



# A local cuisine tourism approach to authenticity and a sense of place for Postmodern gastronomy in I-SAN Thailand

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## Abstract

This study aims to study local cuisine culture in the Chiang Khan District of Loei Province in Northeastern Thailand by performing an examination and analysis through the use of external and internal environment analysis (SWOT Analysis) and by creating awareness and stimulating interest in Gastronomic Tourism. This type of tourism is an international phenomenon that has an obvious process of development and garners a positive impact on the economy at the national level. In addition, cultural heritage has played a positive role because tourism focuses on creating food experiences, which help to attract tourists and to encourage them to buy products and services. This article focuses on the development of local cuisine in the Chiang Khan District of Loei Province in Northeastern Thailand which has a concept of adding value to local cuisine by studying the conditions and potential of local cuisine tourism, by examining the situations and trends surrounding tourism, by exploring the area's potential for tourism, and by conducting an environmental analysis in order to assess tourism potential of local cuisine tourism. Loei, which is very important for cultural tourism and traditions due to its famous tourist attractions, expresses a unique way of life within the community. However, in terms of tourism development, the province is still having several problems. For example, it lacks public collaboration for which mutual understanding is required. Therefore, knowledge regarding the importance of tourism and tourism development needs to be provided to the local people. In this way, tourism has the potential of becoming sustainably developed. Local cuisine has the potential to increase social sustainability by linking relationships among diverse groups of people and by promoting a conducive environment for living together. Food is a top priority for all tourism activities. Some tourists visit certain tourist attractions to solely try the foods offered to them. This creates opportunities to develop foods and promote destinations where local cuisine can be exploited via carefully crafted marketing and public relations.

**Keywords:** Local cuisine tourism, authenticity, sense, gastronomy, post-modern.

## Introduction

In 2017, travel among tourists experienced the highest growth showing an increase of 6.8% since 2009. UNWTO estimated growth at 3.8 percent per year for 2010 to 2020 (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2018). Asia and the Pacific region remained popular tourist destinations with the highest growth at 9.3 percent. ASEAN was ranked as having the second largest growth in the region at 9.4 percent. These figures stand in stark contrast to number of European tourists showing the least growth at 1.6 percent due to the decrease in the number of tourists to Europe. The revenues were generated from the expenses of foreign tourists in accommodation, food and beverages, entertainment, shopping and products, and other services in tourist attractions. It was valued at approximately US \$ 1,220 billion (1,102 billion euros), which was up by 2.6 %. (UNWTO, 2014) In the last few years, food has become an important element in promoting tourism (Jesús Claudio Pérez Gálvez, et al., 2017). Food and culinary culture is an important aspect of cultural heritage due to the fact that it reveals a



community's identity, its lifestyle, and its eating habits (Serdar Oktay & Saide Sadıkoğlu, 2018). Traditional cooking plays an important role in creating national and individual identities. Conservation of food knowledge helps to preserve genetic diversity and is important in maintaining and enhancing racial and cultural identities. (Ilaria Maria Grimaldi, et al., 2018) Therefore, food education is important because food is a part of the everyday lives of people.

In addition, food and cooking are very important for relaxation and for tourism (Fusté-Forné & Masip, 2018), given that not only does the food tourism increase the attractiveness of tourism, but it also creates other benefits and relationships with and among the local stakeholders. (Roberta Garibaldi & Andrea Pozzi, 2018) Moreover, cooking is also a source of inspiration for tourist attractions (Jesús Claudio Pérez Gálvez et al., 2017). Food Tourism has become an important aspect of tourism. Gastronomic Tourism is receiving attention from traditionally agricultural and livestock activities in the form of Rural Tourism. Local cooking reflects the blend of natural and cultural features of the destination (Francesc Fusté-Forné, 2018).

