

**Approach for Slow Tourism Development in
Community Based Tourism Promotion: Case
Study of District Administration Maklua Mai,
Sung Noen, Nakhon Ratchasima**

Juthathip Sutthitep
Tourism Department, Faculty of Management Science,
Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate the forms of slow tourism in District Administration Maklua Mai, Sung Noen, Nakhon Ratchasima Area by using the questionnaire and survey forms. The survey shows that there are four types of tourist attractions in Maklua Mai Sub district: Natural Tourist Attraction, Man-made Tourist Attraction, Religious Tourist Attraction and Agricultural Tourist Attraction. The findings reveal the followings: the number of participating tourists are 400 with most of them male; they come from every region of Thailand who take longer than one day to travel to the area and mostly travel with family on holidays; and, relaxing is the main purpose of visiting the area. The tourists also aware of the value of tourism site as they realize that the area is the tradition, culture and local way of life inheritance. Moreover, they perceive that it is worth for Dharma studying as well as mind and physical health rehabilitation. In addition, good results are shown in the evaluations of all 3 tourism potential aspects: tourism attraction, tourism support and tourism management. The mean and standard deviation of tourist satisfaction in community, hospitality is also at a high level.

Keywords: slow tourism, Community Based Tourism, Nakhon Ratchasima

1. INTRODUCTION

The previous tourism pattern, the Conventional Tourism pattern, places priority on increasing the numbers of tourists as it is believed that they provide desirable sources of foreign currency which can be added into Thailand's economic system with the results of increasing employment and distributing income throughout the country. Conventional Tourism aims to develop facilities to accommodate the tourists' needs in order to attract sufficient numbers of them without having concerns about sustainable tourism management. The roads have been constructed to provide access and accommodations have been built without landscape design considerations. Therefore, some tourists have been allowed to enter some natural tourist attractions

without proper support measures. As a result, all of these activities have caused declines in tourism. Coupled with the cultural globalization, cultural changes are taking place. For example, the western food franchises (Pizza, McDonald's, and Kentucky Fried Chicken) are gaining more popularity among Thais and have resulted in changes in tourism patterns (Pijarinee Lohchaitrakool, 2008).

Meeting the expectations of tourists is essential for tourism development, and these expectations can be classified into 2 contrasting styles. In the first style, tourists usually expect to have convenient facilities, qualified management, and the high-quality hotels and restaurants. In contrast, in the second style, the tourists do not want the single standard service, but prefer that the attractions have a genuine identity. Rather than experiencing a comfortable routine lifestyle, tourists of the second group desire to have extraordinary experiences. They travel to escape their busy and repetitious daily lives, so having a unique experience at a beautiful attraction can successfully fascinate and impress them (Institute of Community Tourism, 2008). This style of expectation is associated with the slow tourism because it focuses on vacation experiences rather than on the numbers of activities during the trip. It also allows tourists to interact with the locals and deeply learn about the attraction instead of just visiting many places in a limited amount of time. Experiences gained from the attraction are vital for slow tourism. This is particularly true in the case of activities that are experienced through the 5 senses: sight, taste, smell, hearing, and touch. In addition, slow tourism can raise the tourists' awareness of the destination's culture and environment. (Cook, Yale, and Marqua, 2010: 336; Matos, 2004: 95-96; Woehler, 2004: 90; Esichaikul and Songsuntornwong, 2010: 13; Yupet, 2012: 5)

Slow Tourism is an alternative tourism and a new brand of sustainable tourism development that prioritizes the environment, the economies, and the societies within the communities (Conway, D. & Timms, B.F., 2010). This tourism pattern is based on the needs of tourists who seek to have different experiences from visiting the various destinations. These groups of tourists are usually attentive to society and to the environment. In addition, they also look to have experiences from the authentic sources (Poon, 1989). A study by Pitsamai Prachanant, et al. (2007) found that the consumer behavior of tourists with respect to tourism products is important information that can be used in the area's plans for tourism development. Furthermore, it helps the services organized to meet the needs of the tourists which is the main reason involved with both Thai and foreign tourists making their decisions to visit destinations once again. However, a study by Orapin Santiteerakul, et al. (2007) found that both the tourists and the locals had an obvious connection to the national

tourism problems. For instance, there has been a decline in the quality of the tourist attractions, as well as bad landscaping designs. Therefore, it is important to focus on the types of tourists engaged in certain tourism patterns. (Orapin Santiteerakul, et al., 2007)

