

ฉันทาคัยอยู่ในจุดหมายปลายทางการท่องเที่ยว ประเภทเกาะ: มุมมองของเด็กในวัยเรียน

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจการรับรู้ของเด็กเกี่ยวกับความพึงพอใจในชีวิตที่ได้รับผลกระทบจากการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวประเภทเกาะและการสนับสนุนการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวประเภทเกาะ บทความนี้มุ่งเน้น

การศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพโดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์แบบมีโครงสร้างภาษาไทยในการเก็บข้อมูล และผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลักถูกเลือกโดยใช้การสุ่มตัวอย่างตามความสะดวก จำนวนเด็กที่ได้รับการสัมภาษณ์รวมทั้งสิ้น 40 คน ใช้การวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหาในการแปลผลการศึกษา ผลการศึกษาพบว่า สิ่งที่เด็กชอบเกี่ยวกับการท่องเที่ยว ได้แก่ ทรัพยากรการท่องเที่ยวในภูเก็ต ความเป็นมิตร และการต้อนรับของชาวภูเก็ต ข้อกังวลหลักของเด็ก ได้แก่ ผลกระทบทางลบด้านสิ่งแวดล้อมและด้านสังคมและวัฒนธรรม การพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวประเภทเกาะส่งผลกระทบต่อตรงในเชิงบวกต่อสถานะการเงินของพ่อแม่และสุขภาพทางวัตถุของเด็ก และสำหรับการสนับสนุนการท่องเที่ยวประเภทเกาะนั้นเด็กยืนยันว่าพวกเขาสนับสนุนแต่พวกเขาไม่ต้องการให้มีการเพิ่มจำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวในเกาะภูเก็ตอีกต่อไป

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I am living on an island tourist destination: Perceptions of School-Age Children

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine island tourism development impacts on children's life satisfaction and their support for island tourism development. The paper applied the

qualitative research methods, using the structured interviews in Thai language for data collection. Convenience sampling method was used for key informants' selection. Total of 40 children informants were interviewed. The content analysis was used to facilitate the interpretation of study results. The findings revealed the children's preferences for the tourism resources in Phuket, friendliness and hospitality of Phuket locals. Their major concerns were the negative environmental and socio-cultural tourism impacts. The island tourism development was shown to directly and positively affect the monetary status of their parents and their material well-being. Island tourism development significantly increased children's and their families' satisfaction with living in Phuket. To support island tourism on the island, the children affirmed that Phuket should not increase the number of tourists any further.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, Support for island tourism, Tourism impacts

Introduction

Island tourism significantly contributes to the development of recreational facilities and economy of many destinations, which suits the needs of both hosts and visitors. Natural and man-made resources are important for recreational activities, as well as commercial pursuit and development. Across the world, tourism is considered as the spearhead for economic growth and enhancement of the locals' health and quality of life (Alaeddinoglu, Turker, & Can, 2016; Yang, Ge, Ge, Xi, & Li, 2016), especially in the small island destinations (Conlin & Baum, 1995).

The island tourism is defined as the occurrence of relaxation-based tourism (Swanson & Cavender, 2019) on specific geographical spaces of the island, which influence tourism facilities establishment and environmental upgrading (Yang et al., 2016). Given the consequences of tourism development, the island tourism creates both benefits and costs on the destination's economy, socio-culture and environment (Croes, Rivera, & Semrad, 2017; Yang et al., 2016). These changes impact the locals' quality of life and well-being (Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013) as well as their attitudes (Swanson & Cavender, 2019). Therefore, it is important to understand the local hosts' attitudes towards the island tourism development.

Many small islands are the important tourist destinations (Ridderstaat & Nijkamp, 2016; Tirasattayapitak & Thammajak, 2019), including Phuket Island, Thailand. Phuket island is in the

Andaman Sea with the total area of 576 square kilometers, and the largest island province of Thailand. Phuket has been famous for tourism industry for over 30 years, mainly due to its natural resources. Tourism in Phuket has seen a dramatic increase, recording 3.5 million tourist arrivals during the first quarter of the year 2018. Of all visitors, Phuket received 2.1 million international arrivals that accounted the significant growth at 28% compared to the previous year (Hotelworks, 2018). With its staggering growth, tourism development in Phuket is similar to other destinations, both island and mainland, which witness both benefits and negative effects for the local communities.

