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MANAGEMENT OF THE PLONG TRADITION, BAN TAKOTAPHI, BURIRAM, THAILAND

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the Management of the Plong tradition at Ban Takotaphi, Buriram, Thailand, using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with a sample group comprising individuals from the area, community leaders, and stakeholders. The study found that greater involvement of individuals in expressing their opinions regarding the Management of the Plong tradition at Ban Takotaphi is necessary. Effective coordination in management necessitates collaboration among all community sectors, and fostering cooperation is crucial. In terms of public sector leadership, community members should exclusively participate in events organized by government agencies or community leaders. The primary form of participation among most villagers is through the dissemination of news and information. Regarding the promotion of traditions, comprehensive support and attendance at traditional events organized by government agencies or community leaders are vital. The primary motivation for attending public events is the desire to actively participate in and perpetuate local traditions, thereby contributing with pride to their preservation.

Keywords: Tradition Management, Participation, Plong Tradition

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Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) advocates a four-step process for genuine participation: planning, implementation, utilization, and obtaining benefits (Sornpaisarn, 2020). Community involvement is imperative across various stages, including decision-making, problem analysis, goal setting, resource allocation, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation during operation. Ultimately, the community bears the responsibility for effectively managing the event (Sarnnoi & Sarnnoi, 2020). Resource allocation, financial control, and utilization are critical components of community development. Utilization involves leveraging activities to enhance self-reliance and social control, while ensuring equal benefits for all individuals involved. The level of participation hinges on the community's comprehension and confidence in the development and management processes, fostering cooperation among government agencies, the private sector, and communities. Community development must align with local needs, facilitating sustainable and systematic exchange and development involving communities and local organizations. Collaboration within organizations is paramount for effective knowledge management and continuous development, which should be an ongoing, intentional process addressing community needs within the existing context. Strong leadership and commitment are indispensable for fostering thriving communities across various spheres such as politics, government, society, culture, and tradition. Sustainable community development requires time, dedication, and effective collaboration, ultimately culminating in the attainment of "Participation in the ideal state," representing the optimal outcome (Sarnnoi & Sarnnoi, 2020). The development of the Takotapi community presents a compelling case study, transitioning from forest settlements to larger villages through the redistribution of previously occupied land into more fertile surroundings. However, successful community development necessitates consideration of multiple factors impacting the process. These include support garnered from community meetings, policies promoting community development, cooperation among diverse organizations, and the creation of an environment conducive to sustainable community growth. This entails fostering collaboration among local residents to ensure long-term sustainability and development.

Research questions: 1) What are the challenges associated with managing public participation in the Plong tradition? 2) What are the guidelines for fostering the development of public participation in the Plong tradition?

Research objectives: 1) To investigate the issue of public participation in the Plong tradition within Ban Takotaphi, Buriram, Thailand. 2) To examine the guidelines aimed at fostering participation in the Plong tradition among the residents of Ban Takotaphi.

Research Methodology

The management of the Plong tradition in Ban Takotaphi, Prakhon Chai, Buriram, Thailand was the focus of this qualitative research study. Ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University under the research project code HE-RDI-NRRU.206/2023. Data collection occurred from October 2023 to December 2023. The selection criteria for the study area encompassed three main aspects: 1) historical engagement in community participation, 2) sustained local development over the past five years, and 3) active involvement in social, cultural, and governance initiatives. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to select participants, including 16 village headmen, 5 community leaders, and 10 community members. Additionally, 6 individuals were randomly chosen to serve as a control group. The research methodology employed qualitative research techniques, including structured and unstructured interviews, participatory and non-participant observation, and group discussions. Structured interviews comprise three sets: 1) interviews with individuals knowledgeable about community history and participation, 2) interviews with participants in Ban Takotapi traditions, and 3) interviews with traditional participants.

Unstructured interviews were utilized to gather open-ended responses and explore specific topics, while in-depth interviews targeted key informants with expertise in the subject matter. Observation methods encompassed both participatory and non-participant observation, allowing the researcher to examine cultural practices, beliefs, rituals, and past and present development activities within the community. Focus group discussions were conducted to collect and analyze relevant data. In summary, the research utilized qualitative methods to investigate the traditional management of Baan Takotapi. Data collection involved structured and unstructured interviews, participatory and non-participant observation, and group discussions. The study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the tradition and its significance within the community, guided by the concept of Janthajorn (2010). The researcher conducted fieldwork for approximately 3 months to collect data. This involved two main approaches: 1) Formal interviews, which comprised unstructured interviews with key community leaders such as the village head and mayor (2 individuals), as well as structured interviews categorized into five sets targeting various informant groups including community leaders, teachers, monks, village headmen, and members of the subdistrict administrative organization. 2) Informal interviews, which encompassed in-depth interviews, participant observation, and non-participant observation. These methods were employed to observe and study traditional rituals, as well as to facilitate group discussions.

