

Article

Interpretation of a Local Museum in Thailand

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Abstract: This paper considers the interpretation of a local museum in Thailand using the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung as a case study. Data collection was carried out from 9 September 2015 to 22 January 2018. The collected data were derived from related documents, previous studies, in-depth interviews and observations. This present research aimed to investigate the interpretation of the case study through the management of “persons, places, and things”. The findings revealed that there are two major types of interpretation at the museum: the interpretation for the people in the community (that is, indigenous curators, local visitors, and local people) and the interpretation for the people outside the community (that is, general visitors and specific-purpose visitors). The results of the study indicate an appropriate and effective interpretation system for the specific community context which encourages people—both locals and foreigners—to be aware of the value of the community. Consequently, as a result of their awareness, people would increasingly cherish their community and work in collaboration with other people for the sustainable development of the community.

Keywords: local museum; interpretation; community engagement; sustainable development; local awareness; local identity; Thai Bueng Khok Salung; Thailand

1. Introduction

A local museum is treated as a representative of the history, origin and identity of a community. Such a museum offers development and preservation opportunities for the local community, which might be adversely affected by globalization. The impacts of globalization might cause the local identity of the community to disappear. Consequently, to lessen the effects of globalization, some communities have begun to prioritize localization that promotes self-reliance and cooperation between the people in a community [1]. The government, moreover, has reformed the laws which support the right to preserve local communities. According to the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, which was enacted on 11 October 1997 (Chapter III, Rights and Liberties of the Thai People, Section 46), “persons assembling as to be a traditional community shall have the right to conserve or restore their customs, local knowledge, arts or good culture of their community and of the nation and participate in the management, maintenance, preservation and exploitation of natural resources and the environment in a balanced fashion and persistently as provided by law” [2]. Furthermore, there is also another constitutional article supporting the local community which was enacted on 24 August 2007 (Community Rights, Part 12, Section 66) that prioritizes biological diversity in a balanced and sustainable fashion [3]. Thus, the local museum has gradually changed according to the social conditions and social context with the objective to promote the preservation of the local community.

In Thailand, numerous local museums have emerged because local people have become aware of their own culture, traditions, and identity that seem to have almost disappeared. Moreover, the growth of tourism also accelerates the emergence of local museums in Thailand, because a local museum could be considered as a tourist attraction that differentiates one community from others. According to the Thai museum database of the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, there are 1479 local museums in Thailand [4]. The center also presented six factors affecting recent local museum emergence as follows: “1. Country context changes 2. The effects on the local community 3. Discovery of antiques within the community area 4. As a symbol of honorable and famous people 5. Building good relationships between younger and older generations 6. Collecting artifacts” [5]. However, many local museums in Thailand have already closed or lack visitors. The causes of the problems can be divided into two major points. The first is management problems. Apparently, being unable to have good planning for a museum is one of the significant problems. There is no established systematic plan for museum administration, and there are no funds for museum activities. In addition, museum specialists and designers are supported by either the government sector or the private sector, and museum administration and maintenance were found to be lacking. Interpretation planning, including the opening and closing times of museums, is the second problem. Without good interpretation planning, activities inside the museums are not performed continuously and are not sufficient to help interpret the local community’s interesting features. Furthermore, the contents of the museums are hard to understand and the exhibitions are presented unimaginatively [6]. Therefore, the study of the interpretation system of local museums might shed some light on effective developmental methods for local museums. The information on interpretation systems in this study was collected at the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung in the Patthana Nikhom District (Lopburi Province) in Thailand. The museum is an example of a local museum that has been successful in terms of development and management. The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is run by local people who are encouraged to be a part of its management. It is one of the local museums that is regularly supported by government or private organizations.

This paper begins with the background on the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung. The explanations of the interpretation systems, the indigenous curators, visions, strategic plans, and working principles of the museum are then described. The definitions of local museum and the physical characteristics of a museum are then presented. This paper also presents information on the interpretation for the people both in- and outside the community. The results from this research may benefit those who manage local museums, particularly in regard to practical developmental knowledge. By learning about interpretation, the target group could determine the interpretation system that is most appropriate to their local context. In applying this knowledge, people in such communities are encouraged to be aware of their local identity. Consequently, the sustainable development of the community would occur. Moreover, the target group would also better understand the best interpretation system that is suitable for people outside their community. As there are various reasons for visiting a local museum for different groups of visitors, an appropriate interpretation system is needed to promote the sustainable development of the local museum and community. The objectives of this study were to study:

1. the management planning of the interpretation system of the local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung; and
2. the interpretation system of the local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung.

2. Materials and Methods

Data collection in this research was conducted by applying a purposive sampling technique to help collect information from five key informants, i.e. community leaders who possess knowledge on the strategic planning methods of interpretation at Thai Bueng Khok Salung local museum. Furthermore, they have also been collaborating with the museum since its establishment in 1999. Data were collected from 9 September 2015 to 22 January 2018.

2.1. Data Collection Approach

The method of data collection was informal interview with semi-structured questions adopted from widely accepted and related research studies [7–9]. The purpose of this interview was to elicit factual information.

The questions were divided into five sections: (1) General information on the informants. (2) Management and strategic planning methods of Thai Bueng Khok Salung local museum: In this second part, sub-questions were presented such as “How, and for what purposes or reasons was the museum established? Who were the target audience, locals or visitors?”, “How was the planning conducted, strategically and as a vision?”, “Who was involved in the planning and organization of the museum?”, “How were the working groups formed and what were their roles and responsibilities for the museum?”, “What were the working procedures” and “How were the activities held?”. (3) Content and the exhibition plans were examined with sub-questions such as “what approaches or method were used for creating information?”, “How was suitable information selected for the target audience?”, “What current information was chosen for presentation?”, “How and where was the data/information collected?”, and “How was the data researched, and how was the information based on the activity knowledge in the local learning centre recorded and kept?” (4) The planning of interpretation/channel included the following sub-questions: “Could you tell me the overall image and detailed procedures of how learning at the Thai Bueng Khok Salung local museum was established since the very beginning?”, “How would you interpret meaning to the targeted groups?”, “What were the learning procedures of the activities?”, “How were the messages or information arranged in the museum or in the community learning center?” and “What were the methods of presentation that corresponded to each targeted group?” (5) The following questions were asked regarding “visitors”: “What does the museum want the targeted group to acquire, a sense of knowledge and/or a sense of feelings?” and “What were the behaviors of the targeted group, museum workers, people in the local community, and visitors?”. In addition, under the topic of “evaluation planning”, the following questions were asked: “What approaches were used for evaluation in terms of knowledge, feelings, and targeted group behaviors?” and “How were data acquired from the evaluation managed?”

A participant observation approach was conducted during the interpretation and planning procedures of museum working staffs (message, channel, and receiver), whereas the evaluation procedures of audience needs were conducted (non-participant observation) by applying an interpretation procedure at the museum for the targeted group. The procedure was conducted by observing outside the group. The data were collected by following John W Creswell’s (Creswell, 2007: 207–211) [10] observation procedures including prolonged engagement, member checking and rich, thick description. Through these procedures, the data analysis was performed as a descriptive research.

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. Definitions and Concepts of Local Museum

The definition of museum has evolved as a result of social change. The reason might seemingly result from how different societies and cultures around the world look at the museum and its influence. The definition of local museum is also considered as a process that was influenced by the changes and evolution of society. However, “museum” could be defined by applying several factors including human-kind, culture, and the environment. It could be said that there are now more opportunities for people to participate in museum development, preservation, research, exhibition and communication as found by the ICOM (International Council of Museums) [11].

The terms mentioned in this study are defined as follows:

- “Indigenous curator” of the local museum refers to a local person in the community who plays a part in preserving the natural environment and cultural or traditional heritage. They are also responsible for passing on the value of their culture to the next generations to make them aware of the value and to carry on the conservation of their community. According to the experts from the

local museum project of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City (as cited in Tojarat Phongsari [12]), a local museum is a museum where people in the community are in charge of sustainability. A local museum is a museum that is established, developed, and managed by the community, for the community. According to Panita Sarawasi, a local museum or folk museum is a museum which local people and organizations created with the objective of developing the local community [13]. Moreover, according to Srisak Wanlipodom's statement about the indigenous curators of a local museum, "a local museum belongs to the local people; there is no one other than the local people that own it, not any individual, not any government organizations, and not any other outsiders" [14]. The above notions are similar to the three major functions of a local museum proposed by Liu and Lee: community participation, local development, and in-situ preservation. These main functions could promote sustainable development [15]. Additionally, according to Sutter, Sperlich, Worts, Rivard, and Teather, a local museum is the product of the community. Thus, the museum needs to be initiated, crafted, and managed by local residents [16].

- The meaning of "Places" of the museum: It could be said that, nowadays, the definition and importance of the term "area" at a local museum has been stressed by many museum stakeholders including curators and educators but each defines the term slightly differently when compared to those in the past. At first, curators gave importance to the area inside the buildings and the area of the museum itself. Later, the meaning of the term "area" at a local museum changed. Area has been termed as a place not only inside the buildings but also the community in which it is situated, which in turn suggests the importance of culture including natural resources, local ponds and rivers, houses, important places within the area, etc., which corresponds to how Riviere (as cited in Davis, 2005: 402–415) [17] and Tojarat Phongsari [9] used the terms.
- "Things" refer to the local history, archaeological evidence, tools, architecture, cultural resources, wisdom, culture, tradition, the natural environment, songs, local points of view, memories of the previous generation, and local plants and animals. In different communities across the world, there are different kinds of artifact that could be included in a local museum. This is because each community has its own characteristics. The indigenous curator is responsible for interpreting the artifacts for both people in the community and outsiders. The indigenous curator also needs to be aware of the importance of preserving those artifacts and developing the community at the same time.
- There are a lot of terms for museums that have the objective to interpret the value and manage the system of a particular community: local museum, community museum, regional museum, folk museum, and ecomuseum. Sometimes, the word "museum" is not included in the name, for example, cultural center and learning center. Nevertheless, these names refer to the same kind of museum. In this study, the word "local museum" is used.
- The local museum, in this study, is treated as a "tool" for preserving the community. This tool helps to interpret the value of a particular community. It encourages people in the community to acquire knowledge and cooperate with each other. The tool could help the local community to be strong. It is also a life-long learning tool.

To conclude, a local museum in this study refers to a museum that is established by the people in the local community, where the presentation, development, and preservation of the community occurs. The local museum pays attention to the preservation of all of the places of interest in the community. It is a life-long learning tool which interprets history and the value of the community for the next generation and encourages them to preserve the identity of the community continually. A local museum could also be called a community museum, a folk museum, an eco-museum, or others.

