

THE INTERPRETIVE PLAN FOR SI SUN THON TOURIST ATTRACTION'S UNIQUENESS THALANG DISTRICT PHUKET, THAILAND

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the techniques and proper interpretive tools for Si Sun Thon tourist attraction, and to illustrate the interpretive plans for Si Sun Thon tourist attraction. The sample for data collection consisted of 100 tourists, 10 stakeholders in local tourism, and 8 tourism experts. Data were gathered from 1) brainstorming through stakeholder discussions and suggestions, 2) investigating the needs for interpretive plans, and 3) evaluating the essential concept standard regarding the interpretive plans for the community's exclusiveness. The results indicated that tourists' needs for interpretive tools were effective at a "moderate" level, with a mean score of 3.28. The top-three preferred interpretive tools were 1) QR Code, 2) signs, and 3) information centers. In terms of the appropriateness of the attraction's presented uniqueness, it was found to be applicable (IOC = 0.66). Moreover, the interpretive plans were divided into three dimensions, which were 1) historical interpretive plans, 2) heritage tourism interpretive plans, and 3) eco-tourism interpretive plans. The evaluation of the interpretive development plan reached the "excellent" level with an average score of 82.25.

Keywords: Interpretive, Tourist Attraction, Uniqueness, Si Sun Thon Community

1. INTRODUCTION

"Si Sun Thon community" is located in Si Sun Thon sub-district municipality, Thalang district, Phuket province, approximately 4 kilometers from Thalang town. The community's

vision is "historical city; flourishing tourism; quality education; care for the environment; cherishing sufficiency economy; public participation; and morals for sustainable development" The community vision emphasizes

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education and tourism where local people can take part. Preliminary exploration of the areas of Si Sun Thon community, to investigate potential tourism resources in the dimensions of historical places, ancient remains, ways of life, and natural resources, found that the crucial mission is to develop Si Sun Thon sub-district municipality, and promote and support historical learning resources so as to keep the cultural identity and local wisdom. To uphold eco-tourism and heritage tourism, clear objectives were established, in order to pass down the culture, traditions, local wisdom, and community, and to publicize these to others. Visitation to Si Sun Thon sub-district municipality, indicated that various tourist attractions could be found which did indeed support these particular visions; for example, historical and cultural tourist attractions included the Ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house, Tha Reua shrine, the city pillar shrine, Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon's monument, Sisunthon temple, and Thep Wanaram temple, while eco-tourism attractions included Bang Niew Dum dam, the sufficiency economy learning center, and Bang Ma Ruan reservoir, among others (Si Sun Thon sub- district municipality, 2017).

Despite the fact that the community has a well known reputation and is widely known, various challenges are evident. For instance, the number of tourists visiting the community has hugely

decreased as most of them prefer to instead visit business districts, where department stores, jewelry stores, and entertainment venues are located, or to visit other well known natural attractions such as Patong beach, Rawai beach, Nai Thon beach, Nai Yang beach, or other islands. The ancient remains and cultural destinations where glamor, ancientness or exclusivity could be appreciated have become merely a route to these desired destinations. Moreover, the key person responsible for the management plans of the historical and cultural tourist attractions of Si Sun Thon community has not paid much attention to good interpretive approaches, for example, by narrating less interesting stories and misguided use of impressive presentation; thus, tourists cannot properly recognize the value of these attractions and spend less time to explore the sites.

For these important reasons, it is significant to develop the interpretive approach for the tourist attractions of Si Sun Thon community, as it will contribute to increased travel and enable tourists to self-approach the destination conveniently, as well as to comprehend ways of life, gain exciting experiences, and gain a full impression of the tourist attractions, such that the important activities of the community's tourism can be nurtured. Interpretation of tourist attractions is also regarded as crucial scheme to strongly strengthen the community by facilitating the tourists to fully understand the attractions and

the community in which they are situated, thus increasing the destination value. This is one important management method to develop tourist destinations in response to a community-based tourism policy which systematically manages interpretation in order to improve effectiveness and develop sustainable tourism in all dimensions. These dimensions include the social dimension which facilitates the community's participation in tourism management, the economic dimension which allows the community to distribute income, and the environmental dimension which allows the community to realize self-conservation.

