



The accuracy and consistency of Chinese tourism information in online media vs. actual data: Songkhla province

Nititaya Soontornthamnit^a, Fenglong Zhang^a

^aFaculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

ABSTRACT

Songkhla Province attracts many Malaysian Chinese Tourists who typically gather information via online platforms before visiting. This research poses the question: Is the Chinese language information recommending tourist attractions in Songkhla accurate and authentic? It aims to analyze the accuracy and consistency of Chinese tourism information of Songkhla province in online media vs. actual media. This study employed a qualitative methodology and investigated data from two online media sources, which included 15 tourist attractions. The analysis was conducted from a comparative perspective and drew upon correspondence theory of truth. The findings found that the consistency between Chinese tourism information in online media and the actual data of Songkhla province divided into three aspects, including: (1) Consistency information (i.e., the geographical locations and core characteristics); (2) Inconsistency information (e.g., location and size detail, folklore legend, style and elements of architecture); (3) Incorrect information (i.e., the English word in parentheses, and recommend other attractions that are unrelated). The finding highlights the need to improve the accuracy and relevance of online tourism information about Songkhla to enhance digital communication and foster a more informed, and contextually grounded tourism discourse. This study also proposed the possible development opportunities and the optimization recommendations.

KEYWORDS

accuracy and consistency, Chinese tourism information, online media, actual data, Songkhla

CORRESPONDENCE

Fenglong Zhang (185063651@qq.com; fenglong.z@psu.ac.th)

INTRODUCTION

Under “Master Plan under the national strategy”, Tourism Development plan the development approaches, including infrastructure improvement, enhancement of facilities, support for incentive measures, marketing promotion, and hosting international events. In alignment with the Southern Thailand Development Plan (2023–2027), Songkhla Province aims to develop in accordance with its potential and opportunities, resulting in the strategic development goal ‘Songkhla: The Economic Hub of Southern Thailand, Connecting ASEAN, and Advancing Sustainable Development.’ Furthermore, significant projects have been initiated to enhance tourism and service sectors, such as: the Community-Based Tourism Development Project in Songkhla Province; the Tourism Development and Upgrading Project in Songkhla Province (The Integrated Provincial Administration Committee of Songkhla Province, 2021). These initiatives clearly illustrate the strategic

direction for developing Songkhla's tourism industry to meet international standards. Studies related to the promotion of tourism in Songkhla area therefore highly valuable and hold significant potential for practical application.

From year 2024–2025, 'China' is the country with the highest number of international tourists from South-East Asia and North-East Asia in Thailand. 'Malaysia' the country near to Songkhla provinces, ranked second, recording 4,952,078 visitors in year 2024 (Jan–Dec) and 861,060 in 2025 (Jan–Feb) (Table 1). Thus, an analysis of the Chinese tourism information is beneficial for Thailand's tourism. Specifically, examining Chinese-language information related to Songkhla can provide valuable support for Malaysian Chinese Tourists.

Table 1. The Top three Countries with the Highest Number of International Tourists

| No. | Year 2025 (Jan–Feb) | | Year 2024 (Jan–Dec) | |
|-----|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| | country | The number of tourists | country | The number of tourists |
| 1 | China | 1,034,321 | China | 6,733,162 |
| 2 | Malaysia | 861,060 | Malaysia | 4,952,078 |
| 3 | Republic of Korea | 377,155 | Republic of Korea | 1,868,945 |

Source: <https://www.mots.go.th/news/category/411>. (Ministry of Tourism & Sports, n.d.)

The review of the literature revealed that online media platforms are currently connecting everyone and serve as a key channel for tourism communication. Before traveling, tourists typically gather information through digital and online channels. Toemsungnoen (2021) found that tourists use online media before the trip, during their journey, and after. Therefore, studying the consistency of tourist attractions in online media is essential. Chaiyakhet et al. (2018) and Chiwakunanan (2018) found that tourism attraction information on online platforms affects tourists' decisions. In addition, Soontornthamni (2021) examined Malaysian Chinese tourists' image of and attitude towards Songkhla at www.google.com.my, an affiliated website, Tripadvisor, from 2018 to 2021. The study suggested guidelines and possible opportunities that help to develop tourism in the future, such as providing Chinese information on attractions, which could help tourists know the correct information. The study reflects that online information is important for tourists. It suggests development of tourism information to ensure that tourists receive accurate details. Moreover, it is related to the decisions of tourists when they choose tourist attractions. However, the literature review indicates that this particular topic remains underexplored, highlighting a noteworthy research gap.

This research explored online Chinese content related to tourist attractions in Songkhla. The information found stated: 在洁白的沙滩上，还有一座很显眼的青铜制美人鱼雕像，以表达对印度教中大地女神的敬意。(Trip.com, n.d.), which translates to “On the clean white beach, there is a prominent bronze mermaid statue, symbolizing respect for the Earth Goddess in Hinduism”. This information differs from the actual Thai information, which states that the mermaid statue at Samila Beach was created based on a Thai folklore legend. Therefore, the problem was identified, prompting the need for this study.

This research poses the question: Is the Chinese language information recommending tourist attractions in Songkhla accurate and authentic? This study aims to analyze the accuracy and consistency of Chinese tourism information of Songkhla province in online media vs. actual media. This study examines the issue through the lens of accuracy and

relevance, the observed inaccuracies involve linguistic issues, geographical information, tourist information content, and outdated content. This is essential for the enhancement of digital communication and the development of a more informed and contextually grounded tourism discourse, which related to academic.

