THE STUDY OF INFORMATION USES BEHAVIOR OF TOURISTS IN SONGKHLA PROVINCE, THAILAND

[1]PATRAPORN KAEWKHANITARAK, [2]SUCHADA SRICHUA, [3]NARAWAT KANJANAPAN

Faculty of Business Administration Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla, Thailand.
E-mail: [1]pat.gm155@gmail.com, [2]suchada.techno@hotmail.com, [3]kkcom59@gmail.com

Abstract- This research is the survey research. The purpose of this research is to study information uses behavior and problem of tourists in Songkhla Province. The tool used in this study include structure questioner standardize in 5 levels rating scale. The 400 participants selected by convenience sampling (allowable error 5%) by Taro Yamane method. The collecting data period is 6 months from January-June 2014. The result of this study found that the type of information that the tourists often use to plan their trip is internet ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81) and the most popular text is restaurant ($\bar{x}$ = 3.77). The tourists found that booking or buying service from internet provided more affordable price and they could select appropriate plan by themselves. The most convenience source of information that the tourists often use is internet and website ($\bar{x}$ = 3.69). Nevertheless, they explained that most of tourist information source in Songkhla province are lack and insufficient of tourist organization that provide information and service related to tourism.

Index Terms- Information, Behavior, Tourists, Thailand.

I. INTRODUCTION

TOURISM is one of the most important service industries for the development of Thailand in terms of economic development and social development. The number of tourists come to Thailand is increasing dramatically in every year, which is the good sign for country development and help to generate more income to the country. Moreover the increasing of number of tourists will help to create jobs opportunities for the local, encourage for new investments, and distribution of the income to local people. There are numbers of tourists travelling to Songkhla recently and trends to be more and more in each year. The number of tourist traveled to Songkhla during year 2011, are 4,024,499, which was 36.59% increased from year 2010. The numbers of Thai tourists are 2,862,201 (71.12%), and foreigner tourists are 1,162,298 (28.88%). These number can be classifies into 3,387,780 travelers and 636,719 visitors, which equal to 44.44% increased from year 2010. [1] The purposes of travelling to Songkhla of both travelers and visitors are mostly for overlooking the natural attractions and tourists attractions which including islands, waterfalls, and lakes etc. In each natural tourist attractions are unique even though they are the places where natures are the same. Songkhla tourists attractions are of interest to both Thai and foreigners tourists, the tour information should be provided at the tourist site or the tourists should be received the travelling information before their trip or even during their trip which will be benefit for them and help to increase of repeating travelling.

However, in order to encourage and support the growth of tourist both in Thailand and overseas, it is crucial that the related government and private sectors must understand the information uses behavior of tourists to improve the information to suit with their habits and need of the users. Moreover, it helps to increase the potential of information providing service for tourists in Songkhla.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2003, [2] defined the meaning of tourism as "Tourism is the temporary travel that purposed for leisure or seeking the new experience. Furthermore, the traveler should not be forced to travel".
In 1999, [3] defined the tourism as the travel from the residence to other destination in temporary period and do not purpose on earn the income.
UNWTO [4] explained that Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.Tourism is defined as the activities of persons who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited."
WTO [5] Tourism is acknowledged by the World Tourism Organization that tourism is the fastest growing economic sector, bringing foreign exchange earnings to countries and creating jobs. Jobs are not only created directly in tourism but in related industries, for example in construction. Much tourism development occurs in developing countries, bringing economic opportunities to local community.

Tourism is one of human activity, to unwind from their routine activities. It is the traveling from one place to another place in some period of time; the purposes are for leisure or knowledge, or for business purpose. Travelling can create new experiences and relationship during the journey and while staying in different places.

In present day, Thai government emphasize to

tourism industry. The government allocated 9,290 million Baht to buildup tourist confidence both domestically and abroad, promote the image of Thailand and organize marketing activities, including creation of a good image among tourists [6]. The government expects to earn tourist revenue of about 970,000 million Baht based on the projection of 22.3 million tourists [7]. The government incorporates tourism as part of the major strategy for national development based on 2 major assumptions: 1) Tourism is a source of foreign exchange contributing to stimulation of the economy; and 2) Tourism is a labour intensive industry [8].

