

A CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN SERVICE COMPETENCY

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are 1) to analyze the path of causal relationship influencing the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises and 2) to examine the hypotheses of causal relationships of factors affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. The sample group consists of 220 community-based tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. The sample were obtained with the 10-time sampling size of the variables. The results showed that 1) the conceptual framework of causal relationship model, of factors affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand, consisted of only three variables; the tourist attitudes towards external factors, tourist behavior and their attitudes towards tourism factors. Additionally, there were six variables influencing marketing potential in added-value creation for products and services; economy, environment, marketing promotion, process, destination attractiveness and access to tourist attractions, and. 2) the hypothesis format was consistent with the empirical data based on Chi-square = 436.373 Chi-square / df = 2.039 df = 214 p-value = .051 GFI = .914 RMSEA = .002, through evaluating the Data-Model Fit. The ρ -Value was applied for verification of the consistency of the empirical model and the theoretical model with statistical significance value of $p > .05$.

Keywords: Causal Relationships, Occupational Standards, Community-Based Tourism Enterprises, Participatory, Service Competency.

INTRODUCTION

Community enterprises [1-8] have contributed economic benefits at both community and national levels according to the 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan (200-2011) and 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016). With respect to the strategy of strengthening communities and society to be the stable foundation of the nation that leads to the incubation for entrepreneurs in the targeted communities, it is

an entrepreneur enhancement through developing their knowledges in marketing management, community-unique production to respond to demand of community enterprise operation for grassroots products and services, and encouragement of high survival rate as well as professional management. The community entrepreneurs /network [9] are small business [10-13] groups generating income to communities, society and the nation whereas tourism plays a vital role as a core industry.

Consequently, the government [14] has defined a policy to promote tourism continuously through various participatory forms of community-based tourism policy such as ecotourism, community-based tourism, community-based tourism enterprises, homestays and OTOP tourism villages with the intention to drive the community-based tourism [15-18] as an essential mechanism for generating income to local communities. Nevertheless, as per the recent empirical [13, 19, 20] tourism data, there have been both positive and negative effects. In view of the positive one, the community-based [8] tourism helps increase and distribute income to local communities whereas developing basic infrastructures, conserving and recovering traditions and cultures leading to resource conservation of communities. For negative one, traditions and cultures become products [21, 22] while their way of life has been changed and there are only some groups of people gaining an advantage, mostly capitalists who update and adapt themselves to be service owners in advance while local people have less participation [23] and become their tourism labors. Aligning with the abovementioned policy [24-26], community people have gathered in various forms of group causing the conflict of interests in utilizing natural resources. Although some agreements of tourism management [15-18, 27-33] were established, there remains only some groups gaining an advantage. While communities are developed to become community-based tourism bringing visiting tourists, it causes uncomfortable and insecure feeling and the aforementioned changes indicate that the policy of promoting community-based tourism leads to organizing new community system [5], bringing about conflict [9] and minimizing community solidarity. According to the aforementioned reasons, the researcher therefore is of interest to explore how the community-based promotion policy affects the community solidarity and what are the factors having both direct and indirect effects towards the community solidarity in order that the findings gained from this research can be further proposed as a guideline for driving the community-based tourism promoting policy to

further strengthen community solidarity. The community solidarity is essential and one of the indicators enhancing sustainable community-based tourism and also one of the components to empower moving-forward of community development in all aspects since it creates cooperation and assistance in order to achieve the community target and also empowers community's moving-forward in required direction that shall sustainably result in an arising of community development [23, 32, 34, 35].

For this research, a study was conducted on the sustainable community-based tourism management [18, 32, 33] : a case study of the community-based tourism enterprises [16, 27] in Patthalung Province. As Patthalung Province is the small province in which there are significant historical sites having cultural and traditional values, natural tourist attractions for relaxation and learning as well as attractive traditions and cultures particularly a shadow play [36]. The Office of National Culture Committee has promoted to conserve and inherit the arts of shadow play to sustain this cultural inheritance for next generations [37]. Further to an interview with tourism operators in Patthalung Province, it was found that Patthalung was one of unpopular provinces among tourists and the image of its tourist attractions has also not yet been remarkably unique. As per the tourist statistical data, there were 1,326,468 tourists in 2016, 1,472,162 in 2017 and 1,554,455 in 2018, respectively showing an increase of number on yearly basis. However, the main income of the province gained from tourism industry sector remained ranked in the 3rd order, thirdly from agricultural sector [37] and industrial sector in spite of having diversified and various tourist attractions . According to the province summary report, the tourism image remains lack of proper management, no community-based tourism network linkage between local people and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, community-based tourism personnel still lack of understanding in quality tourism management [16, 17] and international tourism skills causing tourists unacknowledged the province tourism information and no

information gained by the target group whereas lodging and tourism services have not been diversified, low standardized and inadequate for tourist demand.

