

Enhancing Cultural Identity Through Community Participation: The Wat Khao Yi San In Samut Songkhram Province

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Abstract

One of the most significant historical landmarks in Samut Songkhram Province is Wat Khao Yi San. It's historically significant and unique in terms of its architecture and culture compared to other locations. The mixed research methods used in the study were divided into the following groups: Gathering information through villagers' engagement to express viewpoints required by carrying out interviews with three samples, gathering 200 individuals from locals and visitors, and organizing a focus group meeting to compile the data. The study's findings demonstrate that: 1. According to the interview, the main identities are the Old Temple and Grandfather Sriracha almsgiving. 2. Based on the results of the surveys, identification will be given greater weight than other factors ($\bar{X} = 4.583$), with the Old Temple receiving the most weight while Grandfather Sriracha almsgiving is ranked second. 3. Results of small group meetings There are suggestions for more publicity through social media.

Keywords: Identity, Cultural Tourism, Community
Participation.

Introduction

The Moo 1 subdistrict of Yi San village is located in the Ban Khao Yi San subdistrict, Amphawa district, Samut Songkhram province next to a tiny hill that shares the same name as the settlement, is located on both banks of the canal, and carries that name as its center. The villages have 224 dwellings and a total of 707 residents. The Moo 1 Khao Yi San has a population density of 50.92 people per sq.km. Most of the population is engaged in growing mangrove forests and raising fish, mussels, sea crabs, and other brackish aquatic animals. Use mangrove charcoal as fuel to find work. The Wat Khao Yi San was most likely built during the late Ayutthaya era. (Kanchoochat 2023) During the reign of King Sanphet VIII, also known as King Tiger, a significant reign of King Rama IV–5 of Rattanakosin was restored around the 2246 B.E. (Wankanapon 2019) During the reign of King Chulalongkorn in 2448, he was granted the Visungkhamshima royal gift. Important archaeological evidence includes:

(1) Temple The temple is a brick structure with mortar on top and a thatched wooden roof. Large square plaster columns that are stucco-decorated support the roof frame from the surrounding eaves. The stucco façade features a floral design. The porcelain used as a decoration was influenced by China. (Khozaei et al. 2019) Two entrance doors are located on the front wall, and a stucco pattern is used to embellish the arch. A Buddha statue made of stucco is enshrined in the center, beneath an arch. Stand up and be forgiving. The façade is embellished with stucco patterns, and the solid rear wall on each side contains five window apertures. The exterior hardwood panes have been painted and gold-plated. A window artwork is present there. On a wooden temple beam inside the temple is a stucco statue of the seated Buddha Pang Mara Vichai, which is inscribed in Thai with references to the temple's restoration. (Figure.1) An exterior double sema leaf arch made of red sandstone surrounds the temple. (Hagras 2019) The Art of Ayutthaya pagodas may be found in front of the temple, outside the glass wall area. Artwork from the early Rattanakosin- era. (Sae-Wang 2017)



Figure.1 Temple

(2) Sanctuary The brick structure with a tiled roof is a temple. Stucco-made swan tail, rooster leaf, and bouquet of the sky two entrance doors are located on the front wall, and the arch's façade is embellished with stucco designs. Carved wood makes up the door leaf. The initial bloom has a floral pattern and a pattern of coiling stems cut into it. A guard pattern is etched on the other door. It is lovely and intricate. There is a tiny arch for Buddha statues that is located between the arches. The Luang Por Pak Daeng and Buddha footprint four markings, which the locals have long worshipped, are housed inside the temple. (Janyaem 2020) Additionally, there are significant customs and beliefs that are shared by the Ban Khao Yi San community. Examples include the customs around birth, ordination, death, and Grandfather Sriracha almsgiving event. (Figure.2)



Figure 2. The Grandfather Sriracha almsgiving event

Research Objectives

This research focuses on analyzing the problems and influences of various factors in this area that affect the development and promotion of the identity of Wat Khao Yi San and finding ways to strengthen and develop the identity of Wat Khao Yi San as a cultural attraction through community participation. The majority of studies seek to preserve cultural heritage that reflects the identity of the members of a society. Memory of a location is connected to a compilation of life experiences and daily human interactions with the surrounding environment. Therefore, place attachment, which is established through the union of emotions and relationships that have existed in local environments for an extended period of time, can contribute to the competency of place identification and possesses significant characteristics.

