

A Structural Equation Model for Developing and Promoting Creative Tourism in Thailand

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Abstract

This research aims to develop a structural equation model (SEM) of the development and promotion of creative tourism in Thailand. Creative tourism is a shift of cultural tourism from “seeing and learning” to “doing”. It is a form of experience industry to create memorable for tourists who are no longer satisfied with passive cultural tourism, and look for active participation in creative activities of authentic culture in tourism destinations. The research employed in-depth interviews with experts to find items of four latent variables, namely perceived quality of local creative experts, attraction of creative activities, services to provide convenience, and creative competency among tourists. Eighty observed items were created to construct a questionnaire to distribute among 500 respondents. The findings reveal that creative tourists are willing to pay higher price to participate in creative activities of which they have creative potential. They prefer senior local creative experts to young creative experts. They seek a variety of creative activities. They want service supports in creative destinations. To be an attractive destination for creative tourism, a place must also offer other types of tourism for creative tourists to enjoy. The statistical tests show that the four latent variables are related and render a SEM of the development and promotion of creative Tourism in Thailand. People involved in the development and promotion of creative tourism in Thailand, must know how to leverage Thailand's cultural capital.

Keywords: Creative tourism, Creative tourists, Creative destination, Cultural capital.

INTRODUCTION

Moon Kwong (2017) states that World Tourism Organization (WTO) expected that cultural tourism will grow rapidly. Tourism in Thailand can be regarded as an economic engine to alleviate poverty. Strategies of development in the era of Thailand 4.0 focus on a creative economy, and tourism is one of creative businesses to enhance Thailand's economic growth (The Office of National Economic and Social Development, 2017) Thailand's strategies of development go in line with the goals of United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) which focus on 5 objectives of development, namely 1)

sustainable growth, 2) alleviation of poverty, 3) efficient uses of natural resources, environment protection, and climate change prevention, 4) appreciation of cultural diversity and heritage, and 5) mutual understanding for peace and security. In order to reach the objectives, cities in many countries should be developed to be sustainable tourism destinations.

This research aims at looking for a model to develop and promote creative tourism, which is a shift from passive cultural tourism to active cultural tourism. That means tourists are no longer satisfied with going to see and learn about cultural tourism resources, but they want to actively participate in creative cultural

activities. All people involved must fully understand the conceptual definition of creative tourism. They have to audit creative tourism resources in their communities, and all residents should be proud and learn how to leverage their creative tourism resources to help develop and promote their communities as attractive destinations of creative tourism. To leverage creative tourism as a pivotal economic engine, a model of development and promotion is certainly needed to provide guidelines for best practices.

Literature Review

United Nation Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization—UNESCO (2006) defines creative tourism as tourism that aims at developing communities that are tourism destinations to sustain ways of living, cultural heritage, and histories of those communities. Al- Ababneh (2012) defines that creative tourism is a type of tourism that gives tourists opportunities to develop their creative potential by actively participating in a variety of learning activities. This type of tourism is a must for destinations without tangible cultural products, such as palaces, churches, museums, and monuments. Cultural tourism has been shifted from a “service industry” to an “experience industry” that creates memorable experiences. Creative tourism has four components: 1) local creative experts, 2) creative products as outputs of creative activities, 3) processes of creativity, and 4) ambiances that stimulate creativities. Pavic and Armensky (2018) defines creative tourism as an experience industry. It is obvious that creative tourism will replace mass tourism in many communities. It should be noted that when developing creative tourism, the people involved must adhere to the principles of community-based tourism (Techakana, 2020)

Creative tourism is an annex of cultural tourism; it is a shift from passive seeing and learning to active participating in creative activities. They want to engage with local people, do something to learn authentic culture, and to use their creative potential to do some

activities that they enjoy. It has been defined that creative tourism gives opportunities for tourists to develop their creativity through participating in certain activities to learn from first hand experiences in the context of a particular tourism destination (Richard & Raymond, 2000). The definition states that creative tourism is a type of tourism that encourage tourists to interact with local people to exchange ideas to profoundly understand social values and culture, and ecological contexts of a particular destination (Wisuthiluck, 2015). This is correspondent with the concept of participative involvement (United Nation, 2015) with the objective being to provide opportunities for local residents to have an access to fundamental rights of taking part in decision making processes of development as well as to gain fair and equitable benefits from the development.

