

The Impact Analysis of Sport Tourism, A Case: Buriram Province

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Abstract

This academic article aimed to 1) study the current situation of sport tourism, 2) analyze the impact of sport tourism, and 3) offer the guideline of sport tourism management, case: Buriram province. This article was documentary research that analyzed through the cause-and-effect analysis and collected the relevant data in the period of three months from January – March 2021.

The research result presented that sport tourism had longer existed since the past sport competition events. Each sporting event affected tourism because the tourists had to travel to watch the game. The spending of tourists also increased during the events took place and in recent years. After that, the tourism revenue also increased when comparing with the same period of a prior year before holding the events. However, if the host area had continuously increased tourists and revenue in the years after the events took place, it meant the tourism economy of that area had a long-term benefit from hosting sport events. Nevertheless, even it had a positive effect on economic system in the hosting area, but a thing that the host must be aware of was the social aspect because when the number of tourists had been increasing, it might affect the disadvantage of tourists from local people that needed to be strict prevention approach as well as allowing them to participate in their occupation. Besides, in the environmental aspect, it also needed a plan to handle the pollution and waste that will occur after the sport events were held.

Keywords: Impact, Sport Tourism, Sport Tourism Management

Introduction

Tourism industry has been highly contributing to the revenue of many countries worldwide. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017) Due to the rising tendency of tourists every year, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has estimated that the number of tourists will reach 1,800 million in 2030. With international travel rising at an average rate of 4 percent each year, the most popular destinations are countries in the Southeast Asia (UNWTO, 2019).

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Thailand earned a trillion baht in 2015 from 26,735,583 foreign tourists, with an increase rate of 19.60 percent. However, between January and September in the following year the increase rate was 23 percent (Department of Tourism, 2015). The policy to emphasize new tourism strategies has drawn in the main target market which has purchasing power. By focusing on the specific needs of tourists such as wedding and honeymoon group, golf group, health and beauty group, MICE group, and sport tourism group, the tourist base will expand and more tourists will come to Thailand (Isichaikul, 2014).

Sport tourism is another form of tourism of which the main purposes of the tourists are to play sports and watch sport competitions. In the past two decades, the rate of participation in sport events has been increasing in all levels of society. (Office of Buriram, 2014) Many sport events have more participators and there are records of more teenage tourists as well as tourists taking short breaks and second holidays (Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, 2014). The Tourism Authority of Thailand introduced sport tourism which led to the development of management plans by sport event promoters, sport associations, sport ground and stadium managers, tour agents and marketing experts. They focused on sport fans who have purchasing power and faith in their favorite sport players (Tourism Research Center, 2018). The increasing participations in sport events are affected by economy, politics, changing values and attitudes of people, as well as facilities and advanced technology—live broadcast can affect the popularity of sports. (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2018)

Buri Ram Province does not only have interesting history and culture, but it is also an important province for sport events. (Office of Tourism and Sports Buriram, 2015) The province is being promoted to be one of the ten most wishful destinations for both Thai and foreign tourists (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2014). Buri Ram has grown rapidly in only 3-5 years. Politicians and investors have joined hands to found Buri Ram United or THUNDER CASTLE, build a huge sport arena with international standard, football stadium with capacity of 45,000 (Bangkok Post, 2017) the biggest racing circuit in Asia or Chang International Circuit, accommodation center for athletes, fitness center, convention center, and medical center. (Newin, 2015) Moreover, an academy is built to train talented children with the same standard as famous world-class football associations. Every year, there will be about 33 matches, both home and visiting ones. Last year, Buri Ram United earned 450 million baht from selling tickets and souvenirs (Buri Ram Provincial Office of Tourism and Sport, 2015).

The growth of sport tourism has brought more labors into the area, leading to expanding GDP, higher export and tax values, more investments, and better facilities and accommodation provided by government sectors (Buatong, 2015). Increasing number of

sport events in the past three years affected the province's environment, culture and society. There are more football matches, auto racing, and other sport events. However, the facilities and accommodations needed still require careful management plans, including plans for personnel, services, and tourist distribution management so that the province is ready for any effects which may appear in the future (Itsra Watjanasontorn, 2019) Therefore, the researcher studied on the effect management plan for the destination cycle of sport tourism, present situation about sport tourism, and the potentials so that the management plan is developed systematically.

