

**The Social Capital Potentiality of the Lao Vieng Ethnic Group at Wat Yai Lao
(Wat Yai Thakhinaram) Community in Nakhon Nayok Province, Thailand**

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to study the social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group residing in the Wat Yai Lao community, located in Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand. The sample group comprises 84 individuals, including residents from Wat Yai Lao and neighbouring communities, local government officials, and administrators from Nakhon Nayok province responsible for education, tourism, and cultural affairs. Snowball Sampling was utilized as the sampling method for this study. Data collection involved both participatory and non-participatory observation within the studied communities, along with in-depth interviews with the sample group. Subsequently, the results were analyzed using content analysis techniques. The findings reveal that: 1) The social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai Lao community encompasses human capital, institutional capital, and intellectual and cultural capital. 2) Human capital with significant potential includes

attributes such as the sense of gratitude, public-mindedness, and positive attitudes. 3) Institutional capital with significant potential comprises adherence to ethnic identity and the institution with a temple serving as a focal point for faith grounded in goodwill. Additionally, being an institution that is recognized as a cultural tourism community of Nakhon Nayok. 4) Intellectual and cultural capital with significant potential encompasses the intellectual capital in the construction of the Wat Yai Lao Buddhist temple, Lao Vieng traditional woven fabric, Lao Vieng traditional local cuisine, and the cultural capital of Lao Vieng traditional events held on various occasions throughout the year.

Keywords: Thais of Lao descent, Lao Vieng ethnic group, Social capital potentiality of the Wat Yai Lao community

1. Introduction

Nakhon Nayok province is one of the Thai provinces with various ethnic groups dispersed throughout the province, such as ethnic groups that immigrated from Myanmar, Mon, Khmer, Vietnam, and Laos (Puncreobutr et al., 2019). Among these ethnic groups, the Lao ethnic group is considered one of the major ethnic groups residing in Nakhon Nayok province, which is a tourist destination near Thailand's capital city (Puncreobutr et al., 2021; Rueangchewin, 2015).

Historical records show that the relationship between the Thai and Lao ethnic groups dates back to the 12th and 13th centuries when three equally prosperous Tai tribes resided in northern Thailand. These tribes divided their territories into three kingdoms: the Lan Chang Kingdom, Lanna Kingdom, and Sukhothai Kingdom. All three kingdoms had closely intertwined cultures (Srisuro, 1996).

The Sukhothai Kingdom called themselves as Tai (later changed to Thai) and called people from the Lanna Kingdom "Lao Phung Dam" (now the upper northern region of Thailand, including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang, and Lamphun provinces). People from the Lan Chang Kingdom were known as "Lao Phung Khao" (now the territory of Laos). Over time, war conflicts arose within and between these kingdoms, as well as with neighbouring kingdoms such as Myanmar, and with Western colonial powers (Pitipat & Poolsuwan, 1999).

In the 16th century, war conflicts within the Kingdom of Lan Chang resulted in its division into three principalities: Lan Chang Luang Prabang, Lan Chang Vientiane, and Lan Chang Champassak. The persistent warfare, marked by a cycle of victories and defeats, weakened these principalities (Viravong, 1996). Seeking assistance, the weakened principalities turned to Thailand, involving the latter in the ongoing conflicts. Thailand also engaged in independent wars at times. These conflicts had profound repercussions, prompting the migration of Laotian people to Thailand due to forced displacement and the evacuation to escape war-torn areas (Prachidromran, 1994; Leepanyaporn, 2020).

Some of the Lao immigrants chose to settle in Nakhon Nayok. Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, the Vicar Apostolic of Eastern Siam, who conducted his mission in Nakhon Nayok during the reign of King Rama V (1854 AD), documented that the town had approximately 5,000 residents, mostly of Lao descent (Nakhon Nayok, 1996). These Lao ethnic groups immigrating to Nakhon Nayok originated from various cities within the Lan Chang Kingdom.

