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# The Development of Cultural Heritage Tourism at Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand

**Noppadol Dharawanij**

Tourism and Hospitality Program, College of Tourism and Hospitality, Rangsit University, Pathumthani, Thailand

**Email address:**

5290180@rsu.ac.th

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this study are 1. to study the cultural heritage tourism at Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province; 2. to study ethnic groups of people and conserve their cultural sustainability 3. to study the demand of tourists, who visit the area to increase number of quality tourists. Both quantitative and qualitative methods, which were questionnaires and interviews respectively, were applied in the process of conducting this research. According to the findings, cultural heritage tourist attractions that should be promoted are historical and temple tourism ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ), while the rest were already in high level. The activities that served the need of tourists were visitation to ancient monuments, temple tourism and offering to Buddhist monks on the longest wooden bridge. The accessibility to tourist attractions ( $\bar{x} = 3.97$ ), accommodation service ( $\bar{x} = 3.96$ ) and the amenities ( $\bar{x} = 3.28$ ) still require some improvements. The image of the tourism sites must also be improved ( $\bar{x} = 4.00$ ), while the rest is in medium level. Lastly, the result acquired from the SWOT analysis and TOWS Matrix strategy indicated that there were 3 types of tourism that should be promoted: historical, cultural, and religious tourism. And to increase the number of tourists, all stake holders needed to cooperate to solve the problems of these 4 aspects: the image, the advertisement through digital media, facilities and cleanliness and sanitation management.

**Keywords:** Cultural Tourism, Heritage Sites Tourism, Ethnic Group of People Conservation

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## 1. Introduction

Kanchanaburi Province is located in the central part of Thailand. In 2016, the number of Thai and foreign tourists traveling [1] to the province were 737,890 and 42,433 respectively and reached 831,169 (12.64%) and 46,433 (+9.41%) in the following year. [2] Sangkhlaburi District is one of the most important tourism sites in Thailand bordering on Myanmar. Usually, numerous numbers of tourists come to visit and stay overnight at the district due to its proximity to Bangkok and large diversity of tourist attractions. Firstly, there are some renowned cultural and religious tourist attractions, for example, Wangwiwekaram Temple, a former abode of Uttama, one of the most revered monks among all Mon and Thai people. Moreover, there is also Three Pagodas Pass which was the route Myanmar army used to invade Ayutthaya in the old days, however, in the present days it has become a border where people from both nations come to exchange products, contributing to economic growth. [3] Secondly, natural attractions here are

quite famous as well. It has the beautiful 36-storey-Kratengcheng waterfall, Krengkravia waterfall and etc. [4] Other than tourist attractions, another interesting feature of Sangkhlaburi District is the harmonious coexistence of the 3 major ethnic groups: Karen, Mon, and Myanmar. [5] They live in the community and share their cultures without any conflict. However, there was still a lack of a study on real tourists' demand, behaviors and potential in the area concerning advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and threats. [6] The author, therefore, chose to study the development of cultural heritage tourism at Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand to gather and present the related data to local authorities and the government in hope of drawing the attention to the area, as well as creating an urge to improve all facilities and do public relations about the components of tourism in the area (5As) [7] and the unique differentiate culture among the 3 main ethnic groups of people and cooperate with private entrepreneurs related to tourism to present the cultural heritage tourism; [8] and serve the demand of tourists and

make them satisfaction, [9] and also increase the number of cultural tourists. [10]

## 2. Objectives

1. to study the cultural heritage tourism at Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province
2. to study ethnic groups of people of Sangkhlaburi District and conserve their cultural sustainability
3. to study the demand of tourists, who visit Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province to increase the number of quality tourists.

## 3. Materials and Methods

The author applied mixed methods [11] in process of the research as the following:

1. Quantitative method: the author applied questionnaires as a study tool to the accidental samples, which could be classified into 3 groups of people: 1) 472 Thai and foreign tourists, 2) 50 staffs from private enterprises related to the tourism of the area, and 3) 50 local residents; [12] the study tools were in frequency distribution, average, percentage, standard deviation and, lastly, hypothesis testing by (SPSS). One sample t-test was also used in process.
2. Qualitative method: the author used interviews as a study tool to the purposive samples, which were groups of selected people: 5 leaders of the community in Sangkhlaburi District, a director and 5 officers of central part, Tourism Authority of Thailand head office, a head and 5 officers of Tourism Authority of Thailand, Kanchanaburi office, a head and 5 officers of Tourism and Sport, Kanchanaburi Province; total number was 23 samplings. [13] The author used triangulation for data validation by 1) Surveying the area to compare data obtained from government officers and local residents 2) Observation without participating to collect data and 3) Data collection in different time such as weekday, weekend and holidays etc.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The author used questionnaire as a tool for quantitative research to the accidental samples, which were 472 Thai and foreign tourists, 50 staffs from private enterprises related to tourism of the area and 50 local residents. The findings suggested that the cultural heritage tourist attractions should be promoted as the following:

From figure 1, the top 5 of cultural heritage tourist attractions are in a high level; the attraction that interest both Thai and foreign tourists the most is historical and temple tourism. Thus, these attractions should be promoted to all incoming tourists.