Based on the aforementioned problems, significances, and indicated interesting thoughts, Si Sun Thon community could be potentially developed to be a significant learning site, containing the most important historical and cultural tourist spots in Phuket. Therefore, promoting Si Sun Thon subdistrict municipality's development strategies is a must, in order to meet the Thai government's policy for development in the tourism and hospitality industry. The gathered results from the interpretive approach will create new perspectives for locals to realize the importance of this approach for community tourist attractions, and to establish local people's participation under the theme of sustainable development. Hence, to successfully strengthen economic growth, setting up effective interpretive tools is a vital approach to

increase the community income and careers.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1.To study the techniques and proper interpretive tools for Si Sun Thon community tourist attraction Thalang District, Phuket Province.
- 2.To create interpretative plans for the uniqueness of Si Sun Thon Tourist Attractions in Thalang District, Phuket Province.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study sheds light on interpretive plans in the context of tourism. Interpretive plans are regarded as an art of communication, promoting tourist understanding, and realizing the value and significance of tourism spots. Moreover, it generates tourist enjoyment, such that tourists impressions of the illustrated information can lead to positive attitudes and sustainable tourism as described in the following paragraphs.

3.1 Interpretation

In the tourism context interpretation is the art of communication, and its presentation stimulates the interest of tourists to understand the value and importance of the natural, historical and cultural assets (Freeman, 1970). It plays an important role in adding value to the tourism experience (Pakdeepinit, 2013), as well as increasing visitor

enjoyment, amusement and pleasure. Importantly, it also helps them to gain an understanding and appreciation of the destination and hopefully builds good attitudes towards conservation and the development of sustainable tourism (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2008).

3.2 Roles of Interpretation

The roles of interpretation are to educate, to create enjoyment, and to conserve and promote sustainable development. Education through interpretation helps tourists to know and perceive the value and the importance of natural resources, and the history and culture of the destination. This can include concrete (tangible built structures) and abstract elements of local culture (stories, legends, religions) as well as other elements such as music, cuisine, and traditional garments which have been passed down through generations, and very importantly the friendliness and interactions with the local people. These authentic natural and cultural heritage elements, if well presented, can greatly impress visitors and give value to the destination. The aim is that visitors will leave very appreciative of the culture and amazed at the beauty of nature.

Interpretation also plays a big role in directly creating positive impressions and experiences for tourists, thus creating or enhancing enjoyment. It increases the likelihood of visitors making return visits and of recommending the destination to their

friends through word of mouth, and, importantly in this age of social media through 'word of mouth' by electronic means, such as via Facebook, TripAdvisor reviews, and Instagram. Interpretive activities should be fun and entertaining rather than purely informative. Visitors usually visit destinations where their leisure experience can be expanded, so information guides should be authentic and interesting. Interpretation should not only elucidate facts related to events or persons in history but also stimulate tourists' interests. For example, it might lead them to feel they were actually in the events or sites. It might provide an opportunity for visitors to feel the sites authentically and to be able to relate to them. It should assist tourists in appreciating and enjoying the events presented in a supportive and interesting learning environment.

In conserving and promoting sustainable development, interpretation plays an important part in creating tourists' awareness of the value of natural resources, history and the culture of local communities. It also supports learning and creates a positive impression and attitude towards participation in conservation and sustainable tourism development (Department of tourism, 2015; Fudge, 2003).

3.3 Types of Interpretive Tools

Interpretive tools are divided into 2 crucial components: firstly, personal media, such as tour guides, and key

speakers, who are able to illustrate and provide visitors or audiences with essential information, and secondly non-personal media, which consist of printed media such as brochures, postcards, manuals and guide books, or non-printed non-personal media including guide signs, exhibitions, audio-visual media, multimedia, QR Codes, social media, self-guide interpretive trails, or tourist information centers (Colquhoun, 2005).

3.4 Indicators for the Evaluation of Interpretation

Evaluation and follow-up procedures must be done regularly, eventhough it is time-consuming to do so, as it will yield promising results. This process measures tourists' satisfaction with the interpretive activities, allowing them to be evaluated and improved, and the overall effectiveness of the interpretative programs also improved. Furthermore, employee performance can be assessed in order to determine future possible policies regarding their capacity (Ham and Weiler, 2006). The conceptual plans of interpretive plan evaluation comprise of 5 elements which are 1. tourist attraction potency, for example, values, uniqueness, and reputation, accessibility, facilities and amenities, and activities; 2. managerial effectiveness, such as being a responsible organization and creating a cooperation network; 3. contents such as the outline theme and the types of interpretive tools, and 4.

target groups such as target tourist types, interests of travelling tourists, and tourists' travel duration (Department of tourism, 2015).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This mixed-method research first employed a qualitative method to brainstorm suggestions among tourism experts. The quantitative approach was afterward utilized to determine the tourists' needs regarding interpretative tools, the assessment form for the interpretation of the Si Sun Thon's tourist attractions, and the evaluation of the standard of the interpretative plans for the tourist spots.

