The Tourism Development Policy for Thailand's Ayutthaya Historical Park on the Locals' Livelihoods and Government Responsibility

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Abstract

This research aims to study the social impact assessment (SIA) aspects from the tourism development policy by connecting the strategic policy and the development plan at both national and regional levels and provincial groups in SIA to evaluate people's living conditions in the city. The research data were collected by the use of questionnaires approved by experts. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to ensure content validity and reliability of the questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.725$). The questionnaire consisted of questions concerning economic, social and environmental issues. It was found that people of different races and religions visited for business purposes and the port was used as an industrial centre. The products were improved, and the people could access local culture easily. Local people gained more income and activities. The overall examination and evaluation of tourism-promoting policies should be done. The locals can participate in tourism development policy presentations. Not only would investors realise the advantages, but the community would also be strengthened and unity and utility would directly be created between province and the community.

Keywords: Locals' livelihoods; Tourism policy; Heritage city; Community; Participation

Introduction

Ayutthaya Historical Park is known to be one of the world's most famous tourist destinations, particularly among European countries, as can be seen from a large number of European tourists coming to visit this historical site every year. This has allowed the tourism industry of Ayutthaya Historical Park to expand significantly and gain the highest growth rate within the country, as well as within the region.

Today, the development program of Ayutthaya Historical Park's tourism industry is under the support of both public and private organisations. Consequently, however, this brought significant environmental and social changes to the communities surrounding the historical site, including the living conditions of the local people. A large amount of pollution and waste developed, as well as extensive depletion of natural resources. Such aimless development and promotion of the tourism industry will likely prevent sustainable development of the communities, society and the environment in the future. Therefore, any type of development may lead to environmental and social impacts.

The SIA and assessment of living conditions of the locals following the development of Ayutthaya Historical Park plays a vital role in recognizing environmental and social impacts on the surrounding communities. Following the execution of such a program, benefits include gaining a wider perspective of the existing problems and conducting social analysis from a different aspect besides economic gains from tourism development alone, as had been done in the past, and which led to extensive environmental losses and social changes among surrounding communities. SIA can be a useful tool in forming preventive plans to avoid such problems, beginning with considering the suitability of the program to establish corrective and preventive measures to minimize social impact resulting from tourism development programs. It can be used in defining program specifications for further construction and development.

The process of SIA therefore acts as a regulator at various levels, including policy, planning and program development in particular. By applying the principles of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA),

various groups, especially the locals who are directly affected by the program, will have greater opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and determine the future of the development of the tourism industry based on true community needs, which is considered to be the most effective tool. This SEA is used in evaluating social impact due to the development of Ayutthaya Historical Park, and is expected to help rectify all existing flaws of the planning process of various development programs relating to Ayutthaya Historical Park. Hence, the SIA will become a highly useful tool for the operation, including the policy, planning process and other programs, enabling us to efficiently gather important social data and use the gathered data and principles as a database for the development of other future programs, as well as to ensure sustainable development. To achieve this, a standard must be formulated for determining decisions and defining potential risks that may impact the society and the community in the future.

Considering the provincial tourism strategic plan, it can be found that Ayutthaya's tourism strategic plan is more consistent with the national one. Despite this fact, both positive and negative impacts remained. As a result, tourism development is required to consider positive impacts on the locals and focus on the study of pollution from tourism development strategies to effectively reduce both direct and indirect impacts (Unalan, 2013). A tourism development plan must be holistically considered so that the community can gain maximum benefits.

Methodology

The objective of this research is to study both the social impact and how the living conditions of local communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park were affected by the development of the historical site following the execution of the tourism development policy. This will be done by assessing strategic policy together with development plans at national, regional and provincial levels in order to evaluate social changes and changes in the number of population within the studied area within the scope of tourism development policy.

The researcher began gathering initial data and general problems in June 2012 and compiled all the necessary information for preparing the questionnaire before collecting the actual data from May – June 2012, which result in a three-day data-collection process. The research was carried out in four steps, as follows:

1. Study relevant concepts, theories and studies from primary and secondary data, which includes data from documentations and field research.

