

Determining the attitudes of the local communities towards conservation through ecotourism in Thailand

Author 1, Author 2, Author 3

Abstract

Aim: The current study investigated the perceived influence of local populations' attitudes and behaviours toward environmental conservation by implementing CBET methods

Method: Research is conducted by the application of quantitative method of research since data was gathered through survey questionnaires from 100 residents of local communities from Southern Thailand. The study found a high association between all ecotourism factors, such as planning, transportation, cultural preservation, and ecological knowledge and attitude of residents, using correlation analysis.

Findings: Even though the Thai government has declared a decentralisation policy to support ecotourism since 1998, there are still some areas where tourism activities are being managed in a way that empowers local people, preserves local natural resources and raises environmental awareness among local communities. Local towns in Southern Thailand, like Satun and Plunkett, have made attempts to highlight both the natural beauty and group of islands in natural 'ecotourism' settings. The values of culture protection and ecological awareness, on the other hand, were calculated as -0.366 and -0.136, respectively, indicating that these two factors had an inverse but substantial influence on local community attitudes.

Future Implications: Taking into account the study's findings in the form of figures and tables, additional research might be conducted utilising qualitative research methodologies such as interviews to offer in-depth findings and diverse viewpoints on CBET in Thailand. Furthermore, in the future, a stakeholder approach may be used to evaluate the achievement and collaboration of various stakeholders for CBET to achieve sustainable tourism.

Keywords: *Attitudes, Local Communities, Ecotourism, Thailand, Conservation*

Introduction

Technological development and globalisation have fuelled major changes throughout the world since these are one of the most powerful factors in the continuing rapid growth of the tourism sector and facilitating the ability of people to travel (Unhasuta, Sasaki & Kim, 2021). Therefore, considering the numerous unfavourable aspects of rapid developments in tourism, a significant impact has been observed on natural environments and societies due to tourism (Pornprasit & Rurkkhum, 2019). The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) officially resulted in an international agreement named *Agenda 21* which has led the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to establish guidelines for local communities for sustainable tourism aimed at conservation of the environment under the community-based ecotourism (CBET) approach (Pookhao Sonjai et al., 2021). Consequently, organisations including the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Earth Council have collaborated to introduce *Agenda 21's* principles to the tourism sector. It is noteworthy that the importance of activities of tourism is a major source of national income in developing economies such as Thailand (Pookhao Sonjai et al., 2021). As reported in the World Travel and Tourism Council, 2345.1 billion Baht were generated by Thailand in 2014 through activities of tourism which constitutes 19.3% of GDP. However, the impact of such activities was also severely negative towards the environment for

the natural areas. Thereby, sustainable tourism is the key to preserving the environment, culture and community which is also known as ecotourism (Pornprasit & Rurkkhum, 2019).

As acknowledged by Pornprasit and Rurkkhum, (2019), although the Thai government has declared the decentralisation policy since 1998 to support ecotourism, still there are some areas facing problems in managing tourism activities concerning the empowerment of local people, preservation of local natural resources and enhancement of environmental awareness among local communities. However, still, in Southern Thailand such as Satun and Plunkett, efforts have been made by the local communities to feature both the natural beauty and group of islands in the natural 'ecotourism' settings (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2014). A gap has been observed in the existing literature like Pornprasit and Rurkkhum, (2019) and Pookhao Sonjai et al. (2021) concerning the analysis of attitudes of local communities towards ecotourism. Therefore, to address the identified problem, the current study has explored the perceptual impact of local communities' attitudes and behaviours towards the conservation of environment by adopting the practices of CBET. Although, there is a struggle among Southern Thailand related to survival of ecotourism in the existing mass tourism industry still there is a scope to enhance natural ecotourism settings in tourist areas. Thus, this study has also addressed the challenges faced by local communities in assuring sustainable tourism for preservation of environment. For this purpose, quantitative analysis has been conducted to measure the association between CBET and attitudes of local communities by using Stata.

