

Community Participation In Tourism Management In Busai Village Homestay, Wangnamkheo District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was 1) to study community participation in tourism management at Busai Village Home Stay, Wangnamkheo District, Nakhon Ratchasim Province, and 2) to study the effect of the attitudes upon local tourism, particularly in Busai Village Homestay, Wangnamkheo District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. This research used both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the population studied was 155 family leaders of households in Busai Village Homestay. In addition, we used content analysis in the qualitative method, and in the quantitative method, we analyzed 155 questionnaires utilizing percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation with the SPSS/PC program. The findings were as follows: Community participation was high with regard to developing ideas for tourism management, in planning locations for tourist attractions and use of natural resources, in budgeting for supporting and developing tourist attractions, and in viewing tourist attractions as financially beneficial for the community. Villagers' participation in keeping attractions clean and safe, in beautifying the attractions, and in receiving information on tourism were also high. The community's overall attitude toward tourism was at a medium level. A widely held opinion was that Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO) should accept the people's ideas in order to develop a tourism management system because TAO has not cooperated with the local people in tourism management as it should have. Apart from this, the local people believe that all people are the owners of natural resources serving as tourist attractions and that all should be responsible for taking care of them.. The local people should not protest tourism management, and neither should they consider it as the responsibility of TAO only.

Keywords: Tourism Management, Community Participation, Homestay Tourism

INTRODUCTION

As tourism becomes increasingly important to communities around the world, the need to develop tourism sustainably also becomes a primary concern. Human communities represent a primary resource upon which tourism depends, and their existence in a particular place at a particular time may be used to justify the development of tourism itself. Communities are the basic reason for tourists to travel, to experience the way of life and material products of different communities. Communities also shape the natural landscapes which many tourists “consume.” Communities are, of course, also the source of tourists, as tourists are drawn from particular places and social contexts, which in themselves will help shape the context of tourists' experience in the host community.

In addition, tourism has emerged in many destinations as a catalyst for socio-economic change. Although, local goals to be reached through tourism might not have been clearly established at first, its continuation as a positive force in the lives of local residents is contingent upon local response, involvement, and support (Liu &

Wall, 2006). And tourism as practiced in developed countries is essentially an economic endeavor, whereas in developing countries it is mainly about leisure consumption as a path to development. This consumption generates jobs, and tourism may be the only remunerative employment possibility in poor and peripheral regions where few other options are available to people for improving their marginal economic status. Tourism has a high need for human capital and offers a diversity of jobs in a variety of operations of varied sizes and types (Szivas, Riley, & Airey, 2003).

Tourism has several definitions: Gunn (1988) notes that tourism includes all traveling; it is not limited only to recreational travel, but also includes traveling for such purposes as visiting doctors. Another definition stresses that tourism involves traveling away from home for leisure purposes. It is, therefore, seen as a subset of leisure and of recreation. For example, Kelly (1985) writes that “tourism is recreation on the move, engaging in activity away from home in which the travel is at least part of the satisfaction sought.” In addition, in these definitions it is not clear whether “away from home” begins at the front door, involves a substantial journey of a minimum length, or implies an overnight stay away from home (Shaw & Williams, 2002: 6). The intent here is to use a more universal definition to inform this text. Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from interaction among tourists, the tourism industry, host governments, host communities, origin governments, universities, community colleges and non-governmental organizations, in the process of attracting, transporting, hosting, and managing these tourists and other visitors (Weaver & Lawton, 2002: 3).

Thailand has been one of the world’s fastest growing economies, its boom coming as a surprise and changing the economy and society with a speed and impact that few foresaw. Thailand’s growth has been led by private enterprise with full support from the government. The tourism sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Thailand economy. For example, earnings from accommodations have grown almost 80-90% in the last few years, and income from travelers approximated 299,147 million baht at the end of 2004. Because of the effect of the tsunami that struck Thailand on December 26, 2004, the number of travelers in Phuket province decreased by 40%, and income from tourism decreased 50%, approximately 30,000 – 40,000 million baht. The tourism industry had not fully recovered in 2005, and the average number of foreign tourists fell by 2.2% each year as tourism in the south continued to slump after six provinces along the Andaman coast were hit by the tsunami (Bank of Thailand, 2005). In 2006, however, Thailand’s tourism gained direct income of more than 852,000 million baht, with indirect income amounting to 1,500,000 million baht. The total income for 2007 was more than 2,500,000 million baht (Royal Thai Government, 2007).

