

# Social Capital Structure for Sustainable Tourism of Tourism Community Enterprises in Rayong Province

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## Abstract

The procedure of building and maintaining a tourism industry in a specific place is known as sustainable tourism development. At its most basic level, sustainable tourism is formulating strategies and plans to boost tourism in a certain location. The sustainable tourism could be developed from the along with social capital structure of local communities. Therefore, the current study objective was to test the impact of social capital structure on the sustainable tourism of community enterprises in Rayong Province, Thailand. For this objective, the data was collected from 400 tourism community enterprises employees through the self-administered questionnaire. The PLS-SEM results had shown that social confidence (SC) has positive and significant relationship with sustainable tourism (ST). In addition, social participation (SP) has also positive and significant relationship with the ST. On the other hand, social norms (SN) has also a positive and significant association with the ST. Based on above findings; the study has some theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the current study could be considered a pioneer study which was conducted the impact of social capital structure on sustainable development of Rayong Province, Thailand. Therefore, this study contributed a body of literature in the previous literature that could become a new area of research in future. Practically, this study could help to the tourism industry or tourism department to know about the importance of social capital to increase their sustainable development.

**Keywords:** social capital, sustainable tourism, Thailand.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism in Rayong Province, Thailand is one sort of tourist diversification strategy that plays a key part in motivating, developing, and improving the earnings of tourism community. Increasing development of tourism would boost landowners' as well as the community's favorable perceptions of the necessity of protecting community resources both directly and indirectly. Tourism is critical for both rural and urban communities (Zoto, Qirici, & Polena, 2013). Tourism development may provide jobs

and improve revenue further than the value of their output. Furthermore, the growth of tourism operations is one of the attempts to conserve resources, maintain local innovation wisdom, and also enhance country revenue in order to achieve the community's welfare surrounding tourism (Streimikiene, Svagzdiene, Jasinskas, & Simanavicius, 2021). Various factors are used to enhance the sustainable tourism but among of them the social capital structure played an important role to increase the sustainable development.

Keeping in view previous discussion, it is often assumed that social capital serve as a foundation for economic growth and performance (Q. Zhang & Fung, 2006). As a result, each society's progress is contingent on expanding the amount of social capital with its own functioning institutions (Newton, 1997). Organizations, ties, attitudes, norms, and rules that regulate people's behaviors are all examples of social capital. To put it another way, social capital refers to the networks and standards that allow employees to participate in cooperation (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Social capital, throughout this perspective, is an inseparable aspect of a countries wealth, within the context of sustainable development theory, establishing, sustaining, and enhancing it for posterity have been aims that sustainability must pursue (Salari Sardari, Beyranvandzadeh, & Alizadeh, 2014). Various factors had been discussed for the social capital, among of them social confidence, social participants and social norms are less discussed (Y. Zhang, Xiong, Lee, Ye, & Nunkoo, 2021).

Empirically, it is found that social capital structure has relation with the sustainable tourism but these relationships have several gaps. Firstly, the previous studies had major focused on other developed economies (Partelow, 2021; Y. Zhang et al., 2021) while have little attention on developing economies especially, Thailand (Mangkhang, 2021). Various evidence had also found that social capital structure of Thailand tourism is not properly addressed to improve the sustainable tourism in Thailand (Swangjang & Kornpiphat, 2021). Several studies also mentioned that if the tourism industry in Thailand want to grow and improve their contribution in the economy then they need to development a proper level of social capital (Mangkhang, 2021). It also found that social capital structure indicators namely social confidence, social participants and social norms had mixed results with the sustainable tourism (Statham & Scuzzarello, 2021). Thus based on these gaps, the current study objective is to test the impact of social capital structure on the sustainable tourism of community enterprises in in Rayong Province, Thailand.

The study was divided into five sections, introduction, literature review, research methodology, data analysis, conclusions and recommendation.

## Literature Review

The study has been discussed literature from both of theoretical and empirical perspective.

