

Potential and Guidelines for Tourism Management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark

Kuldara Peanjaroen^{1*} and Parichart Visuthismajarn²

^{1,2}Faculty of Environmental Management, Prince of Songkla University 90112

E-mail: Kuldara@hotmail.com

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the potential assessment of tourism management and study of guidelines for tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark. It was a mixed method research. The data of quantitative research were collected by tourists with simple random sampling, the total of 384 sets. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics. The data of qualitative research were collected by related government and tourism entrepreneur, the total of 10 sets. The data were analyzed with content analysis and validated with triangulation design model. The results showed that: 1) Satun UNESCO Global Geopark's potential assessment of tourism management has a high level of potential. However, accessibility are limited due to the public transportation to various tourist attractions is still remains problematic. 2) Guidelines for tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark with local government and private representatives are consisted develop capacity to support infrastructure with use of innovation and new technology, includes creating an identity and to presenting a new tourism product for tourists to sustainable development of tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark.

Keywords: Potential Assessment, Tourism Management, Satun UNESCO Global Geopark

Introduction

Tourism is an important industry that can drive the Thai economy movement among the vulnerable economic situations and political uncertainties. According to the World Economic Forum's 2017 Tourism Competitiveness Report, the competitiveness of 136 tourism countries across over the world used four tourism elements namely the supportive environmental tourism, the policy and factor promoted tourism, the infrastructure and the natural resources and culture. There are 15 sub-issues reported that tourism in Thailand was ranked at 34rd from 35rd in 2013

and at 43rd in 2015. This can be implied that the Thai government has still dominated the tourism in Thailand for economic growth which conformed to the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017 - 2021).

Satun province is well-known and well-prepared for various tourism resources such as natural tourism resources, culture, traditions and tourism activities. Here is also the location of the island “Tarutao”, the first marine national park in Thailand, Koh Lipe, Koh Adang-Rawi, Koh Hin Ngam which is famous and attractive by tourists. In addition, there are tourist attractions scattered in each area, both by land and sea. And after Satun Geopark has been certified as Satun Global Geopark in April 2018 from UNESCO, it is the first world geopark in Thailand. It is the fifth world geopark of ASEAN and the 36th country in the world (Satun Geopark Office, 2016), increasing Satun's reputation and inevitably stimulating tourism in the area. The preparation and development of tourist attractions to continually welcome the arrival of tourists. From the statistics, if comparing the number of tourists and tourism income in 2017 before being certified as Satun Global Geopark and 2018 after being certified as Satun World Geopark. It was found that the number of tourists increased by 8.43 percent and income from tourism increased by 13.34 percent (Department of Tourism, 2019). Geology is outstanding with the value of archeology, ecology, and culture. The World Geopark Satun Province located in the south of Thailand covering to four districts namely Thung Wa District, Manang District, La-ngu District and Muang District. It is distinguished for its topography and nature that is characterized by a limestone mountain range. There are various big islands and beautiful beaches. Also a variety of tourism activities such as white water rafting, snorkeling, caving, as well as experiencing local cultural life from the geological outstanding of the World Geopark of Satun, is resulting in a variety of famous tourism activities such as kayaking Prasat Hin Phan Yod Kayaking in Lestegodon Cave and travel activities across time zones.

The information mentioned above shows that tourism in the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark area needs a good management for promoting the tourism attractions. Therefore, the potential tourism management should be assessed for more tourist attractions and studied the guidelines for tourism management in the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark in order to prepare for a tourism attraction uniqueness. This can lead calling the tourists' attention as it becomes a selling point for tourism that can make a difference to stimulate tourism including being able to bring in income to the local community for good well-being This will benefit those involved in the development and utilization of tourism in the area. In addition, the tourists' attraction management approach will help raise the level of tourist attractions to be

ready to accommodate the high-potential tourists and enable to maintain tourist attraction standards according to the standard criteria of tourism maintenance resources for sustainability. Therefore, the researcher envisions the need to conduct research studies on Potential and Guidelines for Tourism Management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark, with the objectives of potential assessment of tourism management and study of guidelines for tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark which the study results will display the potential assessment of tourism management and lead to the formulation of management strategies supporting or promoting tourism activities suited to the local contextualization. The results of the study can also be applied to nearby provinces in order to develop tourist attractions and tourism activities according to the province's potential.

Research Objective

1. To investigate the potential assessment of tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark.
2. To draw the guidelines for tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark.

