

What Drives Tourists to Visit Community Camping Destinations*

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The purpose of this study was to examine how multiple destination attributes of community camping stays influence tourist satisfaction and, in turn, how satisfaction affects behavioral intentions. To achieve this objective, the study examined the structural components of the attributes of emerging community-based camping tourism destinations by testing 4 hypotheses. Using a sequential mixed-methods design, 20 community stakeholders were interviewed, yielding results that could be categorized into a total of 50 variables spread across 7 elements, namely: 1) environmental and community resources, 2) activities for tourism, 3) service encounter, 4) COVID-19 safety measures and price reasonableness, 5) security and privacy, 6) location and community activities, and 7) food and accommodation facilities. This was followed by a survey of 402 campers measured on a seven-point Likert scale. The research tested four hypotheses related to the impact of the seven standard elements on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions. It was found that 4 elements significantly influence tourist satisfaction and behavior: activities for tourism, service encounter, COVID-19 safety measures and price reasonableness, and location and community activities. Moreover, tourist satisfaction levels were found to affect tourists' behavioral intentions. Tourism planners and managers

Research Article

Abstract

Keywords

community-based tourism
(CBT);
camping;
tourist satisfaction;
behavioral intentions

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should prioritize locally rooted activities and host training over facility upgrades alone. Policymakers could adopt the seven-factor framework for campsite certification. Future research could diversify the sample, employ longitudinal designs, and examine other mediators.



ปัจจัยขับเคลื่อนการเลือกแหล่งท่องเที่ยวแคมป์ปิ้ง โดยชุมชนของนักท่องเที่ยว*

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การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาองค์ประกอบเชิงคุณลักษณะของที่พักแรมแบบตั้งแคมป์โดยชุมชนที่ส่งผลต่อความพึงพอใจและความพึงพอใจดังกล่าวส่งผลต่อความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรมของนักท่องเที่ยวมุ่งวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบเชิงโครงสร้างคุณลักษณะแหล่งท่องเที่ยวแบบแคมป์ปิ้งโดยชุมชน โดยการทดสอบสมมติฐานจำนวน 4 ข้อ การวิจัยใช้ระเบียบวิธีแบบผสมผสาน เริ่มจากการสัมภาษณ์ผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียในชุมชน 20 คน สังเคราะห์ออกมาเป็นตัวแปร 50 ตัว แบ่งเป็น 7 ด้าน ได้แก่ 1) ทรัพยากรสิ่งแวดล้อมและชุมชน 2) กิจกรรมสนับสนุนการท่องเที่ยว 3) การให้บริการ 4) มาตรการด้านความปลอดภัยและความเหมาะสมของราคา 5) ความปลอดภัยและความเป็นส่วนตัว 6) ทำเลที่ตั้งและกิจกรรมชุมชน และ 7) อาหารและสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกในการเข้าพัก จากนั้นดำเนินการสำรวจนักท่องเที่ยวที่มาพักแรมจำนวน 402 คน โดยใช้มาตรประมาณค่าแบบลิเคิร์ต 7 ระดับ การวิจัยทดสอบสมมติฐานเกี่ยวกับอิทธิพลขององค์ประกอบมาตรฐานทั้ง 7 ด้านต่อความพึงพอใจและความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรมของนักท่องเที่ยว ผลการศึกษาพบว่า 4 ด้านที่ส่งผลอย่างมีนัยสำคัญต่อความพึงพอใจและพฤติกรรมของนักท่องเที่ยว ได้แก่ กิจกรรมสนับสนุนการท่องเที่ยว การให้บริการ มาตรการด้านความปลอดภัยและความเหมาะสมของราคาและทำเลที่ตั้งและกิจกรรมชุมชน นอกจากนี้ ระดับความพึงพอใจของนักท่องเที่ยวยังส่งผลต่อความตั้งใจเชิงพฤติกรรมของนักท่องเที่ยว จากผลการศึกษาดังกล่าว ผู้วางแผนและผู้จัดการด้านการท่องเที่ยวควรให้ความสำคัญ

บทความวิจัย

บทคัดย่อ

คำสำคัญ

การท่องเที่ยวโดยชุมชน;
แคมป์ปิ้ง;
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กับการออกแบบกิจกรรมที่ยึดโยงกับชุมชนและการพัฒนาศักยภาพชาวบ้านมากกว่าการปรับปรุงสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกเพียงอย่างเดียว ผู้กำหนดนโยบายสามารถนำกรอบองค์ประกอบทั้ง 7 ด้านไปใช้เป็นเกณฑ์รับรองมาตรฐานพื้นที่ตั้งแคมป์ในชุมชน งานวิจัยในอนาคตควรขยายกลุ่มตัวอย่างให้หลากหลายมากขึ้น ใช้การวิจัยแบบติดตามระยะยาวและศึกษาอิทธิพลของตัวแปรอื่นเพิ่มเติมต่อไป

1. Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the world's most dynamic economic sectors, and has a significant, if varied, impact on shaping economic growth (Thullah & Jalloh, 2021). Within this industry, the rural and nature-based tourism sector is expanding rapidly, driven by changing consumer preferences toward authentic, sustainable, and experiential travel. According to the Rural Tourism Market Report 2024, the global rural tourism market is projected to rise from USD 97.84 billion in 2024 to USD 131.47 billion in 2028, a strong compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.7%. This expansion demonstrates an increasing inclination among some travelers toward outdoor activities, eco-friendly accommodations, and immersive cultural experiences—of which camping tourism constitutes a growing and distinctive segment (Lengieza et al., 2023). Recreational camping destinations also play a prominent role in mature tourism markets such as Australia and New Zealand, and enjoy wide popularity across many European countries, as well as in Asian destinations like Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand. Particularly in Thailand, a developing economy in Southeast Asia, government policies encourage people in villages and urban communities to create and develop community-based tourism (CBT) business organizations (Rungchavalnont, 2022). Within this development, sub-themes have emerged as activities carried out by specific tourism villages along the lines of ecotourism, agricultural tourism, and rural tourism, including camping tourism villages. This phenomenon becomes particularly significant in the context of community-based camping destinations, where local residents operate accommodations that combine natural landscapes with local cultural traditions and hospitality. Although rural tourism has historically dominated the country's tourism profile, these international developments suggest that camping tourism remains an underdeveloped segment and thus holds strong potential to diversify tourism offerings (Abad & Velasquez, 2025).

Camping tourism can be understood through destination attribute frameworks that explain how specific components of a site shape tourists' experiences, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Building on Cooper et al. (2000) and Lee (2020) noted 4 elements of attributes; attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services that together shape tourists' perceptions of service quality and their levels of satisfaction. While these models are well established in broader tourism research, a number of gaps remain in the existing literature on camping tourism. First, existing camping studies primarily concentrate on commercial campsites in developed countries, offering limited insight into community-based camping in developing economies. Second, prior studies have emphasized generic campsite attributes and have not yet operationalized destination frameworks such as the 4A's that apply in this context. Consequently, little is known about how the unique characteristics of community camping sites influence tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, despite extensive work in nature-based tourism; community-based camping remains underexplored. Tourists' preferences have changed as a result of major global health crises such as COVID-19. Although some studies have explored how the COVID-19 crisis affected outdoor recreation and campsite management, they have not empirically analyzed how specific camping attraction

attributes have been shaped since the crisis. This gap is especially pronounced in Thailand, where camping has grown rapidly since the pandemic. Few studies have systematically linked tourists' perceptions of camping attractiveness to campsite management strategies during and after the crisis (Craig, 2021). This makes it necessary to build a comprehensive understanding of camping sites' attributes, which motivate tourists to select and appreciate these destinations (Ling et al., 2024). Such an investigation would make it easier to plan and manage approaches in community tourism settings more effectively and sustainably. A conceptual framework along these lines would also be useful and applicable to unregulated economic activities and small-scale enterprises prevalent in developing countries (Aguilar & Campuzano, 2009).

1.1 Importance and Significance of the Research

Understanding what drives tourists to visit camping destinations is crucial for the sustainable development of rural communities and the strategic management of emerging tourism markets. First, it supports destination competitiveness, enabling communities to design and deliver differentiated experiences based on tourists' preferences. Second, it promotes sustainable local development, empowering residents to manage resources responsibly while benefiting economically from tourism. Third, insights into service quality and behavioral responses can help guide policy and infrastructure planning in ways which will enhance environmental sustainability and visitor satisfaction. In examining these issues, this research contributes to tourism scholarship by applying destination attribute and service quality frameworks to the emerging context of community-based camping in a developing country. The study also provides actionable recommendations for campsite design, activity programming and benefit-sharing to CBT communities that further enhance their position as primary actors of development.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Camping Tourism

Broadly speaking, camping refers to an outdoor activity which typically involves spending at least one night in a natural setting in a tent, a recreational vehicle, or a mobile home. This could include temporary living arrangements for groups such as migratory farm workers, nomads, gypsies, explorers, soldiers, and refugees (Ward & Hardy, 1986, p. 2).

With regards to tourism, camping has become a major form of special interest nature-based tourism that emphasizes one's physical presence in a natural environment for recreation, encouraged as a type of sustainable tourism and landscape conservation (Dai & Zhang, 2024). Camping tourism includes sleeping (one night minimum) in a tent, recreational vehicle, camper van, mobile home, car, or other type of temporary accommodation which substitutes for an immobile home such as a house or an apartment

one's home (Brooker & Joppe, 2014; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020). Cool of the Wild (2021) noted 7 types of camping; glamping ('glamorous', or luxury camping), car camping, wild camping, hammock camping, winter camping, RVing, and garden camping. As a form of "community-based tourism" (CBT), in which local communities manage camping grounds to present their culture and local environment while gaining economic benefits from it. This arrangement facilitates mutual learning and exchange between tourists and local communities, allowing tourists to study nature and local cultures and ways of life, such as consuming meals prepared by local people (Trejos et al., 2017). In this way, community-based camping can enhance rural well-being through the creation of economic linkages and ripple effects. Building on community settings, the locally managed communication of natural settings, cultural experiences, and direct interaction with host communities shapes visitors' assessments of service quality and, in turn, their overall satisfaction with the visit (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021).

