

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE-
BASED OF THAI TOURIST BEHAVIOR TOWARDS UNIQUE
PRODUCT AND SERVICE ATTRIBUTES OF SONGKHLA LAKE
BASIN IN MUANG DISTRICT, SONGKHLA PROVINCE**



CHAYADA KANABKAEW

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated Tourism Management)
The Graduate School of Tourism Management
National Institute of Development Administration
2021**

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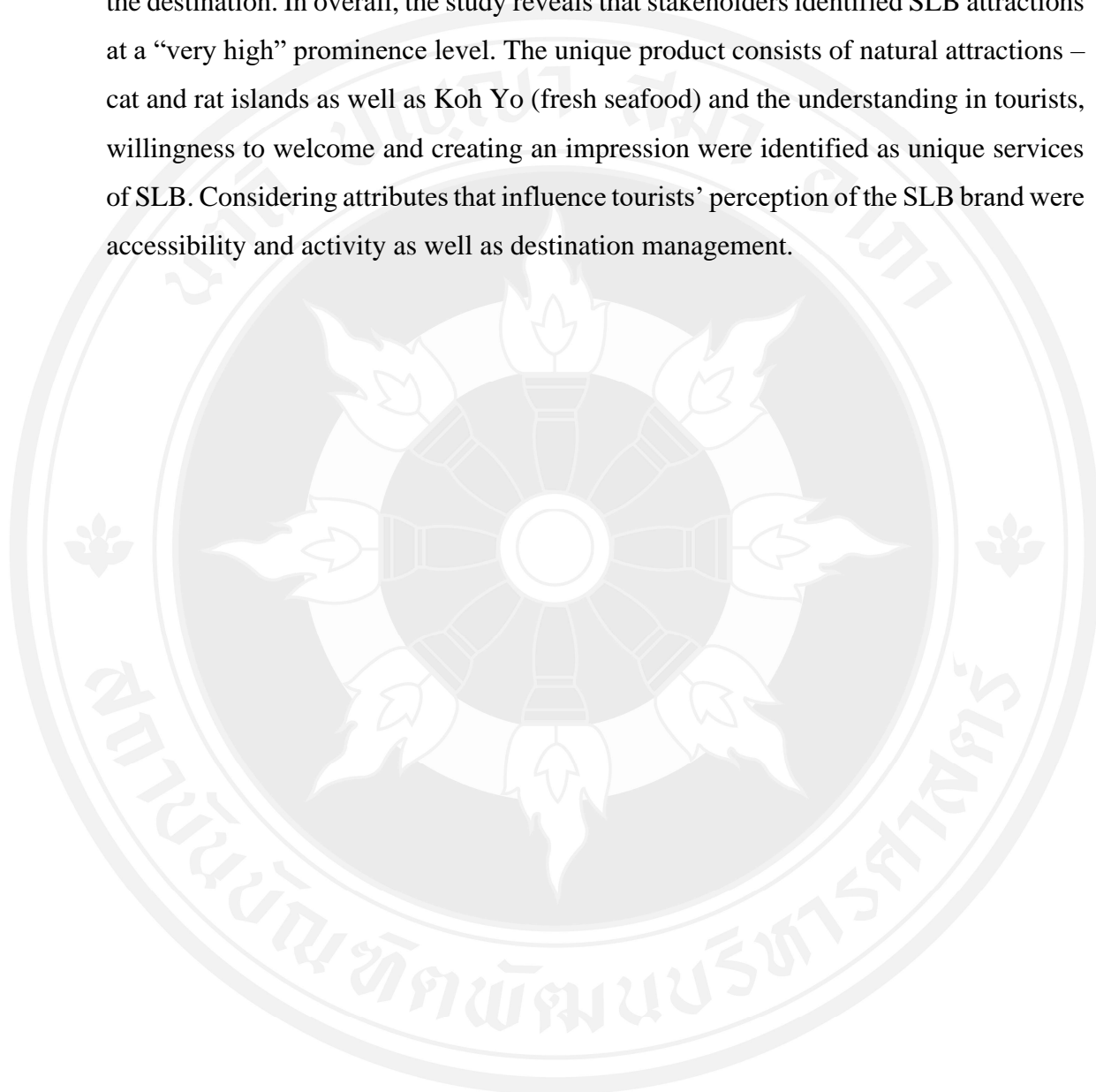
ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE-BASED OF THAI TOURIST BEHAVIOR TOWARDS UNIQUE PRODUCT AND SERVICE ATTRIBUTES OF SONGKHLA LAKE BASIN IN MUANG DISTRICT, SONGKHLA PROVINCE
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The growth in the global tourism sector has caused an aggressive competition between tourist destinations to attract potential visitors. Among the same resources, the different choice of destination is determined. This study aims to analyze on stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) in Muang District, Songkhla Province. The competitive power of a destination can be increased in a sustainable way when involving community stakeholders. Thus, the study was conducted according to the following objectives: (1) to identify unique products and services of SLB, (2) to study tourist behavior towards SLB, and (3) to investigate tourist perception towards the SLB brand.

The study presents a review of the literature, including relevant concepts and theories that are adapted into the analysis of the stakeholder perspective. Built on the literature, the study employed mixed research methodologies. The questionnaire was used to gather unique product and service information, tourist behavior, and tourist perceptions from 420 Thai tourists who visited SLB. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all key stakeholders involved in SLB tourism, comprising 13 government organizations, 26 tourism operators, and 11 local communities. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and T-test analysis), while the findings from semi-structured interviews were extracted using content analysis. Triangulation was a tool of assuring the data validity and conclusions were drawn from a descriptive analysis.

The analysis demonstrated the finding results of tourist behaviors into three stages of the travel: pre-, during- or on-site, and post-travel. SLB unique product and service attributes positively relates to Thai stakeholders' perception and satisfaction, readiness of the attributes of SLB is therefore considered as the key success factor for the destination. In overall, the study reveals that stakeholders identified SLB attractions at a "very high" prominence level. The unique product consists of natural attractions – cat and rat islands as well as Koh Yo (fresh seafood) and the understanding in tourists, willingness to welcome and creating an impression were identified as unique services of SLB. Considering attributes that influence tourists' perception of the SLB brand were accessibility and activity as well as destination management.



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My Ph.D. study is worth memorable with love and warmth from my family and friends. I would like to thank all of them for the support and encouragement they gave me throughout the study. I cannot forget to thank all the respondents and interviewees who took part in my data collection and made this dissertation complete.

I do hope the benefits of this study could be useful for the sustainable development of tourism in the Songkhla Lake Basin as well as the country.

CHAYADA KANABKAEW

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The study was performed in order to analyze on stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) in Muang District, Songkhla Province. The content was initiated with the tourism growth, the tourist behavior, tourist perception and destination brand. As tourism is fast growing industry, brand is becoming an essential tool for distinguishing a destination from its competitors. Therefore, the growth of tourism and the importance of destination were concerned. At present, many destinations offer a variety of product and service to tourists thus understanding tourist is becoming an essential part in order to distinguish a destination itself from the competitors.

In order to understand the stakeholder perspective, this research should then cover three study objectives: destination identity, tourist behavior, and tourist perception on a destination brand. A set of related questions was addressed according to each research objectives. Furthermore, research contributions focused on the outputs and outcomes. Finally, the scope of the study was determined comprehensively. Scope of content, area, demography, and appropriated time were explained.

1.2 Tourist Behavior

Tourism seems to have become a major industry and is among the fastest growing industries. Recently, tourism is devoted to the development and the increasing amount of new destinations. Tourism plays a key role in the country economic structure in the whole society, enhances gross domestic product and generates employment opportunities (World Tourism Organization, 2017). According to the report of World Economic Forum (2017), tourism and its enabling ecosystem have contributed more

economic activity representing for more than 10% of the world gross domestic product and account for 1 in 10 jobs worldwide. Therefore, it can be recognized that tourism industry contributes more income and creates prosperity for the country and local community in tourist destinations.

The growth in the global tourism sector has caused an aggressive competition between tourist destinations to attract potential visitors. Among the same resources, the different choice of destination is determined; for example, eco-tourism, arts and sciences educational attraction, historical attraction, cultural attraction, recreational attraction and natural attraction (e.g., beach, waterfall, cave, etc.). These lead to a situation where one can be replaced by another as the perception of destination choice is no different. Buhalis (1999) supported that destinations are now sold on price rather than its attributes, benefits, and values; thus, they are easily substituted with other cheaper tourism destinations around the globe. As a result, it is crucial to analyze tourist behavior so that marketers can incorporate it into destination marketing strategies to enhance market share. The most critical factor or projections of future tourist behavior is the behavior of tourists. Considering the tourist's social role, each tourist's behavior can also be a predictor of the behavior of others. Tourists establish the social norms of behavior in the tourism by their actions. Tourist behavior happens during the planning and implementation phases of vacations, as well as after they have returned home. It is important to recognize the diverse forms of behavior at each step in order for the tour operator or destination to assess the relevance of its marketing and operational strategies to the development, marketing, and management of tourism activities (Juvan, 2018). Tourist behavior is defined as the use of both common and uncommon products and services outside of one's normal place. Recognize the main factors that distinguish tourist behavior from behavior in the everyday environment for an objective, trustworthy, and useful understanding of tourist behavior. Knowing the behavior of tourists has useful value for all tourism stakeholders.

1.3 Tourist Perception

In tourism research, the significance of tourist perception and satisfaction has been a hot topic. It is critical to define the destination image when making strategic marketing decisions for tourist destinations since it is expected that this would result in a favorable image of the location and visitor satisfaction (Rajesh, 2013).

People of diverse backgrounds tend to make decisions in different ways, depending on the value they place on different stages of the decision-making process. The tourism sector is highly influenced by perception the tourists have with a destination. When visitors have positive perceptions of a destination, they are more likely to return, but if they have negative perceptions, they are less likely to visit and encourage others to visit. This is important to emphasize that visitors' judgments of experience quality and satisfaction are based on this perception (Philemon, 2018).

1.4 Destination Brand

Brand becomes an important tool to attract target visitors as it helps differentiate a destination from other contenders. Brand is a major factor for customer selection. In order to draw the visitors' attractions especially in the global competitive markets; therefore, realization and awareness of a destination brand is essential for the success of tourism destination. The benefits of brand help not only reduce risks of purchasing but also increase purchasing confidence, reduce search costs, add value to visitor, maintain loyalty, realize differentiation and enhance competitiveness (Yi, 2012).

Tourism destinations have more aspects than consumer goods and services due to their complexity that provide intangible products and services (Yusof & Ismail, 2014). Pereira, Correia, and Schutz (2012) also asserted that a group of tangible and intangible elements of a tourist attraction can potentially be portrayed as a brand. Therefore, destination brand is not only as a logo or slogan of such destination but also attractive to tourist minds.

1.5 Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB)

Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) is Thailand's largest lake which is located across three provinces in southern Thailand, named Phattalung, Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat. It covers approximately 8,730 square kilometers, consisting a land area of approximately 7,688 square kilometers and the lake area of approximately 1,042 square kilometers (Parichart Visuthismajarn & Patarapong Kroeksakul, 2012). SLB is the only natural lake in Thailand which with a special three-water ecosystem, i.e. fresh, brackish and saline waters. This results in the richness in biodiversity of fauna and flora species. It can be divided into four parts, 1) Thale Noi in the northernmost area, that is freshwater throughout the year, 2) Upper Songkhla Lake, 3) Middle Songkhla Lake and 4) Lower Songkhla Lake. The lake is interconnected to the Gulf of Thailand at Muang District, Songkhla Province (Chatchai Ratanachai & Wiwat Sutiwipakorn, 2006).

SLB has a long history over 6,000 years and the complex ecosystem of SLB with both natural and cultural resources, creating a life supportive structure, that really has long supported both living and several other economic development for SLB residents (Prachyakorn Chaiyakot & Parichart Visuthismajarn, 2012). There is a great amount of tourism spots in the area. Some are natural resources such as mountain ranges, foothills, lowlands, lake, rivers, waterfalls, hot spring, coast and beach. Some are interesting cultural resources such as lifestyle, folklore museums, local traditional events, handicrafts, temples, monument, archaeological and historic sites. As it is holding various tourism activities, these support the economic value generated in the SLB area. Moreover, Parichart Visuthismajarn (2012) affirmed that SLB tourism plays a significant contribution to the economic development of those provinces and the growth is increasing with the upward trend. It can create various economic activities and jobs in the provinces especially the employment of local workforce as well as tour operators. Approximately 80% of provincial income was derived from the tourism in the basin including hotel and accommodation, restaurant, tourism services, and souvenir shops. According to the statistical report by Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2018), it was found that there was a large number of both Thai and foreign tourists visited SLB compared to other tourist destinations in Thailand. The Ministry also

recorded that Songkhla has welcomed 6,665,224 visitors in the year 2016 (4,160,814 were Thai visitors and 2,504,410 were foreign visitors as was shown in Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Number of Tourist Arrival in Songkhla Province

Year	Visitors		Thai Visitors		Foreign Visitors	
	Number	%Change*	Number	Number	%Change*	Number
2010	2,946,470	+12.93	2,074,368	+12.84	872,102	+13.16
2011	4,024,499	+36.59	2,862,201	+37.98	1,162,298	+33.28
2012	4,363,808	+8.43	3,407,412	+19.05	956,396	-17.72
2013	5,763,439	+32.07	3,551,191	+4.22	2,212,248	+131.31
2014	6,124,972	+6.27	3,831,735	+7.90	2,293,237	+3.66
2015	6,524,676	+6.53	4,038,146	+5.39	2,486,530	+8.43
2016	6,675,178	+2.31	4,157,186	+2.95	2,517,992	+1.27
2017	7,025,573	+5.25	4,396,474	+5.76	2,629,099	+4.41
2018	7,628,813	+8.59	4,614,546	+4.96	3,014,267	+14.65

Source: Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2018); National Statistical Office (2020).

Note: *It means the different percentage of the number between the recent year with the previous year

The complicated and unique ecosystem has made SLB richness in natural resources, biodiversity and environment that attract the attention of tourists. Chatchai Ratanachai and Wiwat Sutiwipakorn (2006) pointed that even though having diverse resources; however, various economic activities have degraded the SLB resources without any rational attempt to properly reserve and rehabilitate those resources. At present, several issues affect the quality of life and local people lifestyle.

1.6 Problem Identification

Varieties of tourist destinations are determined in SLB for a long time; however, some are not appropriate for target market. At present, the utmost benefits of diverse tourist destinations in SLB are not efficiently applied because their development do not relate to subsequent tourism in SLB. Chairat Jussapalo (2018) mentioned that both Thai and foreign tourists spent overnight in Songkhla, Phatthalung and Nakhon Si

Thammarat province for many days to visit their tourist destinations. However, Phatthalung province, which is the most area proportion in SLB, earned the least revenue from its tourism activities. SLB is becoming renown among foreign tourists, especially Malaysia and Singapore, but tourism is still focused only on existing well-known places such as Koh Yo and Thalae Noi. At present, SLB is selling its local tourism products and services to each specific location. Most of the promotion focuses on the well-known tourist sites to attract visitors through only selected tourism and services. Therefore, the promotion and marketing are specific to an individual local attraction but does not represent the whole picture of SLB tourism.

In addition to the product and service offered by a destination, tourist behavior is an important factor to consider when determining what influences their travel decisions. The variety of the tourism product and the multidimensional decision-making process result in highly composite research, whereas few studies are discovered in the overall picture of SLB to identify its market. Through understanding tourist behavior, the understanding of tourist perception will be recognized which will help a destination to improve its strategy to match with tourist desires. Today, tourists have access to an incredible amount of information that they can leverage to make decisions about travel. Their perception of a desired destination are connected with a key messages that communicate the distinguish picture to tourists through the destination brand.

This dissertation aims to analyze on stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behaviors towards unique product and service attributes of SLB in Muang District, Songkhla Province. The results will guide the understanding of tourist behavior that is attached to the destination's unique product and service attributes as well as their perception in order to enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of SLB, where is rich in tourism resources. The results of this study can be used as a source of information to build a competitive SLB tourism strategy. Three objectives of the research are listed in the following section in order to achieve the research goals.

1.7 Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, this thesis intends to answer the following key research questions.

- 1) The unique products and services of SLB

Research question 1: What are the unique product and service of SLB?

- 2) Tourist behavior towards SLB

Research question 2: What is the tourist behavior towards SLB?

- 3) Tourist perception towards SLB brand

Research question 3: What is the tourist perception towards SLB brand?

1.8 Research Objectives

- 1) To identify unique product and service of SLB
- 2) To study tourist behavior towards SLB
- 3) To investigate tourist perception towards SLB brand

1.9 Research Outputs

The purpose of this study is to recognize the following outputs in accordance to the research objectives.

- 1) The identity of product and service of SLB
- 2) The behavior of tourists towards SLB
- 3) The perception of tourists towards SLB brand

1.10 Research Outcomes

The outcomes of this research are primarily focused on providing following benefits:

Academic:

- 1) The findings of this research benefit the understanding of tourist behavior and their perception which are key drivers for the tourist destination successful.

2) The authorities and institutions can use the information available in this dissertation as a guideline for establishing a tourism strategy.

3) Relevant organizations can also use the study as a sample to evaluate the destination unique product and service attributes in such destinations.

Destination:

4) The result of the study can identify the unique product and service of SLB. The result of the study can also identify attributes of the product and service of SLB that is influenced the destination brand. Thus, destination marketer can use the findings for making its strategy.

5) Local community can apply the information about tourist perception and identify of SLB as a guideline for improving their services at its location.

6) The result of the study can help tourism spots to shape their marketing communication specifically to attract target market.

1.11 Scope of the Study

1) Scope of Contents

This study emphasizes on the stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of SLB. The identity of product and service and tourist perception were evaluated by tourists as well as community stakeholders while the behavior was evaluated by the visitors. The results used to identify the unique product and service attributes that influence tourist behavior of the SLB.

2) Scope of Area

SLB involves some part of three provinces which are Phattalung, Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat. The research area in this study, however, was classified as SLB tourism attractions in four sub-districts of Muang District, Songkhla Province. They are the sub-districts of Bo Yang, Pawong, Khao Rubchang, and Koh Yo, respectively.

3) Scope of Demography

To analyze stakeholder perspective, the results were collected from four main groups which are: 1) tourists who visited SLB, 2) community leaders who involve in

tourism of SLB, 3) tourism operators offering SLB's product and service and 4) government agencies.

4) Scope of Time

The study was carried out during July 2020 – April 2022. The study process consists of literature review, research design, data collection, data analysis and output reporting.

1.12 Definition of Terms

Key terms can be described in various ways depending on the theoretical approach employed. Below were the definitions of key terms based on prior literature and were applied in this dissertation.

Tourist behavior defines as all internal and external factors concerned with the decision processes, activities, ideas or experiences that satisfy their needs and wants.

Destination brand describes as a "...name, symbol, logo, word or other graphic that can both identify and differentiate the destination, furthermore it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination. It also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of destination experience" (Kerr, 2006).

Lake basin describes the surface of the ground as a natural depression. A lake basin is a natural land that drains into a lake, often meant to refer to as a drainage basin or watershed (European Environment Agency, 2018).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, concepts, theories and literatures on tourist behavior, perception, community participation and tourism of Songkhla lake basin were reviewed as the basis for this study. These were gathered to define research questions and conceptual framework. The chapter divided into five parts. First, the introduction section which offers the overview of this chapter. Second, a summary of literature review relating to brand building process and development. Third, community participation which describes the importance of community involvement in the creation of the branding cycle. Fourth, the tourism of SLB will be concerned. Finally, the conclusion of the chapter. Related research on the process of building brands, community participation and Songkhla lake basin were expressed in each section. Table 2.1 shows the structure of chapter 2.

Table 2.1 Structure of Chapter 2

Section	Topic	Theory and Concepts
2.1 Introduction		
2.2 Tourist behavior	2.2.1 Tourist behavior	1) Behavior theory
2.3 Tourist perception	2.3.1 Tourist perception	2) Perception theory
2.4 Destination Brand	2.4.1 Definition of brand	3) Brand concept
	2.4.2 Destination brand and its importance	
	2.4.3 Brand identity, positioning, image	

Section	Topic	Theory and Concepts
	2.4.4 Destination attributes	
2.5 Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB)	2.5.1 Lake basin	
	2.5.2 Songkhla lake basin	
	2.5.3 Tourism resources of SLB	
	2.5.4 Research relevant to SLB tourism	
2.6 Conclusion		

2.2 Tourist Behavior

Customers' behaviors while seeking for, evaluating, and discarding products and services that fit their needs are referred to as consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is focuses on how people manage their available resources (time, money, and effort) to consumption-related products (Guleria, 2016). In the context of customer behavior, tourist behavior in the purchasing, use, and abandonment of tourism products is described (Juvan, Gomezeli Omerzel, & Uran Maravic, 2017).

Tourist behavior is powerfully connected to marketing. It relates to the action of tourist behaves according to their perceptions and attitudes before (during the preparation), on-site (implementation phases of the holidays) and post-visit (after returning home) (Juvan et al., 2017; Zgolli & Zaiem, 2018). Any activities conducted at the individual or group level that are directly connected to the purchasing and usage of products and services to fulfill current and future consumer needs, including the decision-making processes that precede and determine these actions, are referred to as behavior. Different studies have revealed factors that influence tourist travel behavior, such as the factors that motivate tourists to travel, the tourist's attitude, and various situational and environmental factors that influence the visitor's personal significance (Wu, 2014). Some examples of tourist behavior such as what tourists do, and why they do it, what tourists think, how they feel and what influences their thoughts and feelings.

Regardless matter how many different travel phases have been identified by various research, the trip decision-making process always contains three stages: pre-, during-, and post-travel (Song, Sparks, & Wang, 2017) as shown in Figure 2.1 below.

Pre-Travel Phase

This is the stage that a person goes through before starting on a journey. The significance of this stage comes from the fact that, before starting on a journey, the would-be tourist or traveler starts searching up information on areas they have never been before and so have no physical experience with.

During Travel Phase

Travelers often experience the trip as well as accompanying activities such as the consumption of tourist items such as transportation, food, lodging, and sight-seeing during this stage. It is also a time when tourists begin seeking for information on additional attractions and modes of transportation available in a particular destination.

Post-Travel Phase

The phase just after series of travel activities has been completed is known as the post-trip phase. In a nutshell, it is the period after the return of travelers to their homes. During this phase, the tourists' experiences are evaluated, and they can determine how satisfied they are with specific products, services, activities as a whole, and information sources as the basis for decisions made during the journey. This post-travel phase is also called as the consuming experience stage, in which tourists try and assess products and services before expressing their personal experiences, which may be pleasant or unfavorable.

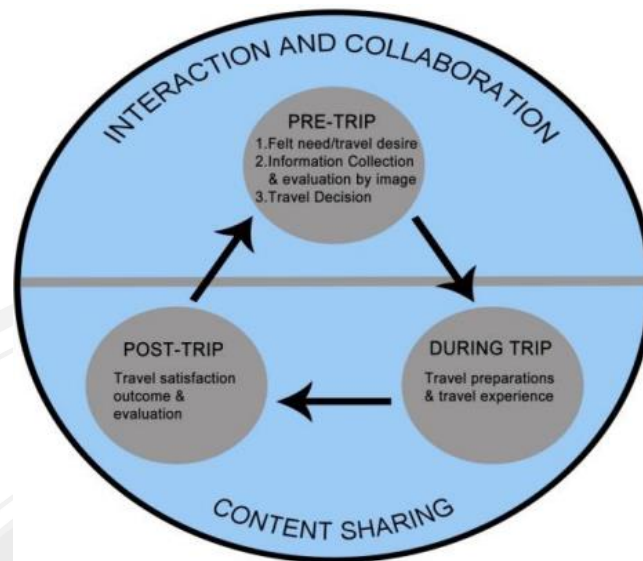


Figure 2.1 Tourism Decision Making

Source: Briandana and Dwityas (2017).

There are various factors influence tourist decision. According to Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2012), the factors influence decision process include culture, travel motivations, finances and previous experiences. The behavior information will shape marketing activities to attract target visitors to the destination. In order to access the relevance of its marketing and operational approaches to the development, marketing and implementation of tourism activities, it is necessary to recognize the different forms of behavior at each stage.

In conclusion, tourist behavior results from the perception of tourists to the overall engagement with a destination. It is therefore necessary for the marketer to distinguish and understand the various behavior forms at each stage in order to design a memorable travel experience that associated with tourists' expectations.

2.3 Tourist Perception

Travel and tourism is an industry with a significant economic impact in many countries. It is also an industry that experiences a great deal of flux due to external factors such as the political climate, economic health, and tourist perceptions of specific destinations and the travel industry as a whole. Tourist perceptions are among the most

influential of them. Tourists create perceptions on destinations, and these perceptions have a lot of power when it comes to making future travel arrangements. It is critical that we acknowledge the importance of these perceptions in driving tourism sector growth.

The tourism industry has challenge related to tourist perceptions. Perceptions are created in stages and influenced by multiple factors. A tourist, for example, may make a judgement of a destination based on the overall travel environment and safety reputation, as well as what the area has to offer in terms of natural attractions, entertainment, and recreation. According to Coraggiogroup (2022), tourists greater access to an incredible volume of information where they might use to make travel decisions. They have access to travel websites, but they are also paying attention to what they see on social media and what the media is reporting. When marketer analyze the influence of the ordinary person's digital experience on their travel choices, it is clear why it is so important to build tourist perceptions from various perspectives.

Tourists' perceptions of a destination image as a desired tourism destination are extremely important (R, 2013). Tourists' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes, have yet to obtain sufficient scholarly attention in marketing studies in SLB. Destination forms a relationship with tourist, consisting of every aspect of the tourist experience, as well as the attributes associated with its tangible and intangible products and services (Hassan, Hamid, & Bohairy, 2010; Wurkhouse, 2018). These are incorporated into a key message of a destination brand to visitors. According to Yusof, Ismail, and Ghazali (2014), a destination brand should have a linkage between identity of the brand and the destination images, as it will make the destination image clear in the minds of tourists. Thus, visitors will be aware of the beauty and distinction of such destination. The tourism industry is very much impacted by the perception of tourists carry with them about the destination as it explains the satisfaction of tourists towards the destination (Philemon, 2018). The study of Philemon (2018) further explains that if tourists carry with them positive perceptions about destination, there would be an opportunity to re-visit the destination. On the other hand, if they carry a negative impression, they might be deferred from visiting and influencing others not to visit the place. It concludes that tourists assess both quality and satisfaction of a destination grounded on their perception to the experience connected with the destination.

