

Lessons Learned from Community-Based Tourism: An Analysis of a Case Study

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Abstract: Community-based tourism is becoming popular, and the better-improved community and tourism convince many communities. This research focuses on Ban Sam Kha's experience; however, a lack of tourist development and promotion expertise will make them fail quickly. Knowing other communities' experiences will help. This qualitative participatory action research project used planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the findings with target group action review (AAR) questions. The data gathering methods were conducted with 10 participants using in-depth interviews, 50 villagers in a knowledge exchange, and three rounds of a focus group discussion with 25 participants. From the results, Ban Sam Kha Community is an experience tourism destination with learning from community knowledge based on the creativity of the research process leading to tourism activities and tourist routes that connect the wisdom of various communities and their community ways that have been applied to the successful solving of development problems, which can be defined as "experience tourism and community learning". This research includes policy recommendations and a model for others to use. Thus, all relevant parties in all sectors should cooperate in policy formation to decide policies and devise directions and strategies for their practical deployment.

Keywords: Community-based Tourism; Lessons Learned; Participatory Action Research; After Action Review; Qualitative Participatory Action Research method; Ban Sam Kha Community; Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

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1. Introduction

Tourism plays an important role in the development of numerous countries around the world. Many nations with sufficient resources have turned their attention toward promoting tourism to generate income, which helps drive the national economy [5]. Thailand is one of the countries that has used these resources as a tool to promote tourism over an extended period [13]. The continuous promotion of tourism has both advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that the country has a stable source of income. However, the primary disadvantage is that tourist attractions have deteriorated or do not continue to have the power to attract visitors anymore, especially regarding the tourists who have already experienced them. Repeat tourism at the same attractions may no longer be able to be used. Therefore, continuous tourism promotion requires the invention or creation of new attractions designed to be unique and always different [13]. Significantly, it has been found that the tourism activities that can motivate tourists must include uniqueness. As every country has its communities and each community always has differences, promoting tourism can use this opportunity [1]. Community tourism promotion is, thus, one of the most

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interesting and popular forms of tourism promotion that researchers and tourism developers must scrutinize for the identity and authenticity of the community to communicate with and motivate tourists with characteristics that are different from where the tourists live [8]. The community's uniqueness and the potential to apply tourism promotion is an important issue that researchers must identify and develop. This research, therefore, focuses on the lessons learned from the community-based tourism case study at the Ban Sam Kha community in the Northern region of Thailand with the following aims: to analyze the tourism potential context, to enhance the knowledge, understanding, and learning from the community-based tourism management practices, and to illustrate the lessons learned [10].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sustainable Community-based Tourism

Regarding tourism in communities, there are many definitions and types of tourism that researchers have attempted to describe; some have mentioned that tourism that presents rural ways of life should be called 'Rural Tourism' [1], while others state that if tourists visit a community to learn about the community's ways of life and their activities, it should be referred to as 'Community-based Tourism'. However, both types of tourism are involved with communities as tourist attractions in which the local people participate as hosts, so both definitions are appropriate. This research focuses on community activities aimed at attracting tourists as an important tool to improve the local people's quality of life [2]. Mann [6] summarized the principles for community tourism as consisting of:

- community tourism should involve local people as participants in the decision-making and ownership,
- the local community should receive a fair share of the profits from tourism,
- outsiders, such as tourism operators, should work directly with communities rather than with individuals,
- tourism should be environmentally sustainable,
- tourism should support the cultures of the communities,
- operators should work with local people to minimize the unsustainable factors,
- tour operators should maintain a small size for tour groups to minimize the carrying capacity impacts,
- tour operators should educate tourists with appropriate information before entering the community,
- local people should be allowed to participate in tourism with dignity and self-respect and
- people have the right to say 'no' to tourism, and villagers who reject tourism should be left alone. It can be said that all of these ten principles can be effectively combined with the three dimensions of sustainable tourism, which are the environmental dimension, the economic dimension, and the social and ethical dimension.