2. Assess social impact due to tourism development from tourism aspect in terms of direct and indirect impact and long-term impact in order to efficiently define the scope of development and minimize social impact by using SIA tools, which consisted of expert analysis and secondary data.

3. Survey the opinions and needs of the community by gathering information from the locals who were directly affected by the tourism development policy by carrying out survey research, including collecting data from documentations and primary interviews. The research team, together with community leaders, coordinated with the Dean of the Faculty of Management Science, Phra Nakhon Si, Ayutthaya Rajabhat University, Mayor of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Municipality, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand were granted permission to conduct field survey research using survey questionnaires as a data collection tool. The questionnaire is comprised of two sections: Section 1 – General Information and Section 2 – Questions Concerning the Economy, the Society and the Environment.

4. Apply the knowledge gained from the SIA in redesigning and improving the existing tourism development plan to reduce potential impacts on the agencies relevant to city tourism development at policy, plan and program levels.

Population and Sample Group

The sample group in this research was selected from the local population residing near Ayutthaya Historical Park using area sampling;

this resulted in a total of 529 households. The research data were collected from a total of 193 local residents living near Ayutthaya Historical Park.

Data Analysis

This research consisted of two variables: 1) Independent variables, which included gender, age, education level, marital status, occupation, income-expenses per household, type of resident, total number of family members, total number of children in school and their monthly expense, total number of elderly family members in the household, and total number of unemployed family members, and 2) Dependent variables, which included economic, social and environmental conditions. Data were analysed using the statistical software package SPSS and coded in a data collection file. Data accuracy was tested using computer software to process the collected information according to the objective of this study. The data were analysed in two aspects: 1) analysis of general information of interviewees and 2) analysis of economic, social and environmental conditions using numbers and percentages.

Results

General Economic Conditions

After surveying general economic conditions of the communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park in terms of income, employment and unemployment conditions, a general overview of economic and social conditions can be obtained and used for conducting further analysis on relevant development policies.

In regards to the economic aspect, it was found that the majority of the sample earned sufficient income from their main occupation (138 persons; 71.5%), and 28.5% (55 persons) earned insufficient income from their main occupation. Of this number, 65.3% (126 persons) did not earn extra income, and 60.6% (117 persons) had no additional debt. In addition, most households earned sufficient income for their monthly expenses (119 persons; 61.7%). However, the unemployment rate is found to have increased (111 persons; 57.5%). Moreover, approximately 57.5%

(111 persons) of the sample said that they have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the economy, whereas 42.5% (82 persons) revealed that they still lacked knowledge and understanding on the subject, as shown in Figure 1.
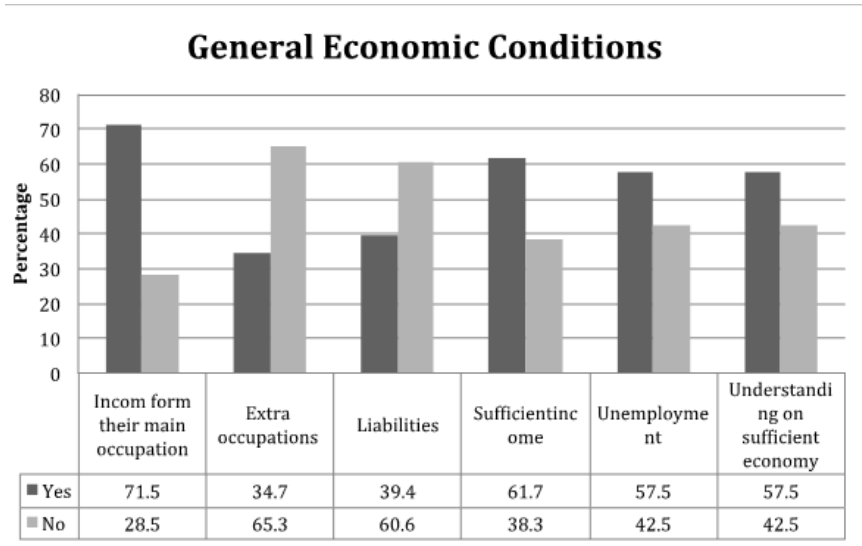

