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A STUDY ON CULTURE AND WAY OF LIFE SUSTAINABLE OF THE PEOPLE IN KOH SAMUI

Abstract:

Culture plays an important and vital role in attracting visitors and tourists to travel to various tourist attractions, in order to explore and learn the cultural context of the area. If the area has the difference of high cultural diversity or cultural context from the other usual tourist environment or habitat, it would challenge and stimulate the curiosity to go high as well. Therefore, the objective of this research was to explore cultural and way of life sustainable of the people in Koh Samui, Surat Thani province, Thailand. This study was designed as a qualitative research, using non-structural interview, in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and communities meeting. This research used sample size of 4 groups, which were local community groups, local entrepreneur such as transportation, accommodation, restaurant, tour operation, souvenir shop and spa business, tourist at Koh Samui as well as supported institute in cultural tourism at Koh Samui.

The study found that traditional community context consisted of the general Thai social that the way of life affiliated family, temple and associate with social groups by means of family is important to supported family members. Agriculture, fishery and merchandise are the main occupation of the community. Koh Samui has a personality and culture of its own. The first settlers that landed at Koh Samui were Chinese traders and Muslim fishermen. On Koh Samui, the family is an extended family. Tourism became the main source of income of Koh Samui. Investments of infrastructure and tourism facilities are rapidly expanded to be beneficial trade of land ownership for both of Thai and foreigner to do the business. Nevertheless, the growth of tourism city without the high-quality management could affected cultural and traditional to be adjust of tourism industry, speedily destroyed ecosystem, historic site dilapidation, and vanish of Koh Samui unique.

Keywords:

culture, way of life, sustainable

JEL Classification: Z19

Introduction

The differences and diversities of culture is a major selling point for tourism. Normal life of the local community may be something spectacular for the visitors; however enthusiasms of tourists in seeking the answers to their needs can be offensive to the community that they were an invasion of privacy from the outsider. Or the entry of cultural tourism could result in changes of concept in order to attract tourists who want to visit. Thus the community has developed into a modern folk to support and want to impress the tourists. Community values caused emulate or mimic the behavior of tourists and changed the differences that were the strength point to the weakness, which is vulnerability of communities. These characteristics cause a clash of cultures which lead to conflict and changing of cultural tourism, and that has occurred in many areas of the country (Haicharoen, 2003).

Problems changing of the culture of the community that caused by tourism are a combination of several common causes. The problem comes from the government, which wants to develop tourism in the area by encouraging community resources that are available. The natural resources, cultural history and way of life were presented as the main selling point. Local people engaged in the tourism and ignored traditional culture. Tourism activities are intrusive to the community unawares and that has contributed to a culture change. The important issue is how the community should preserve the strengths of traditional culture for life and pass on to future generations. The tourism management, especially the cultural tourism should have direction of sustainability. A balance between the environmental community and the existence of a culture of revenue comes from tourism. The community will be strengthened in the context of their culture, and generate income from the tourism. Attractions and environment will not be affected. Tourism has also benefited from the learning perspective of life based on the balance. In addition, tour operators must understand the proper management of cultural tourism that will not affect the intelligence of community.

Koh Samui is located in the Surat Thani province, southern Thailand, is another area where culture and traditional way of life are affected by the business of tourism industry, equipped with the beauty of the natural landscape of the island in the Gulf of Thailand, distance from the city, just 84 km, and about 20 kilometers from the mainland, with the lifestyle of simplicity of the local people living with coconut groves, sailing for fishing and trade, coconut trees that cover almost all areas of the island. It became one of the most important sources of coir production in the country and is the heart of the economy on the island (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2007).

The growth of the tourism industry does not only continue increase the number of tourists (Praneetham and Satjachaleaw, 2015), but it also attracts foreigners from all over the region to enter careers and economic growth in Koh Samui more as well. The coconut was once a major economic crop that was influenced by the tourism. Farmer decided to sell the land to build rental apartments, hotels resorts and restaurants instead. Some people in Koh Samui has more wealth from investors from abroad, both

Thai and foreign investors buy or lease business. The phenomenon of abandoning the traditional profession and turned into a new career from tourism, such as hotels, restaurants, tour staff, bar staff, beer, entertainment, traditional massage by the beach. Coconut plantation that was once the backbone of the economy in the past has been replaced by tourism industry. Tourism industry is likely to continue indiscriminately to cultural change. Culture and traditional way of life is threatened by engaging tourism that could be dissolved because the direction is not clear. Therefore, the researcher was interested in studying cultural and way of life of people in Koh Samui in order to prepare the community to support the cultural tourism and sustainable tourism.

