

Sustainable Cultural Tourism and Community Development:

The Perspectives of Residents' and the Application of Social Exchange Theory

Chanin Yoopetch⁺ (Thailand)

Abstract

This study aims to examine the significant factors affecting residents' support for tourism during one of Thailand's most celebrated festivals - the candle festival, and develop practical guidelines to support its sustainability. Data was collected from residents of the local community where the candle festival is held. Guided by the Social Exchange Theory, the measurements used in this current study were adapted from the past literature concerning the theory. In this research, the dependent variable was residents' support for sustainable festival tourism, and the independent variables included community pride, sense of community, perceived cost, perceived benefit and attitudes towards tourism development. The findings showed that attitude towards tourism development, sense of community, community pride, and perceived benefits significantly affected the residents' support for sustainable festival tourism.

Keywords: *Festival Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Community Development, Social Exchange Theory, Community Pride, Perceived Benefits, Thailand*

⁺ Chanin Yoopetch, Associate Professor, College of Management, Mahidol University, Thailand.
email: chaninyoo@gmail.com.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the most critical drivers to support growth and development for many economies worldwide. Its impacts ranged from economic, social, environmental, and cultural and heritage dimensions (Asero and Tomaselli, 2021; Bimonte and Punzo, 2016). Cultural tourism is one of the fast-growing areas of the tourism environments around the world, especially in developing countries (Salazar, 2012; Li, 2004; Richards, 2021). Communities celebrated their festivals based on their socio-economic backgrounds and ways of life. Festivals allowed the local residents to celebrate their local identity and unique local characteristics to create a sense of ethnic identity. Several communities promote the festivals to raise their pride, recognition and profile to lure more investments and attract visitors and tourists (Murphy and Boyle, 2006). Furthermore, Cecil et al. (2008) noted that the investment and improvement of cultural tourism projects can lead to greater satisfaction of the residents.

Richards (2021) stated that the growing trend of cultural tourism had been increasingly investigated from the various fields of studies, ranging from anthropology, marketing, management, heritage, and cultural studies. Ramkissoon and Uysal (2010) noted that cultural resources and authenticity of the tourism destination are uniquely attractive to the tourists and travelers to visit or revisit the destination.

Festival tourism (Choi et al., 2021) can be referred to as the attractiveness of local festivals, which can draw the visitors and tourists to join, visit and participate in such local festivals based on the local culture, heritage, and other local resources. Getz and Page (2016) studied various types of event tourism fields and highlighted festival tourism as one of the fastest-growing areas of tourism sectors. Furthermore, festival tourism represented the management of activities, utilizing and managing local resources, and the participation of various groups and organizations (such as local residents, businesses, and government agencies (Molina-Gómez et al., 2021). Moreover, festival tourism supported local business activities and contributed to various benefits, including economic aspects (e.g., employment and job creation), social aspects (e.g., social cohesion), cultural dimensions (e.g., cultural and heritage preservation) (Asero and Tomaselli, 2021). Furthermore, the participation, involvement, and voices of the local residents are highlighted as the crucial roles towards the community development in different parts of tourism development, especially in the long run and sustainable development for the tourism activities (Surasawadee et al., 2019; Somnuxpong, 2020; Kalaya et al., 2018).

The purpose of this study is to examine the significant factors (including a sense of community, perceived cost, perceived benefits, community pride, and attitudes) affecting residents' support for candle festival tourism and to develop the practical guidelines to support sustainable festival tourism.

Literature Review

This section offers reviews on the leading theory used in the study, which is the social exchange theory, and factors influencing the support of sustainable candle festival tourism.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory has been one of the important theories used to explain tourism studies (Chang, 2021; Gannon et al., 2021), suggesting the relationship among positive and negative factors towards certain actions (or support for tourism) in this study. Based on Thaichon et al. (2018), the theory identified that people generally consider and analyze the benefits and costs of the activities or transactions before participating or involving in the social exchanges. Chang (2021) stated that social exchange theory has its strengths in clarifying the situations where benefits and costs were exchanged, but the theory lacks the details of group relationships. In the current study, the author attempted to fill in the gap in the literature. In this case, the author included the crucial factors of sense of community and community pride, responding to the group implications to improve the theory's weakness as it has been discussed in the past research (Kayat, 2002). The study aimed to address another limitation of social exchange theory, as Kayat (2002) and Chang (2021) mentioned, ignoring the influence of group relationships in theory. Therefore, a sense of community and community pride were added to explore the group relationship. In addition, the social exchange theory was criticized for assuming bipolarity where extreme negative and positive aspects were presented and tested in the theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Therefore, the proposed model included other external variables, which in the current study, additional factors were included such as attitudes towards tourism development and sense of community.

Candle Festival

Thailand has been one of the major tourist destinations in Asia, and many tourism activities are in the areas of beach destinations, city tourism, and nature-based tourism (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). However, festival tourism in Thailand has continued to attract tourists domestically and internationally. One of the well-known festivals is the candle festival, which has grown from the local level to the international level. Cohen (2001) mentioned that the candle festival in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand, was an example of festival transformation from the local event into the festival tourism event, attracting tourists, not only from other parts of Thailand but also from around the world to visit the city and participate in the festival together with the residents. The candle festival of Ubon Ratchathani province was one of the main features in the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) website (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.), promoting Thai and international tourists to visit the destination to participate in the festival with the local people. Although many provinces in Thailand also held their provincial candle festival celebration, the largest and oldest candle festival in Thailand is at Ubon Ratchathani province (Suntisupaporn and Kaewnuch, 2019). For a few weeks before the festival, professional carvers, residents, and visitors can participate in carving the candles as a good contribution to Buddhist Lent day, where residents celebrate the religious celebration and pride of the local people to host the biggest candle festival in Thailand (Hongpukdee and Hongpukdee, 2016 Buddalerd, 2017).