General Economic Conditions

	Incom form their main occupation	Extra occupations	Liabilities	Sufficientinc ome	Unemployme nt	Understandi ng on sufficient economy
Yes	71.5	34.7	39.4	61.7	57.5	57.5
No	28.5	65.3	60.6	38.3	42.5	42.5

Figure 1: General Economic Conditions

It can be concluded in terms of general economic conditions that most households earned sufficient income from their main occupation and need not earn any additional income. Furthermore, the majority of the sample had sufficient knowledge regarding the economy. In regards to households with insufficient incomes, additional sources of income must be earned amidst the increasing unemployment rate. Hence, a community development plan for professional skills enhancement in communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park became crucial in assisting the local people in earning additional income, including promoting better understanding of the economy among the local people in order to reduce the unemployment problem.

General Social Conditions of Communities Surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park

After surveying social conditions of the communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park, which is considered to be one of the important development factors, it was found that social problems such as drugs and the lack of unity did not only cause a direct impact on the communities, but also caused an indirect impact on the development of nearby tourist destinations. Therefore, social conditions must be considered in the development of historical tourist destinations.

The survey results revealed that the majority of the sample (80.3%) agreed that a drug problem existed within their community whereas only 19.7% disagreed. Approximately 52.8% (102 persons) agreed that there are social conflicts or a lack of unity in their community, 55.4% (107 persons) agreed that their community members have self-development awareness, and 50.8% (98 persons) believed that there are no social gaps within their community (see Figure 2).
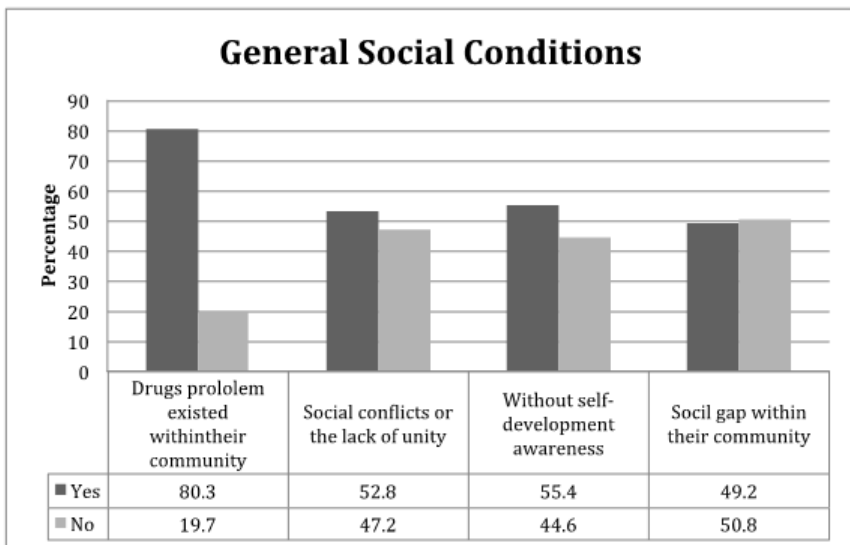

Figure 2: General Social Conditions of the Communities Surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park

