

Policy Models on the Development of Intellectual Capital and Creative Economy to Strengthen Tourist Attractions in the Lower Northeastern Province, Thailand

Dasarinpat Suthamdee ¹ , Chinnawat Chueasraku ^{1*} 

¹ College of Politics and Governance, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

* Corresponding Author, chinnawat.c@msu.ac.th, © Authors

Article history:

Received Date: May 18, 2024

Revised Date: October 17, 2024

Accepted Date: October 28, 2024

Keywords:

Policy Models,
Intellectual Capital,
Creative Economy,
Tourist Attractions

Abstract

Due to Thailand's abundant natural resources and rich cultural heritage, it presents a significant opportunity for further investigation into policy models aimed at enhancing intellectual capital and promoting the creative economy to elevate tourist attractions within the "Nakhon Chai Burin provincial group". The objectives of this study were twofold: firstly, to explore the relationship between intellectual capital and the creative economy in the enhancement of tourist attractions within the Nakhon Chai Burin provincial group, and secondly, to devise a policy model for the development of intellectual capital and the creative economy to uplift tourist destinations in this provincial group. This research employed qualitative methodologies, including documented research methods, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions, to gather and analyze data. The findings were presented through analytical and synthetic means, with interpretative inductive conclusions drawn from the results. The research findings unveiled significant relationships between intellectual capital—encompassing human, relationship, and structural capital—and the creative economy, leading to the enhancement of tourist attractions within the Nakhon Chaiburin provincial group. Notably, a statistically significant positive correlation was observed between these variables and the upgrading of tourist destinations in the Nakhon Chaiburin provincial group. Various factors pertaining to the development of intellectual capital and the principles of the creative economy were identified as influential in the enhancement of tourist attractions within this region. These factors encompass human capital elements, relationship capital dynamics, structural capital components, and concepts intrinsic to the creative economy. Policy models designed to foster intellectual capital development and promote the creative economy for the advancement of tourist attractions in the Nakhon Chaiburin provincial group were delineated as follows: firstly, the promotion of human capital factors through initiatives aimed at nurturing talent, enhancing skills, fostering adaptability, bolstering communication proficiencies, cultivating interpersonal relationships, and nurturing effective leadership; secondly, the promotion of relationship capital factors, entailing activities such as public relations endeavors, promotional campaigns, and the establishment of local networks; thirdly, the encouragement of structural capital development, emphasizing the establishment of clear objectives, the cultivation of a culture of collaborative effort, and the enhancement of operational efficiency; fourthly, the advocacy for integrating the principles of the creative economy into operational frameworks, with an emphasis on fostering innovation and uniqueness. Consequently, it is imperative to prioritize the preservation and cultivation of elements related to intellectual capital and the creative economy to optimize the efficacy of upgrading tourist attractions within the Nakhon Chaiburin provincial group.

Introduction

The 2nd National Tourism Development Plan (2017-2021) articulates the vision for Thai tourism in 2036 as aiming for Thailand to become one of the world's premier destinations for quality tourism, characterized by balanced growth grounded in Thai cultural identity. This vision aims to foster economic and social development while ensuring equitable income distribution across all sectors in a sustainable manner. Key strategies outlined in the plan include the conservation and restoration of tourist attractions susceptible to degradation, the management of tourist capacity, the cultivation of environmental consciousness, and the promotion of cultural sustainability, all while upholding and safeguarding Thai identity, traditional values, and local wisdom. However, various environmental factors and changing contexts, both domestically and internationally, present risks to this vision. These include the liberalization of the economy, the challenges posed by new technologies, and the societal transition to an aging demographic. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2019 further exacerbated these challenges, resulting in a severe contraction of global tourism due to restrictions on international travel. Consequently, the number of foreign tourists visiting Thailand has seen a significant decline over the past decade.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the number of foreign tourists entering Thailand plummeted from 6,692,775 in 2020 to just 106,117 in 2021 (January – October), marking a staggering 98% decrease compared to the previous period. However, in contrast to international tourism, revenue from domestic tourism in secondary cities witnessed a notable increase of 24.91% in 2021 compared to 2020. This surge can be attributed to a blend of cultural diversity, Thai traditions, and local customs that create unique experiences for tourists. Consequently, Thai tourists have shown