4.1 Population and Sample

4.1.1 Population

The population consisted of three groups of participants who visited or were in Si Sun Thon community, Phuket province. These included tourists or visitors to the community, stakeholders in the community tourism of Phuket province, and tourism experts.

4.1.2 Sample

The sample consisted of 3 groups:

- 1.100 Tourists or visitors including both Thai and foreigners participated in this study. Due to the unspecified amount of tourists, the Yamane formula was applied to

calculate the sample size and accidental sampling technique (Silpcharu, 2014) to collect the information of tourists who had visited Si Sun Thon community in the first 4 months of the year of research (April – July 2018).

2. Ten stakeholders: purposive sampling was used to select 2 community leaders, 2 representatives of the leaders or organizations in the Si Sun Thon community, and 6 locals who were knowledgeable, familiar with the area, and able to give in-depth details about Si Sun Thon community.
3. Eight tourism experts: purposive sampling was used to select specific knowledgeable and experienced participants of tourism, each of whom had worked in a particular section for at least 5 years. The chosen participants consisted of 2 representatives from the provincial culture organization, 2 tourism scholars, 2 freelance tour guides, and 2 local historians.

4.2 Research Instruments

To examine the techniques and appropriate interpretive tools for the Si Sun Thon Tourist attraction, Thalang district, Phuket Province; the following instruments were used:

- 1) Questions for brainstorming with the knowledgeable informants, experts in the Si

Sun Thon community and tourism, were delivered in the form of small group discussions; to brainstorm the attributing contents of interpretive thoughts and quality instruments in order to design an appropriate interpretation procedure in the contexts of Si Sun Thon's tourism.

- 2) The tourists' needs for interpretive tools were assessed using a questionnaire to enquire for suggestions regarding desired interpretive platforms, and was divided into 6 parts, namely local tour guides and interpreters, signs or tourist spot signs, guidebooks, the information center, self-guide trails, and QR Code.
- 3) The interpretative evaluation form for Si Sun Thon Tourist attraction's uniqueness comprised of important content techniques to present the tourist spots. The selected theme was highlighted by using an assessment form; an index of consistency or IOC was applied as the applicable protocol to examine these interpretative approaches. When interpreting the IOC, results equal to or higher than 0.50, indicate that the theme was appropriate, while results lower than 0.50 indicate that the particular theme should be revised (Silpcharu, 2014).

In presenting the interpretative plans regarding the uniqueness of Si Sun Thon Tourist attractions, the evaluation form for the appropriateness of the interpretative plans of the tourist spots was analyzed by tourism experts, specifically representatives from the provincial culture organization; tourism scholars; freelance tour guides; and local historians.

4.3 Data Analysis

The gathered data was analyzed in two perspectives as described in the following paragraph, based on the research instrument applied in data collection.

1) Qualitative data collection consisted of brainstorming of suggestions by tourism expert informants. This data was transcribed and analyzed by parsing and segmenting each perspective and scrutinizing to allocate a theme according to the qualitative procedure. The data were then illustrated descriptively in tables and pictures.

2) Quantitative data was collected via a survey of the tourists' needs regarding interpretative tools, an assessment form of the interpretation of Si Sun Thon's tourist attractions, and an evaluation form for the interpretative plans of the tourist spots which was written as check – list items. The mean score and percentage were analyzed and descriptively presented in tables and charts. The gathered data from open- ended questions was placed together and

analyzed according to the theme of the collected data, based on a qualitative procedure and presented descriptively.

5. RESULTS

The results are presented in 4 aspects consisting of the interpretive plans of Si Sun Thon community's uniqueness, the tourists' needs for interpretive tools, the main concepts of the interpretive plans, and the evaluation of Si Sun Thon's interpretive plans.

Firstly, the results of the brainstorming among the tourism and area experts regarding the interpretive tools indicated that 1) thoughts towards the contents of the interpretation are divided into two aspects, specifically theme features and information orders or interpretive comprehension; 2) ideas towards interpretative instrument features were categorized into six appropriate platforms for the tourist spots, specifically local tour guides or interpreters, signs or tourist spot signs, guidebooks, information centers, self- guide trails, and QR Code.