2.2 Tourist Satisfaction

In tourism research, satisfaction generally refers to feelings of happiness or contentment when one achieves success or receives what one wants (Ashgar, 2022). Satisfaction has been predominantly defined as a post-consumption evaluative judgment that reflects the comparison of prior expectations with perceived performance (Oliver, 1999). Although several researchers have theorized satisfaction, previous definitions focused mainly on whether actual performance is consistent or even exceeds customer expectations and perceptions, generating a state of contentment (Oliver, 2010). According to this logic, satisfaction is not merely a cognitive assessment of experiences but also has an affective component that represents the emotional outcome of tourists' experiences at destinations.

For the community-based camping context, satisfaction is often framed as an outcome of the interaction between destination attributes (e.g., environment, activities, service quality). Recent studies have highlighted experience quality and experiential involvement as key antecedents of trip satisfaction, moving beyond a narrow product-service view to a broader experiential perspective. In Thai CBT, recent studies highlight accessibility, community engagement, and authentic cultural-environmental experiences as strong predictors of satisfaction and continued participation (Auksondee & Darawong, 2024; Rungchavalnont, 2022). Related studies in wellness and special-interest tourism further show that experience quality and satisfaction jointly shape revisit intention and e-word-of-mouth (e-WoM), particularly in the post-COVID era, where many tourists seek restorative, nature-based, and wellness-oriented experiences (Seow et al., 2024). This aligns with evidence from community-based camping, which emphasizes activities with the community, perceived safety, and pricing fairness as key determinants of satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Guo et al., 2024). In this study, tourist satisfaction refers to the positive feelings and contentment experienced when expectations are met or exceeded after destination

visitation. It is an assessment given by tourists based on their experiences regarding the standards or key characteristics of services received, in this case, at local camping stays.

2.3 Behavioral Intentions

Behavioral intentions, grounded in attitude-behavior frameworks and relationship marketing theory, refer to a customer's stated likelihood of engaging in future behaviors such as repurchasing, recommending, and willingness to pay. Foundational work conceptualizes these intentions as the commitment to continue using a service and to communicate one's evaluation to others, serving as a proximal predictor of actual behavior (Oliver, 1999). For Zeithaml et al. (1996), behavioral intentions align with customer repurchase intentions, whereby customers continue to use or buy the same product, communicate their outcomes after purchasing (which may include positive or negative feedback), and demonstrate a willingness to pay for a product or service, including a willingness to pay more than the requested sum as a demonstration of satisfaction. In tourism, behavioral intentions capture loyalty-related responses, including revisit intentions, positive WoM, and willingness to pay more for valued experiences such as in hotels (Lee, 2020) and restaurants (Han & Hyun, 2017).

In camping contexts, evidence indicates that campsite attributes affect behavioral intentions via satisfaction and experience quality, with satisfied campers more likely to return, recommend, and accept higher prices for distinctive experiences (Evangelista & Apritado, 2024). Chaoyi et al. (2025) found that, in emerging camping markets in Asia, relaxation, novelty seeking, and destination image drive satisfaction and well-being, which in turn foster loyalty-related intentions. Within Thai CBT and community camping, findings confirm that satisfaction with local accommodations and community-based experiences significantly predicts revisit intention and positive WoM, although the direct link to willingness to pay remains less systematically explored (Auksondee & Darawong, 2024). Building on this literature, behavioral intentions result from knowledge and emotions, which manifest as observable and measurable actions. Behavioral intentions have three components: 1) Revisit Intentions: The intentions of tourists or customers with prior experience of purchasing goods or receiving services to continue purchasing or using those services in the future; 2) WOM: The willingness of tourists or customers with prior experience to recommend and share positive stories with friends, family, and relatives; and 3) Willingness to Pay: The readiness of tourists or customers to pay for products or services. These components jointly capture attitudinal loyalty outcomes and translate into economically and socially meaningful behaviors for local communities (Jeaheng et al., 2019). Positioning behavioral intentions as responses to satisfaction within a CBT camping setting links campsite attributes and community engagement with both revisitation and supportive economic behavior.

