

The Factors Effecting to Trekking Tourism in the Upper Northern Region 2 of Thailand

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Abstract

This study is aims to identify the factors effecting of trekking tourism management in the upper northern region 2 of Thailand and the trekking tourist elements influencing trekking tourism management in the upper north 2 Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, and Nan. The samples used in the research came from officers from relates organization and private sectors include trekking tour operators and trekking guide. The trekking tourism community representatives consisted of 20 people. The research tool included the semi-structured interview based on the trekking standards use a chain of data collection methods. The information used to analyze the data are descriptive statistic. The study results showed that the factors of trekking tourism in the upper North 2 consist by 1) Trekking factors effecting in the area (Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae and Nan Provinces) and 2) the perception of trekking tourists to satisfaction of tourist needs

Keywords: Eco-adventure, Trekking Trails, Trekking Tourist Perceptions

Introduction

Tourism trends in the world tend to focus on responsible tourism and environmentally. Many tourist groups focus on non- destructive activities and

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responsible. Many countries have an important perspective with Mass Tourism causes resource deprivation. Therefore, the objective of tourism is to develop and enhance the value of tourism. Tourism is not just for recreation but it was developed to seek knowledge, challenging physical and mental potential, and environmental responsibility. Thus, the entrepreneurs have to adapt themselves to meet the needs of specific tourists.

Currently, eco-tourism and adventure are unique type of tourism that responds to nature and awareness of the importance of the environment. Currently, ecotourism and adventure are more popular and respectively. The ecotourism and adventure tourism are another form of tourism that is well-suited to the needs of both Thai and foreign tourists provided important to relax with nature are focus on environmental activities. Traveling to a natural attraction with a special nature for fun, excite, challenge, adventure, and experience exotic. At present, there are many entrepreneurs turn to focus on tourism activities such as kayaking, rafting, climbing, bird watching, and hiking, etc. Activities were developed to meet the needs of tourists, learn the nature, love the group, challenge or bring the novel together to challenge make eco-tourism and adventure more attractive to tourists (Dowling, 1996: 488-490)

urthermore, mass tourism arrives at a natural spot because it affects the environment. Then, there are the idealist and environmentalist spread the idea widely and some countries join together to become national conservation organizations. Every group has the same purpose, to have the idea to protect and preserve the good environment of tourist destinations around the world stay sustainable the intention to introduce eco-tourism and resolve the traditional tourism problem, focusing on environmental protection, awareness for tourists, organize activities for sustainable tourism, and improve the quality of life of local people in line with conservation ideals.

Theoretical background

According to the components that promote the process of tourism to a study by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000 : 79-90), There are 3 keys components of tourism by 1) tourists who are satisfied with their travel 2) community owners who manage sustainable community tourism and 3) entrepreneurs who share benefit within tourism business. The composition between the host and the tourists is an important link in

the form of tourism that arises from tourist attractions in the community. Tourism activities that will satisfy and bring tourists to the community.

In this regard, the community must have effective management of tourism within the community together with the tourism business operators in the area in accordance with the resources, environment and culture, thus creating tourism value. (Figure 1)

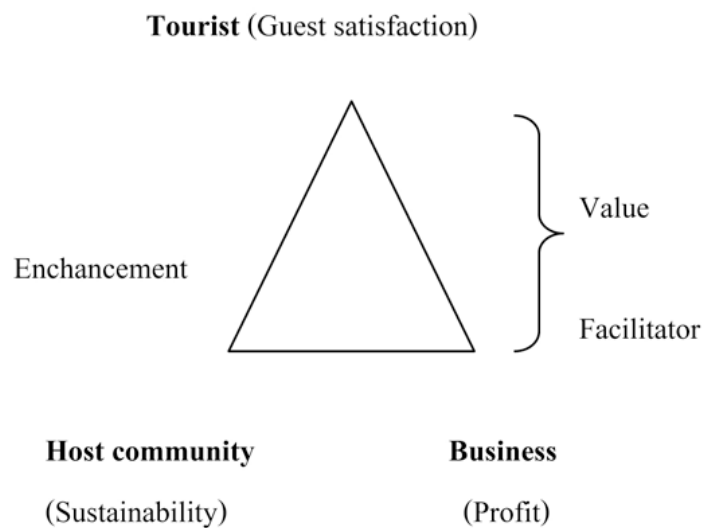


Figure 1 Tourist destination as a contested space

(Source : Prahalad and Ramaswamy. 2000 : 79-90)