School-aged children are the future adult hosts who are, and will be affected by island tourism development as adults. Google scholar database search results in insufficient studies precisely examining children's perspectives towards tourism when their community is a tourist destination (Canosa, 2014; Canosa, Graham, Wilson, & Wray, 2015), the small islands' children's views of the impacts of tourism on their lives, their sense of well-being, life satisfaction, and support for tourism development (Carpenter, 2015; Kim et al., 2013; Poria & Timothy, 2015; Tirasattayapitak, Chaiyasain, & Beeton, 2015; Tirasattayapitak & Thammajak, 2019). In addition, many adults often overlook children and young people under 18 years old as residents and ignore their views (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). It is therefore

interesting to observe and understand the children's perceptions in tourism development context, their life satisfaction and support for tourism (Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo, & Alders, 2013), as they are members of the communities (Gamradt, 1995) which will enable future success of tourism development. Therefore, this paper tries to bridge the gap and examine the children's support for island tourism development. The paper addresses the fundamental questions associated with the objective of this study, including the children's views towards their life satisfaction affected by island tourism development, and the children's views towards the support for island tourism development.

Literature review

1. Life satisfaction impacted by tourism development

For decades, the popular research topics among scholars includes the hosts' perceptions of quality of life related to tourism impacts (Kim et al., 2013; Liang & Hui, 2016; Rivera, Croes, & Lee, 2016; Yu, Cole, & Chancellor, 2016) and the relationship between tourism development and overall life satisfaction from the locals' perspectives (Kim et al., 2013, Rivera et al., 2016). Known as the smokeless industry, tourism provides the good living standards (Alaeddinoglu et al., 2016), economic improvement, infrastructure and superstructure development (Yang et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the local hosts change their perspective of tourism

to be negative when tourism creates environmental degradation, socio-cultural problems (Liang & Hui, 2016; Nunkoo & So, 2016), and child abuse and exploitation (Curley, 2014; Tirasattayapitak & Thammajak, 2019).

Life satisfaction is one form of well-being (Armenta, Ruberton, & Lyubomirsky, 2015), defined through a range of terms such as quality of life (Kim et al., 2013; Pham, Andereck, & Vogt, 2019), happiness (Filep & Deery, 2010), and wellness (Voigt & Pforr, 2014). Furthermore, overall life satisfaction is a positive function that embraces all aspects of an individual's life such as physical health, psychological well-being, and social well-being (Dolnicar, Yanamandram, & Cliff, 2012). The life satisfaction or so-called quality of life comprises five domains of material well-being, community well-being, emotional wellbeing, and health and safety well-being (Kim et al., 2013). The satisfaction of material well-being is affected by cost of living, income and employment. Community well-being is concerned with aspects of community life and settings, usually comparing the local community with their neighbors. Emotional well-being includes leisure well-being and spiritual well-being, while the health and safety well-being involves factors influencing the achievement and maintenance of physical fitness and the quality of life based on the living conditions that promote mental and physical health, connectedness and resilience (Kim, 2002). The economic, socio-

cultural, and environmental tourism impacts commonly affect the sense of well-being of the hosts in the community (Aziz, Muslichah, & Ngah, 2018). The life satisfaction in the tourism destination is positively influenced through the tourism benefits (Pham et al., 2019), which in turn fosters the support for tourism development (Rivera et al., 2016, Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). Concerning the robust connection between the personal benefits obtained from tourism development and the sense of well-being, the sense of well-being in life domains is considered as a significant predictor of children's life satisfaction and their support of island tourism in the future.

2. Support for tourism development

Development of tourism creates several economic, socio-cultural and environmental changes in the life of host community (Alaeddinoglu et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2016; Liang & Hui, 2016; Nunkoo & So, 2016). The changes that are seen as most favourable by the locals are the ones that relate to the economic benefits (Stylidis, Biran, Sit, & Szivas, 2014). Being aware of the local people's support towards tourism development can empower policy-formulation and help diminish potential negative impacts of tourism development, while boosting its benefits. This is particularly important for communities' development and support for tourism improvement in developing countries

(Thetsane, 2019). Local people who stay in tourism-host communities and their attitudes directly affect tourism developments in their respective areas, which further contribute to a word-of-mouth encouragement for tourism support. Therefore, the involvement and the participation of the host communities are highly relevant to the achievement of the tourism development (Hai & Alamgir, 2017).