Literature Review

The concept of cultural identity pertains to an individual's perception of affiliation and association with a specific cultural collective or community.(Phinney et al. 2022) Individuals within a particular group collectively share cultural elements like conventions, traditions, beliefs, values, language, art, and social standards.(Donders 2020) The significance of cultural identity is of utmost importance in the formation of an individual's self-concept, their perception of themselves and others, and the broader global context. The concept of cultural identity is characterized by its dynamic and evolving nature since it is subject to several influences like globalization, migration, intercultural encounters, and societal changes.(Branje 2022) Preserving and comprehending cultural identity plays a crucial role in the promotion of diversity, tolerance, and mutual respect among diverse cultures while also nurturing a sense of pride and belonging among individuals. (Labadi et al. 2021) Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that cultural identity is not static but rather malleable, enabling individuals to simultaneously embrace several cultural influences and identities (Lindstam, Mader, and Schoen 2021) Cultural identity is inherently intertwined with communal identity.(Edensor 2020) Community identity can be defined as the collective perception of affiliation, shared

principles, convictions, customs, and cultural attributes that unite individuals within a particular community.(Jovchelovitch 2019) The phenomenon being described pertains to the development of a shared awareness among individuals inside a particular community, wherein their sense of belonging and differentiation from those outside the community are accentuated.(McCaslin and Kilrea 2019) The concept of community identity holds significant importance in the formation and maintenance of social cohesion within a group, (Fonseca, Lukosch, and Brazier 2019) as it fosters feelings of stability, inclusion, and meaning. The aforementioned factors, including pride, togetherness, and resilience,(Raghavan and Sandanapitchai 2020) have the potential to serve as valuable assets in a community's capacity to effectively confront obstacles and cultivate a collective state of welfare.(Bashi et al. 2023) Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that communal identities exhibit diversity and complexity, incorporating a range of viewpoints and encounters within the community.(Anttila, Martin, and Nielsen 2019)

Rasoolimanesh et al. The researchers compared locals' views on tourism's impact on community engagement and tourism development in urban and rural world heritage sites. PLS-SEM was used in this investigation. The research suggests that local perceptions and community engagement affect tourism support differently in urban and rural settings. The study found no statistically significant differences in the indirect effects of favorable perceptions on community participation and unfavorable perceptions on tourism development endorsement. This study enhances our understanding of urban and rural tourism and local views. It does this by comparing rural and urban World Heritage Site populations. This study can assist urban and rural World Heritage Site governments. Smith Jesse M. used 45 in-depth interviews, textual analysis, and participant observation in a large study. The investigation targeted seven atheist groups.(Rasoolimanesh et al. 2017) Smith, Jesse M. (Smith 2013) The purpose of this study is to investigate the process of collective identity formation among atheists living in the United States. This study examines the sociological, psychological, and interpersonal processes within atheist communities, with an emphasis on the formation and maintenance of atheist identities. The author investigates the

various strategies employed by atheists in resolving the stigmatized perception of their collective identity and in defining atheism for individuals who do and do not identify as atheists. This is accomplished, in part, by examining the use of identity politics and minority rhetoric by contemporary atheists. Moreover, in a broader context, this study investigates the evaluation and characterization of contemporary atheist activism to examine the relationship between collective identity and societal engagement.

Pornprasit Piyanut and Rurkkhum, Suthinee (Pornprasit and Rurkkhum 2019) The findings of a study on community-based tourism in southern Thailand point to the necessity of boosting the financial benefits for local stakeholders. The suggested improvement will effectively aid in the protection of natural resources and encourage local residents to actively participate in the management of ecotourism efforts that place a priority on community-based techniques. A significant government initiative called "community-based tourism" aims to make it easier for people living in neighboring regions to generate revenue. The program fosters an understanding of the value of maintaining and protecting the area while also facilitating and encouraging community members' involvement in the management of tourism and the preservation of local natural resources. The contribution of tourism is crucial to the success of rehabilitation operations. Patchakul Treephan et al. (Treephan, Visuthismajarn, and Isaramalai 2019) The specific focus of the study was on Ban Hua Thang, located in the Mueang District of Satun Province, Thailand. The present study utilized a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The research methodologies employed in this study included a structured interview, a field survey, participant observation, and questionnaires. The findings of the study indicate that the community of Ban Hua Thang operates as a network of familial relationships, incorporating the teachings of the Muslim scripture into their everyday practices while demonstrating a conscious understanding of the importance of preserving natural resources and cultural heritage. Leng Thi Lan et al. (Lan, Hang, and Huy 2021) proposed a study of discovering and developing local cultural features in the Northern region of Vietnam is quite interesting and attract local people to participate. They study uses mainly qualitative analysis