Travelers give top priority to dinner. For travelers who are very interested in food, breakfast is the least important meal that leads to increasing the degree of happiness on holidays (Björk, 2017). Therefore, food is important because food is a part of people's daily lives. Food and cooking are very important for rest and travel. This is reflected through the great interest that tourists place on the importance of food (Fusté-Forné & Masip, 2018). For instance, the nutritional needs of people, who come to local areas, can also influence food development (Ali Batu, 2018). Local products also represent a regional variety of initiative and values. The initiative, which arises from creating a regional culinary landscape, depends on the products and symbols that are distributed in the local food market, which represents a space that is shared between villagers and tourists (Francesc Fusté-Forné, 2018). The consumption of local food is perceived to have medicinal value (Purba, et al., 2018). Moreover, local food festivals have the potential to increase social sustainability in terms of offering opportunities to foster relationships among groups and in terms of creating an environment that is conducive to living together (Anna de Jong & Peter Varley, 2018).

In many forms, services and tourism in Asia are happening around the world, especially with food. In Asia, there are many street foods that are helping to develop a worldwide culture of cooking. Chefs across the world apply trends to their restaurants, which can be traced to the traditions and delicacies found in street foods across Asia. All the while, these restaurants assist in connecting the cultures (Baldwin, 2017). Perception is a positive indicator of behavioral attitudes and intentions. While attitudes play a role in the relationship between perception and intention (Honglei Zhanga, et al., 2018), they also reflect innovations about local foods and local marketing [18]. When the tourists seek correctness, it affects the behaviors of tourists in local food consumption (Bahattin Özdemir & Faruk Seyitoğlu, 2017).

Thailand's income from food tourism was 456,000 million baht or 20% of total tourism revenue. The income included 174,000 million baht from Thai tourists and 282,000 million baht from foreign tourists. The top 3 countries in which foreign tourists spent the most for food and beverages during their travels were China, England, and Russia, respectively.

In the last 3 years, it was found that the income from foods and beverages of foreign tourists had increased by an average of 5.74 percent. The government, therefore, has a policy to promote tourism so that the economy can be continuously stimulated. For example, the Amazing Thai Taste was a project to promote and stimulate tourism under the Coordination of Public Power Project by creating a brand image for Thai foods and fruits by promoting them to be premium products and by encouraging people to eat seasonal Thai fruits. This reflects the accessibility at all levels of communities in promoting Gastronomic Tourism, especially the Thai foods, which are being produced in grass-roots communities.

In addition, 6 types of Thai food, which are popular among tourists, are Pad Thai, Tom Yum Kung, Green Curry, Papaya Salad, Massaman, and Chicken Tom Kha (Department of Tourism, 2016). According to 20-Year Strategic Plan (2017 - 2036) in Strategy 9, the



government's goal is to focus on the development of different sectors in urban development and economic areas. The goals are to reduce the income gap; to create a fair income distribution; to increase the number of livable center cities as the main economic base areas, which are environmentally friendly; and to increase investment value in new border economy areas by 20 percent (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018).

Gastronomic Tourism is considered to be an alternative type of tourism that has received international attention. Many tourist attractions around the world use local cuisine as a tool to encourage tourists to visit their places because the local cuisine is unique given that it has been passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years. It is also important to the lifestyles and cultures of the people living in the communities and further represents the identity and culture of different tourist destinations. The local foods motivate the first-time visitors by giving them a first impression and leaving them with a desire to re-visit in the future. The tourists will find various cultural experiences that are original and authentic to increase their cultural capital (Chang, et al., 2010). Therefore, Gastronomic Tourism represents an ideal way for tourists to experience the food of the host culture through eating (Shalini & Duggal, 2015).

Loei, a province in Northeastern Thailand, has a long history as a source of culture and famous tourism in Thailand, especially the food. It is the home to a traditionally local food or Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew (Thai rice noodle with spicy curry) made of entrails in which the fishy smell has been eliminated through a local method. If you want to know about or try the authentic Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew from Chiang Khan District of Loei Province, you will have to make a visit in order to experience the taste of the original Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew. With various elements, comprising the taste and ingredients used for cooking, it can also be sold to tourists because it is made from clean ingredients and accordingly contains no toxic substances. In addition, the vegetables are grown without chemicals and are good for the health of the consumers.

