

# TRAVEL BEHAVIOR AND NEEDS OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: A CASE OF 'AUTHENTIC SONGKHLA FOOD OLD-TIME ATMOSPHERE' WALKING STREET

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## Abstract

*The tourism industry not only creates jobs, it is also a fundamental industry that allows other businesses and community to develop and grow. The knowledge about travel behavior and needs of visitors are very useful for tourism to develop and response the unique needs to the target. This paper focuses on: (1) studying travel behavior and exploring the needs of visitors for cultural tourism activities in the 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market; (2) analyzing the relationship between the demographic factors and travel behavior of visitors. The data was collected by sampling 300 of visitors who participated in the walking street market during August to December 2014 using questionnaire. Descriptive Statistics and Chi-square test were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that seeing and experiencing local food and cultures were the main reason for visiting. Most visitors came with friends or families. The majority of them were from Muang Songkhla district, followed by tourists from and nearby districts or provinces. The other groups were from Bangkok, Malaysia and Singapore. They spend about 1-2 hours each time for walking around, joining some activities, and shopping there. The main cultural tourism activities found at the walking street market were the activities related to local food. The demographic factors of visitors have an influence on travel behavior to the walking street market. The tourists demonstrated high needs towards activities promoting knowledge and understanding about historical of Songkhla, and the community's way of life. The results from this study provided useful information for policy makers in formulating cultural tourism activities with community participation in the walking street market and creating proactive events to encourage the decision choice of both domestic and international tourists for the long term.*

Keywords: Cultural tourism, Needs, Travel behavior, Walking street market

## 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 also change society through exchange of data, knowledge, technology and culture with "traveling" as an important tool. Tourism can, therefore, bring benefits to the local area and result in the country's economy as a whole. Thailand, thus attaches importance to tourism development. In 2009, the government passed a resolution to make tourism part of the national agenda and an inter-ministry agenda requiring integrated administration involving various organizations in the private and government sectors including local administrative organizations and the general public. Policies and strategic plans for tourism were made under the National Tourism Development Plans 2012-2016 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2010). 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). Cultural/heritage tourism offers several benefits to tourists and residents, as well as governments. First of all, cultural/heritage tourism protects historic, cultural, and natural resources in communities, towns, and cities. People become involved in their community when they can relate to their personal, family, community, regional, or national heritage.

This connection motivates residents to safeguard their shared resources and practice good stewardship. Second, cultural/heritage tourism educates residents and tourists about local/regional history and traditions. Through the research about and development of heritage/cultural destinations, residents will become better informed about local/regional history and traditions which can be shared with tourists. Third, cultural/heritage tourism builds closer, stronger communities. Knowledge of heritage provides continuity and context for communities, which instills respect in their residents, strengthens citizenship values, builds community pride, and improves quality of life. Fourth, cultural/heritage tourism promotes the economic and civic vitality of a community or region. Economic benefits include: the creation of new jobs in the travel industry, at cultural attractions, and in travel-related establishments; economic diversification in the service industry (restaurants, hotels/motel, bed-and-breakfasts, tour guide services), manufacturing (arts and crafts, souvenirs, publications), and agriculture (specialty gardens or farmers' markets); encouragement of local ownership of small businesses; higher property values; increased retail sales; and substantial tax revenues (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1998).

