

## Creative Tourism Development Guidelines of Uthai Thani Province

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### Abstract

The objectives of this research were; 1) to study and analyze the province of Uthai Thani's potential for tourism; 2) to investigate and analyze communities that have the potential to develop creative tourism activities; and 3) to propose guidelines for developing creative tourism in Uthai Thani Province. This research employed the qualitative approach, utilizing site surveys, participation observations, and in-depth interviews with 40 key informants (Government sector, Private sector, Community, and Thai tourist). SWOT analysis and content analysis based on the concept of creative tourism theories were employed to analyze the data.

The result found that the variety of natural and cultural resources and the safety of travel are the strengths of the province's tourism potential. The lack of tourism professionals and expertise in tourism marketing are weaknesses. There are four communities that have the potential to develop creative tourism activities.

Making handicrafts, learning folk songs, and making local food are all examples of learning by doing activities that can be developed as guidelines for creative tourism activities for tourists. An ideal craft activity for tourists is making small and simple handicrafts. Entrepreneurs also need activity design and investment in activity creation. The community must study activities suitable for tourists and design learning points to do activities in the form of various learning bases. Activities to learn folk songs will have more interest from tourists. The community must develop contemporary music. There are activities that attract the new generation to be interested or worth learning along with the preservation of folk songs and there are other activities to learn along with singing folk songs. Local cooking activities should be conducted in homestays and select creative tourism activities specifically targeted at groups of active tourists. Collaboration between

accommodation and community to offer cooking activities for tourists in a timely manner that they can participate in. The community can manage activities for tourists through coordination from the accommodation.

**Keywords:** Creative Tourism; Tourism Development; Uthai Thani Province

## Introduction

Thailand has long been considered a popular tourism destination. Presently, Thailand has attempted to restructure the tourism industry in the country to support the dynamic of tourists that are more sophisticated than before. Nowadays, tourists are more concerned about the quality of the tourism experience and they expect to feel an authentic experience of the destination (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2022). Thus, the concept of creative tourism has been considered as a potential strategy and, then applied to the development of new tourism products in the country.

Nowadays, tourists are starting to turn their attention to creative tourism in order to understand the context of rural society, community life, and traditional ways of life. Because it is a form of tourism that most tourists are attentive to and is a pattern that is unique in the context of the hometown art and culture with a long history, the pattern has been adjusted according to the area to be in line with the community context (DASTA, 2018; Richards, 2021). This becomes a unique cultural element that cannot be created or fabricated by itself. Therefore, the Creative Tourism model is a form that allows tourists to play a creative role within the community. It also strengthens the community in a sustainable way by engaging in passionate experiences and activities using the learning process which can be expected to have a psychological value that will make a lasting impression on the minds of tourists. It also fosters a feeling of conservation of environmental resources. It is also a tourism approach that does not destroy the precious cultural heritage, which is the core of the community-owned Creative Tourism, without creating a burden on the lifestyle of the people in the community. (Richards et al., 2019).

In addition, Creative Tourism not only appears to be a good option in responding to new kinds of demand, but from human-oriented to human-based tourism, it also facilitates aspects of inclusion. It is important to think about tourism in a way that offers tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in local culture and learning

experiences. Reviewing local memories and practices can add value to the global experience by immersing tourists in the destination and local traditions and culture. (Costa et al., 2020)

Uthai Thani Province is known as a tourist destination with a variety of areas for tourism. There is an outstanding natural learning center at the UNESCO world heritage site. There are learning resources such as local wisdom and many important archaeological sites. They create values through cultural heritage and lifestyles that tourists can participate in and gain new experiences gained from travel. By creating stories, activities or products from local wisdom combined with tourists' imaginations it evolves into a new kind of tourism activity. It produces creative economic results that attempt to generate value from both economic and tourism dimensions. (Uthai Thani Provincial Office, 2021)

The Study of Creative Tourism Development Uthai Thani Province, can be used as a guideline for the Creative Tourism development of each tourist attraction. This will create a common understanding to upgrade or generate value to Uthai Thani Province with the concept of Creative tourism.

## Research Objectives

1. To study and analyze the province of Uthai Thani's potential for tourism.
2. To investigate and analyze communities that have the potential to develop creative tourism activities.
3. To propose guidelines for developing creative tourism in Uthai Thani Province.

## Literature Review

### 1. Concept about Creative Tourism

The term Creative Tourism was first coined by Crispin Raymond and Greg Richards in 2000 with a specific meaning that it is a type of tourism which offers visitors the opportunities to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken (Richards and Raymond, 2000).

Creative Tourism is a tourism development concept that balances communities, cultures and the needs of tourists to provide the opportunity for travelers to develop their creative potential through participation in educational activities, learning from actual experiences according to the characteristics of the targeted tourism area to be traveled. Creative Tourism is not the only

production of creativity, but there must also be a community participation process, that is, the community has to agree on the tourism activities, participate in the activities and receive the benefits that arise. The direct stakeholders of Creative Tourism activities are the tourism community owners and the tourists which will have to accept this new travel trend by bringing themselves into actual experiences at tourist attractions, practicing and learning together with people in the community. (Wurzburger, 2009; Richards et al., 2019).

Bakas et al. (2020) states that creative tourism has the following meanings:

1) Creative Tourism is a form of tourism that allows tourists or visitors to develop or utilize their own creative potential or abilities. By making a determined and committed involvement in methods and learning experiences which is something that is done on a regular basis by the people of that tourist attraction in which tourists volunteered to do or get involved.

2) Creative Tourism is the creation of activities or products based on local wisdom combined with tourists' imaginations to create new activities.

3) Creative Tourism tourists are not just viewers or observers of places, but are active in interaction or participation in activities with local people.

4) Creative tourism is the duty of tourists to adapt to their surroundings and use their knowledge to develop more expertise.