In regards to waste and pollution problems, it was found that 51.3% (99 persons) of the sample suffered from increasing volume of waste or pollution within their communities. Approximately 61.1% (118 persons), however, did not develop any health problems. Furthermore, 61.1% (118 persons) agreed that their community lacked community welfare services, 65.3% (126 persons) of the sample had to leave their hometown for work, and 65.3% (126 persons) agreed that their community's beliefs and traditions did not conflict with the society or the policies of governmental agencies (see Figure 3).
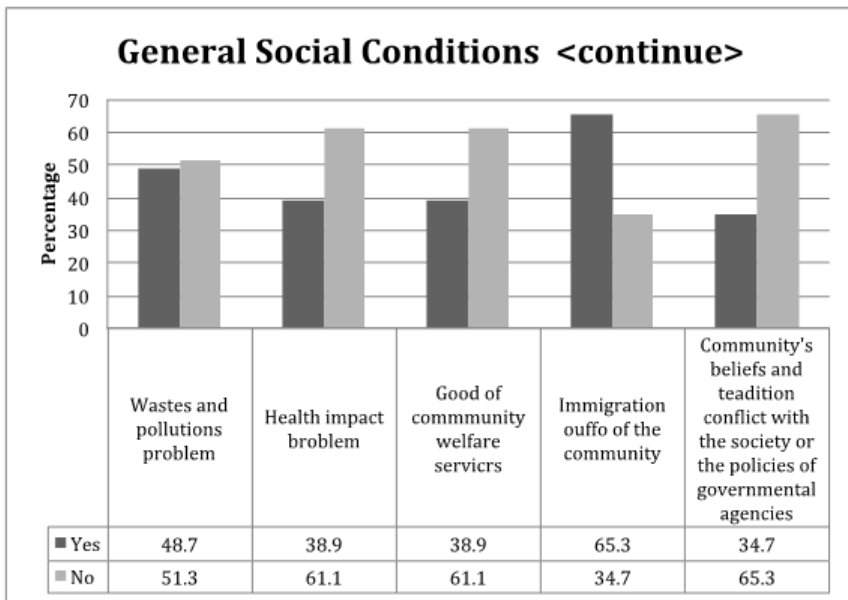
General Social Conditions <continue>

	Wastes and pollutions problem	Health impact broblem	Good of commmunity welfare servicrs	Immigration ouffo of the community	Community's beliefs and teadition conflict with the society or the policies of governmental agencies
Yes	48.7	38.9	38.9	65.3	34.7
No	51.3	61.1	61.1	34.7	65.3

Figure 3: General Social Conditions of the Communities Surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park (cont.)

Therefore, in terms of general social conditions of the communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park, we conclude that the community's beliefs and traditions showed no conflicts with the society or state's policies. However, there are other problems that occurred within the communities, such as the lack of unity, the lack of social awareness and local people leaving their hometown for work. The local people must

rectify such problems by initiating community development and improvement. Nevertheless, certain issues may require assistance from external organisations, such as drugs and insufficient income problems. In regards to requesting government support in developing communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park and rectifying some general social problems, community participation should be promoted. Furthermore, community welfare should also be arranged for the local people, as it is essential in promoting good living conditions among the communities.

Discussion

Tourism Development Impact on the Communities Surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park

Based on the previously described general data and the analysis of the application of the national tourism development strategy, which is in line with tourism development strategy of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, we discovered that the tourism development strategy of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province mainly emphasized promoting development in various aspects, including the promotion and development of cultural heritage, agricultural and industrial development, development of infrastructure and promotion of good quality of life among local communities in order to create good living conditions among the Ayutthaya people. Therefore, Ayutthaya Historical Park is considered an important factor in achieving the defined tourism development strategy. As a result, a development plan for improving Ayutthaya Historical Park's surroundings must be established. Such plan must cover beyond the development of the surrounding environment or the development of the historical site as a major tourist destination, and must include development of the surrounding communities as well. Chai (2011) stated that cultural improvement would be sustainable if the local people realized its importance and maintained their culture. The creative tourism's purpose was related to community development, which created sustainability. Study results revealed a large number of problems existing within the communities surrounding

Ayutthaya Historical Park. This included the lack of unity, the lack of social awareness among the local people, the lack of community strength and the lack of self-development awareness among the youths.

