

TOURISM PROMOTION AND THE USE OF LOCAL WISDOM THROUGH CREATIVE TOURISM PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The trend of creative economy concept has created a paradigm for a new kind of tourism that is different from the traditional one known as “Creative Tourism”. This is a kind of tourism that is directed toward and engaged an authentic experience with participative learning in the arts, heritage or special character of a place between tourists and local people in the community. This new paradigm of tourism has been used as a tool to develop sustainable tourism to keep the equilibrium between economic, social and environmental changes caused by tourism. As for Thailand, creative tourism is not completely new since many of creative tourism activities have already existed in Thailand for a long time, for instance, home stay, culinary tourism and Thai boxing. These tourism activities have been connected and developed to support creative tourism and serve as alternative activities for some tourists with special interest in Thai culture and way of life. Nonetheless, creative tourism has been employed as a tool to conserve and develop Thai tourism in the form of many projects, for example, amulet making in Nakorn Chum, Kamphaeng Phet province and Thai boxing camp. The success and sustainability of using local wisdom to promote tourism through creative tourism process depends on these factors; having a strong community base, having fertile natural resources, having capable leader who can create faith, having strong cultural base, having participation from local people in the community, having continuous operation and having innovation and creative tourism activities.

Keywords Tourism Promotion, Local wisdom, Creative Tourism Process

INTRODUCTION

When the world enters the creative era, a new paradigm in economic development known as “Creative Economy” occurs. This is an economic development concept that focuses on driving the economic through the use of knowledge, education, creativity, and intellectual property that are connected with culture, wisdom, technology and innovation. This covers different industrial sectors, thus, encouraging counties with the need to create economic prosperity and security in their people’s living to this developing concept as a guideline for their country development.

Moreover, the trend of Creative Economy has also created new tourism paradigm that differs from the traditional one. In the first era, tourism focuses on relaxation and pleasure from traveling. The second era is cultural tourism and sustainable tourism with the focus on culture and environmental impacts, and sustainability of the community in tourism areas. Lastly, the third era, creative tourism that is one form of cultural tourism (Ohridska-Olson, 2010) that is directed toward and engaged an authentic experience with participative learning in the arts, heritage or special character of a place (Wurzburger, 2009). Thailand has realized the importance of this new tourism paradigm and utilized local wisdom as a tool to develop and promote tourism within the community through creative tourism process in order to balance the changes from tourism within the community and advantages gained in terms of benefits and sustainability of the community development.

Accordingly, people in the tourism community, entrepreneurs, local administrative organizations and affiliated organizations should be aware of what and how local wisdom is used to promote tourism through creative tourism process. This article explains how local wisdom is used to promote tourism through creative tourism process and the contents of this article are divided into 4 parts; 1) Literature reviews, 2) Methodology, 3) Findings, and 4) Conclusions and recommendations

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Local wisdom and the development concepts

Local wisdom is the knowledge of the provincial gained through their experience and initiation as well as those one that has been passed down from generation to generation. During the transition, the knowledge has been adjusted, adapted, changed and developed. Although something might be lost, new knowledge is acquired in accordance with the era. It can also be said that local wisdom is the use of local wisdom or knowledge to develop local community, resulting in the new set of knowledge (Chuaybamrung, 2011 : 40). The Center of

Folklore Research (2007) has summarized the definition of local wisdom into 4 types: 1) local wisdom is an abstract and is related to religion, 2) local wisdom is the potential that protects the community, 3) local wisdom is the body of knowledge and 4) local wisdom is an intellectual capital

Seree Pongpit and Vichit Nantasuwana (2002 : 15) proposed 4 guidelines to elevate local wisdom to creative development as follows;

1) Conservation: To keep very little remains of things so that they continue to exist, for example, the conservation of Thai traditions like “Rod Nam Dum Hua” (to pour water on the hands of revered elders and ask for blessing) or “Long Kak Giew Kao” (gathering for harvesting rice) or forest conservation.

