



# **PERCEPTIONS AND READINESS FROM LOCALIZATION TO GLOBALIZATION OF SARAPEE COMMUNITY DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC**

**Salisa Sawettanun,**

**Kanlayarat Sawettanun**

**Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Thailand**

## **ABSTRACT**

This research investigated the community perceptions during the Covid 19 Pandemic in 2021 and explored community members' readiness in terms of localization to globalization. The participants were 30 residents living in Sarapee District in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The instrument was a questionnaire and semi-structured. The findings showed that residents had been encountering the difficulties of trading local products because the number of tourists had been decreased since the outbreak of Covid 19 began. These affected the monthly income of the residents. Most residents claimed that adapting to the new normal was completely potential, and the business had to be adjusted.

Moreover, the residents were interested in online platforms. They needed assistance in advertising local products online in different languages. In addition, young residents must upskill English for communication and improve other skills involving online advertisements. Besides, they expected to promote their products through Facebook, Line, etc. To prepare for globalization, residents realized that the description of products should be promoted through online media. Local products and the homestay were presented in the village plan. The preparation of the residents to organize standard homestay should be concerned after the situation unfolding to welcome both national and international tourists.

**Keywords:** Perception, Readiness, Localization, Globalization



## INTRODUCTION

Thailand has significantly not only a mixed economy but also significant sectors, including agriculture, natural resources, and tourism. Therefore, the tourism industry has played an important role in the growth of Thailand's economy. As a result, the country has supported the tourism industry by launching and promoting the national project that the community can own, produce, and advertise the products themselves. Moreover, the uniqueness of the local products is also significant. Obviously, the project has enhanced both local wellbeing and natural and cultural resource conservation. In addition, responsible or sustainable management has been readily understood to reflect the "sufficiency economy philosophy," emphasizing moderate, self-dependent life to preserve natural resources. The result of the establishment is the positive impact on social, economic, and environmental conditions; host communities can preserve cultural heritage, improve quality of life and have employment opportunities.

Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL), located in the north of Thailand, has a reputation for supporting the national policy of local development. The objective is to have collaborative learning in local contexts and bring academic knowledge to assist local people in some aspects of involvement and participation in the management and development. In addition, those can positively impact local people in terms of social, economic, and wellbeing of the communities.

Chiangmai is situated in the north region of Thailand and is famous for traditional unique products and natural resources. As products are locally made and designed; therefore, they are attractive and are marketed to customers all over Thailand and several countries worldwide. Examples of community products are wood curving in Baan Tawai, bamboo umbrella in Bo Sang, silverware in Wau Line, etc. Not only local products but also natural resources are stunning. The communities' economy has grown significantly until the virus "COVID 19" has been spreading since the end of 2019. That has affected various aspects, such as tourism, export, and social spacing measures. (Cosada-Aranda et al., 2021) Unfortunately, ways of living have been changed, known as the new normal, to reduce the number of infected people. The restricted security requirement in the severe pandemic reduces visitors visiting any communities. The result is the villagers' income has gradually decreased.

Chiang Mai has become one of the top destinations in Thailand that international tourists should visit. The tourism industry in Chiang Mai has rapidly grown because it is flourishing the arts, culture, agriculture, and tourism. It is also the most prosperous of the northern part, and Chiang Mai is also the second glorious province in Thailand after Bangkok.

The spread of the virus is influenced by communities and cannot predict the phenomena of economics. It is crucial to study the community's perceptions and readiness during Covid 19 Pandemic to enhance them from localization to globalization to make the communities understand, get ready for the world issues, and finally get through the trouble of the pandemic.



During the spread of COVID-19, most people had lockdown restrictions, leaving them insecure and isolated. In contrast, there was a time for new experiences and personal reflections due to the unexpected situation. According to Büssing et al. (2020), he mentioned that the change during the Corona pandemic was people reflect on themselves more about what they had done. Moreover, people spend more time on social media to receive updated news and stay connected with others. Moreover, Kwok (2020) mentioned the high level of risk perception regarding Covid-19 in the community in Hongkong. It showed that the participants felt alert to the disease and adopted self-protective maturity. While Kuang (2020) indicated that the common perception of the participants was related to health and economic concerns, involving lots of income, inability to travel freely, and becoming sick. The participants were also aware of the common symptoms of Covid-19. He also mentioned the readiness that emphasized adequate education and communication. Therefore, this study highlighted on perception and enthusiasm of the community to enhance the community in the appropriate ways to bring local products to be global.