Furthermore, the study of Pike (2005, 2012) reveals three important factors in the process of destination brand building called, brand identity, brand positioning and brand image, which supports the creation of positive tourist perception (Figure 2.2). Thus, as we focus on the brand identity, it will concentrate on a collection of brand associations that are provided a commitment to visitors while at the same time adding a core and extended identity of a local destination to promote the brand that is recognized by customers (Karmokar, 2014). Local residents play a fundamental role in identifying their identity which represents the main theme of such destination. Moreover, the hospitality of the destination host is another factor that can create an environment that reflects the positive tourist perception as well as their intention to re-visit. After the destination identity has been clarified, the positioning of the brand should be addressed when concentrating on the tourists' perception of destination products and services. According to Liyanag and Jayawardena (2013); Risitano (2006), brand positioning determines how the destination will be seen and impressed by the tourists through identification of the destination attributes that make it unique within the view point of visitors. Finally, the destination brand image will be appeared in the mind of tourists and they will hold this perception in the phase of selection of their destination.



Figure 2.2 Three Important Elements of Destination Brand

Source: Pike (2005, 2012).

Thus, all of these put together the desired brand to match with tourists' perception through various marketing promotional tools in order to attract and differentiate destinations from one another. This is supported by the study of Kesumah and Razak (2019) who explored the tourist perceptions of Eastern Indonesia and the study revealed that visitors are influenced by what they trust most and/or what they find most

interesting. Visitors will identify their perception based on their experience of the destination they visited. The Figure 2.3 illustrates the tourist perception of Eastern Indonesia.

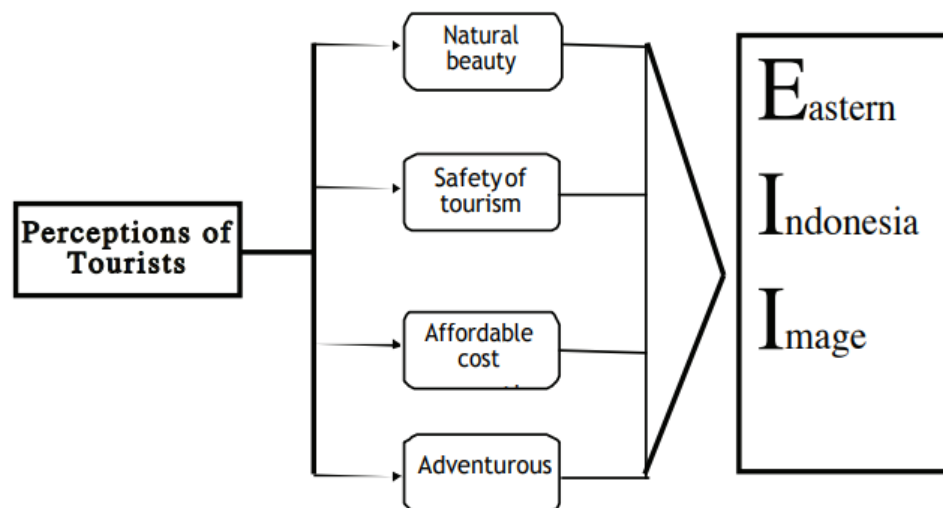


Figure 2.3 The Tourist Perception of Eastern Indonesia

Source: Kesumah and Razak (2019).

In summary, tourist perception of a destination is essential, especially in the process of selecting the preferred destination choices (Ragavan, Subramonian, & Sharif, 2014). The destination satisfaction of the tourist and the decision to choose a location in the future can be affected by their destination perception (Boit, 2013). Therefore, this directly affects the study in tourist perception which is associated with the destination. Then, marketing and promotion can be constructed to match the perception of the visitor by considering brand identity, brand positioning and brand image through a variety of consistent promotional tools.

2.4 Destination Brand

2.4.1 Definition of Brand

Today, an effective tool for market share in an intense commercial war is needed to ensure sustainable competitive differentiation. Therefore, one of the chosen tools for seizing the desired market share is brand. Brands have a wide sort of utilization for products, services, businesses and including tourist destinations. They have been described in several different ways, pending on the angle from which brand is viewed. Brand is an essential tool for marketers to link products or services to their target customers.

According to American Marketing Association (2018), brands are defined as names, terms, signs, symbols, designs, or combinations of these intended to identify the products and services of an individual seller or a group of sellers and are intended to make the distinction from other sellers. A brand therefore signals the product source to the customer and prevents for both client and the producer from the rival who is attempting to give similar goods or services (Aaker, 2009). In terms of product, Ogilvy (2018) describes the brand as the intangible sum of the characteristics of the product: name, package, price, reputation, and history the way in which it is marketed. In addition, a brand can be represented as a collection of perceptions, expectations, relationships, stories, and memories that, taken together, represent the decision of the consumer to favor one goods or services over all others (Godin, 2018). Thus, brand is multifaceted and it is a perception of unique products and services that shape preferred appearance to the public. This is in line with Manocha (2014) who shows the brand as the image of the product in the market. From the point of view of customers, a brand is sometimes described as an entire accumulation of wholly experience and is developed at all points of interaction with the customer (Kapferer, 2004). Customers may seek information and specific requirements of what they want prior to conduct any purchases. Consequently, brand will enable them to make the judgement to select products and services that satisfies their requirements. Brand is a product or service whose elements of which differentiate it from other competitors in order to satisfy the customer need. Temporal (2001) summarizes those successful brands provide longstanding stability and development, higher viable returns, and improved asset value

by achieving competitive distinction, best rates, and greater volume of sales, economies of scale and lower costs, and more reliability of demand. Examples of the brand defined by several authors are recapitulated in Table 2.2. In summary, in this review, the author would like to describe a brand as a unique name and/or trademark projected to recognize the product or service and to make a distinction from the competitors. Successful brand name can attract the customers; and represent the experience and reputation of the producer or organization, as well as make the customers get the confidence and proud to use its products or services.

Table 2.2 Examples of Brand Definition

Author	Definition
Aaker (1991)	A brand is a differentiating term and/or sign (such as a trademark, package design or logo) aimed to identify the goods or services of either a seller or a group of sellers, and to distinguish these certain products from each other and from competitors.
Van den Heever and Williams (2000)	Brands are what the entity wants its target customer to think and feel about their products or services.
Gilmore (2002)	A brand represents organization itself, its reputation and core values.
Angus and Oppenheim (2004)	Brand should be a distinctive word, a simple word, a meaningful term, a verbal or a sound connected to the product that elicit the mental image.
Kapferer (2004)	Brand is described as a complete collection of all its interactions and is established at all points of touch with the purchaser.
Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006)	A brand is the totality of perceptions about the product or service, which you can know, feel, hear, see, read, think, touch, etc. Brand has a unique place in the minds of customers, relying on familiarity, communication, and future projection.

Author	Definition
Simeon (2006)	A brand is a specific collection of emotions, images, or characters that customers recognize and feel when they consider a particular product, service, object or place.
Hasan and Khan (2011)	A brand is more than its name and logo, because a brand stands out in consumer's minds as delivering something more than merely the product.
García, Gómez, and Molina (2012)	The purpose of a brand is to convey a sense of trust, confidence, status and exclusivity that would benefit the customer over others.
Manocha (2014)	Brand is the picture of the product in the market.
Mindrut, Manolica, and Roman (2015)	Brand is a product or service that is differentiated by its positioning in regard of the competition.
American Marketing Association (2018)	Brands are defined as names, terms, signs, symbols, designs, or combinations of these intended to identify the products and services that make the distinction from other sellers.
Godin (2018)	A brand can be defined as a collection of perceptions, memories, expectations, stories and interactions that, put together, represent the decision of the consumer to pick on one product or service over another.
Lee (2018)	Brand is partly your reputation. It is what people say about you when you are not around. It is how they feel about your firm and what they expect from working with you.
Ogilvy (2018)	Brand is the intangible sum of the characteristics of the product: name, package, price, reputation, and history the way in which it is marketed.

2.4.2 Destination Brand and Its Importance

At present, tourism destinations offer choices of products and services among similar features; for example, beautiful scenery, value accommodation, and welcoming host. At present, the travelers are spoiled by the option of available destinations;

therefore, it is more necessary for a destination to establish a successful destination brand (Pike, 2005; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011; Shani & Belhassen, 2009). Destination brand has become an important tool to communicate its prominent identity and uniqueness. A destination can express its differentiation from the others and attract potential tourists and turn them into customers with the most desirable target of having them as loyal customers. This is supported by Wurkhouse (2018) who shows that destination brand includes every aspect of the customer's experience, both tangible and intangible - factual and emotional elements. Brand is an energetic connection between the destination and potential visitors. This explains that brand is beyond the perceived satisfaction of a destination as it involves the promise of an experience that a visitor expects. A destination brand combines all the attributes associated with its tangible and intangible products and services. A successful destination brand needs to deliver the expectations, promise, and unforgettable experience which are associated with the destinations (Hassan et al., 2010).

In competitive world, destination brand creates a barrier to new producers or new organizers who want to enter into a similar target market as they have to put more efforts to attract tourist attention. A destination brand is required for achieving a competitive advantage from its competitors and it should have a linkage between brand identity and destination images (Yusof et al., 2014). The destination brand requires a combination of numerous factors to make the image of the destination clear in the visitors' minds; as a result, the uniqueness and differentiation of the destination will be recognized among visitors. Destination brand also helps potential visitors reduce time to search and increase their trust in choosing a place to spend vacation time. Kasapi and Cela (2017) affirmed that a destination brand attempts to endow its products or services with a specific and distinct identity and uniqueness. The importance of the destination brand is increased by distinguishable products and services in a way that meets the expectations of potential visitors.

Finally, it can be concluded that destination brand is a linkage between tourist and destination. It consists of every aspect of the customer experience, as well as the attributes affiliated with its tangible and intangible products and services to show its prominent identity and uniqueness. Therefore, destination brand is an important tool for a competitive advantage from its competitors, tourist attraction and turning the

tourists to loyal customers. For the customers, it can also save their time for vacation selection.

Tourist destination is characterized as a geographic location or a main attraction that tends to provide visitors with something like a wide range of pleasurable and unforgettable experiences (Bornhorst, Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2010). As stated by Pike (2005), destinations are tourism spots that draw visitors for a temporary vacation. Due to the increasing number of tourists, various destinations compete with one another in the global competitive market to seize their target market as products and services are easily substituted (Buhalis, 1999; Manhas, Gupta, & Dogra, 2012). Thus, in order to secure the success, many destinations have created their brands to attract targeted visitors. The process of distinguishing one destination from another involves destination branding. This is supported by García et al. (2012) that the number of destinations that have adopted the destination branding concept is actually higher and higher. In addition, Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2007) supported that branding a destination is the hottest topics among place marketing professionals at present, while argued that destination branding is unlike a place branding where it is more concentrated on attracting tourism. Destination branding is a multifaceted topic, it includes not only the overlapping between the branding of services and products but also the range of diverse stakeholders, various customer requirements as well as product offerings (Balakrishnan, 2009). According to Manhas et al. (2012), destination branding can be classified as both the establishment and dynamic management of destination brands. In addition, it also makes it easier to identify a tourism place and to build a distinctive uniqueness with simple and specific values that respond to the rational and emotional motivations. Destination brand building is a process involving a production of an exclusive name and image for products and services that will be constructed in the customers' mind through a consistent promotion campaign (Hasan & Khan, 2011).

Many researchers have studied on brand building; however, the study that focuses on destination branding is still quite new as the first journal was published in 1999s, while much progress has been made in the last few years (Dinnie, 2004; Pike, 2009). In the past, branding is used as a tool to differentiate a product and the marketers use mass media advertising to attract potential customers, which is equivalent to

branding (Davis & Dunn, 2002). At present, branding has more of a process than in the past, especially when we apply branding into a destination. In other words, there is differentiation in branding of the product and the destination.

According to Knapp and BrandStrategy Inc. (2000), branding a product consists of five stages: 1) differentiation of brand 2) connection with consumers 3) building consumer confidence 4) building brand awareness and 5) initiating brand recognition. Pike (2004) highlighted the building of a destination brand consists of 3 important components which are the concept of brand identity, brand positioning, and brand image. The destination brand building process starts with the identity of the destination as it needs to understand what the destination stands for (Zouganeli, Trihas, Antonaki, & Kladou, 2012). The process will develop an exclusive identity and personality that is diverse from other competitive destinations (Morrison & Anderson, 2002). Brand identity development is mainly activities implemented by destination marketers in identifying the preferred image to be projected in the market. Pike (2009) also pointed the second component of destination process is brand positioning. Many activities will be implemented to position the brand as identified in the identity shaping stage. Then, the third component is the brand image related to the impression of the tourist's mind and a total brand's personality.

These elements shall be analysed based on market environment, brand identity, brand positioning, brand communication through a variety of tools and brand management. As destination branding focuses more on attracting tourism, the broad literature review of the brand building process is carried out by the researcher to study ideas, concepts, models, and theories and applied them to this study.

2.4.2.1 PCDL Conceptual Model

According to Ghodeswar (2008), his study proposes a conceptual model called, the PCDL model that is suitable for applying in competitive markets. This model involves of four elements specifically, brand positioning, brand message communication, brand performance delivery, and brand equity leverage as shown below in Figure 2.4.

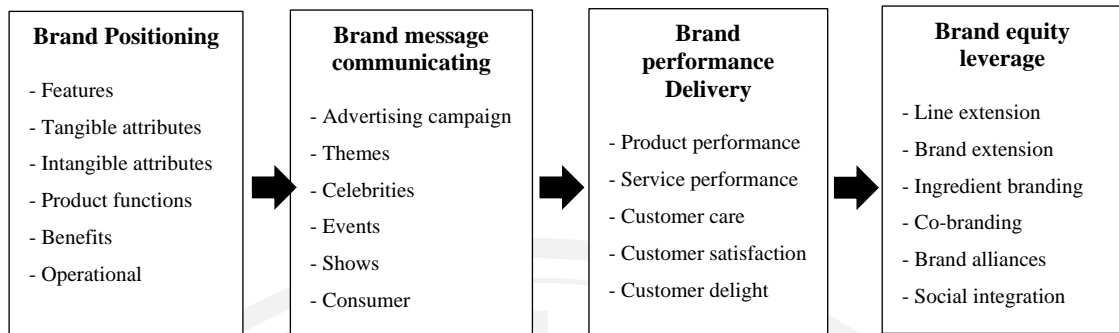


Figure 2.4 PCDL Model

Source: Ghodeswar (2008).

PCDL model explains that its first step is to “position the brand”. Positioning has to do with forming the awareness of a brand in the minds of customers and accomplishing the distinction that this really exists apart from major competitors and that it meets the expectations of customers. The objective is to craft the preferred perception in the mind of projected customers. Then, the second step is to “communicate the brand message” as it shapes a vision of how the target audience perceived the brand. In the first step, brand positioning helps to prioritize the emphasis on brand identity and draws relevant communication i.e. message type, the differentiation of the brand, and themes that call attention to the target group through advertising campaigns. Next, the third step is to “deliver the brand performance”. This step is proposed on the basis of the perception that the brand owners should continuously monitor their brand against the effects of competition. This will help to check the health of the brand in market. Performance can be assessed, i.e. through purchasing level, recognition of a brand, brand remembrance, advertisement awareness, etc. The model enables marketers to evaluate the outcome of the marketing campaign in order to influence the projected customers, which in turn guides to the measurement of the strength of the brand. The last step is called “leveraging the brand equity,” establishing a new collection of relationships from the brand to the individual as well as establishing brand associations. There are diverse strategies for brand leveraging; brand extensions, line extensions, ingredient branding and co-branding, etc.

2.4.2.2 The Destination Brand Benefit

In this study, the researcher examines the destination brand benefit pyramid which was developed by Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride (2004) in order to understand the logical features of the brand and its emotional benefits and associations. The destination brand benefit pyramid expresses the relationship between consumers and the destination which is normally found during the consumer research process. Usually, in this process, the consumers are requested to define what the destination proposes and what the location implies to them. The advantage of destination brand can be helpful to filter out the core of the advertising proposition of the destination brand. According to Morgan et al. (2004), there are five levels of destination brand benefit pyramid as presented in Figure 2.5.

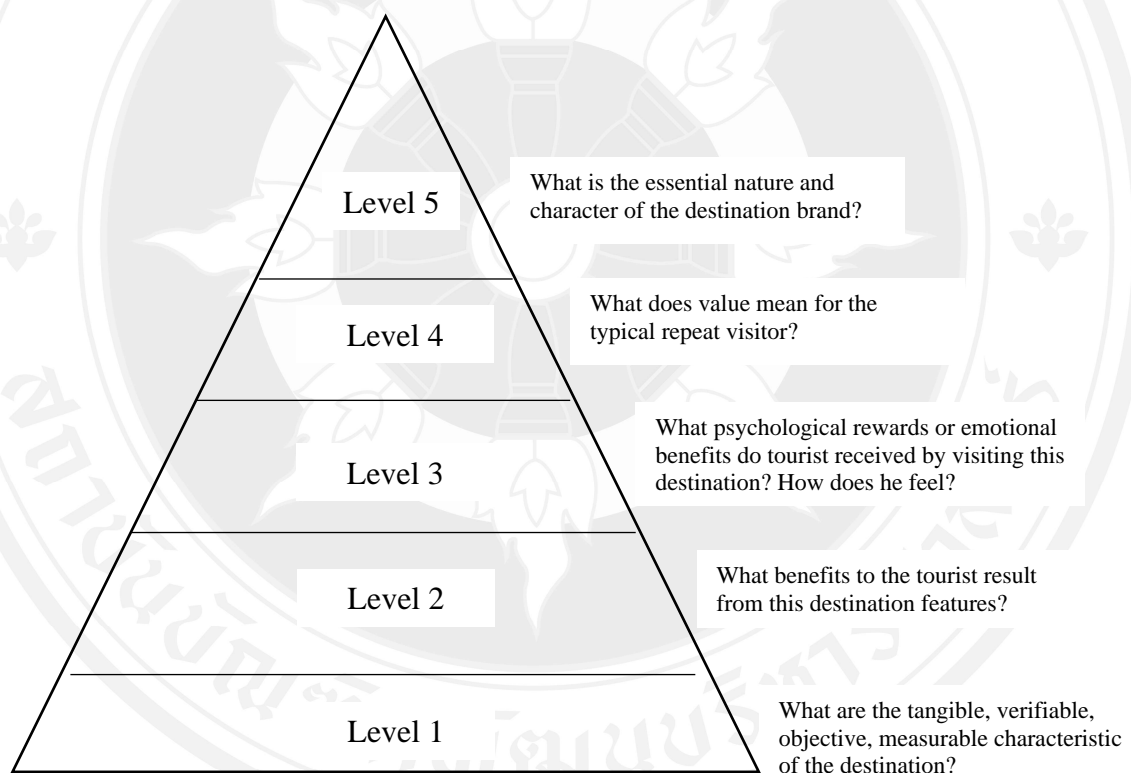


Figure 2.5 The Destination Brand Benefit Pyramid

Source: Morgan et al. (2004).

1) Level 1: Destination Brand Attributes

Attributes are products and services of a brand that provided to customers, or in this case, refer to destination features. The outstanding of such features

are what the tourists are looking for to see, do, and enjoy during a visit to a destination. Many countries are offering beautiful landscapes, history, tradition and culture as well as a local way of life that provides the same similarity. As a result, the destination uniqueness becomes important in terms of extinguishing itself from other destinations that offering similar products and services.

2) Level 2: Function benefits

Functional benefits are the experiences that tourist have received from the destination features i.e. memorable experiences, travel for leisure and travel as fashion accessories. Tourists will find a destination that be able to fulfill their needs and appreciate with the overall experience of the destination. In essence, the more functional the place's characteristics or attributes are in accordance with the interests of visitors, the more desirable it will be to visit.

3) Level 3: Emotional benefits

Emotional benefits refer to the feeling of the visitors after visiting a destination. They are benefits that relate to the satisfaction of tourists in association with the destination.

4) Level 4: Destination value (Personality)

Brand personality is about making the destination prominent in the minds of tourists. It can also be created by direct or indirect interactions between tourist and the destination. As a result, it helps to interpret the destination value that is used to determine destination revisit.

5) Level 5: Destination brand essence

Destination brand essence captures the fundamental characteristics of a destination that has its own personality and makes it distinctive and different from all its rivals. The essence of a successful destination brand is to build emotional bond between potential visitors and the destination through appropriate communication strategy and tools.

2.4.3 Brand Identity, Positioning, and Image

Brand identity, positioning and image are three important core constructs in the destination brand building.

2.4.3.1 Brand Identity

Brand identity refers to how a destination is being identified or what the owner wants to communicate to its potential visitors. Essentially, its features are shaped like vision, culture, relationships, personality, presentations, positioning and other meaning beliefs followed by the entity (Mindrut et al., 2015). Brand identity is a important collection of brand associations that provide customers a commitment and contains the main and extended identity. It builds self-selected environments that are really important to support the brand that is recognized brand by customers (Karmokar, 2014). Brand tends to indicate the differentiation of a destination from other players in the market.

2.4.3.2 Brand Positioning

Brand positioning focuses on the perception of tourists on the destination's products and services. This describes the reference position of the brand with respect to the competitive set by defining the attributes that make it identical to certain locations then distinguishing the attributes that make it distinctive inside that set (Risitano, 2006). Liyanag and Jayawardena (2013) pointed that brand positioning is the process where a brand is established. If a destination has a recognizable and attractive place within the view of customers, the destination has a brand that is recognized by the customers.

2.4.3.3 Brand Image

Brand image is explained as an attitude, belief, idea and impression that a tourist possesses towards a destination. The overall image of a destination is formed by the cognitive and affective evaluation of the brand. Cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs, views, and knowledge of the brand, and affective evaluation states to brand's emotion (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017). Brand identity and brand image are the main elements for a good destination brand. Destination image is a crucial factor for tourist attractions and a greater image of the destination draws more tourists. If positive image can be established, then it is simple to be competitive in tourism industry (Roy & Hoque, 2015).

Brand identity, brand positioning and brand image play a vital part in the process of brand building, creating competitive advantage for a destination to attract

potential visitors. The author therefore uses these core elements as part of the analysis of destination brand building process.

2.4.4 Destination Attributes

It is known that the strong destination brand can draw potential tourists to the place. Thus, destinations are required to create their images that associated to the brand for strengthening satisfaction of the visitors with their travel experiences, as it tends to enhance their behavior and turn it into satisfaction and loyalty to the destination (Mahdzar & Gani, 2018). The destination efficiency; therefore, can be evaluated by the tourist perception of destination travel attributes to boost market segmentation and promotion. The assessment of destination attributes helps the management to recognize the level of satisfaction of tourists and therefore leads the destination competitiveness and provides management with useful information for the tourist destination planning process (Vodeb & Nemec Rudež, 2017). Destination attributes are a collection of attributes that represent the location as a tourist destination which are important for several reasons (Heung & Quf, 2000; Mahdzar, Shuib, Ramachandran, & Afandi, 2015). First, when comparing a particular destination, tourists compare destination attributes, while the efficiency of a destination to charm tourists relies on its perceived ability to convey individual benefits (Mahdzar et al., 2015). Second, the importance of destination attributes is recognized by previous studies in promoting tourism performance and significantly affects the development of destination image (Assaf & Josiassen, 2012). Third, destination attributes have an effect on tourist behavior as it includes the process of selecting a destination, visiting and approaching a destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007). According to Boit (2013), different destinations have different attributes and each destination is chosen on the basis of the nature of experience and its specific attributes. Thus, tourist satisfaction of a destination and judgement on forthcoming destination selection can be influenced by tourist's perception on the attributes of destination.

Destinations are involved of numerous attributes that considerably affect tourists at different stages (Mahdzar & Gani, 2018) and every destination has a combination of functional or tangible attributes and psychological or abstract attributes (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). According to Zhou (2005), there are many attributes linked

to a specific destination, it is impossible for every attribute to be important in the choice of tourist destination. Some attributes reveal attractive to tourist, but some others may be not. It raises a need to identify what could be attractive attributes for destinations. Ragavan et al. (2014) have studied about the understanding of preferences of international tourists connected to the travel attributes of Kuala Lumpur and the study reveals eight dimensions of destination attributes, which are commodities, attractions, food and accommodation, culture, people, image, climate, accessibility, and price. In addition, the study of Mahdzar and Gani (2018) indicates six dimension of destination attributes of Kuala Selangor that effect tourists behavioural intentions, which are physiography, activities and events, cost/value, safety/security, hospitality, and superstructure. Since tourists consider many elements before selecting a particular destination; thus, it is important to know which attributes are in the interest of target tourist as it helps to build strategies, plan for a destination, develop and promote communications, and brand building (Mistry, 2018). According to the study of Mistry (2018) about Gujarat, India as a tourist destination, the study identifies four dimension of destination attribute importance as tourist attraction and benefits sought, on-site management, accessibility and socio-cultural. Table 2.3 concludes dimension of destination attribute and its components. In summary, different authors have identified a list of destination attributes as presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.3 Dimension of Destination Attribute and Its Components

Dimension	Destination Attribute Components
Tourist attraction and benefits sought	Value for money, variety of tourist attractions, adequate provision of entertainment activities, good night life, adequate personal safety and security
On-site management	Uniqueness of destination, adequate provision of entertainment facilities, less traffic and crowd preferred
Accessibility	Convenience to local transportation within destination, ease of access to other major destinations, ease of connectivity with nearby places
Socio-cultural	Different culture, friendly people, cultural activities

Based on literature reviews, the researcher used a set of destination attributes to respond to the objective about the perception of tourists towards SLB. The attributes comprise of 1) attractions, 2) accessibility, 3) activities, 4) tradition and culture, 5) hospitality, 6) price, 7) amenities, 8) safety and security.



Table 2.4 Summary of Destination Attributes in Previous Studies

Attributes	Researchers								
	Boit (2013)	Kim (2014)	Ragavan et al. (2014)	Chahal and Devi (2015)	Atinafu and Muuz (2017)	Mahdzar and Gani (2018)	Mistry (2018)	Toral, Martínez-Torres, and González-Rodríguez (2018)	Hossain and Islam (2019)
Amenities, accommodation, food				●				●	
Attraction		●	●	●		●	●	●	
Climate			●		●			●	●
Accessibility, convenience	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Culture, tradition, history		●	●		●		●	●	●
People, hospitality	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Price, value, cost of living	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Image			●					●	
Activities, entertainment, shopping, adventure	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
Landscape					●				
Ancillary services				●	●				

Attributes	Researchers								
	Boit (2013)	Kim (2014)	Ragavan et al. (2014)	Chahal and Devi (2015)	Atinafu and Muuz (2017)	Mahdzar and Gani (2018)	Mistry (2018)	Toral, Martínez-Torres, and Gonzalez-Rodriguez (2018)	Hossain and Islam (2019)
Safety, security	●	●			●	●	●		●
Infrastructure	●	●							●
Quality of service		●							●
Geographic location									●
Lack of language barrier	●								
Carrying capacity in sustainable limit									●
Government initiatives, priority				●					●
Destination uniqueness				●			●		

2.5 Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB)

2.5.1 Lake Basin

Lake basin describes the surface of the ground as a natural depression. A lake basin is a natural land that drains into a lake, often meant to refer to as a drainage basin or watershed (European Environment Agency, 2020). According to Prachyakorn Chaiyakot (2011), there are three types of the basin: 1) closed drainage basin, where the water is evaporated or absorbed into the surface; 2) open drainage basin, which has various drainage channels in which the water flows into the rivers and allows the salinity to be drained and can become fresh water; and 3) coastal drainage basin, where the water flows in and out of the ocean, creating a complex ecosystem.

