

**KRABI GOES GREEN?
A CASE STUDY IN DESTINATION BRANDING**



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ABSTRACT

Tourism destinations need to possess a certain kind of characteristics in order to be able to influence travelers to visit and to define sense of place. Thailand's tourism industry is one of the forefront industries driving Thai economy. However, in 2018 Maya Bay was closed due to poor management and was a result of negative branding image. In 2020 Krabi is branded itself as 'Krabi Goes Green' in order to bring the city to become a quality tourist destination by 2026.

This research aims to examine whether Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' can be a paradigm for destination branding in Thailand by using a holistic qualitative approach through the analysis of Krabi provincial strategic policy and interview from tourism stakeholders.

KEY WORDS: Destination Branding/ Krabi Goes Green/ Green Tourism

27 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Choices for holiday destination is a vital indicator for today's aspiring consumers who choose to spend time and money at the places where offers emotional appeal. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) marked the twenty-first century tourism destinations as fashion accessories. Consumers need to experience it otherwise out-of-trend. Style and materials are indeed crucial components when considering tourism destinations as fashion accessories. Tourism destinations also have to possess a certain kind of characteristics in order to be able to influence travelers to visit and to define sense of place. This makes tourism as one of the most crucial economic sectors in driving the country.

Tourism has been undergone with continuous growth and fall over decades. It is one of the most crucial and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. It often associates with the development of new destinations and a key driver for socio-economic progress in numerous countries in the world. Tourism is one of the service sectors and has always been a significant source of income for numerous countries or even a main source of income for the entire countries. It brings in a large amount of income into a local economy in the form of purchasing goods and services needed by tourists in several related sectors such as agriculture, construction, public health and telecommunication. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) found that in 2019 international tourist arrivals grew 4% made it to be 1.5 billion total international tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2020). This indeed is driven by various factors such as a growing middle class, a relatively strong global economy, affordable travel costs, accessible visa facilitation and technological advances. It can be said that tourism is now becoming the world's third largest export category after chemicals and fuels.

The number of international tourist arrivals and receipts around the world are increasing every year, however, in the past several years the aftermaths surrounding with unsustainable tourism have intensified at major destinations around the world resulted in negative destination branding image. Research investigated that Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) facilitate brand image of a destination by constantly accomplishing relationship between destination identity, induced image and visitors' experience (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). Branding a tourist destination based upon available resources makes it easier to meet tourists' needs. If a destination is associated with negative destination branding, how a destination can position itself to be able to compete with others.

Thailand is a country located in the center of mainland Southeast Asia. It embodies with diverse cultures and ecosystems including serene beaches in the East and the South, hilly forested areas in the North and the East and the green rice paddle fields in the Central. *Condé Nast Traveller*, a world-renowned traveler magazine, ranks Thailand the 7th among the Top 20 Best Countries in the World by Readers' Choice Awards 2020 (Condé Nast Traveller, 2020). Tourism has been one of the most significant sectors in driving Thai economy, in which continuously brings high income for Thailand. Thai governments perceive tourism as a key tool to drive the national economy with the goals to reduce poverty and lower income inequality. In 2019 Thailand had welcomed over 39 million visitors from over the world. This generated more than 1.9 trillion Baht in income (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). It was accounted for 21.9% in Gross Domestic Production (GDP) (KNOEMA, n.d.). This generates opportunities for local businesses and employment, nonetheless there are a few negative sides of tourism in Thailand related with unsustainable issues at countless famous destinations resulted in negative destination branding. Several of which involve with poor waste management in Pattaya, tourist's scams including 'Zero Dollar Tours' and over-tourism at the world's most celebrated beach, Maya Bay in Krabi.

Krabi is the southern province of Thailand, located in the Andaman Coast where idyllic beaches lie and limestone formation landscapes are. It is one of the most

picturesque provinces in Thailand. The province has numerous tourist attractions ranging from tropical islands, palm beaches, forest waterfall and caves attractions. It has been known to both domestic and international travelers for several decades and the numbers of visitors are increasing every year. In 2019 Krabi welcomed over 4.9 million visitors which grew 4% and made it to be 84 million Baht in total receipt (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). This ranks Krabi as the fourth most visited province in Thailand.