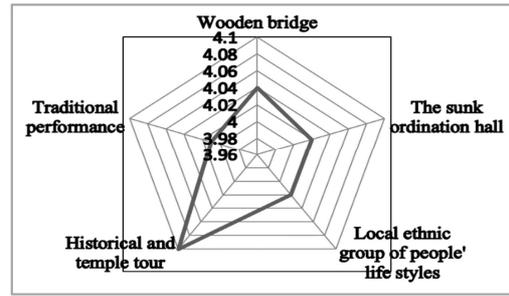


Figure 1. The cultural heritage tourist attraction should be promoted.

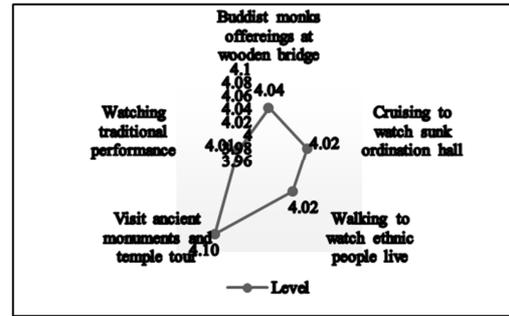


Figure 2. The activities should be promoted.

Figure 2 suggests that all tourist activities are in a high level, and the highest activity is a visitation to ancient monuments and temple tourism (4.10). Hence, it should be promoted the most, however, the rest are also quite popular among tourists and can't be neglected as well.

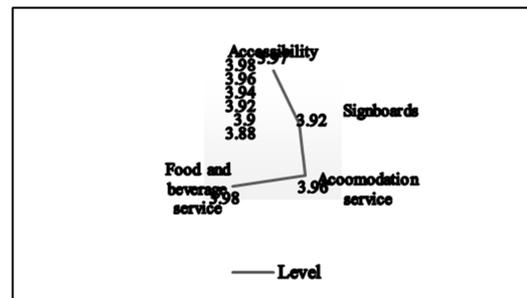


Figure 3. The accessibility to the area and the accommodation service.

From figure 3, we learned that the accessibility, signboard, and the accommodation service along with food and beverage of the area are in medium level and should be improved.

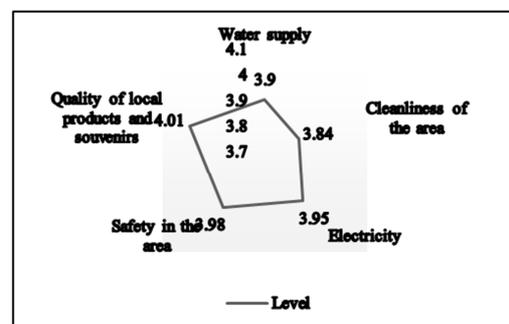


Figure 4. The amenity in the area.

Figure 4 shows that the amenities in the area, water supply, the quality of local products and souvenirs are all in a high level, while the rest are in a medium level and should be improved continually to satisfy the tourists' demand.

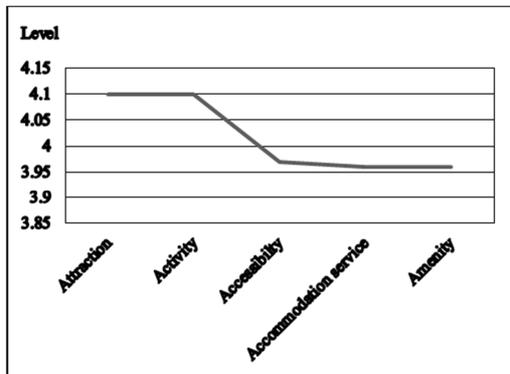


Figure 5. The components of tourist area (5As).

From figure 5, the opinion of tourists and private enterprise in the components of tourist area (5As) is that the attraction and activity are in high level; however, the rest is in medium level.