The current research was aimed at exploring the attitudes of local communities towards ecotourism by conservation of environment through sustainable practices in Thailand. For the mentioned aim, the following objectives were catered in this research:

- To study the concept of CBET (Community-based ecotourism) for empowering local communities.
- To identify challenges pertinent to attitudes of local communities towards conservation through ecotourism in Thailand.
- To determine the attitudes of the local communities towards conservation through impact of ecotourism in Thailand.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Ecotourism has been defined as leisure activities in environmental regions where individuals may fulfil their need to be near to wildlife and benefit from it (Pornprasit & Rurkkhum, 2019). Ecotourism has expanded to incorporate natural preservation, sustainable growth, social integration, cultural preservation, civil values, and moral challenges in the twenty-first century (Youdelis, 2013). Touring to largely unaffected or unpolluted environmental places with the particular goals of researching, observing, and experiencing the landscape, as well as any surviving cultural representations (both ancient and modern) discovered in these locations, has been characterised in ecotourism (Tseng et al., 2019). Ecotourism has also been attributed to poverty alleviation and community revitalisation. As a result, improving modern knowledge of ecotourism is critical, as it may aid in achieving an equilibrium between nature conservation and socioeconomic growth by promoting interactions between ecological regions, local inhabitants, and tourists (Bunruamkaew & Murayam, 2011). In essence, ecotourism incorporates various crucial concepts, including reducing the impact of tourism on natural preservation, offering tourists' informative and intercultural encounters, and producing economic advantages for the area (Jitpakdee & Thapa, 2012).

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) is a type of ecotourism that aims to include regional communities and inhabitants in the conservation of their ecological reserves to preserve ethnic, historical, and physiological biodiversity, and it is a growing movement (Treephan, Visuthismajarn & Isaramalai, 2019). CBET is a widely used strategy for promoting biodiversity protection, particularly in poor nations. It entails integrating ecosystem conservation into the lives of local communities, maintaining biodiversity, decreasing rural deprivation, and accomplishing long-term goals (Walter & Reimer, 2012). Furthermore, stringent protection, ecological consciousness, comprehensive involvement, effective teamwork, and independence are all vital elements of efficient CBET initiatives. The World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) also revealed that the major components of CBET are regions with distinct places of attraction to particular tourists, strategic planning without causing environmental destruction, a consciousness of local community support, public engagement in decision-making, sustainability of native history and cultural identity, and evaluation of neighbourhood potential and contemporary marketing (Auesriwong, Nilnoppakun & Parawech, 2015). Ultimately, ecotourism involves local citizens and groups in the creation and administration of their tourist sites. CBET strives to encourage environmental conservation in specific locations, produce economic advantages for locals, and give tourists enjoyable and informative adventures (Pornprasit & Rurkkhum, 2019).

Being an eco-tourist necessitates understanding and individual commitment to a location's sustainability. Ecotourism starts with planning and preparedness at residence and it is critical to select holiday destinations that promote cultural and environmental preservation, as well as a tour package that is devoted to ecotourism (Youdelis, 2013). Learning about the historical background and traditions of each location and practising a few phrases in the native dialect to immerse in the culture to promote conservation of environment is a crucial component of ecotourism (Tseng et al., 2019). Given the above overview, first hypothesis of this article is:

Hypothesis 1: *Planning has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand*

To have environmentally sustainable travel, greener transportation is essential. Considering the alternatives for transportation to reduce the carbon impact has been regarded as one of the crucial steps for promoting ecotourism (Bunruamkaew & Murayam, 2011). Using air travel only when essential determines the degree of ecotourism within the inhabitants of a particular nation. Making use of public transit, such as trains and busses while exploring the location on foot or by bike also contributes to promoting ecotourism within a specific region (Jitpakdee & Thapa, 2012). It is beneficial for health and environmental conservation, especially in those areas, where carbon footprint is substantial (Treephan, Visuthismajarn & Isaramalai, 2019). Given the above discussion, another hypothesis of this article is proposed below:

Hypothesis 2: *Transportation has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand*

Eco-tourists help local businesses by assuring that their purchases improve the governmental, ecological, and societal structure. Selecting green accommodation that has been verified by a reliable institution and promoting businesses that pay employees an equitable wage can help individuals achieve key goals for promoting ecotourism within any region (Walter & Reimer, 2012). Travellers contribute to a state's stability through appreciating native culture and practices and purchasing traditional commodities, cuisine, and activities. As a result, interacting with regional products and residents delivers a unique and unusual adventure to

visitors (Auesriwong, Nilnoppakun & Paraweck, 2015). Considering the above arguments, another hypothesis of this review is shared below:

Hypothesis 3: *Culture Protection has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand*

Ecotourism is predicated on minimising environmental harm, and to avoid ecological harm, eco-travellers stay on authorised routes or within defined tourist zones when exploring natural sites. Ecotourists do not remove anything from native environments and leave everything intact (Pornprasit & Rurkkhum, 2019). Environmental resources preservation is supported by conserving domestic wildlife and plants and refraining to make purchases derived from threatened animals, such as turtle shells or elephant tusks (Youdelis, 2013). In light of above discussion, another hypothesis of this review is formulated below:

Hypothesis 4: *Nature Preservation has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand*

When ecotourism awareness is raised properly, it merges ecological and wildlife consciousness and resilience with regional economic advantage, making it a major priority for environmental preservation (Tseng et al., 2019). When using possible tropical forests to enhance economic growth, support community living standards, produce wood as well as non-wood commodities, and vegetation environment facilities to conserve biodiversity, it is critical to maintaining ecological stability (Bunruamkaew & Murayam, 2011). Biodiversity promotes the establishment of woodland resources as the living assistance mechanism for progression. When establishing sustainable growth frameworks, a combination of social, environmental, and financial issues must be addressed to satisfy the requirements of subsequent populations (Jitpakdee & Thapa, 2012). Collaborative initiatives, as well as low-carbon and ecological growth, must be emphasised to establish these systems. Ecotourism may fall into these dimensions and might be a useful strategy for achieving long-term environmental conservation (Treephan, Visuthismajarn & Isaramalai, 2019). In light of above discussion, another hypothesis of this review is demonstrated below:

Hypothesis 5: *Ecological Awareness has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand*

Theoretical Framework

The theory of sustainable development states that modern cultures must survive and satisfy their demands without jeopardising subsequent descendants' capacity to fulfil their respective wants. The Brundtland Report, published in 1987, was the first to define an explicit understanding of sustainable development (Walter & Reimer, 2012). In the domain of tourism, sustainable development entails two major concerns: the preservation of the physical ecosystem, materials, and wildlife, as well as the preservation of existing historic artefacts and customs (Auesriwong, Nilnoppakun & Paraweck, 2015). The government, companies, and indigenous communities should work together to establish sustainable tourist development initiatives. The tactics must be centred on maximising possible good outcomes while avoiding or reducing future adverse consequences (Pornprasit & Rurkkhum, 2019). Since the current review is concentrated on determining the attitudes of the local communities towards conservation through ecotourism in Thailand, the above theory of sustainable development relates to the notion of enhancing the sustainability of ecosystem by incorporating conservation initiatives within the ecotourism framework of a particular nation.