Furthermore, the relationship between the three subsystems arises when tourists take advantage of tourism resources for recreation or excursions. Additionally, the components within the system tourism is also related to many important environmental conditions, such as physical and ecological conditions. physical infrastructure economic conditions and investment social and cultural conditions, public-private partnership organizations, laws, facilitate tourism development and promotion. In conclusion, a Tourism system and achieving its objectives or goals requires consideration of the subsystems and the relationship between those elements. (Sin Sarobol et al, 2004 : 15 -21)

Trekking, Hiking, and Backpacking Trails Based on Adventure Tourism Management

The sustainable management of trekking trails matter for a number of crucial issues at the trail destinations (PranilKumar,2018: 79-90) by

1. The explosive growth of tourists for established trekking trails destinations is a challenge for the quality of experience of trail users due to the deficiency on proper management that has lacked minimum parameter of safety, quality and standards. As over tourism without sustainable management will continue to be a serious issue felt by adventure tourism, the destruction of the world's most pristine and special trail destinations is irreversible.

2. The newer destinations (with under visited tourist number and under competitiveness) need to offer them with differential brand identity consisting sustainable management. Such a trend should also coincide with the interest of trail users who are not only growingly conscious for their unique experiences but also for their well-being and fulfillment of their expectations (Standards, safety, and quality) and the betterment of destinations.

3. Developing and enhancing trails to international standards that offer safe and quality trail experiences, requires that trails are monitored and assessed following a robust system of auditing. This is especially necessary to meet the expectations of the global hiking, walking and trekking tourist.

4. The meaningful participations of trail destination wide- ranging trail stakeholder (service offering workers and business and value chain creating enterprises as host communities) it vital.

The situation of mountaineering and trekking in Thailand

Overall, situation of Thailand's eco-tourism and adventure market is not clear how many foreign tourists who specialize in eco-tourism. Thailand still needs to develop many aspects of management to considering the number of foreign tourists in many conservation areas is very small and limited in a short time, such as Khao Yai will have the largest number of foreign tourists in December, however, it was found that the peak period of Khao Yai tourism for foreign tourists was very short. The entrepreneur turned to focus on Thai tourists but it is fewer amounts than foreigners.

Therefore, should encourage foreign tourists to travel during the month off season by tourism promotion activities, organize eco-tourism and adventure tours to provide visitors or travel in different months. Then, analyzing the readiness of the provinces to promote marketing as a tourist destination for eco-tourism and adventure tourism, there are no provinces with high levels of readiness. However, many of the provinces that are not well-equipped currently have low levels of readiness, including Nan, MaeHongSon, Phitsanulok, Phetchabun, Phetchaburi, Nong Khai, and Trang. It has the potential to develop as an ecological and adventure destination, especially in areas with natural resources and activities are already available. The development of such provinces as Chiang Mai, Kanchanaburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Krabi, and Trang, etc., has been developed. The development of these provinces is an ecological and adventure destination must have a common development plan to achieve effective planning and carry out partitions (Department of National Parks in Thailand, 2015: 15-20).

Trekking Tourism of Upper Northern region 2 (Chiang Rai, Phayao, Pare and Nan)



Figure 2 Northern Thailand National Park Map

(Source : Department of National Parks in Thailand. 2015 : 15-20)

According to the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) framework. In order to set out development directions to be accomplished in human capital, society and the economy for future challenge. It is a strategy and policy framework for the development of the upper northern provinces group 2 (Chiang Rai,

Phayao, Phrae, and Nan) Therefore, *the strategy 3: develop and support the promotion of social development*. Ecotourism, culture and health tourism to be a base for sustainable community development and *strategy 4: maintaining a rich natural resource base environment and energy management program* with the participation of communities to be a group of green provinces, found that the resource base has a topographical landscape consisting of Forests. Mountains and Rivers have many natural resources as well as ancient and beautiful cultures is attractive to tourists tend to be more popular with tourists coming to relax. There are ecotourism sites that are related to important community ways, with potential in locations that can link economic and social development with countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region which is unique to the Lanna Eastern group, can be utilized to develop tourism and create value and industrial handicrafts. There are various natural and cultural tourist sites that can be developed to link with tourist destinations in the minority countries. Mekong regional aiming to develop human resources to support the economic and social development of the provincial groups by being able to determine the development direction based on a strong resource base.

