

Homestay Tourism Management Model To The New Normal In The Southern Provinces Of Thailand

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Abstract

Homestay is a form of sustainable tourism where tourists can absorb and learn the community's cultural identity and natural resources related to the way of life of people in the community. At present, there is an increasing number of homestays along with tourism trends. This study aimed to investigate and develop a homestay tourism management model to the new normal standard in the southern provinces of Thailand. It was qualitative research. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interview with key informants coupled with observation. Subjects, selected through purposive sampling, consisted of three communities in southern Thailand, namely Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; Petchkiri Homestay Community Enterprise, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; and Koh Libong Homestay, Kantang District, Trang Province. They all have had homestay eco-tourism certified by Thailand Homestay Standard in 2019. Data analysis was carried out through content analysis and presented in descriptive writing. The findings revealed that a homestay tourism management model to the new normal comprised five major components: 1) Product and Service Management. Homestay accommodation had to be certified by Thailand Homestay Standard. A list of food on the menu mainly used local ingredients, 2) Tourism Resource Management. There was a policy of maintaining environmental resources and culture of community tourist attractions, which was determined by the community, 3) Homestay Management. Homestay management was operated as a community enterprise group which had operational goals, a clear work structure, and hygienic operation in accordance with sanitary safety standards, 4) Public Relations. Public relations were mainly conducted through websites and social media, and 5) Leadership. In driving the group's operations, the group chairperson played different roles as a cooperation creator, a coordinator, and a person who monitors, follows, and evaluates.

Keywords: Tourism Management, Homestay, New Normal, Southern Provinces

Introduction

Novel coronavirus 2019, officially known as COVID-19, refers to a severe acute respiratory disease that can be easily transmitted from humans to humans. It has spread to all regions around the world, causing an increasing number of infected people rapidly. It is a sudden and violent global crisis which both directly and indirectly affects the operations of various

industrial businesses, particularly the tourism and service industry (Chaiyo & Mahaprom, 2020). A wide spread of COVID-19 in Thailand at the beginning of 2020 has changed the way of life of people known as the new normal. The Royal Institute has defined this term as the new normal or the new way of life. It is a new way of living caused by something affecting the usual practice that people in society get used to and can anticipate. Therefore, they have to change to a

new way of living under the new normal. Living in the new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic, the basic new way of life is public health in Thailand. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (CCSA) has announced measures to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 that everyone must give special attention and strictly follow, for instance, wearing a cloth mask or a hygienic mask at all times, maintaining social distancing of 2 meters, washing hands regularly, carrying alcohol gel hand sanitizers, and avoiding crowded places and risk groups or people with symptoms of illness. All these measures are basics for designing the new normal (Tongkeo, 2020). From now on, people's lives will be adjusted to the new normal.

Homestay, a form of tourism where tourists stay with local people in the same house, makes tourists understand and learn the local cultural identity and natural resources related to the way of life of the community. Khiewhom & Khemakhunasai (2017) gather the body of knowledge about homestay and classify the study of homestay into 3 phases. In the 1st phase (2001 – 2005), previous studies mainly focus on motivational attitudes and tourists' behaviors as well as start using research methodology to solve homestay tourism problems. This is because most tourists give special attention to the natures of cultural ways of life and homestay standards. In the 2nd phase (2006 – 2010), an emphasis is placed on using different concept to study homestays and homestay potential development according to the suitability of community contexts. Also, a SWOT analysis is used to help develop the homestay potential of each community. Finally, in the 3rd phase (2011 – 2015), it is found that the research results are mainly on the important of homestay standards. In other words, the needs of tourists are taken into consideration. Most of the research issues are chiefly focused on developing knowledge and skills for the community, building inside and outside networks, and upgrading homestays to meet the standards. In addition, the dynamics of homestay study in the past 15 years reveal that directions and trends of further homestay research should be related to the development of homestay tourism to international standards. In the meantime, the balance point of the ecosystem and the social and cultural way of

life of the community must be maintained in order to make homestay tourism in Thai local community sustainable.