Literature Review

Tourism components are crucial factors for driving the successfulness of tourism movement. It is also a key factor in developing the potential of tourism attractions that can be linked to the patterns of tourism area. Various tourism activities can increase the tourists' satisfaction and quantities. Thus, an efficient and suitable tourism management need to be underpinning for creating the highest tourism value. Apart from that, the components of the existing environmental and cultural resources are consisted of 5A keys (Therdchai, 2007) for fulfilling the sustainable tourism as follows: 1) Accommodation is a place that is arranged for tourists to stay with food and beverage services, 2) Accessibility plays as an important role for the tourism movement to the various tourism attractions and it has been developed to various types of tourism nowadays, 3) Attraction is a tourism resource that can attract tourists to travel. 4) Amenity is thing that is organized to facilitate tourists such as roads, electricity, telephone, maps, internet, tourist information centers, etc, and 5) Activity is a product of promoting and attracting more tourists' attractions. In addition, Nuchpravee, L. et al. (2019) studied the Potentials of Tourism Attraction in Phichit Province aimed to analyze the potential of tourist attractions and the tourism situation, problems and obstacles in the sustainable tourism

development in Phichit Province. This was a qualitative research method used to investigate the potential, context, areas of tourism together with an in- depth Interview, key informants were government officials, private sectors and people in tourist destinations in Phichit Province. The results of the study showed that the state of most tourist attractions can attract tourists to travel to Phichit Province as it has the unique characteristics of each tourist attraction. However, the tourism of Phichit Province still lacks of promotion and public relations regarding the dissemination of interesting information of tourist attractions to the eyes of tourists and visitors. As a result, the tourism attractions are not widely known. Thus, the researcher then used the aforementioned tourism elements to be used to determine the questions in the research in this research study in order to investigate the potential assessment of each aspect of tourism components in order to draw the direction of further tourism development.

Conceptual Framework

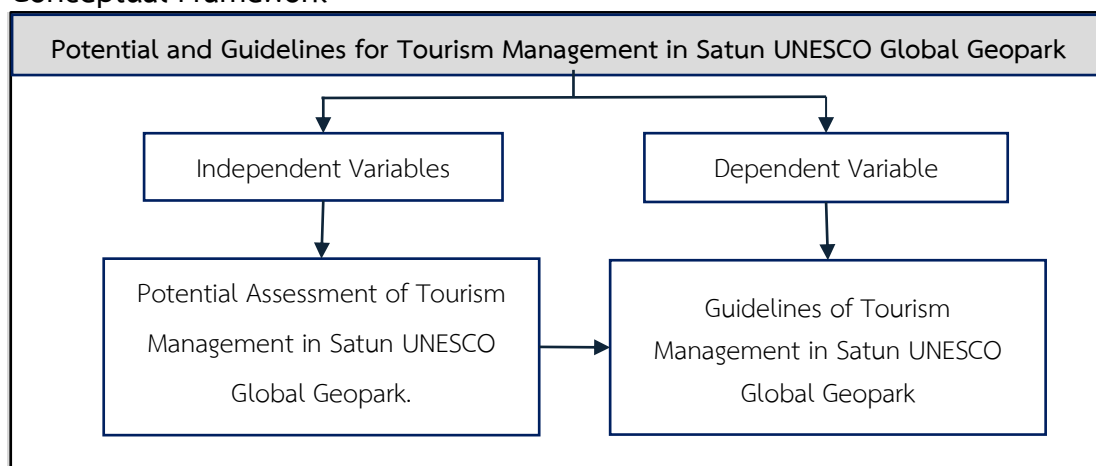


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The mixed method approach was used in this research study. The quantitative research method used to investigate the potential assessment of tourism management and the qualitative research method used to draw the guidelines of the tourism management.

1. Quantitative research method

The population were tourists visiting the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark area. It covers 4 districts: Thung Wa District, Manang District, La-ngu District, and Muang

Satun District (Satun Geopark Office, 2016). Sample group was determined by using the Cochran formula (Cochran, 1977) as follows:

Calculation formula is
$$N = \frac{p(1-p)Z^2}{e^2}$$

where n = the sample size

p = the estimated proportion of the population (0.5)

e = the margin of errors (0.05)

z = a z-value at 95% confidence level or a significant counterpoint 0.05 with z = 1.96.

The researcher as investigators determined the proportion of the population of interest at 0.50 and the confidence level of 95%. The sample size was 384 samples by simple sampling.

2. Qualitative research method

The researcher as investigators had Identified the key contributors by using an in-depth interview. The stakeholder were representatives of government agencies and related entrepreneurs. The Creswell's Criteria (2014) described a sample size between 5-25 samples per study. The selection of 10 representative samples with relevant knowledge and experience in order to provide a good information through in-depth interviews.