The complex ecosystem makes the basin rich in natural and environmental resources; for example, mountain, forest, lake, river, canal, fauna and flora, etc. As people come to live and settle in the area, culture and tradition have been developed, resulting in the creation of architecture, archaeological sites, history, arts and crafts, and local culture events while various occupations have become part of their way-of-life such as fishing, agriculture, livestock and plantation.

2.5.2 Songkhla Lake Basin

Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) is situated in the southern part of Thailand, which is renowned as the largest lake system in the country (Anukularmphai, Sompongchaiyakul, Rivas, & Sangganjanavanich, 2005). SLB extends among three provinces called Phatthalung, Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat. Approximately 8,730 square kilometers of SBL consists of land and lake area which has distinctive characteristics as a 3-water ecosystem (Parichart Visuthismajarn & Patarapong Kroeksakul, 2012). Three distinct parts in SLB are classified as fresh, brackish and saline water. SLB is the single natural lake in Thailand where the combination of fresh water runoff and overland flow, and saline water from the sea, causes its salinity to vary spatially and temporally. SLB consists of four parts, viz. 1) Thale Noi in the northernmost part, which is fresh all year round, 2) Upper Songkhla Lake – turbid and windswept fresh to brackish water, 3) Middle Songkhla Lake – brackish water containing many islands and 4) Lower Songkhla Lake – marine ecosystem containing

extensive fixed fishing gear and fish cage culture (Chesoh & Lim, 2008). The structure of SLB is presented in the Figure 2.12. In addition, the basin is surrounded by two mountain ranges – Bantad and Sangala Kiri mountain ranges, where the higher lands occupied with rainforests that establishing an upstream part of the catchment area. The SLB is linked to the Gulf of Thailand at Muang District, Songkhla Province. Generally, the SLB comprises of lakes, wetlands, and the coastal region - making it known once as Thailand's most distinguished and complex ecosystem in southern Thailand. This high biodiversity system currently supports around 1.6 million people and their numerous activities (Anukularmphai et al., 2005).

Songkhla is a city with a long prosperous past of civilization (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2020). The ancient artefacts are strong evidence. The tradition inherited from the ancestors is interesting. An outpost of the Srivijaya Empire from Sumatra, Songkhla served as a port and coastal trade post where Indian, Persian and Arabian traders came to exchange their products. The city was named “Sing Lha” after the two lion-shaped islands at the entrance of the city's lake. At present, these two islands are called Koh Noo (Rat Island) and Koh Maew (Cat Island). An undeniably historic town endowed with ancient ruins and places of cultural importance, Songkhla is a melting pot of Thais, Chinese and Malays, and charms visitors with its unique traditions, dialect, and folk entertainment. These characteristics are reflections of the province's rich cultural heritage, which has been preserved and passed down from generation to generation.

Chatchai Ratanachai & Wiwat Sutiwipakorn (2006) revealed that the diverse environment has made SLB rich in biodiversity, forming a long-lived life support network, as well as other economic activities for SLB citizens.

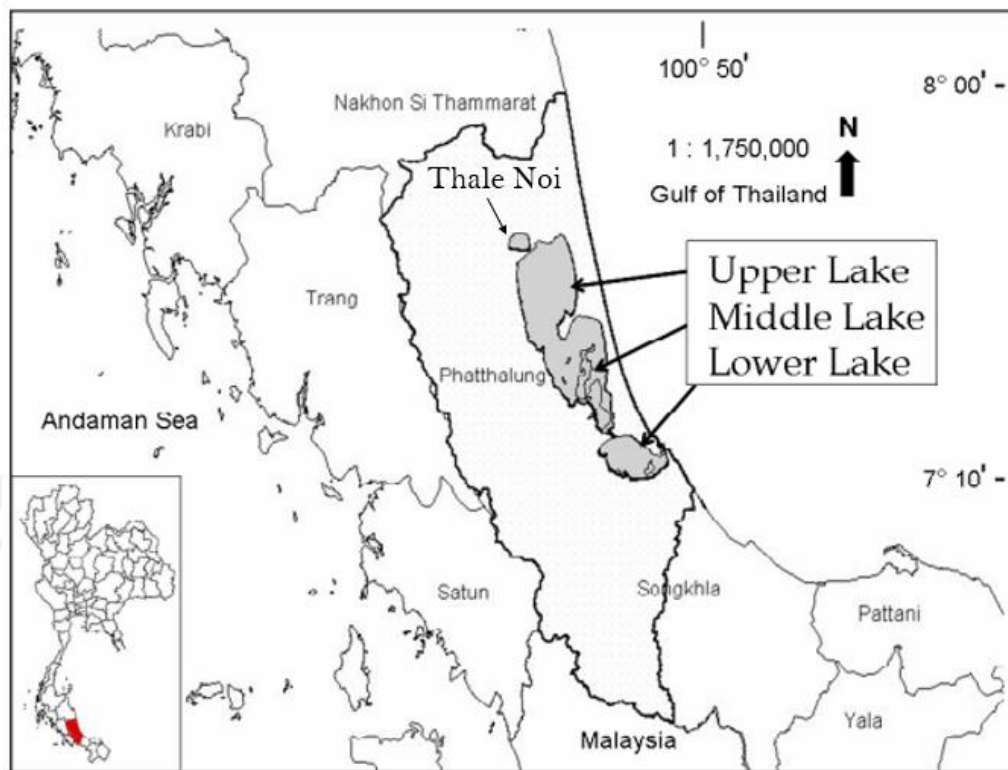


Figure 2.6 Songkhla Lake Basin

Source: Adapted from Chesoh and Lim (2008).

The basin provides a broad variety of land usage in which agriculture is the most significant containing orchards, rice paddy fields, rubber plantations and natural forests. Aquaculture consists of shrimp farming and fish cage culture and pig farming are other significant uses of land in the basin. Fishing is most concentrated in the lower part of SLB where the majority of the communities rely entirely on fishing for their subsistence. Tourism and economic development are both significant aspects of the economy in SLB.

2.5.3 Tourism Resources of SLB

Among tourist destinations in the province, SLB, the largest lagoon in Thailand, is famous among visitors. SLB has a long history over 6,000 years; therefore, it has variety of natural and cultural resources that have accommodated living and other economic activities for SLB residents (Prachyakorn Chaiyakot & Parichart Visuthismajarn, 2012). The SLB is abundant in natural and cultural resources and

archaeological and historical places, most of which are spread through mountain ranges, foothills, lowlands, coastline and lake. It is supported by Prachyakorn Chaiyakot (2011) that SLB's tourism resources are diversified and widely spread across the basin. The SLB tourism resources include natural and environment resources such as wildlife and biodiversity, waterfowl and archipelagoes, upstream watershed, rainforests, community way-of-life as well as arts and culture.

SLB tourism is one of important industries that plays a significant role in the economic growth which has generated the main income to the province. Parichart Visuthismajarn (2012) agreed with this by saying that SLB tourism might build numerous economic activities and jobs in Songkhla province, in particularly by employing local workforce as well as tour operators. According to National Statistical Office (2020), the tourists came to visit Songkhla province reached 7,628,813 persons while the tourism revenue marked at 68,252,64 million baht by the end of the year 2018. These important data show the record about an upward trend of the visitor number and the tourism revenue during the year 2014 - 2018. In comparison, the length of tourist stay reduced while the average expenditure increased (Table 2.5). And Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian, Japanese and the Filipinos were the principal foreigner visited Songkhla province (Songkhla Provincial Office, 2018). Prachyakorn Chaiyakot and Parichart Visuthismajarn (2012) studied tourism objectives for SLB travel and the result revealed that tourists visited SLB for the purpose of recreation, educational trips, visiting families, meeting / training / seminars, and explore new experiences respectively.

Table 2.5 Tourism Statistical Data of Songkhla Province During the Year 2014-2018

Item	Visitors	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Visitor	Total	6,124,972	6,524,676	6,675,178	7,025,573	7,628,813
	Thai	3,831,735	4,038,146	4,157,186	4,396,474	4,614,546
	Foreigner	2,293,237	2,486,530	2,517,992	2,629,099	3,014,267
Average Length of Stay (Days)	Total	2.61	2.60	2.67	2.64	2.58
	Thai	2.64	2.63	2.65	2.57	2.51
	Foreigner	2.57	2.56	2.73	2.73	2.67

Item	Visitors	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Visitor	Total	6,124,972	6,524,676	6,675,178	7,025,573	7,628,813
	Thai	3,831,735	4,038,146	4,157,186	4,396,474	4,614,546
	Foreigner	2,293,237	2,486,530	2,517,992	2,629,099	3,014,267
Average Length of Stay (Days)	Total	2.61	2.60	2.67	2.64	2.58
	Thai	2.64	2.63	2.65	2.57	2.51
	Foreigner	2.57	2.56	2.73	2.73	2.67
Average Expenditure (Baht/Person/Day)	Total	2,987.15	3,213.88	3,409.85	3,620.24	3,880.24
	Thai	2,717.44	2,937.94	3,039.31	3,190.95	3,357.96
	Foreigner	3,390.82	3,628.86	3,941.8	4,229.88	4,558.54
Revenue (Million Baht)	Total	42,825.47	48,885.44	54,337.45	59,831.77	68,252.64
	Thai	23,672.35	26,841.1	28,546.67	30,945.14	33,369.59
	Foreigner	19,153.12	22,044.34	25,790.78	28,886.63	34,883.05

Source: Ministry of Tourism & Sports (2018); National Statistical Office (2020).

According to Parichart Visuthismajarn (2012), there are 212 tourism sites in the lake basin. It can be classified into two major groups, which are 79 natural tourism sites and 133 historical-cultural tourism sites. For natural tourism sites, 54 locations have been classified as sub-categories in terms of their position as mountain, waterfall, beach, wetland and island, whereas 25 places have been defined as cave category. As for historical-cultural sites, 76 places have been identified as religious location, 22 places have been designated as an old town and an ancient community with unique identity, i.e. pagoda, temple, and ancient cave, finally 35 places have been categorized as archaeological site. According to the information revealed, the majority of tourist sites are located in the center of SLB, particularly historical-cultural sites that scattered across Muang district, Songkhla province and Muang district, Phatthalung province. SLB tourism sites are shown below in Figure 2.7.

As SLB is rich in natural and environment resources; therefore, people have come to this region while cultural and traditional have been created since the ancient times. SLB has been influenced by Indian culture, which adopted Brahmanism and Buddhism, while the relation with the neighbouring countries such as Java and Malay have also often reflected its local culture and tradition. As a consequence, the transition of culture and tradition has been developed since then (Kai, 2006).

With these reasons, Songkhla therefore carries with it a large variety of cultural practices which can be represented through local folk games. There are four types of folk games in Songkhla province: 1) local sports, 2) local music, 3) local songs and 4) local performances (Kai, 2006). The folk games are well known as the Southern culture that encourages education among people and the examples of popular folk games are shadow play, classical Thai tune, musical folk drama, bullfighting, chicken fighting, fish fighting, kite competition and drum competition, etc. Thus, these local activities have been listed as tourist activities in SLB which can be found as a part of package tour. In fact, local handicrafts are also one of the tourist attractions, because it supports a substantial income to the residents owing to their uniqueness by utilizing different local materials combined with their local wisdom i.e. weaving cloth, clay tiles, wickerwork, coconut shell handicrafts, and shadow play carving.

Apart from historical-cultural sites, belief of the local people is considered one of tourism resources and draws tourists to visit this area. In general, people in the basin believes in Buddhist, Islam, and Brahmin that contribute to their conviction in superstition and belief in guardian spirits. These believes are tourism resource, which encourage visitors to explore the lake basin (Prachyakorn Chaiyakot, 2011). The summary of tourism locations in the SLB is presented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 SLB Tourist Locations

Type	Number	Details	Songkhla	Phatthalung	Nakhon Si Thammarat
Natural tourist sites	54	Mountain, waterfall, beach, wetland, island, forest and hot springs	●	●	
Historical- cultural tourist sites	25	Cave	●	●	●
	76	Important religious historical sites	●	●	●
	22	Ancient towns and communities, i.e. temple, pagoda, Buddha image, graven image, city wall, stove, pond and pottery	●	●	
	35	Ancient remains and holy places	●	●	

Source: Adapted from Parichart Visuthismajarn (2012).

In addition, based on the study of Prachyakorn Chaiyakot and Parichart Visuthismajarn (2010), there are eight communities-based tourism organizations across the SLB that currently have a wide communities-based tourism network throughout the area.

2.5.4 Research Relevant to SLB Tourism

There are various studies about the SLB tourism; for example, ecotourism, rural tourism, historical tourism, and destination tourism management. According to the literature reviews, it can be summarized that natural and environmental resources at SLB are in good state to be developed and marketed as tourism destination in the basin, providing that they are well managed within the context of sustainability (Parichart Visuthismajarn, 2012; Parichart Visuthismajarn & Patarapong Kroeksakul, 2012; Prachyakorn Chaiyakot & Parichart Visuthismajarn, 2010, 2012; Somjit Intamano & Parichart Visuthismajarn, 2019).

Despite the SLB tourism development potential, many tourism places are at risk of being damaged by nature and attackers; thus, all stakeholders must prevent and shield the tourism resources from the said risk. The promotion of sustainable tourism should be in an alignment of potentials of the sites, with careful attention on the benefits of the community. The community is therefore a key stakeholder in making a destination success and sustainability. However, Somjit Intamano and Parichart Visuthismajarn (2019) found that the opportunity for community participation in tourism management was weak, especially by playing an active part in tourist destinations such as in the role of guides or provision of destination services. Following the announcement of SLB Development Master Plan, there were still obstacles that required collaboration from stakeholders to solve such issues. As such, the strategy of green destination tourism management of SLB has been proposed by Parichart Visuthismajarn & Patarapong Kroeksakul (2012) as 1) enhancing the advantages of tourism to local society, 2) enhancing the satisfaction of visitors, 3) preserving native resources in long term, and 4) maximizing the efficiency of tourism entrepreneurs. The summary of SLB tourism researches is concluded in the Table 2.7.

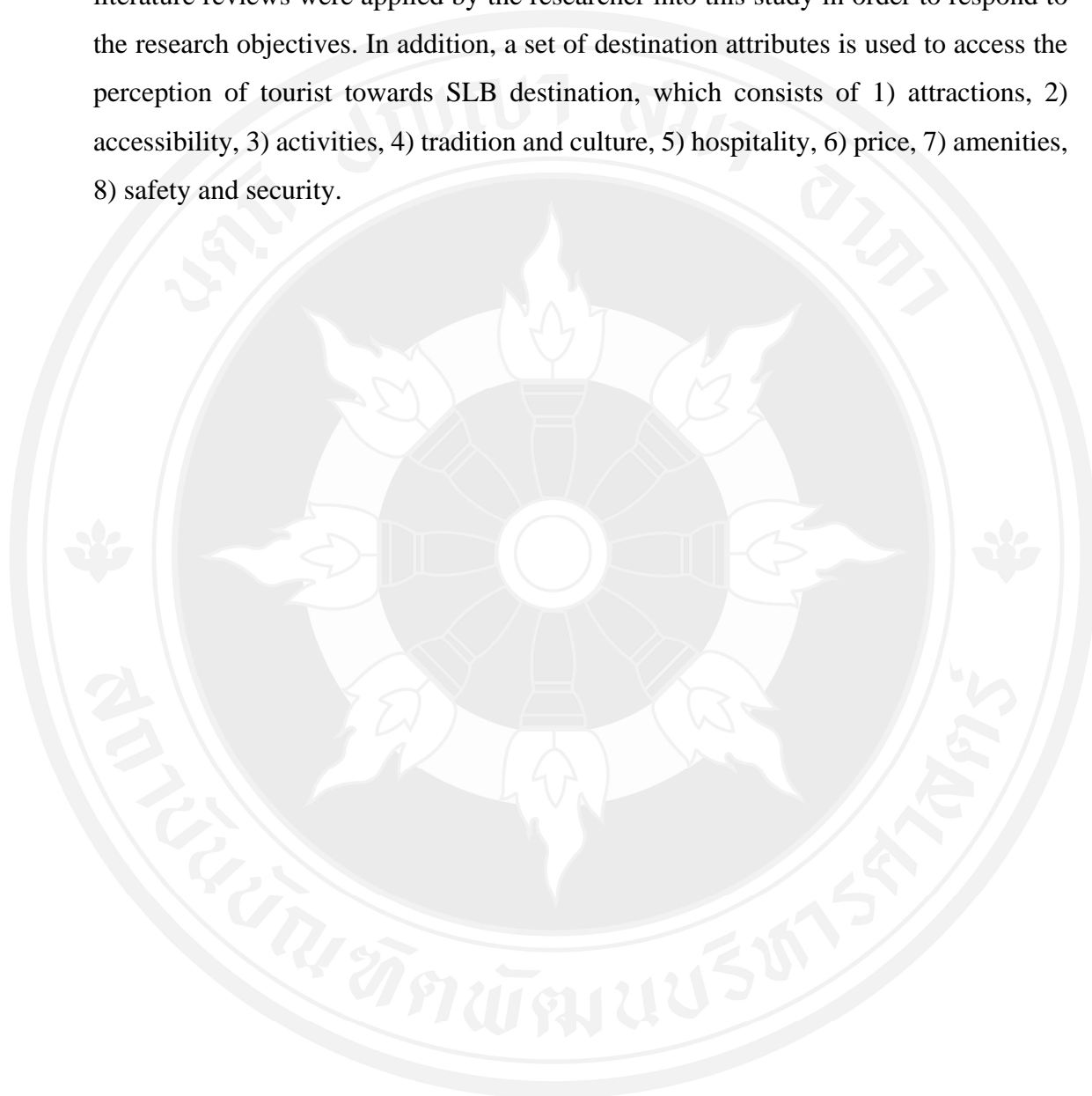
Table 2.7 Related Research on SLB Tourism

Authors (Year)	Topic	Research Aims/Highlights	Significant Results	Theme/Issue
Prachyakorn Chaiyakot and Parichart Visuthismajarn (2010)	Ecotourism Situation in Songkhla Lake Basin: the Opportunity and Challenge	This paper highlights the possibility of SLB attempting to gain from ecotourism development and the challenge from ecotourism development in SLB.	Ecotourism is intended to be used as a method to reduce the costly consumption of environmental resources through the tourism activities	Ecotourism
Prachyakorn Chaiyakot (2011)	A Pattern of Rural Tourism in Songkhla Lake Basin	The objectives are to study the components and factors of rural tourism in SLB, determine a tourism pattern of SLB as a rural tourism and analyse a pattern of rural tourism harmonizing to tourism standard for environment.	The SLB's tourism was located in foothills, mountain range, lowland and lake and coastal. The rural tourism pattern consisted of ecotourism, cultural tourism, archaeological tourism and historical tourism.	Rural tourism
Prachyakorn Chaiyakot and Parichart Visuthismajarn (2012)	A Pattern of Rural Tourism in The Songkhla Lake Basin, Thailand	This purpose of study is to define a pattern of rural tourism that harmonizes with the resources of Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) in southern Thailand.	The study found that historical tourism, archaeological tourism, cultural tourism, and ecotourism are the characteristics of rural tourism that match with SLB resources.	Rural tourism

Authors (Year)	Topic	Research Aims/Highlights	Significant Results	Theme/Issue
Parichart Visuthismajarn & Patarapong Kroeksakul (2012)	Destination Tourism Management in Adaptation for Climate Change in Songkhla Lake Basin	The objectives of this paper are to survey the tourism sites and linkages in understanding and anticipation of geographical and seasonal changes in tourist demand and to serve as a guideline for climate-friendly tourism management in SLB.	The study revealed impacts and its adaptation at tourism destinations at SLB include direct climate impacts, indirect impacts on environmental change, impacts of mitigation policies on visitors movement and indirect impacts on social change.	Destination Management
Somjit Intamano and Parichart Visuthismajarn (2019)	Management of Historical Tourism in Songkhla Province, Thailand	The goal of this study is to research the management potential of historical tourism in the province of Songkhla and the opportunities for community involvement in the administration of historical tourism in the province of Songkhla.	The study found that the involvement of local communities in almost every issue was low, particularly as part of tourist attractions, such as the role of guidance or service provision.	Historical tourism

2.6 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, the researcher would like to access the perception of stakeholders that influence tourist behavior on SLB destination attributes. Thus, the literature reviews were applied by the researcher into this study in order to respond to the research objectives. In addition, a set of destination attributes is used to access the perception of tourist towards SLB destination, which consists of 1) attractions, 2) accessibility, 3) activities, 4) tradition and culture, 5) hospitality, 6) price, 7) amenities, 8) safety and security.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides research methodology in order to achieve the objectives of the research. The chapter consists of introduction, unit of analysis, research methodology, research process and conclusion. The framework main purpose is to analyze the stakeholder perspective of tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of the SLB. The results will understand the Thai tourist behavior that connected to the destination attributes so that a proper market development can be recognized. The framework of this study is evolved from literature reviews.

The structure of this chapter is shown below in Table 3.1 describing the subjects discussed in this chapter and the research methodology is summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1 Structure of Chapter 3

3.1	Introduction
3.2	Unit of Analysis
3.3	Research Methodology
3.4	Research Process
3.5	Conclusion

Table 3.2 Overview of Research Methodologies Related to Research Objectives

Objectives	Research Methods	Population & Samples	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques	Research Tools	Data Analysis
(Obj. 1) To identify unique product and service of SLB	1. Quantitative 2. Qualitative	(1) SLB tourists (2) Local community (3) Tourism operators (4) Local government agencies	420 11 26 13	Purposive + convenience sampling Purposive + snowball sampling Purposive + convenience sampling Purposive + convenience sampling	Questionnaire Semi-structured interview Semi-structured interview Semi-structured interview	Descriptive Statistics Content Analysis Content Analysis Content Analysis
(Obj. 2) To study tourist behavior towards SLB	1. Quantitative	(1) SLB tourists	420	Purposive + convenience sampling	Questionnaire	Descriptive Statistics
(Obj. 3) To investigate perception of tourists towards SLB brand	1. Quantitative	(1) SLB tourists	420	Purposive + convenience sampling	Questionnaire	Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

3.2 Unit of Analysis

It is well known that SLB is Thailand's largest lake spanning three provinces in southern Thailand, namely Phattalung, Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat. It occupies around 8,730 square kilometers with its long history. Among these three provinces, Songkhla is the most interesting based on the number of visitors, resources and tourist attractions. Regarding to National Statistical Office (2020) report, the visitor number of Songkhla, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Phatthalung provinces in the year 2018 were 7,628,813, 3,883,400 and 1,641,841 respectively. In addition, high-quality tourism opportunities are diverse and unique with 212 tourism sites in Songkhla province, viz. 79 natural sites and 133 historic and cultural sites (Parichart Visuthismajarn & Patarapong Kroeksakul, 2012). Therefore, Songkhla province will be selected as the analytical unit in this study and focuses tourism locations along the lake basin situated at Muang district, Songkhla province.

3.3 Research Methodology

The research methodology is one of the most important elements to ensure answer to each research questions. Mixed research is a type of methodology that the data is simultaneously collected, analyzed and interpreted. The qualitative and quantitative methods support each other in interpreting the research results that cannot be separated in social research methodology (Zohrabi, 2013).

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), qualitative method is used to understand how people interpret their expectations and experiences. The qualitative research aims at studying all the information of the subject being investigated through group discussions, conversations, interviews, observations or recordings to allow the researcher to explain the social environment. This method seeks to explain about a situation, problem, phenomenon or an event that has taken place while the data collection may be conducted through interviews, observations, etc. It represents information and data analysis in the format of a descriptive narrative without statistical analysis, but by analyzing and synthesizing the links between theory and the relationships contained within a situation or using some basic statics.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) also further summarized the quantitative method is a systematic methodology that relies on how much or how many, and results are typically described in numerical form. Quantitative research seeks facts and conclusion using numbers as the evidence to confirm the accuracy of the findings and conclusions. Thus, the quantitative research focuses on numerical data that allows the researcher to execute research results by collecting opinions and information from a large number of the key stakeholders identified under this research. Researchers obtain information from sufficient number of respondents that can represent the population statically. Quantitative research requires statistical methods and tools to interpret the data; for example, descriptive statistics or inferential statistics to conclude what the numerical data explains.

Therefore, quantitative and qualitative methods were applied for the outcome evaluation in this study through the utilization of questionnaire and interview sessions. Both primary and secondary data were also collected in order to obtain the reliable data.

To determine the appropriate process of brand building towards community participatory approach of SLB, Songkhla province, the research objectives are defined as the following:

- 1) To identify unique product and service of SLB
- 2) To study behavior of tourists towards SLB
- 3) To investigate perception of tourists towards SLB brand

3.3.1 Quantitative Research

In this study, quantitative research was employed to identify the unique products and services of SLB (objective no. 1), to study tourist behavior towards SLB (objective no. 2), and to investigate perception of tourists towards SLB (objective no. 3). The following seven elements related to quantitative research methods were defined.

3.3.1.1 Population and Samples

The target population was Thai tourists who visit Muang district, Songkhla province during the study period and not less than eighteen years old. However, the exact number of the tourist population was not published at the beginning of the study. Therefore, the average number of tourists in Songkhla province during the

year 2014 – 2018, which was the update data available at that time, was represented as the population size for the design in this study. Some samples were selected as the representative of the population according to the calculated sample size.

3.3.1.2 Sample Size

Table 3.3 presents the number of tourists to Songkhla province from the year 2014 to 2018. The average number of tourist in Songkhla province during this period was used as the population size to calculate the sample size in the formula of Yamane (1973) in this study.

Table 3.3 Tourists Arrival to Songkhla Province During the Year 2014 - 2018

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5-year Average
Thai	3,831,735	4,038,146	4,157,186	4,396,474	4,614,546	4,207,617
Total	3,831,735	4,038,146	4,157,186	4,396,474	4,614,546	4,207,617

Source: National Statistical Office (2020).