Betong District, Yala Province, one of the provinces in southern Thailand, is important to the country's tourism strategy. Because it is a city that has a unique identity as a stand alone city having safety and natural beauty in coexistence with nature surrounded by mountains and mist, and having peace, and tranquility. It is a tourist destination for both local and foreign tourists. Based on the data of the Ministry of Tourism in 2019, there were a total of 689,938 tourists, resulting in revenue from tourism of 3,486.8 million baht. In 2020, a revenue from tourism decreased by 39.96% over the previous year, amounting to 487.7 million baht, with a total number of tourists of 414,228 people (Yala Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports, 2021) or equivalent to 86.01%, compared to the year 2019. This figure shows it is a good opportunity to develop homestay tourism management to generate income for the community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the homestay tourism operation has been affected, resulting in a decrease in a number of tourists, particularly a number of foreign tourists which are contracted by 82.4% and continue to decline due to the disruption of the world tourism situation, making the tourism contracted by 38-45% (Kasikorn Research Center, 2020). To make a preparation and boost homestay tourism in the new normal after the COVID-19 pandemic in Betong District, Yala Province, it is worthwhile conducting the study of the successful homestay tourism management. It will propose a model of homestay tourism management to the new normal, using relevant concepts and theories as a framework for determining the management guidelines to enhance the potential of homestay tourism entrepreneurs in Betong District, Yala Province and neighboring areas to operate their businesses over the COVID-19 crisis. This will help generate income for the community, making it self-reliant. Also, this leads to the better quality of life and the economic expansion of the communities and Yala Province.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to investigate and develop a homestay tourism management model to the new normal in the southern provinces of Thailand.

Literature Review

This research, entitled Homestay Tourism Management Model to the New Normal in the Southern Provinces of Thailand, was carried out by researching the following relevant documents as basics in conducting research.

Awareness of the New Normal

When talking about consumer behaviors in the new normal, it does not mean that people's lives have changed 100%, but it is Thai people to have changed and adapted to a new lifestyle by blending with traditional ways of life. In one aspect, it is to be forced to change according to the situation. In other aspect, it is an automatic change. After changing behaviors and needs still becomes unique Thai behaviors at the present time, consumer behaviors which are expected to continue even after the end of the COVID-19 crisis are online shopping, using delivery services, spending time on home entertainment, shopping for fun and happiness, searching for additional activities, hobbies, and skills. Because a proportion of working from home is higher if compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, and a company allowed to have flexibility in working hours as well. Likewise, tourism businesses have to be adapted to suit target groups. Foreign tourists will choose tourist attractions where they like and feel safe, and where preventive measures and good medical services are provided. A study of Hongpakdee & Hongpakdee (2021) on the solution for the hotel business reveals that for the survival of hotel businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is a new challenge for business entrepreneurs to reconsider their operational strategies. Because the existing business management model is no longer suitable for the current situation. They have to be more adaptive, use technology to help in business operations and management, control production costs, reduce unnecessary expenses in order to have the least operating costs. This would help a business to continue its operation and to wait for more foreign tourists. Also, business operators have to do more marketing activities

with local tourists, consider the revenue management to generate revenue from the sale of goods or services, and determine the selling price appropriate to consumer purchasing power for a certain period of time. In addition, business entrepreneurs should join the project of improving Thai tourism industry in accordance with Amazing Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA) organized by the Tourism Authority of Thailand to create confidence for service recipients. In the long run, it is also readiness in providing future services to meet the new normal.

Homestay Tourism Management in the New Normal

Thai homestays refer to a form of tourism where tourists have to stay in the same house with the homeowner. Due to having empty rooms or living areas in the house, this can be adapted for tourists to stay temporarily, with the provision of accommodation and necessary facilities in return for income. In one house, it has a maximum of 4 rooms and receives tourists no more than 20 people. Homestay is the business operation for supplemental income, which is in line with the definition of the word "hotel" under the Hotel Act B.E. 2547. It is a business that registers with the Department of Tourism in accordance with the rules in 10 aspects and 31 indicators stipulated in Thai Homestay Standard prescribed by the Department of Tourism (Bureau of Tourism Development, Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2015). From the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) around the world and in Thailand, it has affected businesses and tourism activities. It is still at risk of spreading the disease in many areas. Previous studies conducted by academics reveal that currently, tourists give more special attention to safety in tourism. A study of Thongkhot et al., (2021) investigate the potential and guidelines for the development of new normal ecotourism at Talay Bua Daeng (Red Lotus Sea), Kumphawapi District, Udon Thani Province. The findings reveal that Thai tourist behaviors would change. Tourists tend to choose to travel just a short drive within the country. Driving is a means of transportation safer from the COVID-19 infection and allows tourists to travel to unseen tourist

attractions where are less crowded. With the development of ecotourism in the new normal, tourists focus most of their attention to preventive measures for the spread of the COVID-19 virus as follows: having screening points and temperature measurement and wearing a face mask or alternative mask, followed by social distancing measures/restricting the number of people. Service personnel wear personal protective equipment and use disinfectants for cleaning. This aspect is at a high level. This is consistent with the findings of a study of Tangtenglam & Pongpanich (2021). They investigate the factors affecting the selection of new normal Thai travel. The results of the study show that the factors affecting the selection of new normal Thai travel are as follows. Considering each item regarding safety, “Staff dress modestly, wear a face mask, and have their body temperature checked before and after work.” is at a highest level. Considering each item regarding room, “Provision of detailed information about how to protect a respiratory pandemic.” is at a highest level. In order for businesses to survive, entrepreneurs should adjust their service provision in accordance with the tourism behavior in the new normal.

