

## Creating Participatory Communication Model for Promoting Tourism based-on Ethnic Cultural Identity of Nakhon Nayok Province, Thailand Operated by Active Elderly

By

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### Abstract

The concept of "Old people have value, not a burden," which is the creation of a place in society for the elderly with the status of a productive person, was the beginning of the research, which came from the strong emphasis on paradigm shift about the elderly in order to support the aging society. The objective of this research is to develop a participatory communication model for promoting tourism that is based on the ethnic cultural identity of the Nakhon Nayok Province and is operated by the elderly. This research is a mixed method research. The data were collected by use tools of quantitative, qualitative, and participatory action research. The research result show that the "Group meetings" is a communication that influences the participation of the elderly in the community, while "Online communication via platform LINE" is a secondary communication. With the expectation on the outcomes, design thinking has been used in this research. The participatory communication model to promote tourism based on the ethnic cultural identity of Nakhon Nayok province that was operated by the elderly have 9 steps that must be completed: 1) Study and review information before communicated with the communities 2) Deep Interview with community leader 3) Surveying the elderly population's potential 4) Providing information back to the community 5) Finding an identity that is appropriate for the tourism culture and synthesizes a model that is consistent with the elderly. 6) Developing the potential of the elderly; 7) Group meetings for tourism set up 8) Experimental tourism and 9) Evaluation. This is a process-based innovation that enables the elderly to modify their own beliefs and take a greater interest in realizing their own potential.

**Key Words:** Participatory communication, Tourism, Cultural identity, Ethnic, Elderly, Design Thinking

### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) defines the elderly as the population of both males and females over 60 years of age. (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2014) In the Elderly Act B.E. 2003, the elderly mean people over the age of 60 who have Thai nationality when in a society in which the proportion of the elderly or the population aged 60 years and over has increased steadily while the proportion of the birth rate or the population of working age has decreased. (Division for the Promotion of Elderly Potential, 2021) The number of elderly people is increasing more and more. It can be divided into 3 levels of ageing society as follows: Level 1: The population aged 60 years and over, the proportion is over 10%, or the age is 65 years or more, more than 7% of the country's population, consider that the country has entered an ageing society. level 2: with the population aged 60 and over increasing to 20% and the population aged 65 and older increasing to 14% of the total population, consider that the country is a completely aged society and level 3: the population aged 60 years and over is more

than 28 % of the total population or more than 20% of the population is aged 65 or older, consider that the country is a super-aged society.

Thailand has entered into a completely aged society within the year 2022 and by the year 2031, will enter into a super-aged society (Kitphan, 2018). In the next 20 years, the total population of Thailand will increase very slowly. The rate of growth will drop to a minus growth level, but the elderly population will increase rapidly. The elderly aged 60 and over will increase by an average of 4% per year, while the elderly in their late 80s and over will increase at an average rate of 7% per year (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2021). The increasing of the elderly may be seen as a burden for the next generation to take care in future, due to physical deterioration such as back pain, waist pain, muscle pain, and eye and vision problems such as blurred vision, cataracts, etc., such an understanding may affect negative attitudes towards the elderly. The elderly people typically share the same traits: they must be dependent on their age, be the recipient, and have a caregiver (National Statistical Office, 2017).

While there are still many older people in society who are in good health, have sharp minds, are able to transfer knowledge, and are valuable to families, communities, and society as a whole, using the knowledge and experience of the elderly to benefit, increase skills, and provide suitable employment for the elderly themselves will eventually increase their ability to earn money and improve their productivity. If the elderly is healthy, they can earn revenue for themselves, which will not be a burden on the family, thus it will benefit both the elderly and society as a whole if the elderly are physically, psychologically, economically, and socially ready, or are the elderly who still have energy to live. Meanwhile, the government's budget for providing them with medical care has been slashed. Additionally, it will help economic growth if the elderly can engage in the economy. As a result, it will gain from the second demographic dividend, or the country's economy growing as the share of the senior population increases (National Statistical Office, 2017).