The sample size was calculated by using the formula of Yamane (1973), which applies a 95% reliability level with a 5% deviation. The calculation formula is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Size of target population

e = Inconsistency from samplings 95% confidence level

Substitute numbers in formula:

$$n = \frac{4,207,617}{1 + 4,207,617 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 399.96 (\sim 400)$$

Therefore, the appropriate sample size is 400. However, for more reliable data analysis, this study employed 420 samples.

3.3.1.3 Sampling Techniques

In order to reduce the population to the appropriate sample size, the researcher applied two non-probability sampling techniques in this study. First, the purposive sampling technique was used to identify SLB tourists and collected the data from them, who visited the lake basin at Muang district, Songkhla province. Then, the convenience sampling technique that was utilized in conformance with the above-mentioned techniques. The convenience sampling was done to ensure the respondents had met certain criteria; for example, easily accessible to the researcher, readiness to participate and availability (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012; Marshall, 1996). In other words, this sampling method involved getting participants wherever they can be found by the researcher, and usually where they are convenient to take part in the research.

Consequently, the sampling was employed at tourist destinations, located at Bo Yang, Pawong, Khao Rubchang, and Koh Yo Sub-Districts, Muang district, Songkhla province, with Thai tourists during the study period.

3.3.1.4 Research Tools and Designs

The questionnaire was designed as a research instrument for the study. Thai questionnaires were used for the sample, and it contains five main parts using checklist questions, five-point Likert scale, close-ended questions, open-ended questions.

1) Part 1: Tourist Behavior

Certain decision activities, views, or experiences that satisfy visitors' needs and wants were described as behavior. It comprises all activities directly associated with the obtaining, consuming, and disposing of goods and services, as well as the decision-making processes that tend to follow these actions (Solomon, 2020). This part consists of relevant questions about tourist behavior concerning pre-travel, on site, and post-travel. The checklist questions applied to identify the behavior of tourists visiting SLB.

2) Part 2: Products and Services of SLB

This part consists of relevant questions asking about prominence of the SLB's products and services from the point of view of the target tourists. The five-point Likert scale explored the prominence of the tourist destinations of SLB. The researcher used a rating scale ranged from 1 to 5 where 1 refers to very low prominence while 5 refers to very high prominence.

3) Part 3: Tourist Perception Toward SLB

Perception is the mechanism that interprets and organizes sensation in order to create a meaningful experience; additionally, destination attributes were widely used to assess the perception of visitors (Chaturvedi, 2013; Turner & Reisinger, 1999). This part consists of relevant questions asking about tourist's perception toward SLB. The researcher used checklist question to identify SLB brand existence while applied five-point Likert scale to evaluate the level of their perceptions. This applied a rating scale ranged from 1 to 5 where 1 refers to very low importance while 5 refers to very high importance.

4) Part 4: Suggestion

In addition to the close-ended questions, an open-ended question was used in the questionnaire. This section used open-ended question to obtain additional recommendations or opinions from respondents. The open-ended question enabled the researcher to understand the feelings, attitudes and opinions of the respondents as well as to include more information on the subject in the way they perceive it (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec, & Vehovar, 2003).

5) Part 5: Socio-Demographic Information

This section designed to determine the characteristic of the respondents i.e. gender, age, religion, educational level, occupation, monthly income, marital status and country of residence in form of checklist questions.

3.3.1.5 Validity and Reliability Test

The purpose of the research questionnaire was to collect the relevant information in the most accurate and appropriate manner. The accuracy and consistency of the survey forms a significant part of the research methodology, commonly known as validity and reliability (Taherdoost, 2016).

For the content validation test, copies of questionnaires were submitted to three experts in the tourism field for inspection in order to obtain the appropriateness of the questionnaire. The acceptable validity is determined by Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC) equal to 0.5 or above (Turner & Carlson, 2003).

The IOC assessment score system runs from -1 to +1 depending on the following criterion:

If the item was regarded relevant with defined aims and/or could be implemented to reality, it received a score of +1 which means agree.

If the item was regarded doubtful of being incompatible with defined aims and/or could not be applied to reality, it received a score of 0 which means uncertain.

If the item was regarded inconsistent with defined aims and/or could not be implemented to reality, it received a score of -1 which means disagree.

To indicate alignment with defined objectives and relevance to reality, accepted items must have an IOC mean score of not less than 0.5. The items with an average score below the 0.5 cut-off point were removed. In the meanwhile, only those with a score of 0.5 or above were maintained in the questionnaire.

According to expert opinions, only two items from section I (Tourist Behavior) obtained a mean score lower than the cut-off value out of 52 questions from five sections in the questionnaire. The information is as shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Item-Objective Congruence Screening Result Summary

No.	Detail	Proposed Item	Removed Item	Remain
1	Tourist Behavior	31	2	29
2	Products and Services of SLB	2	0	2
3	Tourist Perception Toward SLB	2	0	2
4	Suggestion	1	0	1
5	Socio-Demographic Information	8	0	8

The reliability of the research instrument was examined by a pilot test which was obtained with 30 cases to measure the degree of internal consistency of the measurable scale. The pilot data was collected by using the questionnaire reviewed by the experts with 30 Thai tourists at Hatyai District, Songkhla Province during the first week of January 2021.

To determine whether the reliability of the instrument is acceptable, Cronbach's Alpha value should equal to or greater than 0.7 (Hair, Black, & Babin, 2010). The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha for the entire measurement scale was 0.894 following statistical analysis with SPSS software, confirming that the measurement scale possessed acceptable consistency.

3.3.1.6 Data Collection

In accordance with the research framework of this study, four hundred and twenty samples, from domestic Thai tourists who visit SLB, were collected by using the questionnaire. In order to reduce the likelihood of sampling error, the researcher attempts to obtain as many data as possible. Data collection was conducted during January - June 2021 in various tourist destinations of Muang District, Songkhla Province e.g. Samila beach, Koh Yo, and Songkhla National Museum.

3.3.1.7 Data Analysis

Upon completion of the data collection, data analysis was required to interpret the information collected in order to provide more useful information. The researcher used data coding to analyze the quantitative results. Prior to the data analysis, numerical codes were defined for each response. Then, data analysis was conducted via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as an instrument.

This quantitative data analysis applied descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviations which were used to describe the demographic data of the samples as well as to assess their opinion and agreement in each relevant question. Conversely, inferential statistics methods were used through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and t-test to address the identified research questions and research objectives.

1) Descriptive Statistical Method

After the data was collected, the demographic information of the respondents was evaluated to determine the frequency and percentage. Following then,

mean scores from each question item were obtained and interpreted into five levels of the score classification. The class limit calculated as follows:

$$\text{Class limit} = (\text{Xmax} - \text{Xmin}) / \text{Number of class interval}$$

$$0.8 = (5-1) / 5$$

As a result, for each individual item, perception level was calculated using mean scores that were interpreted using the following criteria:

1.00 – 1.80 = Very low prominence / importance

1.81 – 2.60 = Low prominence / importance

2.61 – 3.40 = Neutral prominence / importance

3.41 – 4.20 = High prominence / importance

4.21 – 5.00 = Very high prominence / importance

2) Inferential Statistical Method

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and t-test analysis were employed as an inferential statistical method to assess the tourist perception of the SLB brand.

EFA is a statistical method used to uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables. It is used to identify the underlying relationships between measured variables. EFA assumes that any indicator/measured variable may be associated with any factor. In this study, EFA was used to identify what destination attributes influence SLB destination brand perception. The consideration in the case of destination attributes was explained by the fact that, while previous findings about destination dimensions had been discovered in various studies, the revealed dimensions were not completely consistent. The proposed variables were introduced by this study when the factor structures were still unclear. As a result, statistical component grouping was required.

The EFA was conducted using 420 samples to ensure validity, using the Principal Components Factor Analysis technique to determine the component structure and Promax rotation to organize variables into their respective factors. The Eigenvalues of all factors were determined to be no less than 1.00 throughout the process as recommended by Hair et al. (2010).

After the EFA was performed, the underlying components were examined using an independent t-test analysis to understand its influence on the SLB destination brand.

In conclusion, the quantitative method employed a questionnaire as a survey tool to broaden the scope of knowledge on the influence of destination attributes on the SLB brand. Because the target population was large and infinite, proper sampling and sample size were crucial because they allowed the research to gather representative samples that represented the whole population and ensured that they had sufficient information and understanding of the phenomena under study. As a result, a quantitative investigation was conducted using questionnaires gathered from all 420 Thai tourists who visited SLB, Muang District, Songkhla Province, and were chosen using a purposive and convenience sampling technique. Upon data collection, the statistical data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics methods.

3.3.2 Qualitative Research

There were three population survey groups in terms of outcomes of qualitative studies. The population included 1) local people, 2) tourism operators, and 3) local government agencies. The qualitative research methodology consisted of seven elements, viz. population and samples, sample size, sampling techniques, research tools and designs, validity and reliability test, data collection, and data analysis.

3.3.2.1 Population and Samples

The target population in this study were local people, tourism operators, and local government agencies. The following criteria were applied to all target population to ensure their appropriateness for this study.

1) Local People

The people who have been living in Muang district of Songkhla province at least one year and were living in the area during study period and involving in SLB tourism and activities.

2) Tourism Operators

The target population was the tour operators and local tourism enterprises functioning in Muang district, Songkhla province at least one year of work experience and they were doing their work during the sampling period of this study.

3) Local Government Agencies

The government agencies of Songkhla province, who were responsible for provincial tourism, particularly in the SLB area, and they were on duty for at least one year, were the target population for this research.

3.3.2.2 Sample Size

The sample size was determined by using triangulation design for validity test in this qualitative study due to its appropriate method for the convergence of information from different sources (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). In addition, relevant studies recommended the sample size of approximately 20-30 for analysis study to ensure the saturation and redundancy of the data (Creswell, 2013; Wacharin Intaprom, 2019). Therefore, the sample size in this study was designed as detailed in Table 3.2.

3.3.2.3 Sampling Techniques

As defined in non-probability sampling technique, purposive sampling were used to reduce the population into an acceptable sample sizes (Wacharin Intaprom, 2019). In this study, purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques were applied to identify the right interviewees to involve in semi-structure interviews. Purposive sampling techniques were used to define proper tourism operators and government agencies and the convenience sampling techniques were utilized to indicate the target population that meets certain criteria, such as availability at a given time and willingness to participate in the study (Etikan et al., 2016) and having qualification as described above (Item 1 Population and Samples). As for the snowball sampling technique, it was applied for research participants in a group of local people to identify other potential participants for this study. The technique involves a primary data source nominating other potential data sources that will be able to participate in the research studies. The snowball sampling method is purely based on referrals, and that is how the researcher can generate a sample. The sampling technique can go on and on until the researcher has enough data to analyze and draw conclusive results.

3.3.2.4 Research Tools and Designs

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the interview technique to collect information from the local experts who involved in the SLB tourism. Among qualitative methods, a semi-structured interview is one of the most practical and useful techniques for identifying particular and significant concerns from a number of key informants. It allows each informant to have more time and room to express their feelings, viewpoints, and attitudes. To reflect the views of the informants, the open-ended questions were used during the interview session in order to get better and more in-depth responses. In addition, the semi-structured interviews can be adjusted, and more questions can be added while interviewing. Nevertheless, this sort of interview provides a comfortable environment that allows opportunity for the informants to speak openly and as a result the new information can be emerged (Blee & Taylor, 2002; O'Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozovic, & Sinha, 2016). Interview form is an essential tool to extract the main or key information from the research samples. The semi-structured interviews were applied continuously until the repetitive responses were obtained.

3.3.2.5 Validity and Reliability Test

The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to acquire the most relevant and appropriate information. Validity and reliability, or the accuracy and consistency of the interview questions, are essential parts of the study. Copies of questions were submitted to three experts for inspection and review appropriateness of the interview questions. The acceptable validity is determined by Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC) equal to 0.5 or above (Turner & Carlson, 2003).

The IOC assessment score system runs from -1 to +1 depending on the following criterion:

+1 = agree, if the item was regarded relevant with defined aims and/or could be implemented to reality.

0 = uncertain, if the item was regarded doubtful of being incompatible with defined aims and/or could not be applied to reality

-1 = disagree, if the item was regarded inconsistent with defined aims and/or could not be implemented to reality.

The items must have an IOC mean score of at least 0.5 to be considered acceptable. The items with an average score of less than 0.5 were eliminated. Only those with a score of 0.5 or above remained in the question form. Experts provided opinions that none of the items had a mean score below the cut-off mark. As a result, all of the questions were maintained in the question form.

Prior to data collection, this study had obtained an approval reference number ECNIDA 2020/0064 to conduct human research. The interview questions have been reviewed and approved for the study. The approval was granted by the Ethics Committee in Human Research, National Institute of Development Administration.

3.3.2.6 Data Collection

Data was collected from all key informants through individual interviews for the ultimate gain of reliable knowledge as well as experience. In alignment with the research framework, the data of fifty informants, consisting of local people, tourism operators, and local government agencies, was collected by using a semi-structured interview. During the process, the interviewer gathered data from the key informants located in Muang district, Songkhla province. The interviews were conducted from January through June 2021.

3.3.2.7 Data Analysis

Data retrieved from key informants described their views on the process of building the SLB brand and community participation. Content analysis was applied to evaluate all the acquired qualitative data gathered during the interviews. This analysis involved counting and comparing, usually the key words, repeated words, or content that reflect the greatest concerns, accompanied by understanding the meanings (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Similar issues were grouped and analyzed before drawing conclusions. As a result, the information obtained from the interviews was used to guide the establishment of the brand building process toward the community participatory approach of the SLB.

In conclusion, the qualitative method employed a semi-structured interview as a survey tool to broaden the scope of knowledge of SLB tourism, focusing on the brand building process and community participatory aspects. Purposive sampling, convenience sampling, and snowball sampling techniques were applied to identify the right interviewees to involve in semi-structured interviews. A qualitative

investigation was conducted using a question form and gathered data from 50 key informants. Upon data collection, the content analysis method was used to direct the formation of the SLB brand building process toward community participatory approach.

3.4 Research Process

This research contains six main steps in process, comprises of literate review, Item-Objective Congruence evaluation, pilot testing, questionnaire surveys, individual interview and data analysis.

3.4.1 Process 1: Literate Review

The literate review provides concepts and theories related to tourist behavior, tourist perception, destination attributes, destination brand and Songkhla lake basin. Relevant variables and criteria were considered by the researcher at the starting point of this process.

3.4.2 Process 2: Item-Objective Congruence Evaluation

To ensure questionnaire validity, processing of the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was required. The questionnaire is acceptable when the IOC result is ≥ 0.5 (Turner & Carlson, 2003). The IOC was carried out by three experts with knowledge and experience in the field of branding and tourism management. Upon completion of the evaluation, the questionnaire was revised in accordance with the recommendations of the experts.

3.4.3 Process 3: Pilot Testing

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire to all samples, the researcher tested the reliability of the questionnaire by pilot testing with 30 tourists at Hatyai District, Songkhla province. The objective is to measure the degree of internal consistency of the measurement scale. The reliability of the instrument is acceptable when Cronbach's Alpha value is equal to or greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010).

3.4.4 Process 4: Questionnaire Surveys

Process 4 and 5 is the period of data collection. Before starting an interview, questionnaire surveys were prioritized in Muang district, Songkhla province. The 420 questionnaires were distributed to tourists who visit destinations along SLB located at Muang district, Songkhla province.

3.4.5 Process 5: Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interview was conducted along with the question form. The interviews focused on local people, tourism operators and local government agencies.

3.4.6 Process 6: Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics methods were used to analyze quantitative data while content analysis method was used to analyze qualitative data.

Table 3.5 Summary of Population Groups and Research Tools

No.	Population	Data Collection Tools	Sample Size	Objective
1	Tourists	Questionnaire	420	① ② ③
2	Local people	Semi-structured interview	11	①
3	Tourism operators	Semi-structured interview	26	①
4	Local government agencies	Semi-structured interview	13	①

3.5 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, mixed research methodology, namely qualitative and quantitative methods, were employed in this study. Table 3.5 summarises the research methodology that will be used for data collection and data analysis in an alignment with all defined objectives. Data was obtained from primary and secondary sources to ensure the validity. In addition, primary sources were qualitative results from semi-structured

interviews and quantitative results from questionnaire which utilizes non-probability sampling. Qualitative findings and results were analysed by content analysis and quantitative results were evaluated by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).



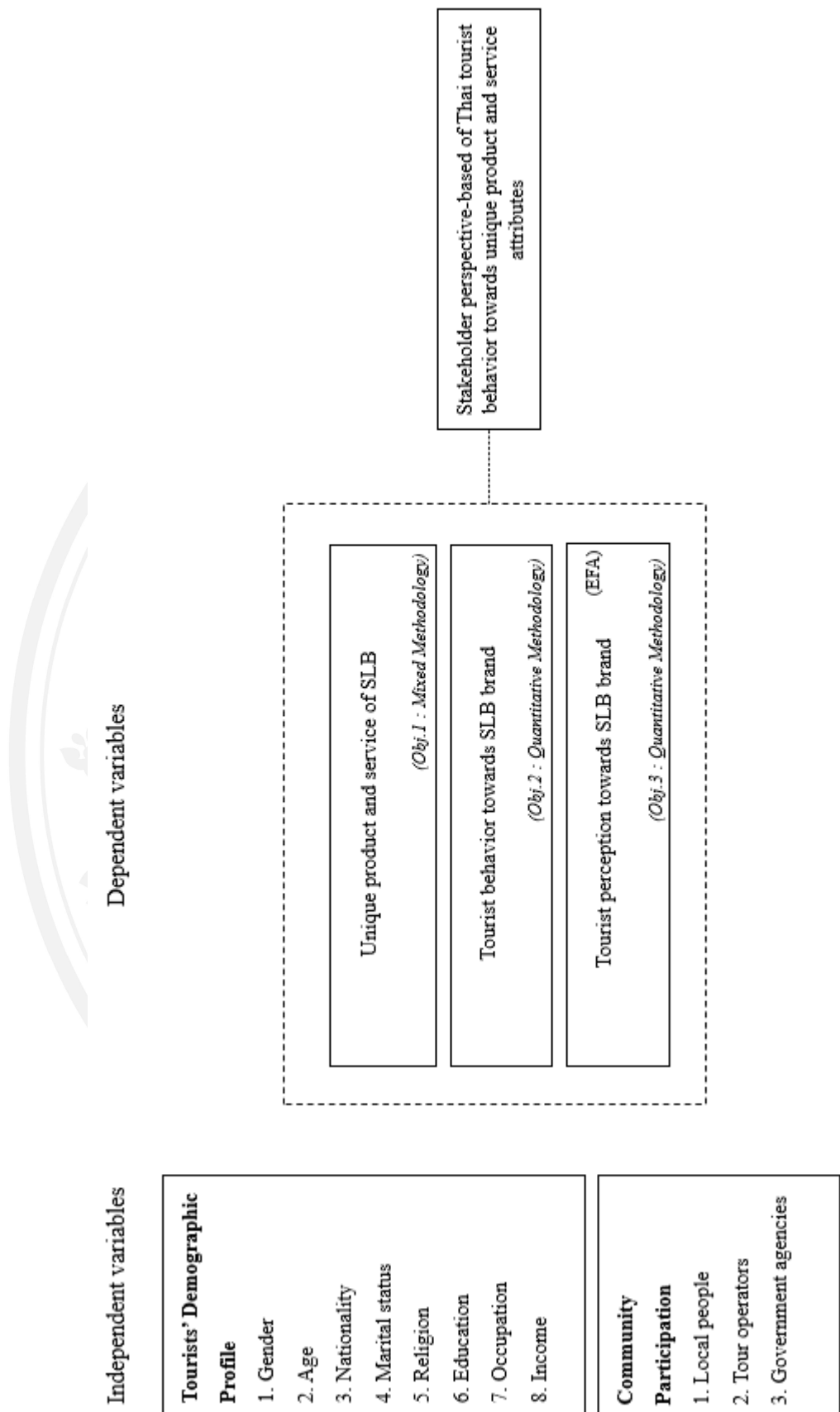


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Research Framework

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are to analyze, interpret and summarize the main findings from the questionnaire with tourist and semi-structured interviews with local people, tourism operators, and local government agencies about the unique product and service of SLB, tourist behavior toward SLB, and tourist perception of the SLB brand.

The findings and discussion of this research are divided into three parts. The first part is an introduction of the chapter. The second part is comprised of descriptive results which cover the fundamental statistical analysis of the respondents' sociodemographic profiles, behavior, and perception of the SLB brand, the qualitative results from semi-structured interviews.

The results of data analysis presented below are based on data collected from 420 samples used in quantitative research methodology, and 50 interviewees from qualitative research methodology.

4.2 Descriptive Results

This study used a combination of research techniques, as described in chapter three. As a consequence, both quantitative and qualitative descriptive results are included in this section.

4.2.1 Quantitative Descriptive Statistic Results

The results of quantitative descriptive statistic are divided into four parts 1) the descriptive statistic results of the socio-demographic profiles of the SLB tourists, 2) the descriptive statistic results of the travel behavior of the SLB tourists towards SLB brand, 3) the descriptive statistic results of the unique products and services of SLB,

and 4) the descriptive statistic results of the perception of the SLB tourist towards SLB brand.

4.2.1.1 Descriptive Statistic Results of the Respondents' Socio-demographic Profiles

The quantitative data was collected from 420 questionnaire surveys, and the results of the descriptive statistics of socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents consisted of gender, age, location of residence, religion, marital status, education, occupation, and average monthly income (Table 4.1).

Among 420 respondents, 97 were male and 316 were female, accounted for 23.49% and 76.51%, respectively. In terms of age, about half of the respondents (49.52%) were between the ages of 21 and 37 years old, followed by those between the ages of 38 and 53 years old, and those between 54 and 72 years old, with 33.25% and 15.55% respectively. A very tiny proportion was shared by the respondents aged over 73 years old and above and below 21 years old, at only 1.20% and 0.48% respectively (Table 4.1).

Considering the location of residence, it is found that 243 respondents (57.86%) were from the southern part, followed by 116 respondents (27.62%) from Bangkok metropolitan. While 31 respondents were from the central part, 16 respondents from the northern part, 10 respondents from the eastern part, and 4 respondents from the north-eastern part, accounted for 7.38%, 3.81%, 2.38%, and 0.95% respectively (Table 4.1).

The study revealed 348 respondents (83.06%) were Buddhist, 57 respondents (13.60%) were Muslim, and 14 respondents (3.34%) were Christian. According to the majority, 232 respondents were married, accounted for 55.24%, followed by 147 respondents who were single at 35.00%. The small portions shared by 22 respondents holding divorce status and 19 respondents having widow status, accounted for 5.24% and 4.52% respectively. A bachelor's degree was held by half of the respondents (50.48%), while 166 respondents with less than a bachelor's degree accounted for 39.71%. Those with a higher bachelor's degree were in the minority, 41 respondents accounted for 9.81% of the total (Table 4.1).

This analysis showed 87 respondents (20.76%) were college/university students and 63 respondents (15.04%) were private-business employees. 58

respondents (13.84%) were business owners, and 57 respondents (13.60%) were part-time workers. Civil servants and housewives shared the same number of 40 respondents, accounted for 9.55% each. 29 respondents (6.92%) were retired, and another 29 respondents (6.92%) were unemployed. Only 16 respondents (3.82%) were pensioners (Table 4.1).

In terms of the monthly income, it was discovered that 124 respondents (29.52%), the largest group, had an average income of THB 10,001 - 20,000. Among the tourists, 86 respondents (20.48%) had no income, and 85 respondents (20.24%) had an average income below THB 10,000. 81 of them (19.29%) had an average income of THB 20,001 - 30,000, while 38 respondents (9.05%) had an average income of THB 30,001 - 40,000. Only 6 respondents (1.42%) had an average income of over THB 40,001 (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Summary of Frequency and Percentage of Respondents based on Socio-Demographic Profiles

No.	Topic	Socio-demographic Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	97	23.49
		Female	316	76.51
2	Age	Below 21 years old	2	0.48
		21-37 years old	207	49.52
		38-53 years old	139	33.25
		54-72 years old	65	15.55
		Above 73 years old	5	1.20
		3	Location of Residence	Southern part
Northern part	16	3.81		
North-eastern part	4	0.95		
Eastern part	10	2.38		
Central part excl. Bangkok	31	7.38		
Bangkok metropolitan	116	27.62		
4	Religion	Christian	14	3.34
		Buddhist	348	83.06
		Muslim	57	13.60

No.	Topic	Socio-demographic Profiles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5	Marital Status	Single	147	35.00
		Married	232	55.24
		Divorce	22	5.24
		Widow	19	4.52
6	Education	Below a bachelor's degree	166	39.71
		A bachelor's degree	211	50.48
		Above a bachelor's degree	41	9.81
7	Occupation	Civil servant	40	9.55
		Private-business employee	63	15.04
		Business owner	58	13.84
		Student	87	20.76
		Pensioner	16	3.82
		Retired	29	6.92
		Housewife	40	9.55
		Unemployed	29	6.92
		Part-time officer	57	13.60
		8	Monthly Income (Thai Baht)	Below THB 10,000
THB 10,001-20,000	124			29.52
THB 20,001-30,000	81			19.29
THB 30,001-40,000	38			9.05
Above THB 40,001	6			1.42
No income	86			20.48

4.2.1.2 Descriptive Statistic Result of SLB Tourist Behavior Toward SLB Brand

The results of the descriptive analysis of tourist behavior are divided by trip interval – pre-travel, on-site travel, and post-travel. The analysis is as follows:

1) Pre-travel

The analysis showed the biggest proportion, 173 respondents (41.30%), used to visit SLB on average 1-5 times. The top two types of transportation were shared by 189 respondents (45.22%) as they preferred to use their personal cars for travel and 117 respondents (27.99%) preferred to travel by using public transportation. In terms of travel objectives, 202 respondents (42.98%) aimed to travel

and do recreation in SLB while 106 respondents (22.55%) intended to visit relatives and friends. For travel plans, 202 respondents (31.74%) spent time more than a week up to 2 weeks searching for information and taking necessary actions. In addition, more than half of the respondents (54.65%) used about 2-3 days to do activities in SLB (Table 4.2).

