

**A Local Way of Life and Culture for Tourism Learning Route at Ko Samui,
Samui District, Suratthani Province, Thailand.**

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Abstract

The research objectives of a local way of life and culture for learning route at Ko Samui, are to study and conduct the potential local way of life and culture for learning route of *Ko Samui*, link tourism sites with participation with local communities and develop the tourism route handbook for green destination of *Samui* district, Suratthani province, Thailand. Data collection was made by field survey, focus group of involving stakeholders both government organizations, private sectors, local community in *Ko Samui*, in-depth interview, data interpretation for developing tourism learning route, and questionnaire collected from a sample of participants who tested the route. The result of this study found that cultural tourism created from a local way of life and culture for learning route, consists of coconut way of life and local community sites at *Ko Samui*. The coconut way of life and culture as described in the tourism learning route program for exploring community lifestyle entitled of “The Green Route and Souvenirs from *Ko Samui*” and handbook. This tourism learning route could be value added by integrating and cooperating of involving organizations about tourism development and promotion for *Ko Samui* as green destination of Thailand in the future.

Keywords: local way of life and culture, cultural tourism, tourism learning route, green destination, Ko Samui

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยเรื่องวิถีชีวิตและวัฒนธรรมเพื่อจัดทำเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวเพื่อการเรียนรู้ที่อำเภอเกาะสมุย จังหวัดสุราษฎร์ธานี มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาข้อมูลศักยภาพของวิถีชีวิตและวัฒนธรรมในแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเชื่อมโยงกับการมีส่วนร่วมกับชุมชนในท้องถิ่น และจัดทำเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวเพื่อการเรียนรู้ คู่มือ

นำเที่ยวสู่จุดหมายปลายทางสีเขียวที่เกาะสมุย วิธีการวิจัยใช้การสำรวจภาคสนาม การประชุมกลุ่มย่อยกับกลุ่มผู้มีส่วนได้เสียที่เกี่ยวข้องทั้งองค์กรภาครัฐ ภาคเอกชน และชุมชนท้องถิ่นในเกาะสมุย การลงแบบสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก การวิเคราะห์และแปลผลข้อมูลในการจัดทำเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวเพื่อการเรียนรู้ คู่มือ นำเที่ยวสู่จุดหมายปลายทางสีเขียว และการลงแบบสอบถามกับกลุ่มนักท่องเที่ยวที่เข้าร่วมการทดสอบเส้นทาง ผลของการศึกษาพบว่ารูปแบบการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมที่มีศักยภาพจากวิถีชีวิตและวัฒนธรรมของเกาะสมุย โดยสามารถจัดทำเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวเพื่อการเรียนรู้ อันประกอบด้วย วิถีมะพร้าวกับชุมชนท้องถิ่นในเกาะสมุย โดยมีการจัดทำเป็นเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวภายใต้โปรแกรม “เส้นทางสีเขียว ปันจักรยาน ของฝากของดีเกาะสมุย” เป็นการเรียนรู้เส้นทางท่องเที่ยวตามคู่มือนำเที่ยว ซึ่งเส้นทางท่องเที่ยวเพื่อการเรียนรู้นี้จะได้รับการสร้างมูลค่าเพิ่มหากบูรณาการความร่วมมือและการประสานงานขององค์กรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการพัฒนาและส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยว เพื่อผลักดันให้เกาะสมุยเป็นจุดหมายปลายทางสีเขียวของประเทศไทยในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ: วิถีชีวิตและวัฒนธรรม, การท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรม, เส้นทางท่องเที่ยวเพื่อการเรียนรู้, จุดหมายปลายทางสีเขียว, เกาะสมุย

1. Introduction

Ko Samui or Samui island is located in Samui District, Suratthani Province, Southern Thailand, consists of tourism resources, natural resources and environment such as waterfall, archipelagoes and historical-cultural based site as well as interesting local identity. However, that identity is not still presented systematically since the entrepreneurs does not pay attention on local way of life and cultural of the community which including the less of service industrial group. Many tourists know only the tourism sites but not the context of local community. Thus the initiating of local community, such as Talingngam community running its tourism business by integrating agricultural and local way of life, is probably the new alternative for tourists. Therefore, to drive

local way of life and culture for tourism learning route at *Ko Samui* the by the local community is likely the optional model for sustainable tourism but it has to suitably be adapted to community context and leading to green destination (7 Greens concept by Tourism Authority of Thailand) of Thailand in the future.