2.2.2. Definition of Interpretation

Interpretation is defined in two major ways: conceptually and methodologically. In the conceptual notion, interpretation is a communicative system that comprises emotions, intellectual pursuits,

audience interest, and the meaning of artifacts. According to Thanik Lertcharnrit, interpretation is a method for creating understanding. It is a process that translates the meaning of any artifact or knowledge into understandable language for the visitors to comprehend [18]. Dean and Edson (1994) proposed three main definitions of interpretation: (1) to explain or clarify; (2) to translate (as from one language to another); and (3) to perform or present according to one's artistic understanding [7]. Those definitions are similar to the definition of interpretation by the Department of Conservation, which stated interpretation is an explanation of the natural, cultural or historic values attached to places. It enables visitors to gain insight and understanding into the reasons for conservation and the ongoing protection of the heritage [19]. Moreover, Ham (1992) also said that "interpretation" "involves translating the technical language of a natural science or related field into terms and ideas that people who are not scientists can readily understand. Additionally, it involves doing it in a way that is entertaining and interesting to these people" [20].

In the methodological sense, interpretation refers to the process of presenting particular information, the value, and the significance of historical sites or artifacts using proper methods and elements. This means interpretation is a method that not only offers the visitors basic information, but also sends particular messages to the visitors to make them appreciate the value of the thing that is presented. According to Sataporn Tiangtam [21], interpretation is a kind of activity which is a medium to build understanding between people. It corresponds with the definition of Tilden that explains interpretation as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" [22]. All of the definitions of interpretation above conform to the ICOMOS Interpretation Charter's definition, which defines interpretation as all of the activities that intend to support the awareness of preservation by people in general and to strengthen the understanding of people towards cultural heritage sites. There are five major elements of cultural heritage site interpretation according to the ICOMOS Interpretation Charter: "Interpretation, Presentation, Interpretive infrastructure, Site interpreters, Cultural Heritage Site" [8].

Cultural heritage site interpretation could also refer to the concepts of local museum interpretation as local museums not only interpret value to people in the community, but also to tourists or visitors. In addition, at present, a local museum is seen as a cultural heritage site. According to Keawta Muangkasem, cultural heritage site interpretation means interpretation in the context of tourism. It is communication that arouses tourist interest and encourages them to be aware of the value of significant locations, history, and culture. This awareness adds value to the tourism product. Moreover, it can build positive attitudes towards sustainable preservation and tourism development [23].

To conclude, interpretation is a method for educational purposes. Its objectives are to communicate particular messages and relationships by using media or channels as explanation tools. Interpretation also illustrates the connection between humans, the environment, culture, tradition, and other things within the community.

From all of the preceding mentioned definitions, the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung can be a good example of a local museum that applies the concepts of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage interpretation as presented in the subsequent sections of this article.

2.3. Research Framework

The researchers employed an adaptation of Dean and Edson's interpretation loop [7] in this study, in which there are five main parts of interest: the sender, the message, the channel, the receiver, and the receivers' response. The sender refers to the local museum that presents the local ways of life, wisdom, heritage, and history. The message refers to the information or meaning that the curators prefer to interpret. The channel refers to the medium for interpretation (for example, exhibitions at the museum center and learning activities in the community). The receiver refers to both people in the community and visitors who attend the activities of the museum. Lastly, the receivers' response refers to the reflection of the receivers towards the activities that they took part in.

3. Results

Thai Bueng Khok Salung community is currently located 60 km away from the central region of Lopburi Province in the Pasak Jolasid River area where an abundance of natural resources and antiques as well as evidence of archeological sites were also found. From 3000 to 4000 years ago, it was evident that the place was rich with forestry and abundant natural resources available for both humans and animals. In addition, mineral resources such as ore were also discovered on the west side of the mountains nearby. Sandstone had also been used to build religious sites and other structures. Based on the historical evidence, humans were there from time to time and groups of nomads called Thai Bueng were there since the time of the Ayutthaya Era [24].

“Thai Bueng people, who are believed to have originated from Thai Dueng or Thai Korat nomads, were found to possess Thai central regional accents with minor differences from their counterparts”. This is evident in Korat, Buriram, and Lopburi Provinces [25].

The community of Thai Bueng Khok Salung was originally a steep hill area which often experienced flooding. In Thai, it is called “Khoak”. “Khoak” was found to have minerals for mining (iron ore waste from mining is extracted in different areas around the villages and great plains). This was why people called the place “Khoak Talung Rare” and later changed it to “Khoak Talung”, before ending up with “Khoak Salung”. At present, Thai Bueng is a 260-year-old community (as mentioned in a brochure) with its own unique culture. People in the community usually end their last names with “Salung” and they craft their own traditional clothes. They mostly worked as rice farmers, sugar cane growers, fishermen and house-hold handcrafters while their houses were built of hard wood. However, they had to move to the present location because of the development of the Pa Sak Jolasid Dam. The construction of the dam greatly affected their traditional style of living as some areas that used to be their agricultural areas were flooded. This problem caused the Thai Buengs to migrate to other places. However, they received a lot of compensation from the expropriation of their properties, as the construction of the dam took place unexpectedly and they had no time to prepare anything. Consequently, the Thai Bueng local traditions and culture were nearly destroyed.

To alleviate the problem, a group of Thai Buengs who were the backbone of the community started to take action by establishing a local museum in Thai Bueng Khok Salung in 1999. The objective was to restore the local traditions and culture of the Thai Buengs. The museum runs according to three main missions: to preserve and restore the local culture and wisdom, to develop leadership to support the working system, and to communicate to others to pass on and develop the Thai Bueng culture in the long term [25] through various activities (for example, local art exhibitions, local culture- and wisdom-based learning activities, observation activities in the actual community and surroundings, and activities in homestays).

3.1. Interpretation at the Local Museum of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung

Interpretation at the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is performed by the indigenous curator and the people in the community who are responsible for interpreting particular messages to people both inside and outside the community. The museum gives priority to three elements—management, places, and artifacts—to interpret any messages. Management is important to interpretation. The indigenous curator takes the museum’s visions and strategies as the goals of any work. The indigenous curator also prioritizes the places in and around the museum (for example, the museum center and learning sources in the community) and cultural artifacts around the community (see Figure 1).

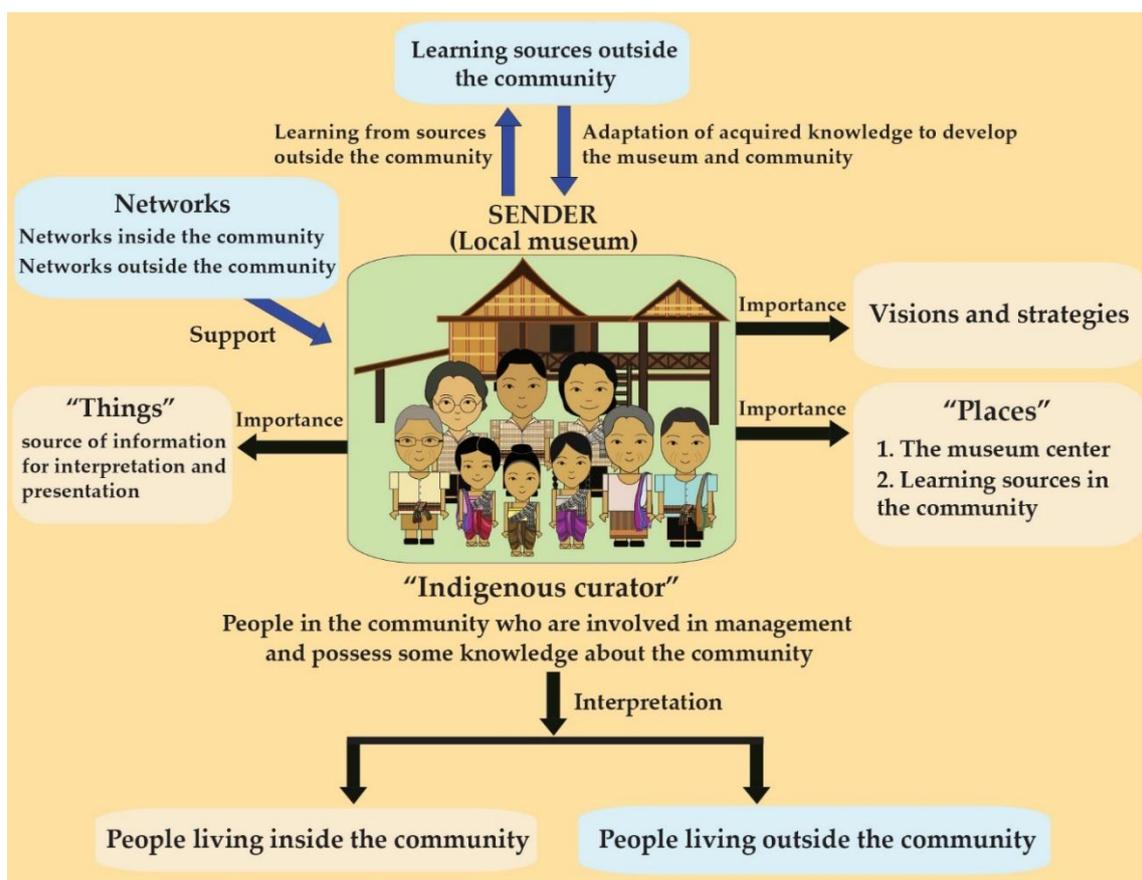


Figure 1. The management of interpretation at the local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

3.1.1. Indigenous Curator

All of the work in the museum is managed by the local people of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community. All of the rights to the buildings and any real estate at the museum belong to the local people in the community (see Figure 2).

- Strategic planning group

The strategic planning group works under the name of Thai Bueng Khok Salung Developing Institute. The group is responsible for planning and designing the strategies used at the museum. There are seven main people in this planning group [26]. However, there are also three representatives, from the weaving group, the homestay group, and the coarse rice manufacturing group, who sometimes participate in strategic planning meetings. The strategic planning group is accountable as the leader of the museum for which special characteristics, such as high responsibility and sacrifice, are required.

- Local intellectuals group

Local intellectuals are local experts who are respected by the local people in the community. They are responsible for passing on local wisdom to the next generations and to everyone who is interested in learning. Most of the local intellectuals are elders or adults. Children and youths in the community are responsible for being assistants to the local intellectuals at the learning bases. A local intellectual might be an expert in more than one area of wisdom; for example, an expert in local songs might also possess the ability to intertwine mats, weave, and make paper flowers.