Tourism in Thailand continues through economic management. Managers have tried to find out which cultural and natural attractions sell well. When an attraction begins to wane, they will develop or start a new one. This pattern has been employed by tourism management without much thought for the impact on culture, society, and even the environment. But if management is good, the local population will benefit from the income. Moreover, the local people will also begin to realize the cultural resource values in their land. In addition, the participation of local people is one of the national strategies that tends to develop a grass-roots-level economy for making strong social ties within the community. Such an approach will guarantee the country’s development and let people benefit from their resources and live efficiently by themselves.

In addition, promoting the tourism industry is an important instrument for tackling the country’s economic problems, creating jobs for people, and increasing income for the country. Tourism should be promoted so it can play a vital role in the development of the quality of life in all regions of Thailand as per the policy of the government. In addition, proactive marketing strategies should be promoted and developed for increasing the new markets, as well as opening niche markets in order to attract more quality tourists to visit Thailand. At the same time, domestic travel for Thais should be vigorously encouraged.

As an example of tourism in Thailand, Buntham (2004:34) studied eco-tourism and cultural tourism management by Mong’s community, at Baan Nam Kah, Payao province. She found that this community has good administration because a committee has planned and brainstormed development plans, such as tourist attraction development, product development, and also public relations. But the important part is that the community has tried to adopt a form of tourism that conforms to its members’ traditions, culture, and way of life. The villagers have learned the process of tourism management, and they know how to increase the value of their resources. They are

willing to share any opinions from the members that are villagers in the community and to participate in the activities that are good for the community. Furthermore, Narong (2006: 81) found that the community has good attitudes for local tourism in that people who have their own natural resources can manage and develop the attractions on their own. Good attitudes for local tourism also help a community’s participation in increasing local sustainable development.

Because tourism is important to Thailand, management needs to be developed. Due to modernization, a community has to participate and to develop their own tourist attractions better while at the same time keeping their traditional way of life in modern times. The researchers for this study were interested in studying local participation in tourism management and in applying the findings as a guideline for tourism development for the greatest advantage in the rest of the country.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY

The objectives of this study were two-fold: (1) to study the participation of local tourism management at Bu Sai Homestay village, Wangnamkheo District, Nakorn Ratchasima, Thailand; and (2) to study attitudes about local tourism management in Bu Sai Homestay village, Wangnamkheo district, Nakorn Ratchasima, Thailand.

THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

The location of this study is Bu Sai Homestay village, Wangnamkheo District, Nakorn Ratchasima Province, Thailand.

METHODOLOGY

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the qualitative portion of the study, we did in-depth interviews of 155 people in Bu Sai Homestay village, Wangnamkheo district, Nakorn Ratchasima, Thailand. Then, with all the data gathered from the in-depth interviews, we used content analysis to synthesize the data, and we also used the data from the qualitative method to design the questionnaire for the quantitative method.

For the quantitative portion, we provided 179 questionnaires to the population; however, only 155 were returned. We believe that only 85% of the 179 were returned because some people worked in other provinces, and some households are in the forest, which is inconvenient to access from the village. Data from the 155 questionnaires was analyzed utilizing percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation with the SPSS/PC program.

RESULTS

1) General Information

The sample for this research consisted of 88 males (56.8%) and 67 females (43.2%). Marriage status: 145 (93.5%) of people are married, 9 (5.8%) are single and 1 (0.6%) is divorced. Education level: 123 (79.4%) people in the sample have graduated from primary school, 28 (18.1%) people have graduated from secondary school, and 4 (2.6%) of people have graduated from vocational school or higher. The age of the sample group is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Age of sample according to age range

Age	Number of Population
21-30	22 (14.2%)
31-40	28 (18.1%)
41-50	37 (23.9%)
51-60	34 (21.9%)
61 up	34 (21.9%)
Total	155 (100%)

