



## Enhancing Ramtone Nokphithid Dance: Integrating Folk Performance into Tourism Activities and Community Products in Thailand

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### Abstract

This research aimed to enhance the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, a folk performance from Krung Ching Sub-district, Nopphitham District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand, dating back to World War II, by promoting it through tourism activities and community products. It also sought to evaluate tourists' satisfaction with these activities and products, which were based on the story of the dance. This mixed-method study used Participatory Action Research (PAR) to engage the research team and local communities in enhancing the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance for publicity through tourism activities and community products. Group discussions and observations were conducted with three communities that support the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, involving 10–12 participants from each group. Workshops were held to develop the dance's public presence through tourism activities and products. To assess tourist satisfaction, survey research was conducted using questionnaires with 10 purposively selected participants, including representatives from relevant sectors, media, and tourists. Data were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis and quantitatively through statistical methods to describe, summarize, and compare results. The findings revealed that three communities successfully integrated the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance into tourism activities and products: (1) Ramtone Nokphithid Dance and Po Aod Tie-Dye at Krung Ching community, (2) Ramtone Nokphithid Dance Learning Center, herbal compress balls, and scented bags at Moo 2 community, and (3) Moral Community and Nokphithid keychains at Moo 6, Ban Pak Long community. These activities and products were promoted by the communities themselves and shared with tourists through community media and personal social media platforms. The evaluation of tourists' satisfaction with the enhanced and publicized tourism activities and community products based on the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance indicated a high level of satisfaction.

## Introduction

Several traditional folk performances have been adapted to promote the tourism industry, particularly as part of guest-welcoming ceremonies. Many of these performances incorporate captivating stories that can be expanded into creative activities, such as tourism experiences and community products or souvenirs.

Krung Ching Sub-district, located in Noppitham District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand, lies in the Krung Ching Valley, surrounded by mountain ranges. The region's landscape is a plateau interspersed with the high mountains of Khao Luang and Khao Nan National Parks, which are rich in forests and serve as the source of numerous streams. These natural features have contributed to Krung Ching's growing recognition (Krung Ching Subdistrict Administration Organization, n.d.).

Krung Ching is a fertile area known for its natural attractions, such as mist-covered mountain views, rafting streams, and the Krung Ching Waterfall. It is also an important agricultural region, cultivating fruits like durians and pras (*Elateriospermum tapos* Bl.), along with various herbs. These attributes make Krung Ching a popular destination for adventure tourism.

A key cultural attraction in Krung Ching is the folk performance known as the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance. This dance originated during World War II and is traditionally performed at special community events and guest-welcoming ceremonies (Kaeosanit & Chamnian, 2015). Today, the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance functions as a "tourism dance," which Peng (2024) describes as a form of cultural expression where tourists experience and engage with ethnic customs during their travels.

However, the survival of this folk performance is threatened by a lack of financial support, especially from tourism, as noted by Smith (2009). Shahzalal (2016) highlights that tourism can provide the necessary funding to preserve and conserve cultural heritage, while also fostering cultural pride and revitalizing local customs and traditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has further reduced opportunities for the performance, exacerbating these challenges.

To sustain the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance as part of the community's cultural heritage, enhancing its story to develop tourism activities and community products is a promising solution. The research team, in collaboration with local communities, is working to create tourism initiatives and souvenirs based on the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, thereby generating income and preserving this cultural asset.

## Objectives

1. To enhance and publicize the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance through tourism activities and community products based on its story, a traditional folk performance of Krung Ching Sub-district.

2. To evaluate tourist satisfaction with the enhanced and publicized tourism activities and community products based on the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, a traditional folk performance of Krung Ching Sub-district.

## Literature Review

### Krung Ching Sub-district and Ramtone Nokphithid Dance

Krung Ching Sub-district, located in Noppitham District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand, lies in the Krung Ching Valley, which is rich in natural resources. A local folk performance, the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, has attracted tourists since its inception during World War II. This dance continues to be performed at special community events and guest-welcoming ceremonies.

