

Creative Tourism in Koh Samed: The Answer for Sustainable Tourism?

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Abstract

Tourism is very important to the growth of a country's economy as it contributes tremendously to the overall revenue of the country. Koh Samed, Rayong province is one of Thailand's key tourism destination well-known domestically and internationally.

Koh Samed faced many challenges in the past few years from the incident of oil spill at Ao Piao and the measures of the government to suppress zero-dollar tours from China resulting to the decrease of visitors' arrival to Koh Samed compared to past years. Local people living in Koh Samed agree that the tourism of Koh Samed is facing a major problem of tourists' perception toward Koh Samed. Many tourists' only recognize Koh Samed as a beach. This case study is interested to find an alternative for Koh Samed as a creative tourism destination which will not only attract more tourists' but also restore Koh Samed in a sustainable way.

This case study begins with a discussion of the new tourism model focusing on creative activities. The behavior of tourists has changed. Tourists are more interested in participating in tourism activities, in addition to visiting beautiful places. Then it will explore the potential of Koh Samed to become creative tourism destination by applying the composition of tourism management based on the concept of creative tourism management. Readers' will understand the opinions of local people in the

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area as well as views of the tourists'. The result will response to the questions' from analysts' whether or not creative tourism in Koh Samed is a solution for the promotion of sustainable tourism in the island. If it is, what kind of creative tourism activities should it be?

Keywords: Creative Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Koh Samed

การท่องเที่ยวเชิงสร้างสรรค์บนเกาะเสม็ด: คำตอบของการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืน?

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บทคัดย่อ

ท่องเที่ยวมีความสำคัญทางเศรษฐกิจต่อประเทศไทยเป็นอย่างมาก การท่องเที่ยวก่อให้เกิดรายได้มหาศาลแก่ประเทศไทย และเกาะเสม็ด จังหวัดระยอง ถือเป็นแหล่งท่องเที่ยวที่สำคัญของประเทศไทย แห่งหนึ่ง ซึ่งเป็นที่รู้จักทั้งในและต่างประเทศ ส่งผลต่อการกระตุ้นเศรษฐกิจของประเทศไทยในภาครวม

จากการนี้ที่เกิดขึ้นบนพื้นที่เกาะเสม็ดในหลายปีที่ผ่านมา ไม่ว่าจะเป็นเหตุการณ์น้ำมันรั่วที่อ่าวพร้าว และมาตรการรัฐในการปราบปรามหัวรศุนย์เรียนจากประเทศไทย ล้วน ส่งผลต่อจำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวที่ลดน้อยลงเมื่อเปรียบเทียบกับปีที่ผ่านมา คนท่องถินที่อาศัยอยู่ในพื้นที่เกาะเสม็ด เห็นตรงกันว่าการท่องเที่ยวของเกาะเสม็ดกำลังเผชิญปัญหาการรับรู้ของนักท่องเที่ยวเกี่ยวกับเกาะเสม็ดนั้นยังอยู่ในวงแคบและภาพลักษณ์เกาะเสม็ดมีเพียงเรื่องการเป็นแหล่งท่องเที่ยวชายทะเล จากเหตุการณ์ดังกล่าวจึงเป็นที่มาของกรณีศึกษาฉบับนี้ เพื่อเป็นทางเลือกในการท่องเที่ยวเชิงสร้างสรรค์ให้แก่นักท่องเที่ยว อันเป็นการกระตุ้นและพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวเกาะเสม็ดอย่างถูกวิธี

กรณีศึกษาฉบับนี้เริ่มต้นด้วยการอภิปรายถึงรูปแบบการท่องเที่ยวแนวใหม่ ที่เน้นกิจกรรมเชิงสร้างสรรค์ โดยพฤติกรรมของนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงไป นักท่องเที่ยวมีความต้องการ มีส่วนร่วมกับกิจกรรมการท่องเที่ยวเพิ่มมากขึ้นนอกเหนือจากการได้ชมสถานที่ที่มีความสวยงาม จากนั้นจะเป็นการเจาะลึกศักยภาพของพื้นที่เกาะเสม็ด ด้านองค์ประกอบของการจัดการท่องเที่ยว ตามกรอบแนวคิดของการจัดการท่องเที่ยวเชิงสร้างสรรค์ และผู้อ่านจะได้เห็นมุมมองของคนในพื้นที่ ตลอดจนมุมมองของนักท่องเที่ยว เพื่อตอบโจทย์คำถามสำคัญๆ ที่ว่า กิจกรรม

