

Development Of An Application To Locate The Community - Based Tourist Route: A Case Study Of Community Enterprises In Nakhon Si Thammarat

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Abstract: The community enterprises are the community-based organizations established to manage the community's capitals creatively. Each community enterprises have their own identities which need to be promoted. In Thailand, one of the community enterprises categories which grows potentially is the tourism community enterprise. Although community enterprises in Thailand are widely organized in every province there are still huge needs for the community's support in terms of promotion, product development, marketing, technology and more. Information technology is one of the tools to strengthen the communities. This study is to support the tourism community enterprises. It aims to develop an application to locate the community - based tourist route. The system development uses the Ionic framework as a tool to create the cross-platform mobile application. The Google map API with JavaScript and CSS are used for the map display on mobile devices. Tourists can use the application to plan for the community visit and get the communities' information easily which adds the service value of the communities. This would help the communities to link tourism to the community's products market as well. This study takes place in ten community enterprises in Nakhon Si Thammarat, a province of southern Thailand.

Index Terms: application to locate tourist route, community - based tourist route, community development, community enterprise, information technology for tourism, tourist route, tourist route locating application.

1 INTRODUCTION

The community enterprises are the organizations based on the community gathering in order to manage communities' capital which generate income for the communities. In Thailand, the community enterprises are established as either the product development group or service group depended on the identity of each community. Each group can be subdivided into many other subgroups, e.g., tourism community enterprise, agriculture community enterprise, medical community enterprise, mushroom community enterprise. As of September 2020, there are nearly 40,000 product development community enterprises and approx. 15,000 service group community enterprises in Thailand. Among them, there are 1,496 tourism community enterprises. In case there are some community enterprises gather together, the network of community enterprises will be established. The community enterprises in Thailand are supported by the people in community and also under the responsible of Agricultural Extension Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand. Nakhon Si Thammarat is a big province of Thailand. It is the most populated province in the southern Thailand. It is important economically, Society, politics and culture. The location is suitable for community setting. There are abundant natural resources. The main economy depends on agricultural production and trading. Nakhon Si Thammarat is also highly recognized for the city with a unique art and culture since ancient times. There are numerous community stories which are interesting and has both historical and cultural value. Nakhon Si Thammarat is a province with high tourism potential because of the complete geography for tourism, including mountains, seas, waterfalls, national parks, etc. It is perfect for ecotourism. Besides, it is famous for food, tradition, and lifestyle which is great for cultural tourism. But even with high potential Nakhon Si Thammarat has not fully utilized that potential. Therefore, there are still things that can be adjusted to expand the tourism in Nakhon Si Thammarat to grow and to be sustainable quality tourism.

Among the current travel managers, they are formed as a community enterprise and formed a large number of tourism community enterprises. Each location has unique and interesting activities based on the nature of the group. However, it was found that at the community enterprise level, information technology was used quite a bit. The communities take advantage of social networks such as Facebook or email correspondence. But most of them do not use information technology in any other way. There are various forms of technology such as Internet of Things, big data or cloud services. The use of that level of technology will lead to Smart tourism. However, the use of technology to support the activities of the community enterprises depends on the perception of the benefits and the readiness to apply the technology in the current context. The channel that can support community enterprises is to apply information technology to create a channel for disseminating information for the community by focusing on community-based tourism. By encouraging the community to create a community-based travel route that can be searched through mobile applications It will enable tourists to find travel route information according to their interests, with the information necessary for planning a complete trip. These day, in tourism industry, one of the factors for success is instead of waiting for tourists to come in. It should encourage the tourists to create a need to travel by providing information that tourists are interested in or providing information relevant to tourists in order to attract tourists. Thus, the objective of this research is to support community tourism enterprises in Nakhon Si Thammarat province to use information technology as a tool to promote community-based tourism management by developing an application to locate the community - based tourist route. This is to support the tourism with the identity of the community and the implementation of the Thailand 4.0 policy (Thailand economic model). It is to strengthen the knowledge management of the community by gathering the strength of the community and creating a clear community-based tourism route and to create channels for presenting community-based tourism routes of