a heightened interest in exploring tourism opportunities in secondary cities during this period. In response to the decline in international tourism and the growing emphasis on domestic travel, the government has implemented measures to support and stimulate tourism among Thai nationals. These measures include initiatives such as the "Traveling Together" campaign, backed by 1,500 million baht, and the "Pansuk Tourism" initiative, supported by 2,400 million baht. While these initiatives aim to promote domestic tourism on a broad scale, they do not specifically target the resolution and revitalization of the tourism sector and its associated businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The northeastern region of Thailand spans an extensive area of approximately 160,000 square kilometers, constituting half of the country's landmass. Within this region lie several provinces, including Nakhon Ratchasima, Chaiyaphum, Buriram, and Surin, which share similar lifestyles and cultural characteristics. These provinces boast a diverse array of tourist attractions, such as sites imbued with the legacy of Khmer civilization, encompassing religious and ancient landmarks that span across all four provinces. Additionally, the region offers opportunities for ecotourism and sports tourism, among other pursuits. Despite its rich offerings, Thailand's northeastern region continues to grapple with a relatively low influx of tourists. Moreover, a notable segment of tourists visiting the region fails to contribute effectively to the tourism sector's economic growth (Kanok Boonsak, 2018). Moreover, currently in Thailand, tourism is a strategic issue for the country's economic development, which is considered a creative economy. Tourism has been included in the National Economic and Social Development Plan in the form of creative tourism activities, focusing on social development that emphasizes the creation of virtues and ethics, reducing social inequality, and linking to a creative economy,

especially in the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan. (2023-2027) which focuses on a creative economy that promotes the production of goods and services by leveraging comparative advantages, utilizing cultural tourism resources. This presents a great opportunity to promote creative tourism as a sustainable model for the development of Thai tourism (Thiranont, S. & Soponjaratsakul, P., 2016).

Given the aforementioned significance, there arises a necessity to undertake a correlation study to explore the influence of each component of human capital, structural capital, and relational capital on sustainable tourism within the "Nakhon Chaiburin Provincial Group." This examination encompasses both direct and indirect impacts facilitated through the intermediary role of the Creative Economy. This framework enables the creation of diverse tourism activities aimed at enticing various categories of tourists to explore the region. Furthermore, it advocates for the promotion of creative and cultural tourism by orchestrating Thai arts and cultural events to distinguish the area and allure visitors. Additionally, it supports tourism models that foster connectivity between communities and the tourism sector via the Creative Economy, thereby enhancing the potential of local human resources to drive sustainable and innovative community-based tourism development. This approach is anchored on the preservation of natural resources and the environment, alongside the promotion of social and community identity, arts, culture, and the sustainable management of tourism resources.

Research Objectives

1) To investigate the correlation between intellectual capital and the creative economy concerning the enhancement of tourist attractions within the Nakhon Chaiburin Provincial group.

2) To formulate a policy model aimed at

fostering the development of intellectual capital and the creative economy to uplift tourist attractions within the Nakhon Chaiburin Provincial group.

Literature Review

1. Concepts of Public Policy

1.1 The Meaning of Public Policy

From the study of concepts related to public policy, it is found that scholars have provided interesting definitions of public policy. For example, Ira Sharkansky (1970, p.1) defines public policy as activities undertaken by the government, encompassing all activities of the government. Dye, Thomas R. (1984, p.1) Public policy is what the government chooses to do or not to do. The part that is done encompasses all activities of the government, both routine activities and activities that occur on certain occasions.

Anderson, James E. (1994, p. 5-6) Public policy is a course of action or conduct that has several components, including the practitioners or a set of actors who are responsible for addressing social issues. The clear objective is to achieve specific outcomes, not merely what the government intends to do or proposes to do. This distinguishes clearly between policy and government decisions, which is a crucial issue in comparing competing alternatives, as noted by scholars from Thailand.

Vorathepputhipong, T. (1993, p. 2) stated that public policy is a course of action by the government with specific objectives, either one or several, to solve current problems, prevent future issues, and achieve desired outcomes.

In summary, public policy is considered a tool that the government uses to set the direction and guidelines for societal development. These directions or guidelines may originate from the initiatives of the government, the private sector, or the public. The process of creating good public policy must involve participation from all relevant parties in society, working together by

policy, implementing those policies, monitoring the results, and reviewing public policy to continuously improve and develop.

1.2 The Importance of Public Policy

From the meaning of public policy, which is characterized by the government's intention to use it as a guideline for the development of the country and its people, the author has summarized the importance of public policy as follows: Public policy serves as a framework for the management of government affairs to solve problems for the public. This is because public policy affects various aspects of people's lives, such as public health policy, education welfare, taxation, foreign trade, immigration, civil rights, environmental protection, local government expenditures, and national defense. Additionally, public policy acts as a compass for the work of government officials, who adhere to it as a guideline. Public policy specifies what actions, how, and when relevant government officials must take to align with that public policy.

In summary, public policy is considered the most important part of government administration because it is related to the government's intentions from the time of election campaigning to the announcement of policy statements. Moreover, public policy itself is significant in terms of the development of the country in all aspects.

