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Creative Community Tourism Development Based on Kudееjeen Community Identity, Thailand

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Abstract

The study aimed to (1) enlarge Kudееjeen community identity via composed Kudееjeen song, (2) develop products of Kudееjeen community identity, and (3) create communication channels for Kudееjeen Community tourism. The researchers obtained qualitative data from ten community leaders via documentary research, participatory action research, in-depth interview, and focus group discussion. The results revealed: (1) Community identity consists of unity, music for performance in church, and pride in Portuguese ancestry. These identities are modified by the campaign “Luk Kudееjeen ” (meaning Kudееjeen Children) song for orchestra and choir, which was composed for community participation and storytelling. (2) Community identity products as souvenirs were in the form of miniature clay Kudееjeen puff topped on a flash drive, and Luk Kudееjeen recorded song. (3) Communication channels for Kudееjeen Community tourism were by Luk Kudееjeen song, a souvenir, and storytelling medias in infographics and videos for online communication.

Keywords: *Creative community, community tourism, community identity, Kudееjeen Community*

1. Introduction

The trend of tourism in the 21st century has focused on sustainable development and promotion of tourism products (Carroll, 1999; Bussey, 2011; Miller 2012). Since tourism is one of the main aspects of social and economic development, the policy of most countries supports sustainable tourism for the economic growth of all communities concerned. Community participation in tourism management has become the target of community-based tourism. Communities are encouraged to preserve their environmental resources, and develop various tourism activities in order to attract tourists (Angkura et al., 2019).

Community-based tourism is an important domain of tourism management, because creativity in tourism can strengthen a community, as seen in Kudeejeen Community along Chao Praya River in Bangkok, Thailand. The community is located on Thesaban 1 Road, Wat Kalaya Sub-district, Thonburi District--a historical site of Thonburi Era. The community's members are multi ethnic groups: ranging from Thai, Portuguese-Thai, Chinese, to Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians. The landmark is Santa Cruz Church, one of the oldest Catholic churches in Bangkok. Santa Cruz Church was built in 1770, when King Taksin the Great gave the land to Thai, Chinese, and Portuguese people to live in this area. The church was first built in wood. The original wooden structure was severely destroyed in a fire accident, but was rebuilt using brick in 1916 during the reign of King Rama VI. The church boasts a Renaissance-neoclassical architecture. Kudeejeen House Museum displays information and history of the community, ancient instruments and appliances. The rooftop of the museum is for a scenic view. Kanom Farang Kudeejeen [local dessert of Chinese and Portuguese ingredients] was traced back to the last period of Ayudhya Era and the beginning of Rattanakosin Era. This kind of dessert reveals the community's identity. Its ingredients are flour, egg, and sugar. Topping is currently added with dried fruits as raisin, dry welding hatch, dried tomato, and sugar. A restaurant called "Baan Sakul Thong," serves authentic food of which the recipes were formerly used in the inner royal court cuisine. Voravuthkitsakul (2016) noted that Portuguese people in Ayudhya moved to stay along the river below Kudeejeen area and were called Farang Kudeejeen. These resources are for the area to become a unique site for community-based tourism in the west of Bangkok.

Kudeejeen Community reveals a mixed culture of Thai, Chinese and Portuguese. Its cultural and lifestyle resources hold unique history, culture, ways of life as local products for community-based tourism. Certainly, local people are the important factor that can appeal to tourists' interest in cultural activities that preserve local characteristics, wisdom, and unique identity; these in turn can help boost the community's economy.

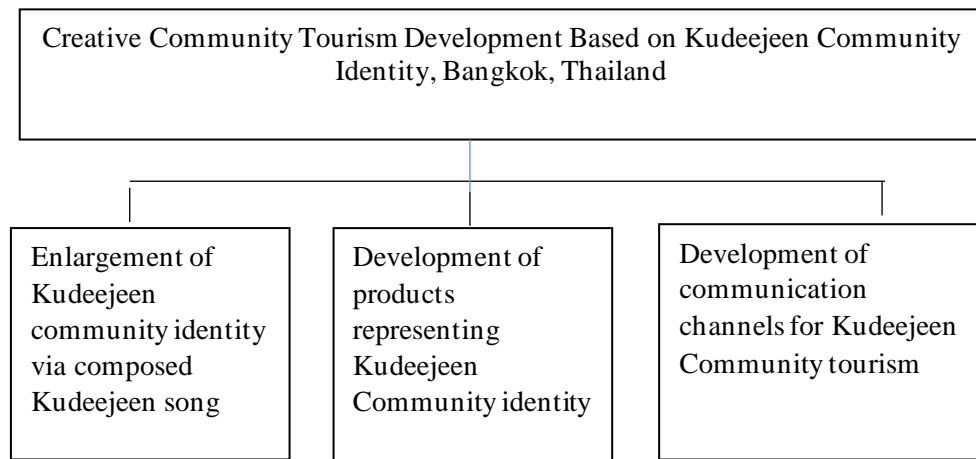
The researchers of this study were interested in examining and identifying new developments in support of community-based tourism in Kudeejeen area.