### Social capital Structure

Reisman (2003) and Rezazadeh, Zehi, and Rad (2016) was the first to use the term "social capital," albeit he used it in a different sense than what has been presently used in the social sciences. Social capital, as per Coleman, is defined as people's capacity to interact successfully with anyone (Coleman, 1988). In addition, Bourdieu defined social capital like a bundle of existing and perceived resources that develop through established networks in the 1980s Lin (2008). There is Fukuyama further defined social capital like a person's opportunities to engage in cooperative activities in order to achieve a common purpose (Wilson, 1997). Putnam defined social capital also as popularity of social organizations including confidence, standards (or engagement), as well as networks that could increase society's efficiency by encouraging association and collaboration in the pursuit of common goals (Suharto, 2007).

As a result, social capital may be defined as a collection of interconnected but distinct ideas, such as "social networks, mutual communication and perception, public confidence, and commitment". People build social capital while they have mutual relationships between employees, in their families, in their communities, and in their surroundings (Nasrollahi & Eslami, 2014). Social capital plays a critical role in human resource coherence; without it, various capitals lose their efficacy; since without, accomplishing development goals is unachievable and ineffective (Rezazadeh et al., 2016). Social capital may offer a suitable basis of human resources that profit through, allowing them to carry out their responsibilities

via increased engagement, mutual trust, and professional expertise (Seyed Javadein, Shahbaz Moradi, Hasanghoulipour, & Mirsepasi, 2014). In light of this capital, however, it is feasible to gain from other capitals. Social capital as well as other assets could be useful factors in improving the effectiveness of social activities as playing a vital part in the development process (Wallis, Killerby, & Dollery, 2004).

According to researchers, social capital comprises several components, the most essential of those are: "social confidence, social participation and social norms. Among of these components, the social confidence is most essential components of social capital, which is a fundamental aspect in every community and appears to be required to address social issues. Confidence is an emotion associated with social connections, and it is proportional to the number of such interactions. As a result, the more social confidence there is among individuals, groups, and community institutions and more intense, diversified, and secure social connections will emerge (Tavakoli & Tajbakhsh, 2008).

Furthermore, social participation seems to have its origins with nationally and internationally community structures and connections, and is ultimately founded on a procedure, a method that develops trust and association among individuals (Khaled, 2017). In reality, generating innovative and important citizen engagement in various stages of development projects is one of the modern world's planning instruments. As a result, among the most crucial parts of social capital is active engagement (Rezazadeh et al., 2016). Social Norms: Such norms might be thought of as a foundation as well as unwritten social regulations, such as assisting others and being a decent person (Dakhli & De Clercq, 2004). The two concepts of social norms and social confidence remain inextricably linked. Civil standards, which govern people's actions, could be viewed as a source of trust that boosts others' confidence (Kaasa, 2009). Social interaction, however, is a crucial norm. People prefer others and expect others to assist them when they are in need. As a result, when there's

enough trust in the society, others are more likely to interact, and individuals will be more ready to imitate civil norms for their actions.

Moreover, the social norms are among the aspects that contribute to social capital in a society and are recognized social capital in and of them. Within context of "social values, social capital, as a facilitator of social interactions," has the potential to emerge, manifest, and gradually improve. Human values, standards, and also ethical and spiritual structures, spread widely throughout society on this foundation. As a consequence, moral values may serve as tangible components in the maintenance of social capital (Bahrami, 2018).

### Sustainable tourism

The theory for sustainable development initially created inside this 1980s with the belief that unrestricted economic expansion would have negative environmental and social effects. It posed a threat to the economic development and growth patterns that had emerged by that time (Clark, Whelan, Barbour, & MacIntyre, 2005; Kerdpitak, 2022). The word "sustainable development" was being used since the Brant Land Commission, which was linked with the United Nations, established formal societies in 1987. These commissions proposed sustainable development in place of a way for meet human necessities without jeopardizing the satisfaction of future requirements (Krause & Winter, 1996). Sustainable development seems to be the simultaneous procedure of three aspects of economy, society, as well as environment in order to accomplish the common objective of welfare, livelihood, poverty eradication, public satisfaction about wanted life, and increase the reach of profiting from environmental assets (sustainable development; Kerdpitak, 2022a) (Salari Sardari et al., 2014). As reality, sustainable development may be thought to possess three dimensions: such as economic, social, as well as environmental (Antman et al., 1997).