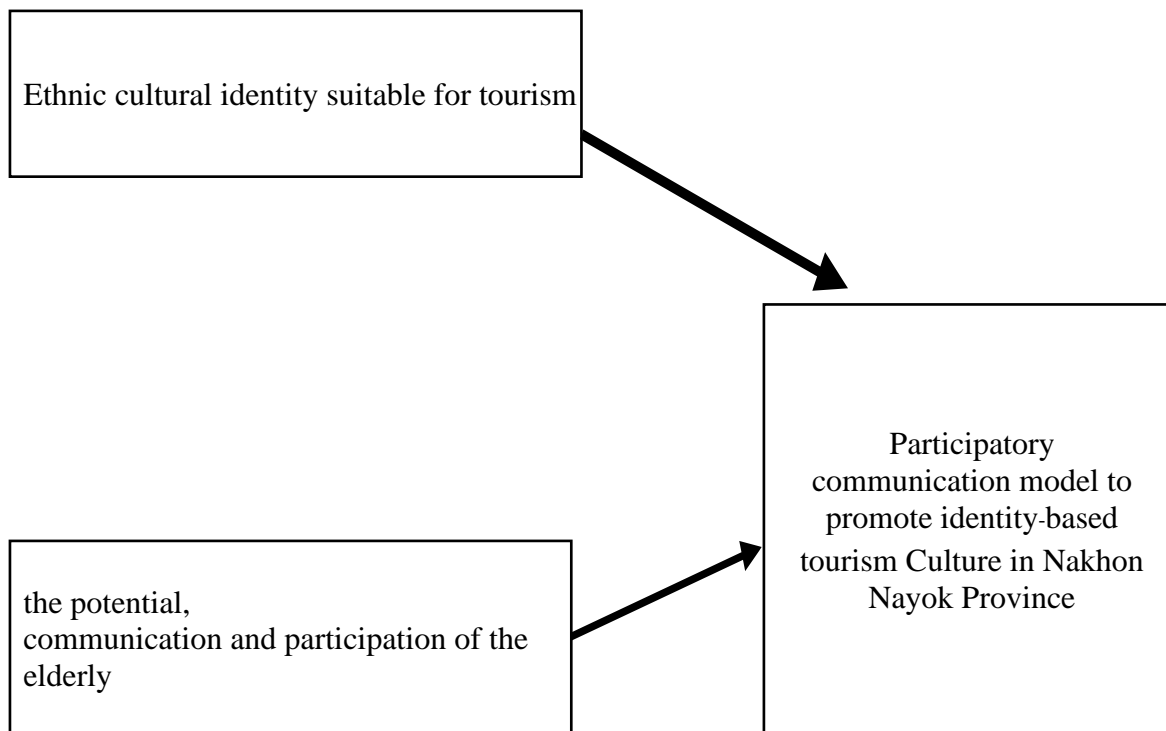
The strategic issues relating to "Developing people's potential throughout life" have been established by the National Strategy on Human Resources Development and Enhancement, in particular. The "ageing phase" seeks to enable the elderly to be a driving force in the nation, promote employment after retirement, and strengthen health rehabilitation and disease prevention for the elderly in addition to creating an environment that is friendly to the elderly and social stability that is in line with their basic needs of living and participation in society.

Pak Phli District in Nakhon Nayok Province is a home of diverse ethnic groups, including the Thai, Chinese, Laos, and Thai Phuan. Each of these groups has a distinct cultural identity, including the "Heet 12 Kong 14" ceremonial, local cuisine, a dialect, clothing, and a folk-art exhibition. It is important feature in the development of local communities as an important source of income when the elderly in the community wish to generate money. Therefore, the development of ability and the management of tourism based on ethnic cultural identity require participatory communication. In order to develop tourism based on ethnic cultural identity in Nakhon Nayok Province of Thailand, the technique of "participative communication" and "design thinking" were applied.

### ***Research Objectives***

1. To discover ethnically based cultural identities that are appropriate for tourism
2. To study the potential, communication, and participation of the elderly in community tourism in Nakhon Nayok Province.

3. To develop a participatory communication model that promotes tourism based on ethnic cultural identity of Nakhon Nayok province by the elderly operation.



*Research conceptual framework*

## Literature reviews

***The elderly's potential was studied using the notion of active ageing, which was as follows:***

The World Health Organization introduced the framework of Active Ageing, which is a concept of improving the quality of life of the elderly at both individual and social for the elderly well-being all in physical, mental, stability in life and participate in society. It is a guideline for many countries to apply to their own context. This frame of mind is all about the important components and factors that affect the Active Ageing state based on human rights, independence, and is a process (World Health Organization, 2002. National Statistical Office, 2017 referred to Wongsawat, 2016), which are as follows:

1. Human rights of older adults means that the elderly has the right to do anything, such as take a bus.
2. Independence that including participation, dignity, care, and self-fulfillment.
3. Active ageing is a process of successful ageing in which an elderly person can help, teach others, interpersonal relationship and impart information to offer value to society.

Furthermore, the World Health Organization has defined the essential components of being an energetic elderly, according to Wongsawat (2016), there are 3 important factors:

1. Healthy. "Health for age" refers to the maintenance of a well-balanced state that integrates the body, mind, society, and spirit.
2. Stability, having certainty and stability in life, i.e., having income stability, having steady housing and caregiver stability.
3. Participation, having activities all the time, not being idle, do the favorite activities in free time, have hobbies or learning activities, have activities as organizations member, families, communities, and knowledge exchange.

Dr. Phusit Prakongsai, secretary-general of the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI), stated that one way to make the elderly play a role in society without being a burden is to change one's mindset by viewing the elderly as a human resource who can still benefit from their diverse experiences. They contribute to the growth of the country by providing opportunities for the elderly who still have the ability to benefit the community. It is a good thing that they should be supported to the strength of community basis in caring for the elderly (Thairath, 2022).

As a result, the notion of active ageing is a concept that allows the aged to realize their potential such as holding a work, social participation, health caring and stable house, and conducive conditions for active ageing, according to the World Health Organization, active ageing consists of 3 components: excellent health, stability or certainty of life and participation which is the main concept of this research, want to change the social mindset that the elderly aren't a burden but a driving force of the community economy, especially the active ageing elderly who have experience and wisdom that can be passed down to the next generation.

