

Potential of Tourism Logistic Service Business in the Border Areas of Chong Anma, Chong Sa-Ngam, and Chong Jom Checkpoints in Thailand to Increase Competitive Efficiency among the ASEAN Community

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Abstract—This study focused on tourism logistic services in the border areas of Thailand by an analysis and comparison of the opinions of tourists, villagers, and entrepreneurs of these services. Sample representatives of this study were a total of 600 villagers and 15 entrepreneurs in the three border areas consisting of Chong Anma, Chong Sa-Ngam, and Chong Jom checkpoints. For methodology, survey questionnaires, situation analysis, TOWS matrix, and focus group discussions were used for data collection, as well as descriptive analysis and statistics such as arithmetic means and standard deviations, were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that business potential was at the medium level and entrepreneurs were satisfied with their turnovers. However, perspectives of transportation and tourism services provided for tourists need to be immediately improved. Recommendations for the potential development included promotion of border tourism destinations and foreign investments into accommodation, restaurants, and transport, as well as the establishment of business networks between Thailand and Cambodia, along with the introduction of new tourism destinations by co-operation between entrepreneurs in both countries. These initiatives may lead to increased visitors, collaboration of security offices, and an improved image of tourism security.

Keywords—Business potential, potential development, tourism logistics, services.

I. INTRODUCTION

TOURISM logistic services are significant in the development of Thailand's economy and the countries of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), especially in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) era, and are interesting as they focus on the middle classes as a main target. In Thailand, specifically in the North-Eastern region, tourism logistic services have been continually developed. A transport route was established between Thailand and Cambodia border at Chong Jom checkpoint in Thailand and Osmach checkpoint in Cambodia. This route is important for the tourism industry and the transport of products to neighboring countries. Reference [1] valued Thailand-Cambodia border trade in 2011 at 638 million baht (around 16.9 million Euros). Despite this high value of border trade, several problems concerning some facility limitations in

tourism logistic services in the areas exist. In terms of financial flow, money exchange services were inconvenient and there were insufficient financial service centers available for tourists. In relation to information flow, information of border crossings, tourism attractions, and products were not satisfactory. In regard to physical flow, tourism service availability, accessibility, time, customer care, comfort, safety, environmental friendliness, tourist attractions, walking streets and the tourists' overall happiness required attention. Therefore, a study of tourism logistics in the border region is valuable to compare the potential of border trade in the attitudes of customers, villagers, and entrepreneurs and to identify guidelines for the development of business.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Tourism Logistics

Reference [2] stated that tourism logistics mainly concerned the three perspectives of physical flow, information flow, and financial flow. Physical flow placed importance on the itineraries of tourists, tourist transportation, and travel convenience. Information flow concerned suggestions about information required by tourists, such as sign board directions, cautions, and recommendations for travel safety. Financial flow involved general facilities available for tourists during travel, such as billing systems with payment channels and other ticketing. It was stated that good tourism logistics led to tourists' satisfaction, good quality of tourism services, and fair income distribution to local villagers. Therefore, it was found that tourism logistics was an efficient indicator to measure levels of tourism potential in a tourism destination.

B. Human Resource Development

Human resource development was significant for all business sectors because it was considered as an indicator to measure organizational development. In tourism logistic business, working skills and service minds of officers should be continually trained and developed to meet the needs of customers and tourists [3].

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C. Good Entrepreneurs

According to [4], good entrepreneurs attempted to use creative attitudes and high-risk performances to make business profits and develop enterprises. Tourism logistic entrepreneurs were considered a key role for tourism development as they came up with intellectual properties and innovative products and services leading to high employment, income distribution to villagers, and competitive efficiency [2].

D. Related Studies

Studies by [3], [5] stated that the logistics business was very important for economic development as it contributed to a high trade value, income distribution, and the working skills of local people. Successful logistic services mainly relied on human resource development including good entrepreneurs. The studies also revealed that tourism entrepreneurs lacked positive attitudes and professional management in the search for new markets and competitors, resulting in inefficient logistic development and organizational achievement. In addition, opinions of officers, administrator, and all stake holders need to be considered in order to provide good quality of services and sustainable enhancement.

