

An Approach to Retain Ayutthaya as a Destination of Cultural Tourism in Thailand

Thanarat Ratanapongtra

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi, Thailand

E-mail: zztalentzz@live.com

Jusana Techakana

Faculty of Business Administration, King Mongkut Technology University North Bangkok, Thailand

E-mail: Jusana_tec@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to propose an approach to retain Ayutthaya as a destination of cultural tourism in Thailand. This is the Qualitative Research by conducting the in-depth interview with 4 key informants from public sector, private sector, community representatives, and academicians totaling 30 persons. The research results reveal that the approach to retain Ayutthaya as the destination of cultural tourism in Thailand are in 10 ways consisting of developing the museum as the learning center, setting up the cultural activity center for tourists to practice their skills, promoting the participation of community people, developing the quality and value of OTOP products which are cultural souvenirs for tourists, controlling and restoring architectural styles and keeping their primacy, developing the personnel in tourism business, developing the landscape and utility system, promoting the arrangement of local traditional activities for tourists to view and participate in the activities, using historical events to create remembrance days, celebration days, and festivals, arranging the integrated marketing promotion campaign.

Keywords: Tourism, Goals, Culture, Ayutthaya, Thailand

Introduction

Tourism plays an important role in the development of the global economy. It is important for creating jobs and distributing income to the local, especially cultural tourism. The World Tourism Organization of the United Nations confirms that cultural tourism has become 39% of the tourists and more researches are conducted on cultural tourism in relation with the motivation for cultural tourism, conservation of things that must be inherited, and relationship between cultural tourism and creative economy (Greg, 2018: 12-21). For Thailand, the government pays attention to the development of tourism promotion. The tourism development approaches were firstly included in the 4th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977 - 1981) until the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017 - 2021) at present (National Economic and Social Development Board, 2016) resulting in more tourists traveling to Thailand. In addition, as different regions of Thailand have different physical characteristics, there is the diversity. For cultural tourism, it can be said that Thailand has the long tradition of culture and various cultures of Thailand attract both Thai and foreign tourists from all over the world. Moreover, the area of Thailand is currently the site of many ancient states. These become the tourism resources that create tremendous value to Thailand's tourism reflecting the past prosperity which creates charm to attract tourists to come to experience from cultural tourism in Thailand especially Phra

Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province that is the past royal capital of Thailand and the national important World Heritage Site.

Due to the factors that Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province has many tourists, the proposed tourism resources can also be developed further to create new tourist destinations to attract tourists. Furthermore, the development is required to be in line with the competitive conditions of the regional tourism industry of Thailand and of the world. While tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province is outstanding until the government considers the importance as being the target tourist destination, the government has also promoted tourism in other major tourist cities including tourism in secondary cities in 55 provinces, especially tourism in the central region with the policy for distributing the tourists from Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province to travel to other nearby provinces.

The policies of tourism promotion and diversification of tourists to new destinations reflect the country's overall tourism potential and show the readiness of tourism promotion from all regions towards Thailand's growth from tourism. However, at the same time, the provinces that are the original tourist destinations must face the challenge whether they can retain the tourism destinations aiming to attract more tourists and increase revenues or not. As tourists have more choices in traveling to various places, tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province must be adjusted in order to be in line with the changing tourism situation. The Province must be able to retain the destination of cultural tourism. This study was conducted to find the answers and determine the approaches to retain Ayutthaya as the destination of cultural tourism of Thailand in order to maintain the competitiveness of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province which is the World Heritage Site and search for the ways to create tourism growth in the province. This can increase the number of tourists and operators as well as enhancing local people to have higher incomes sustainably.

Research Objectives

1. To study the management of the World Heritage Site, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
2. To propose the approaches to retain Ayutthaya as the destination of cultural tourism of Thailand

Literature Review

Alastair (2013) defines that the target tourist city is the geographic area where the management supervises the development and management to make the area attractive among tourists to visit. Such areas may be extensive at the national level or small areas at the sub-district or district level. Such places must be ready to accommodate tourists with all factors of tourism; (1) Accessibility, (2) Accommodations, (3) Attractions, (4) Activities, (5) Amenities (Dickman, 1996). The study of tourism products related to cultural tourism can create the understanding that culture has become an important factor in attracting tourists. It is something valuable to sustain tourism of the area as well as being aware of the importance between cultural tourists and communities in the cultural areas to become the important product of international tourism. The tourists will participate in cultural activities up to 40%. Cultural tourism does not only attract tourists but it also encourages local people to remember the culture of the area (Andes, 2018: 179-182).