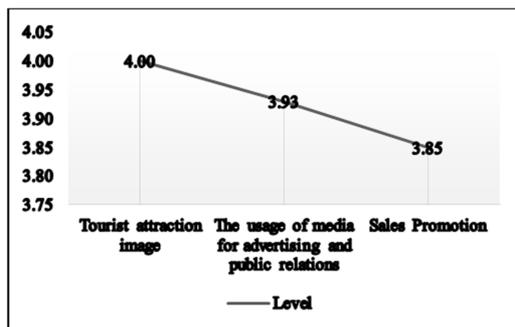


Figure 6. Marketing of the area.

Figure 6 demonstrates that tourist attraction image is the highest level, whereas the other two are in medium level. The latter two could be promoted effectively via digital media.

The findings and suggestions derived from interviews with the related parties are as the following:

#### 4.1. Officers at Tourism and Sport, Kanchanaburi Office

##### 4.1.1. Tourist Attractions' Advantages

- 1) There is diversity of historical and religious attractions especially Wangwiwekaram Temple, which is the spiritual center of Buddhist and residents.
- 2) There are 3 main ethnic group of people: Karen, Mon, and Myanmarese.
- 3) There is unique tradition and customs of the ethnic group of people.
- 4) The area has the famous Mon bridge, the longest wooden bridge (about 900 meters) in Thailand and a signature of the area.
- 5) There are unique local foods and desserts of the 3 main ethnic groups of people.

##### 4.1.2. Tourist Attractions' Disadvantages

- 1) The infrastructure and facilities were incomplete.
- 2) The area still lacked tourist personnel.
- 3) The public transportation system was inefficient.

##### 4.1.3. Public Relations and Channels

Further online and offline publication is still necessary for the promotion of the district. In this regard, a mobile application and product stalls might be of great assistance in promoting the tourist attractions together with local delicacies and products. In addition, a permission for a filmmaking would also help as well.

#### 4.2. Tourism Authority of Thailand, Central Office, and Tourism Authority of Thailand, Kanchanaburi Office

##### 4.2.1. Administration, Participation, and Tourist Attractions' Problems

- 1) Participation in public relations tourism activities in the area, promote the existence activities such as local food festival to be wide known among tourists and coordination in meeting to all units in the community such as SME, fishery group, cultural group, and agricultural group etc. Distribute tourism principle policies from Tourism Authority of Thailand and tourism community plan to the area.
- 2) Distribute budget from Tourism Authority of Thailand to develop area and implement according to government's policies.
- 3) Problems and obstacles are people in the community lack of confidence in developing and local products potential and there is conflict among people in the community when activity created in the area, no one want to come.

##### 4.2.2. Tourist Attractions' Advantages

- 1) There is natural beauty suitable for cruising, there are plenty of historical attractions such as Three Pagodas Pass, Wangwiwekaram temple and old markets and Ban Mai market etc.
- 2) There is tradition both on land and on water which is pay homage to the sunk ordination hall.

##### 4.2.3. Tourist Attractions' Disadvantages

- 1) General people and tourists only know Wangwiwekaram temple, they do not know another historical tourist attraction which should be promoting to be known.
- 2) Lack of public transportation, there still no connection to all the area, Lack of signboards to show tourist routes to connect to all tourist attractions and lack of English or other foreign languages brochures and English-speaking officers and digital media.

#### 4.3. Head of Community, Sangkhlaburi, Kanchanaburi Province

##### 4.3.1. Tourist Attractions' Strengths Points

- 1) There were cultural and religious tourist attractions and 3 main ethnic group of people.

2) There were unique local foods and desserts.

#### 4.3.2. *Tourist Attractions' Disadvantages*

- 1) The public transportation system was inefficient and not accessible in some areas.
- 2) The infrastructure and facilities were incomplete
- 3) The number of quality officers to work on projects and help authorities to improve tourist attractions in the area was inadequate.

#### 4.3.3. *Public Relations and Channels*

- 1) There was still a lack of good cooperation among tourism parts.
- 2) The number of quality personnel who know and understand tourism was deficient.
- 3) The area still lacked the personnel with an ability to conduct public relations digitally and promote it in the worldwide level.

According to the details above, the government already learned the cause as well as how to solve the problems. They were aware of how to develop the area and improve all the facilities, however, the lack of quality personnel to propel the project has hindered them from doing so. As for the private enterprises, the best method for them to assist with the promotion of local attractions, would be to concentrate more on conducting business within the area, instead of making an investment outside.