Secondly, the results of the data collected regarding the tourists' needs of interpretive tools revealed that tourists' preference was for QR Codes, followed by signs or tourist spot signs, information centers, guidebooks, local tour guides or interpreters, and self- guide trails respectively, as illustrated in Table 1.

Thirdly, the results of the analysis of the main interpretative

concepts of the identities of tourist attractions in Sri Sun Thon sub-district, Thalang district, Phuket province, are presented.

Themes for presenting the interpretative plans of the tourist spots were drafted and evaluated in terms of appropriateness, along with correlating the content sequences of the tourist destinations by using the index of consistency or IOC, which was created with the proper method to gain the appropriateness. It was found that the overall main concept of the interpretive plans for tourist

attractions of Sri Sun Thon's identity in Thalang district, Phuket province was applicable (IOC = 0.66).

Fourthly, the final procedure of this study was developing and presenting the interpretative plans of tourist attractions for Sri Sun Thon's uniqueness in Thalang district, Phuket province. Based on the development, the interpretative plans of the community's uniqueness were designed as one of three forms, specifically three routes, three scenarios, and three stories as described in tables 2 to 4.

Table 1: Tourists' needs regarding interpretive signs

Interpretive tools	Level of need for self-guide trails of tourists		
	\bar{x}	SD	Results
1. Local tour guides or interpreters	2.36	0.50	Low
2. Interpretive signs or guide signs	4.36	0.70	Highest
3. Guidebooks	2.50	0.54	Low
4. The information center	3.33	0.88	High
5. Self-guide trails	2.35	0.54	Low
6. QR Code	4.62	0.46	Highest
Total	3.25	0.60	Moderate

Table 2: The interpretative plan of historical and archaeological tourist attractions

Plan	Projects for promoting the interpretation of Si Sun Thon’s tourist attractions in Thalang district, Phuket province
Plan title	The historical and archaeological interpretation 1. Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon's monument 2. Ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house 3. Tha Reua city pillar shrine
Target	To promote tourist attractions which are a model of historical and archaeological destinations
Positioning for interpretation	1. The boldness and symbolism of Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon's monument 2. History of the ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house 3. Origins of the Tha Reua shrine 4. Rules of Worship at the Tha Reua city pillar shrine
Prioritizing topics and Themes	1. Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon's monument <p>Before heading to Phuket city, the Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon’s monument are elegantly situated on the main street, wearing chong kbens (loincloths), cylinder sleeve shirts, sabia (a shawl-like garment in Tabangman style), swords in their hands. The bravery and heroic actions of these two heroines are honored for repelling the invasion of the Burmese in the Nine Armies’ Wars.</p> <p>Thao Thep Krasattri was previously known as Than Phu Ying (High lady) “Chan”, while Thao Si Sunthon was known as Than Phu Ying (High lady) “Mook”. The two sisters were daughters of the Thalang chief. It is now more than 234 years since the ladies defeated the enemy.</p> <p>The monument was established in 1965, designed by Sanan Silakorn, a sculptor of the craftsmanship division of the fine art department. It was sculptured with black bronze, more than 50 percent larger than actual size and standing on a 3 meter pedestal. Thao Thep Krasattri is on the right and Thao Si Sunthon is on the left.</p> <p>To honor their heroic dedication, the government named an area of Thalang as Thep Krasattri sub-district and gathered and named Tha Reua sub-district and Lipon</p>

sub-district as Si Sunthon sub-district, an area all people could access to pay their respects any time of day.

2. Ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house

Travelling towards Phuket city on the Thep Kasattri Road, after approximately 12 kilometers, the ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house can be found approximately 50 meters down Hua Tha alley on the left hand side. Tha Reua shrine is also located nearby.

In the mining era of Phuket, there was chaos between different groups of workmen, however all mines were closed once the government took control.

Phraya Wichit Songkram (Thaat), the primogenitor of Rattanadilok Na Phuket, and the governor of Phuket at that time, built a new house in the area of Baan Tha Reua in 1876, conducting cases in the house.

Phraya Wichit Songkram was surrounded by brick walls, and a guardhouse remains. Each corner of the walls houses a room for the guards and servants and a storage room. Now left in ruins, few bricks are left standing of these interesting square buildings.