## **2. Concept about Travel and tourism Industry Components**

The five components of tourism are: 1) Attraction refers to the attractiveness of a tourist destination, which may be considered the uniqueness of tourist attractions' natural beauty, history, and tourism resources 2) Accessibility means the convenience of accessing tourist attractions may consider public transport, distance, and number of accessible routes, road conditions, safety, and convenience. 3) Tourism activities refer to activities that take place within tourist attractions where tourists participate with tourist attractions for entertainment, relaxation, and excitement, as well as to create experiences such as bird watching, hiking, nature studies, etc. 4) Amenity refers to equipment or places in tourist attractions that are intended to provide convenience to tourists, such as water supply, electricity, internet signals, police stations, hospitals, toilets, waiting areas, parking lots, etc. 5) Accommodation refers to a place to stay in a tourist attraction or close to a tourist attraction, which may be in the form of a homestay hotel, or resort, where tourists will consider the quality of accommodation and the convenience of accessing the services of that accommodation (Buhalis, 2000; Sittikarn & Jaima, 2009).

In addition, based on the literature review, the researcher used the concept of tourism components, the concept of creative tourism, in constructing the conceptual framework of the community survey, and tourism resource exploration. Related concepts and theories were used to analyze the potential of tourism as well as to analyze the guidelines for developing creative tourism in Uthai Thani Province. It was also used to set issues to create in-depth interview forms and focus group discussions, as well as to use as a guide for discussing research results.

### **3. Four tourist communities of Uthai Thani Province**

#### **3.1 Ban Pa Thung Ancient Style Woven Cloth Center, Ban Rai District**

Ban Pa Thung Ancient Style Woven Cloth Center is a center for traditional style textiles of Lao people who migrated to Thailand. Their weaving styles in Sinhs skirts, loincloths, bags and clothes to wrap around the Nak's head have been inherited over generations. Weaving was the traditional occupation of Ban Pa Thung women. It was a small activity of housewives who adapted the ancient hand-weaving style into modern clothing. With their delicate handicraft skill, they have made their handicrafts become very well-known. The group was initiated in 1995 by Thonglee Phumpol, the group's president who came up with the idea to create a group of agriculturist women that can create something during the free period after the harvest. The women's weaving group under the Royal Project was created. They produce textile products with domestic materials and sell these unique Ban Pa Thung style silk, clothing, and handicraft products. In 2002, Ban Pa Thung Ancient Style Woven Cloth Center was established to collect and sell textile products that are the works of the women's weaving group.

#### **3.2 Ban Sanum, Ban Rai District**

Ban Sanum was established as a village in 1923 and is situated in the Ban Rai Subdistrict, Ban Rai District, and Uthai Thani Province. During the time of King Rama III of Rattanakosin, around 1827, villagers from Sanum moved away. The Sanum people's ancestors are thought to have migrated to the present-day village location to settle, build homes, and escape the war at the time. Previously, Ban Rai Subdistrict was a rich wood. Wildlife is plentiful, and canals flow throughout the year. The land is fertile and suitable for grain crop cultivation and farming. The villagers of Sanum speak a Lao dialect that is close to Savannakhet in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and has an accent that is similar to that of Laos in Vientiane. As a result, it is believed that Laotians who may have migrated to a portion of Vientiane or Champasak are the Sanam people's ancestors.

### 3.3 Ban Tha Pho, Nongkayang District

Ban Tha Pho has nearby expressions and cultures that have gone down through the ages. Folk music performances are a draw for tourists to Ban Tha Pho. Folk songs have long been a reflection of the living conditions of the villagers and the rural society in which they can express their emotions. The existence proverb of the locals is near the real world. Folk songs have straightforward characteristics that are simple to comprehend immediately. Additionally, Ban Tha Pho's main draw is the wide selection of year-round seasonal dishes. The sweet and savory deck at Ban Tha Pho is a custom that dates back to ancient times and still serves as a distinctive way to welcome guests.

### 3.4 Ban Rong Nam Kaeng Community, Mueang District

Ban Rong Nam Kaeng Community is a significant ecotourism destination. This community is surrounded on two sides by a significant river in the province of Uthai Thani. The Sakae Krang River and the Chao Phraya River are on one side. The colors of the characteristics of the two rivers are distinct. The locals refer to them as "two-color river villages." The villager's lifestyle is also simple. The majority of the villagers' farm and raise fish in cages. Thus, residents in the space formed a gathering to raise confined fish at Ban Rong Nam Kaeng and enrolled as an OTOP bunch with the Branch of Local Area Improvement. The group's products, including Giant Gourami fish that are raised in cages and processed into a variety of products, have been jointly designed and processed by villagers.

## Conceptual Framework

This research was survey research. The researcher studied information from tourism resources, community context, and stakeholders both within and outside the community, such as the public sector, private sector, and tourists, and studied the relevant theoretical concepts. The research conceptual framework is detailed as shown in Figure 1.

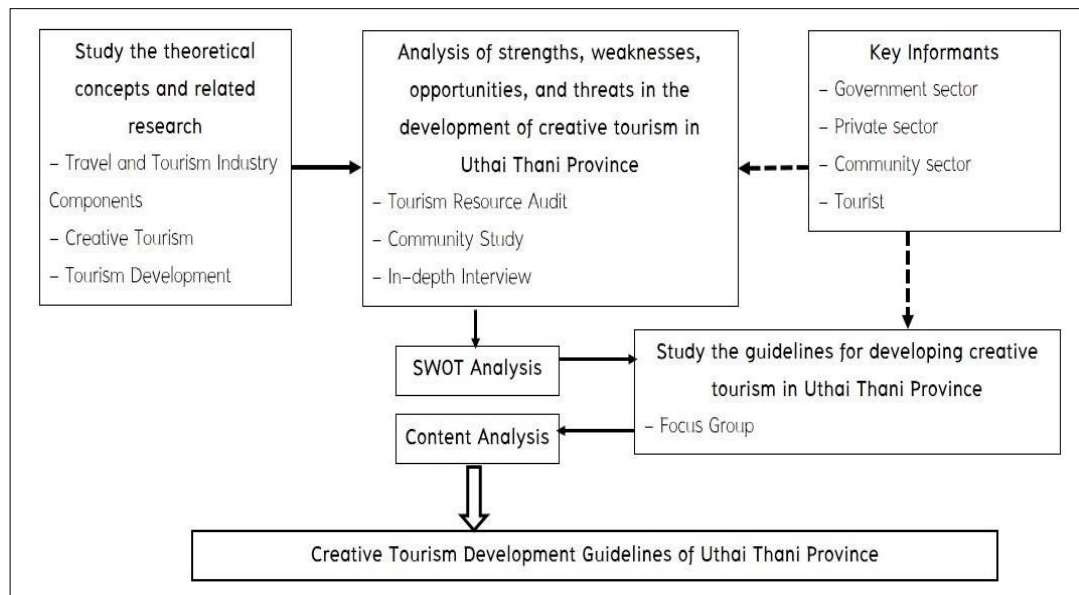


Figure 1: Research conceptual framework

## Research Methodology

This research employed methods to qualitative approaches. Including document reviews, field observations, in-depth interviews, and focus groups.

