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## **Foundation economic development for network development community tourism by linking local products and cultural capital Tak Province**

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**Abstract**---The research effort explained the phenomenon of sustainable tourism development in Tak province of Thailand, influenced by complex variables of cultural perspective including cultural capital and community participation. The moderation role of the important factor of cultural tourism is incorporated in the study, for assessment of the relationship between exogenous and endogenous constructs. This research was conducted on tourism operators of Thailand operating in Tak province that provided their valuable concern of sustainable tourism development. The study reported an insignificant relationship between cultural capital and sustainable tourism development, and between community participation and sustainable tourism development. The cultural perspective significantly influences the relationship between cultural tourism and sustainable tourism development. The moderation role of cultural tourism was observed between the relationship of cultural capital and sustainable tourism development by strengthening the relationship. While no moderation was observed between community participation and sustainable tourism development. The study suggested to policymakers and government to ensure and encourage cultural development to attract international tourists. Future studies must be conducted in cultural tourism for the sustainability of tourism.

**Keywords**---sustainable tourism development, cultural capital, cultural tourism, community participation, Tak Province, Thailand.

## Introduction

The tourism sector has a conspicuous role in the development of the country as dramatic changes in the environment have negatively impacted the sector all around the world. The pandemic era largely affected tourism due to a large-scale ban on tours and traveling around the world. Before pandemic the significant increase in tourism activities was observed and a remarkable impact on economic activity was experienced around the world specifically in South East Asian countries (Jermstittiparsert, 2019; Kerdpitak, 2020). Several factors contribute to attracting tourists around the world including location, site scene, facilities, environment, price, security, and quality of the tourist spot. The literature has depicted that tourism has increased all time except for 2 years of lockdown due to pandemics as a concern with traveling has increased as it is also argued that mass tourism is a bad thing (Malimi, 2017;). It has been reported that tourism is linked with environmental problems and issues, the research scholars have stressed the relationship between environmental factors and their impact on the tourism industry to be investigated Thailand has attracted the international tourists and emerged as one of the most attractive tourist destinations and observed to be enjoying steady growth since decades. The foreign investment from developed countries has been attracted and utilized to improve the infrastructure to provide different exposure to tourists. The tourism industry of Thailand has experienced rapid economic transformation as government of Thailand has focused on exploring the new areas of attraction attracting the international tourists. The two major trends have been highlighted in tourism in Thailand, the first diversification perspective of market sources, the second is considered a response to Western tourism market growth. Previously, literature focused on environmental problems and issues, the natural resources, environmental threat and overall climate (Jermstittiparsert, 2019).

Sustainable development has been defined by various scholars as meeting the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generation for meeting the own needs. Further, it has been defined that the adjustment of human behavior to address the need of present, without compromising the ability of future generation for meeting the own needs. So therefore, the sustainable development is closely linked with growth, environment and protection of future (Opoku & Ahmed, 2013). The interaction between tourism sector and overall economic performance remained interesting subject in last decade due to its significance, as tourism development and economic growth remained the focal point of research (Mohapatra, 2018). The government faced number of bottlenecks financially, and considered to focus on international tourism to attract the tourists to boost the economic situation and activity in the region to overcome the imbalances of payments and financial crisis (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2019).

The socioeconomic development and economic sustainability depend upon the tourism industry for majority of the tourism-based economies. The sustainable tourism involves the visit of various attractive locations without harming or

negatively impact the nature and local community, meanwhile it has been reported that constructive impact on environment, economy and society, the facilitated equipped tourism spots must possess the transportation facility, locally available transportation, entertainment opportunities, shopping malls, leisure facilities, accommodation and nourishment, that are linked with the recreational activities, businesses and families and friends. The policy makers focus on tourism growth, that must be sustainable in achievement of goals, the tourism and travel sector found to be important in economic activities around the world. The tourism considered as an important source of employment in formal and informal sectors, it has been claimed that economic growth and largely depends upon the increase in tourism, the increased tourism presents the satisfied tourists that positively affect the future behavioral intentions (Hwang & Lee, 2019a).