These conditions have led to the need to conduct research into solving the problems and to supporting balanced and sustainable development of the communities. The researcher aims to evaluate the potential of these tourist attractions in order suggest approaches to develop slow tourism in the District Administration of Maklua Mai, Sung Noen in Nakhon Ratchasima.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Slow tourism in Thailand

Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (Public Organization) or DASTA defines Slow Tourism as follows: S – Study, L- Learn, O- Observe, and W- Wrap up. This tourism concept makes trips more enjoyable and valuable. DASTA has also announced the designated area of Sukhothai-Si Satchanalai and KamphaengPhet Historical Park as slow travel in World Heritage City. Furthermore, they have designated the area of Loei as the slow travel in Leisure Loei. Moreover, DASTA has a policy to develop low carbon destination on the islands in the Trat Sea, and their intention is to especially upgrade Mak Island to obtain a World-Class ranking. This policy aims to encourage the business owners to become involved in a plan to reduce the release of carbon and to promote the carbon footprint surveys in the establishments (DASTA, 2014). There are a very small number of research studies that have been conducted on the topic of slow tourism in Thailand, and the researcher found only two of them. The first was “Learning through Interpretation of European Senior Tourists in Thailand: Slow Tourism Domain” by Ranee Esichaikul and Chatchapol Songsuntornwong (2012). It examined the following: 1) the reasons that tourists spend longer amounts of time in cultural tourist attractions and 2) the process of creating an understanding of cultural tourist attractions in Thailand through the interpretation of tourism that is connected to the philosophy of Slow Tourism. The second study was “Slow Tourism Management for Elderly Tourists in Upper Northern” by Suree Boonyanupong and Korawan Sangkakorn (2012). This study aimed to survey and evaluate the potential of the tourist attractions in the Upper North in order to suggest approaches for the development of Slow Tourism and the management of the elderly. It was found that the facilities and services were inadequate to meet the needs of the elderly and that there were no activities to promote slow Tourism. Therefore, the following actions were suggested: 1) the improvement of facilities and slow tourism

activities and 2) the development of related personal and staff. Moreover, the result of the research indicated that the main factor that had made the tourists spend longer amounts of time at the sites were the slow tourism activities. Significant findings from studies by Ranees Esichaikul and Chatchapol Songsuntornwong (2012) and Sures Boonyanupong and Korawan Sangkakorn (2012), have shown that owing to the physical condition and movement the elderly tourists, they are the type of tourist that are particularly suited to Slow Tourism. In a study by Ranees Esichaikul and Chatchapol Songsuntornwong (2011), the number of nights that the tourist spent in a hotel was used as an indicator for Slow Tourism. In addition, previous research has shown that the types of vehicles used for the vacation can cause a longer time to be spent at the destination (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon L. & McGrath P., 2011). Rhoden and Lumsdon (2006) studied the roles of transportation in travelling for vacations by focusing on the tourists' involvement in transport experience. Their findings suggested the two different types of transportation: 1) "Transport as Tourism" and 2) "Transport for Tourism". "Transport as tourism" means the vehicle that the tourists use when they want to experience travelling to their destinations, whereas "Transport for Tourism" means the vehicle that transports the tourists from their homes to their destinations or from one destination to another destination. Both types of vehicles were found to be differently connected to Slow Tourism. "Transport as Tourism" is obviously associated with Slow Tourism because it represents the experiences that tourists gain from travelling, whereas "Transport for Tourism" is the essential means for accessing the destination. Rhoden and Lumsdon (2006) classified tourists into two types. Firstly, there are the "Active Transport Tourists" which refers to the tourists who spend their energy in travelling and are highly involved in dynamic sports, such as cycling or sailing. Secondly, there are the "Passive Transport Tourists" which refers to tourists who spend less energy in travelling and are involved in activities, such as taking cruises.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a survey research. The tools of the research are survey forms and questionnaires. The objective of the survey is to evaluate the potential of the tourist attractions in the Maklua Mai Sub district. The questionnaires were completed by 400 Thai tourists who had visited the target area. The data have been analyzed and is presented in descriptive statistics and tables.

