



Behavior and need for information from the use of web applications among sports tourists in Songkhla Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This research aimed to explore behavior and needs for information on web applications about sports tourism in Songkhla Province, Thailand using mixed methods. Quantitatively, a questionnaire was used to collect data from 400 tourists in Hat Yai District and Mueang Songkhla District and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Qualitatively, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 people involved in sports tourism in Songkhla Province, and content analysis was performed. The study found that most sports tourists had been to Songkhla Province as sports participants, and searched for information from the Internet. Their travel purposes were participating in, watching, or cheering on the marathon, skateboarding, surf skating, and water sports, respectively. Most of the tourists used the Internet for 8.83 hours per day accessing the Internet via smartphones. The social media used were Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Google websites, and Google Maps to search for information on tourist attractions, routes, and travel plans. Their overall need for the use of online information was at a very high level ($\bar{X} = 4.20$, $SD = 0.62$) consisting of (1) Sports database comprising sports activities in the province, information on stadiums available for practices, statistics, and competition evaluation forms, and competition calendars; (2) Tourism database comprising tourist sites, accommodations, restaurants, souvenir shops, and public transport stations; (3) Facilities database comprising navigation service systems, emergency assistance channels, chat boxes, and chatbot services. Information should be multimedia with details in Thai and English to enhance the potential and value added to the activities and services.

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Introduction

Sports tourism is important for social development contributing to good health among youth and people that are essential to the country's development directly affecting the quality of life and society (Butler & Hinch, 2007). Sports tourism can reinforce the building of the nation's heritage, identity, and community soul that all together promote the local culture which is an important role of sports tourism toward culture. Caselli et al. (2015) state that sports tourism also plays an important role in the cultural development of the city because sports tourism can help revive the city's culture and traditions (Ross, 2001). In addition, sports tourism is associated with the community and culture related to the country as well (Butler & Hinch, 2007). Furthermore, sports tourism is beneficial to the development of sports systems in terms of efficiency, sports venues, facilities, and equipment, which directly influence athletes' potential. Thus, sports tourism develops the tourism industry system that generates income in tourist attraction sites by adding activities with special characteristics in addition to developing the potential of people and local society. Moreover, sports tourism is a cultural communication channel that influences cultural development.

Currently, digital technology is essential and plays an increasingly important role in the daily life of Thai people. Therefore, it is an important signal for Thailand to accelerate its competitive ability in terms of digital technology because if it cannot adapt to the changing digital world, business operations could face difficulty (Thongsachon, 2020). The use of digital technology to increase the efficiency of tourism management for sustainable growth is crucial, however, many studies about digital platforms have been on information technology management and management (Blaschke, Haki, Aier, & Winter, 2018; de Reuver et al., 2018). Therefore, digital platforms are a form of online business operation with modern technology. A survey on trends affecting tourism business entrepreneurs by Kasikorn Research Center (2018) found interesting consumer behavior in the increasing use of the Internet and social media. According to Hootsuite, 57 percent of people in the world can access the Internet system including 42 percent who constantly use social media, which may reflect the trend that consumers including

tourists have a chance to spend their free time on activities on the Internet. For example, they can read reviews about updating their lives using social media and chatting via various applications (Pudliner, 2007; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). These activities are deemed important channels for sending and receiving information because consumers can send and receive a lot of information quickly (Xiang et al., 2010). Moreover, tourists nowadays give importance to data-driven decisions and therefore, need the use of the Internet for information to help their decision-making on their travels. In addition to the use of online channels to search for information, they also tend to make hotel accommodations and purchase goods using mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets more than in the past (Buhalis & Law, 2008) as the prices of these types of equipment and internet signals are lower. Besides, the Wi-Fi system covers almost every place making it possible for tourists to reserve services using their smartphones and tablets. According to PhocusWire, approximately one in three reservations are made via different types of mobile devices.

The growth of tourism mentioned above has enabled Songkhla Province to carry out various development plans to support and accommodate sports tourism management as well as public relations media to promote different channels for access to information about tourist attractions for Thai and international tourists and travelers. However, tourism personnel of the Province still have limitations in receiving information and lack knowledge and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) when people nowadays are attached to the digital lifestyle, and more tourists need to access information in the Internet system via smartphones and search for tourist attractions, information on traveling and accommodation that makes it easier for them to travel on their own (Rooymai, 2021; Songkhla Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports, 2019). According to related literature, tourism information services in Thailand have not met tourist needs in many aspects, such as convenience in accessing information at tourism service centers, accuracy and currency of information, uninteresting methods of information presentation, limited number of documents, and lack of information in various languages (Inklum, 2014). Moreover, there are limitations in information technology regarding tourism information systems and internet systems,

which prevent tourists from accessing information by themselves at the time they want. This makes information services unappealing for tourists as they are only tourism symbols that cannot be used cost-effectively (Suporn et al., 2013). Consequently, cooperation with stakeholders lacks concrete integration, resulting in organizations missing the opportunity to develop a wider and more effective range of tourism information services.

