

Community-Driven Tourism: Building a Foundation for Sustainable Growth

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the community-based tourism management guidelines for sustainable growth and analyze their composition. It also examined the direct and indirect impacts of these guidelines on sustainable development through structural equation modeling. The study followed a quantitative research approach, collecting questionnaire data from 600 foreign tourists. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and multi-statistics, followed by hypothesis testing through structural equation modeling (SEM). The results indicated that the highest value was observed for the tourist satisfaction component of community-based tourism management guidelines for sustainable growth. It was followed by destination image, tourist loyalty, and destination reliability, respectively. The structural equation analysis further revealed that destination image, destination reliability, and tourism satisfaction had a direct influence on tourist loyalty. Moreover, destination image and destination reliability indirectly affected tourist loyalty through their impact on tourist satisfaction.

Keywords: Community-Driven Tourism, Destination Trust, Tourist Satisfaction, Tourist Loyalty Sustainable fashion industry, the expectations of the

1. Introduction

Thailand has enjoyed significant economic benefits from its thriving tourism industry, which has consistently ranked among the world's top destinations due to its natural beauty, diverse attractions, and captivating culture. The tourism sector plays a crucial role in boosting Thailand's economy and serves as a vital marketing force. In line with this, the industry has set an ambitious economic target to achieve a 10 percent increase in total tourism revenue from 2019. The goal is to raise foreign tourist revenue to 2.431 trillion baht in 2020, while domestic tourist income is expected to reach 1.287 trillion baht, resulting in a total revenue increase from 3.38 trillion baht to 3.718 trillion baht.

In 2020, the Tourism Authority of Thailand focused on promoting tourism through storytelling, presenting engaging narratives about the experiences of travelers. This promotional campaign encompassed three main phases: Before The Trip, During The Trip, and After The Trip. Concurrently, the Tourism Authority of Thailand aligned its efforts with the national strategy, emphasizing the importance of instilling confidence in safety, public health, and hygiene. It also sought to enhance the flexibility and creativity of individuals involved in the tourism industry while harnessing technology to improve the efficiency of proactive tourism.

However, Thailand faces challenges related to the spread of emerging infectious diseases, which have hindered policy implementation, acceptance of foreign tourists, and overall travel confidence. These effects have resulted in a decline in the country's tourism contribution to the GDP, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Office of National Economic and Social Development Council, 2020).

Thailand's tourism sector in 2020, Thailand's tourism-related Gross Domestic Product (GDP) experienced a decline of -63.92% compared to 2017. To achieve the GDP targets set for tourism, Thailand aimed to have a minimum GDP contribution of 22.92% to the country's overall GDP. In response, Thailand implemented measures to stimulate the tourism economy while prioritizing preventive measures against the spread of contagious or emerging diseases. These efforts aimed to restore tourist confidence (Office of the National Economics and Social Development Council, 2020).

Rayong province, located in eastern Thailand, boasts the highest per capita income in the country and ranks second in terms of total provincial output. It is a significant tourist city with numerous well-known attractions and plays a vital role in the economy, tourism industry, and agriculture. To leverage its potential, Rayong province has devised plans to develop tourism in tandem with the agricultural and industrial sectors, emphasizing quality and sustainability. The objective is to generate income from tourism and enhance the value of Rayong Province's tourist attractions. This entails revitalizing existing tourist attractions, developing new ones, and integrating tourism with the agricultural, industrial, and community sectors. Additionally, Rayong has invested in branding efforts, promoting tourism through the Surprise Rayong brand, which represents freshness, creativity, and vitality (Rayong Provincial Office, 2019).

Community-based tourism (CBT) encompasses four key components: natural resources and culture, community organization, management, and learning. CBT serves as a tool to empower community members in the management of natural resources and their cultural heritage. It enables community participation in decision-making processes and allows them to benefit from tourism. CBT goes beyond leisure and

entertainment, aiming to create a new dimension of tourism. Its principles revolve around community ownership, local involvement in decision-making, boosting self-esteem, improving quality of life, ensuring environmental sustainability, and preserving local identity and culture. These principles promote intercultural learning, respect for diverse cultures and human dignity, fair distribution of returns to the local community, and equitable income distribution for the community's public welfare (The Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute, 2020). CBT has garnered significant attention from new tourists, leading to rapid industry growth and substantial economic benefits for the communities (Burke & Walters, 2022). Thus, it is crucial to formulate strategies and integrate tourist attractions to elevate communities as sustainable tourist destinations (Meera and Vinodan, 2022).