2.2. Social and cultural capital

The concept of socio-cultural capital combines 'social capital' and 'cultural capital', in which the meanings and elements are connected dimensionally. Researchers consider this concept similar to Kata [10], who described the definition of "capital" based on the economic dimension and production by mentioning that capital consists of land, labour, finances, and entrepreneurs. After the concept of social capital was applied by economists, political scientists, and social scientists in the dimension of national development, the term 'capital' was defined in a broader range of dimensions than merely physical capital, namely economic capital, human capital, cultural capital, environmental capital, political capital, and social capital. Jacobs [4] was the first to define "social capital" as the value of working in networks by establishing relationships with neighbouring networks.

The value of social capital cannot be replaced by other capital. If social capital is lost, regardless of the cause, its value or benefits will also be lost. In Thailand, there have been many case studies in which social funds were used to develop solutions and solve problems. Especially regarding issues concerned with grouping or gathering, allocating resources among themselves with trust resulted in communities receiving economic benefits. For example, Ploychan [9] studied a Hmong community and found that the culture is evident when promoting creative tourism through Hmong dress, language, and ways of life. Regarding cultural capital, Wongchaum [15] studied the Ban Tha Kha community in Amphawa District, Samut Songkhram Province, and found that this community is very strong regarding socio-cultural capital in terms of the ways of life that are bound to the river and streams because the geographic context of the community is located along various water passages, which influences the community to be well blended with the lifestyles that lead to their identity.

2.3. Adding Social and Cultural Capital Value

The addition of social and cultural capital value requires the classification of capital into three dimensions as follows. 1) The social dimension is a system of relationships among people in society that benefits all members and helps them live happily

together in their communities. It is an infinite resource of capital that includes commitment, tradition, and trust, which changes according to different social environments and can be seen in everyday life, such as building friendships or empathy to help each other. 2) The political and administrative dimension is social capital that unites groups with common interests. Putnam [11] explained that social capital helps maintain a functioning democracy by facilitating the unification of the trusted citizen network despite various norms. 3) The economic dimension is the social capital that helps to run successful businesses efficiently. Schneider and Fukuyama [3] stated that social capital results in cost reductions in the process of contracting for economic activities due to trust in one another and honesty with each other, and if all parties are committed to this type of relationship, they do not need to waste money and time on creating complicated contracts.

3. Methodology

This research was conducted with a Qualitative Participatory Action Research approach, in which the focus is on identifying and summarizing the lessons learned, combined with asking the After Action Review (AAR) questions with the successful community as a case study to benefit others. It is the process of extracting knowledge from the after-action experience as a form of knowledge capital. Transcription is the process of extracting knowledge from the experience of human beings, known as ‘Tacit Knowledge’, and changing it into a lesson or polished knowledge, referred to as ‘Explicit Knowledge’.

The use of the AAR transcription methodology was aimed at answering four questions, which are: 1) “What was intended to happen?”, 2) “What is happening?”, 3) “Are there any differences, and if so, why are there differences?” and 4) “What can we learn from this?”. These are combined with a community-based data collection process in three steps: Planning, Acting and Observing, and Reflection on the results (PAR). The data collection methods were as follows: 1) the relevant documents were studied, 2) in-depth interviews were conducted with ten stakeholders (community leaders and academicians), 3) the community was surveyed, 4) 50 community members participated in knowledge exchange, and 5) a focus group discussion was conducted with 25 participants. The study results were then analyzed by summarizing and discussing the results using Knowledge Management techniques (Figure 1).