- Career group
 1. *Homestay group* refers to a group of people who take care of homestays for visitors. This group is responsible for: (1) conducting strategic planning meetings to develop the homestays and AAR meetings after the stay of visitors; (2) learning working systems from outsourcers; (3) cooperating with other groups in planning and arranging activities; and (4) adjusting and developing their homestay continually. A homestay is a tool that could make income for people in the community. The people qualified to run a homestay ought to be selfless local people who enjoy doing this work as the community could become chaotic if people cared only about their profits. “A homestay is not only a tool that can make money, but is also a tool that can develop people” [27].
 2. *Weaving group* refers to the group of people who weave local textiles as a side job alongside their agricultural work. Some people in this group have a weaving career as their main job. Some of the local textiles are sold at the museum, and some are sold at textile markets by the makers themselves.
 3. *Textile manufacturing group* refers to the group of people who turn local textiles into design products (for example, loincloths, scarves, shirts, and bags). The products are both used in the community and sold to visitors.
 4. *Coarse rice manufacturing group* refers to the group of people who produce chemical-free rice—Riceberry and Jasmine rice—and let the museum conduct the merchandising.
- The Maled Kao Pluek Thai Bueng group (a group of children and youths)

The Maled Kao Pluek Thai Bueng group was established to help in the development of the children in the community. The group encourages local children to know about their background and the community’s identity. The name “Maled Kao Pluek” (paddy) is a metaphor that compares a child with paddy, where the child grows in knowledge and in physical and mental abilities [28]. The group was started by some middle-school students from two local schools—the Khok Salung school and the Nhong Ta Ming school—which were selected by the strategic planning group. The Maled Kao Pluek Thai Bueng group is responsible for teaching working procedures that relate to the work of the museum for the next generation. Children in the group learn about setting up camp procedures, cooperative working, and other knowledge taught by outsourcers. After they join the group, they gain the necessary knowledge for work (for example, the knowledge of filming a short documentary about the community and the procedure of setting up a camp).

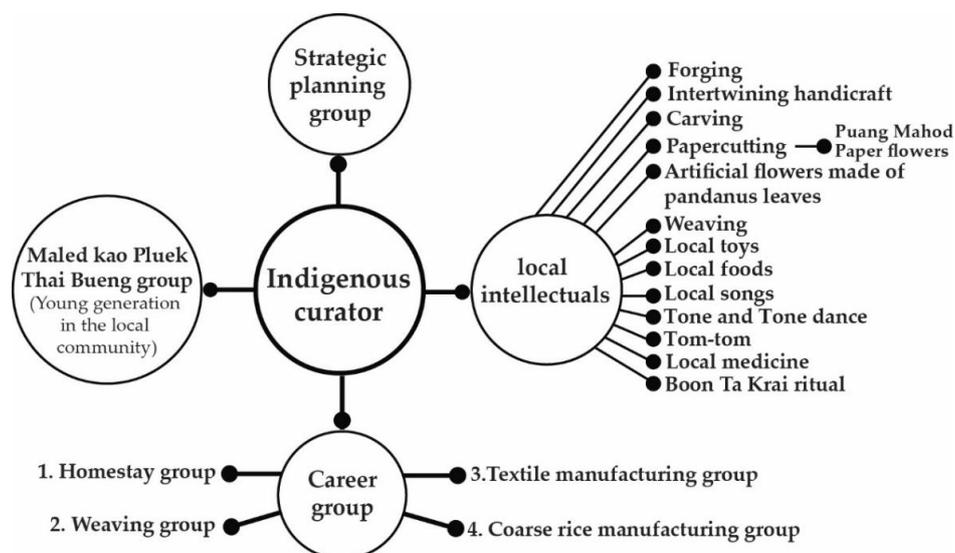


Figure 2. The role of the indigenous curator of the local museum in Thai Bueng Khok Salung (Source: Adapted from the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung).

3.1.2. Visions, Strategic Plans, and Working Principles

Not only are the people in the strategic planning group obliged to know about the museum's visions, strategic plans, and working principles, but the people in the community are also involved in the working system of the museum. The visions, strategic plans, and working principles of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung are as follows:

- The visions of the museum are to make a delightful community and make people happy based on Thai Bueng culture. The ultimate goal is the happiness of all people in the community.
- There are six strategic plans as follows:
 1. Developing people and the learning system by improving the latency of children, youths, and all the people in the community
 2. Preserving, restoring, continuing, and developing local wisdom, culture, and traditions, and making the learning resources in the community a "living museum"
 3. Transforming the local cultural value into economic value by developing the cultural tourism of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community, improving the capacity of the homestay group, and creating various advertisements for the museum
 4. Managing natural resources and the environment in the long term by improving the community's food resources, continually following up and cooperating in making a principled city plan for the Lopburi Province and Khok Salung District, and watching out for unscrupulous businessmen who might take advantage of the community
 5. Preparing people in the community to be ready for social change by establishing the Thai Bueng Khok Salung Developing Institute
 6. Managing the community's welfare by developing a social welfare system

The working principles of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung are working for the benefit of others, being selfless, and having public consciousness. The quality of the work is regarded as more important than quantity. Any working procedure is able to be adjusted according to different situations. However, there should be continuity in development and operative work.

The work at the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung aims to interpret the identity of the community with experts who best understand the interpretation of heritage and are members of the community. The learning activities of the museum increase awareness about local values. They also encourage people in the community to develop themselves based on their own culture. At the same time, academic works and research by curators, scholars, and researchers, also offer additional knowledge on the self-development of the community. Furthermore, the community also employs such research when requesting support or budgets that could help the community to work. This system corresponds to the "big town strategy" [29] which is a strategy that prioritizes the acceptance of people outside the community. When outsiders admire the value of the community, the people in the community are motivated to be aware of their own value. Then, genuine sustainable development can take place.

- Definitions of "the Local Museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung"

The definitions and significant elements of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung, as defined by the Indigenous curator, are as follows:

1. The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung symbolically presents the identity of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community as it is a medium that connects the Thai Buengs with those who are not from the community. The museum is also a symbol of the improvement and development of the museum itself. In an interview, Prateap Aonsalung said that "if the museum seems to be neglected, that means the work that has been done was not successful. On the other hand, if the museum is clean and constantly has activities, it illustrates its development. The great development of the museum indicates that good work has been done here" [27].

2. The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is the center for people in the community and the center of learning. It is a place that inspires and develops the local people of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community.
3. The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is a “living museum”. That means people can physically encounter the culture of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community. The museum not only presents historical artifacts, but also employs local people to be part of the exhibitions. “One example is that of the cultural learning activity in which the local elders are the teachers. This concept of working could help the local people to improve themselves. In addition, it could attract locals who are not working at the museum to be aware of their own culture” [29].
4. The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is a lifetime learning center.
5. The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung uses cultural assets to be tools in teaching and learning about the culture, both in the museum and in the community.
6. The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is responsible for community services that involve passing on and sustaining the stories of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung, encouraging local people to be aware of their own culture and community value, and encouraging the local people to be happy.

To conclude, the definitions and significant elements presented above, the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is the center for people who are interested in the same targets of driving development in the local community. It is also a learning center that brings people in the community and outsiders together by using cultural assets as tools for learning about and interpreting the value and identity of the community. The local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung is also a life-long learning place that could improve the local people and make them more aware of their self-value.

3.1.3. The Physical Appearance of the Local Museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung

The local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is divided into two parts: the museum center and the learning center (see Figure 3).

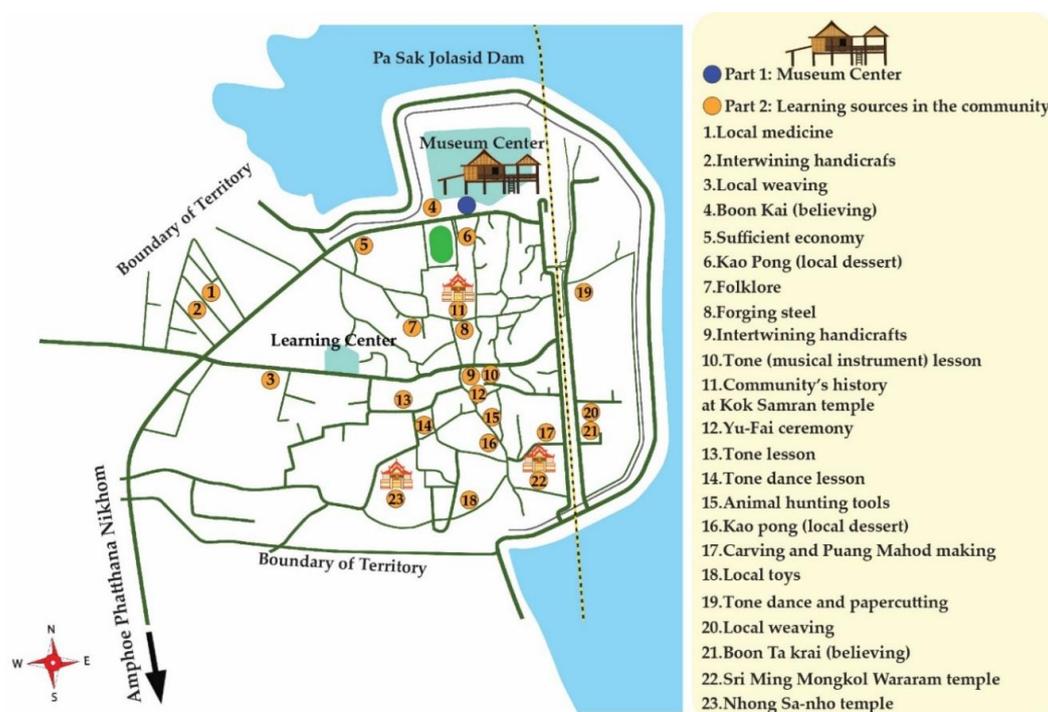


Figure 3. The physical appearance of the local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung (Source: Adapted from the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung).

- The physical appearance of the museum center

The museum buildings are constructed according to traditional Thai Bueng Khok Salung architecture, called Ruen Fha Kho, combined with modern construction. The museum illustrates the specific characteristics of the traditional local community where historical sites were discovered (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. The physical appearance of the local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung (Source: Anuntaset Setteethorn, 2018).

The local museum of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung's museum center is comprised of seven parts (see Figure 5). The first part is the museum building that consists of two floors of exhibition zones. The first floor of the exhibition consists of various zones that display posters presenting the history of the Thai Buengs in Baan Khok Salung, the Thai Buengs' traditional clothes, the Thai Buengs' careers, local vegetables, working tools including the traditional handlooms of the Thai Buengs, other tools for weaving, and local foods. Moreover, there are various local wisdom learning bases; for example, the learning base for local toys made out of sugar palm leaves, the learning base for making Puang Mahod, and the learning base for cooking local foods. This exhibition zone could also be used as a multi-purpose activity court which the staff could use as a dining or meeting area (see Figure 6).

