, some interactive activities or programs related to a special event can help to foster customer engagement which in turn can increase perceptions of special event quality. Moreover, physical environment qualities such as infrastructure of the event site, and interaction quality with the event staff and their level of experience and knowledge can provide a resource that is an input into customers' perceptions of special event delivery and quality. Therefore, to deliver

quality special event offerings, it will be crucial for event managers to determine the relative importance, and necessary inclusion of quality components to their special event offering. The measurement of perceived special event quality will provide a useful tool to assist event managers to target areas for improvement. In addition, it is crucial to evaluate competitors' event performance (e.g., activities) to identify possible quality differences. Relative special event presentation difference on the quality of special event components can then be applied as the foundation for competitive differentiation.

Third, event organisers are advised to design and communicate advertising and promotional programs to capture the actual and ideal selves of the potential target market. For example, managers should communicate information about the event that ensures a match with their actual and ideal self-image during their experience. For example, with regard to a Marathon special event, stating that is 'The greatest marathon in Thailand' or 'Run through a vibrant capital city'. Such activities allow management to foster effectiveness of their special event positioning strategy to a large extent. This is critical for customers, as it represents an important means by which the special event reflects a congruence between their self-image and the event, while encouraging them to engage with the event. In addition, it develops greater connections between the special event and customers, promoting a positive experience and facilitating their perception of event quality. Therefore, appropriate marketing messages with special event offerings appealing to different themes can motivate customers to attend and become engaged.

Fourth, the findings indicate that perceived crowding of special events can generate positive feelings from customers contrary to previous study results. Managers should realise that a crowded environment is not detrimental for all types of events. With regard to the positive effects of perceived special event crowding, event organisers could reinforce the special event reputation associated with social interaction, emphasising positive affective responses (e.g., stimulation, relaxation, fun and enjoyment), and promoting novelty-seeking, by ensuring adequate special event site facilities, gathering locations and viewing areas appropriate for the

special event space. It appears that people participate in and attend certain special events for a hedonic experience, namely, social benefits (e.g., prestige or being with family and friends), excitement and entertainment, variety, novelty, arousal and escape (Gursoy et al., 2006; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). To sum up, it is important for event organisers to understand that a high level of special event crowding does not necessarily place a negative impact on consumer outcomes: one can control specific key aspects and use overcapacity to the advantage of the event's prestige.

#### **6.4. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study has limitations as is the case with any research. The limitations of this study are identified and open opportunities for further research. First, this study focuses on the perceived quality of special events as an outcome of customer engagement with the event. This is because the time frame of the PhD does not suit a longitudinal approach. However, longitudinal research would be better for understanding the perspectives of customer engagement in relation to pre- and post-special event consumption experiences and would reflect the influence of multiple moments of customer engagement with a special event over a long period (Brodie et al., 2011; Taheri et al., 2014). For this reason, an examination of the change in customer judgment of the overall experience and quality of the special event, after the event is concluded, as well as customer loyalty over time, would be valuable. Therefore, it is recommended that further research employ a longitudinal approach to capture enduring special event-related outcomes that are maintained and sustained in the long term.

Second, this study used this study used convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling technique to collect the data from customers who attended special events in Thailand. This approach also could impact the generalizability of the findings. In order to ensure representativeness of the special event customers, future research could select the sample population by interviewing the respondent to ensure that they have experienced the special events and fully engagement and its quality perception of special events.

Third, this study used cross-sectional data, which does not allow for the investigation of causal relationships. In addition, the theoretical model of this study proposed and developed hypotheses with directional impacts among the constructs of interest. Within this logic, the findings of this study only imply relationships, rather than causal relationships, between the constructs of interest. Therefore, further research is recommended to apply an experimental design to understand the causal relationship.

Fourth, this study focuses on a combination of several sub-dimensions of customer engagement. Further research may consider different components of customer engagement to examine their individual influence on perceptions of event quality. The interplay between the dimensions of customer engagement can contribute to understanding different levels of engagement intensity; individual components of engagement may have a measurable impact on other engagement aspects (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Moreover, this study found that the regulatory mode orientation significantly moderates the relationship between motivations and engagement with a special event. Future research could consider goal-orientation motives (regulatory mode orientation) effect customer engagement. Also, future research could investigate to past experience (first-timers vs. repeat visitors) that could impact the construct of interest such as self-image congruence and perceived crowding.