2. Intellectual capital (L. Edvinsson, and Malone, 1997)

Intellectual capital encompasses the intellectual content and cognitive processes, comprising knowledge, information, intellectual property, and experiential insights, which are inherently challenging to articulate directly from the mind (Edvinsson, 1997). It represents a valuable but often elusive resource; once identified and effectively harnessed, it can confer a distinct competitive edge upon organizations (Bontis, N., 1996). This form of capital aggregates human expertise,

structural resources, and experiential wisdom deployed within organizational frameworks, thereby furnishing entities with a foundation for competitive advantage, reputation enhancement, and sustainable competitiveness (Roos & Roos, 1997). Moreover, intellectual capital is construed as the culmination of individuals' developmental endeavors aimed at leveraging their potential to generate income autonomously (Stewart, 2010). Consequently, intellectual capital can be delineated as a reservoir of knowledge, information, and expertise rooted in community or local wisdom. It emerges from the process of knowledge transformation and is disseminated through intellectual endeavors, furnishing communities or localities with the capacity to cultivate competitive advantages and generate income autonomously. Utilizing their professional competencies and technological acumen, individuals within these communities or localities forge meaningful relationships with clientele, thereby fostering sustainable competitive dynamics.

2.1 The composition of Intellectual capital

Based on the pertinent literature review concerning intellectual capital, the constituent elements of intellectual capital can be delineated as follows: Human capital, Structural capital, and Relationship capital (Sveiby, 1997).

2.1.1 Human Capital pertains to the capacity of individuals to act effectively across diverse contexts, generating both tangible and intangible assets (Sveiby, 1997). It stands as a primary dimension of intellectual capital, representing the boundary of cognitive competency (Curado et al., 2011). Human capital may be construed as the economic value intrinsic to human resources, encompassing individuals' abilities, knowledge, ideas, skills, innovation, energy, and resolve to fulfill their responsibilities and create value toward accomplishing organizational objectives (Schermerhorn, 2005).

2.1.2 Structural Capital constitutes an integral facet of intellectual capital, cultivated by organizations to convert human capital, an intangible asset, into virtually tangible capital. It encompasses assets such as patents, concepts, models, computer systems, and administrative frameworks (Sveiby, 1997). Serving as a foundational infrastructure, structural capital comprises systems, procedures, and processes that enable employees to function effectively (Bontis, N., 2002). It encompasses all facets of organizational structure that facilitate employees' capacity to generate wealth for the organization and its stakeholders. Structural capital assumes paramount importance as it encompasses internal systems that underpin wealth creation within the organization (Zablah et al., 2004).

2.1.3 Relationship Capital denotes the network of relationships between an organization and its customers and suppliers (Sveiby, 1997). This external form of capital holds significant relevance for organizations, encompassing relationships with external entities such as customers or business associates (Hardeep et al., 2013). These relationships play a pivotal role in organizational success by fostering collaboration, trust, and mutual benefit between the organization and its external stakeholders.

In summary, Human capital encompasses both tangible (physical) and intangible (non-physical) assets, with their assessment necessitating a measurement model grounded in individual capabilities. Structural capital embodies the organized knowledge within a system and encompasses the value derived from an organization's entire network of relationships with its external environment. This includes applied expertise, corporate technologies, customer relations, and professional competencies, all of which contribute to establishing a competitive advantage in the market (Edvinsson & Malone, 1997). Additionally, Intellectual capital encapsulates the entirety of an organization's knowledge repository, as articulated in the works of Bontis (1999) and Bontis et al. (2002).

3. Creative Economy Concept

The creative economy represents a burgeoning sector within the global market. Hawkins (2010) utilized the creative ecology theory to examine human creativity and creative prowess. Within this framework, creative ecosystems are conceptualized as conduits wherein diverse individuals systematically and adaptively express themselves, utilizing ideas to engender novel concepts. Hawkins (2007) introduced the concept of creative development, underlining three pivotal conditions:

Amplified Personality: Creativity may not invariably stem from individual ingenuity alone; collaborative efforts can foster creative development.

Originality: This facet emphasizes improvement upon existing similarities, delineated by two key attributes:

3.1. Novelty denotes concepts that are absent from the creator's previous repertoire, although they need not be entirely unique.

3.2. Uniqueness signifies creations that diverge from prior manifestations, thereby possessing inherent novelty.

3.3 Significance: Products must not only exhibit creativity but also distinguish themselves from other commodities, thereby establishing a unique identity and imbuing the product with meaningful value.

In essence, the creative economy amalgamates intellectual capital, knowledge, communal identity, and diverse skill sets to foster innovation. This integration facilitates commercial diversification, resulting in value creation and maximal economic output. The creative economy encompasses transactions associated with the creation of goods or outcomes, each embodying two complementary values: the intangible worth of intellectual property and the tangible value of the service provider or platform, if applicable. Notably, certain industries prioritize the valuation of intellectual property over physical assets.

4. Concepts for enhancing tourist attractions

Jitthakhanwattana, B. (2005, p. 9) Factors affecting the development of tourism management. Members of the World Tourism Organization adhere to sustainable tourism development, which means that all stakeholders in tourism should protect the natural environment to achieve economic growth fully, continuously, and sustainably, in order to meet the needs and aspirations of both current and future generations equally. Additionally, it points out that all forms of tourism development that lead to the conservation of valuable and scarce resources, especially water and energy, as well as the avoidance of waste production as much as possible, should be prioritized and promoted by countries, regions, and local public organizations.

