

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Background and Significance of the Study

Tourism is a service industry that has an important role in the economic system of Thailand, for it not only generates the highest total trade-in services revenue, but it has also become a functional industry supporting many other related businesses e.g. hotels and accommodations, restaurants, food shops, souvenir shops, transportation, etc. Tourism encourages employment, tourism areas development, and income distribution of surrounding communities, which is related to the idea and situation summarized by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that in 2012, the number of world tourists increased by four percent (approximately 1.035 billion people). The interesting point is that this rise has led to economic strength and a growth rate of 3.6 percent which explains why UNWTO expects that in 2030 the number of world tourists will reach 1.8 billion.

UNWTO also expects that the regions where the growth rate of world tourism will be most significant will be Asia and the Pacific. It also expects that in 2020 the number of tourists in these regions will rise to 355 million (74 percent) and will continue to rise steadily (UNWTO, 2555). This information from UNWTO emphasizes the significance of tourism. However, tourism is an industry that changes and fluctuates rapidly. Therefore, it is essential that Thailand, which is very interested in the tourism industry, understands this rapid growth and possible fluctuations in the current situation. With this in mind different formats of management plans have been developed. For instance, the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) puts emphasis on the ability to survive under fluctuating situations, rapid self-immunity development, and social development, along with stability in food production which is an essential aspect of strengthening the society. This is also considered to be a self-immunity system development plan for the communities in order to attain sustainability of tourism in Thailand.

Thus, this idea has been remarkably elevated in Thailand's National Tourism Development Plan 2012-2016 in all five major strategies that include emphasis on infrastructure development of facilities for tourists' attractions and touristic goods, and product development, not only for trading and building stability in tourism, but also for creating compliance and cooperation among tourism-related sectors.

This idea and related policies create challenges in tourism development in Thailand, especially in niche tourism, which aims to attract both first-time and returning visitors. One captivating question to be asked is which kind of touristic products are able to attract both kinds of visitors. Moreover, the products must encourage cooperation in the community of that particular attraction and serve as a means of social and economic stability in following the Development Plan. Therefore, the idea of tourism related to food is raised due to the fact that food is what every tourist has to consume. Food is a product which can clearly be utilized so as to support tourism. It is one of the four requisites that every human being has to have and it must be consumed repeatedly. Food is one touristic product that can involve individuals in many sectors, it is considered a raw material that, in some cases, can only be found in particular areas, and is an expression of cultures within a community. Additionally, food can link all human beings together as seen in many business affairs in which business deals often occur during the meal. Additionally, Thailand itself has a reputation in food management, for instance, Bangkok was chosen as one of the cities with some of the world's best street food in 2012. All of these are evidences of Thailand's potential for food management. Moreover, Thailand's government has given precedence to the development of an infod management system for the country to develop as a whole i.e. the project Thai Food to the World which was launched in 2004. Thailand's objective was to stimulate food product exports and expand investment of Thai food restaurants in foreign countries. Furthermore, the National Food Institute of Thailand, subjected to the Ministry of Industry, set up Thai Food to the World strategies in 2012 with the objective to increase Thai food exportation no less than 10 percent per year. The concept was aimed to create a standard for food safety, build a positive image of Thai food, and increase the management value of Halal food exportations no less than 10 percent per year using all four strategies for enhancing Thai Food to the World (Ministry of Industry, 2012) and creating a

distinctive identity for Thai food. In addition to this, it is found that most Thai food is Healthy Food, which is related to the tourism business situation at present in which tourists are aware of and place importance on Health Tourism. Therefore, Thai food, which is considered healthy food, can be easily placed in a Tourism Fair according to the significant ideas promoted by the government in Thai Food to the World from 2004-2008 which follows the 4R's principles of: raw material for food production, ready-to-cook productions, ready-to-eat productions, and support in Thai restaurants development (Raynumas et al., 2012). There are a number of academicians who were trying to study and create standards for Thai food for the sake of consumers, including tourists, health and sanitation. The research found that Thai food has special characteristics that foster stronger health (Raweeroj et al., 2010) and Thai food is believed to be the nectar that is able to prolong our lifespan (Somsri et al., 1998). Also, it is found that healthy food highly regarded especially in foreign countries. According to the report by the Department of International Trade Promotion, Thai restaurants in other countries as had reached almost 11,800 the world over in 2007 (Raynumas et al., 2012) and this represents the important role of Thai food throughout the world. From areport by the American Halal Foundation, there is also evidence that worldwide almost 1.6 million Muslims consume approximately 632 billion USD which is 16 percent of the world's industrial food consumption (American Halal Foundation, 2013). As a result, cultural development of Food Tourism is an important aspect of Thailand's future tourism development. This particular idea is in line with certain interesting information found by a research institute that there are 985,530,000 people practice Islam in the Asia Pacific region, which is equal to 61.7 percent of the people in that part of the world. This shows the importance of and relationship between Muslim food and tourism management in that particular region. However, at the present the Ministry of Tourism and Sports has not planned any area development for this kind of tourism under the National Tourism Development Plan of 2012-2016. The main focus area of his sway is the Andaman shore. According to the biggest tourism and accommodations website Hotels.com (The Office of Strategy Management for Southern Province Cluster, 2013), the ranking scale shows that tourists normally choose to travel to the southern part of Thailand with the most popular destinations being Phuket, Samui islands in SuratThani, and Krabi

