

## DIGITAL MARKETING FOR PROMOTING YOGA TOURISM ON KHO PHANGAN, THAILAND

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**Abstract:** There is a lack of research that focusing on assisting yoga businesses in digital marketing during COVID-19. This research aimed to: 1) investigate the behavior of Thai tourists in purchasing yoga tourism products or services; 2) investigate factors affecting the decision in purchasing a yoga health tourism service in the new normal era; 3) investigate tourists' perspectives on digital marketing to promote yoga tourism; and 4) develop digital marketing media to help promote yoga tourism suitable for Thai tourists in the new normal era. This research is mixed research with both quantitative and qualitative research. Data were collected using questionnaire questions asking 385 Thai wellness tourists. Twenty yoga entrepreneurs were asked to answer interview questions. The samples of both groups were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected between September 2021 and January 2022. The results found that 1) Thai tourists' behaviors using digital channels had a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level with gender, age, and education level, and careers of tourists. 2) Thai tourists' overall views on yoga digital marketing were at a high level with the highest score on purchasing online yoga courses, followed by customer relations, and store information search. 3) Tourists' perspectives on digital marketing to promote yoga tourism were Product and Service, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process, Productivity and Quality, and Health concern. All scores were at a high level. Females considered pricing strategy more than males. 4) The website, LINE stickers, and animation graphics on Facebook story and Instagram helped promotion for Thai wellness tourists.

**Key words:** yoga, digital marketing, health tourism, Koh Phangan, COVID-19, Thailand

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### INTRODUCTION

Wellness tourism is one of the most lucrative tourism markets in the world and includes travel, incentives to promote well-being, and good health through mental, physical, and spiritual activities. Tourists travel to improve and maintain their quality of life (Lyengar and Rivers-Moore, 1989). Yoga tourism is a part of wellness tourism. Yoga is an ancient Indian culture of 5,000 years ago about union of body, mind, and spirit for personal, physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth (Lyengar and Rivers-Moore, 1989) and a niche market that is growing rapidly throughout the world and a valuable business in the health tourism industry (Dutt and Selstad, 2021; Dillette et al., 2019). Thailand is the fourth largest health tourism market in Asia after China, Japan, and India and a popular destination for tourists looking to rejuvenate their bodies, minds, and spirits. Many famous tourist destinations in the country have organized yoga sessions festivals or events (Rungsimanop and Ashton, 2021; Global Wellness Institute, 2021; Ali-Knight and Ensor, 2017).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on the global economy and tourism industry which causing travel restrictions and closing tourist attractions. In the first quarter of 2020, the number of tourists visiting Thailand decreased by 38.01% from the same period in 2019 (Ministry of Tourism and sports, 2020). In Thailand, during the COVID-19 paradigm, not only yoga business but also entrepreneurs and agencies involved in the tourism business must find solutions to revive the Thai tourism industry. As well as preparing for change, promoting domestic tourism is the focus by using technology and innovation to promote sustainable growth and adaptation to the new normal tourism context (Wongcharoenkul and Suntrayuth, 2023). Digital marketing is very important for business because consumers can easily access various digital media anytime, anywhere (Aaker, 2016; Bostanshirin, 2014).

Travelers are always searching for information and notifications about new travel deals. Digital media can make such information instantly available and searchable (Nofal et al., 2020). Gutierrez et al. (2023) presented a systematic literature review on digital transformation and new integration in tourism. It analyzed 167 studies published between

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1997 and 2023. Research highlights the importance of digital transformation in the tourism sector. They suggest that adopting existing technology will benefit tourism companies and contribute to the wider economy.

Digital marketing should be strengthened through multi-channel distribution and use of digital assistants. Tracking and engaging with customer feedback on online platforms to build customer trust and loyalty. However, some of the barriers and problems tourism businesses face in using digital marketing include lack of knowledge and training, lack of time, and annoying ads and spam messages (Velentza and Metaxas, 2023). Therefore, a digital marketing strategy is essential for the travel industry to be able to overcome the crisis and can continue in this new normal era.

The researchers had surveyed a situation of yoga tourism in Koh Phangan during COVID-19 for a preliminary study. The results found that from interview results with 20 yoga entrepreneurs in Kho Phangan, business income has declined. Yoga businesses in Kho Phangan, Surat Thani have no problem digital marketing online to foreign tourists, whereas the yoga businesses are not focusing on market to Thai tourists in the past before COVID-19 situation. Some yoga businesses (5%) have changed their strategies and models of marketing, such as price reductions, and teaching online via YouTube, Zoom, Skype, Facebook media and mobile application. Some entrepreneurs (5%) were focused on having SHA safety standards and some entrepreneurs (5%) were provided COVID-19 testing kits for customers to test for COVID-19. Moreover, the interviews with 20 yoga entrepreneurs in Koh Phangan District, Surat Thani found that 100% of yoga establishments have Facebook pages, 90% have websites, 70% have Instagram, and 5% have mobile applications. Unfortunately, from the interviews results found that 80% of the content on the yoga websites is in English only, 15% of the websites use English and Thai. Moreover, 100% of the yoga Facebook Page content and Instagram content are in Thai.

However, there have been few studies of yoga and wellness tourism market strategies and factors affecting behavior in using yoga tourism services. Wahyuningsih et al. (2022) proposed marketing strategies for developing the tourism industry during the COVID-19 outbreak, to apply the principles of CHSE (Cleanliness, Healthy, Safety, and Environment Friendly) to penetrate the domestic tourist market, segmenting the individual tourist market green marketing, using travel packages, digital marketing, and re-positioning. Cristobal-Fransi et al. (2023) developed an e-commerce website for 106 Spanish health resorts. The study found that many Spanish spa websites lack communication in terms of interactive elements and additional information, such as content sharing, reviews, and ratings. This can be important for customers in terms of credibility and trust in the organization. It is also important to provide information in multiple languages. It is recommended that joint promotional campaigns be organized within the health tourism network to help enhance the image and attraction of both the spa and the destination. It can be concluded that the yoga entrepreneurs are not focusing on marketing to Thai tourists as they should, especially during COVID-19 situation. This is a gap of the research study that the researchers would like to fulfill in this paper.