A pilot study conducted by interviewing officials involved in sports and recreation promotion, and sports activities organizers of Songkhla Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports on November 9, 2020, found an overall insufficiency of databases that apply web applications that could efficiently integrate sports tourism data. For example, public relations media for sports activities, sports competition calendars, statistics on travel for sports tourism, competition evaluation forms, facilities, accommodations, restaurants, souvenir shops, reviews of tourist attractions showing tourist impressions or chat boxes, and interesting detailed information about tourist attractions in Songkhla Province. The importance of these aspects prompted the research team to explore the behavior and needs of tourists for the use of web applications so that the findings could be used as guidelines for the development of web applications for sports tourism in Songkhla Province. These web applications could allow tourists wishing to participate in sports activities in Songkhla Province to access information conveniently and quickly before, while, and after traveling altogether. Moreover, these applications would be beneficial to government and private organizations involved in tourism in applying and developing sports tourism services of Songkhla Province as well as making them sustainable.

Methodology

Mixed methods were employed using quantitative and qualitative methods at the same time. A quantitative method was used to explore the behavior and needs for travel information of sports tourists in Songkhla Province while a qualitative method was used to determine guidelines for the development of databases and web applications for sports tourism in Songkhla Province. After data analysis, the results of the two methods were integrated for interpretation to confirm

the results' correctness and consistency, giving equal weights to the data.

Quantitative Research

The population and subjects in this study consisted of 3 groups: (1) sports tourists, (2) non-sports tourists, and (3) sportsperson-related tourists. The exact number of the population was not known but they were tourists in Songkhla Province during sports competitions. Therefore, the subjects were selected using quota sampling methods and the population was divided into sports tourists, non-sports tourists, and sportsperson-related tourists. Nevertheless, because the study explored the need for the use of web applications concerning sports tourism management, the focus of data collection was on sports tourists, and thus, the numbers of the other two groups of tourists were smaller and divided equally. The required minimum sample size was 385 but to make it convenient to divide the quota, the sample size of 400 was used, and consequently, the number of sports tourists was 200 and the non-sports tourists and sportsperson-related tourists were 100 each, for which convenience sampling was used. They were tourists who traveled in Hat Yai District and Songkhla District during sports competitions, for example, Songkhla Provincial Boxing Competition Festival, Long Len Songkhla Beach Jam #2, Hatyai Extreme Festival 2022, Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour Futures Songkhla Open, the 37th Thailand National Youth Games (Region 4 Qualifying Competitions), Songkhla Triathlon, Tour of Songkhla Cycling Competition, the 4th National Senior Games, Hat Yai Marathon, and Songkhla Provincial Athletics Championships. The data were collected from March to June 2022 using convenience sampling of 400 subjects.

Research Instruments

The instrument used in qualitative research was a questionnaire developed by the researchers by synthesizing data based on concepts and theories and related research. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: (1) Personal data comprising gender, age, occupation, income, marital status, education, and residential province; (2) Behavior in traveling and using information technology. This part of the questionnaire comprised 20 questions; and (3) The need for the use of information

on web applications about sports tourism in Songkhla Province. This part of the questionnaire comprised (1) Public relations media for sports activities, (2) Sports competitions calendars, (3) Competition evaluation forms, (4) Accommodations, (5) Restaurants, (6) Souvenirs of Songkhla shops, (7) Tourist attractions and interesting sports activities, (8) Expressions of impressions or chat boxes, (9) Navigation systems, (10) Use of images to communicate the contents, (11) Chatbots, (12) Emergency assistance channels, (13) Public transport stations, and (14) Stadiums available for practices or workouts. This part of the questionnaire consisted of 5-point rating scale questions (Srisa-ard, 2013).

Validation and reliability of the instruments in terms of content and language usage were tested by three experts in tourism and sports. The index of consistency (IOC) was set at a minimum of .60 (Tirakanan, 2007), and found that all the question items were between 0.67–1.00. The improved questionnaire was tried out with 30 tourists who were not in the sample group. Then the answers to the questionnaire were tested for reliability and it was found that the overall reliability value of the entire questionnaire was 0.95.