Moon Kwong (2017) states that World Tourism Organization (WTO) expected that cultural tourism will grow rapidly. Ways of living which are intangible culture will capture tourists’ attention. The production of local creative products is a challenge for people involved in the development and promotion of novel tourism, so called creative tourism. Local creative experts and creative products will play a significant role that creates a shift from passive cultural tourism to active cultural tourism. Richard (2000) states that creative tourism enjoys a rapid growth due to tourists shifting from passive seeing and learning cultures to active participating in local ways of life. Instead of presenting beauties and histories of churches, palaces, and monuments, the contents will feature ways of life, creative production of artifacts and souvenirs, festive activities tourists can participate, farming activities, cookery and culinary arts, music playing, dancing and other performances, sports, and games. Richards and Wilson (2004) says that cultural tourism should go beyond the availability of museums, theaters, or places for orchestra performance, but it should include folk music, ethnic costumes, and ethnic ways of life. All of these living cultures are components of creative tourism.

Kithia and Reilly (2010) states the importance of unadulterated authentic cultures, due to the facts that some tourists feel that many cultures that have learned and seen for a long time are staged cultures modified for commercial purposes. Tourism has begun to feel dissatisfied with those staged cultures, and have been trying to look for authentic cultures. Sheth et al (1991) says that five components of customer value are 1) functional values, 2) emotional values, 3) social values, 4) epistemic values, and 5) situational values, which are ambiances of experiences when participating in certain activities. Creative activities can create all five values to creative tourists who are modern cultural tourists. Sip (2018) states that experiences create more customer values than services, because experiences are more memorable and have higher appeals. Richards (1999) explains the evolution of creative tourism that there are more cultural tourism products, both tangible and intangible, and communities around the world try to increase a number of cultural tourism products by leveraging local creative activities. Creative activities constitute niche markets of cultural tourists whose interests are diverse. Richards (2000) concludes that the evolution of creative tourism has been developed because of the following factors: (1) tourists are eager to experience authentic cultures, (2) cultural tourism resources are leveraged to enhance the economy of many local communities, (3) cultural activities in small communities are as popular as globally known cultural tourism products in big cities. (4) there is an integrated co-operation between private entrepreneurs and local creative experts with cultural capital, and (5) creative tourism generates a variety of new jobs in the realm of creative activities.

Richards and Raymond (2002) explains the reasons why creative tourism has been growing as follows: (1) it has higher values than passive seeing and learning, (2) it produces innovative local cultural products, (3) it inspires community residents to learn and inherit local creative skills, (4) it gives tourists opportunities to use their creative potential to produce their own creative cultural products as souvenirs to take home, and (5) it is a skilled consumption

that can satisfy tourists more than passive seeing and learning.

Fernandes and Rachoia (2014) state that tourists' behaviors have been changing. They want to participate in community activities, and they want to learn community ways of living. They want to have a feeling about activities they participate in. They want to experience aesthetic activities in aesthetic atmospheres. They want to show their artistic talents in a variety of activities, including craftsmanship, culinary arts, farming, performing, and gaming. This phenomenon is generated by digital communication that globally connects people. People involved in the development and promotion of creative tourism must realize that not only do they offer palaces, churches, museums, and monuments, but that have to also look for cultural activities to attract tourists to come to visit their communities.