To prepare and promote homestay tourism in the new normal after the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers decided to conduct a study of a successful homestay tourism management model and present a homestay tourism management model in the new normal in order to enhance the potential of homestay tourism business operators to run their businesses beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

Research Methodology

This study was qualitative research. The population was homestay tourism entrepreneurs running their businesses as tourism communities in southern Thailand. They were certified by Thai Homestay Standard in 2020, including 3 groups: Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; Petchkiri Homestay Community Enterprise, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; and Koh Libong Homestay, Kantang District, Trang Province. Data was collected through interview and observation. The interview was conducted with key informants, using a semi-structured interview form which was created based on concepts, theories, and research journals. Selected by purposive sampling, key informants comprised 10 community enterprise representatives: chairpersons of the community enterprises and members. They were from the 3 community enterprise groups, including 3 people from Koh Libong Homestay, 2 from Petchkiri Homestay Community Enterprise, and 5 from Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise. The observation was used to examine management conditions of each community enterprise. Data were analyzed using content analysis and descriptive writing.

Research Results

This research investigated a homestay tourism management model to the new normal in the southern provinces of Thailand. The researchers studied research and academic articles and documents related to a homestay tourism management model and homestay management in the new normal to be used as a research framework as exhibited in Figure 1.

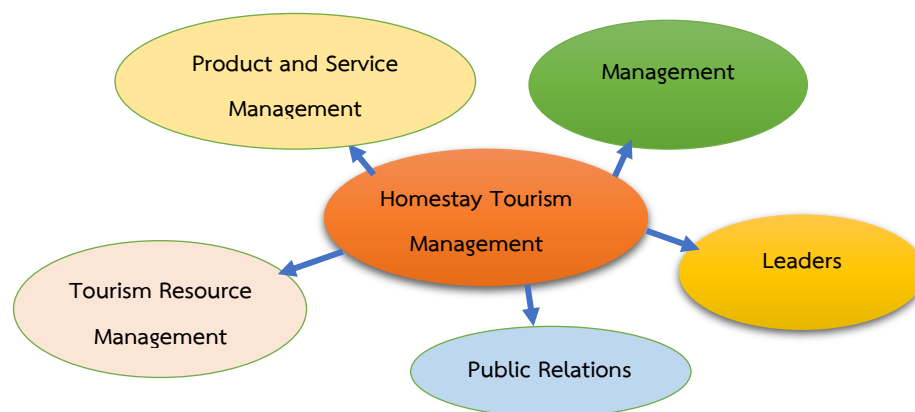


Fig 1. Components of Homestay Tourism Management to the New Normal

Based on the study of a homestay tourism management model to the new normal in the southern provinces of Thailand, the findings of the study were as follows:

General Characteristics of Homestay Tourism Management

It was found from the study that homestay tourism management originated from gathering of community people wanting to provide accommodation for both Thai and foreign tourists. They wanted to travel to explore nature and learn the way of life and culture of the community. The characteristics of customers were walk-in customers, customers who came with friends and with a travel agent. The management of homestays of the 3 groups was conducted under community enterprise groups, where the group chairperson played a supporting role in income distribution by allowing people in the community to participate in the work and receive mutual benefits from activities and accommodation services. The operation was supported by both public and private agencies inside and outside the area. For instance, Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise obtained support from Sub-district Administrative Organization in driving the community and from university regarding academics and community product development.

Components of Homestay Accommodation Management to the New Normal

1. Product and Service Management.

It consisted of 3 aspects: 1. Accommodation. The accommodation had to be cleaned both inside the house and surrounding area. Homeowners had to adhere to SHA standards determined by the Department of Public Health. For example, before and after using the services of tourists, the accommodation had to be cleaned, using disinfectants. Houses provided for tourists had to be rotated in order to be fair to the group members. 2. Food and Nutrition. Menus had to be prepared using mainly local and seasonal ingredients, with a main focus on local dishes in

