

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT JOURNAL

Vol. 9
No. 1



Special Issue:
CATEA 2020/2021 International Conference,
January, 2021.

SINGAPORE
MANAGEMENT JOURNAL
VOL. 9 NO. 1, 2021

The Singapore Management Journal is published bi-annually by the East Asia Institute of Management, 9, Ah Hood Road, Singapore 329975.

The first issue of the Journal was published in January 2012.

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ISSN 2251-239X

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

This special issue features a selection of papers presented at the 4th China-ASEAN Tourism Education Alliance (CATEA) International Conference January 2021. The conference theme was: Emerging Trends in Tourism: Impact on Tourism Education. It was held in the wake of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic that has wreaked havoc on economies worldwide. The tourism industry was one of the sectors most affected. The massive drop in international tourism over the first half of 2020 was estimated to have translated into the loss of some 440 million international arrivals, and about US460 billions in export revenues from international tourism.

Historically, the tourism sector has been a major driving force of economic development for many countries, especially emerging and developing countries. Such countries value the significant contribution of Tourism related activities to the three high priority goals of economic development and growth; the generation of income and employment; and foreign-exchange earnings.

2021 saw early signs of the prospects of the recovery of tourism. A growing number of destinations had started to open up again to international tourists. UNWTO reported that as early as of September 2020, 43% of destinations had eased restrictions. Obviously more needs to be done and it is urgent, indeed imperative that all parties – governments, tourism agencies and private associations and tourism education institutions work together and closely to get global tourism moving again.

CATEA 2020/2021 turned out to be a timely contribution to help the tourism industry in the countries represented in the conference to get back on their feet. The gathering of some of the key players in the tourism sectors– business leaders, experts, educators, college principals, entrepreneurs and tourism agencies - brought together a wide range of expertise and experience to deliberate on, discuss challenges, policies, strategies and actions to shape the future development of tourism. Successful tourism project implementation is a force of national economic recovery and development.

Delegates participating in the conference discoursed on papers presented during four panel sessions. The wide array of thematic topics ranged from nature, spiritual, and heritage tourism, tourism in the millennial era, tourism policy, planning and development and the impact of innovation and technology in the promotion and delivery of value and experience enhancement tourism projects. Delegates who actively participated in-person or via ZOOM, or VOOV, no doubt left the conference with useful and valuable takeaways for back-home adoption.

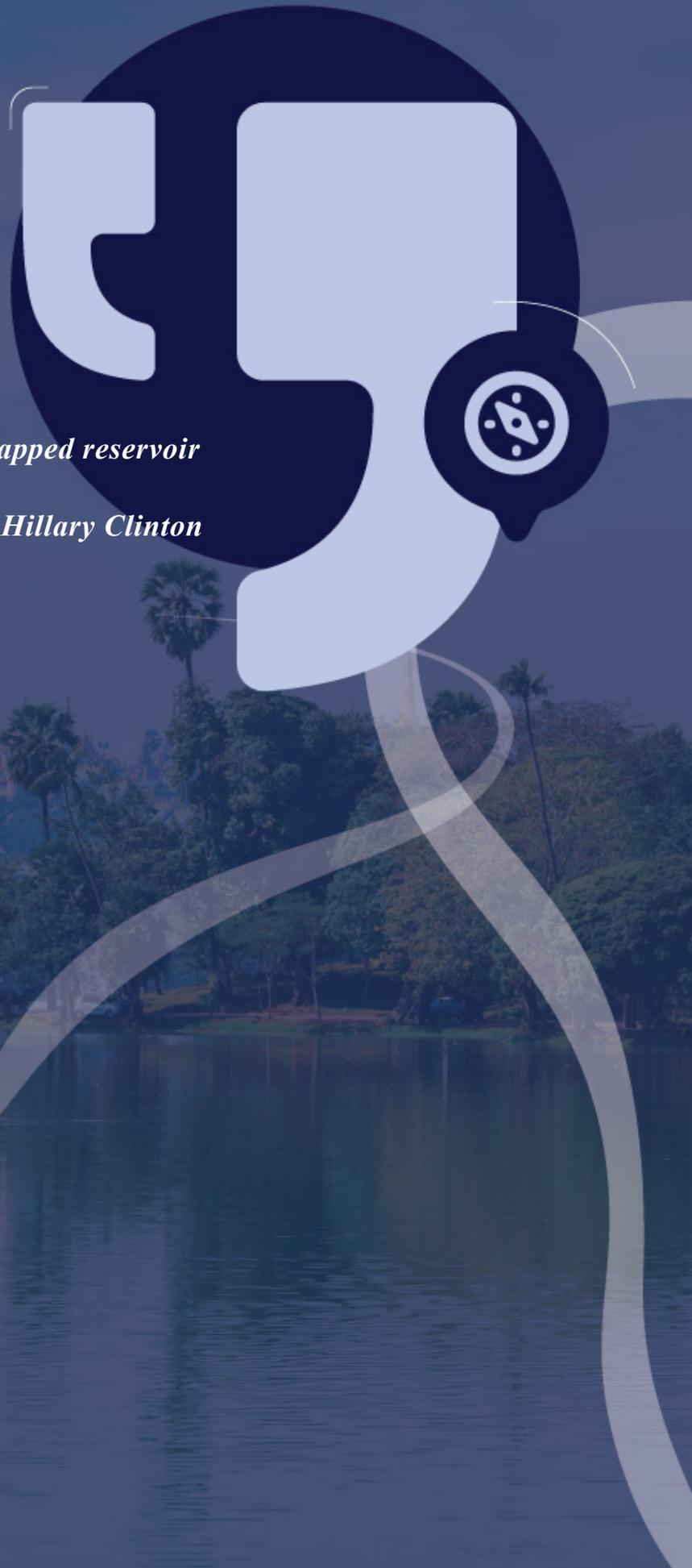
The selection of papers published in this issue of SMJ and a subsequent issue, scheduled to be released in Q4 2021 gives a flavour of what has been and will continue to be achieved in the China-ASEAN region, accelerating the return of the tourism industry back to a new normal. The members of CATEA are proud and honoured to be part of this endeavour.

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*“Women are the largest untapped reservoir
of talent in the world.”*

— Hillary Clinton



Women Empowerment to Support Rural Tourism Development Through Food Home Industry: Case Study Sakerta Timur Village, Kuningan, and West Java, Indonesia

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Trisakti School of Tourism

Abstract

The tourism sector is Indonesia's second largest industrial sector revenue contributor, after palm oil. In 2017 the Indonesian government launched a tourism development program to develop tourism villages. Trisakti School of Tourism (Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata (STP) Trisakti) as a tourism educational institution, supports government programs through human resource development, providing guidance and assistance for the development of tourist villages. One of the villages that received guidance from STP Trisakti is Sakerta Timur (East Sakerta) village in Darma sub district, Kuningan Regency, West Java, Indonesia. Sakerta Timur has been set to become one of the pioneer tourism villages among villages in Kuningan regency. Fifty-four (54) per cent of the workers in tourism industry are women. Traditionally, women's main role has been in raising children and doing household work. In Sakerta Timur village, many women also help their husbands to improve the household economy, by processing local foodstuffs for sale. They thus play a very important role in supporting the development of their village to become a rural tourism destination through the food home industry. Women manage most home industries in Sakerta Timur village. While the home industries products have been a source to supplement the village's income, they lack support from the village government, which gives priority to physical development. Using in-depth interviews, observation, and other supplemental evidence, this study analyses the potential for a home industry as a rural tourism project, empowering women in contributing to making Sakerta Timur village become a rural tourism destination through the food home industry managed by women.

Keywords: *women empowerment, rural tourism, and home industry*

A. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the largest foreign exchange earners in a country like Indonesia. Based on data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (Biro Pusat Statistik/BPS,) the tourism sector is the second country's foreign exchange earner after palm oil exports, earning RP 190 trillion (BPS, October 23, 2017). In the three years of the administration of President Joko Widodo, the tourism sector became the highest foreign exchange earner in ASEAN (www.merdeka.com)

The Indonesian Government set a target of achieving twenty (20) million foreign tourist arrivals in 2019, to be achieved by boosting the development of facilities and infrastructure in tourist destination and improving the quality of human resources working in the tourism sector. Given that Indonesia consists of more rural areas than urban areas, the Indonesian government has wisely initiated a program to develop more tourist villages.

The number of domestic and foreign tourist visits to tourist areas in Kuningan Regency has steadily increased over the past seven (7) years. (Source: Kuningan District Youth, Sports and Tourism Service, 2018). Sakerta Timur village is eager to become a pioneer Tourism Village. It has beautiful nature and sceneries and is surrounded by tourist attraction destinations such as Darma Reservoir (Waduk Darma) and Mount Ciremai National Park. Besides, it also has several home industries that produce snack foods.

To improve the welfare of its people, the village government has a vision and mission to make Sakerta Timur a tourism village, in collaboration with Trisakti School of Tourism (STP Trisakti). It seeks to empower village communities, especially women, in developing food home industries. Women who constitute half of the population of Sakerta Timur village run most of the food home industries. Some of the food home industries have already become the source of income for the family and the village itself.

This research was conducted to examine whether the women's empowerment program carried out by the village government through PKK organisation assisted by STP Trisakti can change the independence attitude of village women so they can support Sakerta Timur to become a Tourism Village.

B. Literature Review

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a form of recreational and tourism activities that utilise the potential of natural resources, both in natural conditions and after cultivation, to allow tourist to gain physical and spiritual freshness, also to gain knowledge and experience and foster inspiration and love for nature. (Saragih, 1993)

Ecotourism fosters the preservation of nature and the environment by involving the local community. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2015) defines Ecotourism as a responsible journey to natural places by preserving the environment and improving the welfare of the local community. This involves education, both for the local community and visitors.

Fandeli and Mukhlison (2000) explain that Ecotourism must contain three main elements, namely (1) Conservation, (2) Outbound education and empowerment, (3) Empowerment of local communities.

Community Based Tourism (CBT)

According to Hatton (1999), CBT is about sustainability, which emerged from fears of overconsumption of resources and degradation of the environment, seeking to ensure that meeting the needs of the present did not affect the needs of future generations and focuses on the well-being of people as well as the conservation of the environment.

Community Based Tourism can be defined as ‘a situation in which local people, usually those that are poor or economically marginalized in very rural part of the world, open up their homes and communities to visitors seeking sustainably achieved cultural, educational or recreational travel experiences’ (O’Niel, 2018)

Community Based Tourism is based on the active participation of the local community. The main purpose of CBT is to encourage involvement and participation of local communities so that they can benefit from tourism, as well as to educate and encourage local communities to be involved in the development of sustainable tourism (Pookaiyaudom, 2013)

Tourism Village

Nuryanti Wiendu (1993) explained a Tourism Village integrates attractions, accommodation and supporting facilities, creating a structured community life that combines applicable procedures and traditions. The two main components in the tourism village concept are accommodation, where visitors or tourist generally live in the home residents, known as homestay, and attractions built around the daily lives of local residents.

According to Prisukmana & Mulyadin (2001), Tourism Village is a rural area that offers an overall atmosphere reflecting rural authenticity. Socioeconomic life, social culture, customs, everyday life, and a building architecture with its typical village spatial structure, portray a unique and attractive economy. Collectively, they offer the potential to develop the various components of tourism, such as attractions, accommodation, food and drinks, souvenirs and other tourism needs.

Women Empowerment

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2013), empowerment has two meanings: a) to give ability or enable to, b) to give power or authority to. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) data in 2019 said that fifty-four (54) per cent of the total workers in the tourism sector are women. Their empowerment has the potential of increasing the development of the tourism industry.

Home Industry

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2013), a home industry is a gainful employment carried on in the home.

C. Research Methodology

This study was carried out in Sakerta Timur village, Darma Sub-district, Kuningan Residency, and West Java, Indonesia from July to August 2018 through direct field research. It involved the team members staying in the village for a week, conducting direct interviews with informants, documenting interviews, taking pictures and making continuous observations.

This study uses a qualitative approach. The data analysed and the results of the analysis are in the form of descriptive phenomena. Primary data were collected from the key informants through in-depth interviews, direct site observation, and conducting focus group discussions. Secondary data was obtained from the office of the Head of Sakerta Timur village in the form of statistical data and also from electronic daily websites and literature study.

The interviews conducted used a prepared number of questions related to the problem. The responses were recorded during the interview process to ensure data accuracy. The transcripts of the interviews provided evidence the interview. The sources of data in the study were from the following informants:

1. Women aged over 30 years and married, who work or run food home industry in Sakerta Timur village.
2. Head of Sakerta Timur village
3. Head of Family Welfare Development (PKK)

This study attempts to analyse the potential for women in Sakerta Timur village to work in the home industry as a supporting factor in rural tourism, and to find the empowerment pattern for these women to support Sakerta Timur village to become a Tourism Village.

A Trianggulasi approach was used to check the data obtained with data from other sources and using reference materials as a benchmark for the data obtained. This increases the validity of the data.

D. Results

Sakerta Timur as a Pioneer Tourism Village

Sakerta Timur village has an area of 2.76 km², with the total population of two thousand three hundred and sixty (2,360), one thousand one hundred and three (1,103) being women. The agricultural products are rice, red beans, cassava, corn, bananas, coffee beans and avocado.

The development of Sakerta Timur village as a tourist village has been going on since March 2017, supported by STP Trisakti. By utilising the green natural potential of the Darma Reservoir and the rich culture and traditions of its residents, Sakerta Timur village plans to become one of the tourist destinations in Kuningan Regency, as well as a Pioneer Tourism Village.

Sakerta Timur has quite a lot of small and medium entrepreneurs in the food home industry, mostly engaged in the production of snacks and raw foods.

Product Description

Currently, food home industries produce snacks such as pisang sale (made from banana), cassava chips, purple sweet potato sticks, and raw foods such as mushrooms, sugar palm fruit (kolang kaling), and palm sugar. For this research the author focused on the three main products, which are pisang sale, cassava chips and palm sugar because they can be produced by routine production methods by women workers.



(Researcher's documentation, 2018)

Women's Role in Sakerta Timur becoming a Tourism Village

The primary culture of West Java is Sundanese., the indigenous people in the village. Only small percentages are educated up to scholars' level. Women who have opportunity to study typically work as office employees, as staff of Sakerta Timur Village Hall, midwives, schoolteachers, or school principals. Women, whose education level is only up to senior high school level, generally become ordinary housewives, help their husband in farming, or work in the home industry to earn extra income. The economic contributions of women who work as office employees, or work in the home industry result in higher family income when both husbands and wives work. Women in the village who work in the home industry, in general, have been working on this job for quite a while, with some running this business as a family concern for generations producing pisang sale, palm sugar, and cassava chips.

Pisang sale snacks have been a pioneer produce home industry in Sakerta Timur village for years. The women make snack foods for visitors as well as fulfilling orders from food stalls and shops, expanding the range to include cassava chips and palm sugar. The raw material for cassava chips is quite abundant but the raw materials of bananas are less abundance and sometime have to be imported from other regions.

There is a greater scarcity of raw materials for palm sugar. Sap from palm trees, known as “nira” is produced by traditional technology. Jaggery is a traditional sugar brown colour and the main product of “nira”. Beverage from palm tree called “lahang” is quite popular in West Java especially in the past (Kurniawan et al, 2018). These palm sugar products with the potential to be a “special product” of Sakerta Timur village. The demand for palm sugar is quite large and currently, forty (40) palm sugar producers are able to make palm sugar with good quality. Unfortunately, the scarcity of water sap as the main raw material is an obstacle.

Little is known about the productive life of the trees, but there is palm tree, which have been producing juice for more than 70 years. Khieu (1996) reported that the average yield was 5 kg of juice per day per tree. The equipment for making palm sugar in Sakerta Timur is also very traditional, which results in one palm sugar producer only able to produce three (3) bonjor or thirty (30) pieces of palm sugar per day. Unfortunately, the palm trees in Sakerta Timur are scattered in the village forest, and there has been no attempt to plant new seeds in proximity areas.

STP Trisakti’s lecturer and students have periodically been providing assistance, helping the village women to calculate the cost and price of food, processing methods that meet hygiene and sanitation standards, as well as developing variations of food made from cassava. Problems of concern include the lack of product promotion of products and unattractive product packaging.

Promotion was done on word of mouth, or person to person. Cassava chips and palm sugar are still wrapped in an ordinary plastic bag without name tags and limited flavour variants. Capital assistance in the form of financial and equipment can help these village women to develop and improve themselves.

The Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDES) organisation has been established for several years. Mr. Cucu Sudrajat as the Sakerta Timur Village Head is targeting BUMDES to fully function by 2019, when the entire individual or village-owned businesses Sakerta Timur village will be managed by BUMDES. The organisation will help to find raw materials, determine the price of raw materials, capital requirements, and marketing, and generally assisting the village women to improve their business. Currently, the production of palm sugar, pisang sale, and cassava chips to become the village specific food souvenir has not yet been realised. Training to improve the abilities and skills of these women is an important goal of empowerment. Currently the training provided by the Village Government has mostly been conducted in Kuningan regency who is quite difficult to access by public transportation.

E. Discussion

The community empowerment, especially the women in Sakerta Timur village has not been prioritised, even though the women would have been eager to learn housekeeping and F&B skills like how to prepare the bedroom, cleaning the toilet, cooking and serving food properly. The main agenda of the Village Government was to build the tourist attractions such as motorbike circuit and camping ground, including public facilities. Some attractions like motorbike circuit were not even in line with the purpose of tourist village development, which is to preserve the nature and environment. Some rice fields areas have to be let go to build the circuit.

