

Awareness, Attitudes, and Behaviors towards the Environment and the Management of Historical Tourism Resources of Muang Wiang Sa Community

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1) to study awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources of Muang Wiang Sa Community 2) to study the relationship between the awareness, the attitudes and the behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources. The sample of this study consisted of 382 people selected by Cluster (Area) Random Sampling technique. The instruments used in this research were: 1) close-ended questionnaire with a five-level rating scale on the awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards the environment and the historical tourism resources, and 2) open-ended questionnaire on the opinions towards the management of historical tourism resource of Muang Wiang Sa community. Mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation (SD), and Pearson's product moment correlation were used to analyze the data.

The findings indicated that: 1) the overall of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors of the sample were found at high level (Mean = 3.70). The highest average level was awareness (Mean = 3.98), followed by behaviors (Mean = 3.57), and attitudes (Mean = 3.54), respectively, and 2) the awareness had positive relationship with attitudes and behaviors towards the environment and the

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management of historical tourism resources ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.01$) and the attitudes and behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources were significantly and positively correlated at the level of 0.01.

Keywords: Historical Tourism Resources, Environment, Muang Wiang Sa Community

Introduction

Tourism resources are very important in the tourism industry because they are attractive to tourists and visitors. It is recognized that the tourism industry has a strong focus on the use of resources. Therefore, tourism development should take into account the utilization of available resources to maximize the value and benefits. Sustainable tourism management needs to emphasize and promote the balance of the environment, culture and tourism resources that are important and directly relevant to the community and people in the area (Kosol and Suttawet, 2014). Thailand has various travel destinations, such as natural attractions, historic sites, historical attractions, cultural attractions, arts, culture and customs inherit for many generations. Over three decades, community-based tourism has been promoted in local communities to

develop the social, environmental and economic needs through offering of a tourism product (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009). Community-based tourism is an alternative for tourists, who want to visit or to experience and learn the lifestyle of the community and allow people to be more aware of the value of tourism resources and assets in the community. Many communities can develop their community's reputation along with tourism. They have a strong management to accommodate the growing number of tourists. However, many communities have not been able to drive tourism in their communities, due to lack of knowledge and lack of participation in community tourism resource management.

The tourism industry plays an important role in generating revenue for the country and stimulating the economy of the country. The Thai government is

aware of the importance of the tourism industry. Hence, the tourism development plan is included in the National Economic and Social Development Plan. Many Local communities in Thailand obtain a profitable business from tourism industry and use tourism to develop and empower their communities, increase income, reduce poverty, and enhance the quality of tourism resources (Jinhirun and Kamnuansilapa, 2013) focusing on promoting sustainable tourism and services industries by building a solid natural resource base and having the sustainable environment. Muang Wiang Sa Community, a district of Surat Thani province, has high potential in tourism. The community is aware of the benefits of tourism development that tourism can generate income, create jobs and improve the quality of life in the community, as well as sustainable self-reliance.

Tourism is considered as a tool for community development to make the community stronger. However, tourism requires a lot of

tourism resources. The use of lavish natural resources regardless of the outcome and lack of good management will result in a reduction of natural resources and tourism resources in the community. Moreover, the environment will be deteriorating. Therefore, the villagers have to take part in the development of their own community tourism. They also have to pay attention to the management of natural resources and the environment around them. Motivation, accurate understanding, and educating are needed regularly to make people aware and behave properly in the management and conservation of the environment, to create a consciousness needs to cooperate, conserve, and solve the environmental problem seriously. This will result in people taking part in managing their existing resources appropriately and sustainably (Praneetham and Leekancha, 2015). Therefore, the researchers were interested in studying awareness, attitudes, and behaviors in management of environment and historical tourism resources of Muang Wiang Sa Community. The data and

results obtained from this study can be guidelines for planning to prevent and improve the environment and the historical tourism resources for sustainable tourism.

The Purposes of the Research

1. To study awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources of Muang Wiang Sa Community.

2. To study the relationship between the awareness, the attitudes and the behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources.

Research Methodology

1. Population and Sample

The population in this study was 8,127 villagers of Muang Wiang municipality in Surat Thani province, Thailand. The sample of this study consisted of 382 people selected by the Cluster (Area) Random Sampling technique.

2. Instruments and Data Collection

The close-ended

questionnaire with a five-level rating scale on the awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources, and the open-ended questionnaire on the opinions towards the tourism management of Muang Wiang Sa community were used as a tool for data collection. The reliability was determined by the Cronbach's Alpha while the reliability test of the whole questionnaire was 0.91. The data were analyzed to answer the research questions.

3. Data Analysis

Means, frequency, percentage, standard deviation (SD), and Pearson's product moment correlation were used to analyze the data.