For big cities with many tangible cultural products, creative tourism may be a choice, but for small cities without tangible cultural products, creative tourism is a "must" to develop and promote communities without structural cultural products. They must leverage creative activities and everydayness of life styles to develop creative tourism. Richards (1999) confirms from his research findings that small cities can be successful in promoting tourism by developing creative activities which are parts of community identities. Small cities conduct creative resource audits to look for unique creative activities of their cities to attract creative tourists. Richards (2019) recommends three success factors to develop creative tourism as follows (1) creative activities must be attractive, (2) communities are developed to efficiently host a large number of creative tourists, and (3) cultural capital is leveraged to create competitive advantages. Creative expertise among local residents is a pivotal cultural capital that should be leveraged according to the principles of resource-based view management. This means looking for unique, rare, inimitable, and valuable activities to attract creative tourist. People involved in the development and the promotion of creative tourism must be able to select, prioritize, and leverage cultural resources of their

communities. Community residents, especially those who are creative experts, must learn how to interact with creative tourists effectively to create memorable impressive experiences for creative tourists.

To answer to tourists' need to shift from passive learning and seeing to active participating in local activities of visited destinations, Suttipisan (2013) states that the management of creative tourism consists of 5 essential elements as follows: (1) examining social and cultural capital that signifies community identities to extend tourism products, (2) adding values to existing tourism resources based on community identities, (3) developing and producing tourism products from strong points of the destination, (4) embracing innovation to develop new product with creativity, and (5) distributing all types of benefits, especially economic benefits, equitably among all sectors of the destination, and preventing leakage. Al-Abahney (2017) suggests that the development of creative tourism must consist of four factors: 1) creative experts, 2) creative products, 3) creative processes that give tourists opportunities to participate in creative activities, and 4) environmental ambiances to stimulate and inspire tourists to use their creative potential to produce creative products and to perform creative activities. It is also mandatory that community members be involved in all decision making processes in order to achieve sustainable tourism that is well supported by community members (Suttipisan, 2013). The development of creative tourism requires a creative network at a destination, and it needs a frictionless co-operation among public officers, private entrepreneurs, community residents, and academicians. Techakana (2020) states that conflicts between public officers and private entrepreneurs are challenges to overcome, because the former tries to adhere to the policy of development, which sometimes becomes a hindrance of the business development.

Research Framework and Method

Framework: According to the information in literature review, it can be seen that important components of creative tourism are local creative experts, creative activities, supports and services to provide impressive experiences for tourists, and tourists' personal interests, potential, and expectations. Thus, the latent's to be studied in order to come up with a structural equation model (SEM) are as follows. (1) Perceived Quality of Local Creative Experts (PQ), (2) Attractiveness of Creative Activities (AC), (3) Services to Provide Convenience (SC), and (4) Creative Competency among tourists (CC).

Method: This research is a mixed research with qualitative and quantitative procedures. For qualitative procedures, in-depth interviews with experts were conducted to look for observed items that manifest relevant practices of each latent. A content analysis was performed to come up with items to be used in the questionnaire for the quantitative research. There are 20 items for each latent with 80 items in total. For quantitative procedures, 80 items were used to constitute a questionnaire to distribute among 500 respondents in the sample. The universe was working people living in Bangkok; the subjects in the sample were selected with a convenient sampling method. Statistical procedures were employed to come up with relevant items to be used as best practices of creative tourism management.

Analysis: The researcher conducted the exploratory factor analysis using the principal component analysis and the Varimax rotation technique. Statistics used to analyze information in this study included the descriptive statistics describing the basic features of data such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to examine the variable structure and reduce the existing variables into the same group. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also used to investigate the structure of components of instrument. The structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to test the coherence of model

and the empirical data with the following indices: the chi-square index, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker and Lewis Index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation index (RMSEA), the standardized root mean squared residual index (SRMR) based on the statistical criteria including $\chi^2/df < 2$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$, $CFI > 0.95$, $TLI > 0.95$, $RMSEA < 0.07$, $SRMR < 0.08$.