The promotion of tourism helps spread revenue to the workforce and reduce poverty among low-income families according to National Account Data and Thai Tourism Satellite Accounts prepared by World Travel and Tourism Council) [9]. The reported data indicate an important role of tourism. That is, the proportion of foreign tourist revenue to GNP has been growing year by year during the period from 1996 to 2012, accounting for 8.6% of the GNP [10]. Tourism plays a prominent role in Thailand's economy. Tourist revenue contributes to economic growth and generates employment, thus boosting per capita income and enabling the government to collect more tax revenue due to increases in the quantity of money in circulation.

Tourist within the meaning of the League of Nations which was defined in 1937 are the person traveling in any country which is not a country that lives on a regular basis for at least 24 hours and [11] have added the meaning of tourists in the following: (1) those who travel for relaxing their mind or health (2) those who travel for meeting or business purpose (3) those who travel for business trading and (4) those who travel with the ship and enjoy the scenery even stay less than 24 hours.

Later in 1963, the United Nations has defined the definitions of tourists as "Foreign Visitor", which refers to individuals who travel to a particular country and non-permanent residents with the purpose not to go to work or earn money. Foreign Visitors can be classified into two types: (1) Foreign Visitors (2) Foreign Tourist. Thailand Tourism Act (1979), section 4 has defied the meaning of tourist as an individual who travel from their local residence to other place in temporary stay and in order not to work or earn money.

Literatures in which related to information uses behavior of consumers will related to philology theory/inspiration methodology that embedded in the motivation theory and related to individual need. It is a method of economic of information theory which established by [12] and [13] found that the tourists would be perceived the cost and benefit they will gain once they search information. The information will be used to evaluate their choices as an alternative to achieve their goal.

Information uses behavior of tourists by [14] which is a model of attitude theory that is widely used for predicting behavior, has been found to be indirectly related to information search behavior. This theory proposes that attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are all indirectly related to behavior via behavioral intention. To clarify, the best predictor of a person's behavior is their intention to perform the behavior.

External information search behavior of tourists have to begin with the understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) and electronic business (e-Business) which affect to the tourism industry, the cause of the revolution of tourism industry and have a directly impact on Travel intermediaries, [15]. [16] found that traveler used technology widely by using computer, notebook, and mobile phone. Moreover, it is clear that tourists use the technology more creative way by using to search for information to make their travelling plan, booking travelling trip which is very convenience. [17] found that the format of information published in which Thai tourist trend to use a lot are books and photos. The problem of using information in Thai tourist does not know how to use some published or when it is in foreigner language. [18] found the problems of using tourist information sources are: (1) The tourism information provided are not enough (2) No time to find travel information (3) Do not know where to find travel information (4) Source of information is far away and not convenience to find and (5) Tourism information does not match the demand.

Information systems are a key component to assist travelers in finding the information and useful while their travelling. It is clear that travelers are using the technology that is being developed in more creative way by use the information to make their plan and booking for their trip.

III. MATH

A. Survey Instrument

The participants of this study are tourists who travel to Songkhla both Thai and foreigner. The research instrument is structure questioner divided into 3 parts as (1) general information of the participants (2) 5 sections of the information uses behavior as type of the information, text of the information, source of the information, language, and problem of information uses. The questionnaire is rating scale divided into 5 levels as 1 = least, 2 = less, 3 = moderate, 4 = high, and 5 = highest. In the reason to selected the appropriate and classify the accurate variable, there was pre-test to 20 tourists to considered and applied the result.

B. Sample Description

According to the data of participants, there are 400 samples divided into male 51.5% and female 48.5%. Most of the sample are 21-30 years old (48.8%) and 31-40 years old (22.5%). The education levels of the sample are Bachelor degree (40.0%) and college

(26.0%). The data found that most of the domestic tourists are local residents 41.3% and foreigners 30.0% as shown in Table I.