The wooden building was built near the pond. It was believed that the house shape had been influenced by the Thai-Muslim house style as Phraya Wichit Songkram's ancestor was an Indian-Muslim. Now, none of the house can be seen.

The fine arts department has registered the ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house as a national archaeological site that covers 37.272 square kilometers (9.318 acres). The archaeological site, the ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house, has some important evidence to indicate the greatness of the past Phuket governor such as brick walls, Battlements, the house bases, pond, water drains, and pieces of brick wreck.

3. Tha Reua city pillar shrine

Phuket city pillar shrine consisted of four shrines; one of them is located in Si Sun Thon sub-district, Phuket province which is Tha Reua city pillar shrine.

Tha Reua city pillar shrine is located in Baan Tha Reua, Si Sun Thon sub-district, Phuket province. It is found only 100 meters from the police box at the Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon's monument.

Tha Reua city pillar shrine has roofs decorated with floral bouquets. The Thephanom sculpture is placed at the gable, where the floor is covered in marble. Inside the building, the main pillar is established from the marble floor, and on the top of this, gold leaves are stuck and a rowboat with its paddle are placed. It is believed that once the sacrificed spirit asked the local people for the wooden boat as her vehicle. Many people come here to pray and seek for a son as a blessing. The city pillar shrine is a place that local people have tremendous faith in and offer their obeisance to it as an invaluable pilgrimage.

Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To develop the interpretation of historical and archaeological tourist attractions to be high quality tourist spots that travel agencies can include in a travel itinerary2. To create realization for locals and tourists regarding history and origins.3. To develop the potency of youth learning, pride and importance regarding community origins.4. To generate QR Codes in order to indicate history, stories, regulations, and signs for all tourists.
Targeted populations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Local people and Thai tourists who own private vehicles for recreation2. Seminar tourist groups3. Students who join field trips in Phuket4. One day trip tourists
Duration	Each project has been done in inequitable periods; this depends on the community, stakeholders, local officers, and the support of business owners.
Projects and Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Project for developing interpretation of technical terms, for example videos of tourist spots retained in the QR Code platform, or contained in interpretative signs and tourist signs of the three destinations2. Project for creating a learning center for the ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house3. Project for creating photo spots at these three destinations4. Project for creating regulation signs for the city pillar shrine5. Project for producing souvenirs for improving income and impressing tourists

Table 3: The interpretative plan of cultural tourist attractions

Plan	Projects for promoting the interpretation of Si sun Thon's tourist attractions in Thalang district, Phuket province
Plan title	Cultural tourist attractions interpretation 1. Sisunthon temple or Lipon temple 2. Thep Wanaram temple or Ma nik temple 3. Tha Reua shrine
Target	To promote cultural tourist attractions to be a model of interpretation at cultural tourist attractions
Positioning for interpretation	1. Reclining Buddha image Sisunthon temple or Lipon temple 2. The origin of the word 'Lipon' 3. History of the former abbot Phaen Buddasaro Wanaram temple or Ma nik temple 4. Courtyard Thep Wanaram temple or Ma nik temple 5. Tha Reua shrine's architecture and God Guan Yu 6.Regulations for visiting and procedure of paying respect at Tha Reua shrine
Prioritizing topics and themes	<p>1. Sisunthon temple or Lipon temple</p> <p>Baan Leak-Phon or Baan Lipon carried out the original belief that in the era of the Burmese invasion in Thalang, villagers sheltered in the house so that they were not located by the enemy. Therefore, the villagers called this 'Baan Leak-Phon' which is now slightly distorted into Baan Lipon.</p> <p>The most important religious place in the village is Lipon temple or Sisunthon temple, which was built in 1792, and is situated on the high hill area near Thepkasattri road.</p> <p>The temple atmosphere was beautifully and peacefully decorated with a reclining Buddha image; lying on its right side, this image was enshrined as the main Buddha image of this temple.</p> <p>In the area of the temple, there is Prom leather hermitage or Prom leather Krai-lert the ancestor of Krai-lert the founder of shadow plays in Phuket province.</p> <p>Sisunthon temple is currently a tourist attraction in Sisunthon sub-district where the works of villagers have been incorporated to create various statues such as persons,</p>

animals, and giants, in order to advertise the temple to both Thai and foreign tourists.

2. Thep Wanaram temple or Ma nik temple

One of the most valuable and crucial religious places in Sisunthon sub-district is Thep Wanaram temple or Ma nik temple, which was established in 1977.

