# POTENTIAL OF KHAO-LUANG TO BE THE ADVENTURE TOURISM ATTRACTION

**KWANKHAO POONPERM**

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University
E-mail: kwankhao.po@ssru.ac.th

**Abstract -** These research used a quantitative method aims to find out the potential of Khao-Laung; which is the arboretum in Nakhon Sawan, Thailand in order to be the new adventure tourism attraction to support the Thailand's central region tourism. The sample were 400 tourists who visited the area and used checklist items questionnaires; Likert's 5 rating scale; frequency, percentage and standard deviation analysis. The findings revealed that Khao-Laung's area potential to be the adventure tourism attractions are the activities, attractions, accommodations, amenities and accessibilities respectively.

**Index Terms -** Potential, Adventure Tourism, Thailand

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the important revenue source to Thailand so one of its tourism strategy is to promote the domestic tourism, distribute income to locals, add more values to its tourism attractions by developing new tourism attractions and adventure tourism is included in the strategy and it helps create the environmentally-related activities and giving knowledge about the important of the eco system.

Khao-Luang is an arboretum in Nakhon Sawan Province of Thailand where locates in the central region which is not famous among tourists except Bangkok and Ayudthaya. Nakhon Sawan Provinicial push forward this area to be the new adventure tourism attraction and this area is under the supervision of the National Park Department, the Ministry of Forestry. Therefore, the local tourism administration needs to be interesting and attracting to tourists and consecutively developing in concrete to support the adventure tourists and do activities in the area so it could making the services and products consumption which distribute income to local people in the area and decrease the difference in income; giving pride and dignities to the locals followed with the concept of self-sufficiency of the late King Bhumibol.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many description for adventure tourism but it can be defined is that a tourist activity that includes a physical activity, a cultural exchange, or activities in nature [2], the tourists will receive excites and challenges within safety controls. Most of the adventure tourism occur in remote areas and its activities can cure tourists' souls and bodies. However, it is necessary to under the supervision of experts who responsible for tourists' health, life and belongings safety.

In Thailand, the adventure tourism is included with ecotourism. It can be described as any activities which using physical strength ability and involving with challenges or risks, but still enjoy the natural environment and can work as tourism sustainability. The activities included in these category are canoeing, rafting, hiking, mountain biking, cliff climbing in example but most of them are involved with nature and environment. [3] Furthermore, it can be added that the adventure tourism is an activity of travel from one destination to another with the purpose for relaxing, enjoying, health, sports, education and other motivation; there may be the incidents occur while traveling or confront with challenges and risk so that the tourists must well prepared and sometimes need the experienced leader to avoid unpleasant occurrences.

In every tourism forms, the element of tourism comprised together to build a successful tourism destination and a successful tourism business. Cooper & Boniface (1998) [4] stated that the element of tourism should comprised with 1) Attractions because the destination must have distinct characteristic in order to attract tourists; 2) accessibility because the destination needs the way for tourists to reach the destination; 3) amenities because the destination should provide facilities for tourists and 4) ancillary service which destination should provide other services for tourists such as food and beverage services. As well as, Dickman (1996) [5] offered that the element of tourism should comprised with 5A, which are 1) accommodation; the destination should provide sufficient accommodation with several level of services and prices. The accommodation and lodging should not far from the destination. 2) Attraction; this is the most important component of tourism because it is the first thing which attract tourists to have visits. Ranjuan Pravatmuang (2011) [6] has noted that the destination is able to attract tourists because it has some characteristics such as beautiful scenery, cultural values, climate impressions, ways of life, able to be at ease and tourism activities. 3) Accessibility; this allow tourists

to reach the destination to absorb the tourism atmospheres. The destination must have the routes, modes of transports in order to deliver tourists and other things. 4) Amenity; this means the facilities provided for tourists which are basic infrastructure such as water, electricity, wifi, toilets and emergency service office also the semantic signs, warning signs and other information signs and 5) Activity; tourists may attend during the period of travel to make their vacation more interesting and the activities should vary and meet tourists' demand such as hiking, canoeing, paintball shooting.

