



Ready to be a host?: The potential development guidelines of sport tourism in Buriram Province, Thailand

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Abstract

Tourism is a major industry in the world. Sport tourism is considered to be a part of tourism created through of the integration of sports and tourism. Sport tourism is growing to convince every country to open it up as a new field in their industry. This research aims to study the potential of sport tourism in Buriram province and suggests how to develop the potential of sport tourism in Buriram province so that it can be a host of international sport events in the future. Literature related to this article include related research, theoretical studies, and research papers, such as sports tourism and elements of sport tourism. Data was collected by in-depth interviews of people who were involved in sport tourism in Buriram. The study found that the sport tourism situation in Buriram province has been developed and is steadily growing. Buriram province has potential to be a city for sports tourism. An overview of the potential for sport tourism also found that Buriram can indeed become a sport city. To ensure that the province can be a competitive sport city what should be developed now includes attractions, accommodation, ease of accessibility, interesting activities, economical available package, good amenities and ancillary services, and greater awareness through effective marketing and promotion.

Keywords: Potential, guidelines, sport tourism, Buriram, Thailand.

Introduction

Thailand's tourism industry is a large industry that generates a lot of income for the country. The expansion of Thailand's tourism industry mostly found that tourists need new activities, resulting in different sectors trying to create and develop new activities for added diversity in tourism so as to attract more tourists to visit the country (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2016). Nowadays, the form of tourism is different to what it was before as we can see the tourists' interests have changed into health and wellness tourism, adventure tourism, and sport tourism. Sport tourism is another form of tourism that can be operated and managed from existing tourism resources which can increase the tourism potential of the country and meet the tourism trends of tourists that want to learn and get different experiences each time they visit an area. This also affects tourism behaviour.

From the trend of sports tourism, Buriram province is a province that wants to develop in tourism and not only in the proposed natural and cultural tourism but also as a sport city with world class standards and it aims to develop the province as a sport destination Buriramgurus, 2016). Provincial administrative organizations and local government organizations also have strategies in order to develop sport and its potential in tourism for supporting the new trends that emerge in the future. Sport tourism is another type of tourism whose main purpose is to play sports. Travelers will travel with the purpose of exercising by playing sports such as golf,



diving, bicycle, boating and other forms of sports include competitive sports in which the tourists are athletes. They will travel to participate in tournaments such as golf tournaments, sailing races, tennis competitions, soccer matches, car races, etc. In addition to be strong and healthy they also travel for enjoyment of the sports that have to compete in the competition. In addition, not only the athletes but followers, fan clubs and other visitors also bring in needed revenue for tourism as well. It can be seen that sports can generate income for the tourism industry, whether it is sports for health or sport in which to compete. The preparation for athletes and teams can start before the match, during the match and after the match. If the area can prepare for this matter, it will be able to generate income from sports event (Chairatananon, 2014).

From the current situation and significance of the problem above, it shows that Buriram province is rapidly expanding in tourism. The study of potential of sport tourism in Buriram province is a key component of the tourism industry. This is an important part of the development process in Buriram province that can hopefully handle some international sporting events in the future.

Objectives

- To analyze potential of sport tourism in Buriram province, Thailand.
- To study the SWOT analysis of Buriram province, Thailand.
- To propose development guidelines of sport tourism in Buriram province, Thailand.

Literature Review

Sport tourism

Gibson (1999) has given a different definition of sports tourism. Sports tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on recreation. The ability to express yourself, have healthy and create engagement with others also relieve stress and have a good experience for life. Sports tourism is a non-commercial journey but concentrates on participating in the event. All forms of sport either direct and indirect, officially and unofficially qualify in this (Hall, 1992; Standeven, 1999). The role of the people to express themselves to join the outdoor activities or outside the area of the community where they live is important. Sports tourism also generates funding, interest and income from competitive and non-competitive sports, by defining a common rule between the sport organization and related organizations (Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2007).

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2010) provides the definition of Sport Tourism that can be divided into 2 types according to the purpose of the sport. 1) Sport for health is a tourist who travels with the main purpose to exercise by playing sports, such as playing golf, diving, rowing etc. 2) Sport to compete in is the type that the athlete travels to so as to compete within a country or in international competition and tourists will also get healthy indirectly. Sports tourism is a departure from home, to get involved in sports activities for recreation, to watch sporting events and visit sporting venues such as the famous sports stadium that has a popular sporting competition. Sports tourism is another form of leisure travel. A traveler will travel from one place to another which the place will host sports related events. It has become a popular choice for sport-minded tourists who participate in sporting events and other tourism activities. Sports tourism causes economic and social benefits to accrue in the country. Politics and local businesses. It also enhances cultural identity and social interaction.