The village women in Sakerta Timur have a very long history of doing business in pisang sale and cassava chips. Most of them continue their family's business. Their skills have been sufficiently high, but training to deepen their skills can further empower them to help create a food home industry that can significantly contribute to Sakerta Timur's ambition to become a tourist village. The process of empowerment can be enhanced if Village chiefs include village women in village development policy discussions.

F. Conclusion

It is time for the Sakerta Timur Village Government to pay more attention to the empowerment of women as part of its total developmental effort, including human resources development. Village women in Sakerta Timur village have the potential and motivation to be developed. They can help to mobilize and develop Sakerta Timur to become a tourist village. This great potential can be transformed into strength by the empowerment of village women. To achieve this, the village community especially the Village Leader has to implement concrete steps, accommodating various inputs, providing infrastructure (physical and educational), and also economic resources such as capital, and markets to help the development of businesses that have been run by village women. BUMDES can be one way to help.

The Sakerta Timur Village Government must also stop land clearing that is damaging to nature and the environment. It is contrary to the purpose of a tourist village, namely, to maintain nature and the environment without damaging it. To replace the environmental damage caused by the opening of a racing track, the Sakerta Timur Village Government can plant trees such as banana trees, palm trees and cassava trees, that become raw materials for food home industries, while at the same time restoring the natural and environmental conditions and also meet shortages raw material for pisang sale, palm sugar, and cassava chips.

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*“Travel is more than the seeing of sights;
it is a change that goes on, deep and
permanent, in the ideas of living.”*

— Miriam Beard



E-Human Resource in the Era of Smart Tourism and Gig Economy

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Abstract

Information Communication Technology (ICT) and digital technology have been facilitating human resource management towards flexible/non-standard engagement (i.e., gig economy). The tourism sector is in the process of transforming into smart tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic further triggers the pace of digital transformation in the tourism sector. The gig economy and telework continue to be the trend of future work. Bearing in mind the caveats of the gig economy, smart tourism and E-HR management, this paper proposes an integrated framework, which is similar to the European job mobility portal. The integrated framework shares information for the gig economy seekers and providers (who could be the industry or individual tourists). The E-HR functions such as e-recruitment, e-selection and e-training would operate within the framework. To sustain the framework, accuracy and availability of data is crucial. The participation of education institutions is essential for the independent evaluation and management of the data. Furthermore, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) can facilitate the development of a collaborative tourism education and research centre for the ASEAN alliance.

Keywords: *Gig economy, E-human resource, Smart tourism*

1. Introduction

Digital technology, particularly Information Communication Technology (ICT) had been facilitating the digital transformation of the tourism sector and human resource management, regarding flexible/non-standard engagement in the gig economy. This enabled educational and training institutions to adapt e-learning and e-management for empowering human resource. The on-going Covid-19 pandemic further triggered the pace of telework (OECD 2020; EU 2020) and online learning in the global community. The public and academics focus on either smart tourism (Mountasser et al. 2019; Baser et al. 2019) or the gig economy (AppJobs 2020; Dheret et al. 2019; Katz LF and Krueger AB 2019a; 2019b) or E-HR (Johnson and Gueutal 2020; Johnson et al. 2020). This paper attempts to loop the three E-portals (smart tourism, gig economy and E-HR) and proposes an Eco E-Human resource empowering and management system for the tourism sector. An investigation into the possible interactions among the three Eportals shades light on aspect of the digitalisation of human resource management such as erecruitment, e-selection and e-learning in the framework of smart tourism and the gig economy. The paper highlights the critical concerns of the gig economy, E-human resource and smart tourism, followed by a brief glance at the trend of the labour market of Singapore. Section 4 proposes an integrated framework of E-humane resource in line with the smart tourism and gig economy, Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. The Critical Concerns of the Gig Economy, E- Human Resource and Smart Tourism

2.1 The Gig Economy

Along with the structural change in the economy, the waves of technology (such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics) are catalysing the replacement of manual/routine tasks and fostering new opportunities for flexible labour engagement / non-standard jobs (Gig economy) in the labour market. OECD (2019) defines non-standard workers as (a) part-time workers, (b) workers under temporary contracts and (c) self-employed workers. The trend in the Gig economy is not just in the advanced economies (DBS 2019; OECD 2020) but also in emerging economies (Soto 2020). Soto (2020) argues that the platform economy could enhance labour market participation and improve working conditions by formalising large pools of informal workers.

However, there are a number of concerns relating to the rights and benefits among the four main actors (on-demand workers, platform intermediates, consumers, regulatory institutions) in the platform/gig economy/telework (Dheret et al. 2019; EU2020; Geist 2018, McCormack- George 2019, Moore 2019; OECD 2020; Peetz 2019;). The first concern is that the rights and benefits of on-demand workers and consumers are not clearly clarified.

The second concern is that the relationship between on-demand workers and platform intermediary is kind of the semi employer-employee relation, as the platform intermediary does not fulfil certain working conditions and benefits for on-demand workers. The third concern is that the platform intermediary may not ensure the quality of service for the consumers. The fourth concern is that the social welfare of on-demand workers may not be adequately covered, for example sick leave, work injury, unemployment benefits.

The platform intermediary facilitates information flow and the search-match process and to some extent, replaces the traditional agent, but its role is not contractually defined for the on demand workers and consumers. For example, “Under the Quebec Act Respecting Labour Standards, Airbnb hosts cannot be considered employees”, being regarded as self-employed workers, or “independent” workers.” who generate profit-making activities via the Airbnb platform (Tremblay-Huet 2018). Airbnb offers services, such as “Trips”, where tourists book tours with the locals. Airbnb, as the online intermediary, collects 20% of the costs but does not offer labour protection to the hosts. Similarly, in such countries like Australia, Canada, France, India, and UK, it is not clear whether Uber is a service platform or a transport company. (Bornstein 2018; Calvao and Thara 2019; Escande-Varniol 2018). The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled Uber as a transport company and is supposed to guarantee the labour rights of the drivers (Leggett 2017; Olson 2020).

2.2 Smart Tourism

Smart tourism comprises three components: smart experience, smart business ecosystem and smart tourism destination, facilitated by the use of technology (such as information and communication technology (ICT), cloud computing, internet of things (Iot), mobile apps, mobile payments, artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual/augmented reality (VR), etc.) in the production and consumption of tourism service (Buhalis and Amaranggana 2015; Baser et al. 2019). “Smartness” focuses on the planning, organising and evaluation of the data and information, which enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of the industry. The challenge is not just about digital transformation of the physical infrastructure and tourism service but also the management of the data, in particular, the evaluation of the data for policy recommendation. In addition, the stakeholders (government, institution, business and tourists) of industry are both the producer and consumer of the data and information, leading to issues relating to the ownership and security of the data. “Smartness” in the tourism sector reflects the use of digital technologies, such as VR (virtual reality) and AI (artificial intelligent) to replace the traditional information and culture ambassadors such as tourist guides, hotel concierges and marketers, which lead to concern on future skill requirement in the sector.

Qualification of the professionals remains required officially while the relevant training and education schemes and management practices may be accommodated accordingly. For example, the tourist guide license is required in Thailand, “The Tourism Department is hoping to fast-track the penalising of un-registered and illegal tour guides and the tour companies using them” (The Taiger 2019).

From the demand side, reports (STB et al. 2013, OCED 2018) found that millennial travellers are likely to explore online resource when they are making travel plans. Moreover, interestbased tours are increasing. For example, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) promotes an Area Tourist Guide License to allow individuals to provide tour guide services based on their areas of interests. They are not required to undergo rigorous training to obtain the Tourist Guide Certification (Tay 2019). Furthermore, in November 2013, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) launched Sustainability Guidelines to serve as a reference guide for MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travel, and Conferences & Exhibitions) industry players in Singapore. These include initiatives that encourage employees to develop a commitment to sustainable practices. The interaction between human resource and smartness would be further examined in the follow section.

2.3 The E- Human Resource

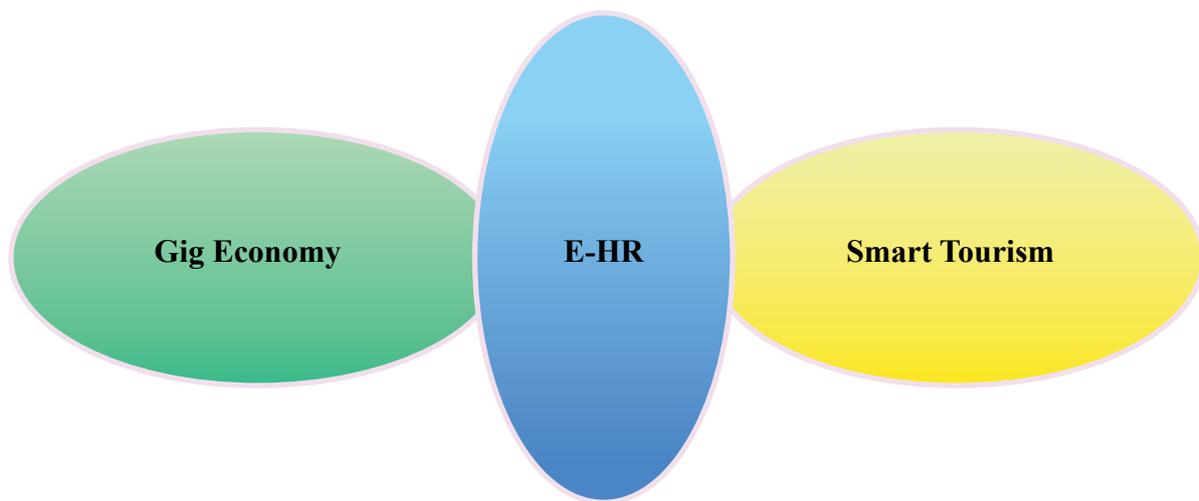
E-Human Resource transforms organisational human resource service and management practices through web-based digitising technology, as such as e-recruiting, e-selection, elearning, e-performance management, e-compensation, e-benefits etc. (Johnson and Gueutal 2011). The E-HR data portal is accessible to various stakeholders within and outside of an organisation and provides extensive statistical information for deep study and analysis, for better decision-making. This paper focuses on the possible interactions between E-HR, the gig economy and smart tourism.

Human resource management in a digitised gig economy has to adapt for flexible employment and telework, not only for part-time but also for full-time workers. In order to organise and manage the streaming of open data of human resource (the flexible employment and telework), the sub functions of E-HR such as e-recruitment, e-selection and e-learning could be utilised to enhance the experience and ecosystem of smart tourism. For example, the Society of Tourist Guide of Singapore, promotes the professionalism of tourist guiding by training and education, professional development courses, as well as provides a platform for the tourists to choose tourism ambassadors. The Society platform lists various tourist destinations according to cultural themes and members’ experience, so that whatever the level of technology used, the heritage and cultural experience of the tourists is fostered. Tourists could book consultancies with the members of the Society on the platform.

The Society, initially established as a non-profit organisation representing tourist guides, became a wholly owned Travel Agency, STGS Tour Pte Ltd, in 2015, to develop & provide guided tours. As a travel agent, the data security of its members and customers is subjected to privacy regulation.

Figure I illustrate how E-HR could be integrated with the smart tourism and the gig economy. The job nature of tourist guides and hotel concierges' employment could be flexible in the gig economy and smart tourism. Their participation in the digital platforms could enhance the interaction between human and cultural heritages. The e-selection of tourist guides and hotel concierges is not just for job providers but also for the tourists. It allows the tourists to get closer to the cultural heritages or hotels before, during, and after their trip planning. The following section (Second 4) proposes an integrated framework of E-human resource the smart tourism and gig economy.

Figure 1. The interaction of E-HR management, smart tourism and gig economy

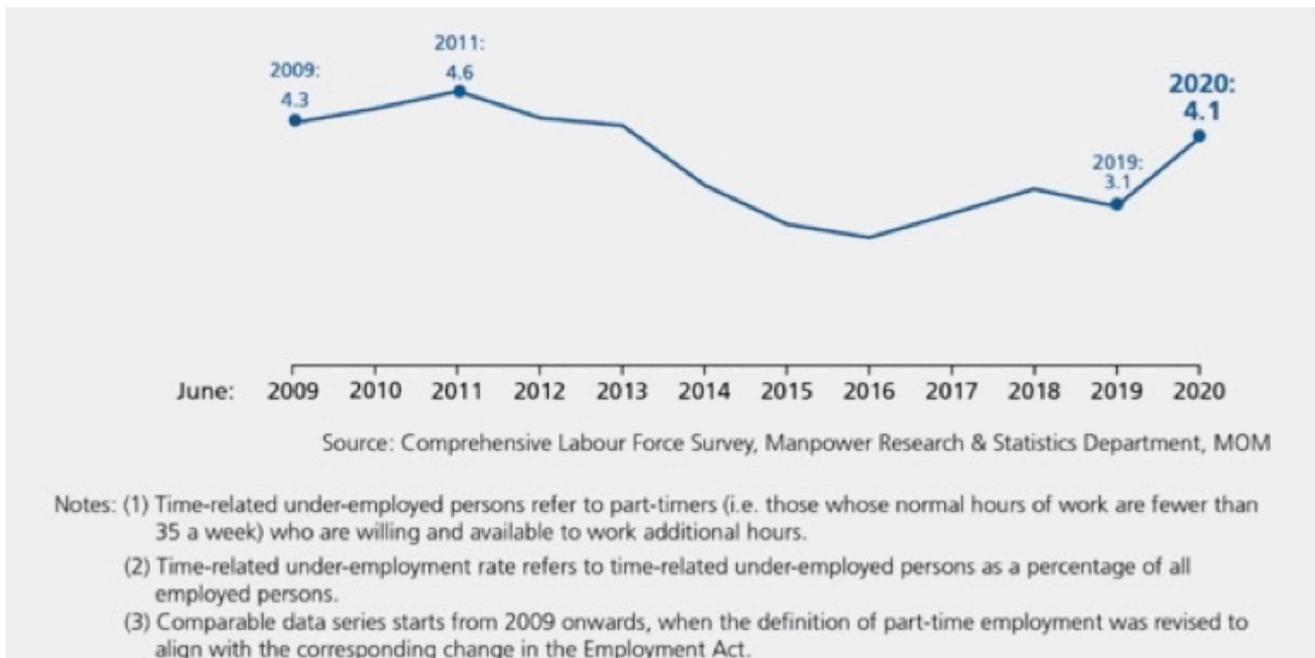


3. The Trend of Labour Market of Singapore

The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey (CLFS) 2020 (Manpower Research and Statistics Department Singapore, 2020), conducted in mid-2020, shows the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market of Singapore: in term of professionals and non-professions; and by industry. The increase in the resident unemployment rate for Non-PMETs increased by 1.7% from June 2019 to June 2020. This was relatedly higher than the PMETs (professionals, managers, executives & technicians) increase by 0.6% from June 2019 to June 2020. This indicates the greater impact of the pandemic among Non-PMETS (clerical support, service & sales, craftsmen & related trades, plant & machine operators & assemblers and cleaners & labourers), who appears to be less suitable for remote work.

From the industry perspective, the time-related under-employment rate increased sharply in industries with high Non-PMET employment, such as retail trade, food & beverage services, arts, entertainment & recreation, construction and transportation & storage (Manpower Research and Statistics Department Singapore, 2020). Moreover, according to Ministry of Trade and Industry, the main cause of the increase in the under-employment (Figure 2) in these industries could be due to the partial lockdown (“circuit breaker” to slow the spread of coronavirus) from 7 April to 1 June 2020.

Figure 2. Resident time-related under-employment rate (%)



Statistics show that the performance of the accommodation and food services sectors has been affected tremendously, plunging 41.4% on-year, due to the “circuit breaker” and a sharp reduction in the number of tourist arrivals in Singapore. It is apt to mention that tourism is a major industry in Singapore, contributing around 4% of its gross domestic product (GDP). People working in accommodation and food services sector are more vulnerable in the pandemic, since businesses are encouraged to go online and telework to stay in their trade. According to the CLFS (Comprehensive Labour Force Survey) 2020 (Manpower Research and Statistics Department Singapore, 2020), Singapore’s proportion of workers who work from home was around 49.3%, which was ranked in 5th place. In the long run, even after the pandemic is over, the trend towards the digitalisation of business and management will continue.

However, due to the nature of their jobs, telework is not practical currently for people working in accommodation and food services. To encourage people working in the tourism sector to upgrade their skill during this tough period, Singapore Tourism Board established the Singapore Tourism Accelerator program. The Accelerator programme supports the industry in digital transformation with a higher tech and low touch approach. It entails an intensive 4-month programme to learn critical market entry skills, pilot design and implementation skills, building scalable company and culture and fundraising strategies, achieved through mentoring, peer learning, expert feedback, networking sessions, etc.

