

# **The Research and Development of Creative Tourism Management Based on Temples for Meditation Learning and Sustainable Tourism of Nakhon Pathom Province**

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## **Abstract**

This project was implemented and based on research and development methods. It aimed to: 1) study situations for management of creative tourism in Nakhon Pathom province; 2) generate a model of creative tourism management and this was driven through temples which were used for meditation learning and creating the sustainable tourism; 3) propose the good practice and 4) its guideline leading to the aforementioned management. The research procedures were divided into 4 stages: Stage 1: studying basic data; Stage 2: designing and developing research instruments; Stage 3: trying out the draft model for and Stage 4: evaluating, improving and proposing the final model. The research instruments were guidelines in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, and non-participatory observation. The collected data were qualitatively analyzed by frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and content analysis. The results could be demonstrated as follows:

1) The situations had its readiness for supporting to the development of creative tourism. The tourists had their chances to visit the

tourist sites more increasingly and their motive of this tourism was overall evaluated at much level.

2) The one model was generated and named “MEDITATE Model”.

3) The good practices were commitment of leaders, targeting and organizing tourist organizations, building up concrete structures of community capitals and organizational cultures etc.

4) The management guidelines involved manipulating strategic plans of tourism, building up common understanding, managing and mobilizing tourist activities, Providing various learning based on temples, developing personnel for tourism, continuous public relations, preparing guide posts to tourist attractions and promoting supporting budgets from government sectors.

**Keywords:** Meditation Tourism Management, Creative Tourism, Learning, Sustainable Tourism

## **Introduction**

Developing Thai country into consumerism or capitalist society can activate people to alienate and estrange from Thai traditional society and culture especially for temples which had been accounted to be the major learning and educational resources in the Thailand. It can be said that the temples have played their main functions in socializing and enculturating Thai youths to be a good citizen of their society. However, new Thai generations now disregard or ignore a visit to temples for making merits, worshipping and listening to Dhamma issues especially on important Buddhist Days such as Buddhist Lent Day and Magha Puja Day. They are in turn changed to be a good consumerism in capitalist market. They go to the movie for entertainment and spiritual healing. Unsurprisingly, this can make the serious changes to Thai education system. Then the Thai youth are largely changed to be alienated from Thai temples. To deal or tackle with the problems, we will have to employ the strategy of religious tourism integrated with the strategy of learning tour and encourage all of them to come back or return to engage and use the temples as their one main learning resource. This means that the tourists will have to get their tourist trips for studying and learning about Buddhist religious philosophy and practice. They will be provoked from the trips to seek out many things for the reality of a fulfilled life and practice of the Buddhist meditation. These are important for awakening their discernment and spiritual experiences. The aforementioned tourism can also be the recognized and considered as a type of Community-Based Tourism (CBT).

Under the 11th National Social and Economic Development Plan 2012-2016, it proclaimed the one vision and three missions that, “The country will have to have security, justice and be immunized for responding to many changes,” and the three missions are “development of servicing and manufacturing bases, enhancement of justice, reduction of social and economic disequilibrium, and procurement of immunization including mobilization of creative economy.” These will achieve the model of Creative Tourism which is one of the new tourist choices and can’t be subsidized to the others. One of the challenges to managers or CEOs of

tourism industries is about how to create values added to the local arts and cultural materials in communities.

To bring back many identities found in the Thai temples such as Thai intellectual heritages, cultures, traditions, ceremonies and good ways of life or what we call “Making Merits, Worshiping and Learning from Dhamma Sources” which were the important selling points of Thai tourism, the government must have its policy to support and provoke the management of creative tourism in communities at both provincial and regional levels. This will make the significant effects on each of the local areas to have self-development. The stakeholders will start preparing and providing their knowledge about how to develop the available tourist sites and create the new ones especially in the new management of meditation tourism for the tourists. This will offer opportunities for many tourists to study and learn about the principles of religious practices, intellectual properties, architectural landscapes, ways of Buddhist life in addition to arts and cultures in the temples and communities.