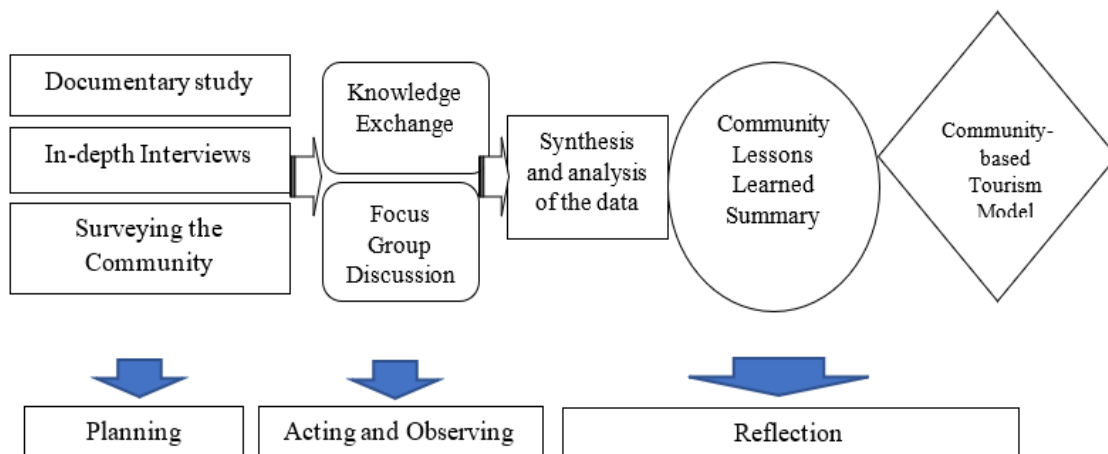


Figure 1: Research Method Framework

4. Research Results

4.1. Context and potentials

Ban Sam Kha, Village No. 6, Hua Suea Sub-district, Mae Tha District, Lampang Province, Thailand. It is a small village in Lampang Province where most of the population is engaged in agriculture, such as farming, raising animals, hunting for forest products, and wood carving. And general contracting. The community has a population of approximately 656 people and 154 households. Most of the population is Buddhist and believes in spirits.

Ban Sam Kha community is a community with local wisdom and a beautiful way of life. They lead a simple lifestyle connected to nature, and most of the food they consume is cultivated or locally sourced, especially medicinal plants and wild foods. The knowledge and local wisdom of Ban Sam Kha are prominently seen in basketry and weaving.

For the weaving work, the wisdom teacher is Uncle Pisit Naso, who has expertise in weaving a rice kratip with palm leaves for a sticky rice container. The palm leaves are a large amount of local material. In addition to the fine appearance after weaving, the palm leaves also have a pleasant aroma that enhances the aroma of the glutinous rice.

For weaving, the weaving wisdom teacher is Kabkham Wansuwong, who uses the local wisdom of weaving by hand and dyeing with natural fabrics. Here, Woven fabrics are full of charm and knowledge in every process of weaving; since the process of planting the cotton to make materials and the invention of natural dyes extracted from natural materials and minerals to make the colour more tightly adhered to the fibres, it has increased resistance to light and abrasion.

In addition, there are also cultural traditions that have been preserved until now, such as ghost (Phi) worship and spirit offerings, such as Phi Pa, Phi Khun Nam, Phee Baan, Phi Ahak-Akao, Phi Chao Pak, Phi Chao Kwaen, Phi Sena, Phaya Kaew, Phiphi Na, and rituals. Worshipping spirits according to beliefs in festivals or important days of the community by cultural traditions reflected through rituals and beliefs of the community.

4.2. Planning

Tourism management within this community is tangibly focused on the Ban Sam Kha Homestay Project, which has been derived since 2001. In addition to this project, the community has provided tourists with accommodation by staying with villagers or living together in the multipurpose building. They welcomed many travelling groups to visit and learn from the successful experience of the Ban Sam Kha community. Some groups preferred to stay with the villager's homestay while some bigger groups preferred multipurpose buildings. The multipurpose building funded by the Suksapattana Foundation to be used as a tourist accommodation with full-service management resulted in the community promoting tourism there. So, tourism activities and attractions areas were developed respectively.

Regarding the potential of the Ban Sam Kha community, it was found that Ban Sam Kha is a community that possesses local wisdom and attractive ways of life. Most food eaten is obtained from cultivation or local sources, especially various herbal and medicinal plants and forest foods. For the local knowledge of Ban Sam Kha that can be seen clearly through fine arts and crafts such as carving and weaving, there is a wisdom teacher in weaving named Khab Kam Suwanwong, who presents the wisdom of weaving by hand and natural fabric dyeing in which the charm and knowledge are hidden in every process of weaving from the cultivation of the cotton plants to the production of the thread from various materials and the creation of the woven patterns.