The purpose of the research

The purpose of this research was to explore cultural and way of life sustainable of the people in Koh Samui, Surat Thani province, Thailand

Research Methodology

A qualitative research method was applied. This research used sample size of 4 groups, which were local community groups, local entrepreneur such as transportation, accommodation, restaurant, tour operation, souvenir shop and spa business, tourist at Koh Samui as well as supported institute in cultural tourism at Koh Samui. In-depth interview, Focus group discussion and communities meeting were organized. Non-structural Interviews were created to collect data. Data analysis was performed using descriptive analysis.

Cultural Tourism and Local Culture

Yod Santisombat (1997) pointed out that the basic characteristics of the culture comprises of six components, namely; 1) shared Ideas that culture is a common idea and social values, 2) culture is learned, 3) symbol that culture is based on the use of symbols. Human behavior originates from the use of symbols. Our daily lives involve in symbols, such as currency, traffic lights, or religious symbols, 4) culture is a holistic of knowledge and wisdom. In this culture has served the needs of humans, 5) human culture is a process to define the meaning of life and things around us, 6) culture is dynamic and there is a change to adapt all the time. Cultural changes are caused by many reasons. Cultural diffusion may be an effect. If technology production has changed, culture will change as well. If the technology changes too rapidly until the cultural and traditional practices may not change immediately, as it may result in a phenomenon called "Cultural Lag" in human society, the sense of alienation may have serious consequences to the culture, making the rift to decay.

National Social and Economic Development Plan, the eighth edition of 1997 – 2001 has discussed about plans to build a culture to develop the country. Developing countries need to stand on their own base and local knowledge, encouraged by all parties involved in the preservation of culture at the national and local level. The principles are as follows: 1) strengthening the cultural and social development, 2) building knowledge on culture by promoting research information gathered knowledge to wisdom, 3) promoting research information gathered knowledge to create local pride in the culture of Thailand by fostering cooperation between state and local (Office of the National Economic and Social Development, 1997).

Pigram (1993) mentioned that cultural tourism has an important motivation that is understand the differences in lifestyle, exchange knowledge and ideas with each other. Smith (1993) said that cultural tourism makes visitors feel and see the life of the society in the past through things. Moreover, people travel to the cultural tourism destination for learning, experiences and entertainment. Some tourists find that locals have a strange and unique culture (Howell, 1993).

It could be concluded that culture is heritage for human living that passed on from the past to the present by improving the conditions and chosen successor era, in order to suit the environment of living in the present and as the popularity of social. Culture has improved differs slightly from the original. The culture is so interesting. It is socially acceptable and is maintained with society.

Impact of Tourism on Society and Culture

Archer and Cooper (1994) pointed out that the impact of tourism on society and cultures are the cultural differences of each country or even the same country but different regions. Even the things that help stimulate tourism. But in cultural or physical differences between tourists and local people, it could cause problems and conflicts can arise.

Inskeep (1991) discussed about the impact of tourism on the local culture as both positive and negative. Positive are tourism helps preserve the architecture, history and archaeological sites that are attractive to tourists interested. Tourism helps conserve, restore traditional arts, crafts, music, drama and the community. Moreover, it helps in maintenance of cultural landmarks such as buildings, museums, theaters, cultural exchange, learn and understand the values and traditions of that community. Negative are festival, which traditionally oriented to tourism often focus on aesthetics, thrilled to witness the neglect to think about the real meaning of such traditions, the role and importance of local life. Festivals bring out the true meaning and value of their own. No relation to the social life of the community. Handicraft may be affected in terms of quality. The standard of art will be able to produce a lot of low cost and high profits without regard to the quality of those crafts. The imitative behavior, both in dress and lifestyle caused conflict between the people in the community. And it may result in loss of cultural identity to the original. Tourists feel free from the bondage of the culture of

normal life. Visitors will feel that they are free from all social obligations when they leave the country. At the times, some tourists are trying to find an exotic experience that their own culture is not acceptable.