There are beautiful chapels, a Sukhothai-styled brass Buddha image as the main image, and an ancient sermon hall in a monastery which is an airy wooden building built in 1958. There is also a buddha image statue which was constructed with the cooperation of locals in 1982 to be the center of Si Sun Thon sub-district.

Thep Wanaram temple or Ma nik temple is situated in the community, surrounded in a shady atmosphere where people frequently make merit. Therefore, the temple provided a courtyard for everyone to practice dharma among the nature.

Moreover, the dead body of the first former abbot of the temple 'Phaan Buddasaro' was incorruptible after he passed away. All of these features have made the local people faithful to this temple.

3. Tha Reua shrine

People visiting Phuket city, will all definitely pass the heroines' monument of Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon, making Tha Reua shrine easily found, as it lies at the corner of this famous road junction. It is one of the largest and most elegant shrines in Phuket.

Pra Po Seng Tai Te, the life saving god is the main god statue of the shrine which represents a great healer. From his ancient medical ability, his medical prescriptions were collected in books and an encyclopedia of Chinese herbs and translated to other 52 languages, contributing to multiple libraries world-wide till he was named as the life saving god.

Tha Reua shrine was established by the faith of the cured people. His spirit would be invited by the conjuror to cure the people without any charge, therefore these people distributed land and money to build the shrine which has since been donated to the Ministry of the Interior.

In the area of the shrine, a huge Gaun Yu statue has been installed in the considering posture, holding a halberd, with his left hand patting his mustache.

God Guan Yu is a god of honesty and god of war. He is the symbol of the fight and competition which can be worshipped at the same time.

Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing interpretation for quality cultural tourism which can be kept in the itinerary of travel agents' tours 2. Creating realization for locals and tourists' of the valuable traditions, culture, and ways of life in the three locations 3. Enlarging the history, origins and regulations of these tourist attractions through various platforms: signs and travel signs, and creating QR codes to conveniently facilitate tourists
Targeted populations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local people and Thai tourists who own private vehicles for recreation 2. Seminar tourist groups 3. Students who join field trips in Phuket 4. One day trip tourists 5. Thai-Chinese people and vegetarians
Duration	<p>Each project has been done in inequitable periods; this depends on the community, stakeholders, local officers, and the support of business owners.</p>
Projects and Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project for developing interpretation of technical terms, for example videos of the tourist attractions to be retained in the QR Code platform and in interpretative signs and tourist signs at the three destinations 2. Project for building a learning center at Thep Wanaram temple and Si Sun Thon temple 3. Project for creating photo spots at these three destinations 4. Project for creating regulation signs for visiting and how to pay respect at Tha Reua shrine 5. Project for creating a learning center for the vegetarian festival at Tha Reua shrine 6. Project for producing souvenirs for raising income and impressing tourists

Table 4: The interpretative plan of eco-tourism attractions

Plan	Projects for promoting the interpretation of Si sun Thon’s tourist attractions in Thalang district, Phuket province
Plan title	Eco-tourism tourist attractions interpretation 1. Bang Ma Ruan reservoir or 87th year Nawamindraracha park 2. Phuket pineapple farms 3. Baan Manik sufficiency economy learning center
Target	To promote tourist attractions to be model eco-tourism attractions
Positioning for interpretation	1. The origins of the name “Bang Ma Ruan reservoir” 2. Activities at the 87th year Nawamindraracha park 3. Phuket pineapple farmers’ lifestyle and why Phuket pineapples? 4. Intensive Farming 5. “Good health community, good incomes” with green roselles 6. Sufficiency economy learning center
Prioritizing topics and themes	1 . Bang Ma Ruan reservoir or the 8 7 th year Nawamindraracha park Phuket island used to be a land of mining regarded as the richest area of tin in Thailand. After the end of the mining era, the city has turned to be a tourism city. The old mining areas have therefore become big and small pools around Phuket. Bang Ma Ruan reservoir was the result of tin mining in Bang Jo village, Si Sun Thon sub-district, Thalang district, Phuket province. It was state property, but was given to the community after the department of rural development dredged the swamp. Bang Ma Ruan reservoir was named after Bang Ma Ruan mining company, a well-known mining company of Takuapa district during the tin mining era in Phuket. It has now been given its royal name of the 8 7 th year Nawamindraracha park. Additionally, it is the main venue of the annual festival of Si Sun Thon sub-district, the traditional Loy Kathog ‘Kid Theung Thay Rang at Bang Ma Ruan’.