2) Restoration: To bring whatever is lost back again, for example, the restoration of traditional Thai children play, mixed farming, and building sand pagoda.

3) Adaptation: To adapt old things for a proper use in the current period, for example, forest ordination is adapted from monk ordination to create the conscious of natural resources conservation.

4) Invention: To create new things based on the old knowledge, for example, inventing irrigation system in place of irrigation ditch or producing gas stove instead of charcoal stove

Terdchai Chuaybamrungrung (2011 : 71-72) proposed these guidelines to develop local wisdom into creative local development by using these analytical processes;

1) Analyzing basic information in the local context such as population, occupation, income, education. This is basically the analysis of the local information in general in order to understand the context in that particular area to see if there are any problems, weaknesses, strengths, and opportunities for development.

2) Analyzing the community and the society in the area to be developed by evaluating

(1) Social unit: analyzing what the society is composed of and what the status and role of each component is.

(2) Institution or social organization: analyzing what institution or social organization that area is composed of what role and potential each organization has.

(3) Social structure: analyzing the relationship between social units and social institutions to see the connection of each sector in the area.

3) Analyzing local wisdom/resources and their situation in the area to be developed to see what local wisdom/resources are available and in what situation they are. Some might be lost or remain in a good or very good condition.

4) Analyzing problems and potential of the area to see what the weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats are in order to understand problematic area and what potential that area has to solve the problems.

5) Analyzing developing opportunities of the area to be developed to see what opportunities are available for the development, what local wisdom/resource should be developed and what techniques should be used for the upcoming development.

The analysis mentioned above requires participative analytical process which means the provincial must be given an opportunity to participate in the process in order to obtain full perspective from both the local and the outsider.

CREATIVE TOURISM CONCEPTS

The term “Creative Tourism” was invented by Raymond and Richards who were inspired by their impressive travel experience during their trip to Thailand, Indonesia and Australia during 1999-2000. They attended several weeks of traditional Thai massage course in Chiang Mai followed by a vegetarian cooking class in Bali and a short course of sheep keeping and livestock in Australia. Raymond and Richards defined this new type of tourism as “Creative Tourism” which means tourism that offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken (Richard and Raymond, 2000 : 18)

UNESCO (2006) defined "Creative Tourism" as the tourism that is related to community development for a sustainable way of life. The activities provided had to be harmonious and connected to history, culture, and way of life in terms of learning and experience. Tourists gain experience and knowledge from the real life of the communities they visit. Additionally, communities had to set creative tourism as a tool for maintaining (1) innovations for in-house tourism and (2) benefits to communities in terms of economy and sustainable development. This also includes organizing activities of learning from direct experiences such as participating in activities and interacting with local people. The goal is that tourists are not just tourists, but they become an active citizen of the community.

In addition, Richard (2010) pointed out that creative tourism is the change from traditional tourism of which the quality seems to degrade over times since it has become mass tourism with people spending most of their time visiting and taking photographs of interesting natural and cultural attractions such as built heritage, museums, monuments, beaches. New generation tourists, on the other hand, have a desire for participation in the culture or identity of the visited place. The overall picture of creative tourism is the tourism with a shift of interests from tangible cultural resources to intangible cultural resources (figure 1)