the tourism community enterprises in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province for tourists to be able to search easily, conveniently and with complete information. It is an added value of service to the community.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This research project is focused on tourism community enterprises. It refers to tourism activities those are owned and operated by the community and managed or coordinated at the community level to ensure the well-being of communities through promoting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valuable society, culture and heritage resources, and natural resources [2]. We study the previous works to understand the problem of the community enterprises, the success factor of the potential community enterprise and the community-based tourism and the role of information technology for tourism. The main focus is the adaptation to the context of Thailand, Nakhon Si Thammarat in particular as our case study. Tourism in Thailand can be categorized into numerous types. In a study on types of tourism in Thailand, it suggests that Thailand has to work strategically to create new more types of tourism in order to be a leader in the Southeast Asian region [14]. We have found that there are more types of tourism offering to the tourist. The community enterprises also try to present their highlights creatively as we see many activities these days. The problem found with community enterprises is that the community enterprises have many products but the products have nothing new either the pattern or style. The products have neither variety nor uniqueness [3]. It is not surprised that the local traditional products are not recognized by customers. There was a study suggested that the government should focus on 3 development areas in order to develop potential community enterprise. First, the production development guideline which concerned about developing new generation leader, production and product standardization and production technology. Second, marketing development guideline which concerned about setting up product distribution center at all levels, developing product design, and supporting e-commerce and third, management development guideline, this is to promote industrial cluster and create community enterprise's knowledge management [13]. It is obviously seen that the community enterprises need some government support in order to achieve the communities goal. Another study of the guidelines to manage the community enterprises identifies the problems of community enterprises as internal management and lack of knowledge of management. It suggests that the government agencies should be a host of a free training program for the members of the community enterprises to have enough knowledge and skills to develop their communities [15]. A study about the factors that affect ICT adoption in developing countries suggests that two critical roles are the role of Small-Medium Enterprise (SME) leaders and the role of government as government leaders should act to ensure that SMEs have the adequate resources to succeed while leaders of SMEs should take action on the adoption of ICT in their organizations [12]. In the development strategy of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, 2014-2017, the vision of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province was set as "The city of civilization is pleasant to visit, agriculture and Sustainable industry ". By defining strategic issues On the development of tourism based on dharma, nature and art and culture [11], it can be seen that Nakhon Si Thammarat Province attaches great importance to tourism and has a focus on tourism

development in what is the highlight of the province. There was also a study on the emergence of community based tourism in Thailand, a case study of Mae Kampong, in Chiang Mai. The researchers showed that the success factors of the computer based tourism in Thailand were the fortunate geographical conditions, external support, and local leadership [10]. There is a study of community-based tourism model of OTOP(one tumbon one product) village champion in Ranong province, Thailand. It shows that to strengthen the community sustainably, the OTOP products development was applied in parallel with the development of the tourist attraction. It is an initiative creation of the community [16]. There is a perspective article about smart tourism towards ambient intelligent tourism. It concludes that technological innovations bring everyone together in tourism service ecosystems [2]. A research about the role of mobile technology in smart tourism described that mobile technology in tourism was related to sustainable tourism in which mobile technology provided various information such as the tourist used mobile devices to set routes to destination [9]. It is shown that the mobile application can help tourists to know the destination better. There was one study of using the mobile technology for tourism development: a case study of banyumas regency, Indonesia in 2018. The problem there is similar to the problem we face here in Thailand that the tourists do not know the areas because of the lack of information. The information on website is not updated wither. A location-based application was built to provide the tourism location [6]. In regard to the use of information technology in tourism There is a study of trends in the application of information and communication technology for tourism. The communities in Malaysia found that before the widespread Internet Public relations for tourist attractions must use the same media format. Community tourism is slow. As the internet became widespread, blogs were used, websites were used, and since 2010, Agoda apps and Facebook were used. In this study, they have pointed out that the barriers to action in Malaysia are that Malay-language websites restrict communication to the global marketplace. In the case of community tourism, there will be a nature of operation that is different from that of a hotel business, but there must be coordination in the community [5]. The internet usage status of Malaysia and Thailand is similar. We should also consider how the obstacles to the nature of community enterprise groups are effective. In this research, mobile applications will be developed for the community enterprises. It was found that the introduction of information technology to support tourism has been done in many countries and forms such as creating a mobile application to support tourism and measure the energy used to walk on mountain trails, collect GPS coordinates and develop an app in the Android platform [8]. Moreover, there is a study of E-tourism indicates that many traditional travel and tourism systems are being transformed into e-tourism system [7]. It is interesting that how fast the tourism industry forwards. But to compare with the community enterprises in Thailand, the level of information technology usage is not at that level. There is also a study that suggests three critical success factors for tourism system designing. They mention about the integration as a one-stop shopping experience, the customization to map the interest of tourists and the pro-activity which the system should create tourist's needs instead of being the choice for tourists to choose [7]. From the literature review above we have the ideas to support the community enterprises with the mobile application that

