



## Key factors in managing cultural tourism in a sustainable way

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore factors that affect effective management of cultural tourism site. This is a quantitative study that aims to determine key factors that affect Chinese tourists' decisions in terms of effective cultural tourism resource management at Thai temples. The study collected data from 1,600 tourists of Chinese nationality. These tourists were selected through non proportional quota sampling with the accidental sampling method from a population of Chinese tourists in Bangkok. Multiple regression was applied to the data analysis. The study found that certain variables can predict the decision of tourists to score cultural tourism resource management at a statistically significant level of .05. These variables include: cultural tourism's value perception; conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources; conservation tourism resource knowledge; those aged from 30–45; those aged more than 46 years; students; government staff; businessmen; and employees. The findings should be useful for promoting and managing planner in the cultural destination in promoting sustainable tourism in cultural destinations.

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### Introduction

Many tourists travel abroad to experience different cultures than their own (Liu, Li, Cárdenas, & Yang, 2018). Cross cultural circumstances may cause problems, for example, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported that a British man and woman in Dubai were fined for drinking alcohol and sentenced to jail for kissing in public. This is an example of how even the tourism industry is affected by cultural differences in communication and interpretation (Liu et al., 2018). According to sustainable principles (Jaswal, Verma, & Bagga, 2017) tourists should have a pleasurable experience and learn more about the culture of their destination at the same time (Battilani, Bernini, & Mariotti, 2018). Tourism managers or stakeholders should create activities that promote proper understanding for tourists from different cultures. Currently, Thailand is a dream destination for Chinese tourists (Hongyu, 2018). Therefore, the number of

Chinese tourists is increasing every year (Kaewta, 2018). Many Chinese tourists visit popular temples (Wats) in Bangkok; sometimes, there are problems such as loud, impolite, unruly behavior that occurs with temple management after Chinese tourist visits (Travel wire Asia, 2018). These problems are not only cultural misunderstandings but also management problems for the cultural destination. Sustainable tourism principles have been broadly discussed and applied as tools to prevent and preserve tourism resources, both cultural and natural, since the late 1980s, but there are also some weaknesses that Liu (2010) has explored. One of these weaknesses is the role of tourism in promoting sociocultural progress. The motivation for this research is to see if the sustainable tourism principle can decrease sociocultural misunderstanding and lead to effective destination management. Therefore, this paper aims to explore causal associated determinants based on sustainable tourism principles for effective cultural tourism resource management to promote tourism resource management effectively and decrease cultural misunderstanding.

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## Literature Review

Some categories of cultural and tourism resources, such as the Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), have categorized cultural, historical, scientific or other forms of significance for natural and cultural heritage conservation purposes (Roodt, n.d.). It is important to make the tourists perceive the tourism resource's value and change their behavior in the proper manner when they visit cultural or natural destinations (Hardy, 2001). Aspect from the personal and professional lives of tourists can help develop a knowledge-based society (Dabrowska-Paulewicz, Wacowska, & Bokwa, 2014; Kasemsap, 2015). Tourism can stimulate visitors' awareness, which, according to cultural tourism, raises awareness and the appreciation of cultural heritage while encouraging tourists to visit historical archaeological sites (El Menshaw, 2016). As we know, it is necessary to realize that the tourist industry is composed of many small but highly competitive operations as well as the well-known and often criticized multinational body. Too many improper or poorly operated small-scale developments in the wrong location can be just as harmful and non-sustainable as a single large development (Butler, 1999). Many tourism destination managers lack concern for conservation issues when they manage tourism resources (Akbulak & Cengiz, 2014); this is something these managers need to pay attention to if they want to manage a successful tourist destination. Bunge-Vivier and Martínez-Ballesté (2017) found that recognition of the heterogeneity of the socioeconomic and cultural context of communities with common properties is necessary to design governmental conservation programs that achieve long-term conservation. Moreover, Muhumuza and Balkwill (2013) summarized that in 21.1 percent of publications, authors found that provisions of education, awareness, and outreach programs to local communities neighboring parks were responsible, in some cases, for successful conservation and biodiversity. As a result—, good resource conservation is one of the many issues that shows effective management of tourist destinations, as does a management plan used as a tool to indicate how a park is to be protected, used, developed and managed (Eagles, McCoole, Haynes, & Phillips, 2002). One of the best practice interpretations for sustainable tourism—is increasing visitor's understanding and, awareness, as well as the appreciation of nature, heritage and site resources (El Menshaw, 2016). Weaver, Kwek and Wang (2017) recognized that Shallow, Extrinsic, Hybrid and Intrinsic segments which vary by their demographics, the degree of cultural connection, the experience with and knowledge of China, and the willingness to engage with Chinese culture, resulted in distinctive cognitive, affective, conative and prescriptive responses in various frontstage and backstage tourism moments. In addition, Keitumetse (2014) stated that people inhabit and change environments using socio-cultural and psycho-social behaviors and processes. People use their socio-cultural understanding of phenomena to interact with the environment. People are carriers of cultural heritage. These characteristics make cultural values ubiquitous in all people-accessed and people-inhabited geographic spaces of the world, making people readily available assets through which environmental sustainability can be implemented.