Dealing with the concepts of creative tourism management emphasizing on temples as a place for meditation learning and sustainable tourism will encourage communities, tourism entrepreneurs, students and the public to pay attention to the Dhamma resources. It tends to be the new emerging pattern of Buddhist tourism. We can integrate the Buddhist ways of life e.g. practicing meditation, paying respects to Buddha statues with the identities Thai communities such as ceremonies, festivals, local dresses and foods what we call of social capitals. These were utilized as a selling point of creative tourism. Hence it is necessary to study how to manage the creative tourism based on temples as a site for meditation learning and sustainable tourism. The results are likely to be applicable to the national policy of Thai tourism, and this will further yield many positive effects on the development and management of Thailand.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To study the situations of creative tourism in Nakhon Pathom province

2. To formulate the model of creative tourism management based on temples for meditation learning and sustainable tourism.
3. To study the good practices of creative tourism management.
4. To study the guidelines of creative tourism management.

### **Review Literature**

UNESCO (n.d.) defines creative tourism as a tourism that has a major objective agreeable to the way of sustainable community development. The tourist activities will be arranged and managed to harmonize with the history, cultures and ways of community life. These are lessons learnt and will lead to the experiences gained from the being of community. Furthermore the community can utilize the creative tourism as an instrument to keep on the equilibrium of internal changes happening in the community and community interests (capital interests and sustainable developments). Then the creative tourism is the new tourist way which enhances everyone to access to the community's history and cultures. The visitors will participate in the various cultures of tourist sites and gain unique experiences.

### **Research Methodology**

This research was manipulated through many stages as follows:

**1. The First Stage (Research 1: R1 or Analysis Stage: A)** It was aimed to study and analyze any basic data needed for the development of creative tourism management. The basic data were obtained through the qualitative analysis of the documents, policies and strategies of tourism both at national and provincial levels and situations in Nakhon Pathom province. The quantitative data were to an interviewing questionnaire and this instrument was used to interview 400 tourists who were classified as a sample group. This group was sampled and selected by using accidental sampling technique. The value of IOC was ranged between .60-1.00. The reliable values in tourism, services, tourist accessibility and public relations were .827, .733, .886 and .788 respectively. All of the data were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed by percentage, mean, standard

deviation and content analysis.

**2. The Second Stage (Development 1: D1 or Design and Development Stage: D and D)** The research instruments were guidelines for focus group discussion, studies of comparativeness, programs of training, arrangement of forum for exchangeable learning, arrangement of forum for seminar and meeting of social networking groups. The data were qualitatively analyzed by content analysis based on the guideline for analyzing the contents of data. The guideline was constructed from the processing of connoisseurship in a seminar of five experts.

**3. The Third Stage (Research 2: R2 or Implementation Stage)** This stage employed the aforesaid research instruments in order to implement in their circumstances. These research activities were :

**1) Arrangement and Implementation of Training Program** This was used to increase the level of creative tourism management in Nakhon Pathom province. The instrument was a satisfaction test conducted before and after the trainees were trained through the program. (The reliable value = .827, the discriminant value = .40-.70 and the difficulty value was ranged between .40-.85) The 30 trainees were all related to the tourism and were purposively included from each one of the three tourist sites (10 trainees/one tourist site). The data gathered were quantitatively analyzed by percentage, mean and standard deviation.

**2) Arrangement and Implementation of Exchangeable Learning Forum of Community Practitioners** The instruments were focus group discussion and non-participatory observation. The 30 respondents were related to the tourism and purposively invited to join by the three forums (10 respondents from one tourist site/one forum). The data were edited and analyzed by content analysis.

**4. The Forth Stage (Development 2: D2 or Evaluation Stage)** This stage aimed to evaluate the satisfaction of tourist groups toward the model of creative tourism management. The 384 respondents were included by using systematic random sampling. The reliability values of services in trip routes, service guides, creative service sites, food shops, restaurants, coffee and beverage shops, gift shops and OTOP shops were .745, .731,

.824, .719 and .822 respectively. The data collected were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed by percentage, mean, standard deviation and content analysis. This was done through After Action Review Technique (AAR Technique). Finally, the findings were concluded and disseminated.

## **Research Results**

### **1. The Results of Studying the Situations of Management on Creative Tourism in Nakhon Pathom province**

**1.1 The Analysis of Strategies of National and Provincial Tourism** From the analysis of strategies it can be correlated Developmental Strategy of Thai Tourism 2012-2016 has proposed its vision that, “Thailand will be the tourist site which has qualities and potentials to compete on tourism at the global level. The tourism can seek and allocate incomes based on its justice, equilibrium and sustainability” and Strategy of ASEAN Tourism 2011-2015 mentions that, “The strategy will focus on the development of tourist goods, marketing of ASEAN tourism and the improvement of facilities and infrastructures needed for tourism”. These would match Vision of Nakhon Pathom province 2013, “To be the number one of agro-products and agro-industry with its international standard and the healthy city promoting and supporting cultural and religious tourism” and Strategy of Nakhon Pathom Provincial Administrative Organization 2013-2015, “The province aims to develop its tourism and service sector”.