Such characteristics provide a clear framework as well as a hierarchical system; however, all of these characteristics seem to have its own

weight toward sustainable development. The weight of all of them is determined by the characteristics of the examined issue (Rezazadeh et al., 2016). As a result, sustainable development is not only dependent on environmental measures, and it cannot be realized without addressing social and economic issues. Thus it necessitates a comprehensive approach to development policy in the environmental, social, and economic aspects, as well as integration in such areas (Rezazadeh et al., 2016).

### Social Capital and Sustainable Tourism

Social capital is described as a set of informal beliefs and standards held by members of the local organization which enable them to work together (Fukuyama, 2002). Trust, reciprocity, as well as social contact seem to be the three fundamental components of social capital. In the line with this, Trust (trust) will motivate people to work together to achieve positive outcomes or collaborative actions. Trust is a result of major collaborative social norms, ultimately leads to the formation of social capital. As mention in the study of Fukuyama (2002), trust is defined as "expectations of order, honesty, and cooperative conduct that arise inside a society based on shared standards." The establishment of trust generates a person's commitment towards place collective interests on the behalf of individual interests, which is beneficial for such maker of a particular economy even it could be depend on to keep costs down. This can be seen where the presence of trust generates a person's desire for putting group interests on the behalf of the personal interests. The presence of great trust can foster strong solidarity, causing each member to be willing to obey the norms and therefore boosting the sense of belonging. In the eyes of the low-trust community, their aggregate economic activity is judged inferior. When there is a lack of trust in society, the government must intervene to make suggestions (Anastaplo et al., 2002). In addition, Social capital takes the shape of social networks. There is social network defined as a collection of individuals who are linked by sentiments of duty and sympathy, as well as transaction and civic participation standards.

Such network might arise since they have a same geographical location, political or religious convictions, familial ties, and etc. This same social platform is structured through an institution which treats people who are created through the network using special consideration in order to obtain social capital to network. A network, in order to boost the economy, is a set of specific agents which accept informal values and traditions in addition to the rules and morals required for conventional market transactions. This idea explains why social capital is advantageous not just in the social realm as well as inside of economic realm. Furthermore, three basic components of the social capital may be observed in a variety of shared activities. As per Uphoff (1986), social capital is a concept. According to Uphoff (1986), social capital may be divided into two types: structural as well as cognitive processes. Social capital are linked by structural categories. Numerous types of social institution, including roles, norms, standards, and processes which may be used to create a vast network of mutually advantageous collaborative actions (Y. Zhang et al., 2021; Kerdpitak, et al., 2022). Within cognitive categorization, social capital is formed from mental states and intellectual products which are reinforced through culture and ethnicity, particularly norms, ethics, behaviors, and beliefs to promote cooperation, typically in case of mutually advantageous collective action, a living standard and well-being (Partelow, 2021).

Moreover, it is also found that social capital structural had positive and significant relationship with the sustainable tourism (Y. Zhang et al., 2021). In the same vein, Garrigos-Simon, Botella-Carrubi, and Gonzalez-Cruz (2018) also found the positive and significant relation with sustainable tourism. While other study, Rodriguez-Giron and Vanneste (2019) found that social capital structure is not important indicator to improve the sustainable tourism of the community. These contradicts have shown that the results are not still consistent which needs to be addressed the relationship further. Therefore, based on

previous discussion, the research hypothesis of the study had been formulated below;

H1: The social confidence has a positive and significant relationship with the sustainable tourism of Tourism Community Enterprises in Rayong Province, Thailand.

H2: The social participants has a positive and significant relationship with the sustainable tourism of Tourism Community Enterprises in Rayong Province, Thailand.