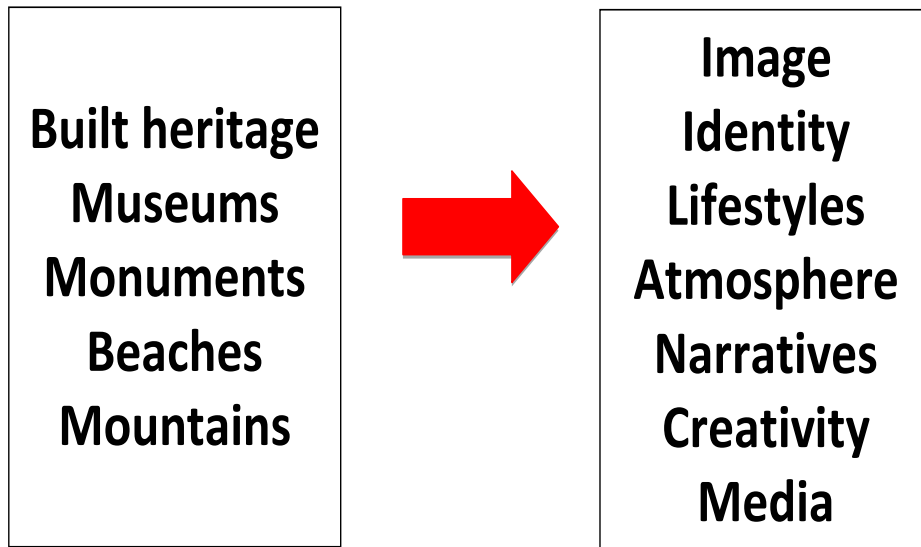


Figure 1: Cultural shift from traditional tourism to new tourism

Richards proposed the following patterns of creative tourism; 1) using creativity as tourist activities and 2) using creativity as a background of tourism. The first form refers to those activities that have already been practiced in creative tourism activities in which tourists are allowed to participate in the place but using creativity as a background of tourism or creating “atmosphere” tends to gain more popularity since it enhances the “charm” of that particular place. For example, Santa Fe has been appointed by UNESCO to be creative town in handicrafts. Activities regarding workshops and trainings on pottery (art of Pueblo indigenous population in this area), local cooking, or local lucky charms are provided at Santa Fe Museum of International Folk Arts, offering various types of experiences to creative tourists who participate in creative product shopping, visiting, testing, or learning a certain skill from the place (figure 2).

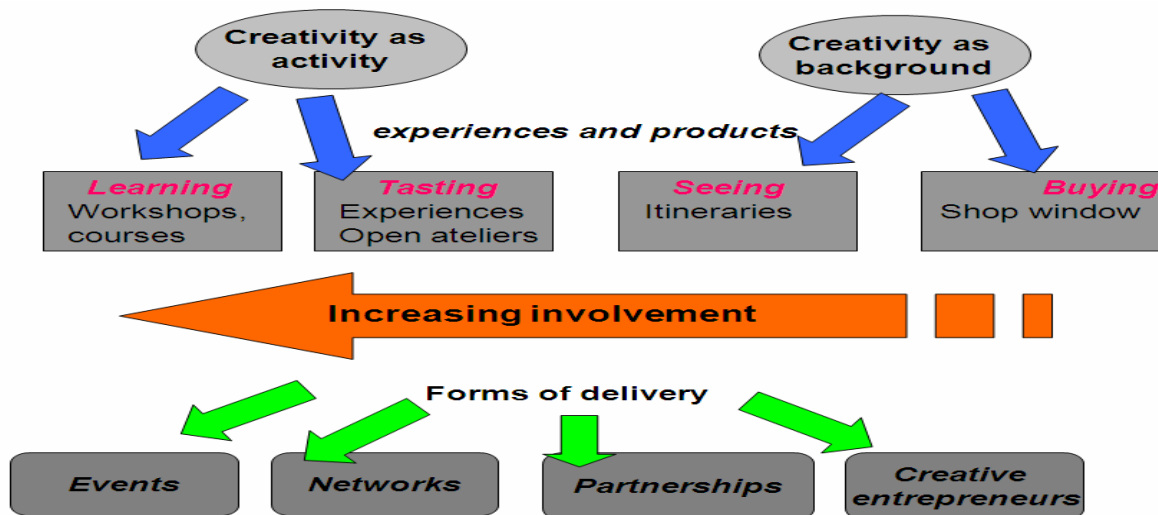


Figure 2: Richards’ Patterns of Creative Tourism

Methodology/Experimental design

This study uses documentary research method to study information from various documents, research articles, and the Internet. For data analysis, critical analysis method is used to conclude the patterns and guidelines on how to use local wisdom to promote tourism through creative tourism process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the study, it was found that, in Thailand, local wisdom has been employed to promote tourism thought creative tourism process and to create conservation and development in various forms of projects. These projects were implemented by entrepreneurs, academic institutes, government and private organizations. Several interesting case studies include;