synthesis and inductive methods, together with quantitative analysis with data and statistics. Their research results show that there are many strengths in local cultural features in Ha Giang province of Vietnam with 19 ethnic minorities that they can develop for cultural and community tourism. Nopadon Thungsakulab and Marisa Hiranteeyakula (Thungsakul and Hiranteeyakul 2022) The purpose of the research is to synthesize perceptions of the relationship between Chinese-Thai people in Korat and the place where they dwell through the concept of place identity. The study was conducted by surveying place identities from the perceptions and meanings of Chinese-Thai in Korat, using in-depth interviews to obtain the viewpoints of those who are attached to places there. The study revealed that the perception of place identity in the collective memories of Chinese-Thai people illustrates their relationships with the places through their experiences and the environment. The relationships involve the activities, functions, symbols, and meanings that reflect Chinese-Thai identity formed from the ways they trade as well as from their beliefs. The places the people are attached to include the following: Thetsaban 1 Market (Municipal Market 1) and Bun Phaisan Shrine. Relationships were also found among other ethnic groups as seen in their participation in the li-ke festival at the city pillar shrine and their way of paying respect to the Thao Suranaree monument.

Methodology

The start of data gathering was scheduled for January 2023. The present study utilizes a mixed research technique, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to maximize the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information obtained. (Fetters and Molina-Azorin 2020), (Morgans et al. 2021) By employing sophisticated methodologies, the sample was partitioned into three discrete categories. There are three principal classifications of individuals: The research methodology employed in this study is a semi-structured interview. (Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger 2020) The individuals in question should possess a well-established association with the given geographical region. The study revealed that a total of three individuals fulfilled the specified requirements, specifically two individuals belonging to the Buddhist monk community and one individual serving as

a community leader. Additionally, data collection was conducted through the administration of questionnaires to assess the population size of villagers residing in the Ban Khao Yi San area. The population consists of 707 individuals aged 18 and above. To determine the sample size, Taro Yamane's formula (1967) is employed,(Sampson et al. 2021) resulting in a sample of 100 individuals. Additionally, the exact number of tourists is indeterminate, so the formular proposed by W.G. Cochran (1953) is utilized, yielding a sample size of 100 individuals. Consequently,(Heath 2022) a total of 200 individuals will be selected as the sample for this study. The following items are included in the questionnaire: The first section examines demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, level of education, and length of residence in the community, family size and principal profession. Part 2: Analysis of public opinion data about the evolution and formulation of the Khao Yi San Temple's identity. The third section evaluates hypotheses by analyzing data.

Analysis of information collected through interviews briefings are meticulously described in accordance with their stated objectives, using content analysis.(Roller 2019) Only the results of in-depth interviews will be used to classify the data based on the information provided by individuals, after which the information of each individual will be compiled and synthesized to provide an overview of each issue. In the focus group, every piece of information is presented. To confirm the accuracy and thoroughness of the information, it is necessary to conduct a survey.(Sit et al. 2020) Create a guide for the classification, scoring, and recording of computerized data. Utilizing data processing software for social science research.

The first part of the questionnaire examines personal fundamental facts through the use of percentages.(Menec et al. 2019) The second part of the questionnaire: public perception regarding the development and identity of the Wat Khao Yi San, specifically focusing on Management, Tourism Activities, Participation, and Identity. Data analysis utilizing Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation.(Puig-Diví et al. 2019) The third part of the questionnaire aims to evaluate hypotheses by examining the mean differences between two distinct demographic groups. The two samples exhibit independence from one another. The independent sample t-test is a statistical test used to compare the means of two

independent groups. It is commonly used in research studies to determine if there is a significant difference. (Kim and Park 2019) The final part of the data was acquired through the facilitation of participatory workshops, including group meetings and interviews, among other methods. (Trimble and Plummer 2019) The act of observing and exploring to achieve accurate and widely accepted results, it is essential to categorize content into distinct data groupings.