In 2020 Krabi is encapsulated in the brand, 'Krabi Goes Green' (Krabi City, 2020). The brand was at first a result of local community opinions to place Krabi as green destination. The local community proposes three main approaches which are limiting and conserving natural resources in terms of Krabi people will reduce natural resource usage and maintain greenness in the City. The pilot areas are at national parks, wetlands and Krabi River. The second approach is to promote green piggy bank. Krabi people realize that income of tens of millions of Baht generated from tourism comes from green areas. Therefore, it is time for Krabi people to drop their shares back to this green piggy bank to preserve natural resources. This requires government officials to share some incomes collecting from admission fees to maintain local resources, not to bring all income back to the central authority like in the past likewise private sectors should help organizing such corporate social responsibility events as mangrove planting and beach cleaning; and public sectors should help raising awareness and funds for socially and/or environmentally friendly projects. The third approach is to create public green spaces virtually or physically in order for local people to knowledge themselves in sustainable development subjects. The reasons behind it lie within the fact that Krabi people had encountered with more natural disasters such as floods and droughts more often; and natural resources got depleted faster. Furthermore, in 2018 Maya Bay was closed due to over-tourism and poor destination management. The Maya Bay is located at Phi Phi Le Island in Krabi Province. It is a stunningly exquisite bay surrounded by high cliffs and silky soft white sand along the bay. It rises to fame when the Hollywood Blockbuster, "*The Beach*" starred by Leonardo DiCarprio filmed there in 2000 (Cripps

& Olarn, 2019). Statistics shows that Maya Bay welcomed more than 4,000 excursionists making 200 boats trips daily is clearly a result of over carrying capacity (Koh & Fakfare, 2020). In reference to Dr. Thon Thamrongnawaswat, the marine scientist, mentioned that Maya Bay's carrying capacity is cut in half from 4,000 to 2,000 excursionists making 100 boats trips daily (Hongthong, 2018). This raised a considerably basic question to the local community in which direction should Krabi move forward so as not to harm the resources and preserve the environment for future generations.

‘Krabi Goes Green’ is a part of a master plan of Krabi provincial strategic policy to promote sustainable development in all aspects – from agriculture to tourism. It aims to develop green tourism and upgrade tourism to international standards so as to build capacity on agricultural production and value-added products along with clean and alternative energy development. The policy can be divided into six different strategies such as 1) Clean City 2) Green City 3) Safety City 4) Healthy City 5) Wealthy City and 6) Quality Tourist Destination City (Krabi City, 2020). All strategies will be employed from tourism point of view to assess destination branding.

This research paper aims to examine whether Brand ‘Krabi Goes Green’ can be a paradigm for destination branding. The research question is, can Brand ‘Krabi Goes Green’ by applying place brand identity model be a model for other tourism destinations in Thailand despite the fact that there has never been have any tourist destinations in Thailand brand itself. An incorporating a review of information in the public domain from Krabi provincial strategic policy on ‘Krabi Goes Green’ and interviews are employed to assess.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 DEFINITIONS

2.2.1 Green Tourism

The notion of “*Green Tourism*” is defined as the environmentally friendly tourism as known as, ecotourism in which all people are encouraged to engage in tourism activities in an environmentally friendly way that minimize the impacts to the environment but still maximizing economic benefits (Jones, 1987). It is about being and environmentally friendly tourist and/or providing environmentally friendly tourism services. There are numerous opportunities for green travel available worldwide. Green tourism targets at urban travelers who have a holiday making's style to countryside and/or lesser known destinations and place the importance on reducing stress from daily life by staying close to nature. Furthermore, it involves small-sized and/or individually owned tourism facilities and interaction with the host community. Several authors suggest that green tourism is similar to the concept of eco-tourism in a way which is a nature-based tourism (Fennell, 1999). Green tourism as a form of tourism could be understood in a way which put a strong consideration on involving environmentally friendly tourism manners (Yokoyama, 1998).

According to Yamazaki (1994), the development of green tourism consists of three phases which are in the late 1940s when tourism amenities were advanced for World War II veterans; in the 1960s there were a large number of vacant farm houses and other farming facilities catching the interests of rural tourists; and in the 1980s farm cottages were introduced in the European countries and were being subsidized to reduce the depopulation in the rural areas and to revive the region via tourism. He also claimed that due to the socio-economic changes it increased the awareness of socially and

environmentally responsible attitudes and practices. It, therefore, can be concluded that a social climate change introduced the concept of green tourism.