Consequently, there are several subgroups of Lao ethnicities, including the group from Phuan and Chiang Kwang cities, known as Lao Phuan Ethnic (Thinanont, 2002), the group from Luang Phra Bang City along the Phu Kang Mountain ridge, referred to as Lao Khrang Ethnic (Leepanyaporn, 2020), and the group from Vientiane City, known as Lao Vieng Ethnic (Phocharoen et al., 2016), among others.

The Lao Vieng ethnic group at the Wat Yai Lao (Wat Yai Thakhinaram) community migrated to Thailand in the year 1780, fleeing war. This migration occurred when the Lao people from Vientiane, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), engaged in war against French soldiers. Following the French occupation of Vientiane, the remaining Laotian soldiers and civilians fled the city, heading south. Among the refugees were skilled craftsmen specializing in various fields (Thinanont, 2002). Therefore, upon settling in Nakhon Nayok province, this group has continued to preserve their distinctive way of life, their ethnic identity, following the teachings passed down from their ancestors (Nakhon Nayok, 1996; Rueangchewin, 2015).

However, nowadays there are rapid and profound economic and social changes, which may have a significant impact on the identity of certain ethnic groups, potentially leading to their disappearance (Rojsanga, 2019). Consequently, it is imperative to investigate the cultural heritage passed down through generations, specifically examining the uniqueness and values that distinguish the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai community. Moreover, there is a special need to explore and safeguard the social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group for its continued existence. Therefore, a study on the social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai community in Nakhon Nayok, Thailand, is deemed necessary.

The findings from this study are expected to be valuable for local government administrators and officers at various levels can apply these insights in collaboration with relevant organizations overseeing education, religion, and culture. This joint effort is designed to preserve and nurture the rich identity of the Thai Lao Vieng community, ensuring its continued existence. Additionally, this research aims to deepen the understanding and ongoing practice of the culture and traditions of the Thai Lao Vieng people in Nakhon Nayok province. Furthermore, this study may leverage the social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai community to boost cultural tourism and improve the economy of the community and overall quality of life.

2. Research Objectives

To study the social capital potentiality that still persists in the way of life, culture, and traditions of the Lao Vieng ethnic group, or the Thai people of Lao descent, whose ancestors migrated from Vientiane, Laos, and formed a community known as Wat Yai Lao (Wat Yai Thakhinaram) in the Mueang District of Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand.

3. Methodology

This research is qualitative, and the sample group comprises residents from Wat Yai Lao (Wat Yai Thakhinaram) and nearby communities, including local government administrators and officials from organizations overseeing education, tourism, and cultural affairs in Nakhon Nayok province. The study involves a total of 84 participants selected using

the snowball sampling method. The research methodology incorporates a combination of participative and non-participative observations within the community, accompanied by in-depth interviews with the sample group.

The analysis of social capital was conducted by integrating the framework for analysing social capital components from the Office of Social Development and Quality of Life (2003), findings from Maeban (2020), and the conceptualization of social capital by Jakobs (1961), Baker (1990), and Coleman (1999). Social capital is categorized into three groups: human capital, institutional capital, and intellectual and cultural capital.

This research was conducted between July 2023 and December 2023. The collected data was subsequently analysed using content analysis. The findings are as follows.

4. Research Findings

From the analysis of data and interpretation of occurrences, symbols, and behavior, the results of the study suggest that the Lao Vieng ethnic group at the Wat Yai Lao community (Wat Yai Thakhinaram), Nakhon Nayok, Thailand has social capital potentiality in all 3 groups as follows:

4.1 Human capital

The key human capital of the Lao Vieng ethnic group includes the sense of gratitude, public-mindedness, and positive attitudes.