Therefore, the key issues for reform or development must aim to ensure that Thai tourism is of high quality and sustainable, to enhance the efficiency of tourism management by the government, private sector, and communities. This will impact tourism development and increase the country's competitiveness in tourism. The approach should follow the guidelines presented by the National Reform Council (2015, pp.1-12) to achieve the goals of tourism development. It is advisable to propose three reform and development issues: reforming the vision of tourism development, restructuring tourism management, and enhancing competitiveness. This is expected to lead to economic growth, reduction of environmental and social issues caused by current tourism development, income distribution and development, reduction of inequality, strengthening of society, and reduction of conflicts through sustainable learning and development.

5. Sustainable Tourism

Tourism serves as a pivotal mechanism for satisfying the contemporary demands of travelers, while concurrently ensuring the preservation of resources for future generations (Weaver, 2006). Sustainable environmental management within the tourism sector necessitates the establishment of realistic and measurable objectives pertaining to energy consumption, waste generation, resource utilization, renewable energy adoption, and recycling initiatives (Kapiki et al., 2012). This approach advocates for tourism practices that cater to the needs of both tourists and local communities, while safeguarding environmental integrity for posterity. Consequently, the tourism industry assumes a critical role within the global economy, generating economic dividends for localities, fostering the growth of the creative economy, bolstering small and medium-sized enterprises, and engendering employment opportunities on a large scale. Additionally, tourism promotes the economic advancement of developing nations (Robin, Pedroche, & Astorga, 2017; Boluk, Cavaliere, & Higgins-Desbiolles, 2019; Batle, Orfila-Sintes, & Moon, 2018).

Sustainable development, as conceptualized by Brundtland et al. (1987), entails the pursuit of development that fulfills present needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to fulfill their own needs. This paradigm aligns economic growth with social advancement and environmental stewardship (Brundtland et al., 1987), as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1*Sustainability Dimension (Purvis et al., 2018)*

Research Methods

There are three distinct groups of informants involved in this study. The first group comprises government officials in tourism and academics specializing in tourism management. The second group consists of community leaders and residents residing within the Nakhon Chai Burin Provincial group. Lastly, the third group pertains to tourists visiting the aforementioned four cities.

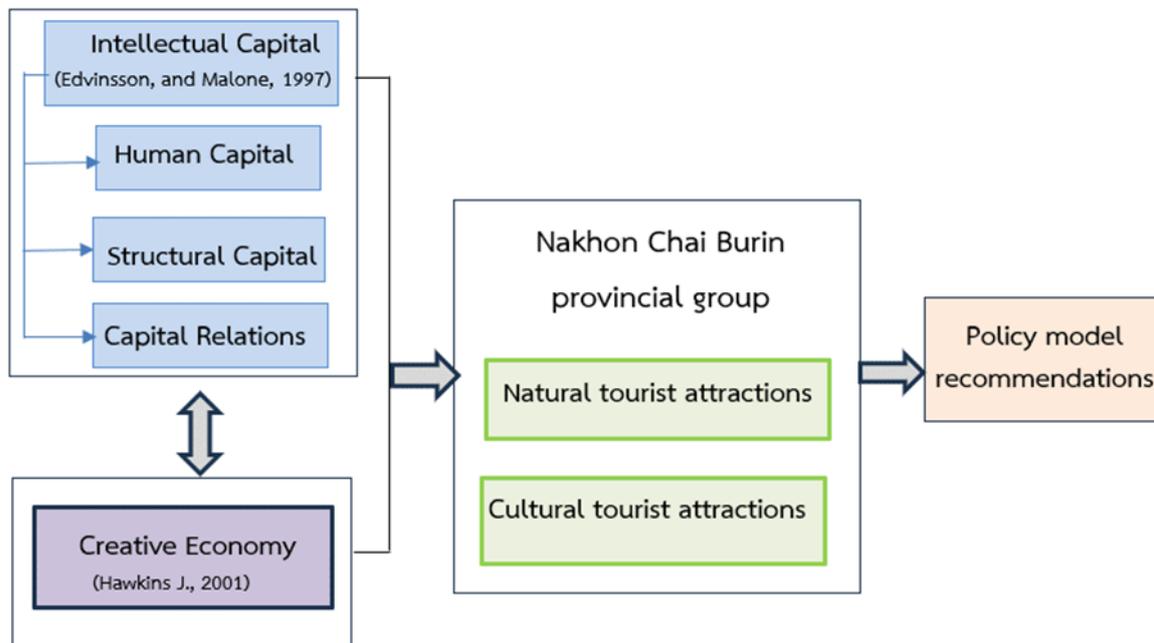
Qualitative data collection methods entail conducting in-depth interviews with representatives from each of the three aforementioned groups. Specifically, interviews are conducted with government officials in tourism and academics engaged in tourism management, community leaders, and residents of the Nakhon Chai Burin provinces, as well as tourists visiting

the region. The focus of these interviews centers on exploring concepts related to intellectual capital (e.g., human capital, relationship capital, and structural capital) and the creative economy (e.g., privacy, imperfection, and significance). A total of 24 individuals participate in these interviews, comprising eight government officials and academics involved in tourism management, eight community leaders and residents of the Nakhon Chai Burin province, and eight tourists visiting the region. The aim of these interviews is to analyze both the internal and external environments, delineating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges within the community. Additionally, participants are encouraged to propose strategies for promoting tourism within the Nakhon Chai Burin Provincial group.