Considering the importance of CBT, this study focuses on examining the management guidelines for sustainable growth, destination image, destination trust, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty in communities within Rayong Province. This aligns with the Thai Tourism Vision 2036, which aims to position Thailand as a leading global destination known for its quality tourism, harmoniously blending with Thai identity.

2. Objectives

- 1) The objective of this study is to examine the elements comprising the guidelines for community-based tourism management, with a focus on sustainable growth.
- 2) This study aims to investigate both the direct and indirect impacts of community-based tourism management guidelines on sustainable growth.
- 3) Another goal of this research is to construct a structural equation model to analyze the relationship between community-based tourism management guidelines and sustainable growth

3. Literary Review

3.1 Destination Image

The perception and beliefs of tourists towards a specific attraction significantly contribute to the overall image of a destination. This image is shaped by the thoughts and impressions of the local community, as well as the social and cultural traditions they engage in. Consequently, the destination image plays a vital role in influencing tourists' emotions, leading to specific behaviors and expressions. Positive destination image development, achieved through enhancing facilities and providing a comprehensive range of services, contributes to creating memorable

travel experiences and positively impacting repeat visits (Sharma and Nayak, 2019).

Research investigating the relationship between destination image and tourist satisfaction has shown that it ultimately influences loyalty. For instance, a study by Godovykh et al. (2021) revealed that tourists' perception of risks differed before and during their journey, influencing their travel experiences, satisfaction, and loyalty. The knowledge gained from perceived risks during the trip significantly influenced whether tourists found the destination more "attractive" and whether they would consider returning or recommending it to others. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2022) found that the quality of attractions and memorable travel experiences had a positive impact on future tourists' behaviors. In another study, Cong (2021) discovered that financial, psychological, physical, and social risks influenced word-of-mouth referrals and generated intentions for repeat visits. Additionally, Najar and Rather (2022) found that creating a compelling destination image helped reduce negative perceptions. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of destination loyalty for effective tourism management, as it is primarily influenced by risk factors and travelers' perceptions of the destination.

Moreover, the destination image plays a crucial role in generating visitor satisfaction, which, in turn, fosters loyalty. Based on the existing literature, it becomes evident that the influence of a tourist destination's image directly impacts tourist satisfaction and subsequently leads to commitment. Therefore, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

H1: The destination image directly influences the satisfaction of foreign tourists.

H2: The destination image directly influences the loyalty of foreign tourists.

3.2 Destination Trust

Destination credibility refers to the level of trust and confidence that travelers have in a particular destination, encompassing factors such as safety, trustworthiness, and friendliness. This credibility plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions and their willingness to revisit the destination. Each tourist attraction possesses unique characteristics, and places that are modern, beautiful, or offer distinct experiences can greatly satisfy tourists, leading to repeated visits (Suryaningsih et al., 2020). Moreover, the uniqueness of a tourist attraction adds value and contributes to sustainable income generation for the community. It is essential, therefore, to focus on addressing obstacles and creating confidence-building measures in tourist attractions.

Several studies have explored the influence of destination trust and tourist satisfaction on loyalty. Yang et al. (2020) found that establishing trust in unique and attractive tourist destinations served as an effective marketing strategy for developing and maintaining sustainable tourism destinations. Destination trust was identified as a critical factor in fostering loyalty among repeat travelers. Setiawan et al. (2021) highlighted that the perception of destination trust positively affected increased tourist satisfaction and repeat visits, providing tour operators with valuable insights for formulating strategies and gaining a competitive advantage. Additionally, Srivastava et al. (2022) discovered that the emotional and experiential aspects of a destination had a significant impact on travelers' willingness to recommend the destination to others and share their positive experiences (Kumar and Kaushik, 2018). These studies emphasize the influence of destination trust on tourist satisfaction. Based on this literature, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Destination trust directly affects the satisfaction of foreign tourists.

H4: Destination trust directly affects the loyalty of foreign tourists.

3.3 Tourist Satisfaction

With the advancement of technology, tourists have increasingly changed their travel behavior. Technology has made travel more accessible and convenient, leading to a shift in tourists' preferences. Nowadays, tourists seek authentic experiences and a deeper understanding of local lifestyles and customs, rather than merely visiting attractions. In response to these changing tourism trends, it is crucial to transform existing tourist destinations into modern ones that cater to the needs of tourists. By providing excellent experiences that cater to different groups of tourists, destinations can foster loyalty among visitors (Khasawneh and Alfandi, 2019).