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การท่องเที่ยวเชิงสร้างสรรค์บนเกาะเสม็ด จะเป็นคำตอบอันจะนำมาซึ่งการส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืนบนเกาะเสม็ดหรือไม่ และถ้าหากว่าใช่ กิจกรรมการท่องเที่ยวเชิงสร้างสรรค์ดังกล่าวควรมีรูปแบบเช่นไร

คำสำคัญ: การท่องเที่ยวเชิงสร้างสรรค์ การท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืน เกาะเสม็ด

Introduction

UNWTO forecasted arrival of international tourists' to South East Asia will reach 535 million by 2030 (UNWTO/GTERC, 2016). The growth of air travelling is the highest compared to other regions. The increasing number of tourists' to the regions also offers an opportunity for Thailand to increase revenue since Thailand attracts more tourists with its beauty, authentic culture and cuisine, plenty of accommodation, and well-developed infrastructure. Thailand's tourism continues to grow in the year 2016. Tourism Authority of Thailand reported that the number of foreign tourists' visiting Thailand was 32.6 million brought revenue of 1.65 trillion baht in 2017, the Tourism Authority of Thailand aims to increase the tourism sector by 10 percent. It also aims to target high- quality tourists' by providing a diverse range of tourism destinations' which will give tourists' memorable experiences. It emphasizes the importance of customer experience to create word of mouth and repeatable travel (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016).

Behavior of tourists' has changed dramatically in recent years. Tourists' are increasingly demanding to participate in tourism activities, learning new cultures as well as seeking new experiences in addition to seeing beautiful places. A new form of tourism is emerging that focuses on creating a creative experience that provides opportunities for tourists' and local communities to interact with each other. Koh Samed which is located partly in Khao Laem Ya National Park has the size of about 3,125 rai of land with mixed forest and sandy beaches. The highlight is the clean white sand and beautiful scenery. Koh Samed has about 18 beaches around the island, which attract tourists' both Thai and foreign through throughout the year. Koh Samed of Rayong is ranked the fifth most visited tourist destination in Thailand among the top 10 tourist destinations in Thailand. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016).

However, creative tourism is a new form of tourism for tourism entrepreneurs in Rayong province. Most of tourism entrepreneurs are still lacking the knowledge and understanding about creative tourism. The incident of oil leak at Ao Prao of Koh Samed a few years ago together with measures to stop zero-dollar tour groups

from China affected badly on arrivals of tourists' to the island compared to past years. Locals' living in the island agreed that Koh Samed is facing challenges on perceptions toward the image of the island. Koh Samed is known in a small circle and most tourists' know Koh Samed only for its beaches. Questions' arise whether creative tourism will help Koh Samed resolve the challenges and promote sustainable tourism on the island or not. What will be a suitable way of creative tourism development to create a new image and alternative to tourists visiting the island which will create additional incomes for locals and lead to sustainable tourism development?

Characteristics of the New Segment: Creative Tourism

For the ease of understanding, creative tourism, sustainable tourism, and community-based tourism concepts and theories are presented below:

Creative Tourism

Raymond (Richards and Raymond, 2000), one of the founders of the creative tourism concept, defines “creative tourism is a tourism that allows visitors to develop their creativity through engaging in activities and learning processes in tourist destinations.”

Raymond (2000) also defines creative tourist as “creative tourists are not a typical consumer. But creative tourists are keen to get involved in the culture of the country or the community they visit”.

UNESCO (2006) defines the term “Creative Tourism” as a tourism that is linked to a community development for sustainable living. Any activity that the community offers must help the tourists' to learn about history, culture and local life harmoniously, inconsistency and enhance impressive experience.

Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration or DASTA, by Dr. Narikatipak Sangsanit, (2013) defines creative tourism as a tourism that is related to history and culture, the local way of the community and the identity of the place and it offers tourists' to learn to create a direct experience with the owner of the

culture, the local way of the community and the identity of the place. Tourism is not a main income generator of a community but focusing on showing the values of the community. The heart of creative tourism is a “real and authenticity” of the community where visitors can learn about the heritage of the area through direct experience to create understanding and appreciation of the uniqueness of the area leading to a meaningful travel where tourists’ learn something new and increase the capacity of tourists’ themselves.

