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MODELS OF CBT ATTRACTIVENESS, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, VALUE AND TOURIST EXPERIENCE TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY PREFERENCES

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Abstract

AIM: This research is to investigate the CBT Attractiveness, Local Community Involvement, Value and Tourist Experience towards CBT Sustainability Preference Behaviors in Thailand and to discover how the tourists' experiences can be optimized. **Materials and Methods:** A quantitative approach through surveys with questionnaires was applied for information gathering. The sampling method used is Quota sampling in 4 most popular CBT tourism sites in Chiang Mai (100 samples per each site and 50 Thai tourists and 50 foreign tourists per each site). The samples were divided into two groups: 200 domestic tourists and 200 foreign tourists, totaling 400 samples visiting the CBT destinations. A descriptive data analysis was used to describe the characteristics and the behaviors of Thai and foreign CBT tourists in Thailand and a structural equation modeling technique was used to identify the influences of CBT Attractiveness, Local Community Involvement, Value and Tourist Experience on Sustainability Preference through the overall model and the comparison models between Thai and foreign tourists. **Results and discussions:** The results have presented an overall model and the comparison models of CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences that influence Sustainability Preferences between Thai and foreign tourists. **Conclusions:** These models can be beneficial for CBT destination management to have better understanding in CBT destination attractiveness in the rural regions of Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand and to respond to Thai and foreign tourists' demands through their perceptions in CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences and Sustainability Preferences.

Keywords: CBT Attractiveness, Community Involvement, Value, Tourist Experience, Sustainability Preferences.

INTRODUCTION

Setting up a community-based tourism (CBT) in a community is not an easy work but sustaining it is more difficult in a changing society, environment, economics and tourist behaviours. Mostly the sustainable tourism in a community has been focused upon the community itself instead of tourist demand and insight. Moreover, according to Grilli, Tyllianakis, Luisetti, Ferrini and Turner (2021), Navrud and Strand (2018), Morse-Jones, et.al.(2012) and Rolfe, et.al.(2000), most of research on preferences and values sustainable tourism development for community-based tourism has been not sufficient and has emphasized mostly on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) started in Thailand in 2002. The tourism model has been developed since after the 1997 economic crisis when the Thai government started using tourism as a stimulus by announcing 1998-1999 as the year to promote Thai tourism (Amazing Thailand). In 2001, the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) project was started. In 2004,

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Homestay Standards were set or called the official name "Rural cultural accommodation", which is considered the beginning of community-based tourism in Thailand. (The Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute, 2017). One important aspect often forgotten is a tourist's perspective on CBT. Thus, the present study is conducted to obtain current data on the attractiveness of CBT from tourists' perspectives on various CBT types in Thailand. This information would better understand destination attractiveness in CBT in the rural regions of Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand.

This information would better understand destination attractiveness in CBT in the rural regions of Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand. The main aim of this research is to investigate the CBT Attractiveness, Local Community Involvement, Value and Tourist Experience towards CBT Sustainability Preference Behaviours in Thailand and to discover how the tourists' experiences can be optimized.

Objectives of The Research

1) To propose a model of the CBT Attractiveness, Local Community Involvement, Value and Tourist Experience towards CBT Sustainability Preference Behaviors
2) To compare the CBT Attractiveness, Local Community Involvement, Value and Tourist Experience towards CBT Sustainability Preference Behaviors between Thai and Foreign Tourists through the comparison models

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Perception of CBT Attractiveness

Tourism quality is considered one of the important factors of tourist attractiveness, in particular CBT attractiveness. The term includes elements, such as a set of natural assets shaped by history and built according to the era. These factors are: Leisure qualities; Nature qualities; Cultural qualities and Specialist qualities. Facilitating travel arrangements (tourism infrastructure) including tourism equipment, leisure travelers enjoy the assets of their chosen destination. Tourism infrastructure can be divided into two groups: Technical infrastructure (e.g., food and accommodation facilities) and Social infrastructure (e.g., service offices, tourist information centres) as well as the availability of transportation that can stimulates tourism development and the access to the clean natural environment (Usmonova & Alieva, 2022).