Therefore, it can be stated that this well-known cuisine of the Northeast, Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew, originated in Chiang Khan District of Loei Province, which borders on the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The province should be promoted as a tourist destination, which has a cultural identity of food and which can respond to the needs of the tourism industries in order to promote a local cuisine identity for the Chiang Khan District in Loei Province. In order to seek ways to promote tourism through dishes of local cuisine in a similar manner, as well as to contribute to sense of identity and uniqueness of local cuisine, a study of the cultural identity of the local cuisine is required. This can help to stimulate tourism within the province and to generate a positive impact on conserving the root culture and the local ways of life. Moreover, if the food products and tourism of the province are presented differently, interestingly, and outstandingly and if added value is created for Gastronomic Tourism, then this way of promoting tourism can bring about a new dimension of sustainability for the community (Loei Provincial Cultural Office, 2016).

## **Literature review**

### **Gastronomic Tourism**

Currently, Gastronomic Tourism is an alternative type of tourism that has received attention across the world. Many tourist attractions around the world use local foods as tools to encourage tourists to visit those attractions because local foods are unique and have generally been passed down from the ancestors for hundreds of years. They are also important to the way of life and culture of people in the community given that they present the identity and culture of the tourist destinations. The local cuisine can stimulate the first-time tourists to have a positive first impression and can plant the desire within them to revisit these places in the future. This is in alignment with a government policy, which focuses on developing local foods



in tandem with tourism and also emphasizes disseminating information about Thai foods at the global level (World Tourism Organization, 2018).

Compared to travelers of 20 years ago, today's tourists are more interested in culture. When travelling, tourists want new experiences. Today's tourists are more environmentally conscious and interested in health and quality of life and these behaviors are reflected when they travel. There is an analysis of factors, which have an influence on current tourist behaviors that tend to prefer new tourism patterns (Ellis, et al., 2018). In addition to the growing popularity of local authenticity, food is an important dimension that is a key element in enhancing travel experiences for tourists when they are visiting tourist attractions (Jameson, 2010). There was a theory about politics in the post-modern era called, "hypo-space", which can be adapted to the phenomenon of modern tourist behaviors. There is a viewpoint towards the perception of the global currents focusing on social and geographical mobility. Therefore, the attention is turned to a unique location or sense of place. In the social system or the modern world, "Gastronomic Tourism" is fulfilling this popularity, and perhaps, is doing so more than "Responsible Tourism" or "Sustainable Tourism". The identity of "Gastronomic Tourism" is the exotic experience that tourists derive. As the main attraction at various hotels or restaurants, it also helps to enhance the local products and promotes conservation (Hornig, & Tsai, 2010).

Food tourism is the journey of tourists, who are motivated to visit a tourist destination with a food identity; which is related to making foods, food festivals, and restaurants or which is especially about foods. The level of meaning of food tourism in English has been broken down into "Gastronomic Tourism" or "Culinary Tourism", which means that the tourists' level of interest in food is moderate. Their interest may include interests in other elements of tourist attractions, such as local cultures. Conversely, "Cuisine Tourism" or "Gourmet Tourism" refers to those tourists, who are particularly interested in foods in tourism. In general, it can be concluded that "Gastronomic Tourism" is considered as a specific or alternative type of tourism, either of which is related to the inherited culture (Forné, 2015).

### **Consumer Characteristics and Food Consumption**

According to a research study (Tse & Crotts, 2005), it was found that the age factor of tourists was negatively correlated with the number or range of cooking preference. This showed that older tourists may have a narrower range of food consumption than younger tourists. Regarding another research study (Ellis, et al., 2018), it revealed that sex, age, and education were the three social variables and consumer characteristics that had affected the tourists, who had consumed local foods.

Referring to the interview of the sample, most female tourists had paid attention to and had felt excited about tasting local food on holidays. However, elderly tourists and those with higher educational levels were very concerned about the health effects of the food, but they still desired to learn and experience foreign cultures through local food consumption. According to a research study (Thirchaya Maneenetr, 2009), some relationships that exist between social factors and consumer characteristics, such as education, career, and age can explain why consumers with higher education levels may have a higher social status, career, and age. Despite the shortcomings of research on social factors and consumer characteristics, it is an important way to examine the socio-economic variables and consumer characteristics that are the internal culture of food consumption for tourists.