1) The sense of gratitude

The sense of gratitude is a prominent aspect of the daily lives of the Lao Vieng Ethnic group. All children are instilled to show respect to everyone and everything that contributes to the success of their various endeavours. Furthermore, they are taught to reciprocate kindness without waiting for explicit requests when the opportunity arises. The teachings, passed down from the past to the present, shaping the upbringing of children in the Lao Vieng community at Wat Yai Lao, involve parents, relatives, and community members who serve as exemplary role models. Beyond these teachings, there is a deep connection to customs, morals, and traditions, not merely as inherited practices, but with a continuous narrative which explains the origins and meanings of these actions. This approach fosters understanding, learning, and the transmission of these practices for generations to come.

The sense of gratitude is a significant capital that not only nurtures love and unity within the ethnic group but also leaves a lasting impression on everyone and every organization that has ever provided support, encouragement, or assistance, no matter how small. The appreciation for this sense of gratitude continuously paves the way for new opportunities and developments for the community. Therefore, it is evident that the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai Lao community, a community of Thais with Lao descent, is widely accepted and supported in all community initiatives. They are always willing to engage in various social activities, on equal terms, with the Thai community in the area.

2) Public-mindedness

The public-mindedness among the Lao Vieng ethnic group is apparent during visits from tourists, whether from Nakhon Nayok province, other regions, or even international tourists. When tourists travel to appreciate the historical sites (the temple) and explore the community's settlement along the river, along with experiencing the traditional practices,

customs, and way of life of the people in the community, the community members extend a warm and friendly welcome. They take excellent care of tourists by providing directions, sharing information and stories, and guiding them to various significant locations.

Public-mindedness is a significant capital that not only nurtures positive relationships among diverse ethnic groups but also enhances the societal value of individuals. This value is expressed without expecting anything in return, but in turn acknowledged through the consistent visits of tourists from various places. The community's well-established recognition in cultural tourism circles contributes to the annual increase in visitors. This, in turn, positively influences tourists' spending within the community, including the purchase of local products, food, beverages, and utilization of transportation services. Consequently, it creates economic value for the community.

3) Positive attitudes

The Lao Vieng ethnic group demonstrates positive attitudes towards various events through their approach to mutual understanding, both within families and in collaborative work settings. This mindset also applies to problem-solving in their daily lives, where everything is viewed as predetermined rather than by chance, aligning with Buddhist philosophy. Consequently, when events unfold, they are seen as a natural part of life. Therefore, resolving any situation involves understanding the inherent nature of that specific event. Once comprehended, there is potential for a favourable resolution that benefits all parties involved.

Maintaining positive attitudes towards diverse events is a significant capital. It not only mitigates potential issues stemming from misunderstandings and differing needs in society but also minimizes conflicts within the community. Furthermore, fostering mutual understanding contributes to a positive mental state for everyone, promoting both mental and physical well-being. This positive mindset serves as capital in creating a high quality of life for community members and elevating the overall well-being of people coexisting in the surrounding society.

4.2 Institutional capital

The key institutional capital of the Lao Vieng ethnic group within the Wat Yai Lao (Wat Yai Thakhinaram) community in Nakhon Nayok are: a social institution that adheres to ethnic identity, a social institution with a temple serving as the center of faith grounded in goodwill, and a social institution recognized as a cultural tourism community in Nakhon Nayok.

1) A social institution that adheres to the ethnic identity

Coming together as a social institution, the Lao Vieng ethnic group forms a collective identity based on shared activities, beliefs, and cultural heritage inherited from their ancestors. This collective effort aims to preserve their magnificent long-standing traditions and customs with pride.

The Lao Vieng ethnic group, originally from Vientiane, the capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos (PDR Laos), consists of Laotian people who migrated to Thailand during the Franco-Lao War in the year 1780. Following the defeat in the war, residents of Vientiane faced displacement, leading to a migration southward. A group of these individuals gathered and established a community within the jurisdiction of Mueang Nakhon

Nayok District in Thailand, initially comprising around 300-400 households. They named their community "Ban Yai Lao" (Lao Village) and, over time, it has expanded significantly. Nowadays, the community has grown larger, coexisting harmoniously with the local population.