3. Camping Tourism in Thailand

Camping tourism in Thailand has developed into a vital component of the rural, nature-based tourism sector, reflecting the country's diverse landscapes and cultural riches. Within the geographical context, this form of tourism emphasizes the spatial relationships between natural settings, environmental resources, and human activities that shape the overall tourist experience (Dai & Zhang, 2024). There are several distinct forms of camping tourism in the Thai context: national park camping tourism on government-managed protected land, wild camping, commercial glamping (Sukthaworn & Nuangjamnong, 2024); private and farm-based camping on individual landowners' plots; car camping and RV tourism by self-drive travelers; and community-based camping (DASTA, 2019; Rungchavalnont, 2022), where local residents collectively manage sites, embed cultural activities into the guest experience, and share income within the community (Rindrasih, 2010; Pawson et al., 2017). The diverse topography of Thailand—ranging from mountain ranges in the North, such as those around Chiang Mai and Pai, to coastal and riverine environments in the South, such as Surat Thani and Phang Nga—creates distinct opportunities for place-based camping tourism. These destinations attract tourists seeking tranquil natural environments and authentic community interactions, aligning with the experiential and sustainable travel preferences noted by Lengieza et al. (2023). The distribution of community-based camping destinations in Thailand mirrors the accessibility and concentration of rural settlements near protected or scenic landscapes (Choibamroong & Angkananon, 2022). Distinct potentials for campsites attract more revisitation due to convenience and landscape appeal (Department of Tourism, 2019). The spatial component of safety and privacy—two factors identified as statistically significant in influencing satisfaction—reinforces the importance of environmental design and spatial planning in community tourism (Han & Hyun, 2017). Consequently, camping tourism in Thailand exemplifies a deep interconnection between geography, service quality, and behavioral dynamics. According to Thailand's Quality Criteria for Community-Based Camping Activities (Department of Tourism, 2023), the general requirements establish standards for the operation of a camping area based in the community. These criteria are organized into 4 dimensions: area, facilities, management, and activities. Destination planners must responsively consider how the site distribution of amenities, community integration, and natural resource management collectively determine tourist experiences.

4. Relationships among the Variables

The relationship among tourist satisfaction levels and local accommodations and behavioral intentions, including willingness to pay, revisit intentions, and WOM, has been explored in numerous studies (e.g., Ali et al., 2018; Han & Hyun, 2017; Mikulić et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2022). Many of these studies have highlighted how the quality and range of campsite attributes, such as natural settings, facility quality,

accessibility, and recreational activities, play a significant role in shaping tourists' satisfaction levels. Khazami & Lakner's work in Tunisia (2021) found that the physical and experiential elements of local accommodation shape tourists' overall experiences, influencing the perceived value of camping destinations and revisitation intentions.

Tourist satisfaction and behavior intentions are well studied in tourism research. Tourist satisfaction, based on experiences in local accommodations, plays a pivotal role in shaping tourists' future behaviors, such as revisiting the destination, recommending it to others, and being willing to pay when reflecting on the value of a good, a service or an experience (Ali et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2022). In terms of revisit intentions, it is a core aspect of behavioral loyalty and is heavily influenced by satisfaction. Ali et al. (2018) noted that positive experiences with local accommodations enhance tourists' attachment to a destination, leading to higher revisit rates. Service quality, destination attributes, and emotional connections play crucial roles in fostering these intentions. Moreover, Xu et al. (2022) found that destinations that offer unique and meaningful nature-based experiences often see higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty among visitors. Similarly, Kim et al.'s (2023) study of nature-based camping and tourist behavior revealed that motivations for ecotourism underpin much camping tourism influencing tourist satisfaction and behavior intentions.

Satisfaction also impacts tourists' willingness to pay heed to WOM as a strong reflection of the value derived from an experience. Han & Hyun (2017) emphasized that perceived quality and trust significantly influence both satisfaction and willingness to pay. Other studies have affirmed that service quality and emotional satisfaction correlate strongly with tourists' willingness to pay more for exceptional experiences. Tourist satisfaction not only exhibits increased willingness to pay but also indicates intentions to return or to recommend an accommodation. Following on from this brief discussion, the following hypotheses were devised:

- H1: A multitude of attributes in a community camping site affect tourist satisfaction levels
- H2: Tourist satisfaction affects behavioral intentions: revisit intentions
- H3: Tourist satisfaction affects behavioral intentions: (WOM)
- H4: Tourist satisfaction affects behavioral intentions: willingness to pay

5. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design combining qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze selected camping sites in Thailand. Data generated in a series of semi-structured interviews underwent a comprehensive quantitative analysis of survey data, which also enhanced the generalizability of the study's findings. The qualitative component involved the collection of detailed comments and opinions by stakeholders who have had experience with community campsites

management and frequent experience of travelling and staying at community campsites in Thailand. The quantitative phase took the form of survey data results derived from 402 tourists. An overview of the research design is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Research Design

Research Methodology Applied	Mixed Methods Research	
	Phase 1 Qualitative Research	Phase 2 Quantitative Research
Data Collection Method	Semi-structured interviews	Survey
Sample Size	20 (5 Stakeholder groups)	402 (Tourists)
Sampling	Purposive	Simple random
Data Analysis Technique	Thematic Analysis	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Confirmation Factor Analysis (CFA) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

(Source Authors)

The questionnaire was developed from a synthesis of prior literature and its content validity was confirmed by three experts. A pilot test with 30 convenience-sampled respondents was then conducted, and all constructs yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of at least 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