Support for Sustainable Festival Tourism

Tourism scholars noted that the residents' support for tourism can ensure the sustainable development in the tourism destination because the residents are

the essential participants in various tourism activities, contributing to the experiences of the tourists during their visits to the destinations (Moghavvemi et al., 2017; Ganji et al., 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Megeirhi et al. (2020) stated that the local residents' values, beliefs, and norms are crucial for supporting tourism activities. Furthermore, the support for tourism can be related to actions, long-term expectations, and willingness to engage and participate in the community as the host of the tourism destination. Papastathopoulos et al. (2020) stated that the support of the residents for the tourism activities and developments depended on the perceived impacts (e.g., economic, social, and environmental) from tourism in their residential areas and the degree of the support for tourism development was related to the perceived impacts of the residents. Nunkoo and Gursoy (2017) stated that political trust and support of the local residents are critical to the success of developing tourism activities and programs. Woosnam et al. (2018) demonstrated that support for tourism development for the residents implied the long-term growth and sustainability of the tourism events. Furthermore, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) noted that support for tourism development is crucial for long-term sustainable tourism. In the current context of the study, support for tourism development is referred to as sustainable candle festival tourism.

Perceived Benefits

Perceived benefits or positive impacts of tourism have been addressed in the social exchange theory. Perceived benefits (Alonso et al., 2015) in tourism development can lead to socio-economic, environmental, educational sustainability, and tourism development in the various characteristics of tourism destinations. In addition, Tew and Barbieri (2012) suggested that perceived benefits implied the entrepreneurial and community development for tourism sectors. Furthermore, to represent the perceived benefits of the residents, Nunkoo and So (2016) stated that the concept of perceived benefits depends on the subjective evaluation and expectation of the local people.

In addition, the local residents consider the perceived benefits will continue, and the residents expect the future positive opportunities from the increased arrivals of the tourists towards economic, social, and cultural benefits (Lee, 2013). Additionally, perceived benefits of tourism also included job creation and opportunities for the residents, investment in the destination, improvement of the standard of living, and the improvement of the basic infrastructure of the tourism destination, such as roads and bridges (Weber and Hsee, 1998; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) found that perceived benefits are positively influential towards support for tourism development.

H1: Perceived benefits have a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism

Perceived Cost

For all types of development in general, there are not only positive dimensions, but there exist some negative consequences. The perceived cost of tourism development basically is related to creating changes in physical settings, such as new construction and infrastructures, leading to air and noise pollution and loss of property for some residents, or in social or cultural changes, such as the loss of

cultural identity from external values brought in by the tourists (Timothy, 2014; Gursoy et al., 2019; Sokhanvar, 2019; Ledwith, 2020).

In addition, the perceived cost can refer to the inconvenience of residing in the tourism areas, such as crowdedness of tourists, an increase of living expenses, traffic jams, various types of pollution (e.g., air and water pollution), and rise of criminal activities. (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Eusébio et al., 2018). Furthermore, the aftermath of the tourism development may cause discomfort for the local residents from the growth of tourism projects and activities (Litvin et al., 2020). From the empirical research, the effects of perceived cost on support for tourism from the past studies represented mixed results. Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) presented that perceived cost showed an insignificant effect on the support for tourism, while the findings of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) and Litvin et al. (2020) indicated that perceived cost showed a significant negative effect on support for tourism development.

H2: Perceived cost has a negative impact on support for sustainable festival tourism

Attitudes Towards Tourism Development

Several researchers in tourism development have recognized the importance of local residents' attitudes towards tourism activities and development (Hadinejad et al., 2019; Nunkoo et al., 2013). Attitude can be referred to as a psychological notion where one assesses a place, an object or an abstract idea and attitude is influential to personal motivation and intention. The current study focused on residents' attitudes regarding festival tourism development in terms of the overall evaluation of the residents towards the candle festival. (Tournois and Djeric, 2019; Choi and Murray, 2010; García et al., 2015). Furthermore, the concept of attitudes towards perceived benefits was found in the past literature (such as Lee, 2009; Weber and Hsee, 1998; Ribeiro et al., 2013). Moreover, Mbaiwa and Stronza (2011) found that attitudes toward tourism development have an influence on support for tourism development. Additionally, Moghavvemi et al. (2017) has found that the attitudes of the residents had a positive impact on support for tourism. Chang (2021) highlighted the important role of local residents' attitudes in the tourism development in the tourism destination. Ramkissoon (2020) stated that perceptions and attitudes of the local residents led to support for tourism development.

H3: Attitude towards tourism development has a positive impact on perceived benefits

H4: Attitude towards tourism development has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism

Community Pride

Community pride is defined as the self-esteem of the local residents resulting from being a part of a community or a social group (Magno and Dossena, 2020; Fišer and Kožuh, 2019). Furthermore, the community pride also represents a symbolic description of being a member of a community, representing a specific positive value toward the identity of the community. Sadler and Pruett (2017)

noted that community pride can be represented in the form of the positive dimensions of the community, such as the attractiveness of community surroundings and high public safety of the community. Sirgy (2012) stated that community pride is defined as the positive emotion and feelings with the community to which the residents belong. Furthermore, pride can also reflect the satisfaction of being a member of such a community. In addition, the community pride represented the intense feelings of a positive effect of tourism development, guiding to the support and the need to engage in tourism development and activities (Butler et al., 2021). In addition, according to Pookaiyaudom (2015) and Magno and Dossena (2020), community pride led to support for sustainable tourism development.

H5: Community pride has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism

Sense of Community

In the study of Macke et al. (2019), a sense of community can have an impact on the residents' satisfaction and lead to a sustainable tourism destination. In addition, a sense of community is connected to the norms, values, and acceptable behaviors of the people living in the community (Dempsey et al., 2011). Macke et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of a sense of community to be studied in the context of developing countries. As for this study, Thailand is one of the developing countries relying heavily on tourism development, especially in the areas of rural areas to support the local people to generate income and career opportunities (Dabphet et al., 2012). Dempsey et al. (2011) referred to a sense of community as the shared feeling among the local people to have a sense of belonging and trust in that engaging and collaborative relationship among the local residents can help them achieve the goals of the local community (Wood et al., 2010). Furthermore, a sense of community improves the policy development and implementation for sustainable cities. In addition, the regular participation of local people is also considered a result of a strong sense of community (Bibri and Krogstie, 2017; Macke et al., 2019; Dempsey et al., 2011 and Wood et al., 2010).

