

Factors affecting the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the level of community context, potential of the community members, community participation, potential of the tourist attractions, and sustainable development of cultural tourist sites; and 2) to study the factors affecting the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites using quantitative research. The sample group consisted of 400 people living in the tourist areas around the island of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya. The data was collected from the questionnaires and was analyzed with the structural equation model. The research results revealed that 1) community context, potential of the community members, community participation, potential of the tourist attractions, and sustainable development of cultural tourist sites were at the moderate level, and 2) the potential of the tourist sites had the most direct influence on the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites followed by the potential of the community members. Meanwhile, the community context and the community participation indirectly influenced the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites. The research results could be used by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and Ayutthaya Province as the guidelines for sustainably promoting cultural historical tourist sites causing important tourist attractions to be preserved, maintained and prevented from being deteriorated. Moreover, the local community has benefited from the economy and the quality of life. The tourists also gained valuable experiences from what they see.

Keywords

Cultural tourist sites, potential of the community members, potential of the tourist attractions

Introduction

Thailand will achieve success in income and competitiveness. However, there are still problems that need to be solved. According to the 2nd National Tourism Development Plan which mentions the sustainability of the tourist resources, there is a deterioration due to the arrival of many tourists who lack a good management system. In terms of safety, there are frequent accidents, deception, and crimes against tourists. The World Economic Council has ranked Thailand at number 116 in terms of environmental sustainability of tourist attractions from 141 countries around the world. Therefore, it is necessary to have solutions from the root cause emphasizing the building of quality tourist attractions, conservation of sensitive tourist sites, allowing people and communities to take part in taking care of tourists and safety. This is to strengthen the future growth of the tourism industry. The tourism industry is necessary to develop tourist attractions, public utilities, operators or responsible agencies to have a high quality standard to be impressive for the tourists. It will result in the employment and money turnover as a great source of foreign currency attraction. Thai entrepreneurs should accelerate to adapt by taking advantage of ASEAN countries to increase market share as well as being able to adjust business strategies (Saranya Saenglimsuwan, 2012).

The rapid growth of tourism is economically viable and therefore lacks control and direction in its development. It is something that causes direct and indirect impacts on the environment, the art, and culture of that tourist attraction. Thus, many tourist attractions in Thailand are found to have the deteriorated environment. The problem of deterioration and their effects are increasing. Culture, tradition, and the original way of life have changed until the environment, the art, and culture of the tourist attractions are inferior in value. If the problems arising from the tourism have not been solved, it will be impossible to attract tourists to return to

travel as previously (Ministry of Commerce, 2012). Especially the important historical attractions such as Ayutthaya Province which is an important cultural site, it has been recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as one of the five World Heritage sites in Thailand and has many important archaeological sites. The requirements and criteria to be considered as a World Heritage Site are proof of the cultural evidence present today. Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province is the capital of the Kingdom of Thailand during the 19th to 23rd Buddhist centuries for a period of more than 417 years. During this long period, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province has created architectural works, art, traditions and cultures that are unique to Thailand passed down through generations to the present. It is also a prototype of Bangkok and is one of the most prosperous city in Southeast Asia making the place interesting with the outstanding values in the global community (Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Provincial Administrative Organization, 2014).

Research objectives

1. To study the level of community context, potential of the community members, community participation, potential of the tourist attractions, and sustainable development of cultural tourist sites.
2. To study the factors affecting the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites.

Research methodology

This was the quantitative research. The population was the people living in the tourist sites around the island of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya aged between 20-60 years for totaling 80,389 persons (Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior, 2017). The sample size was determined

using 20 times the criteria of observable variables (Kline, 2011). There were 20 observable variables in this research for totaling 400 samples. The Stratified Random Sampling method was used.

The research instruments were questionnaires using a Likert scale which was validated by content with an IOC value between 0.80-1.00. For the reliability of the scale, it was found that the Cronbach's alpha) was between 0.700 and 0.909 and the whole issue was 0.920. The data was collected from the sample group answering the questionnaires.

Data Analysis: 1. Descriptive statistics were analyzed for mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (S.D.) to describe the level of community context, potential of the community members, community participation, and potential of the tourist attractions. 2. Inferential statistics were used with the Structural equation modeling (SEM) to determine the factors affecting the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites.

Research results

1. Level of community context, potential of the community members, community participation, potential of the tourist attractions, and sustainable development of cultural tourist sites

Table 1 Level of studied variables

Particulars	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Community context	3.40	0.43	Moderate
Potential of the community members	3.32	0.49	Moderate
Community participation	3.08	0.71	Moderate
Potential of the tourist attractions	3.46	0.45	Moderate
Sustainable development of cultural tourist sites	3.37	0.46	Moderate

According to Table 1, it was found that the community context, potential of the community members, community participation, potential of the tourist attractions, and sustainable development of cultural tourist sites were totally at the moderate level.