Leadership positions of the sample population were as follows: 102 (65.8%) have no leadership position in the village, 49 (31.6%) have other positions not in a leadership role, 1 person (0.6%) works as an assistant village headman, and 1 person (0.6%) is the village headman. For occupation, 102 people (65.8%) do kenaf and cassava farming, 40 people (25.8%) are hired workers, 11 people (7.1%) work in business and commerce, and 2 people (1.3%) work as rice farmers. The income of the sample population is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The income of population

Income/Month (Baht)	Number of Population
Below 3000	2 (1.3%)
3000-6000	86 (55.5%)
6001-9000	43 (27.7%)
9001-12000	12 (7.7%)
12000 up	12 (7.7%)
Total	155 (100%)

2) Participation in tourism management in Bu Sai Homestay village

- 1) *Participation in brainstorming.* The study found that this level of participation was highest ($\bar{X} = 4.27$). When we considered various aspects one by one, we found that the participation in sharing and voting to develop tourism management had the highest score for this part ($\bar{X} = 4.30$). Next was participation in sharing opinions for human development and cooperating with the academy to do tourism management in the village ($\bar{X} = 4.27$), with a score the same as for participation in investment and income for tourism management ($\bar{X} = 4.27$). The lowest score was for participation in sharing opinions with local organizations to determine the direction of tourism management ($\bar{X} = 4.22$).
- 2) *Participation in planning.* The study found that this level of participation was high ($\bar{X} = 4.19$). The highest score for this part was for participation in planning locations for travel attractions in the village ($\bar{X} = 4.23$). Next was providing information to an official by the community's leader ($\bar{X} = 4.22$), participation in planning the use of natural resources in the village ($\bar{X} = 4.19$), and participation in planning the operation ($\bar{X} = 4.16$), with the lowest score being cooperation for meeting in the village ($\bar{X} = 4.16$).
- 3) *Participation in decision.* The study found that the level of this participation was high ($\bar{X} = 4.14$). The highest score was for participation in making a budget plan for supporting and developing tourist attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.18$), but the lowest score was for participation in managing tourist attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.11$).
- 4) *Participation in investment and income.* The study found that the level of participation in this part was high ($\bar{X} = 4.24$). The highest participation here was in the perception that the community benefits from taking part in Busai Homestay management ($\bar{X} = 4.30$). The second highest score was in the investment of shops and services as private entrepreneurs ($\bar{X} = 4.30$), with the next being participation in traditional activities in the village ($\bar{X} = 4.24$). The local academy was perceived to benefit tourism management ($\bar{X} = 4.16$), but less so was the investment of shops and services in groups, such as the project of One Tambol One Product (OTOP) selling, foot massage and more ($\bar{X} = 4.04$).
- 5) *Participation in planned operations.* The study found that the level of participation was high ($\bar{X} = 4.06$). The greatest participation in this part was in keeping the village clean ($\bar{X} = 4.18$), and the next was participation in the activities that promote tourism, such as traditional performances or working with public relations to let tourists know how to keep travel attractions clean and safe ($\bar{X} = 4.00$). People participated least in constructing or restoring structures related to tourism in the village ($\bar{X} = 3.69$).

