

## *Designing a Creative Tourism Supply Network: Experiential Perspectives*

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### **Abstract**

Tourism development involves examining and designing supply network so that tourism value can be delivered to the tourists. Creative tourism supply has special characteristics compared to other types of tourism in terms of key resources, processes, and deliverable. It is more likely that experiential perspectives play an important role in designing its supply infrastructure and network in field of service operations. This paper illustrates how an analysis of experiences can be linked to the design of supply infrastructure and network, particularly in creative tourism context, by examining which service agents have an association with the degree of creative tourism experiences tourists receive from their travel.

Keywords: Supply network design, Creative tourism, Experiential-based, Service design, Tourism development.

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## **Introduction**

Creative tourism supply network can be different from other types of tourism. It is typically that creative tourism attractions are in distances or in rural areas in which indigenous knowledge and culture can be authentically experienced. In developing creative tourism, especially in developing countries of which tourism infrastructure is mainly provided to and from the mass tourism areas. Thus, in order to link those tourists and infrastructure to the community it requires an establishment of various supply components to accommodate and facilitate the flow of people, physical items, and information. Traditional supply chain design will employ value system perspectives to identify and evaluate the requirements and formulate supply chain strategies. It is the fact that one of criteria mainly considered is service level and tourist satisfaction outcomes. However, in the context of creative tourism, it is difficult to state that those measures are sufficient to reflect the success of creative tourism. By its nature, experiences are what matters to the creative tourism tourists. Perhaps, although good hospitality and services may be provided, the tourists may not be fulfilled in terms of authentic experiences they have during their travel. It can happen as experiences are not clear or not being delivered properly then creative tourism goal will be dismissed. In this study, experiential perspectives is taken into account in designing creative tourism supply network by examining which service agents have an association with the degree of creative tourism experiences tourists receive from their travel. Once key agents are acknowledged, an establishment of tourism infrastructure and network for community's creative tourism can be identified and prioritized for further uses in the next stages of supply network design and service design.

## **Literature review**

### **Creative tourism**

Serial reproduction of culture is a situation in which many tourist destinations have been made to create their tourism. It is very important to move away from this conventional value creation approach, especially when creative tourism is looking for. Mostly, traditional tourism value is given by means of core tourism activities such as accommodation, dining, traveling, and leisure activities in accordance with value chain structure of the destinations [Flagestad and Hope, 2001 and Dwyer et al., 2009]. It is known that this approach is suitable for cultural tourism in which cultural places are mainly of interest and sight-seeing is key roles of tourists. In post-modernism, there is tendency that the tourists need to learn and have more understanding about both traditional and modern culture in specific places they visit (Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003). This leads to an emphasis on "tourism experiences" in addition to tourism structure when to create new tourism destinations.

### **Creative Tourism Supply Network Design: Experiential Perspectives**

Creative tourism is developed by relying on how network of producers and consumers is understood and exploited (Baggio et al., 2010, Richards and Wilson, 2006). The established network between producers and consumers must be formed and creativity outcomes must be provided. In the literatures, creativity outcomes from creative tourism are evaluated from the aspects of service offerings and tourists. The former includes experiential or emotional value, multisensory stimulation of senses, varieties of heritage or related activities, and kind of activity. The latter is processes and post-

experiential transformations including revision and learning, socialization and community, experiential authenticity, i.e. individual and personal revision of activities and experiences commodified, and degree of participation in creative activities (Messineo, 2012). It is likely that these measures seems not to help designers much during designing the network but rather helpful to assess the service design consequences. The point is that it is not yet dealt with service providers or service agents. In service design literatures, co-creation system is created by service designers. They identify the links between producers and consumers by examining how they encounter, what kinds of value/experience generates among them, and how value/experience is produced and consumed. Without knowing them, the network between producers and consumers cannot be drawn.

As there are many service agents in tourism, the designers should have insight about which service agents have an association with the degree of creative tourism experiences tourists receive from their travel. It would be beneficial to as-is and to-be design process since it can reduce complexity in network design and improve visibility of co-creation system design.

## Methodology

To facilitate the network design and co-creation system design, service designers can collect and analyze empirical data of how service agents and tourists encounter, what kinds of value/experience generates among them, and how value/experience is produced and consumed. The results can reflect existing situations of tourism so that service designers can be used it as starting points in designing creative tourism supply network and its related co-creation system.

Service agents in this study consist of six main types including environment; staffs; local people; media; activities by community; and activities by government and private sector. These agents are perceived being key producers of creative tourism experiences. The study collects information from the tourists about service agents who provide them the services and experiences; and degree of creative tourism experiences they receive. The total respondents of 60 people were sampled equally within two selected tourism places of Bangkok community, Ta Tien, which are Ta Tien Market and Wat Pho. The degree of creative tourism experiences are grouped into three levels including sensing, learning, and creative level. Likert scale of 1-5 are used to indicate the degree of experiences (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest). The questionnaire data were analyzed by using Kruskal-Wallis test. Table 1 shows a set of creative tourism experiences questions in the questionnaire.