Tourist attractiveness can have three different meanings which can be defined as follows (Krazewska & Ossowska, 2020):

- Tourist attractiveness is subjectively considered; a specific place can be considered in terms of tourist attractiveness based on one's own experience and world view;
- Tourist attractiveness is considered as a result of standardization and categorization;
- Tourist attractiveness is considered valorization, applying a given research technique.

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What's interesting is that the attractiveness of each location can be felt differently by tourists more than entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. It also depends on what is available for the development of tourism potential in that location (Majewska, Napierała & Adamiak, 2016).

CBT Attractiveness and Tourism Sustainability

Studies conducted by Nok et al. (2017), Matthew and Sreejesh (2017) and Grilli et al. (2021), identify that the understanding of sustainability expressed by tourists is linked to a passion for sustainable travel. It is known to provide economic and social advantages to local communities. The value proposition of a travel company should be to be able to attract like-minded travelers in practicing sustainability and participating respectfully in community activities and social environment. That is, the consumer's preferences for the external environment and infrastructure facilities within a tourist attraction can have an impact on its success of sustainable tourism. (Jetter & Chen, 2011).

Local Community Involvement and Tourism Sustainability

Local community participation in development initiatives has been a trend for years now. Despite being conventionally viewed as solely under government responsibility, successful tourism development has required stakeholder participation (Gutierrez, 2019). Community participation is a bottom-up approach whereby communities are involved to solve their problems (Rahman, Masud, Akhtar, & Hossain, 2022).

Few studies have examined customer preferences for attributes related to local communities. They found some evidence which shows a neutral or even critical attitude towards community participation (Capriello, Altinay & Monti, 2019) while other works show a greater preference for local community participation or benefits (Okazaki, 2008; Carballo, Araña, León & Moreno-Gil, 2015; Dikgang & Muchapondwa, 2017; Usmonova, Alieva & León, 2022).

Value and Tourism Sustainability

Values play an important regulatory role in human activity and therefore in attitudes toward the surrounding world, which establishes a correspondence between what is thought, what is said, and what is done, at the individual level (Kim, 2020). These values play a key role in the model of sustainability empathy (Adongo, Taale & Adam, 2018; Kruczek & Szromek, 2020). That tries to unite all the influencing matters together and adds the psychological dimension. It uses the tourists' values as a key factor that can determine their attitude toward the local community and sustainable practices. Values are recognized as a factor that can significantly shape tourists' commitment to sustainable attitudes.

The encounter of nature and human in ecotourism involves a twofold relationship between human and human and between humans and nature. For ecotourism, a conflict arises between deep ecology, eco-centered or ecocentric values and anthropocentric or human-centered values. However, the relationship between humanity and nature is mostly restricted by relations between humans (Mellor, 2000). Few studies have examined the values that prospective tourists place on sustainable tourism development and ecosystem service protection in the context of remote areas (Kramer & Mercer, 1997; Rolfe et al., 2000; Svedsäter, 2000; Huybers

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& Bennett, 2000; Kontoleon & Swanson, 2003; Horton et al., 2003; Swanson & Kontoleon, 2004; Morse-Jones et al., 2012; Navrud & Strand, 2018; Grilli, Tyllianakis, Luisetti, Ferrini & Turner, 2021).

This study selects Value-Based Theory (VBT) by Stern and Dietz (1994) as a framework to explain how tourists display empathetic attitudes toward humans and the environment based on their value orientations: Anthropocentricism, Ecocentrism, Economic growth, Nature conservation, Attitude towards fellow tourists, Attitude towards local community development and Social Value.

Tourist Experience and Tourism Sustainability

Saptutyningsih and Duant (2021) proposed that tourist satisfaction with the physical environment and infrastructure development in tourist destinations may affect the success of sustainable tourism. As well as According to Wehrli, Schwarz, and Settler (2011), sustainable tourism will remain important in the future. Main features of the destination tourist education environmental awareness and recreation costs are statistically significant in determining the needs of tourists.

Research on the preferences and values for sustainable tourism development in remote areas by potential tourists is limited and focuses on the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems broadly (e.g., Rolfe et al., 2000; Morse-Jones et al., 2012; Navrud and Strand, 2018; Grilli, Tyllianakis, Luisetti, Ferrini & Turner, 2021). It was also found that in the majority of studies, with some exceptions, customer satisfaction in travel and tourism in general focuses on some specific aspect of travel preferences and very little research focuses on the entire travel experience (Mtapuri, Giampiccoli & Jugmohan, 2015).