Having tourist visit in conjunction with the economic development can certainly result in physical change and community's way of life that deteriorate and invade many historical sites. Only government sector cannot protect all community areas but local people themselves need to act as a host for environmental conservation and maintaining tourist attractions with the least impact from area development. Additionally, the concerned authorities should avail an opportunity for participatory development of local people to maintain standard as well as sustainable conservation. Should the environment be deteriorated, the tourists used to visit Phatthalung will not revisit and this will cause effects of a decrease of local people's income and disappearance of a sense of loving homeland, no recognition of participatory value within such a community until having no personnel to inherit community resource conservation. These shall finally lead to the difficulty of recovering deterioration of tourism of the community-based tourism enterprises in service competency of Phatthalung Province. As per the afore mentioned problems, it is definitely necessary to conduct the research on community participation in conservative tourism development of the community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province. If without participation, there will be no cooperative preservation of local communities. The significance of this research will enable concerned authorities to acknowledge the potential of community-based tourism and crucial issues regarding community participation in conservative tourism that shall lead to policy analysis for promoting people participation in tourism development and the process of public hearing on tourism development.

Consequently, the research was conducted and it is expected that this study shall enable concerned authorities to explore how to additionally develop occupational standards for community-based tourism

enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province. All concerned authorities need to be reunited and create good relationship within their organizations for positive working environment that shall contribute to an organization in term of enhancing an organizational commitment. This research analyzes a causal relationship analysis of factors affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency and examine the hypothesis of causal relationship of factors affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand.

Research Hypothesis

1. Hypothesis 1: It is a hypothesis testing to examine whether the theoretical path model fits in with the empirical data.

2. Hypothesis 2: The casual variables of factors affecting the occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. are attitude and behavior of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. that were divided into 3 variables as follows:

1) The behavior of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards marketing factors consists of the following factors; product, price, distribution channel, marketing promotion, personnel, physical characteristics and process that affect the occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency.

2) The attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the external factor consists of the following factors; government policy, TAT marketing promotion, political situation, security, traditional and cultural process, economy, and environment that affect the occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency.

3) The attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards tourism factor

consists of the following factors; destination attractiveness, access to tourist attractions, pleasure tourism and service components that affect the occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency.

Research Methodology

Population and Sampling Group

The population of this research is 1,554,455 tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2019).

The sampling group applied for this research is community-based tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. The factor analysis technique was applied under the criteria that the number of data should be 10-time over than the number of variables [38, 39]. The measurement equation model [39-41] of 22 endogenous variables and exogenous variables are the variables of attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the external factor (X1), government policy factor (X11), TAT marketing promotion factor (X12), political situation factor (X13), security factor (X14), traditional and cultural process factor (X15), economy factor (X16), environment factor (X17), attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards tourism factor (X2), destination attractiveness factor (X21), access to tourist attractions factor (X22), pleasure tourism factor (X23), service component factor (X24), behavior of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. (X3), product factor (X31), price factor (X32), distribution channel factor (X33), marketing promotion factor (X34), personnel factor (X35), physical characteristics factor (X36), process factor (X37) and the occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency (Y), respectively that are in line with the criteria condition. The sampling group size is 220 respondents applied with the proportional stratified random sampling – SRS considering of the appropriate number of sampling group

gained from the population by determining companies as the sampling units.

Research Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument for data collection is a questionnaire containing 5 parts of questions as follows:

Part 1 – general information of respondents in a check-list form consisting of gender, age, marital status and educational level, totally 4 items.

Part 2 – questionnaire on behavior of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. in a form of opinion survey using the ordinal 5-rating scale measurement, totally 35 items.

Part 3 – questionnaire on attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the external factor in a form of opinion survey using the ordinal 5-rating scale measurement, totally 25 items.

Part 4 - questionnaire on attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the tourism factor in a form of opinion survey using the ordinal 5-rating scale measurement, totally 8 items.

Part 5 – questionnaire on the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency in a form of opinion survey using the ordinal 5-rating scale measurement, totally 10 items.

The content validity was conducted by reviewing language expression used in a questionnaire with the result of IOC = 0.96 over than .50 (IOC > .50) passing the criteria. Subsequently, a questionnaire was analyzed for validity with the try-out group of 30 community-based tourists visiting Samut Songkhram Province and the result showed the value of 0.945 alpha coefficient according to Cronbach' s alpha coefficient method that was .70 over than the criteria representing very high validity. It is therefore concluded that the content validity was assured and validity analysis concurred with the criteria [42].

Data Analysis

For the analysis of casual relationships of factors affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. the researcher used the statistics by synchronizing the study on aspect basis with the content analysis technique and statistical data used for analysis consisted of percentage, mean, standard deviation and Structural Equation Modelling : SEM whereas the path analysis was conducted by the Maximum Likelihood : ML for evaluation of path coefficient to explore how direct effect and indirect effect of variables affected dependent variables by using Amos Version 21 Program.