The invention of dyes extracted from natural materials and minerals is achieved by summarizing knowledge about the sources of the colours of the raw materials. Each material is extracted to make the natural fabric dyes, which will have an uneven colour, abrasion, or light resistance, depending on the plant's internal components and the dyed fabric's fibres. Therefore, various substances are used, called dyeing agents and colourants, such as those that aid in making the fibres absorb the colour so that it is retained by the fibres more tightly. Their resistance to light and abrasion is increased. These substances are additives that act as a binder and enhance the colour of the fibres. They also help to cause the colour to be darker or brighter by dyeing or activating natural colours. Some commonly used agents are lime water, lye (ashes), acid (lemon juice, tamarind juice), simple pods, groundwater, mud water (ponds that have water all year round) and instant additives such as astringents (from astringent and bitter plants), soy protein, salt, etc.

4.3. Acting and Observing

Several problems were encountered. Although several groups in the Ban Sam Kha community help each other, the most significant problem is that the community is experiencing economic difficulties, such as the problem of insufficient income for expenses. This is because more than 90% of the population are farmers. Most of the materials needed for production must be purchased from outside the community, resulting in high investment levels and uncertain selling prices. In addition, the harvested agricultural products are not processed, which causes them to be sold at low prices. This is compounded by the planting season, and when outside the planting season, the people in the community do not have any fixed income from supplementary careers, which causes endless debt problems (Figure 2).

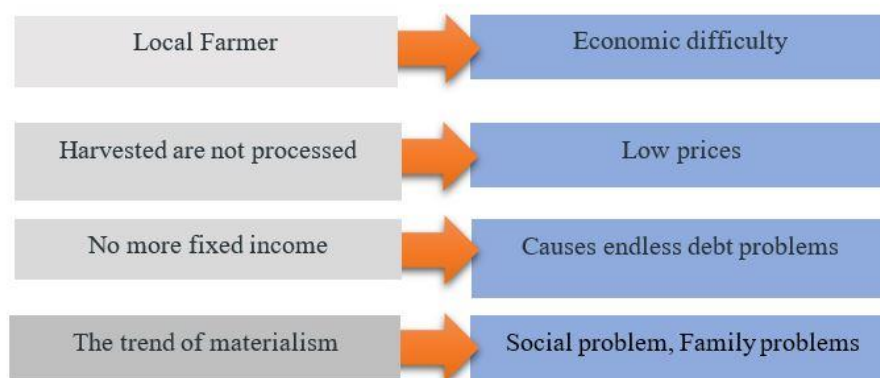


Figure 2: Ban Sam Kha encounter's problems

The effects of the imbalanced economic and social development is another factor that has aggravated the difficult situation in the Ban Sam Kha community due to the overall development of the entire country that focuses on competition and the promotion of material values, which has resulted in Thai society giving more importance to the matters of materialism. Even rural communities such as Ban Sam Kha cannot resist the trend of materialism that has spread into the community. Then, what follows includes social problems, family problems and economic difficulties that can force communities to move.

Ban Sam Kha community has always tried to solve the problems of debt; for example, the establishment of various capital groups in the village ten years ago aimed to assist members in getting a source of loans when needed. After that, the community attempted to find a solution by establishing the faithful Thippa La Sam Kha group; however, they were still unable to solve the debt problem. According to an overall statistical assessment at the beginning of the year 2010, the total debt condition in the village did not decrease. However, one thing that happened was that the community realised and became aware of the existing debt situation and attempted to solve the problem. For this reason, people in the community have started to pay attention to participation in the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) process.

The development guidelines from the study found that the Sam Kha community has several specific needs for community development as a tourism community, which can be summarized as the following:

- There should be a cultural information management system for tourism in the social and cultural dimensions.
- In the community environmental dimension, there should be an increase in the community's knowledge of technology and innovation by expanding upon their existing knowledge.
- In the economic dimension, the form of community tourism that is consistent with the community context, both socially and culturally, and does not affect the environment or capital resources in all dimensions of the community should be developed.
- Standardization of the various components related to community tourism management in terms of cleanliness and the safety of tourists is needed.
- There should be the development of community products from raw materials and resources available in the community to create careers and additional income for the people in the community.
- In the dimension of knowledge in the community, the abilities of the local people should be provided by new knowledge from innovations and external knowledge that can be applied in the community appropriately.

