

Development of Creative Tourism based on Woven Textile Local Wisdoms

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the general context of Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Cluster Provinces, evaluate readiness and potential leading to a tourism management plan, and propose recommendations on how to promote and manage creative tourism focusing on local textiles developed with folk wisdom within the Group Provinces. The findings show that local people still produce local textiles without promoting it to attract more tourists. There is usually a question asking why local textiles and tourism can be integrated. Local people think tourists will come for sight-seeing only and they will not help contributing to the local community. To solve this, children in the area should be encouraged to take part in tourism management, so it will not negatively affect local textile weaving. With this solution, local people will acknowledge and accept more tourists. The leaders in this tourism management plan have to be those who are trusted by people in the same community, have participated and managed many local festivals, and best were not people who are elected to be in charge of the plan. The quantitative interview with local textile manufacturers about the community's readiness and potential reveals that the most agreed factor is members' participation $\bar{X} = 3.83$, high(. The second most agreed factor is readiness of communities $\bar{X} = 3.57$, high(while the least agreed factor is facilities $\bar{X} = 2.54$, medium(.

Keywords: Tourism Management, Local Wisdom Based, Creative Tourism Attraction

1. Introduction

Tourism industry is world-widely acknowledged as an industry that greatly contributes to country revenue. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the number of tourists has been increasing since 1960, and it is expected that the figure will rise to 1,800 million in 2030. The tendency of the increasing tourists each year indicates that tourism industry can continue growing, even though world economy has recently been suffering in many aspects. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) expects international tourism to rise by approximately 4% per year. The popular tourist destinations where numbers of tourists keep increasing include East Asia, Pacific Area and countries in South East Asia (UNWTO, 2014)

Many countries see advantages in tourism industry as it requires low investment but gives high profits. In Thailand, tourism industry is also expanding and plays an important role in Thailand's economy and communities. It brings great income, flowing in of foreign currency and distribution of profits to other parts of the country. To support Thailand tourism's adaptation to every circumstance, growing in quality and ability to compete in the world market level, the government has decided to make tourism as the National Agenda and assigned Ministry of Tourism and Sports to develop

short-term and long-term strategies to recover tourism from crisis. This also corresponds to the National Tourism Policy committee's responsibility to develop a tourism development plan and submit it to the government to for consideration. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports as the secretary of the National Tourism Policy committee has proposed a draft of the development plan for 2012-2016. The draft aims to recover and support the tourism sectors to be sustainable, accelerate and increase potential in gaining profits in tourism, and improve Thailand's tourism so that it is competitive leading to gaining and distributing profits as well as sustaining development in every sector. Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Group Provinces or the Middle Northeast Region includes Roi Et, Khon Kaen, Maha Sarakham and Kalasin. The objective is to create the center of trading, service, agriculture and pleasant community to live in. This Cradle of Learning and Civilization is situated on Chi River's low plain with many archeological sites telling long history, different cultures and beautiful natural attractions. Although many things have changed because of globalization, this land still reserves its pride under the economic crisis and global warming. There are many projects including a policy to develop the center of transportation, economy, medication, education and tourism focusing on Creative Economy (The Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014). Apart from economy, cultures and ways of life are also important. All of the provinces in Roi Kaen Sarn Sin's slogans include silk, so it is plausible to emphasize the importance of these local textiles which are still developed with folk wisdom. The production sites can be integrated in promoting Creative Tourism which is now the popular type of tourism in Thailand. More tourists tend to be interested in experiencing the cultures directly by learning cultures, traditions and ways of life in the real sites. This kind of tourism needs knowledge on both cultures and technologies. Creative Tourism is a kind of development in tourism (Wisutthilak et al, 2013).

The main points for this part can be listed as: there will be higher number of tourists expected by UNWTO, Creative Tourism is a new trend where tourists are exposed to cultures and local traditions in the real sites, and Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Group Provinces have the potential to promote Creative Tourism. The writer has strongly acknowledged the importance of the folk wisdom, so the study on local textiles in Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Group Provinces is conducted to promote the Group Provinces to be creative tourist attractions. Apart from examining the tourism management of the local textiles in Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Group Provinces to promote Creative Tourism, the study also aims to help increase the textiles' value and create new tourist attractions and activities by using resources available in the production sites and developing a concrete tourism development plan.

