



Takua Pa Old Town: Potential for resource development of community-based cultural tourism management

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Abstract

Takua Pa Old Town is an old community in Phang-nga Province of Thailand where there is cultural heritage as it was a port and a tin mining area resulting in its civilized identities left to be seen today. This article is a report of qualitative research conducted through SWOT analysis investigating potential of the area for storage of data on cultural resources that could lead to relevant community-based cultural tourism planning. The study found that the strengths of Takua Pa were historical resources and community participation. However, the weaknesses identified were development of local people on the management of community based tourism. Its opportunities were found to be with the provincial strategic plan and new tourist routes while its threats are in terms of buildings, rules and regulations for tourists. The potential for tourism could be developed based on its community identities through creative design of activities, establishing groups, developing local and state policies leading to effective use of resource base for highest benefits.

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Introduction

The 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017–2021) contains a 20-year national strategic framework (2017–2036) targeting the country's sustainable development goals (SDGs), the Thailand 4.0 policy, and digital economy (DE). Regarding tourism, the aim is for Thailand to be a preferred destination to increase revenues from tourism at the same time as to move towards sustainability by strengthening the gross

domestic product through the Thai way of life based on local experience to generate and distribute income (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017). Thailand can stimulate the economy through tourism by empowering local areas and conserving old towns which are considered new economic innovations.

Another important element of tourism is management leading to development that requires preparation on the part of the community moving towards community-based tourism. Tourism development requires community potential analysis to see its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Several studies related to development of community-based tourism have been found. A SWOT analysis and related strategies found that yacht tourism was one of the most important niche tourism types with high income and sustainable

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development. Moreover, they found that potential evaluation had to include strategic aspects to estimate and interpret development to increase revenues from tourism. According to Khlaikaew (2015) on cultural tourism management under the context of world heritage sites: stakeholders' opinions between Luang Prabang Communities in Laos and in Mueang-kao (old town) communities in Sukhothai Province of Thailand, the study found that stakeholders' participation played an important role on following rules and regulations governing world heritage sites, learning to make creative tourist maps of the town, creating and improving tourism activities, as well as planning, and evaluating them.

Analysis covering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats could help develop rural tourism through internal and external resources as well as solving problems and developing tourist attractions. The study stated that potential based on resources was necessary in the search for sustainable development of rural tourism. The researchers of this current study decided to conduct this study on Takua Pa Old Town because the way of life in this old town is linked with its past and history, faith and beliefs, and outstanding rituals. Resource development begins with a process of community participation, cultural capital, artistic and cultural strengths. Knowledge and shared social experiences are managed through development practices, along with management in business and tourism development. This covers tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources. SWOT analysis will lead to the demonstration of potential that can be driven further by using the community's cultural base to be utilized as a key role of sustainable development.

Methodology

This qualitative research investigated the resource base for use in SWOT analysis to find out potential of Talat Yai Community and Senanut Rangsan Community in Phang Nga Province for community-based cultural tourism management

Participants

The interview form was constructed from information of the research given by nine key informants consisting of tourism policy forming persons, committee members of and residents of the community.

Data Collection

Data collection used focus group and in-depth interview. The topics for the interview were about resources that could drive community potential for community participation in tourism management. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and triangulation technique was adopted.

Data Analysis

The information and data obtained from the interviews were categorized according to the objectives of the study and descriptive analysis was performed to present relevant and complete data.

Results and Discussion

The potential of Takua Pa Old Town was explored in terms of cultural heritage and historical sites in the area. They were then categorized and proposed for use in decision-making, planning, follow-up and evaluation for developing as future tourist attractions. In exploring the potential for development as cultural tourist attractions, SWOT analysis was used in order to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In the development of tourism services and places to accommodate tourists, groups should be formed, and targets should be estimated, for which situation analysis was performed by surveying internal and external environments as follows.

1. Internal environment analysis—the results of internal environment analysis that could affect tourism development could be classified into strengths and weaknesses as follows.

1.1 “Strengths” of resource-based tourism

1) Historical resource-based strengths—Takua Pa Old Town has outstanding cultural capital, resource capital, social capital and economic capital that indicate both its tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The town is located on a beach with mangroves. In the past, it was a port with many ethnic groups of traders and merchants. Moreover, it was so prosperous with tin mining at its peak that it was called “the gold mine of the South”. It is a “cultural route” linking cultural dynamics in this area where the concept of nostalgia proneness could be used in developing its ability to help manage nostalgia of individuals who yearn for the past in their personal life (Holak & Havlena, 1992) that have become community culture giving importance to development of belief as concealed foundation of faith in moving forward (Sirasuntorn, 2013).