As cultural tourism is continuously growing, a city with cultural tourism as the target tourist area will result in the city growing tourism. The important cultural tourism resources are museums, art galleries, historical parks, festivals, including participation in cultural events (Zeppel and Hall, 1991: 29-45).

Such management must be an integrated operation with the cooperation of all involving parties including public sector, private sector, tourism operators, community members in the area with Desinarion Management Organization (DMO) as a consultant (Steven, 2008). WTO

has defined the roles and duties of DMO as follows; (1) being the leader and coordinator in planning and managing the desired city as the target area of tourism for all factors, (2) doing the marketing by providing non-biased facts of the area responsible for selling, reservations, and customer relationship management (CRM) with the goal in attracting tourists to the area, (3) creating the good atmosphere for tourists, enhancing basic infrastructure development, developing personnel in the tourism business to have service mind, suggesting the product development of various businesses in the tourism industry and other industries related to tourism. This includes suggesting the rules and regulations necessary to monitor the behaviors of tourists visiting the area to develop the tourism through sustainable tourism policies and philosophy, and (4) creating the quality for tourists' experiences in organizing training and education to the operators and personnel in the tourism industry as well as providing operational recommendations to ensure that those involved in managing the tourist experience will perform as promised by the DMO in marketing communications.

In developing the city to become the destination tourist area, the development must be in three levels completely; (1) in policy level by the government sector both national and local levels, (2) level of tourism resource planning available in the area including pushing people in the area to develop infrastructure and other facilities that will create an impressive experience for tourists, and (3) private business level that needs to develop business operations, products, and services to have quality satisfying the tourists with the cooperation of 4 parties; (1) the host community, (2) businessmen in the tourism industry, (3) the development of infrastructure by the central and local government sector, (4) the behavior of tourists that will create the context of happiness among tourists. All parties must cooperate altogether in the integrated way by paying attention to the philosophy of sustainable tourism development (Wongmontha, 2017).

Tourism development can be successful with the community-based development where people in the community participate in tourism resource management. Marcus (2009) says that DMO must build relationships with the community with the following actions; (1) communicating and interacting with people in the community regularly and (2) creating an understanding for people in the community to cooperate in supporting tourism development by pointing out the economic results that will occur in the community.

The indicators of achievement in marketing operations to make the destination tourist city have the good brand image are; (1) number of tourists and the value of tourists' visit, (2) tourist satisfaction, (3) satisfaction of businessmen in the tourism industry, (4) marketing success in developing all marketing mixes in the tourism industry, (5) efficiency in developing the "quality" of products, services, and operations, (6) efficiency of service providers in the government sector, (7) caring for the quality of the environment and the preservation of natural resources for tourism, constructions, and culture, and (8) creating competitive advantages by creating the position that clearly creates unique differences (Wongmontha, 2017).

Retaining any city as the destination tourist city requires leadership and coordination of an organization called target tourism organization that has professional development and marketing. The people involved in the development must have all dimensions of knowledge to be used in the planning, development and promotion. The details about knowledge of the participants in development include the following; (1) knowledge of tourism resources in the area, (2) knowledge about the needs, desires, tastes and expectations of tourists, (3) knowledge about creating value for tourists, (4) knowledge in response to tourists' expectation, (5) knowledge about marketing and communication marketing, and (6) knowledge and maintenance of the working atmosphere as a group in the form of integration (Wongmontha, 2015).

Retaining any city as the destination tourist city requires the strategies in the implementation completely; (1) strategy in the development, (2) strategy in the marketing communication to create the image for the brand of the area, and (3) strategy in the management of tourists to have proper behaviors in order to retain the sustainability and experiences with happiness and impression. This will eventually result in the operations for cultural tourism becoming the important factors in attracting the tourists to attend the activities. Therefore, the persons related to the tourism management have to pay attention to the following implementations (Erol, Bahattin and Emrah, 2014: 173-193).

Research Tool and Methodology

This research is Qualitative Research combined with the Documentary Research to study and compare the management of World Heritage tourist site of Ayutthaya and other countries to define the approaches to retain Ayutthaya as a destination of cultural tourism in Thailand.

1st process: Documentary Research

The researcher has compiled secondary data from related researches and documents in the management of cultural tourist sites in foreign world heritage cities that are similar to the context of the world heritage city area of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya. The study is on the management of the ancient Marrakech area in Morocco and the ancient capital Kyoto in Japan which were registered as the World Heritage Sites similar to Ayutthaya.