2. Purposes of Research

The purposes of research were to (1) enlarge Kudeejeen Community identity via composed Kudeejeen song, (2) develop products of Kudeejeen Community's identity, and (3) create communication channels for Kudeejeen Community tourism.

3. Research Framework

Figure 1: Research Framework



4. Research Significance

The researchers expected that the new developments for Kudeejeen Community can appraise its identity in the forms of a song, souvenirs, food and cultural products, and practical communication channels for the public to access the community. These are meant to support creative community tourism based on the community’s identity as appealing to potential tourists.

5. Research Methodology

The researchers obtained qualitative data by documentary research, participatory action research, in-depth interview, and focus group discussion. The participants were 10 community leaders.

6. Scope of Research

The present study focused on Kudeejeen Community, Bangkok, Thailand to develop the community’s capacity as a model for community-based tourism supported by effective communication channels. The area under study is in Thonburi district in Bangkok. The scope covered a song, souvenirs, food and tourism products, and communication channels for the community.

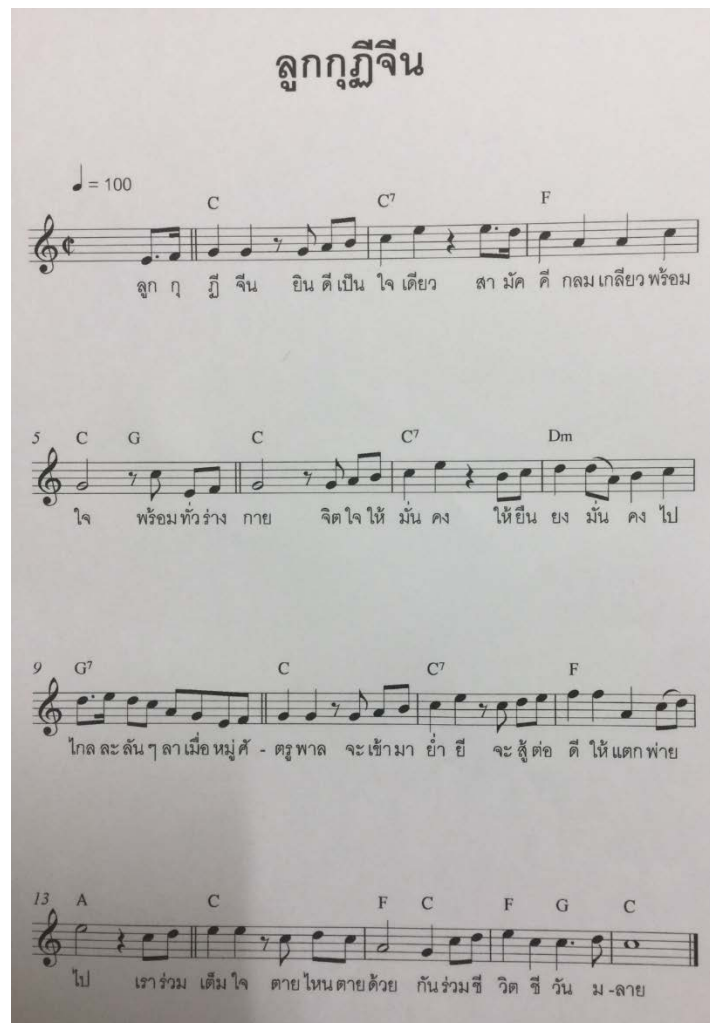
7. Results

7.1 Song Composed for Kudeejeen Community Identity

The original version of the song by Luk Kudeejeen (Kudeejeen Children) was march music for choir and orchestra. The original music was rearranged for variation and harmony. This song originated at the end of 2492 B.E. before the New Year Festival in 2593 B.E. It was firstly sung on 1 January 2493 B.E. by the festival organizing committee

members. The committee took it as a signature for Kudeejeen Community in addition to a village flag. So, they agreed that the village song was accompanied by the village flag. This song was composed using the rhythm of “It’s a long way to Tipperary” by Jack Judge. The rhythm was fast with the feeling of unity, pride, and power of the community. The lyrics were written by Supakorn Maneeprasit conveying harmony and stable unity of people in Kudeejeen Community in overcoming all obstacles and conquering over enemies, and aspiring for living and dying as one.

