

Mobile Marketing in Spiritual Tourism: a Case of Saluang Sub-District, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Jindapa Srisamran¹

Asian Development College for Community Economy and Technology,
Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand
¹srisamran@hotmail.com

Kamolthip Kamchai²

Faculty of Management Sciences,
Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand
²kthip2512@hotmail.com

and Pusanisa Thechatakerng³

Faculty of Business Administration,
Maejo University, Thailand
³thepusanisa@yahoo.com

Abstract - The integration between easy and modern marketing instruments which can be combined with local culture and tradition of the community is a challenging marketing strategy leading to the success in marketing for the community. Nowadays, mobile marketing is known as another form of potential marketing strategy for marketing promotion especially for tourism industry. Currently, an increasing number of both Thai and foreign tourists are interested in spiritual tourism. Therefore, mobile marketing is a form of marketing strategy which can create more value to tourism resources of the community.

Keywords - Spiritual Tourism, Mobile Marketing, Spiritual, Marketing, Social Media

I. INTRODUCTION

Spiritual tourism is a new tourism product announced on the first UNWTO International Conference on Spiritual Tourism for Sustainable Development in Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam, 21-22 Nov, 2013 [1]. Nowadays, tourists are more interested in

spiritual belief. The change comes from the fact that now people are more interested in learning about spirituality, training and peace than religious rules. People in tourism are sensible of this change. For this reason, they offer spiritual tourism, which is a new tourism product to the customers interested in spirituality [2].

Saluang subdistrict is a community which has resources used for the development of spiritual tourism due to the geography which is mainly mountains. It is also known as a subdistrict with a variety of interesting culture, tradition, and belief. Saluang community is divided into 8 villages. The population in the community consists of people from many tribes, for example, native people, "Tailue" tribe people who often live in piedmont plateaus, and Karen, Hmong, Lahu and Lua people in hills. This leads to a diversity of religious belief. Therefore, it is possible to develop marketing strategies to promote various tourism programs in this community.

Mobile marketing is the result of advance technology playing a significant role in people's daily life. Kaplan [3] defines mobile

marketing as “any marketing activity conducted through a ubiquitous network to which consumers are constantly connected using a personal mobile device” Mobile marketing and advertising using mobile devices becomes an important factor in creating of marketing strategies [4].

Therefore, the modern marketing strategy is essential for the tourism in the community. It is also vital to use simple, easy to access, and convenient technology with speed and high effectiveness. One of the most well – known strategies is the use of mobile marketing. Thus, to promote spiritual tourism marketing in Saluang community is considered to be a challenge to integration the body of knowledge and a simple as well as modern marketing instrument which can be well combined with the culture and tradition of the community. This research tried to answer the research question that how does mobile marketing work to promote spiritual tourism in Saluang subdistrict.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Spiritual tourism is a brand-new of tourism product that rapid growth of the tourism market. The promotion is the priority over market strategy to drive the new product of market arena. Mobile marketing is rapidly growth of the online market and become more important than the traditional retail. This research aims to study for capable of mobile marketing as a strategy for driving engagement and conversion the spiritual tourism market, case study Saluang community, Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai.

III. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Currently, mobile marketing has been rapidly growing especially in tourism industry [4]. The advanced technology of wireless high speed networks and market penetration of mobile industry have alerted the planning of mobile marketing in advertisement industry worldwide. The increasing popularity of smartphones allows both government and private organizations in tourism industry to

implement mobile marketing. As a result, mobile is classified in the group of highly growth product in electronic market. The growth reflects that advertisers also concerns about the important of mobile marketing even in small business [5]. Digital Advertising Association (Thailand) together with Kantar TNS (Thailand), have revealed the value of money spent on digital advertising in 2015 – 2016 from 24 leading digital advertising agencies and it has been discovered that in January, digital advertising has been growing constantly with the total value of 9,477 million baht. It has been growing 17 percent more than last year. It is additionally expected that it will grow no less than 24 percent in 2017 [6]. Therefore, this information has illustrated the important growth of mobile marketing playing a significant role to promote the marketing. Furthermore, spiritual tourism is one of them and it has become increasingly popular among tourists. The rapid growth of the spiritual tourism reveals its potential in the market and in generating the incomes to the community. This also indicates the importance of spiritual tourism [3]. Additionally, spiritual tourism is a niche special interest tourism segment. This kind of tourism tends to focus on the necessities and benefits of religious activities. Certain activities tend to emphasize on mind practice. In order to promote the marketing, it is essential to present a complete package of spiritual tourism leading to more competitive ability and sustainability of spiritual tourism [7].