Such problems, which derived from the people within the communities themselves, must clearly be analysed and prioritised, and must be discussed with the communities and local experts (Becker, 1997). Once personnel development is achieved, other types of development will easily follow. The participated creation way should be done by the community in order to create awareness and participation among the local people. This way, the local people can take part in the real public hearing and make considerations regarding the advantages and disadvantages, which is in line with the SIA's method on a participated society by Langston and Ding (2001). Apart from the problems caused by the local people, there are other problems faced by the communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park that need to be addressed, such as drugs and waste and water pollution. Once these problems are solved, it will help to promote other developments, namely the source of income and cultural and tourism resources, which is in line with the defined tourism development strategy. Therefore, the Ayutthaya Historical Park development plan must involve both the development of the overall environment, together with the development of the local people. This corresponds to a study by Kirkpatrick (1997), which suggested taking the people who might be affected by the activities, especially the special or sensitive groups for social change, the elderly and teenagers, as well as the local and foreign people, into account. Despite the positive results following the execution of the tourism development strategy of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, which is in line with the national tourism development strategy, some negative effects still remained. For this reason, potential impacts following the execution of the tourism development plan, such as the waste problem, must also be considered in order to conserve and maintain the world's heritage tourist attraction. Tourism rules must be implemented to ensure safe, clean and convenient travelling. The tourists would be there because of safe, clean and convenient, not for visited the world

heritage (World Tourism Organization, 1985). Study results showed that the communities surrounding Ayutthaya Historical Park were already suffering from waste problems and needed to be addressed immediately as the amount of waste continued to increase, particularly after the development of various tourist attractions, which had drawn large numbers of tourists into the area. Hence, the Ayutthaya Historical Park development plan must take into account all aspects to ensure the best interests of the surrounding communities and create the least impact.

Impact from Tourism Development Policies

In this study, the impacts of tourism development policies and strategies being developed were considered. Few people, however, gained benefits from such policies and strategies, as the increasing number of tourists had significantly increased the amount of pollution. Nevertheless, the public sector attempted to raise the income among the local people in order to promote tourism as follows:

1. The public sector is the only one that promotes coordination. According to the operational results from 2007–2009, sales volume increased by only 9.98% annually. In 2009, the total sales volume of OTOP products was 1,412,017,420 baht, or increased by 6.88% compared to the year 2008. This raised the income among 567 groups of workers and entrepreneurs (Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Provincial Treasury Office dated 25th November 2011). Hence, policies and strategies should be regularly developed and implemented in order to promote, for example, the participation of SML businesses. Most importantly, communities must be encouraged to develop programs by themselves according to the SIA methodology since Dalal-Clayton and Sadler (2005) divided the programs into two groups: 1) technical and 2) community relationship programs that will provide opportunities to increase understanding and awareness regarding current and future social situations among the people and improve their communication skills.

2. In terms of historical park management and by interview-ing Provincial Deputy Mayor and the local people, it was found that

there were many offices involved in this issue, including Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya City Municipality, Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), and the Department of Fine Art. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) provided tourism plans. Accordingly, the municipality and local organisations did not really participate in the management. This suggested that tourism policies are not important factors of community development. This is consistent with Yankholmes (2013), who mentioned about infrastructures development carried out by the public sector. However, provincial tourism development did not improve the economies of the local people in spite of landscapes improvement according to policies because some people were unable to access or work in nearby places. As a result, the people were unable to earn sufficient income. Moreover, public relations activities were conducted by an incompetent private sector, causing the local people to rarely benefit from such activities. In other words, more wastes were produced. Regarding the mentioned problem, Kline et al. (2015) explained that it could lead to disputes among stakeholders because investors are the only ones gaining the benefits. On the other hand, the local people are the ones facing pollution problems. Hence, it is recommended that communities should be involved in making tourism development plans together with the public sector in order to achieve mutual benefits.

By integrating a national tourism development plan in the development plan of Ayutthaya Historical Park, it was found that the tourism development strategy of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province supported the development in various aspects, including the conservation of cultural heritage, agricultural and industrial development, infrastructure improvement and improvement of the quality of life of the local people in order to create good living conditions among Ayutthaya people. Such sustainable development, however, may also lead to the following impacts resulting from the implementation of tourism development policy of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province:

2.1 Economic Impact

The tourism promotion should be done for all cities or provinces.