Figure 2: Notes of Rhythm and Lyrics of Luk Kudeejeen Song
(Photo by Ekkachai Phoohirun, 2023)



The main symbol of the community is Carillon Bell at Santa Cruz Church, which is one of two sets in Thailand. Luk Kudeejeen Song was performed with the Carillon Bell. The bells are in different sizes of 16 bells of different notes. The Carillon Bell originated in Europe in the 16th century.

Figure 3: Santa Cruz Church, 2024



Figure 4: The Carillon Bell at Santa Cruz Church, Kudeejeen Community, 2024



The characteristics of 16 bells give power to the community’s song. The musician uses a thumb finger to hit the keyboard, which links to a sling to hit each bell. At present, there are only two male players in the community who can perform on the Carillon Bell. With participation from the community’s leaders, the research team rearranged a new version for Luk Kudееjeen to sing in accompaniment of the bells.

Figure 5: The History Book of Carillon Bell
(Photo by Ekachai Phuhirun, 2024)



7.2 The Development of Products Representing Kudееjeen Community Identity

Creative community tourism based on a community’s identity can generate tourism products on the original culture to attract tourists. The dessert “Kanom Farang Kudееjeen” and other cultural activities around Buddhist and Chinese temples, boat and bicycle trips, and leisure walk offer pleasant experience to tourists.

The results of the study revealed that the community needs help in producing souvenirs reflecting the community’s identity in the form of miniature clay and the signature dessert “Kanom Farang Kudееjeen” as a delicacy mix of Chinese and Portuguese ingredients. Three ingredients are flour, egg, and sugar. Dried fruits as raisin, dry welding hatch, dried tomato, and sugar are currently used for topping of small and big sizes, in contrast with the original recipe without topping. The body of the dessert is Portuguese and the topping is Chinese.

Figure 6: Kanom Farang Kudeejeen, 2023



The shape of Kanom Farang Kudeejeen was selected by the community as a souvenir. The data obtained from the interview confirmed that the community would like to make a souvenir from Thai clay which is easily found in the area. Molding clay is an easy production method for community people to do and adapt to different shapes and types of molded things. The souvenir is a Thai clay mold in the shape of Kanom Farang Kudeejeen and the molded clay is on the top of a flash drive. The story of Kudeejeen Community and Luk Kudeejeen Song are recorded on the flash drive. The developed souvenir is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The Shape of Molded Clay on Top of Flash Drive after Kanom Farang Kudeejeen
(Photo by Julalak Jarujatarat, 2020)



7.3 The Development of Communication Channels for Kudeejeen Community Tourism

Tourism products and souvenirs need good presentation to attract the public. Luk Kudeejeen march song requires effective marketing communication to reach the target audience. It is integrated marketing communication that can convey the ways of life and

community activities to potential customers (Singkhajorn 2018a, 2018b). The media used in communication should be related to products, and attractive to customers to remember tourism products and services.

In particular, the research team selected a logo of Kudeejeen as appropriate to Thai and foreign tourists, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Logo of Kudeejeen Community Showing Kanom Farang Kudeejeen and Santa Cruz Church (Designed by Singh Singkhajorn, 2019)



Singkhajorn et al (2020) reported planning marketing communication of Kudeejeen Community in the following procedure: (1) analysis of problems and opportunities as part of SWOT analysis, (2) identification of the objectives, which involve creating images, attitudes, perception, and purposes (Angkura 2019) in order to bring Kudeejeen tourism to life with souvenirs and a composed song in orchestra, (3) market segmentation toward local and foreign tourists, aged between 15-55 years old who access tourist information online, and 4) content creation to be precise and concise. Message brevity in marketing communication channels is accompanied by beautiful photos and creative storytelling (Singkhajorn 2018a, 2018b). The video on Kudeejeen Community Tourism is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Video Promoting Kudeejeen Community Tourism (Photo by Singkhajorn, 2018a, 2018b)



8. Conclusions and Discussions

As seen in Figures 2-9, the research team worked on launching Kudeejeen Community tourism by rearranging Kudeejeen Song, developing a souvenir representing the community's identity, and creating integrated communication channels online. The community's participation was sought for its members' approval and willingness to carry on their work on community-based tourism on their own. To the researchers, the R&D project as such offered ample opportunities for the university staff in tourism marketing to learn from the target community and develop good relationships with the key persons of the community for follow-ups and academic services the university can render in its policy on community developments in the vicinity of the main campus for now and beyond.

9. Acknowledgement

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