would help the communities with knowledge from their own knowledge base and ours.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to develop a mobile application to locate the community - based tourist route. This is to support tourism community enterprises in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. There are 85 tourism community enterprises in Nakhon Si Thammarat. The target group was planned for ten tourism community enterprises all across the province. The methods are as follows:

- 1) Conduct a basic study of tourism information of the target group of community enterprises. This process involves researching documents and sources such as the Internet to get the general information and look at the difficulty in obtaining information of that community enterprise. Then, the process proceeds to interviewing and collecting details of each tourist attraction.
- 2) Collaborate with the community to create a community-based tourism route that can show the identity of the
- 3) community and promote quality tourism in the community. This step is in consultation with the community to determine the outstanding tourism routes of the community. The meetings are set for members of the community enterprises to share their knowledge and opinions. The tourist routes can be multiple paths depend on the uniqueness of the communities. The tourist attractions may be the nature spots, spa or body massage or the food source with community special menu.
- 4) Analyze and design a system to create websites and mobile applications that show the travel routes of the communities within the target area. This step is to analyze the data of the tourist attraction presentations. Choose what to convey to tourists. Design the mobile-friendly screens and choose the development tools.
- 5) Collect the coordinates of the tourist route at each visiting point. This step is to collect additional information besides the interviews. Follow the actual tourist routes to collect coordinates of each location.
- 6) Gather information such as pictures, videos, stories from the community. This step is to gather information to be used in system development. Go to community enterprises to store more pictures, record videos, and collect stories from the community.
- 7) Develop and test the system. This step is the development of the system with the selected tools. Bring the data into the system
- 8) Install a system consisting of a community tourism enterprise showing information on community-based tourism routes. This step is to install the system up to the server so that it can actually run through the Internet. It can be used on mobile on both Android and IOS platforms.
- 9) Organize activities to transfer knowledge to the community. This step is to bring the prototype to each community enterprise for training. Thus, the users know how to use the system
- 10) Research findings and prepare documents. This process summarizes research findings and organizes

documents and recommendations

The project framework is display in figure 1.

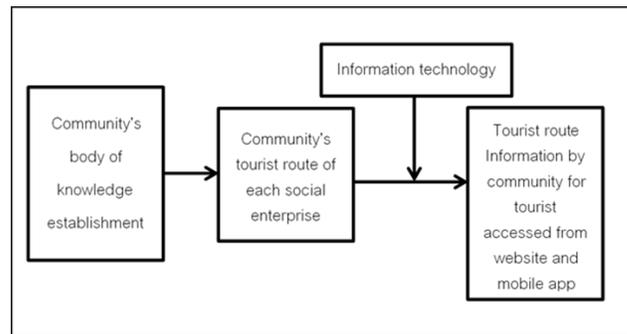


Fig. 1. Project framework

4 RESULTS

4.1 Community Information

We have collected information and travel routes of 10 community enterprises as follows.