The tourism industry contributes in foreign reserves and positively impact the economy of the country while enhance the growth and development, the tourism is major source of income in developing countries that contribute in economic strength of the country, the tourism enables local manufacturer and producers to sell their goods to international clients that increase the trade. The tourism sector also supports economy of industrial sector, the economic expansion in developed countries influence the business activities that further leads to rise the overseas reserves. International tourism gained the importance due to its significant impact on financial situation as World Tourism Organization (WTO), stated that US \$ 1.3 bn per day and US \$s 462 bn in year 2021, the similar amount of revenue generated from exports that contributes in balancing the payment. The effective policies must be devised for ensuring the development of tourism sector due to its role in generating revenue and enhance the quality of life of related households. The number of evidences is found around the world that tourism have positive impact on economy, third world countries focused on tourism to boost the economy, promote the peace, development of HR, and reduce the poverty. The tourism activities assist in enhancing the employment opportunities and earning those major economic benefits produced for local population. The employment of local community expands earning towards socio-economic conditions leads to improve the standard of living. The tourism improves local community development and helps to reduce the poverty (Manzoor et al., 2019).

The Thai tourism industry has grown and played important role in economic, social and cultural changes that contribute in gross domestic product. The cultural tourism has grown faster around the world and faster than any kind of tourism, the cultural tourism has the tendency to serve longer that shows the sustainability of tourism. The cultural tourism has become popular as knowledge about culture, know-how about customers, lifestyle and interesting parts of wisdom must be known of destination, the Krabi province considered as top tourist destination due to its attractive sites. The province has historical, religious, ethnic and folk wisdom, having specific life-style that adds value to the places. The cultural tourism based on cultural assets contribute to the value of destination that reveal heritage value, ensure the cultural tourism plan, promote the Thai tourism. The cultural tourism increases the strength of economy in Thailand, that encourage local administration and government to take initiatives for sustainable tourism in near future (Chongbut & Chapman, 2021).

The sustainable tourism development provides the protection and increase the opportunities for future, the sustainable tourism ensures the balance between economic, environmental and social benefits (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2017; Kerdpitak, 2022). The tourist satisfaction increases the worth and meaningfulness of the destination that play role in sustainability of the tourism that further helps to promote the sustainable tourism practices according to world tourism organization (2019). The prior literature already highlighted the importance of tourism that it impact the economic, socio-cultural and environmental perspective, there are negative impacts as well but positive influences brings remarkable outcomes (Mason, 2020). Due to both positive and negative impacts of tourism encourage to investigate more on sustainable tourism to enhance the positive outcomes, socio-cultural and environmental impacts positively and to reduce the negative footprints (Chongbut & Chapman, 2021). The current research effort intends to determine the sustainable tourism development influenced by cultural capital, community participation and moderating role of cultural tourism in Tak province of Thailand.

## **Literature Review**

### **Cultural Capital and Sustainable Tourism Development**

The social capital plays significantly curial role in contribution of lifestyle of the general public of specific society. So therefore, it is required to focus on the development of economy, society and government's role in taking such initiatives that enhances the efficiency of services and improve the production process that further influence the economic sector. The social development plays important role in Thailand for making progress as cultural trends in various countries leads to the modernization in the globalized era that is necessary for well-being and enhance the learning. During the economic crisis it was experienced that Thai society was very much responsive and possess strengthened social capital and grasp number of advantages due to their social capital perspective including strong kinship, community based hospitable culture (Jantanukul & Kenaphoom, 2020). The literature states that social capital is formed by thinking, acting and trusting each other that tie-up in appropriate cultural situation through effective relationship among people, institution, knowledge and culture that force the community and society. The four major components play role in linking the social capital, first component involves the people have the role in development of country that requires the all-dimensions health, mind of people, generosity, respect, discipline, honesty, public consciousness and patriotism. The second component of institute is highlighted due to its role and support in serving the society, community, people and most specifically its role in generating the synergy in community. The family institutes, fundamental institutes, morality cultivation, values, ethics and religious perspective, further political and administrative perspective along with fundamental institutes as source of knowledge that develop the morality, business sector that utilize the human resource, corporate governance, media that effect significantly behavior and value of people living in society. The third component includes the culture and way of life that is accepted in society, traditions, values and history. Culture connects the people in society that realize the roots and develop the community and country. The fourth component includes the knowledge of local people, the wisdom possessed by local

community, and emerging knowledge, science and art of living that create the diversity of usable knowledge and balance, the utilization of the knowledge can be practices in number of ways to generate the maximum benefits. these four elements form the social capital in the perspective of Thailand, thus the social capital accumulated, adapted, developed, cooperate such as natural resources, HR and values that add worth to the culture and it influences the behavior (Jantanukul & Kenaphoom, 2020).

