

Cultural Heritage of the Urak Lawoi Sea Gypsy in Krabi Province with Environmental Conservation Tourism Routes

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to study the cultural heritage of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Koh Phi Phi in Krabi Province. The findings suggest that these heritages can be used to develop tourism that contributes to environmental conservation. This is because the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies live a life connected to the sea and coastal areas, with some areas encompassing wetlands. Therefore, tourism requires environmental conservation efforts. The study involved interviewing Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in Krabi Province and surveying the needs of tourists visiting and participating in activities with them. The study aimed to develop responsible travel routes that contribute to environmental conservation, fostering a sustainable tourism community.

Keywords: Sea Gypsy Urak Lawoi, Cultural Heritage, Environmental, Sustainable

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a creative industry that plays a key role in driving the country's economy. Thailand boasts a diverse base of natural, historical, and cultural resources, all spread throughout the country, attracting tourists from around the world (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2018). One of the key tourist destinations is the Andaman Sea provinces of Krabi, Ranong, Phang Nga, Phuket, Trang, and Satun, which collectively generate the country's highest tourism revenue. Krabi province boasts beautiful natural resources, world-famous tourist attractions (Phi Phi Island, Maya Bay), archaeological sites already registered and awaiting registration by the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture, and wetlands. Therefore, Krabi is a major tourist destination, generating top tourism revenue. It is a dream destination for tourists worldwide, and a must-visit destination, often returning once (Krabi Once is not enough). Its premium quality serves as an international living room, building confidence among both Thai and international tourists, particularly from Europe and Asia. Krabi province commands a significant number of visitors each year. In total, there are more than 6 million people, earning more than 119 billion baht in tourism income (Krabi Provincial Statistical Office, 2019).

Krabi Province, with its abundant resources and tourism reputation, is also a culturally diverse area. Home to the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies, Krabi has a distinctive identity and cultural heritage that is valuable for learning and sharing. This unique and captivating way of life is shared with those who experience its charming and natural atmosphere. Currently, visitors can learn from the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies residing on Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Koh Phi Phi. This cultural capital can be used to create economic value, attract tourists, and generate income for the local Urak Lawoi. Krabi Province's development direction is driven by environmentally friendly tourism,

preserving its natural beauty ("4 Years of Development into the Future... I am Krabi, 2021"), focusing on developing high-quality and sustainable tourism, enhancing its potential to meet international standards, leveraging diverse tourism lifestyles, and connecting regional and international tourism ("Provincial Development Plan (2023-2027), revised for fiscal year 2025."

The Urak Lawoi (sea, gypsies) are an ethnic group whose way of life is connected to the sea. They have identity, culture and wisdom and play an important role in coexisting with nature sustainably. They have knowledge in managing resources efficiently from their experiences and understandings that have been accumulated and passed down from their ancestors

The researchers therefore recognize the distinctive identity of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in Krabi Province as a valuable resource for lifestyle tourism. This approach can be used to develop environmental conservation routes, catering to the needs of ecotourists. Learning about the local wisdom and fishing practices can impress and delight tourists who experience the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies on various islands in Krabi Province. At the same time, the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies can use tourism to better promote their culture to outsiders. Furthermore, it can help raise awareness of the value of local culture, fostering pride and cherishing their indigenous culture among local Urak Lawoi members.

Therefore, this research aims to develop lifestyle activities based on the cultural heritage of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in the areas of Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Koh Phi Phi in Krabi Province. This lifestyle tourism model serves as a tool to preserve and add economic value to the cultural heritage of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in Krabi Province. It also contributes to environmental conservation by developing tourism activities and community management to prepare them for welcoming tourists. This motivates tourists to learn about and participate in ecotourism activities, allowing them to truly experience the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies' lifestyle and culture. This approach aims to develop sea gypsies in Krabi Province into sustainable tourism communities.

Research Objectives

1. To study the cultural heritage of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in the areas of Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Koh Phi Phi, Krabi Province.
2. To develop lifestyle activities based on the cultural heritage of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in the areas of Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Koh Phi Phi, Krabi Province.
3. To propose guidelines for managing lifestyle tourism by the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in the areas of Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Koh Phi Phi, Krabi Province.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research on the management of tourism according to the lifestyle of the Urak Lawoi people in Krabi Province consisted of quantitative research and qualitative research. The quantitative research was conducted using questionnaires to 400 Thai and foreign tourists visiting the sea gypsy communities of Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Laem Tong. The qualitative research was conducted by focusing on group discussions with sea gypsy leaders, local wisdom, government agencies, and tourism operators in the area. The sea gypsy communities of Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Laem Tong and Koh Phi Phi were interviewed three times with 20 people per area. The interviews were conducted with sea gypsy leaders and local wisdom in the areas of Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Laem Tong and Koh Phi Phi, with 5 people per area. This was to summarize the research results.