### ***Tourism after the COVID-19 crisis***

Following the COVID-19 incident, tourist behavior will change, according to Saenkam (2021)'s research on Thai visitors' tourism behavior after the COVID-19 situation, Thai tourists have changed in 3 ways: 1) Inbound travel is what they choose 2) A short travel by private automobile is an option and 3) The foreign tourists prefer to travel to unseen tourism that have less tourist crowds. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (2022) conducted the Booking.com Sustainable Travel 2022 Survey, which collected data on travelers from 32 nations and over 32,000 people and discovered that tourists in the post-COVID crisis have a propensity to focus on the possible impact of tourism. Tourists have expectations for tourism that include: 1. looking for 'green accommodation,' 2. being more open to 'travel in secondary cities,' 3. avoiding 'high season,' 4. experiencing 'community way of life,' and 5. changing 'ways to travel.' It can be seen that the behavior of tourists following a COVID situation has a very favorable effect on community tourism, all in terms of uncrowded tourism, secondary-city tourism and experiencing the community way of life etc.

### ***Design Thinking***

The Stanford d.school's design thinking process, which consists of five steps (Israsena and Treeratanaphan. 2017), is widely accepted and used around the world.

1. **Empathize**, deeply understanding the target audience is the heart and starting point because the problem that arises is a problem of specific groups and understanding their needs is required to design a solution for these people. It is necessary to understand the needs, data from the target audience can be collected by use observation methods, participatory conversation and participation in hands-on experiences.
2. **Define**, determine when understanding the target audience and the context of the problem will lead to a deeper understand to the problem, more clearly understand the important and origin of the problem that led to solve problems straight to the point and meets the needs of the target group.
3. **Ideate**, idea generation is a process that focuses on developing new ideas that solve a variety of different problems, a new idea that is different from the original idea. It is a process to get as many ideas as possible, in order to find the best solution to create a prototype for the target audience to test.
4. **Prototype**, it is the transformation of ideas into tangible prototypes that can interact with the target audience. The first prototype could be a model or a simple storyboard

that is get up quickly and without wasting much time or money to test with your target audience and learn from mistakes.

5. **Test**, it is an important step in the design thinking process because testing is a real practice to improve and develop better ideas by bring the prototypes to get experiment with target groups in real situations to prove that it meets the needs of the target audience and is able to solve the problem directly or not.

It reveals a deeply understanding of the target audience and problem framing are the process to develop an understanding and interpretation of a problem in order to establish project goals. The idea generation is the process to create new answers or alternative solutions by uses the creativity and perspectives of numerous team members. The prototype creating and test phase are the process to test the concept with a target audience and to develop a prototype in order to generate a really good quality and valuable guideline or innovation for the target audience before releasing it to the public. This research chooses design thinking concept to be guideline because the researchers expected that the research result can have a real impact on community beliefs and empowerment.

### ***Participatory communication***

The participation means that members of the community participate in four aspects of the process: 1. decision making, 2. implementation, 3. benefit, and 4. evaluation (Cohen & Uphoff, 1981 referred to Namburi, 2019).

The participatory communication is the idea that community members are participated in brainstorming, exchanging, decision making, planning, and collaborating through various modes of communication. In addition, there is an inspection or evaluation of the activities performed to enable development or to improve the quality of life in the community (Kitruenpiromsuk, 2005 referred to Pankasem & Prachaknet, 2016).

The participatory communication is a process and instrument to change and improve the communication skills in an individual or group. The participatory communication is a cooperation between recipients and information sources that the communicators duty on messengers and mentors for the participatory communication target audience in the development process (White, 2003 referred to Puksawat, 2021).

There are three models of communication access: 1) Access as Consumer indicates that individuals have the ability to use media as a "receiver/viewer/viewer/reader" by having the ability to choose to consume media from a number of formats and have channels to reflect their reactions to the producer, also known as "Active Audience" 2) Access to media as Producer refers to the opportunity for a person to engage in a production process, such as appearing as a guest on a radio show, as a source of news, selecting subjects to be presented etc. and 3) Access to the media as a Media executive means that a person involve to the decisions system in the media organization such as defining content and appropriate format, determining time period, establishing a management system/budget system, and participate in the development of various plans and policies.

The participatory communication is heart of tourism community communication (Suriyawon, Hounnaklang, & Common, 2021). The two most important models of communication are 1) participatory communication model as a planner and goal-setter and 2) participatory communication model as a messenger or producer.

The participatory communication can occur in two types (Intaratat, 2015 referred to *Res Militaris*, vol.13, n°1, Winter-Spring 2023

Robkob, 2020):

1. The traditional channel or media, in general is one on one interpersonal communication such as discussion group, a coffee council, a forum and including to participate in various relationship on any shows in order to create full communication possibilities with each other. All parties have equal role in communication, in identification and communication to create a society together.
2. The channels or media according to modern information technology that allow the faster and more convenient participatory process and communication through the satellite systems and internet systems in many forms.