DASTA emphasizes that the core of the community is ‘the value of life’. The community must focus on the ‘value’ of the community to be self-sustaining rather than the number of tourists’ visiting the area. A community which is to be sustained by offering creative tourism is a community that can preserve their authenticity and using it to attract tourists’ to visit the community to learn about the community through travel.

Creative tourism has to be based on the principle of creativity that does not imitate anyone and must demonstrate a true originality and authenticity. In addition, creative tourism must enable tourists to express their imaginations while travelling and tourists must gain inspiration and express their idea creatively. Tourists’ must gain knowledge, be inspired by the local arts and cultures. Furthermore, creative tourism must be created from ingenuity and become inventiveness. Creative tourism is owed and is an intellectual asset of the local community (DASTA, 2012).

Sustainable Tourism Concept

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2005) describes the definition of sustainable tourism as a tourism that responds to the needs of the host community and tourists’ by emphasizing on sustainable management of resources and the environment to maintain the stability of the ecosystem to be used continuously throughout in line with local culture and way of life.

ICOMOS (ICOMOS, 2002) discusses sustainable tourism as a tourism that can last a long time because it offers social and economic benefits, natural resources and cultural resources to the area.

UNWTO describes the concept of sustainable tourism development as follows. 1) Tourism activities are conducted in the capacity of nature, community, culture, and traditions of the community. 2) Awareness of tourism activities affecting the community, traditions, culture, and way of life, community. 3) Participation of local people in tourism activities which has an impact on ecosystem, community, customs, culture, and way of life towards tourism. 4) Collaboration of economy needs, the sustainability of society, and sustainable environmental conservation.

Sustainable tourism is the heart of the current tourism system. Many sectors at the global level are aware of its importance and put efforts to promote the concept of sustainable tourism. The main organization in promoting sustainable tourism is the Global Sustainable Tourism Council or GSTC (GSTC, 2016).

GSTC (GSTC, 2016) defined the basic criteria for sustainable tourism as follow;

- 1) Tourism must demonstrate sustainable tourism management.
- 2) Tourism must maximize economic benefits to the host community and minimize negative impacts.
- 3) Tourism must maximize benefits to communities, visitors, and culture; minimize negative impacts.
- 4) Tourism must maximize benefits to the environment and minimize negative impacts.

Community-Based Tourism Concept

Associate Professor Dr. Weerapol Thongma (2004) concludes that "Community Based Tourism or CBT is a tourism that considers the sustainability of the environment, society and culture. CBT is managed by a community for the community and the community possesses the right to manage tourism to provide a learning experience to visitors. Associate Professor Dr. Weerapol views that tourism must work in five areas simultaneously which are political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects and above all, tourism process must be owned and managed by community. Associate Professor Dr. Weerapol explained that learning process of CBT consists of;

1. The capacity of people. People must start at knowing their own roots to be ready to tell their story, and people in the community must be ready to learn, be harmonious and be able to work together.

2. The potential of the area. Which includes natural resources and culture, traditions and local wisdom. People in the community must know, love and cherish the value of resources in their communities. They must be able to manage resources in a cost- effective and sustainable management. The community must be ready to learn new knowledge to understand the concept of Community-Based Tourism and management in the area.

3. Management. It is not easy to maximize the benefits of tourism and the balance between sustainability at the same time. Community to be successful in managing CBT requires strong leaders who have a vision, understanding of community-based tourism and accepted by people of the community. It also requires cooperation from relevant government agencies. The community needs to discuss how to prepare for tourism, select appropriate tourism activities for their community, and distribution of income must be considered carefully for fairness. All of the above, the most important part of the community is participation, members of the community must be involved in all aspects of their collective benefits.

4. Involvement can be done through communication which is a tool for conveying one's idea, discuss problems including finding solutions to any problems by brainstorming. Based on the experience of researchers, the community provides a forum for discussion, joint planning and coordinating with various agencies to work together.

5. Create community regulations for community members and visitors to follow.

Koh Samed: Geography

Koh Samed is the largest island in Khao Laem Ya – Koh Samed National Park. It is located in Phe sub-district, Muang district, Rayong province. Koh Samed has an area of about 4,200 rai, 3,500 rai is situated in Khao Laem Ya National Park - Samet and 700 rai is outside of the park territory. Koh Samed is about 6.5 km from Ban Phe.

