

## AN ASSESSMENT OF TOURISM POTENTIAL IN CHANGKWA COMMUNITY, SURATTHAI, THAILAND

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**Abstract:** This research was aimed to assess the tourism potential in Changkwa community, Suratthani province by invited the experts to survey and assess the tourism potential in 10 areas. The study method was surveyed the tourist attractions to explore the tourism potential of community. Conducted the assessment form of tourism potential by using the comment questionnaires from 300 tourists to assess the tourism potential included 6 indicators. The result showed that the tourist attraction of Changkwa community has potential as tourist attraction at a high level, when considering in each aspect found that Kuha Temple has potential as tourist attraction at a high level, Khao Kumpae Temple and Khao Chawanaram Temple have potential as tourist attraction at moderate level, and the rests have potential as a low level. The suggestions for developing are 1) should define a strategic plan to set up the management guidelines which having budgetary support to develop the area in term of infrastructure and facilities, 2) set up a tourist center of the community, 3) promote the tourist attraction of the community, 4) conduct the interpretive signage to guide the tourism in community, 5) training local guides and training English usage to support foreign tourists.

**Keywords:** Potential assessment, Tourist attraction

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Thai government defined the policy to promote tourism in 2015 as a year of “Discover THAINESS” in order to create positive image recognition, especially in happiness, conviviality and Thai culture, link the travelers feeling with Thainess which is maintaining a sustainable culture Thus, cultural tourism, ecotourism involved with community that are unique to preserve the traditions and living in the community. Sumet Thantivejkul (as cited in Seangchamnonng, 2010) said that Tourism model that communities have a role to response tourist attraction and tourism activities by themselves. The importance to success or not depends on the community because there is the host of the products and including the various agencies involved to support the tour will be more successful.

To assess the tourism potential is priority and preparation of tourist attraction. The evaluation of tourism attraction can be divided into 2 majors of criteria

as follow; tourist attraction value or potential which is attracting and impressive and the availability of resources to support tourism activities. The previous research about tourism potential, Swangkong, 2015; Pongsangiam & Dhamabutra, 2015; Chaiyakot *et al*, 2015; Suvannin *et al*, 2014; Wongbuangam & Pollsawat, 2013; Inkocharan, 2011; Krotsombat; 2010) these research pointed out the importance of assessing the potential of tourism in the region in various fields which most of tourist’s views affected to tourism potential. This research invited the tourism expert to prioritize areas of tourist attraction and a weighted value for tourism potential assessment of Changkwa community.

Hence, to assess the tourism potential of Changkwa community, Kanchanadit, Suratthani province by invited the expert to evaluate the importance of tourist attraction and 6 indicators are 1) in term of tourist access travel, 2) facilities, 3) the importance of tourist attraction, 4) travel

time, 5) bundles of tourism and 6) safety, to prepare guidelines for the development of tourism in the community, to formulate strategies to develop tourism of Changkwa Municipality and also use as a model for other tourism areas.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THEORY**

The assessment of tourism potential is the ability checking process or the tourism readiness by presenting the element of tourism potential evaluation such as tourist attraction, value of access, facilities, environment, the number of tourist limitation, safety and tourism activities. (Thoung *et al.*, 2012) The researcher has researched the concept and theory to evaluate the potential of tourism from a variety of sources which are summarized below,

Sawangkong (2015) evaluated tourism potential in 7 sides as follow,

1. convenient to enter the tourism area
2. facilities in the tourism area
3. value and attraction
4. environment
5. service management
6. people cooperation
7. current famous

Pongsangiam & Dhamabutra (2015) used 4 criterias to evaluate tourism resources as follow,

1. tourism resources potential
2. potential of sustainable resource management
3. potential on the involvement of the community, visitors and stakeholders
4. potential on learning activities and awareness

Wiwatchai Boonyapak (as cited in Wongbuangam & Pollsawat, 2013) offered the criteria and defined the tourism potential as follow,

1. tourism valuable are beauty, features, historicity, the importance of ideological and religious, natural landscape and lifestyle
2. convenient to enter the tourism area are condition of the tourist route, type of journey, and travel time from downtown to the source

3. facilities are hotel, restaurant, beverage, services place, electricity system, plumbing, phone, and security
4. environment are physical, weather, ecosystem, and other conditions of attraction
5. tourist limitations are, area limit, service limit, infrastructure limit, and tourist safety problem
6. the current famous are well-known of tourist attractions and the number of tourists