Moreover, tourist satisfaction and repeat visits are strongly influenced by perceiving a destination as attractive. When tourists have positive and memorable travel experiences, they are more likely to share their experiences and return for future trips. Several studies have examined the relationship between tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Seyitoglu et al. (2022) and Godovykh et al. (2021) discovered that tourist satisfaction has a causal relationship with travel motivation, as perceptions of attractions directly impact travel demand. Positive travel experiences contribute to the loyalty of repeat travelers. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Bayih and Singh (2020), which demonstrated that motivation and emotional experiences significantly influence tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. As tourists engage in various tourism activities, encountering novelty and experiencing emotional connections, their loyalty to a destination is reinforced (Tsai, 2020). Based on this literature, it is evident that tourist satisfaction

directly affects tourist loyalty. Thus, the following research hypothesis is formulated:

H5: Tourist satisfaction directly influences the loyalty of foreign tourists.

3.4 Tourist Loyalty

Tourist loyalty refers to the emotional connection, belief, and perception that travelers develop towards a destination or the satisfaction they derive from the goods and services received. This attachment and positive perception often lead to repeat visitation and contribute to the overall image of the destination, while also attracting new customers. The perception of destination image and trust plays a significant role in fostering loyalty, as tourists consider these factors when deciding whether to travel. Ultimately, satisfaction acts as a key driver in the development of loyalty (Zhang et al., 2022).

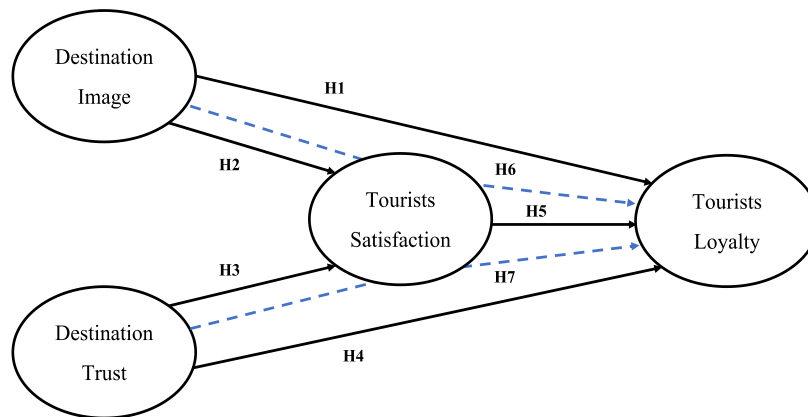
When examining the factors that indirectly influence loyalty through tourist satisfaction, it was found that confidence in tourist attractions influenced belief through various dimensions of risk, such as performance and financial risks. These factors significantly influenced repeat travel intentions among tourists (Khasawneh and Alfandi, 2019). Moreover, the perceived value and trust of a destination directly affected travel intentions. Other competitive attributes of a destination, including critical resources, local communities, and effective destination management, indirectly influenced visitation intentions. Destination management served as a driving force, indirectly impacting loyalty through its influence on behavior, perceived value, and trust, all of which contribute to tourist satisfaction. These findings align with the study conducted by Alves et al. (2019), which revealed that satisfaction indirectly influenced destination loyalty through trust and engagement. This indicates that tourists who hold positive attitudes towards a destination are more likely to appreciate the destination, express intentions to return, and recommend it to others, thereby fostering loyalty. Based on these insights, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Destination image indirectly influences loyalty through the satisfaction of foreign tourists.

H7: Destination trust indirectly influences loyalty through the satisfaction of foreign tourists.

4. Research Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework



5. Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a target population consisting of foreign tourists in the tourist communities of Rayong Province in 2019. Rayong Provincial Tourism and Sports Office (2019) identified six high-potential tourism communities in the province: Ban Thale Noi Tourism Community, Ban Chamrung Tourism Community, Ban Phai Taew Wat Kao Tourism Community, Ban Wang Tourism Community, Ban Map Lao Cha On Community Tourism. Due to the unknown absolute population, the sample size was determined using Khazanie's (1996) formula. With a confidence level of 95% ($Z = 1.69$) and a desired sampling error of 0.05 ($E = 0.05$), a total of 385 samples were collected. To ensure more reliable structural equation analysis, a larger sample size of 600 was determined using Quota Sampling, with 100 participants from each tourist community.

The research instruments consisted of 80 items, with 20 items each measuring destination image, destination trust, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. The questionnaire employed a rating scale with five levels based on the Likert method. The questionnaire items were developed based on the conceptual research framework and relevant literature from Zhou et al. (2022), Cong (2021), Najar and Rather (2022), Suryaningsih et al. (2020), Setiawan et al. (2021), Srivastava et al. (2022), Kumar and Kaushik (2018), Khasawneh and Alfandi (2019), Seyitoglu et al. (2022), Godovykh et al. (2021), and Bayih and Singh (2020).