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL AND METHODS

Mobile marketing in spiritual tourism: A case of Saluang sub-district, Chiang Mai, Thailand was conducted by applying focus group and in-depth interviews where some questions were semi-structured from 20 tourism operators including community representatives from 8 Saluang villages and the government representatives related to the development of spiritual tourism to discover a suitable spiritual tourism for the community. Later, proper mobile marketing was discovered.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results from Saluang Community can be classified into 4 patterns which are:

1) Spiritual tourism in belief at Na Huek and Saluang Nok villages related the legend of the ancient items, the ruin temple, and tales of unknown fire balls that raised from ground on the Buddhist day in these villages. These villages also consist of the activity and lifestyle of organic farming.

2) Spiritual tourism in ecological agriculture style at Saluang Nai and Kad How villages consist of spiritual experience from agricultural in traditional style and the farmer lifestyle.

3) Spiritual tourism in Therapy practice and meditation at Som Suk village consists of spiritual experience by meditation practice from Dhamma retreat, leading by Luang Por Kao who has an experience on healing his cancer by meditation practice.

4) Spiritual tourism in secular tourist attractions and historical attractions at Saluang Nai, Phra Bhuddhabat Si Roi, Muang Ka, and Mae Ka Peang villages which are pervaded with a potentially spiritual meaning. The spiritual potential especially at Muang Ka villages, where was the location of the ancient Lua's kingdom. There are many existing evident of the ruin city, Vilangka's stupa and ancient items that remarkable of the old kingdom. The Phra Bhuddhabat Si Roi village also existing of fours individual Buddha foot prints. The evident of civilization of Buddhism in this area shown as Buddhist scriptures are kept in Temple of Saluang Nai village. Ka Peang Ban Huay Tao Ru village consists of spiritual experience of culture and lifestyle of Keren tribe and Hmong.

Thus, the first and necessary marketing strategy to move the new tourism product into market arena is promotion. Today, Internet is influencing the pattern of the business model of tourism sector. The travel agency and customer manage the way to interact in tourism business through the e-tourism [8]. The marketing via mobile user is now a

necessary part of online-business [9]. Peraz [10] referred to comScore's report, and point out that the U.S. user spend their majority time consuming digital media within mobile application than desktop usage. The statistic shown that they spend 60% of their time on mobile web, while desktop-based digital media consumption remain at 40%. And 79% of smartphone owners use app nearly every day, or 26 days per month. As well as Car [4] proposed their research on the important and properly of use the mobile marketing and advertising strategies in Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

Therefore, the research applies the promotion strategy on mobile as the majority market driven. According to Car [4], the suitable type of mobile marketing for spiritual tourism in Saluang community is the type of mobile marketing channel depending on the basic goal of marketing campaigns. This based on four types of spiritual tourism the study design to campaigns each type to introduce different context such as:

1) Spiritual tourism in belief presents the advertisement by text, image, video and audio to introduce the legend of the ancient items, the ruin temple, and tales of unknown fire balls.

2) Spiritual tourism in ecological agriculture introduces Thai farmer lifestyle, farming process and information of the agricultural product via QR code.

3) Spiritual tourism in Therapy practice and meditation introduces the experience of peace and healing illness by meditation practice.

4) Spiritual tourism in secular tourist introduces the attraction of the area the old kingdom and its legend.

The suitable and available mobile market channel that in Thailand can be useful for spiritual tourism, depending on the target consumer preference [4]. Each mobile market channel as shows in Fig. 1, is different in its features and available about 8 types in Thailand such as:

1) SMS can serve advertising message in form of texts.

2) MMS available for the images, video and audio.

3) Mobile App is better than mobile web because it allows the tourism business to connect with consumer.

4) Local-based Marketing deliver multimedia to the user depending on consumer location through the GPS technology.