2. Aims

- 2.1 To study and conduct the potential local way of life and culture for learning route of *Ko Samui*, link tourism sites with participation with local communities.
- 2.2 To develop the tourism route handbook for green destination of *Ko Samui*, *Samui* district, Suratthani province, Thailand.

3. Theory, concept of the research and related findings

Research framework of a local way of life and culture for tourism learning route at *Ko Samui* is to allow tourists and tour operators to know the island by learning community life. Being the island for agriculture as “coconut” is an important crop and the local people have used for maximum benefits. Hence, the tourism learning route is designed as slow tourism so tourists have time to touch the community within the program and a handbook. The brand “coconut local way of life and culture” could be a green destination according to 7 Greens concept by TAT (green heart, green activity, green community, green logistics, green service, green attraction and green plus) to reflect an eco-friendly tourist destination together of *Ko Samui*.

4. Methodology

This research used both quantitative and qualitative methods by collection data from field survey, focus group, in-depth interview, questionnaire were used by involving stakeholders both government organizations, private sectors, tourists, tour agents, and local community of *Ko Samui*. Integrated participatory action, communities stage, tourism route test and satisfaction assessment by questionnaire and interview were used to connect the local way of life and culture into tourism learning route and leading to green destination.

4.1 Population and sample

The population included tourists from tour agents, hotels, government agencies, educational institutions and local people of *Ko Samui*, *Samui* District, Suratthani Province, Thailand.

4.2 The tool used to study

The tool used to study consisting of;

4.2.1 Document; to study tourism sites and context of local community.

4.2.2 Focus group discussion to study the tourism sites, communities, environment, community way of life, culture and income distribution to community of *Ko Samui*, *Samui* district, Suratthani province, Thailand.

4.2.3 Questionnaire; all data were collected by questionnaire from a sample of participants who tested the learning route. The group included 20 representatives from tour agencies, government agencies and educational institutions.

4.2.4 Satisfaction assessment to tourism learning route tested by using the program of tourism route and activities.

4.3 Data and statistic analyzing used data analyzing

This research was analyzed by program of SPSS for Window Version 11, details as follows;

4.3.1 Analyzing content from document

4.3.2 Analyzing content from focus group discussion

4.3.3 Finding frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation from satisfaction assessment from tourism learning route test.

5. Study results

Ko Samui produced over 3,000,000 coconuts a month, was known as the island of coconut in Thailand. However, the coconut way of life was not recognized as the magnet for tourism especially in the context of local community. Hence, Taling Ngam sub-district was one of the last region of *Ko Samui* that remained largely untouched and full of way of life and cultural of local community as discussed in the focus group, shown in figure 1.



Figure 1. Focus group meeting with Taling Ngam local community.

The study found that community lifestyle of the Ko Samui people entitle “the green route and souvenirs from Ko Samui”. This route consisted of four learning points for way of life and cultural of local community as follows;

- 1) “coconut wooden products point” See and enjoy shopping for products made from coconut wood by local master craftsmen. It is a process of using coconut wood to produce various products; such as boxes and containers that are beautiful and unique. In the same time, tourists can experience the process of how to make products from coconut wood closely at this location. This reflected of green activity by allowing tourists to learn and experience about the resource conservation as shown in figure 2.



- 2) “Stirring Kalamae Point” Yanom is a local word for “Kalamae”. It is a kind of dessert that results from the process of stirring coconut milk with certain ingredients. Ko Samui is well known for an abundance of coconut trees, therefore, the use of coconut milk in Kalamae is unlimited, which makes Kalamae tasty, fragrant and

unique. This reflected of both green activity and green community. This allowed tourists to learn and experience about the resource conservation and protection on the local lifestyle as shown in figure 3.