Therefore, this research will help in planning marketing to meet the needs of Thai tourists and be extremely beneficial to entrepreneurs and aimed to: 1) investigate the behavior of Thai tourists in purchasing yoga tourism products or services; 2) investigate the factors affecting the decision in purchasing a yoga health tourism service in the new normal era; 3) investigate tourists' perspectives on digital marketing to promote yoga tourism and; 4) develop digital marketing media to help promote yoga tourism suitable for Thai tourists in the new normal era.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND RELATED THEORIES

### 1. Wellness Tourism and Yoga Tourism

Wellness tourists have a variety of services including relaxation and stress relief, physical fitness and sports, meditation, yoga, beauty treatment, weight management, and health-related education. The wellness tourists also include travelers who travel primarily for the purpose of wellness activities, and those planning their trips in wellness activities such as spas, yoga, meditation, and wellness resorts (Lyengar and Rivers-Moore, 1989). "Yoga" in ancient Sanskrit means union, yoke, or connection with himself, others, and his surroundings and has been practiced for thousands of years rooted in Indian culture but began to flourish in Western culture in the 2000s. The Yoga Health Tourism identified four motivations among yoga practitioners: seeking spirituality, enhancing mental well-being and physical well-being (Lehto et al., 2022). Prumarsa (2018) classified the types of yoga according to the practice characteristics and the suitability of each person's body as follows: Hatha Yoga, Anusara Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Bigram Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Kunthali, Iyoga, and Vinyasa Yoga.

### 2. Factors Affecting the Purchasing Decision of Yoga Courses

The traditional marketing mix consists of four variables (4Ps): Product, Price, Place, and Promotion (Kotler, 2012). In addition, ideas for adjusting the 4Ps marketing mix are presented to reflect changing business models and consumer behavior. Booms and Bitner (1981) adjusted the marketing mix to suit the 7Ps of service businesses by adding 3 variables: People, Physical Evidence, and Process. Moreover, there is also the 8Ps marketing mix that focuses on delivering product and service quality consisting of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process, and Productivity and Quality (Zeithaml et al., 2006). Marketing strategy is the implementation of various forms of marketing activities to achieve organizational objectives (Zhu et al., 2019; Varadarajan, 2010). Consumer behavior is analyzed to find needs and purchasing behavior. Knowing consumer behavior helps entrepreneurs choose the right marketing strategy and satisfy the needs of consumers (Kotler, 2019) and to communicate to customer groups, knowing the marketing format that consumers want, the time and channels for presenting content to create efficiency, increase sales opportunities, competition, and access to consumer groups (Kanket, 2019). Most yoga tourism marketing strategies promote yoga to promote better health, emphasizing yoga awareness for targeting promotional purposes. Most researchers offer physical benefits to health (Telej and Gamble, 2019; Gan and Frederick, 2018; Askegaard and Eckhardt, 2012; Lehto et al., 2006) presenting, promoting, and developing yoga tourism destinations and yoga experiences from their origins or authentic origins (Komeil, 2021; Telej and

Gamble, 2019). Laptawee and Kongsawatkiat (2016) studied the marketing mix that affects the decision to choose yoga services among working women in Bangkok and its vicinity. Most of 400 samples spent a yoga fee between 250-300 baht per hour and practiced a service facility near the workplace. Changsarn and Kaewprommal (2020) showed that consumer behavior in deciding to purchase a yoga course mostly spends 1,001 - 3,000 baht per course.

Data was collected at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. The influential person in purchasing yoga classes is family members. The most practiced form of yoga is Joint Therapy (Laptawee and Kongsawatkiat, 2016). The marketing mix that affects the decision are location, marketing promotion, and personnel. Tanchote (2020) showed that the important characteristics of a yoga teacher are knowledge and ability to teach yoga well, pay attention to students and have a good personality. Wahyuningsih et al. (2022) applied the principles of CHSE to penetrate the domestic tourist market, digital marketing, and re-positioning. Telej and Gamble (2019) found that Indian tourism marketers designed new approaches to promotional strategies specifically related to “authentic” yoga experiences targeted at people searching for an authentic yoga experience and using realistic imagery. Sharma and Nayak (2019) found that yoga tourism marketing promotion should emphasize the special benefits of yoga to stimulate yoga tourism and to increase the flow of tourists in the future. In addition, it will help promote yoga tourism as a unique and differentiated niche tourism market.

### 3. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing through digital devices and the internet as a medium for communication, promotion, and publicity of goods and services is often referred to in conjunction with Online Marketing (Thewtanom, 2022; Djakasaputra et al., 2021) including Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, Affiliate Marketing, Search Engine, Influencer Marketing (Zhang et al., 2022). Multi-Chanel Marketing is through email, social media, messages, websites, etc. Results can be seen in real time and can develop direct relationships with consumers or visitors (Zhang et al., 2022; Soluk et al., 2021). Using digital marketing channels in business can help reach a wider audience offering customers multiple options and in-depth information (Thewtanom, 2022; Jarusen, 2021). It also affects image, loyalty, product, and service selection decisions and creates competitive advantage (Zhang et al., 2022; Kerdpitak, 2022) and help tourists choose or purchase travel services more easily. Kaur (2017) stated businesses in the tourism industry can succeed in the digital world with six digital marketing activities: 1) a quality website, 2) SEO, 3) email marketing, 4) social media presence, 5) Content, and 6) Mobile Friendliness. Armutcu et al. (2023) studied the impact of digital marketing and social media on tourist behavior in Turkey, finding that perceptions of online content of tourist destinations directly affect tourists' behavioral intentions and satisfaction. Satisfaction and digital marketing interactions are important determinants of intention to visit attractions and destination selection. Moreover, this research recommends developing strategies to encourage tourists to share their experiences and satisfaction levels through digital marketing channels by improving the quality of products and services.