5) QR code is enable the consumer to get information about tourism product.

6) Mobile Web the content can search and feed through the mobile.

7) Mobile Banner Ads present the standards banner that fit on mobile.

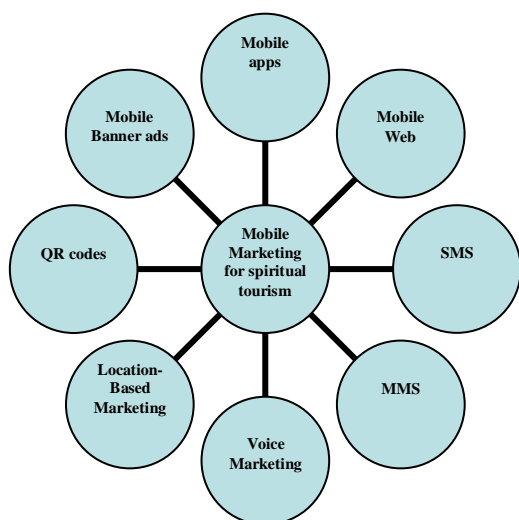
can promptly answer the questions of the customers [3]. Advertising using mobile marketing become an important factor to create marketing strategy [4] especially in tourism industry. Mobile technologies have led to travel guide application (app) for mobile [11].

Therefore, the promotion of spiritual marking in Saluang community using mobile marketing comprises of Mobile apps, Mobile Web, Mobile Banner, Local-based Marketing, SMS, MMS and QR code. This requires identity creation of tourism product so that the tourists can take photos and share in social media. The use of interesting technology corresponds to the notion of lower the expenses and creating more intimacy with the customers as the customers can be responded promptly and accurately with up to date information from the community.

REFERENCES

(Arranged in the order of citation in the same fashion as the case of Footnotes.)

- [1] Ardika, I.G. (2013). "Keynote address: Spirituality, ethics and sustainable tourism in the XXI century". Proceeding of First UNWTO International Conference on Spiritual Tourism for Sustainable Development, Ninh Binh Province, Viet Nam, The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): Spain.
- [2] Haq, F., Jackson, J., and Wong, H.Y. (2008). "Marketing spiritual tourism: qualitative interviews with private tourism operators in Pakistan (Doctoral dissertation, Central Queensland University)".
- [3] Kaplan, A. (2012). "If you love something, let it go mobile: Mobile marketing and mobile social media 4x4 Found". Business Horizons, 55(2), pp. 129-139.
- [4] Car, T., Šimunić, M., and Laškarin, M. (2013). "Mobile marketing and advertising strategies in tourism and hospitality industry". In conference proceeding, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management Opatija, In Conference



Source: Car, et al. 2012. (edit)

Fig. 1 Types of Mobile Marketing

VI. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, the marketing promotion in tourism industry has changed rapidly due to the change of marketing environment, advanced technology and new forms of social media. Consequently, to choose the types of mobile marketing channels depends on the needs of the target [4]. Mobile marketing applications is quite useful for sales promotions, relationship development and it

- proceeding, University of Rijeka.
- [5] Kooser, A.C. "Mobile Technology for Business". <<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/mobile-technology-business-2187.html>>.
 - [6] DAAT reveals. (2013). "Digital media spending survey". <<http://www.daat.in.th/index.php/daat-digital2016/>>.
 - [7] Medhekar, A. and Haq, F. (2010). "Development of Spiritual Tourism Circuits: The case of India". *GSTF journal on business review*, 2(2).
 - [8] Chiu, C.-K. (2009). "Understanding relationship quality and online purchase intention in e". *Quality & Quantity*, 43(4), pp. 669-675, doi:10.1007/s11135-007-9147-6.
 - [9] DeMers, J. "4 Mobile Marketing Strategies That Will Boost Engagement and Sales". <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/>>.
 - [10] Perez, S. "Majority of Digital Media Consumption Takes Place in Mobile Apps". <<https://techcrunch.com/2014/08/21/majority-of-digital-media-consumption-now-takes-place-in-mobile-apps/>>.
 - [11] Corrêa, C. "Mobile marketing of the Brazilian Tourist Board: Case study of Brazil Mobile application". <<http://www.academia.edu/5940422/>>.