### **Research Objectives**

The study aims at investigating Sarapee community perceptions during the Covid 19 pandemic in 2021 and exploring the readiness of the Sarapee community during the Covid 19 pandemic in 2021.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Subjects**

This research used a purposive sampling approach. The participants were 30 originally Sarapee residents in Moo 5, Yangneng Subdistrict, Sarapee District, Muang, Chiang Mai. The participants were from various professions, including the business owner, farmers, general employees, non-government officials, and seniors of different ages.

This community was chosen to be the target group since the village is located southeasterly 7 km. from Chiang Mai on the main road 106 (Chiang Mai-Lamphun Rd.). It has its uniqueness with various natural resources, local fruits, and products. Moreover, the community has announced its economic functions; that is, to promote organic agriculture products, to create conservative and agriculture tourism. Yang Na trees and plant orchids have become unique tourist attractions. In addition, the target area was selected as convenience sampling because many areas were restricted and not allowed as the impacts of the epidemic.

### **Research instrument**

The research instruments were a questionnaire that was divided into three parts. Including general demographic information; 15 questions about community perceptions during the Covid 19 Pandemic in 2021; and 15 questions involving the readiness of community members in terms of



localization to globalization, together with a semi-structured interview with some participants to gather additional information.

Before collecting data, the questionnaire was translated into Thai and corrected by Thai experts. After that, the pre-test was conducted to verify the appropriateness and feasibility. While collecting data, the researchers' team asked participants to approve the questionnaire as follows; understanding the aims and benefits of the research, comfortability, and security. All of the participants could complete the questionnaire only once and could terminate both the questionnaire and the interview at any time they desired. All data were confidential.

### **Data Analysis**

The 5-point Likert scales assessed the rating of perceptions and readiness's community according to their opinions. The scores meanings were as follows:

1=strongly disagree    2= disagree    3=uncertain    4=agree    5= strongly agree

The levels of the mean range were 1.00-1.49 as the lowest, 1.50-2.49 as the low, 2.50-3.49 as moderate, 3.50-4.49 as high, and 4.50-5.00 as the highest. The data were analyzed using percentage, means, and standard deviation, while some additional information was collected from semi-interview.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

General demographic information revealed that the participants mainly included females at 72.4% and males at 28.6%, and they were permanent local Thai residents in this area. It showed that more than half of the participants retired from work at the age of more than 60 years old, and 51-60 years old at 32 %, followed by 31–40-year-old participants. Most of the participants graduated Secondary School. Moreover, most participants used to work as government officers at 34.8%, followed by 30.4 % of participants who operated their own businesses. Some of the rest worked as sales assistants in grocery shops and officers in offices, while others were farmers. The local products purchased in the community were food at 31.8%, followed by dessert, beverage, clothes, herbs, and handmade products, respectively. The outstanding local products were longans, herb, and ice cream.

### **Community Perceptions during the Covid 19 Pandemic**

There were 15 items to investigate the community perceptions about Covid 19 as follows;



*Table 1*

Community Perceptions during the Covid 19 Pandemic

Statements	Mean	SD	Level
1. I know about Covid 19.	4.88	0.72	Highest
2. I know how Covid 19 spreads.	4.65	0.59	Highest
3. I know the symptoms of Covid 19.	4.50	0.69	Highest
4. I know how to prevent catching Covid 19.	4.45	0.69	High
5. I know you should wear face masks.	4.39	0.82	High
6. I should have social distancing.	4.80	0.70	Highest
7. I should wash my hands very often.	4.65	0.66	Highest
8. Outdoor activities may be canceled.	4.27	0.87	High
9. Participants in each event have to be limited.	4.25	0.85	High
10. The number of tourists decreased.	4.68	0.73	Highest
11. I cannot sell your products as usual.	4.60	0.59	Highest
12. I should avoid meeting a lot of people.	4.80	0.70	Highest
13. I have to present your local products online.	4.35	0.88	High
14. I have to use more technology.	4.28	0.78	High
15. Covid 19 changes your lifestyle.	4.95	0.22	Highest