Vipa Sriratu (2007) noted that the criteria to consider the potential of tourism concluded in 4 components are (1) location (2) administration (3) activities and process and (4) participation of stakeholders. In conclusion, this research is aiming to study the potential of tourism by determining 8 criteria which are (1) value of destination, (2) accessibility, (3) amenity, (4) tourists' capacity limit, (5) environment, (6) reputation, (7) activity, (8) community participation

The potential of tourism attraction means the readiness or ability to prepare or provide the facilities to meet tourists' demand and it helps develop the tourism area in 4 sides which are 1) area: the attraction attract tourists with distinct or unique natural resources, 2) administration: the attraction should provide safety to tourists and basic facilities, 3) activities: should provide variety of activities and give knowledge to tourists to conserve the ecosystem and 4) participation: the local government agency must active to control, care and take action to their own tourism resources to develop as the tourism attraction.

Khao-Luang is an arboretum in Nakhon Sawan province in Thailand cover the area about $95^2$ kilometers. Its height is 762 meters above sea level and it is the house of mixed forests, dipterocarp forests, dry evergreen forests which found only on the mount top. There are a cave, a waterfall and the history of gold digging of 80 – 100 years ago. The climate is cool all year round and on mount top the tourists can see the scenery of Nakhon Sawan and Uthai Thani provinces.



**Fig 1: Khao-Luang**

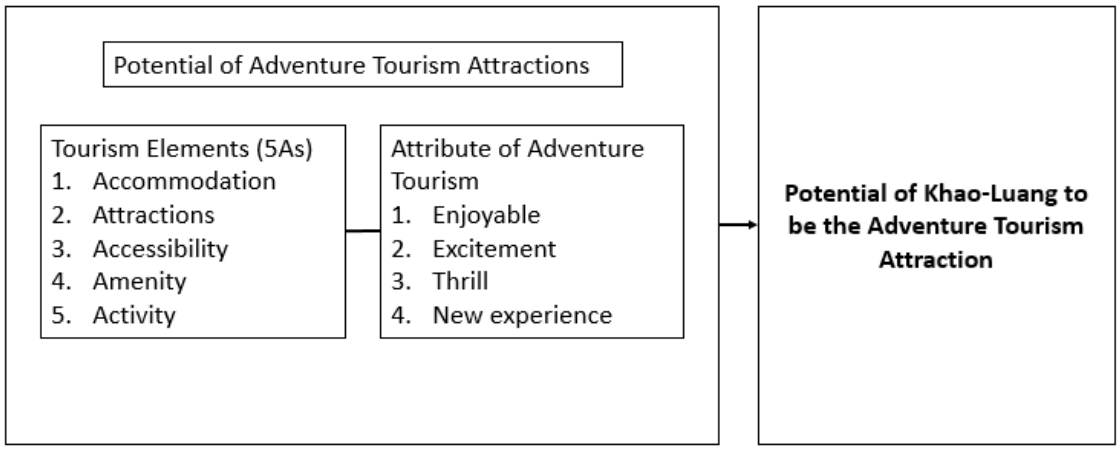



**Fig 2: Conceptual Framework**

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was objected to study the potential of Khao-Luang to be the adventure tourism attraction in Thailand.

This research utilized the quantitative research method with the statistics of 8,249 numbers of tourists visit to Khao-Luang Arboretum in year 2006. So that this research distributed 400 questionnaires to the tourists who came to visit the area during January – May, 2018. The questionnaires comprised of 3 parts: 1) the demographic of the respondents, 2) the item checklist using 5 A's of tourism components in accommodation, attraction, accessibility, amenity, activity. These data were analyzed to find the level of potential of Khao-Laung to be the adventure tourism attraction based on descriptive statistic with arithmetic means and standard deviation to describe. For instance, the level of average of 5 namely 4.50 – 5.00 (strongly agree), 3.50 – 4.49 (agree), 2.50 – 3.49 (nor disagree), 1.50 – 2.49 (disagree), and 1.00 – 1.49 (strongly disagree) and 3) recommendation from the

respondents.