Walking street market is a good place for locals to look for low-priced products ranging from food, drinks, fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, poultry, cosmetics, ladies accessories, clothing, shoes and many household items with cheaper rates than what individual can normally get at super markets and other retail outlets. Walking street markets have been a symbol of the lively urban life in many Asian countries. The purpose of the walking street project was to develop the community as a center of art, artists, performances, music, and increasingly popular cultural tourism products for both local and international tourists (Tidtichumrernporn et al. 2010). Walking street market tourism not only creates jobs in the area of tourism but also encourages growth in the economy as a whole. It is also a fundamental industry that allows other businesses to develop and grow. It can be concluded that tourism industry has generated a significant income and plays an important role in country's economic development. Tourism development is established on the assumption that higher tourism demand will result in an increase of newly established supply, which will in turn generate economic growth (Udomrat and Buakaew. 2012). The walking street project in Thailand originated at Silom Road, the business zone in Bangkok of Thailand, in order to decrease the traffic, air and noise pollutions, and to promote tourism. After the success on Silom Road, the government promoted this activity into the Chiang Mai municipality and named it, Chiang Mai Walking Street (Tidtichumrernporn et al. 2010). Walking street markets in Thailand had been popular destinations among locals because they offered shopping alternative for cooked food, perishable items, clothing and other household necessities. Walking street markets often reflected certain aspects of the Thai unique culture especially the people, the food, the eating habits as well as the diversity of the population. With the concept of open space market place, the local authority would assign stall/stalls to traders, and traders would set up tents, tables, tools and other necessary equipment to prepare and display their products. The designated street, a normally busy one during the day, would be closed off to traffic from early evening until late at night. The attractiveness of walking street markets are it transcends educational income and sub-cultural difference among locals and foreigners.

Songkhla 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 tourist arrived to Songkhla province were 10.57 million, representing income approximately 37.66 million baht. (Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sport. 2014). Songkhla is surrounded by beaches and also known as 'the great city on two seas'. Samila beach is well-known for its white sandy beach, shady pine groves, and the statue of a mermaid that is Songkhla's symbol. East of this statue is cat and rat sculptures. This is a nice, peaceful beach to stroll along, plenty of benches can be found between casuarina trees. Many facilities such as sidewalks, pavilions have been added to enhance this place as the main attraction of Songkhla. Son Awn beach is well shaded with sea pines. At the end of the peninsula stands the statue of Prince Chumphon Khet Udomsak. This peninsula is the best spot to view Ko Nu and the Songkhla Lake. Songkhla Lake, the only natural lake in Thailand is about 80 kilometres long and 20 to 25 kilometres wide. It is a freshwater lake with brackish water near the mouth. There are several islands across from its mouth (Wikitravel. Online). Songkhla is also a center for history of the lower southern part of Thailand. It is an old town consisting of ancient communities, ancient sites, ancient artifacts, traditions, traditional entertainments, folk art inherited from ancestors (Songkhla City Municipality. 2010). Songkhla Old Town in Muang district of Songkhla province has potential for development to be cultural tourism sources that are interesting and can be another selling point for the tourism industry (Udomrat and Buakaew. 2012). 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market is a temporary public 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 travel behavior characteristics and needs of visitors are very useful for tourism in Songkhla to develop and response the unique needs to the target. Thus, this paper focuses on (1) studying travel behavior and exploring the needs of visitors for cultural tourism activities in the 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market; (2) analyzing the relationship between the demographic factors and travel behavior of visitors. The findings will be used to designate the types of activities that meet the needs of both tourists and the community including to be offer valuable information for Songkhla policy planning in order to develop strategies for boosting the economy for the province in the future.

### Literature reviews

Travel behavior refers to the way in which tourists behave according to their attitudes: before, during and after travelling. Before the travel category, includes the study of complex affecting issues on travel decision making and the intention to visit a tourist destination. For example, the destination image is influenced by people's features, psychology, previous experiences and motivation. By during the travel, it means the tourist behavior and their perception of the quality of facilities and the amount of money they spent. After the travel, includes satisfaction and fulfillment of tourists and the intention to return again as well as the tourist's reception with the host community. Tourists behaviors includes human's reaction against needs and their demands to decide to have a travel, then the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of tourists with tourist facilities, services and attractions during travel and ultimately their understanding of tourism destinations, persistency, the decision to return or not to return to the tourist destination and travel reflection. Meanwhile, tourist's behavioral patterns consist of categorizing the tourists in similar and convergent groups based on their behavior in three stages of before the travel, during the travel and after the travel (Yari. 2011). Behavioral has great impact on personal decisions. Knowledge regarding travel behavior can assist in marketing planning and cultural activities development which can increase the number of visitors to the walking street market.

