

Community-Based Gastronomy Tourism Development - The Case Of Northern Thailand

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Article History: Received: 10 January 2021; Revised: 12 February 2021; Accepted: 27 March 2021; Published online: 4 June 2021

Abstract

Gastronomy Tourism Is A Widespread Tourism Trend In Thailand. This Leads The Increasing Number Of Local Restaurants And Menus. This Phenomenon Is Dominated By The Privately Owned- Business And Located In Towns. It Is Neglected Gastronomy Tourism Operated By Local Community, Where The Tourist Can Gain Authentic And Real Local Experiences. Therefore, This Paper Employed A Development Research And Applies A Participatory Action Research (Par) To Initially Develop A Community- Based Gastronomy Tourism Site (Cbgt) In A Second-Tier City In Northern Thailand. This Paper Reveals That Community-Based Tourism (Cbt) Site In Northern Thailand Has A High Potential To Become A Cbgt Site, In Terms Of Community Collaborations, The Variety Of Local Foods, And The Government Supports. Additionally, This Paper Found That Thai Domestic Tourists Are More Likely To Have Their Expectations On Affective Experiences Than Cognitive Experience When Visiting A Cbgt Site. Therefore, The Development Of Cbgt In Northern Thailand Applied Affective Experience Components: Happiness, Relaxation, And Nostalgic Feeling, As A Core Experience Offered. However, The Development Is Considered An Incremental Innovation Due To The Lack Of Service Quality And Operational Skills Of The Locals. This Paper Provides Recommendations For Further Cbgt Development And Study.

Keywords Gastronomy, Community-Based Tourism, Tourist Experience, Tourism Development

Introduction

The Creative Economy Policy Is One Of The Most Recent Economic Development Policies In Thailand. This Policy Fosters Many Of The Second-Tier City, Including Phayao Province In The North Of Thailand, Promotes Its Cultural Community Tourism To Become A Creative Tourism. This Model Of The Tourism Emphasizes The Engagement Between Locals And Tourists, Who Are Interested In Actively Participating In And Learning From An Authentic Experience (Richards, 2010; Designated Areas For Sustainable Tourism Of Thailand Organization: Dasta, 2016). The Characteristic Of Creative Tourism Appropriates With The Recent Thai Domestic Tourist Behaviour. They Are More Interested In Exploring New And Exciting Experiences, Particularly Local Experiences. Thai Tourists Are Willing To Pay More For Gaining New Experiences With Local Cultural Activities And Local Foods (Lunkam, 2017; Tourism Authority Of Thailand: Tat, 2018). This Means Local Gastronomy Tourism Can Be Considered One Of Creative Tourism Approaches.

Gastronomy Tourism Is One Of The Specific Interest Tourism Approaches. Gastronomic Tourist Enables To Gain Experiences From The Unique And Authentic Local Foods And Beverage (Urry, 2002; Wolf, 2002). Since 2016, Gastronomy Tourism Become More Interested Among Thai Domestic And International Tourists As Shown In The Increasing Availability Of Local Restaurant And Menus Across Thailand. In 2016, Gastronomy Tourism Generated 456,000-Million-Baht Revenue Or 20% Of Total Revenue In Tourism Industry In Thailand (Suanpleng Et Al., 2016). This Introduces Gastronomy And Food Tourism A Widespread Tourism Trend In Thailand (Tat, 2018). However, The Increasing Of Local Restaurants Is Dominated By The Privately Owned- Business And Mostly Located In Towns. Gastronomy Tourism Operated By And Located In Local Community Is Remain Neglected.

The Study On Local Gastronomy Tourism In Thailand Reveals That, Although, Cbt Site Has Potentials To Become Cbgt, In Terms Of Its Local Culinary Culture (Chamnancha,2018) And The Local Wisdoms And Skills In Culinary (Promnil, 2019), It Requires Creativity And Customer Understanding For The Development (Chamnancha,2018; Dasta, 2016). These Issues Are Still The Challenges For Cbt Providers In A The Second-Tier City In Northern Thailand, For Example, Cbt In Nong Lum Sub-District, Phayao Province (Pongphattanasiri Et Al, 2009).