Both channels are important to develop a participatory communication model to promote tourism based on ethnic cultural identity and create the participation of the elderly.

## **Methodology**

This research is a mix method methodology that includes quantitative research, qualitative research, and participatory action research, as shown below:

1. The data collection by qualitative research such as studies from related research documents, in-depth interviews, observations, and group meetings.
2. The data collection by quantitative research such as a questionnaire-based survey on the potential of elderly communication and participation in community tourism.
3. The data collection and evaluation by participatory action research such as set up tourism base on ethnic cultural identity experiment of Nakhon Nayok Province and evaluation.

### ***Instrument***

The Cluster Random Sampling was used to collect data from a sample of elderly people in Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province, which was divided area into sub-districts and villages and then have data collection from 400 elderly people aged 60 and up. This research was carried out between March and September of 2022.

The quantitative research tool was a questionnaire with four parts, as follows :

**Part 1:** General information about the elderly, includes personal data: gender, age, education, occupation, income, which is a five-item checklist.

**Part 2:** Potential of the Elderly consists of health, participation and collateral and stability, which is a 5-level, 16-item rating scale questionnaire.

**Part 3:** Communication of the elderly which is a 5-level, 6-item rating scale questionnaire.

**Part 4:** Participation in community tourism consists of participation in decision-making processes, participation in operations, participation in benefits receiving and participation in evaluation. The questionnaire was a 5-level, 12-item rating scale questionnaire. Questionnaire: There is tools examination, validity test by Index of Item-Objective Congruence and reliability test by The Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The result of The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .935 and then the complete questionnaire was used to the sample.

**Data analysis:** This research was analysis by descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, referential statistics such as Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Stepwise Multiple Regression analysis.

## Research Result

### *Suitable cultural identity for ethnic cultural tourism*

Nakhon Nayok province is located in eastern part of Thailand not far from Bangkok, the capital. It is convenient for many tourists to travel because it just takes about two hours by car, van, or bus. The tourists know as it has numerous of natural attractions. It is one in secondary city tourism and belongs to the category of eco-tourism cities.

There are 4 districts in Nakhon Nayok Province, including Muang District, Ongkharak District, Pak Phli District and Ban Na District. The ethnic identity was the notable of Pak Phli District, includes Thai, Chinese, Laotian, and Thai Phuan. The majority ethnic in Pak Phli District is Thai Phuan groups reside and the slogan of the province is “Cultural heritage, pristine scenery, holy artefacts, a folk museum, Thai and Lao Phuan stories and a source of food.”

Following the group discussion, it was discovered that the 7 sub-districts of Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province, have the following cultural identities and distinguishing characteristics:

1. Khok Kruat Subdistrict: King Taksin Memorial, Grass brooms, Processed agricultural products, three-ethnics merit festivals (Thai, Lao, and Thai Phuan), Bun Bang Fai tradition (rocket merit festival), and Khlong Yang Water Resource Development.
2. Pak Phli Subdistrict: Luang Pho Wat Pho Pak Phli (Image of Buddha), the Thai New Year, Thai desserts, Yang Na Yai trees inside Wat Pho Pak Phli (Giant rubber tree), Nam Thip (holy pond), school of the elderly, Pak Phli Museum, Ban Nok Learning Center, Pak Phli Railway Station (old history), and food items like Kaeng Bon (bon plant curry), salted fish, processed fish food, and Khao Kra Yakhu (dessert from ears of rice).
3. Na Hin Lat Subdistrict: learning center for large plots of pomelo, bamboo, durian, wild sweet vegetables, orchid nursery farms, Khlong Klang Reservoir, Wang Bon Reservoir, Wang Muang Waterfall, three-ethnics merit festivals (Thai, Lao, and Thai Phuan), handicrafts made from bamboo, a women group making Chan flowers (sandalwood flowers), food such as Kaeng Bon (bon plant curry), Kuan Khao Thip at Wat Na Hin Lad (rice porridge cooking), Bathing Phra Kru Metha at Wat Khok Sawang.
4. Tha Rue Subdistrict: Sterile tilapia farm for processed and distributed, Laing Baan Saan Pu Taa ceremony (shrine worship), falcon field, Lam Bua Loi temple, weaving, wisdom spell to treat dog bites wound, pink eyes and mumps.
5. Nong Saeng Subdistrict: Local dialect, local food such as Khanom Kab Moo (a type of rice pudding), Kaeng Ma Tua Hor (pork rib and peanut soup), Kaeng Bon (Kaeng Nang Wan: bon plant curry), 3 types of mushroom curry, Krua Mor Noi (Herb), locations such as Takhian Thong Temple (Phra Yim: smile image of Buddha), Sri Thavorn Nimit Forest monastery, Thong Mon Garden, and school for the elderly.
6. Koh Wai Subdistrict: Local dialect, Pla Du, Khao Kra Ya Khu (dessert from ears of rice), carp fish boiled with salt, Pla Do (type of pickled fish) of teacher Lod, Khanom Khao Jee (toast sticky rice), culture such as Museum Pa Phuan at Pak Phli, Thai Phuan Hand-woven Fabric Center, Phra That Kusawadee (pagoda), Pagoda of Luang Pho Phara, believes such as Nang Dong playing, Ramthon (folk drum dance), Lamphuan (folk singer), Soot Sue Soot Pha ceremony (folk exorcise) and Bai Sri Sukhwan ceremony (ceremony of welcome).
7. Koh Pho Subdistrict: Luang Pho Hok (Image of Buddha), Pla Du (type of pickled fish) Mae San, the original recipe of Pla Ra (pickled fish), frog farm, wisdom spell to treat snake bites, and image of Toe Promarangsri Monk (Koh Pho temple).