Objective

To analyze the accuracy and consistency of Chinese tourism information of Songkhla province in online media vs. actual media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the accuracy of online tourism information

A review of the literature indicates that examining the accuracy of information regarding tourist attractions is significant importance. Pertheban et al. (2019) found through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) that existing research on information accuracy remains limited and requires further improvement. Berhanu and Raj (2020) examined the trustworthiness of travel and tourism information sources of social media, the findings revealed that visitors had a positive perception towards the trustworthiness of social media travel information sources. Wang et al. (2023) examined the relationship between online travel information quality (OTIQ), resonance, and conation destination image. The study found that four dimensions of OTIQ (value-added, relevancy, completeness, and design) affect cognitive resonance, and three dimensions of OTIQ (interestingness, design, and amount of information) effect emotional resonance. The study also provides recommendations to destination marketers to formula appropriate marketing strategies in the age of innovation technology.

To analyze the consistency of tourism attractions, David (2005) revealed that Correspondence Analysis (CA) can be used to explore relationships between variables in complex data. CA is a method aimed specifically at quantifying categorical data (Kroonenberg & Geennacre, 2004; David, 2005). The correspondence theory of truth is the view that truth is correspondence to a fact—a view advocated by Russell and Moore early in the 20th century. The correspondence theory is often traced back to Aristotle's well-known definition of truth. Simple forms of correspondence definitions of truth: (1) x is true if x corresponds to some fact; x is false if x does not correspond to any fact; (2) x is true if x corresponds to some state of affairs that obtains; x is false if x corresponds to some state of affairs that does not obtain; (3) x is true if x corresponds to some fact that exists; x is false if x corresponds to some fact that does not exist; (4) x is true if x corresponds (agrees) with some fact; x is false if x mis-corresponds (disagrees) with some fact.

Related research indicates a lack of research of this issue and highlight dimensions that deserve analytical attention. These are all key aspects to be incorporates into the present study. To conduct a principled analysis, this study will refer to the simple forms of correspondence definitions of truth in its analysis of the results.

Research on tourism and online media

Today, online media are closely related to tourism. When tourists plan to travel to a destination, they search for information about attractions in online media. Chinese millennials use digital media when making decisions regarding traveling to Thailand as Free Independent Travelers (FIT). The results showed that travelers using applications and websites of Ctrip (Ctrip.com) focus on the need in checking accommodations and reservations, while those using Mafengwo (Mafengwo.cn) read reviews about Thailand. Travelers using Ctrip and Mafengwo were satisfied. Those using Mafengwo were satisfied with the website and applications' sufficient, correct, and credible reviews, design, and functions (Li, 2017).

In addition, online media is the platform tourists use to search for the most information. As the behavior of users searching for travel information on the internet, including the frequency of queries, keywords used, and search patterns, Jansen et al. (2008) found that about 6.5% of internet queries are related to travel information searches, of which almost 50% are related to geographical information. The study illustrated generation C tourists' traveling behaviors, social media usage behaviors, and social media use and gratification for tourism. The research results found that the frequency of traveling time was positively correlated with social media usage behaviors (Puttaruksakun, 2017). Tourists use online media most to search for tourist information and receive the most exposure to information about tourism in Thailand via online media from Google (Chiwakunanan, 2018).

Moreover, while the tourists explore the tourist attractions in online media before the trip, the information they explore includes maps and facilities. During their journey, tourists use online media to search for information about various interesting travel activities. After their trip, they primarily use online platforms to share travel-related information within specific travel communities and to provide updates to friends and acquaintances. The results showed that the main obstacles and issues that tourists face include unclear details about tourist attractions, false information, duplicate pages, and outdated information (Toemsungnoen, 2021). Furthermore, the study of the potential of Xi'an city to a smart tourism, the findings showed that social media was highly significant to tourism communication for tourists and tourism services provided. Most tourists utilized social media for every tourism activity (Wang et al., 2024).

To sum up, social media has a significant impact on the tourism industry and for the tourist decisions. Some tourists were satisfied with the sufficient, correct, and credible reviews, design, and functions of websites and applications. On the other hand, the results also showed that the main obstacles and issues that tourists face include unclear details about tourist attractions, false information, duplicate pages, and outdated information. Thus, online media can be both sufficient and insufficient, correct, and incorrect, and provide credible and non-credible tourism information. Therefore, studying online media and tourism in Songkhla province is essential. However, previous studies have not addressed this study's research question. This research identifies a gap, namely: 'Is the Chinese language information recommending tourist attractions in Songkhla accurate and authentic?'.

The conceptual framework was formulated from the literature review, as illustrated in the following figure.

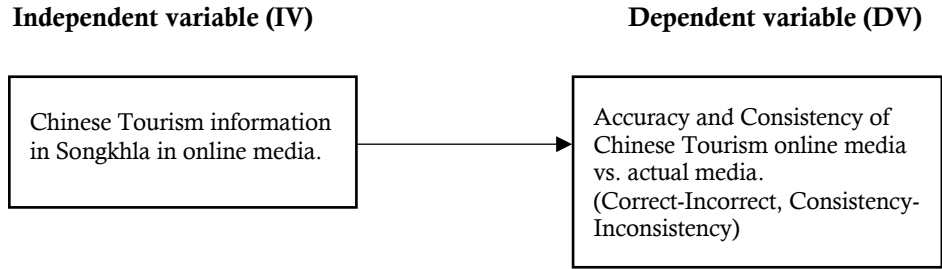


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection

This study analyzes online information from www.google.com.my, an affiliated website, including five tourist attractions from ‘Xinhua Silk Road website (Bo, 2018)’ and ten tourist attractions from ‘Trip.com (Trip.com, n.d.)’. The details of data collection are as follows:

Data collection process

The data collection process includes: First, use ‘宋卡景点 (Songkhla Attractions)’ as a keyword for searching through ‘www.google.com.my’. The data was collected in March, 2025. Secondly, select the first five websites that appear. Thirdly, the information was collected from the first five websites that appeared based on the selection criteria.