The Cbt In Nong Lum Sub-District, Phayao Province Has Been Officially Established In 2015 And Received A First Prize In Northern Local Food Cooking Contest Hosted By Tat In 2019, Although, The Providers And Locals Have Been Making Efforts To Promote The Cbt With This Certified Skills, They Still Lack Of

Understanding And Creativity In Developing And Promoting Their Community To Be Cbgt(A Group Discussion With The Committees Of Cbt Nong Lum, 2020). Therefore, It Is Essential To Explore How To Promote Cbt In Nong Lum To Become A Cbgt One. In Doing So, This Paper Evaluates The Potential Of Cbt In Nong Lum Whether It Can Be Promoting To Cbgt As Well As Examines The Tourists' Behavior And Expectation On Cbgt. Also, We Initially Develop Cbgt In Nong Lum Sub-District, Phayao Province, Thailand.

Literature Review

Types Of Gastronomy In Thailand

The Gastronomy Tourism Is An Emerging Tourism Trend, Which Tourists Enable To Gain Experiences From The Unique And Authentic Local Foods And Beverage (Urry, 2002; Wolf, 2002). Tat (2018) Clarifies Gastronomy Tourism In Thailand Into 3 Categories.

- 1) Food Tours: Food Experiences Provided To Tourists By The Choices Of Tour Package,
- 2) Food And Fruit Festival: The Food And Fruit Events Organized At Various Local Areas, And
- 3) Cooking Vacation: Trips To Various Places And Learn The Culinary Courses.

Characteristics And Behaviours Of Gastronomic Tourists

Previous Study On Gastronomy Tourism (Haukeland, Et Al.,2001; Urry, 2002; Wolf, 2002) Indicate Characteristics And Behaviours Of Gastronomic Tourists As A Conservative People Who Interested In The Authenticity And Simplicity Of Local Culture And Folklore. They Travel For Cognitive And Behavioural Experiences, In Particularly Learning And Understanding On Authentic Foods And Beverages. It Differs From Thai Domestic Tourist's Motivation On Gastronomy Tourism. Designated Areas For Sustainable Tourism Of Thailand Organization (Dasta) (2016) Identifies Thai Tourist's Motivations On Gastronomy Tourism Into 5 Factors, Namely Pleasurable Experience, Grounded, Curiosity, Self-Expression, And Anxiety. These Motivations Are Mostly Related To Affective Components Of Experiences Proposed By Schmitt (1999). He Explains That To Fulfil The Goal Of Creating The Customers' Experiences, It Is Essential To Focus On 5 Components Of Customer Experiences As Follows.

- 1) Sensory Components: Sight, Smell, Taste, Touch, And Sound
- 2) Affective Components: Happiness, Excitement, Scare, And Love.
- 3) Cognitive Components: Learning And Knowledge
- 4) Behavioral Component, And
- 5) Relationship Components: A Good Relationship Between The Locals And Tourists, The Sharing Of Experiences.

Cbgt Development In Thailand

Prior Cbt And Cbgt Developments Have Been Focusing On Product-Oriented Marketing Such As The Development Based On Community Context And Knowledge And Skills Development For Local People. It Is Argued By Marketing Researchers (Kotler And Armstrong, 2012; Gustavo, 2013) That In The 21st Century, Tourists Differ Considerably In Their Preferences. Therefore, Knowing And Understanding Tourist Needs And Behaviors Is Essential In Marketing Activities, Namely Developing, Promoting, And Selling Tourism Products (Choibamroong, 2006; Dolnicar, 2007). Therefore, This Paper Applies Customer-Oriented Marketing Approach And Customer Experience Management As A Tool To Develop Cbt Nong Lum To Become A Cbgt One.