Figure 2*Nakhon Chai Burin provincial group*

The map of Thailand delineates four provinces highlighted in purple, denoted as the Lower Northeastern Provinces, comprising Nakhon Ratchasima, Chaiyaphum, Burin, and Sisaket, collectively recognized as the Nakhon Chai Burin Provincial group. The 4 provinces

shown in the map of Thailand are highlighted in purple, namely the Lower Northeastern Provinces consisting of Nakhon Ratchasima, Chaiyaphum, Burin and Sisaket, also known as Nakhon Chai Burin Provincial group.

Figure 3*Conceptual Framework of the study*

Results

From in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with experts involved in the development of tourism management in the lower northeastern provinces group, using purposive sampling methods, including 1) two representatives from tourism site management in the lower northeastern provinces group, and 2) representatives from the office of Tourism and Sports Group of Lower Northeastern Provinces, 2 representatives; 3) Tourism Academics, 2 representatives; 4) Cultural Academics and Local Politicians, 2 representatives; 5) Representatives of Natural and Cultural Tourism Operators, 2 representatives; and 6) Representatives of the Public, 2 representatives, totaling 12 people, to propose tourism promotion strategies for the Lower Northeastern Provinces. The strategies for enhancing tourist destinations to create a model for upgrading tourist sites include policy and operational approaches as follows:

1) The correlation between intellectual capital and the creative economy exhibited a similar association with the enhancement of tourist attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces.

2) The outcomes of the Policy Modelling to Enhance Tourist Attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces revealed the formulation of guidelines for upgrading tourist attractions, which subsequently led to the development of a modelling approach for enhancing tourist attractions. These guidelines encompass policy directives, operational strategies, and a policy model outlined as follows:

2.1) Policy Guidelines:

(1) Emphasis is placed on fostering intellectual capital factors, entailing initiatives to promote and facilitate the development of human capital. This involves implementing policies aimed at nurturing talent, enhancing skills, and fostering adaptability. Furthermore, it advocates for the promotion of effective communication skills among personnel within the tourism sector

and the continuous development of leadership skills among tourism executives.

(2) Promotion of capital relations factors entails fostering the development of robust public relations systems and strengthening networking initiatives with local administrative organizations. Additionally, it advocates for promoting public participation and fostering collaboration among personnel involved in tourism and various sectors to ensure effective integration and cooperation.

(3) Encouragement is provided for the development of capital structure, including initiatives to delineate clear objectives, support employee responsibilities, foster a culture of division of labor, enhance teamwork, and promote the development of efficient command systems. These efforts aim to promote unity of command and establish a structured framework for control.

(4) Promotion of the development of creative economy concepts in operational practices is underscored, emphasizing the importance of fostering innovation and uniqueness. This entails prioritizing the concept of privacy and embracing pioneering approaches. Thus, the policy framework for tourism development should prioritize the preservation, development, and promotion of elements related to intellectual capital and the creative economy to optimize the efficacy of upgrading tourist attractions in the Lower North-eastern Provinces.

The operational approaches, aimed at implementing the guidelines for upgrading tourist attractions to achieve the overarching objective of revenue generation by governmental organizations, are as follows:

2.2) Operational Approaches:

(1) Initiating the process entails formulating short - term strategies aimed at addressing external impediments or threats, which involves the development of strategic issues. In the short term (within 1 - 3 years), emphasis is placed on intellectual capital

development to foster human capital enhancement. This involves initiatives such as talent development, skill enhancement, flexibility cultivation, and fostering communication skills among personnel engaged in the tourism sector. Additionally, it involves the establishment of relationship-building mechanisms and the cultivation of leadership skills among tourism executives. In the medium term (to be implemented within 4-6 years), the strategy focuses on promoting capital relations factors, including initiatives to enhance public relations systems, bolster networking initiatives with local administrative organizations, promote public engagement, and foster collaboration among personnel involved in tourism and various sectors to ensure seamless integration and cooperation.

(2) Short-term capital development strategy (to be implemented within 1 – 3 years) encompasses the establishment of work systems aligned with overarching objectives and the implementation of promotion systems to support exemplary performance among employees. This involves managing a culture of division of labor and fostering teamwork. The formulation of a medium-term development strategy (to be implemented within 4-6 years) revolves around promoting a command efficiency system aimed at fostering unity of command and establishing a structured framework for control.