Mtapuri, Giampiccoli & Jugmohan (2015) develop a Community-based Visitors Affinity Index (CBTVAI) useful to owners/managers of CBT entities in evaluating their CBT businesses from a visitor perspective. The index does not include all possible entries. This is because CBT ventures exist in different contexts and have different requirements. However, the Index represents a flexible framework that can continually evolve and be reformulated according to the specific needs of CBT agencies for CBT sustainability that is suitable for this study.

Research Framework

From the above literature review, the research framework is presented in Figure 1 (p. 8). CBT sustainable preferences from tourists' perspectives are the results of CBT attractiveness, local community involvement, values and tourists' experiences in CBT.

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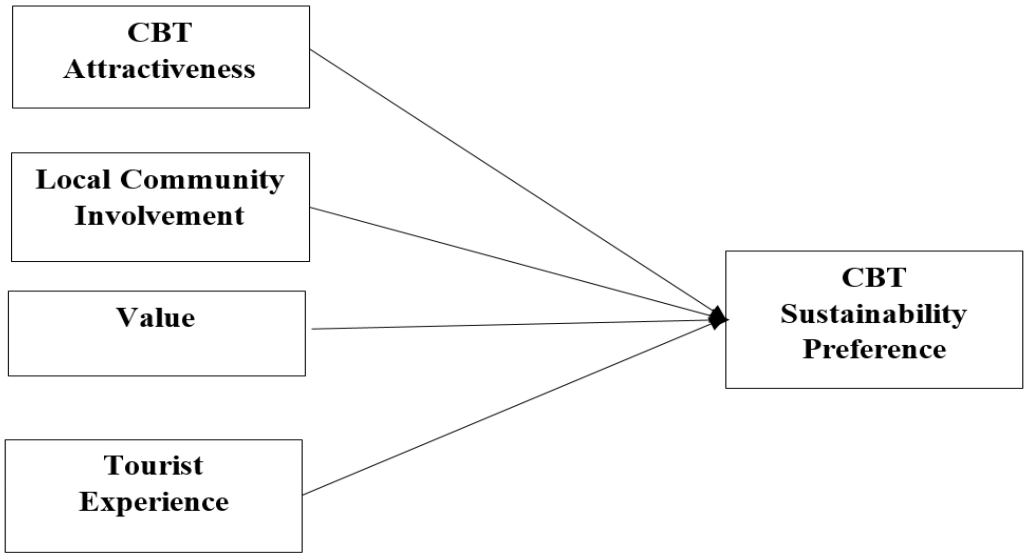

Figure 1: Research Framework

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1) Population and Sample

The population are all the tourists have ever had some experiences visiting CBT sites in Thailand.

The subjects were sampling specifically in Chiang Mai, Thailand which has the most community-based tourism villages in northern Thailand (Thailand CBT Network Coordination Center: CBT-N-CC, 2023). The sampling method used is Quota sampling in 4 most popular CBT tourism sites in Chiang Mai (100 samples per each site and 50 Thai tourists and 50 foreign tourists per each site). The samples were divided into two groups: 200 domestic tourists and 200 foreign tourists, totaling 400 samples visiting the CBT destinations.

2) Research Instrument

The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. "Tourist perceptions of CBT Attractiveness" was adapted from the research tool of Mtapuri, Giampiccoli & Jugmohan .(2015) which conducted research on "Community-based tourism affinity index: a visitor's approach". While **"**Community Involvement" was adapted from the research tool of Usmonova, Alieva and Leon (2022) which conducted research on "Yurt Invited: Combining Tourists and Stakeholders Perceptions of Sustainable Community-Based Tourism in Central Asia". The section of"Value" was adapted from the research tool of Adongo, Taale & Adam (2018) which conducted research on "Tourists' values and empathic attitude toward sustainable development in tourism". For "Tourist Experience" section, it was from all the related literature review. And the last section **"**Sustainability Preferences" was adapted from the research tool of Usmonova, Alieva and Leon (2022) which conducted research on "Yurt Invited: Combining

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Tourists and Stakeholders Perceptions of Sustainable Community-Based Tourism in Central Asia". Five-point scales have been used in previous comparable studies, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, except the section of Tourist Perception of CBT Attractiveness ranging from 1 = worst to 5 = excellent.