Fifth, the measure of perceived quality of a special event used here is a subjective measure based on the perspective of consumers. Future research could consider other measures to address this limitation. For example, further research could consider customer equity, the long-term reputation of the organisation, profitability (van Doorn et al., 2010) and objective measures of special event performance. Objective special event measures determine the generic features of the special event including the event information services, event program, quality of the physical environment and event access (Wu et al., 2018; Yoon, Lee & Lee, 2010).

Sixth, the sampling was drawn from international customers who attended the special events in Thailand. As such, future research should examine domestic customers travel

motives to select special events and how they proactively engage with the special event choices. Doing so may identify areas of divergence, for example the moderating effect of self-image, special event image congruence may differ in a domestic tourist context. Such investigation may also enhance the generalisability of the model beyond the international customers investigated in this study. Finally, using analytical approach such as the structural equation modelling (SEM) may allow the study to postulate cause-and-effect relationships.

## **6.5. CONCLUSION**

As special events and tourism activities proliferate worldwide, destination marketing organisations and their communities are challenged to find strategies and practices to be competitive by providing service excellence, superior tourism experiences, and to sustain customer long-term relationships. To create a long-term, memorable special event experience, event organisers engage their customers in special event activities as tools to build a memorable special event (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). To this end, the purpose of this study was to deepen our understanding of the reasons why customers engage with a special event, as well as investigate why customers' assessment of the quality of the service changes. Building on proactive motivation theory this study used two different themed special events to test the proposed relationships. The study provides theoretical and managerial implications. While this study has extended theory and practice by providing deeper understanding of the drivers and outcomes of customer engagement with special events in Thailand, still more avenues exist for future research to pursue endeavours to develop the theory of service marketing and the special event tourism domains.

# APPENDIX

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TASMANIAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

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## Information Sheet

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Dear Event Attendee:

My name is Supawat Meeprom, I am a PhD student at the University of Tasmania, Australia. I am inviting you to participate in my PhD project which focuses on understanding attendees' special event experiences at special events in Thailand. My project is being supervised by Professor Aron O'Cass and Dr Linda French. Your participation will enable the research team to identify potential methods for enhancing special event experiences, and help make a positive contribution to Thailand's special event industry.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider participating in this study, which will be conducted in two phases. The first phase consists of an onsite survey to be completed at the event location. The second phase consists of a follow-up survey which will be distributed via email for online completion 7 days after the event finishes. Acceptance of this package (containing the information sheet and onsite survey), and completing it implies indicates you give your consent to participate. You can participate in this phase with no obligation to undertake the second phase<sup>3</sup>.

If you agree to participate, please now complete the enclosed survey and return it to the researcher. Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. This project adheres to the guidelines of the ethical review process of the University of Tasmania. All information will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for academic research purposes only.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Supawat Meeprom

PhD Candidate

Tasmanian School of Business and Economics

The University of Tasmania, Australia

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to Mr. Supawat Meeprom: ph. +61 4129 92489 or Email: [supawat.meeprom@utas.edu.au](mailto:supawat.meeprom@utas.edu.au) or Professor Aron O'Cass, Email: [Aron.OCass@utas.edu.au](mailto:Aron.OCass@utas.edu.au), and Dr Linda French Email: [Linda.French@utas.edu.au](mailto:Linda.French@utas.edu.au). If you have concerns about the conduct of this study you may contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on +61 3 6226 7479 or email [human.ethics@utas.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@utas.edu.au).

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<sup>3</sup> Note: The second phase is not included for the thesis due to the short-term period of the PhD work.



## Customer Special Event Questionnaire

Thank you for your assistance. We appreciate you taking about 10 minutes to complete this survey. Your views are important. Please do not rush as your accurate responses ensure your time is well served. Please circle the number or tick the box that reflects your thoughts and feelings.

At the end of this survey, you will be asked to provide your contact information if you are willing to participate in phase two of the study. If you agree, 7 days after the event finishes we will email you a link to complete a short follow-up survey, online.

For each statement, please circle the number that best reflects your thoughts and feelings.