Institutionalization strengthens the group cohesion. It enables the group to establish bargaining power with other surrounding groups on equal terms, without being exploited. Simultaneously, it avoids hostility, disdain, or belittlement towards other groups as well. Thus, generating strength through coexistence, fostering common activities aligned with beliefs, lifestyles, and cultural practices inherited from ancestors. This, along with the collaborative development of the community, ensures its stable growth to keep pace with societal changes.

2) A social institution with a temple serving as the center of faith grounded in goodwill

The Lao Vieng ethnic group, upon migrating to Nakhon Nayok in 1780, promptly built a temple called Wat Yai Lao (later renamed Wat Thakhinaram in 1941). This highlights the community as a social institution that values the temple as a spiritual center—an embodiment of shared beliefs and values. The temple serves as a focal point for community members to practice their faith grounded on goodwill.

The Lao Vieng community consistently organizes social activities and important cultural events at the temple, considering it as a center for faith grounded in goodwill. Their mindset, encapsulated in the concept of "...participating together in solidarity, both the living and the departed (relatives and kins who have passed away), and give dedications and merits to the departed" is crucial. This approach utilizes the temple as the community's faith focal point, fostering unity and collaboration for the well-being of both individuals and the society.

3) A social institution recognized as a cultural tourism community in Nakhon Nayok

The pride of the Lao Vieng people in the Wat Yai Lao community in Nakhon Nayok stems from the recognition and acknowledgment of their community as a cultural tourist destination by national agencies. The community and its temple have been registered with the Department of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Culture as a cultural heritage site since December 1, 1996. The Department of Fine Arts undertook the restoration of the temple's sacred structure to its original state, completing the project on October 4, 2003. Additionally, the Tourism Authority of Thailand has declared Wat Yai Lao, also known as Wat Thakhinaram, as a cultural tourist destination in Nakhon Nayok province, incorporating it into the tourism plans for the Eastern Region of Thailand, both in the short- and long-term plans.

The recognition of the Wat Yai Lao community in Nakhon Nayok as a cultural tourist destination by national agencies mirrors the recognition of Lao Vieng's social institution. Since settling in Thailand, the community has cultivated a rich cultural heritage by blending the traditional art of the Lan Chang Kingdom (a historical Lao art form) with Western art. This artistic fusion serves as means to convey their stories and identity through the construction of the temple. It encompasses the preservation of their cultural identity as Lao

Vieng people, a heritage passed down through generations, establishing the community as a robust and prideful social institution.

4.3 Intellectual and cultural capital

The intellectual and cultural capital of the Lao Vieng ethnic group at the Wat Yai Lao (Wat Yai Thakhinaram) community with significant potential includes the Wat Yai Lao temple, Lao Vieng traditional woven fabric, Lao Vieng traditional local cuisine, and the traditional ceremonies.

1) The Wat Yai Lao temple

The Wat Yai Lao temple is an ancient and well-preserved structure, constructed in 1780 by craftsmen from Vientiane. It has dimensions of 6 meters in width, 10.15 meters in length, and a height of 10 meters. The temple is built with brick and mortar, featuring a tiled wooden roof. On the front facade, intricately carved wood depicts Thep Phanom (clasping hands Deva), and four 12-cornered wooden pillars. The entrance door is ornately carved, and the main front staircase resembles a Naga staircase, though without the Naga head. Flanking the main staircase on each side are two figures of mythical giants with one hand raising a mace and the other on the waist. There is no rear door, but side entrances are present, each adorned with two windows.

Inside the Wat Yai Lao temple is a collection of artistic Buddha statues known as "Lan Chang Pang Mara Wichai" or "Pang Sadung Mara," totalling five statues of varying sizes. These statues are placed on an artfully crafted Lan Chang base. The principal Buddha statue, named Phra Phokha Phayann, or Luang Pho Pak Daeng, is the largest and occupies the central position. Next to the principal Buddha statue are two smaller-sized statues on each side, while on the outer sides, there are two even smaller statues. Additionally, contemporary Buddha statues have been added to the front of the main Buddha statue inside the temple.