4. An E-human resource framework in line with the smart tourism and the gig economy

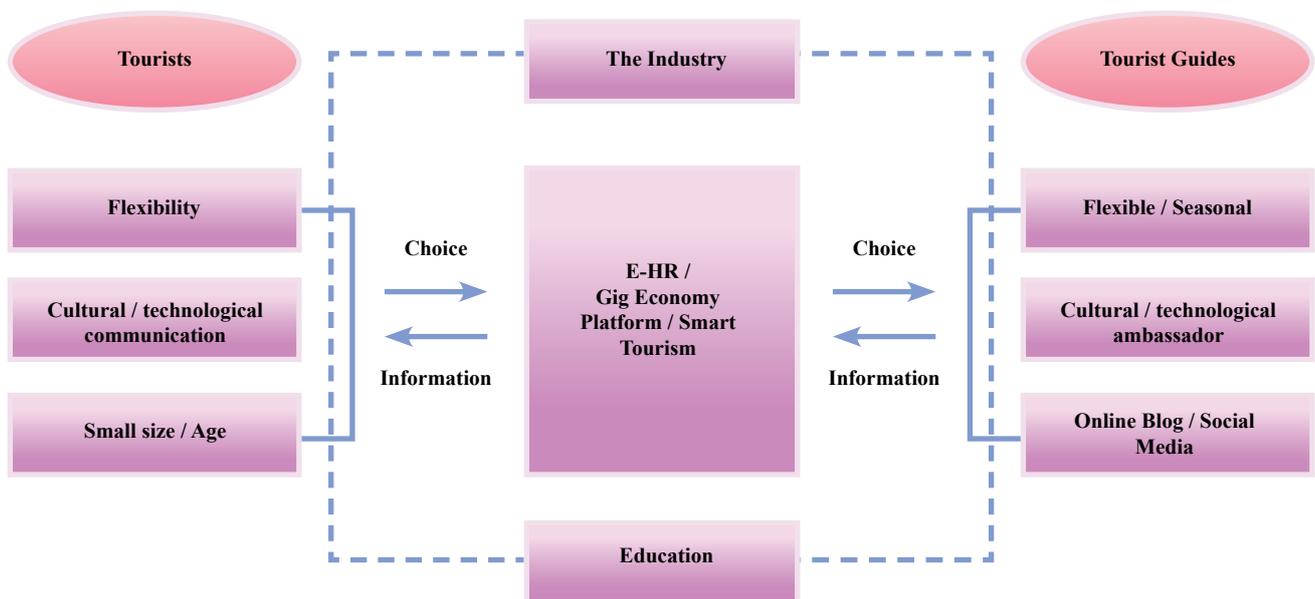
EURES, the European job mobility portal is an European cooperation network of employment services, designed to facilitate the free movement of workers. The network ensures that European citizens can benefit from the same opportunities, despite language barriers, cultural differences, bureaucratic challenges, diverse employment laws and the lack of educational certificates across Europe. Figure 3 shows that the functions of the gig economy, E-HR and smart tourism are combined in the integrated framework, in which the tourist guides and hotel concierges could interact with the tourists. In addition, the industry (hotel, restaurant, museum, travel agency, travel association, etc.) and education institutes also play their roles in the framework by offering jobs and professional events and collecting and analysing data. It is apt to mention that the education institutes, being the actors of data streaming and analysing, could contribute to the sharing of academic values rather than business values.

Figure 3 reflects the trend of tourist's preference in terms of being flexible and the small size. The age groups could be varied, yet their interests in cultural and technological communication remain. Travel professionals such as tourist guides and hotel concierges are adapted to the flexible and seasonal gig economy in the sector. They are the ambassadors of cultural and technological communication in the smart tourism. In addition, the functions of tourist's guides and hotel concierges are not limited at the smart tourist destinations but also in the social media by operating their online blogs.

Similar to the European job mobility portal, the framework (Figure 3) shares information for the gig economy seeker and providers (who could be the industry or individual tourists). HER functions such as e-recruitment, e-selection and e-training operating in the framework, ensure the security and ownership of the data.

Accuracy and availability of data are crucial. The participation of education institutions is essential for independent evaluation and management of the data. In order to keep up with the pace of smart tourism and gig economy, the curriculum and training schemes of tourism education also need to equip the students and professionals with advanced E-HR technology and digital technology in the field of tourism management. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) can facilitate the development of a collaborative tourism education and research centre for the ASEAN alliance. Such an ASEAN alliance can work on the international standardisation of tourism service and related education, such as an international tourist guide license. This will facilitate flexible labour movement in the ASEAN alliance.

Figure 3. E-human resources in line with the smart tourism and gig economy



The ultimate aim of smart tourism is to improve the efficiency of resource management, maximise competitiveness and enhance sustainability through the use of technological innovation and practices. The key is to use technology to help the tourism agent (destination management organisation, tourist attraction, hotel, restaurant, etc.) operate more effectively. Implementing smart tourism can be carried out in various ways: smart accessibility options, smart sustainability initiatives, smart information sharing, smart research and management tools and smart tourist experiences. Smart tourism enhances information sharing across stakeholders, while travel professionals are vulnerable in the gig economy and telework environment. Nevertheless, the integration of E-HR with the gig economy and smart tourism remains a challenge either in terms of regulation or efficient management. Open data available in the integrated framework will allow the stakeholders to stream and analyse for potential trends and the adoption, accordingly, of a sustainable strategy. In particular, it is not just technology but also consumer behaviour in the smart tourism and gig economy that requires flexible E-HR management.

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*“The real voyage of discovery consists not
in seeing new landscapes, but in having
new eyes.”*

— *Marcel Proust*

Towards Sustainable Development of Buddhist Tourism in South East Asia

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Abstract

In 2011, the UNWTO prepared the “Religious Tourism in Asia and the Pacific” study to highlight the significance of religious tourism in Asia and the Pacific regions. The study found that places of religious importance are often the most visited destinations in many Asian countries. Even though Buddhism originated and is followed by a large population in Asia, in particularly South East Asia, Buddhist Tourism has not received the same attention as tourism related to Islam or Hinduism in the region. It is in this context that the contribution of Buddhist heritage to tourism in Asian and South East Asian countries is undertaken. This paper takes a snapshot of Buddhist Tourism in South East Asia and includes the following aspects: significant tangible and intangible Buddhist heritage developed in the country and its use for tourism purposes; visitation patterns to Buddhist sites; promotion of Buddhist tourism; and management of Buddhist destinations and heritage; use of technology in the marketing and management of Buddhist tourism and destinations; and challenges facing the growth and sustainable development of Buddhist tourism.

Introduction

The present state of Buddhist tourism has much to do with the way Buddhism developed historically across the Asian subcontinent. After the Buddha's death, his teachings and philosophy came to be known as Buddhism. Under the royal patronage of King Asoka in the 3rd century, Buddhism spread wide and far across most of Asia. Over centuries, Buddhism became a prominent religion, leading to a proliferation of substantial Buddhist heritage in the region. In many countries, archaeological excavations continue to yield more and more Buddhist sites, but the lack of information renders them outside the purview of tourism activities.

In South East Asian countries, the syncretism of Buddhism with other religious faiths led to the development of a myriad of sites with hybrid Buddhist heritage and worship patterns. In such places with considerable Buddhist followership, cultural experiences through festivals, events and performances, and arts form the major resource for Buddhist tourism. The ways in which Buddhism intersected with native and indigenous practices resulted in complex religious and cultural traditions and sites and most of these continue to flourish and build on Buddhist heritage.

Thus, the diversity of Buddhist cultural landscape in Asia and South East Asia is unparalleled, ranging from village level everyday practices to mixed media live-stage performances and theme parks.

Country-case studies in the UNWTO report reveal that considerable opportunities exist for the promotion and development of Buddhist tourism in South East Asia. Much of Buddhist tourism is focused on iconic Buddhist sites which are designated as UNESCO world heritage. A cursory glance at their annual visitation levels reflects their national importance for Buddhist tourism as they attract the maximum number of visitors in the country: Angkor Wat in Cambodia (2.1 million); Borobudur in Indonesia (3.9 million); Luang Prabang and Champassak in Lao PDR (1.3 million) ii; Bagan in Myanmar (half a million); Ayutthaya in Thailand (7.2 million); and Yen Tu Pagoda in Viet Nam (2.2 million). These sites have a combination of archaeological remains and places of living Buddhist practices and thus cater to a wide range of visitors.

A large proportion of visitors, mainly domestic, are found at many secondary sites that host active religious practice. For example, in Thailand, the festival of light "Yi Peng" is celebrated mainly in the North, with Chiang Mai as the centre of attention.

In Myanmar, the Ananda Pagoda Festival, held every December to January in the ancient city of Bagan, draws thousands to the famous golden temple. As one of the most famous festivals in Myanmar, large numbers of pilgrims often gather and camp out for the duration. Similar patterns are observed in other countries that have substantial Buddhist populations.

A third tier of Buddhist heritage sites could be categorised as the smaller and lesser-known locations that are used mainly by non-Buddhist visitors as tourism destinations. Many of these are either archaeological or mountainous landscapes that provide respite and settings for spectacle and leisure. Their proximity to cities and towns contributes to their popularity as destinations. This is best illustrated in the case of Malaysia where sites such as the Chin Swee Cave Temple in Genting Highlands have become main destinations for domestic and international tourists that are not Buddhists.

In terms of travel patterns, the volume of visitation by domestic visitors far outweighs the numbers of international tourists at Buddhist sites in almost all the countries except a few such as Cambodia and Lao PDR where domestic tourism has begun to grow only recently. In terms of duration, day-visits to single sites from a more accessible city seem to be the dominant form of tourism in most places.

South East Asia Buddhist tourism resources

The rich heritage of Buddhism – tangible and intangible – throughout South East Asia makes it a valuable resource for tourism. For followers of Buddhism, religious and cultural identity, belonging to a faith and its practice, and the return to roots may be strong motivating factors. For others, it provides a path of spirituality or a peek into the vibrant culture or sheer enticement of grand architecture and archaeology in Buddhist destinations. Following is a brief description of the various resources in Buddhism with tourism potential.

1. Tradition of pilgrimage

Through his own sojourn, Buddha highlighted the importance of journey for spiritual seeking. According to the Buddhist scripture of Mahaparinibbana Sutta (V, 16), it is believed that Buddha himself propagated the idea of a pilgrimage to four places that would inspire faith (saddha) and religious urgency (samvega) for the disciples: Lumbini where the Buddha was born; Bodhgaya where he attained the Supreme Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree; Sarnath where he delivered his first sermon and Kusinara, the place of his Great Passing (Parinirvana).

This essence of Buddhist philosophy continues to motivate thousands of monks and followers to undertake pilgrimages to not only these but hundreds of other Buddhist sites in South East Asia. Pilgrimage places also include sites dedicated to Bodhisattvas, learned gurus, and elder monks - this is particularly found in the Mahayana school of Buddhism.

2. Buddhist sites, living practice

Buddhism intersected with native religions and faiths in many ways in all the regions that it spread to. Accordingly, many Buddhist sites also emerged as places for performance of syncretic religious practices and rituals. For instance, large temple-complexes are at the centre of village level Buddhist practice that also doubles up as cultural resources – particularly in countries such as Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. There are several examples where contemporary Buddhist sites are the hub of activities rather than historical or archaeological sites.

In Malaysia, most sites have evolved from the regional origins and followership of migrant communities that have settled in the country. Cultural aspects and the way of life of each different ethnic group is reflected in the way they perform their religious obligations. Their communal devotees reflect representation of each Buddhist denominations. So Thai Theravada Buddhism is associated with local Siamese, Sinhala Theravada Buddhism is associated with local Sinhalese and Mahayana Buddhism is associated with local Chinese communities. This is vividly demonstrated when attending puja (chanting sessions). In a Thai wat, chanting in traditional Pali language follows the Siamese stylized versions, whereas in Sinhalese temple the same chant is carried out in Sinhala tone and rhythm. Similar cultural nuances are also exhibited in different types of cuisine served to members of the Sangha (monastic order, mainly males) during dana (food offerings). In that sense, then, the sites of active practice of Buddhism provide religious- cultural basis for a diverse and often exotic visitor experience.

3. Historical Buddhist sites

The prominence of Buddhism as state religion in many ancient kingdoms of Asia has created a large number of monuments. The mention of Angkor Wat, Borobudur, Ayutthaya, Sukhothai, Luang Prabang, etc., conveys an image of grandeur of Buddhist settlements. In South East Asia, twelve (12) sites related to Buddhism are listed as World Heritage Sites.^{vi} Around these sites, large archaeological parks have been set up that attract high volume of international visitors for the exceptional archaeological experience they offer.

In many cases, they also continue to support active religious and cultural practices and therefore are destinations for both domestic and international visitors.

4. Buddhist pilgrimage circuits

The wanderings of Buddha himself has inspired the idea of circuitous journeys to all the different places that are associated with him. While such pilgrimages across the sub-continent were a part of monastic traditions and Buddhist clergy, they are now being increasingly recognised and promoted as circuits for tourism. The potential of such sites to attract visitors needs careful examination as such attractions have conventionally received fewer visitors compared to other attractions. All such circuits can be seen as operating at different spatial and governmental scale from local level, within a province, across provinces within a country, and across countries at the international cross-border level.

5. Buddhist festivals and events

Buddhist festivals readily showcasing intangible cultural values are abundant and diverse, where exchanges, empathy, and fellowship in the Buddhist communities are expressed abundantly. The most iconic ones are those that celebrate major events related to Buddha's life. In addition to Buddhist rituals, there are many unique cultural and artistic activities related to folklore, Buddhist songs and Buddhist dances. The activities make the festivals become extremely attractive in terms of showcasing cultural values, the arts and spiritual insights. Particularly for tourists, Buddhist festivals have become events that attract visitors to explore and experience with Buddhist communities and indigenous people. More contemporary events such as Peace marathons, conferences, and local pageants are also being packaged with Buddhist festivals making them attractive for tourism.

6. Spiritual tourism products: healing, meditation, yoga, music

The teachings of Buddhism are associated with the process of self-enlightenment and overall spiritual well-being. The experiential aspects such as meditation, yoga practices, healing, chanting, music, and other forms are being offered as tourism products. In many Buddhist sites, monasteries package such experiences into short or long-term retreats while spas and hotels also customise package with involvement of local practitioners and traditional institutions. This segment of Buddhist heritage is increasingly becoming popular and provides tremendous potential for Buddhist tourism.

Challenges in Buddhist heritage tourism

Of the many challenges in realising the potential of Buddhist heritage tourism, the few, which are most pertinent and generic to Asian contexts, are discussed here.

1. Identification and Integration of tangible and intangible heritage of Buddhism for Tourism

Given the long history of Buddhism and its vast spread across different regions, it is a challenging task to identify which layers of this heritage would serve the purpose of tourism. Much of this decision-making depends on the current political will, socio-cultural and religious context in the country. The irony is evident in places where once Buddhism flourished, and which are endowed with rich archaeological and built heritage. At present in those places, there are very few Buddhist followers and hence limited active support for Buddhist heritage. Moreover, the recent histories of current generations overshadow the ancient heritage. For instance, in the Bujang Valley of Kedah in Northern Peninsular Malaysia, excavations at Buddhist and Hindu sites have taken a long time and are still continuing. Except for the iconic sites, much of Buddhist heritage remains uncovered in most places.

The intangible heritage that was supported by tangible heritage is also limited. On one hand, the discontinuity of Buddhist practices and traditions affected much of cultural heritage that has been passed on to current generations. On the other, the monastic base of Buddhism also led to a somewhat isolation of Buddhist teachings and philosophy for a long time. It is only recently that some attention is being accorded to documenting and promoting of Buddhist cultural heritage. More needs to be done in that domain.

2. Destination management in Buddhist sites

Different countries have different kinds of governance and institutional structures for the management of Buddhist sites, and these have considerable bearing on tourism to these places. It is found that the authorities in many Buddhist sites are fragmented: while in many places the agencies with mandates for archaeological preservation have complete jurisdiction over those sites and allow for limited tourism activities. In other places the total control of sites and their tourism by singular state agencies is causing a high level of heavy wear and tear that is threatening the heritage. Yet in other places, religious institutions, private sector, and informal sector drive tourism activities in Buddhist sites and need to be regulated for better outcomes. Overall, it is necessary to strike a balance by involving all relevant stakeholders. This is well demonstrated in tourism management approaches in Thailand.

UNESCO and its designating and providing support to certain destinations as World Heritage Sites has been significant for tourism development in those destinations. Sites in Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand have largely benefited from the UNESCO designation and because of the requirements of UNESCO, have developed reasonable destination management strategies. However, there are also instances where the global heritage intersects with local interests in ways that encourage enclave tourism which have caused negative impacts on communities.

A general observation is that a large number of non-iconic sites are located in small and medium towns that do not have sufficient infrastructure and amenities to support tourism. Most Buddhist sites, despite their present situations, are attractive to devout pilgrims. However, this segment of visitors is unlikely to spend more and therefore it is natural that for such low yield it is difficult to find the private sector investing in such tourism projects. The challenge is to convert the low yield sites into more marketable destinations that can appeal to a wider audience beyond the seekers.

3. Uneven impacts of visitations

It is well known that tourism activities are concentrated within tourism attraction areas only and this means that other areas are often left out of the development that is driven by tourism. This is largely true in Buddhist sites as well. The impacts are unevenly distributed across geographic regions, social classes, and physical environments. Many iconic sites attract large visitations and along with that all the problems of crowding, congestion, wear and tear, strain on services, pollution and so on. A prevalent concern is about commodification where some festivals and events are scheduled to meet the needs of tourists rather than the cultural calendar.

As evidenced in Luang Prabang, there are concerns of loss of authenticity as the surge in numbers of foreign tourists is likely to threaten traditional ways of life and traditional skills. Similar loss of spirit is lamentable, as native residents sell or rent their properties to entrepreneurs who use them as guest-houses, restaurants, or other tourism-related activities. This breaks the tradition of contributing alms to the temples and as result fewer monks can be supported.