### **Relationships that have a role in foods in tourism**

According to the literature review (Office of the Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Sports, 2017) on culinary tourism in tourist attractions, food images, and tourism information, it was found that the pattern of cooking at the tourist attractions had consisted of 2 main factors: (1) the image of foods and (2) the image of the atmosphere and the environment of tourist

attractions, which is an important factor in products of Culinary Tourism. For example, France and Italy are well-known among tourists around the world for producing their local wines and for having popular food flavors. In contrast, Australia, which is a new market for wine production, may be known only by a small number of tourists. In addition, the questionnaire respondents chose to answer the types of information sources in Culinary Tourism, which consists of a comparison between the two countries.

There were 3 important sources of information: (1) traditional data sources (2) commercial sources, and (3) personal data sources. This finding showed the importance of information sources and types of information for tourists. It was also found that the Internet was the most popular source of information. However, other types of sources are also important. In terms of marketing management for the purpose of serving tourists at tourist attractions, information about local food promotion is important for entrepreneurs. Moreover, it also promotes the image of food that has to be unique for local tourist attractions. According to a study (Thirachaya Maneenet, 2009), eating was not only consuming food to provide good nutrition but eating also included experiences that arise from food flavors and the importance of interacting with other tourists during the meal, which may represent cultural identity. Therefore, the role of food image can be linked to social status and social level of the tourists.



Figure 1 Food Tourism  
(Ellis, Park, et al., 2018)

## Marketing Strategies

SWOT analysis is a strategic plan which helps organizations or communities realize their status, and thus, makes it possible to correctly and successfully set goals (Ritson, 2011).

- **Internal Factors of Organizations**

S: Strength means that the organization or community must evaluate its own strengths, which is an internal factor, or it must determine what the organization or community already has, which can be considered as conditions of success within the organization in various dimensions, such as location, financial situation, personnel ability, teamwork, service quality, tradition, culture, and tourist attractions, etc. These strengths are evaluated from a high level to a low level.



W: Weakness means an organization or community must assess their weaknesses, such as complicated rules and procedures and their internal audit system, etc., in order to consider the conditions of organizational failure in various dimensions in similar way to assessing their strengths from a high level to a low level.

- **External Factors of Organizations**

O: Opportunity means those factors that give an organization an advantage over its competitors. They are external factors, such as oil which is normally expensive. While our organization does not use a lot of oil to produce products or services, it is important to have a strong organizational network that is not far from the community, or to have a private non-profit organization to assist in developing the community.

T: Threat means external barriers that hinder the development of an organization or community, such as changes in the election methods for the member of SAO (Sub-district Administrative Office) to be in combined areas, the rise of the Village Headman in the municipality, or the occurrence of conflicts happening in the area, etc. These represent obstacles, which block the goals of the organization and which may directly occur within the organization or the community. Therefore, these obstacles should be considered.

- **Modern Marketing Strategic Planning**

Modern marketing strategy is a marketing mix, which is a marketing communication concept, which is utilized by employing modern tools to communicate with consumers. The marketing strategy has been further expanded to include the study of internal and external marketing strategies for modern businesses. Along with studying the changing behaviors of modern consumers, it focuses on maximizing profits based upon consumer satisfaction as a long-term business operation. Market segmentation cannot be segmented in a traditional way. Therefore, using the appropriate marketing mix is exploited to create policies based on modern marketing strategies by utilizing marketing mix factors in the service industry. In order to see empirical results, great attention must be paid to every detail of each factor so that strategies can be created to promote tourism(Thirachaya Maneenetr, 2016). Factors of marketing mix in the service industry for creating 13P's strategies (Marsili, 2017) are as follows:

- **Planning:** Strategic planning needs to have a vision, pro-active thinking, good intentions, advancement, quality, and excellence. There are definite long-term goals, future analysis, and competitive thinking, which are used in order to keep up with the changes. Moreover, changes for the survival and progress of the organization or business in the future need to be faced.
- **People:** At all levels, staff members, who provide services to tourists, must be trained because they have the ability to promote the organization or to destroy the business. For example, the tourism industry depends on advertising and especially on the quality of services that the customers receive from the business employees. Therefore, the staff members can strengthen or destroy a business.
- **Product:** It consists of important elements including the uniqueness of tourist attractions, which can create value for tourists during their travels, such as transportation, accommodation, tourism activities, and security.
- **Positioning:** Find positions or special locations in the market for products that stand out from those of your competitors. Product positioning is an important factor used to specify possible competitive advantages in creating a position, in choosing beneficial competition, in creating effective communication, and in positioning, which has been selected to reach the target market.
- **Price:** Price is an indicator of the characteristics of tourism products. The price will indicate the level at which the tourists will be able to receive services and what the features of the tourism products will be. The price is, therefore, an indicator of the



standard of service and the type of tourism, such as the service rates for mineral bathing, accommodation, seminar rooms, and tourism activities.