order for tourists to experience the way of life of the community. For example, the Koh Libong Homestay Community and Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community served fresh seafood from local fishing boats. Petchkiri Homestay prepared sour soup made of tamarind paste with Luk Mud, Mangkud Kud (peeled mangosteen impaled in a wooden stick), and shrimp paste dip with fresh vegetables. Local ingredients, such as Som Kaek or Som Kandan, Khao Yum in an original recipe with fresh vegetables, and seasonal fruits. All 3 groups had the group of housewives taking care of food preparation. Cooking practices were done according to food sanitation principles. For instance, preparing meals and keeping utensils had to be done in a clean, central kitchen with enclosed cupboards. Meal services consisted of 2 meals per one night stay: dinner and breakfast of the next day. Meal arrangements were based mainly on the needs of tourists, meaning that when booking accommodation, tourists were always asked about what they could eat and could not. The food service facility was at the common area provided by the group. 3. Tourism Activities. The design of activities was consistent with the natural resources and lifestyle of the community, which was flexible according to the needs and readiness of tourists. Homestay groups provided information on activities and tourist attractions so that tourists could design their own activities. For example, at the Koh Libong Homestay, activities included marine activities, snorkeling and coral viewing. If luckily, tourists might also see dolphins. Activities relied on the tide times, which were related to tourist attractions and fishing, the main occupation of people in the community. Petchkiri Homestay highlighted Kiriwong Village which was known for the best air source in Thailand. Because it was surrounded by the mountains. It was rich in forests and natural streams as well as historical sites like Kiriwong Temple, a 300-year old temple of the Kiriwong people, and historical houses. There were various activities to provide knowledge, demonstrations, and learning sources in the community, etc. As for the community enterprise, the Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise used its

strengths in learning cultural ways and the unique way of life of the Muslim community in terms of dress, food, location, and occupation according to the local fishery lifestyle. The Darul Aman Mosque (Pink Mosque) is a community's center for religious activities and a center of people's hearts in the area. Tourism activities were varied according to geography, society, and culture of the area, such as a boat trip, watching sunrise, sea mud wraps, blue swimming crab bank, and mangrove planting which created awareness of nature conservation and sustainable tourism, etc. In addition, the activities of community enterprise groups focused on giving people in the community to present and demonstrate learning-based activities to create participation of people in the community.

“To be fair in arranging accommodation for tourists, there will be a circulation of accommodation provision. One house will serve tourists no more than the specified standard. If a member is not ready for accommodating tourists at a certain date, a service right will be given to another member. To experience the way of life of the community, tourists will be offered local dishes. We have offered more by preparing a food menu according to the 4 elements to balance the strength of body according to birthday”.

Petchwong, A., Chairperson of the Petchkiri Homestay Community Enterprise Group

2. Tourism Resource Management. It consisted of 2 areas: 1. Environmental and cultural resource management. Due to the fact that each area had its own environmental and cultural resources which varied according to the geographical area. Regarding an arrangement of activities for tourists to learn and do together with the community, there was a policy of maintaining environmental resources and culture of community tourist attractions, which was together set. There was the creation of mutual understanding between the groups and tourists by adhering to community tourism practices. For instance, there has been limits on the number of tourists. Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest

Conservation Community Enterprise could receive visitors up to 150 people per day. Likewise, the number of tourists staying at Petchkiri Homestay was limited to 120 people a day. Also, a policy to take care of environmental resources and community culture was set. There has been mutual understanding among members to jointly maintain the resources they have been using based on the concept of “people must maintain what they use”, etc. There has also been the preservation of culture, traditions, local wisdom, and local way of life. Regarding food preparation, local ingredients were used, such as sour soup made of tamarind paste with Luk Mud, Mangkud Kud (peeled mangosteen impaled in a wooden stick), and shrimp paste dip with fresh vegetables. There have also been designated activities in different learning bases. Furthermore, a campaign to create an understanding of environmental conservation of people in the community was created, and different activities to restore and preserve nature were organized, e.g., mangrove forest plantation, blue swimming crab bank to create awareness of nature conservation as well as sustainable tourism of Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise, seagrass planting activities, or garbage collection activities of Koh Libong Homestay. 2. Attractions. Homestay offered products for sale to generate income for the community by taking outstanding resources in the area to develop products and services. For example, Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise had sea mud as a remarkable natural resource equivalent to New Zealand mud. It had high natural minerals which was processed to mud soup, body scrub, and facial mask. Likewise, Petchkiri Homestay offered products from mangosteen such as serum from mangosteen mixed with sour fruit, called Som Kandan, mangosteen paste, tie-dye fabric products, and batik fabric from natural colors or mangosteen peel's color, etc. In addition, different activities organized by community learning centers for tourists to participate in were provided such as weaving products from the Hang Uan fabric of Baan Bangtong, tie-dye fabric from natural color of mangrove leaves, and hand-made products like key chains, bracelets, etc. Koh Libong Homestay

had distinctive features of marine tourism and Muslim culture, etc.