### Key informants

Forty key informants were selected using the purposive selection method from the account list, and snowball selection was applied to select the key informants who had the qualifications. The approach of Nastasi and Schensul (2005) was used to determine the number of key informants. Botterill and Platenkamp (2012) determined the in-depth interviews with 5 to 30 informants and a discussion group with 5 to 10 informants. The key informants are the local people, local experts, creative entrepreneurs, academics, tourism specialists, local government sectors, public and private sectors, and Thai tourists.

### Research Tools

The Semi-structured interview was applied to the interviews about tourism attractiveness potential, uniqueness of way of life, local wisdom and knowledge, the ability to continuously inherit local wisdom and knowledge, local communities involved in tourism management, the value of tourism resources, accessibility, tourism facilities and services, and Creative Tourism Development.

### Data Collection

The source of the primary data collection included the survey, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and focus group meeting. The sources of the secondary data included the documents and information about Cultural Significance, Creative Tourism, and Sustainable Tourism Development.

### Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analyzed by applying the content analysis approach, synthesized with the concept of Charmaz (2006), and summarized with the descriptive approach, which was the concept of Mills and Birks (2014), Grosseohme (2014), and Teherani et al. (2015).

## Research Results

**Objective 1** To study and analyze the province of Uthai Thani's potential for tourism.

To analyze the tourism potential of Uthai Thani Province, the researcher used a tool to analyze the internal environment and the external environment using the “SWOT” Analysis to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of tourism in Uthai Thani Province. By categorizing the components of tourism potential, consisting of 5 aspects, namely tourist attractions, accessibility, accommodations, amenities, and activities are as follows:

**Table 1:** shows Analysis results of SWOT in Uthai Thani Province

1.1 Attraction	
1.1.1 Strengths – Uthai Thani has cultural and natural resource diversity, including ethnic diversity of people such as Lao Khrang, Lao Wiang, Karen, Mon, and Khmu. – The charm of local people and their way of life. The local communities are still conservative in their way of life, friendly and robust.	1.1.2 Weaknesses – Lack of effective promotion strategies and management plans for developing tourism in the area. – Lack of tourism professionals or tourism marketing expertise among locals or some local businesses.
1.1.3 Opportunities –Tourists tend to travel to seek experiences or learn about culture with the community and want to participate in tourism with the community. –Government agencies at the national level to support creative tourism.	1.1.4 Threats –The development of tourist attractions in many places has to rely on budget support from government agencies.



<b>1.2 Accessibility</b>	
<b>1.2.1 Strengths</b> – Uthai Thani Province has many accessible routes. –It is easy to get to and from tourist attractions via the transportation routes that connect districts and attractions.	<b>1.2.2 Weakness</b> – Public transportation in Uthai Thani Province is still insufficient and does not support tourists who do not have their own cars, especially traveling between districts or traveling between various tourist attractions.
<b>1.2.3 Opportunities</b> – In rural areas, the government sector has constructed additional roads for tourist attractions.	<b>1.2.4 Threats</b> – Insufficient budget for basic infrastructure development.
<b>1.3 Accommodation</b>	
<b>1.3.1 Strengths</b> – Uthai Thani Province has a wide range of lodging options, and the number of new lodging establishments is currently on the rise.	<b>1.3.2 Weakness</b> – Uthai Thani Province does not have accommodation that can accommodate large tour groups.
<b>1.3.3 Opportunities</b> – The popularity of tourists nowadays tends to stay with experience the rural culture and community way of life is increasing and tourists want to participate in activities that are a way of life through learning by doing.	<b>1.3.4 Threats</b> – The economic circumstance and pandemic can reoccur.
<b>1.4 Amenities</b>	
<b>1.4.1 Strengths</b> – Tourists' and locals' safety, due to the low rate of crime, life and travel in Uthai Thani Province are extremely safe.	<b>1.4.2 Weakness</b> – Uthai Thani Province has small local restaurants. –There are neither large restaurants for tour groups nor restaurants that cater specifically to tourists.
<b>1.4.3 Opportunities</b> – The province has a policy of improving each district's infrastructure to better serve the public, including tourists.	<b>1.4.4 Threats</b> – Insufficient budget for basic infrastructure development.
<b>1.5 Activities</b>	
<b>1.5.1 Strengths</b> – Uthai Thani Province has a variety of activities for tourists who like lifestyle, nature, or make merit and traditional festivals such as Tak Bat Thewo and Flower Hang Festival. – Tourists can learn about the way of life, arts, and culture of ethnic groups, gain proficiency with the way of life and customs of the Uthai Thani Province. Doing things like cycling, singing folk songs, weaving, doing crafts, and activities related to local fish dishes.	<b>1.5.2 Weakness</b> – Lack of effective communication channels for marketing and presenting tourism programs to specific tourist groups.

1.5.3 Opportunities – The behavior of tourists has changed from just visiting the area to tourists wanting to learn and participate in activities to gain hands-on experience in tourism.	1.5.4 Threats – Tourism products and services in the nearby provinces share many of the same characteristics.
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**Objective 2** To investigate and analyze communities that have the potential to develop creative tourism activities.