- **Process:** There is a systematic service process, including service readiness, place design, and decoration. Make sure everything works properly. During the planning, never forget to follow the steps throughout the cycle because the plan is not only sensed by customers, but it is also sensed by the staff.
- **Packaging:** Tourism products often have a variety of attractions, facilities, and services. Therefore, packaging must be used in different forms. In general, products or services are normally purchased separately. However, when combined into a single purchase, the customers will receive convenience and pricing will be conveniently set as well.
- **Place:** There must be distribution channels or places where tourists can come to buy tourism products conveniently. The products can be distributed with or without middlemen via the Internet, and tour companies.
- **Promotion:** Marketing promotion in the tourism industry involves many process promotion techniques in order to access buyers, to gain acceptance, and to expand sales, which will result in greater efficiency in marketing operations. It requires appropriate marketing promotion.
- **Promise:** Make sure that you are committed to your brand at every point of senses, including sales corresponding to the brand's promise. There is nothing wrong with determining the steps in order to give customers a great experience, including the best customer service. Make sure that every member of the sales staff, who are involved with your customers are able to provide services.
- **Perception:** Perception is the reality of your customers. Make sure you know what they're saying about your business and ensure that you are in the same place.
- **Prove:** Prove can measure direct response. It can indicate whether or not there is an existing activity or whether you should try your best to find activities and information that will help to drive the business forward.
- **Payday:** Make all of the above changes to the salary day, not just for you and your employees, but for organizations and shareholders.

## Methodology

In order to observe the relevant factors, a quantitative study was conducted by utilizing questionnaires. The survey was conducted with 400 tourists as respondents in the Chiang Khan District of Loei Province after they agreed to participate. It included both close-ended and open-ended questions and utilized a five-point Likert rating scale. The measurement of the research instrument was conducted at a similar tourism site in Loei Province, using 10% of the actual sample size, which consisted of a total of 40 sets. The purpose of the tryout was to determine the validity of the questionnaires through the Index of Item - Objective Congruence (IOC), which yielded a validity of 0.87. After the aforementioned mode of data collection had been completed, descriptive statistics were employed to ascertain the frequency distribution by determining the mean scores, percentages, and SDs. This data analysis was carried out using a computer-processing program. The results are presented in the tables and are followed by discussions of the collected data.

## Results

The environmental analysis results to assess tourism potential consisted of:

- **Strengths**
  - Tourist attractions, especially natural tourist attractions, are abundant in forest resources. In addition, attractions of historical structures and historic sites remain complete, such as Wat Sri Khun Mueang and the 100-year-old wooden house (Chiang Khan's old wooden house community). Furthermore, there are art and cultural



attractions of language, food, and traditions, such as Phee Khon Nam, the Pha Saad Loi Kro rite, and the way of life of the villagers at Tai-Dam cultural village, etc. The aforementioned tourism resources are considered to be the important resources of the Chiang Khan District in Loei Province.