Materials and Methods

The scope of study is qualitative research. This article was documentary research that analyzed through the cause-and-effect analysis and collected the relevant data in the period of three months from January – March 2021, and last year's minutes taken from conferences and meetings about tourism development and personnel training plans to analyze the situation, policies, and strategies. Moreover, Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle Model is used to analyze the tendency and develop plans for the effects caused by sport tourism. The model will help identify the paths of tourist destinations starting from stagnation to decline stage (E. AGUILÓ, J. ALEGRE, M. SARD, 2005). This will be the model for policy and tourism planners that the tourism related products do not last in the market forever and cannot be sold when its popularity decreases. The estimated decline of tourist attractions is caused by the increasing density of tourists (Butler, 2004)

Results and Discussion

1. Present Situation on Tourism

In Thailand, tourism and sports are combined into a ministry called Ministry of Tourism and Sports. In 2016, the ministry set the policy on qualitative tourism, including health, medical and sports. The selling point is new attractions or integration of local communities to sell food and drinks. This will increase the distribution of tourists to other regions, promotions of more events around the year, and advertisements via digital media. The focuses are good advertisements, safety for tourists, and effective transportation (Bureau of Economics Tourism and Sports, 2016). The government sectors also provide help, support and welfare for sport related individuals, for example, sport trainers, referees, sport associations etc. In addition, they give support on sport event management so that all the processes and activities are executed effectively.

Since the province got international level sport stadium, it has become its strong point which brought continuous sport and tourism investment into the area. In 2013, the revenue was 1.4 billion baht, but reached 1.6 billion baht in 2014 and 2 billion in 2015 (Chorpsuk, 2016). The construction of Chang International Circuit, valued 2 million baht, which opened in the late 2014 is also expected to bring more tourists from both Thailand

and foreign countries to reach one of the five most visited countries. The Gross Provincial Product (GPP) rose from 85,413 million baht in 2014 to 95,158 million baht in 2015 (Buriram Provincial Local Administration Office, 2015). At present, there are about 70 sport events and 33 football matches which bring 30,000-60,000 tourists depending on the event size (Buri Ram Working Group on Gross Provincial Product, 2015). Buri Ram was just a pass-way when traveling to other provinces in the Northeastern region, but now it becomes the destination where tourists come for participation in sport events.

Prasat Hin Phanom Rung is the most important historical site in Buri Ram province, which is inherited from Jayavarman V of Khmer Empire (968-1001) (Hunpongtong Loy, 2012). The number of tourists also increased at the rate of 53.68 percent. The most popular destinations include i-Mobile Stadium and racing circuit following with Phanom Rung Historical Park and prasat Muang Tam (Department of Tourism Buri Ram, 2015). From the research, tourists said that the tourist attractions are beautiful and have interesting history. Moreover, government sectors promote all year round tourism, for example, by making the province a learning center for sports and history, and holding Phanom Rung festival every April. Many conferences and meetings are held in the area as well as study trips from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Pakistan. Tour agencies also added that sport related destinations and historical sites in the same trip is very popular.

2. SWOT Analysis of Sport Tourism

Strengths: Buri Ram's growth results from both tourism and economy. The province is the center of transportation of the lower Northeastern region, and is considered an important place of civilization with long history, antiques, relics, culture and festivals. Moreover, the value of money is acceptable—reasonable prices of goods and services. Lastly, there are international standard football stadium and racing circuit (Kaosa-ard, 2015)

Weaknesses: There is lack of network to promote tourism, and tourism attractions are at bad condition because the number of tourists is low and not consistent. The site owners then put on advertisement boards and that blocks the view. Moreover, public transportation is not linked to attraction sites.

Opportunities: The opening of East-West Economic Corridor: EWEC or R9 will allow the government to promote sport and cultural tourism. A policy is set to make the province the center of logistics, medical, MICE, and airlines. There is a chance that the adjacent provinces are affected by the growth of the city.

Threats: Government policies are frequently changed due to political matters. Students are overcrowded in some areas, so it exceeds the capacity of such areas (Department of Tourism Buri Ram, 2018). Travelling from place to place is still difficult. Furthermore, the power to manage sport events is mainly belong to private sectors not the government ones, so the processes related are quite slow to carry out.