H3: The social norms has a positive and significant relationship with the sustainable tourism of Tourism Community Enterprises in Rayong Province, Thailand.

### Research Methodology

The study objective was to check the impact of social capital structure on sustainable tourism of Tourism Community Enterprises in Rayong Province. For this purpose, the quantitative research approach was applied which has more strength as compare qualitative (Einasto, A. Klypin, Saar, & Shandarin, 1984). The study has used the cross sectional research design and is correlational in nature. This paper tests the hypotheses by questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey was conducted from the employees of Tourism Community Enterprises in Rayong Provincem Thailand. The questionnaire used for data collection was pre-tested. After the pre-test, some items in the questionnaire were rearranged and reworded. The questionnaire was distributed among 500 respondents by using a convenient sampling technique. Among of those, 400 questionnaires were returned back. The research questionnaires were adapted from the previous literature according to study nature. The social capital structure dimensions was measured by 12 items. Each of dimension namely social confidence, social participant and social norms was measured by four items. These items were adapted from previous study of (Rezazadeh et al., 2016). In addition, sustainable tourism was also measured by four items that was adapted from the research of (Skrame, Ciancio, Corvello, & Musmanno, 2020). The

questionnaire was measured on five point Likert Scale which was ranked from 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study investigated the causal relationship between Social capital structure and sustainable tourism of Tourism Community Enterprises in Rayong Province by employing Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modelling, a multidimensional estimation method developed by Swedish Econometrician, World [20]. This estimation method is meant to examine complex causal relationships between the variable of interest by combining principal component analysis and ordinary least square regression to estimates the structural model partially. The PLS-SEM method is appropriate for this study since the study aims to test a theoretical model and predict based on the theoretical framework. Again, since the distribution of the dataset used is unknown, the PLS-SEM is found suitable, since it does not impose distribution on the dataset (Joseph F Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2021). The study will examine the causal relationship between the variables of interest, using a reflective path model. Therefore, the study will evaluate both the measurement or outer model and the structural or inner model. The measurement model was assessed using the indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability meant for the internal consistency reliability of the measurement model. In our case, the composite reliability has used instead of Cronbach's alpha as suggested by (Joe F Hair Jr, Matthews, Matthews, & Sarstedt, 2017). The average variance and discriminant validity which measures the convergent validity of the model will be used to evaluate our measurement model. The study will also evaluate the structural model by using the path coefficient size and effect, the coefficient of determination (**R<sup>2</sup>**), predictive validity (**Q<sup>2</sup>**), and effective size (**f<sup>2</sup>**). The path coefficient size and effect will be estimated using the bootstrapping of the PLS algorism, while Q<sup>2</sup> and f<sup>2</sup> has been estimated using the

blindfolding algorithm of the Smart PLS software.

## Results

The result in Table 1 presents the VIF and Tolerance values on all the indicators used in the study. A critical observation of the results shows none of the indicators is suffering from multicollinearity. Thus they are not highly correlated with each other. The VIF values for the indicators are not greater than 5 and their tolerance value is greater than 0.2.

Table.1: *Variance Inflation Factor*

Variable	VIF Value	Tolerance
Social Confidence	2.660	0.282
Social Participation	2.187	0.380
Social Norm	1.119	0.745

Table 2 represents the composite reliability and Average variance which measure the fitness of our final model. The composite reliability is used to measure the reliability, and also test the validity of our measurement model, instead of the Cronbach's alpha as suggest by (Joseph F Hair Jr et al., 2021). The composite reliability values for our model are greater than 0.6 showing that the internal consistency of our reflective latent variables is reliable (Joe F Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). The average variance value greater than 0.7 reported in Table 2 also confirms that the convergent and divergent validity of our measurement model exists (Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012).