Surrounding the temple is a glass enclosure, and around this enclosure, there is a glass wall with arc-shaped gate pavilions imitating Western art on all four sides. On both sides of these gate pavilions, there are sculpted soldier statues, one on each side, acting as guardians. The soldiers are portrayed in European military attire, wearing helmets, and holding rifles. It is believed that these soldiers represent French troops, serving as a reminder for later generations of the historical events when Laotian refugees immigrated to Thailand during the Franco-Lao War.

This temple is considered a unique structure, differing from traditional Lan Chang-style temples (an art form from a certain era in Laos). However, it exhibits a blend of both Lan Chang and French artistic elements.

2) Lao Vieng traditional woven fabric or “Lao Vieng Sinh Teen Jok”

The woven fabric of the Lao Vieng is a textile that carries the distinctive identity of their community. It is handwoven and typically used to make women’s sarongs. Each piece of fabric consists of two parts: the main body woven with solid colours or basic patterns, and the footer woven using a technique known as "Jok" (which involves weaving threads of various colours onto the warp threads to create desired patterns, with the warp threads typically being red). This footer part is called "Jok". When the footer part is attached to the main body, forming

a hem, it becomes a Sinh, thus called the "Lao Vieng Sinh Teen Jok" fabric. The distinctive pattern of Lao Vieng Sinh Teen Jok is a triangular zigzag pattern, typically woven in 4-7 rows. In addition to being used to make women's sarongs, The Lao Vieng traditional woven fabric is also used to make traditional tote bags. Furthermore, it is observed that the Jok fabric is utilized in decorating blouses or other items such as pillows and blankets.

The traditional woven fabric of the Lao Vieng community at Wat Yai Lao still authentically retains the heritage of the Lao Vieng people very well. It was found that the characteristics of the woven fabric found in the Wat Yai Lao community does not differ from the traditional woven fabric of Lao Vieng communities in other areas of Nakhon Nayok province, such as the communities at Wat Khiriwan, Wat Srinawa and Wat Nong Pho.

3) Lao Vieng traditional local cuisine

Traditional local cuisine is considered a vital aspect of community life. It remains to be seen as a staple in the daily meals of the community. Generally, Lao Vieng traditional local cuisine primarily consists of savoury dishes which incorporates fermented fish, either as an ingredient or as the main component in cooking, with a variety of vegetables. The Lao Vieng community holds specific beliefs about food, such as:

1. The belief that consuming chili will prevent evil spirits from disturbing. This belief has led to the creation of various chili-based dishes such as fried stuffed sweet pepper, or "Aua Bak Phed" (stuffing made with minced pork, corn, lemongrass, onion, galangal, and basil leaves), and fresh chili paste or "Jaew Or" (made with onion, garlic, chili, galangal, and lemongrass which has been charred until fragrant, then pounded together with fish meat, and seasoned with boiled fermented fish sauce), etc.

2. The belief that using banana stalk (the core of the banana tree) to prepare welcoming dishes for guests will foster strong bonds, encouraging them to return for future visits. This belief has led to the creation of banana stalk-based dishes such as banana stalk curry (using banana stalk boiled with curry paste and grilled fish, seasoned with fermented fish sauce), etc.

In addition to savoury dishes, traditional Lao Vieng cuisine also includes desserts and snacks. These include "Kanom Hua Plee Tod" (deep-fried banana blossom nuggets), "Kanom Dard Krata" (coconut rice pancakes made by pouring batter onto a hot flat pan and shifting until thin), and desserts primarily made with rice, like "Kanom Kao Pad Dum" (brown cane sugar rice cake), "Kao Jee" (grilled sticky rice buns), and "Kao Tom Hua Ngok" (boiled sweet sticky rice rolls wrapped in banana leaves), etc.

4.4 Lao Vieng traditional ceremonies

The traditional ceremonies of Lao Vieng are monthly merit-making rituals, each serving unique purposes. These ceremonies are conducted to dedicate merit to deceased ancestors, reciprocate nature's generosity, or acknowledge auspicious forces that enhance one's quality of life. Examples of such ceremonies include the "Sart Lao," "Sama," "Su Khwan Kao," "Boun Cham Ah," and "Boun Klang Baan" ceremonies.