Results of the Study

The respondents of this study were 382 participants. There were 239 female with 62.60% and 143 male with 37.40%. The ages were between 41 - 50 years old with 34% and most had education at Bachelor level with 31.2%. Most of villagers were engaged

in agriculture, gardening, and fishing as their main occupation with 44%.

Table 1. Results of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards environment and management of historical tourism resources of Muang Wiang Sa Community.

Variables	Mean	SD
Awareness	3.98	0.79
Attitudes	3.54	0.41
Behaviors	3.57	0.64
Total	3.70	0.61

From the table 1, it showed that overall of the awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources of Muang Wiang Sa Community were found at

“good” level (Mean= 3.70, SD = 0.61). The highest average level was awareness (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.79), followed by behaviors (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.64), and attitudes (Mean = 3.54, SD = 0.41), respectively.

Table 2. Results of awareness towards environment and historical tourism resources.

Variables	Mean	SD
1. The community is rich in natural resources.	3.93	0.79
2. The community has a way of life and local wisdom.	3.80	0.93
3. The community has historical and cultural attractions.	4.20	0.84
4. The community is equipped with utilities.	4.29	0.80
5. The community has easy access to transportation.	4.17	0.89
6. The community has a sustainable way of living and using natural resources.	3.85	0.82
7. The community has a local philosopher or sages who know about local wisdom or history of the community.	3.97	0.83
8. The community has activities to study the way of life	3.67	0.90

Variables	Mean	SD
and local knowledge.		
9. The community has activities to study the history and culture of Muang Wiang Sa.	3.79	0.85
10. The community is not far from the hospital.	4.03	0.91
11. Environmental awareness should be raised for everyone.	3.85	0.95
12. Everyone in the community must be involved in the conservation of natural resources and the environment.	3.88	0.91
13. The environment around us is vital to life.	4.19	0.88
14. Everyone should use materials made from nature instead of the use of synthetic materials such as foam.	3.93	1.10
15. Forest destruction causes drought in communities and causes global warming.	4.13	1.14
Total	3.98	0.79

From Table 2, the study results showed that overall of the awareness towards the environment and the historical tourism resources were found at “good” level (Mean= 3.98, SD = 0.79). The highest level was the community is equipped with

utilities (Mean = 4.29, SD = 0.80), followed by the community has historical and cultural attractions (Mean = 4.20, SD = 0.84), and the environment around us is vital to life (Mean = 4.19, SD = 0.88),

Table 3. Results of attitudes towards tourism, environment and historical tourism resources.

Variables	Mean	SD
1. Tourism contributes to the conservation of natural resources and the environment.	3.88	0.88
2. Tourism makes the way of life of the people in the community better.	3.95	0.85
3. Creating a community as a tourist attraction will help promote the career in the community.	4.02	0.87
4. Community development as a tourist attraction will help increase the income of people in the community.	3.97	0.93
5. Tourism will increase the cost of living in the community. **	3.52	1.01
6. Tourism makes the community more employable.	3.75	0.96
7. Tourism causes conflict in the community. **	3.64	1.13
8. Tourism has contributed to the growth of the community such as improving roads and infrastructure.	3.93	1.00
9. Tourism helps people in the community learn between tourists and people in the community.	3.87	0.84
10. Tourism causes the disturbance in the community. **	3.62	1.17
11. Tourism causes land prices in the community higher. **	2.23	0.95
12. Tourism causes more waste. **	2.40	1.06
13. Tourism changes the way of life and values of local community. **	2.63	0.97
14. Training and educating people in the community is a guideline for rehabilitation and conservation of community resources.	3.86	0.86
15. Tourism gives the community a sense of privacy in local customs and culture.	3.91	0.96
Total	3.54	0.41

Notes. ** Negative items had been converted the average of information in the same direction as positive items.

From Table 3, the study results showed that overall of the attitudes towards tourism, environment and the historical tourism resources were found at “good” level (Mean= 3.54, SD = 0.41). The highest average level was the creating a community as a tourist attraction will help promote the career in the

community (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.87), followed by Community development as a tourist attraction will help increase the income of people in the community (Mean = 3.97, SD = 0.93), and Tourism makes the way of life of the people in the community better (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.85), respectively.

Table 4. Results of the behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources.