5. Discussion

From the research on the community-based tourism lessons learned that were reviewed, the researchers established a framework for summarizing the results in three areas, which are 1) the potential and the starting point of community-based tourism, 2) the value issues that occur for communities in various dimensions, including the dimension of society and culture, the dimension of the community environment, the dimension of the community economy, and the dimension of knowledge in the community, and 3) the development of the model for community tourism. The results of the research are discussed as follows (Figure 3):

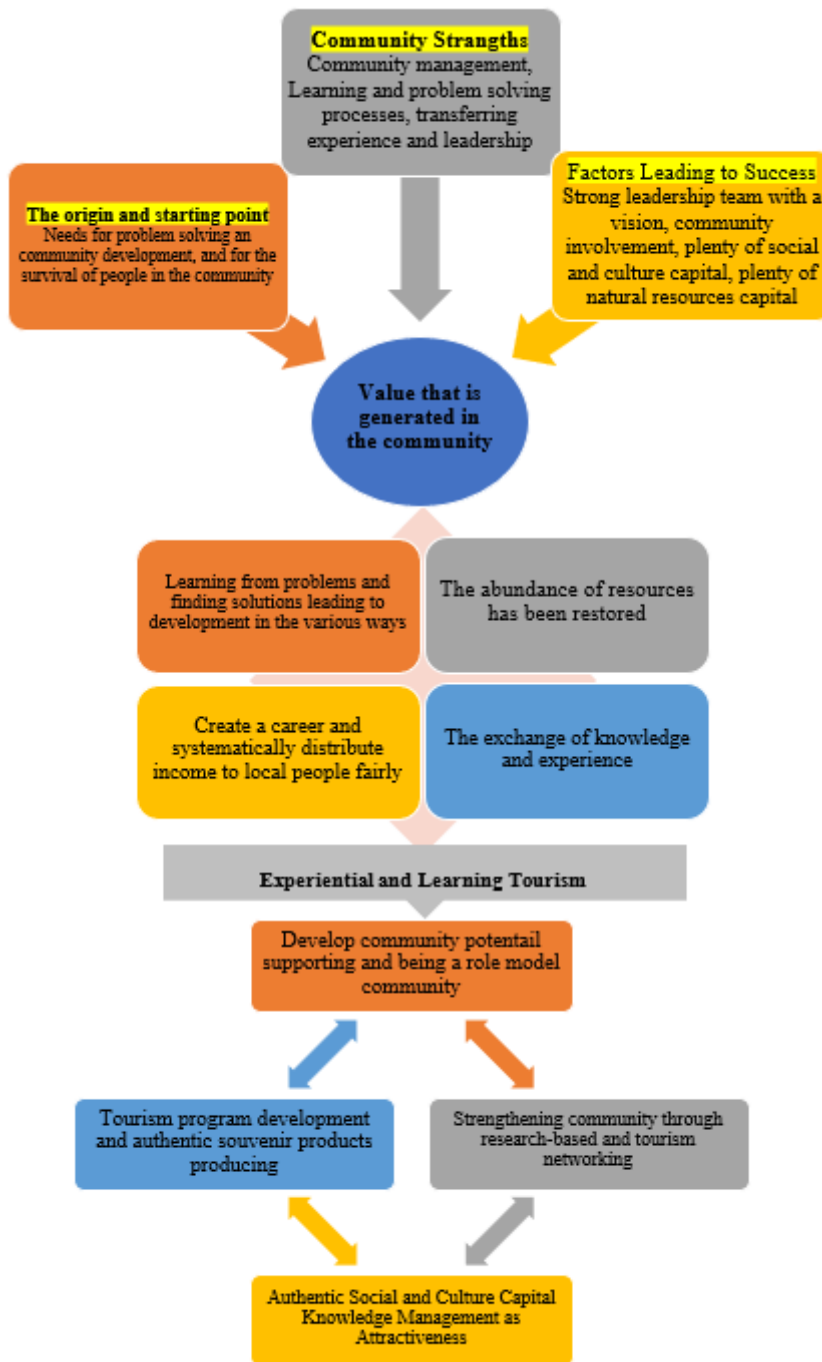


Figure 3: Community-based tourism model of Ban Sam Kha

5.1. Value that is generated in the community and area

The dimensions of society, culture, and the Ban Sam Kha community involve learning in daily life and development by using the principle of self-reliance to achieve maximum sustainability in all dimensions. In addition, a knowledge management process is initiated by identifying and passing on the identity of the people in the Ban Sam Kha community to the next generations. Moreover, learning from problems and finding solutions leads to personal and community development in various ways, with understanding as a strategy for sustainable management.

The community environment dimension is concerned with the community having a learning process and being able to solve problems themselves after the community has revived the natural resources with effective management. It was found that the

factors that cause the community to realize the value in this matter can be summarized into two important aspects. The first of these is the immediate results that directly reflect the actual way of life of the people in the community, such as the restored natural resources providing sufficient water for consumption, the physical and mental health of the community, and the consumption of seasonal forest products and non-toxic agricultural products. The second important aspect is the indirect successful results representing a model community in managing and conserving natural resources and the community's environment, which are successful and useful for education in other tourist destinations.

The community economic dimension of the Ban Sam Kha community tourism management creates a system for generating and distributing income to the people in the community more systematically. There is career development and self-development to create extra income due to the need for individuals and the community to be more efficient in supporting tourism. The community's success is considered a valuable and profitable benefit, as the quality of life of the people in the community will be increased.

The dimension of knowledge in the community is related to exchanging knowledge and experience with the researchers and community organizations that come to study tourism in the Ban Sam Kha community, including assistance and support in various aspects to promote development.

