

Challenges and Issues in Incorporating Local Cultural Tourism Approach into University Mission and Task: A Case Study of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya

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Abstract : New ways and approach to incorporate local cultural tourism into university mission and task of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya were studied in this qualitative research. The researcher used participant observation to find a new way of incorporating local cultural tourism, together with in-depth interviewed of the President of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya and the Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts. This was to find ways to include local cultural tourism into university mission and task. In-depth interviews were also done with chief of local communities to find weaknesses and ways of improving and strengthening their local products. The study covered three cases of boutique hotels in northern Thailand with best practice in applying folk decorative arts and local textiles for hotel soft adornments. This was to find ways to apply local products. Results of participant observation by the researcher was setting a Local textile and Folk decorative arts Apply and Interior design Center and its responsibilities and Rajamangala Srivijaya's Model of Participation in Local Cultural Tourism. The President of Rajamangala University Srivijaya said in the in-depth interview that a Local textile and Folk decorative arts Apply and Interior design Center would be another channel to incorporate into local communities. The new organization should be smart and small and under management of the Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts. The Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts said in the in-depth interview that a university's cultural center is under forming. However, the organization like Local textile and Folk decorative arts Apply and Interior design Center is new and very interesting. It will be a good challenge if the Faculty of Liberal Arts sets an organization which works to apply-design local textile and folk decorative art for hotel soft adornments since both cultural center and the mentioned organization share the same goals. Other important partners are co-hotels because they would be the places where tourists get local products and local community information.

Keywords : Local cultural tourism; RMUTSV Local textile and Folk decorative art Apply and Interior Design Centre; Rajamangala Srivijaya Model of Incorporating Local Cultural Tourism, Hotel soft adornments

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Study

Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya includes three campuses in five different areas of the southern region. Songkhla campus is located along Chalatat Beach here Rajamangala Pavillion is a co-hotel. Songkhla is an old city and rich in mixed-culture. There are many folk decorative arts that can apply to be hotel and restaurant soft adornments for example folk textile, bamboo textile. Nakhonsrithammarat Campus is located in three different areas, in a city, in an agriculture area and nearby a beach. There are many beach hotels that want to be a co-hotel with the university. Nakhonsrithammarat is also an old city and rich in Thai culture. There are many folk decorative arts that can apply to be hotel and restaurant soft adornments for example folk textile, hand-made products from brass, silver and other metals. Trang Campus is located on beautiful land along an Andaman Sea beach. It has its own hotel and restaurant on the campus, same as Songkhla Campus. Trang province is well-known for domestic tourism and here there are beautiful folk textile and wood handicrafts which are suitable for be hotel and restaurant soft adornments.

The three provinces have many beautiful local textile and folk decorative arts but the answers of in-depth interviews and participant observation found that there are few orders for hotel soft adornments. One of the main reasons is there is no one or organization to help them with application and to design local textile and folk decorative arts to be hotel soft adornments. Another reason from in-depth interviews of hotel executives was that local skills and products may not be suitably publicised for enterprise- and therefore formal sector operations may be unaware of their availability (J. Wasansing, 2005). This is a good opportunity for Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya to incorporate who works on application local textile and folk decorative arts, hotel space interior design and use co-hotels as live exhibition centers present local textile and folk decorative arts in hotel space. This also helps the hotels present the regional characteristics which will help them to be different from other competitive hotels. Finally tourists who stay in these hotels will perceive the local spirit and its soul and this will encourage them to visit a local area where those local products come from.

Significance of the Study

The result of the study will be of suitable guidance for the proper management to incorporate local culture tourism approach which has never been done in Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya before. After forming the RMUTSV Local textile and Folk decorative art Apply and Interior Design Center and start to work on its responsibility, it will be another guidance for Thai universities in incorporating local culture tourism, by forming a Local Cultural Center or Local Culture Exhibition Center.

Scope of Study

This study focused on three provinces; Nakhonsrithammarat, Trang and Songkhla where university campuses are located. This study collected information of folk decoration arts from local communities which are attractive to tourists.

To find the theory and to understand more clearly about this research, we have to refer to these questions. The first question is how Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya can be incorporated into local cultural tourism. The answer to this question must begin with understanding the definition of cultural tourism. The second question is which is a more suitable other way than setting up local cultural centers. To answer this question we have to study some case studies of local Thai cultural centers. After that, compare with the researcher's own opinion which is explained in Chapter IV. The third question is how the model of incorporating into local cultural tourism is. The answer to this question also comes from the researcher's own opinion that is explained in Chapter IV. The fourth question is what and how a new organization responsibilities and task is. To find the answer to this question, the researcher studied three case studies of boutique hotels in Chiangmai where the best practices in applying local textile and folk decorative arts to hotel soft adornments are.