Although the related studies focused on logistic business, its significance on tourism, especially in border areas in northeastern areas of Thailand, was missing. Therefore, it was important to determine the attitudes of villagers, tourists, and entrepreneurs towards the potential of tourism logistic services in the selected regions. The attitudes were used for assessment of the current conditions and analysis of the problems of logistic services in the three border areas. All concepts, as well as related studies with summarized attitudes were then applied to discuss the findings and recommendations for business potential development.

III. METHODS

A. Population

1. **Villagers** included those who used services at the three border points and lived in (1) Dan sub-district in Kab Choeng, Surin, (2) Prai Pattana sub-district in Phu Sing, Sisaket, and (3) Song sub-district in Nam Yuen, Ubon Ratchathani. A total of 600 villagers, 200 from each sub-district, were selected.
2. **Thai tourist participants** were clients who used services at the three border points. These services included accommodation, restaurants, and transport services. A total of 600 tourists, 200 at each border point, were randomly chosen.
3. **Entrepreneurs** were selected from three groups, those involved in bus and car rental services, as well as hospitality services including restaurants and accommodation. Five participants were selected from each group making a total of 15.

B. Research Instruments

Data were collected from tourists and villagers by survey questionnaires developed by the researcher using a five-point Likert rating scale related to logistic business potential levels.

Semi-structured interviews were used for the three groups of entrepreneurs. The content of the questionnaires consisted of availability, accessibility, information, time, customer care, comfort, safety, environmental friendliness, tourist attractions, street walks, business locations, and tourist happiness. Average potential scores and low to high ordering scores were used for data analysis. Average business potential and satisfaction values of tourists and villagers were measured according to the following criteria: highest (4.21-5.00), high (3.41-4.20), medium (2.61-3.40), low (1.81-2.60), and lowest (1.00-1.80).

Later, a focus group from the government sector (Provincial Office of Commercial Affairs, Immigration Bureau, and Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports) and private sectors (Provincial Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Industry, and Provincial Tourism Association) were established for SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to establish guidelines for appropriate business potential development.

According to Table I, results indicated that the average value of tourists' attitudes, in each factor, was slightly greater than that of the villagers, 2.64 compared to 2.61. From the tourism service perspective, the tourists' average value was 2.47, while for the villagers it was 2.43 (low level), which implied that entrepreneurs need to give precedence to tourism service management.

The villagers assessed their potential at the medium level, reflecting fair economic conditions and a fair market liquidity in the border area. On the other hand, tourists and villagers found most aspects from the transport perspective were not satisfactory, reflected by the inconvenience to access destinations. Most tourists in the area were Thai workers, teenagers, and local people living near the border, and in the lower South-East region, those who wanted to go to casinos in Cambodia, which contributed significantly to tourism incomes. The result of the business potential self-assessment was similar to the assessments by tourists and villagers at the medium level, implying that the entrepreneurs accepted outsiders' assessments.

The overall business potential assessed by tourists and villagers presented in at the medium level, tourists 2.67 and villagers 2.62. This reflected fair economic conditions and a fair market liquidity in the border area. On the other hand, tourists and villagers found most aspects from the transport perspective were not satisfactory, reflected by inconvenience to access destinations.

Significantly, in regard to tourism service, the tourists' average value was 2.47 and the villagers' average was 2.43 (low level), showing that this area requires urgent attention. However, entrepreneurs' views indicated that their business potential was competent because tourism destinations located in the areas were becoming more popular resulting in a high number of tourists. Although most clients were irregular customers and local people, they had high incomes and greater purchasing power, especially government officers who traveled to casinos in Cambodia. This contributed much to tourism revenues.