Previous Literature Reveals 3 Main Elements That Establish Gastronomic Tourist Experiences Including Physical Element (Barbera Et Al, 2011; Horng Et Al, 2012), Social Element (Ministry Of Tourism And Sports: Mots,2013), And Product And Service (Chimbanrai And Wongsarojana, 2015; Sirichotinishakorn;2017)

- 1) **Physical Element:** Physical Element Has More Influential On Customer Experiences In The Restaurant Than The Product Itself. Horng Et Al (2012) And Ryu And Han, (2011) Assert That Physical Element Has A Significant Effect On Customers' Affective Experience And Purchase Intention, Particularly Aesthetics And Relaxation Ambience (Yeh And Huan, 2017). These Environments Provide Customers' Affective Experience Only When Customer Participate On-Site Activity (Quan And Wang, 2004). However, The Study On Tourist Satisfaction On Local Restaurant On Northern Thailand By Chimbaanria And Wongsrojna (2015) Reveals The Restaurant Direction Sign Also Creates Customer' Affective Experiences During The Tourist Travel To Site (Quan And Wang, 2004)
- 2) **Social Element:** Mots (2013) Point Out That Tourist Can Gain Local Experience By Learning From And Participating In Local Cultural Activities. This Establishes Interaction Between Hosts/Locals And Tourists, And This Creates A Social Element And Relationships Between Hosts/Locals And Tourists.

- 3) **Product And Service Element:** The Exploration Of Thai Domestic Tourists’ Expectation On Northern Local Food (Chimbanrai And Wongsarojana, 2015) Reveal That Tourists Has Highest Expectation On The Uniqueness, Quality, Value, And Taste, Respectively. Similarly, Sirichotinishakorn (2017) Explores Tourist Behaviour On Gastronomy Tourism In The West Of Thailand. The Finding Is Consisted With Chimbanrai And Wongsarojana (2015) That The Tourist Expects To Experience The Uniqueness Of Ingredients, Recipes, And Cooking Procedures. In Term Of Gastronomy Tourism Activities, Punturee (2015) Evaluates Which Activities Enable To Create Tourist Experiences On Gastronomy Tourism. The Results Indicated That Tourist Experiences The Most On The Related Activities Of Food Tours, Such As, Local Market Tour, Local Farm Tour, Handicraft Shopping Center Tour. On The Other Hand, Tourist Gain Less Experiences On Cooking Classes And Cooking Demonstration.

Methods

To Accomplish The Research Objectives, A Participatory Action Research With Mixed- Method Approach Has Been Applied As Shown In Table.1.

Table 1 Showing The Research Methods.

Research Objective	Methods	Population And Sample
To Evaluate The Potential Of Cbt In Nong Lum	Qualitative Methods: Survey And Unstructured- Interviews	20 Of Cbt Committees
		10 Of Folk Philosophers
To Examine The Tourists’ Behaviour And Expectation On Cbgt	Quantitative Methods: Online Questionnaire	400 Of Thai Domestic Tourists
To Initially Develop Cbgt In Nong Lum Sub-District, Phayao Province, Thailand	- Experimental Development - Brainstorming - Participate Observation	20 Of Cbt Committees
		5 Of Folk Philosopher
		5 Of Government Sector’s Representative
		5 Of Private Sector’ S Representative

Methodology

This Is A Development Research And Applies A Participatory Action Research (Par) To Initially Develop A Community- Based Gastronomy Tourism Site (Cbgt) In A Second-Tier City In Northern Thailand. The Community Or Participants Involve In All Development Processes, Including Clarifying Research Problems, Analyzing, Proposing Of The Solutions Of Problems, As Well As Developing Of The Cbgt Model.

Data Analysis

The Qualitative Data Has Been Analyzed Using The Content Analysis Method To Evaluate The Potential Of Cbt In Nong Lum Whether It Can Be Promoting To Cbgt.