### *Characteristics, Potential, Communication and Participation of the Elderly*

The community's elderly was surveyed on three different fronts: health, collateral and stability, and general participation. All of them were performing well ( $\bar{x} = 3.79$ ). Health ranked highest ( $\bar{x} = 3.86$ ), followed by collateral and stability ( $\bar{x} = 3.80$ ), and total participation ( $\bar{x} = 3.73$ ) ranked lowest.

Health consists of 5 variables. Collateral and stability consist of 6 variables and the participation aspect consists of 5 variables. Communication aspect consists of 5 variables. They are all made up to 21 variables in total.

A Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis showed that group communication and the elderly's potential, participation in work with revenue generating organizations, participation with peers, and participation in social activities were the factors influencing to participation of the elderly in community tourism. The elderly's participation can be predicted by all four parameters by 53.80%. (As shown in Table 1).

**Table 1** Stepwise multiple regression analysis, showing each factor affecting the elderly's participation in community tourism.

| <b>Independent Variable</b>   | <b>B</b> | <b>Std. Error</b> | <b>Beta</b> |
|---|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Participation in working with a revenue generating organization (X10) | .246     | .054              | .282        |
| Participation in activities with peers (X7)                           | .263     | .057              | .248        |
| Participation in social activities (X9)                               | .236     | .063              | .227        |
| Group Communication (X19)   | .160     | .046              | .124        |
| A (Constant)  | .209     | .148              |             |
| R = .737      Adjusted R Square = .538      F = 117.344               |          |                   |             |
| R Square = .543      Std. Error of the Estimate = .64253              |          |                   |             |

### *The elderly is engaged in the process of developing a participatory communication model to promote tourism in Nakhon Nayok Province based on ethnic cultural identity.*

**Step 1** The process of information studying: to study for community information before communicating with the community, studying for community information from related research papers.

**Step 2** In-depth interviews: to interview with community leaders and stakeholders, including local community leaders, the chairman and vice president of community tourism in Nakhon Nayok province, and a community philosopher, were conducted in order to obtain information on the state of the community and the state of community tourism in Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province, until to realize that " To reach the elderly in the community must begin at the temple."

**Step 3** The process of surveying: to survey for the communication and participation potential of the elderly in the community. It is the process to study the condition before setting up a cultural tourism that is operated by the elderly with a focus on the communication, potential and participation of the elderly in the community to create the participatory communication models and to create guidelines for promoting tourism. Through this process, it was discovered that group meetings, which are combined with online media like the LINE application, are one of the elements that influence community participation.

**Step 4** The information provide back meeting: to check the consistent of information with the community condition and it is agreed by the community. The community realize their overview potential, communication and participation through the information analysis and it consistent to the need for income generation of the elderly, to the need for new



model of cultural tourism that is operated by the elderly in order to generate income in new way and build their potential for the real self-sufficiency.