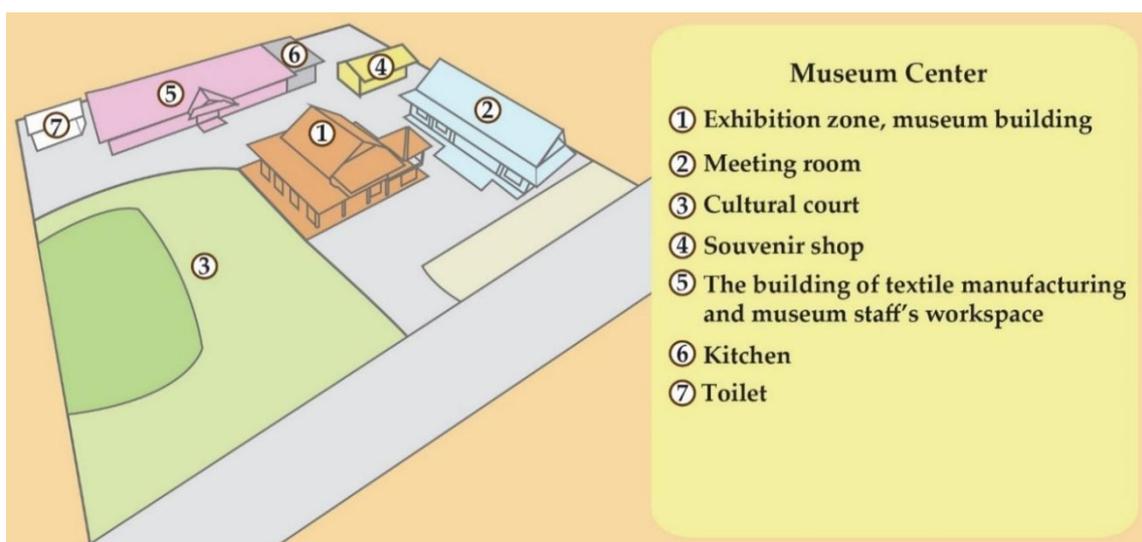


Figure 5. The physical appearance of the museum center (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).



Figure 6. The first floor of the museum building: (a) the Ruen Fha Kho Exhibition; (b) the cultural activities related to Ruen Fha Kho; and (c) local textile weaving (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

The second floor of the building displays a reproduction of Ruen Fha Kho (that is, the bedroom, multi-purpose room, workspace, kitchen, and courtyard) (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. The Ruen Fha Kho Exhibition, the second floor of the museum building: (a) the bedroom; (b) the multi-purpose room and workspace; and (c) the kitchen (Source: Anuntaset Setteethorn, 2018).

The second part is a meeting room. The room provides an area for managing various activities. The third part is the cultural court that allows people in the community to arrange outdoor activities. The fourth part is a souvenir shop selling local products that present the identity of the community; for example, satchels, scarves, loincloths, and key chains that are made from local textiles (see Figure 8). The fifth part is the building for local textile manufacturing and the museum staff's workspace. In this building, there is also a residential area for the indigenous curators and visitors, such as professors, researchers, and undergraduate trainees. The sixth part is a kitchen and the last part is the toilets.



Figure 8. The museum center: (a) the meeting room (activity room); (b) the cultural court; and (c) the souvenir shop (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

- The physical appearance of the learning center

The learning center of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is divided into two parts as follows:

1. The houses of local intellectuals

One of the houses of local intellectuals is the house of Uncle Chao, who teaches forging. The products from this house are various kinds of knives and shovels that could be used for various purposes. Most of the customers of Uncle Chao are local people in the community. In many of the houses of local intellectuals, people learn to weave traditional textiles, which are made into various products such as satchels or loincloths. Such skills can be learned at the house of Miss Bumrung, the house of Grandmother Teaw, the house of Grandmother Rod, and the house of Grandfather Lhi. The house of Uncle Ga teaches how to make local toys from sugar palm leaves. The house of Uncle Sook teaches wood and coconut shell carving and also teaches how to make Puang Mahod, a religious ceremony decoration item. The house of Grandmother Ape teaches the performance of local arts such as local songs, tone dancing, and paper cutting. The house of Uncle Yong teaches how to intertwine bamboo into household objects such as Kraboong (a basket for vegetables or other items), Takra (a basket which people mostly use to store things to receive merit at a temple), Kradong (a threshing basket), Soom Kai (a coop for chickens), and Sai (a trap for catching fish). The house of Grandmother Ruem teaches about the Boon Ta Krai ritual. The Boon Ta Krai ritual is a local belief in which local people perform to understand the cause(s) of any problem they encounter, such as the cause of sickness. In the ritual, the person who leads the ritual, called Mho Boon, explains the cause(s) through a medium called Ta Krai. The last example of the houses of local intellectuals is the house of Grandfather Mhun. This house demonstrates local medicine, such as the local ways to treat broken bones or sprained ankles (see Figure 9).



Figure 9. The houses of local intellectuals that are learning bases: (a) the forging base; (b) the local toy base; (c) the intertwining base; and (d) the paper flower base (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

2. Important landmarks of the community

Historical stories and folklore of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community are transferred through various landmarks within the community; for example, the Kok Samran temple, the Kok Salung train station, the Pa Sak Jolasid dam (see Figure 10), and the Pho Luang Pech shrine. Moreover, the local ways of life are also described through the houses of local people and the local market.



Figure 10. The important landmark learning bases: (a) the Kok Samran Temple; (b) the Pa Sak Jolasid Dam; and (c) the Kok Salung Train Station (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

3.1.4. Things, Information Sources, and Presentation

The museum collects information in the form of files, books, research, reports, and projects. The information is compiled in the museum. It includes various forms as follows:

- Articles from outsources about skill development, the knowledge of working procedures, and tools for local community development
- Research from researchers outside the community from which the museum uses the knowledge to be a working framework or manual
- The museum's projects and research which offer valuable information about the way to develop the community
- Textbooks

It should be noted that the information collecting system of the museum is incomplete as there is some information that still needs to be collected. However, the museum is studying and developing the data collection system continually.

In Figure 11, the research author intended to provide symbols that represent those who are audience or involvers or so-called "receivers", and the different levels of attention that those receivers give. This symbol is represented as the receiver in all diagrams, thus explanation about this symbol is provided so that readers can relate their understanding to relevant contexts and diagrams.

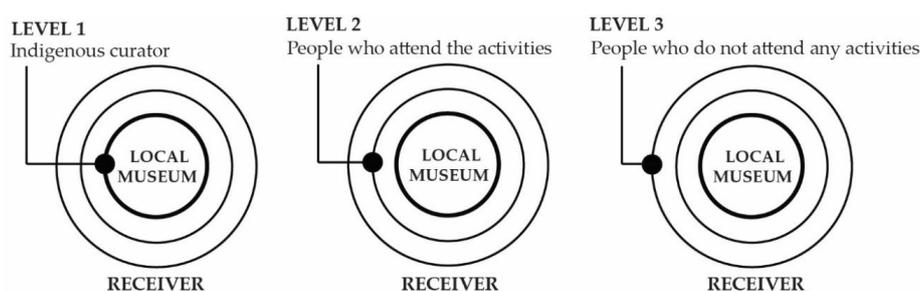


Figure 11. The levels of accessibility and priority for each focus group (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

In Figure 11, the inner circle refers to the museum and learning sources in the community. Level 1 refers to the indigenous curator who is the person closest to the museum. Level 2 refers to people in the community and the outsiders who participate in the learning activities of the museum. Level 3 refers to the group of people, both inside and outside the community, who do not participate in any activity, but acknowledge what the museum does.

3.1.5. Interpretation for People Living Inside the Community

There are five concepts of interpretation for people in the community as follows:

1. The museum provides the developments to people by enhancing awareness about their local knowledge (for example, history, lifestyle, culture, traditions, language, foods, and wisdom) through the process of working in the museum and community.
2. All the work of the indigenous curators is a channel for the indigenous curators themselves to gain and understand local knowledge. Moreover, the local visitors to the museum are also treated as trainers of the indigenous curator, who encourages them to develop their work to be better and to continually practice their local wisdom to pass on the wisdom to the next generations. "All of the activities train us to be aware of our own culture. We ought to learn more. We ought to develop our own capacity. When we have that knowledge, we will understand our own working process. Then, all the work in the museum will be successfully completed as the responsibility of each individual is done efficiently. Additionally, participants have the opportunity to develop their skills every time they work" [29].

3. The indigenous curators are encouraged to be aware of their own value and that of their local culture. The museum also offers the indigenous curators with a feeling of cherishing and ownership of all the places in the local community. Moreover, the generation gap between children and elders is lessened because they are working together as a team.
 4. The preservation of the traditional Thai Bueng Khok Salung way of life is carried out alongside the changes in lifestyle in modern times. The museum accepts the need to adapt itself, and to determine whether the local ways of life, wisdom, or economic value, following the change, are for the greater good of all the people in the community. "We do not deny that a culture could change over time. We are not conservatives, but we are aware of which things we should protect and which things we should adjust. However, in changing something to increase its cultural value, the things that are altered have to still convey the traditional identity of the Thai Buengs" [27].
 5. The museum provides a cultural learning curriculum for the schools in the community.
- Level 1: The Interpretation Loop of the Indigenous Curator

The indigenous curator of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung is the person involved in managing, planning, and doing all the activities at the museum. They are the closest to the working process of the museum and take the part of both the sender and receiver. "(Figure 12).", etc.

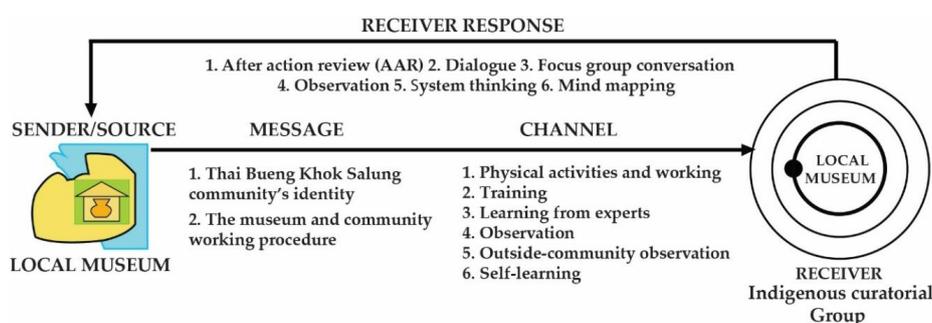


Figure 12. The interpretation loop of the indigenous curatorial group (Source: Adapted from Dean, D., & Edson, G., 1994).

1. Interpretation system management

The interpretation system management for people in the community is comprised of the self-interpretation system of the museum itself and cooperation with both internal and external networks.

Preparation phase: The museum gives precedence to the preparation phase to manage the interpretation system by arranging meetings before any actual work. The meetings allow the curators to see the big picture of the work that is going to be carried out. The preparation phase is counted to be 70% of all of the work done in one job, following the working concept of the curator who said: "if there is good preparation, there is a good result" [27].

Presentation phase: The presentation phase is the step that presents the various activities of the museum (for example, the museum learning activities and annual fair). This phase is counted to be 10% of all of the work done in one job.

After the action review phase: The remaining 20% is the after action review (AAR) which is conducted immediately, or not later than an hour after any activity is conducted. This phase uses the method of aesthetic dialogue, which is a method that allows people in the meeting to talk, one person at a time, combined with a regular style of meeting.