How can Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya incorporate into local cultural tourism?

Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya has many projects and research projects that refer to local communities in three provinces where university campuses are located. That is one of the ways to be incorporated into local cultural tourism. But it is a short term project. If the university desires to succeed along university goals about maintaining art or culture, there should be an organization which works to promote local cultural tourism. This organization works as information-direction in a tourism functional system (Gunn, Turgut, 2002).

What and how is a new organization responsibilities and task?

The answer comes from three case studies of boutique hotels in Chiangmai, northern Thailand where good design and applied local textile and folk decorative arts are used in hotel space. Local textile is applied to guestroom curtains by mixing it with other textiles to make it more luxurious. Wall decoration also use local textiles mixed with wood and silver craft to make hotel guests feel different from other hotels which use common materials found in most hotels.

A Case Study of Tamarind Village, a boutique hotel in Chiangmai

Tamarind Village is a boutique hotel which presents a beautiful local textile in different designs for hotel soft adornments. In the hotel restaurant, the interior designer applied local textiles to be furniture cloth, table cloths and table runners also as wall hangings. Table lamps and ceiling lamps are made in the local style and all accessories are local products. In a guest bedroom, bed covered linen and curtains are made from local textiles. In the hotel lobby, there are different local textiles used as furniture cloth and pillow cases.



Figure 1: In a guest bedroom pillow cases are made from local textiles



Figure 2: In the hotel lobby local textiles are applied to pillow cases and furniture cloth

The Case Study of Baan San Doi Hotel, a resort spa in Chiangmai

The Luxury interior soft adornments in this hotel are all made from local textiles, silver craft and wooden craft. The owner, architect and interior designer are locals and understand well how to present the value of local textiles and handicrafts into hotel space decoration.



Figure 3: Local textiles and folk decorative arts are applied and redesign for use in guest bedroom decoration

Source: Ban San Doi Village.com

A Case Study of De Naga Hotel, a boutique hotel in Chiangmai

This hotel is another best using local textiles and decorative art for hotel soft adornment but with different color style which depends on the target market group of this hotel. The decoration in this hotel is different from Tamarind Village and Ban San Doi Village, but the hotel guests can still feel a taste of Northern style and this is the beginning of local cultural tourism.



Figure 4: Local textile and wooden craft are used in different style of decoration from other hotels in Chiangmai

The Conceptual Model of participation in Local Cultural Tourism of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya

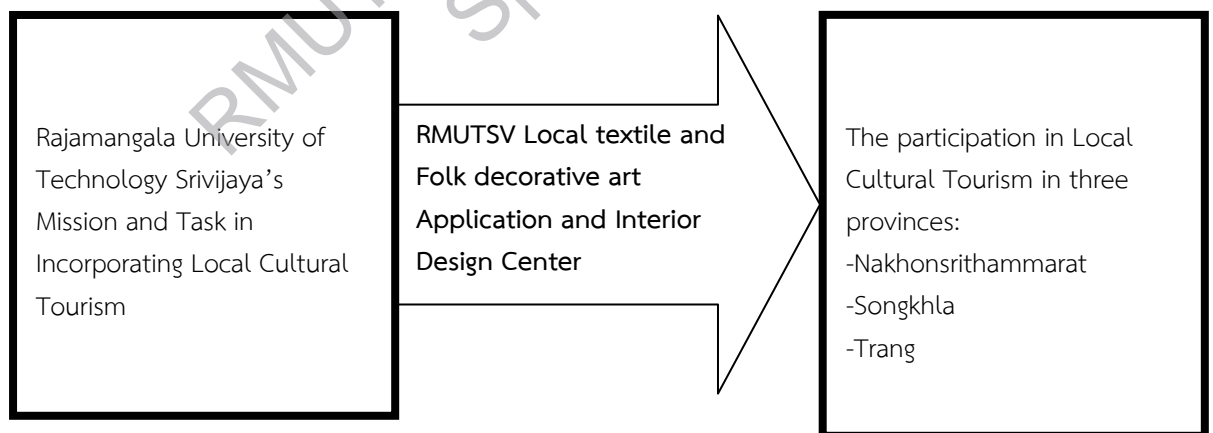


Figure 5: The Conceptual Model of participation in Local Cultural Tourism of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya

2. Materials and Methods

To find out the answers, 1) How Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya be incorporated into local cultural tourism 2) Which is a more suitable way of setting up a local cultural center 3) What is the model of incorporating into local cultural tourism 4) How are a new organization's responsibilities and task 5) The best practice in applying local textiles and folk decorative arts to be hotel soft adornments.