Songkhla is a center for history of the lower southern part of Thailand. Historical sites in Songkhla include: (1) Institute for Southern Thai Studies is located in Moo 1, Tambon Koh Yo, Amphoe Muang Songkhla, on the northeastern side of the island near the upper section of Tinnasulanon Bridge. Built on a site of approximately 10 acres in 1978, the institute serves as the center for studies and research on Southern Thai cultures. The complex of the institute includes the exhibition buildings, some at the foot of the hill while others are on the hill-top. Each building houses a special collection of culturally valuable items, art objects and artifacts discovered in the South. Exhibitions of the Southern people's way of life and customs from the early period to modern times are also shown. A special library caters for individuals interested in Southern Thai history and culture. The outdoor compound is decorated with miniature plant gardens and Thai styled pavilions. Souvenirs can be obtained from the gift shop in the compound. From the hilltop one can see a panoramic view of Koh Yo as well as Songkhla Lake; (2) Songkhla National Museum is located on Wichianchom Road, the Museum, a former residence of Phraya Soonthornrak (Nate Na Songkhla), was built in 1878. In 1894, Phra Wichit Worasart (Chao Phraya Yommarat) designated it as a residence for provincial inspectors of Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat, and from 1896, it was used as a city hall of Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat. At present, the Museum houses art objects and archeological artifacts from the pre-historic period of Baan Chiang and the Stone Age and the Neolithic period of Kanchanaburi as well as the artifacts from the ancient Srivijaya Kingdom; (3) Khao Tang Kuan hill lies next to Khao Noi and on its top (2,000 feet above the sea level) is located the important temples of Songkhla. Built during the Nakhon Si Thammarat era using the Thavaravadee art style. The hilltop commands a panoramic view of Songkhla and is reached by climbing the stairway on Rachadamnoen Road. The temple performs an annual ceremony of placing a robe around the pagoda, Tak Bart Devo (offering food for hungry souls) and a Buddha statue procession in October. Next to the temple is a red pavilion built in 1888 by the then ruler of Songkhla, Phraya Wichien Khiri (Chom), under the command of King Rama VI; (4) Cannon Fortress at Laem Sai, lies behind the premise of Songkhla police station, was built in the reign of King Rama III at the same time Songkhla was moved to the present site; (5) Wat Matchimawat/Wat Klang was built 400 years ago as a royal temple, this monastery is located on Saiburi Road. The interior of the temple displays murals depicting history of Songkhla and Buddhist philosophy, In addition, the "Phattharasin" museum in the temple houses interesting ancient art objects collected from Muang Songkhla, Sathing Phra, Ranode, and elsewhere; (6) Historical Tunnel, Nam Khang Mountain is situated on Moo 1 Tambon Khlong