- 1) The "Sart Lao" ceremony is a merit-making ritual held on every 10th lunar month of the year. It is dedicated to giving merit to deceased ancestors. During this ceremony, participants make "Krayasart" (sweet bars made of rice, nuts, sesame seeds, and sugar),

"Kanom Khong" (circular fried dough resembling a wheel, symbolizing the Buddhist Wheel of Law), "Kalamae", red sticky rice, and betel nuts. These prepared sweets are placed in a wicker basket and offered to Buddhist monks.

2) The "Sama" ceremony takes place during the 5th lunar month, coinciding with the Songkran festival (Thai New Year). It is a ritual devoted to seeking forgiveness from elders, older relatives, parents, and respected individuals for any wrongdoings committed against them in the past year. During this ceremony, participants place flowers, incense, candles, betel nuts, betel leaves, and cigarettes in a wicker basket, known as "Khant Ha" (the Five Aggregates), and offer them to the elders to seek their blessings.

3) The "Su Khwan Kao," also known as "Boun Koon Lan," "Boun Koon Kao," or "Boun Khoom Kao Yai," is held during the second lunar month following the rice harvesting season. This ceremony is a gesture of gratitude to nature for providing bountiful rice harvests, bringing prosperity to the rice growers and the community. During the evening ceremony, participants invite Buddhist monks to recite prayers. The next morning, participants offer breakfast to the monks, who then bless the harvested unhusked rice, the rice drying yard, the barn, buffaloes, cows, and agricultural equipment by sprinkling them with blessed water.

4) The "Boun Cham Ah," also referred to as "Boun Cham Rah," takes place on the 6th lunar month during the waxing moon phase. This ceremony is performed to ward off evil spirits and unfavourable entities from homes and communities while also inviting sacred beings into their midst. During the evening ritual, participants invite Buddhist monks to recite the evening prayer known as "Phra Paritorn," for protection against evil and blessings for good omens. The following morning, participants offer breakfast to the monks, who then bless their homes by sprinkling blessed water.

5) The "Boun Klang Baan" ceremony takes place right after the Songkran Festival. It is an expression of gratitude to sacred beings for bestowing a good quality of life upon the participants. During this ceremony, participants express their appreciation to various spirits, including those of the community, ancestors, fields, farms, community pillars, chiefs, and house guardians. The ceremony includes the invitation of monks to recite morning and evening prayers.

The traditional ceremonies in the Lao Vieng community at Wat Yai Lao are based on beliefs and organized in a similar manner to those of Lao Vieng communities in other areas of Nakhon Nayok province, such as the communities at Wat Khiriwan, Wat Srinawa and Wat Nong Pho.

The Lao Vieng ethnic group possesses significant intellectual and cultural capitals. Their intellectual capital is evident in their expertise in constructing the Wat Yai Lao temple, crafting Lao Vieng traditional woven fabric, and preparing Lao Vieng traditional local cuisine. Additionally, their cultural capital lies in their rich cultural heritage which includes traditional ceremonies held throughout the year. Consequently, the Lao Vieng Community at Wat Yai Lao boasts significant tourism potential, ideal for fostering community-based cultural tourism initiatives, also known as Creative Community Based Tourism. This approach presents opportunities for collaborative tourism management involving both community members and partner organizations.

5. Conclusion

The summary of findings for the social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group at the Wat Yai Lao (Wat Thakhinaram) community in the Mueang district of Nakhon Nayok province is as follows:

5.1 The preserved way of life, culture, and traditions of the Lao Vieng ethnic group within the Wat Yai Lao community generate potential social capital, encompassing three primary types: human capital, institutional capital, and intellectual and cultural capital.

