

# *Organisational Studies and Innovation Review*

*Vol. 2, no.1, 2016*

---

## **Attitudes Toward Cultural Tourism With Community Participation: A Case Of ‘Authentic Songkhla Food Old-Time Atmosphere’ Walking Street in Southern Thailand**

Wassana Suwanvijit\*

*Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Thaksin University, Songkhla 90000 Thailand \**

---

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on: (1) measuring attitudes toward cultural tourism with community participation of tourists, in regards to the management of cultural activities, food and beverage products, souvenir products, facility, access, security, image, and environmental; (2) comparing attitudes by the demographic factors of tourists. The Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere’ walking street market in southern Thailand was chosen as a case study. The data was collected by sampling 300 of the tourists participated in the walking street during August to December 2014 using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, t-test and One-way ANOVA were used to analyse the data. The results revealed that the tourists have positive attitude in all of the components. Though, there were significant difference when compared the attitude between some age group, education level, and income. We found that the older tourists had attitude level on ‘Image’ component less than those younger. The tourists with less income have more attitude level on ‘Image’ component than those who have higher income. The tourists with higher degree of education had attitude level on ‘Security’ component less than those who have the less degree. So, we gave some suggestions such as: the tourism needs to (1) segment the market and communicate using several medias or activities to increase the attitude in each group; (2) increase the communication or supports activities focus on the older aged and the higher income as new target groups; (3) create awareness about the security focus on the higher degree of education group.

**Keywords:** *Community participation, Cultural tourism, Southern Thailand, Attitudes.*

### **Introduction**

Tourism industry plays a very important role in driving many countries economically and socially. In developing countries, in particular, tourism has become a main development strategy because tourism can generate income for the country as it is related to many types of business that distribute income widely and as deep down as the community. Tourism can, therefore, bring benefits to the local area and result in the country’s

economy as a whole. Cultural tourism is the subset of [tourism](#) concerned with a country or region's [culture](#), specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in [urban areas](#), particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as [museums](#). It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle, as well as niches like [industrial tourism](#) and creative tourism. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming generally more popular throughout the World. In addition, cultural tourism can play in regional development in different world regions (OECD, 2009).

Songkhla is also a centre for history of the lower southern part of Thailand and it is an important strategic province for tourism industry in southern Thailand where most tourists come to Hat Yai as it is a large shopping area with convenient accommodation, good food and convenient transportation in addition to its interesting festivals and activities; it is also not expensive. The number of tourists from within Thailand and abroad is increasing. In 2013, the number of tourists arrived to Songkhla province were 10.57 million, representing income approximately 37.66 million baht. (Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sport, 2014).

Walking street market was based on the concept of open-air shopping, where street hawkers or petty traders occupied a designated part of a street to set up their stalls. 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market is a temporary public night market, set up in a street at Chana road along Muang Songkhla wall on Friday and Saturday during 5.00-9.00 PM. This walking street has been in practice for many years and is growing continuously. The walking street has been supported by the province's policy makers in terms of budget, management, and policies. The direct stakeholders who gain benefits are the Songkhla locals as well as tourists. The market takes the form of a walking street with many different types of delicious exotic goods and sometimes there are stage performances. The streets are turned into walking only areas and are filled with crafts, various local products and local food vendors. The idea is to support the locals to improve their economic status and also to promote southern Thai culture through the ability to display the products to a large audience. The traders have to submit their applications to the walking street organizer to get permission to sell on the street. Such products to be sold are, for example, handicrafts, southern Thai antique and contemporary arts, products created from local herbs or other locally sourced raw materials and traditional food. The expected benefits are to develop and fully utilize Songkhla Old Town areas and to promote Songkhla's valuable culture as well as to develop the city's economics. The main participators in the walking street activities include traders, performers, Songkhla locals, and tourists.

The knowledge about tourists' attitude is very useful for the tourism development. Thus, this paper focuses on: (1) measuring attitudes toward cultural tourism with community participation in the 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market of tourists, in regards to the management of cultural activities, food and beverage products, souvenir products, facility, access, security, image, environmental, and community participation; (2) comparing attitudes by the demographic factors of tourists.

## **Literature Review**

Attitude is one of the critical constructs in understanding tourist motivation and behavior. A tourist's attitude toward an object is determined by his or her felt needs and value system, highlighting the relationship between motivation and attitude (Gnoth, 1997).

Tidichumrernporn et al. (2010) measured the satisfaction of domestic and international tourists toward Lanna cultural tourism products using a case study of progress in Chiang Mai walking street activities, in regards to the management of activities, the cultural tourism products promotion, and the preferred Lanna cultural tourism products. The results indicated that international tourists have a higher level of satisfaction than national tourists in almost all areas, especially cultural products.