The economic benefits to the community within which Buddhist sites are located are low. Where followers of other faiths surround these communities, it would be difficult to bring economic benefits of tourism for those who may not participate in Buddhist tourism for religious and cultural reasons. In many places where there is ticketed entry, revenue generation and sharing become contentious.

Recommendations for the future of Buddhism-based tourism

The historical development of Buddhism and its spread throughout South East Asia has generated varied kinds of Buddhist heritage in these countries. Given the recent growth of Asian tourism, it seems appropriate to consider the resources provided by Buddhist cultural heritage in tourism and how Buddhist tourism can be developed as a special segment with a standing of its own. A few generic recommendations that serve the larger goal of the sustainability of Buddhist tourism in South East Asia are discussed below.

1. Branding Buddhist heritage as tourism attraction

In any country, the political, socio-cultural, and religious context defines how Buddhist heritage is articulated and how it can be used in tourism. In some countries the accessibility, the availability, and the positive image of Buddhist heritage has led to considerable Buddhist tourism (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Viet Nam, Indonesia etc.). For many reasons outlined earlier, many countries are yet to fully recognise and showcase their Buddhist heritage in a way that can appeal for tourism. The sporadic excavations and discoveries of Buddhist archaeological sites in these countries need encouragement and support and even more effort to make these sites available for people.

Beyond archaeology, more cultural connections need to be made with the surrounding contexts so that the Buddhist heritage is not isolated and lost again. An exercise of image building of Buddhist places and resources with the involvement of all stakeholders is a first step towards long-term sustainability of Buddhist tourism. This process can take place at local community level and incorporated at higher levels of government into tourism agenda. The image could be around tangible sites or intangible cultural heritage. Then such image and identity need to be integrated into the regional and international network of Buddhist places and the countries with shared heritage. This interlinking can be done with help from international organisations such as UNESCO and through bilateral agreements. This connectivity with global Buddhist heritage will bring in more tourism. It is well known that tourism provides impetus for socio-economic development of destinations.

2. Integration of tangible and intangible heritage

Buddhist tourism, at present, is focused on iconic sites and festivals. It is necessary that the offerings from Buddhist heritage be expanded for tourism, such as incorporating more cultural activities. Some good examples of this are seen in case of Thailand during the Loy Krathong celebrations. But in other places, even if tangible assets are available, they are connected in fairly limited ways with the traditional practices and cultural connections. It will be worthwhile to examine which traditions and performances can be introduced around these sites to make both resources tourism ready.

To achieve sound integration, the tool of “cultural mapping” could be employed. Mapping is essential for identifying cultural resources, establishing a legislative framework for the protection of cultural heritage and an in-depth baseline study on the cultural industry sector in the given destination. This has been effectively illustrated in case of Magelang Regency in Indonesia with the intention to protect and promote the World Heritage of the Borobudur Temple Compounds, promotion of cultural industries and protecting heritage tourism for the long-term sustainability of the local community.

The revival of on-foot pilgrimages that were central to Buddhist culture presents a great opportunity for Buddhist tourism. Governments should provide necessary infrastructure for this revival as it has the potential to evolve into a major tourism product. This is partly seen in the “footsteps of Buddha” pilgrimages in India and Nepal, which are becoming popular. Similar efforts should be made in South East Asia, particularly in Thailand and Myanmar.

3. Active engagement of religious institutions

Religious institutions play a significant role in its management of religious tourism. Monastic establishments, monks, monasteries, sangha, and other Buddhist religious associations are crucial in maintaining visitor flows to Buddhist sites. Thailand is a notable example where international Buddhist congregations are highly visible. A more detailed understanding of the role of Buddhist religious institutions is necessary to articulate their role and responsibility in promoting and sustaining Buddhist tourism. By actively engaging with Buddhist charitable and religious institutions and with the help of religious leadership, it is possible to promote many sites related to Buddha and enhance the trans-boundary flow of monks as well as the laity.

4. Strategies for enhancing tourist flows

A reasonable amount of information is available regarding Buddhist heritages in many countries, used by individuals and package tour for their travel. However, more concerted and directed promotions are needed, to yield better outcome and enhanced tourist flows. Many countries use conventional methods, like travel fair attendance and shows to promote tourism. As shown by Nepal and Sri Lanka, exchanging symbolically important artifacts and adding value through cultural performances at such events can make more effective use of these platforms.

Cultural diplomacy through bilateral agreements and “friendship offers” between national Governments are potent strategies to increase tourist flows from one country to the other. Bhutan Government has effectively used this strategy to attract visitors from Thailand, India, Republic of Korea, and Australia. Since this model acquires legitimacy at the highest level of government, it holds sound promise for many countries to attract visitors to their Buddhist heritage and resources.

5. Sustainable tourism management in destinations

It is necessary that Buddhist destinations can sustain tourism in all respects: social, economic, and environmental aspects. In many iconic sites, designated as world heritage sites, UNESCO has mandated sustainable destination management frameworks and has relevant institutional arrangements in place. This means that those sites are better managed. However, there are many areas of improvement particularly with regards to the engagement of the local community. Community Based Tourism (CBT) is employed to achieve sustainable development in many iconic and non-iconic sites. For instance, in Thailand, around the greater Sukhothai region, such CBT initiatives are proving to be popular. The management of other Buddhist sites can learn much important that lessons from these community projects.

For the better management of Buddhist destinations, it is necessary for all stakeholders related to Buddhism be involved and engaged in their respective capacities. In towns and cities with Buddhist heritage, tourism-driven urbanisation must ensure the compatibility between the needs of urban growth and tourism development, without each exerting negative influence on the other. In such situations, it will be necessary to reframe institutional responsibilities of managing tourism for its sustainability and the sustainability of the destination.

6. Regional cooperation

Within South East Asia, where regional cooperation is operational, it will be worthwhile to ride on the successes of this cooperation to promote Buddhist tourism within the member countries. Cooperative endeavours, such as ASEAN, the Mekong sub-region, the Emerald Triangle, the East-West corridor and the Silk Road Initiative, all have some potential for incorporating and promoting Buddhist tourism in their agenda in a more visible manner. The possibilities for such avenues should be explored. Moreover, regional cooperation can provide a fruitful platform for the transfer of technology and the sharing of experience in the management of Buddhist sites. Many countries in the region are already using these effectively to manage their own Buddhist heritage.

Challenges and Conclusion

A number of challenges face the realisation of the potential of Buddhist tourism. The most vital is recognition of this potential by national governments and incorporating Buddhist tourism as a priority area in their policies and institutional structures. Countries in South East Asia with a substantial Buddhist heritage have accorded Buddhist tourism a national priority sector but its widespread implementation is still in its formative stages.

In countries where Buddhist followership is in a minority, there is a fairly limited recognition of Buddhist tourism as an opportunity in exploiting the potential of Buddhist resources for promoting international tourism. There is a strong need for a more active role by governments in marketing and promotion campaigns to support and encourage Buddhist tourism. The private sector is playing a more active role especially in the supply of services in tourism, gradually making an impact on Buddhist tourism. They need to be able to develop the resource value of Buddhist heritage products for tourism. The contributions of religious institutions to Buddhist tourism are equally important. The support and engagement of Buddhist monks, monasteries, sangha and other national and international Buddhist associations is indispensable for promoting Buddhist tourism.

Buddhism, with its inherent tolerant views, historical and archaeological grounding, exotic sites and offerings of spirituality and holistic well-being, provides for worthwhile tourism experiences for tourists. Buddhist heritage can also be tapped to become the mainstay and a major resource for socio-economic upliftment of communities in many developing countries of Asia.

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Acknowledgements:

Appreciation and thanks to Datuk Seri Prof Dr Victor Wee for his guidance and co-authorship of the UNWTO study “Buddhist Tourism in Asia: Prospects and Sustainability.”

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*“Traveller, there is no path
The path is made by walking.
By walking you make a path
And turning, you look back
At a way you will never tread again.”*

— Antonio Machado

ONE STI Learning Model: Delivering Tourism Education Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

STI is a school network with 54 campuses offering tourism education across the Philippines. This school year 2020-2021, STI introduces the Online and Onsite Education (ONE) at STI. The ONE STI Learning Model is an educational framework to enable tourism students to continue their studies, move up to the next level, graduate, and seek employment amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This new learning model strengthens the blended learning mode of STI that has been implemented since 2016, using an eLearning Management System (eLMS) for students to use at home.

This paper describes the implementation of ONE STI Learning Model in delivering tourism education as experienced by teachers and students of STI College- Gen. Santos. This case study summarises the challenges encountered, and actions taken during the 1st implementation of this model's features. These include Redesigned Learning Content; Modified and Interactive Assessments; Online Learning Platforms; Internet Connectivity Assistance; as well as Onsite Class Schedules; and Teachers' Guidance and Support. Each feature has brought positive learning and teaching experiences to both students and teachers. However, unstable Internet connectivity and compatibility of gadget to multimedia contents are noted as main concerns of online delivery learning. While no Onsite activities are implemented yet due to the prohibition of face-to-face classes by the Philippine Government Agencies. In general, the model has encouraging results and recommendations are made to give valuable insights for the application of online learning delivery in hospitality and tourism education.

Keywords: *Learning model, eLearning Management System (eLMS), Tourism Education, COVID-19 Pandemic, Online Delivery Learning*

Introduction

The demands of the IR (Industrial Revolution) 4.0 have been slowly changing the educational landscape through ICT- enhanced or blended learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has expedited this shift to online delivery learning both synchronously and asynchronously among higher education institutions worldwide. Flexibility, accessibility, and interactivity enabling students to access learning materials and services from anywhere and at any time, are the known benefits of online learning, (Park, 2011).

The COVID- 19 pandemic turned the world upside down when many countries implemented lock-down measures. To maintain the level of learning, higher education institutions were forced to adopt a variety of distance learning modalities. Among these modalities, online distance learning with the aid of Learning Management System was deemed the safest and most efficient way of delivering education to students during the pandemic. This modality was implemented by STI school network in the Philippines through a new learning model- ONE STI.

STI is one of the largest school networks in the Philippines with 76 campuses, 54 of which offer tourism education across the country. It introduced the Online and Onsite Education coined as (ONE) at STI, for the school year 2020-21. The ONE STI Learning Model is an innovative approach to student learning development. It uses digital tools and online technology, combined with invaluable hands-on practice, and onsite engagements to achieve students' academic objectives, through a responsive learning experience. This educational framework enables tourism students to continue their studies move up to the next level, graduate, and seeks employment amidst the COVID- 19 pandemic. This new learning model strengthens the blended learning mode of STI, implemented since 2016. It uses an eLearning Management System (eLMS) for students to learn at home, supplemented by invaluable hands-on training in industry- grade laboratories, and classroom discussions onsite at the campus.

Tourism teachers of STI College- Gen. Santo, who had already been exposed to blended learning, received a month-long training on online teaching methodology before the start of the school year.

Research Objectives

This paper focused on the following objectives:

1. To enlist the challenges experienced by the tourism teachers and students in implementing the ONESTI Learning Model.

2. To present the immediate actions made to handle the challenges encountered by tourism teachers and students in implementing the ONESTI Learning Model.
3. To provide suggestions and insights on how online distance learning be implemented in addressing the needs of tourism education amidst pandemics.

Methodology, Results, and Discussion

Data and information presented in this study were collected from a variety of sources: the personal experience of the researcher as an academic head (college dean) of STI College-Gen. Santos, Inc.; from student survey reports conducted by STI school network and from various authentic websites. Reference was made to some journals and e-contents relating to blended learning, online learning and impact of COVID-19 pandemic on education. STI Learning Delivery System.

Long before the pandemic, STI had implemented a Quality Management System (ISO 9001:2015) certified by TUV Rheinland. Its Learning Delivery System includes courseware development with contents that aimed to be relevant, industry-based, and aligned with the intended graduate outcomes. STI centrally developed the courseware for all campuses in the STI network to ensure the standard delivery of all courses. The courseware is a set of teaching materials used by the faculty members that includes the course syllabus, presentation slides, class hand-outs, and other learning materials in the courseware kit to be used in the duration of the term. One of its important features is the Instructor's Guide (IG), which supports the faculty in articulating the learning outcomes in each session; deploying the appropriate teaching methodologies; providing the context, tips, and other materials to teach the lesson. Moreover, STI has developed courseware for over 500 courses and new courseware are being developed to accommodate new program offerings. The existing courseware were regularly reviewed, updated or revised to keep pace with the changes and trends in the different industries in the country and of the world.

The ONE STI Learning Model

The Online and Onsite Education (ONE) at STI coined as ONE STI was introduced to the STI school network as its learning continuity plan during the pandemic. The ONE STI Learning Model is an educational framework to enable students to continue their studies, move up to the next level, graduate, and seek employment amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This new learning model strengthens STI's existing blended learning mode that combines independent online learning via the eLearning Management System (eLMS) at home with the invaluable hands-on training in industry-grade laboratories and classroom discussions onsite at the campus. Onsite refers to school activities to be conducted on-

campus, following the latest regulations issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), Department of Education (DepEd) for Senior High School, and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for College. Where onsite activities are prohibited by a government agency, activities or modules will be delivered 100% online until onsite sessions are allowed.

Technically speaking, ONE STI Learning Model is an enhanced blended learning of STI. Blended learning is a methodology, which includes online and face-to-face modalities. Online and face-to-face interactions are used alongside each other in Blended Learning and they both aim at developing foundational literacy, competencies and character qualities which are required by 21st century students, (Pappas, 2016).

This educational strategy combines the traditional class with computer-mediated activity using tablets, smartphones and other technological devices, which catch students' interests more effectively than simply face to face or online lessons. It enhances students' interest and provides them with learning autonomy; it enables students to learn at their own pace and prepare them for the future, (Capone, 2017).

The ONE STI Learning Model is being implemented nationwide in the 54 campuses of the STI school network offering tourism education. We discuss the challenges encountered, and the actions taken by STI College- Gen. Santos.

Redesigned Learning Content

STI eLMS were used to supplement face-to-face learning. The pandemic made it necessary and urgent to convert the whole courseware kit for online delivery through the eLMS. The courseware redesign involved having more multimedia content, gamified learning activities and a weekly calendar to track students' assignments. The presentation slides were added with narration or given using Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) with embedded formative assessments. Table 1 showed the feedback of tourism students pertaining to eLMS and courseware. Though the survey covered all STI students for the purpose of academic plan development, data from the tourism students were filtered. Analysis of the data from the tourism students shows the following.

1. The learning materials in the eLMS are "Always" accessible: 59%
2. The learning materials in the eLMS "deepen and/or add to my knowledge of the course/subject": 42%

3. The eLMS materials are enhanced with multimedia (e.g., video, audio, images, interactive learning objects) that help make the content understandable: 43%
4. It was easy to download the handouts from the eLMS to read them offline: 61%

Table 1: Tourism Students Survey Results Pertaining to eLMS and Courseware

Survey Questions	The learning materials in the eLMS are accessible.		The learning materials in the eLMS deepen and/or add to my knowledge of the course subject.		The eLMS materials are enhanced with multimedia (e.g., video, audio, images, interactive learning objects) that help make the content understandable.		I can easily download the hand-outs from the eLMS to read them offline.	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
0 – No chance to observe	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5 – Always	126	59%	90	42%	90	43%	128	61%
4 – Most of the time	49	23%	73	34%	73	35%	36	17%
3 - Sometimes	32	15%	41	19%	43	20%	43	20%
2 – Rarely	5	2%	6	3%	3	1%	3	1%
1 – Never	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%
n	212	100%	212	100%	211	100%	210	100%

Challenges Encountered

Gadget compatibility of multimedia contents especially to those who are using mobile phones and unstable Internet connectivity are the main concerns of both teachers and students. Recent studies show that these concerns have also been challenging to teachers and students of other institutions who have adopted online learning. They include lower attendance, lack of personal touch, and lack of interaction related to connectivity issues. (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020).

Immediate Actions Taken

Gadget compatibility to multimedia contents and unstable Internet connectivity are issues that cannot be resolved immediately at the level of the academic head. Interim measures include extending deadlines and allowing students to submit their outputs using alternative platforms, which to some extent helped to alleviate student concerns. According to Ookla’s Speedtest Global Index, the Philippines ranks 110th out of 139 countries in terms of mobile data speed, having an average of 18.49 megabits per second (Mbps), (Hallare, 2020). The Philippine government is currently in discussions with another provider to improve the speed of Internet connections in the country.

Modified and Interactive Assessments

Assignment in eLMS is a general term for assessment given to students that includes online or offline quizzes, exams, and task performance. Formative assessments embedded in SCORM serve as strategic learning checkpoints and students cannot proceed on to the next module unless the required score is achieved. More variety in graded task performances and online assessments with set time limits for answering are included in eLMS.

Challenges Encountered

When the courseware kit was made available online, it was overwhelming for both teachers and students to cope with a lot of assignments to check and to submit them on a weekly basis. A regular tourism student must complete at least 24 assignments per week. These assignments can either be done online or offline. Consequently, a full-load teacher with 60 students in a class, must check 14, 400 assignments per week.

Immediate Actions Taken

In response to the complaints from both teachers and students during the 1st two weeks of classes, the required number of assignments was automatically set to a maximum of two per week. These two assignments had to be chosen carefully so that they measure the competencies needed for the course. Below are some of the responses of teachers handling tourism subjects when a survey was conducted for the faculty development plan:

“Students got better scores compared to giving assignments to more than 3 or more.”

“I can easily monitor the performance of my students.”

“It lessened the number of assignments to check. This also gave us opportunity to modify some tasks so other competencies can be integrated.”