The research studies have been conducted that incorporated the impact of tourism and travel sector on economic perspective all around the world. The tourism is considered as an important and major sector that generate the income for the country, the important source also contributes in generating the employment in formal and informal sectors (Malik et al., 2010). It has been claimed the development and economic growth has rapidly increased in the world, this shows the satisfaction level of the tourists that further impact the behavior of tourist in shaping future intentions (Hwang & Lee, 2019b). The huge amount of foreign exchange can be generated through effect policy devising for tourism that also contributes in sustaining the growth and development. The developing countries the tourism is considered as an important source of economic development and growth, the increased tourism encourage trade of goods and services, the industrial sector also experienced the development due to large-scale tourism activities. The economic expansion has been observed due to tourism and business travel that also leads to rise in the overseas reserves for the nations (Mahmoudinia et al., 2011).

The cultural capital in tourism perspective occurred in literature rarely, so the current study claims to be the one of the pioneers in incorporating the role of cultural capital in assessing the tourism sector. The present research effort aims to find the relation among cultural capital and sustainable tourism development. Based on the argument of the current study following hypothesis is formed:

*H1: Cultural Capital influence the Sustainable Tourism Development in the province of Tak Thailand*

### **Community Participation and Sustainable Tourism Development**

The community participation is an important factor that referred as the involvement of people at grassroot level, underprivileged, participation in innovative initiatives, planning and decision for social, political and economic factors that affect in number of ways instead of being controlled by higher authorities. It has been proposed that community participation in tourism known as normative model of participatory tourism planning that local participate in decision and benefits of sharing. The community participation plays vital role in strategic planning that referred to be thoughtful that create basic ideas and conduct the frame and lead towards the implementation of policies that foster the tourism development. The prior literate has stated that community participation in strategic planning refers to the participation of local community in tourism development, planning, implementing, controlling and evaluating the strategies. The organization planning process includes the situation of organization, vision, mission, values and goals, the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats,

strategies, action plans and control according to the community association research conducted in year 2014.

The number of scholars has conducted studies on tourism and its economic effect and expansion, it has been revealed that tourism sector plays vital role in the growth of the economy. The world tourism organization highlighted tourism sector as an important sector that contributes on large-scale and these benefits must be analyzed by national economies, the tourism sector considered as driving force for economic development (Ayeni & Ebohon, 2012). The tourism sector plays significant role in economic development and considered as driving force, while having positive impact on foreign exchange that also contributes in employment generation. The less-developed nations around the world focused on the tourism sector to attract the tourist from all over as significant correlation between tourism and economic expansion has been depicted (Croes & Vanegas Sr, 2008). The study has been conducted in Nigeria to assess the growth of tourism and its sustainability, according to researchers the tourism has become important instrument for several countries to economic development. The Nigerian market has experienced tourism sector as one of the strong sectors that contributes for generating revenue and employment generation. It has been noted that developed countries attract higher number of tourists as compare to less developed or underdeveloped nations. However, there are number of opportunities for less developed countries for harvesting the maximum benefits. The study reported that tourism activities contributes in strengthening the economic situation of the country (Ayeni & Ebohon, 2012).

The community participation hasn't occurred in literature in tourism perspective, the current study argues that community participation is important in sustainable tourism development. Based on argument following hypothesis is formed:

*H2: Community Participation influence the Sustainable Tourism Development in the province of Tak Thailand*

### **Moderating Role of Cultural Tourism**

The region of each country has different culture and tourism industry consider the cultural aspect of each country that attract the international tourist, the cultural tourism is considered as subset of tourism that specifically relates to the lifestyle of people and geographical areas. The historical perspective of the country, the people and community of the region, the art and architecture of the region influence the cultural tourism, the religion of the region also impact the cultural tourism and attract the relevant international tourists, that shape the way of individual's life (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). The literature has incorporated the concept of cultural tourism that found to be influential in achievement of sustainability of tourism. The cultural tourism is considered as an essential form of tourism that focus on culture, environment of culture, landscape of tourist destination, values of lifestyle, heritage, visual and performing art, industry and tradition of local population or community. The literature stated that tourism management is concerned with managing the way of resources of tourism, interaction of tourists with physical interaction of tourists and local

community at local region and areas (Mason, 2020). Therefore, the cultural tourism management is ways to manage the cultural resources for tourism, through conservation of strategy, that stimulate the living resources to provide the policy guidance, the conservation may also include retention of contribution that related placed and related objects make to cultural significance (Chongbut & Chapman, 2021).