Talking about preferred travel duration, 153 respondents (36.52%) preferred to travel during the weekdays. For travel decision makers, it was found that 168 respondents, or equivalent to 40%, decided to travel on their own, while family members and relatives shared 20% of the total result. The top information channel that supported travel decision making was social media (63.50%), i.e. IG, Line, and Facebook. In addition to that, the 198 respondents (47.60%) used Facebook as the first option to connect to social media. The study also revealed 268 respondents, who accounted for 63.96%, were the ones who paid for travel expenses on their own. The average expenditure, shared by 155 respondents (36.99%), was in the range of THB 3,001-5,000, followed by 133 respondents (31.74%), was in the range of THB 1,001-3,000 respectively (Table 4.2).

The questionnaires explored the SLB information channels. The respondents gave the top three priorities that they used to get to know SLB. They were social media (36.03%), friends and relatives (21.02%), and the Songkhla provincial website (11.49%). The analysis presented 402 respondents, who accounted for 97.34% of those seeking information prior to the travel trip. 290 respondents (37.52%) utilized social media to find out more SLB information as part of their decision making for this trip. Based on the analysis, the SLB image in the respondents' mind was of a beautiful natural, local way of life, and fresh and delicious seafood, which accounted for 30.89%, 12.04%, and 8.90% respectively (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Summary of Pre-Travel Behavior of SLB Tourists

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Number of travelling to SLB		
1-5 times	173	41.30
6-10 times	135	32.20
11-15 times	76	18.10
15-20 times	28	6.70
Above 20 times	7	1.70
Type of transportation		
Personal car	189	45.22
Public transportation	117	27.99
Car rental	62	14.83
Airline	44	10.53
Train	6	1.44
Travel objective		
Travelling & recreation	202	42.98
Visit relatives/friends	106	22.55
Study visit	90	19.15
Business/meeting/seminar	72	15.32
Pre-travel plan		
Less than 1 week	109	26.01
More than 1 week – 2 weeks	133	31.74
More than 2 weeks – 3 weeks	84	20.05
More than 3 weeks – 4 weeks	26	6.21
More than 1 month	67	15.99
Time spends in SLB		
Less than 1 day	2	0.48
1 day	67	15.99
2-3 days	229	54.65
4-5 days	87	20.76
More than 6 days	34	8.12
Preferred travel duration		
Weekdays	153	36.52

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Weekend	119	28.40
Holidays	59	14.08
At convenience	88	21.00
Travel influencer		
Yourself	168	40.00
Family members/relatives	84	20.00
Lovers	67	15.95
Friends/colleagues	43	10.24
Celebrity/singer/actor	25	5.95
Social media	18	4.29
Offline media	10	2.38
Travel influencer		
YouTuber	4	0.95
Other	1	0.24
Preferred communication channel for information searching & travel decision		
Social media (IG/Line/Facebook)	261	63.50
Friends/relatives	70	17.03
Tour operator	41	9.98
Television	19	4.62
Website	13	3.16
Travel blog	6	1.46
Radio	1	0.25
Preferred social media		
Facebook	198	47.60
Line	110	26.44
IG	43	10.34
TikTok	26	6.25
YouTube	13	3.13
WeChat	10	2.40
WhatsApp	2	0.48
Other	14	3.36
Travel payer		
Myself	268	63.96

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Parents/family members	92	21.96
Company/office	59	14.08
Average spending at SLB/time		
Less than THB 1,000	47	11.22
THB 1,001-3,000	133	31.74
THB 3,001-5,000	155	36.99
More than THB 5,001	84	20.05
How do you know tourism destinations in SLB?		
Social media	276	36.03
Friends/relatives	161	21.02
Songkhla provincial website	88	11.49
Tourism authority of Thailand's website	61	7.96
Tour operator	59	7.70
Television	55	7.18
Book/magazine	33	4.31
Influencer i.e. well known people/actor/singer	26	3.39
Radio	6	0.78
Blogger/reviewer	1	0.14
Pre-travel information searching		
Yes	402	97.34
No	11	2.66
SLB information searching channel for this trip		
Social media	290	37.52
Friends/relatives	173	22.38
Songkhla provincial website	94	12.16
Tour operator	69	8.93
Tourism authority of Thailand's website	60	7.76
Television	36	4.66
Book/magazine	30	3.88
Influencer i.e. well known people/actor/singer	18	2.33
Blogger/reviewer	2	0.26
Radio	1	0.12
SLB image <u>before</u> the visit		

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Having a beautiful natural	118	30.89
Having an outstanding local way of life	46	12.04
Having fresh & delicious seafood	34	8.90
Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture	33	8.64
SLB image <u>before</u> the visit		
Travelling is convenient and easy to access	21	5.50
Value for money	21	5.50
Meeting travel expectations	20	5.24
Value for learning i.e. national museum	20	5.24
Having safety	17	4.45
Availability of various souvenir shops	16	4.19
Having standard accommodation	12	3.14
Having a good location/geographical area	9	2.36
Having local friendliness	5	1.31
Having various tourism activities	4	1.05
SLB image <u>before</u> the visit		
Having exciting destinations	4	1.05
Having complete tourism facilities	2	0.52

2) On-site travel

The analysis demonstrated that the first thing respondents preferred to do when arriving at SLB was to check-in to their hotel or accommodation. This was shared by 118 respondents, accounted for 28.30%, followed by visiting tourist destinations, which was distributed by 80 respondents (19.18%). During the trip, 416 respondents, described as 99.76%, had chosen their accommodation in the SLB area. In terms of transportation, 295 respondents (70.74%) used their personal car for travel. Focusing on activities during the trip, visiting museums and relaxing on the beach both received the same number of responses from 132 respondents, accounting for 12.18% of the total. Considering the most tourist destinations that they intended to visit, 112 respondents (26.73%) chose to visit historical sites, followed by natural sites that were responded to by 102 respondents (24.34%). Communication via social media was among the data gathered. According to the study, 200 respondents (47.85%) utilized

Facebook to share and communicate their travel experiences. The second channel, Line, answered by 122 respondents, accounted for 29.19%. Moreover, 235 respondents (29.52%) used social media to find out more information about the trip and 165 respondents (20.73%) sought opinions from their friends and relatives (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Summary of SLB Tourists Behavior During On-Site Travel

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
First thing to do upon arrival		
Check-in hotel/accommodation	118	28.30
Travel	80	19.18
Visiting relatives	75	17.99
Eating	74	17.75
Meeting/seminar	44	10.55
Shopping	26	6.24
Accommodation		
In SLB area	416	99.76
Outside SLB area	1	0.24
Type of transportation for traveling SLB area		
Personal car	295	70.74
Public transportation	61	14.63
Car rental	61	14.63
Activities during the travel		
Visit museum	132	12.18
Visit beach	132	12.18
Visit temple/Masjid/shrine	128	11.81
Eating local food	115	10.61
Shopping	102	9.41
Taking a tram	79	7.29
Visit relatives	72	6.46
Meeting/seminar	70	6.46
Visit ancient sites	63	5.81
Visit zoo	42	3.87
Cruising on the lake	39	3.60

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Activities during the travel		
Exercise/workout	34	3.14
Visit local community	33	3.04
Making local food	26	2.40
Making Koh Yo weaving cloth	17	1.57
Must visit place		
Historical destination	112	26.73
Natural destination	102	24.34
Religious destination	91	21.72
Recreation destination	49	11.69
Traditional & culture destination	25	5.97
Ancient community destination	20	4.77
Knowledge learning destination	20	4.77
The most communication channel on social media		
Line	122	29.19
Facebook	200	47.85
IG	39	9.33
TikTok	16	3.83
Not using social media	15	3.59
WeChat	14	3.35
YouTube	8	1.91
WhatsApp	4	0.96
Channel for seeking additional travel information		
Social media	235	29.52
Friends/relatives	165	20.73
Songkhla provincial website	74	9.30
Local people/community	73	9.17
Local tourism agencies	70	8.79
Tourist center	63	7.91
Tour operator	48	6.03
Channel for seeking additional travel information		
Tourism authority of Thailand website	43	5.40
Book/magazine	25	3.14

3) Post-travel

The analysis revealed the impression of respondents that they were impressed by the SLB natural beauty. The most impression was revealed by 189 respondents, which accounted for 20.70%. The second impression was the fresh and delicious seafood that was identified by 153 respondents, which accounted for 16.76%. Up to 400 respondents (95.47%) expressed their intention to revisit the SLB. The greatest proportion of 166 respondents (19.24%) described that the reason for revisiting because of its natural beauty (Table 4.4).

In terms of experience sharing, 144 respondents (15.93%) expressed their intention to share with others the natural beauty as the most impressive travel experience of the SLB. Concentrating on the communication channel, 305 respondents (63.02%) applied social media to share their travel experiences. Regarding the comparison of the expectations (before trip) and actual experience (after trip), the respondents identified key highlights as natural beauty, fresh and delicious seafood, and safety, which accounted for 14.22%, 10.81%, and 10.47% respectively. Overall, 299 respondents (71.19%) determined their satisfaction with what was received as expected, while 120 respondents (28.57%) determined the satisfaction was beyond expectations (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Summary of Post-Travel Behavior of SLB Tourists

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Trip impression		
Having a beautiful natural	189	20.70
Having fresh & delicious seafood	153	16.76
Availability of various souvenir shops	74	8.11
Having safety	68	7.45
Having an outstanding local way of life	66	7.23
Value for money	60	6.57
Travelling is convenient and easy to access	51	5.59
Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture	41	4.49
Having standard accommodation	34	3.72

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Meeting travel expectations	31	3.40
Having local friendliness	28	3.07
Having attractions that are worth learning about	27	2.96
Having exciting destinations	27	2.96
Having various tourism activities	24	2.63
Having complete tourism facilities	20	2.19
Having a good location/geographical area	20	2.19
Intention to revisit		
Certainly, come back	400	95.47
Not sure	19	4.53
Reason to revisit		
Having a beautiful natural	166	19.24
Travelling is convenient and easy to access	98	11.36
Having fresh & delicious seafood	92	10.66
Having safety	85	9.85
Value for money	81	9.39
Having an outstanding local way of life	58	6.72
Availability of various souvenir shops	45	5.21
Meeting travel expectations	40	4.63
Having a good location/geographical area	34	3.94
Having complete tourism facilities	33	3.82
Reason to revisit		
Having standard accommodation	31	3.59
Having local friendliness	29	3.36
Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture	24	2.78
Having exciting destinations	14	1.62
Having attractions that are worth learning about	13	1.51
Having various tourism activities		
Topic for experience sharing		
Having a beautiful natural	144	15.93
Travelling is convenient and easy to access	101	11.17
Value for money	101	11.17

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Having fresh & delicious seafood	82	9.07
Having safety	76	8.41
Having an outstanding local way of life	60	6.64
Availability of various souvenir shops	52	5.75
Having complete tourism facilities	46	5.09
Having a good location/geographical area	37	4.09
Having local friendliness	37	4.09
Having exciting destinations	37	4.09
Meeting travel expectations	32	3.54
Having standard accommodation	31	3.43
Having attractions that are worth learning about	23	2.54
Having various tourism activities	22	2.43
Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture	21	2.32
Not to recommend to other	2	0.23
Communication channel of SLB experience sharing		
Social media i.e. Line/IG/TikTok/YouTube	305	63.02
Friends/relatives	143	29.55
Website	22	4.55
Travel blog	14	2.89
Travel expectation and touch of truth		
Having a beautiful natural	125	14.22
Having fresh & delicious seafood	95	10.81
Having safety	92	10.47
Travelling is convenient and easy to access	86	9.78
Value for money	79	8.99
Having an outstanding local way of life	65	7.39
Availability of various souvenir shops	51	5.80
Having standard accommodation	49	5.57
Having exciting destinations	42	4.78
Meeting travel expectations	36	4.10
Having local friendliness	33	3.75
Having complete tourism facilities	32	3.64

Detail	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Having a good location/geographical area	32	3.64
Having various tourism activities	29	3.30
Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture	23	2.62
Having attractions that are worth learning about	10	1.14
Overall impression and expectation		
As per expectations	299	71.19
Beyond expectations	120	28.57
Below expectations	1	0.24

4.2.1.3 Descriptive Statistic Result of the Unique Product and Service of SLB

The results of the descriptive analysis on the unique products and services of SLB are divided into two parts – 1) tourist attraction and 2) service. The analysis is as follows:

1) SLB Tourist Attraction

The quantitative data was collected from 420 respondents who visited Songkhla province during the survey period. This part examines the basic statistical analysis on the prominence level of the unique product and service of SLB. The prominence level is evaluated by employing a five-level evaluation, with five referring to “very high prominence”, whereas level one stands for “very low prominence”. Therefore, the result of evaluation is used for establishing the process of branding towards the community participatory approach of the SLB.

(1) Natural Attraction

Descriptive statistical analysis on the unique product of SLB and its interpreted levels of tourist perception organized in sequential order from highest to lowest scores are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Prominence Level of Natural Attraction

No.	Attraction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Cat & rat islands	4.60	.495	Very High
2	Koh Yo	4.60	.505	Very High
3	Tang Kuan hill	4.58	.513	Very High
4	Noi hill	4.42	.599	Very High
5	Kao Seng hill	4.35	.624	Very High
6	Samila beach	4.35	.667	Very High
7	Kao Seng beach	4.32	.632	Very High
8	Son-on beach	4.20	.738	High
9	Thinnasulanonda bridge	4.18	.753	High
10	Herb garden	4.15	.788	High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.37	.660	Very High

According to Table 4.5, most of the natural attractions were determined to be at “very high” prominence level. The Cat and Rat islands, as well as Koh Yo, reached the highest mean score at the same level which was 4.60. However, there were three attractions revealed to be at a “high” prominence level. The lowest mean score of natural attractions was the herb garden, holding the score at 4.15.

(2) Archaeological and Cultural Attraction – Religious

Descriptive statistical analysis of the prominence of archaeological and cultural attraction – religious and its interpreted levels of perception organized in sequential order from highest to lowest scores are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Prominence Level of Archaeological and Cultural Attraction - Religious

No.	Attraction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Chai Mongkol temple	4.43	.643	Very High
2	Tai Yo temple	4.40	.700	Very High
3	Srisudaram temple	4.36	.700	Very High
4	Phet Mongkol temple	4.35	.694	Very High
5	Pho Pathamawas temple	4.34	.684	Very High
6	Koh Thum temple	4.34	.622	Very High
7	Leam Sai temple	4.32	.701	Very High
8	Matchimawas temple	4.25	.604	Very High
9	Usasna Islam mosque	4.15	.657	High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.33	.670	Very High

Focusing on the religious attraction, most of the prominence level was defined to be “very high”. However, there was only one attraction revealed to have a prominence level of “high”. As presented in Table 4.6, the analysis revealed the highest mean score was held by Chai Mongkol temple, holding the highest score at 4.43, while the lowest mean score was held by Usasna Islam mosque, holding the lowest score at 4.15.

(3) Archaeological and Cultural Attraction – Old Town

Descriptive statistical analysis of the prominence of archaeological and cultural attraction – old town and its interpreted levels of perception organized in sequential order from highest to lowest scores are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Prominence Level of Archaeological and Cultural Attraction - Old Town

No.	Attraction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Muang Songkhla – Leam Son site	4.25	.542	Very High
2	Muang Songkhla – Bo Yang site	4.15	.542	High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.18	.542	High

For the old town attraction, there were two locations, namely Muang Songkhla – Leam Son site and Muang Songkhla – Bo Yang site. Tourists have indicated the overall prominence level of old town destinations as a “*high*” level (Table 4.7), whereas the highest mean score was Muang Songkhla – Leam Son site, holding the score at 4.25, and the lowest mean score was Muang Songkhla – Bo Yang site, holding the score at 4.15.

(4) Archaeological and Cultural Attraction - Other

Descriptive statistical analysis of the prominence of archaeological and cultural attraction – other and its interpreted levels of perception organized in sequential order from highest to lowest scores are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Prominence Level of Archaeological and Cultural Attractions – Other

No.	Attraction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Khao Rubchang pagoda	4.39	.619	Very High
2	Khao Kut pagoda	4.38	.609	Very High
3	Chai Mongkol temple pagoda	4.38	.608	Very High
4	Leam Sai gun turret	4.36	.616	Very High
5	Khao Seng pagoda	4.36	.587	Very High
6	Tang Kuan hill pagoda	4.36	.639	Very High
7	Songkhla national museum	4.32	.642	Very High
8	Sogkhla shrine	4.31	.648	Very High
9	Phadhamarong museum	4.29	.650	Very High
10	Songkhla fortress	4.26	.697	Very High
11	Stone inscription pavilion	4.24	.713	Very High
12	Thaksin folklore museum the institute for Southern Thai studies	4.24	.677	Very High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.32	.640	Very High

Considering other archaeological and cultural attractions, the prominence level was identified as “very high” (Table 4.8). According to the study, the highest mean score was Khao Rubchang pagoda at 4.39, whereas the lowest scores were the stone inscription pavilion and Thaksin folklore museum the institute for Southern Thai studies, holding the same score at 4.24.

(5) Cultural Attraction - Local Handicraft

Descriptive statistical analysis of the prominence level of cultural attraction – local handicraft and its interpreted levels of perception organized in sequential order from highest to lowest scores are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Prominence Level of Cultural Attraction – Local Handicraft

No.	Attraction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Koh Yo weaving cloth	4.25	.645	Very High
2	Lee Ma Lae cloth house	4.24	.670	Very High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.24	.660	Very High

There were two attractions for local handicrafts located in Muang district, Songkhla province. According to Table 4.9, both attractions, namely Koh Yo weaving cloth and Lee Ma Lae cloth house, were identified as having a prominence level of “very high”. The scores were presented at 4.25 and 4.24 respectively.

(6) Learning Attraction

Descriptive statistical analysis of the prominence level of the learning attraction and its interpreted levels of perception organized in sequential order from highest to lowest scores are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Prominence Level of Learning Attraction

No.	Attraction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	General Pream’s garden	4.38	.643	Very High
2	Songkhla regional observatory	4.37	.610	Very High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.37	.630	Very High

Following the data given in Table 4.10 above, it was revealed that in general, the learning attractions were perceived at a “very high” prominence level. General Pream’s garden had a mean score of 4.38, whereas Songkhla regional observatory had a score of 4.37.

(7) Tourist Attraction for Recreation

Descriptive statistical analysis of the prominence of tourist attraction for recreation and its interpreted levels of perception organized in sequential order from highest to lowest scores are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Prominence Level of Recreation Attraction

No.	Attraction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Local restaurant/seafood restaurant	4.53	.580	Very High
2	Souvenir shops	4.52	.580	Very High
3	Tinnasulanonda stadium	4.46	.579	Very High
4	Japanese garden	4.43	.665	Very High
5	Songkhla zoo	4.32	.734	Very High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.45	.630	Very High

The analysis revealed the prominence level of the recreation attractions as “very high”. According to Table 4.11, the highest mean score of the prominence perception was local restaurant/seafood restaurant, holding the score at 4.53, whereas the lowest mean score was Songkhla zoo, holding the score at 4.32.

2) SLB Service

This part examines the basic statistical analysis of the impression level of the SLB tourism service. The impression level was evaluated by employing a five-point Likert scale evaluation, with five referring to “very high impression”, whereas level one stands for “very low impression”.

Table 4.12 Impression Level of SLB Service

No.	Variable	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Understanding tourists	4.46	.562	Very High
2	Willingness to welcome	4.44	.613	Very High
3	The friendliness of the local community	4.40	.668	Very High
4	Creating a consistent impression	4.34	.670	Very High
5	Holding a service expertise	4.34	.600	Very High
6	Clear communication with a smiley face	4.33	.646	Very High
7	Treat with respect	4.32	.502	Very High
8	Willing to help/solve problems	4.32	.666	Very High
9	Having service in mind	4.31	.526	Very High
10	Using modern technology in service	4.30	.706	Very High
Overall Tourist Perception		4.36	.621	Very High

Table 4.12 describes that the overall impression level of the SLB service fell into the range of “very high” impression level. The tourists were considered when evaluating the service, which comprised of the ability to understand tourists’ needs and wants (4.46), willingness to welcome tourists as a host (4.44), friendliness of the local community (4.40), ability to create a consistent impression on visitors (4.34) and capability of holding service expertise (4.34). In addition, they were also considered to have clear communication with a smiley face (4.33), ability to treat others with respect (4.32), willingness to help or solve the problems (4.32), having service in mind (4.31) and using modern technology in service (4.30).

4.2.1.4 Descriptive Statistic Result of the Tourist Perception Towards SLB Brand

The results of the descriptive analysis on the tourist perception towards SLB brand were divided into two parts – 1) existence of SLB destination brand and 2) destination attributes affecting SLB destination brand. The analysis is as follows:

1) The Existence of the Destination Brand

Descriptive analysis of tourist’s perception about the existence of SLB destination brand is illustrated in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13 Tourist Perception of the Existence of SLB Destination Brand

Existence of SLB Destination Brand	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, the brand does exist.	299	71.36
No, the brand does not exist.	120	28.64

In terms of the existence, 299 respondents (71.36%) conveyed their views that the SLB destination brand exists, while 120 respondents expressed that the brand does not exist.

2) Destination Attributes Affecting Tourist Perception of SLB Brand

This part examines the basic statistical analysis of destination attributes affecting tourist perception of the SLB brand. The importance level was evaluated by employing a five-point Likert scale evaluation, with five referring to “very high importance”, whereas level one stands for “very low importance”.

Table 4.14 Tourist Perception Towards Perceived Destination Attributes Affecting SLB Brand

Attributes	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Tourist Destination			
Destination attractiveness	4.56	.572	Very High
Representation of history	4.47	.550	Very High
Tradition & culture reflecting community uniqueness	4.45	.570	Very High
Identity of tourist destinations	4.44	.564	Very High
Location/geographical area	4.24	.511	Very High
Variety of tourist destinations	4.23	.464	Very High
Overall tourist perception	4.40	.550	Very High
Accessibility			
Clear signage availability	4.30	.645	Very High
Travel convenience i.e. road	4.22	.661	Very High
Variety of public transportations i.e. flight, car, plane	4.18	.682	High
Overall tourist perception	4.24	.660	Very High

Attributes	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Activity			
Variety of tourist activities	4.37	.645	Very High
Variety of shopping destinations	4.31	.654	Very High
Opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people	4.25	.538	Very High
Opportunity to join activity with local people	4.20	.520	High
Overall tourist perception	4.28	.600	Very High
Destination Management			
Availability of modern technology for service	4.40	.607	Very High
Easy to access the destination information	4.39	.634	Very High
Availability of local tour guide	4.38	.612	Very High
Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation	4.35	.629	Very High
Community participation	4.35	.693	Very High
Sufficient number of officers on duty and provide quality service	4.34	.590	Very High
Sustainability management	4.32	.613	Very High
Willingness to service	4.30	.592	Very High
Overall tourist perception	4.35	.620	Very High
Cost of Service			
Reasonable price of souvenirs	4.42	.622	Very High
Reasonable price of accommodation	4.40	.580	Very High
Reasonable price of product & services	4.36	.595	Very High
Value for money of the travel expenses	4.16	.602	High
Reasonable of the entrance fee	4.15	.622	High
Overall tourist perception	4.30	.620	Very High
Infrastructure			
Availability of local souvenir shops	4.45	.610	Very High
Availability of local restaurants/shops	4.42	.611	Very High
Availability of a standard hotel & accommodation	4.34	.652	Very High
Availability of bank / ATM	4.30	.638	Very High
Availability of internet/Wifi	4.28	.603	Very High
Availability of tourist information center	4.22	.572	Very High
Overall tourist perception	4.32	.620	Very High

Attributes	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Safety & Hygiene			
Disease control management	4.51	.597	Very High
Clean tourist destination	4.46	.591	Very High
Clean toilet	4.39	.636	Very High
Road safety	4.29	.688	Very High
No terrorism	4.20	.697	High
No criminal	4.11	.666	High
Political stability	4.10	.665	High
Overall tourist perception	4.29	.670	Very High
Destination Brand Image			
Politeness & friendliness of local people	4.45	.548	Very High
Reflecting history & local way of life	4.44	.602	Very High
Destination charming	4.43	.632	Very High
Good renown	4.43	.650	Very High
Acceptance of community/local host	4.40	.550	Very High
Touchable essence of local community	4.39	.558	Very High
Local participation in destination management	4.39	.653	Very High
Overall Tourist Perception	4.42	.600	Very High

According to Table 4.14, most of the destination attributes affecting tourist perception of the SLB brand fall into the range of “very high importance”. The factors they were most likely to consider evaluating the brand perception at a “very high” level, including the highest mean scores of each dimension which are destination attractiveness (4.56), clear signage availability (4.30), variety of tourist activities (4.37), availability of modern technology for service (4.40), reasonable price of souvenirs (4.42), availability of local souvenir shops (4.45), disease control management (4.51), and politeness and friendliness of local people (4.45).

Following the finding that the destination attractiveness (4.56) is perceived most favorably by tourists tends to support the view that it is the driving force for SLB tourism. As supported by Prachyakorn Chaiyakot (2011), SLB has a long history and that has resulted in various tourist attractions and activities available throughout the SLB area, which make it more attractive and competitive in the tourism

market. The findings also show that there is a relatively strong and favorable perception toward the disease control management (4.51) of the destination. This explains the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic that is having an impact on tourists considering the destination brand. It can be summarized that a destination that has proper disease control management tends to attract more tourists. However, the finding that political stability (4.10) is perceived as the least favorable impact attribute by tourists tends to support the view that most of them are local residents and from nearby provinces, thus having no impact in this regard.

4.2.2 Qualitative Descriptive Results

As stated in chapter three, the research design contains mixed methodology in order to obtain comprehensive data to validate the numeric data found through the quantitative method. As a result, the semi-structured interview was used to collect data from key tourism stakeholders essential to the unique product and service of SLB.

4.2.2.1 Respondent's Profiles

To achieve consistent data, the populations relevant to SLB tourism are separated into three groups for the semi-structured interview. They were local government agencies, tourism operators, and local community (Table 4.15).

The interviews involved a total of 50 participants. The first group comprises of thirteen interviewees who were in charge of formulating tourism policy as well as strategic plan formulation for local government agencies. The second group is tourism operators who involved in SLB tourism activities. This group consists of twenty-six interviewees, including transportation agencies, tourism agencies, restaurants, souvenir shops, hotels, and accommodation. Besides, the third group is from the local communities, consists of eleven interviewees from local tourism enterprises and village members.

To maintain confidentiality and ethical standards of the research, the names and positions of the interviewees were coded. GA stands for local government agencies, TO stands for tourism operators, and LC stands for local communities.

4.2.2.2 Interview Questions

Information was obtained through semi-structured interviews in order to answer the research objectives as follows:

- 1) What is the SLB history and its current tourism situation?
- 2) In your view, what are product and service of SLB?
- 3) What is the attraction that call visitors to SLB?
- 4) In what direction do you think SLB tourism should develop in the future? Why?