The researcher systematically organizes, and compiles information obtained from the examination of documents, textbooks, academic books, and related research documents. Additionally, data gathered from interviews, group discussions, observations, and note-taking are categorized according to the research objectives. Subsequently, qualitative data analysis is conducted in alignment with the research aims and framework, guided by established concepts and ideas, utilizing the approach outlined by Chantavanich (2016). These methods encompass Analytic Induction and Typological Analysis. Analytic Induction involves deriving insights from tangible or observable data gathered during fieldwork, including everyday activities and occupations. It entails extracting cultural wisdom embedded within society, influenced by the natural environment, cultural traditions, rituals, and beliefs. This approach analyzes community data to discern changes resulting from external cultural influences and community engagement in various activities. It serves as a crucial tool for comprehending societal dynamics and cultural phenomena. Analyzing community participation sheds light on significant shifts in behavior and values within the community. By exploring the culture and activities associated with community involvement, one gains insight into the significance and purpose of fostering and fortifying communities, particularly amid evolving circumstances.

Research Results

The management of the Plong tradition in Ban Takotaphi, Buriram, Thailand aims to address challenges in public participation in Plong activities. This is achieved by fostering community cohesion and promoting an understanding of the significance of Buddhist activities. The initiative seeks to forge collaboration between governmental entities and local communities to identify and resolve issues, while also cultivating cultural capital to support related endeavors. Furthermore, a dedicated team is established to monitor and evaluate outcomes, ensuring transparency in operations. These measures serve as vital tools for sustainable community development, both culturally and socioeconomically. The ultimate objective is to establish efficient and fully sustainable management of the Plong tradition in Ban Takotaphi for future generations. The researcher draws upon the concepts of community participation and local government, as proposed by Sarnnoi & Sarnnoi (2020), advocating for community involvement in problem identification, planning, investment, and result assessment. This approach aims to foster a tourism paradigm that is both suitable and efficient, empowering individuals to engage in tourism activities within their own communities. Moreover, the

importance of public participation is emphasized, as it ensures the preservation of community traditions and instills a sense of pride in cultural heritage. Souvannavongsa et al. (2022) underscore the role of decentralized local government in promoting self-reliant rural development, wherein community engagement in decision-making processes fosters confidence and resilience at the grassroots level. Ultimately, decentralization is poised to foster self-sufficiency, a fundamental principle of rural development.

Problems of Public Participation in the Plong Tradition

Challenges in developing participation in the Plong tradition include inadequate compensation, lack of government budget support, and a diminishing cultural appreciation among the younger generation. Furthermore, there's a scarcity of funds for equipment, and support groups often lack funding. Additionally, few equipment items are available for Plong ceremonies, requiring participants to bring their own. Guidelines for enhancing participation involve increasing compensation and promoting volunteerism. It's crucial for the government to allocate budget for equipment and locations, and establish a local wisdom think tank. Moreover, setting up a central point and a responsible department, along with developing a systematic communication plan, are essential for managing the Plong traditions in Ban Takotaphi. The researcher draws on the concepts of community participation and local government, as proposed by Sarnnoi & Sarnnoi (2020). They highlight the significance of public involvement in shaping cultural preservation and emphasize the importance of government support in fostering community engagement and development. The notion that public participation is pivotal in shaping novel perspectives on tourism and in safeguarding the preservation of traditions and cultural heritage within the community is emphasized. Active engagement in planning and operational activities serves to foster understanding and a sense of shared responsibility among stakeholders. Collaborative investment and cooperative endeavors are instrumental in enhancing knowledge and fostering opportunities for communal advancement. Concurrently, diligent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms empower citizens by providing insights into outcomes and progress. Public participation is positioned at the forefront of the emerging paradigm in tourism and sustainable community development. A critical component entails assuming the highest role and responsibility as leaders in navigating local government agencies. Souvannavongsa et al. (2022) suggest that decentralized local governance fosters self-reliant rural development, with communities actively involved in decision-making processes and project implementation. Building confidence and resilience at the local level are essential for fostering sustainable and effective community democracy.