The Ramtone Nokphithid Dance features short lyric songs played with simple Thai musical instruments, including small cymbals, cymbals, and tones. The highlight is the "Nokphithid Song" (Nokphithid refers to a type of owl), which uses humorous lyrics and dance movements to depict a courtship between male and female Nokphithids (Chamnian et al., 2020).

### Cultural Tourism and Folk Performance

The International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism defines cultural tourism as an activity that allows people to experience different ways of life, gaining a deeper understanding of customs, traditions, and historically or culturally significant places (Hajra, 2015). Performing arts, as a part of cultural tourism, can play a pivotal role in meeting societal needs and benefiting communities (Paranti & Putra, 2018). In India, folk culture has contributed to the growth and diversification of the tourism industry, although it remains underdeveloped in many states (Hajra, 2015). Folk culture tourism empowers community skills and helps safeguard intangible cultural heritage.

Similarly, the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance of Krung Ching Sub-district has evolved from a community folk performance to an entertainment show for tourists and special events. To preserve and pass on this tradition, the community must be proactive in developing tourism activities and products related to the dance. This will not

only convey the story behind the performance but also provide supplementary media to conserve it as both a local and national cultural heritage.

#### Creative Tourism, Local Tourism Activities, and Souvenirs

Creative tourism, closely linked to cultural and arts tourism, goes beyond mere sightseeing and photo-taking. It emphasizes interactive experiences where tourists engage with the local way of life, fostering cultural exchanges. This type of tourism encourages deeper learning through activities such as traditional crafts and artisanal products, enhancing the overall experience for visitors (Somnuxpong, 2020).

A successful tourist destination ideally includes tourism commodities, activities, institutions, and public facilities, all of which should be promoted effectively to motivate tourist visits (Yoga et al., 2018). In the case of creative tourism and local souvenirs, there is an increasing connection between souvenirs and cultural heritage. The industry has outpaced theoretical research in this area (Zhu et al., 2023). Souvenirs not only serve as products within the tourism experience but also act as symbolic "physical evidence" that captures and synthesizes the entire experience for consumers (Botos et al., 2013).

In this research, the story of the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance is being utilized to create tourism activities and community products, such as tourist souvenirs. This provides an opportunity to generate income while preserving the folk performance as a community heritage. The research team, in collaboration with the local community, is developing tourism activities and products based on the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, ensuring its continued cultural significance.

#### Conceptual Framework

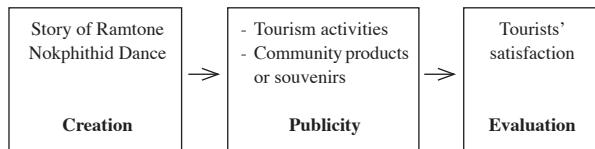


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

The research aimed to enhance the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, a traditional folk performance from Krung Ching Sub-district, by integrating it into tourism activities and community products, and promoting it to tourists. The researchers used cultural tourism and folk

performances as frameworks to create local tourism experiences and souvenirs. The study also evaluated tourist satisfaction with these enhanced and promoted activities and products, with the intention of supporting further development by the community.

#### Research Methodology

##### 1. Population and Samples

The study sought to enhance the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance by promoting it through tourism activities and community products based on the dance's story. The research team applied Participatory Action Research (PAR) through group discussions and workshops with three community groups involved in the performance. These groups included 10–12 participants each from the following areas:

- Po Aod Tie-Dye at Moo 3
- Ramtone Nokphithid Dance Learning Center at Moo 2

- Moral Community at Moo 6, Ban Pak Long

Participants were drawn from tourism and cultural organizations, tourism entrepreneurs, teachers, community leaders, and local experts. To evaluate tourist satisfaction with the enhanced activities and products, the researchers used a purposive sample of 10 individuals representing tourism organizations, government agencies, the media, and tourists. These individuals were selected for their ability to provide insights and recommendations for tourism and product development, as well as to promote the findings in their respective fields.

##### 2. Research Instrument

The research employed three primary qualitative processes:

2.1 Group Discussions: Researchers and community members from the three groups, who were well-versed in the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, engaged in brainstorming sessions to create tourism activities and community products.

2.2 Workshops: The researchers and communities collaborated in workshops to further develop these tourism activities and products based on the dance.