2. Purposes of the Study

2.1 To explore general context of Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Group Provinces, evaluate readiness and potential of local textile producing communities

2.2 To develop a tourism management plan for local textile producing communities

2.3 To propose a tourism management plan for local textile producing communities in Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Group Provinces so that the Group Provinces are promoted for Creative Tourism

3. Research Methodology

The scope of this study is determined by information on local textile producing communities in four Middle Northeastern provinces or Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Cluster Provinces which still rely on folk wisdoms in the producing process. The information was obtained from the Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture and other documents. The study was launched in October, 2015 and ended in September, 2016. The process included 400 samplings using Stratified Random Sampling. Proportional Stratified Random Sampling was used for each stratum (Vanichbuncha, 1999). The target areas are as the following:

Table 1
Information on local textile producing communities

Local textile producing community	Population	Sampling
Ban Wai Luem, Thawat Buri, Roi Et	69	27
Ban Hua Fai, Chonnabot, Khon Kaen	85	34
Ban Nong Bua, Kud Rang, Maha Sarakham	32	12
Ban Phon, Kammuang, Kalasin	840	327
Total	1,027	400

Source:)The Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture, 2015(

Moreover, the documentary research involved compiling related literatures from both inside and outside of the country, including books, textbooks, academic articles, magazines, e-books and statistics from government and private sectors. To gain more in-depth information on Cultural Tourism, Creative Tourism, tourism management and communities' participation, survey research was used to collect information on site, explore general information and ask the opinions from citizens and related sectors on the development of creative tourist attractions. A qualitative research method which is an in-depth interview was used on key informants with Snowball Sampling Technique. The statistics used in this study included frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation (S.D.). The information received from in-depth interview was analyzed with the content analysis.

4. Results

Silk is cultural heritage inherited from ancestors which is produced mainly in the Upper North and the Northeastern of Thailand. The first production of silk dates back to King Rama V's reign. In 1961, a research center and mulberry farm was built at Saladaeng district. The center was under Ministry of Kasettrathikarn (nowadays known as Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives), Chang Sau Mai Department (Sericulture) with help from a Japanese researcher, and later more silkworm centers were built in the Northeastern region. At present, after Queen Sirikit's project to promote silk, this type of textile has become very popular in Thailand. The silk in each area also has distinctive and unique patterns depending on the cultures and arts in that area or province. The main focuses in this study include the followings:

4.1 Present Situation of Local Textile Producing Communities in Roi Kaen Sarn Sin Group Provinces

It was found that there are many communities that produce local textiles with folk wisdoms and modern technology including:

Ban Wai Luem, Thawat Buri district, Roi Et province: There are 360 local textile manufacturers, with 69 members founding a community in order to gain more income apart from what they gain from rice planting. The first objective was to create more jobs, but it led to support and unity within the community. The village is famous for its silk and it is in One Tambon One Product (OTOP) program and also the center of handicrafts, such as bags, cotton, and ready-made dresses. Ban Wai Luem is renowned in Roi Et and in the national level. Its unique pattern is called Saket which is the pattern that complies five Mudmee silk patterns best referring to Roi Et's uniqueness in one piece of silk. The five patterns are Komjed, Naknoi, Kong-ia, Makchub, and Kampao. Each pattern is divided by Inthanin Bok's color (a kind of flower which is purple-pink or magenta). The pattern also represents the unity of the community as well as Roi Et itself.

Moreover, a credit union was founded in Ban Wai Luem to be the center of product distribution. It is now situated at Mrs. Ampaun Tongthisarn's house. There are also home stays in Ban Wai Luem, a kind of accommodations that tourists can come to stay at and experience local lifestyles and cultures. By this way, the village can make profits from both cultures and handicrafts. The popular products are wickerwork, organic vegetables and souvenirs.

Villagers at Ban Hua Fai, Chonnabot district, Khon Kaen province earn a living from farming. Every family has a land for farming and raising cattle. In addition, they also plant mulberry bushes and cotton trees and grow silkworms so that they can produce textiles. There is a saying, "when free from farming, women weave, men intertwine." This refers to the past when Northeastern women had to weave so that people could make cloths. The women had to learn how to weave since they were young, and that became their lifestyle. There is also a Paya, a Northeastern philosopher, saying "if you cannot use a loom, weave a pattern, grow silkworms, do not wish to get married." Weaving skills in the household, therefore, are very important for Northeastern women. Mothers will teach their children to weave. Silk cloths will be worn when they go to the temple, rituals or wedding ceremonies. Then, the cloths will be given to their descendants.