Table 2: *Reliability and Validity of model*

Latent Construct	Composite Reliability	Average Variance extracted
Social Confidence	0.710	0.524
Social participation	0.774	0.640
Social Norms	0.890	0.726
Sustainable Tourism	0.720	0.603

The discriminant validity of our measurement model is assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criteria (Joe F Hair Jr et al., 2017). The validity of our measurement model is assessed by

finding the square root of the average variance of the latent constructs, Demographic Dividend, Educational Attainment, Health Financing, Health Outcome, and Savings. The square root of the average variance for each construct is greater than the absolute correlation coefficient of each column. The results presented in Table 3 shows that the discriminant validity of our measurement model exists

Table 3: *Discriminant Validity*

	Social Confidence	Social Participation	Social norms	Sustainable tourism
Social Confidence	0.908			
Social participation	0.565	0.800		
Social Norms	0.341	0.210	0.552	
Sustainable Tourism	0.589	0.614	0.336	0.896

The fitness of our structural model is measured by  $Q^2$  which assesses the validity of our model,  $f^2$  the effect size of our model, and finally,  $R^2$  known as the coefficient of determination which measures the overall effect size of our structural model. The predictive validity values of 0.258, 0.218, and 0.069, and 0.35 for the latent variables social confidence, social participation, and social norms respectively indicate that predictive validity of our inner or structural model is accurate and acceptable as suggest by [29]. The measurement of the usefulness of our proposed model to the adjustment of the construct also shows that Social participation and confidence have a large effect (Hair, 2014). The results in Table 4 also shows that Social confidence accounts for 34.7% of the variations in the model, social participation accounts for 37.7%. The results also indicate that the latent variable, social norms for 11.3% of the variations in the latent constructs. The  $R^2$  values in Table 4 show that Social participation and Social confidence have a large effect on the model compared to social norms with a small effect [30]. The model fit criteria results discussed, as represented in Table 7 show that our structural model fits the data.

Table 4: *Predictive relevance and effect size*

Latent Construct	Validity(Q <sup>2</sup> )	Effect size(f <sup>2</sup> )	R Square
Social confidence	0.258	0.532	0.347
Social participation	0.218	0.606	0.377
Social norms	0.069	0.127	0.113

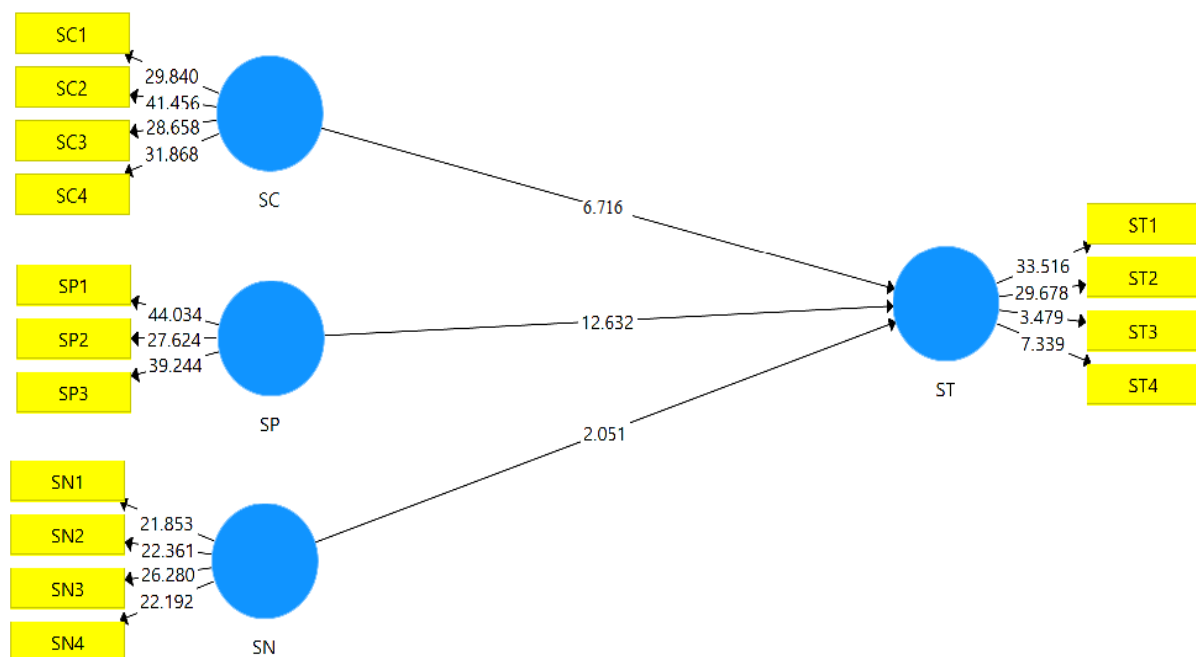
After the model assessment, the structural model of the study had run by using 500 resampling technique to test the study hypothesis. The PLS-SEM results had shown that social confidence (SC) has positive and significant relationship with sustainable tourism (ST). Therefore, hypothesis 1 supported. In addition, social participation (SP) have also positive and significant relationship with the ST that supported to hypothesis 2. These findings had shown that ST directly affected by SC and SP which shows that SC and SP are important indicators to increase the