Variables	Mean	SD
1. People in the community participate in solving problems of natural resources and environment of the community.	3.71	0.92
2. People in the community are involved in the development of the community environment.	3.80	0.89
3. People in the community to protect the environment for next generations.	3.90	0.82
4. People in the community preserve the identity, traditions, culture, and wisdom of the community well.	4.05	0.83
5. People in the community bring recycled materials to use again.	3.34	0.84
6. The government participates with the community in developing community attractions to ensure safety during sightseeing.	3.52	0.88
7. People in the community are involved in improving information systems and outreach.	3.57	0.79

Variables	Mean	SD
8. The community has organized training sessions on tourism and environmental situation of the community.	3.31	0.85
9. The community collaborates together with the government to develop community tourism.	3.48	0.78
10. People in the community participate in organizing community tourism activities.	3.56	0.84
11. Government sector and the community are involved in create and develop the historical attractions routes and maps.	3.54	0.78
12. The community enhances community tourism activities.	3.57	0.74
13. People in the community sorts the waste separation before disposing of.	3.28	0.85
14. People in the community have proper disposal of waste, such as drop the food waste into the bucket, do not throw it away in the streets.	3.58	0.88
15. People in the community are involved in improving waste and sewage disposal systems.	3.34	0.78
Total	3.57	0.64

From Table 4, the study results showed that overall of the behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources of Muang Wiang Sa Community were found at “good” level (Mean= 3.57, SD = 0.64). The highest level was participants in the community preserve the identity,

traditions, culture, and wisdom of the community well (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.83), followed by participants in the community to protect the environment for next generations (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.82), and participants in the community are involved in the development of the

community environment (Mean = 3.80, SD = 0.89), respectively.

Table 5. The relationship of the awareness, the attitudes and the behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources

Variables	Attitudes	Behaviors
Awareness	.759**	.656**
Attitudes		.465**

Notes. **Significant Level at .01

From Table 5, the result showed that the awareness had positive relationship with attitudes and behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.01$) and the attitudes and behaviors of the villagers towards the environment and the historical tourism resources were significantly and positively correlated at the level of 0.01.

Opinion of Respondents on the Tourism Management of Muang Wiang Sa Community

The respondents gave comments and suggestions related to problems and obstacles to the management of tourism of Muang Wiang Sa Community as the following.

- Tourism has both good and bad parts, such as increasing revenue. Moreover, tourism can cause the disturbance among people in the community. Garbage will increase. However, tourism in the community should be promoted because it can increase the employment growth.

- Tourism helps people in the community earn and reduce poverty. There will be a trade in the community.

- The government sectors should help to develop tourism seriously and consistently clarify to the people of the community.

- Tourism may cause more waste but this problem people in the community should have a way to deal with it.

- Community lacks readiness and harmony in the community for tourism management.

- Lack of support and promotion from related government agencies.

- Local government agencies do not actively cooperate in promoting community tourism.

- Lack of publicity about the historical attractions of the community.

- Lack of budget, lack of communication, lack of participation and public relations.

- Youth should be cultivated to love and cherish historical attractions and settled in the community.

- The government sectors and the community should cooperate and develop the ancient city and promote the historical attractions of Muang Wiang Sa.

Discussion and Conclusions

The finding indicated that the sample had a high level of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards tourism resources and environment.

Awareness and attitude had relationships with behaviors towards the environment and the management of historical tourism resources. This is consistent with the research of Praneetham and Thathong (2012) found that the attitude and behavior towards environment of the sample had positive relationship significantly at 0.01 level (Correlation = 0.389). That means if a person has a good attitude towards environment, he will behave appropriately in conserving natural resources and environment as well.

The study showed that people in the community maintained the identity, traditions, culture and wisdom of the community as well. They engaged in environmental preservation for later generations, community development and participated in solving problems of natural resources and environment of the community. Hunnark (2016) mentioned that people in communities should be encouraged to understand and aware of intellect, values of handicrafts, traditions, cultures

and simple way of life which are based on the community context in order to preserve the environment in historical sites nearby.

The study revealed that Muang Wiang Sa has valuable historical and cultural attractions and tourism resources. The community has potential in the tourism business. The sample believed that community development as a tourist attraction would help promote the profession and increase the income of people in the community. The way of life of the people in the community can be improved and the community will be developed as well. The community should be promoted as a new historical and cultural attraction. Therefore, historical tourism plan for sustainable tourism should be developed and implemented. Mattra and Buatham (2017) mentioned in their study that the tourism promotion needs the cooperation of all sectors; the government sectors, the private

sectors, the local people, and tourists in all aspects to have the same idea in the right direction and to improve activities and cooperate with activities that do not negatively affect the tourism. Praneetham (2017) stated that cultural tourism affects tourism behavior for environmental conservation while traveling. This may due to the cultural tourism allows tourists to learn the way of life, understand society, culture, lifestyle, and community, create a good experience to appreciate and want to preserve the environment and beauty of the tourist attraction.

Recommendations

It was found in the result of the study that awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards the historical tourism resources and environment had the relationship. Hence, it is needed to enhance good awareness and attitudes on the importance to tourism resources and environment issues, to know how to help solve these problems that can contribute to environment and tourism resources

conservation and sustainable tourism development. Both public and private sectors along with the community should collaborate and help to develop and promote the historical tourism of Muang Wiang Sa Community.

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