2nd process: Qualitative Research

The key informants are those who involved with cultural tourist spots in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province classified into 4 groups; 1) Government representative groups related to the development and promotion of cultural tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, 2) private sector representatives engaged in businesses related to cultural tourism of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, 3) community representative groups related to the management of cultural tourism resources of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, 4) academicians on tourism management, marketing, and culture totaling 25 persons. The tool used in the research is the semi-structured interview form to collect and analyze the data from the interviews on 25 key informants. The content analysis was also used for the data obtained from the interviews categorized in each area.

Research Results

Management of World Heritage Sites

Ancient Marrakech city in Morocco: It is the city listed as the World Heritage Site with the management to retain the city as the destination of cultural tourism; (1) maintaining the distinctiveness and architectural value, (2) letting people in the area play the roles in the development to make people feel the sense of ownership, (3) home rehabilitation and renovations by issuing laws regulating the addition or change of buildings or houses to maintain the uniqueness of the city to preserve and restore nature to cultural heritage sites, (4) tourism development to distribute income to the community, to create a career for people in the community to improve the quality of life. (Natural and Cultural Environment Conservation Division, 2013).

Ancient Kyoto in Japan: It is the city with cultural and archaeological heritage buried underground with buildings and historic sites. There are a lot of antiques. As ancient cultural treasures are scattered, the local administrative organization sees the importance of preserving the city to maintain the target urbanization of cultural tourism by establishing the conservation area. There are regulations that everyone must comply with and help to maintain the ancient heritage of the local culture for a long time. The cultural promotion was organized as follows; (1) designate conservation areas, important areas, both natural and historical of the city with the law strictly enforced, (2) give priority to the conservation of beautiful natural

landscapes from organizing trees at various locations throughout the city both in tourist attractions and the surrounding areas, (3) pay attention to the conservation of wooden houses and historic sites. The law has been enacted to protect these things, (4) give priority to the preservation of arts and culture, (5) invite local people to participate in urban development by allowing the local people to play a role with the local administrative organization to jointly build the city to be livable for people and to be the tourist destination (Tala, 2013).

Ancient city of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province: It was the previous capital of Thailand and was the source of art, culture and history of the nation. There are many important historical sites that are the cornerstone of the Thai nation showing the beauty of architecture, painting, sculpture, literature, music and dance. In addition, there some foreign villages are the important evidence for colonization in the Ayutthaya period. It shows link with various civilized countries. There is the growing relationship with foreigners. All of this makes Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province a World Heritage List.

The management on tourism of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province to be the cultural tourist destination is done as follows; (1) have clear scope to prevent communities from settling in the ancient city area, (2) reduce overlapping problems on the management because there are many agencies that manage the area, (3) promote the tourism by allowing people in the community to participate in management, (4) legislate to control the landscape, cleanliness, and preserve architectural scenery.

The approaches for the promotion of cultural tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya still have 3 distinct characteristics which are; (1) the city that emphasizes cultural prominence in various dimensions including architecture, religion, historic sites and traditions, (2) participation in the public view of the city to be attractive as the cultural tourist destination, and (3) develop personnel in the tourism business to increase tourism revenues for the community (Thanarat, Seri, Jusana & Nattapol, 2016).

From studying the documents about cultural tourism management of World Heritage Cities of Marrakech and Kyoto and comparing with cultural tourism management in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province obtained from document study, it can be summarized as follows.

Table 1 Comparison on the management of the World Heritage Cities into the destination of cultural tourism

No.	Distinction in the management of World Heritage Cities	Marrakech	Kyoto	Ayutthaya
1	Presentation of outstanding cultural values	•	•	•
2	Participation of people in urban development and care	•	•	•
3	Control and revival of architecture and originality	•	•	•
4	Personnel development for promotion of income contribution and career creation	•	•	•
5	Landscape development and utility system development	•	•	•
6	Promotion of local traditions to tourism •		•	•

The approaches to retain the target city for cultural tourism of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand, are summarized as below:

1 . Develop the museum to be the learning center: Emphasizing the world heritage status which is full of cultural wisdom consisting of royal ceremonies, traditions and way of life of Ayutthaya by establishing as museum of cultural wisdom from the Ayutthaya period being

the capital of Thailand in order to allow tourists to come to study the history of Ayutthaya and the beginning of cultural wisdom.

2. Establish the cultural activity center for tourists to practice their skills: The activity that should be presented is the training of Muay Thai skills since the Ayutthaya period. As it is the unique martial art, the Muay Thai training center should be established for tourists to learn and practice their skills. There should also be the Ayutthaya Food and Dessert Demonstration Center for tourists to practice making. This can add value to cultural tourism in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province.

3. Promote participation of the community people: Allow people in the community to play an important role in tourism resource management. Campaign the public to understand that tourism plays an important role in boosting people's income and stimulating the economy of the province. Suggest the guidelines for how to be a good host. Provide people with knowledge about cultural tourism resources in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province to make them proud and ready to take part in helping to publicize the value of the cultural heritage of the Province both in the face-to-face communication and on social media. Cultivate the view of owning the area.