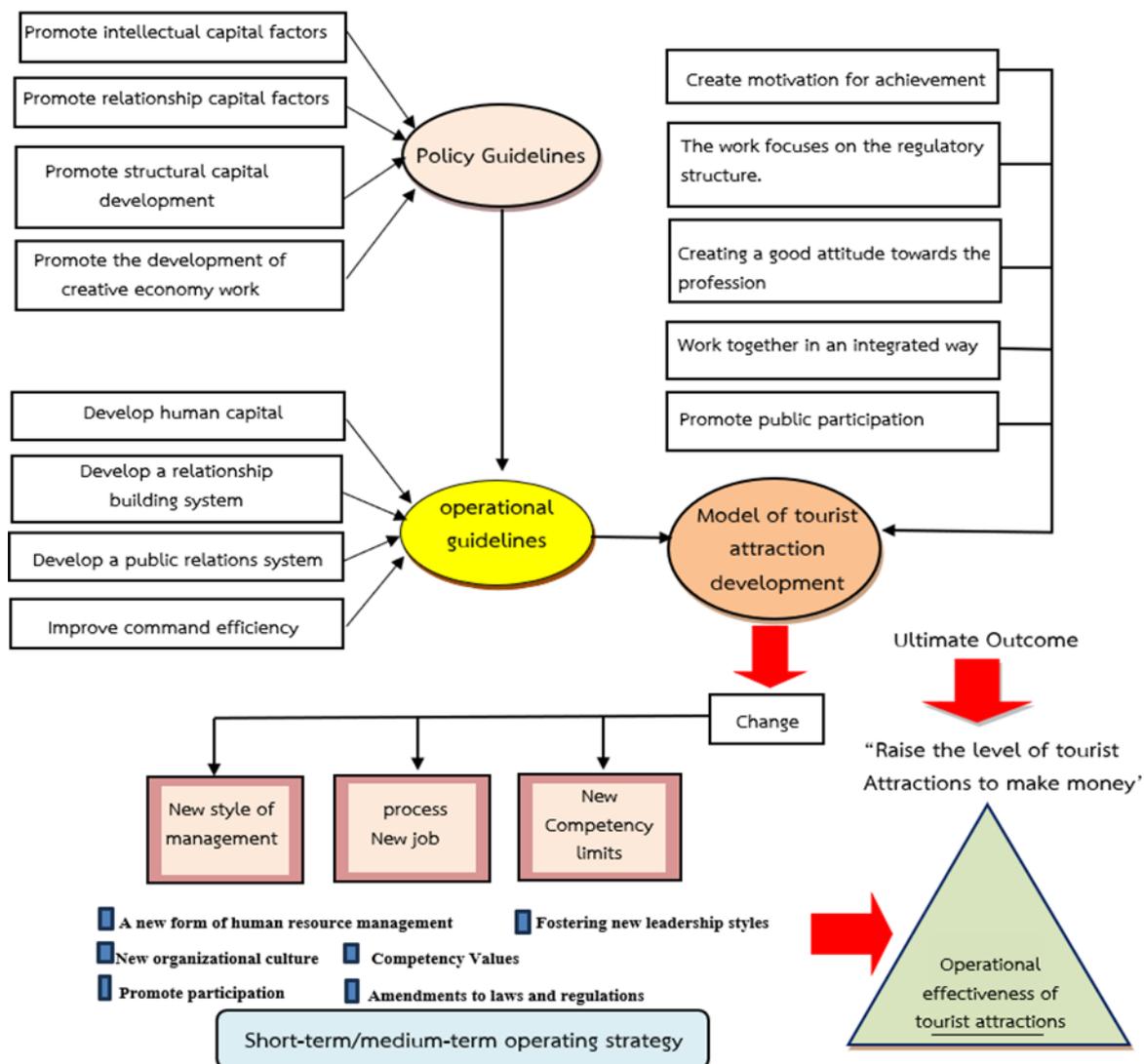
(3) The short-term capital development strategy (to be implemented within 1 – 3 years) entails the cultivation of creative economy concepts among tourism personnel. This involves fostering a work environment centered around the concept of privacy and emphasizing the creation of prototypes. The medium-term development strategy (to be implemented within 4 - 6 years) prioritizes the promotion of innovative practices. This includes the development and dissemination of elements related to intellectual capital and the creative economy.