Thamwiphat et al. (2015) revealed that organizations or companies popularly produce LINE stickers to promote the organization, product, or service to promote corporate communication image and save on advertising costs compared to other forms of media. LINE cartoon style stickers help communicate messages expressing emotions and feelings and can be designed to communicate the perception of brand recognition of users to the organization or business (Lata, 2017). In addition, Liao and Hsu (2020) pointed out the importance of the interaction behavior of LINE stickers and LINE groups in creating links between sticker behavior and business activities. Promoting the visibility of LINE stickers to target consumers plays a role as social media in bridging the gap between organizations and potential customers and enabling them to retain loyal customers. Liu et al (2019) revealed that LINE stickers with product images have an impact on your brand image and a longer period of use can attract consumers better. In this regard, the brand image affects the attitude towards the brand, brand engagement, and product purchase intention. It is in line with Kwangsawad and Jattamart (2022) who stated that developing LINE stickers in an organization creates recognition for the organization. This results in the development of brands that can be used to create value and credibility. Beside, GIFs are great for marketing because they enable natural, real-time responses and can add personality to create a brand identity. It supports storytelling but uses fewer words (Teague, 2023). Using GIFs in your Instagram Story can make your posted content more unique, fun, and catch your audience's attention. Businesses can use GIFs as part of their marketing strategy to make stories posted on Stories more engaging. It also creates more brand recognition (Storrito.com, 2023).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Participants

The samples used in the study were: 1) 20 yoga entrepreneurs at Koh Phangan District in Surat Thani Province who registered for tax payment with the Koh Phangan District Office during COVID-19 situation. 2) The sample group included 385 Thai tourists. The sample size was calculated by the method of Yamane (1973). The characteristics of the sample were Thai interested in practicing yoga at Koh Phangan District in Surat Thani and willing to provide information. Both group of samples were selected using purposive sampling.

### 2. Research Tool

There are two types of questions that used as research tools: questionnaire questions and interview questions. The questionnaire was in 6 parts: 1) General information of respondents, 2) Purchasing behaviors of products and services via digital media, 3) Yoga practice behavior, 4) Marketing strategies to promote yoga tourism in the new normal era, 5) Opinions about the digital market for yoga tourism in the new normal era, and 6) Suggestions. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by Cronbach's reliability Coefficient alpha with a group 30 participants with similar characteristics with the samples (Cronbach, 1951). The reliability of the questionnaires was at 0.947, with a confidence

value of 0.7 or higher. Therefore, it can be concluded that these questionnaires are reliable. The interview questions were asked about situation, obstructions of yoga businesses during COVID-19, digital media channels that the yoga entrepreneurs have used. Validity test of the interview questions using three experts with at least 3 years experiences in digital marketing and tourism verified the accuracy of the content (Rovinelli and Hambleton, 1977).

### 3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data were collected from three sources: questionnaire questions, interview questions, and document and related works, using a triangulation technique to confirm the data. The online questionnaire was sent via email, LINE, and Facebook Messenger with information sheet, purpose of study, and confirmation of consent. The participants can withdraw at any time. Data collection was conducted between September 2021 and January 2022. This research was approved by the Ethics committee No. SRU-EC2021/065. Quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical analysis program with statistics includes frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and Chi-Square Test. Qualitative data were collected from 20 yoga entrepreneurs. The data were analyzed using content analyses. The research methodology process is shown in Figure 1.

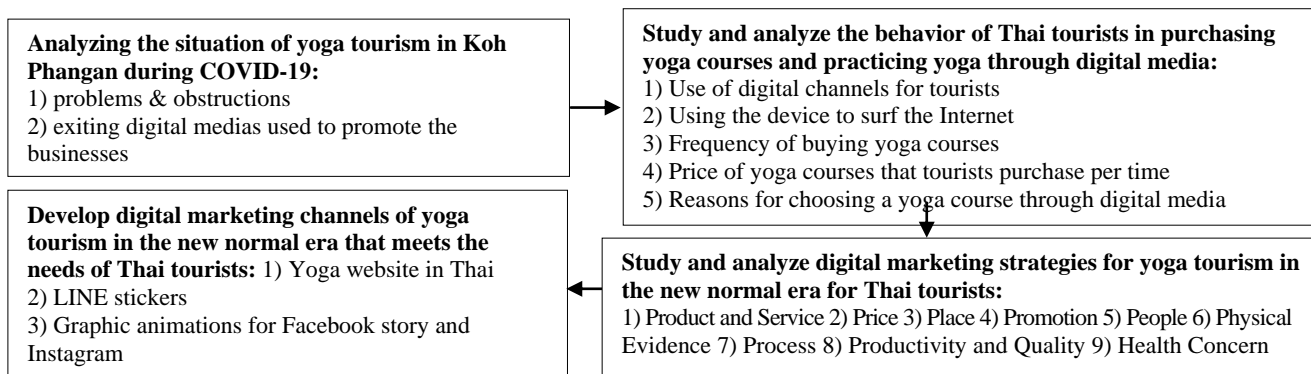


Figure 1. Research Methodology Steps

## RESULTS

The results of the analysis of personal data of 385 respondents found that most Thai tourists are females (60.50%) and males (39.50%). Most Thai tourists are ages between 30-40 years old (31.43%), followed by 41-50 years old (30.40%), and the least 51-60 years old (15.84%). Most Thai tourists had a bachelor's degree (45.71%), followed by had a master's degree (24.16%), and the least had a have a PhD degree (10.39%). Most tourists are self-employed (23.90%), followed by government employees (16.88%), and the least are employees (5.20%). Research results are presented according to objectives in 4 parts as follows:

### 1. Behavior of Thai tourists towards purchasing yoga health services through digital marketing channels

There are 5 aspects of the behavior of Thai yoga tourists towards purchasing products or services through digital marketing channels: 1) Behavior of using digital channels to buy products and services found that more than half (52%) use Facebook the most, followed by LINE (15%), YouTube (11%) and Instagram (9%) as can be seen in Figure 2.

