

DIGITAL PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR PROMOTING EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM AND CREATING VALUE FOR HONEY PRODUCTS

Kornkanok NINDUM¹ Sermsiri NINDUM¹ Paripan KAEWNET² and Peeraya CHUENWONG¹

1 Faculty of Management Science, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand;
n_kornkanok@yahoo.com (K. N.); aj_sermsiri@yahoo.com (S. N.);
Peeraya.chu@crru.ac.th (P. C.)

2 Faculty of Tourism and Hotel, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand;
paripan.kae@crru.ac.th (P. K.)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 6 March 2026

Revised: 27 March 2026

Published: 10 April 2026

ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the context of tourism for developing digital public relations for experiential tourism in order to create added value for honey products. The research methodology is qualitative, using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions through semi-structured interviews. The sample selection criteria were purposive, targeting agencies related to tourism from both the public and private sectors, marketing communication experts, and a group of 33 beekeeping farmers, along with participant observation and document research. The research findings indicate that farmers, as the resource owner, should be a community communicator with strategic thinking skills, capable of market analysis and producing content highlighting the uniqueness of honey products, including forest garden honey, processed honey products, and creative experiential tourism activities within the community context. These can be disseminated through multi-platform, product sales at various festivals, and mainstream media.

Keywords: Digital public relations, Marketing Communication, Experiential Tourism, Honey

CITATION INFORMATION: Nindum, K., Nindum, S., Kaewnet, P. and Chuenwong, P. (2026). Digital Public Relations for Promoting Experiential Tourism and Creating Value for Honey Products. *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(4), 5.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry in Thailand has been continuously growing at a high rate. Thailand has been ranked 5th in the world for attracting European (<https://www.facebook.com/Deptourism>) and 28 million visitors, due to its beautiful natural landscapes, ancient monuments, historical artifacts, unique and beautiful arts, culture, as well as traditions across all 6 regions. (<https://www.thaigov.go.th/news>, 2024). Chiang Rai is located at the northernmost part of Thailand, at the meeting point of three countries, bordering the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The area is characterized by high, complex mountains and is rich in a variety of plant species. The unique and fascinating history rooted in the Lanna Kingdom, Chiang Rai offers various types of tourism. This is reflected in the number of tourists visiting in 2025, which totaled 1,858,076 people. Despite being affected by the COVID-19 crisis, the tourism industry in Chiang Rai has shown significant growth in the following two years (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2022).

Mae Fa Luang District, has a physical landscape characterized by high mountains, approximately 1,000 meters above sea level, part of the Daen Lao mountain range. To the north, it is covered with lush, fertile forests that remain moist throughout the year. The area is the source of the Ma River and its tributary, the Khum River, which includes the Mae Phin River, Huai Rai, and several smaller streams, providing moisture for the local population. This area consists of 4 sub-districts and 77 villages. It is also home to the Royal Development Project at Doi Tung, initiated by the late Princess Mother, Somdej Phra Sri Nakarindra Boromrajinin, aimed at agricultural and livelihood development for the people living on the mountain.

The area has a population of 12,425 people, with 4,228 households engaged in agriculture, handicrafts, and tourism businesses. A secondary occupation is beekeeping and selling honey products, using traditional wisdom passed down through generations. The honey is unique for its thick consistency, free from beeswax, with a floral nectar scent and mineral nutrients, providing an additional income of over 100,000 Baht per year for households. Honey products are also processed to meet market demands, such as lip balms and honey soaps (Group of beekeeping; Interview, August 26, 2024). From field visits and in-depth surveys conducted with government organizations, community developers, and local experts, it was found that operators still lack knowledge about marketing and skills in content creation through online media for promoting products and services, as well as developing creative tourism models in their local area.

Therefore, farmers who will become a marketing communicator should create content that raises awareness and attracts attention to their products or services through community-based activities. This becomes another strategy to create a different travel experience, such as learning about ethnic lifestyles, enjoying the beauty of the cool climate, and having the opportunity to purchase products from the local. This can elevate these products into a key source of livelihood and income. It serves as a model for building a sustainable, stable community of farmers that aligns with the provincial strategy plan 2, which promotes the development of high-quality agricultural products (Chiang Rai Provincial Strategy, 2022).