2.3) Policy Model to Enhance Tourist Attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces: The policy model aimed at enhancing tourist attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces encompasses the relationship between intellectual capital and the creative economy. Each element within this model correlates with the enhancement of tourist attractions in the region, highlighting the factors influencing the development of

intellectual capital and the creative economy. The model advocates for the promotion of capital structure development and the integration of creative economy concepts into operational frameworks. Emphasis is placed on operational approaches that leverage both short-term strategies (to be implemented within 1 - 3 years) and medium-term strategies (to be implemented within 4 - 6 years), as depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Policy Model to Enhance Tourist Attractions in Lower Northeastern Provinces



Conclusion and Discussion

Research on Policy Modelling to Enhance Tourist Attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces yields intriguing findings that prompt discussion as follows:

1) The relationship between intellectual capital and the creative economy mirrors the enhancement of tourist attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces. This correlation encompasses human capital, relationship capital, structural capital, and the creative economy, all exhibiting a positive correlation with the elevation of tourist attractions in the region. This underscores the imperative for tourism development initiatives to prioritize the promotion of elements and relationships associated with intellectual capital and the creative economy. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Hiroyoshi Sano (2016), which delved into theoretical considerations regarding creative tourism. Sano's study aimed to elucidate the genesis and evolution of creative tourism concepts, primarily through a comprehensive review of prior research. Creative tourism has emerged as a novel form of cultural tourism in the early 21st century, fueled by a desire to counteract the negative impacts associated with traditional mass tourism. In recent years, the discourse surrounding creative tourism has shifted from merely examining tourist behavior to exploring the dynamic interplay between tourists and destinations. The contemporary concept of creative tourism encompasses a diverse array of tourism activities and explores its impact on tourist attractions and the creative industries, thereby informing planning and policy formulation aimed at enhancing tourism destinations. As a result, a framework for catalyzing creative tourism has been proposed, with a focal point on fostering synergies between tourism and creative industries, drawing inspiration from Landry's 'cycle of urban creativity'.

2) Factors influencing the upgrading of tourist attractions in the Lower Northeastern Province encompass elements of intellectual capital development and the creative economy. These factors include Human Capital Factors, Relationship Capital Factors, Structural Capital Factors, and Creative Economy Factors. The study framework incorporates dimensions such as privacy, modeling, and meaning, which are in alignment with the research conducted by Maneewan et al. (2560). Their study investigated the influence of semiotics on the portrayal of memories within tourist attractions, focusing on the role of intellectual and cultural capital. The primary objective was to explore semiotic concepts and their application in the context of tourism, particularly examining semiotic patterns utilized through intellectual and cultural capital. The study elucidated the definition of semiotics through the perspectives of three semiographers, highlighting its significance in societal and environmental contexts. Furthermore, the article delved into the narrative of semiotics and tourism, employing an interpretive framework to aid in the development of cities, countries, and tourist attractions by leveraging symbols such as tourist attraction brands, language formats, symbols, signs, souvenirs, and mascots (such as lucky dolls). These elements, created through intellectual and cultural capital, have significantly influenced travelers' behaviors and serve as valuable tools for contemporary tourism developers, as evidenced by the findings of Arismayanti et al. (2017). Their study investigated the establishment of a creative economy rural tourism base in Kendran Village, Gianyar, revealing that the implementation of creative economy principles in rural tourism has facilitated the expansion of market share (Market Niche) without prior SWOT analysis. The research identified strengths within the internal environment, such as picturesque rice field scenery with jogging tracks, preserved traditional culture reflected in traditional Balinese architecture and

sacred sites, historical relics within the village area, Balinese-Hindu ritual activities, arts and culture, as well as community hospitality and accessible spaces. Conversely, weaknesses in infrastructure were identified, including inadequate public facilities, lack of tourism programming and management, and limited foreign language proficiency, particularly in English.

3) Policy models aimed at enhancing tourist attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces encompass several key initiatives. Firstly, there is a focus on promoting human capital factors, including talent development, skill enhancement, flexibility cultivation, promotion of communication skills, relationship building, and fostering executive leadership. Secondly, efforts are directed towards bolstering capital factors such as public relations, promotional activities, and local networking. Thirdly, emphasis is placed on fostering the development of structural capital, entailing the establishment of clear objectives, support for outstanding obligations, promotion of a culture of division of labor, and enhancement of command efficiency. This includes fostering unity of command and promoting a structured framework for control. Lastly, there is an encouragement of embracing the concept of the creative economy in operational practices, with a particular emphasis on privacy. Consequently, there is a concerted effort towards preserving and nurturing elements of intellectual capital and the creative economy to maximize the efficacy of upgrading tourist attractions in the Lower Northeastern Provinces. This underscores the necessity for aligning tourism development efforts in the Northeast region with policy guidelines and operational approaches geared towards enhancing intellectual capital factors among personnel involved in the tourism sector across all sectors. This approach corresponds with the principles outlined by Binns and Nel (2002). The study's findings suggest that the amalgamation of natural

beauty, local entrepreneurship, and established community organizations can significantly contribute to the development of tourism and local economic growth in small towns. Moreover, redundant mining infrastructure can be repurposed for tourism development, such as creating mine museums or developing mine heritage trails, as exemplified by the Horizon Tourism Route in Koffiefontein in the south. While tourism holds significant potential for rural development and revitalization, it is essential to manage expectations realistically, as aspirations often exceed practicalities. Consequently, many public and private institutions view tourism as an accessible pathway to economic development and national restructuring.