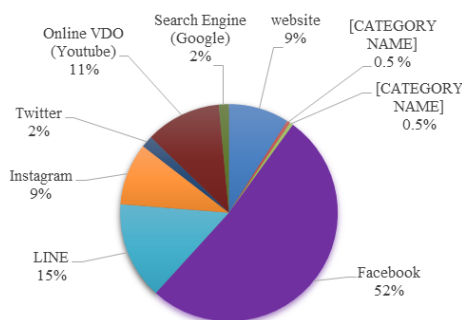


Figure 2. Digital channels that travelers use topurchase products or services

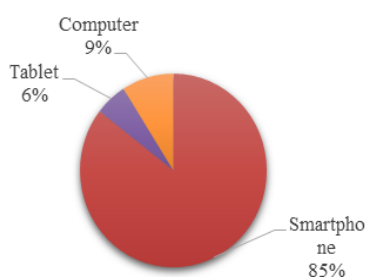


Figure 3. Devices used by tourists for internet use

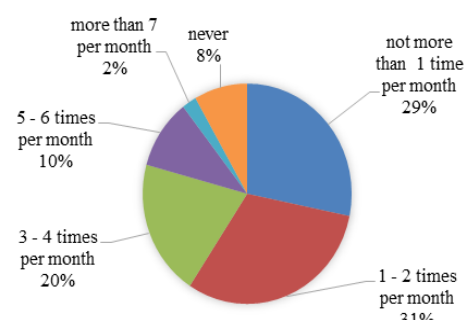


Figure 4. Frequency of purchasing yoga courses via digital channels per month

2) The device used the most for surfing the internet is Smartphone (85%), followed by Computer (9%) and Tablet (6%) as can be seen in Figure 3. 3) 31% purchase a yoga course through digital channels 1-2 times a month, 29% make purchases no more than once per month, and 20% make purchases 3-4 times per month as can be seen in Figure 4. 4) 30% purchase yoga courses under 500 baht, followed by 1,001-1,500 baht (29%), 501-1,000 baht (24%), and more than 1,501 baht (17%) as can be seen in Figure 5. 5). 45% buy yoga courses through digital channels because the courses are cheaper than traditional marketing channels, followed by being able to buy the course 24 hours a day (23%), being able to see reviews and reviews from buyers (17%), and have a variety of products and services (15%)

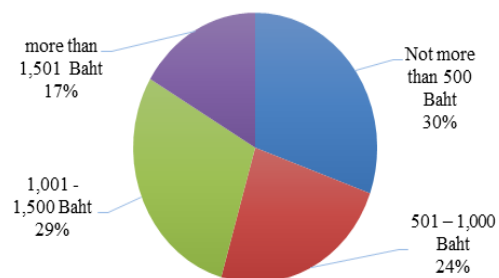


Figure 5. Price of yoga courses that tourists purchase per session

as can be seen in Figure 6. A relationship between behaviors and personal factors is shown in Table 1. The results of the analysis of the relationship between personal factors and consumer behavior in using yoga health tourism services by using the chi-square statistic with Crosstab at the statistical significance level of .05. From Table 1, it was found that tourists' behaviors in using digital channels to purchase products or services have a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level with gender, age, and education level, and careers of tourists. The most used digital channel is Facebook.

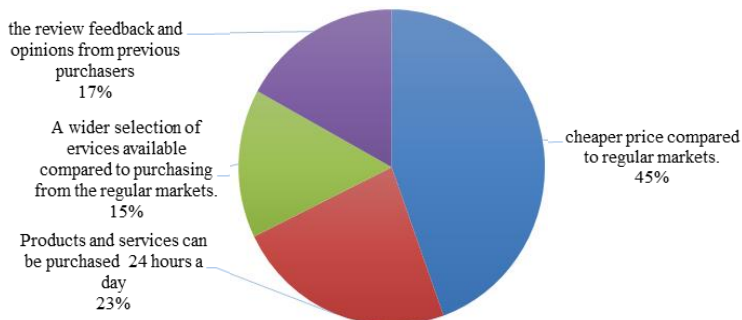


Figure 6. Reasons for purchasing yoga courses through digital marketing channels

Table 1. A relationship between behaviors of Thai tourists in using yoga tourism services and personal factors

Behavior	Gender		Age		Education Level		Income		Career	
	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P
1. Use of digital channels for tourists	38.498	.000*	48.599	.002*	55.119	.000*	30.266	.176	154.425	.000*
2. Using the device to surf the Internet	35.487	.000*	17.066	.009*	9.100	.168	84.286	.000*	6.482	.371
3. Frequency of buying yoga courses	2.681	.749	30.906	.009*	32.102	.006*	30.744	.059	104.917	.000*
4. Price of yoga courses that tourists purchase per time	0.636	.888	30.113	.000*	25.600	.002*	11.507	.243	51.834	.000*
5. Reasons for choosing a yoga course through digital media	7.765	.051	13.613	.137	12.857	.169	14.038	.126	29.777	.040*

Table 2. Thai Tourists' opinion on Yoga Marketing Strategies

No	Marketing Strategies	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Opinion Levels
<b>Product and Service</b>				
1	The reputation of a yoga institute is important in practicing yoga.	3.96	0.85	High
2	The variety of courses and equipment are important when deciding to purchase courses.	4.00	0.76	High
3	The reputation of the instructor influences the decision to purchase a yoga course.	3.92	0.81	High
4	Yoga courses offered need to be accredited by a reputable institution.	3.92	0.83	High
<b>Price</b>				
1	The service price is worth the money spent.	3.95	0.85	High
2	The price is reasonable compared to competitors.	3.88	0.80	High
3	There is clarity in displaying service prices.	3.96	0.79	High
4	There are several levels of service prices to choose.	4.02	0.78	High
<b>Place</b>				
1	A yoga studio is in an appropriate location and is easily accessible.	3.98	0.79	High
2	There are various channels for distribution.	3.99	0.79	High
<b>Promotion</b>				
1	There is continuous promotion such as giving discounts and giving away free gifts.	4.06	0.73	High
2	Publicizing the course through various digital media	4.06	0.71	High
3	Advertising through various media and reaching customers	4.09	0.72	High
4	Digital media is easy to use. It is convenient and quick to search.	4.07	0.73	High
5	Digital media is constantly updating information.	4.03	0.76	High
6	Digital medias attract customers and modern.	4.04	0.73	High
7	Salespeople are good at giving information and advice.	4.06	0.73	High
<b>People</b>				
1	The yoga teacher is knowledgeable and be able to teach yoga very well.	4.05	0.81	High
2	Yoga teachers are attentive to their students.	4.08	0.80	High
3	Yoga teachers have good personalities that help attract people to choose yoga services.	4.10	0.78	High
<b>Physical Evidence</b>				
1	The yoga studio is clean, well ventilated, and attracts you to choose yoga services.	4.05	0.81	High
2	A yoga studio is beautifully designed and well decorate.	4.02	0.75	High
3	Equipment is cleaned regularly according to SHA standards.	4.06	0.81	High
4	Modern training equipment helps attract you in choosing yoga services.	4.02	0.80	High
<b>Process</b>				
1	Staff facilitate in ordering and payment.	3.96	0.82	High
2	Employees are notified of expiration and renewal dates.	4.04	0.79	High
3	You can contact the staff easily when every you have a problem.	4.01	0.82	High
<b>Productivity and Quality</b>				
1	The quality of the service is as expected.	4.00	0.80	High
2	There is differentiation from competitors.	3.98	0.77	High
3	Providing services in line with needs	4.01	0.79	High
4	Satisfied with the quality of service	4.04	0.80	High
<b>Health Concern</b>				
1	The SHA standard will attract your attention to the yoga studio.	4.03	0.78	High
2	Allowing tourists only for those who have received a COVID-19 vaccine to Come to Koh Phangan helps increase confidence in safety.	4.04	0.83	High
3	There should be continuous public health monitoring of the SHA standards of yoga studios.	4.09	0.81	High