The selection criteria

The criteria used to select websites for in-depth study are (1) they must provide information on tourist attractions; (2) they must not include reviews of attraction information. As per the criteria, table 2 illustrated that two websites that were collected.

Table 2. Source of Data Collection

| No. | Online Media | Reviews | The appearance of tourist attraction information |
|-----|--|---------|--|
| 1 | Tripadvisor https://cn.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g317134-Activities-Songkhla_Songkhla_Province.html | + | - |
| 2 | Followus2travel https://followus2travel.com/thailand-songkhla-day-trip/ | - | - |

| No. | Online Media | Reviews | The appearance of tourist attraction information | |
|-----|------------------|---|--|---|
| 3 | Tripadvisor | https://cn.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g2098239-Activities-Songkhla_Province.html | + | - |
| 4 | Xinhua Silk Road | https://www.imsilkroad.com/news/p/85546.html | - | + |
| 5 | Trip.com | https://hk.trip.com/travel-guide/destination/songkhla-649/ | - | + |

Therefore, this research investigates data from 2 online media sources, i.e., Xinhua Silk Road Website and Trip.com, including 15 tourist attractions, as follows:

- (1) Five tourist attractions from ‘Xinhua Silk Road website (Bo, 2018)’, the website include five recommend destinations: Songkhla (宋卡), Mermaid Beach (美人鱼海滩), Hat Yai (合艾), Songkhla National Museum (宋卡博物馆), and Koh Nu and Koh Maeo (‘Nu’ means ‘rat’ and ‘Maeo’ means ‘cat’) (鼠岛和猫岛).
- (2) Ten tourist attractions from ‘Trip.com (Trip.com, n.d.)’ ranked by popularly in the year 2025, including: Greenway Night market (绿道夜市场), Klonghae floating market (合艾水上市场), Elephant camp (大象营), Tone-Nga-Chang Waterfall (‘Tone’ means ‘waterfall’, ‘Nga-Chang’ means ‘ivory’) (象牙瀑布), Hatyai City Municipal Park (合艾市府公园), Samila Beach (撒米拉海滩), Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol (白钢佛塔), Gold Mermaid statue (金色美人鱼雕像), Song Thale Park, and Songkhla Central Mosque (宋卡清真寺).

In addition, although the Gold Mermaid statue (金色美人鱼雕像) and Mermaid Beach (美人鱼海滩) shared the word ‘Mermaid’, they differ in the information about tourist attractions. Therefore, this study involved the collection of all the data.

Data analysis

This study is a qualitative study. The data obtained from online sources and actual data were analyzed from a comparative perspective. This study examines the issue through the lens of accuracy and consistency, the observed inaccuracies involve linguistic issues, geographical information, tourist information content, and outdated content. Using Correspondence Analysis (CA), the simple forms of correspondence theory of truth (David, 2005) are used in the analysis.

This study based on credible sources of factual information, including official documents and encyclopedic references. The aforementioned credible sources include encyclopedic of Southern Culture (Thai Cultural Encyclopedia Foundation, 1999), Songkhla city Municipality (Songkhla City Municipality, n.d.), and Tourism Authority of Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), n.d.).

Moreover, this study based on the finding and proposes the Chinese names of the attractions listed and the optimization recommendations. The Chinese names of the attractions based primarily on widely used conventions to ensure clear communication with tourists. The optimization recommendations proposed in this study are derived from appearing on online media. The suggestions are made by analyzing aspects such as value-added content, descriptive content, the currency of information (up-to-date), transportation details, and operating hours.

The research flow is outlined as illustrated in the following figure.

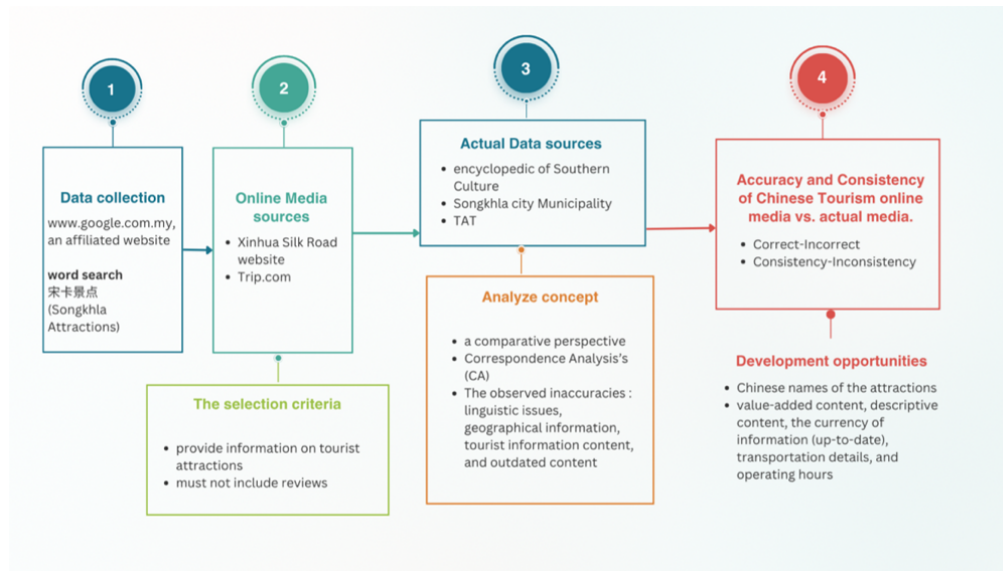


Figure 2. Research Flow

FINDINGS

The study found that the consistency between Chinese tourism information in online media and the actual data of Songkhla province can be analyzed in three aspects: consistency, inconsistency, and incorrect information. The details of this comparison are summarized in Table 3. Through the data analysis, 'Song Thale Park', there is no information about the attraction on the Trip.com website. The details of the accuracy and consistency of information are as follows:

Table 3. The Accuracy and Consistency of Information

| Consistency between Online information and actual information | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| No. | Consistency | No. | Inconsistency | No. | Incorrect |
| 1 | Koh Nu and Koh Maeo | 1 | Hat Yai | 1 | Songkhla |
| 2 | Greenway Night market | 2 | Songkhla National Museum | 2 | Mermaid Beach |
| 3 | Klonghae floating market | 3 | Mermaid Beach | 3 | Tone-Nga-Chang Waterfall |
| 4 | Elephant camp | 4 | Hat Yai City Municipal Park | 4 | Samila Beach |
| 5 | Gold Mermaid | 5 | Samila Beach | | |
| | | 6 | Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol | | |
| | | 7 | Songkhla Central Mosque | | |

Consistent information

The study results indicate that digital tourism information in Songkhla Province is generally accurate in terms of basic descriptions, particularly regarding the geographical locations and core characteristics of attractions, which largely align with official recommendations. However, there remains scope for enhancement in the implementation-specific aspects. For instance, Hat Yai Floating market requires additional information on its introduction to local cuisine and transport guidance. The cultural origins of the Golden Mermaid should be more precisely articulated. The historical significance of Kor Nu and Kor Maeo could be enriched through a more in-depth literature review.

This study found five tourist attractions with consistent data alignment, and their core characteristics correspond to official recommendations (see Table 4).

Table 4. Comparative Analysis of Data-Compliant Tourist Attractions

| Type of Attractions | Attraction | Core Dimensions |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cultural Experience Attractions | Greenway Night market | Cultural immersion |
| | Klonghae floating market | Local gastronomy |
| Natural Experience Attractions | Elephant camp | Ecological engagement |
| | Gold Mermaid | Iconic recognition |
| | Koh Nu and Koh Maeo | Historical symbolism |

The details are as follows:

Cultural experience attractions

(1) Greenway Night Market

It serves as a cultural immersion hub through its authentic handicraft displays and live performances, with descriptions fully matching provincial tourism guidelines.

Example 1

Original Text: 这里有各种各样的摊位，售卖着当地特色的手工艺品、服装、珠宝和小吃，还有现场音乐表演和娱乐活动，是体验当地文化和生活的好地方。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: There are various stalls selling local handicrafts, clothing, jewelry, and snacks. The market also features live music performances and entertainment activities, making it an excellent place to experience local culture and lifestyle.

(2) Klonghae floating market

The recommendation of places includes accurate and consistent to actual information regarding their locations and the details of available products or services, as well as a description of the experiences visitors can expect to gain.

Example 2

Original Text: 水上市场位于合艾郊区，靠近合艾BIGC。市场上有各种本地小吃，前来这里的游客也挺多，有兴趣还可以淘淘纪念品，或者感受下当地人的生活也不错。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: The floating market is located in the outskirts of Hat Yai, near Hat Yai BIG C. The market offers a variety of local snacks and attracts many tourists. Visitors can also shop for souvenirs or immerse themselves in the local lifestyle.

Although the basic information is accurate, there is a need to provide additional details to enhance the visitor experience. The official website of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (n.d.) provides detailed transportation routes and contact information, such as phone numbers and website links. Additionally, the website highlights the natural characteristics of local cuisine in its food section.

Natural experience attractions

(1) Elephant camp

For nature-based attractions, Elephant Camp demonstrates sustainable ecotourism practices through ethically described activities like guided elephant treks, aligning with regional wildlife conservation protocols.

Example 3

Original Text: 大象营是接近自然，呼吸新鲜空气的好地方。这里是高水准的旅游胜地，风景优美，而且旅客有机会骑着大象欣赏风景，到森林探险，新型的旅游方式，令都市人倍感新奇；除了骑象，旅客还可以享受泰式按摩。大象营的招牌节目就是“大象表演”。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: The elephant camp is a great place to get close to nature and breathe fresh air. It is a high-quality tourist destination with beautiful scenery, offering visitors the opportunity to ride elephants and explore the forest. This unique travel experience is particularly fascinating for urban dwellers. In addition to elephant riding, visitors can also enjoy traditional Thai massages. The highlight of the elephant camp is the “elephant show.”

(2) Gold Mermaid

The description offers a concise overview of Gold Mermaid, primarily outlining its external characteristics. Nevertheless, this study found that the information provided is too brief, and it is recommended to add more content to increase its appeal to tourists. It also needs clarification of its origins in local fishing folklore to strengthen cultural authenticity.

Example 4

Original Text: 该雕像是萨米拉海滩的地标，背对着大海，美人鱼在梳理着自己的头发。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: The statue is a landmark of Samila Beach, facing away from the sea, with the mermaid combing her hair.

(3) Koh Nu and Koh Maeo

They exhibit a strong alignment between toponymic legends and geographical features. Their historical designation as “Lion City” by Arab traders during 14th-century maritime exchanges highlights Songkhla’s role in ancient trade networks, warranting integration with primary source navigation records. The analysis of actual data (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.) reveals that the information corresponds with official sources related to the tourist attractions of Songkhla. The details are as follows:

Example 5

Original Text: 鼠岛和猫岛位于宋卡湖中，与撒米拉海滩遥遥相望，是宋卡府的著名象征。传说中国舢板上的一只狗、猫和老鼠偷了商人的魔水晶，试图游上岸去，但还是溺水而亡。猫和老鼠就变成了宋卡湖上的两座岛屿，死在岸上的狗变成了海湾附近的Hin Khao Tang Kuan山。被彻底损坏的水晶变成了洁白的Sai Kaeo沙滩。因为猫岛和鼠岛的形状从海上看过去像一头狮子，宋卡也曾被阿拉伯商人称作“狮子城”。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: Koh Nu and Koh Maeo are located in Songkhla Lake, facing Samila Beach from a distance, and are well-known symbols of Songkhla Province. According to legend, a dog, a cat, and a rat aboard a Chinese junk stole a merchant’s magic crystal and attempted to swim ashore but drowned. The cat and the rat transformed into the two islands in Songkhla Lake, while the dog, which perished on the shore, became Hin Khao Tang Kuan Mountain near the bay. The shattered magic crystal turned into the white sands of Sai Kaeo Beach. Because Koh Nu and Koh Maeo resemble a lion when viewed from the sea, Songkhla was once called the “City of Lions” by Arab traders.