Elements of Sport tourism

Tourism Western Australia (2009) mentions five key elements (5As) that make the tourism business successful as follows:



Attraction is a tourist attraction. Tourists will consider the attractions of interest which may be both natural attractions or a man-made attraction.

Accessibility is the facility to enable tourists access tourist attractions such as transportation, which is essential to transport travelers from one attraction to another. Transportation is therefore important, by land, air, and even water transport.

Accommodation is the accommodation of all tourist destinations.

Amenity is a service that tourists want when they travel to the attractions such as inter-alia public toilets, restaurants.

Awareness is a perception that is really important. It can be described as a recognition of a destination and its attractions.

Buhalis (2000) describes the element of tourism as comprising of six important elements of known as the 6A's:

- (1) Attractions, such as natural attractions, man-made attractions, architecture and special events.
- (2) Accessibility is transportation, passenger and vehicle transport which by air, road and water.
- (3) Amenities, catering and travel services are prepared by the intermediary between the tourist and the host.
- (4) Activities are activities that occur when the tourists stay in the area.
- (5) Available packages are a form of service that is prepared for tourists, such as travel programs.
- (6) Ancillary services, such as banks, hospitals, post office and telecommunications.

Pelasol (2012) said that tourism development must reach the area and support local communities as important stakeholders for it to be sustainable (Nicolides, 2015).. Also, the six elements of tourism should be considered: 1. Accessibility, 2. Attraction, 3. Amenities, 4. Ancillary Service, 5. Accommodation, 6. Activities.

It is concluded that the availability of tourism can accommodate tourists or help the tourists make decisions to come to the area. Although not a direct response, however, this has a great influence on the decision to travel to the location. Therefore, the 8A's are:

- (1) Attraction
- (2) Accessibility
- (3) Amenities
- (4) Ancillary services
- (5) Accommodation
- (6) Activities.
- (7) Available package
- (8) Awareness

Methodology

Research on the potential of sport tourism in Buriram province was conducted using the questionnaire (survey method) and in-depth interviews that were semi-structured which included public and private sector role-players that were related to sport tourism in Buriram province.



The data collected for this study consisted of primary and secondary data. By collecting data from sources that meet the objectives of the research this enhanced the work despite it being limited. Data was then recorded and transcribed for the descriptive and content analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The research on the potential of sport tourism in Buriram Province can be summarized as follows:

1. Attractions

Attractions in Buriram province are diverse, including historical sites such as Phanom Rung Historical Park and natural attractions such as the Volcano (khao kra-dong) Forest Park. There are also major man-made attractions such as Pae-la-plearn. In addition, there are also sports attractions that attracts tourists to visit like I-Mobile Stadium, Buriram International Circuit (BRIC) or other name “Chang International Circuit” for those who are interested in watching the races in Buriram. Therefore, Buriram province can be seen as a tourist destination that can accommodate a wide range of tourists due to its potential.

2. Accommodation

The accommodation facilities have expanded considerably due to the increasing number of tourists who come to Buriram both to visit the place and watch the matches. However, despite the expansion of the hospitality industry at a high level this is still not enough for tourists so this will cause tourists to rather stay in nearby provinces.

3. Amenities

Overall these are good due to the expansion of the tourism economy. There are investors interested to invest in tourism and hospitality both in the restaurants and souvenir shops. However, despite the number of restaurants there is a lack of variety of food categories.

4. Accessibility

There is a convenient transport route to access Buriram's major tourist attractions, with clear signs and attraction signs. However, public bus services are not sufficient and are not available all areas which are mostly downtown. The distance to the attractions are far from each other so traveling by car is generally the most convenient way to get there.

5. Activities

Most tourists come to visit historical attractions and come to visit the sporting events. Buriram province is ready to provide activities for tourists during the festival which are local sport events, national sport events and international sport events.

6. Ancillary services

The overall level is considered moderate as the ATMs are not available in the tourist area and there are small numbers of gas stations but there are some places ready to provide tourist services like the City Museum, “One-Stop Service” project to promote tourism in Buriram Province (Thailand Second Home @ Buriram), Blue Heart Center, Tourism Information Center and Souvenir center.

7. Available packages

According to studies, it has been found that the package or program of travel in Buriram province is very rare. The link between tourism and sports tourism is different. In this regard, it is necessary to develop and jointly organize the activities of all organizations and to collaborate with all the stakeholders involved (Nicolaidis, 2015).

8. Awareness



Awareness recognition for the local people is very low. They also don't really participate or know what is going on in town but if it's a routine program (events that happened in every week) they definitely participate.