2) Strengths of participation in activities—In tourism management, management of the government sector and management of the people sector are important basic components that can change with its dependency situation giving most people true power (Pearse & Stiefel, 1979). Participation through “oral history” upgrades and changes meanings and methodologies; it is a tool of collective identity, creates history of the community using community attitudes for revival. According to Boissevain (1974, 1979) relationships in the network are social reflections of individuals which are diversity of linkages or multiplexity. Adopting policy and driving local management should be from bottom-up to top-down with emphasis on the locality and local people. Expanding local tourist attractions based on cultural heritage is beneficial to the management plan. Additionally, making tourist routes that link to nearby districts or provinces is an expansion of the tourism network.

1.2 “Weaknesses” of potential for tourism management

1) Weaknesses of standards of local products and identities —Presenting the image, identity, projecting outstanding products and packaging were still the main issue of the community. Fisher (1989) referred to the concept of creative media that man has history, culture and storytelling, and whether it is education or communication, storytelling is essential. Another concept to consider is by Vengesai (2003). According to this concept, tourist attractions need coordination in terms of factors increasing community ability to attract tourists and attractive supplies to give the tourist attraction a brand. It can be done, for example, by upgrading local foods and local costumes to show local images. Takua Pa Old Town still lacks outstanding memorable images and standards of local products that could be developed as the image of the city (Lynch, 1960). Images or mental images of the historical buildings and grounds, places or areas that are unique to the town can be perceived and remembered by tourists. Foucault (1975) pointed out that repetition could result in knowledge that could be used and could later become technology according to the concept of power in development principles.

2) Weaknesses in establishing groups—There were no groups on management and suggestion in tourism, and thus, there were no group leaders at present. There was a lack of tour guides or a group of youth to be developed or trained to be tour guides. Moreover, there was a lack of budget for promotion and support for tourism which resulted in no regulations for tourist to follow and no regulations concerning facilitating tourists.

There were no programs and no activities for tourists to do, and as a result, there were no guided tours in this old town. In working as a group, group members must have the same goal in their designated roles, responsibilities and assignments (Sirasuntorn, 2013). This enhances the work atmosphere leading to problem-solving with cooperation and to developing with participation. Furthermore, emphasis should be put on importance of efficiency, equality, and people power targeting true benefits for the community (Eversole, 2012).

2. External environment analysis—the results of external environment analysis that could affect tourism development could be classified into opportunities and threats as follows.

2.1 “Opportunities” of potential for tourism management

1) Opportunities to be included in the strategic plan—The development target of Phang-nga Province until the year 2021 reveals that outstanding natural resources and agriculture are upgraded to be promoted as eco-tourism. Thus, the government should have a policy that strengthens different aspects of the economy and promote local tourism as well as create opportunities and promote cultural tourism. Learning society should be promoted based on local resources that could upgrade and increase tourism in Phang-nga Province. Gidden (1987)’s concept describes interactions in everyday life as could be used in an unlimited way which is the right. These are identities widely open to others who are members of the community leading to sustainable development. Richards (2011) stated that strategic relationships between tourism and different local markets and economic combination with creative industrial promotion could strengthen tourism and increase the number of tourists. Takua Pa Old Town is an area with opportunities that could be promoted to support tourism as an occupation that enables Phang-nga to be a town of happiness.

2) Opportunities to create new tourism routes—Zeppel and Hall (1992) specified that tourism is traveling with a desire to have experiences and learn about diverse landscapes. Therefore, a tourism route should be created to make tourist attractions convenient to visit and for tourists to have experiences and gain knowledge. Hence, tourism routes should be linked with the routes where the community is located and where local people live to increase potential of the community for tourism. Another way to increase the potential is to make a development plan to expand tourism to nearby districts to expand and distribute consumption such as expansion to Khura Buri, Kapong, and Thai Mueang districts, etc., with Takua Pa as the core of development of the networks linking the

existing areas with new ones. Development is a concept on creative tourism that allows tourists to participate in activities which can create and increase a “charming atmosphere” in the areas (Richards, 2010).

2.2 “Threats” to tourism management

1) Threats of population mobility— It was found that people living there were mostly elderly people because young people have moved out to work. As specified by the modernization theory, development must link with the marketing system, and changes of culture and economy are required for such development (Marx, 1977). As a result of young people moving out to work elsewhere, there were problems concerning recruitment of local youth to work in the community. Because of a lack of economic stability, migration has taken place because self-build is necessary. Weber (1976) stated that economic regulations with specific characteristics are one of several key factors for social development behind the capitalist economic mechanisms in the modern world.