2.3 Publicity: After developing the activities and products, the three groups promoted their offerings through various media platforms to reach their target tourist audience.

Throughout these processes, the research team conducted observations. For the final quantitative research phase, surveys were distributed to purposive

tourist participants involved in the tourism activities in order to collect tourist satisfaction.

### 3. Data Collection

Data collection involved observing group discussions and workshops with the three community groups: Po Aod Tie-Dye at Moo 3, Ramtone Nokphithid Dance Learning Center at Moo 2, and the Moral Community at Moo 6, Ban Pak Long. Additionally, to evaluate tourist satisfaction, surveys were administered to purposive samples, including representatives from tourism organizations, government agencies, mass media, and tourists.

### 4. Data Analysis

Data from the group discussions and observations were analyzed using content analysis, focusing on similarities and differences related to the research objectives. To assess tourist satisfaction with the enhanced and publicized tourism activities and community products, statistical methods were used to describe, summarize, and compare the data. Survey results were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The following scale was used to interpret satisfaction levels:

- 1.00–1.50: Lowest level of satisfaction
- 1.51–2.50: Low level of satisfaction
- 2.51–3.50: Medium level of satisfaction
- 3.51–4.50: High level of satisfaction

## Results

In relation to the first research objective, which aimed to enhance the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance by incorporating it into tourism activities and community products, the findings indicate that the fertile environment of Krung Ching plays a significant role in supporting various local livelihoods. Visitors often refer to it as "A city of fertile soil and productive water." Despite ongoing social, economic, political, and environmental changes, the region's natural diversity remains well-preserved. As a result, the local way of life continues to thrive, enriched by natural resources, wisdom, and cultural heritage (Krung Ching Subdistrict Administration Organization, n.d.).

One notable cultural asset is the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, a folk performance that originated in central Thailand during the era of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, around World War II. The dance was originally used as a means of entertaining the public during a period of economic hardship and political conflict. When the dance was introduced to Krung Ching,

a local philosopher named Mr. Nab Longluerit developed hundreds of unique postures and lyrics, inspired by the region's natural surroundings and the daily lives of its people. The postures are synchronized with the short, concise lyrics. A key highlight of the performance is the song "Nokphithid Song," which humorously mimics the gestures and sounds of Fish Owls as they flirt, portraying the playful interactions between male and female owls.



Figure 2 Ramtone Nokphithid Folk Performance

From the group discussion with the philosophers of Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, it was revealed that the dance was once very popular among the local community. People would perform it together to unwind after a day of work. However, as time passed and many locals moved to cities for work, they began to focus more on modern innovations and technology, leading to the decline of the dance's practice. Recognizing this, the research team and the local communities sought ways to conserve the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance while also generating income for the local people (Chamnian et al., 2020).

To achieve this, the research team studied the cultural wisdom associated with the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance through field trips and group discussions with members of three community groups involved with the performance. The results from the group discussions were summarized for each community as follows:

Ramtone Nokphithid Dance and Po Aod Tie-Dye Community

Po Aod Tie-Dye is a community group that offers local tour services, including activities like sea mist viewing, rafting, and trekking in Krung Ching Subdistrict. They also provide a tie-dye workshop where tourists can create their own tie-dye cloths. To integrate the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance into their tourism offerings, the group introduced tie-dye products featuring patterns inspired by the dance's movements. Tourists can

create handkerchiefs or T-shirts with these patterns using natural dyes derived from local plants such as Yan Aod, Lumpo, and mangosteen. This activity allows tourists to take home a tangible reminder of their experience, blending the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance with local craftsmanship.

In addition, the group offers a variety of other tie-dye products, including bags, hats, and scarves, featuring the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance patterns for tourists to purchase as souvenirs. These products not only promote the dance but also contribute to the local economy, preserving a unique aspect of Krung Ching's cultural heritage.