Population and Sample Size of the Study

The qualitative approach to research is not concerned with this sort of statistical analysis. The information collected is generally not presentable in numerical form and conclusions are not based on statistical analysis (Veal, 2005). Three case studies of boutique hotels are studied to find what and how RMUTSV local textile and Folk decorative art Apply and Interior Design Center is going to do to incorporate local cultural tourism.

Study area

This research plans to study in three provinces where the university campuses are located; Trang, Songkhla and Nakhonsrithammarat provinces.

Research Instrument

This research is a qualitative research, the instruments used to gather qualitative information include (Veal, 2005):

1. In-depth interview with Assistant Professor Ruja Thipvaree the President of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, to find out the vision of challenges and issues in incorporating local cultural tourism approach into university mission and task.
2. In-depth interview with Miss Thanomsi Jenwitheesuk the Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts, to find out the possibility of forming RMUTSV Local textile and Folk decorative art Apply and Interior Design Centre as one office in the faculty.
3. In-depth interview with the Chief of local communities involved taking down notes and rewriting into a table and giving back to the Chief.
4. Participant observation

Data analysis

1. In-depth interview with the President of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya involved taking down notes and rewriting these into a table and giving them back to the President to read and confirm.
2. In-depth interview with the Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts involved taking down notes and rewriting these into a table and giving them back to the Dean.
3. In-depth interview with the Chief of local communities involved taking down notes and rewriting into a table and giving them back to the Chief.
4. Participant observation involved visiting the local communities in Nakhonsrithammarat, Trang and Songkhla province.

3. Results and Discussion

This research studied challenges and issues in incorporating local cultural tourism into university mission and task by using in-depth interviews and participant observation as a research instruments. The followings are the results of in-depth interviews with the President of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya and Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts covering the same questions. The questions are about 1) How Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya is incorporating in local cultural tourism? 2) Which way is more suitable way between setting a local cultural center and setting local textile apply and interior design center? 3) How is the model of incorporating in local cultural tourism? 4) How about a new organization responsibilities and task are?

The result of in-depth interview with the President of Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya

Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya is a government university. It has four missions to do; 1. To provide high-quality professionalism at the higher education level by focusing on science and technology and to make sure that our graduates are ready to enter a job market. 2. To create research activities, inventions and innovations on science and technology which can be transferred into value-added goods and services for the country. 3. To provide academic service and creative education with a purpose to prepare graduates for independent careers to stay competitive in their profession. 4. To maintain art or culture and to conserve the environment.

In issue of protect and promote religion, Thai cultures and natural environment Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya has to have many different ways to support this issue. For example, a year plan calendar of activities and many research studies about local food, local handy-craft, local architecture and local livelihood. These are projects that come from a university's mission. The idea of setting a Local textile and Folk decorative arts Apply and Interior design Center is good, and a university's cultural center is still necessary to be formed. It will be another channel to be incorporating in local communities. The new organization should be smart and small and under management of the Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts.

The result of in-depth interview with Dean of Faculty of Liberal Arts

According to a university mission, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya has to protect every Thai culture especially Southern culture. The Faculty of Liberal Arts also has to protect and promote our Thai culture. There is a year plan calendar of activities that includes many activities of Thai culture. To be incorporating in local cultural tourism is not a new activity for the Faculty of Liberal Arts. The Faculty has many research studies about Southern cultures. But the organization like Local textile and Folk decorative arts Apply and Interior design Center is new and very interesting.

A university's cultural center is under forming. It will be a good challenge if Faculty of Liberal Arts sets an organization which work about apply-design local textile and folk decorative art for hotel soft adornments since both the cultural center and the mentioned organization share the same goal.

The result of in-depth interview with Chief of local communities in Trang province

Na Muan Sri, a local community in Trang province which produces a beautiful and unique style of local textile. The products are made for wearing apparel especially women tucked-up skirt. Na Muan Sri has its own local researchers who work to protect and promote their local culture. The community has successfully promoted its local textile, but it still has only a small group of customers. There are no orders for hotel decoration or hotel soft adornments so the community still produces its textile for wearing apparel only though it has the ability to produce for many purposes.

The result of participant observation

Many Thai universities are used to promoting local culture by setting up a cultural center which is suitable for each university. The same as other Thai universities, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya also has to promote local culture but in which way? In the Faculty of Liberal Arts there are many activities for promoting local culture but it does not link to local cultural tourism and cannot explore worldwide.