1) Educational Thai Culinary Tourism

Educational Thai culinary tourism is one of the creative tourism activities that has received a great attention from tourists. Nowadays cooking schools for foreigners are located at many tourist provinces in Thailand like Bangkok, Chonburi, Phuket and Chiang Mai. A Lot of Thai and Thai Kitchen Cookery Centre, for example, are located in Chiang Mai and they use Thai culture and way of life to promote creative tourism. Activities include taking tourists to shop at the fresh market, cooking Thai food using the menu designed for tourists like Pad Thai (Thai-styled stir fried noodle, Pad See Ew (stir fried noodle in black bean sauce), Gang Kiew Wan (green curry), Massaman curry, Beef Panang, Pad Kra Prao Kai (stir fried chicken with basil), Som Tum (papaya salad), Yum Pla Dook Fu (spicy crispy catfish salad) etc. Moreover, "Cook Book" has been created for tourists, using simple explanation and landscape orientation for the ease of use. Taking tourists to shop at the fresh market helps distribute income from the schools to the community, thus, allowing the community to participate in creative tourism. Tourists will experience, have a chance to interact with merchants at the fresh market and be impressed when being greeted with Thai smiles and hospitality.

2) Thai Boxing Class for Foreigners

Thai boxing is one of Thai martial arts. Many tourists are interested in Thai boxing and, in order to have a profound understanding of Thai boxing, many of them have applied for Thai boxing classes at many Thai boxing camps. Thai boxing camps for foreigners can be put into 3 categories

(1) Boxing camps that offer serious training for foreigners. These foreigners will practice very hard, not leaving the camp anywhere. They will focus on learning and practicing. While learning, they will ask their friends to take photograph and after finishing the class, they will record what they have done in a day and keep it for future use when they go back to their countries.

(2) Boxing camps that do not really teach but only allow foreigners coming on tour groups to try kicking sand bag and have their picture taken so that they have something to show their relatives and friends that they learn Thai boxing.

(3) Boxing camps that welcome long-stay tourists. Since the accommodation cost will be very high for a long stay, some foreigners choose to stay at the boxing camp. In Phuket, boxing camps that provides boxing classes, practice place and accommodation for students are available. Foreigners may choose whether they want to practice or go out to travel.

The types of foreigners who take boxing classes in Thailand can be put into 3 categories. The first category is those who learn Thai boxing for the purpose of opening their own boxing camp in their own countries. The second category is those who learn Thai boxing for exercise purpose. The third category is those who work as bodyguards or bouncers in pubs, bars and casinos.

There are 2 types of Thai boxing curriculum for foreigners; (1) basic class for tourists who only have 2-3 days to learn. The basic of Thai-style kicking and punching is taught and (2) class for those who have more time. More techniques are taught.

3) Nakorn Chum Amulet Making, Khamphaeng Petch Province

The evidence of amulet making in Thailand can be dated back since Dvaravati era and continues until now. Many amulets are found in satupas, chedis, or under the base of Buddha images. In some cases, 84,000 (the number that complies with the number of Buddhism morality codes) amulets were found. The decline of Buddhism was mentioned in the Tipitaka and this strongly affects the idea of creating Buddhism related activities in many areas, such as, Sermon of the last great incarnation story of the Buddha, praying, chedis and amulets making. This is known as "Panja Antaratarn" (5 causes of the decline of Buddhism) which comprises "Pariyat Antaratarn" (the lost of learners), "Patibat Antaratarn" (the lost of Buddhism practitioner) "Pativet Antaratarn" (the lost of enlightenment) "Sangka Antaratarn" (the lost of monks) and "Tartu Antaratarn" (the lost of the Buddha's relics)