H6: Sense of community has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism

The Measurements

Regarding the measurement scales for this study, past literature and empirical research were studied, and the questionnaires for each factor were adapted and developed as follows; perceived benefits (e.g., Kang and Lee, 2018); community pride (e.g., Magno and Dossena, 2020); Perceived cost (e.g., Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017); Attitude towards tourism development (e.g., Kim et al., 2019; Ramayah et al., 2009; Ali, 2011); sense of community (e.g., Lardier Jr et al., 2018) and Support for sustainable candle festival tourism (e.g., Gannon et al., 2021).

Research Methodology

The structural equation modeling was adopted to test the relationship and the levels of influences among the factors. The data were collected from the local residents of Ubon Ratchathani province, where the candle festival has been annually held and celebrated. The questionnaires were distributed via an online survey

with the screening question that the respondents must be residents of Ubon Ratchathani province at least in the past two years and considered Ubon Ratchathani as their home.

Four hundred sixty-four samples of local residents were finally included in the study. The respondents confirmed their status as local residents of Ubon Ratchathani province. In terms of gender, 51% were male, and 49% were female respondents. Concerning education, the majority of the residents earned undergraduate degrees with 62%, followed by high school degrees (20%) and others (18%). Regarding the occupation, The largest age group was 29% in the range of 21-30 years old, followed by 25% in the range of 31-40 years old and 19% for the group of 41-50 years old. Based on the characteristics of local residents, 70% of the respondents lived in the province for more than ten years, 27% resided in the province for 5-10 years, and the rest lived in the province for 2-4 years.

The collected data were analyzed by statistical analysis, including reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity prior to testing the relationship of the factors with structural equation modeling. The research framework of the study was proposed based on the literature review is shown in Figure 1.

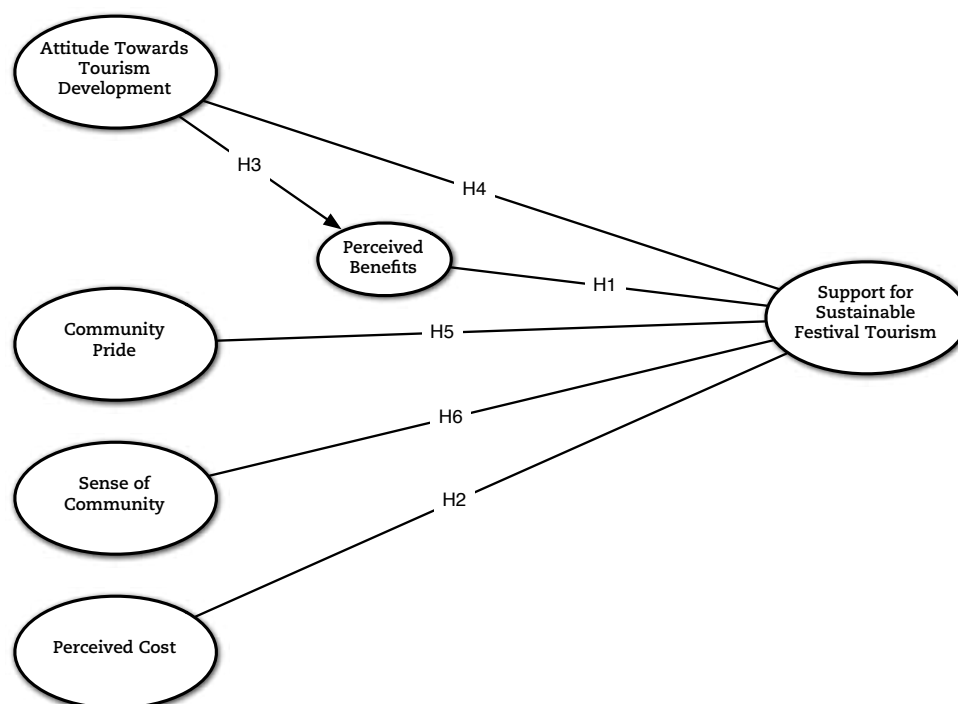


Figure 1. The proposed model diagram showing the relationship between the H1 - H6 elements.

Results

From the table in figure 2, the convergent validity, standardized loadings, and reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) were presented. The convergent validity results were satisfied by the criteria of AVEs more than 0.5 in each construct (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Hair et al., 2010). Additionally, the reliability of all the constructs achieved the criteria where the alpha values were higher than 0.7.

Item/Factors	Standardized Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Benefits		0.761	0.785	0.821
1. Candle festival tourism increases employment opportunities in the community.	0.897			
2. Candle festival tourism attracts more investment to my community.	0.891			
3. Our standard of living would increase because of candle festival tourism.	0.879			
4. Tourism provides more infrastructure and public facilities like roads, shopping, etc.	0.876			
5. Candle festival creates more investment and small business opportunities in the community.	0.803			
6. Candle festival tourism creates social cohesion in the community.	0.887			
Community Pride		0.731	0.761	0.832
1. After the candle festival, the community pride of the local residents is higher.	0.858			
2. The candle festival reinforced community spirit.	0.856			
3. After the candle festival, the community of the local residents of the city is more solid.	0.861			
4. The candle festival makes the local residents proud of the community.	0.84			
5. The candle festival instills the self-esteem of the community.	0.861			
Perceived Cost		0.755	0.780	0.856
1. Local residents suffer from living in a tourism destination area.	0.801			
2. Candle festival tourism results in traffic congestion.	0.891			
3. Candle festival tourism increases the costs of living.	0.893			
4. Candle festival tourism increases pollution, such as noise, and air pollution.	0.887			
Attitude Towards Tourism Development		0.724	0.755	0.845
1. I am positive about tourism development.	0.86			
2. Tourism development is a good idea.	0.848			
3. I have a positive attitude toward tourism development.	0.84			
4. I feel tourism development is a wise idea	0.821			
5. I feel favorable to tourism development.	0.885			
Sense of Community		0.700	0.736	0.847
1. I feel like a member of this community.	0.856			
2. I belong to this community.	0.81			
3. I feel connected to this neighborhood.	0.821			
4. I have a good relationship with other community members.	0.835			
5. This community helps me get what I need.	0.859			

Figure 2. Table of item loadings on related factors. Continued on next page.