5.1 Data Collection

For the qualitative data, a purposive sample of 20 stakeholders in the southern province of Surat Thani was selected, comprising 4 residents, 5 members of a community tourism group, 5 tourists with prior experience of camping in rural communities, 3 accommodation operators, and 3 tourism academics. Semi-structured interviews and observational notes were utilized to gather this data. The interviews inquired about the participants' prior experiences with existing site features and asked about concerns and solutions to any issues raised. The participants were selected by convenience sampling to meet the study's objectives concerning signage design and utilization. A total of 20 semi-structured interviews was sufficient to reach thematic saturation, in line with empirical guidance that most themes in homogeneous samples emerge within 12-24 interviews (Guest et al., 2006; Hennink et al., 2017). For the quantitative data, a total of 402 respondents completed a structured survey. This sample size was determined to achieve a 95% confidence level with a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error. The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections: Research Explanation and Consent, Participants' Profiles, Community-Based Camping, and Tourist Behaviors. The questions used a 7-point Likert scale to determine the level of agreement,

where 1 indicated “least agreement”, and 7 indicated “strongest agreement”. The researchers employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique, where questionnaires were distributed face-to-face to tourists who voluntarily agreed to participate. The research team clearly explained the study and encouraged respondents to complete the questionnaire on-site. As a result, all distributed questionnaires were returned immediately, resulting in a 100% response rate.

5.2 Data Analysis

For qualitative data analysis, the interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. The emerging themes focused on tourists’ experiences travelling in local community areas and staying in campsites. In Phase 1, thematic coding produced 76 candidate indicators. Overlapping and weakly worded items were removed, and content validation by three experts ($IOC \geq 0.50$) reduced the pool to 50 items, which were then organized into 7 domains for the survey instrument. These inductively derived themes were then quantitatively examined in Phase 2 through a structured questionnaire administered to 402 campers, allowing the interview-based insights to be tested via Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), identifying and grouping the underlying attributes of community-based camping tourism according to tourists’ preferences. Subsequently, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed using AMOS version 24 to evaluate model fit and assess the reliability and validity of the proposed factor structure. While CFA assessed the measurement validity and fit of the specified model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the predefined hypotheses and examine complex structural relationships among constructs linking campsite attributes, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intentions.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Surattthani Rajabhat University prior to data collection. All the participants were fully informed about the aims of the study and they all gave their explicit consent to take part. The researchers ensured that all data was handled anonymously and confidentially at each stage of the research process. Both interview and survey protocols were designed to exclude any questions that might be deemed sensitive, and the participants were assured they could withdraw at any time without having to provide a reason.

6. Results

6.1 Qualitative Data Results

The qualitative phase used participatory research and interviews with five stakeholder groups—local residents, community tourism group members, tourists, accommodation operators, and tourism academics. Thematic analysis, triangulated with the relevant literature, produced ten dimensions of community-based camping accommodation quality: (1) cleanliness, (2) food and beverages, (3) privacy and safety, (4) environment and location, (5) activities and community engagement, (6) environmental conservation and tourism resource management, (7) amenities and facilities, (8) service quality and hospitality, (9) COVID-19 prevention measures, and (10) pricing. These dimensions align with earlier campsite attribute frameworks (Lee, 2020; Mikulić et al., 2017) and Thai CBT standards (Department of Tourism, 2019) and Quality Criteria for Community-Based Camping Activities (Department of Tourism, 2023). Across nearly all dimensions, community participation and cultural authenticity surfaced as recurring themes, indicating that local ownership and cultural preservation are not separate concerns but embedded in how accommodation quality is understood in community settings.

6.2 Participants by Profile and Campsite Experience

Analysis of the participants' demographic data revealed that the majority (262, or 65.2%) were female, while 133 (33.1%) were male and 7 (1.7%) were of unspecified gender. Regarding age, the majority of the sample (153, or 38.3%) were aged between 21 and 25 years old. In terms of education level, the majority had a bachelor's degree (225, or 56.0%). Regarding monthly income, the majority of the sample earned between 100,000 and 200,000 baht per year (221, or 55.0%). As for occupation, the largest single group comprised students (113, or 28.1%). In terms of the sample group's annual accommodation experiences, the majority (156, or 38.8%) had stayed 2-3 times in the previous year. Regarding accommodation expenses per night, the majority spent more than 501 baht per night (143 respondents, or 35.6%). The average length of stay per visit was 2-3 nights, with 268 respondents (66.7%) selecting this.

6.3 Assessment of the Measurement Model

EFA was conducted on the semi-structured interviews, in combination with a review of the relevant literature (Department of Tourism of Thailand, 2019; Mikulić et al., 2017; Lee, 2020), to identify and explore how the key components of tourism accommodation standards and community participation align with tourists' needs. From analysis of the initial 76 variables, 50 remained and were then categorized into seven

attributes. A correlation matrix was tested using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which showed statistical significance, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was calculated at 0.962, with $p < 0.001$. Eigenvalues were greater than 1, and the total variance explained was 75.743%. All components had Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.7, ranging from 0.935 to 0.963.

Additionally, the unidimensionality of each variable was checked by CFA (see Figure 1). The validity and reliability of indicators were determined. For each factor, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was greater than the Construct Reliability (CR) for all constructs, confirming that each item demonstrated consistency, appropriateness, and empirical validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). It is thus reasonable to contend that all the latent constructs achieved sufficient validity and reliability (the corrected item-total correlations for all seven components are detailed in Table 2).