This research aims to study the context of tourism, leading to the development of digital public relations for experiential tourism to create value for the honey products. The goal is to build knowledge and skills to expand online marketing channels through digital media for farmers, thereby creating greater competitiveness for the community in a wider market. The results of the study will also provide valuable insights for relevant organizations to use in planning and developing tourism communication and local products to grow, strengthen, and remain sustainable.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Concept of Modern Digital Media

The concept of modern digital media highlights the significance and necessity of the internet in human life across all aspects. It allows users to communicate and exchange information in various formats. The emergence of websites and social media platforms has enabled users to create, design, and determine content freely to meet their personal needs and interests. This shift has impacted communication models, resulting in the blending of information sources and recipients (Jenkins, 2006). Modern digital media refers to media that allows both the sender and receiver to perform the roles of transmitting and receiving information simultaneously, thus enabling two-way communication. It has the special ability to convey information in multiple forms, including text, images, videos, sound, and multimedia. Digital media is an innovative communication technology that has advanced significantly and serves as a powerful tool for easily, conveniently, and quickly searching for information related to products and tourism.

Concept of Digital Public Relations

Digital public relations is a marketing communication strategy that utilizes digital media technologies and online tools to present information and updates to the audience. The goal is to build understanding, trust in products and services, and maintain good relationships with the target audience, which in turn affects the reputation, values, image, and credibility of the business, as well as the organization's direct and indirect performance. It also serves as a tool for fostering public relations (Scott, 2007). In the context of tourism in this area, it is crucial to create awareness and understanding of the local context and community products among tourists in order to generate and increase sales or the number of target group visitors. Therefore, digital public relations play an important role in creating widespread positive awareness through the use of various online platforms as a medium to attract the target audience, make a strong impression, and motivate them to travel to the area.

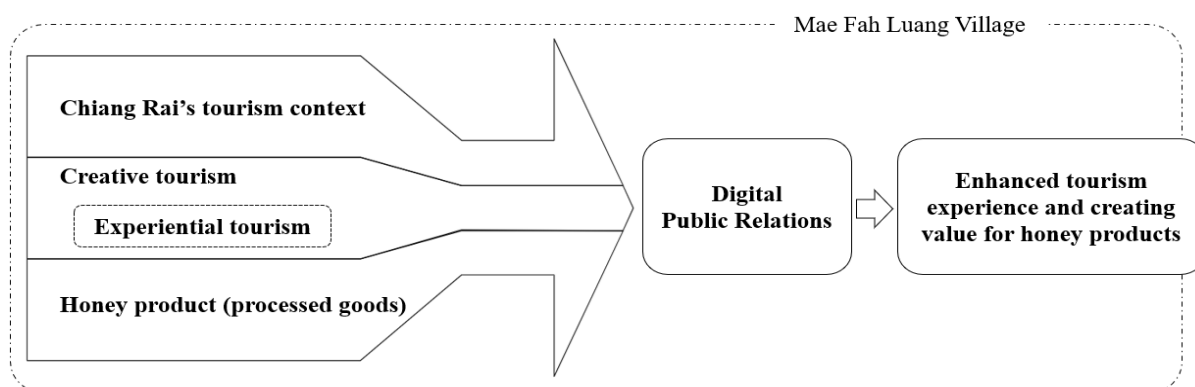


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a participatory action research study that uses a qualitative research approach with an emphasis on enabling the community to play an active role in the research process, start with an identifying problems next analyzing causes to taking action, and proposing solutions to community issues based on primary data obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The data was gathered from the sample group using a purposive sampling method, selecting participants based on specific characteristics related to the research objectives. The study also included participant observation and secondary data collection through document

review. The research was conducted from March 2023 to January 2024 to ensure the data was accurate, comprehensive, and reliable.

The data sources used in this research came from stakeholders, including:

Table 1 Key informants

Participant group	Number
Group of scholars and experts in the fields of communication, marketing communication, and tourism	4
Group of tourism-related agencies from both the public and private sectors	4
Group of beekeepers	25

The tools used in this study include semi-structured interview questions based on predefined topics to address the research questions and obtain the most comprehensive data. Open-ended questions were developed and tested, with the steps for creating and testing the interview questions formulated in advance (Intaprom, 2020). These questions were based on theoretical frameworks, a review of textbooks, documents, and research in communication studies, online marketing communication, and tourism, aligned with the research objectives.

