



Residents' Attitude towards Tourism Impacts and Their Participation on Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case in Chiang Rai Elephant Camp, Muang Chiang Rai District, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This study aims to (1) examine level of residents' attitude toward tourism impact and level of residents' participation in sustainable tourism development, as well as (2) investigates how attitudes toward tourism impacts influence the residents to have participation in tourism development, particularly focus on the sustainable tourism perspective. The findings of this study revealed that level of residents' attitude toward tourism impacts within Ruammit village were frequently interpreted as "much". Consequently, level of residents' participation in terms of sustainable tourism development were frequently interpreted as "sometimes". Another finding illustrated tourism impacts have no statistical significant on the participation. The residents' participation in Ruammit village was considered as serious obstacle for tourism development. In addition, this study also suggests that the important of residents' participation in community development which perceived by local residents is the valued key in achieving community development. The understanding of the tourism' impacts and how its development is being managed are need to be instructed to the residents in Ruammit village.

Keywords : Tourism Impact, Sustainable Tourism Development, Community Participation.

Introduction

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Tourism comprises an extensive range of economic activities and it's considered as the fastest growing industry in the world. In both developed and developing countries, tourism is used for encouraging economics activities by creating jobs and generating income for people with in the countries. Thereby, countries and regions where the economy is driven by the tourism industry have become increasingly concerned to the environmental conservation, as well as promoting of sustainable tourism development for minimizing environmental impact and maximizing socio-economic benefits in tourist destinations (Neto, 2003). Regarding the concept of sustainable tourism, it is tourist activities which lead to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems. However, Chili and suggested that a part of sustainability of tourism is highly related to the involvement of local community such as decision-making, community involvement must be assured in the planning and management of tourism areas. For instance, being sustainability in the long run, tourism must incorporate the principles and practices of sustainable consumption as tourism products and services are provided in the way of minimizes any impacts in the tourist destination.

The elephant camp at Ruammit village, one of tourist attraction in Chiang Rai province which located in Muang Chiang Rai district and has been operating since 1975. As an old village, the Ruammit village famous for its elephants such as a long tradition of elephant training and logging. Furthermore, the Ruammit village is promoted as a Karen community; a combination of four kind of hill tribes such as Lahu, Lisu, Karen and Akha, as well as its remains their outstanding of hill tribe' culture and traditions. Due to the significance of high number national and international tourist arrival in Chiang Rai province, the elephant camp becomes to the livelihood for people within the community. In order to help the tourism sector within the village generate higher benefit from their existing tourism resources, tourism development need to be strengthened.

Review of Literature

1. Overview of sustainable tourism

Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. UNEP & UNWTO (2005) explains sustainable tourism should: (1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity; (2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance; and (3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.



2. An agenda for sustainable tourism

An agenda for sustainable tourism can be combined as a set of twelve aims that address economic, social and environmental impacts. The agenda formulated in this way can then be used as a framework to develop policies for more sustainable tourism that recognize the two directions in which tourism policy can exert an influence; firstly, minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on society and the environment; and secondly, maximizing tourism's positive and creative contribution to local economies, the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and the quality of life of hosts and visitors. Referring to UNEP & UNWTO (2005), the twelve aims for an agenda for sustainable tourism are: (1) Economic Viability: to ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term; (2) Local Prosperity: to maximize the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally; (3) Employment Quality: to strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways; (4) Social Equity: to seek a widespread and fair distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor; (5) Visitor Fulfillment: to provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways; (6) Local Control: to engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders; (7) Community well-being: to maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation; (8) Cultural Richness: to respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities; (9) Physical Integrity: to maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment; (10) Biological Diversity: to support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them; (11) Resource Efficiency: to minimize the use of scarce and nonrenewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services; (12) Environmental Purity: to minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.

3. Sustainable tourism development

Sustainable development is a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. However, sustainable tourism development requires 'the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders and measuring of tourism impacts in the community to ensure the building of a consensus for development and the possibility of introducing preventive or corrective measures, without resident support, sustainable tourism development cannot be achieved (Segota et al., 2016). According to Bell and Morse (1999 cited in White et al., 2006,) concluded

the set of principles for judgment progress towards sustainable development as follows; (1) Sustainable development should be clearly defined in its specific context; (2) Sustainability should be viewed in a holistic sense, including economic, social and ecological components; (3) Concepts of equity should be included in any perspective of sustainable development; (4) Time horizon should span both human and ecosystem timescales, and the spatial scale should include local and long-distance impacts on people and ecosystems; (5) Progress towards sustainable development should be based on the measurement of a limited number of indicators based on standardized measurement; (6) Methods and data employed for assessment of progress should be open and accessible to all; (7) Progress should be effectively communicated to all; (8) Broad participation is required; (9) Allowance should be made for repeated measurement in order to determine trends and incorporate results of experience; (10) Institutional capacity in order to monitor progress towards sustainable tourism development needs to be assured.