Mostly females, ages between 41-50 years old, and have a bachelor's degree, which is a group of self-employed. Internet surfing device usage behavior was found to have a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level with gender, age, and income. Most tourists use smartphones the most. Most are female, aged 41-50 years, with income between 10,000 -30,000 baht. The frequency of purchasing yoga courses was found to have a statistically significant relationship with age, education level, and occupation. Most of them are ages between 30 and 40 years old and have a bachelor's degree and have a career as a self-employed. The highest frequency of purchasing yoga courses is no more than 2 times per month. The price of yoga courses that tourists bought per time had a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level with age and education level. Most tourists prefer to buy yoga courses priced no more than 500 baht. They are aged between 41 and 60 years old with a bachelor's degree and has a career in government service. The reasons for choosing to purchase a yoga course via digital media have a significant statistical relationship at the .05 level with occupational factors. Most of them are Business owners. They thought that buying a yoga course through digital media was cheaper than the walking in.

**2. Marketing Strategies Affecting Decisions for Choosing Yoga Services in the New Normal Era**

Yoga tourism marketing strategies in the new normal era in 9 aspects, including 1) Product and Service; 2) Price; 3) Place; 4) Promotion; 5) People; 6) Physical Evidence; 7 ) Process; 8) Productivity and Quality; and 9) Health. An overall opinion of tourists towards marketing strategies in deciding to use yoga tourism services in the new normal era found average scores at a high level of opinions ( $\bar{x} = 4.01$ ) on all 9 aspects. The three most important aspects of marketing strategies are People at a high level ( $\bar{x} = 4.08$ ), followed by Promotion ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ ) and Health in the new normal era ( $\bar{x} = 4.05$ ), respectively. The results of each aspect were shown in Table 2. Table 2 shows that when considering Yoga Marketing Strategies in each aspect, it was found that all scores was at a high level. 1) Product and Service strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 1 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.00$ ), followed by questions 3 and 4 ( $\bar{x} = 3.96$ ), and the least was question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 3.92$ ). 2) Price strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 4 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.02$ ), followed by question 3 ( $\bar{x} = 3.96$ ), and the least was question 2 ( $\bar{x} = 3.88$ ). 3) Place strategy found that most respondents agreed that questions 1 ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ) and 2 ( $\bar{x} = 3.99$ ) was similar score at a high level. 4) Promotion strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 3 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.09$ ), followed by question 4 ( $\bar{x} = 4.07$ ), and the least was question 5 ( $\bar{x} = 4.03$ ). 5) People strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 3 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ), followed by question 2 ( $\bar{x} = 4.08$ ), and the least was question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 4.05$ ). 6) Physical Evidence strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 3 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ ), followed by question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 4.05$ ), and the least were questions 2 and 4 ( $\bar{x} = 4.02$ ). 7) Process strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 2 had the highest scores ( $\bar{x} = 4.04$ ), followed by question 3 ( $\bar{x} = 4.01$ ), and the least was question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 3.96$ ). 8) Productivity and Quality strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 4 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.04$ ), followed by question 3 ( $\bar{x} = 4.01$ ), and the least was question 2 ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ). Finally, 9) Health strategy found that most respondents agreed that question 3 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.09$ ), followed by question 2 ( $\bar{x} = 4.04$ ), and the least was question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 4.03$ ).

Table 3. Marketing strategies that are related to the behavior of purchasing products and services through digital media

Marketing strategy	Purchase behaviors of goods and services via digital media									
	Frequency of purchases		Devices		Digital Channels		Prices		Reasons	
	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P	X <sup>2</sup>	P
Product & Service	64.514	.322	34.813	.071	94.007	.538	37.936	.381	25.103	.913
Price	51.664	.770	29.835	.190	59.373	.999	30.782	.715	29.211	.781
Service Distribution	33.875	.522	22.817	.063	31.753	.996	19.659	.543	19.941	.525
Promotion	93.352	.251	37.204	.324	121.721	.804	49.853	.519	64.106	.103
People	70.070	.083	35.776	.032*	44.030	.999	43.250	.109	33.037	.465
Physical Evidence	97.461	.006*	25.204	.507	161.928	.000*	36.820	.570	42.671	.316
Process	53.111	.355	43.966	.002*	106.109	.027*	35.374	.229	32.674	.337
Productivity & Quality	81.530	.034*	20.787	.651	146.737	.001*	37.060	.420	22.897	.956
Health	63.924	.089	14.202	.820	149.786	.000*	26.358	.657	35.255	.233

\* There is a significant relationship at the 0.05 level (P<0.05)

Table 3 shows results of the Chi-Square statistical test using the Crosstab method in the SPSS program at the statistical significance level .05. It found that People strategies had a statistically significant correlation at the .05 level with tourists' behavior in purchasing products and services through digital media in terms of devices used to surf the internet. Physical Evidence strategy had a statistically significant correlation at the .05 level with the purchase behavior of tourists via digital media in terms of frequency of purchase of yoga courses per month and digital channel usage behavior. The process strategy had a statistically significant correlation with the device behavior used in internet usage and behavior in using digital channels. Productivity and efficiency strategies had a statistically significant correlation at the .05 level with tourists' behavior in purchasing products and services via digital media in terms of frequency of purchasing yoga courses per month and the behavior of using digital channels. In addition, it was found that Health strategies in the New Normal era and behavior in using digital channels had a statistically significant correlation at the .05 level. Results of analysis of differences between personal factors on the level of opinions regarding marketing strategies. Table 4 shows results of the analysis of differences between personal factors on the level of opinions regarding marketing strategies found that different genders have different effects on the level of opinions regarding price that are significantly different at the .05 level. Females consider pricing strategies more than males.