The interview questions focused on the following areas: the context of tourism in Chiang Rai province, the development and public relations strategies for tourism to add value to local products, strategies for creating unique experiential tourism after the crisis, and the creation of content marketing communication, among others. The study also involved reviewing documents to support additional information, ensuring the data's credibility, particularly regarding digital marketing communication, experiential tourism, and enhancing product value through related research.

Content validity was tested by reviewing the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the content, clarity, and language appropriateness. After developing the interview tool, it was presented to experts for assessing the IOC to ensure the quality of the tool for data collection. Data collection was validated through a triangulation method, involving situational analysis interviews, content analysis, and data verification through focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders, ensuring the data's reliability.

Data Analysis and Presentation This research used a data analysis method based on the framework of digital marketing communication, digital public relations, and experiential tourism. The document analysis method was employed, analyzing data from related documents combined with in-depth interviews from scholars in communication studies, marketing communication, tourism, and professionals from both government and private tourism-related agencies.

Once the data was collected, it was analyzed using various theoretical frameworks as guidelines. The analysis involved studying textbooks, research, and related documents in combination with in-depth interviews. The data was then grouped based on key themes with similar meanings, redundancies were removed, and the results were presented and discussed according to the study's objectives.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This research aims to ensure that the study results are accurate and comprehensive. The researcher has collected contextual data on tourism in Chiang Rai province to provide in-depth and complete findings regarding experience-based tourism to enhance the value of local products. The study results are as follows: Chiang Rai is part of the upper northern region of Thailand, which includes Nan, Phayao, and Phrae provinces, all focused on developing into international tourist destinations. Efforts have been made to promote cross-border trade and establish the region as a center for Lanna civilization tourism. The strategic positioning has three main areas: agriculture, cross-border trade, and tourism. Chiang Rai, therefore, emphasizes tourism as a driver of economic and social development, along with the

enhancement of existing tourism development plans to strengthen and ensure its sustainability (Intaprom, 2020).

The overall context of Lanna tourism is both a travel destination and a route for tourists heading to other destinations, both within the country and abroad (Phuwanatwichit et al., 2019). Chiang Rai serves as a central hub in the Upper Mekong Sub-region, with economic transportation links to neighboring countries and various economic sectors (Choibamroong, 2015; Parnwell, 2001). The region is accessible in many ways, including private vehicles, public transportation, roads, air travel, and waterways. Tourist amenities are available, including information centers located at key tourist sites, and a variety of additional services such as bicycles, city trams, or tour boats. There are also various accommodation options available, offering comfort in different styles and price ranges to suit different needs. This tri-border area has abundant natural resources and is notable for its variety of tourist attractions, including cool mountain ranges like Phu Doi, waterfalls such as Khun Korn Waterfall, Doi Luang National Park, foggy valleys, diverse plant species, ancient sites like the Chiang Saen city walls, museums, and many ancient religious sites (Nindum, 2020). Additionally, the diverse traditions and cultures passed down through generations, along with famous natural landmarks, historical ruins, ethnic communities, and Lanna culture, are major attractions for tourists (Suwan, 2002).

Over the past 2-3 years, the overall tourism situation has shown a continuous positive growth trend, with a total of 3,729,148 tourists, both Thai and foreign (Nindum, 2021). However, when the new virus strain pandemic spread worldwide, Thailand implemented strict lockdown measures to control the spread of the disease, which had a significant impact on the overall social structure, both large and small, across all industries, including Chiang Rai's tourism sector. The number of tourists dropped by more than 90% (<https://www.mots.go.th/>, 2023). This led to a significant decline in revenue from tourism services, sales of local souvenirs, and other related sectors, negatively affecting the local economy and society.

For honey products, the group of honey producers and sellers operates as a supplementary income, with sales channels limited to selling at their homes and setting up stalls at annual festivals in key locations of the province. They sell around 10 bottles of honey (700 milliliters each) for 250 Baht during the soft honeycomb season between March and April, with the highest nectar collection period being in May. Honey processing is only done by a few households. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism sector and the declining economy caused a halt in honey sales. Therefore, a marketing strategy should be applied to create value for honey products by integrating them with experience-based tourism through creative experiential activities, as detailed below.

Target group analysis reveals that the primary audience consists of working adults, middle-aged individuals who focus on health or enjoy traveling, people who like buying souvenirs, young farmers seeking raw materials to produce other products, and specific groups interested in the community lifestyle, as this area is home to various ethnic groups. Therefore, it would be ideal to develop agricultural activities connected to the products, such as creating herbal medicine formulas, energy-boosting products, or nutrition-based products containing honey, to highlight the benefits of honey.