2) Threats of building protection—Building protection management or architectural conservation is based on a civil society concept with emphasis on social capital. However, Drucker (1989) stated that in the modern world, the emphasis should be on the role and participation of people. Buildings and building complex in Takua Pa Old Town have not been properly protected, and people in the community can still utilize, renovate, and modify them any way they want to. Even the zone that has been designated as the old town by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning since 2013, has not been protected. This covers people in the community with clear zoning but without clear regulations. Conservation of old towns can be carried out according to the concept of Ray and Anderson (2000), who are in the core cultural creative group of social movement to play a role and reflect sustainable conservation.

3) Threats of COVID 19 pandemic—The pandemic is having an impact on every business sector especially in tourism due to the nature of social gathering, social contact and leisure activities (Chang, McAleer, & Ramos, 2020). According to the research by Chang et al. (2020), the tourism and hospitality sectors are sensitive and vulnerable to significant shocks or external shocks such as the COVID 19 pandemic. In order to prepare for such threats, the Agile tourism strategy is suggested for the context of Takua Pa community. A quick community can respond and adapt, which will help to reduce the negative impact. For its tourism policy, the results of the SWOT analysis revealed that potential development required support from various sectors in upgrading local culture to be included in tourism. We strongly believe that

a community is a social unit that needs to adapt and to be supported in this modern age. In addition, personnel power is important and should be included in the operation plan even though it is a burden of risk (Checkoway, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Management and increased ability in community-based cultural tourism management must have a common beneficiary. According to Brinkhorst and Dekker (2009), tourism is informal networking that can link environments and experiences in different periods of time. Furthermore, Urry (2002) stated that facilities not only support tourism but also the economy. The study also found that the main factor affecting tourism management as found from potential analysis was development that could affect wellbeing. Similarly, Dredge, & Jenkins (2003) found relationships among physical and mental factors and the environments of the community. However, we found that the government sector should prepare for tourism in Takua Pa Old Town in terms of personnel, policy and strategic plans. This is because if there is a lack of concrete operations, it will affect administration, and tourism could be affected only in the short term while the community would miss benefits in the long term.

Good “capital” is not only about the economy but also society, and culture is a true foundation of policy on sustainable development. We propose that potential of the community for development of cultural tourism should aim at value of history, which is the root of the community. Moreover, it should be based on the learning process with participation of local people (Siri, 2017). One data collection process using tourism as a tool for sustainable tourism as pointed out by The World Tourism Organization (2013) is to use it to designate tourist destinations covering mass tourism and niche tourism. Tourism management must be appropriate to local areas leading to conservation based on potential of the community. The results of potential analysis of Takua Pa Old Town, which was the target community, revealed data presented in the following analysis table. After SWOT analysis, TOWS Metrix was used to present the potential and ability, as presented in [Table 1](#) below.

Ensure preservation in driving cultural tourism of the community from the SWOT analysis, resulting in an increase in capacity. Give support to the current tourism industry to be able to adapt to the situation. The results of this study should be beneficial for potential analysis based on community development to identify strengths in important capital in the community through participation

Table 1 Analysis table of potential for community-based cultural tourism management

External factors	Internal factors	
	Strength	Weakness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity of culture - Adaptation - Cultural heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group in order to create unity in the long term - Group in the development of extra income - Product development
Opportunities	SO	WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Old Town with Tourism City - Develop Culture area with Research area - Develop Cultural Mapping - Develop Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and support local products as local identities - Develop local income distribution as preparation for population expansion - Develop historical data to be in written form and promote knowledge in various languages - Develop and strengthen administration concerning government policy to make it more efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve access to technology and develop personnel for tourism - Improve awareness and activities that promote natural resources with emphasis on youth - Improve decentralization of the government sector and make it correspond to the people sector - Improve local information base to make it cover more areas
Treats	ST	WT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covid-19 situation - Recovery from the situation - Policy and management of conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasize on preparing a place for community health care to reduce the spread of the epidemic - Emphasize expansion of innovation and technology that is accessible to people - Emphasize promotion of youth's awareness in local conservation to sustainable development - Emphasize principles of old town development specific to the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote use of technology and innovation for benefits and added values of tourism - Promote Capabilities of the community to support the new normal of tourism, and correct health - Stimulate training for personnel to practice with community participation - Stimulate forming of conservation groups and representatives for local development

processes of the community in sharing experiences. Development depends on internal and external environments based on resources to identify local historical value for tourism management as proposed in the following recommendations.

Recommendation

Cultural resource management for policy in the curriculum with emphasis on the community with youth as the core in driving it and in learning to realize and to make it a learning center to prepare administration for local personnel to be able to organize activities and to strengthen the people sector as the base for the policy on local income distribution. Also, practice, explore and restore the use of regulations and practice local resource-based tourism to upgrade local resources to be learning resources for the community and tourists. Conduct participatory action research to develop ability of the community in tourism management.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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