**3. Tourists' perspectives on digital marketing in deciding to choose yoga tourism services in the new normal era**

An overall score of tourists' perspectives on digital marketing for yoga tourism in the new normal era was at a high



level ( $\bar{x} = 3.96$ ). When considering the results of each aspect, it was found that tourists had the highest decision-making perspective on purchasing online yoga courses ( $\bar{x} = 4.02$ ). This is followed by customer relations ( $\bar{x} = 3.99$ ), content marketing ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ), social media marketing ( $\bar{x} = 3.93$ ), and store information search ( $\bar{x} = 3.91$ ), respectively.

Table 4. An analysis of differences between personal factors on the level of opinions regarding marketing strategies

Marketing strategies	Genders		Ages		Education Levels		Incomes		Careers	
	t	sig	F	sig	F	sig	F	sig	F	sig
Product & Service	-1.092	.276	1.406	.240	0.896	.443	1.375	.250	1.762	.106
Price	-2.232	.026*	1.006	.390	0.218	.884	0.498	.684	1.277	.267
Service Distribution	-1.724	.086	1.017	.385	0.233	.873	0.351	.789	1.913	.077
Promotion	-1.869	.062	1.388	.246	0.082	.970	0.46	.711	2.396	.028
People	-1.644	.101	1.091	.353	0.144	.934	1.063	.365	1.475	.185
Physical Evidence	-1.353	.177	0.644	.587	0.485	.693	0.604	.613	1.447	.195
Process	-1.336	.182	0.576	.631	0.089	.966	0.906	.438	1.012	.417
Productivity & Quality	-0.727	.468	0.421	.738	0.118	.950	1.728	.161	1.808	.096
Health	-0.833	.405	0.721	.540	0.291	.832	1.656	.176	1.637	.136

\* There is a significant relationship at the 0.05 level ( $P < 0.05$ )

Table 5. Tourists' perspectives on digital marketing in deciding to choose yoga tourism services

No	Marketing Strategies	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Opinion Levels
<b>Content Marketing</b>				
1	Presenting useful content about products and services	3.98	0.81	High
2	Visual communication or visual storytelling	3.98	0.79	High
3	Short graphic presentation, concise and easy to understand	3.99	0.81	High
4	Presenting content that is both informative and entertaining at the same time.	3.97	0.79	High
<b>Customer Relationship</b>				
1	Received news or promotions through digital media and was interested.	3.96	0.77	High
2	Received benefits through digital media and was impressed.	4.03	0.79	High
3	Receive information about products and services and purchase products and services through digital media.	3.98	0.76	High
4	Able to communicate with a yoga staff quickly and easily	4.00	0.80	High
<b>Search Engine Optimization</b>				
1	You often click on yoga name lists that are at the top of the list.	3.90	0.78	High
2	You feel that the yoga names' lists on the front page is trustworthy.	3.97	0.82	High
3	You tend to click on websites with short and descriptive names.	3.89	0.81	High
4	You often click on websites that have ads on Google.	3.88	0.84	High
<b>Social Media Marketing</b>				
1	You often follow various social media fan pages to receive yoga information.	3.88	0.81	High
2	You feel that social media is a convenient, fast way to update information.	3.98	0.75	High
3	You are interested in advertisements or product promotions on social media.	3.94	0.79	High
4	You often use various social media to find information about a yoga course.	3.93	0.81	High
<b>Online Purchase</b>				
1	You often use various social media to find information and buy a yoga course.	4.00	0.75	High
2	You compare information about yoga products and services, reliability, price, and promotions to choose the best option.	4.05	0.74	High
3	You choose online channels to purchase products and services because they meet your needs and are convenient.	4.06	0.75	High
4	You often criticize the experiences you receive after purchasing products and services.	3.96	0.75	High

Table 5 shows that when considering tourists' perspectives on digital marketing in each aspect, it was found that all scores was at a high level. 1) Content Marketing found that most respondents agreed that question 3 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 3.99$ ), followed by questions 1 and 2 ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ), and the least was question 4 ( $\bar{x} = 3.97$ ). 2) Customer Relationship found that most respondents agreed that question 3 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.03$ ), followed by question 4 ( $\bar{x} = 4.00$ ), and the least was question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 4.96$ ). 3) Search Engine Optimization found that most respondents agreed that question 2 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 3.97$ ), followed by question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 3.90$ ), and the least was question 4 ( $\bar{x} = 3.88$ ). 4) Social Media Marketing found that most respondents agreed that question 2 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ), followed by question 3 ( $\bar{x} = 3.94$ ), and the least was question 1 ( $\bar{x} = 3.88$ ). Finally, 5) Online Purchase found that most respondents agreed that question 3 had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ ), followed by question 2 ( $\bar{x} = 4.05$ ), and the least was question 4 ( $\bar{x} = 3.96$ ).

Table 6. Chi-Square test of Tourists' perspectives on digital marketing in deciding to choose yoga tourism services

Marketing strategy	Purchase behaviors of goods and services via digital media									
	Frequency of purchases		Devices		Digital Channels		Prices		Reasons	
	$\chi^2$	P	$\chi^2$	P	$\chi^2$	P	$\chi^2$	P	$\chi^2$	P
Content Marketing	90.014	.054	29.938	.366	172.441	.000*	49.529	.198	37.155	.683
Customer relations	69.161	.339	28.597	.330	135.239	.021*	39.496	.448	36.941	.564
Searching for store info	74.535	.493	43.191	.056	199.803	.000*	43.959	.516	39.073	.720
Social media marketing	55.106	.804	20.486	.767	86.098	.899	36.814	.570	37.395	.543
Buying an online yoga course	53.933	.696	31.689	.135	54.508	.999	34.687	.531	32.660	.628

\* There is a significant relationship at the 0.05 level ( $P < 0.05$ ).