Figure 3 New tourism activity from research: Ramtone Nokphithid Dance tie-dye



Figure 4 New community product from research: Ramtone Nokphithid tie-dye bag

Ramtone Nokphithid Dance Learning Center and herbal compress balls and scented bags at Moo 2 Community

The Ramtone Nokphithid Dance Learning Center in Moo 2 Community was established in August 2019. Its members include local philosophers of the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance and other residents interested in preserving this performance. Using local natural and cultural resources, the group created herbal compress

balls and herbal scented bags, both wrapped in cloth featuring patterns inspired by the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance. These products contain over 10 different types of herbs, including unique local varieties from Krung Ching Sub-district, such as Manee Deva and Nom Sawan. Once the herbal compress balls and scented bags have been used, the cloth can serve as a keepsake, reminding tourists of their visit to Krung Ching.



Figure 5 New tourism activity from research: Making a compress ball and an herbal scented bag with Ramtone Nokphithid Dance cloths



Figure 6-7 New community product from research: a compress ball and an herbal scented bag with Ramtone Nokphithid Dance pattern cloths

Moral Community and a Nokphithid keychain at Moo 6, Ban Pak Long Community

The Moral Community Group, founded by teachers from the Ban Pak Long Children Development Center and local villagers, promotes moral values within the community, as seen in initiatives like the Moral Fresh Market, where people purchase goods without sellers. The group also incorporates the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance into their activities. Teachers and students, drawing on local wisdom, have created Nokphithid keychains made from natural materials such as betel shells and rubber shells, adorned with intricate patterns. These keychains are sold as souvenirs for

visitors. In addition, the group organizes tourism activities where tourists can make and decorate their own Nokphithid keychains after watching a performance of the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance.



Figure 8 New tourism activity from research: Making Nokphithid keychain



Figure 9 New community product from research: Nokphithid keychain

To evaluate tourist satisfaction with the enhanced and publicized tourism activities and community products inspired by the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, the research team conducted an evaluation for each activity and product offered by the different community groups. The results are as follows:

From Table 1, the result show that the tourists were totally satisfied and the tourism activities and community products or souvenirs were proper at a high level of 4.40. The tourists perceived knowledge and experience of Ramtone Nokphithid Dance and pattern and detail of community product or souvenir from tourism activity was proper at the same level of 4.10.

**Table 1** Tourists' satisfaction towards tourism activity: Making Ramtone Nokphithid Dance tie-dye cloth and bags

Issue	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	Order
The tourism activity is interesting.	4.00	0.667	High	3
The tourism activity creates proper tourists' participation.	3.90	0.994	High	4
Community volunteers inform proper information to tourists.	4.00	0.816	High	3
The place for activity is proper.	4.00	0.667	High	3
The period for activity is proper.	3.80	0.632	High	5
The tourists perceive knowledge and experience of Ramtone Nokphithid Dance.	4.10	0.568	High	2
Pattern and detail of community product or souvenir from tourism activity is proper.	4.10	0.568	High	2
The tourism activity and community product or souvenir is proper (50 Baht per 1 time per 1 piece).	4.40	0.516	High	1
<b>Total satisfaction</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>0.843</b>	<b>High</b>	

**Table 2** Tourists' satisfaction towards tourism activity: Making a compress ball and an herbal scented bag with Ramtone Nokphithid Dance pattern cloths

Issue	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	Order
The tourism activity is interesting.	3.80	0.632	High	5
The tourism activity creates proper tourists' participation.	4.00	0.816	High	3
Community volunteers informed of proper information to tourists.	4.40	0.699	High	1
The place for activity is proper.	4.10	0.994	High	2
The period for activity is proper.	3.90	0.738	High	4
The tourists perceive knowledge and experience of Ramtone Nokphithid Dance.	4.00	1.054	High	3
Pattern and detail of community product or souvenir from tourism activity is proper.	3.80	0.789	High	5
The tourism activity and community product or souvenir is proper (35 Baht per 1 time per 1 piece).	4.00	0.816	High	3
<b>Total satisfaction</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>0.675</b>	<b>High</b>	

From Table 2, the result show that in terms of community volunteers informing properly tourist information was rated at the highest level of 4.40. The total satisfaction level was 4.30 and the period for activity was proper at 4.10.