The next step is to create a tourism pathway linking community networks, including bee farms and nearby tourist sites, which is part of an ecosystem activity within a specific area. This area has abundant natural resources, including forests, wildlife, and plant species, making it a key factor for sustainable tourism (Choibamroong, 2015). This initiative would offer an experience of beekeeping, creating memorable moments while enhancing knowledge about beekeeping practices, such as the bee life cycle, harvesting seasons, bee food sources, trees where bees build their hives, and the characteristics of different types of honey. Additionally, there could be activities to build beehives based on local wisdom, creating unique honey flavors and intensities from different flower pollens. There could also be nutrition-related activities involving cooking

with honey, including both savory and sweet dishes, allowing participants to use honey as an ingredient in food, desserts, or herbal drinks, as well as learning about its health benefits. For example, marinating meats with honey, practical workshops on product processing, and highlighting the health benefits of honey, such as its antioxidant properties for preventing neurological diseases, its vitamins and minerals for immune health, royal jelly for body balance, and its use in cosmetics like lip balms.

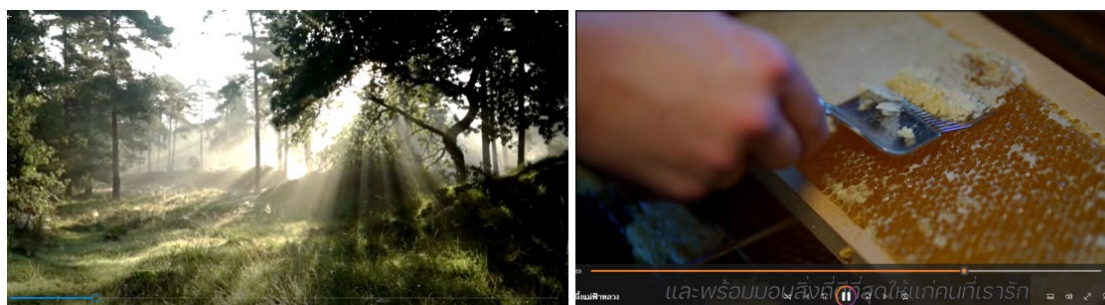


Figure 2 Travel atmosphere and honey production with short video clips from <https://www.facebook.com/Maefahluanghoney>

For the development of digital media for creative tourism promotion to add value to honey products, it was found that the information sources should be community communicators with strategic thinking skills in both marketing and consumer analysis, create and share content and stories. This is because the entrepreneurs possess genuine of beekeeping and the community context. By conveying messages under their own unique Lanna community identity, they can deliver content in a way that resonates deeply, creating emotional impacts, which ultimately stimulates purchases. Additionally, local influencers or micro-influencer on social media can be utilized to promote creative tourism by experiencing the atmosphere of the mountain, participating in beekeeping activities, and purchasing products. These individuals will present and share their stories in their own style, often resembling or being similar to the local people. The content shared can take various forms, including images, short clips, articles, or storytelling, highlighting the unique aspects of the area, such as its natural forest resources, which serve as a core feature of ecotourism destinations. This adds meaning and value to the journey when connected to the sale of community products, thus creating a distinct and contemporary identity for the community.

"We need to make Mae Fah Luang a destination for ecotourism with its own distinctive identity. We should leverage the name Mae Fah Luang, which is already well-known, but there has been a lack of development in the area. Nature should be the core focus. The content must be unique, emphasizing memorable local experiences, the area's abundance, and products or natural resources that benefit health and well-being." (Interview, September 20, 2024)

Focusing on the key features of honey products, the main selling point that creates recognition, such as "Forest Garden Pollen Honey" derived from flower pollen honey or wild honey, can be tied to tourism-related areas. The story behind the product can be shared by educating customers about the benefits of authentic honey, how to identify real honey, and the proper ways to store it. Additionally, creating a cartoon character, "Little Mountain Bee," with a cute and cheerful personality that reflects the ethnic identity, friendliness, and sincerity of local products could be effective. Another strategy could be to use gamification techniques and offer discounts in collaboration with business partners within the community network. This would

help create a memorable experience and maintain relationships with existing customers, linking the community to customers through a special-person marketing approach.