Results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

The suitability of the variables sets analyzed by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) is valued at 0.95, which is above 0.80 indicating that these variables sets are suitable for the factor analysis at an excellent level based on the measure of

Kim and Mueller (cited in NongluckVirachchai, 1995). Additionally, Bartlett’s test of sphericity finds that the correlation of variables has a significance level of 0.000. This indicates that these variables are useful for the factor analysis as follows.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) The result of adequacy test of the variables under the study with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) reveals the value of .905, which is higher than 0.80. This indicates that this set of variables is adequate to conduct a factor analysis at a high level according to the criteria set by Kim and Mueller. The result of Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity reveals that the relationship among the variables is statistically significant at 0.000, indicating that all of the variables can be used to conduct factor analysis. The detail is shown in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1: *KMO Values and Bartlett’s test*

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.905
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	38879.967
	Df	3160
	Sig.	.000

The statistic values indicates that the correlation coefficient matrix is not identity matrix, which means the variables are related and can be used to conduct a factor analysis.

Table 2: *Aiken Value Analysis*

Components	Initial Eigenvalue		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1.Observed items for PQ	18.416	23.020	23.020
2.Observed items of AC	8.334	10.418	33.438
3. Observed items for SC	7.647	9.559	42.997
4.Observed items for CC	4.900	6.125	49.121

Note: PQ=Perceived Quality of Local Creative Experts, (2) AC=Attractiveness of Creative Activities, (3) SC=Services to Provide Convenience, and (4) CC=Creative Competency among tourists

Table 2 shows the result of exploratory factor by means of component extraction according to Principle Component Analysis (PCA). The Varimax rotation of 80 variables reveals that all of the four components have Aiken values at 18.416, 8.334, 7.647, and 4.900 respectively.

The values explain the variance of each variable at 23.020, 10.418, 9.559, and 6.125 respectively.

Table 3: *Defining Groups of Observed Items in Each Component*

Components	Observed Items
PQ: Perceived Quality of Local Creative Experts	1. I am willing to pay for learning creative activities regardless of prices.
	2. When I travel somewhere, I want to go beyond passive learning.
	3. I want to create my own souvenirs to take home.
	4. I will choose to participate in creative activities of which I have talents.
	5. I am serious to learn exotic culture of local creativities.
AC: Attractiveness of Creative Activities	1. It is important that local creative experts have showmanship in their presentation.
	2. I look for local creative experts who are friendly.
	3. It is something that experts are good at responding to.
	4. I look for local creative experts who are famous.
	5. I prefer senior local creative experts to young local creative experts.
CC: Creative Competency among Tourists	1. I like to learn ways of living.
	2. I like activities that I perceived as strongly differentiated from my previous experiences.
	3. I like to go to a destination with a variety of creative activities.
	4. I like to produce my own souvenirs to take home.
	5. I like to learn the traditional way of life.
SC: Services to Provide Convenience	1. The destination has good infrastructure.
	2. The destination also has many activities for tourists to enjoy.
	3. The destination has many creative activities to provide.
	4. The atmosphere of the destination is pleasant.
	5. Services are up to world class standards.

Looking at the group of observed items for the Perceived Quality of Local Creative Experts, one can see that tourists are willing to pay for learning creative activities regardless of prices, When they travel somewhere, they want to go beyond passive learning, they want to create their own souvenirs to take home, and they will choose to participate in creative activities of which they have talents. Tourists are serious to learn exotic culture of local creativities.

Looking at the group of observed items for the Attractiveness of Creative Activities, one can see that it is important that local creative experts have showmanship in their presentation and good at what they teach. It is also

important hat local creative experts be famous. Tourists prefer senior local creative experts to young local creative experts.

Looking at the group of observed items for the Creative Competency among Tourists, one can see that besides looking for creative activities to participate in, creative tourists also look for good services and supports available at a destination. They want to learn ways of living in order to learn the traditional way of life. They like to go to a destination with a variety of creative activities, and they like to produce their own souvenirs to take home. They like activities that they perceived as strongly differentiated from their previous experiences.