- There are a variety of tourist attractions in the Chiang Khan District of Loei Province, such as the 100-year-old wooden house, the Mekong River, the old city temple, natural attractions and cultural sites, the ways of life of the local people, and their local wisdom.
- The Chiang Khan District of Loei Province has unique cultures and traditions all of which have been passed down for generations, such as Phee Khon Nam, the Pha Saad Loi Kro rite, giving alms and sticky rice to the monks, as well as the way of life of the Chiang Khan people, such as their language, foods, local wisdom, and handicrafts, etc.
- Each of the tourist destinations is located close to each other, allowing tourists to travel to nearby attractions in a short period of time.
- The distinctive geographic feature of the province is that it is surrounded by mountains, which makes winters especially cold. Along with the beauty of the Mekong River, the geography has a significant charm, which assists in attracting many tourists to visit the area.
- Tourist attractions are conveniently accessible by convenient transportation, and tourists can access the attractions both by land and air.
- Chiang Khan District is a famous tourist destination in Loei province because it is a source of a variety of well-known tourist resources and souvenir products that attract tourists, such as Kaeng Khut Ku, coconut sweet, and blankets, etc. With these products and tourist attractions, the Chiang Khan District has become well-known and is famous in Loei Province.
- The community has gained strength by cooperating and acting in compliance with the requirements of building old wooden houses along the Mekong River and by painting houses in wood tones in order to promote the image of the 100-year-old wooden house community. In addition, in order to solve various problems, the members of the community also share their opinions and cooperate with one another to pass along the history of Chiang Khan to tourists.
- In addition to the Chiang Khan District, Loei Province has other famous tourist attractions in various areas, which are important tourist destinations. These include a variety of tourist attractions scattered throughout various areas, as well as in other districts, such as Phu Kradueng National Park (Phu Kradueng District), Phu Ruea National Park (Phu Ruea District), and Phu Luang Wildlife Sanctuary (Phu Rua District), etc.

- **Weaknesses**

- There is a lack of systematic management at tourist sites in the area of determining regulations, and some previously determined regulations are not yet consistently adhered to. For example, no standard design for building construction has been determined. Some regulations are violated, thus causing a lack of good management and negatively affecting the image of the community.
- Basic facilities are not sufficient enough to accommodate the numbers of tourists, such as restaurants, toilets, and local shops. They are especially unable to meet the needs of the many tourists in attendance during long holidays and festivals.
- The sites lack locational signs and the signs that do exist signs do not clearly provide information. Moreover, there are not enough signposts to various places, and the signs do not harmonize with the identity of the tourist area.
- The sites lack personnel, who have specific knowledge of the area. Moreover, the existing personnel do not understand tourism resources and local tourism resource conservation.
- The sites lack public relations and effective marketing management. The tasks of organizing the annual traditions or festival events and attracting tourists to visit the





places is not up to standards because most tourists are not made aware of the dates and times that such festivals will be held. Therefore, there should be more effective public relations and better marketing management.

- The sites lack tourism agencies, which could coordinate between communities and government officials. There is also a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding community cooperation. Therefore, there should be a strong agency in charge of fixing of tourism problem and promoting tourism development.
- Local people still lack knowledge and understanding of tourism management. Some local people still do not know what the local attractions in their communities are, where they are located, and don't comprehend the history of those attractions. In addition, the local people still have not taken the responsibility to act as good hosts for tourists and have not reduced the visible pollution in tourist areas.

- **Opportunities**

- Executives and related agencies should begin to pay more attention to tourism in the area. Moreover, policies, which delineate the guidelines for promoting and developing tourism of tourist attractions in other districts with interconnected areas, should be created and carried out.
- International tourism in the border area should be promoted given that the Chiang Khan District of Loei Province is located between the Thai and Lao border, which offers future opportunities for international tourism to be stimulated.
- The construction of road and bridges, which would connect the two countries, offers an opportunity for international travel to and from both neighboring countries and would boost the economy of the area, as well as the prosperity of the Thai people.
- Cooperating to promote tourism with neighboring countries, establishing a mutual agreement on product taxes, and having flexible entry and exit inspections between the countries would provide opportunities for tourism promotion and would assist in facilitating growth.
- Having various types of tourism activities in the area, such as slow tourism, agro-tourism and health tourism, etc., or creating additional tourism activities from the existing activities would increase the area's attractiveness to tourists.

- **Threats**

- Gasoline Price Fluctuation Problems: Rising gasoline prices are currently affecting the visitors' decisions to travel to the tourist attractions, which results in a lower number of tourists and lower incomes for people in the community.
- The Political Situation: Political unrest currently affects tourist travel because the tourists are concerned about being unsafe and facing any uncertainty, which may arise during their travels.
- Seasons: The seasons affect tourism because bad weather may cause tourists to have accidents while travelling.
- Natural Disasters: Due to the current trend of global warming, each region across the world is being affected by many natural disasters, including storms, floods, and earthquakes, etc. Chiang Khan District is another area in Thailand that has been affected by natural disasters. For example, there was an earthquake, which occurred in Laos and resulted in a huge 5.4 Richter tremor in the border area with Laos. As a result, tourists feel insecure and unsafe due to the uncertainty of natural disasters and the fact that they can occur at any time.
- Taking Advantage of Tourists in Providing Services: Some entrepreneurs openly take advantage of tourists by increasing the prices of products and services for tourists, who have traveled to the area.