1. Online Learning Platforms

An LMS supports the management and administration of training. (Ebardo & Valderama , 2009). For online delivery of learning, STI has Microsoft Office 365 (Office.com) a learning platform. Microsoft Teams is used for synchronous session where teachers break up their classes into two to four sessions with 20- 30 students, and for a 30 to 60 minutes real- time session per week. During synchronous session, only learning checkpoints through formative assessments take place and long lectures are discouraged. Instead, teachers are encouraged to create narrated slides, videos, etc., to be uploaded via eLMS, to support better student understanding of the courses they are taught. The teachers also under-

go rigorous training using these platforms before the school year started, aside from the Online In-service Training Course that they must complete in eLMS.

Challenges Encountered

Complaints were received from students during the first two weeks of online classes. Feedback from students include: “A student cried because she couldn’t join the recitation during the synchronous class because of poor Internet connection”, “a parent complained that his child was not able to join the graded activity due to poor internet connection”, “some teachers conduct online lectures” and “students cannot join the synchronous session”

Teachers also experienced being disconnected during synchronous session and on an average only 75% of their students could join their synchronous sessions.

Immediate Actions Taken

To address the concerns of synchronous session, the DOs and DON'Ts were established as follows:

DOs:

- Reduce the number of sessions (from 4 to 3) by increasing the number of students and time per session (20 students 40-60 min). Set recurring sessions. Session name template: <Course name><Section><Batch No/Total> (e.g., ENTREPRENEURSHIP ABM 2-2A Batch.)
- Utilize chat • Utilize chat box most of the time, rather than sharing screen to consider those who have poor net connection.
- Use a 1 Slide- 3 Point Agenda that contains Intended Activity, Weekly Tasks and Reminders on Past due Tasks. This was posted in the chat box of the Team at least a day before the scheduled Synch Session.

DON'Ts:

- Never allow students to start your Synch Classes (Change Settings in Meeting Options)
- Avoid activities that may cause stress to students such as recorded assessment during Synch Classes. Formative Assessment serves as check points of learning. (Recorded assessments are conducted/ submitted in eLMS)
- Don't require your students to turn on their video the whole time.

Establishing the DOs and DON'Ts has helped to ensure that the synchronous sessions run smoothly. Below are the quoted feedbacks of tourism teachers:

“When I give formative assessments, I still make it a habit to record them, for monitoring purposes and so that I can determine areas in the lesson that my students are having difficulty understanding. However, these are not graded. I am just doing this to be able to identify ways to re-enforce their learning about the lessons by giving another activity that is directly aimed at that specific lesson/topic.”

“It can give a clear information for both students and teacher.”

“The implementation of Do’s and Don’ts has a better effect in my synchronous class thus, it efficiently gives the students a way to focus since they are given a guide and minimal task and quizzes. As to the utilization of slide in every meeting, agenda is presented and surely they are guided. Those students who are having connectivity problem, we utilize the chat box as to inquiry about the lessons and i do not obliged students to turn on their cameras since not all are able to do so due to poor connectivity.”

2. Internet Connectivity Assistance

All STI students nationwide were given a FREE SIM with 35GB monthly data plan subscribed to either of the two providers in the Philippines depending on the signal strength in their area.

Challenges Encountered

Since the government has implemented lockdown nationwide, students were not allowed to go to school to claim their SIM kits. Though parents are allowed, there were travel restrictions from one local government to another. Thus, not all SIM kits were distributed.

Immediate Actions Taken

Temporarily students without SIM kits yet were provided with data using their own numbers.

3. Teachers’ Guidance and support

All teachers of STI College- Gen. Santos have been working from home since the start of this school year. Thus, they are expected to be available for consultation through email, or chat during designated schedules.

Challenges Encountered

Teachers complained that students were consulting them, 24/7. Another challenge teachers faced is contacting delinquent students who have not submitted their eLMS assignments, despite they have been seen to be active in their social media accounts, teachers see a need for an intervention program to deal with this concern.

Immediate Actions Taken

Teachers working from home were advised to restrict their response to during their office hours.

4. Parent Partnership Education Program

The program is for parents or guardians to learn on how they can support the learning of their children through their own eLMS account and monitors the progress of their children or ward. STI believes that parents and guardians play a significant role in helping their child meet and thrive against the challenges of online learning. Thus, STI has been conducting webinar series for parents that aim to support, empower and recognize the continuous effort in helping STI students the best that they can be. The following are the webinar series given by STI during this pandemic:

Episode 1: The Role of Parents in Supporting Students' Online Learning

Episode 2: Protecting Your Child's Data Privacy

Episode 3: Dear Parents

Challenges Encountered

Though parents have been complaining how stressed their children have been because of online learning, less than 10% of parents have attended the webinars provided by STI.

Immediate Actions Taken

Since most of the parents are working, they could not be forced to attend the webinar series. Thus, the action was limited to allowing them replayed the series at their most convenient time, answered the evaluation form and issued a certificate.

Practical Applications or Implications for Business and Management

- Just like how Learning Management System (LMS) has become an integral backbone of academic institutions especially this time of pandemic and even post pandemic, it can be extended to training centres of industries in training their human resource remotely.

- The online delivery learning that has been forced to students due to the absence of face-to-face learning has prepared the future work force in facing the demands of the Industry Revolution 4.0 one way or another.
- The challenges faced by students have shaped them well to become resilient, patient, creative, resourceful, innovative, independent, and critical-thinkers who would constitute the future work force of world.

Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research Directions

This paper has presented the implementation of online delivery learning amidst COVID-19 pandemic. The case of ONE STI Learning Model was mentioned with its exclusive features, challenges and immediate actions taken as implemented by STI College- Gen. Santos. In the current situation that the higher academic institutions are facing, it is integral for schools to have flexible learning options for students. This study has established that LMS, even with standardized contents, can still have challenges but can be provided with immediate actions if supervised properly. It is imperative that challenges are given immediate actions to provide students a conducive virtual learning space. Each feature of ONE STI Learning Model is crucial as it has an overall impact on the quality of education that STI school network advocates.

Feedbacks from teachers and students provide important bases to improve the learning model. Therefore, it is essential to continuously supervise the implementation of this model.

Whilst this study has valuable contributions, it has also its limitations. Though ONE STI Learning Model was implemented to 54 campuses offering tourism education nationwide, this study is based on how STI College- Gen. Santos has implemented it. Therefore, not all challenges and immediate actions taken can be generalised to the other campuses. However, considering only one campus seemed enough with the study aim to investigate the implementation ONESTI Learning Model on tourism education with more or less 200 tourism students of STI College-Gen. Santos.

Future studies could focus on the impact of ONE STI Learning Model on Academic Performance of tourism students and comparing these performances could encourage healthy competitions among STI campuses. A study on the perception of students on online delivery learning would also be helpful in adding several features to this model that would enable virtual tour which is necessary in tourism education.

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“I travel light; as light, that is, as a man can travel who will still carry his body around because of its sentimental value.”

— Christopher Fry



Business Impacts and Eco-systematic Dynamism: A Study on E-commerce Business for Local Enterprises in Thailand

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Abstract

Thailand's ecommerce has witnessed a continual growth in recent years. With the on-going expansion of e-commerce, the government has been supporting the small and medium enterprises in Thailand. This research comments on the dominant role of e-commerce platforms in Thailand. Findings show that: 1. the advancement of modern technology affects online purchasing consumers; 2. There are advantages for the small and medium enterprises sellers to use e-commerce platforms; 3. The development of e-commerce in Thailand is promising. The authors seek to analyse the impact of e-commerce and suggest how Thai e-commerce can become more efficient. These include adaptive solutions for small and medium enterprises to get ready for the inevitable impact of e-commerce development and thereby enjoy the beneficial results of e-commerce.

Keywords: *business impacts, local enterprises, e-commerce business model, and adaptation, eco-systematic dynamism Thailand*

1. INTRODUCTION

The e-commerce platform has contributed significantly to increased overall trade efficiency in Thailand. According to Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) data in the years (2015-2018), labour efficiency in the trade sector has increased by approximately six (6%) per cent per year. In the early 2020s, the growth rate is expected to increase by about four (4%) per cent. Ecommerce plays an increasingly important role in the daily lives in Thai society. Businesses like Amazon and Alibaba, which are among the world's giants enjoy leapfrog sales. Their promotional activities include Double eleven (11.11) Mass purchasing day, Black Friday, and Cyber Monday. E-commerce helps the sellers of digital technologies like Smartphones, Tablets, or Smart TV easily reach potential consumers. Research by PricewaterhouseCoopers shows that the online shopping rate has witnessed a forty-five (45%) per cent increase in Thailand prior to the COVID-19 outbreak (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2020). The pandemic had negative impacts on every sector of business worldwide. Consumers across the world faced various quarantines and businesses had to shut down due to the pandemic. In response, businesses turned to ecommerce platforms to reach out to customers and market and deliver their goods and services.

This article focuses on the opportunities for the e-commerce sector in Thailand, created by the impact of the pandemic. It analyses the development trends relating to the continual growth of e-commerce, changing e-business models and the efforts to foster an eco-systematic dynamic Thai e-commerce in the near future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW and DESK RESEARCH

2.1. Advancement of E-commerce and Consumer Behaviour for Thai people

Research conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers's conducted before and after the coronavirus outbreak, showed that seventy (70%) per cent worked at home, forty-four (44%) per cent of millennial had an Amazon Prime membership, thirty-five (35%) per cent were buying groceries online by smart phone during the COVID-19 pandemic. (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2020). Given the competitive environment for the variety of products and services promoted via e-commerce platforms, each company had to adapt its service promotional outreach in ways guided by consumer needs. Shamim Hossin identified the countermeasures innovated by these e-commerce platforms. They include delivery expectations, the simplicity of the return process, clarity and simplicity of the online shop, prices and payment options. These key breakthroughs for e-commerce sector helped businesses to cope with the challenges and difficulties under the impact of COVID-19 (Hossin 2020).

E-marketer 2020 showed that the e-commerce momentum will be uneven during the COVID-19 affected year (E-marketer 2020). Global retail e-commerce sales will slow to a sixteen and a half (16.5%) per cent growth in 2020 (down from 20.2% in 2019). The regions with outstanding e-commerce rise are Asia Pacific and North America in the field of retail and e-commerce retail. Asia-Pacific will account for 42.3% of global retail sales, North America will account for 22.9% and Western Europe account for 16.2% (E-marketer 2020).

2.2. Technology and the new trading business model in Thailand

The Internet era has provided a range of technologies, affecting all aspects of life in Thailand and taking place in the context of the current process of global economic and trade integration. The development of e-commerce in the “Internet Plus” era involved the application of the Internet and other information technology in conventional industries. Various other Internets – mobile internet, cloud networking, big data or Internet of Things- have been added to other fields, fostering new industries and business. Technology has changed the pattern of interactions between sellers and buyers, resulting, among other things, in a wider and more complex business model in Internet service, especially the online shopping platforms. The traditional trade model starts from the manufacturer. The manufacturing factories produce the products and distribute the commodities to the retailers. Finally, the consumers purchase these products. After the advancement of modern technology, the traditional supply chain model has been changed. Customers are not purchasing products only from retailers. Manufacturers can sell to consumers directly as well. They do it through the e-marketplace, for instance, through the Lazada.com or Shopeee.com. They also use delivery service providers by accepting direct payments through e-payment providers.

Technology advancements facilitate the business process, reducing overhead costs and increasing productivity (Gustafsson and Khan 2017). Businesses online can help save millions of dollars annually by investing in eco-systematic and user-friendly e-commerce technologies. Using technology to manage and analyse customer data also help the high-tech companies to increase their sales performance. It helps increase the efficiency of the service to meet the needs of the target audience. Changes in technology help create and attract new businesses into the commercial sector.

E-commerce that relies on the advancement of technology has played an even greater role today (Kemp and Moey 2019), in terms of both consumers and business operations. It is therefore inevitable that entrepreneurs must improve or adapt themselves, to be able to continue their operations in the business sectors that are becoming more and more competitive.

2.3. Thai E-commerce market reality in Thailand

In recent years, Thailand's e-commerce market has developed rapidly. This paper describes the process of collecting Thai e-commerce data for a better understanding of the e-commerce industry in Thailand. The focus is on the e-commerce business impacts on small and medium enterprises, analysing the digital business of these companies and their dynamic strategies to foster an eco-systematic system to remain competitive or even survive.

The study uses the international definition of the types of e-commerce and analyses the ecommerce statistics in Thailand and the scope of e-commerce currently existing in Thai consumer market. It goes on to point out the importance and trends of the e-commerce market, including Thailand's e-commerce business model and the market structure that has changed with the arrival of new businesses. Policy recommendations follow.

2.4. Definition and types of e-commerce in Thailand

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the U.S. Census Bureau have defined the term, E-commerce, as follows: "The sale or purchase of good or services over the internet network. Payment and delivery of the good or service can be offline. Orders made by telephone calls, fax or manually typed e-mail are excluded. Only priced transactions will be measured" (Cited from Melati and Dewi 2020). E-commerce means trading of goods and services through the Internet, regardless of whether payments and shipping will take place online or offline. The transactions that occur must be measurable. In general, Ecommerce can be divided into several categories, shown below.

Classification criteria

Category

Seller-Buyer Characteristics

1. Business to Business (B2B)
2. Business to Consumer (B2C)
3. Business to Government (B2G)
4. Consumer to Consumer (C2C)

Sales Channel

1. E-marketplace such as Shopee Lazada
2. Classified website such as Kaidee Prakard.com
3. Brand.com such as Central.co.th BigC.co.th UNIQLO.com
4. Social commerce such as Facebook, Instagram, Line

Product Characteristics

1. Physical goods
2. Intangible items such as digital goods or music download movies, software, and hotel rentals.

Business Model

1. Click and Mortar: Sell through store and online.
2. Pure Online: Selling online only

The researcher adopted e-commerce definitions from the OECD and the U.S. Census Bureau in this study. The study is limited to the trading of physical goods in the form of B2C or e-commerce in the retail sector. This is the business sector with the highest value of e-commerce in Thailand and the highest growth rate.

2.5. Development and importance of the e-commerce market in local enterprises in Thailand

E-commerce or online trading is not new in Thailand. Ten years ago, E-commerce in C2C format was one of the first online sales in Thailand by E-marketplace. There were not many businesses that operated this way then. Most such businesses were founded and ran by Thai people such as Weloveshopping, Tarad.com, OLX and Pramool, but they were not as popular, as they did not develop an ecosystem and infrastructure, which is able to cope with surging increases in e-commerce.

E-commerce has become more popular in Thailand since the time of the E-marketplace. Major expatriates like Lazada entered the Thai market in 2014 as a starting point to help Thai consumers become familiar with a new form of business. Customer confidence in online purchases was reinforced through having a return policy, including the delivery of the product first and then collecting the money later, in a cash-on-delivery service. As a result, buying online increased in popularity, becoming one of the top 5 Internet activities in 2017.

The data in figure 1 shows that Thais have access to e-commerce or online shopping at the high level of 85%, more than the world average and, in ASEAN, second only to Indonesia's 90%.

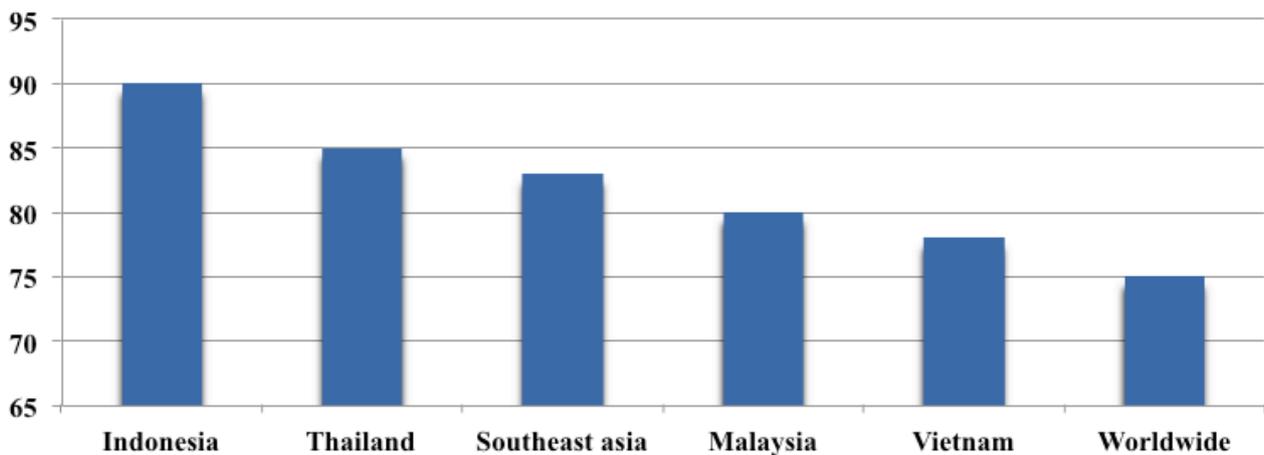


Figure 1. Proportion of E-Commerce of Thai, ASEAN and Worldwide in 2019

It is expected that the value of e-commerce in Thailand will reach 4.02 trillion baht, (aCommerce 2018), a growth rate of 6.91% from 2018, with a total value of 3.76 trillion baht. The value was 2.76 million in 2017. The growth rate will likely pick up further in 2020, as Thai people get used to this new type of behaviour of buying and selling online.