## IV. RESULTS

### A. Demographic of Respondents

Most of the respondents were male (60.2%), aged between 18 – 24 years old (51.5%), secondary school education level (57%), monthly income below 100 $ (79.8%) respectively.

| Demographic profile | Amount | % |
|---|---|---|
| **SEX** | | |
| Male | 241 | 60.25 |
| Female | 159 | 39.75 |
| **TOTAL** | **400** | **100** |
| **AGE** | | |
| 18 – 24 | 206 | 51.50 |
| 25 – 34 | 93 | 23.25 |
| 35 – 44 | 58 | 14.50 |
| 45 – 54 | 25 | 6.25 |
| above 55 | 18 | 4.50 |
| **TOTAL** | **400** | **100** |
| **EDUCATION** | | |
| Secondary School | 228 | 57.0 |
| College & University | 152 | 38.0 |
| Higher | 20 | 5.0 |
| **TOTAL** | **400** | **100** |

**Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents**

### B. Potential of Khao-Luang to be the adventure tourism attraction

This section represents the level of opinion of the respondents towards potential of Khao-Luang to be the adventure tourism attraction using mean ( $\overline{X}$ ) and standard deviation (SD) are shown in tables 1 -5.

| ACCOMODATION | $\overline{X}$ | SD | Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Natural & environmentally harmonized decoration** | 3.65 | 0.99 | Strongly Agree |
| **Natural looks interior** | 3.78 | 0.77 | Strongly Agree |
| **Safety & security** | 3.99 | 0.81 | Strongly Agree |
| **Safety from wild animals** | 3.96 | 0.74 | Strongly Agree |
| **This place is for relaxation** | 4.21 | 0.80 | Strongly Agree |
| **Total** | 3.92 | 0.58 | |

**Table 2: the accommodation potential**

These data showed that the respondents strongly agreed about the accommodation must be decorate harmonized with natural surroundings either exterior or interior because visitors choose the place for relaxation and also need to be safe from wild animals.

| ATTRACTIONS | $\overline{X}$ | SD | Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Water-fall** | 3.81 | 0.88 | Strongly Agree |
| **Cave** | 4.06 | 0.70 | Strongly Agree |
| **Wildlife animals watching** | 4.18 | 0.76 | Strongly Agree |
| **Natural trails** | 4.24 | 0.75 | Strongly Agree |
| **Botanical education** | 4.14 | 0.77 | Strongly Agree |
| **Mountain top challenging** | 4.08 | 0.83 | Strongly Agree |
| **Total** | 4.08 | 0.50 | |

**Table 3: the attraction potential**

These data showed that the respondents were strongly agreed about the attractions on Khao-Luang are very interesting. The respondents have had chosen Khao-Luang because it offers the experiences with water-fall, cave exploring, wildlife animals watching, natural trails walking, botanical education while walking on trails and the respondents felt that if they can reach to the mountain top of Khao-Luang would be very challenging.



**Fig 3: Beautiful scenery on the mountain top**

| AMENITIES | $\overline{X}$ | SD | Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Information signs** | 3.90 | 0.85 | Strongly Agree |
| **Readiness of staff (porter, first aid)** | 4.02 | 0.78 | Strongly Agree |
| **Cleanliness in the area** | 4.05 | 0.77 | Strongly Agree |
| **Parking space** | 4.15 | 0.73 | Strongly Agree |
| **Grocery shop** | 3.57 | 1.13 | Strongly Agree |
| **Basic facilities (toilets, electricity, water)** | 1.88 | 0.81 | Strongly Disagree |
| **Telephone signals, WIFI signals** | 3.64 | 3.99 | Strongly Agree |
| | | | |
| **Total** | 3.89 | 0.53 | |

**Table 4: the amenity potential**

These data showed that the respondents were strongly agree about Khao-Luang are providing amenities for tourists whether the semantic information signboards to give some knowledge or information to tourists; the readiness to support the tourists like first aid care or the porters to help bring belongings to the mountain top; the enough parking space, the grocery shop which sell dried food, drinks, sanitary pads, etc.; telephone signals and wireless internet signals. The respondents were strongly disagree that Khao-Luang has potential in basic facilities like electricity, water supply and enough public toilets so if it would like to open for tourism, it needs to provide more of those.

| ACCESSIBILTY | $\overline{X}$ | SD | Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Access ways conveniently** | 3.99 | 0.90 | Strongly Agree |
| **Easy to travel** | 3.45 | 0.90 | Agree |
| **Comfort pathways** | 3.15 | 1.08 | Agree |
| **Public transportation** | 2.78 | 1.18 | Agree |
| **Total** | 3.34 | 0.72 | |