**The results of determining the target customer group in Gastronomic Tourism and Domestic Tourism with marketing analysis by STP techniques**



The results of determining the target customer group in Gastronomic Tourism and Domestic Tourism with marketing analysis by STP techniques consisted of:

**Segmentation**

- Geographic Segmentation is tourists, who travel to the Chiang Khan District in Loei Province and to nearby provinces.
- Demographic Segmentation is tourists of all ages.
- Psychographic Segmentation is a modern traveler typology, one who loves to travel to unusual places and has the lifestyle of wanting to try something new.

**Target Market**

First Jobbers up are those, who are about 30 years old and who are the target market. The reason for this is that these groups have purchasing power to travel at a certain level and like domestic tourism. In addition, this group's members use a lot of social media and use social media in combination. Furthermore, this group of tourists often uses mixed social media and takes advantage of referral marketing as well. When referencing the research data, it was found that if tourists have been impressed by a place, then they are more likely to recommend it to others using word-of-mouth (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018).

**Positioning**

It is important to set the price of the product, “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”, so it is moderately priced to relatively highly priced. In other words, the cost should be approximately 40-100 baht per dish, which makes it affordable. Hence, it will not be difficult for tourists to make the decision to try this local special dish of the Chiang Khan District of Loei Province.

**The results of determining the strategic planning for “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”**

TOWS Matrix analysis is a matrix that represents opportunities and external obstacles, which are associated with internal strengths and weaknesses with a choice of 4 alternative strategies, which are generated by matching the external factors and the internal factors. These were used to formulate strategic plans for “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” as follows:

<b>TOWS MATRIX</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Strategy: SO</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating food identity in Chiang Khan by using “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” as a stimulus for awareness.</li> <li>2. Increasing public relations for Gastronomic Tourism.</li> <li>3. Allowing tourists to participate in making “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” and learn about the origin of this type of food.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Strategy: WO</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a way to preserve the food for tourists to buy “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” as a souvenir or take home food.</li> <li>2. Increase distribution channels of dried herbs and spicy sauces for tourists to buy and try at home. However, if they only want to eat the original one, they will need to come to the province.</li> <li>3. Add information channels in social media.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Strategy: ST</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a unique logo of the product to prevent copying or impersonation.</li> <li>2. Expand the customer base to tourists by performing public relations or other activities.</li> <li>3. Develop packaging to enhance the quality of the souvenirs so that tourists will want to purchase them to take home and cook the food by themselves. In this way, the customer base can be expanded.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Strategy: WT</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask related agencies for budgetary support to publicize the products.</li> <li>2. Use the medicinal properties of the food in public relations for Gastronomic Tourism.</li> <li>3. Promote a-must food, “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” together with promoting public relations regarding other tourist sites in the area.</li> </ol>

**The results of the image analysis of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”**

The results of the image analysis of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” are show in table 1.



**Table 1** The results of the image analysis of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”

Analysis of Item	Level of Image		
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Meaning
<b>Quality of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”</b>			
Cleanliness	3.77	0.990	High
Sufficiency	4.18	0.952	High
Non-toxic ingredients	3.95	0.938	High
Good taste	4.11	0.945	High
<b>Overall Quality result for “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”</b>	3.92	0.814	High
<b>Atmosphere of Restaurants</b>			
Clean	3.76	0.936	High
Cozy	4.11	0.845	High
Relaxing	3.81	0.703	High
<b>Overall result of Atmosphere of Restaurants</b>	4.08	0.818	High
<b>Value for Money (Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew)</b>			
It is reasonably priced.	3.69	0.820	High
The price makes it a value.	4.18	0.952	High
The price is not expensive compared to other local foods.	3.81	0.703	High
<b>Overall result of Value for Money</b>	4.08	0.818	High
<b>Unusual food (Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew)</b>			
Unique Appearance	4.11	0.938	High
Unique Taste	4.10	1.008	High
Differs from International foods	4.18	0.952	High
<b>Overall result for Unusual food</b>	4.08	0.818	High

**Results of the image analysis of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”:** It was found that the tourists had had a good perception of the image of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” in terms of the quality of food at a good level. When considering each item, it was determined that the tourists had had the following positive perceptions of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew”: 1) it is delicious, 2) it does not have toxic components, and 3) that it has sufficient nutrients. However, regarding the aspect of cleanliness, it was remarkably rated lower than other items.

