

English Storytelling and Cultural Identity Exploration to Drive Sustainable Tourism in Northern Thailand

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Abstract

Thailand's cultural legacy is widely acknowledged to be opulently rich. Thus, cultural tourism has become one of the main sources of national income. Meanwhile, it is also widely known that high-value travelers are desirable for achieving sustainable tourism. This research was conducted in the Mae Hong Son Province of Northern Thailand with the overarching goal of upgrading cultural tourism. The study's two main objectives are to determine the cultural identity of the area's tourist attractions and determine what effect receiving training in English storytelling has on local tourism stakeholders. Initially, documentary data were explored to identify the cultural identity of the four selected cultural tourist sites. Then, seven key locals were asked to endorse the common collective cultural identity previously identified. To address the second objective, a two-day English storytelling workshop related to attractions-based cultural identity was arranged for 20 tourist stakeholders. The participants in the training received important cultural knowledge in English before incorporating it into an English storytelling simulation task at the actual sites. A satisfaction survey was completed, and the results of the analysis showed that the training was highly satisfactory. The results demonstrate the beneficial impact of coordinated efforts from many stakeholders in making local tourism destinations well-known across the world. Finally, this study underscores the function of English education that may be effectively and efficiently integrated with others, enhancing tourist sustainability and supporting English education.

Keywords: community-based tourism, cultural tourism, English language education, high-value tourist, Mae Hong Son, Thailand