

Chapter 19

Communication for Promoting Tourism by Community Leaders in Chulabhorn Pattana 9, Yala Province, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study focuses on the communication strategies employed by community leaders in promoting tourism in the Chulabhorn Pattana 9 Community in Yala, Thailand. The research framework encompasses cultural communication, community communication and sustainable tourism. The primary data were collected from ten tourism leaders through purposive sampling, utilizing in-depth interviews, and observations as research tools. The data analysis revealed that Chulabhorn Pattana 9 Community was initially established by the Thai government as a residence and workplace for the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) in Thailand, managed by the Chulabhorn Research Institute. Presently, it has evolved into a tourist village and a learning center showcasing the historical perspective of the Communist Party of Malaya. The community leaders in Chulabhorn Pattana 9 Community employ effective communication strategies, which involve community-based and participatory communication among its members.

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INTRODUCTION

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a development approach that leverages tourism activities to empower local communities. It offers numerous economic and social benefits, including providing unique cultural experiences for tourists. By immersing visitors in the local culture and distinctive characteristics of a destination, CBT fosters greater understanding and appreciation of local heritage. Moreover, it presents a valuable opportunity to support local businesses by promoting the sale of authentic products and services, thereby generating income for the community through local employment and tourism-related sales. Additionally, community-based tourism strengthens communities both economically and socially, while promoting collaboration between local residents and visitors. Community-based tourism has been on the rise as an alternative form of tourism, growing alongside ecotourism. Other terms used interchangeably include conservation tourism and green tourism. Currently, community-based tourism is closely intertwined with ecotourism, as it is a tourism approach employed by communities to manage their tourism activities, with a strong focus on community-centric governance. In contrast, ecotourism primarily centers around nature conservation. (Angkoon et al., 2019). Community-based tourism has emerged as a powerful tool for empowering communities to manage tourism resources, be it natural, historical, or cultural. Communication plays a pivotal role in shaping the tourism image for external audiences through various channels such as advertising, public relations, digital media, and community-based participatory communication processes in defining development directions and management. As a result, tourism can effectively communicate and create new meanings for community-based tourism, fostering pride and showcasing tourism potential. (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). This doesn't merely limit the definition of tourism to relaxation, enjoyment, or fun. Instead, it opens up a new world of learning, exchange, and valuable experiences such as education, demonstrations, and the preservation of local wisdom. It also builds tourists' confidence and promotes the destination's image. Integrating community-based tourism management with sustainable tourism management must start with tourism communication factors. (Kongdee et al., 2020)

Tourism is an activity that fosters community empowerment, economic development, job creation, income distribution, and improved quality of life. Cultural tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on local community involvement in tourism management to conserve local resources such as identity, culture, and economy. This is achieved through the simplicity of daily life, livelihoods, and environmentally-friendly occupations. The unique charm and character of these communities attract visitors from other regions who seek to experience local lifestyles, participate in community activities, and learn about cultural differences. Tourism also serves as a major source of foreign exchange income (Fernando, 2020) and community income from tourism and ensures the sustainable transmission of community culture. In Butsanom's research (2021) it was found that the continuous use of various communication channels to reach target audiences is a key factor in creating a positive image for tourist destinations. Tools such as brochures, call centers, and emails can be used to directly communicate with tourists, increasing awareness and encouraging visits.

The National Tourism Development Plan (2021-2022) clearly demonstrates that community engagement is a crucial tool for developing cultural tourism. A fundamental factor in the success of community tourism and cultural tourism development is understanding the culture and transmitting knowledge from community members, including local wisdom keepers and community leaders, through participatory communication to convey cultural experiences in terms of wisdom, history, culture, and way of life under the concept of sustainable tourism development. The focus is on developing cultural tourism destinations

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