The results found that there are four communities in the three districts of Uthai Thani Province that have the potential to promote the development of creative tourism activities as follows:

2.1 Ban Pa Thung Ancient Style Woven Cloth Center, Ban Rai District Because it creates a gathering to preserve the traditional weaving wisdom that has been handed down from the ancestors, this place has social value. Youth and interested individuals, both within and outside the community, have been taught the art of weaving by the community. This weaving group wants to preserve local knowledge by teaching demonstrations to young people and those interested in actual practice. In addition, Uthai Thani Province's ancient weaving fabrics have earned it a UNESCO prize, establishing its reputation. It is important to the province of Uthai Thani because it is a cultural capital with social value (Ministry of Culture, Thailand, 2021).

This place has economic value because it produces local fabrics that are worn and used in homes to raise OTOP products, earning the villager's income and establishing a reputation (Uthai Thani Provincial Office, 2021). The villagers' weaving is seen as important to the economy. The creative economy is an economic development driven by cultural heritage capital. Moreover, villagers produce woven fabrics and add value to a variety of products, including mobile phone cases, pillows, and bags. Tourists can learn about weaving, dyeing, cotton spinning, and cooking local food, among other interesting activities.

## 2.2 Ban Sanum, Ban Rai District

It is a valuable social community. Because organizing local traditions is the pride of people in society. It is the center of the minds of people in society, which causes the cooperation of people in the community when organizing activities. Whether it is the preparation of offerings, cooking, and cooperation in following the traditions. These reflect the community's unity and ties since ancient times. The variety of local food in the community is another culture that has been passed down from the ancestors. Food is a cultural heritage that has been handed down from the

past to the present. Food culture means food according to the beliefs, values, way of life, and knowledge of each society. There are both the science and the art of food in each society. Local food is like the customs and traditions of people's behaviors in society that have been adhered to in every step of food and are shaped by the experiences and skills of people from generation to generation and passed on to their descendants.

This community is valuable to the economy. Because of its outstanding traditions, arts, and culture, as well as its well-known natural attractions, Sanam Village was chosen by the Provincial Community Development Office to be "OTOP Navatviti Village of Ban Rai District." Activities that tourists can do in the community such as learning about local food (Lao Wiang and Lao Krang food), cooking local food, learning about weaving, dyeing, and cotton spinning, and observing the community's way of life (Ministry of Culture, Thailand, 2021).

### 2.3 Ban Tha Pho, Nongkayang District

This community is well-known for its lovely dialect, folk songs, local cuisine, and annual festival (Uthai Thani Provincial Office, 2021). Social values are also reflected in these cultural capitals because they encourage community unity. The language, speech, and pronunciation of folk songs are one of a kind, as are their aesthetic value. What's more, it has instructive worth since it makes new dialect learning and multifaceted correspondence. They were written by members of the community, folk songs still have social value because they can teach new generations about the values of the past and prepare them to pass them on. Folk song learning activities may contribute to promoting Thailand's folk art and culture to the world. Tourists can do activities in this community that are learning to sing folk songs and joining in the fun and dancing according to the melody of Tha Pho folk songs.

### 2.4 Ban Rong Nam Kaeng Community, Mueang District

The community has a Geographical Indication (GI) Giant Gourami fish, indicating that it is a product of that geographic origin and demonstrating to buyers its quality and characteristics as a result of the combination of natural factors (Uthai Thani Provincial Office, 2021). As a result, this community has economic value. Utilizing the expertise of the workers in the production area, a product with distinctive characteristics is produced. By registering under a geographical indication mark, the Giant Gourami fish is processed into a community product that also generates income for the community and has been passed down through the community.

Because it is the local way of life of the people of Uthai Thani, who live along the Sakae Krang River, this community also has social value. Individuals locally participated in bringing fish up in confines. It is regarded as traditional wisdom and an adaptation to the setting in which the villagers lived throughout time (Uthai Thani Provincial Community Development Office, 2021). Tourists can observe the Giant Gourami fish farming in cages, participate in cooking activities using Giant Gourami fish, or take a boat trip to see how the riverside community lives.

**Objective 3** To propose guidelines for developing creative tourism in Uthai Thani Province.

From a survey study and in-depth interviews, information regarding the tourism potential of Uthai Thani Province was obtained. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses regarding community potential in Uthai Thani Province. Including analyzing information about communities based on the concept of creative tourism, revealing communities that have the potential to develop creative tourism activities, and leading to guidelines for the development of creative tourism in Uthai Thani Province. Guidelines for developing creative tourism activities of Uthai Thani province can develop activities in three types of creative tourism activities in four communities as follows:

### 3.1 Creative tourism and handicraft activities

A suitable activity for tourists is making small, simple handicrafts. Entrepreneurs also require event design as well as investment in the creation of events (Richards, 2021). In addition, the community must study activities suitable for tourists. Designing learning points to do activities in the form of various learning bases. Creative tourism activities about handicrafts in Uthai Thani are activities that tourists can do, but the community needs to be well-planned and organized, as Interviewee 1 said:

*“It is possible to develop activities, but doing so will likely require a significant investment. There are woven materials that can be used for weaving work because the costs must be invested in the loom. In the event that it's a little piece of work, it tends to be finished. There must be activities to do throughout the day if weaving-related activities are to be done. For instance, begin cutting, sewing, and practicing sewing early in the morning. The afternoon may begin with experiments in weaving and dyeing. All of these things can be done, but they all depend on our budget and the money we have.”*

Moreover, it should be a simple handicraft-making activity that does not take long. It is the ability to make that piece of craftsmanship and bring that piece home. The making of small items is suitable for creative tourism activities such as handicrafts in Uthai Thani because handicrafts are woven fabrics, which weaving is a difficult task that must be adapted to suit

activities and tourists. Another consideration is that most craft-specific tourists are women, which may be activities that communities or entrepreneurs of creative tourism activities must consider. Additionally, Interviewee 2 provided the interesting comment that:

*“The woven fabric can be processed, perhaps into a bag that has already been made, and then the keel can be sewn on. By making satchels, earrings, bracelets, and lanyards out of woven fabrics, the workpiece becomes easier to make and takes less time. Take into account, for instance, the behavior of the majority of Thai tourists, who are extremely interested in this kind of activity for particular groups. The activity ought to allow for the workpiece to be brought home for completion. In the event that the work on the fabric is not finished and the tourists only have a short amount of time, they can be proud of their own work and gain knowledge of the local culture because they took part in the activities.”*

Therefore, the guidelines for the development of creative tourism activities related to handicrafts in Uthai Thani Province in which the tourism community must learn and develop activities in line with the behaviors and needs of current tourists by creating benefits for the community both in terms of income distribution and preservation of local wisdom.