For instance, some countries specified the houses' colour or flowers. However, tourism promotion in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province simulated a model of other places, such as a floating market. Local culture promotion, which included food, drink, dancing, and textile, helped raise colourful conservative cities and added value (Seidl, 2014).

1) The employment rate in the industrial sector decreased, causing a larger number of unemployed workers. Many local people suffered from insufficient income while their debts increased. Hence, a Community Learning and Career Development Centre was established to promote participation within the community in forming various groups to help each other improve the labour skills demanded by the market.

2) The quality and the amount of household products or community products failed to reach industrial standards, resulting in marketing disadvantage. Therefore, the communities were encouraged to form various groups to help each other develop professional skills and improve the quality of their products, including promoting trainings to uplift the quality of local products in order to achieve the required standard and gain acceptance from customers, and allocating space for displaying and selling community products.

3) Agricultural products suffered from declining or unstable prices. This problem was solved by reducing cost of production, promoting the use of good quality but low cost raw materials and providing a place of distribution or mortgage for seasonal products in order to raise the quality of agricultural products.

4) Inconvenient transportation routes obstructed investments and trading. Thus, maintenance must be carried out to allow more convenient access and to improve the overall economy.

The Ayutthaya people should have adequate knowledge on the history and more understanding on tourism income. The tourism survey on income sources was needed for tourism promotion. According to a study by Cheer et al. (2015), social changes on tourism development can only be achieved by two factors, the local people and their cultural understanding. Moreover, community management, marketing, and product improvement

are needed concurrently in order to create and strengthen the conservation of community tradition.

Sinclair-Maragh et al. (2015) mentioned that public relations or support for tourism could lead to environmental or social problems or effects. For instance, if the number of tourists increased, the economic growth rate will also increase. This conforms to the survey results indicating that the mentioned problem also occurred in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province and led to urban expansion as well as other problems including those relating to waste, cultures and traffic jams. The effects of the environmental problems on communities and local people are not significant because these problems are normally found in big cities. The important problems are weak communities, the low participation of the local people and other problems, such as drugs and poverty. As a result, investors, not the local people, gain benefits.

2.2 Social Impact

1) Current social values had affected family relationships by making family members become more distant. As a result, families lacked warmth and morals that lead to proper social values. Therefore, family activities should be encouraged in order to build love and affection among family members and create proper values and instil morality among family members.

2) The problems of low quality and unequal healthcare services, as well as the lack of basic public health knowledge must be addressed by promoting equal and fully accessible healthcare services within the community, including providing basic knowledge regarding personal hygiene and public health.

3) The lack of life and property safety due to crimes and environmental pollution requires a stronger community. Accordingly, community involvement in maintaining public peace and order must be promoted by forming a community peace and order group to help regulate and maintain proper social organisation and prevent social problems such as drugs, crimes, gambling, hotels and entertainment places.

4)   Since there were many poor and underprivileged people

lacking proper social care and equal treatment, community welfare was therefore provided, including allowances for the handicapped, the elderly and HIV patients, and sports complexes to ensure that everyone has equal access.

5) Due to the increasing number of conflicts and complaints among the people, proper resolution must be formed in order to build stronger communities and eliminate conflicts within communities.

2.3 Impact on Natural Resources and the Environment

1) Since a large number of community members still lacked natural resources and environmental conservation awareness, community participation in natural resource management must be promoted and a co-management system must be developed between the public sector and local communities in conserving and restoring natural resources.

2) The expanding pollution and depletion of natural resources due to the increasing number of the population and economic expansion in the industrial sector, the transportation sector, as well as the tourism and service sectors have called the need for controlling the amount of household waste and industrial waste, including establishing programs that require the people to be responsible for their household waste.

3) Many tourist sites and public locations lacked proper landscape organisations and therefore required improvements. Also, awareness must be raised among communities regarding preserving the conditions of tourist sites.