Thus, the concept of sustainability became a practice which considered as its benefit to the progress of tourism development. The studies of Dolnicar & Leisch, 2007; Dolnicar et al., 2010; Mihalic, 2013; Weaver, 2013 & Chiu et al., 2014 cited in Chen, 2015, have shown that performing environmentally friendly operations allows a tourism entity to build its image as an operation that cares about the living environment of human beings, a view that could enlarge its current consumer base.

4. Residents' attitude toward tourism impacts

An attitude is an overall evaluation that express how much people like or dislike an objective, issue, person, or action. In addition, attitude also is based on cognition (thoughts) or beliefs that people has about information received from an external sources or information which can recall from the memories. Also, attitude is based on emotion such as observing and vicariously experience the emotion from the others (Soloman, 2007). However, to widen the understanding of resident' attitude toward tourism impacts, it is vital to discuss and understand the research literature on the different dimensions of impact that follows tourism development at a destination.

4.1 Economic impact

Economic impact is considered as the most direct effects occur within the primary tourism sectors; lodging, restaurants, transportation, amusements, and retail trade which the actual money spent by incoming tourists during their stay and through secondary effects, tourism affects most sectors of the economy (Lundberg, 2011). Beside that Kim et al. (2013) examined the economic impact of tourism has commonly been viewed as both positive and negative. Also supports that the increasing of wages empowers people to spend money on leisure and recreational activities and he pointed that economic factor as the tourist's flow from the countries, inflation, GDP per capita, emerging tourism business within the country and tangible investments. Therefore, it can be said that tourism is a vehicle for injecting enthusiasm and an economic encouragement. The understanding of economic impacts of tourism through the above review confirms a need for planning to ensure the elimination of the negative effects of tourism and the reinforcement of positive ones, as well as the incorporation of the local community



desires into the development planning. Residents tend to have positive attitudes because they see tourism as an economic development tool. For this reason, almost all the studies that examined the relation between the benefits of economic gain and attitudes towards tourism reported a positive relation (Allen, Long, Perdue, & Keiselbach, 1988; Davis, Allen, & Cosenza, 1988; Perdue et al. 1990; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Pizam & Pokela, 1985, cited in García, 2014,). Thus, the first is proposed: Hypothesis1 (H1): Economic impact is positively influence residents to have participation in sustainable tourism development

4.2 Socio-cultural impact

Mathieson & Wall (1982, cited in Fredline, Deery & Jago, 2006) defined the social and cultural impacts of tourism as the ways in which tourism is contributing to changes in value systems, individual behavior, family relationships, collective lifestyles, safety levels, moral conduct, creative expressions, traditional ceremonies and community organizations. Furthermore, tourism may have different effects on the social and cultural aspects of life in a particular region which depended on the strengths of the region.

4.3 Environmental impact

As the expansion of tourism activities all around the globe, today, environmental resources have become more serious concerning and the modern tourists are becoming more searching a high-quality physical and willing to pay a premium price (Romeril, 1985; Inskip, 1987; Hunter & Green, 1995). Tourist activities affect the natural environment during their period of time traveling at the destination. For example, in the study of Zhang, H. & Lei, S. L. (2012). illustrated that the cultural tourism in China, activities such as worship at temples can also pollute the air quality, as one preliminary study of environmental impacts in the ecotourism area of Yunnan Province showed that the concentration of SO₂ in the atmosphere increased significantly due to a dramatic increase in the number of Tibetan visitors in the Songzanlin temple in a large crowd and burning tons of incense for worship. Today, the influence of tourism on the environment have led in many countries to take into requirement of preservation. As the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope, the negative impacts of tourism certainly occur and the residents' positive perceptions may quickly become negative when they perceive the negative environmental impact of tourism (Kim et al., 2012). The environmental impact can be improved and achieved by ensuring that its harmonious with the overall plan for the destination, increase the number of attractions, recreational opportunities and services. For example, referring the study of Sheldon and Var (1984 cited in García et al., 2014) illustrated that the residents of North Wales had a positive perception of tourism due to the fact that they appreciate the greater employment opportunities and perceived public facilities was in better conditions. It could be said that residents with exocentric attitudes support policies that can lead to preservation of resources and the environment, while those holding anthropocentric attitude favor transforming the environment to fulfill human needs. Thus, the discussion leads to the development of the third hypotheses: Hypothesis 3 (H3): Environmental impact is positively influence residents to have participation in sustainable tourism development.