Results

The research findings revealed that for the analysis of casual relationships of factors affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. and consistency inspection between hypothesis model and empirical data by analyzing direct effect, indirect effect and total effect of variables affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. with the Maximum Likelihood Estimates = ML for data analysis as follows:

- (1) The over identified model or model specification
- (2) The measures of the model fit
- (3) The parameter estimation of the model or result of coefficient estimation

(4) The result of calculation on direct effect, indirect effect and total effect as per details below:

The over identified model was applied with the 22 endogenous and exogenous variables consisting of the following variables; attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the external factor (X1), government policy factor (X11), TAT marketing promotion factor (X12), political situation factor (X13), security factor (X14), traditional and cultural process factor (X15), economy factor (X16), environment factor (X17), attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the tourism factor (X2), destination attractiveness factor (X21), access to tourist attractions factor (X22), pleasure tourism factor (X23), service component factor (X24), behavior of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. (X3), product factor (X31), price factor (X32), distribution channel factor (X33), marketing promotion factor (X34), personnel factor (X35), physical characteristics factor (X36), process factor (X37) and development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency (Y)

Model Adjustment

Considering the analysis on coefficient value of the over identified model, it was found that the relationships between variables used have not yet been fit and the path coefficient value showed no statistical significance of 7 paths , the adjustment to the model was required so as to obtain the best relationship model by removing statistical insignificance path as represented in Table 1

Table 1 *Estimation Result on Standardized Regression Weights after Model Adjustment*

Correlation Coefficient	Estimate	S.E.	C.R. (t-Value)	P-Value
X ₁ <---	X ₁₆ .186	.063	2.963	.003**
X ₁ <---	X ₁₇ .142	.069	2.062	.039*
X ₂ <---	X ₂₁ .221	.083	2.680	.007**
X ₂ <---	X ₂₂ .319	.090	3.538	***

X ₃	<---	X ₃₄	.161	.074	2.171	.030*
X ₃	<---	X ₃₇	.267	.074	3.616	***
Y	<---	X1	.329	.205	1.604	.009**
Y	<---	X2	-.325	.183	-1.781	.005**
Y	<---	X3	.037	.167	1.220	.026*

Remark: Significance Value of * p < .05, ** p < .01, ***

According to Table 1, the path coefficient value of each structural equation can be subsequently developed into the parsimonious model of casual relationship so as to obtain the best one as appeared the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises and attitude of tourists towards the external factor ((Y <--- X1).

The Measures of the Model Fit

The Hypothesis 1 is to test whether the theoretical path model fits in with the empirical data.

H0: Theoretical Path Model = Empirical Model

H1: Theoretical Path Model ≠ Empirical Model

The measures of the model fit between the theoretical model and empirical model was conducted through AMOS program whereas actual data of all variables were collected. The findings revealed that the theoretical model fit in with the empirical one since CMIN/df = 17.405, p-value = .596, GFI = 0.914, RMSEA = 0.002 based on the evaluation criteria of the

data-model fit and using of ρ-Value for the measures of the model fit with statistical significance : Sig. that is over than p > .05. It is therefore concluded that the model fits in with the empirical data since should p > .05., the result will be not Sig. representing that there is no difference or fit-in. The findings value resulted from this research is p > .836

Further to the measures of the model fit conducted through AMOS program and actual data of all variables were collected, it is found that the theoretical model fits in with the empirical data [1, 13, 43-48] as Chi-square = 436.373 Chi-square/ df = 2.039 df = 214 p-value = .000 GFI = .539 RMSEA = .163 based on the evaluation criteria of the data-model fit and using of ρ-Value for the measures of the model fit with statistical significance : Sig. that is over than p > .05. It is therefore concluded that the model fits in with the empirical data since should p > .05., the result will be not Sig. representing that there is no difference or fit-in. The findings value resulted from this research is p > 2.039 as represented. and Table 2.

Table 2 The Measures of the Model Fit between the Casual Model and Empirical Data

Symbol	Statistical Value	Criteria	Unadjusted Model	Adjusted Model
CMIN-p	Chi-square Probability Level	ρ>.05	.000	.569
CMIN/df	Relative Chi-square	< 3	2.039	.725
GFI	Goodness of Fit index	> .90	.539	.914
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	< .08	.163	.002

Parameter estimation of the model or coefficient estimation

Hypothesis 1 : The casual variables affecting the occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency are the attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the

external factor (X1), market orientation (X2) and behavior of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. (X3) that can be divided into 3 items as follows:

Hypothesis 1.1 – the attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the external factor (X1) consisting of 7 variables of

the following factors; government policy (X11), TAT marketing promotion (X12), political situation (X13), security (X14), traditional and cultural process (X15), economy (X16) and environment (X17) that affect the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency.