Result

The following specifications will be used to analyze the data from three samples: (1) Six categories of information were derived through in-depth interviews with the first sample (Buddhist monks and community leaders): 1) Local history; 2) Local identity; 3) Architectural value; 4) Tourist Attraction; 5) Tradition and Culture; and 6) Concept of Space Development. The three samples gave no conflicting information; hence, Ban Khao Yi San is a long-established traditional village. It was not at all prosperous in the past. There is only one way in and out, which is by boat. The majority of the locals work in agriculture. Shrimp farming and the combustion of coal. The Old Temple and the custom of Grandfather Sriracha almsgiving give the place its primary personality. The temple has beautiful window paintings from the late Ayutthaya period. The Grandfather Sriracha is what draws travelers. The tradition of the Grandfather Sriracha almsgiving event and the annual celebration are the two main traditions associated with the Luang Por Pak Daeng and Buddha footprint four markings. There are numerous components to the space development concept, but not all of them because it would be expensive. The area in front of the Sanctuary has to be renovate because it is dilapidated. (2) Responses to questionnaires in the second and third samples (local villagers and visitors), which have 200 individuals, will be separated into two stages. The first section analyzes personal factors using processing percentages, and the second section analyzes data on community opinions on the development and identity of Wat Khao Yi San, specifically management, tourism activities, participation, and identity. The mean and standard deviation are used for processing, as detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

The weighted of all the opinions expressed by the respondents to the four inquiries was determined based on the

information provided in Tables 1 and 2. The variable with the highest weight value in this study is identity, with a $\bar{X}$ score of 4.583. Following closely behind are management with a $\bar{X}$ score of 4.46, participation with a $\bar{X}$ score of 4.43 and tourism activities with a $\bar{X}$ score of 4.32. The first identity selected by sample is an The Old Temple. The heaviest item in the set has a $\bar{X}$ weight of 4.66, while the second is Grandfather Sriracha with a $\bar{X}$ score of 4.61. Following closely behind is the Buddha footprint four markings, which has a $\bar{X}$ weight of 4.57.

Table.1 The mean and standard deviation of community opinions towards development and creation the identity of the Wat Khao Yi San management issues and tourism activities

Community opinions on the development and create the identity of Wat Khao Yi San	Opinion Level					
	Sample	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1.Mangement				4.46	0.646	Excellent
1.1 Information is introduced to tourists	local	4.52	0.521	4.43	0.507	excellent
	visitor	4.35	0.479			
1.2 Regulations are established within the temple area	local	4.55	0.500	4.42	0.494	excellent
	visitor	4.29	0.456			
1.3 There are staff to guide along the way	local	4.38	0.647	4.33	0.576	excellent
	visitor	4.28	0.494			
1.4 The wasteland is developed to be beautiful	local	4.64	0.482	4.51	0.510	excellent
	visitor	4.39	0.490			
1.5 It is pushed to be part of the provincial development plan	local	4.54	0.593	4.42	0.553	excellent
	visitor	4.31	0.486			
2. Tourism activities				4.32	0.358	Excellent
2.1 There are signs to introduce places and important information	local	4.44	0.556	4.38	0.527	excellent
	visitor	4.33	0.493			
2.2 There is a route to visit at different points	local	4.48	0.521	4.83	0.498	excellent

Community opinions on the development and create the identity of Wat Khao Yi San	Opinion Level					
	Sample	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
	visitor	4.29	0.456			
2.3 Tourism activities do not affect religious culture and traditions	local	4.53	0.501	4.40	0.530	excellent
	visitor	4.27	0.529			
2.4 Tourism activities must not interfere with the routine of monks	local	4.40	0.568	4.35	0.899	excellent
	visitor	4.31	0.464			
2.5 Activities should be organized during important Buddhist festivals	local	3.93	1.156	4.12	0.358	good
	visitor	4.31	0.464			

Table.2 The mean and standard deviation of community opinions towards development and creation the identity of the Wat Khao Yi San Participation issues and Identity