Green tourism, in reference to Krabi provincial strategic policy (2020), is defined in terms of all parties involved in the tourism industry enhancing to engage in sustainable development in all aspects. It includes conserving and restoring natural resources and environment as well as implementing tourism activities in an environmentally friendly manner in order to make Krabi as quality tourism destination city. This is also to develop basic infrastructure that is to facilitate tourism. Krabi's green tourism, moreover, put a strong emphasis on creating values for all sectors for being a good host, developing quality tourism personnel and a variety of tourism activities which is in line with sustainable tourism. It also develops safety and protection system to tourists and local community and creates a positive image of being tourism destination known nationally and internationally.

Likewise, green tourism as defined by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is the commitment towards socially and environmentally sustainable practices for the hospitality and tourism sectors (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2011). It introduces 'Seven Green Concepts' as guiding principles to all tourism stakeholders. The concepts are - 1) *Green Heart* serves to raise socially and environmentally awareness; 2) *Green Logistics* serve to encourage environmentally friendly modes of transportation such as electric vehicles, bicycles and public transportation; 3) *Green Destinations* serve to promote responsible managed tourist destinations, 4) *Green Communities* serve to support community-based tourism which still preserving local community identity; 5) *Green Activities* serve to promote tourism activities that are in line with local culture and environment; 6) *Green Services* serve to encourage tourism service providers to manage businesses in a consciousness and eco-friendliness way in line with meeting the international standard quality; and 7) *Green Plus* serves to encourage people to take part in volunteering opportunities.

2.2.2 Destination Branding

According to the New Oxford American Dictionary (2001), brand (noun) is *“a trade mark, goods of a particular make: a mark of identification made with a hot iron, the iron used for this: a piece of burning or charred wood, (verb): to mark with a hot iron, or to label with a trade mark.”*

The word “brand” has now a commercial application. It is a marketing tool to describe who you are and what you do through the use of visual identity, verbal dialog and actions. Brand is how people categorize, distinguish and recognize you. It is the image that consumers have in mind. Considering destination or place brands are a collective creation of stakeholders such as residents, authorities, businesses and other intermediaries which is charged with symbolic meanings. Brand is interrelated with branding concept. Branding is probably one of the most powerful weapons in marketing. Ries and Trout (2001) argued in their book called, ‘Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind’ that the branding concept is not only valid with a brand but also to a company, person or even place. This goes in the similar direction with Kotler and Pfoertsch (2010) in terms of that the product can be defined as physical goods, service, place, person and/or idea.

Destination branding refers to the practice of applying brand strategy and other marketing techniques to the socio-economic and political developments to a particular place. The destination branding model concentrates on the building of brand identity and image. It is

“the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk.”- (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005).

This generally can be assumed that tourists choose a destination not only because of what a destination can offer but also what a destination is defined. It is to fulfill tourists who are seeking lifestyle self-actualization and experiencing a destination in a more emotionally attached rather than tangible elements such as attractions and accommodations. Considering brand Western Australia (WA) as example. Brand WA was created in order to differentiate Western Australia on the international market. Crockett and Wood (2004) stated that Brand WA was an innovative and cohesive approach to destination branding in terms of that it positioned itself as a premier nature-based tourism market by employing several elements in branding concept and marketing mixed strategies. Branding the destination has always been studied throughout the world perhaps over two-third of the world's tourism destination (Piggott, 2001).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Place Brand Identity Model

Place brand identity model is all combinations of all elements such as brand name, tagline, brand voice, brand positioning, brand associations and brand personality of a brand. It is how a brand identified itself and how the brand wants its customers to perceive it. This research paper will employ Leslie de Chernatony's brand identity model to examine Brand 'Krabi Goes Green'. Leslie de Chernatony's core elements of brand identity model (2001) comprises of vision, values, personality and unique characteristic; as well as Ruzzier's (2013) proposed theory of place brand identity which adds on mission and benefit elements. These two additional elements are very crucial in identifying destination branding in terms of that mission and vision will give a clear guidance for a destination's direction and benefits will allow a destination to attract stakeholders.