Conceptual Framework

The below research framework has been developed to test the hypotheses proposed earlier:

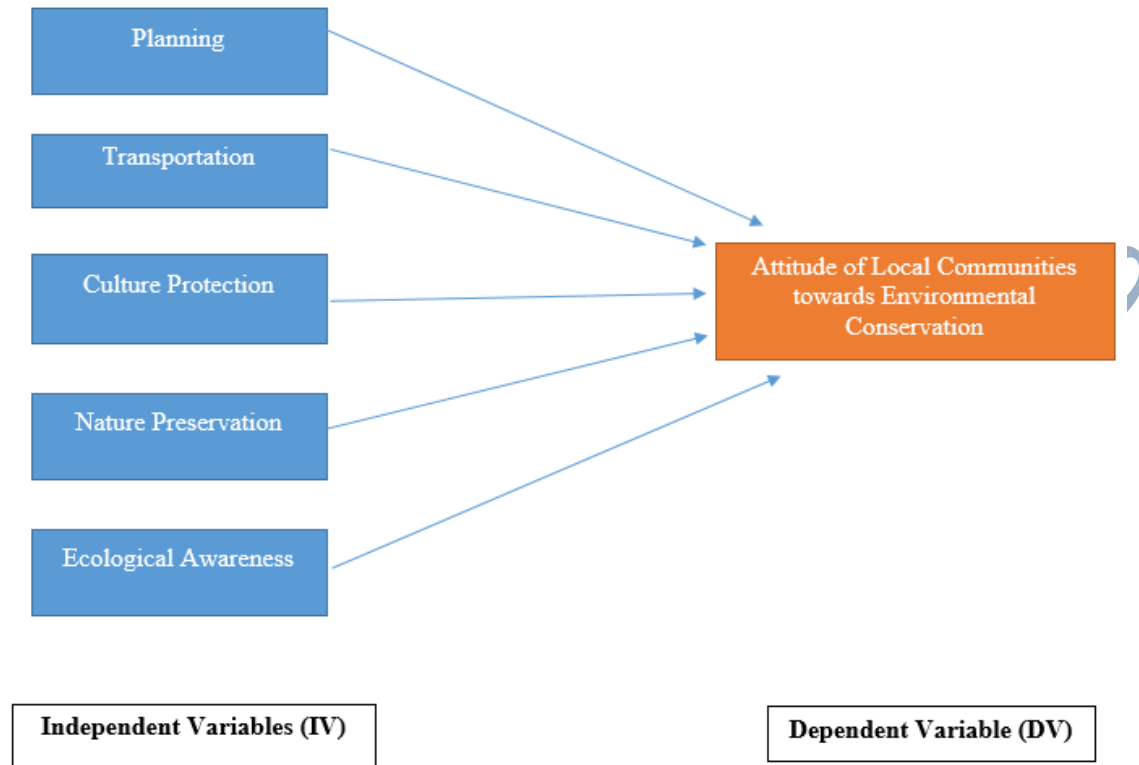


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2021)

It can be observed from the above figure 1 that planning, transportation, culture protection, nature preservation, and ecological awareness are independent variables whose impact is measured on an attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation, which is one dependant variable in this review.

Methodology

In the recent research, the philosophical paradigm of positivism was adopted for data interpretation and analysis. As mentioned by Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), the observation of logical facts and figures is carried out by the use of positivist philosophy. Therefore, positivism was used to determine the association between dependent and independent variables of the study for the collection of data and examine results via an approach of exploratory research design. It was an effective approach for examining the impact of CBET on attitudes of local communities in Thailand since it allows rigour and quantitative assessment of the research objectives.

Moreover, deductive approach of reasoning was adopted as the research approach in the recent study to generate results based on causal relationships from general assumptions to the formulation of specific conclusions. As explained by Cramer-Petersen, Christensen and Ahmed-Kristensen (2019), deductive reasoning is a top-down approach that allows testing of hypothesis of the research to either reject the general theories or present results with logical reasoning. Thereby, to reveal the credible findings by testing the hypothesis with logical facts and figures in the recent study regarding the impact of CBET on local community for conservation of local environment, a deductive approach of reasoning was utilised.