Koh Samed is about 6 km long, the widest part of Koh Samed is about 3 km, and the narrowest part is in Kao Nok Bay - Kiew Bay, which is about 100 meters wide as depicted in Figure 1. There are 2-3 mountains along the ridge.

The base of the island is on the north side facing Ban Phe. On the west side of the island is a high cliff and steep to the east with a curved beach creating many beautiful beaches. Most beaches are located on the north and east sides of Koh Samed. In the southern tip of the island, there are three small islands: Ko Chan, Koh San Chalarm and Koh Hin Khao. These rocky islands are uninhabited and are a spawn of the gull (Ratchaburi, C., 2006).

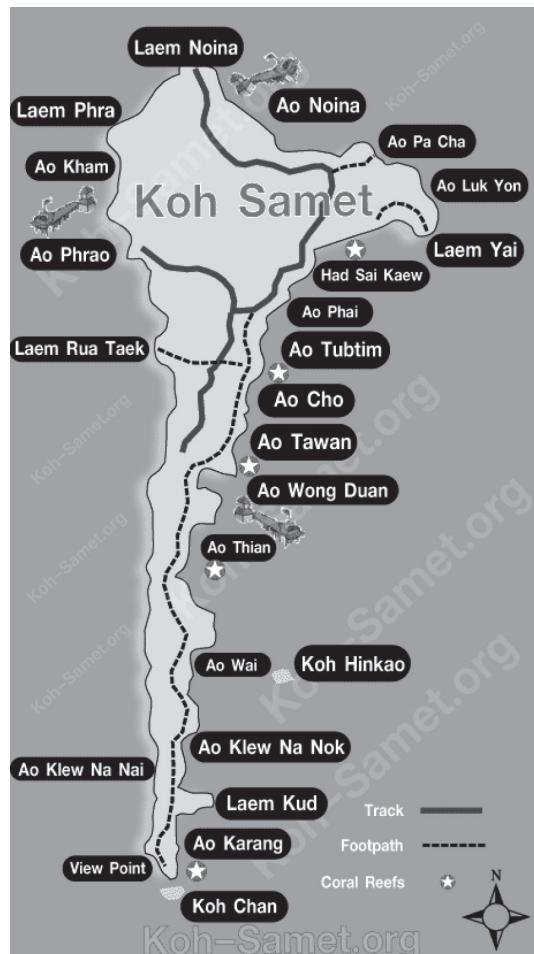


Figure 1: Geographic Map of Koh Samed

Source: www.koh-samed.org

Koh Samed received its name from the plant species that is located on the island, which is Samet White and Red Samet. In addition to the beautiful beaches, clear water, nature and tranquility, Koh Samed is also important as a tax house collecting taxes on trading ships passing through. It is located in a strategic spot in the Gulf of Thailand, trading ships between Eastern cities and countries such as China, Cambodia, and Vietnam must pass through the island. Koh Samed was visited by 3 kings of Thailand which are King Rama V, King Rama VI, and King Rama VII.

In addition, evidence shows that the island is described in Thai literature “Phra Aphai Mani”, an anthology of Thai poet Sunthorn Poo and a valuable Thai literature. It is believed that the reason Koh Samed has been called “Koh Kaew Pissadarn” maybe because of its crystal white sand beaches (Ratchaburi, C., 2006).

Boundaries

On the eastern and northern sides of Koh Samed, there are several bays and sandy beaches, starting from Ao Noina, Ao Look Yone, Hat Sai Kaew, Ao Phai, Ao Tub Tim, Ao Naun, Ao Cho, Ao Wong Duan, Ao Sang Daun, Ao Wai, and Ao Kiew. Hat Sai Kaew is the longest white and long beach with a length of about 2 kilometers.

To the west of Koh Samed is Ao Prao. The beaches of Ao Phrao will gradually tilt creating beautiful beaches. Ao Prao is recognized as the most beautiful sunset spot of Koh Samed.

The southern part of Koh Samed is Ao Pakarung (the coral bay) which has beautiful coral reefs suitable for snorkeling. There are three small islands in the southern tip of the island which are the habitat and spawn of the gull. The shoreline is a strange shape but not suitable for swimming because of the deep-water level and the whirlpool. It is a good fishing place and it is also possible to walk across the pier at the park guard unit to watch the sunset.