Given the explanation to Chernatony's and Ruzzier's elements of brand identity. Some elements are interrelated somehow. Similarly, brand vision and brand value that differentiate and characterize the brand and enable the brand to fulfill the objective. Brand value also shares among all parties concerned including in tourism stakeholders and drives behavior and interaction among stakeholders. Personality likewise relates to place brand personality in terms of whether a person or a place must possess certain kind of characteristics that are attributed to a brand name. Unique characteristic is attributes or a place's attraction to differentiate self from others and to position self, ranging from functional to psychological attributes (Echter & Ritchie, 1993). Benefits of a place enable people to think of what the place can offer. These elements serve brand promises in a way that place's brand functional and psychological values create experiences. Chernatony (2001) also includes stakeholders in place brand identity model because relationships among different stakeholders influence a place's brand promises

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Below is this research paper conceptual framework based upon the literature review and theoretical framework. This research paper assumes that Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' can be a paradigm for destination branding.



Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper was conducted using qualitative approach as a mean to draw research findings. It is to investigate Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' can be a paradigm for destination branding in Thailand by examining six strategies and practices from 'Krabi Goes Green' Policy. An incorporating a review of secondary data in the public and a collection of primary data to place brand identity are employed to assess.

3.1 REVIEW OF SECONDARY DATA

The review of secondary data purely from the information in the public domain from 'Krabi Goes Green' provincial strategic policy.

3.1.1 Brand 'Krabi Goes Green'

Sustainability has always been a core pillar in Krabi for several years due to local sentiments regarding unsustainable tourism issue and protests against the proposed power plant in Nhua Khlong in 2014. In 2016 local authorities and all stakeholders including public, private and community framed a brand called, 'Krabi Goes Green'. It is a master plan of Krabi provincial strategic policy which levels down from Thailand's 20 Years National Strategic Plan to 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan to Regional Development Plan to Provincial Development Plan and underlines the commitment towards sustainable development in all aspects while enhancing Thailand's competitiveness.

3.1.2 Vision

“Krabi is a nice city, lovely people, central service hub and gateway of history, art and culture together with being quality city (Q-City) in 2026”.

3.1.3 Mission

1) To promote cleanliness of the city which is up to the standard of being quality city. This includes cleanliness of the city itself, development of morality of people's minds and encouragement of transparency.

2) To sustainably preserve and recover environments and ecosystems as well as encouraging local people to use alternative renewable energy.

3) To develop infrastructures in order to facilitate people in the city.

4) To improve living quality of people by promoting hygienic activities and practices; and equal basic welfare accessibility.

5) To advance quality of education which up to regional standard such as ASEAN's Standard while preserving religion, art and culture.

6) To promote local employment in terms of arranging marketplaces to help generate incomes within society and encouraging the application of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

7) To promote good governance.

8) To promote green tourism via combining local art and cultures in any part of traveling so that income will be generated to locals as well as creating uniqueness of tourism which is green tourism.

‘Krabi Goes Green’ has six strategies which are - 1) Clean City 2) Green City 3) Safety City 4) Healthy City 5) Wealthy City and 6) Quality Tourist Destination City (Krabi City, 2020). Each identifies strategic goals and approaches to place Krabi as green destination.

3.1.4 Clean City

‘Clean City’ refers as when Krabi is physically and mentally clean. Given a clarification. It is to make the City integrates in cleanliness in terms of space and mind among citizenship inhabitants. This includes government officials not to engage in non-transparent activities like corruption. There have been several initiatives and projects run by Krabi Municipality to promote Krabi as Clean City. One of which is TRASH Project. It is a result from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) jointly signed by Krabi Municipality and private sectors namely Unilever Thailand and Zero West Yolo Company to raise the awareness on plastic waste management (Prachachat, 2019). Krabi was selected as the first prototype province for TRASH (Tourism to Recycling Actions for the Schools and Homes) Project due to its ‘Krabi Goes Green’ provincial strategic policy.

3.1.5 Green City

‘Green City’ is described as when Krabi City has green spaces embedded with abundant natural resources and biodiversity; people have a conscious mind to take part in of natural resource conservation and restoration activities; and have alternative energy for use. Several actions include the promotion of renewable energy among locals and businesses. Given a picture of how Krabi engaged ‘Green City’ development. In 2018 Krabi was awarded the “Global Low-Carbon Ecological Scenic Spot” by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok (TAT Newsroom, 2018).

3.1.6 Safety City

‘Safety City’ ensures safety in their lives and assets in various fields such as roads, infrastructure, traffic, electricity, lighting and drugs for everyone in and around the city. This means its people are safe in the environment and children are protected from drugs.