The results of the above questions are used to answer the first objective. The findings are used as a guideline to analyze stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of Songkhla Lake Basin in Muang District, Songkhla Province.

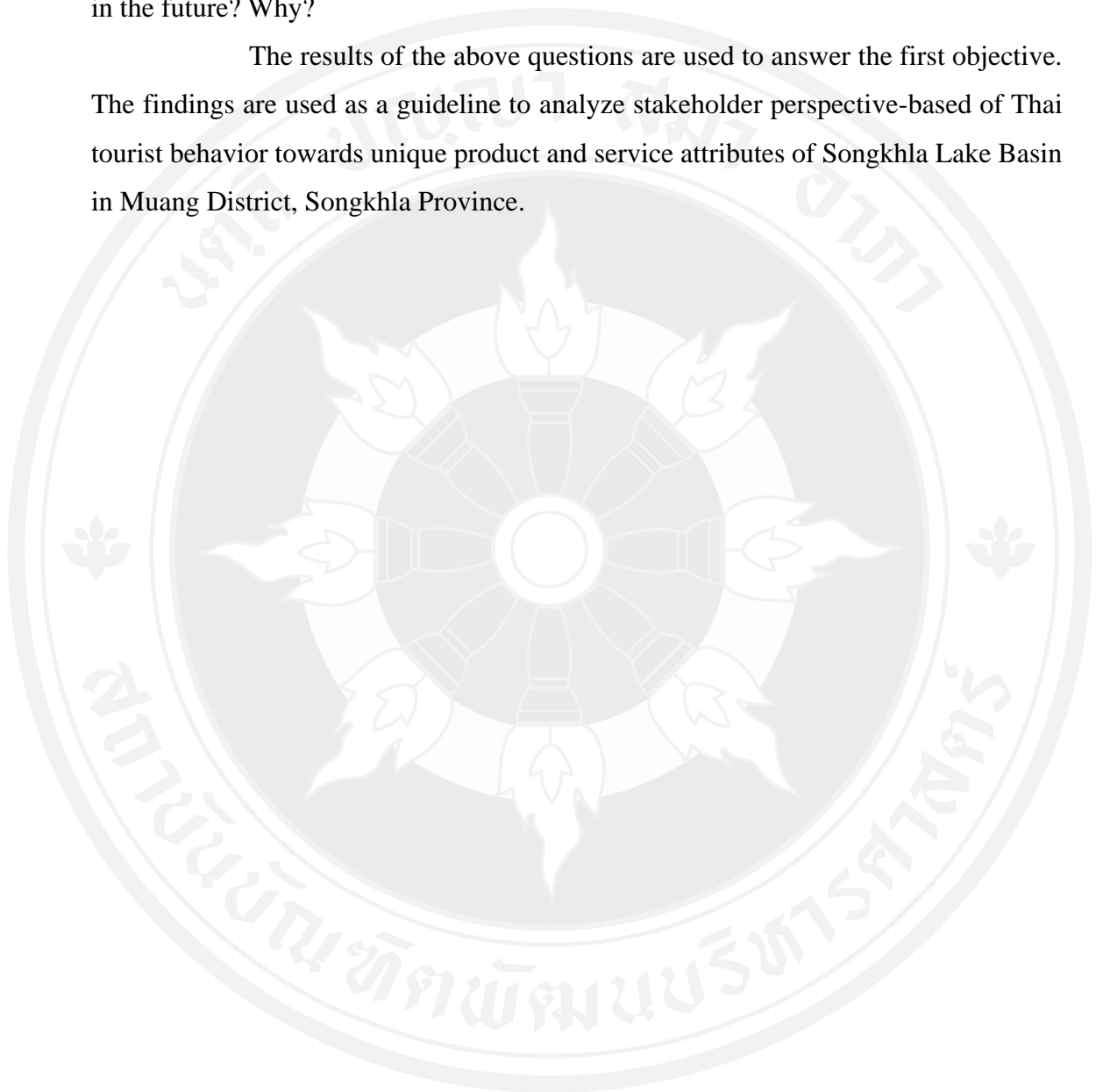


Table 4.15 Respondents' Profile from Semi-Structured Interviews

Respondents	Total (50 Persons)	Position
Local government agencies (13)	Songkhla provincial office (2 persons) Tourism authority of Thailand, Hatyai branch (2 persons) Songkhla district office (1 person) Songkhla provincial community development office (1 person) Songkhla municipality office (2 persons) Koh Yo sub-district administration organization (1 person) Songkhla provincial office of tourism and sports (1 person) Songkhla provincial administration organization (2 persons) Thaksin university (1 person)	Vice Governor, Provincial Strategic Planner Branch Manager, Marketing Officer Deputy District Officer Head of Strategic Community Development Unit Social Welfare Head, Tourism Promotion Head Deputy Head Office Head President, Head of Tourism Promotion Unit University Lecturer
Tourism operators (26)	Transportation (5 persons) Tourism agency (5 persons) Restaurant (6 persons) Souvenir shop (5 persons) Hotel/accommodation (5 persons)	Owner, Driver Owner, Staff Owner, Staff Owner, Staff Hotel Staff
Local communities (11)	Local tourism enterprise (8 persons) Local villager (3 persons)	Group Head, Group Member Village Member

4.2.2.3 Interview Results of the First Interview Question

The semi-structured interview research findings are identified by the group of respondents in order to combine the viewpoint of each group on the research questions.

The first question “What is the SLB history and its current tourism situation?” is meant to address the first objective. The conclusions are identified in separate groups of interviewees (Table 4.16) and the findings are summarized descriptively as follows.

1) The SLB History

SLB is a location that has a long history with a unique way of life of the community. SLB renowned for its natural beauty and a variety of attractions, such as beaches, old towns, the community way of life, the city pillar shrine, fresh sea food as well as delicious local foods.

2) Current Situation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this current situation creates a high negative impact on tourism in SLB. Tourism shut down and that resulted in a loss of income for all stakeholders in the tourism sector. With the limited tourism activities, the application of disease prevention aligning with public health control has been put in place. The consensus among the groups represented was that the main target tourists were local people, not foreign tourists.

4.2.2.4 Interview Results of the Second Interview Question

The second question “What are product and service of SLB?” addresses the first objective. The conclusions are identified in separate groups of interviewees and the findings are summarized descriptively in Table 4.17.

1) SLB product and service

In the view of all stakeholders, they identify the uniqueness of SLB as having fresh seafood. Songkhla is connected to the Gulf of Thailand and Songkhla Lake, and that results in the richness of natural resources, especially marine animals. These are examples of findings on product and service of SLB from the interviews;

“Songkhla is well-known for its seafood because of its position, which makes the province rich in natural resources. Most visitors know Koh Yor as a spot to eat delicious seafood, and if you have a chance to try it, you will surely want to return.” (LC5)

“The most delicious fish in Thailand is called “3-water seabass,” which can be found only in Songkhla lake.” (TO13)

In addition to the seafood, the stakeholders agree that the diversity of tourism activities is one of the SLB’s uniqueness that makes tourists admire the place. SLB features a variety of tourist attractions across the area, ranging from the sea, beach, local way of life, history, and so on. This is an example from the interviews;

“SLB contains a range of tourist attractions, resulting in a wide range of tourism activities. If you visit Songkhla, you will be able to enjoy its genuine beauty through the activities that you will participate in.” (TO20)

4.2.2.5 Interview Results of the Third Interview Question

The interview question “What is the attraction that call visitors?” focus on the first objective about the unique product and service of SLB (Table 4.18).

1) SLB attraction to call visitor

All the groups’ consensus is that the uniqueness of SLB that attracts tourists to revisit is seafood. The local community group supports the idea that there is lots of good food in Songkhla. The famous place is Koh Yor, where you can find fresh seafood as well as local food. In addition, the government sector and local tour operators point out that the convenience of travel is also one of the attractions for call visitors. Below is an example from the interviews;

“There are various transportation options to bring visitors to Songkhla. At Koh Yor, there are good roads around the island with public signage that will help visitors easily find the place.” (GA12)

Table 4.16 Research Findings from Semi-Structured Interviews on The Current Brand Building Process of SLB

Question 1: What is the SLB history and its current tourism situation?			
Respondents & Topics	Local government agencies (13 interviewees)	Tourism operators (26 interviewees)	Local communities (11 interviewees)
SLB History	(GA1/7/12) Long history since ancient time (GA10/11/13) Distinguished local way of life	(TO1 -26) Long history and holding various tourist attractions	(LC1/2/3) Long history and old town community (LC1/5/6/9/10/11) Local way of life (LC3/5/8/11) Unique local identity
Current Situation	(GA1/7/8/9/11) Limited tourism activity due to the pandemic (GA2) Application of diseases prevention aligning with public health control (GA3/4/8/13) Not much affected from COVID-19 as the target customers are local people and from nearby provinces	(TO1/2/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/23) Affected COVID-19 pandemic thus no travel and no tourists during lock down period thus some business closed (TO3/5/11/20/22) Affected from COVID-19 lock down but adapt to change themselves for business survival (TO4/8/9/21/24) Not much affected from COVID-19 as the target customers are local people (TO6/7/10/25) Decreasing number of foreign tourists thus less income gained	(LC1/3) Affected COVID-19 pandemic especially during lock down period (LC2/3/5/9/10/11) Not much affected from COVID-19 as the target customers are local people

Table 4.17 Research Findings from Semi-Structured Interviews on The Unique Products and Services of SLB

Question 2: What are product and service of SLB?			
Respondents & Topic	Local government agencies (13 interviewees)	Tourism operators (26 interviewees)	Local communities (11 interviewees)
SLB uniqueness	(GA3) 3-water seabass - the most delicious fish in Thailand (GA5) Various tourism activities (GA7) Fresh seafood is well known (GA10) Local way of life with long history (GA13) Wide range of tourist activities	(TO13) Fresh seafood – the taste that only found in Songkhla (TO15) A lot of activities for tourists to do during their stay (TO20) A range of tourist attractions in SLB	(LC1) Availability of activities for visitors to choose based on their interests (LC5) Seafood at Koh Yor

Table 4.18 Research Findings from Semi-Structured Interviews on The Attraction that Calls Visitors

Question 3: What is the attraction that calls visitors?			
Respondents & Topic	Local government agencies (13 interviewees)	Tourism operators (26 interviewees)	Local communities (11 interviewees)
SLB attraction	(GA1) Seafood and local food (GA12) Various transportation options and travel convenience	(TO8) Fresh seafood (TO19) Public road access to the destination	(LC5) Lots of good seafood restaurants in Songkhla

4.2.2.6 Interview Results of the Forth Interview Question

The interview question “In what direction do you think SLB tourism should develop in the future? Why?” focus on the first objective to evaluate the development of SLB attraction.

1) Future development

In the view of government agencies, they focus on promoting community tourism to provide visitors with an exotic and different travel experience elsewhere and to develop facilities as well as services to encourage stakeholders in setting their community tourism guidelines. For tourism operators, more focus should be placed on creating or promoting a local way of life that does not exploit tourists. Finally, increased local community participation in all stages of tourism sustainable development should be encouraged, according to local communities. This is aligned with the finding of Somjit Intamano and Parichart Visuthismajarn (2019) who found that the opportunity for community participation in tourism management was weak, especially by playing an active part in tourist destinations such as in the role of guides or provision of destination services.

4.3 Findings by Objectives

Based on research objectives 1-3, this section summarizes research findings and examines the results of both quantitative and qualitative data applied in this study. As demonstrated in the last section of this chapter, the findings from primary and secondary data are combined to respond to analyze the stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of Songkhla Lake Basin in Muang District, Songkhla Province.

4.3.1 Research Objective 1: The Unique Product and Service of SLB

In relation to research objective 1, the unique product and service of SLB are investigated to explain the view of stakeholders.

4.3.1.1 Research question 1: What are the unique product and service of SLB?

The findings of the unique products and services identified by SLB tourists are divided into two parts – 1) tourist attraction and 2) service. They are summarized as follows:

1) SLB Tourist Attractions

The study reveals the identification of the prominence of tourist attractions as the products of SLB, into 7 categories (Table 4.19). The overall study indicates that all the SLB tourist attractions have a “very high” prominence level. The details of the prominence level in each category are summarized as follows:

Table 4.19 Prominence Level of SLB Attractions

No.	Attractions	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Natural Attractions				
1	Cat & rat island	4.60	.495	Very High
2	Koh Yo	4.60	.505	Very High
3	Tang Kuan hill	4.58	.513	Very High
4	Noi hill	4.42	.599	Very High
5	Kao Seng hill	4.35	.624	Very High
6	Samila beach	4.35	.667	Very High
7	Kao Seng beach	4.32	.632	Very High
8	Son-on beach	4.20	.738	High
9	Thinnasulanonda bridge	4.18	.753	High
10	Herb garden	4.15	.788	High
Archaeological and Cultural Attractions - Religious				
1	Chai Mongkol temple	4.43	.643	Very High
2	Tai Yo temple	4.40	.700	Very High
3	Srisudaram temple	4.36	.700	Very High
4	Phet Mongkol temple	4.35	.694	Very High
5	Pho Pathamawas temple	4.34	.684	Very High
6	Koh Thum temple	4.34	.622	Very High
7	Leam Sai temple	4.32	.701	Very High
8	Matchimawas temple	4.25	.604	Very High

No.	Attractions	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
9	Usasna Islam mosque	4.15	.657	High
Archaeological and Cultural Attractions – Old Town				
1	Muang Songkhla – Leam Son site	4.25	.542	Very High
2	Muang Songkhla – Bo Yang site	4.15	.542	High
Archaeological and Cultural Attractions – Other				
1	Khao Rubchang pagoda	4.39	.619	Very High
2	Khao Kut pagoda	4.38	.609	Very High
3	Chai Mongkol temple pagoda	4.38	.608	Very High
4	Leam Sai gun turret	4.36	.616	Very High
5	Khao Seng pagoda	4.36	.587	Very High
6	Tang Kuan hill pagoda	4.36	.639	Very High
7	Songkhla national museum	4.32	.642	Very High
8	Sogkhla shrine	4.31	.648	Very High
9	Phadhamarong museum	4.29	.650	Very High
10	Songkhla fortress	4.26	.697	Very High
11	Stone inscription pavilion	4.24	.713	Very High
12	Thaksin folklore museum the institute for Southern Thai studies	4.24	.677	Very High
Cultural Attractions – Local Handicraft				
1	Koh Yo weaving cloth	4.25	.645	Very High
2	Lee Ma Lae cloth house	4.24	.670	Very High
Recreation Attractions				
1	Local restaurants/seafood restaurant	4.53	.580	Very High
2	Souvenir shops	4.52	.580	Very High
3	Tinnasulanonda stadium	4.46	.579	Very High
4	Japanese garden	4.43	.665	Very High
5	Songkhla zoo	4.32	.734	Very High

(1) Natural Attractions

There are 10 natural attractions, and the study reveals the highest scores are the cat and rat islands and Koh Yo, each holding the same mean score at 4.60.

(2) Archaeological and Cultural Attractions - Religious

There are 9 archaeological and cultural attractions – religious. The study reveals the highest score is Chai Mongkol temple, holding the mean score at 4.43.

(3) Archaeological and Cultural Attractions – Old Towns

There are 2 archaeological and cultural attractions – old towns. The study explains the highest score is Muang Songkhla – Leam Son site, holding the mean score at 4.25.

(4) Archaeological and Cultural Attractions – Other

There are 12 archaeological and cultural attractions – other. The study shows the highest score is Khao Rubchang pagoda, holding the mean score at 4.39.

(5) Cultural Attractions – Local Handicrafts

There are 2 cultural attractions – local handicrafts. The study indicates the highest score is Koh Yo weaving cloth, holding the mean score at 4.25.

(6) Learning Attractions

There are 2 learning attractions. The study reveals the highest score is General Pream's garden, holding the mean score at 4.38.

(7) Recreation Attractions

There are 5 recreation attractions. The study reveals the highest score is local restaurants/seafood restaurant, holding the mean score at 4.53.

In summary, the study of SLB tourists reveals the unique SLB attractions fall into natural attractions category. The analysis shows cat and rat islands as well as Koh Yo, which hold the highest prominence level in all categories.

2) SLB Service

The analysis shows that the overall prominence level of the SLB service falls into the range of “very high” prominence level. The highest score is under the variable of “understanding of tourists”, with a mean score of 4.46 (Table 4.20).

Table 4.20 Prominence Level of SLB Service

No.	Variable	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1	Understanding of tourists	4.46	.562	Very High
2	Willing to welcome	4.44	.613	Very High
3	The friendliness of the local community	4.40	.668	Very High
4	Creating a consistent impression	4.34	.670	Very High
5	Holding a service expertise	4.34	.600	Very High
6	Clear communication with a smiley face	4.33	.646	Very High
7	Treat with respect	4.32	.502	Very High
8	Willing to help/solve problems	4.32	.666	Very High
9	Having service in mind	4.31	.526	Very High
10	Using modern technology in service	4.30	.706	Very High

Considering the results of semi-structured interview from all three respondent groups, the findings reveal the uniqueness of SLB product is having fresh seafood, and the famous location is Koh Yo. The information described in the semi-structured interview shown below:

“Songkhla is well-known for its seafood because of its position, which makes the province rich in natural resources. Most visitors know Koh Yo as a spot to eat delicious seafood, and if you have a chance to try it, you will surely want to return.” (LC5)

“The 3-water seabass from Koh Yo, Songkhla is very famous. It is a seabass with good meat and the most delicious taste in Thailand. Because it is a fish that is raised in natural water and has a circulating current that causes the fish to swim constantly. The special thing is that there are 3 water sources, which are salt water, fresh water, and brackish water. Because these fish are fed with fresh food, their meat is firm and heavy in weight, as well as juicy.” (GA3)

“The most delicious fish in Thailand is called “3-water seabass,” which can be found only in Songkhla lake.” (TO13)

Another uniqueness mentioned is that SLB is rich in natural attractions, located across the area. It is always on the minds of tourists when they think about SLB, and that attracts them to come and visit the place.

“SLB has a variety of tourist attractions, which results in a broad variety of tourism activities. Visitors will be able to experience Songkhla’s stunning beauty through the activities that they will participate in.” (TO20)

Considering the service element, local people and tour operators expressed their opinion that “the willingness to welcome tourists” is the uniqueness of SLB. While government agencies pointed out that the uniqueness is “creating an impression”. According to the interview, they explained that making a great impression will assist in the development of visitor relationships and sales.

4.3.2 Research Objective 2: The Tourist Behavior Towards SLB

According to research objective 2, the tourist behavior towards the SLB is examined to understand the tourists who visited SLB, Songkhla province.

4.3.2.1 Research question 2: What is the tourist behavior towards SLB?

The study explores tourist behavior visited SLB, Songkhla province, during the survey period. The findings reveal that their behavior can be divided into 3 stages: pre-travel, on-site travel, and post-travel. The findings are summarized as follows:

1) Pre-travel

The analysis explains that 41.30% of respondents used to visit SLB an average of 1–5 times. Personal cars are shared by 45.22% of respondents as the preferred option for travel. In terms of travel objectives, 42.98% of respondents aimed to travel and do recreation in SLB. The study shows that 97.34% of those seeking information prior to the trip and 31.74% of them spent more than a week up to 2 weeks for searching for information and taking necessary actions prior to the trip. 36.03% of respondents gave their view that they used social media to search for SLB information. For travel duration, 36.52% of respondents preferred to travel during the weekdays. Noting that the decision maker is the tourists themselves, as the proportion is shared by 40%. Most of them, about 63.50%, used IG, Line, and Facebook to find out more

information to support their decision-making. The study reveals 47.60% of them used Facebook as their first option to connect to social media. The study also reveals that 63.96% of tourists paid for their own travel expenses, with an estimated expense of about THB 3,001-5,000, accounting for 36.99%.

2) On-site travel

The first activity when tourists arriving at SLB is checking in to the hotel or accommodation, accounted for 28.30%. Then they will do other activities as planned. During the trip, 99.76% of tourists preferred to stay in the SLB and 70.74% of them used their personal car for travel in the area. As there are various activities, the most favorite things that they wanted to do are visiting museums and relaxing on the beach, both holding 12.18% of the respondents. The respondents shared their intention to visit historical sites with represents the highest score of 26.73%. During the trip, they used social media to communicate and share their activities and the result shown 47.85% of them used Facebook to share their travel experiences.

3) Post-travel

Further the post-travel, the results of the investigation revealed that respondents were impressed by the SLB's natural beauty. 95.47% said they wanted to revisit the SLB. The natural beauty of the location was cited by the majority of 19.24% as the rationale for returning. In terms of sharing their travel experiences, 15.93% said they wanted to share the natural beauty of the SLB with others as the most attractive. When it comes to the mode of communication, 63.02% of respondents used social media to share their travel experiences. When comparing expectations to actual experience, the respondents ranked natural beauty as the most important factor, accounting for 14.22% of the total. 71.19% said their satisfaction with what they experienced was as expected, while 28.57% said it exceeded their expectations.

4.3.3 Research Objective 3: The Perception of Tourists Towards SLB Brand

The perception of tourists towards the SLB brand is examined as part of research objective 4.

4.3.3.1 Research question 4: What is the tourist perception towards SLB brand?

The analysis on the tourist perception towards SLB brand is separated into three parts – 1) existence of SLB destination brand, 2) destination attributes affecting tourist perception of SLB brand, and 3) factors analysis measurement results. The findings are as follows:

1) Existence of SLB destination brand

According to the findings from the questionnaire, 71.20% of respondents expressed their viewpoints that the SLB destination brand exists, while 28.60% of respondents expressed that the brand does not exist.

However, the finding from the semi-structured interview indicates that the SLB destination brand does not exist, and the current brand in place is considered a product brand. The government sectors were the ones who initiated the projects and invited tourism operators and local people to take part in the brand development. Thus, the groups considered the availability of product brands; however, the SLB destination brand is not clearly identified.

The findings from semi-structured interviews also reveal that tourists perceive SLB as having a long history which civilization traces were found along the lake. The Songkhla old town is one type of evidence that tourists should not miss if they visit Songkhla province, the government said. For tourism operators, tourists perceive SLB as having a variety of activities that they can do during their stay, and with the availability of travel options, tourists tend to travel to Songkhla. Moreover, tourists prefer to come to SLB to learn and share experiences with them, as appeared in a local motto that “Songkhla is a learning city”, said the local communities.

2) Destination Attributes Affecting Tourist Perception of SLB Brand

This section explores the destination attributes that influence tourist perceptions of the SLB brand. To analyze perceived brand perception, eight main destination attributes were derived from the literature review in chapter 2. The finding result is as shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21 Tourist Perception Towards Perceived Destination Attributes Affecting SLB Brand

Attributes	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Tourist Destination			
Destination attractiveness	4.56	.572	Very High
Representation of history	4.47	.550	Very High
Tradition & culture reflecting community uniqueness	4.45	.570	Very High
Identity of tourist destinations	4.44	.564	Very High
Location/geographical area	4.24	.511	Very High
Variety of tourist destinations	4.23	.464	Very High
Accessibility			
Clear signage availability	4.30	.645	Very High
Travel convenience i.e. road	4.22	.661	Very High
Variety of public transportations i.e. flight, car, plane	4.18	.682	High
Activity			
Variety of tourist activities	4.37	.645	Very High
Variety of shopping destinations	4.31	.654	Very High
Opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people	4.25	.538	Very High
Opportunity to join activity with local people	4.20	.520	High
Destination Management			
Availability of modern technology for service	4.40	.607	Very High
Easy to access the destination information	4.39	.634	Very High
Availability of local tour guide	4.38	.612	Very High
Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation	4.35	.629	Very High
Community participation	4.35	.693	Very High
Sufficient number of officers on duty and quality service	4.34	.590	Very High

Attributes	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Sustainability management	4.32	.613	Very High
Willingness to service	4.30	.592	Very High
Cost of Service			
Reasonable price of souvenirs	4.42	.622	Very High
Reasonable price of accommodation	4.40	.580	Very High
Reasonable price of product & services	4.36	.595	Very High
Value for money of the travel expenses	4.16	.602	High
Reasonable of the entrance fee	4.15	.622	High
Infrastructure			
Availability of local souvenir shops	4.45	.610	Very High
Availability of local restaurants/shops	4.42	.611	Very High
Availability of a standard hotel & accommodation	4.34	.652	Very High
Availability of bank / ATM	4.30	.638	Very High
Availability of internet/Wifi	4.28	.603	Very High
Availability of tourist information center	4.22	.572	Very High
Safety & Hygiene			
Disease control management	4.51	.597	Very High
Clean tourist destination	4.46	.591	Very High
Clean toilet	4.39	.636	Very High
Road safety	4.29	.688	Very High
No terrorism	4.20	.697	High
No criminal	4.11	.666	High
Political stability	4.10	.665	High
Destination Brand Image			
Politeness & friendliness of local people	4.45	.548	Very High
Reflecting history & local way of life	4.44	.602	Very High
Destination charming	4.43	.632	Very High
Good renown	4.43	.650	Very High
Acceptance of community/local host	4.40	.550	Very High
Touchable essence of local community	4.39	.558	Very High

Attributes	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
Local participation in destination management	4.39	.653	Very High

Tourists perceived the most destination attributes under tourist destination as destination attractiveness, representing a mean score of 4.56. For accessibility, clear signage availability holds the highest mean score of 4.30. The respondents reveal that the availability of a variety of tourist activities is the most admired activity attribute, holding a mean score of 4.37. Focusing on destination management, the availability of modern technology for service at the site is the first item, having the highest mean score at 4.40. Respondents' attitude toward the attribute of cost of service is marked by the reasonable price of souvenirs at the top of the list, putting the mean score at 4.42. This is supported by the analysis under the infrastructure attribute that shows that respondents prefer the availability of local souvenir shops for them to do activities during the trip. The findings also reveal that the destination's diseases control management system has a pretty strong and favorable perception at the mean score 4.51. This explains the existing COVID-19 pandemic, which is affecting travelers who are choosing the destination brand. The analysis implies that a place with effective disease control management tends to attract more visitors. The last attribute of the destination brand image reveals the perception of respondents that they consider the politeness and friendliness of local people for the destination brand perception, carrying the mean score of 4.45.

3) Factor Analysis Measurement Results

The factor analysis was carried out in order to reduce and summarize variables to a management level. Relationships between sets of many interconnected variables are examined and represented in terms of a few underlying factors. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method was used to discover how many latent variables lay beneath the complete set of data.

In this research, principal components factor analysis with Promax rotation was used to determine the underlying primary dimensions governing the full set of 46 items of destination attributes affecting tourist perception of SLB brand. The indicators were encoded ranging from Q321-Q3246 as shown in Table 4.22 and the result of analysis is demonstrated in Table 4.23.