Kwang, Nathawee District, Songkhla, 4 kms from Khao Nam Khang National Park. It is open to the public as a new tourist attraction of Songkhla, different from others destinations. Nice sceneries of mountains and forest around the tunnel, pure air, the history of the tunnel as well as the lives of residents are very interesting and worth to study; (7) City's Pillar Shrine (Sarn Chao Lak Muang Songkhla) is located on Nang Ngarm Road, the shrine was revered and worshipped by people in Songkhla and from neighboring provinces. Built to commemorate the founding of the city, the Chinese architectural styled shrine has influenced other buildings in the town. Particularly prominent are the Sino - Portuguese styled houses on Nakhon Nai and Nakhon Nork Road; (8) Wat Chai Mongkhon (A pagoda containing Buddha bone relics) is located in Wat Chai Mongkhon on the corner of Petch Mongkhon and Chai Mongkhon Road. In 1892 a Buddhist monk named Na Issaro who taught Pali at the temple visited a town in Sri Lanka where relics of Buddha's bone were kept. The monk became acquainted with a rich Sri Lankan merchant who had many pieces of Buddha's relics in his possession and agreed to donate some to the monk. Upon his return to Songkhla, the monk constructed a pagoda which contained the holy Buddha's relics where devotees came to worship regularly; (9) Khao Noi Palace is located to the south of Khao Noi hillock on Sadao Road. It was built as a residence of Prince Chao Fah Yukhon Khamphorn (Krom Luang Lopburi Ramase) when he was Phra Samut Thesaphibaan of Monthon Nakhon Si Thammarat, and later Somdet Upparat of Monthon Pak Tai (Southern Territory). The present King and Queen used to stay at this mansion on an earlier trip to the South in 1959. At present the mansion is used as the residence of Governor of Songkhla; (10) Baan Sattha (Home of Faith) was built in 1991 by residents of Songkhla for its famous son, former Prime minister H.E. General Prem Tinnasulanon, senior statesman and a Privy Councilor. The house was later returned to Songkhla people in 1996 and a public library was built next to the house to commemorate the King's 50th Anniversary of His Ascension to the Throne. Situated on the hill, the house, which is open to the public, serves as advantage point for enjoying the scenery of Songkhla, overlooking Tinasulanon Bridge, the longest in the country. Surrounding the house are decorating plants and trees which provide cool shade for visitors; (11) Twin Pagodas on Khao Daeng hill: (a) Black Pagoda is located on the top of Khao Daeng hill in Amphoe Singha Nakhon. It was built by Chao Muang Phra Khlang (Dis Bunnag) or Somdet Phraya Ongyai (Somdet Phra Borom Maha Prayoorawong on occasion of a victory over the rebellion of Kedah in 1830; (b) White Pagoda was built by Phraya Sri Phiphat (Thad Bunnag) or Somdet Maha Phichai Yat in memory of the victory over the rebellion of the rulers of Kedah, Patani, and Penang. After suppressing the rebellion, Phraya Sri Phiphat governed Songkhla for two years, during which time he built the white pagoda on top of the hill as a twin of the black one; (12) Wat Chathing Phra is located 200 meters from the district office at Moo 4, Tambon Chathing Phra, Amphoe Sathing Phra. Formerly called "Wat Sathing Phra", The temple was built in 1009 A.D., shelters ancient structures of the Srivijaya Period such as the pagoda containing Buddha's relics, a chapel housing the reclining Buddha statue, and a bell hall; (13) Wat Phakho (Wat Rachpraditsatharn) was built around 43 B.C., this renowned temple is located on the hill of Phiphatthasing at Moo 4, Tambon Chumphon, Sathing Phra. The revered monk named Somdet Phakho, who commands much respect among local residents, used to reside at this temple. Many ancient objects and artifacts housed in the temple included a reclining Buddha statue, Buddha's footprint, a magical crystal ball belonging to Somdet Chao Phakho, in a posture of meditation, and statue of Somdet Chao Phakho in a pilgrimage posture; (14) Wat Khongkha Liab, belonging to the Mahayana Buddhist sect, is located at Baan Nongkhuan Moo 5, Tambon Tha Chang, Amphoe Bangklam on an approximately 4 acre plot. This temple is considered a holy place revered by both Buddhist Thais and Buddhists from other countries, many of whom travel to pray at this place; (15) Wat Hat Yai Nai is located on Phetchkasem Road near U-Taphao Bridge. It houses a reclining Buddha statue called "Phra Buddha Hattha Mongkhon", once believed to be the world's third largest, a size of 35 meters long, 15 meters high, and 10 meters wide. The temple is visited by both local residents and foreign devotees; (16) Wat Aek Cherngsae (Wat Aek) is located at Tambon Cherngsae, Amphoe Krasaesin. It houses a sacred Buddha statue made of coral reef. The present figure, a size of 70 cm. At the lap and 120 cm. high is covered with cement; (17) Holy Well is located at Moo 4, Tambon Koh Yai, 7 kilometers from the District Office. The legend says that a Buddhist monk named Phra Sin Narai and a layman called Khoon Vichai Bhrama Sarn traveled from India to the Kingdom of Ayutthaya and on their way they stopped over and dug a well here, claimed to be sacred. The water in the well runs abundantly all year long; (18) Wat Tham Khao Roop Chang is located in Tambon Padang Besar, Amphoe Sadao. It utilizes a cave in the premise as place for performing religious practices. Exotic stalagmites and stalactites are eminent in the cave. The interior of the cave is partitioned into many chambers. The temple premise is cool and peaceful. It is about 13 kilometers from Padang Besar market (Mono Travel, online).