3. Analysis on Effects from Sport Tourism

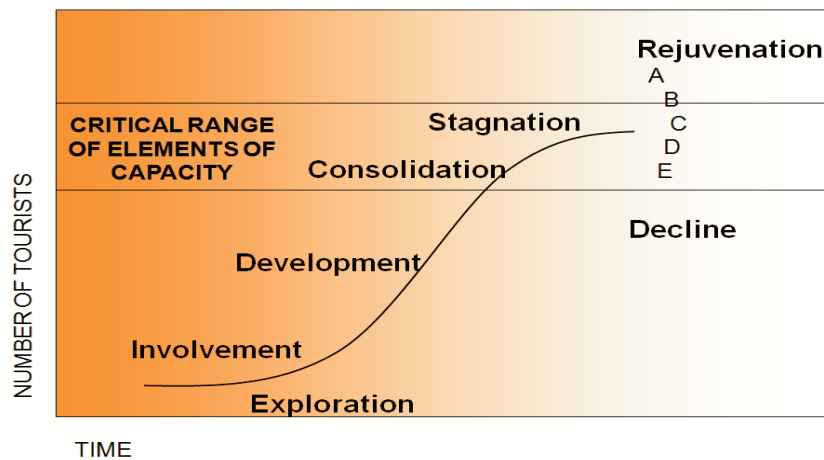
After introducing Buri Ram as sport tourism destination, there are many changes and effects followed, especially the policy to make more profits and jobs to the community has caused the property value to rise up to 200 percent. For example, the price of land in 2012 was 2 million baht per rai (1,600 m²), but today the price rose up to 10 million baht. The advantages are that there are more new jobs, more employment and flow of foreign currency. In contrast, cost of living within the area highly increased (Jittangwattana & Srikampha, 2014). Sometimes there is need to import resources from other countries. Moreover, the income made from tourism depends on the season. The sport competitions and festivals are not held every day, meaning that the jobs and employment related to sport tourism are not secure.

Considering effects on the community, in the positive way is that there are recreation and education sites. Citizens are aware of their hometown's potentials, and also that they have better standard of living which will prevent them from immigrating to big cities (Jittangwattana & Srikampha, 2014). In contrary, when more outside people come to the area as tourists, local people started to feel uneasy. There are more conflicts, crimes, exploitation, and imitation of bad behaviors.

Following the policy to create an image of the province by linking history with modern sports, the concept 'Thunder Castle Stadium' is the positive point to promote culture. In every festival, culture and history will be implemented to emphasize the province's uniqueness. However, it is thought that this could lessen the value of arts as culture is sold in the form of products. In addition, local culture is blended with outside culture.

For overall environment, the transportation in Buri Ram is improved. Hotels and resorts have higher standard. There are more restaurants as well as better public place cleaning. Nevertheless, more trees are cut down, and there are more pollution and garbage to deal with especially when there are auto racing events (Jittangwattana & Srikampha, 2014). In summary, sport tourism in Buri Ram, starting from the point of opening sport center to the present, has grown at the same level as other common businesses. This study used Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle Model (Butler R.W., 1980) in the analysis as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Tourism Area Life Cycle (Butler, 1980)



Butler divided the life cycle of tourism product into six stages as followed:

1) Exploring stage: In this stage there are no facilities and accommodations for tourists. So they have to share what is needed with local people. Tourists are able to get exposed to local life and culture, but the profits local people get back are quite small, for example, new roads to seashore and underdeveloped tourist attractions (Kaosa-ard, 2015).

2) Involvement stage: Local people play an important role in providing facilities and accommodations at first. They also advertise tourism by themselves and communication between two groups may affect the people's lives. Government sectors are pressured to provide fundamental structures essential for tourism, such as transportation and facilities.

3) Development stage: In this stage, new attractions are built as implements to original attractions, as well as learning centers. Geographical features are changed due to new construction of roads and other buildings. Local administrators may take actions to come up with management plan and provide facilities, which might not be acceptable for some of the local people. During tourism season, the number of tourists may exceed that of the local people. There is more need for labors, and small businesses such as laundry.

4) Consolidation stage: The maximum number of tourists decreases, yet it still exceeds the local population. Economy of the area is tied to tourism. Although the area depends on tourism, some of local people who are not related to it may dislike tourists. Many industries have to deal with the situation by promoting a campaign to extend the area of attractions and tourism season.