The content Validity was through 3 CBT experts and the IOC (Index of Item – Objective Congruence) value from 5 Thai restaurant experts is 0.92, as well as a pilot test with 50 tourist samples who had the CBT experiences in Thailand. For the Reliability, Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to analyze the data when completing the data collection. The overall Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.960. And the Cronbach alpha coefficient for Thai tourists was 0.963 while the Cronbach alpha coefficient for foreign tourists was 0.970. This confirms the high reliability of the research tools.

3) Data Analysis

A descriptive data analysis was used to describe the characteristics and the behaviors of Thai and foreign CBT tourists in Thailand and a structural equation modeling technique was used to identify the influences of CBT Attractiveness, Local Community Involvement, Value and Tourist Experience on Sustainability Preference through the overall model and the comparison models between Thai and foreign tourists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) Personal Data and CBT Behaviors of Tourists

Most of the tourists are female (209 samples = 52.3%) while there are 191 male tourists (47.8%) in the age of 21 – 30 years old (200 samples = 50%), followed by 31 – 40 years old (81 samples = 20.2%), single (200 samples = 50%), followed by married (176 samples = 44%). Most of them have had Bachelor Degree (308 samples = 77%) with the occupation of business owners (112 samples = 28%), followed by private company staff (111 samples = 27.8%) and students (84 samples = 21%) with the average income per month of 100 – 500 USD (135 samples = 33.8%), followed by 501 – 1,000 USD (127 samples = 31.8%). These results are similar to the results of Zufeng's (2019) study on The Gap Analysis between Supply and Demand Side in Community-based Tourism: A Case Study of Chiang Mai Province and Charoensit, Emphandhu and Phongkhieo's (2022) study on Travel Motivations to Visit CBT Communities Adjacent to National Parks in the Southern Region of Thailand. For the nationality of the respondents, there were 200 Thai tourist sample as set as the quota while the most foreign tourists are from Europe, (54 samples = 13.5%), followed by Chinese (44 samples = 11.1).

For the comparison personal data between the Thai and the foreign tourist samples, the majority of both samples are female (108 Thai = 54%, 101 Foreign = 50.5%), while there are 191 male tourists (92 Thai = 46%, 99 Foreign = 49.5%). Both of the samples are mostly in the age of 21 – 30 years old (83 Thai = 41.5%, 119 Foreign = 59.5%), followed by 31 – 40 years old for the Thai tourists (53 samples = 26.5%) whereas followed by 20 years old and below for the foreign tourists (39 samples = 19.5%). This implies that the foreign tourists are younger than the Thai

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tourists. Most of the Thai tourists are married (100 samples = 50%) while most of the foreign tourists are single (125 samples = 62.5%) with Bachelor Degree (149 Thai = 74.5%, 165 Foreign = 82.5%). For the occupation, most of the Thai tourists are private company staff (69 samples = 34.5%) whereas most of the foreign tourists are business owners and students (65 samples = 32.5% for each occupation). When considering about their average incomes per month, most of the Thai tourists have earned more than most of the foreign tourists (501 – 1,000 USD for 70 Thai samples = 35% while 100 – 500 USD for 76 foreign samples = 38%). So the occupation as students and the average incomes per month = 100 – 500 USD for most of the foreign tourists are reasonable.

In overall, most tourists have accessed the CBT sites by car (268 samples = 57.5%), both for Thai tourists (135 samples = 62.8%) and foreign tourists (156 samples = 56.3. For the length of visit, the majority have had 1 day trip (242 samples = 60.5%), followed by 2-3 day trip (120 samples = 30%). Also the Thai and the foreign tourists have chosen to have 1 day trip (134 Thai = 67%, 102 Foreign = 51%), followed by 2-3 day trip (59 Thai = 29.5%, 72 Foreign = 36%). This result of 1 day trip is consistent with the research result of Charoensit, Emphandhu and Phongkhieo (2022) about Travel Motivations to Visit CBT Communities Adjacent to National Parks in the Southern Region of Thailand.