Cultural activities sites in Songkhla include: (1) Bull fighting has long been a popular sport among the people in the South. Unlike bull fighting in Spain where a matador fights with a bull, the bull fighting of the South features a bull fighting another bull. A pair of fighting bulls is led into the arena for each about where spectators can cheer and bet on the winner. During the fight, specially trained bulls lock horns until one decides to call it quits and runs away. Each bout normally takes between 15 to 30 minutes; (2) Dove Singing Contest Cooing doves are popular among Southerners, particularly residents of the five Southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun and Songkhla. The most sought after birds are from breeding farms in Chana where dove lovers from neighboring countries such

as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore flock the district to purchase the birds. Dove cooing competitions are held annually between January and July. Criteria used in judging the quality of dove's sound is based on pitch, melody, volume, and continuity in its singing; (3) Thai Boxing (a martial art unique to Thailand) has been a popular national sport. Boxing competition is organized throughout the country. Two boxing stadiums are open to visitors to Songkhla; (4) Pa Prem Recreational Garden is located on the shore near the head of the first section of Tinnasulanon Bridge (From Ban Nam Krachai to Koh Yo). This lakeside garden is filled with flowering and ornamental plants and provides shady and cool area for picnic. It also features a children's playground (Mono Travel, online).

There are so many festivals and events on the local scene in Songkhla such as: (1) Songkran festival is celebrated on April 13<sup>th</sup> each year. The traditional festival is held country-wide. In Songkhla, the festival starts with the merit making ceremony by participants respectfully pouring water on their venerable elders and ending up with throwing water at each other; (2) Thamboon Duen Sip festival is celebrated by the Buddhists of the southern Thailand, the Merit Making on the Tenth Lunar Month festival originates from the belief that during the waxing moon of the month, souls of the deceased ancestors are allowed a period of freedom to visit their living relatives. It is the duty of the living to prepare food and bring it to the temple to make merit, In Sathing Phra, tall figurines representing venerable elders respected by the villagers parade along together in the procession; (3) Lark Phra and Tak Bat Devo festival is celebrated by residents of Songkhla on the first day of the waxing moon in the 11th lunar month (around October) in Songkhla town. The festival starts one day early with the robing of the pagoda on the top of Khao Tang Kuan. Early in the morning of the festival day, hundreds gather on the hill and proceed down the stairs to receive offerings from the faithful. Late morning is the scene of processions of artistically decorated vehicles with Buddha statue from temples in and around Songkhla. The vehicles are paraded around the town and the faithful make merits by joining the procession. Finally the decorated vehicles gather at Sra Bua (The Lotus Pond) for competition; (4) Thai Agricultural Products and Thai Fruit festival is organized annually around October with the aim of promoting agricultural products from various provinces in the South. Fruits and other products are sold at cheap prices; (5) Loy Krathong is a Thai traditional event dating from the Sukhothai period. It is held throughout the country on the 15th night of the waxing moon of the 12th lunar month (around the middle of November). The festival is held to honor the goddess of the river and to make atonement for offenses made during the year. A float is made from banana leaf or other buoyant material. Candles and incense sticks, and even pieces of nail and coins are placed in the "Krathong" to float away one's misfortunes. The fun-filled night also features fireworks, float design competition, and the Miss Noppamas beauty contest (Mono Travel, online).