Table 6 shows results of the analysis using the Chi-Square test using the Crosstab method in the SPSS program at the statistical significance level of .05. The results found that the behavior of purchasing products and services through digital media in terms of using digital channels has a significant statistical relationship at the .05 level with the content marketing, customer relations, and searching for store information.

#### 4. Digital Marketing Medias Development

The interviews with 20 yoga entrepreneurs found that 80% of content on the yoga websites is in English only, 15 % of the websites use English and Thai which are Ananda Yoga and Detox Center, AUM Sound Healing Center and Orion Healing Center. There is only one website which is Hatha Yoga Academy (5%) where English is used along with Russian. A researcher team had developed a yoga website of Koh Phangan District using WordPress software packages. The website helps promote yoga in Koh Phangan District and attracting more Thai tourists to visit yoga health tourism. The research team used English content information available on the digital media of each entrepreneur to analyze, synthesize and write content in Thai to communicate with Thai tourists. The website “https://yogakohphangan.com” consists of 3 main parts: 1) The homepage consists of a slideshow of 20 yoga establishments (Figure 7). 2) The yoga page (Figure 8) consists of an introduction to 20 yoga establishments by readers interested in the details of each establishment can press a “Read more” button. 3) The tourism page consists of introducing interesting tourist attractions and various activities that they could visit while traveling to Koh Phangan Surat Thani Province. Readers who are interested in the details of each establishment can press the “Read more” button.

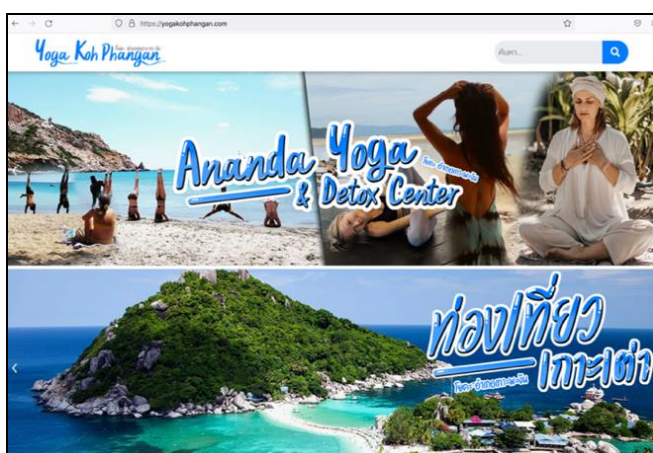


Figure 7. Image slideshow of the yoga establishment (Kho Phangan, 20 November 2021)

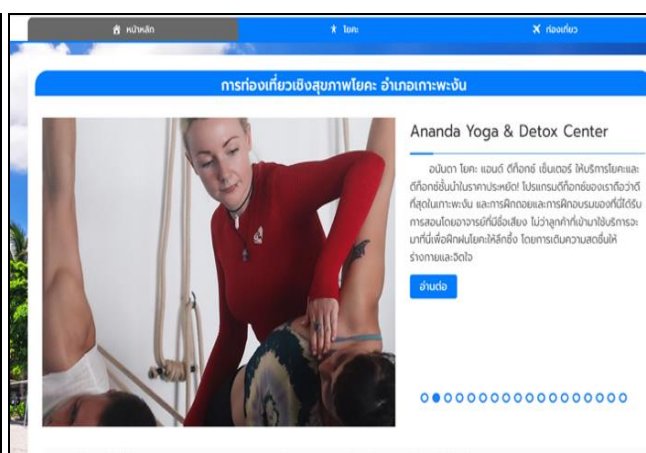


Figure 8. Introduces each yoga establishment (Kho Phangan, 20 November 2021)

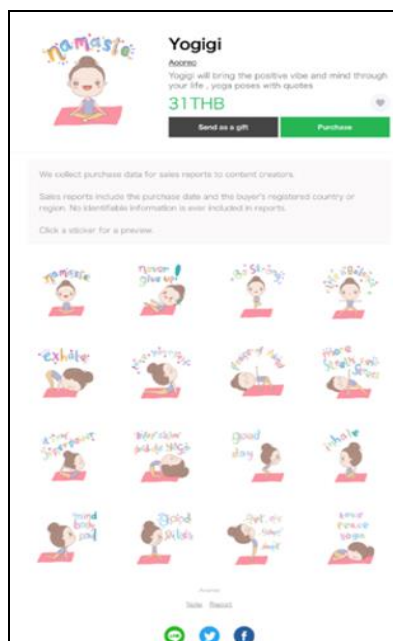


Figure 9. LINE Sticker  
Source: authors2023

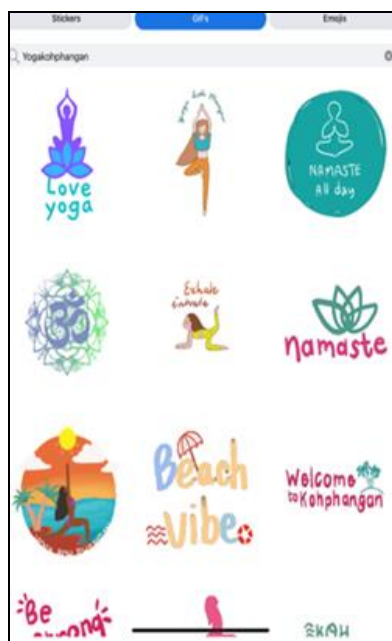


Figure 10. Animated GIF images  
Source: authors 2023



Figure 11. A sample of using GIF image  
(Kho Phangan, 20 November 2021)

As the results LINE application was the one that Thai tourists use in daily life. Therefore, the research team decided to development a sticker set on the LINE Yoga apparel application, is named "Yogigi", totaling 16 images that have been considered for distribution in the LINE Store (Figure 9). This sticker set uses yoga poses as the highlight of female cartoon



characters and use positive verbal messages. To help promote positive energy and a calm mind according to yoga science. Users can download LINE stickers images by searching for the name of the “Yogigi” sticker in the LINE Sticker Shop system or via the link that has provided: <https://store.line.me/stickershop/product/19666512/th>. Animated .gif images were developed by researchers for use in Stories in Facebook and Instagram applications under a set of images called “Yogakogphangan” where users can call up this set of GIF animations (Figure 10) and apply them to use onto the photo (Figure 11).