Rajamangala Srivijaya's Model of Participation in Local Cultural Tourism

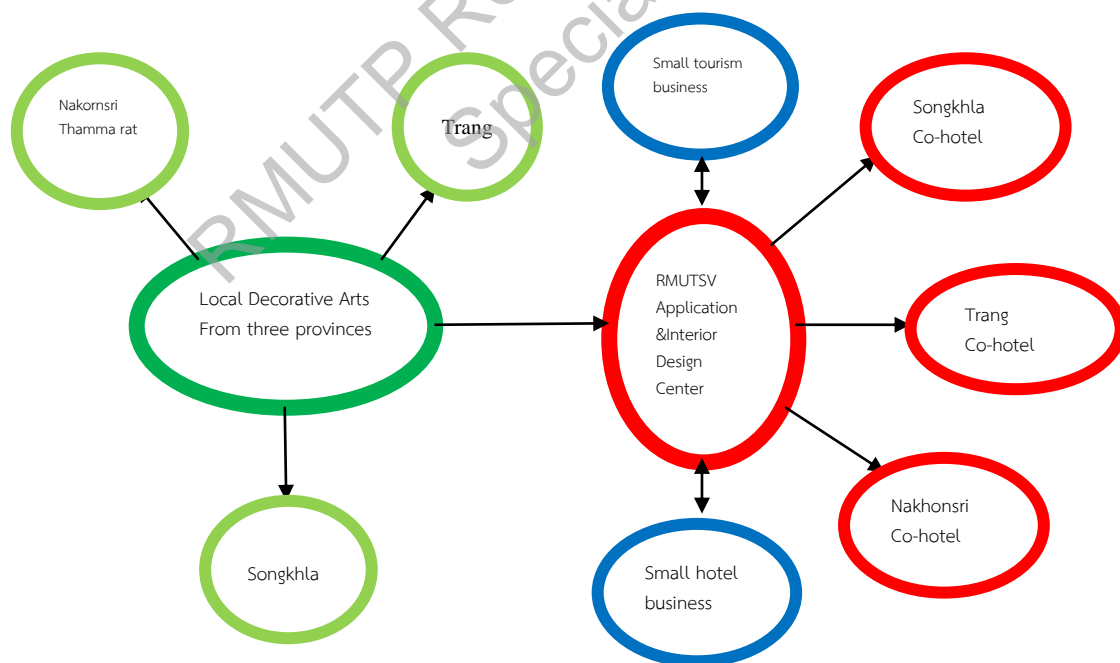


Figure 6: Rajamangala Srivijaya's Model of Participation in Local Cultural Tourism

Because the researcher has a knowledge base in architecture and work experience in design studio and fine-dining restaurant, so the researcher would like to present a good challenge in incorporating local cultural tourism in a different way. That way is setting up an organization the same as an interior design studio which works with local communities and hotel businesses to promote local culture to hotel guests or tourists both domestic and international. This organization which is called RMUTSV Local textile and Folk decorative arts Apply and Interior design

Center has to work under the model of participation in local cultural tourism.

Rajamangala Srivijaya's Model of Participant in Local Cultural Tourism is the model that the researcher plans the responsibilities of RMUTSV Local textile and Folk decorative arts Apply and Interior design Center on other organizations to work together. The following figure is a model that the researcher designed by base on work responsibilities, university campuses and local communities and university partnerships.

Explanation of Rajamangala Srivijaya's Model of Participation in Local Culture Tourism

According to the figure of Rajamangala Srivijaya's Model of Participation in Local Culture Tourism it is divided into 3 working parts.

First, Surveying and collecting folkloric decorative arts from three provinces where university campuses are located. Internet research at Department of Cultural Promotion at www.culture.go.th, Department of Industrial Promotion at www.dip.go.th. And do in-depth interviews with the leaders of local communities to find the strengthens and weaknesses of their products.

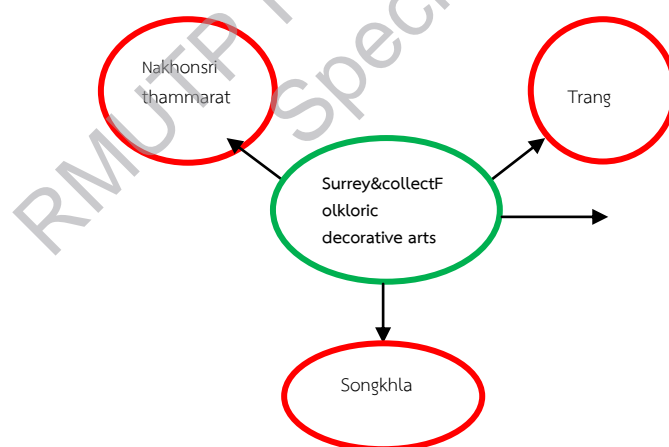


Figure 7: Diagram of Step 1, Surveying and Collecting folkloric decorative arts

Second, application and design step of all folkloric decorative arts to be hotel soft adornments. This step needs specialist designers who are experts in both interior decoration and hotel knowledge-based. This step is a very important step as it is a center where the private hotel business or travel agency comes to ask for help in using application folkloric decorative arts in their businesses.