**1.2 The Results of Quantitatively Analyzed Data Collected from the Interviewing Questionnaire** Most of the Thai tourists in the sample group were female (58%), with the ages between 21-30 years old (35.50%), and single status (51.75). They held a bachelor degree or higher (48.00%) and worked as a business entrepreneur (21.75%). Their income was lower than was 10,000 bath but the number of the thief visits to this tourist site was about 5 times or less (43.75%). The number of the trip mates was 2-3 persons (49.25%). The main aim of this trip was to practice religious activities (44.25%) and travel with friends (46.25%). They mostly spent mainly by 1-2 hours (73.25%) and lower than 200 baht on the trip. They traveled vehicles mostly used is a private car (62.00%). They

learned the information from their friends (59.25%). Their motivation in creative tourism in Nakhon Pathom province was overall evaluated at a much level ( $\bar{x} = 3.78$ , S.D. = 0.83). When this was considered in each of its dimensions, it was found that the dimension of accessibility was prioritized in the motivation of touring ( $\bar{x} = 4.16$ , S.D. = 0.80) and the inferior dimension was the attractiveness of tourist sites ( $\bar{x} = 3.93$ , S.D. = 0.55) and the lowest was the public relations ( $\bar{x} = 3.18$ , S.D. = 1.06). The details are shown in Table I below.

**Table 1 :** Mean, Standard Deviation, Interpretation, and Motivation Ranks of Thai Tourists Classified by Their Motivation in Creative Tourism of Nakhon Pathom Province

(n = 400)

Motivation in Tourism	Levels of Opinion			
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
1.Dimension of Attractiveness	3.93	.548	Much	2
2.Dimension of Services	3.54	.905	Much	3
3.Dimension of Accessibility	4.16	.802	Much	1
4.Dimension of Public Relation	3.48	1.062	Fair	4
<b>Total</b>	3.78	.829	Much	

The weaknesses of Nakhon Pathom tourism from SWOT Analysis were that its continuous public relations and marketing were not provided. The entrepreneurs still had verged few skills in the management. There were not enough facilities and travel routes to support it. Besides there were many shortages of attractiveness, identities, support and promotion on from the government, participation of stakeholders, religious activities for learning about arts, societies and cultures of community. From the analysis of Nakhon Pathom tourism at its provincial level, it could be recommended that the tourist actions should be unitedly integrated under the participatory management. Of course Nakhon Pathom tourist site still had its potentials for the development of creative tourism.



## **2. The Model of Management on Creative Tourism Based on Temples as the Site of Sustainable Learning and Tourism**

From the analysis of data collected from the basic data, documents and research reports regarding this research in addition to training programs, exchangeable learning forums and seminars, the researchers could generate a draft model and name it “MEDITATE Model” and this acronym was originally from : 1) M = Managing for tourism resource 2) E = Eye-catching in tourism) 3) D = Differentiation of tourism 4) I = Identity on tourism 5) T = Transformative learning 6) A = Activities of marketing) 7) T = Technology for tourism and 8) E = Evaluation about tourism. This model had its common components as follows:

**Component I:** The development of potentials in management of creative tourism for enhancing all the stakeholders, knowledge, understanding and practice about the tourism in its concrete forms;

**Component II:** The management of creative tourism in its landscape or physical properties, attractive sites, facilities or basic services, security, marketing, participation of stakeholders and public mind on the tourism;

**Component III:** The participation of three stakeholders consisting of : 1) Business entrepreneurs of tourism, community leaders, and community dwellers, 2) Tourists and 3) Government offices and private business offices ;

**Component IV:** The construction of knowledge necessary and available for learning, creation of added values and interesting tourism activities;

**Component V:** The development of tourism to contribute the tourists to have their satisfaction toward the tourism and public mind of to conserve natural resources and environments in communities.

**The Conditions for Utilizing of “MEDITATE Model”:** The devised model was just a draft and it needed to be changed or set up to be a strategic plan or an action plan. This would achieve the development of creative tourism management and the more details of activities related to the creative tourism in its fieldworks.