How important were the following in the choice to attend the (...event name..)?		Not at all important							Very Important
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO1	To explore new places	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO2	To experience new and different lifestyles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO3	To learn new things, and increase my knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO4	To experience the excitement offered by this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO5	To enjoy the event activities and atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO6	To visit a once-in-a-life time event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO7	To visit famous cultural and historical attractions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO8	To have fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO9	To escape (e.g., routine work)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO10	To do something that impresses others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO11	To go somewhere that my friends haven't been (attended yet)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO12	To spend time with my family/friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
MO13	To create good memories with family/friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Many brands of products, holiday locations or services are often considered by users to have human like personalities. Think about *the (...event name..)* and its personality and respond to the following statements.

Thinking about the (...event name..)...		Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
SIC1	the personality of this event is <u>consistent with how I see myself</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
SIC2	the personality of this event is <u>a mirror image of me</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
SIC3	the personality of this event is <u>close to my own personality</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
SIC4	the personality of this event is <u>consistent with how I would like to see myself</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
SIC5	the personality of this event is a <u>mirror image of the person I would like to be</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
PC1	the event site seems very crowded to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
PC2	there are a lot of people at the event site	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
PC3	there is a lot of foot traffic at the event site	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
PC4	I feel cramped at the event site	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
PC5	the event site does not have an open, airy feeling to it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
PC6	the event areas feel confining	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

In thinking about the (...event name...)...		Completely Disagree					Completely Agree		
CE1	I identify strongly with this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE2	this event embodies what I believe in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE3	this event is like a part of me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE4	I like to learn about this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE5	I pay a lot of attention to anything about this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE6	anything related to this event grabs my attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE7	when attending this event, I forget everything else around me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE8	time flies when I am attending this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE9	when attending this event, I do not want to leave	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE10	I feel happy when I am attending this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE11	I get pleasure from attending this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE12	attending this event is like a treat for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE13	I am interested in anything about this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE14	I find this event interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE15	I feel enthusiastic about this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE16	I like to get involved in discussions with other people at this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE17	I enjoy exchanging ideas with other people at this event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
CE18	If I have a useful idea on how to improve event quality and service, I will let the event organisers or workers know	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

In thinking about my experience at (...event name...), I would say...

SQ1	...the quality of the event is...	Poor 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Excellent 9
SQ2	...the quality of the event is...	Inferior 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Superior 9
SQ3	...the quality of the event is...	Low standard 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	High standard 9

In general in life...		Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		
AO1	I prefer to wait and evaluate all possible choices thoroughly before deciding how to act	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
AO2	do the right thing – describes me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
AO3	I have a tendency to keep thinking without leaping/rushing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
AO4	I have a desire for careful analysis to be accurate and make the ideal choice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
AO5	I favour a strategy that allows me to make as many comparisons as possible to arrive at the best decision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
LO1	when I decide to do something, I can't wait to get started	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
LO2	most of the time my thoughts are occupied with the task I wish to accomplish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
LO3	I enjoy actively doing things, more than just watching and Observing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
LO4	just do it - is an apt reflection of me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
LO5	I focus on "getting on with it" to make things happen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



The following questions are about YOU.

PE1- Have you attended the (...event name..) before?

☐ No

☐ Yes- Please indicate how many times you have attended this special event.....

DC1 – My Gender is ☐ Male ☐ Female

DC2 – My age is \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

DC3 – Please tick the box below for your nationality:

☐ Thai (local resident)

☐ Thai (non-local resident)

☐ Chinese

☐ American

☐ Australian

☐ European specific country.....

☐ Russian

☐ Other specific country.....

DC4 - Please tick the box below for your highest educational level:

☐ Primary School

☐ High School

☐ Vocational or technical education

☐ Diploma

☐ Undergraduate Degree

☐ Postgraduate Degree

DC5 - Please tick the box below for your Occupation:

☐ Student

☐ Employee

☐ Government employee

☐ Business owner

☐ Retired

☐ Unemployed

☐ Home duties

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

DC6 – If you are willing to participate in phase two of this study please provide your name and email address below. If provided, we will email you a link to an online survey 7 days after the event concludes. Provision of your email address implies your consent to participate in phase two of the study.

Name .....

Email address .....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND VALUED HELP.

Please now return the survey to researcher

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