5) Stagnation stage: When the number of tourists reaches or exceeds the maximum capacity, tourism will cause pollution, social and economic problems, for example, wastewater from hotels polluted sea water. In this stage, the tourist attractions become well-known but not sustainable. Therefore, a meeting is held to solve the problem and keep tourists. More new attractions and buildings are built and their number

is starting to overcome natural and cultural attractions. Assets and properties change hands often. Although there are still new developments, it is limited to the attractions' outer area. The tourist type changes to mass tourism company.

6) Decline or rejuvenating stage: In the last stage there are two cases, either decline or rejuvenating (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000).

6.1) Decline case

- Assets and properties change hands very frequently. Buildings built for tourism are used for other purposes. Tourist attractions change to new places.

- Local people start to be able to afford tourism business at low price because of the decline in tourism.

- Tourism business owners compete with each other by reducing price leading to vicious cycle.

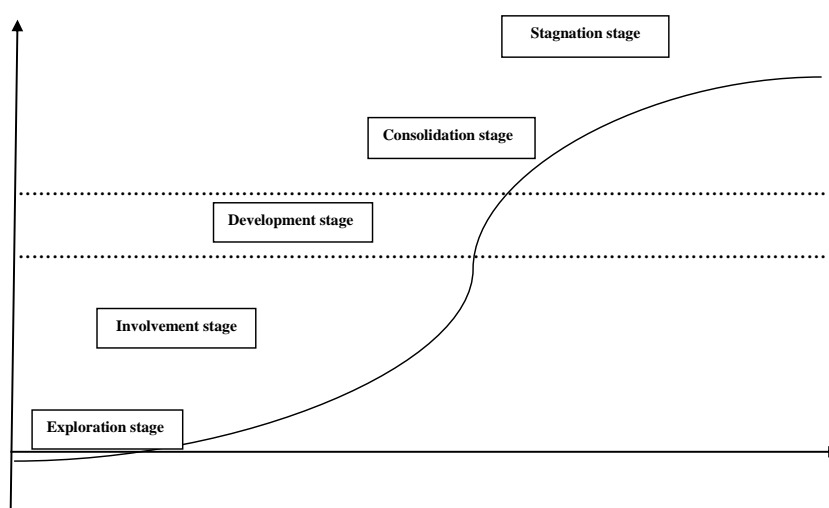
6.2) Rejuvenating case can occur if:

- There are manmade attractions, for example, casinos and theme parks.

- Unused natural resources or attractions are introduced (Butler R.W., 1980).

Butler acknowledged that in some areas there is a chance of having timeless attractions which will not decline (Butler R.W., 1980), for example Niagara Falls and Disneyland which always get improved with new services and entertainment (Kaosa-ard, 2015). From the analysis on the sport tourism in Buri Ram since the development of sport center in 2012 until present, it is found that the stage is development stage as presented in Figure 2:

Figure 2: Destination Cycle of Sport Tourism (Butler,1980 & Kaosa-ard, 2013)



By studying destination cycle of sport tourism in Buri Ram, it is found that there are manmade attractions, for example, sport stadium, in addition to original local

attractions. This resulted in more constructions for hotels, sport learning centers and change of environment, more roads, landscape management and city system. Some local people are not content with the number of tourists which exceeds the capacity. The market has enough space for supporting industries: spa, restaurants, laundry and entertainment. The growth also spread to adjacent areas, for instance, when there is important match, the main hotels are fully booked and tourists will have to stay in other nearby town. The mentioned model can be effectively useful for effect management plan in the future.

5. Sport Tourism Management Plan

From the analysis of development tourism area, the province is in developing stage with more modern public utility, constructions of hotels, environment changes in some places, and the mass flow of tourists (Marina,2008) The suggestions include studying the capacity of tourist attractions, setting land management plan, building structure control, launching environment preservation, determining target market according to tourist behaviors, developing proper infrastructure, developing additional attractions which integrate local way of life with modern products, promoting more investment in tourism, and raising awareness so that both private and government sectors join hands in protecting environment (Jitpakdee & Kaiyapan, 2015).