Table 4.22 Code Representing Destination Attributes of SLB

No.	Code	Indicator
Tourist Destination		
1	Q321	Location/geographical area
2	Q322	Variety of tourist destinations
3	Q323	Identity of tourist destinations
4	Q324	Destination attraction
5	Q325	Representation of history
6	Q326	Tradition & culture reflecting community uniqueness
Accessibility		
7	Q327	Variety of public transportations i.e. flight, car, plane
8	Q328	Travel convenience i.e. road
9	Q329	Clear signage availability
Activity		
10	Q3210	Variety of tourist activities
11	Q3211	Opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people
12	Q3212	Opportunity to join activity with local people
13	Q3213	Variety of shopping destinations
Destination Management		
14	Q3214	Willingness to service
15	Q3215	Sufficient number of officers on duty and provide quality service
16	Q3216	Availability of modern technology for service
17	Q3217	Easy to access the destination information
18	Q3218	Availability of local tour guide
19	Q3219	Sustainability management
20	Q3220	Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation
21	Q3221	Community participation
Cost of Service		
22	Q3222	Reasonable price of the entrance fee
23	Q3223	Value for money of the travel expenses
24	Q3224	Reasonable price of product & services

No.	Code	Indicator
25	Q3225	Reasonable price of souvenir
26	Q3226	Reasonable price of accommodation
27	Q3227	Availability of tourist information center
28	Q3228	Availability of internet/Wifi
29	Q3229	Availability of bank / ATM
30	Q3230	Availability of a standard hotel & accommodation
31	Q3231	Availability of local restaurants/shops
32	Q3232	Availability of local souvenir shops
Safety & Hygiene		
33	Q3233	No criminal
34	Q3234	Political stability
35	Q3235	No terrorism
36	Q3236	Road safety
37	Q3237	Clean toilet
38	Q3238	Clean tourist destination
39	Q3239	Disease control management
Destination Brand Image		
40	Q3240	Good renown
41	Q3241	Politeness & friendliness of local people
42	Q3242	Acceptance of community/local host
43	Q3243	Touchable essence of local community
44	Q3244	Reflecting history & local way of life
45	Q3245	Destination charming
46	Q3246	Local participation in destination management

Table 4.23 Factor Analysis Result

	Component																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Q328	0.911	-0.016	0.030	-0.020	-0.051	0.022	0.043	-0.059	0.118	0.063	-0.012	0.013	-0.012	0.046	-0.024	-0.011	-0.033
Q327	0.856	-0.060	0.024	-0.013	-0.048	0.044	0.063	-0.034	0.109	0.053	-0.036	0.023	-0.036	0.107	-0.008	-0.067	-0.040
Q329	0.846	0.031	0.057	0.007	-0.018	-0.041	-0.118	-0.020	-0.133	0.049	0.077	0.010	0.077	-0.149	-0.036	0.045	-0.044
Q3210	0.425	0.230	0.082	0.078	0.058	-0.082	-0.131	0.032	-0.105	-0.006	0.012	-0.023	0.012	0.012	0.024	0.089	0.021
Q3228	-0.003	0.905	0.035	-0.066	0.027	0.022	0.057	0.017	0.067	-0.013	-0.153	-0.113	-0.153	0.072	-0.083	0.046	-0.032
Q3227	0.035	0.836	-0.049	-0.062	0.013	0.026	0.003	0.037	0.091	0.047	-0.137	-0.013	-0.137	0.114	-0.041	-0.009	0.003
Q3229	0.011	0.795	-0.050	0.049	-0.025	0.000	0.070	0.006	-0.134	-0.063	-0.008	-0.017	-0.008	-0.147	0.071	-0.048	0.024
Q3230	0.016	0.478	-0.051	0.070	-0.029	0.065	0.087	0.039	-0.133	-0.002	0.456	0.052	0.456	-0.262	0.035	-0.019	0.112
Q3222	0.079	-0.008	0.919	-0.025	0.129	0.020	0.056	0.031	-0.020	0.018	-0.006	-0.087	-0.006	0.004	-0.022	0.032	-0.018
Q3223	0.057	-0.042	0.904	-0.012	0.055	0.012	0.037	0.026	0.019	-0.005	0.033	-0.064	0.033	-0.031	0.007	-0.016	0.035
Q3224	-0.031	-0.013	0.655	0.067	-0.007	-0.059	0.020	-0.033	-0.056	-0.011	-0.080	0.039	-0.080	-0.143	-0.001	0.002	0.451
Q3233	-0.001	-0.046	0.007	0.942	0.071	0.044	0.028	-0.020	0.041	-0.117	0.081	-0.021	0.081	-0.069	0.077	-0.055	-0.046
Q3234	0.012	-0.038	0.017	0.940	0.044	0.046	-0.017	0.004	0.032	-0.005	-0.025	-0.013	-0.025	0.012	0.044	-0.029	-0.036
Q3235	-0.012	0.044	-0.062	0.676	-0.028	-0.053	0.000	0.012	-0.004	0.396	-0.112	-0.018	-0.112	0.089	-0.088	0.086	0.081
Q3220	-0.065	-0.019	0.003	0.081	0.922	0.110	0.075	-0.007	-0.007	0.024	-0.004	-0.030	-0.004	-0.029	0.040	-0.007	-0.038
Q3221	-0.022	0.044	0.279	0.012	0.836	0.091	0.034	0.017	-0.089	-0.051	-0.087	0.083	-0.087	-0.049	-0.021	0.018	-0.120
Q3219	0.048	-0.024	-0.226	-0.020	0.573	-0.027	0.004	-0.001	-0.029	0.030	0.000	-0.032	0.000	-0.066	-0.043	-0.003	0.161
Q3215	-0.050	0.016	0.006	0.043	0.058	0.936	-0.141	-0.076	0.131	-0.003	0.048	0.016	0.048	0.119	0.028	-0.102	-0.045
Q3214	0.065	0.012	-0.017	0.007	0.181	0.902	-0.118	-0.056	0.104	-0.011	-0.015	-0.023	-0.015	0.106	-0.038	0.019	0.011
Q3216	-0.101	0.116	0.087	0.053	-0.291	0.476	-0.068	-0.034	-0.048	0.055	0.036	0.441	0.036	0.038	-0.006	0.041	-0.116
Q3212	-0.006	0.035	0.045	0.003	0.024	-0.164	1.030	-0.083	0.094	0.035	0.090	0.096	0.090	0.157	0.020	-0.059	-0.133
Q3211	-0.039	0.108	0.038	0.054	0.026	-0.180	0.948	-0.108	0.182	-0.101	0.024	0.075	0.081	0.231	0.066	-0.001	-0.055
Q3213	-0.052	-0.034	0.057	-0.129	0.194	0.236	0.440	0.126	-0.017	0.163	0.110	-0.004	-0.033	0.027	-0.125	0.093	0.053
Q3242	-0.072	0.032	-0.005	0.015	-0.010	-0.096	-0.050	1.001	0.051	0.039	0.036	0.043	0.095	0.079	-0.014	-0.050	-0.022
Q3241	-0.007	0.029	0.051	-0.024	0.017	-0.050	-0.115	0.973	0.126	0.005	0.029	0.028	-0.079	0.081	0.013	-0.004	-0.075
Q321	0.029	0.002	0.000	0.056	-0.029	0.136	0.116	0.042	0.979	-0.027	-0.006	-0.056	-0.118	-0.178	-0.028	0.032	0.085

	Component																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Q322	0.009	-0.002	-0.025	0.007	-0.064	0.084	0.138	0.118	0.962	0.001	-0.038	-0.007	-0.031	-0.196	-0.005	0.029	0.076
Q3237	0.066	-0.018	0.036	-0.131	0.036	0.079	0.006	0.002	0.006	0.852	-0.071	-0.025	0.056	0.050	0.286	-0.024	-0.018
Q3236	0.078	-0.013	-0.022	0.164	-0.048	-0.075	-0.013	0.052	-0.034	0.804	0.007	0.018	0.037	0.086	-0.138	0.074	-0.017
Q3217	-0.021	0.005	0.140	-0.003	-0.228	0.100	0.133	0.020	-0.030	-0.018	0.882	-0.007	0.019	-0.068	0.045	-0.001	0.010
Q3218	0.088	0.001	-0.066	-0.030	0.187	-0.069	0.057	0.052	-0.059	-0.056	0.862	-0.022	0.000	-0.202	0.070	-0.010	0.032
Q3244	0.022	-0.084	-0.070	-0.053	-0.008	0.082	0.071	-0.073	-0.059	-0.006	-0.017	0.917	-0.033	-0.048	-0.037	0.089	0.034
Q3243	0.063	-0.086	-0.119	0.036	0.020	0.117	0.197	0.179	-0.148	-0.053	-0.020	0.849	-0.152	-0.123	-0.013	0.004	0.076
Q3245	-0.106	0.101	0.069	-0.010	0.062	-0.127	-0.166	-0.045	0.113	0.069	0.054	0.532	0.138	0.088	0.001	0.023	-0.028
Q3246	-0.042	0.085	0.154	-0.004	0.121	-0.107	-0.179	-0.066	0.114	0.107	-0.047	0.413	0.151	0.121	-0.002	-0.150	-0.077
Q3231	0.037	-0.065	-0.009	-0.041	-0.106	0.060	0.135	-0.018	-0.018	0.032	-0.062	-0.027	0.949	-0.138	-0.029	0.025	0.012
Q3232	-0.011	-0.208	0.007	0.036	0.037	-0.032	0.010	0.088	-0.004	0.046	0.126	-0.082	0.830	0.096	-0.058	0.018	0.020
Q325	-0.100	0.011	-0.001	0.008	-0.024	0.108	0.162	0.035	-0.175	0.021	-0.135	-0.111	-0.026	0.978	0.002	0.236	0.066
Q326	0.155	-0.016	-0.087	-0.019	-0.068	0.087	0.181	0.101	-0.152	0.098	-0.085	0.041	-0.059	0.889	0.014	-0.204	0.192
Q3239	-0.004	-0.053	0.014	0.110	-0.024	-0.027	0.053	0.001	-0.044	-0.071	0.105	-0.033	-0.043	0.079	0.888	0.049	0.001
Q3238	-0.092	0.018	-0.038	-0.070	0.051	0.004	0.001	-0.039	0.014	0.416	0.007	-0.038	-0.065	-0.144	0.801	-0.034	0.014
Q3240	0.189	0.005	-0.027	0.021	0.017	0.076	-0.086	0.148	0.016	-0.323	-0.051	0.052	0.078	0.269	0.400	0.126	0.053
Q324	-0.022	0.005	0.039	-0.014	0.022	-0.012	0.004	-0.039	-0.101	0.008	0.016	-0.011	0.068	0.305	0.009	0.926	-0.044
Q323	0.044	-0.017	-0.032	-0.031	-0.023	-0.092	-0.057	-0.018	0.238	0.054	-0.031	0.169	-0.040	-0.263	0.057	0.782	0.007
Q3225	-0.070	-0.049	0.221	-0.025	-0.155	-0.031	-0.079	0.024	0.044	0.012	0.024	0.090	-0.051	0.100	0.032	-0.049	0.875
Q3226	-0.010	0.083	-0.117	-0.027	0.084	-0.022	-0.138	-0.146	0.170	-0.053	0.031	-0.029	0.146	0.267	-0.020	0.015	0.797

The sample was appropriate for using factor analysis as measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The overall KMO was 0.599 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The eigen value greater than 1.0 criterion was used to determine when factors cease to add significantly to the amount of variance extracted. The items with factor loading greater than 0.4 were grouped for each factor derived. The factor analysis generated 17 underlying dimensions of the perceived attributes on SLB destination brand by tourists, which make good conceptual sense and explain a total of 74.153 percent of the cumulative total variance. Therefore, the factor structure of attributes of SLB destination brand detected by the EFA was composed of four variables for component 1, 2 and 12, three variables for component 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 15, and two variables for component 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17. The percentages of variance characterized by component 1 - 17 after the rotation were 10.773%, 6.781%, 6.053%, 5.801%, 4.626%, 4.385%, 4.193%, 4.098%, 3.854%, 3.704%, 3.414%, 3.356%, 2.974%, 2.796%, 2.556%, 2.444% and 2.406% respectively, as shown in Table 4.24.

As clearly stated, destination attributes affect tourists' perception and it influences tourists' behavioral intentions (Mahdzar & Gani, 2018; Mistry, 2018; Ragavan et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to understand whether any significant differences exist among those 17 dimensions affecting the tourists' perception of SLB brand. Table 4.27 shows the factors were further tested by independent t-test analysis to understand their influence on the destination brand. According to the analysis, the researcher used the mean scores as representative of each component to test the significant differences in the perception variables. According to Table 4.28, only 11.76% (2 items) were significant, consisting of component 1 - accessibility and activity as well as component 5 - destination management. Both components have significant differences ($p < 0.05$) at 0.008 and 0.042 respectively.

Table 4.24 Factor Analysis of the Perceived Attributes on SLB Destination Brand

Component	Factor Loadings	Eigen Value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach Alpha
Component 1					
- Travel convenience	.911	4.956	10.773	10.773	.804
- Variety of public transportations	.856				
- Clear signage availability	.846				
- Variety of tourist activities	.425				
Component 2					
- Availability of internet/Wifi	.905	3.090	6.718	17.492	.755
- Availability of tourist information center	.836				
- Availability of bank / ATM	.795				
- Availability of a standard hotel & accommodation	.478				
Component 3					
- Reasonable price of the entrance fee	.919	2.784	6.053	23.544	.820
- Value for money of the travel expenses	.904				
- Reasonable price of product & services	.655				

Component	Factor Loadings	Eigen Value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach Alpha
Component 4					
- No criminal	.942	2.668	5.801	29.345	.841
- Political stability	.940				
- No terrorism	.676				
Component 5					
- Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation	.922	2.128	4.626	33.971	.688
- Community participation	.836				
- Sustainability management	.573				
Component 6					
- Sufficient number of officers on duty and provide quality service	.936	2.017	4.385	38.356	0.747
- Willingness to service	.902				
- Availability of modern technology for service	.476				
Component 7					
- Opportunity to join activity with local people	1.030	1.929	4.193	42.550	.607
- Opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people	.948				
- Variety of shopping destinations	.440				

Component	Factor Loadings	Eigen Value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach Alpha
Component 8					
- Acceptance of community/local host	1.001	1.885	4.098	46.648	.859
- Politeness & friendliness of local people	.973				
Component 9					
- Location/geographical area	.979	1.773	3.854	50.502	.367
- Variety of tourist destinations	.962				
Component 10					
- Clean toilet	.852	1.704	3.704	54.206	.704
- Road safety	.804				
Component 11					
- Easy to access the destination information	.882	1.570	3.414	57.620	.671
- Availability of local tour guide	.862				
Component 12					
- Reflecting history & local way of life	.917	1.544	3.356	60.977	.630
- Touchable essence of local community	.849				
- Destination charming	.532				
- Local participation in destination management	.413				

Component	Factor Loadings	Eigen Value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %	Cronbach Alpha
Component 13					
- Availability of local restaurants/shops	.949	1.368	2.974	63.951	.709
- Availability of local souvenir shops	.830				
Component 14					
- Reasonable price of souvenirs	.978	1.286	2.796	66.747	.588
- Reasonable price of accommodation	.889				
Component 15					
- Disease control management	.888	1.176	2.556	69.303	.567
- Clean tourist destination	.801				
- Good renown	.400				
Component 16					
- Destination attraction	.926	1.124	2.444	71.747	.630
- Identity of tourist destinations	.782				
Component 17					
- Reasonable price of souvenirs	.875	1.107	2.406	74.153	.588
- Reasonable price of accommodation	.797				

Table 4.25 The Analysis of Dimensions Affecting the SLB Brand Perception

Component	Brand Perception	N	Mean	t	Significance
Component 1	1. SLB brand available	299	4.3261	3.671	.008
Accessibility and Activity	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.1222	3.408	
Component 2	1. SLB brand available	299	4.2709	.864	.904
Amenities (1)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.2271	.852	
Component 3	1. SLB brand available	299	4.2676	3.060	.338
Price (1)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.0972	2.903	
Component 4	1. SLB brand available	299	4.1488	.702	.823
Safety & Hygiene (1)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.1042	.708	
Component 5	1. SLB brand available	299	4.3835	2.870	.042
Destination Management (1)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.2278	2.670	
Component 6	1. SLB brand available	299	4.3735	1.879	.344
Destination Management (2)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.2750	1.796	
Component 7	1. SLB brand available	299	4.2486	-.446	.182
Activity	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.2694	-.458	
Component 8	1. SLB brand available	296	4.4189	-.184	.219
Destination Image (1)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.4292	-.180	
Component 9	1. SLB brand available	299	4.2341	-.069	.534
Tourist Destination (1)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.2375	-.067	
Component 10	1. SLB brand available	299	4.3311	-.234	.659
Safety & Hygiene (2)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.3458	-.234	
Component 11	1. SLB brand available	299	4.4064	1.388	.490
Destination Management (3)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.3250	1.318	
Component 12	1. SLB brand available	296	4.4296	1.437	.761
Destination Image (2)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.3639	1.445	
Component 13	1. SLB brand available	299	4.4649	1.838	.735
Amenities (2)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.3583	1.857	
Component 14	1. SLB brand available	299	4.4214	.695	.788
Tourist Destination (2)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.3833	.693	
Component 15	1. SLB brand available	299	4.4972	2.386	.535
Safety & Hygiene and Image	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.3819	2.381	
Component 16	1. SLB brand available	299	4.4766	-1.561	.370
Tourist Destination (2)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.5583	-1.542	
Component 17	1. SLB brand available	299	4.5050	2.974	.371
Price (2)	2. SLB brand unavailable	120	4.3500	3.071	

Table 4.26 Summary of Dimensions Affecting the SLB Brand Perception

Component	Brand Perception	N	Mean	t	Significance
Component 1: Accessibility and Activity	1. Available of SLB destination brand	299	4.3621	3.671	.008
- Travel convenience	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.1222	3.408	
- Variety of public transportations					
- Clear signage availability					
- Variety of tourist activities					
Component 5: Destination Management	1. Available of SLB destination brand	299	4.3835	2.870	.042
- Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation	2. Unavailable of SLB destination brand	120	4.2278	2.670	
- Community participation					
- Sustainability management					

According to Table 4.26, the study reveals 2 components of the destination attributes that have a significance on the SLB brand. The component 1 is focusing on accessibility and activity which consists of travel convenience, variety of public transportations, clear signage availability, and variety of tourist activities. While component 5 is considering destination management which focuses on knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction and natural conservation, community participation, and sustainability management.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the dissertation titled “A critical analysis on stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of Songkhla Lake Basin in Muang District, Songkhla Province”. The research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses the study’s importance, justification, objectives, and outcomes, while the second chapter discusses the literature review, concepts, and theories. The third chapter describes the research methods used for the study, and the fourth part includes data analysis, and research results. Lastly, the conclusion, discussion, and limitations of the study are presented in the fifth chapter.

The primary goal of this research is to analyze stakeholder perspective-based of Thai tourist behavior towards unique product and service attributes of SLB. To obtain primary data from several different population groups, mixed research methodologies were used. The findings of primary data (interviews and questionnaires) and secondary data (literature review) are used to analyze stakeholder perspective.

5.2 Overview of the Study

The study relies on both quantitative and qualitative investigation aiming to achieve the following research objectives:

- 1) To identify unique products and services of SLB
- 2) To study tourist behavior towards SLB
- 3) To investigate tourist perception towards SLB brand

To serve the above objectives, the conceptual research framework was set. The first stage was to conduct a literature review in order to extract significant topics from the reviewed studies. The topics were used as a framework for questionnaire instruction. The questionnaire was employed as the survey instrument for quantitative investigation. There were five sections in the questionnaire, consisted of section 1) tourist behavior, 2) SLB product and service, 3) SLB brand perception, 4) recommendation and 5) personal data of respondents. The test group was 420, using purposive and convenience sampling survey methods. Before the data collection was performed, the researcher ensured questionnaire validity by applying the process of the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) into the process. The IOC was carried out by three experts with knowledge and experience in the field of branding and tourism management. The outcome was those two items from a total of 46 questions, had a mean score of 0.33, which is lower than the cut-off value of 0.50, and were thus eliminated from the questionnaire. Then, the items were validated with 30 cases to test on whether the questionnaire was adequately valid and reliable, resulting a Cronbach's alpha of 0.894. The data collected from quantitative method was performed by using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the demographic profiles, unique products and services of SLB, and tourist behavior. Meanwhile, inferential statistics, t-test and EFA with principal components analysis, together with the Promax rotation method, were used to determine the underlying primary dimensions governing the full set of 46 items of destination attributes affecting tourist perception of the SLB brand.

In order to obtain comprehensive data from grounded sources and avoid bias in the study, qualitative research methods were also used, which included semi-structured interviews with three population groups. Prior to data collection, the researcher ensured the interview question validity by applying IOC, which was carried out by three experts, into the process. The semi-structured interviews were gathered from 13 local government agencies, 26 tourism operators, and 11 local communities until data were repeated.

5.3 Summary of Research Findings

After the data collection was completed, the statistical analysis was conducted with descriptive and inferential methods. The descriptive statistic was used to give overall details about demographic data of the samples, along with the respondent's degree of perception in each individual section. Whereas the inferential statistical method was used to do factor analysis.

This section contains two main parts as a brief of demographic profiles of samples and summarized research question answers.

5.3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Data was collected from 420 Thai tourists visited SLB based on purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Out of the total target samples, 23.49% of respondents were male (97 persons) while the rest 76.51% were female (316 persons). Considering the age, the majority of the respondents (49.52%) were between 21 and 37 years old. A very tiny proportion was shared by the respondents aged below 21 years old, at only 0.48%. Looking into the location, the biggest proportion (57.86%) were from the southern part. In terms of religion, 348 respondents (83.06%) were Buddhist. For marital status, most of them 55.24% were married (323 persons). A bachelor's degree was held by half of the respondents (50.48%). As for occupation, 20.76% of respondents were college/university students. In terms of the monthly income, it was discovered that 29.52% of the respondents (124 persons) had an average monthly income in the range of THB 10,001 - 20,000.

5.3.2 Research Question Answer

This section summarizes key points or research question answers in sequence of research objective identified in chapter one.

5.3.2.1 The Result of Research Objective 1: The unique product and service of SLB

The study investigates the unique product and service of SLB in the perception of tourists. The finding indicates the uniqueness results of tourist attractions and services.

Research question 1: What are the unique product and service of SLB?

Focusing on quantitative results, tourist attractions are divided into seven categories, which consist of natural attractions, archaeological and cultural attractions - religious, old towns, other, cultural attractions – local handicrafts, learning attractions, and recreation attractions. The study demonstrated most of the attractions fell into the “Very High” perception level. The highest score represents the SLB uniqueness in the natural attractions category, which aligns with the study of Prachyakorn Chaiyakot (2011) who indicated the natural attraction is the main tourist attraction of SLB. The data interpretation shows that cat and rat islands, as well as Koh Yo, share the same mean score at 4.60, and that represents the most prominent in all categories.

As for qualitative results, the findings of the semi-structured interview reveal the mutual perception of all respondents about the uniqueness of SLB as having natural attractions and fresh seafood. Below are the findings of the semi-structured interview:

“Songkhla is well-known for its seafood because of its position, which makes the province rich in natural resources. Most visitors know Koh Yo as a spot to eat delicious seafood, and if you have a chance to try it, you will surely want to return.” (LC5)

Looking into services, the quantitative results show that respondents express the opinion that the most impressive service of SLB is the level of “understanding in tourists”. It is consistent with Camilleri (2018) research, which asserted that businesses must understand their customers’ needs and wants if they are to remain successful in a competitive marketplace. The better service providers understand tourists’ needs, the more positive impressions and satisfaction they create. In addition, qualitative results show the “creating impression” was pointed out by government agencies, while tourism operators and local communities focused on “the willingness to welcome tourists” as the uniqueness of SLB.

In summary, the quantitative findings express tourists’ perception on SLB products consistent with the qualitative findings of semi-structure interview of all group of respondents. The products are natural attractions and fresh seafood of Koh Yo.

For services, the findings cover 3 main topics which are “understanding in tourists”, “creating impression”, and “the willingness to welcome tourists”.

5.3.2.2 The Result of Research Objective 2: Tourist behavior towards SLB

This research objective examines tourist behaviors towards SLB. The study splits into three stages: pre-travel, on-site travel, and post-travel:

Research question 2: What are the tourist behaviors towards SLB brand?

This section is analyzed to understand of tourist behavior who visit SLB. Tourist behavior is intimately connected to marketing. It refers to how tourists behave based on their perceptions and attitudes before, on-site, and post-visit (Juvan et al., 2017; Zgolli & Zaiem, 2018). It is a fundamental aspect to be considered by tourism destinations when planning marketing strategies.

The findings of pre-travel explains that SLB tourists visit the area at an average of 1–5 times. The main objective is to travel and do recreation in SLB. Most of them seek information before going on the trip, and they will spend time searching for it and taking necessary actions. The action will take around a week to two weeks to collect the required information via social media, such as Facebook, IG, and Line. It is worth noting that for tourists, Facebook is the first option for connecting to social media. Then, they will next consider their options and make a decision. Tourists themselves, according to the survey, are the ones who decide on the trip and will pay an average of THB 3,001-5,000. Furthermore, they preferred to travel on weekdays, with their personal cars being their favorite mode of transportation.

During on-site, the first activity they do is check in to their hotel or accommodation. Then they will do other activities as planned. Most tourists prefer to stay within the SLB area and use their personal cars for travel. The favorite activities are visiting museums and relaxing on the beach. In addition, they also prefer to visit historical places in the SLB area. They used social media to interact with others and share their activities. And Facebook is the top choice for sharing their experiences on social media. It is useful information for marketer to plan for their marketing strategies as supported by Zeng and Gerritsen (2014) who reveal social media plays a significant role in many aspects of tourism, especially in information search and decision-making behaviors.

For post-travel analysis, the investigation's findings revealed that tourists were impressed by the SLB's natural beauty. They wanted to return to the SLB because they admired the natural beauty of the place. They also wanted to share the natural beauty of the SLB with others as the most attractive part of their trip experience. For modes of communication, the majority of tourists prefer to share their trip experiences via social media. If comparing expectations to actual experience, tourists regarded natural beauty as the most essential factor, and their satisfaction levels were met, with some reporting that they had exceeded expectations.