Focus group: The focus group is with the indigenous curator and is divided into three age groups: children and youths, adults, and elders.

Time period: The time period of this management is throughout one's life.

2. Messages of Thai Bueng Khok Salung Community's Identity and Working Procedure of the Museum

The working procedure of the museum and the community is as follows

Dialogue procedure: According to Prateep Onsalung (2018), "society nowadays seems to be in disarray. That makes most people only talk but not listen to others. When they do not listen, it is impossible to acknowledge what the others really want to express" [27]. Therefore, the dialogue method is used for communication in the museum, whether it is a planning meeting or the AAR phase. The dialogue method is what Prateep Onsalung called the way in which a person pays attention to listen to others to learn what the other people really want to say. "If we really pay attention to listen when someone talks, we would know what that person really wants to express. It is because he or she might not always explicitly say something out loud" [27].

Systematic thinking: Systematic thinking is the way to link the relationships between things, instead of looking at one thing in particular. In the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung, the indigenous curators have to think about the people or organizations that are involved in a certain job; for example, the relationship of each individual in the community or any outside organization and the local textile production system.

After action review: After action review is a kind of meeting that promotes self-reflection of the recent group work. According to Prateep Onsalung, "the rule of AAR is that one is not allowed to entangle other people with his or her own contemplation. It is essential that one has to look upon only him/herself about what he/she has done in the recent job. Additionally, if the work is finished successfully, we are going to be proud together. However, if it is not like we hoped for, we are going to brainstorm what might have been wrong and try to come up a way to alleviate the problem that might affect the next job" [27].

It is noted that some academic language which might be too hard to understand for the locals should be altered to make it easier to comprehend.

Additional work training: The indigenous curators are obliged to train themselves to be storytellers who interpret their wisdom or knowledge for other people. They have to acquire the characteristics of a storyteller, the process of storytelling, and the right way to question and answer issues with the visitors. Moreover, the indigenous curators might train themselves to be local intellectuals of fields other than the one that they are already an expert in. The training is conducted by observing other local intellectuals on the way they teach, the way they make products, and the history behind the wisdom.

Mind mapping: A mind map is a tool that records various thoughts of the people in a curatorial group into a single paper that could be used to help them understand each other in the same way. The curatorial group uses mind mapping in the planning and concluding work of the museum.

Collaboration: The museum promotes collaboration between all people in the community. The indigenous curators are encouraged to learn about the procedures and benefits of collaboration.

3. Channels

The indigenous curatorial group learns through actual activities and working, outside-community observation, studying with experts, observation by him/herself, and self-training (for example, to train to communicate in a meeting and to train how to exchange ideas).

4. Receiver Response

The receivers—the indigenous curators—could respond in six ways: focus group conversations, dialogue procedures, systematic thinking, observations, AARs, and making mind maps (see Figure 13).



Figure 13. The indigenous curatorial group meeting: (a) the meeting atmosphere; (b) mind map construction by a representative of the indigenous curatorial group; and (c) an example of a mind map (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

In the interpretation system of the “indigenous curators”, the researcher discovered from the observations of this group’s dialogue procedures that the continuance of working in the museum, attending courses to develop knowledge, and cooperation between the curators allowed them to accumulate specific knowledge in regard to conducting the local museum’s tasks. The continuance also allowed the indigenous curators to change their perspectives and behaviors to be more suitable to work in modern society. For example, they became more confident to reflect and express their thoughts to others. This is a good alteration, resulting from the opportunities to express one’s opinions provided by the museum’s system. The researcher also discovered the reasons why most of the indigenous curators still work in the museum. (1) It is because of the curators’ love, understanding, attachment, and happiness towards the local museum itself, as Teaw Salungyu stated; “I love that place (the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung) like my own home. I love Uncle Mued (a community leader). If we do not help him, who else will? I think this way. I like it. I am happy here. We laugh together like we are relatives, and that makes me happy. I am much more mature than before because Uncle Mued taught me well. He said that we live in the same community. Thus, we should help each other in all work. If there is any mess, we should clean it up. Here I never mind the income”. (2) It is because they want to develop their hometown. (3) They also remain working at the local museum because the museum is able to manage a team-work system. This system promotes understanding among curators. (4) They can see tangible results which are continually improving. (5) It is because they have hope and focus. (6) They want their heirs to carry on the work of the museum. (7) They are also aware of their responsibilities, both as a person in community and as a Thai citizen. Prateep Onsalung, a leader of the community, stated;

“The reason why I am still working at the museum is responsibility. I am Thai. I am a Baan Khok resident. It is wrong if I count on others to take care of my own community. Thus, I have to do it if I want to live happily. I have to do it if I want my children to live happily in the future. Besides, the reason that forces me to work this much is because there is only income from government provided for the museum. If I quit when other people in the community do not possess enough strength to take my position, this community may turn into a slum or a bad place. However, if all the people in the community help in taking care of the museum, this place will turn into a learning centre that gathers together people who want to develop their own community.”

- Level 2: Interpretation Loop of Local Visitors
 1. Interpretation system of general local visitors

The focus group of this level of the interpretation loop includes local students and local organizations. Throughout the year, local schools provide opportunities for students to learn about their local traditions and culture (for example, learning how to cook local foods or how to make traditional local toys) at the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung. For people in local organizations, besides learning about the local traditions and culture similar to the group of local students, they also learn about the working procedures of the museum, which they could adapt to use in their own organizations.

2. Interpretation system of the museum's projects and research

It is not only the museum that is involved in this interpretation loop; it also includes various organizations outside the community which are linked to various sources of knowledge and funding from external stakeholders. Moreover, this interpretation also takes various organizations in the community (for example, local primary and secondary schools) into account.

To conduct any project, the museum always considers how the project is going to benefit the community, and the obtained knowledge should help in continuing or developing the completed projects or strategies that have already been planned (see Figure 14).

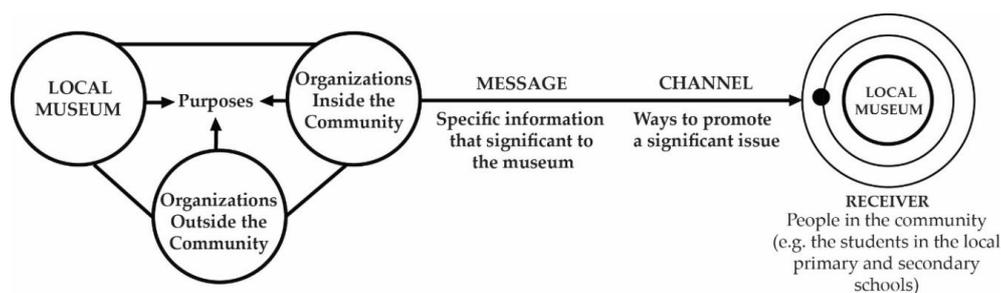


Figure 14. The interpretation loop of projects and the research of the museum (Source: Adapted from Dean, D., & Edson, G., 1994).

The museum has completed many projects. The first example is the project that supports healthy local foods. The results of this project are, firstly, that the new generation can carry on the local wisdom about Thai Bueng's healthy foods, which suit all kinds of people (for example, adults, teenagers, elders, pregnant women, and women in the breastfeeding stage). Local schools have also included the healthy local food list from the project in their lunch menu. The second example is the developing project of instructional media about local folktales. The focus group of this project includes children, youths, local intellectuals, schools in the Khok Salung District, and the people of the community. By using the local folktales as a channel, this project encourages people in the focus group to exchange local knowledge, to acknowledge their background and identity, to collect a data set about Thai Bueng's tales, to present Thai Bueng's traditions to the public, to develop the capacity to carry on the local folktales of the youths in the Thai Bueng community, and to build a network for the preservation of the local folktales (see Figure 15).



Figure 15. The local folktale instructional media creating activities: (a) the modeling clay lesson; (b) the painting activity; (c) the motion picture creating activity; and (d) the presentation of local folktales in the forms of books and videos (Source: Payom Onsalung, 2017).

The third example is the children's development through the local wisdom project that promotes four abilities—health, mind, human relations, and intelligence—by using local entertainment and toys as a channel. The objective of this project is to prepare children for standard education (for example, Elementary School Division (Grades 1–3)) [27].

3. Interpretation system of annual fair

The objective of the local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung's annual fair is to present what the indigenous curators have done throughout the year. The fair builds a better understanding for the people who do not know exactly why the curators did certain things. Furthermore, this is beneficial when the museum requests a budget from the government because it is evidence of the activities and the costs.

There are three messages that the annual fair conveys: to present work results, to present Thai Bueng Khok Salung's identity, and to arouse the interest of outsiders (for example, scholars and researchers) about the museum and community. The theme of the fair changes every year; for example, local food was the theme of the annual fair for one year, and the next year, the theme was changed to local textiles. This interpretation has six channels: the talking stage, the performance of local entertainment, local wisdom bases, exhibitions, local tradition activities, and the work resulting from the cooperation between the museum and outsiders (for example, a local textile fashion show). The museum, moreover, gives priority to the arrangement of meetings between the curators, people in the community, the researchers, and the outside organizations. The meetings help in the development of the community itself as the information acquired at each meeting enhances the understanding between all of the people involved (see Figure 16).

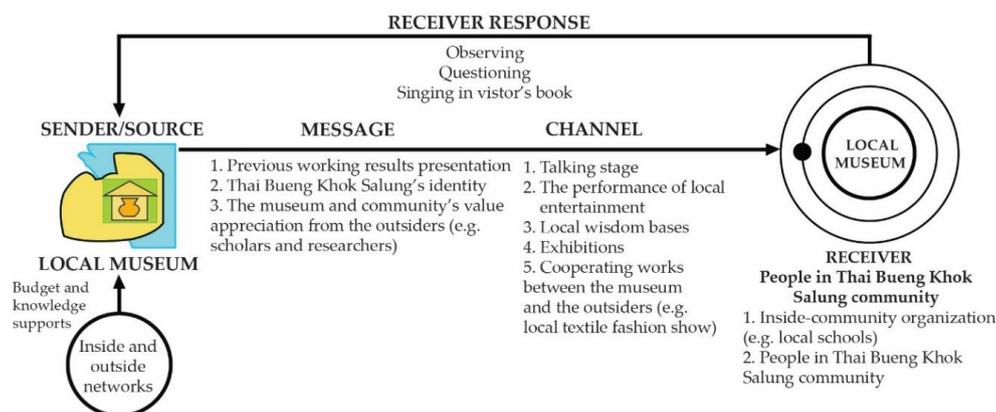


Figure 16. The interpretation loop of the local museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung's annual fair (Source: Adapted from Dean, D., & Edson, G., 1994).

The time duration of each annual fair is approximately 1–2 days. The receivers of this interpretation are the inside-community organizations and all of the people in the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community. Examples of inside-community organizations are local schools, the sub-district administration organization, and the strategic planning group. The receiver responses are recognized by observation, questioning, and the receivers' comments in a visitor's book.