3.1.7 Healthy City

‘Healthy City’ guarantees good quality of lives of Krabi people. This includes number of public parks and gyms are available as well as accessibility to public health services.

3.1.8 Wealthy City

‘Wealthy City’ refers Krabi as when its citizens live their lives according to the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy – not too much exactly right. Local people have equal access to quality public education. Doing business in such a way that is not harm others. Promoting traditional and cultural activities.

3.1.9 Quality Tourist Destination City

‘Quality Tourist Destination City’ is defined under the provincial policy as making Krabi as a global city. The strategy aims Krabi to be the quality tourist destination city where tourism’s resources will be developed in order to fulfill consumer’s need and to be the destination attracting to both domestic and international tourists which is in line with sustainable development practices. This will in turns generate income to the local economy. Its practices are to develop tourism products and promote Krabi as green destination via green tourism brand as well as increasing potential to meet with the international standards and connecting tourism to regional and international level.

In order to make Brand ‘Krabi Goes Green’ successful, local authorities and all sectors including public, private, community engage in several practices, for example, local authorities such as Krabi Provincial Department enforces renewable energy usage among tourism stakeholders and local people and sustainable practices including the banning of plastic use; representatives from both public and private sectors in Krabi Province launched, ‘Krabi We Care’ Project under the COVID-19 prevention to assure local and international visitors that Thailand is open for tourism and travel activities as usual (Rongpon, 2020). In addition, the Tourism Authority of Thailand,

Krabi Office (TAT Krabi) launched, 'Krabi RT - We Are Krabi' Project which is a marketing concept to promote responsible tourism among all tourism stakeholders and TAT Krabi with the President of Krabi Tourism Association offer tour package that enforce low carbon tourism activities.

3.2 COLLECTION OF PRIMARY DATA

A holistic approach such as in-depth interviews requires to assess place branding identity. The in-depth interview via telephone call and in-person technique was employed to gain insight on how Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' that is in line with the provincial strategic policy is perceived and practiced among stakeholders involved in Krabi's tourism industry. Selected interviewees include Krabi Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Krabi's Destination Management Company and Krabi's Hotel Owners.

3.2.1 Interview Questions

The interview questions are open-ended questions so that the interviewees could feel free to share and express their opinion and the interviewer could get more insights and ideas from the interviewees' answer. The interview questions aim to examine how Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' promotes to place brand identity. The questions consist of two parts which are interviewees received the spectrum of brand identity elements as mentioned earlier in the literature review via e-mail and/or line; and interview sessions were took place via telephone call and in-person interview.

Due to confidential reason this research paper will not disclose real name of some interviewees, but rather use pseudonyms in some interviewees.

3.2.2 Sample of Interview Questions

1. Please tell me more about your background involved in Krabi's tourism industry.
2. What do you think of Krabi as 'Green Destination'?
3. How do you perceive Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' (which is in line with place brand identity model)?
4. What can you do to help promoting Brand 'Krabi Goes Green'?
5. When thinks of 'Green Destination' in Thailand are there any? Please identify.



CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research question is, can Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' by applying place brand identity model be a model for other tourism destinations in Thailand? As stated in Chapter (2) research framework is developed based upon paper related to this particular interest. The analysis of Krabi Goes Green Policy does highlight some key elements in a place brand identity model in accordance with research interviews and Krabi provincial strategic policy. This research will also compare Krabi to Phuket which are a vivid example of destination branding in Thailand along the line. The following sections will demonstrate interview results and research findings.

4.1 INTERVIEW RESULTS

4.1.1 Krabi Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand

The Director has been involved in the tourism industry for more than 20 years and been in this position for 1 year. Krabi as 'Green Destination' is complemented to each other due to natural resources available and the commitment towards sustainability from both public and private sectors as well as the New Normal trends that people are more concerned with environmental issue. Brand 'Krabi Goes Green', to him actually happened several years ago but it actually goes into practices when Krabi Provincial Department put it as provincial strategic policy. This, in turns creates even more commitment towards both public and private sectors. The reason why Krabi has to go green is because of its natural resources attributed to the City and social movement in the province so as to the kindness and friendly personality of local people. Just like the motto of Krabi that Krabi is a pleasant city where people are friendly. There are

several aspects of go green practicing now in Krabi such as the promotion of using renewable energy on Ko Lanta. This one is a collaboration among Ko Lanta Tourism Association, Krabi Provincial Department and Ministry of Energy. While TAT Krabi helps promoting Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' in terms of promoting low-carbon activities and green events in Krabi. Such a picturesque of Krabi low-carbon activity is indeed canoeing activity at several places in Krabi. The most renown one is at Thalen.