Udomrat and Buakaew (2012) studied cultural tourism activities with community participation in Songkhla Old Town to investigate activities and explore tourists' needs for cultural tourism activities and to design cultural tourism activities with community participation. The results of the study revealed that tourism activities could not yet present clear identities and were not attractive enough. Activities that were most wanted by tourists were dining and shopping for local goods while enjoying the atmosphere on Thanon Nang Ngam where old buildings are still intact. Cultural tourism activities that found to be suitable for Songkhla Old Town were: activities held at different places around the area with roads linking them; activities promoting knowledge and understanding about history; activities promoting relationships among family and friends; activities presenting simplicity and traditions of the community's way of life. These activities should be arranged as one-day trips. Cultural Tourism activities with community participation in Songkhla Old Town should be based on the concept of conservation tourism and community based tourism (CBT) focusing on more fun and doing activities with the community in order to build relationship between the host and tourists. In addition, the government should provide more opportunities for the community to play more roles in tourism in the area. For example, sending community representatives to participate in meetings to plan, decide, and operate tourism activities. Moreover, for the tourists who come on their own, a handbook should be provided to give information on roads to important places and on their history in more detail. The handbook should be available in three languages: Thai, English, and Chinese. If possible, tour guides should be provided for groups of tourists who needs the service and

convenience because tour guides can explain the background and importance of places to tourists so that they receive more knowledge and better experience.

## **Methodology**

The data for this study were collected from the tourists visited 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market. 300 tourists were participated this study. The survey was conducted from August to December 2014 by using structural questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part dealt with personal characteristics of the respondents. The second part included questions of tourists' attitude toward the night market, using a five-point Likert scale (1= 'worst' to 5= 'very good'). The last part was assigned to gather information about tourist recommendations to improve the tourism at the walking street market, using open-ended questions. A pilot test was conducted to assess how well the instrument captured the constructs it was supposed to measure and to test the comprehension of the questionnaire items. The researchers applied descriptive statistics, t-test, One-way ANOVA, and [Least Significant Difference \(LSD\)](#) to analyse the tourist's attitude, and comparing the attitude by their demographic factors. The breakdown of the score/ranking is as follows: 4.50-5.00 means 'Very good'; 3.50-4.49 means 'Good'; 2.50-3.49 means 'Fair', 1.50-2.49 means 'Poor'; and 1.00-1.49 means 'Worst'.

Demographic characteristics are important to establish how tourists meet their needs. The demographic characteristics of visitors focused on this study include gender, age, education level, occupation, incomes, religion, and residence. The tourist's attitude focused on 8 components: cultural activities, food and beverage products, souvenir products ,facility ,access, security, image ,and environmental.

## **Results**

The respondents of this research consisted of 300 tourists from 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market. 76.3% were female and 23.7% were male, with age range from 12 years old to 55 years old. 66.0% of the respondents were students with average income per month less than 10,001 Baht, the others were from various careers such as government officials, artists, and company employees. The majority of respondents (76.0%) were Buddhists from Muang Songkhla district, followed by tourists from other districts, and nearby provinces. Other groups of visitors were from Bangkok, Malaysia and Singapore who drive their own cars to Songkhla while some came in a van or bus of their organizations on their holidays or long weekends.

The results revealed that the overall of attitudes toward 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market was at the good level in all components: cultural, food, souvenir ,facility ,access, security, image ,and environmental. However,

there were significant difference when compared the attitude in each demographic factor included age group, education level, and income.

When comparing the differences between the attitudes on age, the result indicated that the respondents with different age had a significant different attitude on the 'Image' component at the 0.01 level. The respondents aged 50-41years old had attitude level on 'Image' component less than those younger than 20years old. In addition, respondents over 51years old had attitude level on 'Image' component less than those younger than 40 years old. When comparing the differences between the attitudes on education level, the result indicated that the respondents with different education level had a significant different attitude on the 'Security' component at the 0.05 level. The respondents with a Bachelor's degree had attitude level on 'Security' component less than those who in high school and college level. When comparing the differences between the attitudes on income, the result indicated that the respondents with different income had a significant different attitude on the 'Image' component at the 0.01 level. The respondents with income more than ₺50,000 had attitude level on 'Image' component more than those who had income between ₺ - 25,001₺50,000.

In addition, the respondents demonstrated some suggestions to develop the tourism at 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market such as: (1) should increase the products assortment; (2) should have reasonable price of goods and food; (3) should develop a unique style of trader; (4) should increase event marketing; (5) should have the cultural contest events; (6) should adjusted parking rates; (7) should add lights around (8) should strict about security; and (9) should increase the event day included Sunday.