Kotsombat (2010) offered the 6 criteria of eco-tourism potential as follow,

1. facilities
2. conditions of access travel
3. attraction
4. value, importance, and educate
5. involvement of people on tourism management
6. organizational management and tourism management

The researchers have applied concepts from research related to the evaluation criteria of potential resources for ecotourism from Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research which linked with the current conditions of tourism and predicts the future development of tourism. Thus, to assess the tourism potential of Changkwa community using 6 criteria as follow, the access travel, facilities, tourist attraction important, travel time, tourist attraction grouping and safety.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **The research steps**

To assess the tourism potential of Changkwa community had the research steps as follows,

Step 1, "Field Survey" to survey the tourism potential of the community by group discussion of informants included tourism agencies, Changkwa Municipality, academic, and 20 community leaders, selected tourism potential and invited the experts survey to find the tourism potential data of Changkwa community from 10 sources included Kuha Temple, Buddha Chedi Temple, Khao Chawanara Temple, Khao Kumpae Temple, Yang

Moo Temple, Hua Mark Temple, Thong Di Cave, Nang Euey Cave, Neuy Khuan Cave, and Nam Thung Hua Son public park.

Step 2, create the evaluation form included 6 criteria are the access travel, facilities, tourist attraction important, travel time, tourist attraction grouping and safety. The samplings were 300 tourists which collected from Accidental Sampling method.

The research tool is questionnaire for tourists with comments on the tourism potential of Changkwa community in term of 6 criteria; access travel, facilities, tourist attraction important, travel time, tourist attraction grouping and safety, including the suggestions on increasing tourism potential of Changkwa community.

**Data Analysis**

To assess the tourism potential value by 6 indicators to survey the tourist’s comments on tourism potential using Mean and Standard Deviation. Use the data to find the average and the definition of the scale are

- 1.00-1.80 = least
- 1.81-2.60 = low
- 2.61-3.40 = moderate
- 3.41-4.20 = high
- 4.21-5.00 = highest

By the way, 5 level of Rating Scale define as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 which meaning to comments on tourism potential from “least” to “highest”, respectively. Rate Score: R define as 5 level from level 1 as “lowest potential” to level 5 as “highest potential” and bring Rate Score: R multiply Weight Score: W, which showing the importance of 6 indicators level from 1 as “lowest importance” to 6 as “highest importance”. Then, evaluate the potential value of each tourist attraction using Weight Equation of Forest Research Center (Faculty of Forestry, 1995).

$$RRP = \frac{W_1R_1 + W_2R_2 + \dots + W_nR_n}{W_1 + W_2 + \dots + W_n}$$

As:

RRP = tourism potential of Changkwa Community

R<sub>n</sub> = Rate Score

W<sub>n</sub> = Weight Score

Then, compare the tourism potential level from Class Interval as below

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Class Interval} &= (\text{highest-lowest})/\text{classes} \\ &= (5-1)/5 = 0.80 \end{aligned}$$

Calculated the level of tourism potential which use as comparison criteria as below,

- 1.00 – 1.80 = lowest tourism potential
- 1.81 – 2.60 = low tourism potential
- 2.61 – 3.40 = moderate tourism potential
- 3.41 – 4.20 = high tourism potential
- 4.21 – 5.00 = very high tourism potential

**4. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Tourists commented on the tourism potential of Changkwa community for all 10 sources as follows; the access travel was at high level ( $\bar{X} = 3.49$ ) R<sub>1</sub>= 4, facilities was at moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 3.12$ ) R<sub>2</sub>=3, importance of tourist attraction was at high level ( $\bar{X} = 3.63$ ) R<sub>3</sub>=4, travel time was at moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 3.32$ ) R<sub>4</sub>=3, tourist attraction grouping was at high level ( $\bar{X} = 3.42$ ) R<sub>5</sub>=4, and safety was at moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 3.25$ ) R<sub>6</sub>=3, showed in Table 1

**Table 1**  
**Tourists comment on tourism potential of Changkwa community and Rate Score**

Indicators Index (R)	mean	S.D.	Meaning	Rate Score
the access travel	3.49	0.90	high	4
facilities	3.12	1.12	moderate	3
Importance of tourist attraction	3.63	0.83	high	4
Travel time	3.32	0.89	moderate	3
tourist attraction grouping	3.42	0.81	high	4
safety	3.25	0.89	moderate	3