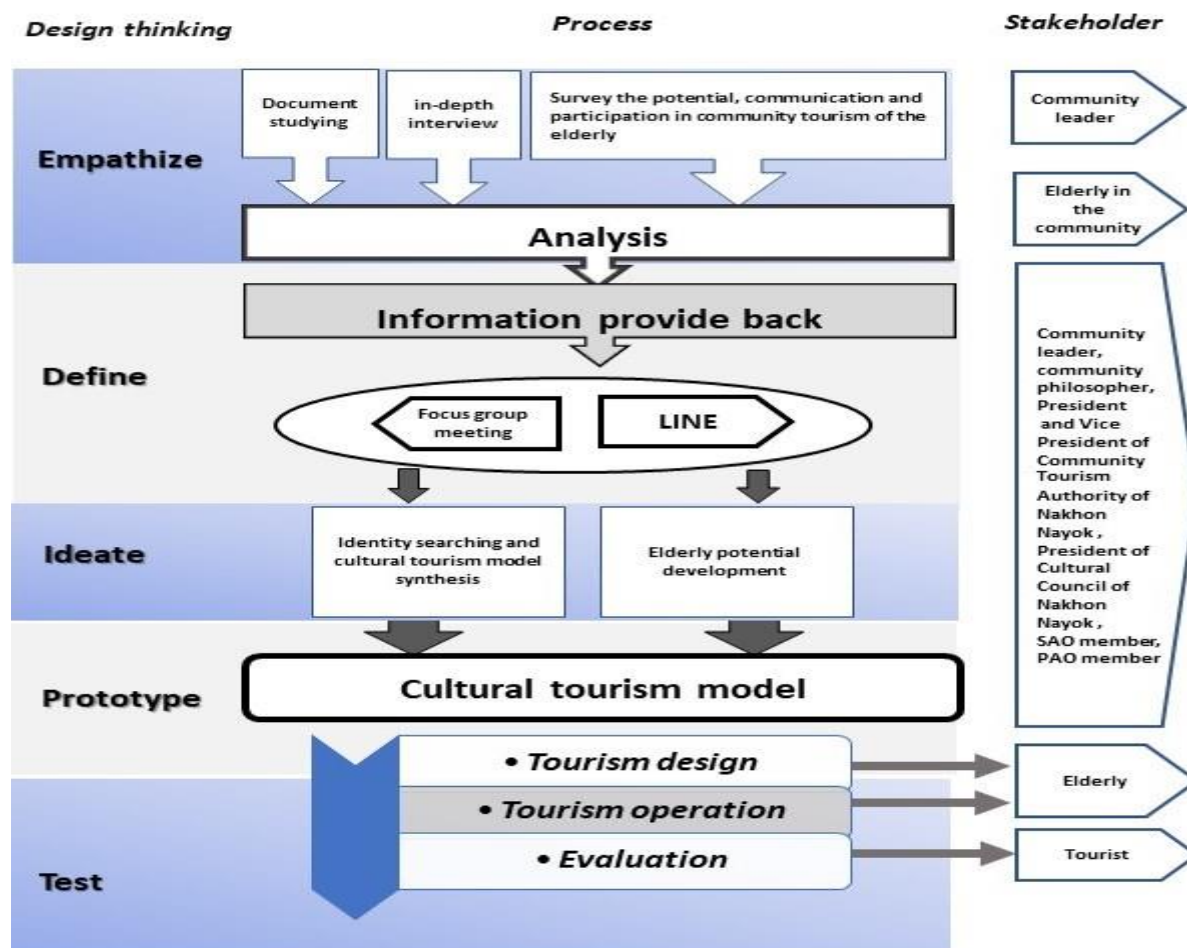
- Step 5** Brainstorming: to find out the identity that consistent to the cultural tourism and to synthesize the models that consistent to the elderly. It needs really community participation in the process, participation in information exchange, participation in opinion exchange and participation in brainstorming to find out the identity that consistent to the cultural tourism. Allow the elderly in the community to participate in the process to find out a suitable identity for cultural tourism by group meeting.
- Step 6** Elderly potential development: the elderly who operate the cultural tourism are the ones who have cultural knowledge and local wisdom from first-hand experience, but they still have concerns about how to communicate by storytelling with the different ages people in a fun way. The potential development of the elderly in storytelling skill is necessary, therefore the elderly can improve and use their storytelling skill for this tourism operation through group meetings.
- Step 7** The elderly group meetings to create a cultural tourism model: They have participation from start at step of tourism design, operation, and evaluation by bring the elderly to participate in meeting group and regular online communication with the LINE application at every stage. The elderly in the community ends up with highly cooperate with the tourism operating process as a result.
- Step 8** Set up the experimental community tourism: let the created ethnic cultural tourism model to really use.
- Step 9** Evaluation and lesson learned: The new tourism guidelines to develop further by use the train traveling have been developed after evaluation and lessons learned from the elderly group who operate the cultural tourism in the community. The problem would be improved is about the time to connect of tourism attraction and adjust for the appropriate time schedule.

The evaluation of traveller according to a survey of satisfaction with the cultural tourism that operated by the elderly: The highest level of satisfaction of tourism was the readiness of activities operating, the second was high level of satisfaction with the local knowledge and cultural potential of the elderly and high level of satisfaction in all aspects.

**Table 2** Mean and standard deviation of cultural tourism satisfaction

| Satisfaction   | $\bar{X}$   | S.D.        | Interpretation    | Rank |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------|
| Train travel   | 3.52        | 1.326       | GOOD <sup>†</sup> | 16   |
| Traveling by tourist tram                              | 3.76        | 1.300       | GOOD              | 14   |
| Storytelling of Wat Fang Klong                         | 4.27        | .911        | GOOD              | 9    |
| Storytelling of the Textile Center                     | 4.33        | .692        | GOOD              | 6    |
| Storytelling of Bai Si Su Kwan Thai Phuan activities   | 4.21        | .960        | GOOD              | 11   |
| Visiting the Pa Phuan at Pak Phli Museum               | 4.30        | .637        | GOOD              | 7    |
| 3 Lam Shows (Lam Phuan, Lam Tad, and Ram Thon)         | 4.36        | .699        | GOOD              | 3    |
| Thai Phuan Textile Center activities                   | 4.36        | .742        | GOOD              | 3    |
| Visiting Wang Bon Reservoir                            | 4.30        | .847        | GOOD              | 7    |
| Snack (morning), banana, salted egg and coffee         | 3.67        | 1.315       | GOOD              | 15   |
| Afternoon snack: steamed chives dumplings (Na Hin Lat) | 4.18        | 1.103       | GOOD              | 12   |
| Dessert: Krayakoo rice                                 | 4.00        | 1.000       | GOOD              | 13   |
| Tok Pha Sai (Traditional Lunch)                        | 4.36        | .895        | GOOD              | 3    |
| Ancient Pad Thai (dinner) on the train                 | 4.24        | .969        | GOOD              | 10   |
| The elderly is ready to organize tourism activities.   | 4.55        | .617        | EXCELLENT         | 1    |
| The elderly has cultural potential and local wisdom.   | 4.42        | .708        | GOOD              | 2    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>4.16</b> | <b>.588</b> | <b>GOOD</b>       |      |