The data were collected from sports tourists, non-sports tourists, and sportsperson-related tourists who traveled to watch and participate in sports competitions in Hat Yai District and Mueang Songkhla District during March and June 2022. The researchers and five research assistants informed in person the informants of the purposes and details of the questionnaire and the subjects responded to the questionnaire online by themselves.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency, mean, percentage, and standard deviation, and the needs were arranged in order of the level of needs to be used as guidelines for the development of web applications.

Qualitative Research

The population and sample groups were groups of organizers and network partners who organized sports tourism activities in Hat Yai District and Mueang Songkhla District. To obtain various aspects of data with validity, the focus was on informants with experience and playing a role in sports tourism management in Songkhla Province as well as stakeholders recruited using purposive sampling (Podhisita, 2021). In-

depth interviews were conducted with 30 informants consisting of (1) Five organizers of sports tourism activities, (2) Five informants from supporting networks of government, private, and people sectors, (3) Fifteen sports tourists participating in competitions, and (4) Five sports tourism academics.

The data collected from the interviews were about the development of databases related to sports tourism management in Songkhla Province. The telephone interviews were flexible and changeable. The informants were contacted on the phone before the interviews to introduce the research team, inform them about the study's objectives, and make appointments. Then the topics and issues of the interviews were mailed or emailed to them. Before the interviews, the informants were asked for permission to be recorded while being interviewed using Zoom Meeting. The questions of the semi-structured interviews were open-ended, and the answers were analyzed using content analysis before the results were presented in a descriptive essay to provide a detailed analysis of the data.

Ethics

The research was carried out upon the prior consent of the Ethical Committee of the Center for Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, Prince of Songkla University (No. PSU IRB 2021 - LL - Librats 003 (Internal)). The subjects were informed of the objectives of the study and that they had the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without any penalty or consequences. In addition, they were informed that the information they provided would be kept strictly confidential and reported as overall results.

Results

The results of the general data are as follows. Most of the subjects were females (238 or 50.4%), followed by males (190 or 40.3%) and other sexual identities (44 or 9.3%); 49.3 percent were between 20–40 years old. Occupations: 25.0 percent self-employed, 24.5 percent private company employees, 20.0 percent government servants, 18.1 percent students, and 12.4 percent state enterprise employees. The incomes of 45.6 percent were in the range of 15,001–35,000 Baht. Education: 56.4 percent bachelor's degree, 36.7 percent

below bachelor's degree, and 7 percent higher than bachelor's degree. Most of the subjects, or 85.8 percent, lived in Southern Thailand.

The results of the study on the behavior of sports tourists in Songkhla Province revealed that most of them had participated in sports activities in Songkhla Province 3.14 times on average. 56.1 percent traveled with friends or acquaintances, an average of 3 people in a trip; 68.4 percent searched information on the Internet or websites; 47.7 percent had friends or acquaintances taking part in making the decision to travel while 83.1 percent arranged their own travel itineraries; 50 percent chose to stay in hotel accommodations; 56.1 percent stayed for two nights, followed by 27.8 percent who stayed at a relative's or a friend's home. Most of the subjects or 82 percent traveled by their own cars; the average expense per trip per person was 4,061 Baht. The purpose of the trip for most of them 44.7 percent was to participate in sports competitions, 30.7 percent to watch and cheer on the competitions, and 18.9 to enjoy the trip and relax. The type of sports that most subjects participated in, watched, and cheered on was marathons 51.1 percent, followed by skateboarding and surf skating 14.6 percent, and water sports 10 percent. Most subjects, 58.90 percent, wanted to visit natural tourist attractions. As for the behavior in the use of tourist information technology in Songkhla Province, it was found that most of the subjects used the Internet for an average of 8.83 hours per day,

and most of them, 95.13, percent accessed the Internet on smartphones; 58.26 percent used online social media: Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram, followed by Google websites 38.56 percent. Of most subjects, 86.65 percent used the Internet to search for information about tourist attractions; 56.87 percent reserved accommodations on the phone directly with the accommodation places, followed by 36.44 percent who reserved online via the Agoda website.