Changing in Culture and Way of Life in Koh Samui

It is believed that people who settled on the island in the early may come in the way of acquiring luck finding new sources of livelihood, or by chance. The study found that traditional community context consisted of the general Thai social that the way of life affiliated family, temple and associate with social groups by means of family is important to supported family members. Agriculture, fishery and merchandise are the main occupation of the community. The main crops of economic importance and uniqueness of Koh Samui is coconut, which covers most of the island. Plateau had made some rice. It left only traces of the area's past, these were sold or transferred to construction in the area is nearly exhausted. In addition, with its location in the middle of the sea make the island a natural environment of Koh Samui are beautiful, attractive for tourists to visit. Tourism industry plays a key role in the economic growth and the lives of the people of the island. There is also an orchard key. Koh Samui has a personality and culture of its own. The first settlers that landed at Koh Samui were Chinese traders and Muslim fishermen. On Koh Samui, the family is an extended family. Tourism became the main source of income of Koh Samui. Investments of infrastructure and tourism facilities are rapidly expanded to be beneficial trade of land ownership for both of Thai and foreigner to do the business. Nevertheless, the growth of tourism city without the high-quality management it could affected cultural and traditional to be adjust of tourism industry, speedily destroyed ecosystem, historic site dilapidation, and vanish of Koh Samui unique.

Koh Samui is famous throughout the world. The beauty of the natural resources, tourist places and lifestyle of the people attracted tourists both Thai tourists and foreign tourists enormous each year (Praneetham and Satjachaleaw, 2015). Koh Samui has been developing and changing rapidly due to the growth of the tourism industry. Koh Samui currently has changed quite a lot and has been constantly evolving, from both public and private sectors. Tourism is the main source of income of Koh Samui. People have begun to modify their lifestyle and well-being in order to fit within the context of business travel growth. Several factors are important to the cultural tourism of Koh Samui, such as guideline for tourism plan, tourism management, dimensional attraction in both the natural environment and society, and travel behavior. Celeste (2010) pointed out that local communities could continue to perform their traditional culture, along with business travel as well. Strategy for success was to truly engage with the tourism industry in the first action. Being a good host, under the rules, regulations and codes of conduct that defined a common practice, including directing tourists to behave according to the conventions of the community, visitor care and attention to the cultural experience that tourists could get. The income distribution was taking place in a transparent and fair. Nancy (2010)

revealed that the North Dakota is a cultural tourism place that has attracted tourists to travel constantly because it is a historical heritage. The North Dakota has well managed tourism quality. Visitors have the opportunity to share their learning experiences with the local community. The communities have the same opinions as to encourage tourists. Carla and Chris (2011) pointed out that the government brought the modern culture to the indigenous Maori, New Zealand that made lifestyle being modified and local culture to be lost. These are similar to many other communities in the area, making the development of local cultural identity changed or lost. A model of conservation and restoration of cultural sharing of information for the culture of the Maori still existed on their identities. Meanwhile, the development policies of the country can be done. The creation of a mechanism for Maori autonomy from government was another key to make the pattern ideas hostile to outsiders modified and contribute to the success of the model to be jointly prepared.

Changes of way of life of people in Koh Samui as a tourist destination today have affected the changes of culture and traditions of Koh Samui to virtually all aspects. From previously, residents on the island were living comfortably, dependence on supportive care like relatives, shared a common, share feeding, help rotation job opportunities by becoming a society where people earn their struggle to survive. The growing as a tourist destination, but lack of good management had an impact on rapid ecological destruction, because a lot of garbage is increasing steadily. By increasing of the tourists' amount, there were also some changes in the role of tourism related to the physical and economic. The culture has changed. Such condition is deteriorating more and more. Government should have a proper management plan to achieve a balance between income from tourism, culture and sustainability. Agencies should be involved in the tourism industry with care and operate with a great deal.

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