“Community enterprises have processed seafood products, such as organic fish, sea salt (unsalty), shrimp paste, etc. We have continuously developed products through a network of educational institutions in the area.”

Ben Sa-at, A., President of Libong Homestay Group

3. Homestay Management. It consisted of 5 components. 1. Management. The management structure included a chairperson for a group, a committee, a secretary, and a treasurer. The important factors that made homestays to be certified by Thailand homestay standards were members having a common work goal, having confidence and trust their leaders, working together, and having mutual benefits. There was a systematic work with special attention to operate in accordance with homestay standards. When the chairperson was contacted by tourists, he or she would ask about the exact schedule of stay, the number of visitors, the activities they wanted to do, and then the said information would be forwarded to the relevant parties like a person dealing with the accommodation to prepare for tourist arrival. When tourists arrive, the rules of stay would be explained, followed by taking tourists and their suitcases to the prepared accommodation. After the tourists departed, the chairperson of a group held a meeting to hear opinions and operation problems and find ways to improve the operation in the future. 2. Financial Administration. The principles of joint action and mutual benefits would be applied regarding financial administration. The homestay made a clear description on service fees, such as accommodation, meals, and activities as all expenses for each visitor in each program. The income collected from tourists was allocated as compensation for people in the community. Each group had guidelines for fair sharing of benefits. In addition, there was a mutual agreement that part of the members' income would be deducted and kept in the group for different purposes, such as the development of the group's potential in different aspects, members' merit-making ceremonies, cost of training and study tour, or common expenses like expenditures for

organizing member meetings, maintenance expenses, utility expenses, member welfare payments, etc. The part of income of every member was deducted for common expenses, for instance, 5% of income of a member of the Koh Libong Homestay group and 10% of income of a member of the Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Conservation Community Enterprise. 3. Safety. Regarding safety supervision, the 3 groups had same standards of tourist care. When tourists visited the community, people in the community helped one another to take care of tourists for safety's sake. For example, the Koh Libong Homestay group would have the concept of “Tourists are relatives.” When having tourists, members of the group would take turns to pay a visit to tourists at their accommodation. Moreover, there was a group of volunteers, namely Pracha Ruam Jai. They voluntarily did activities for society like to give assistance and to take care of the lives of tourists and their belongings. In addition, there has been first aid readiness and medicines for common illnesses as well as emergency preparedness. 4. Hygiene Services. Under the COVID-19 situation, the government has had lenient measures in tourism-related businesses. The homestay groups had the same sanitary management in accordance with the Amazing Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA), including entrepreneurs, service providers, and service recipients (Department of Tourism, Department of Health, and Ministry of Public Health (2020). There has been a plan to accept only tourists who have made a reservation and with a limitation of the number of tourists. In cooperation with local agencies, the homestay groups also had a visitor screening process. The homestay groups would provide a service to only tourists who have received at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. When arriving, tourists were required to register and pass through the visitor screening process like temperature measurement, wash their hands with alcohol gel regularly and every activity that they did. Moreover, there has also been a change in the operation procedure by keeping social distance, decreasing the size of the group of tourists participating in the activity, and not allowing tourists from different areas to join the activity for easy care and protection. To track tourists, they were suggested to install the Morchana

application to register in and out of the community. 5. Network Building. The homestay groups created the link of people and a group of local agencies and private organizations to exchange information or do different activities together. The network has participated in doing the group activities, such as supporting the budget, giving useful advice, driving the community tourism, providing academic support, and developing community products. All homestays were also ready to cooperate with various government and private agencies that helped develop the community enterprises. For instance, Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Conservation Community Enterprise had a network of both local and private organizations, such as Tha Sala Subdistrict Administrative Organization, network associations which helped support in driving community enterprises, and tourism network associations, Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, and Tourism Authority of Thailand, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, etc.

“The group’s operational goal is to generate income for the community through the development of sustainable tourism coupled with the preservation of the community’s way of life. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, the homestay groups have increased the maintenance of public areas for cleanliness. They give special attention to systematic waste management, particularly face mask wastes for safety’s sake of tourists and people in the community.”