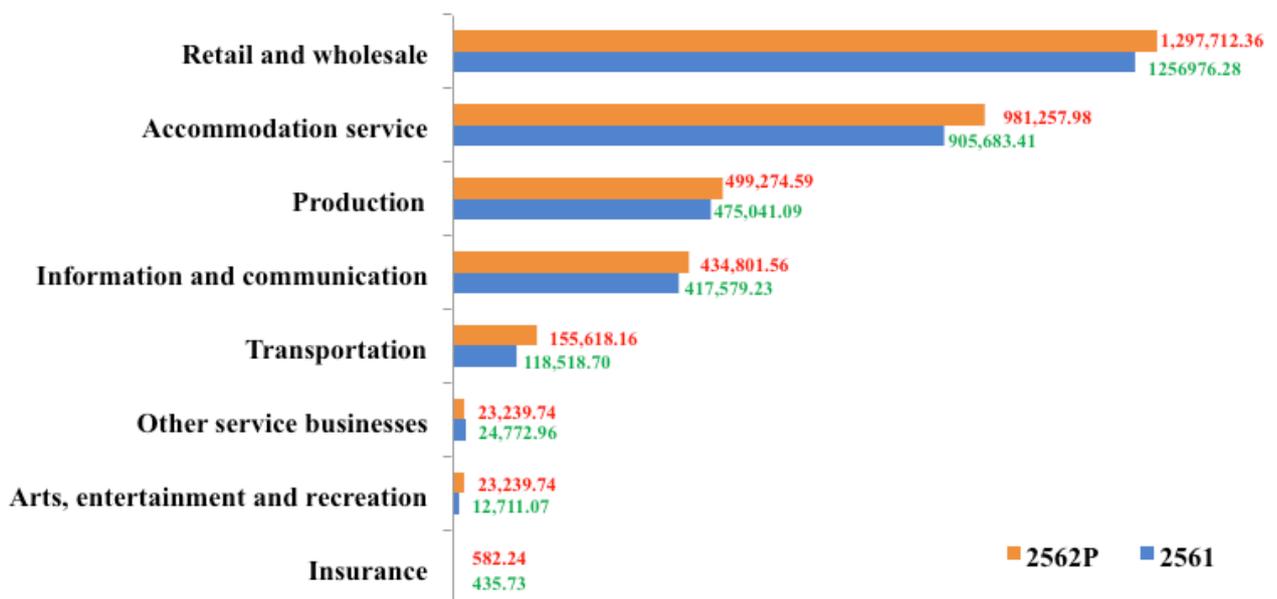


Figure 2. Value of e-commerce market in Thailand (classified by industry type) (aCommerce 2018)

The top 5 categories of products and services in the E-commerce retail and wholesale industries with the highest value are department store business at 9.39 billion baht. This is an increase from 9.11 billion baht in 2018. The expenditure for food, beverages, agricultural and fishery products also increased considerably. This is most likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, when the government-imposed city lockdown measures forced department stores to close or turn to adaptation to an online model of doing business. This may therefore be the answer to self-salvation to increase the value of e-commerce in the department store business. Similarly, the food delivery business is expected to grow at least by 30% in 2020.

A study of SEA Group companies, based on surveys of 7,000 Shopee online entrepreneurs found that e-commerce sales by entrepreneurs selling to outside their region, increased by 36 per cent. The entrepreneurs who benefited most from boundless online sales were not those in Bangkok and its vicinity but entrepreneurs in other regions of low population concentration. This was especially so in the North, South and Northeast. It can be said that e-commerce can help raise and distribute incomes of entrepreneurs, mostly in SMEs in other provinces outside Bangkok.

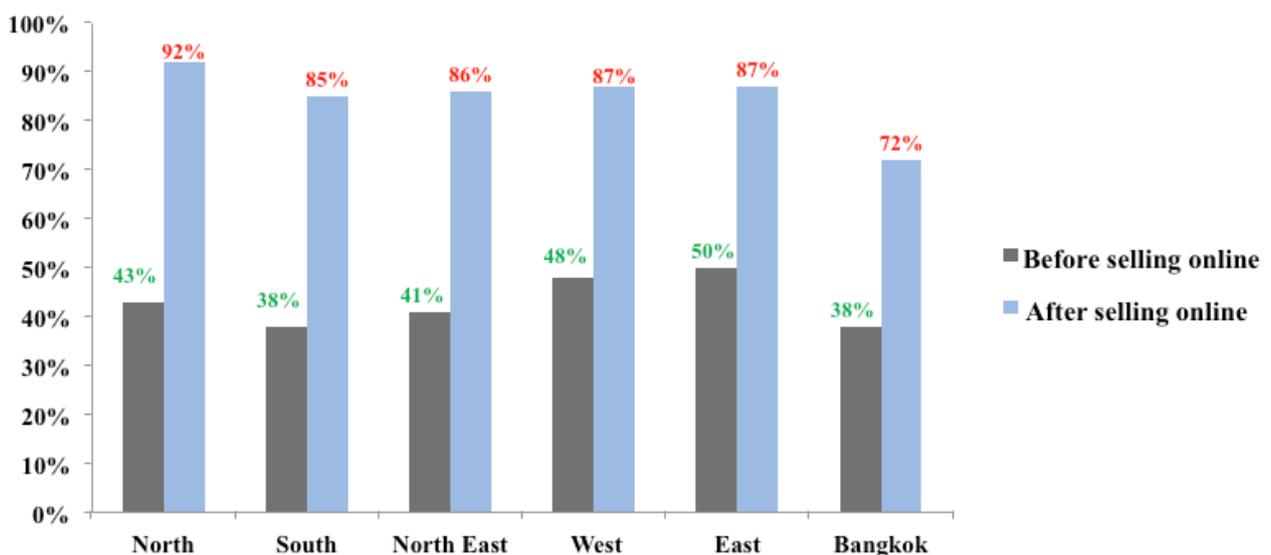


Figure 3. Proportion of entrepreneurs selling products to other regions out of their own

Selling products abroad by entrepreneurs via Thai E-commerce channels is still a small proportion, representing only 23.1% of all online sales. This trend is growing yearly. The main export products are food and beverages, cosmetics and agricultural products, mostly to ASEAN, China and the US markets, respectively. However, e-commerce also facilitates competition from foreign products, especially products from China. The volumes of E-commerce imports jumped in 2017 after Lazada launched a Taobao collection (Kemp and Moey 2019), selling their products directly from China. Direct sales from China accounted for 44% of the total product volume. Chinese products competing in the Thai market are concentrated in the top five online products, especially electronics, fashion products, baby products and toys. However, they face strong competition in areas such as health and beauty products and consumer products where such Thai products remain popular with foreign country buyers. Generally, it can be said that e-commerce keeps markets open, by breaking the distance barriers between producers and consumers. Opportunities abound for sellers to quickly expand their markets around the world. But they have to be ready to cope with the increasing competition on a regional basis.

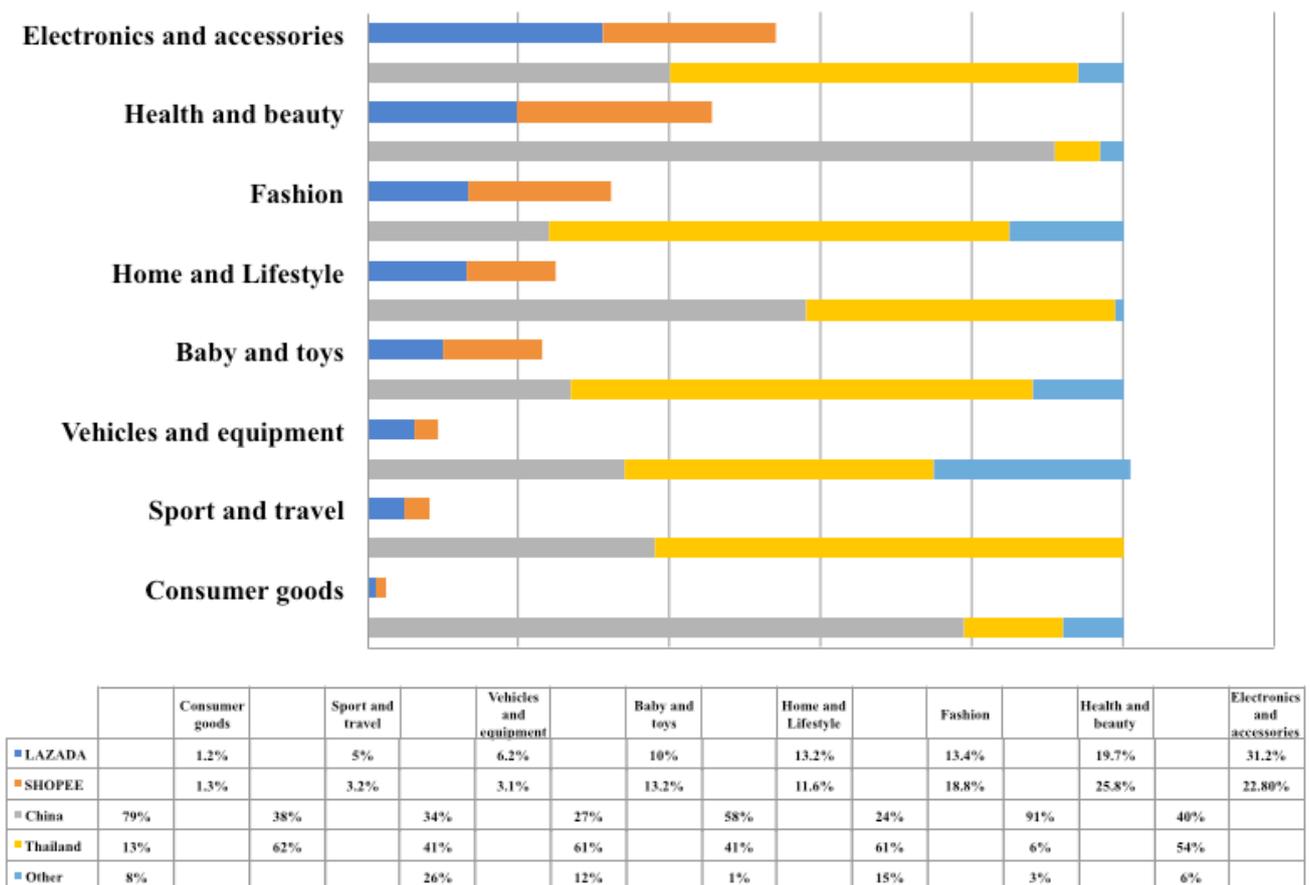


Figure 4. Popular product types and sources of merchandise sold in e-marketplace Thailand:

E-commerce sales data was obtained from a sample of 3,326 e-commerce entrepreneurs representing sales of less than 50 million baht per year. The growth of e-commerce has also encouraged related businesses such as express or parcel delivery, warehousing, payment intermediary's business e-marketplace business in Thailand. It was found that within just three years the number of operators in the parcel delivery and warehouse business increased by 20 per cent (Goldmanis et al. 2010). The online merchandising business continued to increase, despite e-commerce creating many emerging businesses. Both entrepreneurs selling online products and related businesses are increasing their impact, while there are risks for traditional retail businesses, which have not adapted to the trend. These traditional businesses may lose the ability to compete and eventually shut down. The data on opening closing of businesses, revealed such an impact, reflected by the current number of closures of traditional retail businesses.

In terms of employment, it was found that e-commerce resulted in an increase in the total number of workers in the trade sector. The traditional retail employment has not declined. But the number of workers in online retail and related businesses increased by an average of 13.7% between 2017 and 2018. This number is still low, compared to employment in traditional retail. But the average wage received by workers in online retail is higher than those working in traditional retail, probably reflecting the fact that the workforce in the e-commerce sector is higher skilled than those in traditional retail businesses.

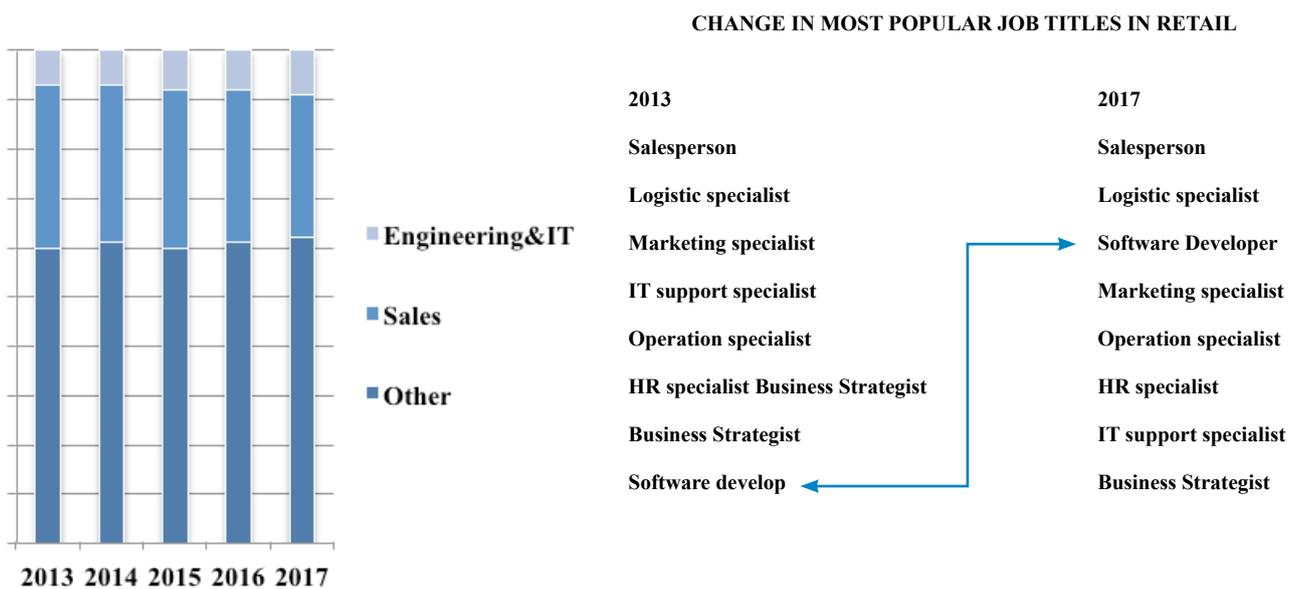


Figure 5. Proportion job titles in retail sector

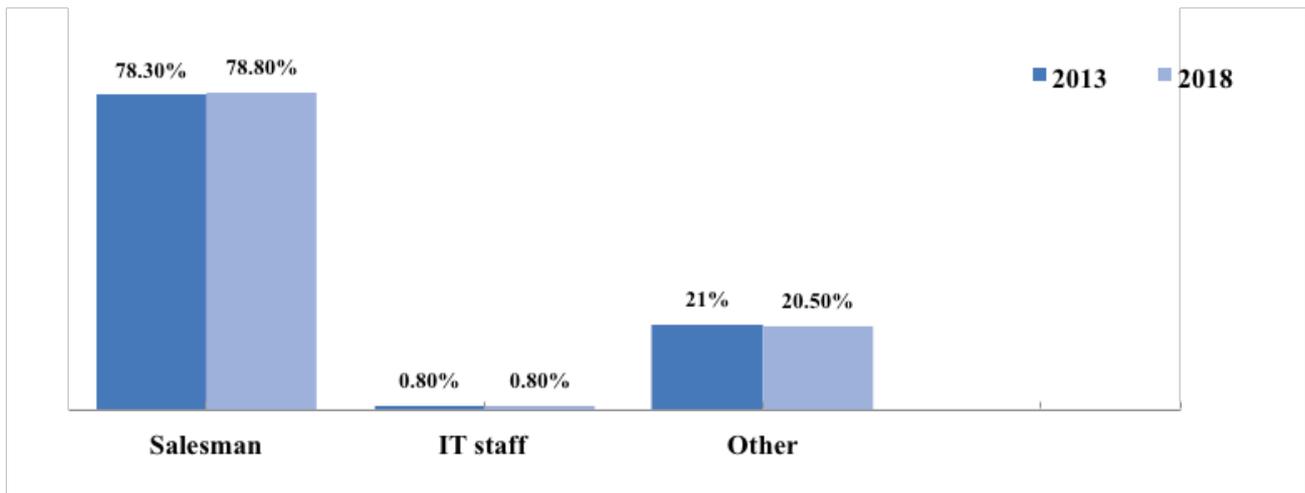


Figure 6. Proportion of workers in key positions in the Thai trade sector: National

The current job positions in the Thai trade sector differ from the composition of jobs in the world labour market. Almost 80 per cent of the workforce in the trade sector is still doing sales. But in the future, as e-commerce sales play an increasingly important role, the employment trend in the Thai trade sector is likely to be in line with the employment situation in the global trade sector.

3. Research findings

3.1 Impacts of E-commerce on Thai local enterprises

E-commerce is a major challenge faced by operators, being viewed either as having an adverse impact or representing a new opportunity for entrepreneurs to survive and grow their business. Some local operators have adapted well to modern retail practices and have seen their businesses grow. Our study highlights the opportunities and challenges as businesses seek to adopt e-commerce practices that change their old business practices by leveraging on their current strengths and advantages. The impact of Thai e-commerce has allowed traditional enterprises to reposition themselves, to step out of the original framework, accept the impact of new thinking, and transform themselves. Most of the traditional enterprises have been reliant on extensive distribution channels to gradually form brand influence and increase their market share. Over the past decade, the development of e-commerce and the increasing competition from international investors, have forced traditional enterprises to act quickly to adjust themselves. A fairly large number of traditional trading companies, manufacturing companies, and entrepreneurs have begun to transform their businesses into cross-border e-commerce companies and complete the industry value chain. They have been supported by the Thai government's efforts to improve the regulatory service environment for these enterprises.