The attitude of tourist towards cultural tourism is considered as one of the most significant factors as survey revealed the small number of tourists are aware of cultural tourism, there is need to conduct the research that enrich the awareness among tourists so that required support for promotion of cultural tourism as secondary attraction must be valued and uniqueness has the tendency to attract the large number of tourists. The cultural tourism attracts the tourists in five routes such as values, uniqueness, that attract the tourists and plays important role in increasing the value of tourism. The public participation also plays important role in sustainable tourism development as value creation takes place and it spread at social media, that bring the customers and promotion of tourism destination also attract the tourists around the world. The countries must be able to focus cultural tourism as it consists of conservation, new creation and management that further leads to the sustainable tourism development.

The current study argues that cultural tourism has the tendency to moderate the relationship between cultural capital, community participation and sustainable tourism development. The following hypotheses are formed to investigate the relationship and influence of cultural tourism.

*H3: Cultural tourism influence the Sustainable Tourism Development in the province of Tak*

*H4: Cultural Tourism moderates the relationship between Cultural Capital and Sustainable Tourism Development in the province of Tak Thailand*

*H5: Cultural Tourism moderates the relationship between Community Participation and Sustainable Tourism Development in the province of Tak Thailand*

## **Research Framework**

The figure 1 demonstrates the research framework of the current study in the light of above hypotheses to be investigated.

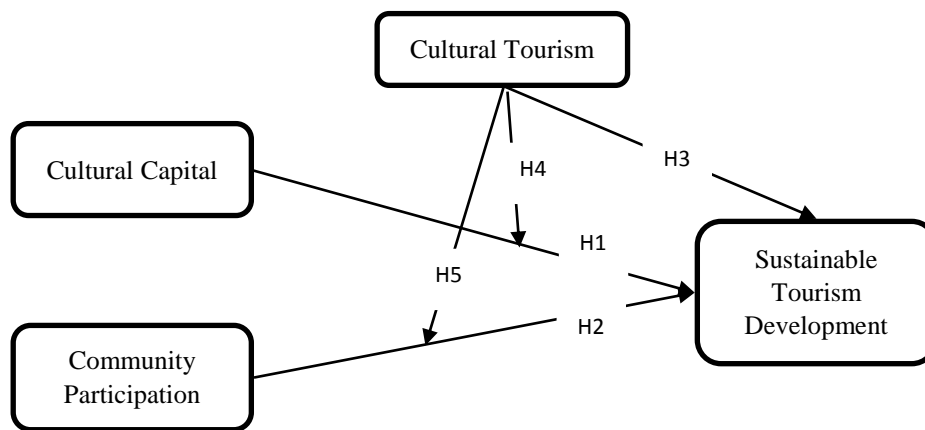


Fig 1: Proposed Framework

## Research Methodology

This research paper was conducted to assess the sustainable tourism development and data was collected through questionnaires, so therefore the research was quantitative, the data was collected from the tourism related operators in the Tak province of Thailand through simple random sampling. The questionnaire was collected from 200 respondents as targeted for data analysis. The measurement scale of each variable was adopted from previous literature. The 04 items measurement scale of cultural capital was adopted from the study of (Jantanukul & Kenaphoom, 2020). the 03 items measurement scale of community participation was adopted from the research of (Mahachanok, 2019). the 07 items measurement scale of sustainable tourism development was adopted from the study of (Sakolnakorn et al., 2013). the 05 items based measurement scale of cultural tourism was adopted from the study of (Chongbut & Chapman, 2021). Each item was assessed on the 5-point likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5, whereas 1 as strongly disagree, 2 as disagree, 3 as neutral, 4 as agree, and 5 as strongly agree.

## Data analysis

This section presents the data analysis, measurement model and structural equation model is presented in the data analysis for assessment of construct validity and reliability, and the hypothesized relationship respectively.

## Measurement model assessment

This section entails the assessment of measurement model through Cronbach alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted. The following table 1 shows the results of alpha, CR and AVE that assessed under PLS algorithm method. The value for alpha, CR should remain higher than 0.70 for acceptability

of reliability and validity. The value for AVE must remain greater than 0.50 for acceptable validity as per suggested criteria of (Leguina, 2015).