Furthermore, Chen and Chen (2010) investigate the relationships between the quality of those experiences as well as the perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions of the visitor experience in heritage tourism in Taiwan. The results revealed direct effects of the quality of experience on perceived value and satisfaction. Nevertheless, Nyaupane and Timothy (2010) examined the public awareness of heritage properties in Arizona, USA. The results showed that the aware/visited group members had more positive attitudes towards heritage preservation than the other groups. This paper suggests that visiting heritage sites by residents and tourists can help create heritage awareness. The findings of this study provide important information for heritage site managers and policy makers. Moreover, community residents have strong stakes in local heritage sites and may constitute an important force in conservation, management and development. Positive relationships between a heritage site and community residents can promote its protection (Han, Yang, Shi, Liu, & Wall, 2016). Wurzinger and Johansson (2006) investigated whether eco-tourists are more ecologically oriented than nature tourists and city tourists. The authors found that in all three groups, knowledge about ecotourism was limited and mainly associated with ecologically sound tourism. The application of Stern and colleagues' schematic causal model of environmental concern was proven to be useful, and implications for the tourism industry can be derived. Furthermore, principles of sustainable tourism development (Ecological Tourism in Europe) stated that social dimension should concern participation and information, more meaningful tourism experiences, promotion of visitor observation and comprehension – culture, sensitivity towards local people & other stakeholders.

These factors were summarized for the hypothesis and conceptual framework of this paper. Thus, the objectives of this study are to examine some of the key factors, composed of social and population factors, that affect cultural tourism resource management effectively; cultural tourism's value perception; conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources; and the conservation tourism resource knowledge for affective cultural tourism resource management.

### *Definitions in This Study*

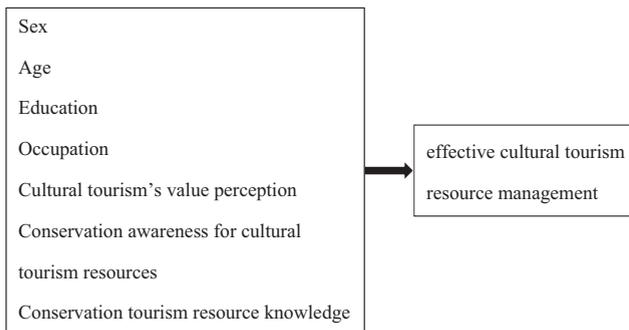
**Cultural resources:** physical features, both natural and man-made, associated with human activity. These include all products of man's cultural life which could be mobilized in other to meet the needs of tourism development.

**Cultural tourism resource management:** increasing demand by tourists provided a powerful political and economic justification to expand conservation activities; on the other hand, increased visitation without regard for their cultural values posed a real threat to the integrity.

**Cultural tourism's value perception:** the visitors or tourists understand cultural resource's significances.

**Conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources:** the visitors or tourists awareness to protect cultural resource's significances.

**Conservation tourism resource knowledge:** the visitors or tourists have knowledge to conserve cultural resource's significances.



**Figure 1** Conceptual framework

## Methodology

### Data Collection

This quantitative survey is composed of 1,600 Chinese correspondents by using non proportional quota sampling with a convenience sampling method and interviews of Chinese tourists from 4 popular destinations in Bangkok. These destinations were Wat Phra Kaew (Temple of the Emerald Buddha), Wat Pho (Temple of the Reclining Buddha), Wat Rakhang and Wat Arun (Temple of Dawn). There were 400 cases interviewed at each location; therefore, 1,600 cases represent the total sample size. These respondents were purposively selected from amongst those who had seen cultural items such as the chapel and pagoda as well as the sacred things in those temples to know whether their social and population factors as well as other factors influence their decision making and to determine if cultural tourism resource management is effective or not. The researcher analyzed the causal correlation between independent and dependent variables. This study was conducted from May to July 2017, wherein questionnaires were given to the tourists at tourist crowded temples in Bangkok, Thailand. The research tools for this study were structural questionnaires, which were divided into two portions. The first portion gathered social and population data. The second portion pertained to the influence of geographical factors on effective cultural tourism resource management. The tool for assessing reliability was a research tool known as Alpha; the Coefficient was 0.95.

### Data Analysis

The key variables were measured by using scale data. The total scale data varied from 1–5, where 1 is the lowest agreement and 5 is the highest agreement.

The percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe general data containing a description of social, population, and geographical factors that affected effective tourism resource management. Multiple regression (Enter method) was used to explore causal relationships between key factor and effective cultural tourist management by setting the statistically significant level to .05. Multiple regression was used to report data and to account for the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more nominal, ordinal,

interval or ratio-level independent variables. Therefore, in this paper multiple regression was used to account for the relationship between social and population factors; cultural tourism's value perception; conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources; and the conservation tourism resource knowledge for effective cultural tourism resource management.

## Results

Table 1 indicates that more than half of the samples were female (859 persons; 53.7%). In addition, most of the Chinese tourists were aged from 30–45 years (752 persons; 47%). Most of the tourists had an education at the bachelor's degree level (770 persons; 48.1%). These tourists were students (391 persons; 24.4%).

Table 2 shows that most tourists shared comments that they perceived the cultural tourism's value at 2.99, with a standard deviation of .70. The tourists were aware of cultural tourism resource conservation, with a value of 3.61 and a standard deviation of .64. Most of the tourists had conservation tourism resource knowledge, with a value of 3.95 and a standard deviation of .80. Moreover, the tourists considered that managing cultural resources was effective, with a value of 3.54 and a standard deviation of .95.

Table 3 shows that the following variables of tourists can predict effective cultural tourism resource management at statistically significant level of 0.05. These variables include the following: aged 30–45; more than 46 years old; students; government staff; businessmen; employees; cultural tourism's value perception of tourists; conservation awareness of the selected samples; and the conservation tourism resource knowledge of the visitors. Tourists' aged 30–45 increased by 1 unit, resulting in .237-fold more cultural tourism resource management. Tourists more than 46 years old increased by 1 unit, resulting in .369-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management compared to tourists less than 30 years of age. Tourists who were students increased by 1 unit, resulting in .236-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management. Tourists who were government staff increased by 1 unit, resulting in .371-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management. Tourists who were businessmen increased by 1 unit resulting in .177-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management. Tourists who were employees increased by 1 unit, resulting in .196-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management compared to tourists who were in other occupations. Cultural tourism's value perception increased by 1 unit, resulting in .209-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management. The conservation awareness of the tourists for cultural tourism resources increased by 1 unit resulting in .358-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management. The conservation tourism resource knowledge of the tourists increased by 1 unit resulting in .349-fold more effective cultural tourism resource management.

## Discussion

Age and occupation are key factors in effective cultural tourism resource management that are relevant to research by

Jingyi and colleagues who found that age and occupation were significant determinants of the perception of local cultural change in Zhuhai (Jingyi & Chung-Shing, 2017). Cultural tourism’s value perception, conservation awareness of cultural tourism resources, and conservation tourism resource knowledge have been associated with the factor of cultural tourism resource management as shown in Table 3. These three factors relate to the study of Ching Fu Chen and Fu Shian Chen (Chen & Chen, 2010), Nyaupane and Timothy (Nyaupane & Timothy, 2010) and Barkmann and Zschiegner (Barkmann & Zschiegner, 2010). This means that if tourists perceive the significance of the tourism resources, they will visit sustainably regardless of the circumstances. Furthermore,

conservation consciousness and knowledge of resources will increase the concerns for cultural resources that lead to a destination’s effective management in a sustainable way. Since visitors have full conservation consciousness, they are willing to respect the rules and avoid taking actions that cause the deterioration of resources; there are many cases of cultural events that are designed to attract tourists and promote tourist spending in the local economy (Torre & Scarborough, 2017). At the same time, conservation awareness of cultural resources should not be ignored. Sustainable tourism management could fulfil the satisfaction of everyone and every organization concerned about destinations in term of using natural and cultural resources (Luekveerawattana, 2018).

**Table 1** Number and percentage classified by social and population factors

	Frequency	Percent	Effective tourism resource management	
			$\bar{x}$	<i>SD</i>
Sex				
Male	741	46.3	3.54	.930
Female	859	53.7	3.55	.958
Age				
Less than 30 years old	534	33.4	3.28	.924
From 30–45	752	47.0	3.60	.904
More than 46 years old	314	19.6	3.86	.964
Education				
Below bachelor’s degree	483	30.2	3.48	.965
Bachelor’s degree	770	48.1	3.49	.950
Higher than bachelor’s degree	347	21.7	3.74	.881
Occupation				
Student	391	24.4	3.50	.930
Government staff	340	21.3	3.73	.933
Businessmen	347	21.7	3.61	.910
Employee	278	17.4	3.40	.908
Others	244	15.2	3.44	1.03
Total	1600	100.0		