It indicates that exoticity is very important for developing and promoting creative tourism.

Looking at the group of observed items for the Services to Provide Convenience, one can see that good infrastructure of a destination is important to provide convenience for tourists,

and a destination must also have many activities for tourists to enjoy. A destination must have many creative activities to provide to tourists who look for creative activities to participate in. The atmosphere of a destination must be pleasant, and services must be up to world class standards.

Table 4: *Factor Loading Values of the Components*

Components	Observed Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
PQ Eigenvalue 23.020% Variance: 14.768	I am willing to pay for learning creative activities regardless of prices.	.837	.905
	2 . When I travel somewhere, I want to go beyond passive learning.	.797	
	3.I want to create my own souvenirs to take home.	.784	
	4. I will choose to participate in creative activities of which I have talents.	.781	
	5. I am serious to learn exotic culture of local creativities.	.781	
AC Eigenvalue 10.418% Variance: 13.235	It is important that local creative experts have showmanship in their presentation.	.853	.831
	I look for local creative experts who are friendly.	.835	
	It is something that experts are good at responding to.	.833	
	I look for local creative experts who are famous.	.820	
	I prefer senior local creative experts to young local creative experts.	.818	
CC Eigen value 9.559% Variance: 13.151	I like to learn ways of living.	.778	.809
	I like activities that I perceived as strongly differentiated from my previous experiences.	.767	
	I like to go to a destination with a variety of creative activities.	.756	
	I like to produce my own souvenirs to take home.	.748	
	I like to learn the traditional way of life.	.745	
SC Eigen value 6.125% Variance: 7.948	The destination has good infrastructure.	.733	.819
	The destination also has many activities for tourists to enjoy.	.711	
	The destination has many creative activities to provide.	.699	
	The atmosphere of the destination is pleasant.	.697	
	Services are up to world class standards.	.678	

Table 4 shows the result of quality testing of measurement instrument be means of correlation analysis among the latents. The Correlation Coefficient is between 0.239 and 0.853 and Cronbach's Alpha is between 0.819 –

0.905. This indicates that the latents in this research do not have high relations among them, but the confidence value is high enough to conduct a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Hair et al., 2006)