**Table 3** Tourists' satisfaction towards tourism activity: Making Nokphithid keychains

Issue	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	Order
The tourism activity is interesting.	3.80	0.632	High	5
The tourism activity creates proper tourists' participation.	4.30	0.483	High	1
Community volunteers inform proper information to tourists.	4.00	0.667	High	3
The place for activity is proper.	3.90	0.994	High	4
The period for activity is proper.	3.80	0.632	High	5
The tourists perceive knowledge and experience of Ramtone Nokphithid Dance.	4.10	0.738	High	2
Pattern and detail of community product or souvenir from tourism activity is proper.	4.10	0.568	High	2
The tourism activity and community product or souvenir is proper (35 Baht per 1 time per 1 piece).	4.00	0.667	High	3
<b>Total satisfaction</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>0.789</b>	<b>High</b>	

According to Table 3, the results indicate that tourist participation in the tourism activities was rated the highest, with a score of 4.30. The overall satisfaction was 4.20. In terms of tourists gaining knowledge and experience from the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, as well as the appropriateness of the patterns and details of community products and souvenirs from the tourism activities, the score was 4.10.

Based on the story of the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, the research team and local communities collaborated to create and organize tourism activities and community products rooted in the natural resources and cultural wisdom of three community groups. Together, they worked to preserve the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance as a cultural heritage of Krung Ching Sub-district.

In conclusion, both the tourism activities and community products from the three groups were promoted to raise awareness of the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance among tourists. However, additional media platforms, such as print, broadcast, and online media at both community and mass levels, should be utilized to further disseminate the story of the dance. Moreover, local residents can serve as storytellers, sharing the history of the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance with tourists. The locals will play a key role in attracting tourists to Krung Ching Sub-district, encouraging them to enjoy the folk performance, participate in tourism activities, and purchase community products as souvenirs.

## Discussion

This research aimed to enhance the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance through tourism activities and community products, based on the dance's story and its

significance in Krung Ching Sub-district. The findings suggest that the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, a valuable cultural resource, can be developed and enhanced to add value, supporting cultural tourism in the community. Dychkovskyy and Liashenko (2020) emphasize that the growing role of cultural tourism contributes to the preservation and revival of intangible heritage, cultural traditions, and spiritual practices.

Cultural tourism involves activities that allow tourists to explore the culture, history, ethnography, archaeology, folklore, and lifestyles of different communities. During these activities, people travel to gain a deeper understanding of the culture of a particular region (Nafasov, 2020). This research aligns with the concept proposed by Dychkovskyy and Liashenko (2020), which highlights that the diversity of cultural heritage fosters local identity, becoming a key factor in attracting tourists and enhancing the appeal of the region.

The Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, along with Po Aod Tie-Dye in Krung Ching, the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance Learning Center, herbal compress balls and scented bags at Moo 2, and the Moral Community with Nokphithid keychains at Moo 6, Ban Pak Long, are cultural activities and community products integral to the tourism system. These elements fulfill essential functions within the tourism sector (Ruiz et al., 2017).

However, in the context of Thailand's souvenir industry, there is concern that souvenirs are not sufficiently developed to meet tourists' needs or showcase the unique identities of different provinces and tourist attractions. Tourism businesses and entrepreneurs in each region should continuously develop products that reflect the local culture (Hiranyachawalit, 2016). Hume (2013) notes that souvenir collectors often base their selections on personal knowledge and understanding of a site, taking into account local materials, crafts, and aesthetic values. In this research, tourists had the opportunity to create Ramtone Nokphithid Dance-themed souvenirs by participating in tourism activities from the three community groups. The evaluation of tourist satisfaction with these enhanced and publicized activities and products indicated high levels of satisfaction.

The tourism activities and community products related to the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance serve as vehicles for communicating the story of this folk performance. A variety of media platforms, including community, mass, and personal media, should be employed to provide tourists with information that meets their needs and expectations. Taufatofua and

Tokotaha (2002) outline tourist expectations in terms of information, adventure, and entertainment.

Today, the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance, a folk performance from Krung Ching Sub-district, Nopphitham District, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand, has evolved from a community play to a performance for tourist entertainment and special social events. It is now closely tied to tourism activities and community products, serving as a medium to communicate its story and preserve it as both a community and national heritage.

### Suggestion

The results of this research should be further pursued by relevant sectors or organizations, particularly local government agencies, to promote the Ramtone Nokphithid Dance and raise awareness among the local community and tourists.

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