**Results of the image analysis of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” in terms of the Atmosphere:** It was found that overall perception of the atmosphere of Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew restaurants was at a good level. When considering each item, it was noted that Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew restaurants had a cozy, relaxing, and clean atmosphere.

**Results of image analysis of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” in terms of Value for Money:** It was discovered that the overall perception of value for money was high. When considering each item, the tourists determined that Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew was valuable and worth buying, followed by reasonably priced and inexpensive as compared to other local foods.

**Results of image analysis of “Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew” in terms of being considered an unusual food:** The results revealed that Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew was indeed unusual. When considering each item, the tourists shared their opinions that Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew was different from international foods and was one of the Thai foods that was considered to be unique.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Loei province is very important for cultural tourism and traditions because there are famous tourist attractions and unique lifestyles to be found in the community along the Mekong River. In addition, there are also famous and abundant natural attractions that can attract as many as 1.9 million visitors every year. The majority (97.13 percent) are Thai visitors. However, in many respects, The World Heritage Group is still facing problems in developing tourist attractions, such as inefficient private sector management and public cooperation. In order to begin overcoming these problems, the public should be helped to better understand these issues and should be educated about the importance of tourism and tourism development. In addition, there should be effective measures to guarantee that the private sector abides by the regulations. These measures should include determining the architectural designs and



setting limitations for designing construction projects, buildings, and other structures in Chiang Khan District, all of which can further contribute to the development of sustainable tourism.

Regarding the fact that Food Tourism activities can accordingly encourage a good perception of the Chiang Khan District in Loei Province, it was pointed out that the people had positively responded to the activities and had agreed to organize these activities in order to foster a good perception. More varieties of activities should be created and constantly held. Not only the local cuisine should be improved, but instant food, which retains the original look and taste, should be created to be sold as a souvenir so as to give people opportunities to access and try the food. In addition, side dishes of local herbs should be promoted to develop and increase the value of the local cuisine, allowing it to become more accepted in the market (Mnguni, & Giampiccoli, 2019).

The local food, which is only found in Chiang Khan District, is Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew. According to history, the original population of Chiang Khan were those people who had immigrated from Luang Prabang, Laos. The food of Chiang Khan people is, therefore, similar to the food of the Luang Prabang people. Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew is a food that also originated in Luang Prabang. As a result, the immigration of Laos's people brought the recipe for Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew into Chiang Khan. Originally, it was eaten within the local households. As the city developed, people turned making and selling this household food into a career. As the city of Chiang Khan became a tourist city, tourists wanted to learn about the culture of Chiang Khan people. The food culture of people here is unique. Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew is the common breakfast food of the local people. With the flux of tourism into the city, Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew has become a "must-try food" that the local people recommend to tourists. The ingredients of Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew differ from "Kha Nohm Jeen" (Fermented Rice Flour Noodles) because the noodles are smaller and the curry includes bits of pork entrails, intestines, livers, and kidney, all of which are boiled until cooked. Vegetables, consisting of morning glory, cabbage, bean sprouts, peppermint, and fresh onion, are added, and most importantly, the dish is completed with the addition of a clear broth. If those, who visit Chiang Khan, do not try Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew, it is considered that they have not visited Chiang Khan at all. Currently, Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew is being served at many restaurants. The cooking methods employed by all restaurants do not differ because they use the same methods of cooking, which have been passed down for generations. Moreover, the process of making of Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew cannot be modified as in recipes for other noodles, which gives them differences in flavor. However, Kâao-Bpûn-Nam-Chaew restaurants have their own identities, which help them to increase their sales.

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