The analysis results of the need for the use of sports tourism travel information on web applications of tourists in Songkhla Province revealed that the overall opinion level was high ($\bar{X} = 4.20$, $SD = 0.62$). When classified in detail, it was found that tourists who traveled to participate in, watch, or cheer on sports competitions needed public relations media about sports activities at a high level ($\bar{X} = 4.30$, $SD = 0.73$), about interesting sports activities ($\bar{X} = 4.27$, $SD = 0.76$), stadiums available for practices ($\bar{X} = 4.26$, $SD = 0.75$), navigation systems ($\bar{X} = 4.25$, $SD = 0.78$), statistics and competition evaluation forms ($\bar{X} = 4.25$, $SD = 0.72$), emergency assistance channels ($\bar{X} = 4.24$, $SD = 0.78$), restaurants ($\bar{X} = 4.23$, $SD = 0.80$), the use of images that communicate the contents ($\bar{X} = 4.22$, $SD = 0.80$), chat boxes ($\bar{X} = 4.22$, $SD = 0.76$), chatbot services ($\bar{X} = 4.21$, $SD = 0.79$), public transport stations ($\bar{X} = 4.17$, $SD = 0.83$), hotel accommodations ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, $SD = 0.87$), sports competitions calendars ($\bar{X} = 4.07$, $SD = 0.89$), and souvenir shops ($\bar{X} = 4.03$, $SD = 0.92$), respectively (Table 1).

Table 1 Means and standard deviation levels of needs for the use of sports tourism travel information on web applications of tourists in Songkhla Province

No.	Sports Tourism Information	\bar{X}	SD	Level
1	Public relations media	4.30	0.73	High
2	Interesting sports activities	4.27	0.76	High
3	Stadiums available for practices	4.26	0.75	High
4	Navigation systems	4.25	0.78	High
5	Statistics and competition evaluation forms	4.25	0.72	High
6	Emergency assistance channels	4.24	0.78	High
7	Restaurants	4.23	0.80	High
8	Use of images that communicate the contents	4.22	0.80	High
9	Chat boxes	4.22	0.76	High
10	Chatbot services	4.21	0.79	High
11	Public transport stations	4.17	0.83	High
12	Hotel accommodations	4.14	0.87	High
13	Sports competition calendars	4.07	0.89	High
14	Souvenir Shops	4.03	0.92	High
Total		4.20	0.62	High

The results of the interviews with the sports tourism activities organizers, supporting network partners from the government, private and people sectors, sports tourism academics, and sports tourists participating in sports activities could be concluded as follows.

1. Opinions on the use of information technology to manage databases on sports tourism in Songkhla Province revealed that nowadays information technology and communication play an important role in the lives of all age groups. Thus, the application of digital technology and the development of tourism information services using electronic systems are the dimensions that all sectors must adapt and attach importance to. At present, sports tourism is rather popular among tourists and adds much value to the tourism sector. Songkhla is a province with various potential aspects that can attract tourists from within Thailand and other countries to participate in sports and traveling activities. It has been appointed a sports city that can contribute to the country's economic growth with the sports industry, especially in sports activities for tourism and recreation. This is because Songkhla Province is well-equipped with all the facilities to be a center for sports development. Therefore, using modern information technology to manage information services in sports and tourism in Songkhla Province systematically would completely upgrade its being a sports city. Accordingly, there is the need for the development of web applications for sports tourism in Songkhla Province using responsive web design (RWD) that supports the use of a variety of devices and screen and display sizes such as desktops, smartphones, and tablets. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the display of the sports tourism information of Songkhla Province on web applications such as contents, images, sounds, animations, and texts providing all details that are correct, up-to-date, and useable. These web applications would be used by tourists who wish to participate in sports activities in Songkhla Province and allow them to be able to access and search for information conveniently and quickly before, while, and after the trip in a complete manner.

2. Opinions on the services of sports tourism information in Songkhla Province were revealed as follows. Tourists who wished to participate in sports competitions and travel suggested that information on sports tourism web applications of Songkhla Province should be classified into three databases: sports database, tourism database, and facilities database.