CFA was conducted using AMOS version 24. The model fit indices to assess the goodness of fit of the data were reported as follows: $\chi^2/df = 4.617$, $\chi^2 = 1215.350$, $df = 1150$, $(p < 0.001)$, RMSEA = 0.095, CFI = 0.840, and NFI = 0.805. All factor loadings exceeded 0.50 for each variable, meeting the criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2019). The normality of the data distribution was tested through skewness and kurtosis analysis. The skewness values ranged from -1.333 to -0.669, and the kurtosis values ranged from -1.493 to 1.540. Based on the normality criteria (skewness and kurtosis between -2.00 and +2.00), the dataset was deemed acceptable for analysis (George & Mallery, 2010). Detailed results are presented in Figure 1.

Goodness of Fit Statistic:

$\chi^2/df = 4.617$,

$\chi^2 = 1215.350$,

$df = 1150$,

$p < .001$,

RMSEA = .095,

CFI = .840,

NFI = .805

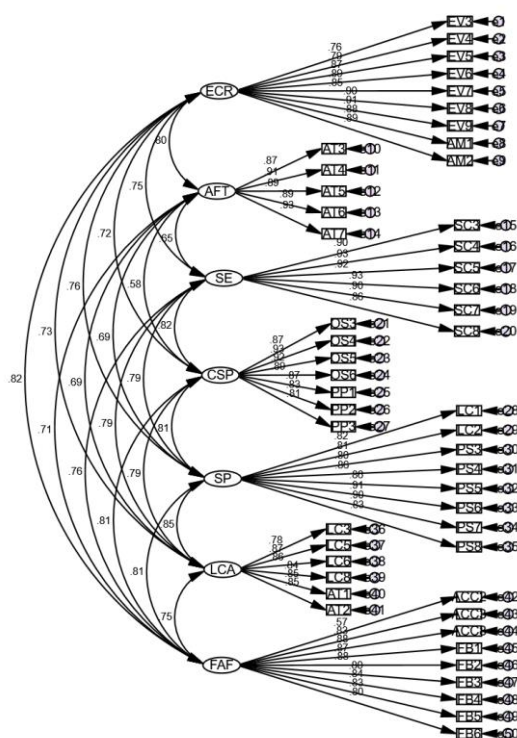


Figure 1. Measurement Model: Confirmation Factor Analysis

Table 2

Correlations among the 7 Factors

	ECR	AFT	SE	CSP	SP	LCA	FAF	AVE
ECR	.861							.742
AFT	.797 (.635)	.899						.809
SE	.747 (.558)	.652 (.425)	.905					.820
CSP	.720 (.518)	.579 (.335)	.816 (.665)	.874				.764
SP	.764 (.583)	.687 (.471)	.792 (.627)	.809 (.654)	.850			.723
LCA	.720 (.518)	.682 (.465)	.781 (.609)	.768 (.589)	.836 (.698)	.849		.721
FAF	.817 (.667)	.713 (.508)	.756 (.671)	.804 (.646)	.813 (.660)	.730 (.532)	.721	.669
CR	.963	.955	.965	.958	.954	.939	.947	

Environmental and Community Resources = ECR, Activities for tourism = AFT, Service Encounter = SE, COVID-19 Safety offering and Reasonable Price = CSP, Security and Privacy = SP, Location and Community Activities = LCA, Food and Accommodation Facilities = FAF

6.4 Assessment of the Structural Equation Model

Hypothesis testing was conducted using SEM utilizing AMOS Version 24 to evaluate the model of tourism accommodation standards with community participation. This model includes the following latent variables: Environmental and Community Resources (ECR), Activities for Tourism (AFT), Service Encounter (SE), COVID-19 Safety Offering and Reasonable Prices (CSP), Security and Privacy (SP), Location and Community Activities (LCA), and Food and Accommodation Facilities (FAF). These variables were tested for their impact on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions, encompassing Revisit Intentions, WOM, and Willingness to Pay. Model Fit Indices are Chi-square (χ^2) 6,377.567, Degrees of freedom (df): 1,775 Relative Chi-square Ratio (χ^2/df): 3.593, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA): 0.080, Comparative Fit Index (CFI): 0.865, Normed Fit Index (NFI): 0.823, Incremental Fit Index (IFI): 0.866, and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI): 0.851. The goodness-of-fit statistics ($\chi^2/df = 3.593$, ($p < .001$), RMSEA = 0.080, CFI = 0.865, NFI = 0.823, IFI = 0.866, TLI = 0.851) indicate an acceptable fit between the model and the observed data (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hair et al., 2019). Further details of the relationships and path coefficients are illustrated in Figure 2.