respectively. This tells us that two Andaman provinces have gained a high popularity for tourism. Moreover, the Andaman provinces, including PhangNga, Krabi, Phuket, Trang, and Ranong, gained a touristic income of 102,041.53 million baht in 2007, which equals a quarter of the whole country's touristic income in the same year which was 547,781.81 million baht.

Table 1 Comparison of touristic income gained by Andaman provinces in 2007

Visitors	Income (Million Baht)					
	Phuket	Krabi	Phangnga	Trang	Ranong	Andaman
Thais	13,567.65	6,079.98	1,685.22	2,634.05	1,026.21	24,993.11
Foreigners	80,671.87	18,648.95	2,216.22	425.02	79.47	102,041.53
Total	94,239.52	24,728.93	3,901.44	3,059.07	1,105.68	127,034.64

Source: Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2007)

There is a consistency in terms of both the idea and statistical growth in number of visitors to the Andaman provinces. Kasikorn Research Center Company Limited (KResearch) showed the among of visitors travelling all over Thailand the most popular region was the southern region, with the number of visitors being 11,683,026 million with a total income of 219,543 million baht (ranked in second place following Bangkok). Also, the statistics revealed details of the three most popular southern provinces that visitors chose as their destination: first, Phuket with 6,622,776 visitors, second, Krabi with 1,340,851, and third the Samui islands in SuratThani with 702,180 (as shown in Table 2). The first two places are both located in the Andaman provinces.

Table 2 The most popular tourist attractions in the southern part of Thailand in 2011

Attractions	Number of visitors (People)	Proportion (Percent)	Touristic income (Million baht)	Proportion (Percent)
Phuket	6,622,776	56.7	163,927	74.7
Krabi	1,340,851	11.5	22,369	10.2
Samui Islands	702,180	6.0	10,138	4.6
Phangnga	620,038	5.3	4,709	2.1
Other provinces	2,397,181	20.5	18,400	8.4
Total (whole southern part)	11,683,026	100.0	219,543	100.0

Source: Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, by Kasikorn Research Center Company Limited (2011)

From the previous idea on the importance of Andaman tourism, there is an interest in Phangnga province, which is a part of the Andaman Sea. Phangnga is a remarkable tourism area where a number of Muslims reside, namely, Yao Noi and Pan Yee islands. These areas are also highly famous for tourism because of their geographical features, one of such is, surrounding mountains which serve as close walls protecting the area from natural disasters such as tsunamis. This distinctive physical characteristic is an important factor in this study of these particular islands with an aim to develop the local food for tourism development. Incidentally, the local food, or Halal, is considered one of the ways to present a local identity; that is to say, it is a presentation of the uniqueness of this area by use of a clear image. (Pike, 2009). In addition, the local food which is rarely found in other areas is a way to present its unique background. It really is an expression of the identity. Some kinds of the local food have come about through social process and local cultures; hence, local food in the Andaman Sea areas is representative of their own identity as well. Nowadays, the government sector, led by the Department of Religious Affairs, has put much emphasis on food management, especially Halal, for tourism and exportation as world class food. Consequently, if the local Muslim food is cultivated and its prominence is

highlighted and enhanced to become a touristic product that captures the attention of people visiting that particular area, it can be a key strategy for sustainable tourism development in Thailand. Therefore, if Thailand is able to develop an innovative model for local Muslim food for cultural tourism; it will be likely to affect tourism development, creating interesting new forms. Also, this new form will follow the direction of growth in world tourism. As a result, this will bring a touristic advantage to Thailand and provide a model for tourism development that involves communities and local cultures which is truly the goal of tourism development.