The sports database should contain details of sports public relations news, sports calendars, sports facilities, sports competition results, registered sports personnel of the Sports Association of Songkhla Province, and products and services directly and indirectly related to sports. The tourism database should contain details of tourism public relations news, tourism calendars, tourist attractions, hotel accommodations, restaurants, and souvenir shops. The facilities database should have details on transportation systems in Songkhla Province as well as between Songkhla and other provinces, systems suggesting travel directions to the sports competition venues, tourist attractions, healthcare centers, police stations, chatbot services, chat boxes, emergency assistance channels in Songkhla Province. Moreover, the information should be provided with images and videos that communicate the contents, and texts giving details about tourist attractions that are interesting and attractive to tourists. It is also crucial for the information to be in both Thai and English in order to facilitate both Thai and international tourists to conveniently and quickly access the information and to expand the sports tourism market for Songkhla Province. This would further contribute to the development and add value to the economic and social sustainability of Songkhla Province. In conclusion, the data collected from both the quantitative and qualitative research methods revealed that technology and innovation are important factors for moving forward the management of sports tourism in Songkhla Province. The sports and tourism data collected from the specific groups of tourists for analysis to form a guideline for the systematic development of web applications for sports tourism in Songkhla Province would help upgrade Songkhla Province as a sports city to be more complete with the additional service networks of services with better international standards. The government, private, and people sectors as well as stakeholders associated with sports tourism management should take into consideration the needs and behavior of tourists as the major concern focusing on information that meets the needs of the tourists so as to encourage more tourists to use the services online. Therefore, it is essential that information be carefully selected to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of the specific groups of tourists. In addition, the information must always be up-to-date, easy to access and share, safe, and useful. Such could help tourists who travel to participate in sports competitions and sports activities to easily and quickly access

the needed information to plan their trips before, while, and after in all aspects in a short time and a complete manner.

Discussion

The study on the need for the use of web applications for sports tourism management of Songkhla Province found interesting issues to be discussed as follows.

The results of the study on behavior and the use of information technology among sports tourists in Songkhla Province revealed that most of the tourists had been to Songkhla Province to participate in sports activities, and they traveled with friends or acquaintances in a group of an average of three people each trip. They searched for information on the Internet or websites and made decisions about the trip with friends or acquaintances. They planned the itineraries by themselves and chose to stay in a hotel for an average of two nights. Most of them traveled in their own cars, reserved tours in advance, and used their own services in transportation and accommodations during the trip. These behaviors corresponded to the findings by Kiiulnen (2013), who found that 78 percent of Generation Y travelers reserved services in advance and used their own services for transportation and accommodations while traveling. The expenses per trip per person of sports tourists in Songkhla Province was 4,061 Baht. The purpose of the trip for most of them was to participate in sports competitions, followed by watching or cheering on and relaxing during their stay. Most of them traveled to participate in and watch or cheer on marathons, followed by skateboarding, surf skating, and water sports. For touring, most of them considered visiting natural tourist attractions. The results of the study on behavior in the use of information technology revealed that most of them used the Internet at an average of 8.83 hours per day and accessed the Internet using smartphones; the social media used were Facebook, Tik-Tok, Twitter, and Instagram, followed by Google websites. This is in agreement with the survey by Business Insider (2022) that explored users distributed in ages, regions, and provinces and found that online activities had a tendency to grow continuously because Internet users had choices for searching information and communication. Moreover, social media has increased more than in the past, which makes information-searching

behavior or communication change. For example, the search of information within Google websites revealed that almost 40 percent of Generation Z prefer searching for information on TikTok and Instagram to Google Search and Google Maps. Additionally, the study found that most of the subjects used the Internet to search for information about tourist attractions, and most of them reserved accommodations directly by themselves using their smartphones, followed by reserving such online via the Agoda website, respectively. From the study results, it can be seen that tourist behavior at present has changed entirely. They use smartphones as tools for searching for information from the time before the trip to the end of the trip. They use smartphones for buying and selling online, sharing images through social media, etc. (Buhalis, 2020; Kim & Law, 2015; Wang et al., 2012).

The results of the analysis of the need for the use of sports tourism information on web applications of tourists in Songkhla Province revealed that the need among tourists traveling to participate in sports activities in Songkhla Province was at a high level. When classified according to details of the need for services, it was found that tourists who traveled to compete in, watch, or cheer on sports activities needed sports information on tourism and facilities in the following aspects. (1) Most of the sports tourists needed public relations media about sports activities, followed by (2) interesting sports activities in Songkhla Province, (3) information on stadiums available for practices, (4) navigation service systems to the sports competition venues, (5) data on statistics and competition evaluation forms, (6) information about emergency assistance channels, (7) information about restaurants, (8) use of images that communicate the contents, (9) chat boxes, (10) chatbot services, (11) public transport stations, (12) hotel accommodations, (13) sports competition calendars, and (14) souvenir shops, respectively. The study results show that technology and innovation are important factors in driving sports tourism in Songkhla Province. Thus, the development of web applications on sports tourism to be used in managing and gathering information services about sports as well as tourism in Songkhla Province and integrating them systematically would help upgrade Songkhla Province to be complete as a sports city. However, the contents, types, sources, reliability, correctness, being up-to-date, and completeness of the information are necessary. These are crucial standards in providing