### 3.2. Creative tourism activities with folk songs

This activity will have more interest from tourists. The community must develop contemporary music. There are activities that attract the new generation to be interested or worth learning along with the preservation of folk songs and there are other activities to learn along with singing folk songs, as Interviewee 3 said:

*“Community has to be creative on its own. Apply, add the beats, add raps, and alternate between folk songs and raps. Alter the lyrics to speed up some of the beats and go back to folk songs as before. The format needs to be changed in some way to make it more interesting. To make the lyrics more up-to-date, take the happenings in the country and in the world right now and incorporate them into the lyrics. Make it interesting and encourage the audience to watch along with you.”*

Folk songs may be performed on the walking street to make it more known to locals and tourists. In addition, there ought to be a stage where folk songs can be performed at important events in Uthai Thani Province or where folk songs can be brought to perform at various seminars that are held there by the government and private organizations. This is done to preserve the community, increase outside participation, and encourage more people to visit. Additionally, Interviewee 4 provided the interesting comment that:

*“If it would be interesting, folk songs could be performed on the walking street. For instance, with assistance from Khemmarat District, every Saturday at 6:00 p.m., they will bring a traditional Lao dance to show tourists in Khemmarat District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. Similar to Phu Thai dancing, there was road blocking and row dancing. Most likely, volunteers made up the fifty people who came to perform. We only saw it because we didn't pay much attention to it and were reminded that Khemmarat Walking Street hosts local performances. That's good, I think because it educates us and encourages trading. It would be beneficial to make it memorable for tourists. Uthai Thani might utilize the Khemmarat technique to play out certain exhibitions.”*

The number of tourists visiting Ban Tha Pho will rise if the community is connected to tourist routes that connect Muang District and nearby districts or if new tourist attractions are built nearby. In addition, the development of creative tourism activities must be based on the community and the behavior of the people in the community without causing too much chaos and changes in the community's way of life.

### 3.3. Creative tourism activities related to food

The development of food-related creative tourism activities. The following are two areas in which tourism-related activities can be developed.

#### 3.3.1 Ban Rai District

Cooking activities can be learned through the process of picking vegetables, cooking food, doing activities in areas where they are held in the community. Additionally, Interviewee 5 provided the interesting comment that:

*“Activities that tourists can participate in. When we cook, we set up a homestay so that tourists can see how this ingredient is used. After a walking activity to explore the betel nut garden, eating fermented fish must be like this. We will show tourists local vegetables and explain to them that this vegetable must be eaten with food like this. This is how this jaew is eaten with this vegetable. Tourists can participate in community activities like natural prostate gland dyeing, weaving or tie-dyeing. We will inform the tourists of the cost, such as how much this activity costs per person and how much food costs per person. How much does it cost per person to be a speaker for one base? How much does each person pay for homestay? The community provides tourists with information about the location, activities, and costs of their stay.”*

Local cooking activities should be conducted in homestays and select creative tourism activities specifically targeted at groups of active travelers (Learning activities and doing activities with local communities), as Interviewee 6 said:

*“Activities for learning about Lao Krang's local food. I think the activity is fun. It ought to be planned as a learning activity or to establish homestay-specific activities. In a small homestay, vegetable picking is being done about this way of life. It is a homestay in the community where tourists can make their own rice and chili paste with the help of the owner or other members of the community. Participants in these activities must have a genuine interest in the group or even the homestay. Because people who do not like to sleep in homestays have also done so, it must be someone who really enjoys sleeping there. People will experience simplicity or a simple way of life in this day and age, I believe. Because Uthai Thani is also close to Bangkok and has equally stunning scenery as the north, tourists may stay in a homestay for two days”.*

Moreover, compiling stories together and story-telling about food and local ways of life that lead to activities. It's important to have a story to tell during the activity. In order for the activities to take place, they need to be designed in a way that is appropriate.

### 3.3.2 Mueang District

Engaging in activities at homestays or in the Ban Rong Nam Khaeng community is an interesting alternative. Communities should receive advice and assistance in developing activities or stimulating and motivating the community to organize creative tourism activities to generate additional income through budget support from government agencies and related agencies.

Communities or entrepreneurs that offer activities related to local cooking must develop a marketing story using the storytelling of the Sakae Krang River and the Giant Gourami fish in the river leading to food and activities with tourists. The activity should be a simple fish dish that doesn't take long to complete the activity. Creative tourism activities should take place in Uthai Thani since there is no serious action yet, which may be another option for Uthai Thani tourism in the future. In addition, doing activities in the accommodation area will help extend the stay of tourists, helping to increase income for the community. Additionally, Interviewee 7 provided the interesting comment that:

*“Uthai Thani should be able to develop learning activities about Giant Gourami fish in Mueang District, starting with the farming, processing, and cooking of Giant Gourami in the city's Sakae Krang Riverside community (Floating house community) and another community near an Ban Rong Nam Khaeng where Giant Gourami are raised. Fish processing, tourists can participate in learning activities like cooking rice or preparing raw materials in a homestay-style setting. Another thing tourists can do is arrange for learning by doing and by coordinating with their lodgings or homestays.”*

In addition, Cooking activities are suitable for family groups. Cooking activities should be done in resorts or homestays. May be made into a travel package and have a suitable travel time. There is an interesting incentive for tourists to want to participate in activities and make simple food menus for tourists, as Interviewee 8 said:

*“During the holidays, a family activity might be to cook. I believe cooking is better for a family. Because cooking becomes more enjoyable when everyone works together. Similar to when we go camping, we enjoy doing activities and cooking together. Vegetable gardening and catching Giant Gourami fish are possible applications if adapted for use in Giant Gourami-related activities.”*

If tourists have limited time or only two hours, we can easily and efficiently participate in cooking menu activities by choosing ones that can shorten the process. For instance, local cooking instructors have already created three menus, and tourists visit to create one or more menus, possibly by making chili paste to familiarize themselves with the ingredients. Make it look good to tourists that they made this menu. It ought to be yet another intriguing alternative that is appropriate for the conduct of Thai tourists.