In terms of receiver response, the museum has been applying observation, questioning, and the receivers' signing a visitor's book methods. For observation, the museum observes the behaviors and feelings of the audience and predicts their potential participation in the future. For interviews with government officials, the museum curators do not interview them formally but rather exchange their opinions with the interviewees and hope to find an opportunity to work with them in the future. Besides, letting visitors write down their opinions in the museum guest book is one of the best ways to discover their thoughts and what the museum should improve based on their opinions.

The success of the interpretation system at this annual festival cannot be achieved instantly but rather takes much time as it is necessary to repeat the message repeatedly to attract the attention and raise the awareness of the audience and visitors as to what the museum is trying to do. This is what the museum is attempting to do by interpreting the value to the locals and government representatives (if it attracts outsiders, locals should be able to appreciate the value of what they own and its interpretation). This is an example of what the museum receives when they are able to make the official representatives

realize the value of the locality. With collaboration between museum and government agencies, concrete results are possible, for example when schools around the Khok Salung area allow their students to wear traditional Khok Salung clothes and take their traditional Khok Salung bags to school. Some of the students even let the museum craft their school uniforms for them while families with garment making skills produce apparel for their children. It could be said that traditional garment making is a symbol of participation in the community’s traditional way of life and positively influenced the sense of belonging and awareness in children, schools, and the locals themselves (see Figure 17).



Figure 17. The annual fair of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung: (a) the talking stage of local value; (b) the local food learning activity; and (c) local product stalls (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

- Level 3: Interpretation loop of non-participants who have the potential to be participants in the future (local people)

The focus group of this interpretation loop is non-participants who have the potential to be participants in the future (local people). They monitor what is going on at the museum and their community, but are not involved in any activity. The messages that the museum sends to this focus group are about local traditions that have nearly disappeared such as the Tak Bart Lookom tradition (the tradition of offering candy to Buddhist monks) and the flower parade tradition, the attention of the outsiders (for example, scholars and researchers) towards the community, and the attention of the Thai Bueng way of life, culture, and traditions from mass communication businesses. The interpretation is recognized through three channels: the various activities of the museum (for example, local fairs, traditional practices, and learning bases around the community), various television programs and videos in social media that portray the story of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community, and the positive changes within the community. The receiver responses are recognized through the observation of changes in the community (see Figure 18).

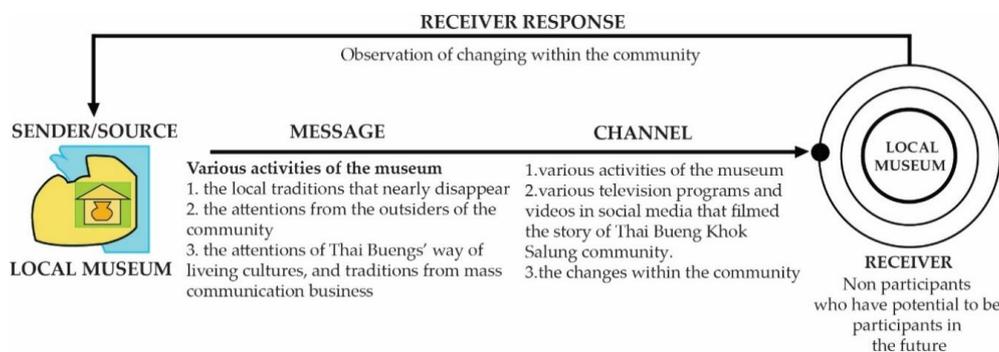


Figure 18. The interpretation loop of non-participants who have the potential to be participants in the future (local people) (Source: Adapted from Dean, D., & Edson, G., 1994).

3.1.6. Interpretation for People Living Outside the Community

There are two parts of the interpretation concept for people outside the community: knowledge and emotions. The knowledge part is comprised of attempts to encourage visitors to the museum to understand the Thai Bueng Khok Salung identity and the working procedures of the indigenous curators. This part also encourages the visitors to adapt the knowledge they acquired from the museum to develop their own community. "If one knows how to change one's community to be a better place, one could be in any place happily" [27]. For the part of emotions, the museum encourages both visitors and people in the community to be happy as a result of the various activities of the museum. Furthermore, the visitors are encouraged to recognize the value of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung identity. Moreover, the indigenous curators ought to appreciate the visitors because they are an important part in the development of the community.

- Interpretation loop of general visitors

The objective of this interpretation is to present Thai Bueng Khok Salung's identity to outsiders who visit the museum to learn about the culture of Thai Bueng Khok Salung and the working procedures of the museum. The focus group of this interpretation loop includes teachers and students, community developers, and people who are interested in cultural value (for example, Thai people, foreigners, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)).

The interpretation loop planning for general outsiders is work which involves the indigenous curators and the visitors planning the activity pattern together. The main learning objective of visitors comes before the planning, but it has to be the baseline of what the community has to offer. Outsiders could choose the learning and activity bases by themselves. This act of giving options to the visitors could promote independent thinking skills and allow the visitors to learn about what they really want to learn. It should be noted that any planning or changing of activities has to be done before the day of the visit because the work needs time for preparation (see Figure 19).

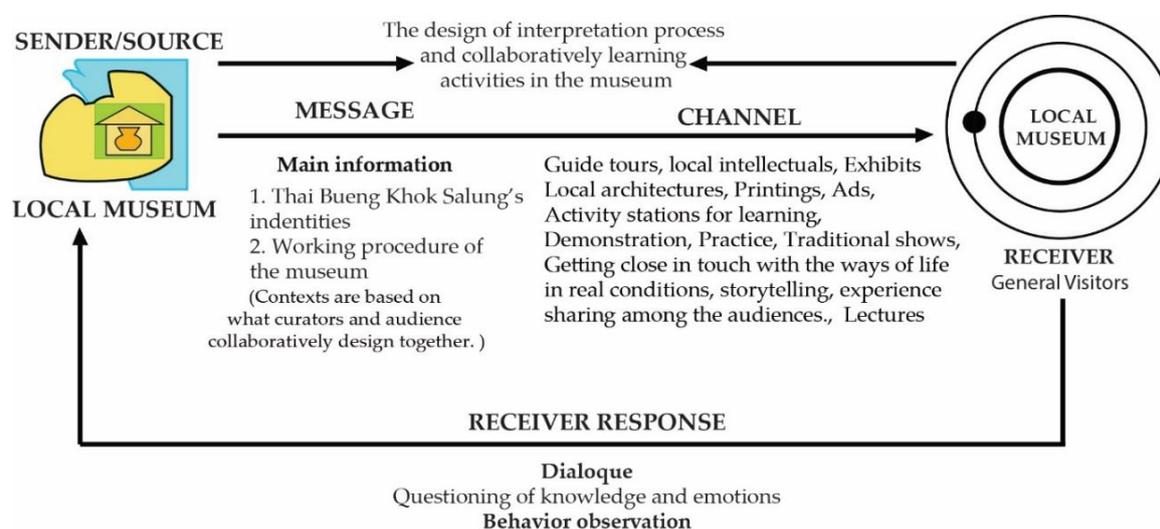


Figure 19. The interpretation loop of general visitors (Source: Adapted from Dean, D., & Edson, G., 1994).

Interpretation Procedures for General Visitors

1. Welcoming process

The museum has a concept of making the visitors happy when they are at the museum because everyone, including the visitors, is important to the community and the museum itself. "The museum starts to impress the visitors in order to make them happy from their first step into the community" [26].

To start the welcoming process, the indigenous curator prepares a bunch of flowers made of Pandan leaves to be a welcome gift for visitors. The Pandan flower is also one of the interpretations from the museum because this is a local plant. After visitors have received the flowers, they are led to another welcoming amenity, which is local herbal drink (for example, Pandan juice and Roselle juice). According to Prateep Onsalung, the welcoming process is conducted “in order to make the visitors acknowledge the friendliness that all the people in the community offer” [27] (see Figure 20).



Figure 20. The welcoming process of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung: (a) the local people giving Pandan flowers to the visitors; (b) Pandan flowers; and (c) the local herbal drinks station (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

In cases where visitors stay overnight, there is another welcoming gift at the homestay, which is a garland that each homestay threads in different ways. The local flowers (for example, red and yellow Ixoras, Marigolds, Bougavilles, Ervatamias, and Crown flowers) are used to make the welcome garland because they are easy to find and show the identity of the community. There is another form of interpretation involved in the case of the homestay, which is the calling of the name of the owners of the homestay. If the owner is a female, the visitors are encouraged to call her “Mae” (mother in English) followed by her name; for example, Mae Bumlung or Mae Tiew. If the owner is a male, the visitors call him “Pho” (father in English) followed by his name; for example, Pho Aon. This name calling could be interpreted as the feeling of staying at home for visitors (see Figure 21).



Figure 21. The welcoming process at homestay: (a) the visitors receiving the local flower garlands; and (b) the local flower garlands (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

2. Dialogue for expectations interviews

The indigenous curator conducts expectations interviews by using the aesthetic dialogue procedure, which is a method that allows only one person to talk at a time, before the visitors attend any learning activity of the museum. The results of the interview reveal the expectations of the visitors towards the museum. An example of this procedure is the three-step procedure of the expectations interview. The first step is the formation of groups of two people to talk about each one’s expectations about the museum for 5 min. The second step is the formation of groups of five people. This step takes about 5 min. The last step is the presentation of each group. While each group is presenting their ideas, the curators note down the main ideas on a mind map. The results of the interview could lead to the adjustment of some activities (see Figure 22).



Figure 22. The dialogue process for expectations interviews: (a) the visitors present their expectations; (b) the representative of the curatorial group creates a mind map; and (c) a mind map of visitors' expectations (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

3. Messages

There are two messages in this interpretation system. The first message is the Thai Bueng Khok Salung's identity; for example, the history of the community, the local ways of life, local costumes, local wisdom, local foods, local traditions and beliefs, local entertainment, and local handicrafts. The second message is the working procedure of the museum that encourages learning about community development.

4. Channels

The museum interprets the focus messages through three channels: places, persons, and methods. The visitors acknowledge the messages via places, including the museum center and the various learning bases within the community (for example, the houses of local intellectuals, Khok Samran temple, Khok Salung train station, Pa Sak Jolasid dam, the community market, and local homestays). The messages are also represented through the local people, such as local guides and local intellectuals. Moreover, various methods presented at the museum (for example, the arrangement of exhibitions and learning bases, learning by doing, and the way of presenting any information) could be also treated as a channel to interpret the focus messages.

5. Receiver responses

The museum receives the receiver responses by questioning or interviewing the visitors about their knowledge and feelings using the aesthetic dialogue procedure. Moreover, the responses are identified by observations.