Item/Factors	Standardized Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Support for Sustainable Festival Tourism		0.718	0.751	0.836
1. I support and would like to see candle festival tourism become an important part of my community.	0.831			
2. I believe that candle festival tourism should be actively encouraged in my community.	0.841			
3. I participate in candle festival tourism development.	0.869			
4. I support the promotion of candle festival tourism.	0.853			
5. It is important to develop plans to manage the candle festival and long-term growth of tourism.	0.8435			

Figure 2 Cont. Table of item loadings on related factors.

Furthermore, in figure 3's table, discriminant validity was met with the acceptable measure with the criteria that square roots of AVEs (shown in bold and italic) were above the correlation values, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981).

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
F1	<i>0.873</i>					
F2	0.785	<i>0.855</i>				
F3	0.021	0.061	<i>0.869</i>			
F4	0.651	0.721	0.203	<i>0.851</i>		
F5	0.534	0.622	0.22	0.751	<i>0.836</i>	
F6	0.743	0.729	0.106	0.764	0.742	<i>0.848</i>

Figure 3. Table of the correlation coefficient matrix and the square root of AVEs. Note: Square root of AVEs (shown in bold and italic).

Key: F1= perceived benefits (PB); F2 = community pride(CP); F3=perceived cost (PC); F4= attitude towards tourism development (AT); F5=sense of community (SC); F6=Support for sustainable festival tourism (ST).

With confirmatory factor analysis, the structural equation model with acceptable levels must provide several fit indices showing a good fit of the model with CFI, NFI, NNFI, and IFI values higher than 0.90 (Beauducel and Wittmann, 2005; Schreiber et al., 2006). Additionally, RMSEA was less than 0.08 and X^2/df was less than 3.00, presenting the good fit of the model.

Fit Index	Model Value
χ^2/df ($\chi^2 = 2480.999$;df =866)	2.865
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.978
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.967
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.976
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.978
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.063

Figure 4. Table of the Fit index.

For the model fit indices in Table 3, CFI, NFI, NNFI and IFI were higher than the criteria of good model fit, which were above 0.9 (Montoya and Edwards, 2021; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). Furthermore, RMSEA was 0.063, less than 0.08 (Browne and Cudeck, 1992; Marcoulides and Yuan, 2017). Based on the recommended values of good fits, the constructs used in the study met with acceptable standards.

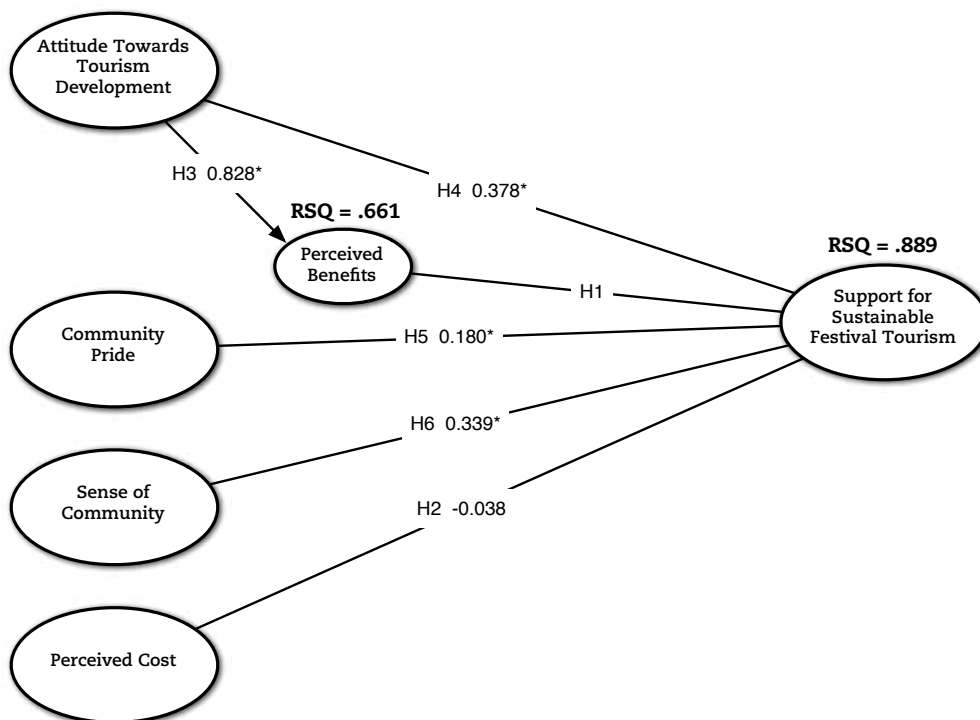


Figure 5. Full model with coefficients added. Note: RSQ =R-squared; * = significant with p-value <0.05.

From the results indicated in figure 5 above, attitude toward tourism development had the greatest influence on support for sustainable festival tourism, followed by a sense of community, community pride, and perceived benefits. The findings presented that attitudes towards tourism development had the highest influence on support for sustainable festival tourism, meaning that the higher degree of

positive attitude, the greater the support of the local residents for the sustainable festival tourism, and the stronger the sense of community, the higher the support for the festival tourism. Furthermore, community pride and perceived benefits also presented similar influences on support for sustainable festival tourism. These findings confirmed the significance of the constructs selected in the model shown in Figure 2. Although perceived cost showed a negative sign on the support for sustainable festival tourism, the statistical effect was not significant at 95% confidence interval, representing that perceived cost had no significant influence on the dependent variable. Additionally, attitudes towards tourism development provided a positive influence on perceived benefits. The summary of the hypothesis testing was shown in the table in Figure 6.

Hypotheses	Testing Results
H1: Perceived benefits have a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism	Supported
H2: Perceived cost has a negative impact on support for sustainable festival tourism	Not supported.
H3: Attitude towards tourism development has a positive impact on perceived benefits	Supported
H4: Attitude towards tourism development has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism	Supported
H5: Community pride has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism	Supported
H6: Sense of community has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism	Supported

Figure 6. Table of summary of hypotheses tests.