Trekking tourism is a great way to explore such region, as it usually takes place in remote areas where most forms of transport are unavailable. Trekker are expecting trekking tourism companies to be actively involved in preserving their local natural environment.

The Factors of Trekking Tourism Management

Brockleman (1990 : 141) researched that “The Role of Nature in Conservation: A Case-Study in Thailand” founded that the trekking patterns of Thailand purpose to develop remote areas and promoting the community that live with hunting, elephant riding, trekking and donating money to improve the living of community. There are the following components: 1) Nature Guide 2) Relations with Villagers 3) Economic return 4) Nature Theme 5) Clients. Although, Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (2018 : 10-20) explained that a trek is a long adventurous trip on foot in mountainous areas where common means of non-transport are available and

trekking is considered a form of hard adventure tourism. Moreover, the factors are including 1) Product description 2) Health and Safety measures 3) Political stability 4) Untouched natural environment and sustainability 5) Experienced and knowledgeable guides 6) Trek grading systems 7) Traveller profile

Meanwhile, Trekking travelers seek a physical and mental challenge in different degrees, authentic experiences, and like to connect with local people. Sustainability and responsible tourism are important to them and they are looking for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Beside these general characteristics, trekking travelers can be dividing into four segments, based on age and their level of trekking enthusiasm.



Figure 3 Age Level of Trekking

(Source: Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries. 2021 : 11-20)

Epler Wood (2002 : 44) describes the behavior and characteristics of ecotourists as Being a tourist is different from a mass tourist. Mostly of trekking tourist are likely travel in small groups and passionate to learn about nature with local guides to conserve nature in the natural tourist area. There is also a research study from Australian research (Blamey, 1998 : 47–72) that studies the European tourist market, including Germany, Switzerland. and Scandinavian in ecotourism within Australia using demographic principles consisting of Age, Gender, Education, Household composition, Party composition, Trip duration, Expenditure, Important Element of trip and Motivation for taking next trip.

In this contextual background, this paper intends to address following objectives:

1. The aim of the research was to explore factors affecting to trekking tourism management in the upper northern 2 Region
2. To analysis the key influence of tourist perception in the upper northern 2 Region

Methodology

This paper is baesd on both interdiscipnary of trekking tourism and mountain development and trandisciplinary from universal trail standards and tourism management research approach. The methodolgy included the collection of the qualitative information through primary source of information from Thailand National Park Department. The secondary source of information included a comphensive review of revelant published and unpublished literatures, reports, and data through desk studies. Theoretically, this paper is conceptualized on competitiveness based integrated approach of tourism planing and management. Also, the researcher used a semi-constructed in-depth interview from the public sector and private sector of trekkinng tourism representative of purposive sampling by 20 peoples. Hence, the perception of trekking tourist collecting in-depth interview with a group expert trekker experienced over 5 years in Thailand and aboard.

Result and Discussion

1. The factors affecting to trekking tourism including by

1.1 Trekking trails and altitude

A trail is usually a path, track or unpaved lane or road or highway. The trekking trails on foot have played significant roles in the human story for their accessibility, migration, and civilazation since the pre-historic time. Trails around the world are an immeasurable asset to local communities as pathways of connection and avenues for development and livelihood. These products have global appeal and are

becoming more prolific (Alves, 2008 : 81-90)

The trail or route are provides a themed and interpreted journey through the rural or urban landscape, creating links between sites, attractions and other tourism businesses by providing information and storytelling along the way. Trails range in scale from the site-specific to the international and can be followed on foot, by bicycle, or horseback, by car, by boat or even by diving along underwater trails. In many cases, these trails have been developed to promote access and recreation, to explore a conservation theme and to give a clear identity to places and already well-known by visitors (PranilKumar, 2018 : 1-31)

The trekking trails generally meet the needs of outdoor, nature and adventure enthusiasts though offering pristine untouched nature and changing landscapes (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2017 : 1-31). Furthermore, these trails provide breath-taking views of the towering and short peaks and give tourists the chance to visit communities and villages and learn about the culture and traditions of various ethnic groups. Therefore, it is necessary that tourism stakeholders and the government ensure to create a positive image through proper destination positioning and promote new opportunities of the natural region in becoming an attractive tourist all over the world.

