

The Guidelines for Public Relations and Tourism Promotion of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province

Prapon Leksuma¹ and Nilubon KongPrem²

Tourism and Hotel Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University

Abstract

This research aimed to form the guidelines for public relations and tourism promotion of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum. The data collection method used was in-depth interview with 25 interviewees. It was found that the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum housed a collection of antiques and was a place of tourist attraction where visitors could learn about the local's way of life, culture, customs, and history. The guidelines for public relations and tourism promotions consisted of the employment of 3 channels: 1) person-to-person public relations, in which visitors' words would promote tourism directly; 2) print media, which included the tourist manual, brochures, and posters, all of which were aided by interesting content and infographics; and 3) online media, through which tourism events and activities would be promoted via, for example, Line, YouTube, and Facebook. This guidelines aimed to appeal to the tourists who were interested in local way of life and history.

Keyword: Public Relation, Museum and Tourism

1. Introduction

Tourism industry is one important factor in Thai economy. In 2015, Thailand's tourism revenue reached 2.23 billion baht, 1.44 of which were from foreign tourists, while the other 0.79 from native ones [1]. Tourism industry also instigates investment, employment, and income distribution to the rural area, as well as contributes development to many regions of the country [2].

Thailand is globally known for its beautiful culture, customs, history, ethnic diversity, and people's hospitality, all of which draw visitors to the country. Ministry of Tourism and Sports encouraged alternative forms of tourism where tourists could learn more and engage in local activities, to illustrate, ecotourism, creative tourism, and cultural tourism [3].

A museum is considered an important cultural tourist attraction, the keeper of history, art, and culture. The purpose of visiting a museum is to peak one's interest about the exhibited object and gain more knowledge in a relaxing, enjoyable way. Visitors will be interested to learn more about different matters depending on what type of museum they visit, for example, historical and archaeological museum, contemporary art museum, machinery museum, natural history museum, anthropological museum, ethnic museum, and folk museum [4].

Nakhon Pathom province is the city of historical importance, believed to have been founded since the Dvaravati period. It contains a great amount of historical and archaeological evidence, and, thereby, has many places to house them, for example, Sanam Chandra Palace, Phra Pathom Chedi National Museum, Wat Samrong Folk Museum, and Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum [5].

The Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum is another learning center in Nakhon Pathom Province where antiques are kept. It is not famous among tourists, though, due to the lack of public relations and usage of media. The museum then could not efficiently develop. This research, thereby, aims to form the guidelines for public relations and tourism promotion of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Nakhon Pathom, with the hope that the place will become better known among people, local and foreign alike, and can attain sustainable tourism in the future.

2. Literature Review

Tourism promotion means stimulating sales through the dissemination of information. It means trying to encourage actual and potential customers to travel. According to Salah Wahab, the objectives of promotion are: 1.To make the tourist product widely known. 2.To make it very attractive in order to encourage many people to try it. 3.To make the message attractive without being dishonest

3. Research Objectives

3.1 To study the context of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

3.2 To study the forms of tourism of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

3.3 To form the guidelines for public relations and tourism promotion of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

4. Scope of the Research

Area Scope The area scope in this research was Wat Tha Phut Temple, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, and its vicinity.

Content Scope The content scope involved the concepts and theories of cultural tourism, tourism promotion, museum, public relations, as well as other studies relating to museum tourism.

Population Scope The population scope comprised 25 people who are involved with the Wat Tha Phut Museum, including the local residents, tourists, scholars, public and private agencies.

5. Research Benefits

5.1 To understand the context of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

5.2 To understand the forms of tourism of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

5.3 To be able to form the guidelines for public relations and tourism promotion of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum, Rai Khing Subdistrict, Sam Phran District, Nakhon Pathom Province.