2) Overall Model of CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences that influence Sustainability Preferences

The results of the structural equation model analysis after adjusting it by connecting the error values of the indicators according to the recommendations of Modification indices (MI) found that the adjusted model is consistent with the empirical data and the statistical values used to test the model are acceptable. Comparison of Before and After model adjustment results are as shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of the Model Adjustment Results for the Overall Tourist Sample

Statistics	Criteria	Assumption model		Adjusted model	
		Statistics	Result	Statistics	Result
Chi-Square (x^2)	There is no statistical significance at the level > 0.05	43.814	-	25.199	-
df	-	21	-	18	-
p-value	p > 0.05	0.002	Non pass	0.120	pass
χ2 /df	χ2 /df < 3	2.086	pass	1.400	pass
CFI	>0.90	0.980	pass	0.994	pass
GFI	> 0.90	0.978	pass	0.987	pass
AGFI	> 0.90	0.953	pass	0.966	pass
TLI	> 0.90	0.966	pass	0.988	pass
IFI	> 0.90	0.981	pass	0.994	pass
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.052	pass	0.008	pass
RMR	< 0.05	0.011	pass	0.032	pass

From the results of the Goodness of Fit index analysis of the model after adjusting the causal factor model of community tourism attractiveness, Community Involvement, valuing, tourist experiences that influence sustainability preferences, it was found that all Goodness of Fit

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index values passed the criteria for consideration. It can be concluded that this structural equation modeling model is consistent with empirical data in the studied context after adjusting the model as shown in Figure 1

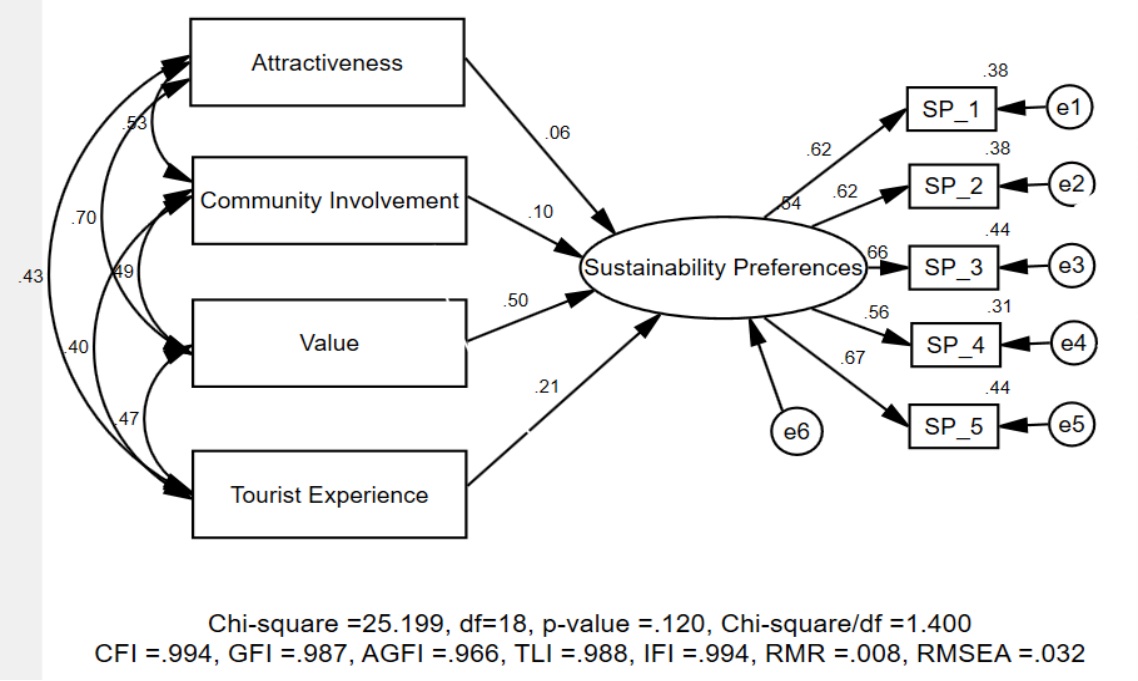

Figure 1: The After-Adjusted Overall Model of CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences that influence Sustainability Preferences