Table 1: The results of cronbach alpha, composite reliability, and average variance

	Cronbach alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance extracted (AVE)
CC	0.831	0.881	0.598
CP	0.702	0.834	0.627
CT	0.703	0.814	0.528
STD	0.814	0.877	0.641

Note: cultural capital (CC), community participation (CP), Cultural tourism (CT), Sustainable tourism development (STD)

The above table demonstrated that all values for alpha, CR and AVE found to be significant that meets the required criteria for measurement assessment. The constructs of the current study are acceptable for reliability and validity and next stage of SEM can be executed.

### **Discriminant Validity**

The discriminant validity was assessed through HTMT, the authors have suggested to examine the discriminant validity through assessing the values of HTMT, the closer the value to the 1 shows lack of discriminant validity, the authors also suggested to accept the results as valid at the threshold point of 0.85 (Hensler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). The table 2 shows the results of HTMT that satisfied the required criteria for discriminant validity.

Table 2 The results of HTMT that satisfied the required criteria for discriminant validity

	CC	CP	CT	STD
CC				
CP	0.535			
CT	0.598	0.787		
STD	0.711	0.773	0.783	

Note: cultural capital (CC), community participation (CP), Cultural tourism (CT), Sustainable tourism development (STD)

The above table satisfies the HTMT and reported that discriminant validity is satisfied and constructs are different in nature and measure different variables.

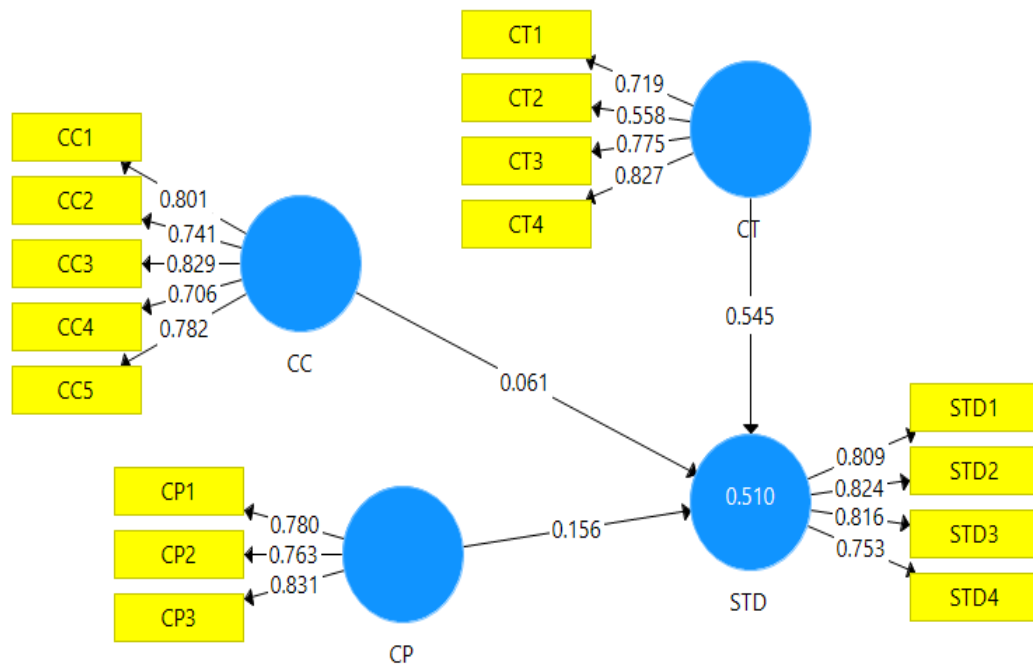


Fig 2: Measurement model: Note: cultural capital (CC), community participation (CP), Cultural tourism (CT), Sustainable tourism development (STD)

### Structural Equation Model (SEM)

This section presented the results of hypothesized relationships, the direct and moderating hypotheses results are presented and assessed on the base of given criteria of Hair et al., (2010), by assessing the t-value, and p-value. The table 3 below presents the direct hypotheses results below in table 3.

Table 3: The direct hypotheses results

	$\alpha$	t-statistics	P value
CC→STD	0.133	0.1.159	0.124
CP→STD	0.173	0.1.919	0.028
CT→STD	0.583	0.4.861	0

Note: cultural capital (CC), community participation (CP), Cultural tourism (CT), Sustainable tourism development (STD)

The above table shows the results of direct hypothesis H1 that cultural capital has insignificant to sustainable tourism development based on the t-value and p-value. The community participation hypothesis H2 also remained insignificant in explaining the sustainable tourism development. The both hypotheses remain insignificant and rejected on the base of statistical grounds. The cultural tourism found to be influential in explaining the sustainable tourism development. That means cultural tourism is important and crucial to consider in order to gain the sustainability in tourism.