**Inspection for Endorsement:** The draft model was inspected by the expert team and endorsed that the draft model could be overall applied at much level. When considering into each of its first dimensions, the dimensions in the rank were Technology for tourism (T) Activity marketing (A) and Evaluation about tourism (E). The second dimension was Transformative learning (T) and the lowest was Identity on tourism (I).

**3. The Results of Implementation (Research: R2 or Implementation: I)**

**3.1 The Training Program** The trainees were tested before and after being trained through the program and it was found that the pre-test mean score standard deviation and were 10.72 ( $\bar{x}$ ), 1.002 (S.D.) and 71.47 (%) respectively and the mean score as was interpret fair. After being trained, the trainees, post-test mean standard deviation and its percentage were 13.14 ( $\bar{x}$ ), .765 (S.D.) and 87.60 (%) respectively. This mean post-test score was significantly higher than the pre-test mean score at the .05 level. The details are presented in as Table II below.

**Table 2:** Comparison of Trainees’ knowledge before and after, being trained through the training program

Testing	n	Score	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	%	Interpretation	df	t	Sig
Before Trained	30	15	10.72	1.002	71.47	Fair	29	18.246*	.000
After trained	30	15	13.14	.765	87.60	Much			

\* Significance at  $P < .05$

**3.2 The Good practice** From the research. the good practice could be done based on its many conditions as follows:

- 1) The tourist leaders had their leader relationship and put many intentional efforts into the management of creative tourism and this was necessary for the good followers. Besides, the community leaders should promote the exchangeable learning among their community

dwellers. The community organizations should be promoted to be one of the learning organizations as well and the processing of exchangeable learning should be enabled and reinforced in their organizations along the horizontal line of communication. Moreover the practitioners should have the authorized power in their assigned tasks.

2) The organizations should have their concrete structure and could organize themselves systematically. The organizations could also perform their tasks based on their teamwork and social-networking. They were promoted to have their capabilities to manage their internal knowledge and disseminate it to the outside society. They could then perceive, learn and exchange their knowledge with the outsiders.

3) The communities had a variety of capitals such as social capital, resource capital, intellectual capital and cultural capital and these capitals were sustainably and securely used in the communities.

4) The organizations had their organizational cultures emphasizing on its horizontal line of communication. Their social relationships were connected and interacted through the social network and horizontal line of command. The organizations would focus more on their performance roles as a enabler, director and activator. The leaders would respect and honor humanity, virtues and concern to the common interests.

5) The technologies were proactively and continuously publicized through Internet websites, mass media and personal media.

6) The management of creative tourism should to have the social networking of “Four Associates”, namely 1) Community-community leaders/community dwellers, 2) Temples-abbots and monks, 3) School/University and 4) Organizations - Tambon Cultural Council/Municipal/local administrative organizations/Government offices

7) The organizations and communities had their potentials and readiness to support the creative tourism. These included their outstanding and strengthening points in the management of tourism.

8) The educational institutions like universities and schools provided and supported their academics and developmental activities for

the tourism continuously.

9) The communities donated many of their valuable things and utensils to the local museums.

10) A model of creative tourism management and a learning center which served different aims under the heterogeneous contexts were needed.

11) Enhancement of the democratization and the prioritization of exchangeable learning of community dwellers, should be promoted.

12) Enhancement of the public mind of conservation in natural resources and ways of community life should be encouraged.