5. Community participation

Community participation has been widely discussed in the literature under the domain of sustainable tourism, with successful tourism planning relying on the support and involvement of local residents (Rasoolimanesh, 2016). Community participation is a portion of the democratic system which permit the locals to express their views on development matters which will affect their lives in the future Fagence (1977, cited in Prabhakaran et al., 2014). However, Schroth (2007) believes that initially participation is the response to increasing claims for active citizen involvement in local decision-making, thereby the idea was first formulated in American and British planning in papers such as the theoretical literature on typologies of participation. The “ladder of participation”. Arnstein’s typologies are useful starting point for differentiating degrees and kinds of participation. Consequently, various researchers tried to acknowledge the changed situation with modified “ladders of participation” with different emphases (Schroth, 2007) including Pretty’s (1995) typology. The following table explains the typology of participation which consists of 7 typologies (see table 1).

Table 1 : Pretty’s typology of participation typology characteristics of each type

Typology	Features
Manipulative participation (A)	Participation is simply presence, resident have unelected representatives on official boards without power. Almost no interaction occurs between local stakeholders and managing institutions.
Passive participation (B)	Resident participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management who do not listen to people’s responses. The information being presented belongs only to external professionals.
Participation by consultation (C)	Resident participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes. This process does not concede any share in decision making and professionals are under no obligation to adopt people’s views. Resident have no opportunity to influence proceedings.
Participation for material incentives (D)	Resident participate by contributing resources, e.g. labor, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. This is commonly called participation, yet resident have no stake in prolonging practices when the incentives end. Decisions are made by the managing institutions alone.



Table 1 (per) : Pretty's typology of participation typology characteristics of each type

Typology	Features
Functional participation (E)	Resident's participation is seen by external agents as a means of achieving project goals, especially reductions in costs. People may form groups to meet pre-determined objectives. This participation may be interactive and may involve shared decision making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have been made by external agents. Interactive
participation (F)	Residents participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and the formation, or strengthening, of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just as a means of achieving project goals. Residents take control over local decisions and determine how local resources are used, thereby maintaining structure and practice.
Self-Mobilization (G)	Residents participate by taking initiatives, independently of external institutions, to change systems. They develop contacts with external Institutions and there is primary transfer of authority and responsibility for the resources. Self-mobilization can spread if government and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Referring the review of above the empirical and theoretical literature suggest, therefore, that more disaggregated and less normative approach to the analysis of participation is required to create an understanding of the conditions under which participatory approaches may further development objectives, and to aid the design of specific interventions. These perspectives have driven the development of the framework outlined in this research.

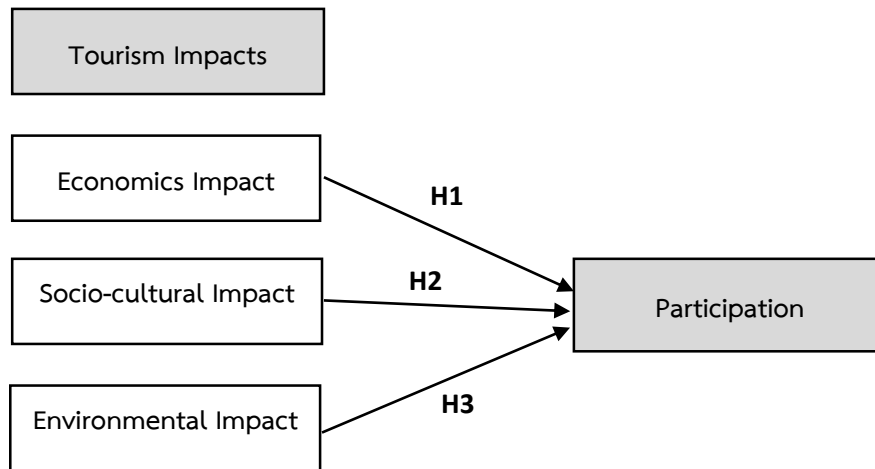


Figure 1 : Conceptual framework model of the study (Adapted from Stylidis, et al. (2014).