Minman, S., Member of Baan Laem Homestay Mangrove Forest Conservation Community Enterprise Group

4. Public Relations. Due to the fact that the homestay groups have been certified by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, they publicized their information through the websites of the Office of Tourism Development and the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports. Also, there has been a publicity through the Facebook page of each homestay group, such as the Facebook pages of the 3 community enterprise groups, the publicity under the projects of the Department of Tourism, and through travel programs, etc. In addition, the homestay groups

have made public relations plans with a main focus on online media, such as a video clip promoting the club of tourism for conservation and development of the Koh Libong Community, Trang Province through YouTube in order for tourists to receive the information about tourist attractions, tourism activities, and tourism products. The Petchkiri Homestay group publicized the information about its accommodation through different media, such as traveloka.com, expedia.co.th, etc. Regarding offline media, when having an opportunity, every homestay group participated in an exhibition organized by government and private agencies.

5. Leaders. The chairperson of the homestay group played a key role in driving the group’s operations. His or her roles were (1) building cooperation. The chairperson influenced or motivated the members to cooperate with one another to work. (2) Coordination. The chairperson acted as a coordinator with both internal and external organizations. When being contacted by tourists, the chairperson took responsibility for taking jobs and delegating tasks to members with an emphasis on the fair distribution of benefits; and (3) Supervision, monitoring, and evaluation. The chairperson acted as a supervisor of the overall operation. The monitoring of members working was done by both inquiries and meetings.

“Previously, I worked in Bangkok as an employee. I had an idea of wanting to come back home to make Kiriwong popular. I started to run homestay businesses by gathering approximately 10 families and then form a community enterprise group, namely Petchkiri Homestay to receive (welcome) tourists. Looking for a network to support the group’s operations is necessary. As a chairperson, I myself apply for a membership of tourism networks of both inside and outside the area.”

Petchwong, A., Chairperson of Petchkiri Homestay Community Enterprise Group

Summary of the Study

Based on an analysis of homestay accommodation management components, the

findings revealed that the homestay groups have organized homestay tourism, using natural resources for both Thai and foreign tourists who wanted to travel along with nature and learn the community way of life and its culture. The management styles included 1. Product and service management. It consisted of (1) The accommodation had to be certified in accordance with Thai Homestay Standard. (2) Food. A list of food menu was used local ingredients, with special attention to food sanitation and cleanliness. (3) There has been tourism activities through the presentation of outstanding natural attractions in that area. Activities were designed in consistent with natural resources and the community way of life. 2. Tourism resource management. It comprised (1) Environmental and cultural resources management. A policy to conserve environmental and cultural resources of community tourist attractions was determined together. (2) Attraction. The outstanding resources in the area were used to develop products and services to generate income for the community. 3. Homestay management. It consisted of (1) Management. The operations were performed through a community enterprise group which had operational goals and work structures. The group chairperson gave support in the distribution of income. (2) Financial management. People in the community were allowed to participate in the work and obtain benefits. Also, there has been the deduction of part of income from members of the community enterprise group to be utilized for the operation of both the group and the community. (3) Safety. People in the community were required to take care of tourist safety and security. (4) Hygiene services. The management of hygiene services was strictly controlled in accordance with the Amazing Thailand Safety and Health Administration (SHA), (5) Network building. There has been a link between people and groups of organizations of both local and non-governmental organizations to exchange information and do activities together. 4. Public relations. There has been a publicity through different websites and social media. 5. Leadership potential. The group chairperson played a key role in driving the group's operations as a collaboration builder, a coordinator, and a person who monitored, supervised, and evaluated.

Discussion of the Research Findings

Based on the study of concepts, theories, and interviews with the representatives of homestay groups, homestay tourism management model to the new normal in the southern provinces of Thailand could be summarized according to the following 5 aspects:

1. Product and service management. It consisted of (1) The accommodation had to be certified in accordance with Thai Homestay Standard. Accommodation and surrounding areas were needed to be clean regularly under the SHA practices of the Ministry of Health. (2) Food. A list of food in the menu was prepared, using only local ingredients and with hygiene practices in cooking. (3) Tourism activities has been offered with special attention to outstanding natural tourism attractions. The activities were organized in consistent with natural resources and the way of life of the community. Based on the study of Chinnaphong (2019), it was found that the homestay tourism community enterprise model in terms of accommodation, food, and safety affected the success of operations at the highest level. He claimed that accommodation should be provided with a container with a lid for storing clean water for use, clean drinking water, a clean and soft bathroom and toilet, and the right amount and type of food using local ingredients. The food preparation was done with hygiene practices. The findings of the present study were in line with the study of Rungfamai & Sritongrmas (2019), claiming that the accommodation standards should be chiefly focused on cleanliness, safety, and convenience to meet the needs of tourists. The criteria of Thai Homestay Standard of the Department of Tourism, which were close to these factors included accommodation, food, and safety. This was consistent with the study of Wongjo (2018), stating that the homestay management of Bang Nam Phueng Community was handled with emphasis on keeping the accommodation and surrounding area clean as well as rotating the accommodation for tourist stays. In addition, tourism activities were organized based on highlighting outstanding natural tourist attractions in the area and designing the activities in consistent with natural resources and the way of life of the community.