Although, it is a small area of the country, Thailand has a very rich tourism resources. Whether, it is the natural tourism resources include mountain and seas. As the northern region also has a beautiful natural environment within walking in the mountain along the border or mountain to watch the scenic peaks. In addition to mountain type offered with adventurous trekking trails based on the elevation and types of activities, mountain trails can be broadly categorized as

1. *Easy walking/trekking trails*. It can be a short day hike for pleasure and fun, to reconnect with nature and established hiking trails and footpaths.
2. *Nature/culture trekking trails*. It can be a short day hike or an overnight hiking experience.
3. *High mountain trekking trails*. It's cross-country hiking trails, dirt roads, mountain trails, or area without any roads in complete wilderness.

4. *Pilgrimage trekking routes.* Usually morethan two days and backpack is necessary include equipments to pack a tent, sleeping bag, food, cookware, clothes, medication, etc. Also, hiking boots with ankle support are essential.

Table 1 List of Mountains in Upper Northern Thailand 2

Categorized	Province	Name	Range	Elevator (m.)
1. Greater than 2000 meters	Chiang Rai	Doi Mae Tho	Khun Tan	2,031
	Nan	Phu Khe	Luang Prabang	2,079
	Nan	Phu Lo		2,077
2. Greater than 1500 meters	Nan	Doi Phu Kha	Luang Prabang	1,980
		Doi Dong Ya Wai		1,939
		Doi Khang Ho		1,904
	Chiang Rai	Doi Phu Wae		1,837
		Doi Chang	Khun Tan	1,720
		Pha Tang		1,608
	Phayao	Doi Luang	Pi Pan Nam	1,694

(Sources : Avijit. 2005 : 115-200)

Saqib (2018 : 615 - 632) mentioned that there are four possible niche markets are identified that can inform the development of the destination's positioning strategy: 1) nature based 2) adventure 3) cultural and 4) culinary. The overall conclusions and discussion of the findings should provide a case-based framework for the practical planning and implementation of positioning strategies in the tourism context. However, Buckley (2007 : 260-302) was study and summarize the components of trekking tourism from continent are places, operator, activity, equipment, accommodation, access, safety, environment, and marketing. Then, researcher was special attention to community in the national park area and stakeholder participate

with the tourist safety and protection of natural resources.

2. The key influences of trekking tourists perception in trekking tourism following by

2.1 Trekking tourism factors

The key influences on their participation in trekking and their actual experiences following the push factor including by risk, sensation seeking, life style factors for tourist who do sports are known to be extra-verted, aggressive, emotionally stable and less anxious than others.

Kajtna, T and P.Klinar (2017: 1-9) had done some study about sensation seeking scale (SSS) is defined as “the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical, social, legal and financial risks for the sake of such experiences. Also, Zuckerman (2009 : 455) found that people, who are higher in sensation seeking, are more open – they have high interest in new experience and a higher desire for participating in unusual physical activities and person with a high need for sensation seeking is either underestimating the risk, or just takes the risk as a reward, which is felt during the experience. On the other hand, low sensation seekers try to avoid taking risks and many researchers discovered the same.

2.2 Trekking tourism pull factors

The natural and recreational use qualities for mountaineering include the range of ‘ ‘hard’ ’ and ‘ ‘soft’ ’ mountaineering activities facilitated by the mountain topography as well as the landscape and vegetation. The management conditions include the extent to which the region has been developed for mountaineers, such as through the provision of mountain huts and trekking routes, and the enforcement of regulations, such as access restrictions. These qualities will act as pull factors for mountaineers in their destination decision-making. (Clarke & Stankey, 1979 : 4-28)

Conclusion

In conclusion, authors have found that there is a growth in demand for adventure tourism (Williams and Souta, 2009 : 413-438) Trekking can be classified as an adventure tourism niches. This niche can effectively be used in the destination’s

positioning strategy to assist in minimising the seasonality associated with the current mass tourism strategy. Also, ensure that this niche is developed to its full potential, the services and environmental conditions that contribute to the satisfaction of the tourists should be promoted. The infrastructure and equipment for adventure tourism combined with the socially accommodating nature of local people can support tourists.

Furthermore, the author suggests that Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sport should enhance knowledge and awareness of the trekking tourism quality assessment and tourism accreditation. Tourism Authority of Thailand should enhance and publicize events promoting accredited trekking tourist attractions in the green season. Additionally, Local Organization should provide resources to develop tourism quality and standard of tourist attractions in their area.

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