TABLE I
PROFILE OF SAMPLE n = 400

	N	Present
Gender		
Man	206	51.5
Woman	194	48.5
Age		
Less than 20 years	28	7.0
21 – 30 years	195	48.8
31 – 40 years	90	22.5
41 – 50 years	35	8.8
51 – 60 years	24	6.0
61 years above	28	7.0
Education		
Some high school	29	7.3
High school	88	22.0
Some college	104	26
College graduate	160	40.0
Post-graduate	19	4.8
Residence of the tourists		
Songkhla local residents	165	41.3
Other local residents	115	28.8
Foreigner tourists	120	30.0

C. Sample and Data Collection

The sample of this study is tourist both Thai and foreigner by convenience sampling. There are 400 samples (280 Thai tourists and 120 foreigners) collected into Taro Yamane Table [19] with allowable error + 5%. The survey area is 11 natural attractions in Songkhla as Samila Cape, Son On Cape, Tanguan Mountain, Kowseng Mountain, Koh Yo, Sai Keaw Beach, Sakom Beach, KooKud National Park, Kow Nam Kang National Park, Ton Nga Chang Waterfall, and Baripat Waterfall. The data collection period is 6 months from January to June 2014.

D. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS 17.0. The results was presented and discussed separately for the four sections of the questionnaire. The research result was divided into four parts: Information uses, Text of information, Sources of information and Problem of information uses. The reliability of the questionnaire was at 0.954, measured by Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The Descriptive Statistics analyze by percentage, mean, and standard deviation

IV. RESULTS

E. Section 1: Information Uses

According to the data from 400 tourists, the result found that the information uses that the tourists most prefer is internet ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81) and other 12 information uses in moderate level has mean between 3.32 – 2.85 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30 – 2.85). When considered each type of information, found that the highest mean is map ($\bar{x}$ = 3.32) and secondary is brochure ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26) and Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.884 as shown in Table II.

TABLE-II
INFORMATION USES

Type of information uses	Mean	SD	Level
Book	2.99	0.910	Moderate
Academic report	2.85	1.024	Moderate
Academic journal	2.89	1.075	Moderate
General journal and magazine	3.16	1.084	Moderate
Brochures	3.26	1.124	Moderate
Newspaper	3.14	1.146	Moderate
Photo	3.25	1.088	Moderate
Movie	3.04	1.048	Moderate
Television/VDO	3.08	1.081	Moderate
Map	3.32	1.044	Moderate
Online database	3.23	1.162	Moderate
CD/DVD	2.99	1.126	Moderate
Internet	3.81	1.134	High
Total	3.16	1.081	Moderate
Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.884			

F. Section 2: Text of Information

The result of the study found that text of information uses in high level are 10 categories and the median is between 3.77 – 3.48 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.77 – 3.48). The category that shown highest mean is restaurant ($\bar{x}$ = 3.77) and the second is travel information ($\bar{x}$ = 3.66) and location ($\bar{x}$ = 3.65) and Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.875 as shown in Table III.

TABLE III
TEXT OF INFORMATION

Category of Text	Mean	SD	Level
Location	3.65	0.916	High
History	3.56	1.021	High
Tourist attraction and route	3.51	0.970	High
Map	3.38	1.074	Moderate
Accommodation information	3.57	1.050	High
Local product/Souvenir	3.48	0.991	High
Restaurant	3.77	0.978	High
Travel information	3.66	0.963	High
Tourist activities	3.61	1.029	High
Tourist expenses	3.49	1.025	High
Security and ask for assist	3.58	1.217	High
Total	3.57	1.021	High
Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.875			

G. Section 3: Source of Information

The result of this study found that there are 3 categories source of information use in high level as internet/website ($\bar{x}$ = 3.69), Family/friend ($\bar{x}$ = 3.62), and the personal property ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42). There are 10 categories in moderate level that presented the mean between 3.40 – 3.06 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40 – 3.06). When considered each categories, the result found that the highest mean is Tourist Information Center ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40) and secondary is Tourism Authority of Thailand ($\bar{x}$ = 3.37) and Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.891 as shown in Table IV.