4. RESULT

The evaluation included the following 3 types of tourism potentials. Firstly, there is the potential of being an attractive site for tourists with respect to having cultural identity, a unique way of life, and value that should be conserved and inherited. Cultural identity includes the following: 1) the way of life, 2) costumes, 3) activities and traditions, 4) houses, 5) food, 6) tools for everyday living, 7) characteristics of the invention, and 8) norms, etc. Secondly, there is the potential of foundation facilities development, such as water supply, electricity, roads, and accommodations, etc. Finally, there is the management of maintenance and the restoration of the site.

The results indicated that the evaluation scores of the tourist attraction in the Maklua Mai Sub district had been at a good level and further showed that the site has the potential to develop and support tourism. From the results from the questionnaires, it was shown that 136 (34 percent) of tourists were male and 264 (66 percent) were female. Moreover, 363 tourists (90.8 percent) agreed that their most favorite attractions were the temples/religious sites and that their second favorite attractions to visit involved seeing the ways of life within communities (89.3 percent). In last place was adventurous travel (87.3 percent). The most popular objective of their visits was to relax and make merit. It was found that the tourists usually travelled on the weekends with their families. They had a high level of awareness of the values of the tourist attractions as follows: 1) the value of having cultural and traditional heritage, 2) the value of being a wildlife refuge and/or forest reserve, and 3) the value of being a good place to rehabilitate the body and the mind. In addition, the tourists' level of satisfaction was high as shown in the table below:

Table 1: The Mean and Standard Deviation on the Satisfaction of Tourists in Maklua Mai Sub district

Satisfaction	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meanings
1. Accommodations	4.31	.539	Highest
2. Food and nutrition	3.93	.560	High
3. Safety	3.60	.699	High
4. Hospitality of community	4.17	.485	High
5. Tour Program	3.64	.644	High
6. Natural resources and environment	4.14	.500	High
7. Culture	3.90	.690	High
8. Product price and value	3.95	.552	High

9. Tourism Management	3.91	.535	High
10. Public Relations	3.55	.719	High
11. Other facilities	3.29	.717	High
Overall	3.85	.453	High

From Table 1, it was found that tourists with travel experience are more satisfied with travel. The overall about tourism is very high. When considering each aspect, it was found that the satisfaction was at the highest level. One of the aspects of the accommodation and satisfaction was the high level from 10 aspects. It was found that the friendliness of community owners was the highest. Secondly, natural resources and environment.

5. CONCLUSION

From this study found that there are four types of tourist attractions: natural attractions, Man-made tourist attraction, Religious sites and agricultural tourism. The potential attractiveness of tourism in this area shown that tourism support and management are at a good level. Therefore, it can offer advice on slow tourism development at District Administration Maklua Mai, Sung Noen, Nakhon Ratchasima Area as follows.

Firstly, activities designed for each trip should encourage that a longer time period be spent at the site being visited. By so doing, the tourists will be able to fully acquire mental and physical relaxation. In addition, spending a longer time period at each tourist attraction encourages the spending of additional revenues and supports the flow of money to local businesses. It is, therefore, crucial for the activities, conducted at each of the tourist attractions, to be culturally and historically diverse. Furthermore, they should encourage learning from and among the tourists because this will make it worthwhile for the tourists to spend a longer time there. The activities should also reflect the local identity and should be tempting in order to get the tourists' attention.

Secondly, the accommodations, that encourage slow tourism, should be made appropriate for slow tourists who basically stay longer than 2 nights. Therefore, the accommodations should be diversified and there should be a variety of choices, such as home stays, farm stays, guest houses, and serviced apartments. Also, hotels and resorts of different sizes should be included. A variety of accommodations can better serve the needs of the slow tourists with different economic backgrounds.

Thirdly, foods for slow tourism should be "slow foods" made from clean and well-selected ingredients. The ingredients should be obtained locally while the cooking methods and tastes should be original. Since slow foods are prepared using local ingredients, the local farmers should be respectively encouraged to produce

highly hygienic agricultural products. As a consequence, the process speeds up the flow of money to local businesses. It is also a wise way to conserve the culture of the food for the next generation.

If the clear development plans for slow tourism are implemented, it can be concluded that Thailand can become a successful and sustainable hub for slow tourism. Plans for this development should be drafted by keeping in mind the diversity of the local cultures. Most importantly, the master key is the cooperation of all stakeholders. This cooperation has the ability to unlock the successful development of Thailand's slow tourism industry so that the utmost benefits can be derived and the outcomes can be sustainable.

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