Si Sun Thon sub-district has hence developed and reformed into a park for people to relax and exercise from 06.00 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day.

2. Phuket pineapple farms

If you have never tried “Phuket pineapple” it tastes crispy, moist, and a bit sour; you should not miss the opportunity when you are in Phuket.

Phuket pineapple is distinguishably popular rather than others fruit. Local people call it in the southern dialect ‘Yah nut’; it is also, called “Ong lai” in Hokkien, which means the coming enlightenment of life, therefore the pineapple is the auspicious fruit which is used to pay respect to the gods in daily life and for other Phuket traditions.

In the past, Phraya Charoonrajaphokakorn had brought the pineapple seeds from Penang, Malaysia to Phuket province. Then, it was found that its taste was better as the result of good soil and a proper climate which affected its taste.

The authentic Phuket pineapple is in a cylindrical shape, including the small, medium, and large pineapples. Its eyes are clearly deep, its top is in the proper size, its skin is yellow, and its taste is sweet, a bit sour, and it has a good smell. More importantly, the core can be consumed. Authentic Phuket pineapples must only be grown in Phuket.

Phuket pineapple has been with the local people’s way of life in terms of foods and deserts for a long time. Meanwhile, tourists can try its taste and often love it.

Besides, the Phuket pineapple has guaranteed quality from GI and GAP, and it has therefore become a symbol of Phuket province.

3. Baan Manik sufficiency economy learning center

Baan Manik sufficiency economy learning center is a model community in Phuket Province which promotes the community’s health tourism under the theme of “Good health community, good incomes” and encourages local people to participate in Bang Nieu Dum dam land management according to the new theory of “intensive farming” with land, water, forest and human resource management.

	<p>From the dry and spotted land affected by mining in the previous era, villagers adjusted the land by soil aggravation and bio-fertilizer, making the land plentiful and able to grow integrated crop farming.</p> <p>In the rainy season and flooding when many cultivations are unable to be used, the water management of King RAMA IX's vision is used to control the flood crisis by the Kaem Ling project, digging small pools, a middle pool, and a big pool. These pools are suitable for fish farming.</p> <p>Baan Manik sufficiency economy learning center is incorporated by the Bang Niew Dum agricultural groups of Manik village, Moo. 7, Si Sun Thon sub-district, Thalang district, Phuket Province as a learning center for local people and others that can exchange ideas based on the sufficiency economy practices.</p>
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promoting the interpretation of quality eco-tourism attractions as a model which can be contained in travel agents' itineraries 2. Creating people's concepts of eco-tourism attractions by emphasizing public participation 3. Presenting tourist attractions and guidelines including signs and information signs and creating QR Codes for facilitating tourists 4. Raising main income
Targeted populations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local people and Thai tourists who own private vehicles for recreation 2. Seminar tourist groups 3. Students who join field trips in Phuket 4. One day trip tourists
Duration	<p>Each project has been carried out in inequitable periods, depending on the community, stakeholders, local officers, and the support of business owners.</p>
Projects and Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project for developing the interpretation of technical terms, for example videos of the ourist attractions retained in the QR Code platform and in interpretative signs and tourist signs in the three destinations 2. Organizing the traditional Loy Krathong festival 'Kid Theung Thay Rang at Bang Ma Ruan' 3. Project for promoting people's health at 87th year Nawamindraracha park

4. Project for promoting the learning center at Baan Manik sufficiency economy learning center
5. Project for creating photo spots at the three destinations
6. Project for building cooperation networks for the housewives at Baan Manik sufficiency economy learning center
7. Project for learning the life of a farmer and trying pineapples at Si Sun Thon pineapple farms
8. Project for producing souvenirs for raising incomes in the community and impressing tourists with the pineapple such as pineapple printed shirts, pineapple keychains, etc.

Ever since these 3 interpretive plans of Si Sun Thon, Thalang district, Phuket province were launched their success has been evaluated by tourism scholars. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The Results of the evaluation of the interpretive plans of Si Sun Thon, Thalang district, Phuket province.