This model was used to investigate the relationship between tourism impact factor and participation factor.

1. Population and sample design

The population of this study were the residents who live in Ruammit village, Muang Chiang Rai District, Chiang Rai Province. Regarding sample size, the researcher was applied a formula of Yamane (1973). As a result, 189 samples were accepted.

2. Research instrument

The questionnaire was developed from the operational definitions of three dimension of tourism impact and participation. The questionnaire was comprised of three part: Part 1 comprises of 4 statements associated with personal information. Part 2 comprises of 18 statements associated with attitude toward tourism impact which divided into 3 dimensions; economic impact, sociocultural impact; environment impact. Part 3 comprises of 8 statements associated with residents' participation in sustainable tourism development.

3. Data collection

In order to collect the data from respondents according to scope of study based on purposive sampling technique, the questionnaires were directly distributed to residents in Ruammit village by the researcher and assistant and 189 questionnaires were completed.

4. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 22.0) was used to conduct primary analysis of personal information; residents' attitude toward tourism impact; and participation of respondents. In this study, two types of statistics were presented; (1.) descriptive statistics including percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation; and (2.) inferential statistics, this type of statistics was used for hypothesis testing. The researcher used Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis several variables in order to investigate the relation between variables and investigate the influence between independent variables and one dependent.



Result

Table 2 : Personal information

Measure	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	73	38.60
	Female	116	61.40
Age	Under 18 years	9	4.80
	18-25 years	34	18.00
	26-33 years	28	14.80
	34-41 years	38	20.10
	42-49 years	26	13.80
	Over 50 years	54	28.60
Education	Non-education	27	14.30
	Primary school	43	22.80
	High school	70	37.00
	Vocational diploma	17	9.00
	Bachelor's degree Higher than bachelor's degree	31	16.40
		1	0.50
Occupation	Government officer	2	1.10
	Student	15	7.90
	Business's owner	80	42.30
	Farmer	48	25.40
	Employee	32	16.90
	Other	12	6.30

Regarding the personal information, the residents in Ruammit village, the female was bigger than male which account for 116 (64.4%) and 73 (38.6%) respectively. The age of the respondents covers from 18 years to over 50 years old. Remarkably, most of respondents (28.6%) were age over 50 years old while the majority of the respondents finished only high school 37%. Interestingly, among 189 respondents, most of residents were business's owner which account for 80 (42.3%).

Table 3 : Mean and SD of all variables (n=189)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level of tourism impact and participation
Economic impact	3.92	0.42	Much
Sociocultural impact	4.19	0.32	Much
Environment impact	4.04	0.40	Much
Participation	3.40	0.54	Sometimes

Result of objective 1: To examine the level of residents' attitude toward tourism impacts factor: economic, sociocultural and environment impact and participation factor in terms of sustainable tourism development in Ruammit village. The findings illustrate that the level of residents' attitude of economic impact: mean = 3.92, SD = 0.42; sociocultural impact: mean = 4.19, SD = 0.32; and environment impact: mean = 4.04, SD = 0.54, all of these variables have the level of attitude value at "much". And the residents were sometime having participation in sustainable tourism development with mean = 3.40 and SD = 0.54.

Table 4 : Table Regression Coefficients of important variables

Regression Coefficients					
Variables	Unstandardized	Coefficients	Standardized	t-test	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	2.935	.576		5.096	.000
X3	.053	.105	.041	.510	.611
X2	.089	.142	.053	.627	.532
X1	-.030	.115	-.022	-.264	.792

Another finding of the objective 2: To investigate the influence of tourism impacts factor toward residents' participation factor in terms of sustainable tourism development in Ruammit village. The results indicated that three variables including economic impact (t-test = - 0.264), sociocultural impact (t-test = 0.627), and environment impact (t-test = 0.510) have no statistical significant to the participation factor. Hence, among the three predicted variables: economic, sociocultural and environment impact have no influence on the participation.