Community opinions on the development and create the identity of Wat Khao Yi San	Opinion Level					
	Sample	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
3. Participation				4.43	0.386	Excellent
3.1 Villagers participate in thinking and making decisions	local	4.48	0.643	4.42	0.570	excellent
	visitor	4.36	0.482			
3.2 Labor mobilization or funding is organized for the event	local	4.39	0.694	4.37	0.621	excellent
	visitor	4.36	0.541			
3.3 Collaboration from external agencies	local	4.58	0.535	4.41	0.577	excellent
	visitor	4.24	0.570			
3.4 Community products are distributed	local	4.61	0.490	4.44	0.546	excellent
	visitor	4.28	0.551			
3.5 Communities help maintain the environment, cleanliness	local	4.74	0.440	4.50	0.539	excellent
	visitor	4.26	0.524			
4. Identity				4.58	0.373	Excellent
4.1 Old Temple	local	4.76	0.429	4.66	0.474	excellent

Community opinions on the development and create the identity of Wat Khao Yi San	Opinion Level					
	Sample	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
	visitor	4.56	0.498			
4.2 Luang Por Pak Daeng	local	4.75	0.435	4.52	0.500	excellent
	visitor	4.29	0.456			
4.3 Grandfather Sriracha	local	4.79	0.433	4.61	0.508	excellent
	visitor	4.44	0.518			
4.4 Buddha footprint four markings	local	4.79	0.409	4.57	0.495	excellent
	visitor	4.36	0.482			
4.5 Khao Yee San Museum	local	4.75	0.435	4.54	0.499	excellent
	visitor	4.34	0.476			

Subsequently, the hypotheses were examined by employing the mean difference test to compare two populations. The two independent sample t-tests were conducted at a 95% confidence level, leading to the rejection of the primary hypothesis. The null hypotheses (H0) were rejected in favor of the alternative hypotheses. The statistical significance level must be less than 0.05, as indicated in Table 3.

Table.3 Testing the differences of community opinions in developing and creating the identity of the Wat Khao Yi San. classified by sample group

Community opinions on the development and create the identity of Wat Khao Yi San	t-test for Equality of Means				
	Sample	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
1. Management	local	4.600	0.858	3.083	0.003
	visitor	4.324	0.252		
2. Tourism activities	local	4.356	0.430	1.067	0.288
	visitor	4.302	0.265		
3. Participation	local	4.560	0.443	5.046	0.000
	visitor	4.300	0.263		

Community opinions on the development and create the identity of Wat Khao Yi San	t-test for Equality of Means				
	Sample	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
4. Identity	local	4.770	0.382	8.038	0.000
	visitor	4.400	0.257		

1. The sample has an opinion on tourism. Sig. (2-tailed) is more than 0.05, which is 0.2228; therefore, the null hypotheses is accepted. Accepting the primary hypotheses (H0) and rejecting the secondary hypotheses (H1) indicates that the samples differ. The opinions of the community regarding the development and creation of identity at Wat Khao Yi San by the tourism aspect are identical.

2. Respondents provided their perspectives on management, participation, and identity. Sig. (2-tailed) is less than 0.05, which equals 0.003, 0.000, and 0.000; therefore, the primary hypotheses were rejected. Accept (H0) and the secondary hypotheses. (H1) indicates that the samples differ. The opinions of the community regarding the development and creation of identity at Wat Khao Yi San by administration, participation, and identity are distinct.

The final phase will be to give the information obtained from the interviews and questionnaires to a group of 20 individuals who will act as representatives for consideration and the exchange of ideas regarding a variety of suggestions broken down into the following categories:

1. Management: should have an opinion that is consistent with the questionnaire and the interview form.

Additional ideas: Members of the community have expressed interest in seeing online advertising made available across all platforms.

2. Tourism activities: The responses to questionnaires and interviews support this opinion.

Additional ideas: The community desires that the sign and symbol system be united, unique, and permanent.

3. Participation: The responses to the surveys and interviews are compatible with the participants' opinions.

Additional suggestions: The community would benefit from the establishment of an organization that specializes in the design of dehydrated food products and packaging.

4. Identity: The opinion is in line with the results of the interviews and questionnaires.

Additional ideas: The community has expressed interest in redeveloping and improving the appearance of the surrounding region.