**Table 2** Mean and standard deviation of variable

	Cultural tourism’s value perception		Conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources		Conservation tourism resource knowledge	
	$\bar{x}$	<i>SD</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>SD</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>SD</i>
Sex						
Male	3.00	.733	3.63	.628	3.91	.829
Female	2.99	.676	3.59	.641	3.99	.780
Age						
Less than 30 years old	2.91	.755	3.52	.622	3.85	.790
From 30–45	3.02	.714	3.62	.635	3.94	.782
More than 46 years old	3.08	.551	3.74	.636	4.16	.844
Education						
Below bachelor’s degree	2.86	.665	3.53	.682	3.92	.871
Bachelor’s degree	2.98	.714	3.59	.602	3.94	.817
Higher than bachelor’s degree	3.22	.674	3.76	.614	4.02	.667
Occupation						
Student	2.87	.708	3.58	.650	3.95	.805
Government staff	2.97	.601	3.62	.634	4.02	.882
Businessmen	3.19	.749	3.68	.656	3.96	.772
Employee	2.95	.725	3.48	.610	3.76	.770
Others	2.99	.674	3.68	.588	4.07	.739

**Table 3** Tourists’ social and population factors that affect effective cultural tourism resource management

Variable	B	SE	Beta	t	sig
Male	-.008	.038	-.004	-.213	.831
Age less than 30 (reference group)					
Age from 30–45	.237	.044	.125	5.427	.000*
Age more than 46 years old	.369	.055	.155	6.703	.000*
Lower than bachelor’s degree (reference group)					
Bachelor’s degree	-.041	.045	-.022	-.923	.356
Higher than bachelor’s degree	.017	.056	.007	.306	.760
Student	.236	.062	.107	3.777	.000*
Government staff	.371	.063	.161	5.841	.000*
Businessmen	.177	.065	.077	2.720	.007*
Employee	.196	.068	.079	2.905	.004*
Others (reference group)					
Cultural tourism’s value perception	.209	.030	.156	6.872	.000*
Conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources	.358	.039	.241	9.186	.000*
Conservation tourism resource knowledge	.349	.029	.297	11.959	.000*
Constant	-.131	.134		-.977	

Note: R<sup>2</sup> = .370 , SEE = .75300 , F = 77.536, Sig of F = .000

Y = -.008(Male) +.237(Age from 30–45) +.369(Age more than 46 years old) -.041(Bachelor’s degree) +.017(Higher than bachelor’s degree) +.236(Student) +.371(Government staff) +.177(Businessmen) +.196(Employee) +.209(Cultural tourism’s value perception) +.358(Conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources)+.349(Conservation tourism resource knowledge) -1.31

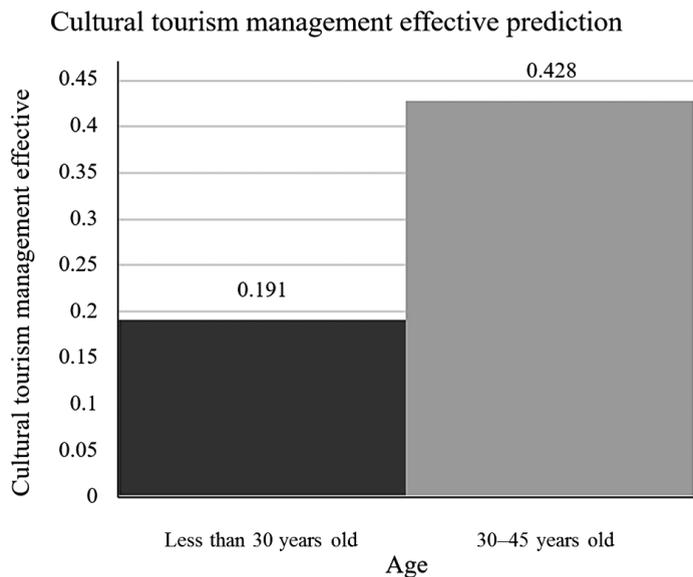
**Conclusion and Recommendation**

The three main factors that affect effective management are cultural tourism’s value perception, conservation awareness for cultural tourism resources, and conservation tourism resource knowledge. This means that if visitors perceive cultural resources’ value, they will be highly aware of tourism resources. In addition, conservation knowledge will increasingly stimulate tourists to act in a proper manner while visiting. This will help the destination managers effectively manage their tourism resources.

For recommendation, from the equation, when every factor is equal and supposing everyone is male, the visitors

who are less than 30-years-old will give scores of effective cultural tourism resource management less than the visitors who are 30–45 years-old as Figure 2. The manager of cultural tourism site can promote and interpret significance of cultural tourism resources to the visitors or tourists who are less than 30 years old for increasing effective management.

Recommendation for further study; this study has focused on sustainable principle to develop study framework and was specific only on social dimension. There are other interesting dimensions for further study such as environment or economic. Figure 2 shows predicting effective cultural tourism resource management by age.



**Figure 2** Predicting effective cultural tourism resource management by age

## Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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