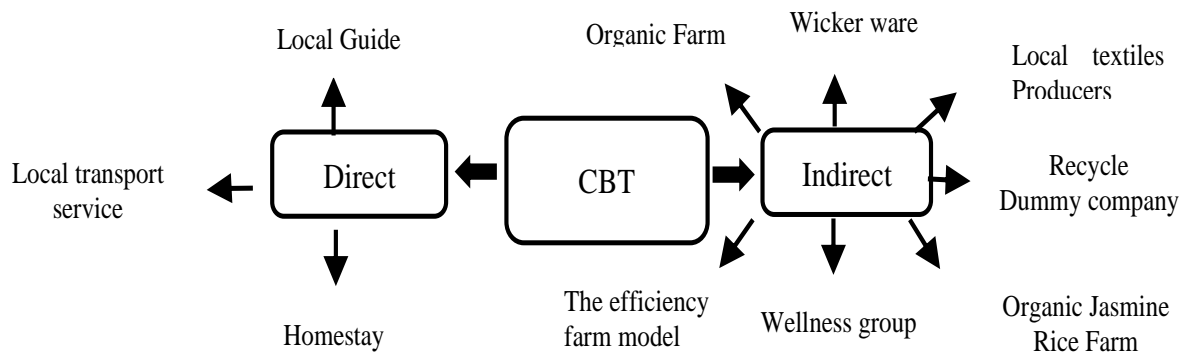
The Qualitative Data Collected From The 400 Questionnaires Was Analyzed By Using The Spss Program. A Descriptive Analysis, Including Frequency, Percentage, Mean, And Standard Deviation, Was Used To Examine Tourists’ Behaviour And Expectation On Cbgt.

Results

1. Cbt In Northern Thailand Has A Highly Potential To Be Developed Cbgt Site.

This Paper Reveals That Cbt In Nong Lum Has A Highly Potential To Become A Cbgt Site, In Terms Of Community Collaboration, The Variety Of Local Foods, And The Government Supports. There Are Various Vocational Groups In The Village Which Have Different Goals Of Performance And Require Working Independently. However, They Are Willing To Cooperate With Others As The Tourists Arrive. (See Figure 1).

Figure.1. Vocations Related To Cbt In Nong Lum



This Performance Is Considered As The Matrix Structure, Where Each Vocational Group Provides Their Cooperation To The Designated Group For Tourism Promotion. In Term Of The Motivation To Work Collaboration, This Paper Found That Each Vocational Groups Have A Pleasure And A Pride In Presenting Their Community To The Tourists. Also, They Participate The Project Because Of Their Sense Of Community And Belonging As Captured 'I Live In This Village Whenever The Tourist Come, I Am Willing To Serve And Being A Good Host'. This Shows That The Social Rewards And Intrinsic Rewards Considered As The Motivation Of The Community's Collaboration.

This Paper Also Reveals The Variety Of Local Foods In Cbt Nong Lum. Although, Most Local Foods Found In Nong Lum Are Typically Found In Northern Thailand, There Are Some Specific Nong Lum Cuisine. For Example, Moo Raa (Like Picked Pork), Moo Noom (Like Fermented Pork), Nuah Noom (Like Fermented Beef), And Khanom Naa Mai (Like Burned Custard). These Menus Are Ancient Northern Dishes, Which Are Disappeared In Most Parts Of Northern Thailand. Additionally, There Are Some Differences Of The Cooking Techniques, Ingredients, And Seasonings Which Are The Result Of Specific Geographical Context And The Locals' Preferences In Cbt Nong Lum. The Examples Of Its Unique Recipes, Specific Ingredients Are Nam Prik Jing Leed (Cricket Chilli Paste), Kang Yuak Paa (Wild Babana Stalk Curry) Khao Tom Bia Oil (Stream Sticky Rice Wrapped In Sugar Cane Leave).

Moreover, This Paper Reveals The Involvement Of Government Sectors And Academic Institutes In Organizing Activities And Creating The Tourism Route Such As The Agro-Tourism Route, The Health-Tourism Route.

2. Affective Experience Is The Core Tourist's Expectation On Cbgt

Using Descriptive Analysis Method With A Quantitative Data Collected From 400 Online Questionnaires Reveal That Most Of Informants Are Females (75.5 %) And Lives In Northern Thailand (64.7 %). The Range Of Age Is Between 21-50 Years Old. The Majority Of Informant Have A Higher Education (64.3%), Who Work In The Government Sector And Gain More Than 30,000 (100 Us) Thai Baht Per Month.