Hypothesis 1.2 – the attitude of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. towards the tourism factor (X2) consisting of 4 variables of the following factors; attractiveness (X21), access to tourist attractions (X22), pleasure tourism (X23) and service component (X24)

that affect the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency.

Hypothesis 1.3 – the behavior of tourists visiting Phatthalung Province, Thailand. (X3) consisting of 7 variables of the following factors; product (X31), price (X32), distribution channel (X33), marketing promotion (X34), personnel (X35), physical characteristics (X36) and process (X37) that affect the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency.

Table 3 *Direct, Indirect and Total Effect Analysis between Dependent Variables and Predictor Variables*

Dependent Variables	Effect	Predictor Variables								
		X37	X34	X16	X17	X22	X21	X3	X1	X2
X1	DE.	.000	.000	.186	.142	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	IE.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	TE.	.000	.000	.186	.142	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
X2	DE.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.319	.221	.000	.000	.000
	IE.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	TE.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.319	.221	.000	.000	.000
X3	DE.	.267	.161	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	IE.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	TE.	.267	.161	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Y	DE.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.037	.329	-.325
	IE.	.010	.006	.061	.047	-.104	-.072	.000	.000	.000
	TE.	.010	.006	.061	.047	-.104	-.072	.037	.329	-.325

As per Table 3 above, considering the total effect, it is found that there is only one independent variable affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand.; the attitude of tourists towards the external factor (X1) having the total effect = .329 (direct effect + indirect effect). The variable having a direct effect is the attitude of tourists towards the external factor (X1) = .329 with no indirect effect. Thus, the findings reflect that in development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency of

Phatthalung Province, Thailand. the variables that have most effect is the attitude of tourists towards the external factor and those are the different economy factor and environment factor affecting the different attitude of tourists towards the external factor.

Discussion

The tourist behavior consists of the following factors; marketing promotion and process having the casual relationships affecting the development of occupational standards for

community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. and determining the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. This arises due to cooperation in marketing planning since there are engagement and coordination among concerned parties in long-stay tourism marketing structure. Consequently, such a planning helps drive big picture working and avoid redundancy. In view of product and service development, tourism entrepreneurs have proposed to mainly study the tourist behavior in order to meet service users' requirement. However, there remains a concern that any proceeding should not discredit Phatthalung Province, Thailand's identity. Marketing relying on long-stay tourism networking is in line with the study [49]. which the findings revealed that service users required diversified service styles in beauty popular for health care. Also [50-52] which the findings revealed that the product was the most crucial factor for determining product and service meeting customers' requirement that began from building a well-known organizational image and focusing on new and qualified service orientation for all groups of service users.

The analysis of attitude of tourists towards the external factor consists of the factors of economy and environment showing the same direction of casual relationships affecting the development [53] of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises [16, 27] in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. due to cultural conflict between tourists and local people, change in social values and pattern of local cultures, debasement of culture and art objects, , distortion of local art objects, transformation of local culture to become tourism products, etc. Community way [7, 8] of life has created awareness of environmental values of local communities, maintained, developed and restored community environment as well as explored how to conserve community environment

The attitude of tourists towards tourism factor consists of the factors of destination

attractiveness and access to tourist attractions showing the same direction of casual relationships affecting the development of occupational standards for community-based tourism enterprises in service competency, Phatthalung Province, Thailand. The 3 motivations for health tourism are leisure and stress relaxation, travelling to emerging tourist [16, 54] attractions, newly experiencing that match with the study of proposing facilities, attractiveness of tourism resources, policy and planning for tourist attraction development, and tourist attraction management for sustainable health tourism. Further to preliminary studies, it was found that most of research studies were survey and qualitative ones and there have been only some of them were conducted through SWOT analysis [55, 56]

Recommendations

- 1) The explicit policy at provincial and local community level should be determined particularly within the province and local communities having outstanding community-based tourism in terms of development of community-based tourism plan appropriate for each local community context, policy on personnel development based on competency standard, and policy on development of tourist attractions standard, etc.
- 2) In this study, it was also found that the trend of community-based tourism on meditation was very popular with high attention of tourists. Therefore, it is recommended to develop the tourism routes and activity patterns especially on "mental health" to be comprehensive and applicable as information or main routes for practical tourism operation.

Recommendations for future research

For future research, it is recommended to conduct the survey one by comparing Thai tourists in terms of satisfaction and behavior in community-based tourism, impact arising from community-based tourists' attitude towards the external factor especially Thailand political situation factor and domestic and international natural disasters affecting satisfaction on health

tourism such as impact from global economic change or entering into Asian Economic Community. Moreover, a comparison of other tourism styles between Thai and foreign tourists can be undertaken as well.

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