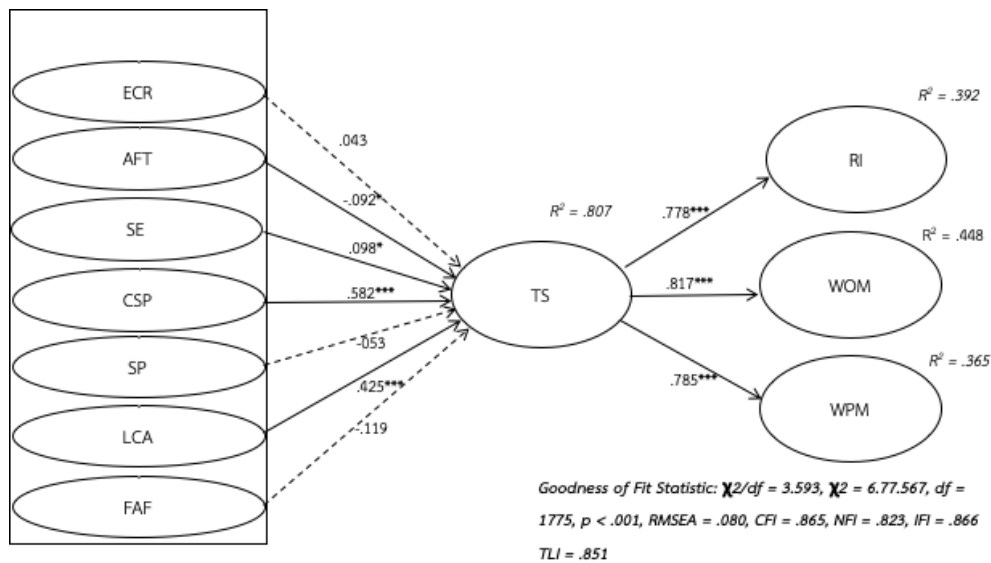


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

6.5 Hypothesis Examination Results

This study investigates the extent to which camping tourism as a form of CBT and local community participation aligns with tourists' preferences and experiences as means of exploring the relationship between tourist satisfaction with local accommodation and behavioral intentions. The study revealed a number of specific correlations through SEM analysis. In Table 3, the four hypotheses are addressed in sequence as follows:

- H1: Each attribute affects tourists' satisfaction levels. The analysis here identified four attributes which significantly affect tourist satisfaction: 1) Activities for Tourism (AFT → TS): (β beta = -0.092, $t = -2.141$, $p < 0.001$); 2) Service Encounters (SE → TS), (β beta = 0.098, $t = 2.223$, $p < 0.001$); 3) COVID-19 Safety Offering and Reasonable Pricing (CSP → TS), (β beta = 0.582, $t = 9.021$, $p < 0.001$); and 4) Location and Community Activities (LCA → TS), (β beta = 0.425, $t = 4.809$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, three attributes do not significantly influence tourists' satisfaction levels: 1) Environmental and Community Resources (β ECR → TS = .043, $t = .705$, $p > .05$); 2) Security and Privacy (β SP → TS = -.053, $t = -.737$, $p > .05$); and 3) Food and Accommodation Facilities (β FAF → TS = -.119, $t = -1.353$, $p > .05$).
- H2: Tourist satisfaction influences behavioral intentions: Revisit Intentions (β TS → IR = .778, $t = 15.302$, $p < .001$) = the hypothesis is supported.
- H3: Tourist satisfaction influences behavioral intentions: WOM (β TS → WOM = .817, $t = 14.334$, $p < .001$): the hypothesis is supported.
- H4: Tourist satisfaction influences behavioral intention: Willingness to Pay (β TS → WPM = .785, $t = 13.368$, $p < .001$) = the hypotheses is supported.

Table 3

Summary of Outcomes of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis/Relationship			Standardized estimates	t-Values	Result
H1: A multitude of attributes in a community camping site affect tourist satisfaction					
ECR	→	TS	.043	.705	Not supported
AFT	→	TS	-.092	-2.141*	Supported
SE	→	TS	.098	2.223*	Supported
CSP	→	TS	.582	9.021***	Supported
SP	→	TS	-.053	-.737	Not supported
LCA	→	TS	.425	4.809***	Supported
FAF	→	TS	-.119	-1.353	Not supported
H2: Tourist satisfaction affects behavioral intentions: Revisit Intentions					
TS	→	IR	.778	15.302***	Supported
H3: Tourist satisfaction affects behavioral intentions: Word-of-Mouth (WOM)					
TS	→	WOM	.817	14.334***	Supported
H4 Tourist satisfaction affects behavioral intentions: Willingness to Pay					
TS	→	WPM	.785	13.368***	Supported
Goodness of Fit Statistic: $\chi^2/df = 3.593$, $\chi^2 = 677.567$, $df = 1775$, $p < .001$, $RMSEA = .080$, $CFI = .865$, $NFI = .823$, $IFI = .866$					

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

7. Discussion

The validation results indicate that the key components of local accommodations aligning with tourist expectations include “Support Activities for Tourism (AFT)”, “Service Encounter (SE)”, “COVID-19 Safety Offering and Pricing Appropriateness (CSP)”, and “Location and Community Activities (LCA)”. The finding that these factors significantly influence tourist satisfaction aligns with previous research findings, such as Guo et al. (2024) and Zeithaml et al. (1996), who emphasized the critical role of service quality in determining customer satisfaction. This highlights that well-designed and consistent services lead to higher satisfaction levels, which is essential for loyalty and revisit intentions. Jeaheng et al. (2019) focused on the importance of perceived quality in accommodations, including aspects like service delivery and pricing fairness. These factors are shown to directly influence tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This aligns with Muskat et al. (2019), who explored how food quality, environmental factors, price, and service quality all contribute positively to customer satisfaction in the tourism industry. These factors embody the experiential and interactional dimensions of service provision and are closely aligned with service-quality

frameworks such as SERVQUAL, wherein responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are central drivers of perceived value, trust, and attitudinal loyalty