It is important to create creative tourism activities by telling stories about the floating house community's way of life, fish farming, the river's environment and quality, and where local food comes from. Moreover, one key to creating creative experiences is to let them create their own narratives and use their own imagination (Ali et al., 2016)

## Discussions

### Creative Tourism Activities

The development of creative tourism requires three basic components: 1. Communities already know that their communities have cultural capital or tourism resources for tourists, which these communities have: local food, local crafts, and folk songs that can be created as activities for tourists to do in the community. Then, 2. The community has to think about further development on how to use cultural capital or their own resources to create learning, doing activities for tourists, and 3. What activities will the community allow tourists to do that are related to the way of the community? (Richards, 2009, 2020; Richards, & Duxbury, 2019; Bakas et al., 2020).

Creative tourism requires an effective exchange of experiences, knowledge, and skills among participants, and tourists participate in events that also involve the communities.



(Cabeça et al. 2020; Muhamad et al. 2021). The design of creative tourism activities for tourists must contain all 4 key elements as follows:

1. Creative Tourism Activities of Uthai Thani Province Tourists will participate in cooking activities, handicrafts, and folk songs (Active participation).
2. Tourists use their creativity to cook their own food, design their own handicrafts, and sing folk songs, activities that tourists have never tried before (Creative self-expression).
3. Tourists will learn about the history of the activities they choose to do, and learn new skills in doing activities (Learning).
4. The community participates in all creative tourism activities because the community designs and participates in activities with tourists (Community engagement).

three types of creative tourism activities in Uthai Thani Province share the following six important characteristics (Richards, 2009)

1. The three creative tourism activities enhance tourists' skills in cooking, handicrafts, and learning to sing folk songs. Traditional crafts and handicrafts, gastronomy, and dancing are all examples of creative tourism's creativity base. (Richards, & Wilson, 2006; Ali et al., 2016).

2. Activities for cooking, handicrafts, and learning folk songs. All are hands-on activities that use hands-on learning skills and gain hands-on experience with local culture gained through participating in creative tourism activities. Moreover, Blapp and Mitas (2017) pointed out that gaining hands-on experience allows tourists to break free from life management frameworks and can create spaces for new experiences based on their own interests. According to Ali et al. (2016), tourists have the opportunity to learn something new while also engaging with local culture to provide a unique experience. Allowing tourists to develop their own narratives and draw on their own potential for imagination is one key to developing creative experiences. Tourists expect authentic lifestyle experiences, not staged or recreated. Tourists want to see or learn about the heritage inherited from the past in tourist attractions, which also offer opportunities for tourists to collaborate on activities or goods. Including the possibility of learning from and interacting with locals. Additionally, tourists should be invited to participate in activities that are part of the locals' everyday lives, such as weaving, farming, or handicrafts (Srijongsang, 2018; Wongmanee & Wongsaroj, 2021).

3. All three types of creative tourism activities are activities that involve bringing local knowledge, which is an intangible tourism resource, to be shifted and further developed into activities for tourists. Activities for cooking, crafting, and learning folk songs. It refers to the

expansion of tourism-related activities by adding value to the community's existing cultural costs by expanding tourism-related activities in which tourists participate. Each community has its own unique set of resources from which to derive these three types of activities. Bringing the community's products into other tourism activities besides just being a product for tourists to buy means more income for the community and more money is distributed to it (Lekhakula et al., 2021).

4. Food, handicrafts, and folk songs are the three types of creative tourism activities that are related to the community's day-to-day life. Food that is consumed on a daily basis by members of the community is referred to as local food. Cloth is actually used on a daily basis, and weaving is a local skill. In the community's important day celebrations, folk songs are truly sung and danced to. Food, handicrafts, and folk songs are all living cultures which in the context of Creative Tourism refers to cultures that have inherited the original and reconstructed culture that can be blended with contemporary culture, national culture, popular culture, and local culture all in harmony. (Blapp & Mitas, 2017; Chuenpraphanusorn et al., 2018).

5. Tourists can participate in activities with the local community through the three creative tourism activities, such as cooking with the community, making crafts with the community, and learning folk songs with the community. In addition, Blapp and Mitas (2017) described that the heart of Creative Tourism is the interaction between tourists and destinations. Interactions between hosts and guests that foster creative potential and new skills are regarded as meaningful by both tourists and locals. During creative tourism activities, hosts and tourists share ideas and get to know each other better. This gives tourists a real sense of the area where they are doing the activities. Tourists are able to get a feel for the authenticity of the community's cultural assets and activities thanks to their access to the area (Richards, 2014; Pimenta et al., 2021; Manirochana & Nambuddee, 2020).

6. In order to establish a distinct identity for tourist attractions, it is a type of tourism that must be distinguished in terms of tourism resources. Because tourists want new experiences that are different. One aspect of the creation of creative tourism activities is the distinctive identity of the activity or community in comparison to other locations in Thailand. Local food, which is a geographical indication and a highlight that can be further developed into a creative tourism activity, sets Uthai Thani Province apart from other provinces (Wongmanee & Wongsaroj, 2021; Hung et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2013). Cooking Gourami is a local cooking activity that is different from other provinces because Gourami is a Geographical Indication Product, which is a local

product. Unlike other places, there is a way of life along the Sakae Krang River that is used as an area for creative tourism activities in terms of local food. These distinctive features can be developed into Creative Tourism.

### **Tourism Potential of Uthai Thani Province**

Uthai Thani Province has a variety of natural resources and cultures. There are natural world heritage sites as well as traditional festivals that can attract tourists of all ages to travel or do activities in this Province. This province has a diversity of flora and fauna as well as a diversity of ethnic people. Local people have a simple lifestyle. It is a livable city with the charm of the diverse people of Uthai Thani. It conformed to Buhalis (2000), Morrison (2020), Chuaybumrung (2009), Pelasol et al. (2012), Intrakom (2010), Jittangwattana (2005), and Rojanasoonthorn (1999) stated that attraction means tourism resources that can attract tourists to travel, such as attractions in the category of natural attractions, and attractions in the category of culture and traditions. The availability of tourist attractions in providing tourism services to tourists is the attractiveness of the place. The main influencing factors of tourism are based on the location and characteristics of the attraction to tourist demand. Uthai Thani province has a number of cultural and natural resources that can entice tourists to visit.