Rate score affected tourism potential of Changkwa community for all 6 indicators lead to define Weight Score

of each indicator using Delphi Technique (Sealeum, 2010) and scored by 6 experts sorted descending from 1 to 6 and scoring from 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. (Table 2)

The research found that rate score of the importance of tourist attraction was at highest score ( $\bar{X} = 5.17$ ) set as first priority and defined Weight Score = 6. Rate score of facilities ( $\bar{X} = 5.00$ ) was the second priority, defined

Weight Score = 5. Rate score of entrance to tourism area ( $\bar{X} = 4.83$ ) was the third priority defined Weight Score = 4. Rate score of safety ( $\bar{X} = 2.50$ ) was the fourth priority defined Weight Score = 2. Rate score of tourist attraction grouping ( $\bar{X} = 2.00$ ) was the fifth priority defined Weight Score = 3. And the Rate Score of travel time ( $\bar{X} = 1.50$ ) was the sixth priority defined Weight Score = 1.

**Table 2**  
**The priorities of experts and Weight Score**

Experts/indicators	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Mean	Priority	Weight Score (W)
the access travel score	1	2	3	3	1	3	4.83	3	4
facilities score	2	3	1	2	3	1	5.00	2	5
Importance of tourist attraction score	3	1	2	1	2	2	5.17	1	6
Travel time score	5	4	6	6	6	6	1.50	6	1
tourist attraction grouping score	6	6	4	5	5	4	2.00	5	2
Safety score	4	5	5	4	4	5	2.50	4	3
Total	21	21	21	21	21	21			

Thus, defined Weight Score of factors affected Changkwa community tourism as:

- $W_1 =$  Rate Score of the importance of tourism area = 6
- $W_2 =$  Rate Score of facilities = 5
- $W_3 =$  Rate Score of access travel = 4
- $W_4 =$  Rate Score of safety = 3
- $W_5 =$  Rate Score of tourist attraction grouping = 2
- $W_6 =$  Rate Score of travel time = 1

To evaluate the tourism potential of Changkwa community calculated from Weight Score equation as:

$$RRP = \frac{W_1R_1 + W_2R_2 + W_3R_3 + W_4R_4 + W_5R_5 + W_6R_6}{W_1 + W_2 + W_3 + W_4 + W_5 + W_6}$$

$$= \frac{(4 \times 4) + (5 \times 3) + (6 \times 4) + (1 \times 3) + (2 \times 4) + (3 \times 3)}{6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1}$$

$$= \frac{72}{21}$$

$$= 3.43$$

The tourist attraction of Changkwa community had potential score = 3.43, it showed that the tourist attraction of Changkwa community has potential to be the tourist attraction at the high level because most of attractions are cultural tourism and eco-tourism.

Considering each attraction showed that in term of cultural tourism found that Kuha Temple where is the famous and importance temple in Suratthani province,

thus, there has high tourism potential at 3.48 level following by Khao Kumpae Temple and Khao Chawanaram Temple have moderate tourism potential at 3.00 and 2.76, respectively (Table 3). For Buddha Chedi

Temple, Yang Moo Temple and Hua Mark Temple have low tourism potential because there have little facilities and not well-known.

**Table 3**  
The assessment of tourism potential for 10 areas in Changkwa community

Tourism area	Tourism potential indicators						mean	Potential level
	the access travel	facilities	Importance of tourist attraction	Travel time	tourist attraction grouping	safety		
(W)	4	5	6	1	2	3		
Kuha Temple	very	moderate	very	moderate	moderate	moderate		
R	4	3	4	3	3	3		
Potential	16	15	24	3	6	9	3.48	high
Khao Chawanara Temple	moderate	low	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate		
R	3	2	3	3	3	3		
Potential	12	10	18	3	6	9	2.76	moderate
Khao Kumpae Temple	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate	moderate		
R	3	3	3	3	3	3		
Potential	12	15	18	3	6	9	3.00	moderate
Buddha Chedi Temple		very	low	low	moderate	moderate	low	
R	4	2	2	3	3	2		
Potential	16	10	12	3	6	6	2.52	low
Yang Moo Temple	low	low	low	moderate	moderate	moderate		
R	2	2	2	3	3	3		
Potential	8	10	12	3	6	9	2.29	low
Hua Mark Temple	moderate	low	low	moderate	moderate	moderate		
R	3	2	2	3	3	3		
Potential	12	10	12	3	6	9	2.48	low
Thong Di Temple	low	least	very	low	moderate	least		
R	2	1	4	2	3	1		
Potential	8	5	24	2	6	3	2.29	low
Nang Euey Cave	moderate	low	low	moderate	moderate	low		
R	3	2	2	3	3	2		
Potential	12	10	12	3	6	6	2.33	low
Neuy Khuan Cave	low	low	moderate	moderate	moderate	low		
R	2	2	3	3	3	2		
Potential	8	10	18	3	6	6	2.43	low
Thung Hua Son public park	moderate	least	moderate	moderate	very	low		
R	3	1	3	3	4	2		
Potential	12	5	18	3	8	6	2.48	low