Discussion

Guided by the social exchange theory, perceived benefits showed a significant influence in many of the past tourism research studies. The finding from this current research confirmed the same results with H1: *Perceived benefits positively impact support for sustainable festival tourism*. This finding demonstrates that the benefits from economic, social, and cultural contribution to the community have effects on the support of the residents in festival tourism. This finding was supported by several studies (Nunkoo and So, 2016; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2011; Lee, 2013; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017).

As one part of the social exchange theory, perceived cost was hypothesized to negatively influence support for sustainable festival tourism in H2: *Perceived cost has a negative impact on support for sustainable festival tourism*. However, in the context of festival tourism, the perceived cost has no significant effect on the support for sustainable festival tourism, similar to the insignificant relationship between these two factors found in the work of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012). Regarding the other studies, the perceived cost was found to have a significant negative effect on the support for tourism, including the works of Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011), Eusébio et al. (2018), and Litvin et al. (2020).

The positive attitude towards tourism development is hypothesized to positively affect the perceived benefits of festival tourism. Obviously, the agreeable and positive attitudes of the residents influenced the perception of benefits that the local residents can gain from the long-term development of the festival. The finding supported the hypothesis, *H3: Attitude towards tourism development has a positive impact on perceived benefits*. The works of Weber and Hsee (1998) and Lee (2009) confirmed the finding.

Based on the result, residents' attitudes are essential for supporting sustainable candle festival tourism. *From H4: Attitude towards tourism development has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism*. A positive attitude was clearly crucial to participation and engagement in festival tourism. Promoting positive attitudes for the local residents is a key to sustainable festival and cultural tourism development. The finding was supported by the works of Ramkissoon (2020) and Moghavvemi et al. (2017).

Having self-esteem and a positive feeling for being in the community lead to support for the community. *For H5: Community pride has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism*. This indicates that having the community's uniqueness and being proud of the community directly affects the support for festival tourism. With the pride of their community, the local residents are clearly willing to support and participate in the local festivals. The result was confirmed by the work of Magno and Dossena (2020) and Pookaiyaudom (2015).

Regarding *H6: Sense of community has a positive impact on support for sustainable festival tourism*. Being a member of the community with the connection with other community members strengthens the support for festival tourism. Therefore, improving the sense of community should yield future support for community activities in tourism development. Creating a sense of community should be effectively and systematically planned and implemented by the local authorities, community leaders, and crucial stakeholders. For example, having monthly meetings (e.g., online or on-site) can help strengthen collaborative efforts and monitor festival planning and implementation. The finding was supported by Macke et al. (2019), Dempsey et al. (2011), and Wood et al. (2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study's objective was to investigate the effects of the factors based on the social exchange theory (e.g., perceived benefits and perceived cost) together with external variables, and the objective was clearly achieved. The study indicated the critical roles of the key factors, namely attitudes of the residents towards the tourism development activities, community pride and sense of community, and perceived benefits, on the support for the sustainable candle festival tourism. However, perceived cost lacked significant influence on supporting sustainable candle festival tourism. The significance of the study can provide the guidelines for festival tourism development to raise the support from the local residents to engage and participate in festival tourism activities as it can be known that the local residents and local community are the foundation of festival management

and development. Several empirical studies have adapted and applied the social exchange theory to tourism areas, such as community-based tourism. This study enriches the application of social exchange theory in the area of festival tourism, which is the fastest-growing sector in tourism studies.

Theoretical Contribution

The current research was initiated by adopting the social exchange theory as the foundation to develop the research model. The limitation of social exchange theory has been argued in that the theory pays less attention to the effect of group relationships (Kayat, 2002; Chang, 2021; Cropanzano et al., 2017). The study validated the social exchange theory by introducing the external variables to help explain the proposed relationship generally used in theory. Additionally, theoretical contributions from the current study, including external variables, were tested in the proposed model, indicating the perceived benefits or positive impacts with significant effects on the support for sustainable candle festival tourism. The support for sustainable festival tourism was explained significantly by perceived benefits and other external factors, including attitudes toward tourism development, sense of community, community pride. However, the perceived cost indicated no significant effect on the support for sustainable festival tourism. This partly confirmed the social exchange theory in that only perceived benefits demonstrated the influence of the support for the festival tourism, while perceived cost showed no effect. In the context of festival tourism, the study provided that residents and communities considered the positive impacts from all the developments and activities related to the festival arrangements. Furthermore, the current study included community pride and a sense of community, which were not often investigated in the context of festival tourism.

Practical Contributions

Candle festival is considered one of the important festivals in Thailand, where the festival unites residents, visitors, and stakeholders and enhances the sense of celebration, pride, and community among the participants. Therefore, managers and hosts of festival tourism development should understand the relationship among resident's attitudes toward tourism development, sense of community and community pride, and perceived benefits by creating the sequence of events and activities to improve the social network within the community since all these important factors directly influence the implementation of festival tourism development. Since the attitude towards tourism development showed a positive influence on residents' support for sustainable festival tourism and therefore, local authorities should highlight and present the positive impact of tourism activities to the residents and should offer more opportunities for the local residents to participate in the tourism activities with the tourists. Understanding the role and importance of tourism development for the community can help create positive attitudes for the local residents. Furthermore, creating local events for social gatherings among residents can help promote the people's engagements, leading to a sense of community. To support sustainable festival tourism, local authorities, community leaders, and tourism organizations at all levels, including local and national, should continuously support and promote the history, story-telling,

uniqueness, and the meaning of the candle festival for the local residents, especially new generations in the local areas, to understand the cultural value and to generate community pride for its festival. Additionally, educational institutions or schools may include extracurricular activities for students to participate in and be involved in several local festivals to increase the sense of community and pride. The tourism authorities can support the community building and promote the destination branding to enhance their pride in their local resources and values. Additionally, the benefits of festival tourism should be promoted and communicated to all related stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, and local public organizations.