TABLE-IV
SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Source of Information	Mean	SD	Level
Library	3.06	1.014	Moderate
National museum	3.18	1.024	Moderate
Tourism Authority of Thailand	3.37	1.094	Moderate
Tourist information center	3.40	1.126	Moderate
Personal property	3.42	0.933	High
Family/friend	3.62	0.917	High
Specialist/Tour guide	3.32	1.078	Moderate
Newspaper	3.17	1.051	Moderate
Radio	3.10	1.045	Moderate
Television	3.34	1.090	Moderate
Convention/Seminar	3.36	1.064	Moderate
Internet/Website	3.69	1.084	Moderate
Total	3.33	1.043	Moderate
Cronbach's coefficient alpha =0.891			

H. Section 4: Problem of Information Uses

The result found that the problem of information uses was in moderate level all of 10 categories. The mean of this section is 3.15 – 2.98 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15 – 2.98). The category presented highest mean is insufficient source of information ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15) and secondary is lack of optional language ($\bar{x}$ = 3.13). Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.932 as shown in Table V.

TABLE-V
PROBLEM OF INFORMATION USES

Category of problem	Mean	SD	Level
Don't know where to get information	2.98	1.037	Moderate
Don't know how to use printed materials, such as reference index or abstract	3.02	1.060	Moderate
Don't know how to use information from databases …….	3.06	1.186	Moderate
Unnecessary details of information …..	3.01	1.015	Moderate
Unwanted information or inaccurate information …..	3.03	1.076	Moderate
The information did not up to date	3.03	1.153	Moderate
Insufficient source of information	3.15*	1.083	Moderate
No information center/receive inconvenience service from information center	3.11*	1.097	Moderate
Do not understand foreign language (Do not understand English)	3.04	1.061	Moderate
Lack of optional language	3.13	1.182	Moderate
Total	3.05	1.095	Moderate
Cronbach's coefficient alpha = 0.932			

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the study of information uses behavior of tourists in Songkhla can be discussed as follow;

The type of information that have various use in the tourists is internet, because internet has the large source of information that can be used in planning and decision making by comparing from the internet and purchases through the internet, in which so called "e-commerce". At the mean time tourist can interact with entrepreneurs and review their traveling, which useful for others tourist to find more information about their trip. For example accommodation information, travelling information, restaurant information, or the satisfaction of the services received which useful for the others tourists, which related to the study of [20] which said that the source of information that widely use in tourists is internet and become the leader in e-commerce in type of B2C, the number of internet using are increasing continuously such as travelling, shipping and accommodation etc.

The large contents in which the tourists search is restaurant, because of excellent services provided, the decoration of dishes with natural ingredients, the value of food and beverage. The change in tourist behavior from searching for information to make the reservation though the internet, which related to the study of [21] that mentioned that there is an increasing of tourists using the internet by which the cheapest way to search for information and to choose the time and place of satisfaction from web pages.

Source of information in which tourist use in high level is internet/website because internet has gather a lot of reliable information in which traveler agree to do booking online and to create new customer. Moreover internet/website can act as travel agent and be able to help traveler create plan for their trip, this is relevant to the [22] which discussed trends of implemented of e-business to tourism businesses, since the growth of internet used worldwide has increased and new technology on I-mobile which is more convenience for the travelers to purchase online products. Travel and tourism will participate in the trade and create good relationship in the future.

Moderate problem of using information in tourist is the insufficient of sources of information and insufficient of tourist organizations that provide information and service related to tourism. The need of information in tourist will occurs when they realize that it needed and they will try to seach for the related information to suit with their appropriate time, places, and environment this is relevant to [23] found that demand of service and information of travelling is to have mass media technology which is web blog and organization leader in order to communicate and notify new information to tourist to get to know and make decision to come to visit the tourist destinations.