## **Conclusion & Recommendations**

The tourists report a positive attitude with most aspects of their trip in all components: cultural activities, food and beverage products, souvenir products ,facility ,access, security, image ,and environmental. However, there were significant difference when compared the attitude in each demographic factor included age group, education level, and income. The tourists aged 50-41years old had attitude level on 'Image' component less than those younger than 20years old. The tourists over 51years old had attitude level on 'Image' component less than those younger than 40years old. The tourists with income more than ₺50,000 had attitude level on 'Image' component more than those who had income between ₺-25,001₺50,000. The tourists with a Bachelor's degree had attitude level on 'Security' component less than those who in high school and college level. The findings are consistent with the hypothesis stated that the tourist with different demographic factor had different level of attitudes. This may be due to adults and high-income groups rarely visited the walking street market. So, the experience, participation,

awareness and understanding about the walking street and the security were lower than other groups. The results provided a general picture of tourists' attitude and the meaningful information for Songkhla City Municipality and business sectors to effectively develop and deliver products or services that meet the unique demand of the walking street market. The findings can be also used to create proactive activities to encourage the decision choice of tourists.

The results indicated that there were significant difference when compared the attitude in each demographic factor included age group, education level, and income. Thus, the tourism should segmentation the target and designs a strategic communication using several media or activities to increase the attitude of each target group. The respondents' attitude on 'Image' component was different in each age group and income level. The older tourists had attitude level on 'Image' component less than those younger. The tourists with less income have more attitude level on 'Image' component than those who have higher income. Thus, the tourism needs to increase the communication about the walking streetor supports activities focus on the older aged and the higher income as a new target group. The respondents' attitude on 'Security' component was different in each education level. The tourists with a higher degree of education had attitude level on 'Security' component less than those who have the less degree. Thus, the tourism needs to create awareness about the security measures around the walking street market focus on the higher degree of education.

In regards to the respondents' suggestions, the tourism need to support management actions aimed at controlling cultural tourism activities, access and impacts to express a stronger interest in experiencing Songkhla local culture as follows: (1) the tourism and community should increase the products assortment, unique product, and handmade products; (2) the traders should sell at a standard or reasonable price; (3) the traders should develop a more unique style shops or wear Thailand contemporary dress; (4) the tourism and community should increase the event marketing, sales promotion, and enhance communication through the radio for news releases over the walking street area; (5) the tourism should increase the art or cultural contests and preserve the local culture for the new generations; (6) the tourism should adjusted the bus fares and parking rates; (7) the tourism should add lights around the walking street market and provide adequate trash, add free car parking, and organize for better sidewalks; (8) the tourism should be added, and strict security measures, restrict smoking area; and (9) the tourism should increase the event day included Sunday, provide more vehicle mobile toilets or public toilet, including to provide dining and relaxing space.

However, this study did not mention about tourists' behavior in the 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market. Future research should investigate the behavior and intention to revisit this destination, which is an important issue for both tourism and researchers. Future studies should also apply the research method to other

cultural tourism destinations so that a competitive analysis in different destinations can be explored.

## Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Thaksin University (TSU) Research Fund 2014.

## Bibliography

Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sport. (2014). *Statistics of Thailand tourist arrival*. Available at: [http://marketingdatabase.tat.or.th/ewt\\_w3c/ewt\\_news.php?nid=1621](http://marketingdatabase.tat.or.th/ewt_w3c/ewt_news.php?nid=1621)

Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. MA: Addison-Wesley.

Gnoth, J. (1997). Tourism Motivation and Expectation Formation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(2), pp. 283-304. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016%2FS0160-7383%2897%2980002-3> (Accessed: 28 May 2014).

Ministry of Tourism and Sport. (2010). *National Tourism Development Plan 2010-2016*. Thailand.

Mono Travel. (Online). *Songkhla a Business Center of the South*. Available at: <http://www.hotelthailand.com/travelinfo/south/songkhla.html> (Accessed: 2 June 2014).

OECD. (2009). *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*. Paris: OECD.

Songkhla City Municipality. (2010). *Data of Songkhla Province*. Songkhla.

Tidtichumremporn, T., Janasak, S., Mujtaba, B.G., Khunsongkiet, P., Duangjai, N., Bhawanantechanon, N. & Vongkham, O. (2010). *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 1(3), pp.31-52.

Udomrat, S. & Buakaew, J. (2012). Cultural Tourism Activities with Community Participation in Songkhla Old Town. Proceedings of Management, Agroindustry and Tourism Industry. 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources. (1998). *Tourism Handbook: Putting Virginia's to Work*. VA: Richmond.