2. For the results of model analysis, when considering overall, it was found that all of the indicators were consistent (Supamas Angsuchot, Somthawin Wichitwanna, and Ratchanikul Pinyopanuwat, 2011) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Consistency indicators

Indicators	Data consistency criteria	Before the model improvement	After the model improvement
Chi-square / df	Less than 2.00	4.898	1.970
RMSEA	Less than 0.05	0.099	0.045
Standardized RMR	Less than 0.05	0.10	0.033
GFI	From 0.90 and over	0.84	0.96
AGFI	From 0.90 and over	0.78	0.92
CFI	From 0.90 and over	0.90	0.99
PGFI	From 0.50 and over	0.64	0.651
CN	Not less than 200	115.42	362.75

Results of hypotheses test

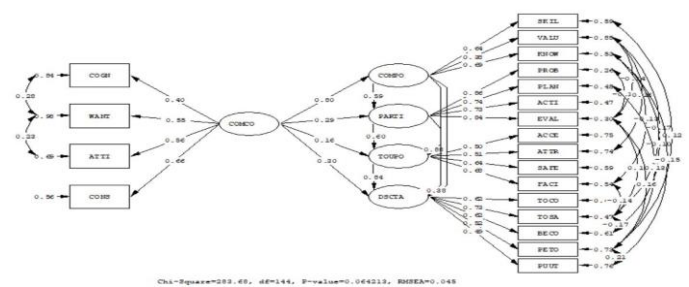


Figure 1 Structural equation mode after the model improvement

1) The sustainable development of cultural tourist sites (DSCTA) depended on the potential of the tourist attractions (COMPO), community participation (PARTI), potential of the community members (TOUPO), and community context (COMCO) could be written with the following structural equation.

$$DSCTA = 0.20 * COMPO + 0.38 * PARTI + 0.84 * TOUPO + 0.30 * COMCO,$$

(0.29) (0.13) (0.19) (0.27)
 1.96 1.91 5.79 1.68
 Errorvar. = 0.0076, R² = 0.95
 (0.013) 0.60

The analysis results revealed that the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites depended on the potential of the tourist attractions and the potential of the community members. The variation of the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites could be explained for 95%. The community participation and the community context had no direct effect on the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites.

2) The potential of the tourist attractions (TOUPO) depended on the potential of the community members (COMPO), community participation (PARTI), and community context (COMCO). The structural equation could be written as follows:

$$TOUPO = 0.88 * COMPO + 0.60 * PARTI + 0.16 * COMCO,$$

(0.22) (0.10) (0.24)
 2.82 2.82 0.76
 Errorvar. = 0.056, R² = 0.37
 (0.015) 3.82

The analysis results revealed that the potential of the tourist attractions depended on the potential of the community members and the community participation. The variation of the potential of the tourist attractions could be explained for 37%. Meanwhile, the community context had no direct effect on the potential of the tourist attractions.

3) The community participation (PARTI) depended on the potential of the community members (COMPO) and the community context (COMCO). The structural equation could be written as follows:

$$PARTI = 0.59*COMPO + 0.29*COMCO, Errorvar. = 0.11, R^2 = 0.71$$

(0.22) (0.33) (0.021)

3.99 1.96 5.37

The analysis results revealed that the community participation depended on the potential of the community members. The variation of the community participation could be explained for 71%.

4) The potential of the community members (COMPO) depended on the community context (COMCO) could be written with the following structural equation.

$$COMPO = 0.80*COMCO, Errorvar. = 0.064, R^2 = 0.65$$

(0.21) (0.019)

5.99 3.40

The analysis results revealed that the potential of the community members depended on the community context. The variation of the potential of the community members could be explained for 65%.

Direct and indirect influences of the variables on the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites

The results of the model analysis in the t-value model (Figure 4.10) showed the influence of the latent variables which directly and indirectly affected the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites. The researchers then used the results of the structural equation analysis to present the direct and indirect influences and the sum of all latent variables to show the influence of various factors affecting the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Direct, indirect, and total influences of the studied factors

Influences of the variables	Causal relationship		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Community context	0.30	0.16*	0.16*
Potential of the community members	0.20*	0.74*	0.94*
Community participation	0.38	0.50**	0.50**
Potential of the tourist attractions	0.84**	-	0.84**

According to Table 3, it was found that the potential of the community members had the most total influence on the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites followed by the potential of the tourist attractions, community context, and community participation, respectively.

When considering only the factors directly affecting the development of sustainable cultural tourism sites, the potential of the attractions was found to have the most direct influence on the development of sustainable cultural tourism sites, followed by the potential of the people in the community. Meanwhile, the community context and the community participation had only the indirect influence on the sustainable development of cultural tourism sites.