By contrast, Environmental and Community Resources (ECR), Safety and Privacy (SP), and Food and Accommodation Facilities (FAF) were not identified as statistically significant antecedents of overall satisfaction. Rather than implying that these dimensions are unimportant, this pattern suggests that they function as hygiene or threshold attributes within the community-based camping setting. In the Thai CBT context, tourists appear to presuppose a minimum standard of site characteristics and management—such as environmental cleanliness and personal security—and facilities, including basic food and lodging provision, as a precondition for considering a rural community campsite. Once these baseline expectations are fulfilled, incremental enhancements in these domains exert only limited marginal effects on satisfaction, whereas deficiencies might plausibly trigger marked dissatisfaction. The salience of these factors is also consistent with post-COVID tourism scholarship, which underscores the growing importance of visible health-safety protocols, transparent and equitable pricing, and authentic community engagement in shaping evaluative judgments of tourism experiences. It should further be acknowledged that the sample composition—dominated by young, price-sensitive campers, many of whom are students—likely amplifies the weight accorded to activity-based experiences, social interaction, and value for money and, correspondingly, attenuates the relative importance attached to comfort- and privacy-oriented attributes. As a consequence, attributes associated with enhanced comfort, seclusion, and higher-end facilities may be systematically underrepresented in the present model and could emerge as more salient predictors of satisfaction among family, older, or higher-income segments, which constitutes a fruitful avenue for subsequent inquiry.

8. Conclusion

This study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to our understanding of community-based camping as an emerging segment in the tourism industry. The identification and validation of seven key attributes provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating and improving community-based camping offerings, while the strong relationships between satisfaction and behavioral intentions demonstrate the economic viability of this tourism model.

8.1 Theoretical Contributions

The study extends service quality theory to the community-based camping context, revealing unique satisfaction drivers that differ from traditional destination settings. The framework contributes to the growing literature on alternative tourism forms and provides empirical validation for the future

development of CBT. The finding that certain traditionally important factors (environmental resources, privacy, accommodation facilities) do not significantly influence satisfaction challenges existing assumptions and suggests the need for context-specific theoretical development in CBT research. Drawing on experiential tourism, the research develops a model linking satisfaction and behavioral intentions to campground features. Campsite attributes act as environmental stimuli impacting travelers' psychological responses and behavioral choices. This approach reveals how individual-level factors mediate sustainability outcomes. The standard attributes of camping destinations serve both as psychological influences and strategic assets. These findings advance service quality's micro-foundations and suggest future research should examine mediators like tourist behavior, tourist expectations or tourist motivations.

8.2 Practical Implications for the Industry

This study offers several practical implications for community-based camping development. Destination managers and local entrepreneurs should enhance and prioritize service encounter quality, experiential community activities with residents, host training, implement appropriate safety measures, and ensure reasonable pricing strategies. The strong behavioral intention outcomes justify investments in satisfaction-enhancing initiatives as they directly translate to business sustainability through revisitation, positive WOM, and price premium acceptance. Local government, tourism policymakers and local authorities can utilize the key attributes as national standard criteria for selecting, mentoring, and certifying community-based camping sites. This involves facilitating training in safety management, visitor flow and zoning, basic environmental management, and collaborative product development across neighboring communities to create coherent regional camping routes. In doing so, policymakers can position community-based camping as a strategic tool for diversifying rural tourism, strengthening local resilience, and advancing inclusive, low-impact tourism development.

8.3 Implications for Community Development

The study demonstrates that community-based camping can serve as an effective tool for community economic development while at the same time preserving cultural authenticity. This model strengthens local economic retention by operating camping sites and locally-run restaurants that are central to the visitor experience, thereby channeling tourist spending directly to resident households rather than external operators. The emphasis on community-designed tourism activities demonstrates that meaningful economic opportunities for rural communities without requiring significant infrastructure investments can be created. The findings support the sustainable tourism paradigm by showing that authentic, community-integrated experiences can achieve high satisfaction levels without compromising community resources or cultural integrity.

8.4 Limitations of the Research and Future Research Opportunities

This study's limitations include its cross-sectional design, which offers only a single-point view of tourist perceptions at established camping sites in southern Thailand. Future studies might adopt longitudinal and cross-cultural approaches to garner a broader understanding. This would help enhance tourism development strategies, particularly in preparing for an international audience. Additionally, the current research focused solely on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Future studies might consider other factors influencing tourist behavior, such as tourists' attitudes, perceptions, emotions, or decision-making processes. Apart from repeating this study in other geographic locations, it is highly desirable that future researchers develop a measurement scale for competitive analysis and critical success factor models. Future researchers may expand upon the evaluation criteria to draw upon the rich contributions of these approaches and models. As identified earlier, there is also a need to expand the research on destination competitiveness to other stakeholders (e.g., the tourism industry and government sector).

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