6. Conceptual Framework

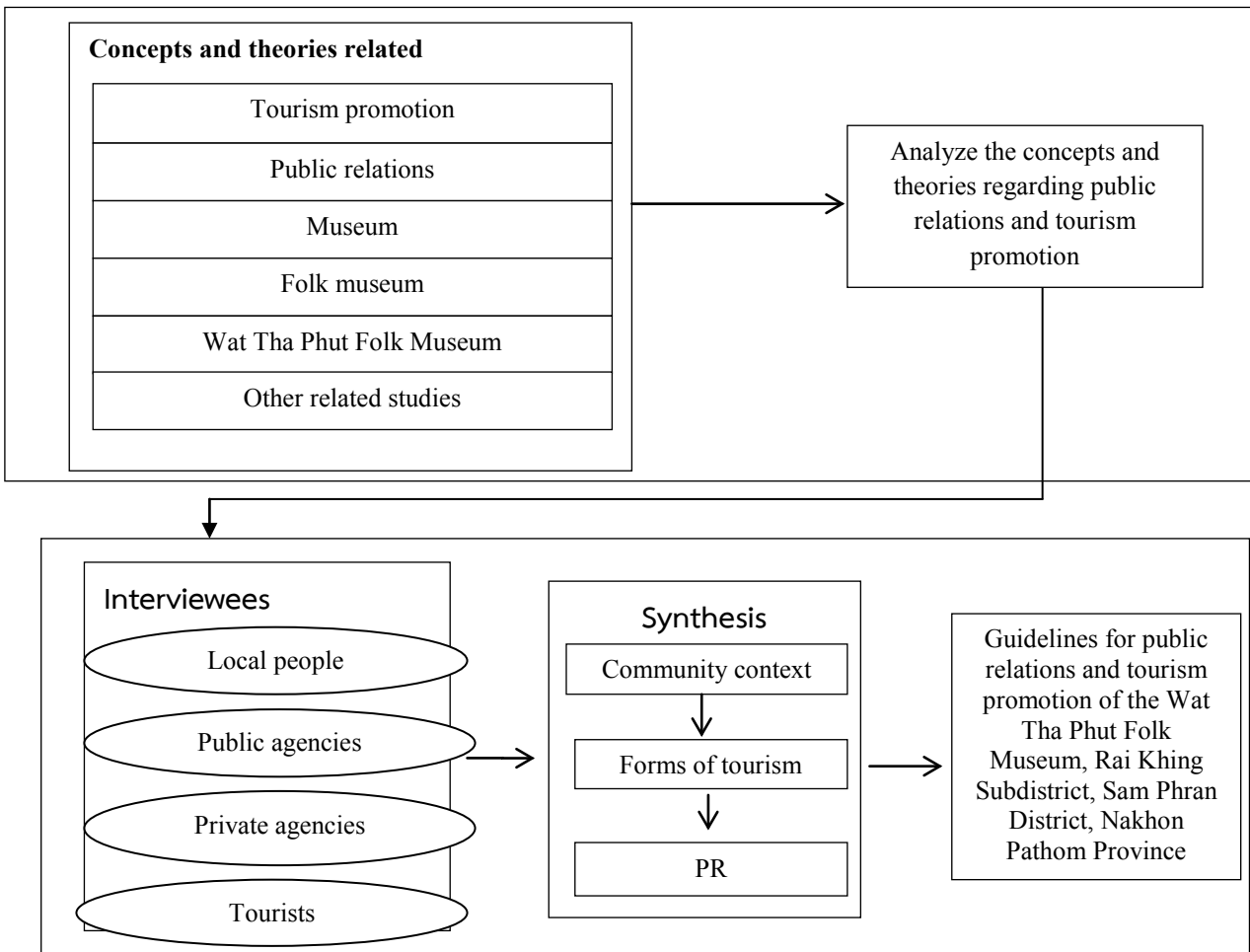


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

7. Methods

Two steps were employed in this research:

7.1 Documentary Research

The researchers gathered information from books and research papers, written in Thai or English. The collected information included the concepts and theories regarding cultural tourism, tourism promotion, museum, public relations, as well as other relevant studies. The researchers then synthesized the acquired information to create the interview form.

7.2 In-depth Interview

The interview form then were applied to 25 interviewees, categorized into 5 groups: the local residents, tourists, scholars, public agencies, and private agencies. The tools employed were the interview forms, a recorder, and a notebook to write down important piece of information. Also, regarding the interview, the interviewees would be notified beforehand. The pieces of information acquired then would be validated with the triangulation method. They would be compared with one another. Should contradiction arise, the interviewees would be contacted and asked to confirm their answer via telephone call or email. The piece of information which was deemed to lack credibility or correctness would be disposed and not used in this research. Then, Analysis data by pattern matching [6] consists 3 step following 1. Data reduction 2.Data display and 3. Conclusion drawing and verification.