He thinks that Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' is only just now on creating awareness to local people of what it is and how it is practiced. It is not yet at the moment should be a case for destination branding in Thailand. When it comes to green destination in Thailand, the Director can think of Ko Mak Island in Trat and Nan Provinces in terms of both are positioning itself as green destinations. Ko Mak is quite small as such cannot be compared to destination branding while Nan is just at the beginning stage.

4.1.2 Destination Management Company

Ms. A is owner of small Destination Management Company (DMC) in Krabi and has been involved in promoting Krabi mainly to international market especially the European like the Scandinavian for 17 years. Her tourism product knowledge of Krabi will be more of to nature and beach (islands) destinations that is in line with the European consumer behavior. Her tour routes also include other Andaman provinces namely Phuket, Trang and Satun. Her company focuses on sustainable tourism concept in parallel with implementing positive impacts and minimizing negative impacts in tourism.

'Green Destination', to her, she has heard the terms for quite some years but it has become a priority of Krabi people for a couple of years since the proposed power plant protest. Her perception towards the concept is in terms of that Krabi has a lot of potential to become a green destination since the foundation of the destination that is physically supportive. It is nature and beach-like destination. Not only that local people have a very harmonious lifestyle compared to other destinations like Phuket that I used

to live in and a harmonious lifestyle of people here is a key to success to drive the province to that 'Green Destination' direction. She is familiar with Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' due to her involvement with the local authorities like TAT. The Brand at first involves with using natural and renewable energy in Krabi and creates less impact to the environment in whichever possible ways, but now it is in Krabi's provincial strategic policy to promote 'Krabi Goes Green' by aiming to be a green destination together with quality destination. The brand itself is quite in the air. People are saying about it but less is practicing it. She thinks it also depends on which level of aiming to be green destination we are looking at. If it is where she came from (which is Denmark), practices of Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' are not enough. However, Thai authorities are doing quite good in promoting and enforcing responsible and sustainable practices towards locals. One thing she would like to point out is in terms of the continuity in promoting Brand 'Krabi Goes Green'. She does not want to see when the new authority comes policy changes.

In reference to Ms. A, if seeing Krabi as a brand it has a clear vision and a mission written in the official document. The provincial authorities are trying to differentiate Krabi as tourism destination from other destinations in Thailand like Phuket. From her experience, tourists always misunderstand Krabi and Phuket in terms of that they want to visit Phi Phi Island but they understand that the Island located in Phuket. The local authorities such as TAT tried so hard to differentiate tourism destination advertising pictures of Krabi to Phuket in terms of that Krabi's destination advertising picture is longtail boat and Phuket's destination advertising picture is gastronomy instead. Indeed, when looking at unique characters of Krabi it has unique landscapes where limestone rock formation lies around the province and the greenery landscape attributed to its personality. Visitors can obviously see this greenery landscapes the moment they arrive. If there are customers especially ask for eco-tourism tours Krabi will be the first choice that her company will offer to customers due to supply side availability.

Her company involves in promoting Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' in terms of offering responsible tour programs to customers. Such tours are to promote low activities like hiking and canoeing as well as supporting green accommodations and using refill bottle water when conducting tours. She has no clue when it comes to green destination in Thailand, only Nan.

4.1.3 Krabi's Hotel Owners 1

Mr. X is a mature entrepreneur who owned a 4-star hotel located in Ao Nang in Krabi. The hotel is result of his passion in hospitality industry for 50 years worldwide. He just recently relocated to Krabi in 2015 and opened the Hotel in 2018. He is a passion in sustainable tourism. The Hotel is inspired by Thai culture and nature surroundings and certified green globe standard. Mr. X has been working closely with Thai Officials and public sectors to promote at sustainable tourism in Krabi by initiating first from his hotel in terms of offering low carbon accommodations, activities and green services. He also educates local people of how to manage green hotel.

Krabi as 'Green Destination' according to Mr. X is where a destination offers sustainable and responsible tourism products, Krabi for example is obvious. He does not see any destinations in Thailand seriously offer green tourism.

Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' has he heard since the moment he started the business. It was at first the Initiative from both public and private sectors. It has been developed along the way and now as far as he knows it was Krabi's provincial strategic policy which has a clear sense of direction. If comparing Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' with destination branding theory, again vision and mission are clear. Personality of Krabi is clear in terms of physical appearance of the destination. Unique characteristics, likewise, is able to make Krabi be different from other beach-like destination like Phuket. Krabi is richer in terms of natural resources and cultures. Mission and value are interrelated somehow in terms of mission is a commitment of the province to make it happen and

once to happens it will automatically create the value of the province and it will be beneficial to the province in the long run.

As mentioned earlier Mr. X has worked closely with public sectors. 'Krabi We care' is initiative from him and his partners in Krabi in making Krabi safe from COVID-19 for tourists. When asking about green destination in Thailand besides Krabi Mr. X cannot identify.

4.2 THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENT AND INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

In relation to place brand identity model, Krabi provincial strategic policy does have a precise vision and mission statement of Brand 'Krabi Goes Green'; and strong strategic plans in promoting green tourism in Krabi. Both vision and mission strongly emphasize on how to make Krabi to be the quality city (Q-City) in 2026 which is in line with green tourism practices such as promoting green businesses and renewable energy as well as improving the livelihood of the local people. Thus, vision provides a specific time for the City to achieve its goal. Mission likewise identifies the provincial operational goals. All interviewees all agree that Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' promote place brand identity model in terms of that it has a clear vision and mission statement to promote sustainable development in all aspects in Krabi. The reason that Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' as written in the strategic provincial policy that in line with vision and mission of place brand identity is due to the fact that local authorities put forwards the Strategic Policy into practices even though it was just in a beginning process. Considering our interviewees who represent stakeholders in tourism industry. TAT Krabi enforces its tourism marketing activities which is in line with the Provincial Policy to endorse Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' in terms of enforcing green event initiatives when organizing marketing events and when doing Krabi's Tourism Product Presentation to travel agencies. The Brand is always at its core. Moreover, Destination Management Company's owner and Hotel's owners employ several missions of Brand 'Krabi Goes

Green' into their businesses. Several of which include promote local employment and green tourism in a way that their business supports green tourism activities such as canoeing and kayaking instead of jet ski.

The third element of place brand identity model is value. Value of Krabi lies with the ideal of abundant natural resources both on land and in sea as well as kindness of local people. Even though value element of place brand identity model does not clearly write in the strategic policy, it still can be determined that Krabi's values are those two mentioned earlier in terms of that in the official document it stresses the importance on conserving its natural resources in almost every possible way. Not to surprise, all respondents state that the most representative values of Krabi are nature, people and family-oriented traits of Krabi people as known as hospitality in tourism traits. In comparison to Phuket its values lie on the ideal of easily access and vibrant cultures. This means Phuket offers a wide variety of accessibility to Phuket whether from public buses to numerous flights. Not to mention numerous tourism facilities from boutique hotels to 5-star villas and countless tourism activities. This is the perceived image of Phuket in which our respondents refer to.

The fourth element is personality. Personality refers to a certain trait attributes to a brand. Krabi's personality is ruggedness. It does not obviously demonstrate in the strategic paper, however, it is written in the SWOT analysis section of the provincial strategic policy in terms of that Krabi posses a rich of natural advantages such as beautiful landscapes, serene beaches and mangrove forests which in turns could promote to be tourist destinations. The research interviewees agree that personality of Krabi lies with the greenness of the City and the advertorial picture of the longtail boat on turquoise sea. Phuket, on the other hand, its personality is convenience in terms of sophistication. This means Phuket offers more luxurious experiences to visitors than Krabi. Whereas Krabi has more ruggedness than Phuket in terms of outdoor adventures.

The fifth element is unique characteristics. Krabi definitely possess a certain kind of unique characteristics. As mentioned in the fourth element, Krabi's personality

refers to natural resources likewise its unique characteristic is the mangrove forests which make this part of the coastline unique and are rich in wildlife and nature. The respondents mentioned that because of natural resources available and stunning landscapes make it easier for Krabi to position itself as green destination. This makes Krabi differentiated from other tourist destinations in Thailand like Phuket. When speaking about unique characteristic of Phuket, it is often associated with the idea of convenience and luxury that attribute to Phuket.