The findings of the present study were consistent with Wongjo's study in 2018, claiming that tourism products and services bearing the community identity were one of the major factors. Therefore, it could be stated that the path to success of homestay depended on community-based tourism through organizing tourism activities highlighting the community identity.

2. Tourism Resource Management.

An analysis of this aspect was divided into 2 components: (1) Environment and cultural resource management. A policy to conserve the environmental and cultural resources of the community tourist attractions was set together. (2) Attractions. The outstanding resources of the area were used to transform into products and services to generate income for the community. Piandee & Onlamai (2021) claimed that the attractions referred to places in the community having the attractions, beautiful landscape, and beautiful natural resources. Duangpikul & Methaphan (2018) stated that there should be the community preparedness through the exploration of natural tourism resources, culture and tradition, and local dishes with a main focus on the natural environment and the way of life of the community and simplicity as well. With reference to the study of Chinnaphong (2019), it was found that the homestay tourism community enterprise model had an important variable: local culture. It affected the success at the highest level. He gave the definition of this management which included: the readiness for service provision. There has been using local wisdom in organizing tourism activities. The community had a normal community way of life. To respond to the needs of tourists, there have been activities, plays, and folk performances. Local raw materials were creatively used to produce interesting souvenirs to attract tourists. Srisuwan & Detmit (2019) stated about the guidelines for developing the homestay management to maintain charm, identity, and unique selling points, local ways of life, culture, tradition, food, plays, and interesting local wisdom that could tell stories of local community and pass on to visiting tourists. Based on the study of Piandee & Onlamai (2021), the important thing in the development of natural resources and culture of the Baan Koh Khiam Community was that it had an area rich in natural

resources: mangrove forests, marine animals, nurseries for aquatic animals. It also had a sustainable production process relied on natural resources. The traditional way of life of fishermen was brought into part of tourism. Moreover, the community had locally unique cultural traditions, such as culture of Thai Muslims and Thai people of Chinese descent, important Islamic and Chinese religious traditions as well as the uniqueness of making sweets which could tell the stories of tourism routes.

3. Homestay Management.

The homestay management included: (1) Management. The homestay operation was carried out through the community enterprise group, with operational goals and work structure management. Piandee & Onlamai (2021) stated that the community had to jointly and clearly determine rules based on certain characteristics of the community. Also, there should be rules and supervision systems to ensure that the number of tourists was consistent with the capacity of the area and community environment by considering the ability to connect tourism with the overall community development. It was necessary for the community to have a system or mechanism for fair allocation of benefits. Aksornpim (2017) investigated the strategies of sustainable community-based tourism management in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, claiming that the group had a clear management structure, including the operating committee, advisory committee, establishing clear roles and responsibilities, having clear agreements and rules. The operation of the group was done through a meeting process of members which was held before arrival of tourists. The operation was regularly performed based on a discussion rather than a written form. Members of the group had an opportunity to share knowledge, raise problems, and suggest solutions to the problems of tourism management of the community. (2) Financial management. People living in the community were allowed to participate in the work operation and obtain benefits as well as the deduction of part of members' income for the operation of the group and the community. Duangpikul & Methaphan (2018) claimed that income distribution led to sustainability. The group made products, using local raw materials and sold them

as souvenirs to distribute income to local people. (3) Safety. People in the community were required to take care of the tourist safety. This was consistent with the study of Yaggahavita et al., (2019), claiming that safety was a high priority for tourists. The objectives of safety provided consisted of 2 characteristics: feeling safe at home and in the community. (4) Hygiene services. The management of services was strictly performed according to SHA standards. Lunkam (2021) suggested that tourism had to be adjusted regarding the service styles in order to minimize physical contact, for instance, online check-in and using cashless technology as an alternative for safety. Sirivejjabhandu (2021) suggested the guidelines for the development of community tourism to the new normal, for example, welcoming tourists, establishing the screening and check-in points with the cooperation of village health volunteers. Services for tourists were provided based on safety standards, such as separating containers, determining the number of tourists, sending tourists, having a check-out service, and evaluating the provision of services. Regarding the study of Thongkhot et al., (2021), they suggested the development of the new normal ecotourism of Thalay Bua Daeng, or Red Lotus Sea. After the spread of COVID-19 virus, authorities of public and private sectors as well as community jointly established surveillance measures for COVID-19 through having screening points and temperature measurement, wearing a face mask or an alternative mask, adopting social distancing measures, minimizing the number of commuters on boat, using disinfectants in cleaning, and establishing a designated area for entry and exit to build confidence and safety for tourists. (5) Network building. There has been a connection between people and groups of local and private organizations to exchange information or do activities together. Srisuwan & Detmit (2019) claimed that the encouragement of various relevant agencies inside and outside the community had to be provided through seriously working together in making a plan and taking action. Building a network inside and outside the community improved homestays to meet the standards. In addition, networking connected and integrated homestays with different forms of tourism, such as gastronomic tourism,