It should be noted that the above interpretation procedure for general visitors is a complete procedure that could be altered according to the planning of the museum and different focus groups. All of the details of each activity (for example, the presentation method and time duration) are considered differently in each focus group. For example, if the visitors are children, the learning activities would focus only on basic or easy procedures; that is, the indigenous curators could minimize the ingredient mixing step in the Kanom Bueng (a kind of Thai dessert) learning base, which is moderately complicated, and provide readymade ingredients for the children to make Kanom Bueng.

In the interpretation system of visitors who visit to study and participate in activities about local wisdom at both the local museum and the learning center in the community, the researcher discovered from the observations of this group's dialogue procedures that most of the visitors felt like they were back at home. It is because the people in the community took care of them as though they were at home. It is also because the way of life in this community and the local culture was similar to their own. Furthermore, most of the visitors were impressed by the "people" in the community, whether it was the way they welcomed the visitors, their friendly personality, their way of life, or the conversations with them; the "places" in the community, such as the dam, the train station, the natural surroundings, and the guest houses; and "Things" in the community. Both happiness and enjoyment were expressed by the visitors when they talked about their participation in activities or their time spent in the community.

Moreover, the visitors were also able to adapt the knowledge gained from the museum, whether about the museum’s working procedure or the sense of unity and belonging, to use in their own community or workplace. A visitor stated, “In this place, everyone is an owner. No one is a boss. This method could be applied to use when working as a group. It is good that we promote equivalent rights when we are working together”. (Dialogue procedure observation, 1 June 2017).

Recommendations

A visitor suggested the activity bases at Khok Samran temple should be adjusted: the allocation of exhibition areas should be more appropriate and more systematic. He stated, “This place has various cultures and a long history. I learned a lot about ancient culture and historical sites and artifacts from this temple. Now, if we are able to highlight these key features, culture and history, and make them accessible for people to explore, this temple can be one of the tourist attractions in the community. It can even be a landmark of the community which could attract tourists to visit the place. Afterwards, we can include social media to promote the place. For example, we can create a fan page or website. It is also a good advertising when the visitors check in the place in any social media” (dialogue procedure observation, 8 October 2017).

- Interpretation loop of Specific-purpose visitors

Specific-purpose visitors are different from general visitors as the objective in visiting the museum is not only to learn about Thai Bueng Khok Salung culture, but also to study the museum and use the acquired information for their research, report, thesis, or project. This group of people usually learns about specific topics that the museum provides (see Figure 23).

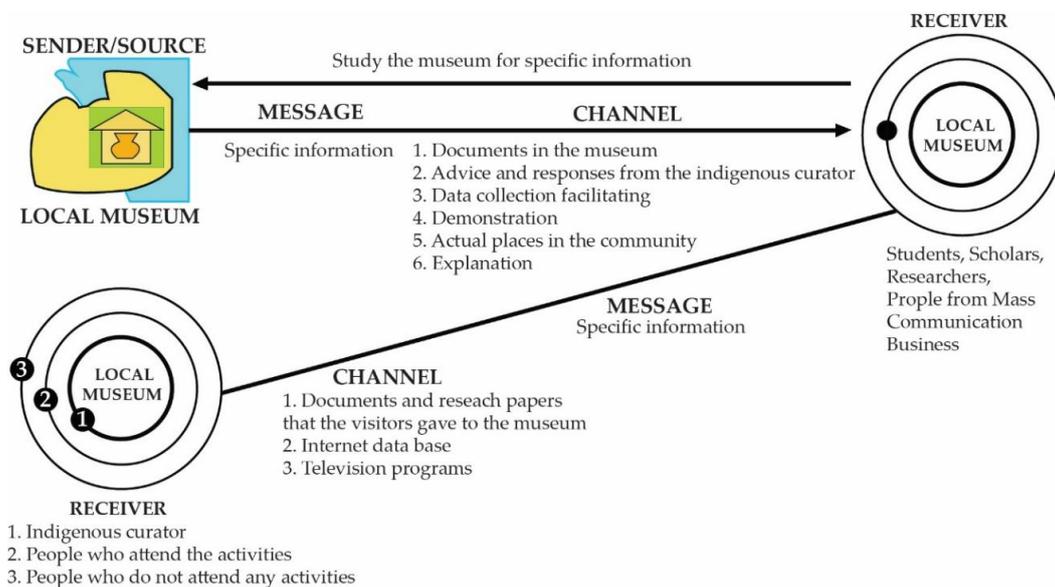


Figure 23. The interpretation loop of specific-purpose visitors (Source: Adapted from Dean, D., & Edson, G., 1994).

The interpretation process of this group starts with students, scholars, researchers, and people from mass communication businesses who are interested in specific information that the museum provides, for example, a group of students visiting the museum to study the history of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community for their school project.

There are also university students who visit the museum for their research, thesis, or independent study. The students are from various majors (for example, sociology, pedagogy, medicine, history, architecture, mass communication, accountancy, and social psychology) at various universities. They study various kinds of knowledge; for example, the history of the Thai Bueng people, the development of the

community, local medicine, local textile manufacturing procedures, local entertainments, local culture and traditions, the local language, and the working procedures of the museum and community.

Moreover, there are groups of scholars and researchers who visit the museum to study specific knowledge. Nowadays, there are many projects about the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community that have been conducted by these groups of people. Examples of those projects are the human developmental research called the future leader project and the developmental project for local textile production. The latter project developed a local textile called E-Heew, which is used mostly by elders although people of every age are able wear it. The developmental products are called the “E-HEEW Collection”. This collection was presented at the annual fair of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung in 2017. The project is a co-operation between the museum and a researcher called Mr. Niwet Phuanthim (see Figure 24).



Figure 24. The “E-HEEW Collection” fashion show: (a) the original style of the E-Heew Clothes; and (b) the Developmental Products from E-Heew Textiles in the 2017 annual fair of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

The last specific group of visitors is people from mass communication business. The objective of visiting the museum for this group is to make television or online programs about Thai Bueng Khok Salung culture and traditions. An example of these programs is an episode of a television program called *Kon Thai Huajai Mai To* on Thai television Channel 5, which presented the local traditions and culture of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community on 14 September 2017. Another example is a Japanese travel documentary for the NHK channel that filmed the local wisdom of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community (that is, local textiles and Kanom Bueng) on 22 January 2018.

To conduct any study or film any program, the focus group must contact the museum center first. The indigenous curators of the museum are responsible for coordinating between the focus group and the community, providing information, and facilitating the focus group to obtain what they are looking for. The time duration of any work depends on the focus group. The channels for this interpretation are documents in the museum, advice and responses from the curators, explanations of information or activities, various demonstrations, actual local entertainments, and actual places in the community.

After the people from the focus group have received the required information from the museum, they produce their work. The work of the focus group is usually presented in the form of paper documents, online databases, and television programs in which the focus group usually sends a copy of the work back to the museum to be presented to other people afterwards.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated the interpretation of a local museum in Thailand using the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung as the case study. The study investigated two target groups for the interpretation of the museum: the local people and people outside the community. Furthermore, the study examined the interpretation management, messages, and learning activities of the museum. There are two major issues that are discussed as follows.

4.1. The Local Museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung According to the Traditional Definition of Local Museum and the Prioritizing of Interpretation for People in the Community

The museum prioritizes the interpretation of “person”. This means that the indigenous curator of the museum is a local person who works co-operatively to develop individuals in the community continually as well as the working capacity of the museum and the community itself. This developmental work is consistent with the definitions of the local museum as specified by the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City (as cited in Tojarat Phongsari [12]), Panita Sarawasi [13], Srisak Wanlipodom [14], Liu and Lee [15], and Sutter et al. [16]. The groups organized by the indigenous curators of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung can be divided into three age groups: children and youths, adults, and elders. The group of children and youths is responsible for learning new knowledge that is going to be useful in developing their own community. The people in this group are expected to be successors who carry on the work of the museum. The group of adults is responsible for strategic planning and teaching the children and youths about the work of the museum. Last, the group of elders is responsible for teaching the next generation to be aware of the identity of the community. This group of indigenous curators also helps with various activities of the museum as local intellectuals (see Figure 25).



Figure 25. The indigenous curators of the local museum of Thai Bueng Khok Salung: (a) the indigenous curatorial group of children and youths; (b) the indigenous curatorial group of adults; and (c) the indigenous curatorial group of elders (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

The museum also prioritizes the interpretation of “place”. This means that the indigenous curators not only highlight the interpretation of messages via exhibitions at the museum center, but also appreciate all the learning places in the community (for example, the houses of local intellectuals and other important places) as interpretation channels. This notion of bearing all the places in the community as parts of the local museum is consistent with the definition of a local museum of Riviere (as cited in Davis [17]), Tojarat Phongsari [12], and Ratchadaporn Ketanon Neawheangtham [9].

Moreover, the museum also prioritizes the interpretation of “Things”. The indigenous curators consider artifacts in the community as not only ordinary objects, but as media for presenting the community’s identity. The artifacts, including cultural heritage, traditions, local wisdom, local ways of life, natural resources, geophysics, and vernacular architecture, could promote the collective memories of people. According to Davis (1999) [30], the indigenous curator of a local museum ought to prioritize the cultural narrations of their community in the same way as additional knowledge from outsources about community management which would promote the sustainable development of individuals and the community management system.

4.2. Interpretation for People outside the Community

Management and strategic planning: The indigenous curators are responsible for preparing and planning the museum’s interpretation system using learning activities as media to interpret particular messages. The activities could be planned together with the visitors based on Thai Bueng Khok Salung’s culture.

Place: There are two learning places at the museum, i.e. the museum center and the learning center in the community. Both places present physical cultural heritage sites to the visitors.

Technique and method: The museum offers the interpretations of the traditions and culture of the Thai Bueng Khok Salung community through cultural exhibitions and reproductions of local architecture. There are a lot of informational posters (that is, posters that present local wisdom descriptions, the history of local intellectuals, information on historical artifacts, and the history of local temples) throughout the community. The museum, moreover, offers the visitors various academic papers about culture, traditions, and the natural resources of the community (see Figure 26).

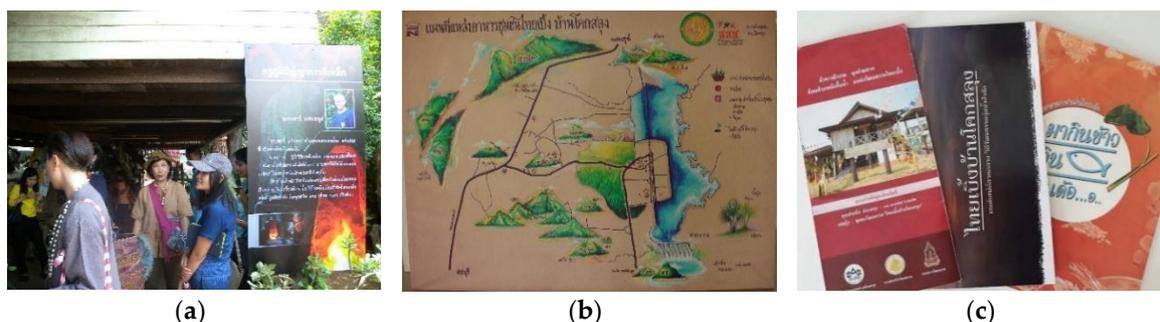


Figure 26. (a) The information poster; (b) the map of food resources in the community; and (c) brochures about the community (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

Educational activities: Tour guides and local intellectuals are representatives of the museum to interpret particular messages to visitors. The interpretation could be in the form of lectures, explanations, demonstrations, and learning-by-doing activities (see Figure 27).