The Structural equation model analysis of community tourism attractiveness, Community Involvement, values and tourist experiences that influence sustainability preferences has shown in Figure 1 that for the overall, the four observed factors, which are CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values and Tourist Experiences have appreciably positive effect on Sustainability Preferences. The most positive effect variable (standardized path coefficient value) on Sustainability Preferences was Value (value = 0.50), followed by Tourist Experiences (value = 0.21), Community Involvement (value = 0.10) and CBT attractiveness (value = 0.06). This is the same result as Adongo, Taale and Adam's (2018) study result that identified that Value has been an important factor that leads to sympathetic attitudes towards nature conservation, fellow tourists and local community development, an aspect with implications for sustainable development in tourism. The most significant strongest covariance value was between Attractiveness and Value (0.70 with C.R. = 11.50). For the Overall Factor Analysis Results, the first factor of CBT attractiveness was Facilities (FA = 0.67), the first factor of Community Involvement was "I choose to spend money where it stays in the local community and contributes towards a thriving locality" (CI 1 = 0.64), the first factor of Value was Attitude towards fellow tourists (AF = 0.66) and the first factor of Tourist Experience was "I believe the experience of visiting community-based tourism is fun, enjoyable and entertaining." (TE1 = 0.50).

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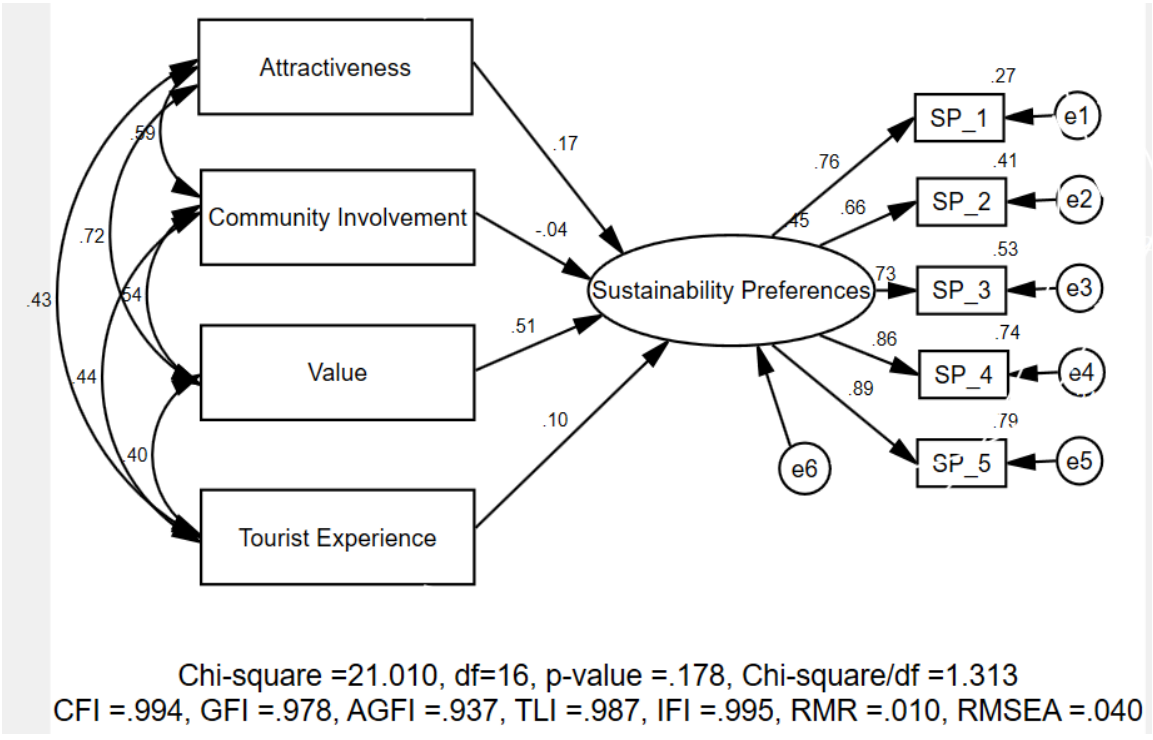
3) Comparison Model of CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences that influence Sustainability Preferences

When comparing Thai and Foreign models as presented in Table 14 (p.), the overall results for Thai tourists showed that the four observed variables, which are CBT attractiveness, Values and Tourist Experiences have appreciably positive effect on Sustainability Preferences, except Community Involvement. The most positive effect variable (standardized path coefficient value) on Sustainability Preferences was Value (value = 0.51), followed by CBT attractiveness (value = 0.17) and Tourist Experiences (value = 0.10). The only one negative effect variable on Sustainability Preferences was Community Involvement (value = -0.04). This result is consistent with the research result of Usmonova, G., Alieva, D. and León, C. J. (2022) that found the negative relationship between the local community involvement and the perceptions of CBT sustainability but not significant. This would indicate that those tourists who wish to involve more with the local communities have a lower perception of the sustainability of CBT.