5.2 The Lao Vieng ethnic group possesses valuable human capital, characterized by key qualities like the sense of gratitude, public-mindedness, and positive attitudes. These qualities contribute to fostering societal values that are exemplified without expecting anything in return. Nevertheless, the indirect reward lies in the positive impression left on visitors from different places, which in turn drives ongoing growth in tourism. Consequently, the community gains recognition among cultural tourists, influencing their expenditure within the community and ultimately generating economic value.

5.3 The significant institutional capital of the Lao Vieng ethnic group comprises important aspects such as being a social institution embodying the ethnic identity, being a social institution with a temple as the center of faith grounded in goodwill, and being recognized as a cultural tourism community of Nakhon Nayok. The emergence of this institutional capital fosters collective collaboration to carry out activities in line with the ethnic group's identity, beliefs, and culture, passed down continuously from their ancestors. This collaborative cultural preservation effort over the long term, with pride, leads to positive outcomes, including being acknowledged as a strong cultural tourism community of Nakhon Nayok.

5.4 The significant cultural and intellectual capital of the Lao Vieng ethnic group with potential includes intellectual capital, comprising an ancient temple, beautifully woven traditional Lao Vieng fabric, and a diverse and appealing array of traditional Lao Vieng local cuisine. Additionally, there is also cultural capital potentiality, evident in the various traditional Lao Vieng ceremonies held throughout the year. It can be said that the Wat Yai Lao community possesses abundant tourism resources that can be utilized to further develop the community's cultural tourism. Specifically, through Creative Community Based Tourism, a new form of tourism management where various network partners actively participate in tourism activities alongside the community, under community-led management.

6. Discussion of Results

The findings of the research reveal that the social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai Lao community consists of human capital, institutional capital, and cultural and intellectual capital. These findings align with the findings of Prasongthan (2013), which found that the Lao Puan ethnic community in Pak Phli District, Nakhon Nayok province, possesses outstanding social capital, particularly in terms of intellectual and cultural capital. This includes characteristics such as friendliness and mutual assistance, resulting in a strong human capital within the Lao Puan ethnic group, which benefits the community and is utilized in the management of Creative Community Based Tourism. This tourism approach targets Thai tourists and international overnight visitors, employing strategies that emphasize diversity which blends with learning management.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations for applying the research results:

1) Based on the findings of this research, the significant institutional capital of the Lao Vieng ethnic group includes key attributes such as being an institution embodying ethnic identity, being a social institution with a temple as the center of faith grounded in goodwill, and being recognized as a cultural tourism community. Therefore, local government administrators and all levels of local government officials may utilize this finding to work collaboratively with other relevant agencies overseeing education, religion, and culture. The local government and various agencies should use the institutional capital of the Lao Vieng ethnic group to preserve the admirable identity of the Thai Lao Vieng community. This involves transferring the knowledge to the younger generations in the community to preserve and promote the culture and traditions of the Thai Lao Vieng people, thus enriching the attractiveness of the diverse cultural landscape of the various ethnic groups in Nakhon Nayok Province.

2) Based on the findings of this research that the Wat Yai Lao community possesses significant cultural and intellectual capital, including an ancient temple, beautifully woven traditional Lao Vieng fabric, a variety of traditional Lao Vieng local cuisine, and various ethnic group ceremonies held throughout the year. These resources represent a substantial tourism potential. Therefore, local government administrators and all levels of local government officials may utilize this finding to work collaboratively with other relevant agencies to leverage the social capital potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai Lao community. This collaboration aims to further promote cultural tourism development, enhance the local economy, and improve the quality of life for residents within the community.

8. Recommendations for further research:

According to this research, the Social Capital Potentiality of the Lao Vieng ethnic group in the Wat Yai Lao community includes human capital, institutional capital, and cultural and intellectual capital. However, it is important to note that this study is qualitative, based on observations and in-depth interviews. Therefore, to ensure confidence in utilizing these findings for further development, such as in tourism, community development, and enhancing quality of life, it is recommended to complement this qualitative research with additional quantitative research, in order to confirm the findings.

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