TABLE I
COMPARATIVE BUSINESS POTENTIAL OF THE THREE BORDER AREAS IN ATTITUDES OF TOURISTS AND VILLAGERS

Aspects	Tourists		Villagers	
	Average	Meaning	Average	Meaning
1. Transportation				
1.1 Number of available vehicles	2.48	Low	2.32	Low
1.2 Diversity of vehicle services	2.38	Low	2.31	Low
1.3 Standardized vehicles	2.56	Low	2.38	Low
1.4 Suitability of vehicle fares	2.52	Low	2.42	Low
1.5 Convenience of ticketing services/channels	2.42	Low	2.34	Low
1.6 Suitability of parking lots and rest areas	3.30	Medium	3.24	Medium
1.7 Facilities along transportation routes	3.58	High	3.52	High
Average	2.75	Medium	2.65	Medium
2. Information				
2.1 Travel information	3.06	Medium	2.98	Medium
2.2 Inbound and outbound travels	2.74	Medium	2.83	Medium
2.3 Tourism destinations	2.78	Medium	2.70	Medium
2.4 Restaurants	2.40	Low	2.51	Low
2.5 Accommodations	2.30	Low	2.29	Low
2.6 Souvenir shops	2.60	Low	2.46	Low
2.7 Accessible vehicles	2.28	Low	2.17	Low
Average	2.59	Low	2.56	Low
3. Services				
3.1 Cleanliness and sanitary services found in tourism attractions, toilets, restaurants, and accommodations	2.48	Low	2.33	Low
3.2 Adequacy of food and drink restaurants and toilets	2.36	Low	2.48	Low
3.3 Infrastructure such as electrical services, water supply, ATMs, and hospitals	1.98	Low	2.13	Low
3.4 Service convenience such as bus stop seating areas and air-conditions in buses	2.30	Low	2.35	Low
3.5 Sufficiency of accommodations	2.26	Low	2.11	Low
3.6 Skills and etiquettes of facilitators/service persons	3.46	High	3.18	Medium
Average	2.47	Low	2.43	Low
4. Time				
4.1 Suitability of bus time tables	2.18	Low	2.09	Low
4.2 Suitability of voyage time	2.32	Low	2.43	Low
4.3 Punctual bus services	2.22	Low	2.36	Low
Average	2.24	Low	2.29	Low
5. Safety				
5.1 Safety of vehicles	3.04	Medium	2.98	Medium
5.2 Safety of passengers' luggage/belongings	2.90	Medium	3.08	Medium
5.3 Fire protection	2.44	Low	2.55	Low
5.4 Preparation of first aid accessories in case of emergency	2.20	Low	2.31	Low
5.5 Safety of voyage routes	3.02	Medium	2.88	Medium
Average	2.72	Medium	2.76	Medium
6. Environmental Friendliness				
6.1 Environmental friendliness of vehicles	2.76	Medium	2.67	Medium
6.2 Reduction of garbage and waste found in vehicles	2.82	Medium	2.96	Medium
6.3 Reduction of noise disturbance of vehicles	3.12	Medium	2.91	Medium
Average	2.90	Medium	2.85	Medium
7. Attractions				
7.1 Attractive tourism destinations and traditions	2.72	Medium	2.64	Medium
7.2 Shopping centers/ walking streets	2.68	Medium	2.51	Medium
7.3 Night entertainment venues/nigh destinations	2.36	Low	2.47	Low
7.4 Intimacy of villagers	3.42	High	3.29	Medium
Average	2.80	Medium	2.73	Medium
Average of all aspects	2.64	Medium	2.61	Medium

C. Results

Overall, guidelines for business potential development, derived from SWOT analysis and TOW matrix among the stakeholders, were as:

1. Workshop activities related to service-minded approaches and communication skills should be planned for entrepreneurs and officers working in hospitality, including accommodation and restaurants.

2. Investment support of public transport, accommodation, and restaurants in the border area should be established to increase tourism-carrying capacity.
3. Security policies and international relations should be emphasized to create confidence among Thai and Cambodian investors and tourists.
4. Infrastructure, facilities, and rural roads around the border area connecting to national high ways should be improved to accommodate tourism.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings were consistent with [6] in that entrepreneurs needed to adapt their characteristics consistent with environmental contexts and be self-confident in business competitiveness. The findings also corresponded with those of [4] who stated that well-prepared entrepreneurs gave importance to maximum profits and benefits derived from gained resources to meet a wide variety of customers' needs.

The findings of this study were consistent with those of other researchers. Firstly, [7] stated that human resources management was relevant to all stakeholders in an organization aiming to maintain its business competitive opportunities. Secondly, [3] found that Thai entrepreneurs had to adapt themselves, use up-to-date information, and focus on tourism logistics association and customer relationship management.

V. CONCLUSION

Tourism logistic services in the area were limited; however, there was a valuable opportunity for entrepreneurs to develop tourism products to meet customers' needs, resulting in competitive advantages. Communication skills in the languages of ASEAN countries, especially Khmer, were needed for the development of tourism management, which would result in more sound business sustainability of the two countries.

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