Thai Tourist Model

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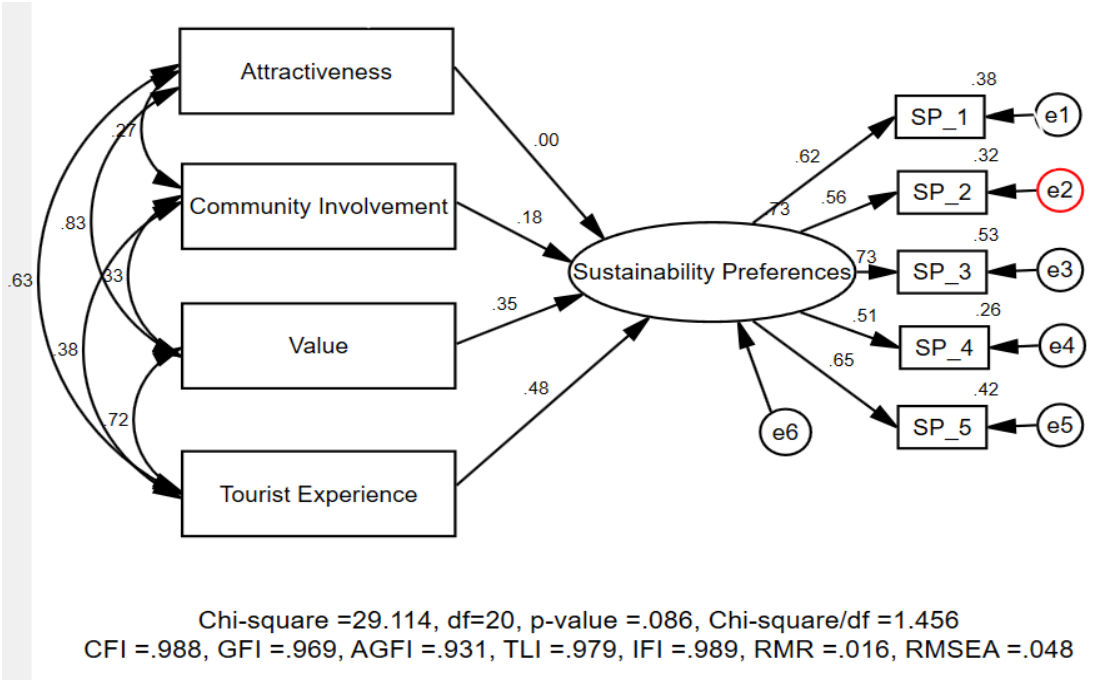

Foreign Tourist Model

Figure 2: Comparison analysis models of CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences that influence Sustainability Preferences for Thai and Foreign Tourist Sample

Table 2: Comparison of Thai and Foreign Models

Thai Model	Foreign Model
1st Factor: Value (value = 0.51)	1st Factor: Tourist Experiences (value = 0.48)
2nd Factor: CBT attractiveness (value = 0.17)	2nd Factor: Value (value = 0.35)
3rd Factor: Tourist Experiences (value = 0.10)	3rd Factor: Community Involvement (value = 0.18
4th Factor: Community Involvement (value = -0.04)	4th Factor: CBT attractiveness (value = 0.00)

