

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries and the highest priority industries in many countries. Tourism industry is expected to generate the growing revenue from US\$6,201.5 billion in 2005 to US\$10,678.5 billion by 2015 as well as the tourism demand that is expected to increase by 4.6% per annum between 2006 and 2015 (WTCC, 2005). In developing countries, tourism can be used as a source to encourage the economic development. Tourism creates better living conditions to the local residents, provides tax revenues to governments, creates new tourism jobs and businesses, and keeps rural residents from moving to overcrowded cities (WTO, 2005). Although, tourism has created benefits, its negative impacts on the socio-culture and environment toward the communities must not be overlooked. Without well considerable plan in tourism development, it will damage the socio-culture and environment in tourism attractions and the surrounding areas, as well.

Most tourism generating countries have more awareness to the impacts of tourism development. Many strategies are applied to work on tourism development and the concept of sustainability is considered as the main theme. The essential scheme of sustainable tourism development is the balance development among environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism. The concept of sustainability becomes an international use in terms of developing the direction of national strategies. In Thailand, the 9th national plan (2002-2006) included this concept in social participation for sustainable development. People and all stakeholder sectors have the particular rules to participate in the development of natural resource, environment, economy, and society (NESDB, 2003).

Tourism in Thailand is aware of the sustainable development that tries to encourage local community to participate in the development process and establish a suitable balance between environmental, economic, and socio-cultural at the destination. The significance of sustainable tourism in community is that, the community can directly obtain unbiased distribution of all tourism benefits and avoid the negative tourism impacts (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005). After Tsunami, 26th December 2004, Thai tourism concerned about the situation. Government suggested using situation for improving the tourism

management at the destinations, especially in the Andaman cluster, also the sustainable concept was reviewed regularly.

Tourism destinations in the southern part of Thailand are more greatly promoted than ever by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), especially the Andaman coast that includes Phang-Nga, Phuket, and Krabi province. Phang-Nga province is famous for natural tourism attractions. Many fascinating islands are protected by the development of Phang-Nga Bay National Park. Yao Noi and Yao Yai Islands are two large islands located in the East of Phuket in Phangna Bay. The famous island as a tourism destination is Yao Noi Island (Koh Yao Noi). It is the sub-district in Koh Yao District. Koh Yao Noi Sub-district Administration Organization (2005) stated that Koh Yao Noi or Yao Noi Island is 48.6 kilometers from the south of Phang-nga mainland. It is 46.46 square kilometers in estimated including municipal area 0.6977 square kilometers. The geographical phenomenon covers with the mountains and beaches around the island. More than 90% of local people are Muslim, and their main occupation is agriculture and fishery. The physical features of the island, the unique local culture, public facilities, and necessary infrastructure can support the tourism development. It is not hard to catch the attention from the international and domestic tourists (Appendix A).

Koh Yao Noi or Yao Noi Island is famous in eco-tourism because of the richness of natural resources. There was the development of Community Based Eco-Tourism Club in the community, directed by REST (Responsible Ecological Social Tours) since 1995. The major objectives of REST for Koh Yao Noi are to educate local community to conserve the natural resources and to strengthen the community participation. Meanwhile, the representative of the community and REST formed the tourism club in order to promote the tourism in the community and create the environmental conservation awareness to local people in the community and visitors who travel in Koh Yao Noi. Nowadays, this tourism club is known as Homestay Koh Yao Noi and is still operated and managed by local residents. Another group is called Koh Yao Homestay and Tour Company, developed since 1997 by local people. The objectives of this group are to involve in tourism development and management, improve the tourism in the community, conserve the local culture, and generate economic benefits to host community.