3.2 The impact of E-commerce on the commodity-trading sector

E-commerce contributed to the higher productivity in the overall commercial sector, especially during the years 2015 - 2018, when e-commerce played an increasingly higher role in Thailand. Consider the following statistics: the overall picture shows the proportion of online sales rises by 1%, the efficiency of the commercial sector increases by 0.7 %. Not all products have the same level of efficiency, as different types of products adjust differently to online sales. The study found that the major factor that hurt and hinder the form of e-commerce is product delivery, service and advice during and after the sale, and assembling and installing the product. There are two product groups: (1) the product group where there are low limitations to ecommerce playing a high role, and (2) the product group where e-commerce has played a low role due to high limits (Anvari and Norouzi 2016). The first product group includes apparel, cosmetics and small electronic devices, characterised by relatively short product lifestyles, consumers demand and preferences for variety. Online channels, especially social media have become the main distribution channel for these products, due to its ease of use, low investment, and are thus popular with customers.

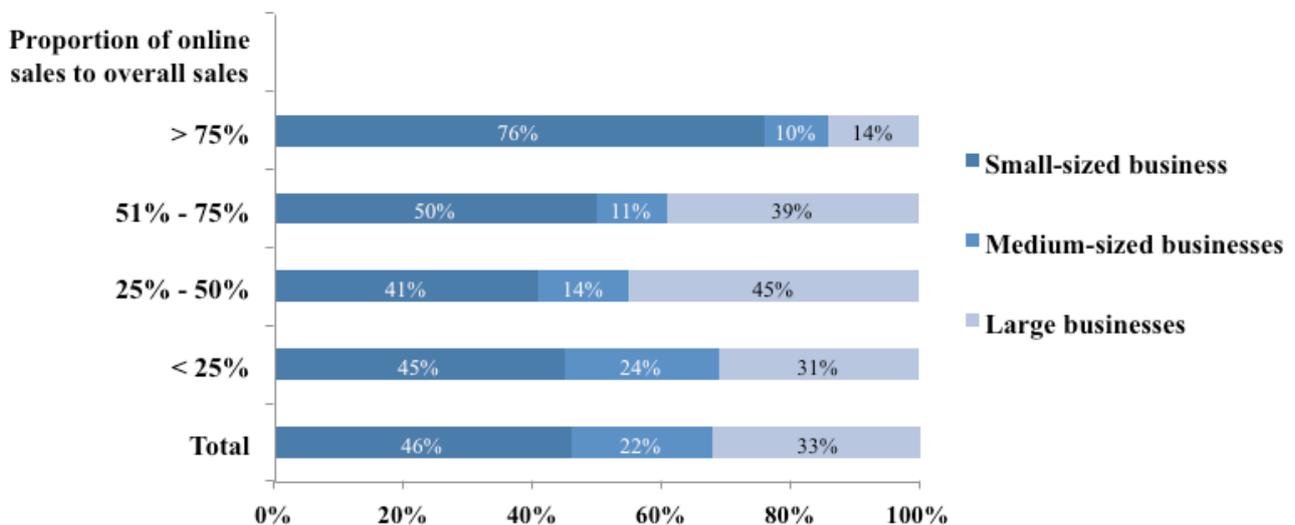


Figure 7. Proportion of the number of businesses in the retail sector (Separated online Sales proportion and business size) Office

From Figure 7, it is found that small businesses account for more than 50% of their online sales, and they mainly use social media or social commerce (Ueasangkomsate 2015). As a formal channel sale that can reach a large group of customers at a low cost, it is suitable for entrepreneurial entry into the e-commerce market.

The data from surveys of local medium-sized department store operators, especially those selling clothing, cosmetics products in various provinces and countries, indicated that they are facing competitions from e-commerce sales. Other obstacles faced by small businesses include the high cost of investing in the technology needed to expand sales to online channels. Therefore, many medium-sized enterprises estimated that it was not worth investing in highcost online sales channels. Traditional businesses therefore find it more cost-effective to invest in expanding branches and renovating storefronts. Thus, some medium-sized businesses sell only certain types of products online, without changing their back-of-store management system.

The second product group (with high limits to successful e-commerce) deals with products in the construction and buildings sector. Except for a few larger retailers, most of them have not yet adapted much to e-commerce. Information from inquiries from operators of construction materials stores and electrical appliances stores in many provinces across the country revealed that shipping was a major obstacle for the retailing of heavier and larger products. Given the limitations and obstacles, most local entrepreneurs in the business of selling such products make use of the large number of branches covering the country. This helps to localise their provision of a more comprehensive pre- and post-sales service and advice.

3.3 Businesses in the e-commerce era must adapt based on their strengths.

Entrepreneurs entering the E-commerce market must evaluate its effectiveness for their business by taking into consideration a whole host of variables. These include their individual experience and business strengths, the product characteristics and the size of their business. We discuss the details of the important adaptations required.

Small Businesses Leverage: Mobility is a well-known lifestyle today. Fast mobility formation and shorter cycles are the order of the day for both human beings and manufactured products. In the clothing and apparel products category accessories as well as equipment electronics the response of the business sector must be as flexible and fast in adapting to changes as they occur. Here, small entrepreneurs have an advantage in being creative and nimble in quickly and adaptively changing the style and appearance of the products in response to current trends. Survey data show that most of them use social media as the main production distribution channel because of its ease of use, low investment cost and popularity with customers.

Medium-sized businesses adapt their business models to meet and reach customers, leveraging on their location: Although online commerce is a substitute for shopping through the store, there are still many aspects that are the strengths of offline channels. An entrepreneur with a shop location that is convenient for consumer access can leverage on this advantage, especially if it is supplemented by improving interaction between sellers and buyer and open two-way communication. A practical example is that some local shopping malls have started using loyalty card systems to collect information about their purchases and services. Some businesses turn to an omni channel approach. An omni channel is a type of retail, which integrates the different methods of shopping available to consumers, e.g., online, in a physical shop or by phone, rather than just using one.

Large businesses take advantage of the economies of scales to access online channels: For large department store businesses which have branches scattered throughout the country, it was found that it was better for blue businesses to sell their products through online channels. These businesses build customer loyalty through fostering the values of trust, honesty and dependability. A key advantage is lower product price, vis-a-vis that of other stores, thus making it more competitive in the e-commerce market.

In summary, E-commerce is here to stay and will affect all types of operators. The speed of e-commerce entry may be slow or fast, depending on the types of products being marketed. Companies seeking to be successful in e-commerce can benefit from consulting firms, which can provide good advice on business planning and marketing strategies for online sales. They can also obtain support and help from government agencies and trade associations. Such assistance includes organising activities to educate people on the what, do's and don'ts of e-commerce practices and the supporting info-com digital technologies that will improve their competitiveness in ways that suit the size and type of their business.

4. Conclusions and Discussion

4.1 Government Support for the Development of E-commerce Business

Government support and co-ordination is very important in the development of the e-commerce business in Thailand. They include:

Infrastructure Developments: Currently, the information technology systems and network systems do not cover the whole country. Citizens are generally were not familiar with the use of the various technologies. It is important for the government to step in and provide coordinated development of such

infrastructure and utilities throughout the country, preferably in various forms of public-private partnerships. It also affects the development of areas in the country. The quality of life of citizens will improve as more e-commerce businesses facilitate access and links between sellers and buyers. It is important for e-commerce entrepreneurs and business owners to obtain proper licences for their e-commerce website before starting their operations. This not only ensures they are operating legally but will also give their e-commerce store greater visibility, improve consumer confidence, leading to increased consumer base.

Develop Specific rules and regulations for e-commerce businesses. Much can be learnt from the experiences of other countries with a longer history of e-commerce practices. This includes consumer protection for online merchandise transactions, to build consumer trust and encourage consumers to turn to online shopping platforms. In Thailand, there is still no specific consumer protection rules and regulations in the online market. Government action is vital to help establish appropriate rules and regulations for the proper conduct of trade in an environment facilitating free, fair and verifiable competition. The field of taxation is another pressing issue and concern that requires governmental action and initiative.

4.2 Guidelines for Business Adaptations

The advent of Internet-based electronic commerce offers considerable opportunities for firms to expand their customer base, enter new product markets and rationalise their business. Available data indicate impressive growth in the rate of adoption of the Internet by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a number of OECD countries. SMEs appear to be gradually bridging the gap in uptake in comparison with larger firms. However, adoption of information and communication technologies (ICT) is only part of the story. Of greater importance is the use made of them.

Although SMEs increasingly use the Internet for a variety of commercial and production-related purposes, on average they have a limited understanding of the full range of benefits of electronic commerce. This lack of awareness of the great potential of e-commerce is one important barrier to its adoption, together with inadequate investment in skills, and the relatively high initial investment costs involved in developing electronic commerce strategies.

This situation is a matter of serious concern. Important efficiency gains are associated with the use of electronic commerce, arising from reductions in business costs and a rationalisation of business processes. In addition to these static gains, firms may use Internet-based electronic commerce to create

added value by producing new products, adopting completely new business practices, or changing the ways in which they interact in the marketplace. Realising these dynamic gains depends to a large extent on the way in which small firms integrate e-commerce applications into their business functions. The development of effective e-commerce strategies is of fundamental importance for success in domestic and international markets.

Evidence from case studies shows that SMEs carry out electronic commerce in three different ways. Internet start-ups invent new ways of creating value-added, new services and new business models, while established small firms use the Internet to develop e-commerce strategies geared to expanding their business, often internationally, and increasing their effectiveness. In addition, groups of small firms are entering into electronic partnerships with large firms, which are their customers or suppliers, or with industry-wide associations. This works best when e-commerce is used proactively as part of a set of strategies to increase SMEs' competitiveness in global markets. All OECD governments have realised that the advent of ICT, and in particular the potential of the Internet for innovating, reorganising production, carrying out transactions and linking geographically dispersed operations, implies major changes in the ways in which firms do business. Consequently, governments have introduced policies to improve the climate for electronic commerce and facilitate its growth and use.

However, the practical policy issues confronting small firms are somewhat different from those confronting all firms, and they can be more difficult to deal with for small firms than for larger ones. These issues relate in particular to network infrastructure access costs, dissemination of information on electronic commerce, training, skill development and human resources. Also, the difficulty in addressing issues of trust and confidence makes SMEs more vulnerable than large firms to problems linked to authentication/certification, data security and confidentiality and the settling of commercial disputes, especially for firms targeting consumers. Finally, the changing nature of competition in electronic markets poses new challenges for small firms, and, in some countries, transport infrastructure and logistics problems are a continuing issue. The establishment of open, competitive electronic exchanges and marketplaces is key for SMEs.

The impact analysis shows that the entry of E-commerce businesses inevitably affects local operators. Other co-factors may play a part in influencing business adaptation decisions.

New Retail Store: The convenience of online platforms supports many new services and trends, such as product exchange within three (3) days of purchase or support of speedy shipping. But in many

situations, the local business cannot be fully replaced by online platforms. Entrepreneurs could turn it into a product testing facility place, or to be a place to fix products for free for products purchased from the store. It can also be a place to organise sales promotions and present fresh new products based on customer's expectations. These might work with the online platforms together effectively (Huang et al. 2019).

Customers Database: Customer buying habits can be gathered through a customer database analysis to yield information and knowledge on social trends, frequency patterns, and background factors influencing their decision to buy something. Businesses study customer behaviour to understand their target audience, create more attractive products and service offers and how to better communicate with their customers in a productive and delightful way.

Strategies for creating a satisfied consumer experience: The most important thing in merchandising services is the satisfaction of consumers. Every business is focused on a positive customer experience, through a variety of strategies to build that vibe. For example, frozen food or tinned food can be sold on an online platform but there are some products that are better sold through a human touch service, such as fresh food. Generally, adaptation is a difficult thing to avoid for local business and there is no one-size fits all solution. Each business needs to seek its own way to solve their challenges.

Acknowledgements

This research is in relation to a Ph.D. dissertation in Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand, entitled "Chinese Outbound Tourism and Alternative Modernity: A Reflexive Study of Chinese Transnational Tourists in Thailand". Thailand Research Fund (TRF) (RDG 6110030), the National Social Science Fund of China (17BJY150), Guilin Tourism University-China ASEAN Research Centre (2018DMYB02), supports it. The authors of this paper would like to express their gratitude to the contributions of Ms. Wachirapohn Khonarp, Miss. Kannika Saewa and Miss. Pornchita Saramakoon, to the writing of this paper.

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“As you move through this life and this world you change things slightly, you leave marks behind, however small. And in return, life—and travel—leaves marks on you. Most of the time, those marks—on your body or on your heart—are beautiful. Often, though, they hurt.”

— Anthony Bourdain

Forest Conservative Lifestyle of Mentawai Shaman (Sikerei): Indigenous Enrichment to the Education Value of Ecotourism in South Siberut, Mentawai, West Sumatra, Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia is ranked number four in the world, in terms of its abundant wealth of biodiversity. Mentawai Island Regency, (Mentawai for short), located in West Sumatra Indonesia is known for its Biosphere Reserve of the Siberut National Park. It and the area surrounding the National Park are being challenged by the increased degradation of natural resources and low environmental management and control. Ecotourism is considered as an alternative solution to answer the environmental problems of forest conservation in Siberut. Ecotourism education as a means of achieving forest conservation goals needs to rely on local values to be effective. Ecotourism education and learning, especially regarding forest conservation in villages around the Siberut National Park can be obtained from a traditional figure known as Sikerei, the Mentawai shaman. The indigenous Mentawai cherish and respect their Sikerei as traditional leader and healer. Research was conducted on the Mentawai Shamanic (Sikerei) Forest Conservative Lifestyle: Indigenous Enrichment of the Value of Ecotourism Education in South Siberut, Mentawai, West Sumatra, Indonesia. The aims of this study are (1) to explore the most dominant lifestyle type of Mentawai Sikerei in relation to forest conservation; and (2) to determine the indigenous forest conservative lifestyle of Sikerei that can be translated into and to enrich the education value of ecotourism in Mentawai. The objective is to incorporate Ecotourism Education Values that are in line with the Indigenous Local Wisdom of Mentawai in South Siberut, Mentawai, and West Sumatra, Indonesia. This descriptive study was conducted during the period of August 2019 to February 2020. Using the Schwartz Value Survey instrument, eight out of the total of twenty-one Sikerei from the Matotonan village of South Siberut Mentawai were chosen to fill self-assessment questionnaire, followed by an interview. The descriptive data analysis revealed that most Sikerei in Matotonan has a dominant conservation lifestyle. Their indigenous forest conservative lifestyle can be interpreted and translated to deepen the education value of ecotourism in Mentawai.

Keywords: *forest conservation, lifestyle type, and education value, indigenous, ecotourism*

A. Introduction

Indonesia is a tropical country, located between the two continents of Asia and Australia and between the two oceans of Pacific and Indian Ocean. The equator crosses the country. The country's abundant biodiversity and endemism is ranked number three in the world, after Brazil and Colombia (Nurbaya, 2020).

Mentawai, (short term for Mentawai Island Regency), located in West Sumatra, Indonesia, is famous for its biosphere reserves, namely the Siberut National Park. The Minister of Forestry Decree No. 407/Kpts-II/1993, as The Siberut National Park, has designated the conservation area of Siberut Island. The area (190,500 ha) comprises the natural reserves (132,900 ha), protected forest (3,500 ha), limited production forest (36,600 ha) and permanent production forest (36,600 ha). (Sagajinpoula, 2015). The still natural condition of the forest in this national park contains many large trees with an average height of 60 meters. The flora and fauna found in the Siberut National Park area are diverse. (Sagajinpoula, 2015).

Utilisation of forests by the indigenous people of Siberut, the Mentawai tribe, is very limited except for certain production interests (Persoon, 2001 in Indra, Nurainas, Chairul & Mansyurdin, 2017). The forest of Siberut National Park is the source of the needs of daily life for the people of Mentawai. It provides their medicine, food and house building materials. Such indigenous communities have clear incentives to conserve and manage their forest resources sustainably (Tee, Agbidye, & Ogwuche, (2014).

The culture of the indigenous tribe, Mentawai, reflects a unique relationship with nature. They consider it to be very important for the community to maintain harmony among the various elements of the forests as sustained significant economic sources of their food and income. Harmony is maintained through ceremonies (*lia*, *punen*). Imposing restrictions on individual behaviour, and taboo systems (prohibitions) govern activities involving hunting, fishing, collecting forest products, and raising (Persoon 2002).

Mentawai island communities face increased environmental problems arising from the degradation of natural resources. The implementation of Government Regulation (Perda) No. 6/2017 suffers from low environmental management and control and non-optimal management of protected areas. Mentawai langurs are endangered because their population continues to decline, estimated to have reached a fifty (50%) percent decline over the last forty (40) years due to habitat destruction and hunting activities. (IUCN Redlist, 2016 in STPT-TFCA, 2019). Febrianti (2019) reported that there has been a reduction in forest coverage for industrial monoculture plantations.

Ecotourism is considered an alternative solution to the forest conservation problems in Siberut. The Local Regulations (Perda) No. 6/2017 about the Mentawai Island Regency's Long Term Regional Development Plan, Siberut National Park and its surrounding villages have been designated as ecotourism areas by the Local Government of Mentawai Island Regency. Included as the ecotourism area are the villages of Sigapokna, Simalegi and Simatalu (West Siberut), Bojakan (North Siberut), Sibudda Oinan (Central Siberut), Matotonan and Madobag (South Siberut), Katurei and Sagulubbek (Southwest Siberut). This study conducted in Matotonan village. focusses on investigations on the forest conservation practices within the conservation area as in Perda No. 6/2017, which can be used to develop a much-needed ecotourism learning and education programme.