8. Results and Discussion

It is found that the history which related to the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum went back into the far past. Around the period after the second fall of Ayutthaya Kingdom, Wat Tha Phut Temple was founded along the river known at present as Tha Chin by a Buddhist Monk Rot, who was the first abbot. The Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum was founded later in the modern era, as people feared that many existing antiques might be lost or stolen. The museum received great support from Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre in organizing and registering the antiques. The museum comprised 3 buildings. The first one, "Tipitaka Hall in the reign of King Rama III," held ancient objects, for example, a royal palanquin, a tea pot, a Tom Pat spittoon, which King Tank Sin granted to Monk Rot. The second one, "Former Abbot's House," displayed the abbot's utensils, Buddhist monk's requisites, and some of the temple's property, for example, blue and white ware, old banknotes, and valuable shells. The last building, "Dharma Study Building in the reign of King Rama V-VI," was made of teak wood and decorated with wood carvings. It displayed newspaper of olden days and other documents, as well as the utensils which the local had given to the temple. The local people were in charge of organizing the museum themselves. This museum followed the notion proposed by Worrapong Worachadudompong [7] saying that a museum was a place to display and house antiques and intellectual property. It was also a place of relaxation, as well as of research and education, the reference of knowledge in various fields.

The form of tourism of the Wat Tha Phut Museum, therefore, was that whose purpose was to gain more knowledge, whether about the local history or the people's way of life and culture. Most of the visitors came in group. They were teachers and students. Other visitors included those who were particularly interested in history and culture. This group of tourist usually visited the museum during the annual festival of Wat Tha Phut Temple.

Regarding the public relations, it was found that the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum had 3 channels: person-to-person PR, print media, and online media. The person-to-person PR depended on the local people to give information to tourists and raise their interest in the museum. The print media were in the form of booklets and brochures providing information pertinent to Wat Tha Phut Temple and the museum. The online media consisted of the temple's website and Facebook page.

With the data provided above, the guidelines for public relations and tourism promotion of the Wat Tha Phut Folk Museum could be formed accordingly, as follows:

1) Person-to-person PR: Tourists could be encouraged to speak about the temple and the museum on different websites. Web bloggers and those who owned social media space could help to spread the information, too.

2) Print media: Good design could help to make the tourist manual, brochures, and posters more interesting, preferably with the aid of images and infographics. They should also be available in the famous tourist attraction spots in Nakhon Pathom whose travelling routes could connect to the museum. Worrapong Worachadudompong [7] also supported the use of brochures and posters, saying that they played a significant role in PR and were convenient to handed out widely. Also, with the use of them, the targeted group of tourist could become better focused.

3) Online media: Events and activities could be promoted through this means. PR videos could be made and published on Line, Facebook, YouTube, etc. when a festival or a special occasion were to be held.

These 3 channels focused on visitors who were interested in the local's way of life and the local history. This group of tourist was considered to be of decent quality and their tourism form was regarded with the term "Special Interest Tourism," including, for example, cultural tourism and experiential tourism [8]. This type of tourism put emphasis on experiencing local people's real way of life and culture, rather than mere sightseeing [1].

9. Reference

- [1] Ministry of Tourism and Sports. **National tourism development plan 2. 2017 [Internet]**. Available from: http://www.mots.go.th/ewt_dl_link.php?nid=8409
- [2] Boonreat J. **MICE Business**. Fern Khaluang, Printing and Publishing. 2014
- [3] Salisa T, Prakasit S. Creative tourism. Alternative options-survivor options. **Academic journal**. Pathumthani University 2016; Year 8 No.2 July-December
- [4] Suthasinee W. **Research Report Learning Power of Museum: Case study England. Bangkok: Office of the Basic Education Commission**. 2001
- [5] Nakhon Pathom Provincial office. **Nakhon Pathom Strategic plan 4 year (2015-2018) of Thailand**. Nakhon Pathom Official; 2014
- [6] Yin, Robert K. **Case study research, Design and Method**. 3rd ed. Vol. 5. Thousand Oaks: Sage; 2003
- [7] Worrarong W. **Graphic design**. Bangkok: Sophon Printing; 1997.
- [8] Hall CM, Mitchell R. Gastronomic tourism: Comparing food and wine tourism experiences. In M. Novelli (Ed.), **Niche Tourism: Contemporary Issues, Trends and Cases**. Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann; 2005; 73-88
- [9] Tourism Authority of Thailand. **National tourism strategic plan 2017-2021**. Office of the Permanent Secretary, the war Veterans Organization; 2017.