agritourism, health-related tourism, historical tourism, etc. Aksornpim (2017) said that there were 2 levels of network: (1) Horizontal networks included the cooperation with communities within provinces or regions. There were meetings of network groups to help send tourists between groups. (2) Vertical networks were the cooperation with government and private organizations and academic institutions for operational assistance and support, such as the provision of academic knowledge and promotion of marketing activities, etc.

4. Public Relations. According to the study of Chinnaphong (2019), it was found that the homestay tourism community enterprise model in terms of public relations affected the operational success at a high level, which included making print media and a website, having publicity for tourism activities, publishing goals and tourism plans of the community, making a handbook, pamphlet, and clear and accurate map of the community, and publicize tourism programs and activities with expenses. Klinmeang (2015) proposed the guidelines for cultural tourism management of the Khlong Bang Luang Community. She suggested that there should be clear and diversified support and promotion of public relations and tourism marketing activities. The study of Philakham et al., (2019) revealed that public relations were necessary for operations. Effective public relations suitable for the context of tourism led to being known by and accessible to tourists. Moreover, the community should create a public relation network with tourism business operators, such as hotels, travel agencies inside and outside the area for sustainable tourism management. Phiphek (2015) proposed the guidelines for public relations development, including building public relations networks for integrated tourism and developing tourist attractions and promoting tourism activities. This was in line with the study of Duangpikul & Methaphan (2018), claiming that public relations communication was an important factor in attracting tourists, such as online database for tourism and homestays, making billboards, posters, and advertising brochures, homestay handbooks as well as building a homestay network base. A study of Aksornpim (2017) revealed that community-

based tourism groups used different media to promote community tourism activities, including (1) Online media, such as websites, Facebook, etc. are the easiest ways to distribute information at least expense. (2) Television media. It was found that well-known groups would obtain support from private organizations to film television programs and record videos to promote the group's tour. (3) Radio programs. The groups generated publicity through free and paid radio programs. However, most tourism groups had limited funds for making public relations through different media, they would give special attention to word-of-mouth marketing which was reliant on recommendations from tourists who used to visit or make public relations through a group of network partners.

5. Leaders. The group chairperson played a role in driving the group's operations as a cooperation builder, a coordinator, and a person who supervised, followed, and evaluated the operations of the homestay group through formal and informal meetings. The group chairperson was an important person who took responsibility for supervising all work, coordinating with other relevant bodies, solving the problems, focusing on the benefits of the group and the community, having an intention to providing services, encouraging members to work with service mind and devote their time to work. The leaders had to possess certain attributes: having determination and patience, creating love and unity, being neutral, sharing ideas, and helping members to solve problems (Duangpikul & Methaphan, 2018). Likewise, Rungfamai & Sritongmas (2019) stated that the strength of community leaders was another important key to create the success of homestay operation. Regarding the management of homestay and community-based tourism, community collaboration in planning was essential. A study of Aksornpim (2017) revealed that group leaders were elected by the majority of votes from the group. Most of them have served as the group's chairperson since the start of the group's operations. In addition, leaders in many groups were pioneers of homestay operations and persuade community members to join. This was a prototype which made people in the community see it as an example. Leaders had determination to the group

management. All leaders had knowledge and understanding of community-based tourism management through regular meetings and training of community-based tourism networks.

Knowledge from the Study

Knowledge of a successful homestay tourism management model to the new normal was obtained and presented in a set of knowledge which homestay tour operators in Betong District, Yala Province enabled to use to prepare themselves and encourage to operate homestay tourism in the new normal after the COVID-19 situation to enhance the potential of homestay tourism business operators in running their businesses over the COVID-19 crisis.

Recommendations

This study has found a successful homestay tourism management model to the new normal. Homestay tour operators in Betong District, Yala Province enable to apply the proposed model to community management since they are in similar contexts. The group chairperson plays a key role in driving operations and building networks. Under the new normal, special attention should be given to the application of technology in business operations to avoid physical contact. For further research, the research topic on consumer behaviors in tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic should be carried out.

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