It was found that the most effective communication channels for sharing information, activities, and local product and tourism services across multi-platform channels such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, or e-marketplaces as well as product sales at various festivals and mainstream media, which remain essential for local communities.



Figure 3 Marketing communication for community products through digital media and the cartoon character “Little Mountain Bee”

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Based on the collected data, along with relevant theoretical concepts and research, it can be discussed that the community should be a community communicator with strategic thinking skills in both marketing and consumer analysis, creating content and stories that can be shared through new media channels, offering memorable and unique experiences. This is because the community has genuine knowledge of beekeeping and the local Lanna context, which can be passed on and woven into stories with deep emotional connections and a sense of pride for their homeland. This aligns with the study by Sarobol (2003), which explains that local people, who are resource owners and stakeholders in tourism and services, can use natural resources, cultural traditions, and local production lifestyles as capital for proper tourism management to benefit the local area as much as possible.

Furthermore, research by Suriyawong et al. (2021) found that community involvement in promoting tourism by creating plans to promote tourism and adding value through cultural entrepreneurship helps to support tourism. Additionally, using local influencers on social media will convey stories in a personal way, creating a memorable identity. This is connected to the study by Maneekat & Suthathon (2020), which reflected that the sample group plans their tourism through information reviews via social media platforms.

As for the content can be presented in many different ways, such as images, short clips, knowledge snippets, or story creation, including: 1) Stories about the unique aspects of the area, the route of ecological tourism leading to the Mae Fah Luang community, natural beekeeping areas, and nearby locations to link with community products for sale. 2) Emphasizing key characteristics of honey products, with a focus on selling points that serve as an identity, such as "forest flower pollen honey" from natural flower pollen honey, etc., which can be connected to tourism locations, along with knowledge about Mae Fah Luang honey, and the creation of a cartoon character, “Little Bee of the Hill,” with a cute and bright character that reflects ethnic imagery to create awareness of the friendliness and sincerity of local people.

Moreover, content can be presented alongside gamification strategies and offering discounts in collaboration with business partners within the village network to leave a lasting impression and maintain customer relationships. This connects the community with target audiences in a special-person marketing approach. The findings from the research are consistent with Suriyawong et al. (2021), who stated that the core components of community potential regarding natural resources and local culture can develop into creative tourism. This can integrate community lifestyle, tourism, or products, with the community of communicators creating promotional marketing strategies to reach target audiences both in and out of tourist seasons, thus sustainably boosting sales and tourism. (Nindum, 2020)

Regarding digital media communication channels, it was found that content about local products and experience-based tourism services should be shared on multi-platform channels, as it is the most effective platform for quick and unlimited information dissemination. It is the most popular social media platform in Thailand (<https://www.twfdigital.com>, 2023) and provides easy access to Gen Y users, therefore this is consistent with the study by Nindum (2021), which synthesized An Academic Review of Research in Local Marketing Communications of agricultural products in Chiang Rai over the past nearly 5 years, indicating that entrepreneurs have chosen to utilize digital marketing communication tools. Moreover, the target group can order products and inquire about tourism information, while operators can track consumer interactions through other online channels, such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, or e-marketplaces or e-marketplaces, which is the most downloaded platform in 2022 (<https://www.indigital.co.th>). This study also confirms the marketing communication concept (Duncan, 2005) where producing compelling narratives about honey products in various formats across multiple platforms can effectively generate interest and aligns with the research of Niamnak (2018), which found that the majority of the population uses online platforms to search for information when making tourism decisions, particularly through Facebook fan pages. These pages are visited 1-3 times a week to gather information for future tourism. Additionally, in rural areas, traditional media such as radio, television, posters, and in-person sales remain vital communication channels. This is in line with the study by Parikh (2004), which concluded that in rural areas, mass media and retail sales remain crucial. It can be synthesized that the simple lifestyle of people, their limited access to technology, and their familiarity with traditional media are reasons why traditional media and face-to-face interactions are still important for customers in the community.