## DISCUSSION

The behavior of purchasing yoga health products and services through digital marketing channels of Thai yoga health tourists found that most tourists (52%) use Facebook to purchase goods and services, which corresponds to a report on the behavior of internet users in Thailand in 2022 (Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, 2022). It was reported that Facebook is the social media that Thais use the most (95%), followed by LINE (92.8 %) and the device Thais use most to access the internet is a mobile phone. Tourists' behavior in purchasing yoga courses in terms of frequency of purchasing yoga courses found that most purchase yoga courses 1-2 times per month (31%) and purchase yoga courses at a price not exceeding 500 baht per time. This is different from the 1,001 - 3,000 baht found by the research of Changsarn and Kaewprommal (2020) at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. The current study was during the later stages of the COVID-19 outbreak when the economic impact is more pronounced and may result in lower incomes. Most tourists (45%) are of the opinion that buying a yoga course through digital media is cheaper than buying a course in the market. This point can be used to help determine and plan pricing strategies for marketing through digital media in digital channels e.g., Flash Sale, give discount coupons or gift vouchers, etc. The top three important marketing strategies are 1) personnel strategy, 2) marketing promotion strategy, and 3) Health strategy in the new normal era. This may be because important personnel in yoga training centers include yoga teachers who oversee the training and must be reliable, professionalism, have experiences and must have a teaching certificate. This is consistent with Laptawee and Kongsawatkiat (2016) and Tanchote (2020) showed that the important characteristics of a yoga teacher are knowledge and ability to teach yoga well, pay attention to students and have a good personality. In addition, publicizing information and organizing marketing promotional activities to adequately reach Thai tourists will influence tourists' decision to choose services. Moreover, health strategies in the new normal era affect the decision to choose yoga tourism services. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, tourists must be more mindful of standards for protection and health. Therefore, Health strategy factors in the new normal era are important issues affecting tourists' decision to choose services in the new normal era. In this respect, it differs from existing research. Most research studies yoga marketing strategies during normal situations (Tanchote, 2020; Telej and Gamble, 2019; Sharma and Nayak, 2019; Laptawee and Kongsawatkiat, 2016) that are not during the COVID-19 epidemic.

When planning marketing strategies for yoga tourism marketing, marketers should consider planning and adjusting strategies to suit the situation and period. Tourists have the top three opinions on deciding to use yoga tourism services:

- 1) deciding to purchase an online yoga course, 2) customer relations, and 3) content marketing.

In digital marketing, it is important to make the decision to purchase a yoga course through online channels because the online channels meet the needs and convenience of consumers. Buyers can compare product and service information, reliability, prices, and promotions to get the best choice. This is consistent with Wahyuningsih et al. (2022) stated that from a traveler's perspective, digital marketing should focus on building relationships with customers. This is because contacting customers and creating good relationships with customers will result in increased sales. Proving easy to understand graphical content and present useful content for products or services, etc. (Tesaniratsai, 2020).

Most of yoga businesses in Koh Phangan have very little publicity in Thai. As a result, yoga information may not be accessible to Thai tourists thoroughly. Therefore, the researchers developed the website in Thai to help promote yoga health tourism in Koh Phangan District, Surat Thani Province. The development of stickers on the LINE application of yoga series is called "Yogigi". In addition, LINE stickers help to promote the corporate communication image. It also saves on advertising costs compared to other forms of media. It is consistent with Liao and Hsu (2020) and Liu et al. (2019) who pointed out the interaction behavior of LINE stickers in creating links between sticker behavior and business activities. LINE stickers play a role as social media in bridging the gap between organizations and potential customers and enabling them to retain loyal customers. LINE stickers with product images have an impact on brand image and a longer period of use can attract consumers better. The brand image affects the attitude towards the brand, brand engagement, and product purchase intention. In addition, animated .gif images were developed for use in Stories in Facebook and Instagram applications under a set of images called “Yogakogphangan”. Users can call up the set of GIF animations and apply them to post on Facebook and Instagram stories. It is in line with Teague, 2023 and Storrito.com , 2023) who revealed that GIFs are great for marketing because they enable natural, real-time responses and can add personality to create a brand identity. The yoga businesses can use GIFs as part of their marketing strategy to make stories posted on Stories more engaging.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, yoga entrepreneurs at Koh Phangan District, Surat Thani have no problem marketing online to foreign tourists. However, the yoga entrepreneurs are not focusing on marketing to Thai tourists as they should during COVID-19 situation. Therefore, this research will be extremely beneficial to entrepreneurs helping in planning marketing to meet the needs of Thai tourists. Yoga entrepreneurs could use the results of this study as a guideline to develop marketing strategies and digital marketing that are appropriate and meet the needs of Thai tourists. Thai tourists' overall perspectives on yoga digital marketing had the highest score on purchasing online yoga courses, customer relations, and store information search, respectively. Digital marketing strategies to promote yoga tourism were Product and Service, Price, Place, Promotion, People,

Physical Evidence, Process, Productivity and Quality, and Health concern. A development of “<https://yogakohphangan.com>” helps promote Thai tourism instead of just waiting for foreign markets. The development of stickers on the LINE application called “Yogigi” was developed by the research team to help promote marketing and reach consumers directly. A development of animated .gif images called “Yogakogphangan” was developed by the research team to help promote marketing on Facebook and Instagram stories. The animated .gif images can add personality to create a brand identity.

## IMPLIMENTATION

The yoga entrepreneurs in Kho Phangan could apply the results of behavior of Thai tourists for choosing yoga services to their own yoga activities to meet the exact needs of Thai tourists. The research results help guide the development digital marketing medias to promote yoga tourism for more Thai tourists to practice yoga in Koh Phangan, Surat Thani Province, instead of targeting only foreign tourists. When more tourists come to practice yoga in Koh Phangan, entrepreneurs will have more income, also to distribute income to other businesses on Koh Phangan, such as accommodations, restaurants, etc. Confidence in SHA safety standards result in more tourists who want to come and practice yoga on Koh Phangan.

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