The Analysis Of Tourist Expectation On Visiting Cbgt Site Shows The Highest Means At Tourist Expectation On The Emotional Fulfilment : Happiness By Having Local Cuisine (\bar{x} = 4.22) , Followed By The Relaxation While Experiencing Local Cuisine (\bar{x} =4.04), And The Fulfilment Of Their Nostalgic Feeling Gained From The Ancient And Rare Northern Dishes (\bar{x} =4.03). On The Other Hand, Learning The Cooking Techniques Of Local Recipes (\bar{x} = 3.60), The Expression On One's Self-Identity (\bar{x} = 3.73), And Gaining Knowledge And Experiences On Local Cuisine (\bar{x} = 3.77) Are The Lowest Means Of Tourist Expectation On Cgbt As Shown In Table.2.

Table.2. Mean And S.D. Of Tourist Expectation On Cbgt

Expectation On Cbgt	\bar{x}	S.D.
1. To Fulfill Happiness On Having Local Cuisine (Pleasure)	4.22	.78
2. To Learning The Cooking Techniques Of Local Recipes	3.60	1.12
3. To Gain Knowledge And Experiences On Local Cuisine	3.77	1.05
4. To Express One's Self-Identity	3.73	1.03
5. To Rest And Relax While Experiencing Local Cuisine	4.04	1.07
6. To Rest And Relax By Joining The Cbgt Activities	3.84	1.01
7. To Escape From The Daily Routine By Joining Cbgt Program	3.80	1.03
8. To Fulfil The Nostalgic Feeling Gained From The Ancient And Rare Northern Dishes	4.03	.08

Table 2 Illustrates That Affective Experience, Is The Key Tourist’s Expectation On Cbgt. There Are 3 Elements Of Affective Experience Found In This Study, Namely Happiness, Relaxation, And Nostalgic Feeling. Whereas The Cognitive Experience, Such As Learning And Gaining Knowledge Of Local Culinary, Is Considered The Less Concerned Expectation.

In Addition, This Paper Examines Cbgt Elements Effect On Tourist Experiences, Namely Physical, Product And Service, And Social Elements. The Findings Show That Informant Has A Highest Expectation On The Physical Elements (\bar{X} = 4.26), Followed By Product And Service Element (\bar{X} = 4.11) And Social Element (\bar{X} = 3.51) As Shown In Table 3.

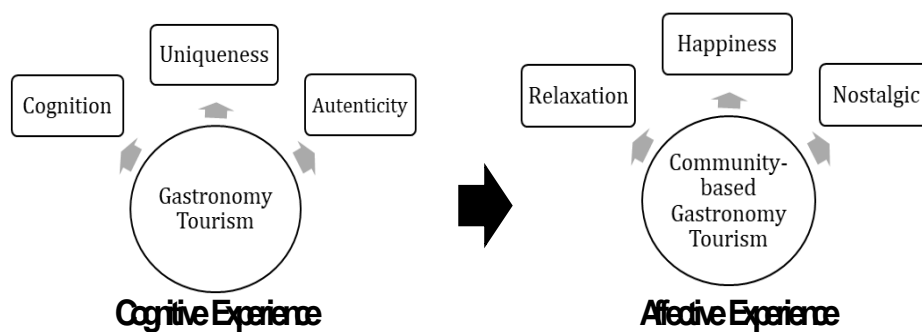
Table 3. Cbgt Elements Effecting Tourists’ Experiences.

Cbgt Elements	\bar{X}	S.D
Physical Element	4.26	0.75
Social Element	3.51	0.58
Product And Service Element	4.11	0.69

3. The Development Of Cbgt In Northern Thailand

Findings From Table 2 Indicates That Thai Domestic Tourists Have A Higher Expectation On Affective And Pleasurable Experience Than Cognitive Experience When Traveling To Cbgt Site. Therefore, This Paper Applies An Affective Experience, Including Happiness, Relaxation, And Nostalgic Feeling, As A New Core Experience Offered To Tourists And Concept For The Cbgt Development In Northern Thailand As Shown In Figure 2.

