

Cultural Tourism Potential and the Way of Life of Pak Ror
Community, Singha Nakhon District, Songkhla Province
ศักยภาพการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมกับวิถีชีวิตชุมชนปากรอ
อำเภอสิงหนคร จังหวัดสงขลา

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Yuttakan Dissakul

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้ มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อศึกษาศักยภาพการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมที่เกี่ยวข้องกับวิถีชีวิตของชุมชนปากรอ อำเภอสิงหนคร จังหวัดสงขลา จากการศึกษาข้อมูลตำราเอกสารและงานวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้อง เพื่อสร้างความเข้าใจทางด้านมิติที่เกี่ยวข้องกับวัฒนธรรม วิถีชีวิตของคนในชุมชน การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพเก็บข้อมูลจากการสำรวจ สัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกจากผู้นำชุมชน จำนวน 6 คน ชาวบ้านในชุมชนจำนวน 18 คน นักวิชาการ 2 คนและผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียจำนวน 2 คน จากนั้นนำข้อมูลที่ได้ทั้งหมดมาวิเคราะห์แก่นสาร และใช้เทคนิคการวิเคราะห์จุดแข็ง จุดอ่อน อุปสรรคและโอกาส

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อีกทั้งวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยภายนอก ก่อนนำข้อมูลที่ได้มาสังเคราะห์ศักยภาพการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมกับวิถีชีวิตชุมชนปากกรอ

ผลการศึกษา พบว่า ชุมชนปากกรอมีการดำรงอยู่ซึ่งวัฒนธรรมและวิถีชีวิตที่เป็นเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะถิ่น มีการประกอบอาชีพตามวิถีดั้งเดิม ทั้งทางด้านการทำประมงชายฝั่ง ลุ่มแม่น้ำทะเลสาบสงขลา การทำเกษตรกรรมนาข้าว ปลูกตาลโตนด และเลี้ยงสัตว์ ตามแต่สภาพพื้นที่ทางกายภาพที่มีความแตกต่างกันภายในชุมชน ส่งผลไปยังการมีแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมที่มีศักยภาพ ประกอบด้วยวัดแหลมจาก ชุมชนวิถีชีวิตตาลโตนด ชุมชนวิถีชีวิตประมงชายฝั่ง ชุมชนวิถีชีวิตเกษตรกรรมทำนา กลุ่มวิสาหกิจชุมชน ศูนย์การเรียนรู้ชุมชน กลุ่มแปรรูปผลิตภัณฑ์ท้องถิ่น เป็นต้น ซึ่งแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม และวิถีชีวิตของคนในชุมชน มีศักยภาพที่จะนำไปพัฒนาให้เป็นแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม เพื่อส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวให้กับชุมชน ได้มีการสร้างงาน สร้างรายได้ รวมทั้งได้นำเอาทรัพยากรในท้องถิ่นมาใช้ประโยชน์และพัฒนาไปสู่การท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมที่สอดคล้องไปกับวิถีชีวิตของคนในชุมชน

คำสำคัญ: การท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม ศักยภาพการท่องเที่ยวทางวัฒนธรรม
วิถีชีวิตชุมชนปากกรอ

Abstract

The objective of the study was to investigate the potential of cultural tourism in relation to the way of life of Pak Ror community, Singha Nakhon District, Songkhla Province. Data were gathered from related documents and research reports such as interview questions to gain understanding of the cultural dimension relating to the way of life of the community. Data were also collected through survey and in-depth interviews with community leaders, locals, and stakeholders. The data were collected from the field through in-depth interviews with six community leaders, eighteen local people, two academics and two related people in the community in order to obtain understanding of historical, cultural, social, political, economical and environmental dimensions. The researcher analyzed the data by using thematic analysis. SWOT analysis and PEST analysis were performed before all the data were synthesized to understand cultural tourism potential and

the way of life of Pak Ror community, Singha Nakhon District, Songkhla Province.

The study found that Pak Ror has a unique local culture and way of life. Pak Ror natives make their living out of traditional occupations of coastal fishing in the area around the river basins of Songkhla Lake such as rice farming, sugar palm making and the raising of livestock depending on different geographical characteristics in different areas of the community. Potential cultural tourist attractions are Wat Laem Chak, the making of palm sugar, coastal fishing, rice farming, community enterprises, community learning centers and local product processing groups, etc. These cultural tourist attractions have potential for the development of cultural tourism and the promotion of the community's livelihood. Occupations and local resources are geared towards cultural tourism in harmony with the way of life of people in the community.