The research was performed by using the quantitative method since the purpose of the study was to examine associations between multiple variables in the research by using adequate techniques of inferential analysis. Quantitative research provided factual based analysis by collecting data from a colossal sample size (Apuke, 2017). Therefore to yield results in a reliable manner reducing the chance of any bias in human attitudes pertinent to CBET, the current study was conducted by applying quantitative techniques. The collection of data for quantitative analysis was performed through primary sources i.e. surveys were conducted from the local communities of Southern Thailand to identify how CBET is creating an impact on their attitudes.

Since data collection was made by distribution of surveys, convenience sampling which is a category of non-probability sampling was used in the recent research. In the convenience sampling technique, samples are drawn easily from the population close in hand which is a convenient way to reach a wide range of participants for the research (Speak et al., 2018). Thus, it was used in the current research to select 100 residents of local communities from Southern Thailand to identify how the CBET approach is modifying attitudes of local communities for sustaining environments. A large sample was selected to determine results with better generalizability and present them from a broader perspective mitigating bias in findings.

The analysis of data collected through surveys was carried out by applying various statistical tests using Stata. These statistical tests include demographics, descriptive, correlation and regression analysis to test the association between CBET and local communities' attitudes towards ecotourism.

The ethical norms were also considered significant while data collection and analysis. The confidentiality of the respondents was ensured by asking them for informed consent via email before the distribution of survey questionnaires. The researcher also made certain that any secondary source data utilised for carrying our critical literature review was properly referenced to give credit for its usage in the current study with the author's name.

Analysis

Demographics

A demographic examination is a frequent form of inference assessment that aids investigators in assessing a group's behaviours and attributes. Demographic profiling is a strategy for assessing a sample's age, gender, and culture and identity, as well as how it has evolved as a consequence of the intrinsic demographic cycles of birth, mortality, and relocation (Conner, & Johnson, 2017). The following tables show the demographics of the respondents. Each table represents a particular region in which it is clear which element has the most impact on the current situation.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics

			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Valid	Male	44	44.0	44.0	44.0
		Female	56	56.0	56.0	100.0
		Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Age	Valid	20-25 years	29	29.0	29.0	29.0
		26-35 years	38	38.0	38.0	67.0
		36 years and above	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
		Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Years of being inhabitant at southern region of Thailand	Valid	1-2 years	19	19.0	19.0	19.0
		3-7 years	44	44.0	44.0	63.0
		7 years and above	37	37.0	37.0	100.0
		Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above table 1, it can be observed that three demographic aspects are measured such as gender, age and years of living in southern region of Thailand. Based on gender demographics, it can be observed from the above table that there is 44 percent male, and 56 percent female participants. In terms of age, the above demographics revealed that 29 percent were aged between 20 to 25 years; 38 percent were aged 26 to 36; while 33 percent were aged 36 years and above. Lastly, in terms of years of living in southern region of Thailand, the above statistics highlighted that 19 percent of people have been living for 1 to 2 years, 44 percent have been living from 3 to 7 years; while 37 percent have spent 7 and above years living within the southern region of Thailand.

Descriptive

Descriptive statistics are short descriptive parameters that highlight a data collection, which might be a depiction of the complete demographic or a subset of the sample (Conner, & Johnson, 2017). The preceding source reflected that descriptive metrics are divided into measurements of central tendency and measurements of variability. Mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, minimum, and maximum variables are all included in descriptive statistics. Following table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics of this paper:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive						
Variable	Planning	Transportation	Culture Protection	Nature Preservation	Ecological Awareness	Attitude Of Local Communities

Mean	1.680	1.764	1.572	1.510	1.13631	1.611626
Standard Deviation	0.223	0.271	0.277	0.272	0.184	0.2487913
Min	0	0	0	0	0	0
Max	2.027	2.111	1.950	1.882	1.38889	1.970588
Observation	100	100	100	100	100	100

The mean value of independent factors is shown in Table 1. Planning has a mean value of 1.68, transportation has a mean value of 1.764, cultural protection has a mean value of 1.572, natural preservation has a mean value of 1.51, and ecological awareness has a mean value of 1.13. This indicates that the majority of respondents are likely to agree. The standard deviation provides the variability metrics. Table 1 shows that standard deviation of planning is 0.223, a standard deviation of transportation is 0.271, a standard deviation of culture protection is 0.277, a standard deviation of nature preservation is 0.272, a standard deviation of ecological awareness is 0.184, and standard deviation of conservation attitude is 1.611. The mean value of standard deviation is found to be skewed towards agreement.