CONCLUSION

This study presented 4 significant subjects are (1) most of the tourists prefer to use internet to plan their trip and determined to select their travel by comparing the tourist information from internet and purchase tourist service from website (2) text of information that the tourist often use is restaurant, the main reason is to booking or buy online service because they could

found the affordable price and they could plan the appropriate time and places (3) most of the tourists prefer to use internet and website to search tourist information because there are a lot of information, convenience to purchase online service, and they could determine their trip by themselves and (4) most of the tourists encountered with lack of tourist information source and insufficient of tourist organization that provide information and service related to tourism. Therefore, the related tourism organization should assign the role and proactive management to offer appropriate tourist information service. In addition to, the tourism data should be obvious, accurate, interesting, and up-to-date included publishing the information of tourist attraction and restaurant to public.

REFERENCES

[1] Ministry of Tourism and SportsDatabase, "Marketing Tourism Statistics domestic tourists. (Songkhla)," Bangkok: Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2010.

[2] Department of Tourism, "This document sets distance training course on tourism management, sustainable communities," Bangkok: Sukhothai Thammathirat University, 2003.

[3] P. Pongsaboot and W. Pongsaboot, "Docent Training Manual. Bangkok: Centre for Continuing Education at Chulalongkorn University,"1999.

[4] World Tourism Organization, Understanding Tourism: Basic Glossary, (Online) Available From: http://media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary 30 January 2015.

[5] World Tourism Organization, Why tourism, (Online) Available From: http://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism 12 July 2014.

[6] The Bureau of the Budget, "Budget in Brief. Fiscal Year 2011," Bangkok: The Bureau of the Budget, 2011.

[7] A. Watthanakuljarat, "Integrated Development of Sustainable Tourism for the Greater Mekong Suv-region 2007: A Comparison of GMS Logistics Systems," (Online) Available Form: http://library.cmu.ac.th/ntic/knowledge_show.php?docid=18 24 February 2015.

[8] The Tourism Authority of Thailand, "The survey projects the cost of the trip," The first quarter of the year 2012 Bangkok: Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2012.

[9] Bank of Thailand, "Economic and financial year 2010, Full version, Bangkok: Thailand, 2010.

[10] S. Tulyasathian, "Economic Thailand. Thailand and the tourism sector during the past and future trends," Bangkok: Fiscal policy Office, 2014.

[11] Boonlert J., "Tourism industry," Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 2005.

[12] George J. Stigler, "The Economics of Information. Journal of Political Economy," 69 (3), pp. 213-225, 1961.

[13] James R. Bettman, "An Information Processing Theory of Consumer Choice," Journal of Marketing, 43(3), pp. 124-126, 1979.

[14] Ajzen, I. and Fishbein M., "Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior," Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice–Hall, 1980.

[15] Arunee I., "Tourism Online (e-Tourism) of Thailand. Article Seminar logistics, however, important to tourism," 15 February 2008, Bangkok: Maruay Gardent Hotel, pp. 10-12, 2008.

[16] Peter O'Connor, "Examining the effect of novelty seeking, satisfaction, and destination image on tourists' return pattern: A two factor, non-linear latent growth model. Tourism Management," 32 (4), pp. 890-901, 2011.

[17] Kingkeaw P., "Information Uses and Information Needs of Tourists in The Lower Northeastern Part of Thailand.," Buriram: Buriram Rajabhat University, 2011.

[18] Woraluck T., "Using information tour guides in the tsunami disaster," (Online) Available From: http://thesis.swu.ac.th/swuthesis/_Inf_Sci/Vorraluk_T.pdf 15 March 2015.

[19] Yamane Taro., "Statistic: An Introduction Analysis, 3rded. New York: Harper and Row Publication," 1973.

[20] Berger, H., et al., "Online tourism communities on the part to web 2.0 – an evaluation, virtual communities in travel and tourism. Information Technology and Tourism," 10(4), pp. 329-353, 2007.

[21] Deitel, H M., H. M. Deitel, P. J., & Steinbuhler, K., "e-Business & e-commerce for manager," Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001.

[22] English Tourism Council, "The UK tourist: Statistics 2000, London: English Tourism Council, 2002.

[23] Siriporn S., "Services marketing mix affecting european tourist decision towards tourism services in Luang Prabang province," Lao People's Democratic Republic, Chiang Mai: Graduate Chiang Mai University, 2008.

★★★