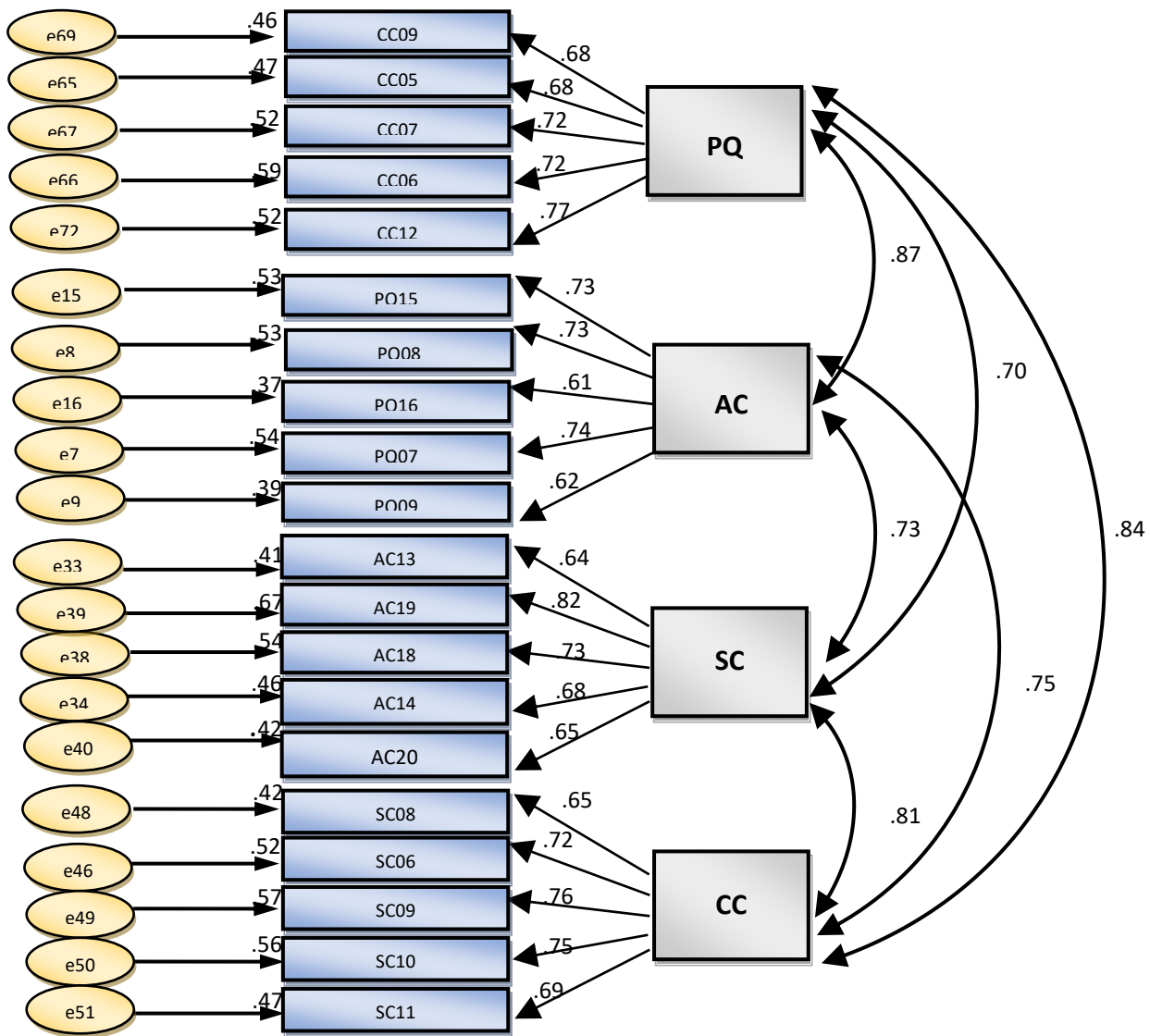
Table 5: Correlations, Reliability, AVE, and Mean

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
F1 (PQ)	(0.81)			
F2 (AC)	0.28	(0.80)		
F3 (SC)	0.21	0.24	(0.76)	
F4 (CC)	0.22	0.22	0.23	(0.77)
CR (Composit	0.91	0.82	0.81	0.69

reability)				
MEAN	4.00	4.02	3.91	3.85
SD (Standard deviation)	0.99	1.30	1.02	0.77

The square root of AVE in bold on diagonal line.

A Structural Equation Model for Developing and Promoting Creative Tourism in Thailand



The result of a structural equation modeling analysis of “A Structural Equation Model for Developing and Promoting Creative Tourism in Thailand” is consistent with empirical data. The indices of fit are: $\chi^2 = 214.80$, $df = 268$, $p\text{-value} < .05$; Relative $\chi^2 = 1.52$, $GFI = 0.98$;

$AGFI = 0.96$; $SRMR = .04$; $RMSEA = 0.04$, $NFI = 0.95$, $CFI = 0.97$, and $CN = 324.12$. The findings reveal that A Structural Equation Model for Developing and Promoting Creative Tourism in Thailand consist of Perceived Quality of Local Creative Experts (PQ),

Attractiveness of Creative Activities (AC), Services to Provide Convenience (SC), and Creative Competency among Tourists (CC). Each factor has standardized score between 0.62 and 0.82. Image is the item with the highest value. Exoticity (something strongly different for previous experiences) is the most important for choosing a destination and a creative activity to participate in.