Local flavor from food to handicrafts in Songkhla include: (1) Cashew Nuts are a common snack or used in cooking in many Thai dishes. They are sold in the baked or uncooked form and can be bought from vendors in Hat Yai or shop selling local products; (2) Koh Yo Hand-Woven Fabric is the island's famous cottage industry. The long lasting fine cloth with varied designs made by the locals can be tailored into men's or ladies's apparels. The fabric is sold in shops selling local products and souvenir shops in Songkhla, and at the market in Koh Yo; (3) Shadow Puppet is a folk entertainment of the South and is popular among the people in Songkhla. The puppets are crafted from cow hide, painted, and when used in shadow plays, are placed against the screen where strong back light outlines the shadow of the puppet on the screen master. Crafted shadow puppets are sold for souvenirs or decoration; (4) Shrimp or Fish Rice Crisps produced in Songkhla. They are well-known for their taste and reasonable price. They are available at shops selling local products (Mono Travel, online).

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 main informants of this participatory action research were: a group of related private sectors and people, a group of the government sectors and public organizations, and a group of tourists. The research instruments were: participatory observations in community stage arrangement and in-depth interviews. The data were classified, decoded, interpreted, and tested through triangulation. 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.

### **Methodology**

The researchers collected data from two sources, secondary and primary data. Secondary data was retrieved from reviewing related document. While primary data was collected from observation and using structure questionnaires

to collect data from 300 visitors who participated in the 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market during August to December 2014. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part dealt with personal characteristics of the tourists. The second part included questions of tourist behavior. The last part was assigned to gather information about tourist needs 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 reliability of the measurements in this study was 0.86, which acceptable based on the Cronbach's alpha. Then, three hundred questionnaires were distributed to the visitors by accidental sampling. The researchers applied descriptive statistics and Chi-square test to analyze the behavioral patterns, and the relationship between demographic factors and travel behavior of the visitors.

Demographic characteristics are important to establish how customers meet their needs. The demographic characteristics of visitors focused on this study include gender, age, education level, occupation, incomes, religion, and residence. The travel behavior of visitors included reason to visit, motivation, member in travelling, vehicle used, cost spent, travel frequency, travel date/time, time spent, interested goods, activities preferred and decision to revisit the walking street market. Visitor needs were the fact about cultural activities that visitors want or expect from travel experience in the 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market.

## 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.

Regarding to kinds of information that respondents searched prior their visit, information about local food and cultural attractions were the most popular information. The majority of respondents visited the walking street market in order to buy local food. Their motivation was local product assortment. They usually came with a friend or family member by motorcycle. The average spending was approximately 300 Baht with and travel frequency about twice per month. Most of them came on Friday 5.00 PM-7.00 PM and spent about 1-2 hours for walking around, doing some activities, and shopping at the walking street market. Preference activities of visitors were dining and shopping for local goods while enjoying the atmosphere on Chana Road where the old walled city of Muang Songkhla and Phathammarong Museum are located. The interested goods included local food/sweet (such as Kaow Stew, ancient style noodles, Khao Yam or Rice Salad, Big Salapao, Thong-ek, Sampanni, Thien sod, etc.), fashion products, home decorations products, second hand products (such as clothes, shoes, etc.), herbal products, art pieces, and souvenirs of Songkhla. The other impressed of visitors were the activities related to the local festival, local food cooking contest, local musical shows, visiting Phathammarong Museums, photo exhibition of Songkhla Old Town, and taking a tricycle around Songkhla Old Town. Regarding to post travel behavior of tourist, the results show that almost of visitors enjoyed the trip and decided to re-visit the walking street market again once they have a chance.

When analyzed the relationship between demographic factors and travel behavior of visitors using Chi-Square test, the results revealed that (1) gender of visitor related with reason to visit, member in travelling, vehicle used, travel frequency, travel date/time, and time spent; (2) age of visitor related with reason to visit, member in travelling, vehicle used, cost spent, travel date/time, and activities preferred; (3) education level of visitor related with reason to visit, member in travelling, vehicle used, cost spent, travel frequency, travel date/time, and activities preferred; (4) occupation of visitor related with reason to visit, motivation, member in travelling, vehicle used, cost spent, and decision to revisit; (5) income of visitor related with reason to visit, member in travelling, vehicle used, cost spent, and travel date/time; (6) religion of visitor related with cost spent, travel frequency, travel date/time, and interested goods; (7) residence of visitor related with vehicle used, travel frequency, interested goods, activities preferred, and decision to revisit. The relationship can be seen in conclusion from table 1.