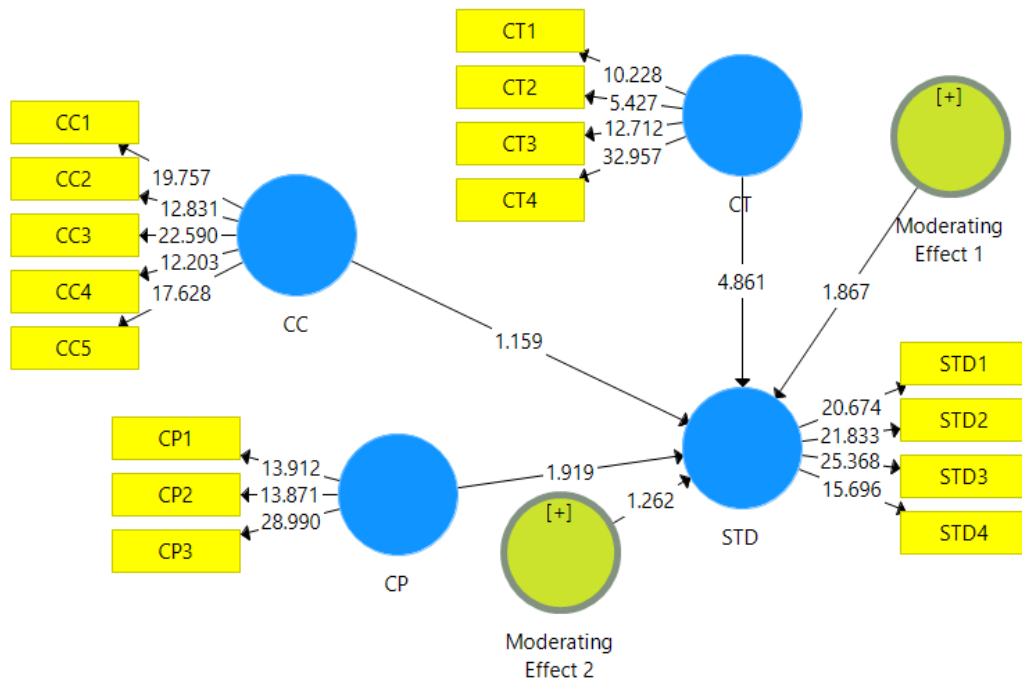


Fig 3: Structural Equation Model: Note: cultural capital (CC), community participation (CP), Cultural tourism (CT), Sustainable tourism development (STD)

### Moderation hypotheses

The study also incorporated the moderating factor of cultural tourism between exogenous and endogenous constructs. The table 4 demonstrated the moderation effect of cultural tourism.

Table 4 Demonstrated the moderation effect of cultural tourism

	$\beta$	t-statistics	P value
Moderating effect 1 → STD	-0.18	1.867	0.031
CP → STD	0.173	0.1.919	0.028

Note: cultural capital (CC), community participation (CP), Cultural tourism (CT), Sustainable tourism development (STD)

The first moderating effect of cultural tourism between cultural capital and sustainable tourism development on 10% error margin. The t-value found to be 1.867, that is higher than the threshold points of 1.68 with 10% error and hence statistically significant that cultural tourism strengthen the relationship between cultural capital and sustainable tourism development. The hypothesis H5 demonstrated that no moderation effect between community participation and sustainable tourism development, hence the hypothesis is rejected.

### Conclusion

The research paper explained the complex phenomenon of sustainable tourism development in the province of Tak Thailand influenced by cultural capital and community participation with moderating role of cultural tourism. The study was conducted to explained the relationship between variables of sustainable tourism development, and reported interesting results. The study claimed to be the one of the pioneers in assessing the emerging cultural perspective in tourism industry. The study reported that cultural capital and community participation insignificant in explaining the sustainable tourism development, surprisingly, the cultural tourism moderated the relationship between cultural capital and sustainable tourism development by strengthening the relation, however no moderation role of cultural tourism was reported between the relationship of community participation and sustainable tourism development. The study found and reported that the importance of cultural tourism has significantly influential in attracting the international tourists. The governments should focus on the cultural perspective that attract the international tourists. The study is limited in confirming the influential perspective of sustainable tourism development. The future studies should consider to bring more influential factors or conceptualize the cultural perspective in explaining the sustainable tourism development.

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