Items	Experts							
	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8
1. Tourist attractions' potency (40 marks)								
1.1 Value, uniqueness, and reputation of tourist attractions (10 marks)	8	7	7	8	6	7	8	6
1.2 Accessibility of tourist attractions (10 marks)	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	9
1.3 Facilities and amenities (10 marks)	6	7	7	6	7	7	6	6
1.4 Activities at the tourist attractions (10 marks)	7	6	6	6	7	6	7	7
2. Managerial effectiveness (10 marks)								
2.1 Responsible organization (5 marks)	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
2.2 Cooperation network creation (5 marks)	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	3

Items	Experts							
	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8
3. Themes and contents (30 marks)								
3.1 Themes (10 marks)	8	9	9	8	7	8	7	9
3.2 Content outline (10 marks)	8	9	9	8	7	8	7	9
3.3 Media tool selection (10 marks)	9	10	10	9	9	9	9	9
4. Target groups (20 marks)								
4.1 Target tourist groups (5 marks)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4.2 Types of travellers (5 marks)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4.3 Tourists' interests (5 marks)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4.5 Duration of travel (5 marks)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Total	82	84	85	80	81	83	81	82
Average	82.25							

6. DISCUSSION

It was evidently found that all three interpretive plans of Si Sun Thon community, Thalang district, Phuket province reached scores between 80 and 85 points, which is a high level. The average score was 82.25, and consisted of 4 components: 1) potency of the tourist attractions which accounted for 40 marks, 2) managerial effectiveness which gained 10 marks 3) themes and contents which accounted for 30 marks, and 4) targeted groups which reached 20 marks out of the total score of 100 marks as scored by experts such as tourism scholars, freelance guides, and local historians. Hence, the results illustrated that before the plans were designed and the needs of interpretive plans were investigated, that the plans were excellently appropriate. As suggested by the department of tourism (2005), planning of interpretive plans is a must

to achieve as these plans can convey and ignite tourists' understanding respectively and simply, enabling visitors to gain exciting experiences, realize the resource values, make an impressive journey, and achieve high management of the tourist attractions.

It should be pointed out that the interpretation is the important guidance to support tourists in experiencing must-do activities and sustainable activities, so as to raise awareness of conservation, reduce damage to tourism resources, and inform tourists to avoid fragile places and overuse of valuable and heritage areas or sites. Additionally, it encourages full understanding between tourists and the locals or responsible organizations (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2008) in all dimensions. Furthermore, the responsible organizations of tourism in Si Sun Thon community should be in charge of the interpretive plans directly.

Based on the illustrated results, the organizations should appoint one person to take the major part in the plans. As a result of the excellent interpretive procedure, a knowledgeable, responsible, and devoted person is truly required, especially, in terms of the selection of interpretive tools, the presented contents, the types of tool, fonts, pictures, figures, and even light and color selection, as these can lead to a successful interpretive approach as indicated by Larsen (2003), who stated that most interpreters have an affinity for combining their knowledge, enthusiasm, and people skills to tell stories. Some are naturally gifted and intuitively transform seemingly mundane information into meaningful and engaging presentations. Thus, the cooperation between the community and relevant organizations is needed for planning, comprehending, and reflecting, so as to retain and manage the tourist attractions. The community has gradually distributed quality tourism by themselves.

7. CONCLUSION

The results indicated that the tourists' needs of interpretive tools were at a "moderate" level. It could be elaborated that visitors would prefer to have one of the interpretive tools in their hands as their journey takes place. It is clear that the top-three selected tools were 1) QR Code, 2) signs, and 3) the information center. In terms of the appropriateness of the

important contents and key concepts presented regarding the tourist attraction's uniqueness, these were deemed applicable. The interpretive plans were divided into three dimensions which were 1) the historical interpretive plan, consisting of Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sun thon's monument, Ruins of Phraya Wichit Songkram house, and Tha Reua city pillar shrine, 2) the heritage tourism interpretive plan, which included Si Sun Thon temple, Thep Wanaram temple, and Tha Reua shrine, and 3) the eco-tourism interpretive plan, which included Bang Ma Ruan reservoir, the pineapple farms, and Baan Manik sufficiency economy learning center. The evaluation of the interpretive development plan was also at the excellent level.

The gained results could be used as empirical concepts for the relevant organizations, stakeholders, and local government officers; in order to enlighten the importance of Si Sun Thon tourist attractions and enable the community to obtain high-quality interpretive plan management and present appropriate unique tourist attractions. These would also benefit cultural tourism organizations or local administrations in terms of generating an interpretive plan system for tourist attractions. Moreover, local entrepreneurs could apply these results to develop their businesses, for example, travel agents may exploit these routes to create an exquisite environment of travelling in the area.

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