Population

There are 1,318 people living in Koh Samed from about 720 households and about 1,300 people are living in Koh Samed as a migrant group. Most of the

people living on Koh Samed are native islanders living by the sea in a sharing culture (Phe Subdistrict Administrative Organization, 2016).

Accommodation

Koh Samed has different types of accommodations. According to booking.com, there are 84 accommodations registered with this online booking agent. List of accommodation is listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Number of Accommodations by Category

| Type of Accommodation | Number |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Resort | 34 |
| Guest House | 24 |
| Hotel | 14 |
| Vacation Village | 4 |
| Bed and Breakfast | 2 |
| Hostel | 2 |
| Homestay | 2 |
| Apartment | 1 |
| Bungalow | 1 |

Source: www.booking.com

Facility and Public Service

Facilities and public services in Koh Samed as listed below;

1. Health promotion hospital, Koh Samed Health Promotion Hospital.
2. School, Koh Kaew Pissadarn School or Ban Koh Samed School.
3. News or audio broadcast tower or 1 one community radio.
4. Religious institute and organization, there is 1 monastic institute in Koh Samed.
5. Phe police station.

Association and Organizations

List of association and organizations in Koh Samed.

1. Beach Massage Group
2. Koh Samed Village Fund Group
3. Coral Conservation Club
4. Jet Ski - Speed Boat Group
5. Hornbill Conservation Club

Koh Samed: Concept of Creative Tourism

Based on analysis of creative tourism conceptual framework, 4 groups of activity can be identified based on creative tourism development principles suitable for the destination which are authenticity, knowledge and local wisdom, imagination or creative event and innovativeness. The activities are grouped as depicted in Figure 2 below



Figure 2: Analysis and Grouping of Activity Based on Creative Tourism Development Principle, the Area of Koh Samed, Rayong province

Source: Researcher's adapt of the area based on creative tourism concept from Tinikan (2018)

1. Authenticity

1.1 Alms Offering at the Beach

Most of the people in Koh Samed are Buddhists. On Koh Samed, there are temples and monks. In the morning of every day, monks will divide into 2 groups and walk the community to collect alms. One of the group will walk in a beach area to collect alms. There are tourists' and villagers' will wait for monks and offer alms. This is a not usual scene of alms collecting. It is a local way of Koh Samed.

1.2 Local Dish “Muek Nam Dam”

Muek Nam Dam is a local dish of Koh Samed. This menu is cooked by boiling small squid with local spices such as shallot, lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, fresh chili, spring onion and roots of coriander. Fresh squid and sweetness from spring onion increase the taste of this dish. This menu is the local wisdom of fishermen at Koh Samed.

1.3 Catch Baby Squid Using the Local Technique

Koh Samed has many shallow beaches. People can walk to the beach to catch fish by using the nets or take a small boat off the beach to spoon the fish using a simple fishing net.

2. Knowledge, Local Wisdom

2.1 Batik Making

Koh Kaew Pitsadarn School has introduced batik making to students and people who are interested. Koh Kaew Pitsadarn School is also open for visitors who are interested in learning batik techniques. This is a fun creative activity for tourists to join in to learn a local wisdom and at the end, tourists make themselves souvenirs that they can take home.

3. Imagination or Creative Event

3.1 Chao Poo Dam Festival

Chao Poo Dam is a sacred deity that people of Koh Samed worship. Leaders

in the island have initiated a tradition of Chao Poo Dam festival once a year as a sign of respect and as a time to allow people of Koh Samed to socialise. It is a creative activity for solidarity within the community and is a tourism activity that attracts people to visit Koh Samed.

3.2 Local Literature “Pra Abhaimanee”

The story of Phra Aphai Mani is an important legacy of Thai writing. There is evidence that Koh Samed is Koh Kaew Pisadarn in this literature. The community has brought the story and characters in the literature such as Phra Aphai Mani, a beautiful mermaid and the giant Phi Sau Samut to create a unique theme and identity creatively to build a remarkable landmark. Sculptures of those characters become popular photo spots and sources of word of mouth attracting many visitors' to the island. In addition, the personality of the giant Phi Sau Samut has been created into a new image and called “Mama Moot” to make a friendlier listening and a representative of the island. Koh Samed can utilize its literature creatively.