Uthai Thani Province's public transport system still needs to be developed to accommodate more self-traveling tourists as a component in improving the tourism potential of the province which conformed with Suriyawon et al. (2021), who examined the Communication for Creative Tourism Development through Community Participation and found that another strength of the tourism community's potential is its accessibility to tourist attractions. Furthermore, this was in line with the research of Jakawan and Wongsaroj (2021), which found that the fundamental value of the convenience of traveling to tourist destinations and creative tourism destinations is referred to as creative functional value.

The safety of Uthai Thani Province revealed that the province is extremely safe and travelers can travel safely. According to Boonyaphak (2007), Buhalis (2000), Morrison (2020), Chuaybumrung (2009), Pelasol et al. (2012), Intrakom (2010), and Rojanasoonthorn (1999) described that amenity refers to things that are arranged to provide benefits and convenience to tourists such as restaurants, beverages, souvenir shops, electrical systems, water supply, telephones, maps, internet, interpretation, tourist information centers, and safety for life and property.

Safety when traveling in Uthai Thani is the highlight of the amenities that most tourists mention when traveling to Uthai Thani relating to Buaban and Srisawang (2018) mentioned that the safe environment is an important factor in encouraging creative tourists to visit. Furthermore, this was in line with the research of Jakawan and Wongsaroj (2021), which studied the Characteristics of Creative Tourism Expected by Tourists of Creative Destinations in Thailand and found that safety in tourist destinations is an important issue for creative tourists as well as all gatherings of travelers who hope to be protected consistently while staying or participating in creative tourism activities.

This result conformed with Chokpreedapanich (2020), who examined the Capabilities Development of Creative Tourism in Area of Thai Song Dam Ethnic Group, Phetchaburi Province and found that Guidelines for promoting creative tourism in the community consist of five elements, namely tourist attractions, accommodations, facilities, activities and accessibility to tourist attractions and consistent with the research of Junead et al. (2018) found that Guidelines for experiential tourism development consists of seven elements: tourist attractions, accessibility, accommodation, facilities, touristic activities, community participation, and management.

Furthermore, the potential of tourism development in all five elements is an important fundamental element in the development of creative tourism which is consistent with the research of Sungsuwan (2018) found that the guidelines and strategic plans that are appropriate for the management of creative tourism depend heavily on the involvement of local stakeholders. To give them a sense of ownership over creative tourism activities, accommodation operators, restaurant owners, transportation providers, government offices, and tourism associations must have a forum to voice their opinions.

#### **Community potential in developing creative tourism activities**

Presenting the way of life and living culture for tourists to learn about ethnicity is an appropriate activity for creative tourism activities related to handicrafts in Ban Rai District. Because Ban Rai District is an area where the Lao Krang and Lao Wiang ethnic groups still have their ways of life, culture, festivals, and traditions, which is consistent with the research of Buamrungsilp (2022), who examined A Model of Creative Tourism Development for Cultural Preservation of Lao Krang in Kud Jok, Chinat Province and found that for the tourism behaviors, it was indicated that most of the tourists travelled to Lao Krang community because they would like to join and study its traditions and cultures. Moreover, Handicrafts are historical items that use fabric to tell the story of making a piece of work. It is a work of art with social value because it is valuable local wisdom

that reveals the community's identity and tells the community's story through craftsmanship. Handicrafts are jobs with economic value because they bring in money for the people involved and the community, which is consistent with the research of Angkurawacharapan and Saowapawong (2018), who discovered that the cultural significance of the Handicraft groups has value of cultural significance as Historic value, Aesthetic value, Social value, Scientific Value/ Education Value, Economic Value, Spiritual Value, and Rarity and Unique Value. In addition, making handicrafts and participating in activities with hosts and tourists enhances locals' understanding of their surroundings and contributes to the community's income generation (Richards, 2014).

Ban Tha Pho Community has a variety of songs that tourists can learn. There is a community conservation group that organizes activities for tourists. There is an exchange of knowledge along with the preservation of local wisdom, which is consistent with the research of Laophuangsak et al. (2023), who found that creative tourism activities can contribute to the preservation of local wisdom by creating a learning activity base in various forms to create knowledge, understanding, and exchange of knowledge along with the preservation of local wisdom. But the Ban Tha Pho community still wants the new generation of youth to be the inheritors of this local art and culture. The community needs the development of creative cultural messengers and presents folk songs in a form that is relevant to the present and attracts tourists to visit the community, which is consistent with the research of Popichit (2020), who found that the community must develop cultural messengers who are proficient in telling stories and explaining activities. They must be well-versed in local wisdom, creative, and skilled in applying the original identity and presenting it in an interesting way that fits with the current environment.

#### **Guidelines for developing creative tourism in Uthai Thani Province**

Creative tourism activities of Uthai Thani Province reflect the authenticity of local art and culture existing in the local community and can lead to development into activities such as local food, and handicrafts, which is consistent with the research of Hongsuwan and Sritharet (2022), who found that people describe themselves or present their identities, local groups or ethnicities through such cultural information as myths, performing arts, plays, costume, basketry, traditions, rituals, food, music and tools. These are all cultural mechanisms that have been used to show the identity of the people to differentiate 'us' from 'the others'. Moreover, to create a creative tourism activity in food, it is important to have a story to tell the story of food for tourists. To create an understanding of creative tourism activities that are food that tourists do in order to exchange knowledge and gain authentic experiences, which is consistent with the research of Supun et al.