**Table 5: the accessibility potential**

These data showed that the respondents feel that Khao-Luang's accessibility is in the medium level of potential attractions because it may lack of some features such as the public transportation or access ways to the mountain top but most of the adventure tourism attractions are in natural and they have unique characteristics about hard to reach so this could be charming to adventure tourists not for mass tourists.

| ACTIVITIES | $\overline{X}$ | SD | Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Natural trails walking** | 4.22 | 0.78 | Strongly Agree |
| **Water-fall related activities** | 4.09 | 0.77 | Strongly Agree |
| **Bird watching** | 4.04 | 0.85 | Strongly Agree |
| **Ecosystem education** | 4.26 | 0.78 | Strongly Agree |
| **Total** | 4.15 | 0.72 | |

**Table 6: the activity potential**

These data showed that the respondents were strongly agree that the activities provided by Khao-Luang are very interesting and meet the attribute of adventure tourism; enjoyable, excitement, thrill and new experience and they would like to do more activities more than trails walking, water-fall related activities, bird watching and ecosystem education.

## CONCLUSION

According to Dickman (1996),the Khao-Luang Arboretum has many potential to be the adventure tourism attraction or destination in the central region of Thailand. From 5 components of tourism's elements revealed as follows;

**1. Activities**. The mean of this component was 4.15 which was in the high level because Khao-Luang provides activities such as botanical education, natural trails walking, swimming at the water-fall, cave exploring, bird watching which conformed with Dickman (1996) who had stated that the adventure tourism destination should provide activities of challenging, thrilling and enjoying to meet the tourists' needs.

**2. Attractions.** The mean of this component was 4.08 which was in the high level because the respondents thought that to conquer the Khao-Luang's mountain top is challenging. So, this attraction provided such things to meet tourists' needs.

**3. Accommodation.** The mean of this component was 3.92 which was in the medium level. Therefore, this arboretum is safety from wild animals, convenient staying, and the decoration was blending well with the environment both exterior and interior.

**4. Amenities.** The mean of this component was 3.89 which was medium level. The respondents were agreed that Khao-Luang provide enough parking space also the cleanliness of place, the readiness of staff (porter).

**5. Accessibilities.** The mean of this component was 3.34 which was a medium level. Hence, there are public transports to bring tourists to the arboretum. The routes are convenient and easily reach to the area. All of 5 components met the Dickman (1996)'s theory that the tourism attractions should provide the variety of activities to meet different type of tourists because the tourists who visit Khao-Laung may not be all the adventure tourists, they may do soft-adventure activities. The potential of attraction came from the unique characteristic of place or having cultural values, showing ways of life or climate differences. The accommodation or lodging should provide efficiently to the number of tourists if not, Khao-Luang needs to limit the tourists to enter the arboretum. The destination should provide amenities to tourists; regardless of basic needs facilities such as electricity, water supply, first aid, semantic information sign boards and other necessary things. Lastly, the destination must provide the accessibility to the area.

## SUGGESTION

As the Khao-Luang Arboretum has potential to be the adventure tourism attraction in central region of Thailand but the researcher would like to give some comments and for the future research. First, most of the adventure tourism destination (attraction) are closely with natural environments, it would be interesting if there are the development of this area to be the fully ecotourism destination. Secondly, the push and pull factors analysis of tourists in ecotourism around Thailand.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank the Research and Development Institute, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Udon Thani Campus of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (www.ssru.ac.th) for the greatness support, Mr. Nakarin Thangthong and Ms. Prakaijai Orachan for generosity.

REFERENCES

[1] Online. Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand.
[2] Online. Adventure Travel Trade Association
[3] Sakul Jariyachamsit, "The Study of Malaysian Tourists' Traveling Routes in Thailand: A case study at Hat-Yai district," www.ssruir.ssru.ac.th/handle/ssruir/655, 2012

[4] Boniface, B.G. "Geography of Travel and Tourism". UK: Butterworth Heinemann, 1998
[5] Dickman, S. "Tourism: An Introductory text (2nd ed.). Sydney: Hodder Education, 1996
[6] Ranjuan Pravatmuang, "Potential of Word Heritage Tourism City: A case study of Sukhothai and Ayudhaya," Suan Dusit University, Bangkok, 2011.

★★★