For the SWOT analysis, the author found that: [14]

##### *Strengths*

1. There were 2 identical tourist attractions in Sangkhlaburi District, Kamchanaburi Province, namely Wangwiwe- karam Temple and the longest wooden bridge.
2. Wangwiwekaram Temple is a spiritual center of Thai and other ethnic groups of people. The 2 main activities satisfying the demand of tourists were a visitation to the temple and ancient monuments and offering to Buddhist monk on the wooden bridge.

##### *Weaknesses*

1. The amenities in the area were insufficient.
2. Local tour operators should be responsible for the tourism in the area.
3. The area lacked the cooperation and integration among stake holders in the area such as accommodation business, food service business, souvenir shops and etc., which could help in attracting incoming tourists.
4. The area lacked specialists in marketing, sales promotion, and public relations to manage the promotion of tourist attractions in the area.

##### *Opportunities*

1. There was a large diversity of tourist attractions and activities in the area which could lead to various kinds of activities, unfortunately, the concept and accurate understanding of tourism was still unaware by some parts of the area.
2. There was a traditional practice of paying homage to the sunken ordination hall both on land and water.
3. The area possessed many accommodations, most of

which were of enormous scale and capable of organizing any meeting or conventions. Their potential could effectively attract more tourists and revenue to the area.

##### *Threats*

1. Although the area has been receiving a full support directly from the government, supports from other sections were still missing.
2. Tourism information was outdated and couldn't satisfy tourists properly.

For the TOW Matrix, the author paired SO to use strengths to create advantage from opportunity strategy; WO to win over weaknesses and take the usage of opportunities strategy; ST to use strengths and avoid threats strategy, and WT to reduce weaknesses and avoid threats strategy as the following:

##### *SO*

1. Try to organize meeting, seminar or convention for both government side or private enterprises in difference sizes of hotels or resorts at Sangkhlaburi, Kanchanaburi province.
2. Organize local cultural tourism center, ethnic groups study center or minorities group study center.

##### *WO*

1. Accelerate cooperation to develop amenities in the area to be completed as soon as possible.
2. Increasing number of trash boxes and improve trash collection system.
3. Promote tourism in the area and get together to promote sales promotion and public relations digitally and globally.
4. Organize meeting all related units to get well cooperate to attract more incoming tourists to the area and the province.
5. Training tourism officers and making more medias to promote tourism both online and offline.

##### *ST*

1. Organize meeting all related tourism organization both government and private to cooperate to promote tourism in the area.
2. Establish provincial tourism center to present tourism information.
3. Training or give knowledge of tourism to people in the area both government and private organization.

##### *WT*

1. Develop communication to all government and private organization to promote public relations of the province.
2. Develop and training tourism information to local people, entrepreneurs, and all people to help promote all information to the tourists.
3. Promote knowledge and skill the usage of foreign languages to entrepreneurs and local people to communicate to all foreign tourists.

## 5. Conclusion

Tourists, related government officers and private

enterprises believed that there even though the numbers of tourists visiting Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi were already at a high level, the cultural heritage tourist attractions and activities, equipped with a high tourism potential, could still draw even more tourists to the area, ultimately leading to a further growth in this number. In the future, if the government join hands with private enterprises, and cooperate in harmony to improve accessibility to tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation service, there would be more tourists considering visiting Sangkhlaburi District. In addition, the image of the tourism sites, advertisement and publication as well as sales promotion should be improved and promoted digitally and globally. After the improvement project and the cooperation from the

locals are both achieved, the new marketing strategy can be launched; more tourists would come to the area, bringing more revenue [15] to the community. And the revenue collected from this would be utilized to develop the community, preserve the environment and conserve the cultural heritage with sustainability.

## 6. Suggestion

The author would like to suggest that the government and private organizations should join force and establish a cooperation to realize the essential strategies and implementation, which will definitely result in the increase in quality tourists and revenue of the local residents.

*Table 1. Strategies and Implementation.*

Strategies	Implementation
1. The image of the tourist attraction.	- Contact related government units to improve the image of tourist attractions. - Examine and reach out to the media to assist with the public relations of the tourist attractions.
2. The advertisement through digital media.	- Train both government and private officers in the area to provide accurate tourist information and make a response to all questions on a real-time basis through digital media.
3. Facilities in the area.	- Improve electric power system by contacting PEA to provide stable electricity to the area.
4. Cleanliness and sanitation management.	- Contact municipal unit to provide sufficient trash boxes and manage trash collecting system effectively.

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