Keywords: cultural tourism, cultural tourism potential, way of life, Pak Ror community

Introduction

The present Thai way of life is changing all the time depending on both internal and external stimulants as can be seen from many communities that have adapted to modern society focusing on tourism promotion and use of tourism as a development tool (The Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute: CBT-I, online source). The CBT-I opens opportunities for local people to participate in setting the direction and making decisions concerning tourism management focusing on income distribution to communities for public benefits, and making it sustainable for future generations as well as for greater benefits (UNWTO, online source). The way of life and the culture that has long been in the local area can prove to be the community selling points. There are factors that change tourists' travel behavior, and it is natural for

people to have different desires; therefore, the travel goals of individuals are different (Chittangwatthana, 2014, pp. 91-105). Cultural tourism is the management of cultural heritage, beauty of art and culture, architecture, activities, festivals, legends, beliefs, and faith that people have. Culture is different for different people according to their viewpoints, ways of thinking and living that has been passed on from generation to generation. Furthermore, beside instilling in local people the love for their cultural resources, it is also important to provide tourists with knowledge and understanding of cultural resources and of the environment in areas of tourist attraction (Klangsombat, 2011). Tourists should also be reminded to have respect for others' culture, especially when they visit communities where culture is different and new to them. These are factors that can attract tourists to communities. In line with these ideas, Prince of Songkla University in its strategic plan, attaches importance to upgrading local social quality and cultural maintenance promoting and maintaining local culture in order to strengthen the community's self-dependence.

Pak Ror community is considered a community that has preserved its local culture and way of life very well. Pak Ror is located on the coast of Songkhla Lake; its 6 villages are different in their geographical characteristics and that makes their ways of life and occupations different. The main occupations are rice farming and fishing. Other occupations include making palm sugar, raising fish in baskets, and shrimp farming. Presently, government organizations promote the community in terms of occupations, creation of more jobs for more income using other communities as models. However, local resources, especially various potential cultural resources in the community have been overlooked. Community cultural resources have been ignored and there is no plan to promote them in sustainable ways. There is, therefore, a need to recognize and value our local cultural resources for the benefit of the local community and for the promotion of local culture in general. Tourists traveling to the areas with low tourism potential could be developed and their resources re-evaluated and, eventually, utilized for the

benefit of Pak Ror community. A promotion strategy could help reduce the unemployment rate and the migration rate. The community's cultural resources should be publicized and the local culture, way of life, local wisdom should be valued so as to attract more tourists.

Research Objective

To investigate cultural tourism potential relating to the way of life of Pak Ror community, Singha Nakhon, Songkhla Province

Expected Benefits

1. Gaining data on potentials for cultural tourism to develop tourism that can respond to the way of life of Pak Ror community.
2. Promoting cultural tourism relating to the way of life in Pak Ror community
3. Raising awareness among tourists traveling to Pak Ror community

Research Methodology

The study was conducted employing interpretive paradigm with the use of qualitative research method, reviews of related textbooks, documents and research reports used as basic data for research. There were 28 people participating in this research. The researcher used non-probability sampling techniques, including snowball and purposive sampling techniques, in this study.

The data were also collected from the field through in-depth interviews with six community leaders, eighteen local people, two academics and two related people in the community in order to obtain understanding of historical, cultural, social, political, economical and environmental dimensions. The researcher analyzed the data by using thematic analysis together with SWOT analysis and PEST analysis which were performed before all the data were synthesized for understanding of cultural tourism potential and the way of life of Pak Ror community, Singha Nakhon District, Songkhla Province.

Research Results

The study on cultural tourism potential and the way of life of Pak Ror community, Singha Nakhon District, Songkhla Province found that the community still preserves the traditional way of life and local culture. Geographically, the areas in this community are different. In the part that is adjacent to the coast of Songkhla Lake, native fishing is still the way of life of local people while the part of the community that is not adjacent to the coast relies more on rice farming and palm sugar making, occupations that have been passed on from generation to generation. The community has conserved the traditional cultural identities. Results of SWOT analysis of the environment and potential of the community are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Analysis of Environment and Potential of the Community: SWOT Analysis (Albert Humphrey)

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Traditional way of life such as making palm sugar, traditional fishing in the village near Songkla Lake	1. Drought causing lack of water for agriculture and flooding in raining season due to no water reservoir
2. Fertile natural resources	2. The purpose of the roads is for local transportations only not for tourism so some roads needing repairing
3. Palm sugar making that has been inherited from forefathers	3. Lack of people participation
4. Community locations that are adjacent to the sea and on the main land	4. Insufficient tourist facilities
5. Traditional activity Phor Than Mahaloy Ceremony at Leam Jak Temple that is enjoyed by	5. People' s lack of knowledge in tourism resources management