4) Since many communities were suffering from infertile soil and riverbank areas were deteriorating, proper soil management must be promoted, including providing knowledge and training on the proper ways to utilise soil, and construct dams to prevent river bank deterioration.

5) As more historical places and their artefacts are destroyed by natural disasters and human acts, communities must be encouraged to take part in preserving these historical sites and the artefacts together with local administrative organisations and state organisations.

Mbaiwa (2011) stated in his research that changes in living conditions and lifestyle were the indicators of city culture. Abrupt

changes and new things might create living instability. For example, tourism planning should take into account urban context and the present way of life. Tourism promotion and development of the government should be done with the environmental conservation in the same time and concrete. Changing of agricultural society to industrial society for more improvement needed the social development along. For example, skill development and support, supporting morals in society. This was not different from the Ayutthaya tourism developing strategy, which required the environmental and historical place conservation. The community tourism was one of the strategies that should be supported by government and private sectors for sustainable development and a peaceful community. The people's welfare was one indicator of the completed tourism development (Jordan et al., 2015).

There were many specialists who suggested some problems or negative effects from tourism. Over the last 10 years, the tourism strategies have emphasized nature (Sukhothai, Lanna, and Lanchang). The tourism in Ayutthaya was not clear, just policy plans without committees and systematic coordination. The 10 years following, most of the people were merchants and private businesses; they were from other provinces. The local people were lacking income, and then they had to do jobs in other provinces. We could say that people made profit from commerce around temples, as most of the income came from industry not world heritage tourism. However, the government sectors were still creating infrastructure for tourism, which supported and responded to tourism. These should be encouraged to the natural tourism for direct advantages on local people, and also local tradition conservation. Nevertheless, the local tradition regression was found in the present, which was one problem of tourism development. Besides, the coordination between other departments was still lacking. Wang and Ap (2013) stated that the tourism concept idea development needed the explanation of factors affecting the operation of tourism policy, and experienced frameworks of local tourism. They were: (1) macroeconomic environment, preparation, the relationship between organisations, (2) structured coordination between organisations,

and (3) the influenced advantage group on tourism policy implementation. From the database that was explained and the analysis on national tourism strategy adaptation for Ayutthaya, the results demonstrated that the Ayutthaya tourism strategy emphasized many developments, which included cultural resources promotion and development, agricultural and industrial occupational development, infrastructure improvement, and promoting people's quality of life. These were created for welfare for Ayutthaya people. The Ayutthaya Historical Park was a very important site. To be successful on the tourism strategy, the park needed to develop the surrounding area. The development did not mean only for the environment or to be a famous park, but the surrounding people were needed to improve (Kim et al., 2013). The research found that the surrounding community of the historical park still had internal problems. They were lacking unity, the community lacked of consciousness, there was no group strength for the community, and the youth lacked self-development consciousness.

These problems were internal problems in the community, which were related to Sutawa's (2012) statement that the main obstacle of tourism development was community weakness – also the key to improvement. The individual or person problem should be solved first. If these problems are solved, other developments could be easily completed. Apart from individual obstacles, others problems were around-histori-cal-park problems, which needed to be solved: drugs, waste, or wasted water. If these problems were solved, other improvements and developments could easily be done as well, including occupation, cultural resources, or tourism. These would respond to the tourism strategy, which was created by the provincial government. Therefore, the developing or improving plan for the historical park needed corporation between individual and overall environment.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The Ayutthaya tourism strategy conformed to the national tourism strategy and could develop tourism; the tourism development would create positive and negative results at the same time. The tourism

improvement needed to also consider the impacts, such as waste. The current study has shown that the surrounding communities of the historical park have been faced with waste, an urgent problem that needs to be remedied. The waste could increase easily, especially when the tourism development was done and there would be many tourists, also producing large amounts of waste. The developing plan on the surroundings of the historical park needed to consider on all aspects for the most worthiness and least impact on the community in the future.

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