Figure 2. New Tourists’ Experience Designed For Cbgt



The Finding From Table 3 Indicates That Thai Domestic Tourist Expects The Most On Physical Element, Such As The Aesthetic Facility And Relaxation Ambience. Therefore, This Paper Initially Develops 3 Elements Of Cbgt By Prioritizing Physical, Product And Service, And Social Element, Respectively. By Observing The Development Processes As Well As Brainstorming With Cbt Nong Lum Committees, We Found That The Development Of Cbt Nong Lum Into Cbgt Nong Lum Has Been Gradually Improving Based On The Existing Tourism Conditions And Environments. For Example, All Food Containers Are Created And Made By Local Materials, Such As Bamboo, Teakwood, Banana Leave, And Coconut Shell. Cbgt Activities Are Re-Arranged From Existing Agri-Tour Program. In Terms Of Service Quality Improvement, Service System, Kitchen Operational Systems, And Host-Guest Interaction Activities. In A Short Period Of Development, The Locals Appreciate Their Performance On The Host-Guest Interaction Activities, Namely Local Cuisine Presenting, And Cooking Demonstration. This Is Because These Are As Characteristic Of Their Inherited Culinary Culture And Lead Them To Perform Confidently As Noted ‘I Learned To Make This Menu While Helping My Grandmother Cooking About 30 Years Ago [...]’ (Informant 1). ‘[...] Do What We Experienced Is Not Pressure [...]’ (Informant 3). However, They Are Struggling In Applying The Designed Service System, Kitchen Operational Systems. ‘[...] Do What We Do Not Experienced, Like In The Kitchen System, Is Under Pressure [...]’ (Informant 3).

Discussions

This Paper Highlights That Cbt In Northern Thailand Has A Highly Potential To Be Developed Into Cbgt Site, In Terms Of Community Collaboration, The Variety Of Local Foods, And The Government Supports. We Found That A Matrix Structure Organization With Social And Intrinsic Motivations Is A Key Mechanism For Community Collaboration Employed In Cbt Nong Lum. This Mechanism Of Community Collaboration Not Only Foster Knowledge And Resources Exchanges, But Also Enhances The Flexibility Of The Performance.

This is consistent with Promnil (2019) that the sense of community is a key motivation of the villagers to join the Nawatwithee Homestay in Phayao Province. It might be due to Thailand is a highly collectivist society, particularly in the rural community, where group and community acceptance are highly concerned. Members of this society are satisfied with their status of highly material and mental dependence (Hofstede, 1984).

Moreover, this paper found that affective experience: happiness, relaxation, and nostalgic feeling, is the core tourist's expectation on Cbgt. Although, this finding is incorporated with Dasta (2016) who assert that pleasure experience is considered one amongst motivations to visit gastronomy tourism site. This finding differs from the characteristics and behavior of gastronomic tourists who travel for cognitive and behavioural experiences, especially learning and understanding on authentic foods and beverages (Urry, 2002; Wolf, 2002; Chonhakhajhon, 2017). Interestingly, the findings of tourist expectation on affective experience when travelling to Cbgt site is consistent with Thai tourists' motivation on visiting Cbt and rural tourism site. Previous studies (Promnil, 2020; Petchai, 2011; Kureechwy & Banjongmanee, 2018; Tat, 2018) noted that enjoyment and relaxation factors influence Thai domestic tourists to visit Cbt and homestay. It can be interpreted that affective experience, including happiness, enjoyment, relaxation, is the core expectations of Thai domestic tourists in visiting Cbt and Cbgt sites whereas the cognitive experience is considering the less concerned expectation.