4. Innovativeness

4.1 Local Way of Life by Local Tri-wheel Truck

Local tri-wheel truck is used widely in the Island. Comfortable seats are added. The truck run at low speed and it can carry 2-3 passengers at most, therefore, it is an appropriate mode of transportation to touring Koh Samed. Moving at slow speed allows tourists to be able to enjoy beautiful surroundings of the island and allow tourists' to visit longer distance compared to walking. It is also friendly to the environment and local people. In addition, it is also safe.

4.2 Dhamma Talk and Basic Meditation

Buddhism is a way of the people of Koh Samed. The teachings of the Lord Buddha including meditation and mind training have attracted a lot of foreigners. Getting tourists' to visit the temple is a good thing. Dhamma talk with the monks is an innovative creative tourism activity that allows visitors to exchange ideas with the monks, to learn Buddhist teaching including simple instructions on meditation.

Koh Samed: Local Perspectives

Local opinion is presented through members of community and stakeholders in the area regarding creative tourism in Koh Samed. Semi-structured in-depth interview was a tool used for data collection from monks at Wat Koh Kaeo Pissadarn temple, local guru who is an expert in history of Rayong and Koh Samed, representative of Koh Samed Tourism Association, the owner of budget resort in who was born in Koh Samed, owner of restaurant, teachers of Koh Kaew Pissdarn school, owner of luxury resort and local administration officials. Data triangulation was used to test the validity and reliability of data and then analyzed by using content analysis principle to identify opinions in three different issues which are the core of this study, listed as 1) the local opinion regarding tourism situation of Koh Samed, 2) the potential for creative tourism in the area, and 3) the attitude toward creative tourism.

1. The local Opinion Regarding Tourism Situation of Koh Samed

The study shows that local people all agreed that Koh Samed is experiencing problems. Tourists' only recognize Koh Samed as a beach destination and the main problem local people see is a decline of a number of tourists visiting the island compared to past years. The major cause of the decline was the incident of oil leak at Ao Prao. "...Oil leak incident was a problem but not a very big problem. We tried not to mention the incident especially from the government side....". In regard to the government's attempt to take down zero-dollar tours from China "...it was a lot more in the past. Around 30-40% of income was from Chinese tourists. Now they do not come because the government tried to stop zero-dollar tour....".

2. The Potential to Develop Koh Samed into a Creative Tourism Destination

Koh Samed has a long history and a local guru has studied about this topic including the overall history of Rayong province and Koh Samed. "...The island has potential. I as a historian felt that people who come to Koh Samed for only beach and sea are losing a good opportunity to appreciate other aspects of the island. Koh Samed has a lot of interesting historical points. The island was visited by

many kings. What can we do to make people aware and attract them here....". School, temple and community are key elements for sustainable tourism. They are a foundation for creative tourism. School has agreed to participate in the community's activities such as a young tour guide project and other activities like batik making. A temple is a center of the community. Villagers maintain temples and community members can use temple ground for different functions.

Natural resources are still abundant. The villagers can still catch the fish by the traditional way using shallow water net. This is a charming Thai way of living; local lifestyle and the story of rare marine lives are told from generation to generation. This way of life can be interpreted to tourists'. "...yes, we are watching. If tourists' come here, they can experience things they cannot get somewhere else. Even Thai people do not know about this fish (Kau fish). Everyone wants to try it. It doesn't matter whether it is delicious or not, they only want to try it....". In addition, there are many birds live on the island such as oriental hornbills, White-Rumped shama and coppersmith barbet.

Koh Samed still carries on Boon Berg Fah tradition and the festival of Chao Poo Dam. Quote from an in-depth interview said "...in the morning, we offer alms to monks and then we will build a sandcastle. Sandcastle is a tradition that is being forgotten at Koh Samed. After that, we will place Chao Poo Dam statue on a boat and a parade of boats will visit each beach to allow people to pour holy water on Chao Poo Dam....". The events were organized by locals with support from related government offices. Not only they are the religious gatherings, but it is also a place where members of community socialize and carry on their identity. This shows that relationship among members of the island is in good condition which is an important factor for the development of creative tourism.

3. Attitude toward Creative Tourism

Informants are aware of sustainability of tourism "...we would like to be a sustainable tourism. I do not want to drag the umbrella to this point and then to get far away from the island. Now Fireball show is swept away because it spoils oil to the

water. Golf cart will be taken away next month.... ”. Whether it is environmental issues, the beauty of the beach, conservation of plants and animals, and creative activities. Informants agree with the development of Koh Samed area as a creative tourism destination. Table 2 shows a summary of key issues and opinions of local people.