The result of SWOT analysis of sport tourism in Buriram province

The researchers also conducted the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Buriram Province (SWOT Analysis) as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There are many outstanding tourist resources and world-famous. -Human resources are ready to be developed. -Availability of infrastructure and sports facilities -There are international airport upgrades, hospitals and tourist facilities. -The unique culture of the province. -There are many historical sites. Khmer civilization There are 6 volcanic eruption sites that can be developed as a tourist attractions. - Rich wetlands -A unique local history. Cultural diversity link to living a lifestyle. -There is wisdom. Traditional Thai medicine, folk philosophers. - There is a modern football field and the most beautiful in the country is the I-Mobile is open to visitors. - Chang International Circuit receives world-class standard - There is a cultural community for tourism. There is a beautiful silk weaving industry lifestyle. - There are applications to support tourism. - International and national sports tourism activities are organized. - There are many plans and projects to support tourism. - Buriram can be linked to tourism in both the country and abroad. (Neighbor countries) 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weakness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate housing and restaurant facilities during national or international sporting events. - Transport problems, access to tourist sites - Public transport problems in tourist services to tourist destinations. - Safety issues and tourist misuse - Lack of public participation and publicity. - Control and maintenance of service standards - People in the area lack awareness of being a tourist town and being a host. - Local people cannot provide tourist information. - Lack of personnel in the tourism industry and quality services to support tourism growth. - Buriram lack of information linking and presenting legendary stories to increase tourism value (Story Telling) - Lack of unique souvenirs and local souvenirs
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support budget for development of infrastructure to support sports tourism development. - World-class tourism, cultural tourism and sports tourism. - Economic growth and investment in health tourism and the elderly. - Link to the region and developing it internationally. - State supporting of the tourism industry development especially sport tourism. cultural tourism and the unique Khmer civilization. - The world of health. sport competition and exercise. - The private sector is competitive in driving the economy. Including the drive to develop the provincial sports tourism to the world. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -World economic volatility. - International terrorism, international conflict and epidemics, crime. - Out-dated legislation - The adaptation of business and society to the leap forward. - Concern for holding lands. The development of real estate for tourism is difficult.

Table 1 Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Buriram Province, Thailand

Recommendation for Potential Development Guidelines of Sport Tourism in Buriram Province, Thailand



1. Attraction

Although Buriram has many attractions, there is a lack of promotion for tourists who visit the races or soccer matches to also know that Buriram has historical and natural attractions so these should be publicized to tourists or sold as part of a bundle (sport-attraction) ticket.

2. Accommodation

Sports tourism is a seasonal event type so building a new hotel may not work in that the entrepreneur will not have customers when there is no competition. Instead of building a hotel, the relevant agencies should set up a club for homestay to accommodate visiting tourists so the tourists can also learn of the way of life from the local people in the community.

3. Amenities

There should be added varieties of food categories such as i-san food, traditional food, fusion food in the various tourist services. Also, the souvenir shops should be promoting local items which can demonstrate that a tourist was in Buriram.

4. Accessibility

Transportation routes to the province must be bolstered so tourists can travel in many ways and roads need to be developed for comfortable transportation routes and these must lead to each attraction and this has not been much developed yet and this aspect requires work and planning.

5. Activity

Creating a tourist program like a one-day trip to visit natural and historical attractions. Visiting a local community and buying some souvenirs from the community with a newly trained tour guide (junior guide) can generate income for local people as well as be an enjoyable experience for visitors.

6. Ancillary service

Tourism management is very important for tourism development because it is a collaboration between the entrepreneur, community, and government to improve tourism. A tourist center is very necessary so as to provide services for tourists.

7. Available packages

Creating a travel package or tour program to serve tourists or having a travel guide that has a year-plan for those coming to Buriram province including where to travel, eat, do shopping and hanging out, is important.

8. Awareness

There should be a project to develop tourism personnel to serve as a good hosts. This is to ensure that the local residents and travel network personnel are well-trained, knowledgeable and ready to help tourists when they are needed. To promote the tourism of Buriram province so it is widely known will serve to give tourists' confidence, added safety and facilitates effective tourism management in the tourist destination.

Conclusion

The study shows that Buriram is one of the potential provinces for sport tourism in many areas whether it is in sports infrastructure, transportation, trade, investment, investors are interested in investment, people in the area also cooperate very well in the development of the city as a sports tourism base. Based on data analysis, it was found that the overall picture of the sport tourism elements of Buriram province showed that there are many tourist attractions. Accessibility can be arrived at in many ways. The activities include both historical activities and sports tourism activities available for tourists. There are various types of ancillary services available in the tourist attractions, including gas stations and ATMs. The weakest potential in Buriram province is available packages which they don't have. This means that all



organizations that are involved should consider this matter immediately to try to get more attention from tourists both domestic and foreign.

Recommendations for further research

1. Study in tourism behaviors of sport tourist are needed to meet the needs of tourists which can serve as development guidelines.
2. Studies are required in social, cultural and environmental impacts of international sports events in Buriram province.

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