Lastly, our study found the moderately development of Cbgt Nong Lum based on the existing tourism resources in the village. The reasons of this moderately development might be the lack of technical skills in service and kitchen operational skills of the locals. Similarly, Jiramahapoka (2017) explores the ability of Cbt operators in Chiang Rai Province (Northern Thailand) in delivering local food. His finding indicates that food presentation and cooking demonstration skills inherited from their own experiences and local wisdom. However, the communities still require the time to gain sufficient experiences in the development and improvement of systematic service quality. It might be due to human skills can be derived from a frequent practice and a time consumption process (Luephong, 2102). Therefore, an experiential learning approach is one available method to create an appropriate and continually developing program (Razzaqa Et. Al, 2013)

Conclusion

Gastronomy and food tourism is a widespread tourism trend in Thailand, and this leads the increasing number of local restaurants and menus. This phenomenon is dominated by the privately owned- business and located in towns. The local gastronomy tourism operated by local community, where the tourist can gain authentic local experience is limited. Additionally, the issue of tourism marketing and creativity is still the challenge for Cbt providers in a small and non-main city in Northern Thailand such as Phayao Province (Pongphattanasiri Et Al, 2009). Therefore, this study filled the gaps in the literature on local gastronomy tourism as well as community-based tourism by adapting a development research and employing a participatory action research (Par) to initially develop a community- based gastronomy tourism site (Cbgt) in a second-tier city in Northern Thailand.

This paper supports previous literature on Cbt and Cbgt (Dasta, 2016; Chamnancha, 2018; Tat, 2018; Promnil, 2019) that Cbt site in Northern Thailand has a potential to become a Cbgt site, in particular a community collaboration based on a matrix structure organization with social and intrinsic motivations. This mechanism fosters work flexibility and the share of knowledge and resources. This mean on a matrix structure organization with social and intrinsic motivations is one of the key success factors in Cbgt developments in a highly collectivist society like rural communities in Northern Thailand.

Additionally, this paper contributes a new experience offered to Cbgt tourist. We found that Thai domestic tourists are more likely to expect on affective experiences than cognitive experiences when visiting a Cbgt, Cbt, and rural tourism site. Therefore, this paper introduces an affective experience, including happiness, relaxation, and nostalgic feeling experiences, as a new core experience offered to tourists and concept for the Cbgt development in Northern Thailand.

Furthermore, this paper supports previous study on Cbt development in developing countries in Asia (Hussin, 2008; Bhan and Singh, 2014; Kim Et Al., 2014; Kunjuraman and Hussin, 2017). Our findings indicate a moderately development of Cbgt in Northern Thailand. The development is mainly based on the existing tourism resources, including the lack of service quality and operational skills of the locals. These skills can be derived from a frequent practice. As such, we recommend an experiential learning approach as an appropriate method to train and develop Cbgt's human resources in Northern Thailand.

Limitations And Future Studies

The Main Limitation Involves The Research Methodology. This Paper Aimed To Use Online Questionnaire To Collect Quantitative Data With Thai Domestic Tourist Across Thailand. However, The Returned Questionnaires Are Dominated By Respondent Who Lives In Northern Thailand. Therefore, A Core Experience Offered To Tourists And Concept For The Cbgt Development Contributed From This Study May Appropriate With Local Tourists And Difficult To Apply For Cbgt Development Across The Nation. Therefore, It Is A Need For Other Cbt Sites In Other Regions To Target Their Customers And Explore The Targeted Tourists' Expectation To Create A Core Experience Offered And Concept Of The Development. Also, This Reduces The Similarity Of Cbgt Products And Services.

Furthermore, This Study Was Conducted Only In One Cbt Site In The North Of Thailand, The Results May Be Difficult To Generalize Or Extend To Represent Cbgt Across Region. Therefore, Further Research Should Apply A Multiple Case Study And Conducted With Several Cbt Site In The North Of Thailand. This Can Help Replicates The Procedures For Each Case Study And A More Compelling And Robust Than When Data Is Collected From A Single Case Study (Yin, 2014)

Acknowledgement

We Would Like To Express Our Gratitude To My Scholarship Sponsor, Unit Of Excellent In Innovative And Hotel, University Of Phayao, For Providing Financial Means And Their Support. We Also Wish To Acknowledge Cbt Nong Lum In Dokkamtai Province Located In Northern Thailand For Participating In Our Development Research As Well As All Informant Who Generously Gave Us Their Valuable Time And Provided The Necessary Information For This Study.

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