Inconsistent information

Inconsistent information is there is information that corresponds with the actual data, but there is also information that does not. This study identified four aspects of inconsistent

information, including: location and size detail, folklore legend, style and elements of architecture style, and local language. As summarized in table 5 below:

Table 5. The Aspects of Inconsistent Information

| No. | Aspects | Tourism attractions | Number |
|-----|------------------------------------|---|--------|
| 1 | location and size detail | (1) Hatyai City Municipal Park (2) Songkhla Central Mosque | 2 |
| 2 | folklore legend | (1) Samila Beach (2) Gold Mermaid | 2 |
| 3 | style and elements of architecture | (1) Songkhla National Museum (2) Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol | 2 |
| 4 | local language | Hatyai | 1 |
| | Total | | 7 |

Table 5 presents four aspects along with the names of tourist attractions corresponding to each aspect. The analysis revealed examples such as: the details about Hat Yai City Municipal Park and Songkhla Central Mosque are not shown in their actual size and location; the story of Samila Beach and the Golden Mermaid are not presented clearly; the architectural style and elements of Songkhla National Museum are not described in the correct style. The details, as follows:

Location and size detail

The attractions where the location and size detail are inconsistent are Hat Yai City Municipal Park and Songkhla Central Mosque.

(1) Hat Yai City Municipal Park

The inconsistent is the area of the park. Online information shows that Hat Yai City Municipal Park has 6.7 hectare, which differs from the actual data. The actual data indicated that Hat Yai City Municipal Park has 400 rai (Thai) (approximately 160 acres) (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). In addition, 1 rai is equivalent to 0.16 hectare; so, 400 rai is $140 \times 0.16 = 64$ hectare. As shown in the following example.

Example 6

Original Text: 位于距离市中心约6公里，占地约6.7公顷，政府在这座山上建了三个旅游风景点：四面佛寺、立佛寺、观音寺。目前，这里正在扩建，以后会有更多的景点。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: Located about 6 kilometers from the city center, covering an area of approximately 6.7 hectares, the government has built three tourist attractions on this mountain: the Four-Faced Buddha Temple, the Standing Buddha Temple, and the Guanyin Temple. Currently, this area is undergoing expansion, and more attractions will be added in the future.

(2) Songkhla Central Mosque

Songkhla Central Mosque is located at Khonghae subdistrict, Lopburi Ramesuan Road, Songkhla (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). However, online media shows that

Songkhla Central Mosque is in the central area of Songkhla. So, the information in online media differs from actual data. The details from online media are as follows:

Example 7

Original Text: 其位于城市的中心，外观华丽而精美，内部则装饰着美丽的壁画和装饰品。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: It is in the city center, with a gorgeous and exquisite appearance, while the interior is adorned with beautiful murals and decorations.

Folklore legend

This study found that the folklore legend of the Mermaid is shown in online media differs from the actual Thai information. Online media features the narrative legend of Mermaid through two attractions, including Samila Beach (trip) and Mermaid Beach (Xinhua Silk Road' website).

Online media indicates the legend about the Mermaid, stating that its prominent bronze statue represents reverence for a Hindu goddess. However, based on actual data, the legend of the Mermaid is based on Thai folklore legend and does not mention any reverence to Hinduism (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). The details from online media are as follows:

Example 8

Original Text: 在洁白的沙滩上，还有一座很显眼的青铜制美人鱼雕像，以表达对印度教中大地女神的敬意。(Trip.com, n.d.; Bo, 2018)

Translate Text: On the pristine white sandy beach, there is also a striking bronze mermaid statue, symbolizing respect for the Hindu earth goddess.

Style and elements of architecture

This study found that two attractions advertised in online media do not correspond with actual data. The architectural styles of Songkhla National Museum are a blend of Chinese and European styles, not purely Chinese architecture. The architectural elements of Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol are stainless steel, not pure silver.

(1) Songkhla National Museum

According to the encyclopedias of Southern Culture (Thai Cultural Encyclopedia Foundation, 1999), this study found that there is consistent information on Songkhla National Museum, but the difference in information lies in the architectural style. The website describes it as purely Chinese architecture, whereas the Thai sources suggest it blends Chinese and European styles. It can be said that the original building of the Songkhla National Museum was in the Chinese style, and after renovation, European architectural elements were incorporated (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.) The inconsistent information recommended on the website is as follows:

Example 9

Original Text: 宋卡国家博物馆建于1878年，颇有中国建筑风格，体现了华人对当地文化的影响。(Bo, 2018)

Translate Text: Songkhla National Museum was built in 1878. It has a distinct Chinese architectural style, reflecting the influence of Chinese peoples on the local culture.

(2) Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol

The materials used in the construction of the temple are inconsistent. The website describes this temple as using ‘pure silver (纯银)’, but Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol uses ‘stainless steel (纯钢)’ (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). The details from online media are shown in the example below. In addition, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (n.d.) provides in-depth information about this temple in Thai, but online media contains less Chinese information about the attractions.

Example 10

Original Text: 这座寺庙是由纯银打造的，奢华酷炫，周围环境也很安静。(Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: This temple uses pure silver, luxurious and cool, with a very quiet surrounding environment.