Data Collection Process

1. Study data on the sea gypsy community tourism areas of Koh Lanta, Koh Phi Phi, and Koh Jum through a review of relevant documents and field visits to collect data on tourism resources and activity formats.
2. Analyze data on the cultural heritage of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies in Krabi Province and the resulting tourism activities. This data was used to formulate questionnaires for use in surveying tourists regarding their perceptions, expectations, and needs from creative tourism.
3. Participate in meetings and observe tourism activities with relevant agencies and other sectors to gather data on various issues related to lifestyle tourism in Krabi Province to ensure the reliability and diversity of the data used in the analysis.
4. Analyze and synthesize data by objectives. Data obtained from field visits was separated into themes, categorized, compared, and analyzed by each area based on objectives. Data on resources and activity formats were analyzed. For other recommendations, qualitative data analysis was used. Quantitative data analysis was used to assess tourist perceptions, expectations, and needs.
5. The results of the analysis and synthesis were used in focus groups to summarize and evaluate the implementation of the guidelines, making improvements and corrections based on the recommendations.

6. The research findings were presented to the public for the benefit of the community and for policy recommendations to be implemented in a concrete

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Planting seagrass in the Koh Jum area, where the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies will learn to live with nature and care for their habitat to maintain its abundance. It is a home to rare marine animals such as sea turtles and dugongs. The deterioration of seagrass habitats is caused by nature, seasonal changes, and human activities. The Urak Lawoi sea gypsies on Koh Jum have crab banks to manage wet waste from households living near the coast, helping to reduce water contamination. As a result, seagrass in Krabi Province is abundant among the Andaman provinces.[13]

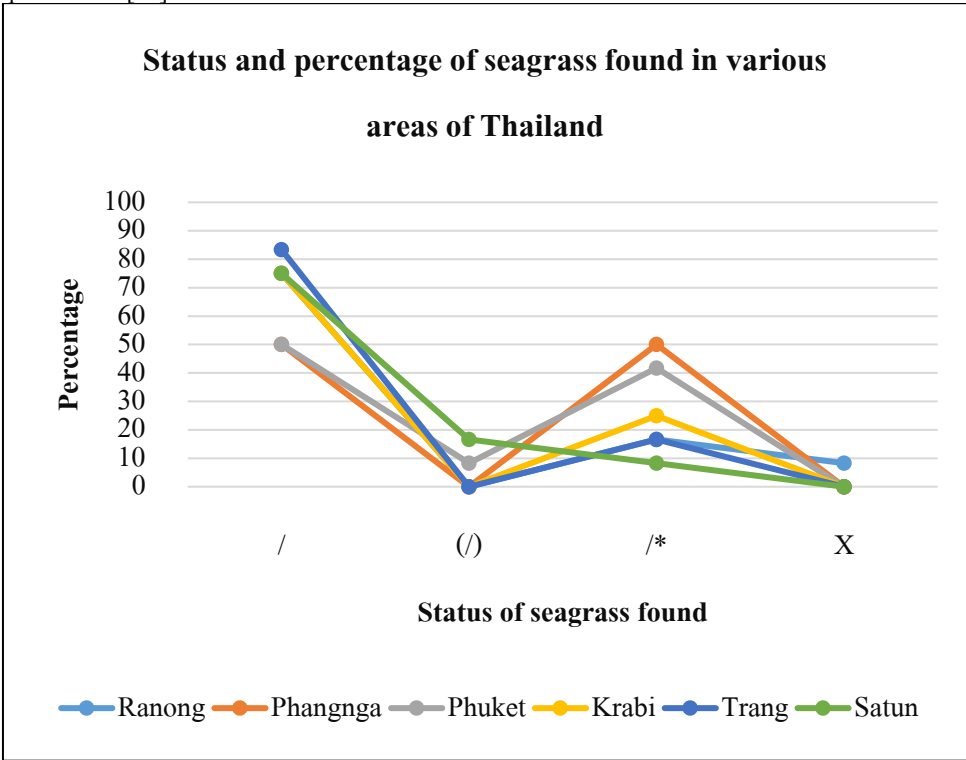


Figure 1. Showing seagrass in the Andaman provinces

Note: Tseagrass species found are as follows: *Cymodocea rotundata* (Cr), *Cymodocea serrulata* (Cs), *Enhalus acoroides* (Ea), *Halophila beccarii* (Hb), *Halophila decipiens* (Hd), *Halophila major* (Hj), *Halophila minor* (Hm), *Halophila ovalis* (Ho), *Halodule pinifolia* (Hp), *Halodule uninervis* (Hu), *Syringodium isoetifolium* (Si), and *Thalassia hemprichii* (Th).