Correlation Analysis

A simple association observed between variables of the study is known as correlation analysis. It is essential for determining the relationship between the two or more variables which can be either positive or negative. The values of correlation analysis are observed within a range from 0 to 1. The values ranging from 0 to 0.3 depicts that the association between the two variables is weak. However, the range of values from 0.3 to 0.7 highlights a moderate relationship between the two variables. In contrast, the values ranging between 0.7 to 1 shows that the two variables are strongly related having a high correlation. Furthermore, the negative or positive sign depicts whether the association between two variables is direct or indirect.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Correlation	Planning	Transportation	Culture Protection	Nature Preservation	Ecological Awareness	Attitude Of Local Communities
Probability	1					
Planning	1					
Transportation	0.958	1				
Culture Protection	0.929	0.992	1			
Nature Preservation	0.924	0.989	0.998	1		

Ecological Awareness	0.951	0.988	0.978	0.978	1	
Attitude Of Local Communities	0.974	0.992	0.984	0.984	0.981	1

The table above depicts the correlation of the different variables of the research. It can be noted that there were five independent variables in this research there the association of planning, transportation, culture protection, nature preservation and ecological awareness has been determined with dependent variable of the research i.e. attitude of local communities. As shown in the table above, concerning attitude of local communities, the correlation value of planning is 0.974, transportation is 0.992, culture protection is 0.984, nature preservation is 0.981 and ecological awareness is 0.981. Noting values of all five variables, it can be analysed that there is a high correlation among all variables of ecotourism and attitude of local communities.

Regression Analysis

A set of statistical processes which determines the impact of independent variables on dependent variables is known as regression analysis. It is significant for examining the effect of one variable over other therefore some analysts offer to refer to it is as a way that offers cause and effect aspects. This is determined by identifying the p-value or sig value having a threshold value of 0.5 such that values below 0.5 suggest that impact of the independent variable is significant on a dependent variable.

Table 4: Interactive Regression Model

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Planning	***0.481	0.020	23.83	0.000
Transportation	***0.182	0.051	3.53	0.001
Culture Protection	-0.366	0.082	-4.44	0.000
Nature Preservation	***0.817	0.064	12.66	0.000
Ecological Awareness	-0.136	0.035	-3.82	0.000

R-squared = 0.97 R-squared = 0.97

***Significant at 10%; **Significant at 5%; ***Significant at 1%**

From the table above, it can be observed that there are two values essential for determining whether the developed regression model is fit and adequate for analysis or not. These two values include R-square and adjusted R-square, the R-square values suggested that the model developed for regression analysis can be adequately explained by the independent variables. Therefore, as noticed in the table above, value of R-square has been computed as 0.99 which suggests that 99% of the development is explained by independent variables of the study in light of planning, transportation, culture protection, nature preservation and ecological awareness.

Furthermore, the table above also reveals that five variables are having a significant impact on attitude of local communities. However, it should be noted here that whether the impact is positive or negative is different for each variable. The value of the independent variable i.e. training is 0.481, transportation value is 0.182, and nature preservation value is 0.817 which depicts that the effects of these three variables are direct and significant on the attitude of local communities. However, the values of culture protection and ecological awareness have been computed as -0.366 and -0.136 which represents that these two variables have an inverse but significant impact on attitude of local communities.