During the spread of Covid 19, most participants knew about the outbreak of Covid 19, its symptoms, and the protection at the highest level. Social distancing was known as the protection way among local residents at the highest level, followed by washing hands more often and wearing masks when going out, respectively. They also considered that the practice of normal life changed to at the highest level. Moreover, the expected number of Thai and foreign tourists travelling to Chiang Mai gradually decreased because the government announced measures to maintain Covid 19 distance. They knew it was essential to cancel several local events that might have massive congestion. As a result, local business had undoubtedly been influenced. They realized that they should learn how to operate technology effectively to present products to the public in various channels at a high level.

### Readiness of Community during the Covid 19 Pandemic

There were 15 items to explore the readiness of the community during the Covid 19 Pandemic as follows;



Table 2

Readiness of Community during the Covid 19 Pandemic

Statements	Mean	SD	Level
1. I have to work harder for business.	4.87	0.43	Highest
2. I have to learn new technology.	4.73	0.64	Highest
3. I have to learn how to use some applications online.	4.77	0.43	Highest
4. I have to advertise my products online.	4.53	0.73	Highest
5. I have to learn how to do a live stream.	4.77	0.65	Highest
6. I have to practice speaking Chinese.	4.48	0.74	Highest
7. I have to practice speaking English.	4.80	0.72	Highest
8. I have to learn how to communicate effectively.	4.53	0.76	Highest
9. I have to create my brochures.	4.25	0.63	High
10. I have to launch a line application.	4.60	0.66	Highest
11. I should broadcast my products through youtube.	4.45	0.53	Highest
12. I should be ready to perform Tiktok.	4.21	0.72	High
13. My products should be promoted on Facebook.	4.91	0.22	Highest
14. I have to use technology more often.	4.70	0.63	Highest
15. I have to be ready for my future career.	4.69	0.56	Highest

It revealed that the participants planned to promote the Sarapee community to tourists for community readiness. Facebook had become the most popular website to promote the community at the highest level (57.1%), as well as line application (21.4%), youtube(10.7%), and Tiktok (7.1%), respectively. On the other hand, printed media such as brochures and posters were the least in demand. It was seen that the participants preferred to have online media to promote their community in both Thai and English languages from localization to globalization. Besides, they mentioned that the community presentation should include various parts of the village and introduce different groups of the villagers to allow the interested people to obtain further information.

Furthermore, the participants preferred improving their English skills. They realized that the ability to communicate in foreign languages was the most significant advantage for anyone required to continue operating businesses. To be ready to promote products, half of the participants needed to practice English vocabulary and expressions related to describing products, followed by defining the villages (25%) and greetings (8.3%),



respectively. They also mentioned that it would be a great idea if English online lessons were provided for them to practice by themselves.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Due to the contagious Covid 19, it has had huge impacts on many aspects worldwide. The business that had been continuously growing has had obstacles on travel restrictions to control the outbreak. Plenty of tourist attractions had been temporally closed because of the epidemic control measures. The import and export products could not be transferred because of the flight reduction. Those were severely destruction on all business.

The objectives of the research aimed at investigating the perceptions of the community on Covid 19. Adane, Daniel, and others (2021) stated that communities' negligence in preventive measures was the major obstacle that the country could not succeed in controlling the virus. Fortunately, the study revealed that most of the community had sufficient knowledge of Covid 19. The finding also showed that community members realized that Covid 19 was dangerous, and the ways of prevention were necessary to protect them from death. Information sources and awareness levels of the community were consistently provided. The study found that most participants had a good perception of Covid 19 prevention measures.

The study also explored the community's readiness in terms of localization to globalization. Based on the high expectation of foreign visitors, communication skill was the most important because business agreements could be effective and avoided misinterpreting. The study also revealed that the community's members were required to do their business with foreigners since more than a million visitors were visiting Thailand, especially Chiang Mai. The participants considered this valuable time to improve their skills and develop their products.

### **Recommendation**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the community had to follow the prevention measures restrictively. The number of participants and time consumption were limited for doing the research. Therefore, the finding could be generalized. The size of the population should be more extensive in different areas. Face-to-face interviews should be undertaken in order to collect sufficient data.





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