This aligns with the knowledge management concepts of Wipasrinimit [14], who mentioned that one's knowledge is often linked to life experience so that the knowledge gained can be utilized. This is because the knowledge that arises is not memorised knowledge but, instead, knowledge that involves understanding. Furthermore, the knowledge gained from experience leads to another form of knowledge seen today that has been written down and recorded, such as manuals and textbooks. In order to make use of the existing knowledge for benefits, a process called knowledge management is required, which means the process of collaborating with organizations and community groups to create knowledge properly, step by step, by formulating problems together, conducting research together, and learning together to organize knowledge into a form where joint learning can take place. Performance evaluations that lead to adaptation and continuous knowledge transfer are consistent with creating added value from social capital and culture, which is a form of appreciating and utilising social capital by focusing on all dimensions and affecting each other.

These include existing capital such as heritage (capital in the dimension of community capital or public capital), capital in the interaction between individuals and groups that are expressed based on positive intentions and leads to cooperation in practice and good solutions (capital in the dimension of social relations), expressive capital of the results of social capital (capital in the dimension of social power), and capital that provides effective ways of thinking for the people. Suppose people start with the right way of thinking. In that case, it will lead to action and beneficial results (capital in the dimension of thinking and knowledge systems) and systematic coordination (capital in terms of systematic social process dimensions). It is a process of using capital in various dimensions, both concrete and abstract, which can lead to the enhancement of self-management or becoming a society or a community that can sustain itself during a crisis of strength and self-reliance.

For example, Rattanasoi [12] sees social capital as a way of thinking and knowledge systems for managing the ways of a community, such as the management of resources that are difficult to obtain and the organizing of a system of relationships for coexistence in society and communities, which is a matter that requires complex thinking and involves knowledge and wisdom systems. It also requires rules to govern the use of that knowledge, whether in the form of tradition, law, or social rules. At the same time, organisations must be responsible for managing such matters as social capital education and civil society development networks.

Beeton [1] studied social capital by applying research concepts and social policy implementation. This study found that social capital is a social network that allows people to come together and participate in various activities that affect the development of the economy. There are four perspectives on social capital: community views, network views, institutional perspectives, and collaborative perspectives. From the research, it can be concluded that social capital, when viewed from a collaborative perspective, will be most beneficial to supporting development policies at all levels. Moonphatee [7] studied the concepts and the process of community empowerment in Samkham Village, Mae Tha District, Lampang Province, and found that the concept of community empowerment can lead to the strength of the community.