- 1) Old city tourism community enterprise, Ratchadamnoen Rd., Muang district
- 2) Ban Laem Homestay, Thasala district
- 3) An upstream Klai ecotourism community enterprise, Noppitam district
- 4) Taled Bay Eco-Tourism Community Enterprise, Kanom district
- 5) Agricultural Tourism Community Enterprise, Sufficiency House, Hua Sai district
- 6) Tung Saeng Duen Community Enterprise, Community Products and Ecotourism, Muang district
- 7) Ban Nai Suan Community Enterprise, Promkiri district
- 8) Klong Dan Agricultural Tourism Community Enterprise, Hua Sai district
- 9) Royal Initiative Project Learning Center, Wang Ang sub-district, Cha-Uat District,
- 10) Saengviman Tourism Community Enterprise, Pakpanang district

Of all 10 community enterprises, 7 of them are joined together as the community enterprises network. They are Ban Laem Homestay, An upstream Klai ecotourism community enterprise, Taled Bay Eco-Tourism Community Enterprise, Agricultural Tourism Community Enterprise, Sufficiency House, Tung Saeng Duen Community Enterprise, Community Products and Ecotourism, Ban Nai Suan Community Enterprise, and Klong Dan Agricultural Tourism Community Enterprise. The rest three enterprises, Old city tourism community enterprise, Royal Initiative Project Learning Center, and Saengviman Tourism Community Enterprise, are operated as individual community enterprise. Working as a network strengthens the opportunity of all members of the network as they support each other. They share the information and connect as a network. It is beneficial for both tourists and network that tourists would have more information and more services while the network sends tourist to the members. In this study, we had the in-depth interviews with the 2 – 10 key persons of each community enterprises about the community enterprise's status, the tourist places in the areas, the tourist route, and the management of the community enterprises.

Most of the communities do not use information technology to help the operation. For example, in some community enterprise, if the tourists want to visit the places there they have to contact the coordinator of the community enterprise via telephone. The information would be provided upon request. However, every community enterprise understands the importance of using information technology to benefit the community. They are willing to adopt technology but still need more knowledge to use it. For example, one of the community enterprise has its own website but the villagers do not know how to update the information. Their website provides the wrong information for tourists. The proper channels to promote the community enterprises are needed such as website, Facebook page, Instagram, Line and other applications. The community enterprises' products/tourist spots and the channel to communicate with tourists are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES' DETAILS ON PRODUCT/TOURIST SPOTS AND THE ONLINE AVAILABILITY

Community Enterprises	Products/ Tourist spots	Tourist route available online	Website available	Facebook/ Social media available
a) Old city tourism community enterprise, Ratchadamnoen Rd.	Important temples, famous art craft, shadow puppet, accommodation service and local restaurants, etc	No	No	No
b) Ban Laem Homestay	Mud spa, local foods (Halal food), mulberry products, soap, fisherman lifestyle, and homestay	Yes	Yes	Yes
c) An upstream Klai ecotourism community enterprise	Natural trekking, white water rafting, hot spring, homestay, organic soap, and sacred spirit of Klai	No	No	Yes
d) Taled Bay Eco-Tourism Community Enterprise	Dolphin watching cruise, seaweed soap and serum, local food, tourist activities	No	No	Yes
e) Agricultural Tourism Community Enterprise, Sufficiency House	Combination of agriculture and culture, homestay, agriculture products, rice soap, crafts from coconut shells and shadow puppet	No	No	Yes

Community Enterprises	Products/ Tourist spots	Tourist route available online	Website available	Facebook/ Social media available
f) Tung Saeng Duen Community Enterprise, Community Products and Ecotourism	Bamboo rafting in the canal, Goat milk products, packaged coconut milk, goat milk soap and local food (Halal food)	No	No	Yes
g) Ban Nai Suan Community Enterprise	Homestay, tourist spots around the mountain in community way	No	No	Yes
h) Klong Dan Agricultural Tourism Community Enterprise	Khlong Dan market, which will cover two provinces, with Dan Canal is a natural boundary, homestay, banana soap, goat farm with great view, and morning cruise	No	No	Yes
i) Royal Initiative Project Learning Center, Wang Ang District, Cha-Uat District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province	Arranging activities to promote careers through knowledge development, technology transfer, study tour and demonstration	No	No	Yes
j) Saengviman Tourism Community Enterprise	Famous pomelo, route to see the pomelo plantation and cruise route in Khlong Bang Chak, and local food (Halal food)	No	No	No

From visiting the area to establishing tourism routes developed by the community it was found that all community enterprises have their own tourism routes that had been implemented. But they do not provide a clear route for tourists to access. The research team has confirmed the travel routes of each community to determine the most appropriate routes for tourists to search before they visit. In this regard, all tourist routes have been collected for the coordinates of tourist spots along the route in order to create applications.