Limitations

The limitations of the current research included the single use of the research method, which is structural equation modeling, in this case, providing the explanation based on the rigorous test of the model. Some further explanations or findings can be further included in other analytical techniques for the phenomena' additional dimensional explanation. Secondly, the study was cross-sectional research. The limitation may occur in attempting to generalize the study results in the long run. Thirdly, the study was conducted at the individual level, which is the level of local residents. There might be some missing points of view from the community or provincial levels to holistically represent the whole community for the comprehensive explanation for sustainable candle festival tourism development.

Directions for Future Research

There are various potential topics to be further explored in the context of cultural and festival tourism, such as further qualitative research studies may be conducted to enhance the clear understanding of the relationship among the key factors of the study. In addition, the researchers may replicate similar research studies in other types of festivals to test the relationship among the factors in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, the researchers may conduct a longitudinal study on festival tourism to measure sustainability or to reconfirm the nature of the relationship of the factors in the long run. Additionally, focus groups and in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, including tourism authorities, local administrators, and destination managers, should provide additional valuable insights.

References

- Ali, Azwadi. "Predicting Individual Investors' Intention to Invest: An Experimental Analysis of Attitude as a Mediator." *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2011):876-883.
- Alonso, Abel Duarte, Alessandro Bressan, Michelle O'Shea, and Vlad Krajsic. "Perceived Benefits and Challenges to Wine Tourism Involvement: An International Perspective." *International Journal of Tourism Research* 17, no. 1 (2015):66-81.
- Anderson, James C., and David W. Gerbing. "Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-step Approach." *Psychological Bulletin* 103, no. 3 (1988):411-423.
- Asero, Vincenzo, and Venera Tomaselli. "The Impact of an International Literary Festival in a Tourist Destination." In *Handbook of Research on Cultural Heritage and Its Impact on Territory Innovation and Development*. Hershey: IGI Global, 2021. 259-275.

- Beauducel, Andre, and Werner W. Wittmann. "Simulation Study on FitIndexes in CFA Based on Data with Slightly Distorted Simple Structure." *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 12, no. 1 (2005):41-75.
- Bimonte, Salvatore, and Lionello F. Punzo. "Tourist Development and Host–Guest Interaction: An Economic Exchange Theory." *Annals of Tourism Research* 58 (2016):128-139.
- Bibri, Simon Elias, and John Krogstie. "Smart Sustainable Cities of the Future: An Extensive Interdisciplinary Literature Review." *Sustainable Cities and Society* 31 (2017):183-212.
- Browne, Michael W., and Robert Cudeck. "Alternative Ways of Assessing Model Fit." *Sociological Methods & Research* 21, no. 2 (1992):230-258.
- Buddalerd, Patlapa. "Backpacker Tourism and Cultural Heritage Tourism: Wat Thung Sri Muang (Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand)" *Veridian E-Journal, Silpakorn University (Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts)* 10, no. 5 (2017):563-576.
- Butler, Gareth, Gerti Szili, and Huanling Huang. "Cultural Heritage Tourism Development in Panyu District, Guangzhou: Community Perspectives on Pride and Preservation, and Concerns for the Future." *Journal of Heritage Tourism* (2021):1-18.
- Cecil, Amanda K., Yao-Yi Fu, Suosheng Wang, and Sotiris H. Avgoustis. "Exploring Resident Awareness of Cultural Tourism and its Impact on Quality of Life." *European Journal of Tourism Research* 1, no. 1 (2008):39-52.
- Chang, Kai Chih. "The Affecting Tourism Development Attitudes Based on the Social Exchange Theory and the Social Network Theory." *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 26, no. 2 (2021):167-182.
- Choi, Kanghwa, Hee Jay Kang, and Changhee Kim. "Evaluating the Efficiency of Korean Festival Tourism and its Determinants on Efficiency Change: Parametric and Non-parametric Approaches." *Tourism Management* 86 (2021):104348.
- Choi, Hwansuk Chris, and Iain Murray. "Resident Attitudes Toward Sustainable Community Tourism." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 18, no. 4 (2010):575-594.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Harris. "Textile, Tourism and Community Development." *Annals of Tourism Research* 28, No. 2 (2001):378-398.
- Cropanzano, Russell, Erica L. Anthony, Shanna R. Daniels, and Alison V. Hall. "Social Exchange Theory: A Critical Review with Theoretical Remedies." *Academy of Management Annals* 11, no. 1 (2017):479-516.
- Dabphet, Siripen, Noel Scott, and Lisa Ruhanen. "Applying Diffusion Theory to Destination Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case from Thailand." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 20, no. 8 (2012):1107-1124.
- Dempsey, Nicola, Glen Bramley, Sinéad Power, and Caroline Brown. "The Social Dimension of Sustainable Development: Defining Urban Social Sustainability." *Sustainable Development* 19, no. 5 (2011):289-300.