Symbols: / indicates the type of seagrass currently found, (/) indicates the type of seagrass previously found, /* indicates the type of seagrass currently found and commonly found in almost every area of the province, and X indicates no seagrass was found

2. Using old ropes and fishing nets to make souvenirs and gifts for sale to tourists and allowing tourists to learn about art from garbage. Reducing garbage in the sea helps reduce the death rate of marine animals, turtles, and dugongs.

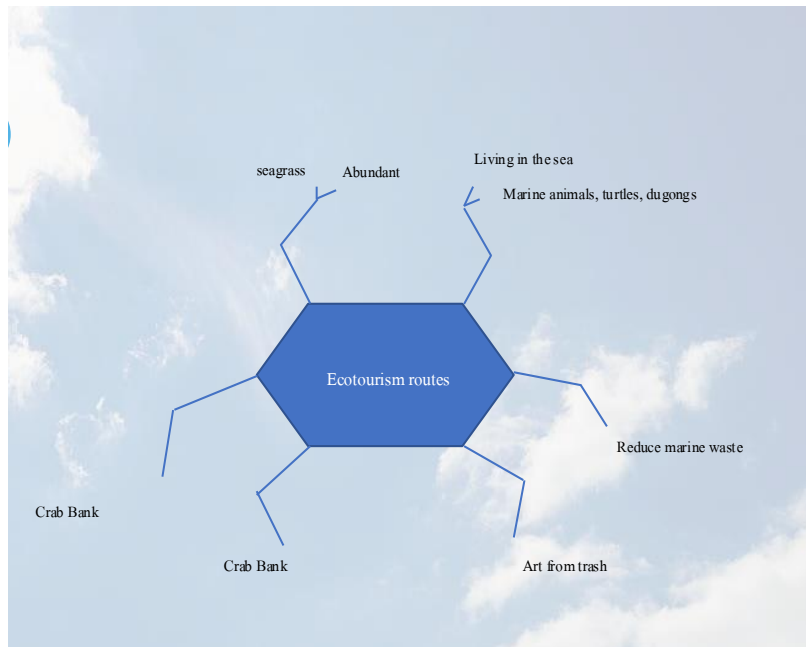


Figure 2. Environmental conservation tourism routes

The Urak Lawoi sea gypsies live on various islands, particularly Koh Jum, where they thrive. This area is home to seagrass, a vital food source for marine life, particularly turtles and dugongs. They practice a traditional fishing lifestyle and a rotational fishing method, using small boats and large nets called bubu, which are set up at specific locations. Urak Lawoi sea gypsies navigate routes that are heavily occupied by seagrass. Surveys conducted in 2022-2023 found that seagrass is being destroyed by boat traffic. Tourists traveling with the Urak Lawoi sea gypsies will help conserve seagrass in this area.