For the comparison of the factor loadings in each factor, the first factor of CBT attractiveness for Thai Tourists was Facilities (FA = 0.83) while the first factor of CBT attractiveness for foreign tourists was Activity (AC = 0.71). The first factors of Community Involvement for Thai Tourists were "I choose to spend money where it stays in the local community and contributes towards a thriving locality" (CI 1 = 0.76) and "When I travel, I want to understand the destination and "live like a local" through informed decisions" (CI2 = 0.76). Similarly, the first factors of Community Involvement for foreign tourists were "I choose to spend money where it stays in the local community and contributes towards a thriving locality" (CI 1 = 0.59). The first factor of Value for Thai Tourists was Attitude towards fellow tourists (AF = 0.65) while the first factor of Value for foreign tourists was Social Value (SV = 0.77). The first factor of Tourist Experience for Thai Tourists was "I feel that this place is attractive and appreciable." (TE3 = 0.70 with effect value = 0.84), followed by "I believe the experience of visiting community-based tourism is interesting." (TE2 = 0.70 with effect value = 0.83) whereas the

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first factor of Tourist Experience for foreign tourists was "I feel the experience of staying at this place allows me to harmonize with environment." (TE5 = 0.55).

The most significant strongest covariance value for Thai and foreign tourists was between Attractiveness and Value (Thai = 0.72 with C.R. = 8.25; Foreign = 0.83 with C.R. = 9.05). This can be explained by Korstanje (2010), Fernandes, Marques, Toledo and Mazzon (2010) and Gutiérrez-Marines & Reyes-Mercado (2018) that tourists are willing to visit sustainable destinations that represent a unique value in their perception. There are many tourists with special tastes who seek and choose places that go beyond global fashion and trends.

RECOMMRNDATIONS

Recommendations for CBT Sites

1) Refer to the Personal Data of the Samples, the target tourists to the CBT sites in Thailand are female in the age of 21 – 30 years old with Bachelor Degree. Thai tourists are married while the foreign tourists are single. Thai tourists are private company staff who have earned 501 – 1,000 USD per month whereas foreign tourists are business owners and students who have earned 100 – 500 USD per month. Both Thai and foreign tourists have accessed the CBT sites by car to have 1 day trip. Therefore, CBT Sites should focus on this target tourist group.
2) As the Structural equation model analysis result, the most significant strongest covariance value for Thai and foreign tourists was between Attractiveness and Value. Tourists are willing to visit sustainable destinations that represent a unique value in their perception. There are many tourists with special tastes who seek and choose places that go beyond global fashion and trends. Therefore, CBT sites should create, present and preserve their uniqueness in their attractions to be their sustainable values in the eyes of tourists.
3) For foreign tourists, the most positive effect variable on Sustainability Preferences was Tourist Experiences and they seemed to give higher rating than the Thai tourists for tourist experiences. CBT sites should make sure that foreign tourists will have impressive experiences as their demands in their communities.
4) The only one negative effect variable on Sustainability Preferences was Community Involvement for Thai tourists. Fewer community involvement activities should be provided for Thai tourists.
5) The only one variable that has had no effect on Sustainability Preferences was CBT attractiveness for foreign tourists. Therefore, CBT sites should maintain and preserve their natural, original and unique settings and environment for this tourist group.
6) For the comparison of the factor loadings in each factor, the first factor of CBT attractiveness for Thai Tourists was Facilities while the first factor of CBT attractiveness for foreign tourists was Activity). CBT sites should maintain and get better of their facilities for Thai tourists and more community involvement and social value activities for foreign tourists.

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Recommendations for Further Research

1) This study has been undertaken only in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Future research can be done in CBT in other cities in Thailand or in other countries.
2) The scope of this study focused on Tourist Perceptions in CBT Attractiveness, Local Community Involvement, Value and Tourist Experience towards CBT Sustainability Preference Behaviors, further studies can extend their scopes to tourist satisfaction, tourist loyalty or tourist online awareness of CBT.
3) Future research needed to determine the assistance and relationship of local communities and tour operators with the government sector and comparing the impacts or benefits from community-based tourism in Thailand with nearby countries.
4) Further research can study about the roles of travel bloggers and influencers who can be the key player to promote and drive the economic growth for the CBT industry in Thailand.
5) From a methodological standpoint, feedback loops must be evaluated between tourists' and stakeholders' perceptions

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has presented an overall model and the comparison models of CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences that influence Sustainability Preferences between Thai and foreign tourists. These models can be beneficial for CBT destination management to have better understanding in CBT destination attractiveness in the rural regions of Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand and to respond to Thai and foreign tourists' demands through their perceptions in CBT attractiveness, Community Involvement, Values, Tourist Experiences and Sustainability Preferences.

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