4. Develop the quality and value of OTOP products that are cultural souvenirs for tourists: The product quality should be levelled along with the continuous development on the production and marketing knowledge for the operators for all operators to have expertise in designing, packaging development, branding, paying attention to quality and image of the brand.

5. Control and revitalization of architectural styles and originality: In the past, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Island was a metropolitan area surrounded by three major rivers. The visitors should, therefore, see the ancient canal that used to travel in the past. The government agencies should pay attention to conserve the ancient canals with dredging to be beautiful. Moreover, the floating markets that used to exist in many places should be revived by providing the vintage markets in the original commercial areas in order to create the atmosphere of Ayutthaya in the past.

6. Personnel development in the tourism business: Include personnel in the accommodation business, restaurants, travel agencies, souvenir shops and transportation to create a value chain for tourists. Tourism operators must invest in the development of the quality of human resources in terms of knowledge and skills, work, service mind and skills in interacting with tourists.

7. Landscape and utility system development: To maintain being the destination for cultural tourism, the city plan for cultural heritage site must be prepared. The law should be enforced to control the area from constructing to obscure the landscape. Legislation should prohibit the construction of modern houses to destroy the cultural landscape

8. Promote traditional local activities for tourists to see and participate in the activities: The interesting traditional activities should be promoted for tourists. The activities show various traditions that are unique to Ayutthaya culture. The cultural park where tourists can visit or participate in various traditional activities should be provided.

9. Use historical events to create remembrance days, celebrations and festivals: Ayutthaya was Thai capital for more than 400 years. There were many historical events that are worth remembering and hosting celebrations. Therefore, in managing the situation as the destination for cultural tourism, there should be a magnificent annual celebration or remembrance in the state of light and sound performances or festivals. At the same time we should study various festivals that have existed in the past and restored to become the cultural festival that tourists should not miss. In this regards, the academicians and cultural experts should be the originators.

10. Marketing promotion campaign with the integrated marketing: To retain the status of being the destination of cultural tourism, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province must have integrated marketing communication that uses both offline mass communication and online digital communication using the strategy of content marketing together with digital marketing to create the image of Panara Nakhon Si Ayutthaya as a World Heritage City that is worthy as the destination of cultural tourism. Using strategies that focus on conversation and interaction on social media areas will allow tourists who have visited Phra Nakorn Sri Ayutthaya to introduce the Province as the destination of cultural tourism.

Conclusion and Discussion

The approaches to retain Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province as the destination of cultural tourism of Thailand in accordance with the management of the context of 3 World Heritage Cities consist of 10 ways; developing museums as learning centers, establishing cultural activity center for tourists to practice their skills, promoting the participation of people in the community, developing the quality and value of OTOP products that are cultural souvenirs for tourists, controlling and reviving architectural styles and keeping their primacy, developing personnel in tourism business, developing the landscape and utility system, promoting the arrangement of traditional local activities for tourists to see and participate in activities, using historical events to create remembrance days, celebrations and festivals, doing the marketing promotion campaign with integrated marketing. The approaches are correspondent with Antonia (2003: 2282-A) finding the pattern of Barcelona in tourism development. The community must build a cultural center for tourism in the city and control labor and the hotel industry in accordance with local and national law so it can go well. Greg & Julie (2004: 1931-1951) stated that various cities use cultural activities to improve the image, stimulate urban development, and attract more and more tourists. Nethchanok (2018: 1-12) found that maintaining the authenticity of culture is absolutely necessary for cultural tourism. The cultural tourism administrators have the duty to maintain the culture that will reflect the authentic culture as it had been in the past. The experience that tourists gain from true culture will be an impressive experience for tourists. In Thailand, cultural tourism is growing rapidly. In addition, Jagannath (2011) found that tourism development is an important tool for poverty alleviation. Therefore, all 10 approaches are the keys to retain Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province as the destination of cultural tourism.

Recommendations

The successful tourism development must be an integrated development requiring many parties involved including the government, private sector, communities, and academicians in the area to join forces to work altogether in harmony without conflict. And at the same time, tourism must be developed based on the sustainability philosophy for the economy that has to spread the wealth providing benefits to people in the community for investment opportunities, employment, and increasing income. The culture and social way of life of the local people must be maintained as well as preserving the natural resources and the quality of environment. Most importantly, it must be Community-based Tourism that provides opportunities for people in the community to decide to use the resources of the community. Tourism development in various areas must involve people in the community and agree with the development approaches.

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