The Ban Sam Kha community uses the concept of empowerment, creating cooperation, mutual respect, unity, and discipline to strengthen their inhabitants. By creating the power of thought, the villagers jointly brainstorm and analyze problems and establish plans for the community. Everyone must have the same direction and listen to other participants' opinions without prejudice. The opinions must provide useful ideas and empower the compassion and unity of the community.

All of the villagers of the Ban Sam Kha Community are friendly, understanding, and without prejudice because they have experienced and resolved numerous problems together to recover from various crises, which has caused them to understand

each other. Community discipline building in Ban Sam Kha is considered a full civil society activity. According to the rules issued by the community, all community members will strictly comply because the regulations are based on the true needs of the villagers, making the villagers willing to comply without prejudice toward the rules and regulations.

5.2. The successful results of the Ban Sam Kha

The community have led to a community of learning and development that has been built up through the process of exchanging knowledge and experience with an effort to solve the problems concerned with the needs occurring in the community with the goal of development aimed at the community being able to manage itself and sustainably follow the guidelines and achieve the goals that the community needs. The management of the community and the identity of the development of the community to operate in the context of tourism management in the Ban Sam Kha community are regarded as important features that have unique characteristics in addition to the cultural tourism in the community, which includes ecotourism and experience tourism from the knowledge of the community based on the idea of creation.

5.3. The development model that leads to the prototype of the tourism community of Ban Sam Kha

A community for experience and learning tourism by defining four development strategies and directions, which are as follows: 1) Community development to support being a prototype tourism community, 2) Development of the strength of community tourism from the research bases and the building of community tourism networks, 3) Management of the knowledge of social and cultural identities to create tourism charm, and 4) Creation of tourism routes and development of distinctive products that help define the community's identity.

Therefore, Ban Sam Kha Community Tourism is an example of experience tourism and learning from community knowledge based on the creativity of the research process to develop tourism activities and tourist routes that connect wisdom and/or diverse community knowledge as well as the ways of the community that have successfully undergone problem-solving development or express "experience tourism and community learning".

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The following recommendations for community tourism management in the lessons learned model are summarized based on the findings. Furthermore, suggestions for future research are also provided.

6.1. Policy suggestions

In driving the strategy for the development of every community in the country to become a standardized tourism community, there must be cooperation from the relevant parties in all sectors to participate in the policy-making, the development of the direction, strategy formulation, and implementation of strategies into concrete actions, including participation in the monitoring and evaluation of the entire system operations.

6.2. Proposals for policy implementation

In order to apply the tourism strategies to concrete action, all sectors must integrate operations at all levels.

6.2.1. implementation at the strategic level

All regions must participate in formulating a joint strategy by considering the linking of strategies at each level to obtain the overall strategy at the regional, provincial, and community levels to act as a framework for community operations consistent with the strategy and the community context.

6.2.2. implementation at the project plan level

When establishing a clear joint strategy for the community, the most important factor is to transfer the plan into action in every community. Community members must become involved in implementing the plan. They must also create knowledge and understanding, create project plans under their mission, and be consistent and support the overall tourism development at all levels.

6.3. Suggestions for future research

This research focused on investigating the lessons learned concerning community tourism management to develop a model of community tourism in 17 northern provinces. If others are interested in studying the framework for identifying the lessons learned from community tourism management for developing a model of community tourism in other areas, it will be useful. Moreover, the results can be applied and linked to developing tourism strategies for the country.

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Data Availability Statement: <https://www.research.dusit.ac.th/> provides access to the datasets generated and examined throughout this investigation. This initiative, which embraces open science and openness, extends an invitation to other researchers to use, replicate, and expand the project's data for additional investigation. If you have any questions about getting access to the data, send an email to the first author.

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Ethics and Consent Statement: This study was conducted in strict accordance with the ethical standards and guidelines established by Suan Dusit University, Thailand. All research protocols involving human subjects were thoroughly reviewed and approved by the university's ethics committee and the project supervisor. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with assurances provided regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of their information. The ethical conduct of this research adheres to the highest standards for research involving human subjects.

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