Table 3 Perspectives of Local People toward Creative Tourism Development

| Issues | Findings |
|---|--|
| Local opinion regarding tourism situation of Koh Samed <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Impact on the number of tourists in Koh Samed.- Impact of conflicts on tourism in the area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Government policies, accident, incidents, and the perception of tourists affect the number of tourists in Koh Samed.- Inconsistent policy of the public and private sectors is a barrier to tourism development in Koh Samed. |
| Potential of the area to be developed into a creative tourism destination <ul style="list-style-type: none">- History- Relationships of people in the community- Natural resources- Way of living, traditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Koh Samed has a long history.- Temple, community, and school show healthy relationships.- Beautiful beaches, rich in flora and fauna.- Boon Berg Fah festival, Chao Poo Dam festival. |
| Attitude toward creative tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Creative Tourism- Sustainable Tourism | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Agree to develop Koh Samed as a creative experiential tourism destination.- Want to develop Koh Samed into a sustainable tourism destination. |

Source: in-depth interview conducted by Tinikan, 2017.

Koh Samed: Tourist's Perspectives

Tourists' reflect their opinion about creative tourism activities in Koh Samed by applying the 4 aspects of creative tourism concept. It is found that both Thai and foreign tourists are interested in activities that demonstrate the authenticity of the area. Thai tourists are interested in local food "Muek Nam Dam" at an average score of 3.53 while foreign tourists are mostly interested in alms offering at the beach.

Knowledge and local wisdom presented by the activity of Batik making attracts both Thai and foreign tourists are rated at a moderate level of 3.37 and 2.64. In terms of imagination or creative event which is reflected through Chao Poo Dam Festival, Thai tourists' rate at a moderate level of 3.45, this is reflected that the festival is important to local communities and still carry on this tradition. In the local literature aspect, Phra Aphai Mani is rated moderate by Thai tourists' at 3.45, while foreign tourists' give less importance with a low score of 2.55. This may be due to the story of Phra Aphai Mani is a local Thai literature, so foreign tourists' are not interested. In the Innovativeness aspect which is presented by offering a ride on local tri-wheel truck, Thai tourists' and foreign tourists' rate this aspect as moderately important, with an average of 3.28 and 2.86, respectively.

Overall, Thai and foreign tourists' perspective toward creative tourism at Koh Samed is at average level. Activity that Thai tourists' are interested in the most is local dish "Muek Nam Dam", while foreign tourists' are most interested in alms offering at the beach. The results' show that at present, tourists' want to travel and learn the way of life of local people. Travelling is not just for the beauty of the tourist attraction. This is consistent with the principles of creative tourism.

Conclusion: Creative Tourism in the Island of Koh Samed, will the Outcomes Lead to the Promotion of Creative Tourism in the Island? Outcomes and Recommendations

Analysis of different aspects, exploring of different tourism activities, in-depth analysis of the area capacity according to creative tourism concept and opinions of

local people as well as tourists' toward creative tourism in the island, it is founded that Koh Samed has the potential to be developed into a creative tourism destination by focusing on local way of life to create learning experience. Creative activities found are;

- Alms offering at the beach
- Local dish "Muek Nam Dam"
- Catch baby squid using the local technique, Batik making
- Chao Poo Dam Festival
- Local literature "Pra Abhaimanee"
- Local way of life by local tri-wheel truck
- Dhamma talk and basic meditation

Although Koh Samed is experiencing negative news, if suitable creative tourism activity is created to responses to the need of tourists, it is possible to attract tourists to the island again which will ultimately lead to sustainable tourism in the island. Creative tourism will attract royal tourists' who are not very sensitive to the current situation. Creative tourists' travel and feel that they are part of helping to drive good things back to society. They also share experiences with local people. It can be concluded that creative tourism is a form of tourism and a mechanism to solve problems for Koh Samed sustainably.

Local stakeholders' participation is key to the guidelines and strategic plans appropriate for the management of creative tourism to the area of Koh Samed. Local community, accommodation operators, restaurant owners, transport providers, government offices and Koh Samed Tourism association must have a platform to express their opinions, so they will feel the ownership of creative tourism activities. Outstanding creative activities must be promoted to raise awareness of the visitors and the younger generation of the island to protect the knowledge. In conclusion, creative tourism is a form of tourism suitable Koh Samed and it is a mechanism to promote sustainable tourism for the island.

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