In term of eco-tourism included Thong Di Cave, Nang Euay Cave, Neuy Khuan Cave, and Thung Hua Son public park are low potential but can develop as tourist attraction especially Thung Hua Son public park which is developing the reservoir by Changkwa Municipality to use as the activity area for people such as Loy Kra Tong festive, and boat racing. There is near the football field and making the public park as importance attraction. For Thong Din Cave where is the closed cave, the tourists have to contact with the Municipality staff before entrance. However, the cave is beautiful and worthy of being preserved.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The tourism potential of Changkwa community is cultural tourism and eco tourism such as temples, caves, and reservoir. There have high tourism potential. The religion and cultural activities are philanthropy, Duen Sip festival, Wai Kru ceremony (respect for teacher) and view point. Eco tourism activities are cave visiting and recreation at the Thung Hua Son public park. However, as a new tourist attraction making access to the attractions some places are not convenient. There are not enough facilities such as shops and souvenir shops and safety system is not efficient.

For in term of the access travel, importance of tourist attraction and tourist attraction grouping were at high level especially in Kuha Temple, Khao Kumpae Temple, and Khao Chawanaram Temple which are famous in Suratthani Province. There are convenient to enter. The tourist can drive a car to go there. There are signs to tourist attractions. There is a place with cultural significance, and shady. The tourists can stroll around the temple and go up on the mountain to the view point. The tourist can travel to other places nearby because there is near the city and the way to Samui Island.

In term of facilities, travel time and safety were at moderate level. There are beautiful stalactites in the new eco tourism attractions such as Thong Di Cave, Nang Euay Cave and Neauy Khuan Cave but there are closed cave and have to contact the staff before enter. There are lack of promote. Nam Thung Hua Son Public Park is still innovating and has no tourist information center and warning signs.

Hence, in term of facilities for tourism must be raised as to tourist attraction according to the rules of international standards. There must be developed about modern and convenient. What the community needs to develop further to enhance the tourism potential of the community are infrastructure such as plumbing, electricity, toilet, route and landscape improvement which consistent to the research on tourism potential (Chaiyakot *et al*, 2015; Suvannin *et al*, 2014). So, Changkwa community should develop the facilities to support the tourism strategy of Suratthani cultural.

Changkwa community must create the involvement of people within the community which consistent with the research of Inkochasan (2011) such as training local guides, service training for people in the community, give opportunity for local residents participate with tour operation. Moreover, more promoting the tourist attraction through media and increasing security system for tourists.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The tourism potential of Changkwa community be able to develop as tourist attraction due to its unique attractions, both cultural and ecotourism but need to renovate the landscape, access travel, advertising board, and tourism information board for developing as tourism area of Changkwa community where is appropriate and integrity. Be able to support tourism activities and tourists in the future which leading to enable local development and bringing revenue into the community area.

## SUGGESTION

1. Should define a strategic plan to develop the community's tourist attractions to set up the management guidelines for Changkwa community which having budgetary support to develop the area in term of infrastructure and facilities.
2. Coordination with the agencies involved in tourism to support the development of Changkwa community tourism such as take part in the preservation of natural resources and environment, cultural resources, provide the potential and readiness on restoration and preservation of arts and culture in the community to support as a tourist attraction.

3. Set up a tourist center of the community, create the tourism data, brochures, and promote the tourism of the community.
4. Conduct the interpretive signage to guide the tourism in community and to tell the matter, and to educate tourists to travel in the community.
5. Training local guides and training English usage to support foreign tourists.

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