Practical recommendations

1.1 The governmental bodies overseeing tourism or relevant agencies tasked with tourism management should utilize policy guidelines to enhance tourist attractions in the Lower Northeastern provinces of Thailand. These guidelines should serve as foundational principles for devising strategies across various domains, including image enhancement strategies and service quality improvement strategies. Strategies aimed at cultivating positive experiences for tourists should be formulated with a keen consideration of the concepts of intellectual capital development and the promotion of the creative economy, among others.

1.2 The government should facilitate increased opportunities for communities to engage with diverse tourist demographics, such as through tourism fairs. Encouraging governmental agencies to showcase communities as tourist destinations and disseminating knowledge about community-based tourism initiatives would enhance visibility and understanding among tourists at large.

1.3 Agricultural products could be cultivated and marketed as souvenirs for tourists visiting festivals. Leveraging local traditions can foster interconnectivity among different regions, thereby fostering development opportunities for each province within the area.

Suggestion for Future research

1) Research endeavors ought to be undertaken to explore the formulation of models that facilitate the distribution channels of goods within the tourism sector, both within the Tourist Market and the broader ASEAN Community.

2) It is imperative to conduct studies focusing on the enhancement of local administrative capacity and the management practices of store operators operating within the tourism industry.

3) The strategic blueprint delineating the development of model cities fostering the creative economy within the provinces situated in the lower Northeastern region warrants evaluation, both during the implementation phase and in its aftermath.

References

- Anderson, J. E. (1994). *Public policy making: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Houghton Mifflin.
- Batle, J., Orfila-Sintes, F., & Moon, C. (2018). Environmental management best practices: Towards social innovation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*.
- Binns, T., & Nel, E. (2002). Tourism as a local development strategy in South Africa. *The Geographical Journal*, 168(3), 235–247.
- Boluk, K., Cavaliere, C. T., & Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2019). A critical framework for interrogating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda in tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.
- Bontis, N. (1996). There's a price on your head: Managing intellectual capital strategically. *Business Quarterly*, Summer.
- Bontis, N. (2002). National intellectual capital index: The benchmarking of Arab countries. *Journal of Business and Management*, 4(4). (Originally published August 19, 2016)
- Brundtland Commission. (1987). Towards sustainable development. In *Our common future* (pp. 43–66). Oxford University Press.
- Curado, C., Henriques, L., & Bontis, N. (2011). Intellectual capital disclosure payback. *Management Decision*, 49(7), 1080–1098.
- Edvinsson, L., & Malone, M. S. (1997). *Intellectual capital: Realizing your company's true value by finding its hidden brainpower*. Harper Business.
- Hardeep, C., & Purnima, B. (2013). Examining intellectual capital and competitive advantage relationship: Role of innovation and organizational learning. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 33(3), 376–399.
- Hawkins, J. (2001). *About the creative economy: How people make money from ideas*. London.
- Jiranut, S., Rugsiri, C., & Kanjanarat, R. (2017). Development of participatory cultural tourism management strategies: A case study of Banhauydhindum, Dan Chang District, Suphan Buri Province. Suan Dusit University.
- Jitthangwattana, B. (2005). *Sustainable tourism development*. Press and Design.
- John Wiley & Sons. (2000). *Value-driven intellectual capital: How to convert intangible corporate assets into market value* (P. H. Sullivan, Ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Kanok, B., Sitthichai, P., Seri, W., & Wasana, K. (2018). The influential factors toward tourist loyalty to community-based tourism in the lower northeastern part of Thailand. *NNRU Community Research Journal*, 12(1), 10–28.
- Maneewan, C., & Somphob, C. (2017). The influence of semiotics towards the memorable images of destination through the intellectual and cultural capital. *Dusit Thani College Journal*, 12(2), 434–445.
- Ministry of Tourism and Sports. (2022, September 15). *Tourism statistics 2022*. <https://www.mots.go.th/>
- Ni Ketut, A., I Gusti Ngurah, W., & I Wayan, W. (2017). The establishment of rural tourism-based creative economy in Kendran Village, Gianyar. *IRCS UNUD Journals*, 1(1), February.

- Purvis, B., Mao, Y., & Robinson, D. (2018). Three pillars of sustainability: In search of conceptual origins. *Sustainability Science*.
- Robin, C., Pedroche, M., & Astorga, R. A. (2017). Revisiting green practices in the hotel industry: A comparison between mature and emerging destinations. *Journal of Cleaner Production*.
- Sano, H. (2016). Theoretical consideration on creative tourism. *Journal of Global Tourism Research*, 1(2), 127–132.
- Thiranont, S., & Soponjaratsakul, P. (2016). Creative tourism: An alternative and a solution for Thai tourism. *Academic Journal of Pathumthani University*, 8(2), 206–215.
- Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2018). *Link the main city, get secondary city back to the neighbors*. TAT Intelligence Center.
- Vorathepputhipong, T. (1993). *Public policy and planning + public policy*. Faculty of Public Administration, National Institute of Development Administration.
- Weaver, D. (2006). *Tourism management*. Queensland University of Technology.