- Eusébio, Celeste, Armando Luís Vieira, and Sara Lima. "Place Attachment, Host–Tourist Interactions, and Residents' Attitudes Towards Tourism Development: The Case of Boa Vista Island in Cape Verde." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 26, no. 6 (2018):890-909.
- Fišer, Suzana Žilic, and Ines Kožuh. "The Impact of Cultural Events on Community Reputation and Pride in Maribor, the European Capital of Culture 2012." *Social Indicators Research* 142, no. 3 (2019):1055-1073.
- Fornell, Claes, and David F. Larcker. "Structural Equation Models With Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics." *Journal of Marketing Research* 18, no. 3 (1981):382-388.
- Gannon, Martin, S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh, and Babak Taheri. "Assessing the Mediating role of Residents' Perceptions Toward Tourism Development." *Journal of Travel Research* 60, no. 1 (2021):149-171.
- Ganji, Seyedeh Fatemeh Ghasempour, Lester W. Johnson, and Samaneh Sadeghian. "The Effect of Place Image and Place Attachment on Residents' Perceived Value and Support for Tourism Development." *Current Issues in Tourism* 24, no. 9 (2021):1304-1318.
- García, Fernando Almeida, Antonia Balbuena Vázquez, and Rafael Cortés Macías. "Resident's Attitudes Towards the Impacts of Tourism." *Tourism Management Perspectives* 13 (2015):33-40.
- Getz, Donald, and Stephen J. Page. "Progress and Prospects for Event Tourism Research." *Tourism Management* 52 (2016):593-631.
- Gursoy, Dogan, Zhe Ouyang, Robin Nunkoo, and Wei Wei. "Residents' Impact Perceptions of and Attitudes Towards Tourism Development: A Meta-analysis." *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management* 28, no. 3 (2019):306-333.
- Hadinejad, Arghavan, Brent D. Moyle, Noel Scott, Anna Kralj, and Robin Nunkoo. "Residents' Attitudes to Tourism: A Review." *Tourism Review* 74, no.2 (2019):150-165.
- Hair, Joseph F., Bill Black, Barry J. Babin and Rolph E. Anderson. *Multivariate Data Analysis*. London: Pearson College Division, 2010.
- Hongpukdee, Napaporn, and Surbpong Hongpukdee. "Costs of Candle Making: A Local Wisdom in the Candle Festival of Ubon Ratchathani Province." *Executive Journal* 36, no. 2 (2016):62-78.
- Kalaya, Pannathat, Yuthakan Waiapha, Parnprae Chaoprayoon, and Metee Medhasith Suksumret. "A Community's Buddhist Arts Conservation-based Voluntourism Management: A New Innovation Arousing Community's Conservational Participation." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 17 (2018):32-53.
- Kang, Soo K., and Jaeseok Lee. "Support of Marijuana Tourism in Colorado: A Residents' Perspective Using Social Exchange Theory." *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 9 (2018):310-319.
- Kayat, Kalsom. "Power, Social Exchanges and Tourism in Langkawi: Rethinking resident Perceptions." *International journal of tourism research* 4, no. 3 (2002):171-191.

- Kim, Nooree, Yuri Park, and Daeho Lee. "Differences in Consumer Intention to Use On-Demand Automobile-Related Services in Accordance with the Degree of Face-to-Face Interactions." *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 139 (2019):277-286.
- Lardier Jr, David T., Robert J. Reid, and Pauline Garcia-Reid. "Validation of the Brief Sense of Community Scale Among Youth of Color From an Underserved Urban Community." *Journal of Community Psychology* 46, no. 8 (2018):1062-1074.
- Ledwith, Margaret. *Community Development: A Critical Approach*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2020.
- Lee, Ming-Chi. "Factors Influencing the Adoption of Internet Banking: An Integration of TAM and TPB with Perceived Risk and Perceived Benefit." *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 8, no. 3 (2009):130-141.
- Lee, Tsung Hung. "Influence Analysis of Community Resident Support for Sustainable Tourism Development." *Tourism Management* 34 (2013):37-46.
- Li, Yiping. "Exploring Community Tourism in China: The Case of Nanshan Cultural Tourism Zone." *Journal of sustainable tourism* 12, no. 3 (2004):175-193.
- Li, Xiangping, and Yim King Penny Wan. "Residents' Support for Festivals: Integration of Emotional Solidarity." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 25, no. 4 (2017):517-535.
- Litvin, Stephen W., Wayne W. Smith, and William R. McEwen. "Not in My Backyard: Personal Politics and Resident Attitudes Toward Tourism." *Journal of Travel Research* 59, no. 4 (2020):674-685.
- Luo, Shixian, Katsunori Furuya, and Jing Xie. "Impacts and residents' Attitudes to Flower-Viewing Tourism in Chengdu, PR China." *Tourism Recreation Research* (2020):1-15.
- Macke, Janaina, João Alberto Rubim Sarate, and Suane De Atayde Moschen. "Smart Sustainable Cities Evaluation and Sense of Community." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 239 (2019):118103.
- Magno, Francesca, and Giovanna Dossena. "Pride of Being Part of a Host Community? Medium-term Effects of Mega-events on Citizen Quality of Life: The Case of the World Expo 2015 in Milan." *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 15 (2020):100410.
- Marcoulides, Katerina M., and Ke-Hai Yuan. "New Ways to Evaluate Goodness of Fit: A Note on Using Equivalence Testing to Assess Structural Equation Models." *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 24, no. 1 (2017):148-153.
- Megeirhi, Huda A., Kyle Maurice Woosnam, Manuel Alector Ribeiro, Haywantee Ramkissoon, and Tara J. Denley. "Employing a Value-belief-norm Framework to Gauge Carthage Residents' Intentions to Support Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 28, no. 9 (2020):1351-1370.
- Moghavvemi, Sedigheh, Kyle M. Woosnam, Tanuosha Paramanathan, Ghazali Musa, and Amran Hamzah. "The Effect of Residents' Personality, Emotional Solidarity, and Community Commitment on Support for Tourism Development." *Tourism Management* 63 (2017):242-254.