- 6) *Participation in assessing results.* The study found that the participation level in this part is high ($\bar{X} = 3.89$). The greatest level of participation consisted of assessing tourism management in Bu Sai village ($\bar{X} = 4.10$). The next highest were assessing public relations for promoting tourism and keeping travel attractions clean and safe ($\bar{X} = 3.94$), cooperating with local organizations to process activities rapidly ($\bar{X} = 3.89$), and assessing which activities best supported tourism in the village ($\bar{X} = 3.86$). The lowest level of participation was in assessing construction or restoration of tourist attractions in the village ($\bar{X} = 3.74$).
- 7) *Participation in accessing tourism information.* The study found that the level of participation in this part was high ($\bar{X} = 4.08$). The community participated most in receiving tourism information from many sources such as television, radio, magazines, newspaper advertising board, and more ($\bar{X} = 4.18$). Next highest was community reception of information about the tourism management of Bu Sai Homestay village from many sources like television, radio, newspaper, and many more ($\bar{X} = 4.08$). The lowest level of participation was in reception of information from officials ($\bar{X} = 4.05$).
- 8) *The attitude of the community to local tourism.* The level for this aspect was average ($\bar{X} = 2.78$). The highest level here was shown in people's belief that local organizations should listen to opinions from the village people for developing local tourism ($\bar{X} = 4.30$). Next was the belief that local people should be the owners of community resources and that they have the right to manage or develop them ($\bar{X} = 4.09$). That people should allow local organizations to manage local tourism ($\bar{X} = 2.78$) was followed by the idea that local tourism management should be in charge of local organizations ($\bar{X} = 2.13$). Lowest was the idea that advantages usually belong to people who are not local, and that local people would not receive the greatest share of income ($\bar{X} = 2.10$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research studied community participation in tourism management, as well as the effect of attitudes on local tourism. From interviewing people about the problems, we found that the greatest problem in the village had to do with the public utilities: the water supply is limited and not clean, electricity is always out of order and does not cover all of the area, and the low quality of the roads affects tourists. The next problem is perceived cultural clashes with tourists, such as inappropriate dress, noisy behavior, etc. The next is the lack of participation from local organizations, and last is that there are no activities or second jobs available for people to increase the income to the village.

Taweekul (2001) found that the participation of people in sustainable tourist attraction management depends on villagers' skill levels, and the greatest participation for tourism is in natural resource management. In addition, it is almost required that community people participate in making a budget plan for supporting and developing tourist attraction.

In addition, for tourism development, villagers needs support from officials in developing public utilities, such as water supply, electricity, and roads. People need to increase and develop travel attractions in the village and restore natural resources, which would include planting more trees and flowers in the village. Field studies should be given to village members; this method has been proven in other places to increase villagers' knowledge and hence their participation. Finally, advertising should be increased for information about local tourism, and homestay attractions should be developed for the convenience of tourists.

SUGGESTION

Our study at Bu Sai Homestay village, Wangnamkheo District, Nakorn Ratchasima Province, Thailand, has yielded the following suggestions with regard to community participation in tourism management:

- 1) The community should cooperate with local organizations to discover the best tourism management policies for the village, but local organizations must encourage villager participation through support and through providing chances for villagers to get involved in local tourism activities.

- 2) Though the level of participation in planning is high, the lack of meetings is a problem. Village members usually do not participate in meetings for planning tourism management. To solve this problem, the community should schedule meetings and develop a public relations campaign for members to convince them to participate in every meeting. It is good for village unity if members brainstorm and participate in responsible tourism management.
- 3) The study found that the level of participation in decision-making is high, but the decisions are still not participated in by all members. More participation is needed in order to find practical ways to avoid misunderstandings in the village.
- 4) Though the level of participation in investment and income is very high, everyone still needs to support village businesses, such as restaurants; this should be done as a community enterprise because the community still lacks unique products (One Tambol One Product: OTOP). To support this aspect, the village should cooperate with the local academy and share the benefits with each other.
- 5) The level of participation in planning operations is high, but the village needs to develop public utilities such as water supply, electricity, and roads. Village members need to cooperate with the government, which can provide utilities with the greatest efficiency.
- 6) The level of participation in assessment is high, but the village still has a low level of participation in assessing the restoration and the construction of attractions. The village needs to solicit the assessment of related agencies for such developments.
- 7) The level of participation in accessing tourism information is high, but the village still receives little information from the government directly. To solve this, the government should find ways to provide more information to the village.

FUTURE STUDY

- 1) The role of local organizations in cooperating with the community for tourism management should be further studied. Methods are needed for supporting communities in their tourism management, and organizations should be permitted to participate in developing tourism in the community.
- 2) A further research project should study the effects of homestay tourism on the community, and use the results as a plan to guard the local ethics and culture. The community may be at risk of a cultural “melting”—i.e., a significant impact on the traditional way of life—because tourists who come from outside the community visit there. 3) Further study should also compare the management of homestay tourism in other part of Isan (the northeastern region of Thailand) with Bu Sai Homestay village to implement a pattern of homestay tourism management in Isan.

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