

## ABSTRACT

The globalization paradigm accelerates competition in all markets, especially in the tourism industry. Destinations must be able to compete in a sustainable fashion in their markets. Otherwise, they will suffer a decline in tourists. These destinations could be better prepared for market competition and sustainability if they became aware of the importance of tourism stakeholders' attitudes and support for sustainable tourism development. Not taking into account these factors could lead tourist destinations to become unsustainable and to a decline in visits.

Consequently, this study introduces a structural model that explores the key actors of tourism stakeholders' (tourism experts and residents) attitude towards sustainable tourism developments and to what extent tourism stakeholders interface with destination sustainability strategies. Findings from 432 residents and 416 tourism experts-respondents from Bangkok, Thailand were analyzed.

Utilizing LISREL (Linear Structural Equations), a confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling procedure were performed successively on the collected data. The results show that the community benefits of tourism perceived by both tourism experts and residents in an urban area have a direct and positive relationship to support for tourism development.

However, the perceived negative impact of tourism has a negative effect on resident support for tourism attraction development, but not on that of tourism experts. The results also show that tourism expert and resident support for tourism attraction development has a significant positive relation to their support for destination sustainability strategies.

Furthermore, two other hypotheses based on "sustainability attitudes", "perceived positive impact of tourism", and "support for tourism attraction development" show similar results when the two groups, tourism experts and residents, are compared. Concerning relationships, "sense of community" has a significant positive relationship to "perceived positive impact of tourism" in both tourism stakeholder groups. Additionally, "sense of community" has a significant negative relationship to "perceived negative impact of tourism" in residents, but not in the tourism experts group.

Moreover, one new relationship was added in the final model to better capture both tourism experts and residents' attitudes in urban tourist destinations. This additional relationship indicated that tourism stakeholders, who have attitudes toward sustainability, are likely to support enhancement strategies for destination sustainability.

From these findings, policy-makers need to recognize that sustainability attitudes (e.g. socio-environment, long term planning, and community participation) and sense of community will enhance the development of tourism attraction and destination sustainability strategies. Furthermore, they should give due consideration that destination sustainability strategies may be associated with good management of tourism destination organizations, upgrading of information technology, development of service facilities, expansion of creative marketing efforts and activities, and enhancing sustainable management and practices. To promote tourism attraction of Bangkok, tourism strategies should also include hosting seasonal cultural and folk events, sports and outdoor recreation facilities and activities, offering Meeting, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) programs, and supporting tourist services (e.g. hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, and souvenir shops).