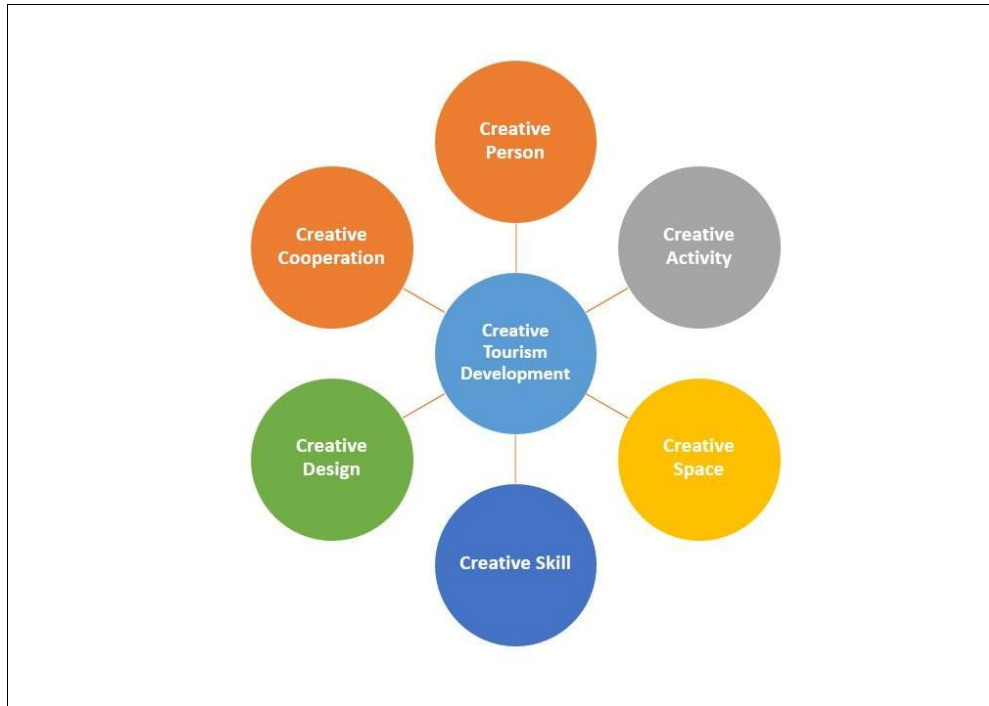
(2022), who found that developing or utilizing local knowledge can be carried out in 3 ways: 1) creating a short story or tale, 2) developing a creative tourism activity, and 3) creating a tale while taking a tour of the place or leading an activity.

Activities for crafting, learning traditional songs, and cooking. Participating in creative tourism activities enables participants to gain hands-on experience with local culture and use hands-on learning skills in all of the activities. Food, handicrafts, and folk songs are the three types of creative tourism activities that are related to the community's day-to-day life. Food that is consumed on a daily basis by members of the community is referred to as local food. Cloth is actually used on a daily basis, and weaving is a local skill. In the community's important day celebrations, folk songs are truly sung and danced. (Kaewsanga & Chamnongsri, 2012). Moreover, culinary activities also allow tourists to experience authenticity. It is an experience where tourists can learn by doing and creative activities can help create a good image of a tourist destination (Bestari et al., 2022). Making handicrafts and participating in activities with hosts and tourists enhances locals' understanding of their surroundings and contributes to the community's income generation (Richards, 2014). Creative tourism activities provide a one-of-a-kind experience for tourists by giving them the chance to learn something new and interact with local culture.

The most crucial factor in the development of creative tourism activities in Uthai Thani Province is the process of planning and designing them. Uthai Thani Province needs to make cooperation between tourism communities and tourism entrepreneurs in developing and designing creative tourism activities that are suitable for the province.

### **Knowledge from research**

There are many important components in the development of creative tourism, including people, activities, skills, cooperation between related departments, creative space, and activity design. But the most important components for the development of creative tourism activities in Uthai Thani Province are: 1. Designing creative tourism activities for tourists and 2. Creative space for creative tourism activities that are appropriate and encourage an atmosphere of creative thinking. Knowledge about creative tourism development approaches is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** The components of creative tourism development

There are details of the components of creative tourism development guidelines as follows.

- Creative Person: People in the community (host).
- Creative Activity: Cooking, crafting, and learning traditional songs.
- Creative Space: Areas in the community or areas of creative tourism entrepreneurs.
- Creative Skills: Cooking, crafting and learning the performing arts.
- Creative Design: Designing activities suitable for the extension of local wisdom and the needs of tourists.
- Creative Cooperation: Coordinating with community, entrepreneurs, private sector, government sector, and tourist.

## Conclusion

From this research, activities for cooking, crafting, and learning traditional songs are found. It refers to the expansion of tourism-related activities by adding value to the community's existing cultural costs by expanding tourism-related activities in which tourists participate (Duxbury, 2021). Each community in Uthai Thani Province has its own unique set of resources from which to derive these three types of activities. Bringing the community's products into other tourism activities besides just being a product for tourists to buy means more income for the community.

Moreover, it is important for creative tourism activities to have a story to tell, whether the food is made from raw materials, the handicrafts have stories about making cloth, or folk songs have been passed down from generation to generation. Creative tourism activities are another way to help preserve the community's cultural heritage by teaching the younger generation about the value of community resources. However, it is essential to inform the upcoming generation of what the community has and how they can use it to further develop themselves and generate income, as well as to preserve the community's local wisdom.

The development of community tourism as Creative Tourism places an emphasis on the creation of experiences between locals and tourists, beginning with the locals imparting their traditional wisdom to tourists. Additionally, tourists frequently produce works in novel ways. In order to develop their own works, the community needs to learn to collaborate with tourists and be open to new ideas. The community needs to be prepared to adjust to this.

## **Suggestions**

### **1. Suggestions for Usage**

1.1 The most crucial factor in the development of creative tourism activities in Uthai Thani Province is the process of planning and designing creative tourism activities.

1.2 In order for tourists to participate in creative tourism activities in a community or entrepreneurial area, there needs to be creative space available.

1.3 Uthai Thani Province have to make cooperation between tourism communities and tourism entrepreneurs in developing and designing creative tourism activities that are suitable for the province.

### **2. Suggestions for Further Research**

2.1 A study of the long-term tourism development plan of Uthai Thani Province, extending creative tourism to sustainable tourism.

2.2 A Study of Foreign Tourist Behavior and Development of Creative Tourism Activities in Uthai Thani Province.



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