Local residents' support for tourism development stimulates the vitality of tourism industry and effective local community developments (Stylidis et al., 2014). Accordingly, it is in the highest interest of the tourism industry and tourists that local residents have an optimistic consideration and positive involvements with tourism development. The study done on local residents' support for tourism development impact and quality of life perspective within the rural communities of Orange County, Indiana, United States of America, has inspected positive and negative tourism impacts and tourism-related community quality of life as well as local residents' support for tourism development. The results disclosed that both sociocultural and environmental benefits and negative effects influenced this local community's living experience, and quality of life in the community stimulated local residents' support for tourism development (Yu, Cole, & Chancellor, 2018).

Research methodology

This paper reports the qualitative data extracts from the mixed method research study ‘Views of school-age children towards sense of well-being impacted by island tourism and support for tourism: A case study of Phuket Island, Phuket Province’. The paper relied on the qualitative method to explain the children’s perception of island tourism development. The study established more general conclusions about children and island tourism development in the context of developing countries. A specific area of that study was discovering ways to enhance life satisfaction and support for island tourism, of which children are a significant component.

1. Population, sample sizes and sample techniques

The population for this qualitative study were children studying in secondary schools in Phuket (Phuketwittayalai School, Sateephuket School, Kathuwittaya School, and Muangtalang School) at level 1-6, and age 12-18 years old. The study primarily predetermined 30 key informants in each school, which were selected using the convenience sampling method. To lessen the bias during the interaction between the researchers and the children, the researchers communicated with children to assure that their involvement in the project was voluntary and anonymous. In addition, children were encouraged to voice and

give their personal point of views as truthfully as possible (Padsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Padsakoff, 2003). The interviews were conducted until no new information was found and the data saturation was reached. Therefore, the total number of children informants was 40. Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the researchers fortified the increased attention on specific ethical issues of doing research with the children, such as harms and benefits, informed consent, privacy, confidentiality of their views and offering a small token after the completion of the individual data collection process (Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson, & Fitzgerald, 2013).

2. Research tool

This study employed the structured interview questions. The interviewed questions involved the children's likes and dislikes related to tourism, their views of the life satisfaction impacted by island tourism development, and children's support for island tourism.

3. Data collection

The children were informed about the research and the consent for the study was obtained. During the process of data gathering, the child was under the observation of a school teacher, but without interference or disruption. Moreover,

researchers were experienced enough to provide the appropriate care and direction to the children, in order to help them express their opinions and in safe surroundings (Graham et al., 2013). In addition, the children were accordingly protected from all forms of exploitation in the processes of study and dissemination of information (Beazley, Bessell, Ennew, & Waterson, 2006).

The convenience sampling for the individual structure interview was conducted. The primary data was collected in the direction of cross-sectional approach. The interviews were recorded and transcribed at the end of the day. In addition, the secondary data was collected from studies of relevant documents.

4. Data analysis

The content analysis method was used to evaluate gathered qualitative data and facilitate the interpretation of study results. The study reports the results in content descriptions.

Results

1. Demographic profile of the children-informant

The 40 school-age children, comprising 8 males and 32 females, were interviewed until the data saturation was achieved. The majority of informants were living with both father and mother, except six children living with mothers and the other four

living with grandmother, a sister, an aunt and a friend. Fourteen children indicated that their parents worked in tourism industry, including hotels, Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited, travel agents, tour operators, driving taxi at Patong Beach, driving tuk-tuk in town area and selling goods to tourists. The other children's parents did not have occupations related to tourism. Most children used the southern dialect to communicate with family members and friends while some used the common national language. The interview results expressed both similarities and differences of children's opinions towards the issues of study. In this report, informants are left anonymous and "IC" indicates a child.

2. Children's views of the likes related to tourism

The children expressed their likes towards tourism. Typical positive views included resources in Phuket, friendliness and hospitality of Phuket locals, as well as the positive tourism impacts. The examples of children's likes are detailed in the following statements:

"I like when tourists visited the Phuket Old Town and they asked me some questions about the buildings, thus helps me to practice my language skill." (IC 2)

"I like tourists' culture. Also, the economics of Phuket is good." (IC 4)

“The variety of people and their culture make Phuket more lively to live.” (IC 12)

“I like European tourists because they are more civilized than other nationalities. I want many tourists visiting Phuket. Phuket locals are also friendly.” (IC 19)

“Public transportation in Phuket is more convenient and improved. Tourists can get around Phuket more easily.” (IC 39)

3. Children’s views of the dislikes related to tourism

The major concerns of the children were the negative tourism impacts caused by island tourism development, especially environmental and socio-cultural impacts. The children’s dislikes were voiced in the following sentences:

“Certain business owners provide tourists poor services. Some tourists used to attack me when they disputed.” (IC 2)