Conclusion and Discussion

The latent under study in this research can explain variance of creative tourists' behaviors. The manifesting items reveal that they are willing to participate in creativities regardless of prices. This indicates that creative tourists are in an upper market; they are likely to be well-off tourists. As creative tourists, when they travel, they want more than passive experiences. They participate in creative activities because they want to make their own souvenirs to take home; thus, creative activities offered should focus on souvenir making for tourists to take home for impressive memory. To come up with a good piece of artistic souvenir, creative tourists will choose to participate in creative activities of which they have talents. Along with participating in creative activities, they are also serious to learn exotic culture of local creativities; thus, opportunities to visit local communities to observe everydayness of community members are essential.

To attract creative tourists, local creative experts who are coaches must have showmanship in their presentation. They must be friendly and famous. Creative tourists prefer learning from senior local creative experts to young local creative experts. This means that local creative experts must be capable of externalizing their tacit talents to creative tourists. There must be a training program to develop this capability among senior local creative experts.

When visiting a destination to participate in creative activities, creative tourists also want to learn ways of living, which they perceive as being exotic. It is something

strongly differentiated from their previous experiences. They want to see community members' authentic traditional way of life. Thus, when offering cultural ways of life, developers must present an authentic culture, not a staged one. As for creative activities, they prefer going to a destination with a variety of creative activities to a destination with only single creative activities. This means that creative tourists want to have choice, and they may also want to participate in more than one activity. With attractive creative activities and authentic cultures, people involved in developing and promoting creative tourism must pay attention to the development of infrastructure and human resources who are service providers. Creative tourists want to be in a destination with good infrastructure for their convenience and comforts. They also want recreational amenities to enhance their memorable experiences. They want to get world-class services; thus, the development of human resources working in businesses of tourism industry is truly essential.

Recommendations

1. People involved in the development and the promotion of creative tourism must start with auditing creative activities as creative tourism resources.
2. There must be a process to discover local creative experts who can be coaches for creative tourists. They must be famous artists with strong talents, and they must be trained how to be effective coaches with showmanship in their presentation. Young creative experts must learn to inherit creative talents from senior creative experts, in order to sustain creative talents of a destination. There should be a variety of creative activities, so that creative tourists can have choices that suit their creative potential.
3. Creative tourism should look at upper market tourists who are well-off because creative tourists are willing to pay to participate in creative activities of their choices regardless of prices. Creative activities should be developed around the purpose of allowing

creative tourists to make their one souvenirs to take home as tokens for impressive memory.

4. In order to be an attractive destination for creative tourism, a place must a destination well equipped with other components of tourism, namely accessibility, infrastructure, authentic culture of everydayness, and recreational amenities. Human resources in all businesses in tourism industry must be well trained to provide world-class services to creative tourist to lure them to come back.

5. It would be wise to look for ways to leverage technologies in creative activities to make them innovative. Content marketing to tell stories of each creative activities and evolution of community culture is needed to enhance the attractiveness of a destination and creative activities offered at that particular destination.

Final Notes:

Creative Tourism is an integrated development: Creative tourism is a combination of creative contents (Interpretation) and creative life styles (Activities, Traditions, Customs, Festivals, Arts, Performance, Craftsmanship) of everydayness. It gives tourists opportunities to participate in creative activities that manifest their creative potential. To be successful, a destination for creative tourism must be a creative city with beautiful atmospheres and surroundings. People involved in the development must form a task force with members working together with integration. The task force must consist of public officers, private entrepreneurs, academicians, and community residents. Local creative experts must be available, and they must be willing to transfer their tacit knowledge and skills to tourists. They must be good coaches with high teaching and coaching skills.

Creative Tourism is a modernized cultural tourism: Creative tourism is a modern extension of cultural tourism that leverages creative activities to attract tourists who want to experience authentic cultures by interacting with local creative experts. It is a shift from

passive cultural tourism to active cultural tourism. This shift is an answer to tourists' needs to go beyond seeing and learning. An image of a destination for creative tourism is important. A destination for creative tourism must be a creative city with beautiful buildings and surroundings. Creative activities must be unique and reflect destination identities

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