A participatory communication model was developed from the aforementioned steps to promote tourism based on ethnic cultural identity, Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province (as shown in Figure 1)



**Figure 1:** Model of participatory communication for promoting tourism based on ethnic cultural identity, Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province

## Discussion

The following characters are present in participatory communication for promoting tourism based on ethnic cultural identity by the elderly in Nakhon Nayok Province:

**1. Participation by persons** refers to the participation of the elderly as the community research team such as Headmen in Nong Saeng Sub-District, Chairman and Vice President of the Thai Phuan Community Tourism Promotion Club in Pak Phli District and the leaders of the Ban Mai, Ban Fang Klong, Ban Ko Wai, and Ban Tha Daeng communities that have meeting and coordinate with the Phranakhon Rajabhat University's faculty members. In addition, the participation in provincial level is the Chief of Provincial Community Development of Nakhon Nayok Province, President of the Cultural Council Nakhon Nayok Province, Member of Provincial Administrative Organization. This participation causes a new route of cultural tourism in Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province (Give thanks to Abbot of Wat Fang Klong Phrakhru Wiriyanyuk, Priest of Pak Phli District).

2. **Participation by content** refers to using tourism content based on ethnic cultural identity. The elderly of Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province community have local wisdom, full of experience accumulated over a long time, thus they can conserve the ethnic culture until now such as Thai Phuan language, Heet Sip Song traditions, regional cuisine, regional dressing and performing arts. All are accumulated as knowledge in the elderly that full of participation power to give information to community, information of the elderly themselves and Information on cultural tourism development and local wisdom. The elderly is dedicated to transfer these knowledges to the next generation for sustainable of ethnic and culture. The participation in this level is among of community leaders, community philosophers and academics from Phranakhon Rajabhat University.

3. **Participation by process** refers to the community elderly that participate in research projects such as compile the research question, participate in community information giving, participate in planning for the tourism based on ethnic cultural identity, participate in getting benefit from this cultural tourism and participate in prototype tourism operating. In this point, there are only two participants: a group of elderly community leaders and the academics from Phranakhon Rajabhat University. The participatory action research is the coordinating in participatory procedures in every steps. The participation in this level is among of the community leaders, community philosopher, community elderly and academics from Phranakhon Rajabhat University.

**Level of communication participation** (Kaewthep, Kanpai and Sathapitanon, 2000 referred to Roongkasem et al. 2015, Puksawat, 2021) are as follows:

1. **First Level: participation as a receiver/user.** It is the lowest level of participatory communication. The elderly in the community participate in communication process as the receiver and as sender to send back the information.

The participation communication for promoting tourism based on ethnic cultural identity enables the communities to exchange ethnic cultures and cultural identity of communities in each sub-district, to share experiences and wisdom of Self-community, and develop skill of the elderly. This participation similar as Audience, Receiver and User.

2. **Second Level: participation as a sender/producer.** It is a higher-level communication step. The elderly participates as messengers and producers.

The elderly group operate together the actual tourism, establish a new route for cultural tourism that consist of cultural communication, such as Thai Phuan dressing, Thai Phuan dialect, and Thai Phuan performing arts. This participation similar as a sender/producer/co-producer/co-exhibitor.

3. **Third Level: participation as a planner/policymaker.** The highest level of participation, the elderly participates in the communication process from planning, decision making, participatory content and activities creating, scheduling, system planning and budget administration and after that have participation in plan development and evaluation of the project. The one point to keep in mind is that while the participation moves to higher level the proportion of community participation moves to smaller.

In this research, the elderly has participation in communication for promoting tourism based on ethnic cultural identity, including to planning, decision making, content creating, model and activities of cultural tourism, activity scheduling in each part, administration, and budget management by the elderly themselves, including development plans before and during

this cultural tourism arrangement. They also have lessons learned together. In addition, the elderly is provided the new rout of ethnic cultural tourism to "Tourism Authority of Thailand, Nakhon Nayok Province" and Nakhon Nayok Province leaders in order to establish sustainable tourism routes. This participation similar as planners and policymakers.

### *The change from participatory communication model creating*

There have numerous changes of the elderly in the community.