Despite being at development stage, investors pointed out that they are not interested in national competition as their goal is to be one of the best five countries in Asia. The investors want to expand football fan base and make Buri Ram a sport city. In short term, adventure, motor and water sport will be promoted. In long term, Buri Ram will be known as health city. Whenever thinking of Asia, people will think of Buri Ram and its unique design, and it is where tourists can come to watch sport competition, play sports with trainers and have local clean food. This will also help in income distribution (Chidchorp, 2015). Apart from athletes, staff, followers and sport fans are as well the target market because they will need services and arrangements both before and after the match. If there are facilities and accommodation for these people who come to participate in sport events, more profits can be made to the country (Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, 2014). Moreover, security also attracts more tourists because they feel safe under high level of security. From the study, it is suggested that in the future there should be security measure with technology, such as CCTV security cameras and scanners (Toohey & Taylor, 2008). Moreover, tourists will have to show their ID cards when they buy tickets, so that it is easy to identify each individual. If the government and private sectors cooperate with each other, the development plan will be more effective.

6. Summary and Conclusions

For the effect management plan for the destination cycle of sport tourism in Buri Ram, the National Tourism Committee should be given more power so that it can be upgraded to an organization that coordinate and promote the development of the Tourism Authority. When the organization has unity, it will be able to set a plan to collect tourism taxes from tourists via accommodations. (Therdchai Choibamroong ,2014). The development of sport tourism has attracted much attention due do its promise to improve the societal welfare and quality of life of the host community. An effective tourism promotion plan will improve societal quality of life and benefit national economy. The success of sport tourism commercially and traditionally contributes to local residents in terms of economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits (Miaw-Xian,2020) Chang In addition, tourism roadmap should be applied to enhance the tourist capacity in the long term and get prepared for any risks and tourism crisis. The summary of the effect management plan is shown in Figure 3:

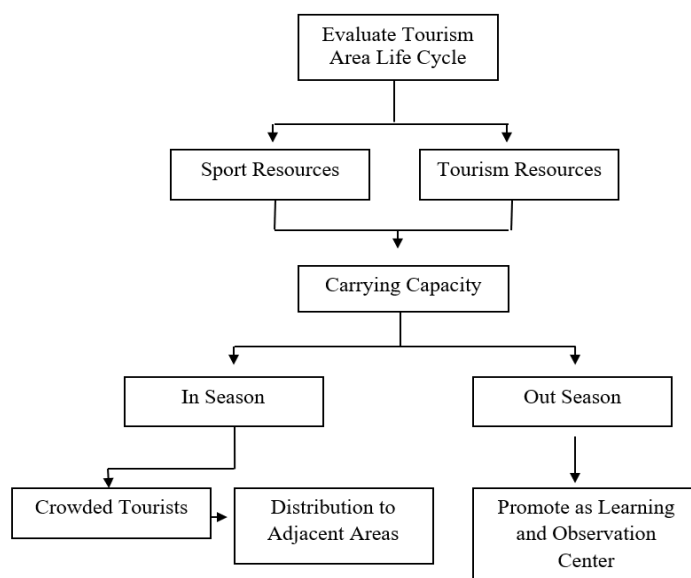


Figure 3: Effect Management Plan for the Area Life Cycle of Sport Tourism

Source : From data analysis

However, in the planning process, related sectors have to work as marketing intelligence unit to inform tourism manufacturers in many countries about tourist behaviors and needs so that they can produce products and services according to the demand. (Kristine Toohey and Tracy Taylor 2008) Government sectors also have more capacity to manage and improve tourism while supporting private sectors at the same time, especially a sport city like Buri Ram (TAT Intelligence Center, 2014). This will also allow the tourism development to progress effectively, continuously and satisfying to local people. Lastly, there should be a strategy to reform tourist capacity management in the long term, as well as the improvement of public utility and transportation to sport stadium

and tourists attractions. The management of the flow of tourists to distribute some tourists to the adjacent cities also helps prevent over capacity problem when there is a big sport event. The contribution of the study will be given due emphasis by sport tourism stakeholders; tour operators, hotels, restaurants, airlines, and local national government organizations that involved with tourism, especially in Buriram to sustain their tourist continual visit and the development of their events and services (Itsra Watjanasoonorn, 2019) perceived sport tourism quality effected tourist satisfaction. The management in tourism could apply the findings in delivering services with a view to boost customer satisfaction (Terason,2019)

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