Local language

Through the Xinhua Silk Road’ website, which describes Hat Yai, this study found some inconsistent information. Hakka and Teochew are not the most used languages, and Hakka is not the first language of peoples in Hat Yai. Hakka and Teochew are commonly used exclusively by Thai-Chinese in Songkhla, a specific cultural group. Hat Yai peoples commonly used the ‘Thai’ and ‘Southern Thai language’ as the local language. The details shown in online media are inconsistent with actual data as follows:

Example 11

Original Text: 漫步合艾街头，……路上行人说话，也多为客家或潮州话，其中客家话为这里的第一语言。(Bo, 2018)

Translate Text: Strolling through the streets of Hat Yai, ... the pedestrians are mostly speaking Hakka or Teochew, with Hakka being the first language here.

Incorrect information

The incorrect information includes: the English translation in parentheses following the Chinese terms is inaccurate, and additional descriptions recommending other attractions unrelated to the context have been included.

The English translation in parentheses is incorrect

There are three attractions where the English words are incorrect, including Samila Beach, Songkhla, and Mermaid Beach. Therefore, this finding is significant for enhancing the quality of Chinese-language information on online media. The details are as follows:

Example 12

Original Text: 美人鱼铜像旁边是一组“猫和老鼠”雕像，因为宋卡最著名的两座岛屿就分别命名为猫岛 (Ko Yo) 和鼠岛 (Ko Losin)。 (Trip.com, n.d.; Bo, 2018)

Translate Text: By the side of Mermaid is a group of ‘Cat and Rat’ statues, because the most famous island of Songkhla includes Koh Maeo and Koh Nu.

From example 12, the English words in parentheses of ‘猫岛’ is ‘Ko Yo’ and ‘鼠岛’ is ‘Ko Losin’, which is incorrect. The name ‘Koh Maeo (which means cat)’ should be used instead of ‘猫岛’, and the name ‘Koh Nu (which means rat)’ should be used instead of ‘鼠岛’. Moreover, this attraction is commonly called ‘Koh Nu Koh Maeo’.

Example 13

Original Text: 宋卡 (Songkhla) 与马来西亚的吉打州 (SaiBuri) 接壤。 (Bo, 2018)

Translate Text: Songkhla border on Malaysia Kedah (Saiburi).

From example 13, the English word in parentheses of ‘吉打州’ is ‘Saiburi’, which is incorrect. ‘吉打州’ is ‘Kedah (the state of northwest Malaysia)’. In contrast, ‘Saiburi’ is the name of a district in Pattani province. Therefore, in parentheses, ‘Kedah’ should be used instead of ‘Saiburi’.

Recommend other attractions that are unrelated

The information of Tone-Nga-Chang Waterfall is not correct. There is a description of other attractions, including ‘Tham Khao Rup Chang’. Although this place is a tourist attraction in Songkhla, it is a different location that is additional, unrelated to Tone-Nga-Chang Waterfall. The details are as below:

Example 14

Original Text:另一个有名的景点是大象泉之穴 (THAM KHAO RUP CHANG), 距离市区大约10公里的地方, 其中有3个洞穴,。 (Trip.com, n.d.)

Translate Text: Another famous attraction is the Elephant Spring Cave (THAM KHAO RUP CHANG), located about 10 kilometers from the city, which has three caves.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the Chinese tourism information of Songkhla presented in online media contain both consistent and inconsistent content, as well as inaccurate information. If tourists do not receive accurate and precise travel information from online platforms, it may lead to decreased interest in visiting Songkhla, thereby negatively affecting the tourism industry.

In comparison with prior studies reviewed in the literature, this study supports the conclusions of Toemsungnoen (2021), which indicated that the accuracy of tourism information remains limited and requires further improvement. The result aligns with the finding of Pertheban et al. (2019), there are unclear details, false information, and outdated about tourist attractions in online media. Moreover, the information about tourist attractions is not entirely accurate. In contrast, the findings of this study do not align with those of Li (2017), demonstrating different results, which found that the information of attractions is sufficient, correct, and credible reviews, design, and functions. This finding also contrasts with the study by Berhanu and Raj (2020), which examined the relationship between Online Travel Information Quality (OTIQ), resonance, and conative destination image. Notably, that study did not address linguistic information, location details, architectural descriptions, or local legends, elements that this identifies as significant components of tourism information. This study indicated that not all the information about tourist attractions is accurate (e.g., location, folklore legend, English translation in parentheses).

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the consistency of the information about tourist attractions, which may inform important strategies and opportunities for tourism development in Songkhla province. This study also suggests potential areas for improvement, including enhancing the quality of Chinese language use, ensuring content is regularly updated, utilizing tools such as AR-based navigation, and providing Chinese name for tourist attractions, as follows:

- (1) Chinese-language information in online media should be regularly updated. The names of attractions should be those commonly used. For example, 'Mermaid Beach (美人鱼海滩)' is not commonly used. The Gold Mermaid statue (金色美人鱼雕像) is more commonly used for this attraction.
- (2) Information about attractions should be accurately compiled and presented. The names of attractions and relevant details should be accurate and up to date.
- (3) Establish collaboration among the government, private companies, and universities to develop Chinese-language tourism information.
- (4) Using tools like AR navigation, interactive storytelling, and workshops to make travel information easier to use and better at sharing culture. Technology could change how travelers get information and understand local culture.
- (5) The Chinese names of the attractions listed should be the same. This study proposes the Chinese names of the attractions listed and the optimization recommendations as show in Table 6 below.