Strengths	Weaknesses
Malaysian and Singaporean tourists	
Opportunities	Threats
1. Financial support from the government sector and academics in developing community	1. Lack of tourism networks and tourism development
2. MOUs for community wellbeing development and tourism promotion	2. Labor migration from the community to urban society
3. Development and diversity of tourism resources that can turn into tourism attractions	3. Use of drugs by teenagers

Analysis of the environment and potential of cultural tourism in the community in the SWOT analysis table above revealed weaknesses, strengths, threats and opportunities for development of cultural tourism in Pak Ror community. The data were then used to perform PEST analysis consisting of analysis of policy that can positively and negatively affect community operations by further analyzing economic expansion of the community in employment and investment by the private sector and cost of living. Then social analysis was performed concerning the way of life social participation reflected in people's behavior. Technological analysis was conducted concerning access to technology, and use of technology in communication, knowledge exchange, and efficiency enhancement of the local community. The results of the analyses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

External Factor Analysis Summary: PEST Analysis (Aguilar, 1967)

Factors	Findings
P = Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaders lacking strength and experience in occupational group development 2. Lack of coordination between government and private sectors in charge of tourism 3. Government sector support at the infrastructure level in roads, electricity and water supplies
E = Economic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Homestay accommodations are available for tourists. 2. Increase in the number of Thai and non-Thai tourists including Malaysians Singaporeans, Indonesians, etc. 3. Promotion of local product development as souvenirs, and promotion of products made with local raw materials 4. Community's low GDP
S = Social	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entering an aging society 2. Grouping of people for local raw material processing to earn extra income 3. Activity of sprinkling water onto Phor Than Mahaloy statue (a Buddhist monk statue), a gathering of local people that attracts tourists from Malaysia and Singapore
T = Technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase of internet service and telephone signal system coverage in the area 2. Use of online advertising for tourist attractions and accommodations

Factors	Findings
	3. Limited number of staff with knowledge and ability in technology transfer and in using technology
	4. Governmental organizations conducting research and local development

It can be seen from the results of SWOT analysis, PEST analysis, in-depth interviews with community leaders and related people in Pak Ror community, and other data collected from the field that people in this community still maintain their traditional way of life by making a living based on the existing resources. However, some of them have begun to earn extra income from additional occupations after receiving knowledge from academicians, and support from governmental organizations in the processing of products to earn extra income in their free time. For example, they make compost from natural materials to reduce the use of chemicals and to raise awareness of the effects of using chemicals; people can exchange local raw materials for compost. Support is also given in establishing an agricultural learning center; and promotion of providing homestay accommodations for tourists who are interested in learning the coastal fishing way of life. These activities lead to using the potential of cultural tourism based on the way of life of Pak Ror community. As a result, the following cultural tourist attractions in the community have been found.

1. Palm sugar making community
2. Native fishing community
3. Native fishing product processing
4. Wat Laem Chak (a temple)
5. Agricultural way of life
6. The Agricultural Learning Center
7. Compost making and agricultural promotion group
8. Local product processing group (coated banana chips)
9. Coastal homestays (Pak Ror)

As can be seen, there are resources in Pak Ror with potential for attracting tourists to the community to learn and experience the community's way of life. These resources can be developed into cultural tourist attractions based on the local community's ways of life by constructing identities for the areas and making them interesting and attractive to tourists.

Discussion

The study on cultural tourism potential and the way of life of Pak Ror community, Singha Nakhon District, Songkhla Province is an investigation on the potential of tourist attractions existing in the community, and is associated with the community's interesting culture and ways of life which can attract visitors and inspire them to learn about the local culture. The features of interest are discussed as follows:

1. Cultural tourism potential encompassing the ways of life in Pak Ror community revealed that ways of life among local people of Pak Ror community are still related to palm sugar making using local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation. Although some of the utensils used in making palm sugar have been changed, most are still traditional ones. This makes it charming and attractive to tourists from other places who desire to learn about palm sugar making in Pak Ror. According to Angkhawanit and Nitniran (2013, pp. 4-13), socio-cultural changes have resulted in a decline in the occupation of traditional palm sugar making as it has been affected by environmental, socio-cultural, economic and educational dimensions that make it necessary for this traditional occupation to adapt to the present situation. In spite of the fact that people in Pak Ror have preserved their traditional ways of living and their valuable local identities, the younger generation who is used to a more technological environment is worried that there might no longer be any farmers climbing sugar palm trees to get the raw material for sugar making. This is an issue of

concern for the community and for the future of this traditional way of life because the younger generation desires to preserve this local cultural wisdom. This is in agreement with Burn 2003 who states that cultural management that can maintain balance between cultural value and economic value requires participation from all parties concerned to jointly address the problem. As can be seen, potential cultural attractions related to occupations in Pak Ror community involve occupations other than palm sugar making including agriculture, the work of the agriculture learning center, making compost and agricultural farming promotion, native coastal fishing, and local raw material processing (coated banana chips). Presently, there are homestay accommodations near the coast of the lake (Pak Ror) for tourists, especially those who are interested in relaxation and learning the way of life of native fisher-folk. These homestay accommodations are arranged to reflect the community's identities. A study reported by Mankhatitham (2011, pp. 65-68) on "Homestay accommodations reflecting architectural identities of Samut Songkhram Province" specifies that building homestay accommodations which reflect the local culture and architecture can help promote tourism and conservation which provide opportunities for economic growth, increase people's love for their hometown, and attract more tourists. Furthermore, building homestay accommodations requires provision of adequate facilities and safety for tourists. This corresponds with a study conducted by Netpracha (2008, pp. 113-115) which found that the designs of homestay accommodations must include the aspect of safety for use, and facilities that are in line with the community's ways of life. Therefore, giving importance to the cultural way of life of the community is crucial and would lead to cultural-based tourism development.

2. Cultural tourism potential relating to the ways of life, especially local resources in Pak Ror community revealed that Pak Ror community has interesting natural resources derived from its geographical characteristics because part of it is adjacent to Songkhla Lake while another part is low land.

These physical characteristics make local people different from each other in their use of local resources. Local people who live near the coast make a living on native fishing while those living on low land make their living on farming, livestock and palm sugar making. Analyses of the potential of the community taking into consideration its local resources revealed that the community is outstanding in its cultural ways of life “*Nod, Na, and Le*” or “*Sugar Palms, Rice Fields, and the Sea*”. These three types of resources are people’s ways of life that have changed importance on each aspect along with the present situation. Nevertheless, local people still live together in a network that maintains the community’s culture. Hall 2007 describes that actually there is no cultural object that naturally has its value attached to it; the value is designated by humans who give importance to it, and differences of value depend on the community’s way of thinking or the world view of each academic who gives definition to it. Similarly, Charoenwong (2007, p. 50) referring to importance of cultural resources says that “Cultural resources belong to humans in a certain period and were built specifically with the significant features of that period. Therefore, they are irreplaceable, non-renewable and fragile and need to be preserved as long as possible to be managed to benefit society the most”. Lertchanrit (2011, pp. 32-47) who studied the value of resources states in his article entitled “Cultural resources management” that there are three different types of cultural resource values: market value, community value, and human value. It is evidenced that the potential of cultural tourist attractions related to local resources of the community are with value to development. These attractions are native fishing on the coast of Songkhla Lake that makes use of coastal resources; palm sugar that makes use of natural resources from sugar palm trees; agriculture or farming using land resources; and Wat Laem Chak where tourist resources are constructed by local people to be a mental or spiritual center for the community. Wat Laem Chak is a temple famous for its traditional yearly ceremony which involves sprinkling water on the statue of Luang Pho

Khelai, a revered Buddhist monk in the past. The ceremony attracts a large number of tourists from Malaysia and Singapore every year. There are also tourists from Thailand and other countries visiting the temple, paying homage and asking for blessings every day.

Conclusion and Recommendations

1. In conducting studies on cultural tourism potential of Pak Ror community, cultural tourism potential should be measured in order to know the level of cultural tourism potential. For high tourism potential attractions it is necessary to develop and add tourism value in the attraction or promote culture tourism activity. Low tourism potential attractions need more attention in terms of planning for development and on ways to make the destination more interesting for tourism by allowing the community to get involved in development plans.

2. Behaviors of tourists should be studied because they are now interested in cultural tourism, especially tourists coming to Pak Ror community. Trends and need for culture tourists must be taken into account because tourism can help the local economy. The analysis of tourist's behaviors can help the tourist destination respond to their needs and create an adequate tourism development plan.

3. It is recommended that data on the potential of cultural tourist attractions should be used in making a cultural tourist map, especially a map of the cultural tourist attractions in Pak Ror community, Singha Nakhon, Songkhla Province.

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