Tourism in Koh Yao Noi became famous since it received the 2002 World Legacy Award from Conservation and National Geographic Traveller in the category of "Destination Stewardship". This award is for being a leading example in the tourism

industry where environmentally and socially responsible tourism practices are helping to protect natural and cultural heritage. Therefore, Koh Yao Noi became an international well-known tourism attraction. In 2002 and 2004, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) awarded Homestay Koh Yao Noi or Community Based Eco-Tourism Club for the best tourism organization. These awards can stimulate tourists and visitors' perspective in Homestay and ecotourism to the community. The increasing numbers of tourists and visitors as well as the number of establishments in Koh Yao Noi are not only promoting benefits, but there are also the drawbacks. Resources overuse and not consider sustainable tourism development may arise and these are the tourism drawbacks. In order to maintain the economic, environment, and socio-culture benefits and eliminate the tourism drawbacks, local people participation in tourism development is the key tool to sustain the tourism resources and those benefits.

Although, there is the visible participation in tourism development at Koh Yao Noi, at local level still has had an unclear defined direction for community participation. Therefore, they are reluctant to participate. As a result, sustainable tourism development is slow in practice and lacks visible achievement. A locally appropriate model of community participation in tourism plan for sustainable tourism development is a special need at the local level. This model can be accomplished if the local residents are motivated by tourism benefits and are given the appropriate direction and supports.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 To study the interest level of community participation for sustainable tourism development at Koh Yao Noi.

1.2.2 To study the important level of community motivations that influence participation for sustainable tourism development at Koh Yao Noi.

1.2.3 To propose a model of community participation in tourism plan for sustainable tourism development at Koh Yao Noi.

1.3 Significance of the Study

1.3.1 The proposed model of community participation for sustainable tourism development is able to enhance the effectiveness of the community participation in sustainable tourism development.

1.3.2 The information and the results obtained from this research can be utilized as information for all stakeholders in decision-making in the tourism development plan.

1.3.3 The information and the results obtained from this research can be utilized as a source for further research or for any academic purposes for students or interested persons.