Table 6. The Name of the Attractions

| No. | English | Chinese | Thai | Optimization Recommendations |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| 1 | Songkhla | 宋卡 | สงขลา | Expanded brief history |
| 2 | Gold Mermaid statue | 金色美人鱼雕像 | รูปปั้นเงือกทอง | Expanded folklore narratives |
| 3 | HatYai | 合艾 | หาดใหญ่ | Up-to-date |
| 4 | Songkhla National Museum | 宋卡国家博物馆 | พิพิธภัณฑสถานแห่งชาติสงขลา | Expanded brief history |
| 5 | Koh Nu and Koh Maco | 鼠岛和猫岛 | เกาะหนูเกาะแมว | Transit guides |
| 6 | Greenway Night market | 格林威夜市 | ตลาดกรีนเวย์ไนท์มาร์เก็ต | None required |
| 7 | Klonghae floating market | 合艾水上市场 | ตลาดน้ำคลองแห | Local Cuisine & transit guides |
| 8 | Elephant camp | 合艾白象营 | ปางช้างเผือกหาดใหญ่ | Online booking system integration |
| 9 | Tone-Nga-Chang Waterfall | 象牙瀑布 | น้ำตกตองนางช้าง | Transit guides |
| 10 | Hat Yai City Municipal Park | 合艾市立公园 | สวนสาธารณะเทศบาลนครหาดใหญ่ | Up-to-date, transit guides, Ticket price and operating hours |
| 11 | Samila Beach | 撒米拉海滩 | หาดสมิหลา | Restaurant, coffee, activities |
| 12 | Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol | 三界三吉祥大佛塔（白钢佛塔） | พระมหาธาตุเจดีย์ไตรภพ ไตรมงคล (เจดีย์สแตนเลส) | A brief overview, special activities on the schedule date |
| 13 | Song Thale Park | 双海公园 | สวนสองทะเล | A brief overview |
| 14 | Songkhla Central Mosque | 宋卡府中央清真寺 | มัสยิดกลางประจำจังหวัดสงขลา | A brief overview and highlight |

Table 6 shows the English names, Chinese names, and Thai names of 14 attractions. Additionally, it offers recommendations to enhance the accuracy and clarity of the names and information. For example, the information about the Gold Mermaid Statue could be enhanced by including additional details about the legend. The information about Hat Yai City Municipal Park could be updated (e.g., transit guide, ticket price, ticket purchase, and operating hours.) However, Greenway Night Market does not need any modifications.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study analyzed the Chinese tourism information of Songkhla province through online media. The data from online sources and actual data were analyzed from a comparative perspective and the simple forms of correspondence definitions of truth. The results indicated that the tourism information about attractions is not entirely accurate. Some information and details contain inaccuracies.

The findings found that the accuracy and consistency between Chinese tourism information in online media and the actual data of Songkhla province can be analyzed in three aspects, including: (1) Consistency information (i.e., Koh Nu koh Maeo, Greenway Night market, Khonghae floating market, Elephant camp, Gold Mermaid): the geographical locations and core characteristics of attractions, which largely align with official recommendations. Nevertheless, the research revealed that the promotional information provided for some locations was relatively scarce. (2) Inconsistencies information (i.e., Hai Yai, Songkhla National Museum, Mermaid Beach, Hat Yai City Municipal Park, Samila Beach, Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol, Songkhla Central Mosque) include location and size details, folklore legends, style and elements of architecture, and local language. For example, the area of Hat Yai City Municipal Park, the legend of the Gold Mermaid statue differs from the actual Thai information, and the architecture style of Songkhla National Museum. (3) Incorrect information (i.e., Songkhla, Mermaid Beach, Tone-Nga-Chang Waterfall, Samila Beach): the English translation in parentheses following the Chinese terms is inaccurate, and additional descriptions recommending other attractions unrelated to the context have been included. Such inaccurate information can result in misperceptions among tourists seeking travel-related content through online platforms. Additionally, of the three aspects mentioned, the inconsistency in tourism attractions is the most prominent. This is essential for the enhancement of digital communication and the development of a more informed and contextually grounded tourism discourse.

This study also acknowledges several limitations and provides corresponding recommendations for future research:

- (1) The data of the present study were collected from www.google.com.my. The findings primarily focus on Chinese Malaysian tourists. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies be designed to incorporate other sources for analysis, especially applications, such as Xiaohongshu (小红书), Douyin (抖音), Fliggy (飞猪), and Qunar (去哪儿). The mentioned applications are also popular travel search platforms. Moreover, they are also platforms that many Chinese tourists use.
- (2) The data used to examine accuracy and consistency primarily consists of place names and descriptive information about tourist attractions. In addition, information related to restaurants, accommodations, and activities within Songkhla province is also of interest. To date, there is a lack of studies that explicitly examine these specific aspects. Therefore, it is also recommended that future research be conducted on the mentioned aspects. These would be in-depth and beneficial for Songkhla tourism development.
- (3) The literature review and analysis of online information about tourist attractions indicate that technological tools have not been integrated into the tourism

development of Songkhla province. To contribute to the development of technology-integrated tourism. This study also recommends that future studies focus on immersive tourism (沉浸式旅游) (e.g., NPC (Non-Player Character) playing poets, historical immersive experience, cultural heritage immersive, theatrical immersive experience), and study the approach of using immersive tourism to adjust strategies and develop tourism in Thailand.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors gratefully acknowledge the Faculty of Liberal Arts, [Prince of Songkla University], for their valuable assistance in proofreading this manuscript, which significantly enhanced its clarity and accuracy.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose and received no financial support for the research, authorship, or publication of this article. This study was conducted solely to explore information that may contribute to the advancement of tourism development.