tourism of the community enterprises. On the other hand, social norms (SN) had also a positive and significant association with the ST that supports to propose hypothesis 3. The above discussed results are predicted in the following Table 5 below.

Table.5: *Hypothesis Results*

	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T Statist ics	P Valu es
SC -> ST	0.308	0.046	6.716	0.000
SN -> ST	0.181	0.088	2.051	0.041
SP -> ST	0.721	0.057	12.632	0.000

Note: SC-social confidence, SN-social norms, SP-social participation, ST-sustainable tourism.

Figure.1 *Structural Model*

## Discussion and Conclusion

Sustainable tourism development is the process of establishing and maintaining a tourism industry in a particular location. At its most fundamental level, sustainable tourism development can developing strategies and plans to enhance tourism in a particular

destination. The sustainable tourism could be developed from the along with social capital structure of local communities. Therefore, the current study objective was to test the impact of social capital structure on the sustainable tourism of community enterprises in in Rayong Province, Thailand. For this objective, the data was collected from the tourism community enterprises employees. The PLS-SEM results

had shown that social confidence (SC) has positive and significant relationship with sustainable tourism (ST) which is consistent with the previous study of (Kwaramba, Lovett, Louw, & Chipumuro, 2012). In addition, social participation (SP) have also positive and significant relationship with the ST which supports to previous results (Dai, Fan, Wang, Ou, & Ma, 2021). These findings had shown that ST directly affected by SC and SP which shows that SC and SP are important indicators to increase the tourism of the community enterprises. On the other hand, social norms (SN) had also a positive and significant association with the ST. This result is consistent from previous result of (Sutawa, 2012). The above results had shown that community enterprises of Rayong province had better level of social capital structure to improve the sustainable tourism development. This demonstrates that the more the province progresses toward sustainable development, the more it may improve in this area. The more the region develops in the sector of tourism, and the more focus officials give to it, the more the region improves financially, and more career choices that people are established, one's income goes up, and indeed the government's and countries per capita income rises. Furthermore, improving the social capital structure has a good impact on sustainable tourism, and focusing more on tourism can help improve the social and environmental conditions in Thailand's Royang region.

Based on above findings, the stud had some theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the current study could be considered a pioneer study which was conducted the impact of social capital structure on sustainable development of Royang Province, Thailand. Therefore, this study contributed a body of literature in the previous literature that could become a new area of research in future. Practically, this study could helped to the tourism industry or tourism department to know about the importance of social capital to increase their sustainable development.

The study also had some limitation for conducting research in future. Firstly, the study

was limited on Thailand, which had little generalizability, a future research could be done on other countries to enhance research scope. Secondly, the research was done with direct effect there are various other variables that could also effect for the sustainable tourism development, and therefore a future research could be done along with mediating or moderating variable to enhance research generalizability. Thirdly, the study was conducted on quantitative research approach. A future research could be done on mixed methods to enhance research generalizability.

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