REFERENCES

- Brahma, A., & Dutta, R. (2020). Role of Social Media and E-commerce for Business Entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Computer Science, Engineering and Information Technology*, 01-18.
- Chiang Rai Provincial Strategy, (2022), *Chiang Rai Provincial Strategy*. <https://plan.chiangraipao.go.th/en/>.
- Choibamroong, T. (2015). Chiang Rai Remembrance: Foundations for the Future of Sustainable Tourism. *Journal of Development Administration. National Institute of Development Administration*, 55(12); 103-129.
- Churchill, E. (2012). Social Media Meaning. *In Proceedings of the 2012 International Workshop on Socially-aware Multimedia*, 43-44.
- Downloaded Platform. (2022). *Statistics*. <https://www.indigital.co.th>.
- Duncan, T. (2005). *Principles of advertising & IMC*. Boston: McGraw- Hill companies, Inc.
- Facebook Page of Mae Fah Luang District. (2022). *Agriculture Office Chiang Rai Province*. <https://www.facebook.com/kaset.maefahluang/>.
- Facebook Page of Mae Fah Luang Honey. (2024). <https://www.facebook.com/Maefahluanghoney>
- Global Connect. (2022). *Tourist Statistics*. <https://shorturl.asia/YmMDW>.

- Go to (2022). *15 popular tourist attractions in Chiang Rai*. <https://paimayang.com>
- Intaprom, W. (2020). Literature Review for Qualitative Research. *Academic Journal Bangkokthonburi University*, 9(1): 1-14.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press.
- Mae Fah Luang Subdistrict Administrative Organization. (2022). *General information*. <https://www.maefaluang.go.th>.
- Maneeekhat, P. & Suthathon, P. (2020). The Influence of Online Reviews Affecting Travel Planning Behavior of Generation Y Thai Tourists. *Journal of Dusit Thani College*, 14(2): 590-609.
- Ministry of Tourism and Sports, (2023). *Tourist statistics*. <https://www.mots.go.th/>.
- Niamnak, T. (2018). *Study of Creative Content Creation for Couples Via Social Media Facebook Fanpage Case Study: Facebook Fanpage: Pai gun na*. Master's Dissertation, Graduate School, Bangkok University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Nindum, K. (2020). Guidelines for Content Development and Communication Channels for Homestay Business at Ban Rong Plaina, Chiang Rai Province: *CRRU Journal of Communication*, 3(2): 1-21.
- Nindum, K. (2021). Innovative Storytelling to Add Value to Homestay Tourism. *PSAKU International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 10(1): 12-21.
- Parikh, D. (2004). Communication and Promotion in Rural Markets. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 34.
- Parnwell, G. (2001). *Sinews of Interconnectivity: Tourism and Environment in the Greater Mekong Subregion*. In P. Teo, T. C. Chang and Ho, K. C., eds. *Interconnected Worlds: Tourism in Southeast Asia*. 231 – 247. Singapore City: Elsevier Science.
- Phuwanatwichit, T. Songthanapithak, A. Srirat, S. & Sangkam, S. (2019). The Development of Integral Tourism Marketing Plan for Establishing Chiang Rai Province as a Tourism Hub of Lanna Civilization through the Tourist Behavior and Perception of Tourism Public Relations Media. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 20(2): 11-39.
- Richards, G. & Raymond, C. (2000), *Creative Tourism*. *ATLAS News* 23, 16-20.
- Richards, G. (2011). Creativity and Tourism: The State of the Art. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38: 1225-1253.
- Sabols. (2003). *Community Tourism. Concepts and Experiences of Northern Areas*. Chiang Mai: Thailand Research Fund.
- Scott, D. (2007). *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*. New Jersey: Wiley & Sons.
- Suriyawong. (2021). Cultural identity Cultural Identity in Story Telling of Akha Ethnic in Chiang Rai Province. *Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, Buriram Rajabhat University, 17(3), 99-117.
- Suwan, M. (2002). *Complete Report Project to Study the Development Plan of Tourism in Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, and Nan*. Bangkok: Project Planning Division Tourism Authority of Thailand.
- Tourism Authority of Thailand. (2023). *Annual Report*. <https://dl.parliament.go.th/handle/lirt/426932>.
- Tourist in Chiang rai. (2024). *Annual Report*. <https://www.opsmoac.go.th/>.
- Tourist in Thailand. (2024). *Annual Report*. <https://www.facebook.com/Deptourism>.
- Tourist in Thailand. (2024). *Annual Report*. <https://www.thaigov.go.th/news>.
- Twfdigital (2022). *Statistics and Behavior of Using Social Media Around the World Q1 2020* <https://www.twfdigital.com>

Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. This is a fully open-access article distributed under the terms of the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).