Figure 27. The educational activities: (a) the local dessert cooking activity; (b) the local toy lesson by local intellectuals; and (c) the boon Ta Krai Ritual learning base (Source: Jirawan Sirivanichkul).

Reflection of visitors: There are two kinds of reflection for visitors that the museum conducts, i.e. pre-reflection and post-reflection. Pre-reflection is the method of interviewing visitors about their expectations about the museum. After receiving the responses, the indigenous curators make a mind map and use it in planning meetings. After the learning process has been completed, post-reflection of the visitors' knowledge and emotion is conducted. Both kinds of reflection use the dialogue procedure to obtain visitor responses.

The above notions of the interpretation for people outside the community are consistent with Tilden's [22] explanations of educational activities and the use of direct experience. They also correspond with the five notions of interpretation, presentation, interpretive infrastructure, site interpretation, and the cultural heritage of Silberman [8].

5. Conclusions

5.1. Interpretation Management and Planning of the Local Museum at Thai Bueng Khok Salung

To establish and understand the true meaning of museum, initially, indigenous curators as a group of people who dedicate themselves to preserving and protecting their communities must equip themselves with knowledge, creativity, and devotion. “The meaning of museum can be interpreted in many ways but for me museum represents people who are living together harmoniously and peacefully together and what we are doing and having happiness together right now, to us this is the meaning of life” said Prateep Onsalung. [27] From his words, “Happiness” might sound simple but, in reality, the very creation of Thai Bueng Khok Salung museum has become something exceptional through the influence of the word, “happiness”. People in the community helped to establish the museum by writing a strategic plan, reinforcing the plan, helping each other out, collaborating with outsiders and devoting themselves to the prosperity of their museum and community.

The purpose of organizing activities in the local museum was to help communicate the true meaning of the museum creatively, knowledgeably, and thoughtfully to create love and dedication to their own community. “Today, it has become widely accepted in development circles that, in order for development efforts to be sustainable in the long run, they must take local people’s values, traditions, knowledge, and resources into account” [31] (Kreps, C., 2008). Additionally, it could also be assumed that museum management should be conducted by its own people to survive. Without the locals’ awareness of their own culture and traditions, the true sense of museum will seemingly deteriorate and finally diminish for good.

5.1.1. Planning on Creating New Museum Indigenous Curators

To make the local museum thrive continuously, indigenous curators and community development should be considered. Knowledge received from training such as ideas processed from actual fieldwork should be passed on to local (or potential) indigenous curators. The more the locals appreciate these ideas, the more locals will collaborate with the museum, which could eventually raise awareness about preserving and protecting their community. It could be concluded that the process would start with the leaders and spread to the people in the community.

The traditional Thai Bueng Khok Salung museum is one of the best examples of how a community is protected by its own people; however, a few problems are still evident. People and community development, the improvement of knowledge and ideas, and raising awareness need a lot of time and patience to achieve. Furthermore, the small number of local participants could also be considered as one of the main problems.

To solve the problem, local museum representatives have visited the community, provided necessary knowledge to the locals and built cooperation between the museum and the community. As Payom Onsalung mentioned:

“Planning for creating local participation could be done by bringing cultural tools and applying them to the community. What we are going to do is a lot of people from other places already knew about Thai Bueng, but the people in the community themselves still don’t feel a sense of belonging and therefore, we will be trying to use traditional intellect as a way to provoke the interest of locals who are currently residing in the community. This method I think somebody called the “Palormmueng” theory, or “Muenglormpa, something like that. We would try to introduce jobs to them by spotting the target areas, but not in a scattered way. We will try to bind our relationships with the locals and make one of them a leader so it would be easier for us to initiate ourselves with other locals in the area. In the case of Uncle Song, we told him that we will be going into the community and hoping to talk to them about how we could improve the community. This was started by bringing in portable theatres, then teaching them how to make “Kanom Bueng” Thai traditional dessert, and how to create the puag-ma-hode clothing pattern. I asked Uncle Song to find me 5 to 6 local participants and it was just to try to create a hype for the locals” [26].

Currently, the museum is planning and trying to execute the plan in the very near future by asking village leaders or elders who are well-respected in the community to help in bringing in locals to learn. The museum believes this would really attract the locals to participate in activities.

Problems in Creating a Sense of Belonging for the New Generation

Related to the problem, even though the museum has been attempting to provide knowledge for children and young adults in the community, it takes a long time for the museum to increase the sense of belonging for these youngsters towards the community. This is because the teenagers who have already been trained by the museum need to go to schools or work in places far from the community. The museum hopes to bring them back to help improve their homes and community, but, when that time comes, they will choose what they really want to do.

“We hope to bring our children back . . . but if we expect them to be back, it seems like we are too selfish. We really want them to learn what we are trying to teach them. We hope the experience will root deep in their identities and make them a better person. As you can see from Non and Jane, Jane is a teacher teaching at Kao Kwang school nearby. She has her own life objectives. She just wanted to come back and help her family. She didn’t come back here to help the community but she did her best to teach her students. For Non, all of the experience he has got right now is all because of this community. He always says that. He has set his goal that in about 5 years, he will become a vice school director and he will move back here to Khok Salung Wittaya school. We always believe whether our children came back here or not, we have implanted those goodness in them which will eventually flourish somewhere; it could be here in Khok Salung or somewhere else and that could help our society in one way or another” (Payom Onsalung) [26].

5.1.2. Planning an Interpretation System

- Design and collaborative learning between the local museum and activity participants

It is evident in many local museums that, to encourage visitors to visit the place, making scheduled appointments and arranging group meetings between visitors and museum caretakers must be prioritized to determine who will be participating and their objectives and reasons in order to offer appropriate learning opportunities. Furthermore, the museum also has sufficient staff who can arrange the place for convenience purposes. As mentioned in the book of Falk and Dierking, a successful museum must be able to recognize who their audiences are and what background knowledge they have to understand and realize what should be focused on to help the audience achieve what they want from the museum. [32] (see Falk, J. & L. Dierking 2000)

- Interpretation process

1. Content

The content of locals could be categorized into eight types: (1) local community history; (2) their ways of life; (3) jobs and careers; (4) local food; (5) working tools; (6) beliefs; (7) traditional music, plays, and crafts; and (8) geography and knowledge on local community and museum development.

Database System of the Local Museum, Problems on Community Knowledge Database

It could be assumed that most data are stored in the form of documentation but not as a digital database. From observations, digital data for the locals and visitors is inadequate and there is a lack of systematic planning on data storage. The curators have been trying to collect information from the community and turn it into digital data but much time is required. However, the indigenous curators of the museum have been trying to create a systematic plan for collecting data by cooperating with the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC).

2. Channel

Direct experience based learning is how learners learn from real people and real fieldwork experience through interactions between learners and their interlocutors including observation, demonstration, and practice.

- Exhibition Organization

Even though there are many existing theories and principles in organizing museum exhibitions, local curators were not aware of this existing knowledge. The Thai Bueng museum curators prefer to design and organize their museum by representing how houses and community were designed and built back in the past using their memories. They attempted to recall what materials had been used and what types of architecture had been used for designing and, therefore, the exhibition arranged by the locals seems simple yet very accommodating to their needs.

- Factors That Affect the Museum's Exhibition for Indigenous Curators

Problems in understanding how to organize museum exhibitions and to preserve antiques.

To take care of the museum, the indigenous curators should have suitable knowledge on the museum's display items and possess enough knowledge to realize the importance of museum arrangement.

3. Targeted learning group

1. Indigenous Curator group (people living inside the community)

This group of people acquired their actual experience from learning at the museum and time is the key factor that helps create experience. Through the repetition of learning and experience, knowledge has accumulated until it becomes wisdom for the curators.

2. Museum activity participants (people living inside the community and people living outside the community)

These groups of people participated in activities for different purposes: Group 1, acquisition of general knowledge; Group 2, acquisition of specific knowledge; and Group 3, providing knowledge to the museum.

Group 1 includes groups that intend to acquire specific knowledge at the museum. This targeted group takes quite a lot of time to learn and has its own specific purpose. They are able to learn on their own without any assistance such as those who want to learn about traditional woven garments, beliefs, and knowledge on traditional wisdom, which corresponds to Falk, J. & L. Dierking who said "Free-choice learning tends to be nonlinear, is personally motivated, and involves considerable choice on the part of the learner as to what to learn, as well as where and when to participate in learning" [32].

Group 2 learns at the museum for only a couple of days and their objectives are to learn about the culture and the museum's working process to help them understand and implement such knowledge in their own organization. These people are usually representatives from universities and schools including teachers, students, and trainees who want to learn more about the local community. It could be assumed that these people learn interactively, progressively, and independently. This particular group must follow the instructions of the leader of their groups about what the curators have already arranged for them and it is quite hard for them to learn something new. It could be concluded that, for this group to learn something from the museum, they must follow what "the people" want them to do; "the place" and "the area they cannot choose"; and eventually "funds" from their organization could also be one of the key factors.

Group 3 includes people who come to pass on their knowledge to the museum. This might result from research they have conducted on the museum and when the research is published, they attempt to use the knowledge to help the museum, such as by producing modern woven products that would help create product value.

Group 4, distant observers, do not participate in any activities created by the museum but rather observe from a distance through televised or social media, but this group may eventually collaborate with the museum in the future.

4. Evaluation of target audience awareness

The evaluation of working progress in the local museum is started by gatherings between the leaders of each community. They would sum up what activities they had been working on and what had already been done through a process of dialogue. This process will help each community leader to convey the knowledge they have acquired outside to the people in the community. This type of evaluation is a reinforcement intended to help in the exchange of ideas, by learning from each other, and solving problems together without making each member feel neglected in the group. Other evaluation approaches are based on numbers, making people in meeting feel stressed and making the meeting emotionally meaningless.

The results of the study indicate an appropriate and effective interpretation system for the specific community context which encourages people—both locals and foreigners—to be aware of the value of the community. Consequently, as a result of their awareness, people would increasingly cherish their community and work in collaboration with other people for the sustainable development of the community.

• Recommendations

1. Further study is suggested to investigate the interpretation systems in various cultures to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each community. Comparison would provide a larger picture of the interpretation systems for local museums in Thailand that could develop the existing local museums in Thailand and in other countries.
2. Further study is also suggested to investigate the data collection system at local museums, develop a system that could prevent the loss of local cultural heritage, and develop a stronger interpretation system.

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