3. Research tools

The research instruments included questionnaires and in depth interviews the details as follows:

3.1. A questionnaire for collecting data on tourism management potential in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark tourist sites. From the tourism components, the questions used in the questionnaire were derived from related concepts and theories. Five-level rating scales were assigned and the validity of questionnaires was tested by determining the content consistency index (IOC).

3.2. In-depth interviews about tourism management practices. The questions were reviewed by three experts to determine the components between the questions and the objective and research contents.

4. Analysis of data and statistics

4.1. Analysis of data obtained from questionnaires on tourism management potential at Satun UNESCO Global Geopark. Descriptive statistical analysis was used, including Mean and Standard Deviation.

4.2. Analysis of data obtained from an in dept interview questionnaire regarding tourism management guidelines in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark by applying the content-based data analysis and validate their reliability using a triangulation authentication method.

Results

The results of the study were divided into two parts: 1) the potential assessment of tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark and 2) Guidelines for tourism management at Satun UNESCO Global Geopark as follows.


1. The potential assessment of tourism management in the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark displayed that a total of 384  rists surveyed were female (53%), aged between 18 - 25 years (61%), single (77%), working in government service / state enterprises (55%), salary between 15,001-25,000 baht (37%), and travelling objectives to Satun UNESCO Global Geopark's attractions: to relax (53%). The details on the level of tourism management potential in the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark's attractions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The Overall Mean and Standard Deviation of Levels of Potential Tourism Management

No.	Components of Potential Tourism Management	N = 384		Mean
		\bar{x}	S.D.	
1	Accommodation	4.26	0.75	High/much
2	Accessibility	4.17	0.82	High/much
3	Attraction	4.38	0.70	High/much
4	Amenity	4.25	0.76	High/much
5	Activity	4.23	0.75	High/much
Total		4.26	0.75	High/much

Based on the data in Table 1, it shows that the overall levels of the tourism management potential in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark was at a high level (\bar{x} = 4.26, SD = 0.75). The details were as follows: the attraction (\bar{x} = 4.38, SD=0.70), the accommodation (\bar{x} = 4.26, SD = 0.75), the amenity (\bar{x} = 4.25, SD=0.76), the activities (\bar{x} = 4.23, SD = 0.75), and the accessibility (\bar{x} = 4.17, S.D. = 0.82) respectively.

2. The guidelines for tourism management in the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark based on data from in-depth interviews, the key informants found that the tourism management guidelines for Satun UNESCO Global Geopark should work together in an integrated manner under the cooperation of government agencies and the private sectors. This can drive the development opportunities for tourist attractions and develop the tourism capacity to support infrastructure. The use of innovation and new technology as well as establishing the basic identity of production and the presentation of tourism products to tourists in order to develop the tourism management of Satun UNESCO Global Geopark to become sustainability.

2.1 Development of tourism area management in which government agencies should coordinate the cooperation from related organizations, both the public and private sectors in all levels. The short-term training and development programs of specialized operational skills, especially in guide personnel, such as storytelling skills, lecturing and correcting techniques should be organized for competitiveness environment. In addition, the use of foreign languages to develop communication skills such as English, Chinese, and cultural history training to prepare for future travel arrangements. Creating tourism activities and preparing as a host are good to welcome tourists.

2.2 Facilities for tourist attractions to increase the tourist confidence of the tourism management at Satun UNESCO Global Geopark can be divided into four issues as follows: 1) Improvement and development of the tourism logistics system by integrating all modes of transport connected to a convenient public transportation system in means of fast and safe. Furthermore, to support tourism as well as to develop land transport routes to have safety standards, the preparation of signs, maps, directions, tourist attractions and support private investment in the development of transportation is the priority. 2) Development of communication networks, information systems in order to support the widespread use of E-commerce system and to promote the preparation of online travelling information including links to various service systems on the travelling website to increase accessibility channels of the target tourists. 3) Restoration and improvement of tourist landmark with shabby conditions to return to their original state in order to added value and uniqueness should be taken into account. As the identity and way of life of the local community can attract more tourists when the setting of service standards and safety standards for all tourism activities 4) the development of tourist facilities from the landscape improvement, parking places, meaningful signs with QR Code, a one-stop service tourist information center, Wi-Fi service checkpoints, prayer rooms, and restrooms to

provide convenience for tourists, including facilities for the elderly. Such as ramps, handrails, must comply with the environment and be safe according to international standards

Discussion

Based on the research results, it can be identified that the potential of tourism management and use it as a tool to drive the formulation of management strategies and support tourism activities accordingly. It can also be used to develop tourism for the benefit of the local community as following details:

1. Potential of tourism management in the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark has been considered into five aspects namely accommodation, accessibility in terms of attraction, amenity, and activity. All aspects have the potential for tourism management at a high level in particular the area of attraction as the attraction is well known and beautiful. It has distinctive characteristics that reflect uniqueness based on culture, traditions and local wisdom. The Satun Wonderland Geopark concept can communicate to the story and image of the area very well. This issue is consistent with Howhan, T. et al. (2017) conducted a research study on the Potential of Creative Tourist Destination in Satun Province. Most of Satun's natural attractions are under the supervision of government agencies so a management nature is from the top down procedures to the practitioners. Some tourist attractions are still maintained by the private sectors. Therefore, the leaders need to have creativity in developing them as a learning center in the area Including historical, religious and cultural attractions that are maintained by local government organizations such as the Ancient Elephant Museum. In Thung Wa district, leaders were found to have strong vision and jointly push for tourism activities according to the planned in action plan. In addition to the accessibility to access to the tourist attractions found that the travelling transportation is not as convenient as some area of tourism checkpoints like paths/paved roads and gravel roads need to be improved as they are lacks of clear signs and information which is difficult for the tourist to access. From the researcher's points of view when taking a field trip, it was found that the problem of access to tourist attractions of the community, especially the routes between the main road boundary to the target tourism places are far from the main road with unclear signs and the use of GPS signals cannot be reached as there was no signals. Furthermore, the public transport is still key problem in line with Danuvat, S. (2021), a research study on Guidelines for enhancing the tourism markets in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark in the collaborations with government and private agencies reported that access to tourist attractions

remains a problem as there are no public buses to serve tourists for travel between the scattered Satun UNESCO Global Geopark. The researcher realized that the tourism logistics system should be immediately improved and developed. by integrating all forms of transport to be connected those tourism zones in term of fast and safe.

2. Guidelines for tourism management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark attractions found that there should be guidelines for raising tourism standards into the international standards by using Satun UNESCO Global Geopark as a resource and certified by the first UNESCO in Thailand. The integrated manner under the cooperation of government agencies and the private sectors including giving the opportunities for the local community to participate as Nittaya, N. and La-iard, S. (2017), studied on the Guidelines on Sustainable Tourism Development at The Lakha Community on The Banks of Damnoensaduak Canal in Samutsakhon and Ratchaburi Provinces, revealed that the development of tourist attractions needs the participation of the local community like the joint planning, evaluation and consideration of regulations and laws from the government in the areas of planning, management, conservation and maintaining the identity of the way of life. Moreover, the budget should be allocated for tourism development in a systematic and relevant manner, such as developing or improving meaningful signs, direction signs to cover the same system according to international principles. An attractive proactive marketing publicity to provide the development of tourist attractions, the development of the capacity to accommodate tourists in accordance with the target group to compete in business. Additionally, from the researcher's field work, it was found that the development of specialized operational skills for community tourism entrepreneurs should be up-skilled and re-skilled to fulfill the tourists' satisfactions for instance the foreign languages for communication, specialized operational skills-tour guides, the storytelling skills, interpretation skills and lecturing or servicing techniques to tourists. This supports the research report of Pongsak, T. (2019) studied on Community-based Tourism Management in Satun UNESCO Global Geopark. The results showed the government agencies should be clear cut in promoting and supporting the management and budget allocation for the spontaneous development of the tourist areas. This includes skills development and short-term training for the personnel who drives tourism activities, such as English language training, tourism interpretation, hospitality and lectures by creating a learning activity along with the establishment a capacity development plan to meet the management standards both at domestics and international aspects. Moreover, the management should be consistency and continuously. The management policies need to allow the

community to participate in all aspects which can lead to the effectiveness and efficiency in creating a management model at the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark, Satun Province for sustainable development in long run.

Suggestions

1. The government and private sectors including the local communities should have cooperation in determining the positioning of tourism products and marketing strategies to support or promote the tourism activities to suit the local contexts to become the driving force for the development of sustainable creative tourism activities in the future.

2. The integration of collaboration among all relevant social units for enhancing the development areas including moving forwards to a five-year long-term tourism development plan to support the tourism in the future, and budget for tourism development should be allocated systematically and continuously.

3. The creation and improvement of meaningful signs and directions in various tourist areas could be processed into internationally and systematically as the Satun UNESCO Global Geopark. In addition, tourism education and research should be encouraged in order to further use various information to be a database for the development and management of integrated tourism.

4. The next research should be studied on the creative tourism management model that is suitable for the Satun area. This is to be developed under the participation of agencies in many sectors of the area. This will raise the level of tourism potential to meet the needs of tourists as well as creating attraction for tourism repetition of tourists in the future

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