Conclusion & Discussion

This research is a study of the development and identity of Wat Khao Yi San, an ancient temple constructed during the late Ayutthaya era that is regarded as a temple of great historical significance but lacks its own identity. As a consequence, both locals and visitors continue to know little and visit sparingly. In addition, the temple has many significant sites of worship, including the Ban Khao Yi San community, which has both traditions and customs. Food, lifestyle, and the arts are extremely fascinating. If the area is supported and promoted as a cultural tourist attraction, it will result in numerous benefits, including the preservation of architectural and cultural features. Cultural tourism will increase provincial community income. Environmental preservation, cultural landscape sustainability, etc. Consequently, the objectives have been specified as two issues: 1. This research focuses on analyzing the problems and influences of various factors in this area that affect the development and promotion of the identity of Wat Khao Yi San and 2. Finding ways to strengthen and develop the identity of Wat Khao Yi San as a cultural attraction through community participation. The research will be conducted using combined research methods, qualitative research, quantitative research, and participatory action research, each of which can be summarized as follows:

Findings from the interview questionnaires and small group meeting to collect data, there are minor historical discrepancies in some facts because it is a succession of tales, which has no substantial effect on perception and transmission. Concerning issues on which there is agreement and which provide the same information, namely the identification of the Wat Khao Yi San, According to the respondents, if it is a physical identity, they would choose the Old Temple since it is an ancient architectural with historical value that deserves to be maintained and kept as a local heritage that is important both physically and imaginably. The community's traditional and spiritual identity. The subjects

chose the tradition of offering alms to their father and Grandfather Sriracha since it is a community tradition passed down from generation to generation. It is a celebration that brings together the villagers in the town to share their opinions and values. Grandfather Sriracha is a respected person who must return home every year to make merit for Grandfather Sriracha, which is a different tradition from other places, and suggests that it be disseminated through agencies such as provincial tourism and promoted through various media, particularly online media, social media such as Tiktok, Line, and Instagram, which will reach the target audience more directly.(Liao, Widowati, and Hsieh 2021)

In the discussion, the results from the research query "What is the primary identity of the Wat Khao Yi San?" are presented. According to the research findings, there are two issues. If physical identity is taken into account, the sample will select the ancient temple. The second argument considers the community's traditional and spiritual identity.(Ives and Kidwell 2019) The researchers discovered that the subjects chose the Grandfather Sriracha almsgiving event because the region has deep historical origins. Being a provincial community, the community has a close relationship with the temple. There are few individuals in the community. Therefore, the majority of villagers are quite devoted to temples and religious ceremonies. Consequently, identity is created in both physical and traditional forms.(Abram, Macleod, and Waldren 2021) How will the Wat Khao Yi San be promoted as a cultural attraction in the community? The results of the study indicated that community participation will be a driving force in the promotion of community tourist attractions. It was discovered that the majority of villagers cooperated well during various activities and also when greeting tourists.

The researcher believed that the research was inconclusive, so comprehensive results were obtained to separate the data into two distinct approaches.(Aksnes, Piro, and Rørstad 2019) The first strategy is founded on interviews and small-group meetings with community stakeholders,(Belfiore 2016) inquiring about the perspectives of groups with a long history of association with the community and temple. It will make them aware of essential historical information that has not been recorded or released to the

public, as well as the in-depth issues that arise in the community.(O’Leary et al. 2022) Statistical testing based on data collected from questionnaires completed by villagers and travelers revealed that the samples were distinct.(Zhang 2021) Opinions of the community regarding the development and rebranding of Wat Khao Yi San. The tourism aspect is not distinct, but the sample may be. Management, participation, and identity are also viewed differently by the community regarding Wat Khao Yi San's growth and establishment of its identity.(Adams et al. 2021)

Acknowledgements

The authors sincerely thank all participants in the research for their contribution. We are indebted to Thanakunwutthirot.K, Pramualsuk.N, Siriponnoppakunand.W and Limsaksri.D. The authors wish to thank the respondents at Khon Yi San Community, Thailand, for participating in this research. Finally, I thank the anonymous reviewers and journal editors for their valuable feedback on earlier versions of this article.

This research has passed the certification of exemption in the consideration of research ethics. Code No.COE2-111/2023

Funding

This research was funded by Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand.

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