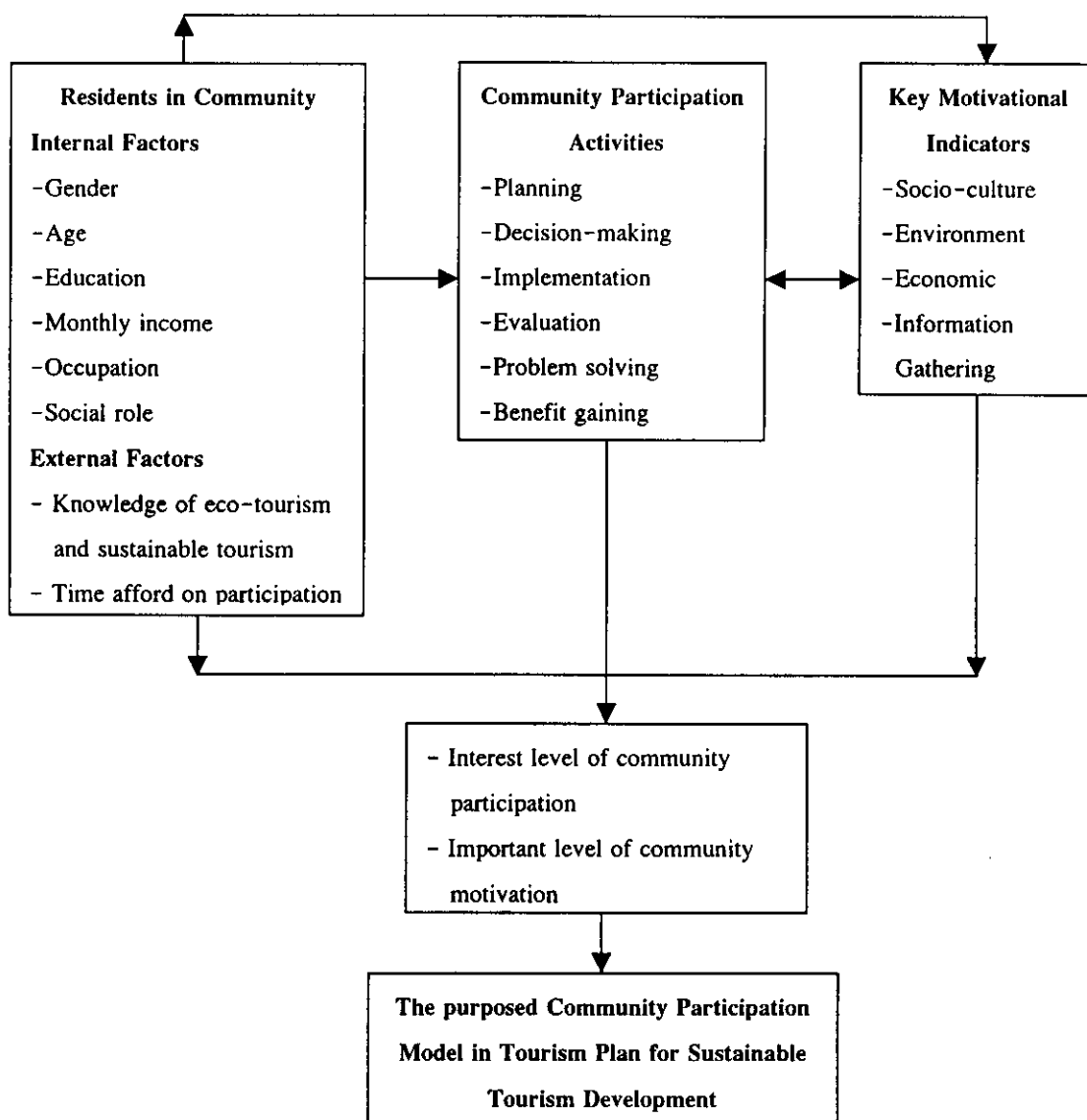
1.4 Scope of the Study

1.4.1 Scope of area: This study is specified at Yao Noi Island, Yao Noi Sub-district, Phang-Nga Province which composes of 7 villages and 1 municipality area. There are tourism activities, natural tourism attractions, and popularity in Homestay.

1.4.2 Scope of demography: Residents who live and work at Yao Noi Island and are at least 18 years old. Koh Yao Noi residents' interest level of participation for sustainable tourism development and their tourism benefits motivation are studied from the resident's perspective.

1.4.3 Conceptual framework: The residents in the community are examined with regard to their internal factors and external factors that might affect the interest level of participation and the important levels of motivations. The community participation activities and the key motivational indicators (based on tourism benefits) were used to identify the potential participation levels and the important levels of motivations. Then, the potential participation levels and the important levels of motivations were used to determine the components inside the model for community participation in sustainable development (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework



1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1.5.1 Community participation is defined as the local residents' involvement and cooperation in participation activities for sustainable tourism development. Participation activities are planning, decision-making, implementation, problem solving, evaluation, and benefits gaining by the local residents.

1.5.2 Interest level of community participation is defined as the residents' level of interest in participation of planning, decision-making, implementation, problem solving, evaluation, and benefits gaining. The ranges of level are superlative interest, high interest, moderate interest, low interest, the least interest, and no interest.

1.5.3 Motivation is defined as information gathering and benefits from sustainable tourism development. Those benefits are socio-cultural, environmental, and economic benefits that are able to motivate or influence participation from local residents in the community.

1.5.4 Important level of community motivation is defined as the given important level of motivation (socio-cultural, environmental, economic benefits, and information gathering) by residents. The ranges of level are superlative important, high important, moderate important, low important, the least important, and not important.

1.5.5 Sustainable tourism development is defined as the development of tourism that creates optimal use of environmental resources, respects the socio-cultural authenticity of host community, and provides economic benefits to all stakeholders.

1.5.6 Residents are defined as people who live with their family and work in Koh Yao Noi. They must be at least 18 years old.

1.5.7 Community Participation Model is defined as a proposed model of community participation in tourism plan for sustainable tourism development. This model identifies the components for enhancing the effectiveness of community participation in implementing the tourism plan. It composes of 4 parts of inputs, processing, outputs, and improvement. Moreover, the model applies the blending of top-down and bottom-up management.