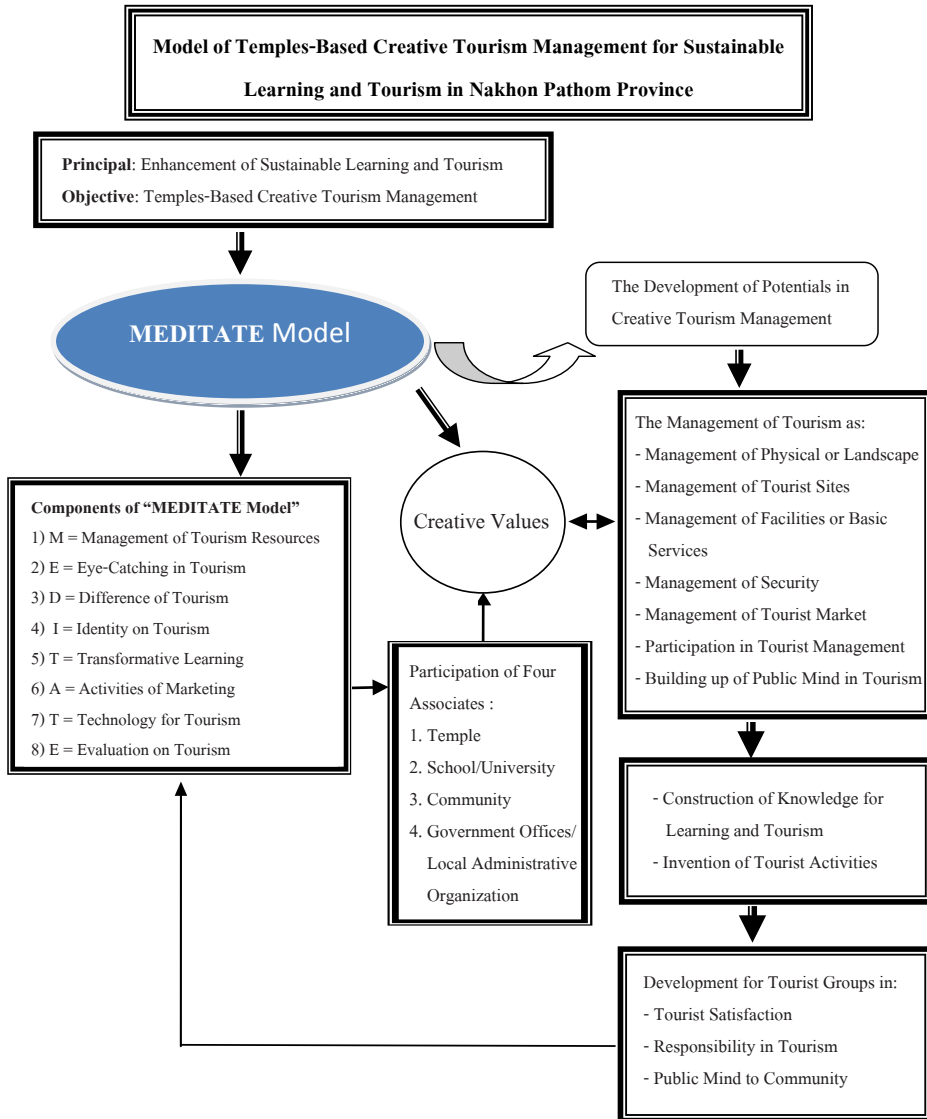
13) The evaluation or assessment was approved to be an instrument for evaluating and understanding the processing of tourist implementation on its every step. The positive and negative outcomes should be used as the feedback for developing in the further implementation.

14) The product/outcome found here was that the tourist sites and the available learning resources being in the communities could be used as the studied sites for many visitors from many organizations and offices. These could be sustainably practiced and achieved through community powers/social capitals along the way of creative tourism management. The development should be operated gradually, focused importantly on self-reliance and this would achieve the transformative learning.