**Table 1:** The relationship between the demographic factors and travel behavior of visitors

Travel behavior	Gender	Age	Education level	Occupation	Income	Religion	Residence
Reason to visit	**	*	**	**	**		
Motivation				**			
Member in travelling	**	**	**	**	**		

Vehicle used	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Cost spent		**	**	*	**	**	**
Travel frequency	**		*			**	**
Travel date/time	**	**	*		**	**	
Time spent	*						
Interested goods						**	**
Activities preferred		*	**				*
Decision to revisit				**			*

\* Significant at the 0.05 level; \*\* Significant at the 0.01 level

In addition, the respondents demonstrated high needs some more activities in the ‘Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere’ walking street market as follows: (1) activities promoting knowledge and understanding about historical of Songkhla Old Town and southern Thailand; (2) activities presenting simplicity and traditions of the Songkhla community’s way of life; (3) varieties of local products especially the handmade products and products of Songkhla that show identities of being Songkhla Old Town or Songkhla Tae Raek; (4) unique style of each store type such as the traders should wear southern Thailand contemporary dress; (5) local wisdom contests and cultural conservation activities for the future generations; (6) sightseeing tours to look at old buildings at Nakhon Nai/Nakhon Nok road, old temples and other attraction of Songkhla Old Town; (7) varieties of food for foreign visitors such as Malay, Chinese, etc;

### Conclusion and Discussions

The results of this study revealed that the tourism in the ‘Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere’ walking street market is suitable for visitors with special interest in local food, culture and history of Songkhla Old Town. The demographic factors of visitors (gender, age, education, income, religion, and residence) have an influence on travel behavior to the walking street market. The findings about the travel behavior and needs of visitors from this study also supports the studied of Udomrat and Buakaew (2012) about cultural tourism activities with community participation in Songkhla Old Town, which showed that most wanted activities of tourists were shopping for local goods while enjoying the Songkhla Old Town atmosphere.

The results from this study provide the fundamental and meaningful information for Songkhla City Municipality and business sectors to effectively develop, promote and deliver products and services that meet the unique demand of this walking street market. The findings can also help tourism practitioners and planners to have a better understanding of cultural tourism in southern Thailand and to formulate better strategic plan. The cultural uniqueness of walking street market exposes walking street market to be the must-visit for both local residents and visitors.

### Recommendations

The results of the study indicated that cultural tourism activities in the ‘Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere’ walking street market still lack the outstanding and attractive features of Songkhla local cultural. Thus, the development of the activities should involve community participation in setting the directions and making decisions on tourism in the walking street. It is necessary for all related parties to join hands in improving tourism in the community and find ways to conclude and form guidelines for activities to be take place in the future. The recommendations are made to improve the cultural tourism at the walking street market as follows: (1) it necessary to have public relation about the event, so visitors can see the value of preserving Songkhla; (2) activities and program should be printed in a map and handbook focusing on presentations of the simplicity of life and ways of traditional community life; (3) one-day trips around Songkhla Old Town should be arranged; (4) 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; (5) it necessary to reserve the old buildings that are rundown; (6) it necessary to have information center service for visitors; (7) Songkhla City Municipality should be the main organization to be responsible for coordinating the organization of activities so that they are most relevant, most effective, and meet the needs of visitors and the community; (8) Songkhla City Municipality should play an important role in mobilizing all the power and strategies for the community to voluntarily participate so that cultural tourism activities with community participation becomes concrete; (9) the government sector should provide opportunities for the community representatives to participate in planning, decision-making and operating tourism activities; (10) Songkhla City Municipality should focus on the activities that can join with the community in order to share cultural experience and increase the relationship between the host and visitors; (11) Since the demographic factors of visitors have an influence on travel behavior, each cultural activity should focus only for the target and potential visitors.

However, this study did not mention about visitors' attitudes toward 'Authentic Songkhla Food Old-time Atmosphere' walking street market. Future research should investigate the attitudes and the relationship between attitudes 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.

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### Author Biography

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