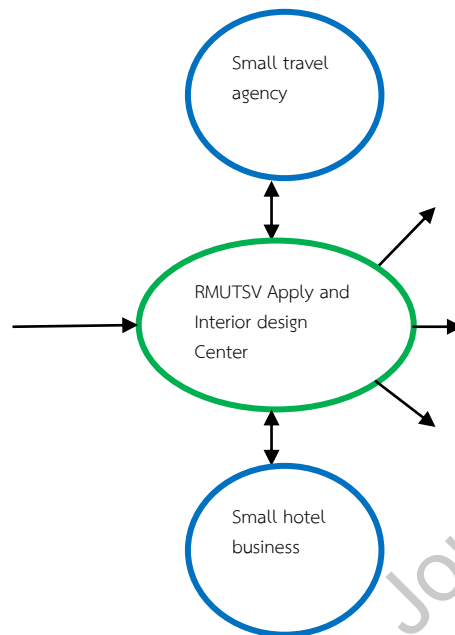


Figure 8: Diagram of Step 2. Application and Design folkloric decorative arts

Third, explore the application of folkloric decorative arts through co-hotels in the three university campuses. By using all the application folkloric decorative arts in hotel guest rooms, hotel lobby, hotel restaurants, hotel shops or stand alone restaurants.

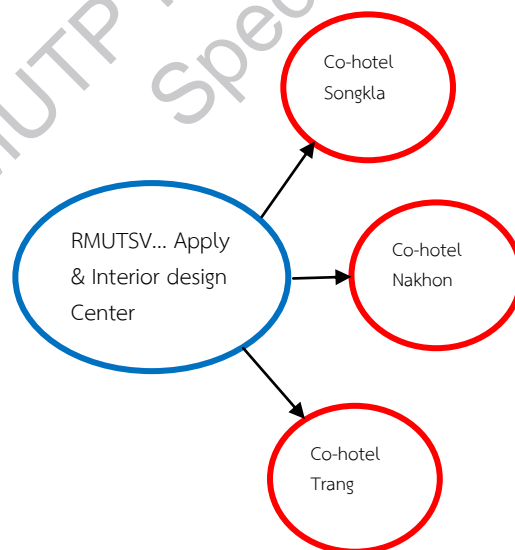


Figure 9: Diagram of Step 3. Explore application folkloric decorative arts through co-hotels

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research studied challenges and issues in incorporate local cultural tourism approach into university mission and task by applying qualitative method. In-depth interviews with President of university, Dean of Department of Liberal Art, Chief of local communities and participant observation to find results for incorporating local cultural tourism. Two main results of this study are Rajamangala Srivijaya's Model of Participation in Local Cultural Tourism and RMUTSV Local textile and Folk decorative art Apply and Interior design Center. But this is only the beginning of the task for local cultural tourism. After this, Dean of Liberal Arts and Chief of RMUTSV Center have to plan the details of the center and its management. Co-hotels will be the key to success because they are live exhibitions for presenting local textiles and decorative arts to their guests. Co-hotels also will be information-direction (one of tourism functional system) center for local cultural tourism (Gunn, Turgut, 2002). So that RMUTSV Local textile and Folk decorative art Apply and Interior design Center has to work together as closely as possible to succeed in participation in local cultural tourism.

During the in-depth interview with the President of the university and Dean of Liberal Arts about the general planning of RMUTSV Center, the first idea is that it should consist of three main functions. The first function is an office of RMUTSV Center, the second function is live exhibitions which can be in a restaurant, and the third function is an applied products shop or corner. The researcher also thinks that the concept of decoration of the center should be of contemporary style where all materials used for decoration are local textiles and folk decorative arts from the three provinces where the university campuses are located.

Recommendation

Like Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, the other 8 Rajamangala University of Technology campuses are in many provinces in Thailand which have their own different rich culture. And in every university there are many designers who work as lecturers. So the result of this study will be useful in the guidance of incorporating local cultural tourism. The result of the study is easy to apply as a suitable model for each university.

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