4.2 System Architecture

The community - based tourist route app is developed to facilitate tourists. In providing directions for traveling to the community and interesting tourist spots of the community. This is to help the tourists able to access the tourist spots via mobile app. The Ionic framework are used as a tool to create

the cross-platform mobile application. The Google map API with JavaScript and CSS are used for the map display on mobile devices

System development process:

- 1) Planning: starting with a feasibility study, define user group, consider the budget for the implementation of the plan, and operating time.
- 2) Collect and analyze needs: define the problems and conditions of the users to know. Study the current operation and requirements of new systems. Enter the area to collect the coordinate information of tourist spots in each area. Collect the stories of the community interviewing villagers in the community.
- 3) Design: use the information collected above to design the system to meet the needs of user, design a database structure system, screens (User Interface) that display results in order to meet the needs and benefit of the community most.
- 4) System development: use Ionic Framework, a tool used to create mobile applications that can be used on iOS, Android and Windows operating systems.
- 5) Testing and implementation: test all functions to ensure the system to work properly and accordingly to the requirements
- 6) Maintenance: maintain the database, backup system, and update the system.

The community - based tourist route locating app system architecture is designed as shown in figure 2.

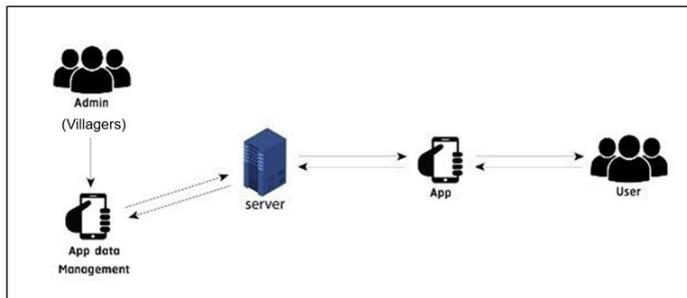


Fig. 2. System Architecture

The community - based tourist route locating app is developed to be able to display results with mobile platforms such as mobile phone and tablet. It runs as a cross platform app on both android and iOS. There are two user groups. First, tourists use the Application when visiting the community. View route information Tourist spots within the community and navigation information to that tourist spot. Second, the villagers act as a system administrator to keep the community tourism information up-to-date. The work process is to let the villagers' login to add, delete, and edit route information, tourist spots and details of tourist attractions via the application for both mobile devices and computer. Then the information will be added to the server. When tourists come to visit the community in that area, search for tourist attractions. Tourists will be provided with information on tourist routes. They can travel to tourist spots through the introduction of the application along with information about the history and community stories of the travel spot.

4.3 Community - Based Tourist Route locating app

This application is implemented for each community enterprises. The administration can add or edit the community information to provide the update information for tourist. The application is implement and available on Google store. Community enterprises can advise the tourists to use their app to get the tourist route and the tourist points along the route with the communities' story.

The features of the application are as follows:

- 1) Tourist route: Tourist can search for the tourist routes of the community enterprise. The search output will show the details of the route such as the distance of the route. Time required in order to complete the route. There are the pictures of the tourist spots which can be shown in details of each spot.
- 2) Community's story: Tourist can search for the story of the community enterprise. Some contains folklore, belief, and the history of the community.
- 3) Package: Tourists can search for the details of service packages available. Some communities set the packages for 0.5, 1, 2, or up to 3 days' packages.
- 4) Contact: The contact person and channels are provided for tourists' convenience.

Examples of screen are shown on figure 3.