- Molina-Gómez, Jesús, Pere Mercadé-Melé, Fernando Almeida-García, and Raquel Ruiz-Berrón. "New Perspectives on Satisfaction and Loyalty in Festival Tourism: The Function of Tangible and Intangible Attributes." *PloS one* 16, no. 2 (2021): e0246562.
- Montoya, Amanda K., and Michael C. Edwards. "The Poor Fit of Model Fit for Selecting Number of Factors in Exploratory Factor Analysis for Scale Evaluation." *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 81, no. 3 (2021):413-440.
- Murphy, Clare, and Emily Boyle. "Testing a Conceptual Model of Cultural Tourism Development in the Post-industrial City: A Case Study of Glasgow." *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 6, no. 2 (2006):111-128.
- Nunkoo, Robin. "Toward a More Comprehensive Use of Social Exchange Theory to Study Residents' Attitudes to Tourism." *Procedia Economics and Finance* 39 (2016):588-596.
- Nunkoo, Robin, and Dogan Gursoy. "Political Trust and Residents' Support for Alternative and Mass Tourism: An Improved Structural Model." *Tourism Geographies* 19, no. 3 (2017):318-339.
- Nunkoo, Robin, and Haywantee Ramkissoon. "Developing a Community Support Model for Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 38, no. 3 (2011):964-988.
- Nunkoo, Robin, and Haywantee Ramkissoon. "Power, Trust, social Exchange and Community Support." *Annals of Tourism Research* 39, no. 2 (2012):997-1023.
- Nunkoo, Robin, and Kevin Kam Fung So. "Residents' Support for Tourism: Testing Alternative Structural Models." *Journal of Travel Research* 55, no. 7 (2016):847-861.
- Nunkoo, Robin, Stephen LJ Smith, and Haywantee Ramkissoon. "Residents' Attitudes to Tourism: A Longitudinal Study of 140 Articles from 1984 to 2010." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 21, no. 1 (2013):5-25.
- Papastathopoulos, Avraam, Syed Zamberi Ahmad, Nada Al Sabri, and Kostas Kaminakis. "Demographic Analysis Of Residents' Support for Tourism Development in the UAE: A Bayesian Structural Equation Modeling Multigroup Approach." *Journal of Travel Research* 59, no. 6 (2020):1119-1139.
- Pookaiyaudom, Gulapish. "Relationship Between Community Pride and Participation Needs in Sustainable Tourism Development of Fishing Village: A Case Study of Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand." *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment* 192 (2015):343-54.
- Ramayah, Thurasamy, Kamel Rouibah, M. Gopi, and Gary John Rangel. "A Decomposed Theory of Reasoned Action to Explain Intention to Use Internet Stock Trading Among Malaysian Investors." *Computers in Human Behavior* 25, no. 6 (2009):1222-1230.
- Ramkissoon, Haywantee. "Perceived Social Impacts of Tourism and Quality-of-life: A New Conceptual Model." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (2020):1-17.
- Ramkissoon, Haywantee, and Muzaffer Uysal. "Testing the Role of Authenticity in Cultural Tourism Consumption: A Case of Mauritius." *Tourism Analysis* 15, no. 5 (2010):571-583.

- Rasoolimanesh, S. Mostafa, Christian M. Ringle, Mastura Jaafar, and Thurasamy Ramayah. "Urban vs. Rural Destinations: Residents' Perceptions, Community Participation and Support for Tourism Development." *Tourism Management* 60 (2017):147-158.
- Ribeiro, Manuel Alector, Patrícia Oom Do Valle, and João Albino Silva. "Residents' Attitudes Towards Tourism Development in Cape Verde Islands." *Tourism Geographies* 15, no. 4 (2013):654-679.
- Richards, Greg. *Rethinking Cultural Tourism*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021.
- Sadler, Richard C., and Natalie K. Pruett. "Mitigating Blight and Building Community Pride in a Legacy City: Lessons Learned from a Land Bank's Clean and Green Programme." *Community Development Journal* 52, no. 4 (2017):591-610.
- Salazar, Noel B. "Tourism Imaginaries: A Conceptual Approach." *Annals of Tourism Research* 39, no. 2 (2012):863-882.
- Schermelleh-Engel, Karin, Helfried Moosbrugger, and Hans Müller. "Evaluating the Fit of Structural Equation Models: Tests of Significance and Descriptive Goodness-of-fit measures." *Methods of Psychological Research Online* 8, no. 2 (2003):23-74.
- Schreiber, James B., Amaury Nora, Frances K. Stage, Elizabeth A. Barlow, and Jamie King. "Reporting Structural Equation Modeling and Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results: A Review." *The Journal of Educational Research* 99, no. 6 (2006):323-338.
- Sirgy, M. Joseph. "Consequences of Hedonic Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, and Eudaimonia." In *The Psychology of Quality of Life*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2012. 45-60.
- Sokhanvar, Amin. "Does Foreign Direct Investment Accelerate Tourism and economic growth within Europe?." *Tourism Management Perspectives* 29 (2019):86-96.
- Somnuxpong, Suprapa. "Chiang Mai: A Creative City Using Creative Tourism Management." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 20 (2020):112-132.
- Suntisupaporn, Punnatree, and Kanokkarn Kaewnuch. "Marketing Competencies for Festival Coordinator in 21th Century." *Dusit Thani College Journal* 13, no. 3 (2019):476-490.
- Surasawadee, Chantana, Somboon Sangsawang, Monton Chanchamsai, Pannat Tanatpansarat, Buncha Buranasing, and Worapun Surasawadee. "The Samoreang Community's Rehabilitation Project." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 19 (2019):51-73.
- Tew, Christine, and Carla Barbieri. "The Perceived Benefits of Agritourism: The provider's perspective." *Tourism Management* 33, no. 1 (2012):215-224.
- Thaichon, Park, Jiraporn Surachartkumtonkun, Sara Quach, Scott Weaven, and Robert W. Palmatier. "Hybrid Sales Structures in the Age of E-Commerce." *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management* 38, no. 3 (2018):277-302.

- Timothy, Dallen J. "Contemporary Cultural Heritage and Tourism: Development Issues and Emerging Trends." *Public Archaeology* 13, no. 1-3 (2014):30-47.
- Tourism Authority of Thailand. "Lent Candle Festival." N.d. [www.tourismthailand.org/Search-result/tagword/Lent Candle Festival](http://www.tourismthailand.org/Search-result/tagword/Lent+Candle+Festival) (accessed January 2, 2021).
- Tournois, Laurent, and Gordana Djeric. "Evaluating Urban Residents' Attitudes Towards Tourism Development in Belgrade (Serbia)." *Current Issues in Tourism* 22, no. 14 (2019):1670-1678.
- Weber, Elke U., and Christopher Hsee. "Cross-cultural Differences in Risk Perception, but Cross-cultural Similarities in Attitudes Towards Perceived Risk." *Management Science* 44, no. 9 (1998):1205-1217.
- Wood, Lisa, Lawrence D. Frank, and Billie Giles-Corti. "Sense of Community and its Relationship with Walking and Neighborhood Design." *Social Science & Medicine* 70, no. 9 (2010):1381-1390.
- Woosnam, Kyle M., Jason Draper, Jingxian Kelly Jiang, Kayode D. Aleshinloye, and Emrullah Erul. "Applying Self-perception Theory to explain residents' attitudes about tourism development through travel histories." *Tourism Management* 64 (2018):357-368.