Bisong and Essien (2010) noted that the protected areas' conservation and development almost always encounter difficulties because of a lack of foundational knowledge and the ability to manage indigenous resources in relation to the ecosystem functions. Indigenous communities depend heavily on forest resources for their living, and therefore have clear incentives to manage forests sustainably (Tee, Agbidye, & Ogwuche, 2014). An ecotourism education and learning programme, especially regarding forest conservation in the villages of and around the Siberut National Park, can be developed, by learning from the expertise and experience of the traditional leader, the Mentawai shaman, known as Sikerei.

Sikerei as a Mentawai shaman is considered an important traditional leader who maintains the traditions and customs of the indigenous Mentawai. Sikerei. They are cherished as healers in the indigenous medical system. They perform indigenous rituals, namely birth, puberty, marriage, and death rituals. Sikerei are referred to as the Guardians of the Mentawai Forest (mentawaikita.com)

In the indigenous communities, Sikerei is therefore considered a central figure, representing the traditional values of Mentawai tribe, and reflecting the power to connect with the supranatural. The indigenous people of Mentawai respect them highly. Sikerei are appreciated as people with adulthood, maturity, and wisdom in carrying out indigenous traditions and customs. The Mentawai Sikerei believes that conserving the existence of the forest is necessary to sustain the balance of life. (West Sumatra antaranews.com, 21 September 2019).

Ecology education and learning relates to creating awareness and understanding about forest conservation. The Sikerei can teach the Mentawai communities much about forest conservation values, especially the respect for the tradition of indigenous Mentawai.

Values are standards or principles that are considered valuable or important in life. They guide acceptable patterns of behaviour (Kunchithapadam, 2005). Values determine lifestyle patterns (Gunter & Furnham, 2015). The forest conservation values of the Sikerei are manifested in the Sikerei lifestyle. This Sikerei forest conservation related values have not been fully explored as educational and learning values in ecotourism. This research was therefore carried out to learn the “Forest Conservation Lifestyle of Mentawai Shaman (Sikerei): An Indigenous Enrichment to the Education Value of Ecotourism in South Siberut, Mentawai, West Sumatra, Indonesia”

The purpose of this study is (1) To analyse the most dominant lifestyle type of Mentawai Sikerei in relation to forest conservation; and (2) To discover the indigenous forest conservative lifestyle of Sikerei as to enrich the education value of ecotourism in Mentawai. The research findings will help us develop Ecotourism Education Values that are in line with the Indigenous Local Wisdom of Mentawaian in South Siberut, Mentawai, and West Sumatra, Indonesia.

B. Literature Review

Ecotourism. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines Ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment, sustains the wellbeing of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.” (The International Ecotourism Society, 2015). Fennell, (2014) explains that the essence or core criteria of ecotourism are (1) The foundation of nature-based ecotourism; (2) The dimensions of ecotourism sustainability from a conservation perspective;

(3) Sustainability of the human dimension in the form of local participation and benefits; (4) Learning and education as part of the ecotourism experience; and (5) Ethical imperatives.

Forest. Xu, Ma, Tashi, Fu, Lu, and Melick. (2005) explain that the forest supports a variety of cultural services, which include spiritual services, inspiration, aesthetic values, and recreation places. Therefore, the sustainability of indigenous ecotourism is very dependent on the protection of the forests around their homes.

Education. Education is a process whereby knowledge is passed from one person (a teacher or guide) to another (student or tourist). Knowledge is gained from outside sources. (Fennell, 2014) Education is a social process of learning with and from other humans. (Falk & Staus, 2013).

Education Value. Education value is the education concerned in the development of the total personality of the individual's intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral and spiritual aspect. It involves developing sensitivity of the good, the right, and the beautiful; the ability to choose the right values in alignment with thought and action. (Seshadri, 2005).

Education in Ecotourism. The educational aspects of ecotourism provide opportunities for acquiring new knowledge, developing a greater awareness of and appreciation for nature and wildlife, reflecting on deep and important issues, reconsidering attitudes, values and beliefs, making changes to everyday actions and thus facilitating the adoption of a sustainable lifestyle. (Ballantyne, & Packer, 2013). Such transformative experiences can be deeply satisfying, leading to increased self-efficacy and self-esteem. Self-development may also occur through meeting physical and intellectual challenges and developing new skills.

Educational and interpretive activities are necessary to establish the intellectual and emotional connections between people and the places they visit in order to provide meaning about the things they see and do. Thus, the challenge for ecotourism operators will be to develop experiences that promote these connections so that they can effectively enhance both the educational and conservative outcomes that make ecotourism experiences socially and politically important as well as increase visitor satisfaction outcomes. They are fundamental to the economic success of such enterprises. (Weiler and Ham, 2001).

Education and Learning Values of Ecotourism. According to Packer & Ballantyne (2013) the main focus of education in ecotourism is related to tourist learning experiences aimed at environmental conservation. Ecotourism is distinguished from nature-based tourism, which is travel for the purpose of enjoying undeveloped natural areas or wildlife. Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. (Rodger, Moore, Newsome, 2007).

Conservation. According to United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2016), sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Thus a key element in tourism development is to maintain important ecological processes and help conserve natural resources and biodiversity. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2010) states that indigenous knowledge-based conservation systems are complementary knowledge in the conservation of sustainable development, including tourism because many indigenous people living in forest areas are known to have traditional relationships with their lands and are users and managers of these forest land resources.

Lifestyle. Lifestyle is a pattern of social behaviour characteristics of both individuals and groups (Veal, 2000). Lifestyle typology can be based on various types of variables, such as opinion activities, values, preferences, and personality characteristics (Jansen, 2011).

Value. Value study is one approach in studying lifestyle. Values are desirable, trans-situational goals of varying importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives (Vyncke, 2002). Values determine lifestyle patterns. (Gunter & Furnham, 2015). Values are used to characterise cultural groups, societies, and individuals, to trace change over time, and to explain the motivational bases of attitudes and behaviour. (Schwartz, 2012)

Lifestyle and Value. Schwartz (2006) states values are beliefs tied to emotion, not objective, cold ideas. They are motivational constructs and refer to desirable goals people strive to attain. Schwartz (2012) developed a basic human value theory consisting of ten types of universal values and motivation. The ten types of Universal Value Domains are (1) Self-Direction; (2) Stimulation; (3) Hedonism;

(4) Achievement; (5) Power; (6) Security; (7) Conformity; (8) Tradition; (9) Benevolence; and (10) Universalism. Based on the ten value domains, Schwartz developed four types of lifestyle, namely openness to change, self-enhancement, conservation, and self-transcendence.

C. Research Methodology

This study uses both descriptive and quantitative research approaches. Secondary data were obtained from related readings and e-journals. Primary data were gained through direct observation, research instruments of Schwartz Value Survey distribution and collection.

Interviews were carried out with eight (8) Sikerei chosen as sample respondents, to represent the population of around 21 in the village of Matotonan, South Siberut, Mentawai. Each research instrument item has a gradual variation from very positive to very negative: 7 (very important); 6 (important); 5, 4 (without label); 3 (sufficient); 2 (without label); 1 (less important); 0 (not important); -1 (opposite to the value adopted by the respondent). Questionnaires collected were then processed and analysed using a descriptive analysis method. This study was conducted during the period of August 2019 until February 2020.

D. Results

Demographic Profile

Respondents within this study are Sikerei from Matotonan Village, South Siberut, Mentawai. All eight respondents are male, seven of them are married. Their ages range from 52 to 75 years old. They have been Sikerei for between 21 years and 52 years.

Result 1. Sikerei Dominant Lifestyle Type

The dominant forest conservative lifestyle type of Matotonan Sikerei respondents is Conservative. Six out of eight respondents (75%) show a great tendency for conservative lifestyle type; two respondents (25%) show a mixture of three-lifestyle type of openness to change, self-enhancement, and conservation. Within this study, the dominant conservative lifestyle is discussed further.

Table 4.1. Forest Conservative Lifestyle Type

No	Lifestyle Type	Numbers of Sikerei	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	Conservative	6	75	75
No	Openness to Change, Self Enhancement & Conservation	2	25	100
Total		8	100	

Result 2. Sikerei Forest Conservative Education Values

Figure 1. Educational Values of Conservative Lifestyle Type shows that three value domains were addressed by Sikerei, namely Tradition, Security, and Conformity. There are three values contained within the Tradition value domain, that is devotion to God or Greater spirit, respect for tradition, and humility values. The Security value domain consists of social order, security, and reciprocation of favours. Lastly, within the value domain of Conformity, three values are contained - politeness, honouring parents and elders, as well as discipline.

E. Discussion

Sikerei Indigenous Forest Conservative Lifestyle Type to enrich the Education Value of Ecotourism in Mentawai

The Value Domain of Tradition in Sikerei Conservative Lifestyle.

The conservative lifestyle of Sikerei in the tradition value domain emphasises the importance of the preservation of the past and resistance to change. These include acceptance to the customs and ideas given by one’s culture or religion, placing devotion to God, respect, and humility. Adherence to traditional or religious teachings, accepting tradition as part of life and a humble attitude in preserving the ecological process of the forest makes for the sustainability of ecotourism. Tradition requires subordination to more abstract objects – religious and cultural customs and ideas. Traditional values demand a response to the eternal expectations of the past (Swartz, 2012)

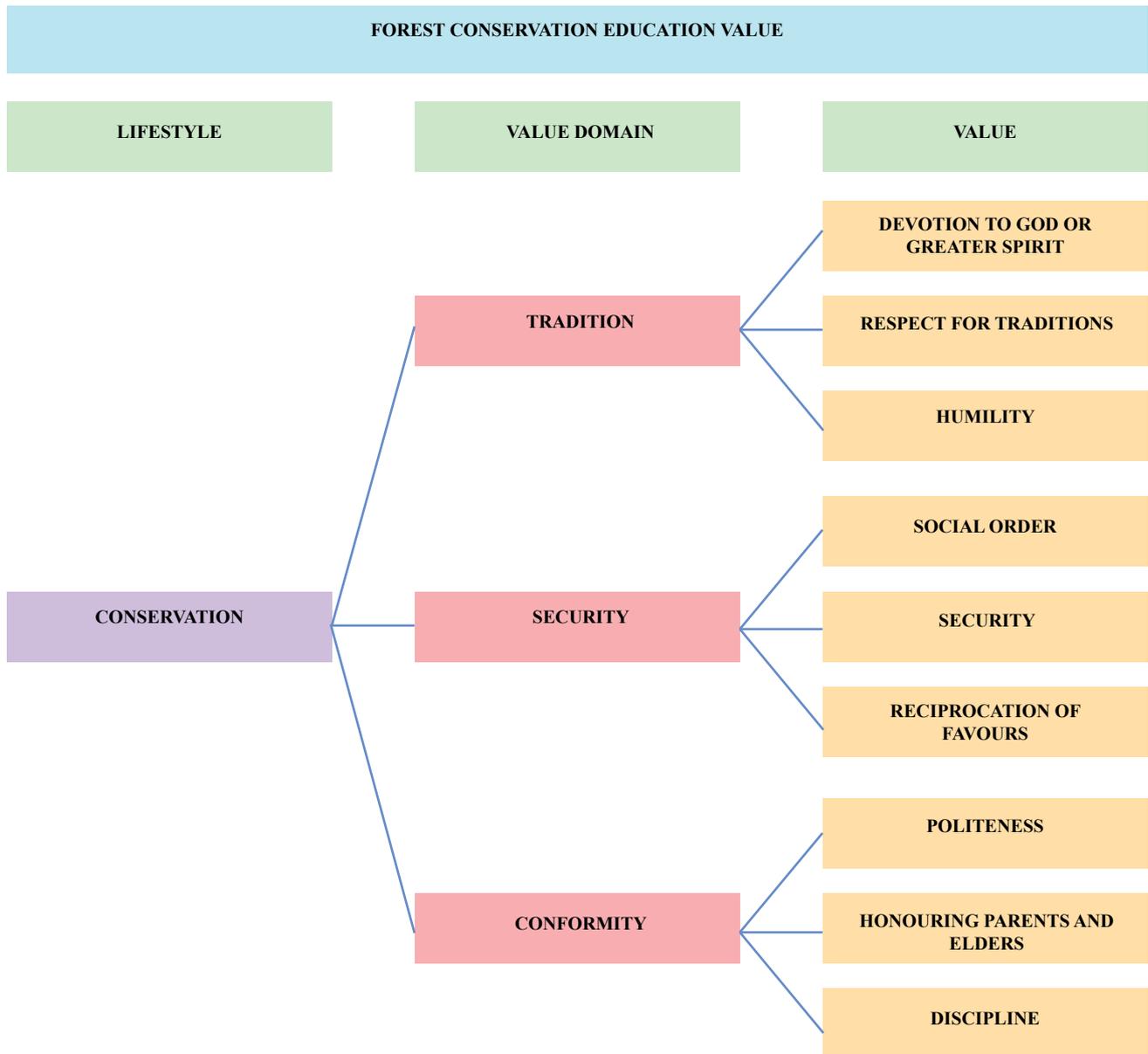


Figure 1. Educational Values of Conservative Lifestyle Type

Implementation of the value of the Tradition domain in ecotourism education in this study includes (1) the value of obedience to the teachings of tradition or religion; (2) the value of accepting tradition as part of life; and (3) the value of being humble.

Two out of six people of the conservative lifestyle type consider the value of obedience to traditional or religious teachings very important in maintaining forest ecological processes to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism; one answered important and three people, quite important. Three out of the six consider it very important to accept tradition as part of their life in maintaining the ecological process of the forest to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism; two think it is important and one person, quite important. Two out of the six consider the value of being humble very important in maintaining the

ecological process of the forest to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism. Two other people consider it important and one person, quite important.

The Value Domain of Security in Sikerei Conservative Lifestyle.

The value of security emphasises the orderliness that tends to resist changes outside of the existing order. According to Schwartz (2012) the security, harmony and stability of society are the goals of every action. In the domain of security values, Sikerei serve the interests of others rather than their own, prioritise the interests of a wider group, help one another in security, a sense of belonging, maintaining the social order in harmony as to preserving forest ecological processes to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism. This value domain has the aim of security, harmony and stability of society, relationships and self. The value of security comes from the basic requirements of individuals and groups. Some security values primarily serve individual interests (e.g., hygiene), others broader group interests (e.g., national security). These values are social order, family security, national security, cleanliness, reciprocity, health, mutual help, a sense of belonging (Swartz, 2012). This study focused on the implementation of the value of ecotourism education in (1) the value of security to serve the interests of the individual or community; (2) the value of social harmony; and (3) help each other for safety.

Three out of six people who have the conservative lifestyle type consider it very important for the value of security to serve the interests of individuals or communities in maintaining forest ecological processes to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism; three other people consider it important. Three out of six people consider the value of harmony in social order very important in maintaining the ecological process of forests to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism; three other people considered it important.

Five out of six people consider the value of helping each other very important for the sake of security in maintaining the ecological process of the forest to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism; one other person thinks it is important.

The Value Domain of Conformity in Sikerei Conservative Lifestyle.

The value domain of conformity emphasises self-delimitation in order to refrain from actions and tendencies to harm others or to anger or violate social norms. Most Sikerei consider values in the conformity domain as important and very important, such as maintaining compliance with rules, self-

discipline, courtesy, respect for older people and elderly, being loyal to responsibility, politeness in maintaining forest ecological processes to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism. This domain of conformity value emphasises the value of refraining from actions, tendencies, and compulsions that are likely to anger or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. The value domain of conformity stems from the requirement that individuals inhibit tendencies that can disrupt and undermine smooth interactions and group functioning. Conformity values emphasise self-control in daily interactions, usually with other close people such as obedience, self-discipline, politeness, respect for parents and parents, loyalty, responsibility (Swartz, 2012). The values of ecotourism education in this study are (1). The value of politeness; (2) the value of respecting parents and elderly people; and (3) discipline and obedience to social norms.

As many as four out of the six people consider the value of politeness very important in maintaining forest ecological processes to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism; two other people thought it important. Three out of the six people consider the value of respecting their parents and elderly people very important in maintaining the ecological process of the forest to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism; three other people considered it important. Three out of the six people who have the conservative lifestyle type consider the value of discipline and obedience to social norms very important in maintaining the ecological process of the forest to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism. Three other people considered it important.

F. Conclusion

The most dominant type of Sikerei forest conservative lifestyle is Conservative – seventy-five (75%) percent. Another twenty-five (25%) per cent of Sikerei have a mixed lifestyle of conservative; openness to change; and self-enhancement.

The lifestyle of Conservative has the value domains of tradition, security, and conformity. The value domain of tradition comes with the values of devotion to God or Greater spirit, respect for tradition, and humility. The value domain of security comes with the values of security, social order and reciprocation of favours. The value domain of conformity comes with the values of politeness, honouring parents and elders, as well as discipline. All these nine values contained in the three value domains stemmed Forest Conservative lifestyle. The Sikerei indigenous conservative lifestyle can be a sustainable and useful foundation for enriching the education value of ecotourism in Mentawai.

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Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai Nomor 6 Tahun 2017 Tentang Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Daerah Kabupaten Kepulauan Mentawai Tahun 2005-2025

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