2. Research Objectives

- 2.1 Examine the identity of local Islamic food.
- 2.2 Study the participation of the community and related sectors in cultural tourism management as it relates to local Islamic food.
- 2.3 Study the behaviors and needs of international tourists and how they relate to local Islamic food services.
- 2.4 Analyze the creation of added value products under cultural tourism management of local Islamic food.
- 2.5 Generate an innovative model of cultural tourism management for local Islamic food.

3. Scope of the Study

3.1 Scope of the Area

The area scope of the study is Pan Yee Island, Mueng District and Yao Island, Ko Yao District, both in Phangnga province

3.2 Scope of Population and Samples

In this research, the researcher put the population into four categories:

Group 1 Government and private sectors

Group 2 Community leaders and local philosophers|

Group 3 General population who visit the areas

Group 4 International tourists who come to Pan Yee and Yao islands

3.3 Scope of Content

The content in this research was set out according to the following research objectives:

3.3.1 Basic information and information focused on identity of local Islamic food in the study areas

3.3.2 Study the cooperation in local Islamic food cultural tourism management of the community and involved sectors with emphasis on learning about arts and cultures and the identity of the community, both through first-hand experience and participation with the owners of the cultures. This will bring about a positive relationship between visitors and residents; also, it can be used as a new model for tourism management development and help further other kinds of tourism

3.3.3 Study the behavior and needs of international tourists in the study areas that lead to an interesting and practical innovative model for local Islamic food cultural tourism management

3.3.4 Study ways to generate added value in local Islamic food cultural tourism management in the study areas

3.3.5 Study ways to synthesize innovative models for local Islamic food cultural tourism management in the study areas

3.4 Scope of Duration

The time frame for this research follows a period of 24 months: April 2013 - March 2015.

4. Contribution of the Research

In the area of study, this research will:

4.1 Acknowledge about the identity of local Islamic food in the study areas

4.2 Develop cooperation among related sectors including the community, involved government sectors, and international tourists which can lead to establishing a creative tourism development model in the study areas

4.3 Document the behaviors and needs of international tourists and inquire into further suggestions for developing local Islamic food services.

4.4 Increase the value of cultural tourism as it relates to local Islamic food for international tourists.

4.5 Create an innovative model of cultural tourism management of local Islamic food.

5. Research Problems

5.1 What is the identity of local Islamic food?

5.2 What are international tourists' behaviors and needs toward local Islamic food services in the Andaman Sea?

5.3 How does cultural tourism management of local Islamic food influence traders, people in the community or other stakeholders, and the government?

5.4 What factors help to create additional value in cultural tourism management of local Islamic food in the Andaman Sea?

5.5 How can "An Innovative Model for Cultural Tourism Management of Local Islamic Food in the Andaman Sea to Support International Tourism" be used to bolster cultural tourism in Thailand?

6. Hypothesis

6.1 The characteristic of identity of local Islamic food could relate to the creation of innovative model of cultural tourism management for local Islamic food.

6.2 The participation of community could relate to the creation of innovative model of cultural tourism management for local Islamic food.

6.3 The innovative model of cultural tourism management for local Islamic food could relate to the establishment of the value added among international tourists.

7. Definitions

7.1 Local Islamic Food refers to local Islamic food in Panyi and Yao Islands. It has a specific identity which reflects a mixture of culture, religion, and the locality.

7.2 Innovative Management Model refers to a model or a structure of cultural tourism management of Islamic food. Panyi and Yao Islands, situated in the Andaman Sea, are studied as models of how to creatively develop the areas through the participation of all sectors.

7.3 Cultural Food Tourism refers to an alternative tourism for tourists who aim to learn about culture as it relates to local Islamic food on Panyi and Yao Islands. It includes all relevant sectors of food activities, such as education in using local, non-toxic ingredients for cooking and consumption of dishes indentified as local Islamic food. This will help improve creative tourism models, so that tourists can appreciate and understand the food culture in Panyi and Yao Islands through tourism.

7.4 The Andaman Sea refers to the Andaman Coast in Southern Thailand, comprised of natural seaside resources, such as groups of islands, diving sites, beaches, and natural land resources, such as mountains, caves, waterfalls, and sites showcasing history, culture, and local ways of life. Panyi and Yao Islands, situated in the Andaman Sea, will be the focus of this research.

7.5 International Tourists refer to foreign tourists visiting the Andaman Sea, particularly the Panyi and Yao Islands.

8. Conceptual Framework