From the above findings, it is well recognized that tourist behavior is a key to strengthen marketing activity undertaken to develop, promote, and sell tourism products. Undoubtedly, if we are to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing activities, we must first try to understand how they make purchasing or using tourism products. If we understand their behavior patterns, we will be able to determine when we need to intervene in the process to achieve the desired results.

5.3.2.3 The Result of Research Objective 3: Tourist perception towards SLB brand

This section reveals the tourist perception towards the SLB brand. The findings on tourist perception of the SLB destination brand is divided into three sections: 1) the existence of the SLB destination brand, 2) destination attributes influencing tourist perception of the SLB brand, and 3) factors influencing the SLB destination brand.

Research question 3: What is the tourist perception towards SLB brand?

1) The existence of the SLB destination brand

According to quantitative results, tourists perceived the existence of the SLB destination brand. They believed that the destination brand was available. However, it is not inconsistent with the findings of the semi-structured interview that indicated the availability of local product brands, not a destination brand. Due to the unclear destination brand building process identified in objective 1, it can be assumed that the brands that tourists experienced were local product brands.

2) Destination attributes influencing tourist perception of the SLB brand

The findings indicate that the destination's attractiveness is perceived most favorably by tourists ($\bar{X}=4.56$), which tends to support the view that it is the driving factor behind SLB tourism. As supported by Prachyakorn Chaiyakot (2011), SLB has a long history, which has resulted in a variety of tourist attractions and activities available throughout the SLB area, making it more attractive and competitive one. The findings also reveal that the destination's disease control management has a strong and favorable perception ($\bar{X}=4.51$). This explains the present COVID-19 pandemic, which is affecting tourists who are choosing the destination. In consequence, a place with effective disease control management tends to attract more visitors (Assaf & Scuderi, 2020).

3) Factors influencing the SLB destination brand

The purpose of this study was to investigate destination attributes affecting tourist perception of the Songkhla Lake Basin brand, Muang district, Songkhla province, Thailand. The entire set of 46 destination attributes influencing tourist perception of the SLB brand were determined. The factor analysis generated 17 underlying dimensions of the perceived attributes on SLB destination brand by tourists. According to the literature review, tourist perceptions and behavioral intentions are influenced by destination attributes (Mahdzar & Gani, 2018; Mistry, 2018; Ragavan et al., 2014). Thus, this study explores more to understand whether any significant differences exist among those 17 dimensions affecting the tourists' perception of SLB brand. By using independent t-test analysis, the study reveals that component 1 - accessibility and activity and component 5 - destination management have the significant differences ($p < 0.05$) at 0.008 and 0.042 respectively.

Only 2 of the 17 dimensions were found to have significant differences. It can be explained that most of the Thai tourists who participated in the survey were local people and from nearby southern provinces. Thus, they considered the remaining dimensions did not have any influence or significant differences to their perceived experiences, for example, location, tradition and culture, opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people, and the hospitality of the hosts, etc. Another reason could be related to the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in the traveling

restrictions of the local government announced during the survey period. It caused limited travel by the normal visitors to SLB; thus, only people from its province and neighboring provinces visited SLB during the said period. Therefore, based on the results of this study, it was revealed that tourists considered SLB destination attributes in component 1 - travel convenience, a variety of public transportation, clear signage availability, and a variety of tourist activities, and component 5 - knowledge sharing about the value of tourist attractions and natural conservation, community participation, and sustainability management, which were represented in their perception of the SLB destination brand.

5.4 Discussion

The findings, as briefly addressed above, contribute to two main points of the analysis on stakeholder perspective, which are capable of adapting as a foundation to improve the tourism development and management of SLB in Muang District, Songkhla Province.

1) The improvement should be more focused on unique SLB product and service attributes

As SLB unique product and service attributes positively relates to Thai stakeholders' perception and satisfaction, readiness of the attributes of SLB is therefore considered as the key success factor for the destination. It is supported by the study of Assaf and Josiassen (2012) who stated that destination attributes will affect the destination image in the minds of tourists and influence tourist behavior during a destination selection process (Chen & Tsai, 2007). In overall, the study reveals that stakeholders identified SLB attractions at a "very high" prominence level. The unique product consists of natural attractions – cat and rat islands as well as Koh Yo (fresh seafood) and the understanding in tourists, willingness to welcome and creating an impression were identified as unique services of SLB.

Focusing on the attributes that influence tourists' perception of the SLB brand, there were two groups of attributes identified in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 T-test Analysis of Attributes Affecting the SLB Brand Perception

Component	Brand Perception	Mean	t	Significance (p < 0.05)
Accessibility and Activity	1. SLB brand	4.3261	3.671	0.008
- Travel convenience	available	4.1222	3.408	
- Variety of public transportations	2. SLB brand unavailable			
- Clear signage availability				
- Variety of tourist activities				
Destination Management	1. SLB brand	4.3835	2.870	0.042
- Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation	available 2. SLB brand unavailable	4.2278	2.670	
- Community participation				
- Sustainability management				

Focusing on these significant dimensions, this study justified those Thai tourists paid greater attention to how they could access the destination and what they could do at the tourist attractions. The accessibility of the location was regarded as significant to Thai tourists since they required a quick journey to that destination, and the ability to plan and manage their schedule accordingly. The accessibility, in the opinion of Thai tourists, focused on a variety of public transportation such as flights, cars, trains, etc., which provided travel options for them. The convenient road, equipped with clear signage, was in the minds of Thai tourists, especially those who loved travelling by car. These results were similar to those of the study by Prebensen, Chen, and Uysal (2014) who revealed that tourists increasingly seek convenience and rapidity when travelling due to time limitation. In addition, this also similar to Siripen Dabphet (2016) who explored accessibility and transportation was a key pull factors for first time tourists to visit a destination. Despite accessibility, the activities that tourists could do at the destination were also regarded as significant to Thai tourists since they considered this as part in the decision process. They were influenced by activities when

deciding where to go, noting that activities could enhance new experiences, such as traditional culture and local ways of life, as well as provide relaxation, fun, and enjoyment both physically and emotionally. Furthermore, Thai tourists expressed their views about the knowledge gained from the visit, consisting of the value of the destination, natural conservation, and sustainability management. It is supported by the study of Wong (2011) who explored major destination attributes consisting of travel value and leisure attractions were among the identified themes. Normally, Thai tourists want to understand the destination's values so that they can immerse themselves in the history or background of the place. As a global trend, it is also accepted that Thai tourists pay more attention to sustainable tourism. They consider sustainable programs in which they can participate or consider whether the place has proper sustainable management at sites, then decide to choose the destination. The last result revealed by the study was about community participation. As part of destination management, Thai tourists tend to consider tourism through community participation as they can learn about the unique experiences that are inserted into the tourism activities, and at the same time, they can also support local economic distribution in the place where they visit. It aligned with the study of Kulvadee Lamaijeen (2015) who explored that community participation is the process of community enhancement by giving their opportunities and chances for them to direct and handle their own benefits.

The results revealed by this study differed from prior findings, which were conducted to identify attributes that attract tourists to a destination (Atinafu & Muuz, 2017; Boit, 2013; Chahal & Devi, 2015; Hossain & Islam, 2019; Kim, 2014; Mahdzar & Gani, 2018; Mistry, 2018; Ragavan et al., 2014; Toral et al., 2018). However, this study discovered more about the destination attributes that influence tourists' perceptions of the destination brand. As such, to elaborate more the benefits of this research, the result might be great interest to local government and SLB tourism marketers as well as planners to focus and consider applying in the process of promotion and marketing of the identified destination attributes that should be considered to make a destination attractive to tourists in recognizing tourist satisfaction and brand perception levels and boosting the destination's competitiveness (Vodeb & Nemec Rudež, 2017).

2) The development should incorporate the findings about tourist behavior which is relevant to their perception into the destination strategy

Tourism is not just an economic business, but also a social one, a “stage” on which a large number of people interact, and one in which psychology plays a significant role. This brought a challenge to the analysis. The trip decision-making made by tourist contains three stages: pre-, during-, and post-travel (Song et al., 2017).

The key findings of Thai tourists visited SLB in the pre-travel period related to their information searching. They used social media at 63.50% to find the destination information as well as to listen to other comments or reviews and 97.34% of them did information searching prior to travel. In addition, during the trip or on-site travel, tourists spent overnight in the area and the first thing they prefer to do was to check-in hotel before visited the destination. In this phase, tourist preferred to use personal car as mode of transportation and used Facebook as social media to communicate the trip experiences. The last stage is post-travel, tourist behavior expressed the impression of the SLB and willing to revisit in the future. The most impression was about the beautiful natural attraction which met their travel expectation. And another finding focused on the experience communication which they used social media as a communication channel.

These findings about tourist behaviors benefit the destination management in order to improve its product and service to meet minimum requirements of the visitors. For example, the first thing tourist wanted to do when arrived the destination was to check-in hotel; thus, it is the point where the destination should plan for how to make impression to tourist when they first arrive in the area. Another view could be ensuring the availability of the internet for them due to their behavior is usually connected with social media. No one can deny that it is now present in every aspect of life. We are surrounded with digital at all times of the day and night. It is well acknowledged that today’s visitors are engaged and prefer digital, which simplifies their journeys. Nowadays, social media has become a powerful tool for destinations and their brands to connect (Huertas & Marine-Roig, 2015).

5.5 Recommendation and Future Research

5.5.1 Implementation Recommendation

First, it is recommended that relevant local government agencies and SLB tourism marketers and strategists concentrate on and probably apply inside the process of marketing and promotion of the findings – unique product and service, tourist behavior and their perception as well as identified SLB destination attributes which should be considered while designing a destination attractive to tourists in realizing tourist satisfaction and perception levels and boosting the destination's competitive strength.

5.5.2 Future Research Recommendation

Because the target sample consisted solely of Thai tourists, the conclusions were entirely based on their perceptions, which were unlikely to represent other tourists. As a result, future study should include international tourists to provide insight into the perceptions of both local and international tourists.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is limited; the findings are representative of only Muang district, Songkhla province, not all locations connected to the Songkhla lake basin.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

PhD Dissertation Research Questionnaire



PhD Dissertation Research Questionnaire

Destination Brand Building Process Towards Community Participatory Approach: A Case Study of Songkhla Lake Basin, Muang District, Songkhla Province

This questionnaire is a part of the PhD dissertation research in Integrated Tourism Management at the Graduate School of Tourism Management, National Institute of Development Administration. The questionnaire consists of 5 parts as follows:

Part 1: Tourist behavior

Part 2: Tourism product and service of Songkhla Lake Basin

Part 3: Tourists' perception towards Songkhla Lake Basin's brand

Part 4: Recommendation

Part 5: Respondent's details

The information obtained will only be collected for educational and research purposes. The result of this study will be useful for tourism development with local participation. Thus, your kind cooperation and assistance would be very much appreciated.

Miss Chayada Kanabkaew

PhD Student in Integrated Tourism Management,
The Graduate School of Tourism Management,
National Institute of Development Administration.

1.9 Preferred social media

- 1) IG 2) Line 3) Facebook 4) TikTok
 5) YouTube 6) WhatsApp 7) WeChat 8) Other

1.10 Who pay for this travel?

- 1) Myself 2) Parents/family members
 3) Company/office 4) Other

1.11 Average spending at SLB/time

- 1) Less than THB 1,000 2) THB 1,001-3,000
 3) THB 3,001-5,000 4) More than THB 5,001

1.12 How do you know tourism destinations in SLB?

- 1) Songkhla provincial website 2) Book/magazine
 3) Tour operator 4) TAT website
 5) Social media 6) Friends/relatives
 7) Television 8) Radio
 9) Blogger / reviewer
 10) Influencer i.e. well known people/actor/singer
 11) Other

1.13 Pre-travel information searching

- 1) Yes
 2) No (Please go to question #1.15)

1.14 SLB information searching channel for this trip

- 1) Songkhla provincial website 2) Book/magazine
 3) Tour operator 4) TAT website
 5) Social media 6) Friends/relatives
 7) Television 8) Radio
 9) Blogger / reviewer
 10) Influencer i.e. well known people/actor/singer
 11) Other

1.15 SLB image before the visit

- 1) Having fresh & delicious seafood
 2) Having exciting destinations
 3) Having various tourism activities

- 4) Having an outstanding local way of life
- 5) Having standard accommodation
- 6) Travelling is convenient and easy to access
- 7) Availability of various souvenir shops
- 8) Having safety
- 9) Value for money
- 10) Having complete tourism facilities
- 11) Having a beautiful natural
- 12) Having a good location/geographical area
- 13) Having local friendliness
- 14) Meeting travel expectations
- 15) Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture
- 16) Value for learning i.e. national museum
- 17) Other

1.16 First thing to do upon arrival

- 1) Travel
- 2) Check-in hotel/accommodation
- 3) Eating
- 4) Shopping
- 5) Meeting/seminar
- 6) Visiting relatives
- 7) Other

1.17 Accommodation

- 1) In SLB area
- 2) Outside SLB area

1.18 Type of transportation for traveling SLB area

- 1) Personal car
- 2) Public transportation
- 3) Car rental
- 4) Other

1.19 Activities during the travel

- 1) Exercise/workout
- 2) Making local food
- 3) Eating local food
- 4) Visit temple/Masjid/shrine
- 5) Cruising on the lake
- 6) Visit local community
- 7) Visit museum
- 8) Visit ancient sites
- 9) Making Koh Yo weaving cloth
- 10) Visit beach
- 11) Visit zoo
- 12) Taking a tram
- 13) Meeting/seminar
- 14) Visit relatives

- 15) Shopping 16) Other

1.20 What type of place do you intend to visit most?

- 1) Natural destination 2) Religious destination
 3) Ancient destination 4) Traditional & culture destination
 5) Historical destination 6) Knowledge learning destination
 7) Recreation destination 8) Other

1.21 During travel, what type of communication channel on social media do you use most?

- 1) IG 2) Line 3) Facebook
 4) TikTok 5) WhatsApp 6) WeChat
 7) YouTube 8) Other 9) Not using at all

1.22 What form of information channel do you prefer the most if you want more information during your visit?

- 1) Local people/community 2) Local tourism agencies
 3) Tourist center 4) Songkhla provincial website
 5) TAT website 6) Book/magazine
 7) Social media 8) Friends/relatives
 9) Tour operator 10) Other

1.23 What is your trip impression?

- 1) Having fresh & delicious seafood
 2) Having exciting destinations
 3) Having various tourism activities
 4) Having an outstanding local way of life
 5) Having standard accommodation
 6) Travelling is convenient and easy to access
 7) Availability of various souvenir shops
 8) Having safety
 9) Value for money
 10) Having complete tourism facilities
 11) Having a beautiful natural
 12) Having a good location/geographical area
 13) Having local friendliness

- 14) Meeting travel expectations
- 15) Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture
- 16) Value for learning i.e. national museum
- 17) Other

1.24 Intention to revisit

- 1) Certainly, come back
- 2) Not sure yet (Please continue to question #1.26)
- 3) Not come back (Please continue to question #1.26)

1.25 What is your reason to revisit?

- 1) Having fresh & delicious seafood
- 2) Having exciting destinations
- 3) Having various tourism activities
- 4) Having an outstanding local way of life
- 5) Having standard accommodation
- 6) Travelling is convenient and easy to access
- 7) Availability of various souvenir shops
- 8) Having safety
- 9) Value for money
- 10) Having complete tourism facilities
- 11) Having a beautiful natural
- 12) Having a good location/geographical area
- 13) Having local friendliness
- 14) Meeting travel expectations
- 15) Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture
- 16) Value for learning i.e. national museum
- 17) Other

1.26 What is your topic for sharing to others?

- 1) Having fresh & delicious seafood
- 2) Having exciting destinations
- 3) Having various tourism activities
- 4) Having an outstanding local way of life
- 5) Having standard accommodation
- 6) Travelling is convenient and easy to access

- 7) Availability of various souvenir shops
- 8) Having safety
- 9) Value for money
- 10) Having complete tourism facilities
- 11) Having a beautiful natural
- 12) Having a good location/geographical area
- 13) Having local friendliness
- 14) Meeting travel expectations
- 15) Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture
- 16) Value for learning i.e. national museum
- 17) Other
- 18) Not recommend

1.27 Communication channel of SLB experience sharing

- 1) Friends/relatives
- 2) Social media i.e. Line/IG/TikTok/YouTube
- 3) Travel blog
- 4) Website
- 5) Other

1.28 What are your travel expectations for SLB, as well as your touch of truth?

- 1) Having fresh & delicious seafood
- 2) Having exciting destinations
- 3) Having various tourism activities
- 4) Having an outstanding local way of life
- 5) Having standard accommodation
- 6) Travelling is convenient and easy to access
- 7) Availability of various souvenir shops
- 8) Having safety
- 9) Value for money
- 10) Having complete tourism facilities
- 11) Having a beautiful natural
- 12) Having a good location/geographical area
- 13) Having local friendliness
- 14) Meeting travel expectations
- 15) Having an identity that reflects local traditions & culture
- 16) Value for learning i.e. national museum

17) Other

1.29 Overall impression and expectation

1) As per expectations

2) Beyond expectations

3) Below expectations

Part 2: Tourism product and service of Songkhla Lake Basin

2.1 In your opinion, what is the prominence level of the SLB tourist destinations?

5 = Very high, 4 = High, 3 = Medium, 2 = Low, 1 = Very low

Type of Tourist Attraction	Prominence Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
Natural Attraction					
2.1.1) Cat & rat islands	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.2) Koh Yo	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.3) Tang Kuan hill	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.4) Noi hill	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.5) Kao Seng hill	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.6) Kao Seng beach	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.7) Samila beach	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.8) Son-on beach	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.9) Thinnasulanonda bridge	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.10) Herb garden	5	4	3	2	1
Archaeological and Cultural Attraction - Religious					
2.1.11) Usasna Islam mosque	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.12) Matchimawas temple	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.13) Koh Thum temple	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.14) Chai Mongkol temple	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.15) Srisudaram temple	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.16) Tai Yo temple	5	4	3	2	1

Type of Tourist Attraction	Prominence Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.17) Phet Mongkol temple	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.18) Pho Pathamawas temple	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.19) Leam Sai temple	5	4	3	2	1
Archaeological and Cultural Attraction - Old Town					
2.1.20) Muang Songkhla – Leam Son site	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.21) Muang Songkhla – Bo Yang site	5	4	3	2	1
Archaeological and Cultural Attractions – Other					
2.1.22) Khao Rubchang pagoda	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.23) Khao Kut pagoda	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.24) Khao Seng pagoda	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.25) Chai Mongkol temple pagoda	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.26) Leam Sai gun turret	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.27) Tang Kuan hill pagoda	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.28) Phadhamarong museum	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.29) Songkhla national museum	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.30) Sogkhla shrine	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.31) Stone inscription pavilion	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.32) Thaksin folklore museum the institute for Southern Thai studies	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.33) Songkhla fortress	5	4	3	2	1
Cultural Attraction – Local Handicraft					
2.1.34) Koh Yo weaving cloth	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.35) Lee Ma Lae cloth house	5	4	3	2	1
Learning Attraction					
2.1.36) Songkhla regional observatory	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.37) General Pream’s garden	5	4	3	2	1
Learning Attraction					
2.1.38) Local restaurants/seafood restaurant	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.39) Souvenir shops	5	4	3	2	1

Type of Tourist Attraction	Prominence Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.40) Tinnasulanonda stadium	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.41) Japanese garden	5	4	3	2	1
2.1.42) Songkhla zoo	5	4	3	2	1

2.2 In your opinion, what is the impression level of the SLB services?

5 = Very high, 4 = High, 3 = Medium, 2 = Low, 1 = Very low

Services	Impression Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.1 Having service in mind	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.2 Treat with respect	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.3 Understanding tourists	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.4 Willingness to welcome	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.5 Holding a service expertise	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.6 Clear communication with a smiley face	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.7 Willingness to help/solve problems	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.8 Creating a consistent impression	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.9 Using modern technology in service	5	4	3	2	1
2.2.10 The friendliness of the local community	5	4	3	2	1

Part 3: Tourists' perception towards Songkhla Lake Basin's brand

3.1 Do you think SLB has a destination brand?

1) Yes, it has a destination brand.

2) No, it has no destination brand.

3.2 Please indicate the importance level of the following destination attributes that effects the perception of the SLB brand.

5 = Very high, 4 = High, 3 = Medium, 2 = Low, 1 = Very low

Destination Attributes	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
Tourist Destination					
3.2.1) Location/geographical area	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.2) Variety of tourist destinations	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.3) Identity of tourist destinations	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.4) Destination attractiveness	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.5) Representation of history	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.6) Tradition & culture reflecting community uniqueness	5	4	3	2	1
Accessibility					
3.2.7) Variety of public transportations i.e. flight, car, plane	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.8) Travel convenience i.e. road	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.9) Clear signage availability	5	4	3	2	1
Activity					
3.2.10) Variety of tourist activities	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.11) Opportunity to exchange knowledge with local people	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.12) Opportunity to join activity with local people	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.13) Variety of shopping destinations	5	4	3	2	1
Destination Management					
3.2.14) Willingness to service	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.15) Sufficient number of officers on duty and provide quality service	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.16) Availability of modern technology for service	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.17) Easy to access the destination information	5	4	3	2	1
Destination Management					

Destination Attributes	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.18) Availability of local tour guide	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.19) Sustainability management	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.20) Knowledge sharing about value of tourist attraction & natural conservation	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.21) Community participation	5	4	3	2	1
Cost of Service					
3.2.22) Reasonable of the entrance fee	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.23) Value for money of the travel expenses	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.24) Reasonable price of product & services	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.25) Reasonable price of souvenirs	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.26) Reasonable price of accommodation	5	4	3	2	1
Infrastructure					
3.2.27) Availability of tourist information center	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.28) Availability of internet/Wifi	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.29) Availability of bank / ATM	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.30) Availability of a standard hotel & accommodation	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.31) Availability of local restaurants/shops	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.32) Availability of local souvenir shops	5	4	3	2	1
Safety & Hygiene					
3.2.33) No criminal	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.34) Political stability	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.35) No terrorism	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.36) Road safety	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.37) Clean toilet	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.38) Clean tourist destination	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.39) Disease control management	5	4	3	2	1
Destination Brand Image					
3.2.40) Good renown	5	4	3	2	1

Destination Attributes	Importance Level				
	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.41) Politeness & friendliness of local people	5	4	3	2	1
3.2.42) Acceptance of community/local host	5	4	3	2	1

Part 4: Recommendation

Recommendation and suggestion for SLB tourism

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Part 5: Respondent's details

5.1 Gender

1) Male

2) Female

5.2 Age

1) Below 21 years old

2) 21-37 years old

3) 38-53 years old

4) 54-72 years old

5) Above 73 years old

5.3 Location of Residence

1) Southern part

2) Northern part

3) North-eastern part

4) Eastern part

5) Central part excl. Bangkok

6) Bangkok metropolitan

5.4 Religious

1) Christian

2) Buddhist

3) Muslim

4) Other

5.5 Marital status

1) Single

2) Married

3) Divorce

4) Widow

5) Other

5.6 Education

- 1) Below a bachelor's degree
- 2) A bachelor's degree
- 3) Above a bachelor's degree

5.7 Occupation

- 1) Civil servant
- 2) Private-business employee
- 3) Business owner
- 4) Student
- 5) Pensioner
- 6) Retired
- 7) Housewife
- 8) Unemployed
- 9) Part-time officer
- 10) Other

5.8 Monthly Income

- 1) Below THB 10,000
- 2) THB 10,001-20,000
- 3) THB 20,001-30,000
- 4) THB 30,001-40,000
- 5) Above THB 40,001
- 6) No income

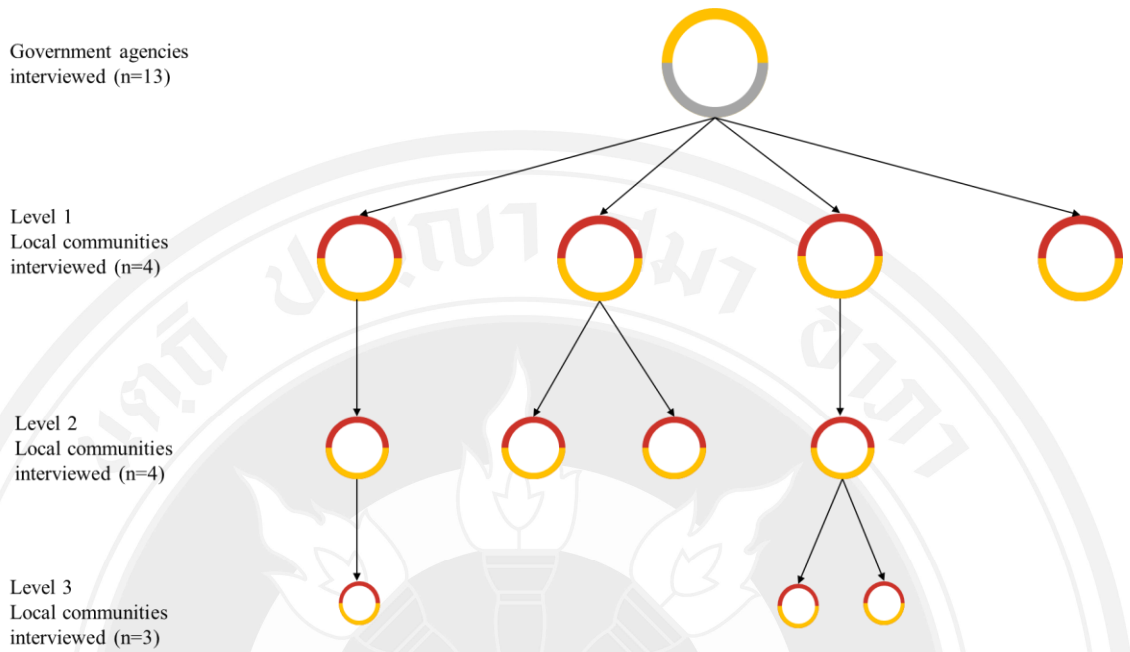
Thank you for your kind cooperation and assistance



APPENDIX B

Snowball Sampling Technique

Snowball Sampling Technique



BIOGRAPHY

Name-Surname	Chayada Kanabkaew
Academic Background	Master of Science (Agribusiness) Graduate School Prince of Songkla University (2003) Bachelor of Business Administration (Tourism Management) Faculty of Management Sciences Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (2005) Bachelor of Business Administration (Marketing) Faculty of Management Sciences Prince of Songkla University (2000)
Experience	Manager, Community Engagement (2016-present) Banpu Public Company Limited Specialist, Social Investment (2010-2016) Chevron Asia South Limited Public Relations Section Head (2005-2010) Trans Thai-Malaysia (Thailand) Limited Translator / Interpreter (2000-2005) Consulate General of Malaysia, Songkhla