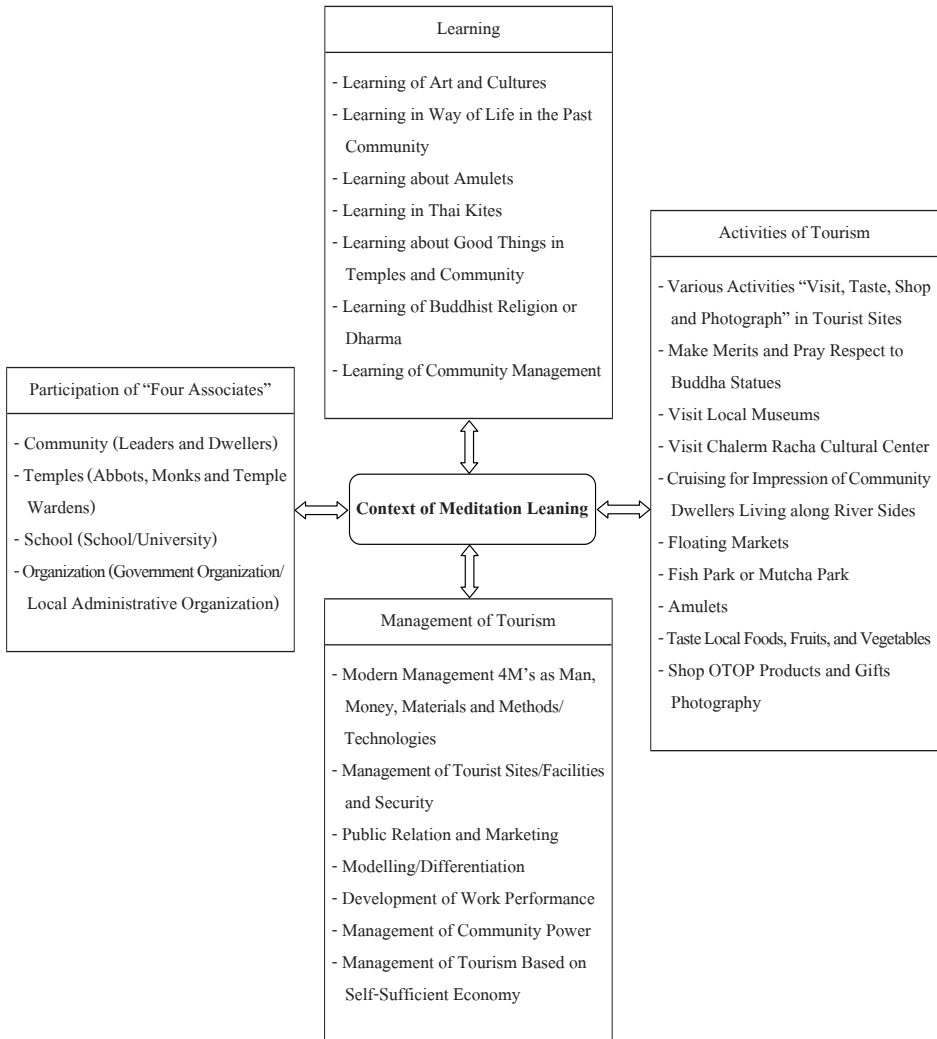
**3.3 Context of Meditation Learning based on Temples as a Site of Religious Learning and Sustainable Tourism.** The management of creative tourism could be done through the co-working of “Four Associates”, namely (1) Community (Leaders and Community Dwellers), (2) Temples (Abbots, Monks and Temple Wardens), (3) School (School/University) and (4) Government Offices (Local Administrative Organizations/Government Offices). All of them could co-work through : 1) Manipulation of the Strategic Plan of Creative Tourism, 2) Enhancement of Participation and Common Understanding, 3) Arrangement of Various Tourist and Learning Activities in Temple Sites, 4) Development of Tourist

Personnel, 5) Continuous and Proactive Implementation of Public Relation, 6) Manipulation of Guide Posts, 7) Supporting of Government Budget for Continuous Implementation of Public Relation, 8) Study Tour and Taking Lessons Learnt from the Good practice in Successful Tourism Sites, 9) Continuous Promoting in Proactive Marketing of Creative Tourism and 10) Sharing in Benefits or Interests from Creative Tourism. The details are shown in Figure II.

**Figure I:** The Model of Temples-Based Creative Tourism Management for Sustainable Learning and Tourism



**Figure 2: Context of Meditation Learning**



**4. The Results of Development (Development2 : D2 or Evaluation Stage : E)**

This stage involved evaluation and improvement. It was found that "MEDITATE Model" was applicable to the real contexts. The studied group had their overall satisfaction toward the tourist model at much level. When considering into each of its dimensions ranked here, the first dimension was "Creative Tourist Sites". The second was "Gift Shops and OTOP Stores" and the others were "Service Guides for Tourism", "Service Guides for

Tourist Trips” and “Food Shops, Restaurants, Coffee and Beverage Shop”. The more details are shown in Table III.

**Table 3:** The Tourists’ Satisfaction toward Creative Tourism Management Classified by Mean, Standard Deviation, Levels of Satisfaction and Ranking

(n = 384)

The Tourists’ Satisfaction toward Creative Tourism Management	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Levels of Satisfaction	Rank
1.Service Guides for Tourist Trips	3.72	.805	Much	4
2.Service Guides for Tourism	3.73	.785	Much	3
3.Creative Tourist Sites	4.29	.761	Much	1
4.Food Shops, Restaurants, Coffee and Beverage Shop	3.70	.741	Much	5
5.Gift Shops and OTOP Stores	3.85	.802	Much	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>.780</b>	Much	

From the lessons learnt, it could be presented as follows:

1) To build up the social capitals and the participation of stakeholders or associates, all of the activities could be practiced based on “Co-Working of Four Associates”.