It is unknown when people in Chonnabot district started to weave. However, there is a piece of Mudmee silk called Na Nang or Pha Poom which is 220 years old. It is claimed that the silk is from King Rama I who gave it to Chonnabot's governor. The silk then was passed down to his ancestors. Chonnabot citizen used the unique Na Nang pattern in everyday weaving. From this information, it is estimated that the art of weaving appeared in the area at least 100 years ago, or at most 200 years, the same time when Chonnabot district was founded.

The local textile producing community in Hua Fai is the most well-known community in Chonnabot district. There are 85 members led by a group who specializes in weaving Mudmee silk with folk wisdoms. They want to pass on the knowledge as well as the love for the art. At present, the villagers built a center where they grow mulberries and silkworms. The center has also become a learning center that represents the community's unity to create more jobs and protect culture at the same time.

At Ban Nong Bua, Kud Rang district, Maha Sarakham province, there are 32 silk manufacturers who formed a community funded by Sarakijjayunuta, a respectful elder monk in the village, and government sectors. The community purchases raw materials from an enterprise at Non-gnam silk community, Huy Toey, Kud Rang district, Maha Sarakham and adjacent provinces. For color dyes, the group uses natural dyes found in the local area. The unique pattern here is called Soi Dok Mahk which almost disappeared is almost extinct. This pattern is so beautiful and delicate that it is considered the best pattern to represent Maha Sarakham province. Apart from weaving silk, the community also uses silk to produce cloths and many kinds of goods.

Soi Dok Mahk is the pattern named by ancient people, literally meaning a necklace made by betel palm's flowers. Nowadays, the name may vary depending on the areas, such as Kred Pla (fish scales) and Kohm Kao (nine lamps). The pattern was developed by using the pattern named Kohm Ha with Kohm Kao and adding a weaving technique called Oup Mee Lae Ngao to make the pattern on the fabric look more delicate. Then, the fabric will be dyed many times so that it looks shiny. In addition, all the silk threads must be in the same size. It can take four or five days to weave Soi Dok Mahk pattern if the weavers use 49 cords of silk threads. However, if they use 73 cords or more it will take more time to finish weaving.

There are 840 members of Phuthai Cultural and Praewa Silk Center at Ban Phon, Kammuang district, Kalasin province. The center preserves Phuthai people's ways of life and their housing style including four Phuthai houses and a museum. Praewa silk is the uniqueness of Phuthai people, a tribe coming from Sipsong Chu Thai—a region located in the north of Laos and Vietnam. They immigrated to Phu Phan Mountains which cover Kalasin, Sakon Nakorn, Nakorn Panom, and Mukdahan. Phuthai people still wear traditional cloths and conserve old customs. Their weaving techniques are called Kebkhid and Jok which were passed on generations to generations. The pattern and style is considered representative of Phuthai.

Praewa means to weave two Wa long silk cloth (a Wa equals two meters) which is usually used as a shawl or Pha Biang (shawl used by a woman to wrap over one shoulder around her chest and back). Women will wear Pha Biang when they go to festivals or religious rituals. Mainly, they have to weave three pieces of cloths: black blouse, Tam Prae (Praewa silk), and silk sarong. The uniqueness of this style is various colors and patterns which made Praewa very popular to both Thai and foreign silk lovers. The most famous place for Praewa silk is definitely Ban Phon Kammuang district, Kalasin province.

4.2 Readiness and Potential of the Communities

This study evaluated the readiness and potential of the communities. This is the second stage of the study before moving to an analysis to develop a management plan. There are five aspects needed to be focused on as follows:

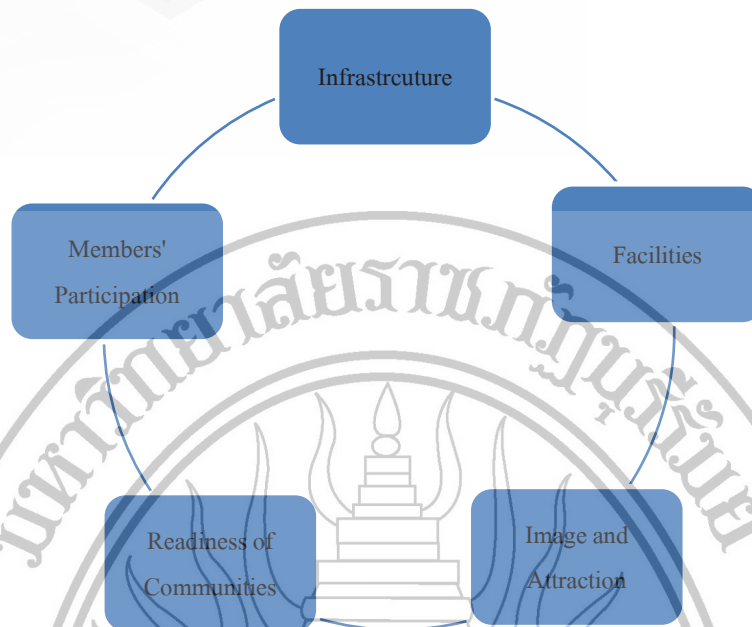


Figure 1. Readiness and Potential of the Communities Model

The five aspects can be summarized as follows:

1. Infrastructure: From the samplings, the result is high ($\bar{X} = 3.55$) and when considering sub-points, the highest factor is water ($\bar{X} = 3.65$), followed by communication ($\bar{X} = 3.44$). The lowest is public transportation ($\bar{X} = 3.15$).

2. Facilities: The result of this aspect is medium ($\bar{X} = 2.54$). The highest sub-point is tour guide ($\bar{X} = 3.46$), followed by tourist information ($\bar{X} = 3.18$), and the lowest is accommodation ($\bar{X} = 2.99$).

3. Image and Attraction: The result from the samplings is medium ($\bar{X} = 2.94$). The highest sub-point is local wisdom—folk wisdom ($\bar{X} = 3.70$), followed by good human relations—friendliness ($\bar{X} = 3.18$). The lowest is the viciousness of activities ($\bar{X} = 2.13$).

4. Readiness of Communities: The finding shows the result as high ($\bar{X} = 3.57$). The highest sub-point is tourism management knowledge ($\bar{X} = 3.20$), followed by human resources ($\bar{X} = 3.13$), and the lowest is strong leader ($\bar{X} = 2.13$).

5. Members' Participation: The result is high ($\bar{X} = 3.83$). The highest sub-point that the samplings agreed with is cooperation ($\bar{X} = 3.33$), followed by making decisions together ($\bar{X} = 3.27$). The lowest is taking others' opinions ($\bar{X} = 2.28$).

5. Conclusion

According to all of the information presented above, including the general context as well as the readiness and potential, it can be summarized that most members in the local textile producing communities still use folk wisdoms in the producing process. However, there are only 13 members that are involved in all processes, starting from growing mulberries and silkworms to the process of weaving. According to the interview, the villagers claimed that it takes long time to finish weaving. Moreover, soil quality and quantity of water are affected by drought, so mulberries and silkworms do not give enough produces. Although the government had tried to promote silkworms that could endure different types of weather, the villagers were not much interested in them for some reasons. Mostly, the villagers will buy silkworm cocoons or silk threads and use them in weaving process. The different point is that the patterns, weaving techniques and dressing styles uniquely depend on the area.

Nevertheless, the communities still doubt if tourism and local textiles can be integrated. They believe that tourists will just come to see and disturb their concentration on weaving, which is the process requiring time and attention. Although they do not want to spend time welcoming tourists, the local people said that they allow tourists to visit their houses.

Therefore, the writer of this study cooperated with local textile producing community leaders, related sectors and experts to develop a management plan suited with the villagers' way of life. Firstly, teenagers who were not related to weaving are encouraged to take part in tourism management, such as being tour guides, cultural performers and coordinators for villagers and silk buyers. Next, the leader for each community should best be the person who is respected by everyone and usually takes part in important festivals rather than the person who is elected. By these suggestions the villagers will likely be more open to tourism.

Finally, according to the quantitative research using the interview about the attitude on the community's readiness and potential, it is found that the most agreed aspect is member's participation ($\bar{X} = 3.83$, high), followed by readiness of communities ($\bar{X} = 3.57$, high), and the lowest one is facilities ($\bar{X} = 3.54$, medium)

6. Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include:

- 6.1 Researchers should study communities which already succeeded in tourism management to use the model with other communities.
- 6.2 In-depth study on creative tourism activities should be arranged to suit with community's lifestyle.
- 6.3 Long-term effects from tourism should be analyzed.

7. Acknowledgement

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