Table 5 : Result of hypotheses tested in this study

	Hypotheses	Statistical Testing	Results
H1	Economic impact is positively influence residents to have participation in sustainable tourism development.	Multiple Regression	Rejected
H2	Socio-cultural impact is positively influence residents to have participation in sustainable tourism development.	Multiple Regression	Rejected
H3	Environmental impact is positively influence residents to have participation in sustainable tourism development.	Multiple Regression	Rejected

The result of hypothesis testing at 0.05 level of the statistical significance revealed that tourism impact factor; economic impact; sociocultural impact; and environment impact variables have no statistical significant on participation factor because Sig. value (Significance probability) of tourism impact factor: economic, sociocultural and environment impact which calculated by SPSS were 0.611, 0.532 and 0.792 respectively. This result is contrast to the study of study of Styliadis et al., (2014): residents’ support for tourism development by drawing on the triple bottom line approach and adopting a non-forced approach for measuring residents’ perceptions of the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism. The study illustrated that the role of residents’ place image in shaping their perception of impacts and support for tourism development was investigated. And also, contrast to the study of Nunkoo & Gursoy, (2011) which studied about residents’ support for tourism: an identity perspective. In their study found that tourism development support was influenced by the residents’ attitudes to the positive and negative impacts of tourism and dissemination of the benefits or expected benefits to the local residents may also contribute to gaining their support for tourism development.

Discussion

The results demonstrated that the level of residents’ attitude toward tourism impacts within Ruammit village were valued as “much”. This is because, residents were perceiving more positives (benefits) than negatives (costs) based on effects arising from three dimensions of tourism impacts including economic impact; sociocultural impact; and environment impact. As stated by Lundberg (2011), “residents examine costs and benefits as a result of tourism, if their assessment is positive, also their attitude towards the tourism industry will be positive”.

Therefore, Ruammit village as a tourism destination for both national and international tourists, tourism has created job opportunities and income for residents, as the main source of income and an additional source of income derived from their elephant camp. In addition, for some community members, tourism has become the primary source of income for their families when they entirely work on the production

or sale of goods and products for the tourists instead of working in the agricultural sector. Consequently, the level of residents' participation in terms of sustainable tourism development were frequently interpreted as "sometimes". It can be said that the result of this study can be relied on Pretty's typology of participation, the fact that a typology is contained of different levels of participation which ranges from 'only being told of' to being able to influence in every aspect of the tourism development.

According to the finding in this study was that the level of residents' attitudes toward tourism impacts were examined in positive circumstance. Despite, the hypotheses testing reveals the residents' attitude toward tourism impacts have no influence on participation. This is due to the majority of the selected residents were business owners which account for 42.3%. In this case, the researcher found that there was some of the reasons why the local residents tended to refuse to have participation in tourism development. As the researcher has approached to the various of respondents, in order to collect the data some respondents were requiring the researcher to read over the surveys by each statement. In general, the last section of the survey allows respondents to express their suggestion about related research topic. Based on this part of suggestion, research found that some residents who were in the group of the business owners were frequently expressing in the details that they often ignored to participate in monthly meeting by giving the explanations that they have migrated from other villages and have been living here for business purposes; sale of goods, products and services for the tourists. As a result, the research realized that the lack of holistic participation within this village is considered as a serious obstacle for further tourism development. This is due to the majority residents were not well-informed regarding the important of tourism development and community' participation.

Hence, the suggestion of researcher is that in the process of development with in Ruammit village requires careful management processes. In relation to the development of tourism sector in Ruammit village, it is important for the developers of tourism sector, government organizations and village leader to provide reliable information to residents in the ways of the tourism impacts could bring both positively and negatively upon their way of lifes, as well as the important of community' participation in tourism developing plans which can influence resident to participate in tourism development in the future. Furthermore, with more information available to them, all resident in the group of business owners will have a better understanding of the effects of tourism and how its development is being managed. Due to the fact that community' participation in the tourism development can be viewed as the decision-making process, sharing of tourism benefits, in particular job creation, brings more economic benefits which directs to the community. This is because, if tourism development within a community is based on the demands of tourists, rather than the community's needs and desires, there is the potential for tourism to cause conflict within the community. As the community participation has been widely discussed in the literature under the domain of sustainable tourism, with successful tourism planning relying on the support and involvement of local residents (Rasoolimanesh, 2016).



Conclusion

Level of residents' attitude toward tourism impact within Ruammit village were interpreted as "much". Consequently, as well as level of residents' participation in terms of sustainable tourism development were interpreted as "sometimes". Another finding illustrated tourism impacts has no statistically significant on the participation. The residents' participation in Ruammit village was considered as a serious obstacle for tourism development. This initial research on residents in Ruammit village was crucial for developers to understand the residents' attitude toward tourism impacts and their participation in sustainable tourism development. The result also provides meaningful implications for the developers of the Ruammit village with more efficient management of community participation for future tourism' development policies and a future sustainable tourism plan setting.

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