- 3) “Boxing Camp for Education” Ko Samui is a part of Suratthani Province, an original place of “Muay Chiya” With reference to history when King Rama V the Great visited Ko Samui, the city ruler of Chiya arranged “Muay Chiya” teachers to be the guards of the king. Later on, “Muay Chiya” progressed into first boxing. This boxing camp is created from the kindness of a boxing teacher who is willing to assist the children in the community who lack financial support for their education, and bring them to do boxing practice for self defence and developed a boxing ring in order to earn money for their educational fund. This reflected of green community. This allowed tourists to learn and experience about the protection on the local life style as shown in figure 4.



- 4) “Local Fishery” It is a place to see and buy processed seafood products of the local fishermen using local fishing tools such as, fishnet and fish trap. Tourists can

find goods like salt-dried fish and a variety of products that have been processed and transformed without the use of preservatives. This reflected of green community. This allowed tourists to learn and experience about the protection on the local life style as shown in figure 5.



The tourism learning points were described as shown in the figure 6.

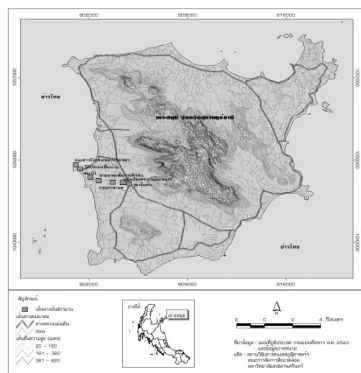


Figure 6. Location of tourism learning routes entitle “the green route and souvenirs from *Ko Samui*”

However, Taling Ngam community tried to assemble to formulate any groups continuously but there was not connection between groups. After focus group meeting was held in the community it made each group understood and knew connection process step by step. Moreover, when there were researchers stepping to community and made understanding about tourism management systematically and connected each group. It created coordination and arrange project plan to link tourism route of every group together. After the program has developed “the green route and souvenirs from *Ko Samui*” using bicycle for tourists spent more time

with community with a handbook as shown in figure 6. This reflected of green logistics.



The test route was then undertaken and result was found that the tourists have attitude to the route in high level generally ($\bar{x} = 3.55$). When considering in each field found that tourist’s attitudes to activities and place are in good level average at 3.76 and 3.51 respectively. The tourist’s attitudes to the process was in fair level at 3.37 because of not different variety of souvenirs, not very attraction as well as not good service and small involvement of community. as shown in table 1.

Table 1 Mean, Standard deviation and level of attitude to the “the green route and souvenirs from *Ko Samui*”

Field	Mean	S.D.	Level
Activities	3.76	0.74	Good
Place	3.37	0.88	Fair
Process	3.51	0.79	Good
Total	3.55	0.76	Good

The result of in-depth interview in the area found that there was tourism cooperation network spreading around district. It should be integrated with other strategies such as; setting a tourism network among local, educating, developing conscious and realizing to value of natural resources to communities, entrepreneurs and tourists, participation and equally benefit distribution and the community, moreover, should coordinate to push local government playing important role to manage tourism for green destination of *Ko Samui* in the future.

6. Summary

The tourism route and program should be managed by communities by considering from main objectives of tourism resources management, communities potential and readiness to tourism development by having the important strategy as setting a network between local area and important mechanism as having the coordinator between communities and tour agent to connect the tourism route with commodity, to distribute the income between entrepreneurs and communities equally. It also should plan to use properly resources by integrating with other organizations both government and private sectors and also meet tourists need.

7. Recommendations

There is the recommendation in policy level to encourage the using the local route as a tourism learning route to enhance local people having supplementary income from various activities doing particularly agricultural way of life for equally income distribution between entrepreneurs and communities leading to sustainable tourism development. And to entrepreneurs, they should recognize the local community context and lead to green destination including; green activity, green community and green logistics to operate business which could lead to sustainable tourism in the future.

8. Acknowledgements

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