“Poor communication with the locals and lack of good understanding in Thai culture cause them inappropriately and roughly behave to the locals.” (IC 3)

“I dislike the unfriendliness of tourists very much. I smiled to them but they ignored. The garbage in Phuket is increasing in relevant to the increasing number of tourists.” (IC 4)

“Some tourists behave inappropriately. It is not a good example for children here. The foreigners invest in tourism industry. They get money but we lose our resources.” (IC 14)

“The illegal actions by foreigners and the government cannot watch over.” (IC 6)

“Lots of pubs and bars as well as tourists’ improper behavior and show-off are not good for Thai children and youth.” (IC 7)

4. Analysis of children’s views towards life satisfaction affected by island tourism

The study also cross-examined the children’s views towards their life satisfaction affected by the island tourism development. Their views on this issue were different from the study results obtained from questionnaires. Twenty-two children strongly confirmed that the island tourism development directly and positively affected the monetary status of their parents and their material well-being in terms of house, money, mobile phones, air-conditioner, car and motorcycle. Sixteen children considered that the tourism development has the partial effect on their families’ livelihood, while two children evaluated no effect of the island tourism development on their sense of well-being. The majority confirmed that tourism helped improve their living conditions. Different opinions were conferred:

“My material well-being is not completely effected by tourism because my parents’ income does not come from tourism.” (IC 4)

“Certainly, island tourism has significantly developed Phuket. An influx of the migrant workers from other provinces move in Phuket.” (IC 9)

“I think there is a direct effect because tourists come to buy drinks from my Mom’s shop.” (IC 19)

“Possibly affects the financial status of my family. My Mom sells houses. If the foreigner buys her house; she will earn more income.” (IC 34)

“Yes, certainly. My Mom works in the hotel. During the high season, she will earn more income if lots of tourists check in at her hotel.” (IC 37)

“Tourism generates both benefit and cost. In the positive way, tourism improves the economics of Phuket. However, tourism also impacts Phuket in a negative way because of crowd. So chaotic.” (IC 14)

Of all key informants, only 3 children mentioned that tourism had no effect on them and their families living happily in Phuket, while the majority (37) mentioned that island tourism development significantly increased theirs and their family happiness with living in Phuket. Nonetheless, all children concluded that island tourism development overall does good for them and their family. The different views were detailed:

“What I seriously concern is the alienate workers not tourists. Tourists come for holiday. They do not cause the crime here.” (IC 20)

“Yes, I am already so happy to live in Phuket. When tourists come, I can learn their culture and exchange the Thainess with them.” (IC 24)

“No, I don’t think that our happiness is concerned with island tourism.” (IC 33)

5. Children’s views towards issues related to the support for the island tourism development

The children were further asked about the issues related to the support for the island tourism development. Regarding the future increase in the number of tourist arrivals to Phuket, 20 children affirmed that Phuket should not increase the number of tourists to any further extent because Phuket already receives the high influx of tourists all year round. On the contrary, other 18 children favored seeing Phuket welcome increasing number of tourists, while two remaining children informants also desired the increase in tourist arrivals, but with the volume control. The reason why almost half of the informants preferred an increase in tourist arrivals on the island was that they mainly wanted the positive economic impacts for the locals. All children agreed that more rules were strongly required to manage island tourism in

Phuket. The main rules they deemed as required were control and improvements in issues related to road safety, traffic, littering and nature conservation. The interesting views are noted:

“The Chinese tourists do not care about the cleanliness. They litter everywhere and they do not know how to respect others. We should set more rules to control their behaviors.” (IC 2)

“I want to see the effective penal codes for the foreigners.” (IC 5)

“The dress code should be enforced when tourists visiting the cultural attractions of Phuket such as in the area of Phuket Old Town and Chalong Temple.” (IC 17)

“Dos and Don’ts in Thailand must be regularly emphasized and publicized to tourists in order that they will understand.” (IC 35)

The children were also interviewed regarding their support for island tourism development. When asked about working in tourism industry after graduation, 15 children did not want to work in tourism industry due to their desires to become engineers, policemen and healthcare providers, while some mentioned fears of their poor English proficiency. In addition, the other 25 children wanted to have occupations related to tourism. The occupation preferences included tour guides, aviation related jobs, working in travel service companies and hotels:

“I want to work in hospitality industry as a receptionist in hotel.” (IC 2)

“I want to have a job similarly to my Dad. I prefer to work in a hotel.” (IC 5)

“I want to work like my Mom. She is responsible for safety and security of tourists at the airport.” (IC 7)

