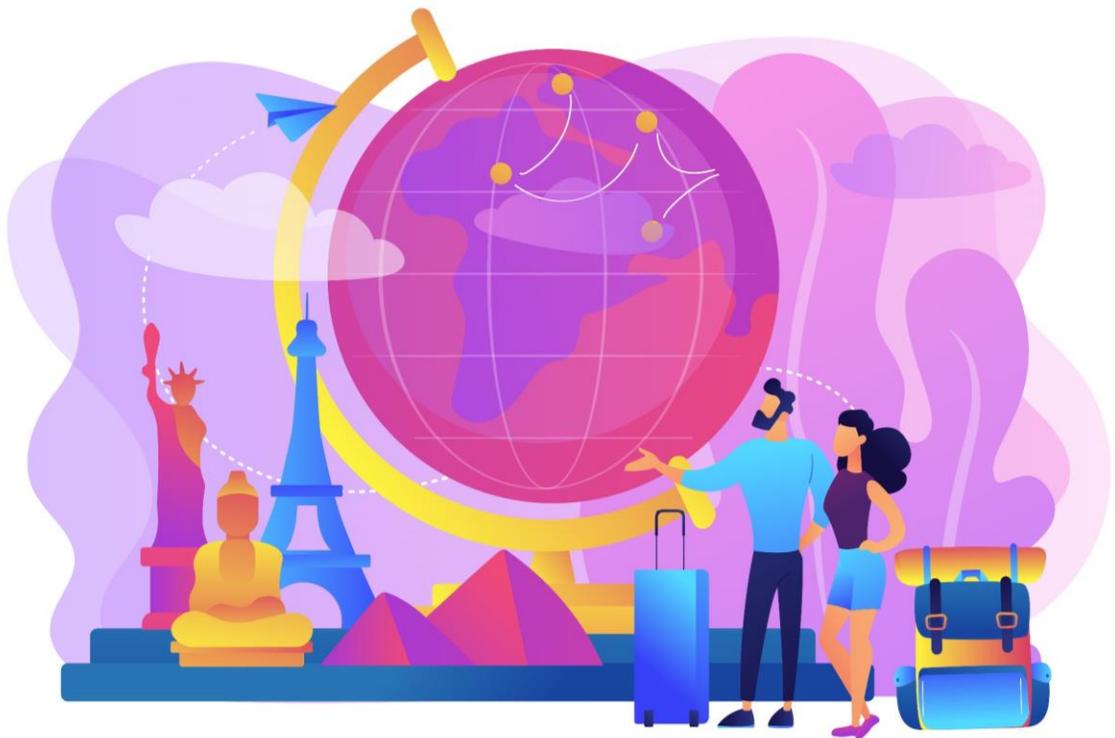


Master of Arts in Business and Managerial Economics

MABE 

New Economy Lecture

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Future Tuorism, Future Phuket

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Future tourism Future Phuket

On October 26th , 2022 During the individual study trip of MABE Part-time 22 student to Phuket, Mr. Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, the advisory chairman of Phuket Tourism Association provided the New Economy Lecture on the topic of :Future Tourism Future Phuket” In this special lecture, Mr. Bhummikitti shared how Phuket survive from the Covid-19 pandemic and the future trend of tourism industry.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, people had to stay at home, businesses were shut down or moved to on-line platforms, and of course, traveling was out of the question. 95% of Phuket economy was related to tourism.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, business was going on and off, which was almost impossible for any business to survive. Business owners and residents decided they had to get out of the crisis to survive. The only solution at that time was vaccination, and they made a solid decision that from 1st October 2021 onwards, Phuket would start to open up for international travelers who had been vaccinated and no quarantine was required., which is the initiation of ‘**Phuket Sandbox**’¹. The project was approved by the government in March 2021and was enacted on 1st July 2021.

The social media such as “Chan-Cheet-Laew” and the Phuket- tong- Cha-na (ภูเก็ตต้องชนะ.com) was used to promote the vaccination among Phuket residence in a very short period. Finally, the first international flight from Abu Dhabi by Ethihat airway landed at Phuket airport on 1st July 2021. The secret behind the success of Phuket Sandbox was built on an ecosystem contributed by government and business organizations.

¹ **Phuket Sandbox** program has three key messages as follows.

- 1) Vaccine for herd immunity: The immunity island
- 2) No quarantine for vaccinated international traveler
- 3) Communication strategies for global tourism awareness, for domestic market and for local sentiment

Future tourism Future Phuket

Thai economic growth highly depends on the number of international tourists. Even though the number of international travelers has been increasing gradually since the end of the lockdown in many countries, the trend in tourism industry is changing in many aspects.

First, 'Revenge Travel', which creates the sudden influx of tourists after being kept in their country for so long. However, instead of pure leisure, travelers will be driven by impact and purpose. Travelers will be more concerned about engaging in positive practices such as protecting the environment and giving back to communities.

Second, the Covid-19 pandemic makes people realize that life is too short, so we should spend our valuable time with our love ones when we have an opportunity. Tourists will travel in smaller group with their family instead of in the big commercial tour group as in the past.

Third, despite the convenience of on-line communication such as ZOOM meeting, people still long for the physical experience from their vacation and business arrangement.

In 2021, Thailand was ranked at 36th out of 117 countries in Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI). The area that Thailand received low score are ground and port infrastructure, cultural resources, and environmental sustainability.

The tourism sector is expected to fully recover in 2024. Nonetheless, there are threats from rising energy costs and tourist tax that would increase the cost of travel. We must carefully balance between volume-based (Short-run) and value-based tourism (Long-run).

Future tourism Future Phuket

The upcoming trend that must be addressed is the Carbon footprint of Global tourism. Thailand promised to become carbon neutral by 2050 and become Net Zero emission by 2065. As the main tourism city, Phuket authorities are actively engaging in environmental protection activity. Thailand Sustainable tourism Development Foundation (TSDf) was established on 25th July 2014 with a mission to promote development that provides for balance and sustainability in Thailand's economy, society, environment, and culture. Tourists can pay money to the foundation to plant the tree to offset the carbon emission from their traveling activities. The foundation will give this money to the residents who will be obligated to plant and take care of the tree.

The Covid-19 pandemic gave us a lesson that Thailand cannot rely much on tourism, and to thrive, Thailand must diversify. Phuket is not only famous for beautiful beaches and summer vacation, but also holds a lot of potential in many areas including the unique gastronomy of Phuket cuisine, medical and wellness tourism, and yacht industry. Furthermore, the government also plans to expand into education, MICE, sport city and smart city. Changing from 'Leisure' to 'Bleisure' (Business and leisure) would create value to both visitors and the residents. With this strategy, Phuket will be able to achieve sustainable growth and become the city for all seasons.

Additional Information

1) Travel & Tourism Development Index 2021 Rebuilding for a Sustainable and Resilient Future Insight Report May 2022

https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Travel_Tourism_Development_2021.pdf