The final element of place brand identity model is benefit. It refers to what Krabi can offer to visitors that creates psychological attributes. Such psychological attributes can be implied to the need and want to revisit Krabi again. According to the provincial strategic policy, Krabi's benefit lies with those six strategies which are- 1) Clean City 2) Green City 3) Safety City 4) Healthy City 5) Wealthy City and 6) Quality Tourist Destination City. All of which promote Krabi to be green destination. The research interviewees likewise highlight that the most significant Krabi benefit lies with being a quality of life destination meaning that living close relationship with unspoiled nature which in turns creates both locals and visitors to feel and have unique experiences. All of these elements – mission, vision, personality, value and unique characteristics in turns creates benefit to Krabi as Brand 'Krabi Goes Green'.

4.3 BRAND 'KRABI GOES GREEN'

This research paper investigates from interviewing main stakeholders in tourism industry whether Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' can be a case study for other tourist destinations branding in Thailand. If compares with destination branding elements, it is still lack of several touch points in terms of that people who do not involve in the tourism industry the Brand still possess superficial perceptions like up-in-the-air perception. They perceive Krabi as to Phi Phi Island and Aonang. This perception also applies with international tourists. Perhaps this is a marketing point-of-view to be further discusses of

how to publicly the Brand as green destination. Even though Krabi positions itself as a green destination it is deficient in a strong branding in several ways. One of which is image branding that its advertorial pictures of Krabi are still the picture of James Bond Island. It should rather be something like a landscape of limestone formation or kayaking at Thalen. Furthermore, its branding campaign of being green destination is in shortage of implementation. To demonstrate, even though there are both public and private sectors work together to promote Krabi as green destination there is no strong commitments from them. Whenever there is a new chief, the policy tends to change according to the new policy from new chief. While private sectors tend to promote green tourism in the face of their businesses. Few are doing it from their subconscious. When brand 'Krabi Goes Green' came to public in 2016, from then till now the Brand has been known for the power plant project rather than its branding campaign. This in turns projects only one side of a brand story of Krabi Goes Green in terms of clean energy. Its message does not project Krabi as green destination yet.

To answer the research question, can Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' by applying place brand identity model be a model for other tourism destinations in Thailand? This research paper investigates that a place brand identity model does not indicate the end of Brand 'Krabi Goes Green', but rather a development for strengthening the Brand identity. Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' at the moment should not be a paradigm of destination branding in Thailand, however, it can be case study for other tourism destination in Thailand to brand itself. Taking Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' will be a good starting point.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Destinations with a clear brand identity have always had advantages in today's competitive markets despite the fact that travel agencies provide consumers with information of those destinations. However, the choice of destinations lies within consumers. In light with the tourism industry there is a need to develop a clear identity and/or brand of a destination while reflecting on the personality. Krabi as one of the top-of-mind tourism destinations among both domestic and international travelers. It has attempted to brand itself as 'Krabi Goes Green' since 2016. It has not yet achieved its branding strategy according to place brand identity model even though the Brand has all elements in place brand identity model. It still absences of in terms of delivering brand image to both domestic and international consumers. There is also a lack of commitments from all stakeholders involved in tourism business especially local authorities or government officials. Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' is known to those involved in the circle.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations will be given as followed:

1. Krabi should put more on the advertising and marketing strategies into practices for tourism to capitalize on Brand 'Krabi Goes Green'. Such strategies include making promotional materials for Krabi and a solid branding campaign in order to convey audiences to perceive Krabi as green destination.

2. Krabi Provincial Authority should enforce and implement on a policy which will create win-win situation to all parties involved in tourism industry. Such policy as payments for environmental services and TAX reduction policy for those employing renewable energy usage.

5.3 LIMITATION IN THE SCOPE OF STUDY

Some limitations occur in the scope of study. This includes accessibility in the formal documents from Krabi Provincial Department in terms of that some projects and initiatives confidential and it is just the beginning of the fiscal year so projects and initiatives have not yet moved forward. Thus, by interviewing only 1 Krabi's Destination Management Company and 1 Krabi's Hotel Owners may not be able to effectively represent the service industry. The future researchers can increase the scope of study and the number of interviewees such as Krabi Municipality for better representative in the tourism context. Inbound Destination Management Company should also include in the process of analyzing Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' if wanting to see how outsiders perceived Krabi. Comparing other destination branding in Thailand should be included and analyzed in the study. Further researchers should conduct quantitative study among visitors who have been visited Krabi to investigate how they as outsiders perceive Brand 'Krabi Goes Green' or not.

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