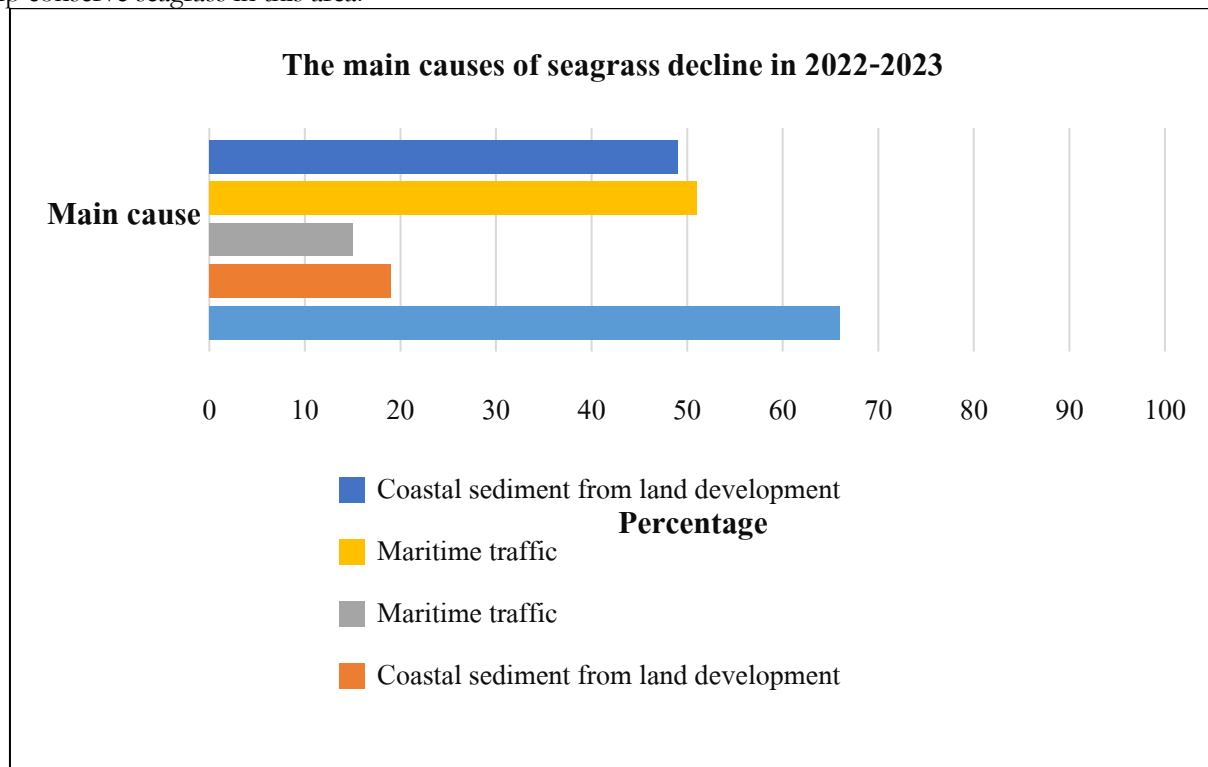


Figure 3. The main causes of seagrass decline

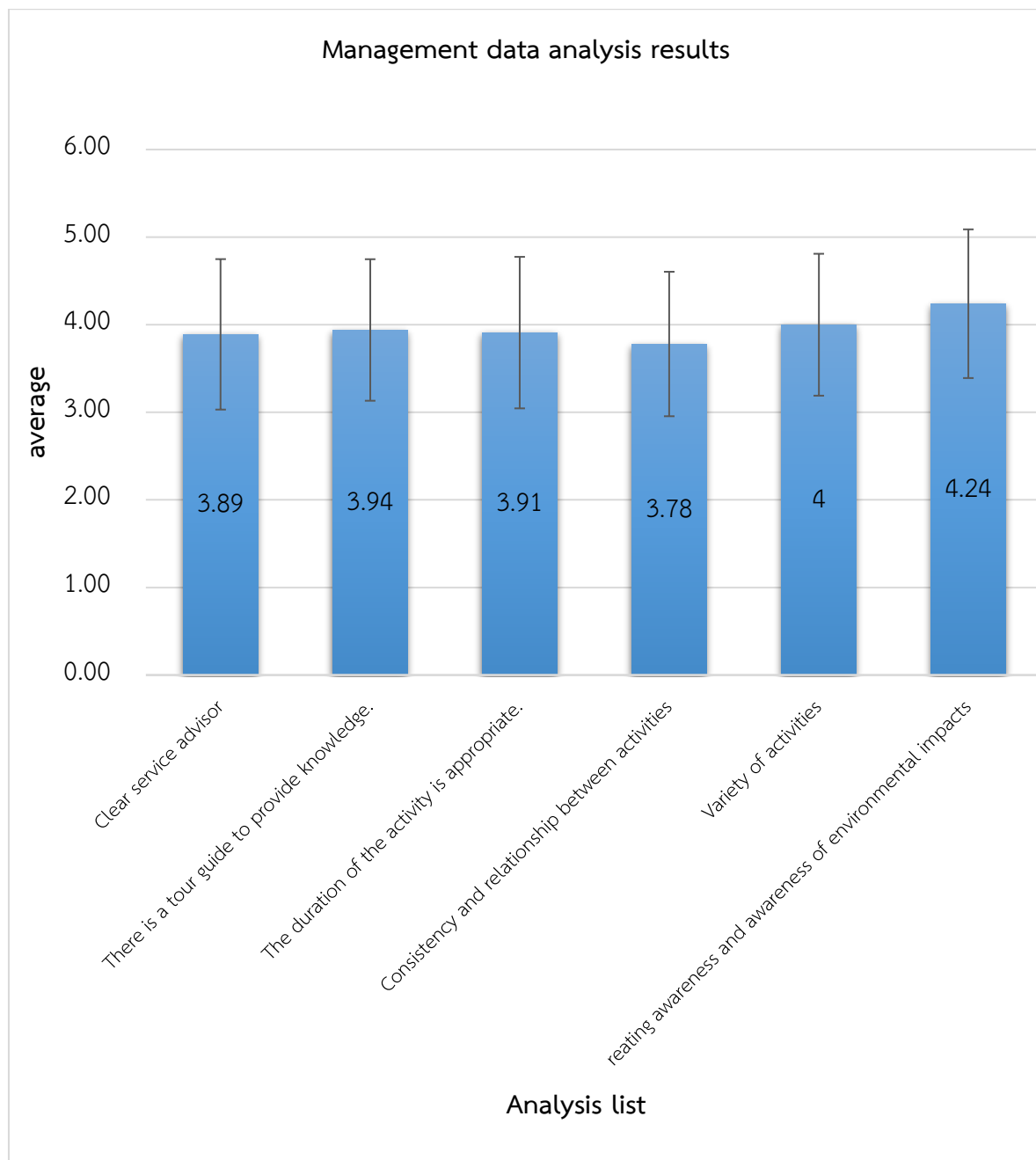


Figure 4. Analysis of tourism management

From the figure, it shows the results of the analysis of the management data of the respondents as a whole, with a high mean ($\bar{X} = 3.96$, S.D. = .850). It was found that most of the respondents wanted to create awareness and importance on environmental impacts, with a high mean ($\bar{X} = 4.24$, S.D. = .849). Next, it was found that the respondents wanted a variety of activities, with a high mean as well ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, S.D. = .810). Next, the respondents wanted the appropriate time to participate in the activities, with a high mean ($\bar{X} = 3.94$, S.D. = .808). It was also found that the respondents wanted a tour guide to provide knowledge, with a high mean ($\bar{X} = 3.91$, S.D. = .865). And the respondents wanted a variety of access to tourist attractions. The mean score was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.89$, S.D. = .859), similarly, the respondents' desire for consistency and relationship between activities was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.78$, S.D. = .825), respectively.

RESULTS

A tourist route to learn about the local fishing lifestyle, eat local food of the sea people, learn how to make souvenirs from garbage, learn about garbage management in the sea people's way. The sea people bring water

bottles, plastic bottles to make buoys, equipment to help in circular fishing, reduce garbage and save the government expenses in collecting garbage for disposal in Krabi town. There is a garbage bank, there is income from selling garbage, the Rong Ngeng performance of the sea people, Urak Lawoi.

Focus group participants stated that community tourism must not compete with community resources. Regarding water for use on the island, which is limited, there are sometimes problems during the summer with fresh water, household water, electricity from electrical appliances, and air conditioning. The increasing heat has an impact on coastal marine ecosystems, affecting the habitats and food for aquatic animals, and the increasing amount of garbage. Both hosts and tourists must help each other.