Discussion of results

1. The potential of the community members affected the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites as the potential of the community members was that the community could respond the demands in solving problems of the community members. This included the competency of the community members to cooperate in various activities with the people outside the community. It included working altogether to solve problems arising from outside the community with the aim of the community to achieve normal happiness in the coexistence of people in the community. The elements to empower the community to operate relied on various elements including natural resources, ecosystem, people structure, structure of power and governance, production system and occupation. Therefore, the process of building a community to have strong potential must have the following components; 1) ideology and vision to be a motive and an anchor for the community to solve problems, 2) potential in the management with the division of roles and duties, network coordination as well as good resource management, including people, materials, equipment and technology to be used in continuous operation, 3) potential in politic negotiation to join the network of villagers' organizations in order to have the power in politic negotiation, 4) potential for initiating projects to implement solutions and find ways to develop. This includes the ability and experience to be used in the activities of the project, 5) potential for fundraising with funding both inside and outside the community in order to use the obtained funds for various activities effectively, and 6) potential of the villagers which is considered the most important factor (Araya Inkotchasan, 2011). The above research results are consistent with the research of Kosit Chaiprasit (2013).

2) The potential of the tourist sites had the total influence on the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites for the 2nd highest level. This was due to the availability of utilities, physical aspects of the tourist attractions in providing tourism services to visitors to be attractive, accessible, and impressive. This was consistent with the concept of Cooper & Boniface (1998), Wiwatchai Bunyaphak (2007), and Vipa Sirathu (2008). The tourist attractions must have something to attract which may be the place, events, art, culture, archaeological sites, historical places including various tourism activities that can attract tourists to travel (Boonlert Jittangwattana, 2005). One of the most important things that tourists pay attention to is the management of tourism safety in the area and nearby areas. The management must control the number of tourists in the tourist areas not to exceed the capacity. The management of local tourism operations was made for the safety of life and property of tourists (Vipa Sirathu, 2008). The tourists visiting the tourist attractions needed to have the staffs or representatives of the community members to look after safety in various locations including the police who provide advice on both tourism and the safety of tourists (Patcharin Sermkandee, 2553). Another important thing is the facilities that can support the visiting activities of tourists fully and sufficiently. It is the component to allow tourists to come to the tourist attractions impressively. It can also build the

image of the tourist attraction. The facilities must meet the standards such as food and accommodation including the amenities such as souvenir shops (Lertporn Pharasakul, 2012). The research results are consistent with the research of Phatchareerat Hanchai (2009).

3) The community participation affected the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites because the community participation was very important in the development or management for the achievement. Thus, the participation was how to gather the community members to play the role in the development the best. This agreed with the concept of Cohen & Uphoff (1981) proposing that the participation aimed at the community to invent the problem as the persons who played a role in everything, not in assigning people in the community to act on a particular area. Everything has to be a matter of people in the community who have to work altogether to think in order to affect the needs of the group of people in line with the social lifestyle. However, in order for people in the community to participate in it, the organization of participation activities must take into account the lifestyle, traditions, values, attitudes of the person to create voluntary participation in activities. People in the community are different in their personal characteristics, economic characteristics and obtaining of information (Suthee Worapradit, 2010). The participation of people in the community has 4 steps; 1) Analysis on the community problem synthesis, 2) Appropriate planning and consistent with lifestyle, 3) Organization of activities, and 4) Evaluation of such activities (Newcomb, 1954). The findings are consistent with the research results of Rattakorn Saengchote (2011).

According to the study, it was found that time constraints are the most important issue especially during the high season. All sample groups of people see the importance of conservation of nature and the environment, especially culture and traditions. The suggestions are given to the government or the responsible body in giving priority and sincerity in their commitment to manage sustainable tourism. This shows the concrete works. There should be staffs of relevant departments to study and develop seriously. There is a budget support for landscape improvement and development of tourist attractions as well as the formulation of policy to promote sustainable tourism management clearly and concretely. In particular, Pai Sub-district Municipality, which is a local government organization, has to make understanding with local people in order for entrepreneurs to have a consistent understanding as well as having public relations encouraging the public to realize the importance of participation. The results of this research are consistent with the research of Pongthip Nakin (2013).

4) The community members affected the sustainable development of cultural tourist sites as people in the community had knowledge and understanding on various environments occurring in that community. They had the relationship with the community from the past to the present. It is relevant to the livelihoods of people in the community, the way of life, living conditions, governance, geographic conditions, economic conditions and people in the community. It developed career and local wisdom suitable for local people. This is consistent with Maslow's theory (Maslow, 1970) which is used as a basis for the study

of human travel needs by enhancing the experience of traveling to new places that have never been visited (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006).

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