

Jeerapon Tabkaew 2007: Opinions and Attitudes of Youths towards Ko Chang Development for Sustainable Tourism. Master of Science (Resource Management), Major Field: Resource Management, Interdisciplinary Graduate Program. Thesis Advisor: Associate Professor Sompetch Mungkorndin, Ph.D. 120 pages.

This research studied the opinions and attitudes of youths, including the factors affecting the youths' attitudes. The questionnaires were used to interview 280 youths, who had residence registration at Ko Chang Sub-district, Trat Province. Data were analyzed by statistics of frequency, percentage, mean, maximum, minimum and standard deviation. Chi-square test was used to find the factors affecting the youths' attitudes at significance level 0.05.

The results showed that the majority of youths were 15 years old. Proportions of male and female were close. Most of the youths were students, had high school education, parents were hired workers, and sports were youths' hobby. The settlement period was 1 to 5 years. The distance from home of the youths to nearest tourist areas was 1 to 5 kilometers. The majority of youths were not member of local tourism group. Youths had moderate level of attitudes on positive impacts and benefits from tourism development. For negative impacts and damage from tourism development, level of attitudes was low. Most youths had high level of knowledge towards sustainable tourism. They had moderate level of receiving informations on tourism development, mostly from their teachers. The informations on natural resource conservation and environmental impacts through televisions were most wanted.

Opinions of most youths indicated that the present Ko Chang sustainable tourism development patterns caused degradations of the natural resources, garbage and pollution problems, respectively. The development proposed must not harm environmental and natural resources. Monthly meeting with the community should be continuously arranged. There were three factors at moderate level of attitudes of the youths, namely, education level, occupation, and positive impacts and benefits received. The results of this study can be used to support related organizations working on Ko Chang sustainable tourism. Public relations with representatives of local tourism groups should be conducted to increase youths' leaders and networks to participate in tourism development. These would turn the attitudes from moderate to high levels.

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Thesis Advisor's signature