information services for sports and tourism in Songkhla Province. Up-to-date technology that meets the needs of the target groups of tourists would help sports tourists who travel to participate in competitions and join activities to access information conveniently and quickly. They could also use tourism information before, while, and after traveling to complete their trip, which is in agreement with the concepts of the components of sports tourism management in which Shonk (2006) specified that good quality sports tourism management that achieves success in sports competitions before, during, and after the events requires the following characteristics. The venue must be convenient and safe to access, and the process of service management must be with quality and cost-effectiveness. These services are for example, facilities, public relations, transportation, medical services, application procedures, signs and symbols, accommodations, statistics of competition results, etc. At present, technology and innovation are essential factors for moving forward the sports tourism management of Songkhla Province. Technological development facilitates tourists to access information without borders and communicate information through modern technology rapidly. This corresponds with a case study in Cyprus by Achilleos et al., (2021). The case study was on promoting active sports tourism through technology and evaluating its economic impact: experiences from Cyprus. The study found that sports had a lot of positive impact on local as well as the country's economy. The more complete information provided on the websites for users to access, the more effective the promotion of the products or the activities, especially when the websites are accessible anytime anywhere. Hence, the development of online systems to introduce activities online that are flexible to accommodate the interests of each user to access from various platforms would impress the users. This includes providing well-rounded knowledge that responds to the needs of users who are sports activity participants very well. This is in agreement with a study by Kaisornrat and Naksanee (2017) on the development of the local community into a destination for sports tourism: a case study of Chom Bueng Community, Ratchaburi Province which found that the influence of technology is an important factor of community development to a destination for sports tourism. The study found that tourist behavior has changed in the use and the method of accessing information as a large number of tourists use the Internet to search for information to help

them make decisions on traveling and to plan before, during, and after the trips. For example, they search for public relations about sports activities, venues, travel methods, accommodation reservations, and sharing experiences, ideas, criticism, services, and impressions toward trips.

Conclusion

Most of the sports tourists have traveled and participated in sports activities in Songkhla Province. They traveled with a group of an average of 3 friends or acquaintances on each trip, and they searched tourism information from the Internet or websites and had friends or acquaintances help make the travel decision. They arranged their own tour itineraries, chose to stay in a hotel, and stayed for two nights. Most of the tourists traveled by their own cars, and had a total expense of 4,061 Baht per person per trip. Their purpose of traveling to Songkhla Province was to participate in, watch, or cheer on sports, and to relax. The popular sports activities for tourists to participate in, watch, and cheer on were marathons, skateboarding, surf skating, and water sports. Most of the sports tourists wanted to visit natural tourist attractions. Most of them use the Internet for an average of 8.83 hours per day, accessing the Internet via smartphones. They used social media, namely, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Google websites, and Google Maps to search for information on tourist attractions, and tourist routes, and to plan their trip while traveling. They reserved accommodations directly with the hotels through smartphones. Regarding the results of the survey on the need for the use of information services on web applications for sports tourism of tourists in Songkhla Province, it was found that the opinions of tourists, government, and private organizations, the people sector, and stakeholders involved in sports tourism management were in agreement. They stated that integrating information services systematically according to the needs of the specific group of tourists requires information that is correct, up-to-date, useable, from reliable sources, interesting, and useful for traveling. Furthermore, the development of information technology infrastructure must cover services throughout Songkhla Province with high-speed internet that connects each other efficiently. It can be concluded from the results of this study that the web applications should be in three groups of information on sports tourism consisting of

(1) sports database on public relations media on sports activities, interesting sports activities in Songkhla Province, information on stadiums available for practices, data on statistics and competition evaluation forms, and sports competition calendars; (2) Tourism database consisting of tourist attractions, hotel accommodations, restaurants, souvenir shops, and public transport stations; and (3) Facilities database consisting of navigation service to the venues, emergency assistance channels, chat boxes, and chatbot services. The information displayed on the web applications should be presented using multimedia such as images, sound, animation, and text giving detailed information about tourist attractions on the websites that can attract tourists to visit them. The texts should be in Thai and English for Thai and international tourists who wish to participate in sports competitions and so that those who wish to join sports activities can access information conveniently and rapidly, and can use the information to plan the trip before traveling, while traveling and after traveling to complete the entire trip. Web applications with these characteristics can enhance the potential of competition and create value-added activities and services more concretely.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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