Conclusion and Discussion

The management of the Plong tradition in Ban Takotaphi, Buriram, Thailand serves as a captivating case study, revealing numerous hidden cultural and artistic elements within the community. These discoveries hold significant importance for the preservation and successful transmission of cultural heritage. The study uncovers a wealth of invaluable art and cultural practices deeply embedded within the community, including rituals, festivals, and traditions that serve as sources of pride and distinct cultural identity. However, the emerging trend of the younger generation disregarding traditions in favor of modern fashion poses a risk to the continuity of local weaving arts and sciences. Despite this challenge, fundamental knowledge and skills pertaining to the production of local arts and culture remain crucial. Acquiring information on materials, production processes, techniques, and unique fabric patterns specific to the local area is essential for weaving local fabrics efficiently and maintaining quality standards. Fostering an understanding of and appreciation for arts and culture can significantly enhance community pride and cohesion. Therefore, the systematic collection and discussion of such information are vital steps in managing the Plong tradition, ensuring the sustainable preservation of culture in the long term. In line with Souvannavongsa et al. (2022), participation

is characterized by the psychological and emotional engagement of individuals in group settings, motivating action and facilitating the achievement of group goals. It fosters a sense of shared responsibility within the community. Additionally, it is emphasized that effective participation hinges on three key conditions: individuals must be free, able, and willing to participate. Identifying the root causes of the problem and presenting them to relevant government agencies is imperative for addressing challenges in managing the Plong tradition. It underscores the importance of multi-sectoral involvement in identifying and addressing issues, thereby facilitating informed planning and operational strategies for the preservation of the tradition. Participation in operational planning necessitates collaboration among key community agencies to devise concrete activities through comprehensive brainstorming sessions involving all sectors. Sarnnoi & Sarnnoi (2020) highlight the importance of participation in researching community problems, identifying needs, and devising solutions to address challenges or introduce beneficial initiatives. This involvement extends to decision-making regarding resource allocation and implementation of policies, plans, projects, and activities to achieve set goals. Such participation, as noted by Oakley & Marsden (1984), is integral to community development, emphasizing the significance of public involvement in decision-making processes. Cohen & Uphoff (1977) stress the four dimensions of community participation: decision-making, contribution to development efforts, benefit-sharing, and project evaluation, aligning with the holistic approach advocated by Punyawutpreeda (2020). This collaborative model fosters a sense of pride, enhances understanding, and strengthens cooperation among community members in tackling shared challenges. Furthermore, it enables equitable distribution of benefits and fosters a clear understanding of the outcomes of collective efforts, as underscored by the United Nations (1981) and Reeder (1947). Ultimately, fostering comprehensive participation across all areas serves as a catalyst for the success, conservation, and development of the Plong tradition, generating income through cultural tourism and bolstering the community's economic growth, thereby contributing to the advancement of society and the nation.

Management of the Plong tradition in Ban Takotaphi necessitates a structured approach that acknowledges the significance of appropriate compensation for participants, as emphasized by Deewattanakul (2022). This compensation not only fosters community confidence and motivation but also aligns with principles of equitable participation in decision-making processes, project execution, and benefit-sharing, all of which should be voluntary. Central to this approach is the responsiveness to community needs, ensuring satisfaction and fostering long-term cultural preservation values within the new generation. Government agencies play a pivotal role in supporting these efforts by instilling cultural preservation values and facilitating the procurement of necessary resources for the Plong tradition. This includes developing guidelines for equipment acquisition and location coordination, as well as fostering collaboration for resource sharing among community members and agencies. Moreover, there is a need to allocate budgets towards establishing a think tank dedicated to systematically collecting and preserving local wisdom related to the Plong tradition. In line with the research conducted by Hirunyahard (2001) on the development potential of cultural villages for tourism, it is evident that successful management within the community is imperative for sustainable tourism initiatives. This entails understanding and effectively leveraging the unique attractions of the area while addressing management challenges such as unclear delineation of authority, conflicting opinions, and equitable benefit allocation both within and outside the community. Recognition and support for wisdom teachers are essential components of this management approach, ensuring the continuity of cultural preservation efforts. This involves promoting and honoring these individuals and providing financial assistance to encourage their continued dedication. To amplify the reach and impact of the Plong tradition, there is a need for systematic public outreach efforts aimed at fostering unity, communication, and community pride. This

includes leveraging modern public relations mediums to cultivate a tourism trend consistent with the principles outlined by Praneetham (2017), thereby encouraging citizen participation in local tourism initiatives. Ultimately, sustainable tourism development hinges on fostering effective cooperation between communities and ensuring that tourism activities respect and preserve the natural and cultural heritage associated with the Plong tradition. By fostering active participation across all sectors, we can collectively contribute to the conservation and development of this cherished tradition for generations to come.

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Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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