The focus group discussions agreed that there should be the production of souvenirs that reflect the identity of the Urak Lawoi people so that tourists visiting the community can purchase them as souvenirs and record their memories through souvenirs. They wanted the agency to send lecturers to provide knowledge and to establish community enterprise groups to strengthen the groups for sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This proposal proposes a community-based and environmentally friendly tourism management approach for the Urak Lawoi sea gypsy community on Koh Lanta, Koh Jum, and Koh Phi Phi in Krabi Province. Community-based tourism is a community-based tourism approach with community rules and regulations, fostering responsible tourism. Community members serve as good hosts, presenting their cultural heritage to tourists. Relevant organizations support and promote the preservation of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsy's cultural heritage. The Urak Lawoi sea gypsy's cultural heritage can attract a variety of tourists to the community, including international visitors for extended vacations. Tourism businesses in Krabi and other areas refer tourists to visit the sea gypsy community, providing them with a variety of options to learn about the local way of life. Participating in activities with the Urak Lawoi sea gypsy contributes to the conservation of natural resources and the protection of the Urak Lawoi sea gypsy's cultural heritage. This stimulates the economy and generates tourism revenue for the sea gypsy community and the mainstream tourism sector in Krabi Province. This impressive tourism initiative encourages tourists to share stories through various channels, encouraging them to return and expand into new destinations.

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