Discussion and Hypothesis Assessment Summary

S.No.	Hypothesis	Status
1.	Planning has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand	Accepted
2.	Transportation has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand	Accepted
3.	Culture Protection has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand	Accepted
4.	Nature Preservation has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand	Accepted
5.	Ecological Awareness has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand	Accepted

Table 5: Hypotheses Summary

Above table 5 illustrates the hypothesis summary of this investigation. The first hypothesis of this review was planning has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand. The findings from the analysis disclosed that planning had a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards the environmental conservation of Thailand since the generated value of coefficient from regressions analysis was 0.00, which was lower than a threshold value of 0.005, indicating significant impact of an independent variable on dependant variable. The preceding result was supported in the literature, as it was uncovered that ecotourism begins with planning and preparation at home, and it is vital to choose vacation sites that support cultural and ecological conservation, as well as ecotourism travel packages (Pornprasit & Rurkkhum, 2019; Youdelis, 2013).

The second hypothesis of this article was transportation has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand. The results uncovered that transportation had a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand since the generated value of coefficient from regressions analysis was 0.00, which was lower than a threshold value of 0.005, indicating significant impact of an independent variable on dependant variable. Similarly, the above results were supported in literature, which highlighted that the degree of ecotourism among the population of a country is determined by the use of air travel only when necessary. Taking public transportation, such as trains and buses, while exploring the area on foot or by bike helps to promote ecotourism in a certain region (Auesriwong, Nilnoppakun & Paraweck, 2015; Jitpakdee & Thapa, 2012).

The third hypothesis of this study was culture protection has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand. After generating the results, it was revealed that cultural preservation had a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand since the generated value of coefficient from regressions analysis was 0.00, which was lower than a threshold value of 0.005, indicating a significant impact of an independent variable on dependant variable. Likewise, the preceding results were supported in the literature, which specified that travellers help in bringing stability to a nation by enjoying and consuming traditional goods, food, and pastimes, which shows their acknowledgement of local culture. As a consequence, contact with local products and locals provide tourists with a distinct and interesting experience (Walter & Reimer, 2012; Bunruamkaew & Murayam, 2011)

The fourth hypothesis of this research was nature preservation has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand. The findings suggested that nature preservation had a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand, as the derived value of coefficient from regressions analysis was 0.00, which was lower than a threshold value of 0.005, indicating significant impact of an independent variable on dependant variable. In contrast to the above results, findings from the literature indicated that ecotourism is based on reducing environmental impact, and eco-travellers minimise ecological degradation by staying on designated tourist itineraries or inside designated tourist boundaries when visiting natural places (Youdelis, 2013; Auesriwong, Nilnoppakun & Parawech, 2015).

The fifth hypothesis of this investigation was ecological awareness has a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand. It was disclosed from the analysis ecological awareness had a significant impact on attitude of local communities towards environmental conservation of Thailand, since the generated value of coefficient from regressions analysis was 0.00, which was lower than a threshold value of 0.005, indicating a significant impact of an independent variable on dependant variable. Similar results were generated from literature, which highlighted that ecotourism awareness combines ecosystem, species knowledge and adaptability with local financial advantage, rendering it a priority for natural preservation efforts in a particular region (Tseng et al., 2019).

Conclusion

The study found a high association between all independent variables, such as planning, transportation, cultural preservation, and ecological knowledge and attitude of local people, using correlation analysis. The influence of cultural preservation and environmental awareness, on the other hand, has an inverse but considerable impact on local community attitudes. In conclusion, it can be stated that community leaders and government agencies in Thailand are hopeful that the approach of CBET will significantly bring benefits to the residents in Thailand by contributing towards conservation of the environment and ecotourism in the most attractive tourist places. However, the study noted that there remain some high-priority problems such as appropriate regulations, visitors' involvement in conservation projects and levels of local communities' knowledge towards ecotourism in Thailand. The local community leaders must make sure CBET principles are integrated into planning, managing destinations, culture and nature protection and decision making for dealing with issues pertinent to ecotourism and CBET.