Nakorn Chum amulet making was created by Mr. Somai Payorm who lives in Nakorn Chum and has been in the amulet society. He is fond of amulet making and has learned how to make amulets from one amulet maker in Kamphaeng Phet province and was successful in making "Pra Sum Kor" amulet. In 2008, he set up the center of Nakorn Chum amulet making in order to educate high school and university students, people, and tourists who are interested in amulet making. At the center, the members will demonstrate different processes of amulet making. The knowledge and the local wisdom related to Nakorn Chum and Kamphaeng Phet amulet making do not only connect to Buddhism teachings that explain the philosophy of amulet making and historic attractions in Kamphaeng Phet but also link with the community ways of life. Since the making of amulet is still practiced in

households just like in the past, the heritage of Kamphaeng Phet amulet making is a cultural bond that connects the glorious past with the present and deserves to be developed into creative tourism.

4) Sun Sai Home Stay Business Group, Chiang Mai

Sun Sai Home Stay Business Group is located at Bann Pong, San Sai, Chiang Mai. Bann Pong community covers a concession area of more than 3600 Rai of mixed deciduous forest. There are plenty of interesting herbs, insects, birds that worth studying. Most of the provincial are descendent from Tai Yai (Shan) ethic group and live a simple way of life, making their living on agriculture. When tourism is introduced to the area, natural resources have gained more interests. Various programs for tourists have been arranged. Tourists can commute or spend a night. Different rates are applied and depend on the facilities and needs required by tourists. The service includes guided train trip to the village followed by a warm welcome from the provincial and a traditional Khantoke dinner, comprising sticky rice in palm leaves, Nam Prig Ong (northern style chili dip), Hung Lay Curry, etc. Local music is performed during the meal. Next is a guided trekking program along the natural route and tourists have an option to rent mountain bikes if they like. They will learn about herbs, plants, animals, birds, insects as well as many natural wonders. The home stay business creates extra income for the provincial apart from their rice and fruit farming. Besides providing services to tourists, they can make use of the existing resources by selling locally grown produces (Vipada Santiwattanapan and team, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Creative tourism is a form of tourism that complies with culture and community ways. The community can manage their own tourism. In terms of **area**, it's the tourism in the area that is mainly connected with community ways and nature with natural attractions with the area's identity as well as the culture and history of that particular area. In terms of **management**, it's the tourism that has no impact on the environment and has sustainable management by allowing tourists, community, and local people and affiliated persons to participate in the conservation of culture and environment in the community attractions. In terms of **activity and process**, it's the tourism that facilitates the learning by educating on culture and community ways as well as environment and ecosystem of tourism to create awareness and consciousness in tourists, community, local people and affiliated persons. In terms of **participation**, it's the tourism that is aware of the participation from tourists, community, local people and affiliated persons.

Accordingly, using local wisdom to promote tourism through creative tourism process in order to create sustainable tourism development is targeted at the community. Equilibrium must be created in terms of economy, society and environment so that the community, with this equilibrium, can develop sustainable tourism. The concept of sustainable development that focuses on people-centered is applied to create equilibrium, stability and sustainability in these 4 sides; 1) Life - human from individual, family and community level are affected by external environment, resulting in risks and instability, 2) Economy of people in the community, 3) Society – community and society of human beings living together, having relationship and responsibility in the change of the society and 4) Environment around human beings and social environments. Nonetheless, the success and sustainability of conservation and development by using local wisdom to promote tourism though creative tourism process depend on these factors; 1) having a strong community base, for example, a community with production system or sufficiency economy and harmony in the community, 2) having fertile natural resources, 3) having capable leader who can create faith, 4) having strong cultural base such as having unique culture, 5) having participation from local people in the community, 6) having continuous operation and 7) having innovation and creative tourism activities.

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