To ensure the quality of the research instruments, content validity was assessed using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) by three experts. The IOC scores ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, surpassing the threshold of 0.50, indicating that the questionnaire items aligned with

the research objectives and content requirements (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977). The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed through a pilot test with 30 non-sample participants. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was calculated, resulting in a range of 0.81-0.95, surpassing the threshold of 0.70 as per the criteria of Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), indicating that the questionnaire was appropriate and reliable.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, calculating means and standard deviations for the five-level scale. Additionally, multivariate statistics and a structural equation model (SEM) using the AMOS statistical analysis program were employed for evaluation criteria. The analysis included criteria such as CMIN-p greater than .05, CMIN/DF less than 2, GFI greater than .90, and RMSEA less than .08 based on Arbuckle's (2012) guidelines.

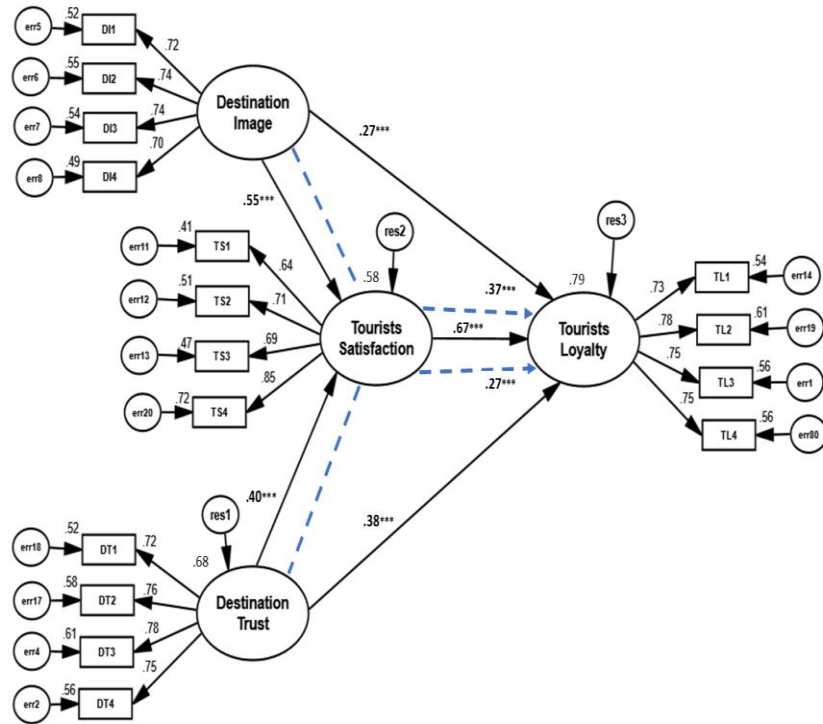
6. Result

The study examined the significance of destination image, destination trust, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to analyze these factors. The results revealed that destination image received a high rating, with a mean of 4.07 (SD = 0.42). Destination trust showed an increasing trend, with a mean of 3.90 (SD = 0.51). Tourist satisfaction was rated highly, with a mean of 4.21 (SD = 0.48), while tourist loyalty also received a high rating, with a mean of 4.00 (SD = 0.36).

The analysis of the structural equation model yielded the following results: the Chi-square probability level (CMIN-p) was 0.150, which exceeded the significance threshold of 0.05. The relative chi-square (CMIN/DF) was 1.274, which was below the recommended value of 2. The goodness of fit index (GFI) was 0.956, surpassing the threshold of 0.90. Lastly, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.024, falling below the recommended value of 0.08. Based on these evaluation criteria, it can be concluded that all four statistical values aligned with the empirical data.

The results are as follows:

Figure 2 Community-Based Tourism Management Structural Equation Model for Sustainable Growth



The structural equation model analysis examined the direct influences of destination image and destination trust on tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty in the context of community-based tourism management for sustainable growth. The results indicated that destination image had a direct influence on both tourist satisfaction (TE=0.55) and tourist loyalty (TE=0.27). Similarly, destination trust had a direct influence on tourist satisfaction (TE=0.40) and tourist loyalty (TE=0.38).

Furthermore, the analysis revealed the indirect influences of destination image (TE=0.37) and destination trust (TE=0.27) on tourist loyalty through the mediating factor of tourist satisfaction. These indirect effects highlight the pathway by which destination image and trust impact tourist loyalty.