Future Implications

The subject of this research was to shed light on the impact of CBET on changing attitudes of local communities within Thailand. The focus was placed on performing the analysis by adopting the quantitative methods of research and collection of primary data through survey questionnaires. Considering the aforementioned findings of the study in the form of figures and tables, future research can be carried out by using qualitative methods of research such as interviews to present in-depth findings and multiple perspectives regarding CBET in Thailand. Moreover, a stakeholder approach in the future can be integrated to analyse the effective achievement and collaboration of various stakeholders for CBET to achieve sustainable tourism. Besides, the analysis in the future can be incorporated by the socio-cultural aspects and ethnic-based attractions for planning and development of ecotourism. Lastly, future researchers can also take assistance from the current study aiming to determine the significance of varying attitudes pertinent to ecotourism and conservation of the environment.

References

- Alharahsheh, H. H., & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 39-43.
- Apuke, O. D. (2017). Quantitative research methods: A synopsis approach. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 33(5471), 1-8.
- Auesriwong, A., Nilnoppakun, A., & Paraweck, W. (2015). Integrative participatory community-based ecotourism at Sangkhom District, Nong Khai province, Thailand. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 23, 778-782.
- Bunruamkaew, K., & Murayam, Y. (2011). Site suitability evaluation for ecotourism using GIS & AHP: A case study of Surat Thani province, Thailand. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 21, 269-278.
- Conner, B., & Johnson, E. (2017). Descriptive statistics: Use these tools to analyze data vital to practice-improvement projects. *American Nurse Today*, 12(11), 52-56.
- Cramer-Petersen, C. L., Christensen, B. T., & Ahmed-Kristensen, S. (2019). Empirically analysing design reasoning patterns: Abductive-deductive reasoning patterns dominate design idea generation. *Design Studies*, 60, 39-70.
- Jitpakdee, R., & Thapa, G. B. (2012). Sustainability analysis of ecotourism on Yao Noi island, Thailand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 17(3), 301-325.
- Kontogeorgopoulos, N. (2014). Ecotourism and mass tourism in Southern Thailand: Spatial interdependence, structural connections, and staged authenticity. *GeoJournal*, 61(1), 1-11.
- Pookhao Sonjai, N., Bushell, R., Hawkins, M., & Staiff, R. (2018). Community-based ecotourism: beyond authenticity and the commodification of local people. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 17(3), 252-267.
- Pornprasit, P., & Rurkkhum, S. (2019). Performance evaluation of community-based ecotourism: a case study in Satun province, Thailand. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 18(1), 42-59.

- Speak, A., Escobedo, F. J., Russo, A., & Zerbe, S. (2018). Comparing convenience and probability sampling for urban ecology applications. *Journal of applied ecology*, 55(5), 2332-2342.
- Trephan, P., Visuthismajarn, P., & Isaramalai, S. A. (2019). A model of participatory community-based ecotourism and mangrove forest conservation in Ban Hua Thang, Thailand. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(5), 1-8.
- Tseng, M. L., Lin, C., Lin, C. W. R., Wu, K. J., & Sriphon, T. (2019). Ecotourism development in Thailand: Community participation leads to the value of attractions using linguistic preferences. *Journal of cleaner production*, 231, 1319-1329.
- Unhasuta, S., Sasaki, N., & Kim, S. M. (2021). Impacts of Tourism Development on Coastal Communities in Cha-am Beach, the Gulf of Thailand, through Analysis of Local Perceptions. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4423.
- Walter, P. G., & Reimer, J. K. (2012). The “ecotourism curriculum” and visitor learning in community-based ecotourism: Case studies from Thailand and Cambodia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 17(5), 551-561.
- Youdelis, M. (2013). The competitive (dis) advantages of ecotourism in Northern Thailand. *Geoforum*, 50, 161-171.