REFERENCES

- Berhanu, K. & Raj, S. (2020). The trustworthiness of travel and tourism information sources of social media: Perspectives of international tourist visiting Ethiopia. *Heliyon*, 6(3), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e03439>
- Bo, Y. (2018, February 27). *Taiguo you zhi songka bibeigonglue* [Essential travel guide to Songkhla, Thailand]. Xinhua Silk Road. <https://www.imsilkroad.com/news/p/85546.html>
- Chaiyakhet, W., Kaewchana, T. Viriyo, Y., & Luangrangsee, P. (2018). *Pat chai nai kan lueak laeng thongthiao phan sue sangkhom online khong nak thongthiao: Korani sueksa chumchon thongthiao Khlong Daen Amphoe Ra Not Changwat Song Khla* [Factors on choosing tourist attractions online: A case study of the Klong Dan Community, Ranod District, Songkhla Province]. *Hatyai Academic Journal*, 16(2), 171–190.
- Chiwakunanan, D. (2018). *Itthiphon khong reviewer nai sue online kab kan tat sin chai lueak doen thang thongthiao nai changwat thi pen chudmai plai thang nai Prathet Thai* [Influence of reviewer in online media and the decision to travel in Thailand] [Unpublished master's thesis, Thammasat University]. http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2018/TU_2018_6002030457_9888_9939.pdf
- David, M. (2005, 25 July). The correspondence theory of truth. *Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2006/entries/truth-correspondence/>
- Jansen, E. J., Ciamacca, C. C., & Spink, A. (2008). An analysis of travel information searching on the web. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 10(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3727/109830508784913121>
- Kroonenberg, P. & Geennacre, M. (2004). *Correspondence analysis*. Univeritat Pompeu Fabra.
- Li, Z. (2017). *Kan chai sue digital khong nak thongthiao chao chin klum millennials thi tat sin chai doen thang thongthiao Prathet Thai nai rup baep kan thongthiao baep itsara (Free independent Travel, FIT)* [Digital media usage of Chinese millennials travels in marking the decision for travelling to Thailand in

- the way of Free Intendent Traveler (FIT)] [Master's thesis, Bangkok University].
http://dspace.bu.ac.th/bitstream/123456789/3205/3/zi_li.pdf
- Ministry of Tourism & Sports. (n.d.). *Tourism statistics*. Ministry of Tourism & Sports.
<https://www.mots.go.th/news/category/411>
- Puttaruksakun, N. (2017). *Phruetikam kan thongthiao phruetikam kan chai sue online lae kan chai prayot lae khwam phuengphochai nai sue sangkhom online phuea kan thongthiao khong nak thongthiao klum generation si* [Generation C tourist's traveling behaviors, social media usage behaviors and social media used and gratification for tourism] [Master's thesis, Burapha University]. BUUIR.
- Pertheban, S., Samy, G. N., & Shanmugam, B. (2019). A systematic literature review: Information accuracy practices in tourism. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospital & Tourism*, 1(1), 1–30.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2018.1563016>
- Songkhla City Municipality. (n.d.). Tourist attraction. Songkhla City Municipality Official Website.
<https://www.songkhla-city.go.th/2020/travel>
- Soontornthammiti, N. (2022). *Phaplak Songkhla nai thatsana khong nak thongthiao chao chin Malaysia phan sue online Tripadvisor website partner www.google.com.my pi khor sor 2018–2020* [Malaysian Chinese tourists' images of and attitude towards Songkhla at www.google.com.my affiliated website, Tripadvisor from 2018 to 2020]. *Chinese Studies Journal*, 15(2), 1–35.
- The Integrated Provincial Administration Committee of Songkhla Province. (2021). *Phaen phatthana Changwat Songkhla* [The tourism development and upgrading project in Songkhla Province].
https://www.songkhla.go.th/files/com_news_develop_plan/2022-05_9ac446a7eddae74.pdf
- Toemsungnoen, H. (2021). *Kan chai sue online phuea kan thongthiao nai Changwat Petchabun* [The use of online media for tourism in Petchabun Province] [Master's thesis, Suthothai Thammathirat Open University]. STOUIR: Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University Intellectual Repository.
- Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). (n.d.). *Songkhla*. Tourism Authority of Thailand.
<https://thai.tourismthailand.org/Destinations/Provinces/%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%87%E0%B8%82%E0%B8%A5%E0%B8%B2/353>
- Trip.com. (n.d.). *Songkhla*. Trip.com. <https://hk.trip.com/travel-guide/destination/songkhla-649/>
- Thai Cultural Encyclopedia Foundation. (1999). *Saranukrom watthanatham Thai phak tai (lem sib et)* [The encyclopedias of Southern culture (no.11)]. Siam Press Management.
- Wang, X., Chaiittipornwong, & Wansiti, P. (2024). *Kan chai sue sangkhom online pen awut khap khluen kan thongthiao atchariya Mueang Si An* [Weaponization of social media for enhancing to tourism in Xi-an City]. *Journal of Liberal of Rungsit University*, 19(2), 7–22.
- Wang, X., Wang, X. & Lai, I. K. W. (2023). The effect of online tourism information quality on conative destination image: The mediating role of resonance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14(1140519), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1140519>

BIODATA

Nititaya Soontornthammiti, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in Chinese at the faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand. Her research interests include Chinese confusable words, Chinese teaching, learners' lexical errors, and tourism discourse.

Fenglong Zhang is a lecturer in Chinese at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus, Thailand. His research interests include Chinese language teaching, language ontology studies, comparative analysis, and tourism discourse.

How to cite this article:

Soontornthamniti, N., & Zhang, F. (2025). The accuracy and consistency of Chinese tourism information in online media vs. actual data: Songkhla Province. *Journal of Language and Culture*, 44(2), 68-87.

Received: 3 April 2025

Revised: 1 July 2025

Accepted: 28 July 2025

© The Author(s) 2025. *Journal of Language and Culture* published by Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University. This article is open access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, permitting the use, sharing, adaptation, distribution, and reproduction in any medium or format. Users are required to provide appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, include a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if any changes were made. The images or other third-party materials included in this article fall under the article's Creative Commons license unless otherwise specified in a credit line. If the material is not covered by the article's Creative Commons license or if your intended use goes beyond what is permitted by statutory regulation, you must seek permission directly from the copyright holder.