The specific values for the direct and indirect influences are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The statistical analysis of the direct and indirect influences of the structural equation model for sustainable growth in community tourism management guidelines.

Dependent of Variable	Standard Coefficient of Influence	Independent of Variable			
		DI	DT	TS	TL
Tourists loyalty	DE	.27	.38	.67	-
	IE	.37	.27	.00	-
	TE	.64	.65	.67	-
Tourists Satisfaction	DE	.55	.40	-	-
	IE	.00	.00	-	-
	TE	.55	.40	-	-

DI: Destination Image, DT: Destination Trust, TS: Tourists Satisfaction and TL: Tourists Loyalty

Note: DE= direct effect, IE=indirect effect, TE=total effect, - = not applicable

The results of the hypothesis test for the structural equation model with seven hypotheses were consistent with the presumptions made. Table 2 displays the results.

Table 2 Hypothesis Test Result

Research Hypothesis	Result
H1: The destination image directly influences the satisfaction of foreign tourists.	Accept
H2: The destination image directly influences the loyalty of foreign tourists.	Accept
H3: Destination trust directly affects the satisfaction of foreign tourists.	Accept
H4: Destination trust directly affects the loyalty of foreign tourists.	Accept
H5: Tourist satisfaction directly influences the loyalty of foreign tourists.	
H6: Destination image indirectly influences loyalty through the satisfaction of foreign tourists.	Accept
H7: Destination trust indirectly influences loyalty through the satisfaction of foreign tourists.	Accept

7. Discussion

A study focusing on community tourism management approaches for sustainable growth, with a specific emphasis on destination image, revealed that foreign tourists have a preference for experiencing the

unique social and cultural aspects, rare local traditions, and diverse cuisine of the destination. This demonstrates that the aforementioned destination image has a significant impact on building tourist satisfaction and loyalty. These findings align with the study conducted by Najar and Rather (2022), which revealed that a positive perception of the destination image leads to a favorable attitude towards the tourist attraction and increases the intention to visit repeatedly.

Regarding destination trust, it was found that tourists highly appreciated the friendliness of the local community, the cleanliness and beauty of the tourist attractions, the presence of informative signage explaining the community's stories, and the availability of various activities, warning signs for hazardous spots, and a tourist assistance center equipped to handle emergencies. These factors contribute to the satisfaction of foreign tourists with community tourism. The study by Suryaningsih et al. (2020) further emphasized that the uniqueness of the destination and the availability of a range of activities generate satisfaction among tourists, leading to repeat visits. Setiawan et al. (2021) also highlighted the importance of destination trust as a critical strategy for gaining a competitive advantage, particularly by ensuring the presence of sufficient service personnel and community members with good interpersonal skills to assist and provide advice on various activities, thereby creating positive experiences for tourists and fostering loyalty towards the tourist attractions.

The results of this study support the notion that destination image and destination trust indirectly influence loyalty through the preferences of international tourists. Community tourist attractions, with their natural beauty, captivating social cultures, and unique products, differentiate themselves from other tourist destinations, resulting in positive experiences that foster satisfaction and loyalty. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Lestari et al. (2022), which highlighted that community resources and the local community play crucial roles in driving loyalty and the potential for repeat visits. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that tourist loyalty is influenced by satisfaction with destination image and trust, as established in previous research conducted by Aves et al. (2019) and Naletelich and Spears (2020).

8. Suggestion

The research findings demonstrate that destination image, destination trust, tourist satisfaction, and loyalty among foreign tourists contribute to improving the quality of life within the community and fostering economic development by generating income. These findings provide valuable insights for local agencies and the Rayong Provincial Tourism Office, who can utilize them as a guide for developing the tourism

community into a sustainable tourist destination. This can be achieved by designing tourism activities that align with the district's unique offerings. Additionally, implementing a systematic knowledge management process within the community and developing the service skills of local individuals can help attract more foreign tourists, particularly those who are long-term travelers with higher spending capacities. Given that foreign tourists are considered high-potential visitors, they can serve as a catalyst to draw attention to tourism in Thailand, ultimately benefitting the community by creating employment opportunities, income generation, and sustainable economic growth in Rayong province's tourism community. Furthermore, it is recommended to explore other factors that influence foreign tourist loyalty, such as attraction personality, motivation, travel intentions, and safety measures. Additionally, future research should consider expanding the sample groups to include government agencies, community leaders, and local residents. This broader study can help identify the most effective tourism management models for the community, creating added economic value and positioning Rayong as a preferred tourist destination.

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