1. **Change the concept of tourism** – It was “Change from a visiting of the Learning Center to the real tourism,” It is a breaking through concept. Nakhon Nayok province is famous in ecotourism, a few tourists travel for cultural tourism. The majority of cultural tourism tourist to Pak Phli District in Nakhon Nayok Province come to learn about ethnic cultures in community learning center. The beginning of community learning centers concept was that the government agencies or education institute come to train or study in the community. The new concept of tourism affects to the tourism pattern. By the participatory communication, brainstorm the opinions from all parties and cooperation, the result is real cultural tourism in new concept. It looks like a test chapter of cultural tourism that is reflected through the creation of new tourism routes, travel by train and connect the cultural identity tourist point in Pak Phli District by tourist tram, to give visitors an unforgettable experience.
2. **Change in confidence of value** - The elderly population of Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province, has potential and has a wealth amassing of local knowledge. They have fully readiness potential for real tourism development. The participatory communication makes more confident of the elderly to develop a new model for cultural tourism.
3. **Change in opportunity viewpoint for income** - The main question of this research is how to transcend by making cultural tourism enjoyable and appropriate for people of all ages. As a result, the community uses the process of participatory communication with the elderly to promote tourism by participate in the planning, operation, and benefits assessment processes. This will help the elderly in the community gain new skills and provide a source of income.
4. **Change the communication quality by storytelling skill** - Making a difference, the story has been modified to make it a humorous storytelling, replace the knowledge lecture style of instructor for the impressive experience of the tourists.
5. **Change the elderly perceptions of their own worth** - The conversion of cultural capital into economic capital needs a creating to make different and novelty, this form of capital conversion that allow the elderly to realize their own worth as well. In Addition, it can boost tourism, creative tourism activities and variety of tourism product for economic sustainable.

### *Recommendation for Utilization*

1. According to the research, "Communication through group meetings" has led the elderly to participate in cultural tourism and community tourism. As a result, it should be used for direct communication in community activities like agricultural tourism and those in other activity that need for community participation.
2. The social media using in the elderly is very common, especially the application "LINE." Therefore, creating a LINE group will give the elder another channel for the participatory communication.
3. The participatory data analysis, participatory co-synthesis of elderly consistent pattern, information providing back and idea exchange make a balanced two-way

communication which was important guideline to create the community participation and can apply to use in local development for the really needs of the community.

4. By the elderly participation in thinking, planning, evaluation, and benefit-taking, it led to the successful tourism set up. In addition, the elderly increase their communication potential and they are more open to change and improve themselves. The Design thinking process can be used to ensure that the elderly understand in overview to see their problem and weakness and get it to design and develop, build a prototypes and evaluation, then find the ways to improve.

## Recommendation

1. The goal of cultural tourism is to convert cultural capital into economic capital, which can grow into other forms of creative economies such as community product development.
2. The goal of ethnic branding is to increase awareness of the community among those outside it by educating them about it and promoting the ethnic travel.

## Conclusion

Thailand will become a super-aged society in the following ten years after becoming a fully aged society in 2022. This has an impact on the country's development in 2031 in terms of both productivity and budget. Therefore, encouraging the elderly to use their potential to earn money in jobs suitable for their local community will have a variety of effects. It will make the elderly become quality seniors according to the World Health Organization's concept of "Active Ageing," this is necessary.

In this research, a mixed research process was used to identify a guideline to create a communication model to promote tourism based on ethnic cultural identity through the social innovation processes that lead to changes in the elderly thinking concept. The elderly in the community is full of knowledge about their culture and the key to get the elderly participation is two-way symmetrical communication. The content is equally understandable to the sender and the recipient. The providing back information to the community, participation in every stage, transforming the community into a research team with participation in sharing concepts, plans, actions, benefits, evaluation, exchanges, learning and dialogue, all of it are the communication for local development. The participatory communication that uses the ritualistic model can produce effective communication.

**The research product** consists of 1) a cultural identity based on ethnicity that is appropriate for tourism in Nakhon Nayok Province 2) to understand the potential and communication character of the elderly 3) a cultural tourism model for Nakhon Nayok Province based on the elderly potential and 4) a participatory communication model that was developed to promote cultural tourism by the elderly potential in Nakhon Nayok Province.

**The research result** consists of 1) Ethnic cultural tourism products based on the potential of the elderly and operated by the elderly 2) A guideline to develop potential of the elderly towards a potential more consistent with cultural tourism such as the development of storytelling skills and further development guidelines like digital workforce development, online media transfer skills training, etc. and 3) The elderly realizes and have confidence in their potential and worth.

**The research impact** consists of 1. Economy aspect: Generating enough income for the elderly to support themselves. 2. Social aspect: 1) Helping the elderly maintain their realizing of worth 2) Setting a model to develop the elderly potential and 3) Fostering the happiness in the family to avoid the lack of warmth in the elderly 3. Environment aspect: 1) Sustainability in the composition of the elderly population 2) The elderly has a high quality of life and hold strong values 3) Establish a society in which the elderly is not a burden and 4) Establish a network of the elderly community enterprises 4. Fundamental knowledge aspect: 1) A model to manage the potential of the elderly; and 2) A process innovation to develop potential of the elderly and reduce the burden condition of the elderly.

Above all, the outcome of this is smiles, pride, enjoyment, and happiness at being able to participate in and take part in the community cultural tourism.

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