2) Mobilize the creative tourism could be based on: 1) Participation and Building up of Social Capitals through “Principal of Four Associates”, 2) Giving Values to Art, Cultures and Learning for its Transformation, 3) Management of Model of Creative Tourism, 4) Good Practices in Creative Tourism by Using Community Power and 5) Taking Lessons Learnt from Researching its Research and Development of Creative Tourism. These could not be achieved immediately but they would in turn be practiced gradually in accordance with the tourist leaders intention of to achieve the established goals of creative tourism. The creative tourism could



be therefore operated and these was the light at the end of the tunnel. However, it should be significantly started from the internal community powers known as the main powers of three stakeholders including “House, Temple and School (HTS)”. This would finally lead to “The Co-Working of Four Associates”.

### **The Recommendations Gained from the Research :**

From this research two recommendations from both policies and practical were provided below:

#### **1. The Policy Recommendations**

1) According to “MEDITATE Model, all of the government offices at all levels should support this management of creative tourism. The key temples should be a base for meditation learning and sustainable tourism and this should be proceeded seriously and continuously. The model is prepared for its readiness to support ASEAN Community as well.

2) All of the things mentioned earlier should be changed or adapted by the government offices in Nakhon Pathom province for their strategic and action plans. This should be relevant to Tourist Strategy of Nakhon Pathom province and Tourist Strategy of Tourist and Sport Ministry.

3) The activities of creative tourism in each of the tourist sites still had its different contexts and patterns. All of the government offices should develop their personnel at all levels to play their roles and functions in the harmonious way so as to serve the creative tourism and this can be done through the training program and seminars. They can utilize “Wat Lumpaya Floating Market Model” to be their learning base for the development. The outstanding identities of tourist sites should be built up or upgraded in order to attract.

4) Some of the tourist sites lacked financial support from government offices and local administrative organizations. All the potential supporters should therefore provide enough money and material budgets e.g. guide posts, public relations of tourism, tourist information and activities. These will fulfill the potentials of creative tourism and mobilize

the tourist sites in order to achieve sustainable tourism.

## **2. The Practical Recommendations for Utilizing the Research Results**

1) One of the results that some of the tourist sites had their strengthening point of social-network in tourism but some did not have it matter, was due to their incompatibilities and conflicts of Buddhist commercial interests. To tackle this so as all of the stakeholders and the community leaders should utilize the Four Associates and community powers to engage and manage knowledge and social capitals as well as develop the sustainable creative tourism.

2) Since most of the tourists were 25-34 years old and visited the tourist sites about 5 times or less respect to Buddha statues and practice other religious activities, all of the stakeholders should provide the various tourist activities to focus on their outstanding identities at the tourist sites such as relaxation and meditation in natural sources, making merits and paying respect to Buddha statues including visiting natural sites. A well-known site is “Wat Lumpaya Floating Market”.

3) According to the results of SWOT Analysis, the data which was gathered, analyzed from the forum of exchangeable learning among participants the weaknesses of tourism were the shortages of public relations especially guide posts, dissemination of important information and tourist activities including continuous publicizing in proactive ways. All of the stakeholders such government sectors, private sectors and people sectors should join together to solve or improve all of the aforementioned shortages for example, the government offices should provide guide posts about tourist sites in Nakhon Pathom province, internet websites, information centers and other facilities or basic services in order to serve the creative tourism.

4) The tourism of Nakhon Pathom province in the past lacked the network tourism stakeholders hardly played collaborative roles, functions and activities regarding to the tourism. To deal with this all the stakeholders should play their roles and functions collaboratively and systematically. The stakeholders should arrange many choices of the network routes and the information on creative tourism so as to provide the information for

tourist' decision making. They should set up the plan of public relations and this plan should contain concrete tourist activities in cheerful environments.

### **The Recommendations for Future Research**

1. These should be a study on how to expand “MEDIATATE Model” and apply it to “Four Tawaravadee provinces” known as the networking of tourism in the western part of Thailand. These province are Ratchaburi province, Nakhon Pathom province, Kanchanaburi province and Suphan Buri province. It will make the creative tourism more comprehensive.

2. There should be a study on how to develop the model of creative economic activities for promoting and supporting famous tourist products and OTOP products of Nakhon Pathom province such as pork related products, pomelos, roseapples, young coconut etc.

3. The should be a study on the foreign tourist groups about their motives and behaviors in creative tourism and how to drive the public relations to serve their demands in proactive ways. This is one of the readiness preparation of creative tourism for ASEAN Community in 2015.

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