“I want to be a tour guide. I love English.” (IC 13)

“I want to have my own small resort or homestay.” (IC 16)

It is worthy to note that all children were willing to promote and support island tourism development in Phuket. The types of support the children would provide were noted as introducing attractions and Thai culture to tourists, ban littering and drugs selling to tourists and keep the beaches clean:

“I am willing to support tourism to be expanded and developed in the less developed areas of Phuket. I want to introduce people tourist attractions.” (IC 1)

“I want to promote Phuket-local culture.” (IC 3)

“I want to get involve in traffic management in Phuket, especially dealing with the Chinese.” (IC 10)

“I want to be a volunteer to collect garbage on the beach and in the sea as well as organize the exhibition to promote tourism.” (IC 28)

“I am willing to support tourism in any matter and any role because it is not only good for me but also for other Phuket locals.” (IC 29)

Discussion

School-age children informants in this study were 12 to 18 years old. They were acknowledged as active society participants with the right to have a say in any matter that disturbs them. The children held their own perspectives on any matter, similarly to other respondents, regardless if their opinions were deemed correct or incorrect (Ben-Arieh, Casas, Frønes, & Korbin, 2014). Based on the children’s right as children and future adults (Mitchell & Borchard, 2014), they were considered influential in having an active voice in the accounts (Canosa, 2014). Therefore, when it came to discussion of research results, the theoretical rationale to support discussed issues of children was almost identical to that of adults.

The children expressed their positive views regarding the tourism resources in Phuket and the hospitality of Phuket locals. These views signified the children’s sense of pride and appreciation over their community’s natural and socio-cultural environments and could be a prerequisite of their support for tourism (Meimand, Khalifah, Zavadskas, Mardani, Najafipour, & Ahmad, 2017). Furthermore, the children seemed to realize the

positive economic impacts of tourism through the job opportunities. These employment prospects were direct benefits (Alaeddinoglu et al., 2016) that enabled the children to have positive attitude on tourism and to support its development (Untong, Kaosa-Ard, Ramos, Sangkakorn, & Rey-Maqueira, 2010). On the contrary, the children expressed their dislikes regarding negative environmental and socio-cultural tourism impacts (Alaeddinoglu et al., 2016; Liang & Hui, 2016; Nunkoo & So, 2016). As commonly stated in other studies, when the hosts had negative perception of tourism impacts, they would be in conflict with the tourism development (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Hence, the children perceived the effects of island tourism development on their lives as a meaningful influence on their well-being and overall life satisfaction (Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). The more positive the perceptions of tourism effects in children were, the greater their satisfaction with the community, leisure, health and safety (Yu et al., 2016; Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016). Currently, the island tourism development on Phuket Island had reached the extent of the development stage of the tourist area evolution (Butler, 2004; Beritelli, 2019). This high development caused many school-age children the displeasure about the living circumstances and the tourist-host social exchange (Ap, 1992). This could be also supported that children who lived in communities inside tourist areas for a lengthy period of time were

more negative regarding tourism development (Meimand et al., 2017).

The good quality of life of hosts, likely leading to the support of tourism development, was a consequence of the positive overall life satisfaction in their wellbeing (Dolnicar, Lazarevski, Yanamandram, 2013; Woo et al., 2015). The children strongly insisted on establishing more rules in order to better control negative impacts. Tosun (2000) argued that one of the limitations in implementing tourism-related regulations and policies for communities in developing countries was the lack of appropriate enforcement of rules and regulations. The children did consider that one of the important things for a destination is to take strict regulative measures to protect both natural and cultural resources of local people. Indeed, as they were still the young children, an increase in number of rules and regulations for tourism management could possibly be perceived by them as more-effective means to better control ill-behaved tourists and undesirable tourism activities that they encountered from time to time in any area on the island.

Implication and contribution of the research

In a highly tourism-dependent community like Phuket, the children's quality of life may be more affected by the positive benefits of tourism and they may overlook the real costs,

especially when the island destination is at the development stage. This study assists the community authorities and tourism policy-makers to pin down the factors that affect the children hosts' life satisfaction, including the likes and the dislikes related to tourism, which will sequentially increase their support for island tourism development. The community authorities and tourism policy-makers may need to approach the island tourism development more cautiously and sustainably. At the same time, if the island tourism is studied in isolation of children, the understanding of the phenomenon may be partial and incomplete. In addition, the research about children as hosts and tourism is an under-explored area. There is a high need to include the children's opinions both in future tourism research and island community planning in order to strengthen socially sustainable host communities.

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