Table 1: The questions of creative tourism experiences

Level	Q1	Q2	Q3
Creative/ Learning/ Sensing	At the service point(s), which degree of tourism experience you receive from service provider(s)	Together with your own knowledge and experience, which degree of tourism experience you receive from service provider(s)	During moving around the place, which degree of tourism experience you receive from service provider(s)

## Results and discussion

The statistical analysis shows how tourists and service agents encounter (Table 2). At Ta Tien market, tourists gain experiences through environment, local people, and staffs. Media and activities do not play an important role in providing experiences to the tourists. This can reflect to what experiences tourists can have at the place; sensing from excursion and learning from conversation. In the mean times, tourists at Wat Pho gain experiences mainly through media, staffs, local people, and environment. Activities are found to be minority for tourist's experiences at Wat Pho. Only sensing and learning level of creative tourism are achieved here just as Ta Tien Market (Figure 1).

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of key service agents at Ta Tien market and Wat Pho

Place	Agent	Proportion
Ta Tien market	Environment	0.621
	Staffs	0.483
	Local people	0.586
	Media	0.448
	Activities by community	0.414
	Activities by government and private sector	0.207
Wat Pho	Environment	0.517
	Staffs	0.621
	Local people	0.586
	Media	0.690
	Activities by community	0.483
	Activities by government and private sector	0.276

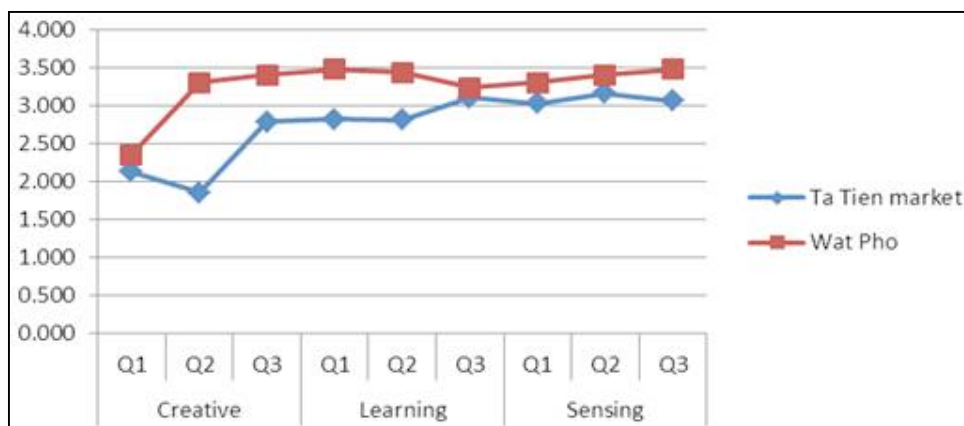


Figure 1: Degree of creative tourism experiences

This can imply that Ta Tien community does not currently offer creative tourism as the experiences or tourism values they gain are mainly provided by producers. In other words, tourists have low degree in participation and co-creation. Figure 2 presents snapshot of Ta Tien and Wat Pho.



(a)

(b)

Figure 2: Snapshot of (a) Ta Tien Market and (b) Wat Pho

In order to specify which service agents are critical to tourism experience level, the Kruskal-Wallis test of experience level of each service agent was conducted. The results are shown in Figure 3. The results show that, unlike environment agent, one of staffs, local people, and media significantly contribute to different level of experiences. This can point out which agents should be focused on when creative tourism needs to achieve its goals. Based on the results, developing creative tourism for Ta Tien community should start with staffs, local people, and media as key service agents. Supply network and co-creation system between these agents and tourists must be emphasized on. The examples of supply network and co-creation system design for Ta Tien market and Wat Pho can be described here.

Agents	H	df	p-value
Staffs	5.685	2	0.05*
Local people	8.351	2	0.015*
Media	5.009	2	0.081**

\*significant level at 0.05

\*\*significant level at 0.1

Figure 3: Kruskal-Wallis test results

People and media are significant supply in creative tourism. It should be built formal and informal communication channel for tourists and staffs as well as local people to interact. For instances, assigning community-owned representatives to tell stories about the history and culture of the places, allowing local people interact more with tourists via group welcoming, touring, and talking. They can enhance co-creation between tourists, local people and staffs and increase an involvement of local people in creative tourism activities. Features of media can be developed to the next level in order to encourage the tourists to learn and to be more creative during their visit. For instances, having a touch screen monitor with a set of questions about places, history, and culture of Wat Pho for the tourists to enjoy after they walk and see various interesting points around the temple. In overall, it can improve experiences and value for the tourists, which also encompass the objectives of creative tourism. Additionally, the service design approach can be more exploited for tourism purposes with clearer views of the designers.

## **Conclusion**

Creative tourism supply network seems to be more complex than traditional tourism one. It has to deal with experiential perspectives of the tourists. The goal of creative tourism supply network design is to understand how service agents and tourists encounter, what kinds of value/experience generates among them, and how value/experience is produced and consumed. Consequently, co-creation system between tourists and service providers can be developed. In this paper, it illustrates how an analysis of experiences can be linked to the design of supply infrastructure and network in creative tourism context of Ta Tien community. By examining which service agents have an association with the degree of creative tourism experiences tourists receive from their travel, it can be used as starting point prior to the service design process. The service designers can ensure which service linkages should be considered. It can reduce complexity in network design and improve visibility of co-creation system design.

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