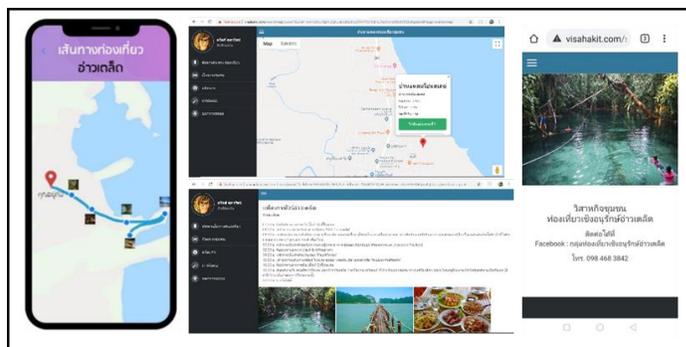


Fig. 3. Examples of screen

5 DISCUSSIONS

The introduction of information technology into community enterprises in Thailand is still undergoing less work than it should be. This is because the fundamental problem is that the knowledge and understanding of the application of information technology are few. The community is skilled in production and service, but does not make use of information technology. In studying the basic information of community enterprises from various sources such as the website, it is quite difficult to find information and not up to date. The community information is not detailed. Even though the community has a Facebook used to communicate and some community enterprises have websites. But it is not able to search tourist route information. It is difficult for tourists to find information on travel planning. The most convenient way is to search from the Internet, such as Google search and Google map. But the information that is entered is little and the information may not be exact, such as the incorrect opening and closing information of some community enterprises. Because villagers in community enterprises often have other occupations as well. The action of some community members is an additional occupation. Tourism management therefore requires an appointment which mainly uses telephone contact. Traveling in the

community without an appointment is inconvenient. Tourists will not know the tourist spots to see and may not have a suitable vehicle to travel on their own. In entering the area for presentations, there must be an appointment for the target audience to attend the training. Appointments are quite difficult to find the right time. Community enterprises have joint activities with government agencies at various levels (sub-district level, district level, provincial level and national level), causing them to often go outside their own area to attend the activities. It is obvious that the community enterprises want to take advantage of information technology. When the research team presented the applications to the community in the meeting of network community enterprises at provincial level, all networks requested for information technology support. During the sharing session, some problems of the tourism community enterprises which need some helps were raised as follows. The community enterprises need the market to sell community products in addition to sell the tourists or present their products in the fair. The community would like to have legal certification for the community guides. Currently, it is not legal even the communities help on taking care of the communities in the same network. If it is certified as a community guide, it will be of great help. The communities believe that tourism may help on community products, not the vice versa. Because of the nature of tourists to go on a trip and buy things Not traveling to buy things directly. Another problem is raised as the issue about finding funds. The community still has operations that require funding. But cannot find a low-interest source of funds. Although it is said that the government has financial assistance. But the assistance will not reach the actual community level because of the lack of credibility from financial institutions. The need of language training is also in need. The communities realize the important of foreign languages. They want to have serious training to use the words that are actually spoken, not a few days of short training, which is not enough. Finally, the communities would like to show that the communities' tourism work can be a main occupation. The younger generation should see this opportunity.

6 CONCLUSION

From conducting research, it has clearly seen the action of the community that it is a community based tourism which is operated by the community itself, very strongly in every community. It is one of the factors that makes the operation of community enterprises successful. Because they do not wait from the government budget alone. Our application to locate the community-based tourist route is successfully built. It helps the tourist to get adequate information for visiting the community enterprises. It also shows that the community understands the importance of making information technology used. They are eager to use IT to benefit the community. Moreover, actions as a community enterprise network will enable them to support the operations of enterprises in the network. Including the use of applications in the network in the future. Another thing that the community needs is a market to sell community products. Providing tourism routes using information technology will make the community product information easily searchable. Although it is useful and meet the needs of the community, our suggestion is that the community enterprises may continue improve the tourist routes to be the unique attraction and publish the information online to make the community enterprises reachable easier.

More applications with new technology would be beneficial for them. The E-market platform should be developed to help the community enterprises as the world has changed to be online, in some crisis such as COVID-19, in particular.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the Thailand Capital budget for the year 2019 (Integrated research and innovation budget) 's funding of the research project "The development of an application to locate the Community - Based Tourist route." (2019) which enabled our study

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