

THE INFLUENCE OF BEHAVIORAL INTENTION IN SPORTS TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF BURIRAM PROVINCE, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Sport tourism is one of the rapidly growing industries in Thailand, with major international events such as the MotoGP World Championship playing a significant role in driving economic development, expanding employment opportunities, and enhancing the country's global reputation. The event not only attracts thousands of international and domestic spectators but also promotes local culture, infrastructure development, and the overall sports industry. However, despite its rapid growth, challenges remain in ensuring a high-quality tourism experience. Factors such as image perception, service quality, perceived value, and behavioral intention play a crucial role in shaping visitor satisfaction and their likelihood to return. Issues such as cultural differences, service consistency, and destination branding influence the long-term sustainability of sport tourism in Thailand. This study adopts a literature review methodology to examine these key variables and their impact on sport tourism at the MotoGP World Championship in Thailand. The findings aim to contribute to the development of a comprehensive and sustainable sport tourism management model, providing valuable insights for policymakers, event organizers, and tourism stakeholders.

Keywords: Behavioral Intention, Sport Tourism, Buriram Province

INTRODUCTION

With the rapid growth of Thailand's sports industry and the increasing popularity of tourism, establishing a sustainable sports tourism management model is crucial. Buriram Province has emerged as a key sports tourism destination, hosting internationally recognized events such as the MotoGP World Championship and Thailand Super Series. These events attract thousands of domestic and international visitors, significantly contributing to local economic growth, employment generation, and cultural exchange (Smith & Hinch, 2019).

Despite its success, Buriram's sports tourism industry faces several challenges, including environmental sustainability, infrastructure management, and long-term economic viability. A key issue is the lack of a systematic framework for managing sustainable sports tourism. Inefficient resource allocation, environmental impact, and balancing economic benefits with social responsibilities remain critical concerns. Previous research highlights the need to integrate sustainable tourism practices to ensure long-term success (Higham & Hinch, 2018).

the MotoGP World Championship. These events play a significant role in stimulating economic growth, generating employment opportunities, and enhancing the country's global reputation. Specifically, the MotoGP event attracts a large number of both international and domestic spectators, contributing to the promotion of local culture, infrastructure development, and the broader sports industry. However, challenges persist in maintaining a high-quality tourism experience. Factors such as image perception, service quality, perceived value, and visitor behavior significantly impact overall satisfaction and the likelihood of repeat visits. Additionally, issues such as cultural differences, service consistency, and destination branding can affect the long-term sustainability of sports tourism in Thailand.

This study aims to assess the current state of sports tourism in Buriram Province, with a focus on key attractions, visitor trends, and the economic contributions of sports events. By adopting a literature review methodology, the research examines the influence of various factors on the sports tourism experience, particularly in the context of the MotoGP World Championship. The study's findings aim to provide insights into the development of a sustainable sports tourism management model, offering valuable recommendations for policymakers, event organizers, and stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Moreover, stakeholder collaboration—including government agencies, businesses, and local communities—is essential in creating a resilient and eco-friendly sports tourism ecosystem (Weed & Bull, 2009). Local engagement is necessary to ensure that residents benefit from tourism through employment, business opportunities, and cultural promotion. Sustainable event planning, community-based tourism (CBT), and responsible tourism policies can mitigate negative impacts while maximizing benefits (Gibson, 2020).

This study aims to analyze and propose a sustainable sports tourism management model for Buriram Province. By applying Total Quality Management (TQM) and Resource-Based Theory (RBT), the research will explore strategies to enhance service quality, optimize resource utilization, and ensure long-term sustainability. Additionally, it will examine the roles of key stakeholders in shaping sustainable tourism development while balancing economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. The findings will contribute to the theoretical framework of sustainable sports tourism and provide strategic recommendations for policymakers and industry practitioners.

OBJECTIVE

To assess the current state of sports tourism in Buriram Province – examining key attractions, visitor trends, and economic contributions.

RELATED RESEARCH

Buriram Province has emerged as a significant destination for sports tourism in Thailand, attracting both domestic and international visitors through its development of sports infrastructure and hosting of major events. Several research studies have examined various aspects of sports tourism in Buriram, providing valuable insights into its current state.

Thonkeaw, K. (2019) A study titled "Analyzing of Sports Tourist Behavior: Empirical Study in Buriram" investigates the behaviors and travel patterns of sports tourists attending the MotoGP

2019 event. The research identifies the Chang International Circuit as the primary attraction for these tourists and employs Social Network Analysis to map their travel routes and destinations.

The academic article "The Impact Analysis of Sport Tourism, A Case: Buriram Province" aims to assess the current state of sports tourism, analyze its impacts, and propose management guidelines. The study highlights the longstanding presence of sports competitions in the region and discusses the socio-economic effects of sports tourism on the local community.

Sutthirak, T., & Kittisri, R. (2020) In "Evaluating the Economic Impact of Sports Tourism in Buriram, Thailand," researchers apply a mixed-method approach, including Difference-in-Differences estimation, to assess the economic effects of sports tourism development from 2011 to 2018. The findings indicate a significant increase in tourism revenue, ranging from 16.7% to 21.5%, and positive perceptions among residents regarding employment and income opportunities.

Thammarat, S., & Khemsawat, S. (2021) The study "Ready to be a host?: The potential development guidelines of sport tourism in Buriram Province" explores the province's readiness to host international sports events. Through in-depth interviews with stakeholders, the research identifies strengths such as existing sports facilities and community support, while also highlighting areas needing improvement, including infrastructure and marketing strategies.

Stoffelen (2024) proposed in "A review of tourism and bordering processes: Launching the Annals of Tourism Research Curated Collection on tourism and territorial borders": Tourism refers to a form of labor service based on tourism resources, utilizing tourism facilities to provide services such as food, accommodation, transportation, tourism, entertainment, and shopping. Provide intangible services to tourists to meet their tourism needs. And it has characteristics such as dependence, comprehensiveness, fragility, volatility, seasonality, driving force, foreign-related, capital intensive, and labor-intensive.

Chen (2024) proposed in "The spatiotemporal pattern and influencing factors of efficiency in sport tourism scenic spots in China" : Tourism refers to related industries related to tourism activities, including transportation, tourism employment, tourism shopping, tourism accommodation, tourism catering, tourism activities, tourism entertainment, and other comprehensive industries that involve various consumption needs of tourists in various aspects of tourism activities and experiences.

Hinch(2018)proposed in "Sport tourism and sustainable destinations: foundations and pathways": Sport tourism management for sustainable refers to an attraction, or a destination, consists of an empirical connection between a tourist, a nucleus and a marker. The relevance for sustainable tourism development is significant, not only in terms of the movement of tourists from generating to destination regions to engage in sports, but also in terms of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with movement of spectators.

Margaret(2005)proposed in "The Management of Sport Tourism": Sport tourism management for sustainable refers to the management of sport tourism events. If this industry is to develop, strategic and sound operational management of the sport tourism industry is crucial. At the macro level, leverage the government's coordinating role. At the micro level, it is important to recognize the impact of expanding and contracting the workforce for sports events.

Cooper(2021)proposed in "Cancelling March Madness exposes opportunities for a more sustainable sport tourism economy": Sport tourism management for sustainable refers to the ability to meet current tourism needs without compromising future tourism needs, while maintaining sustainable development of ecological, economic, and social benefits. This concept emphasizes long-term development rather than short-term economic benefits.

Mazza (2023) proposed in "A Theoretical Model of Strategic Communication for the Sustainable Development of Sport Tourism": Sport tourism management model for sustainable refers to Sustainability and sustainable development are two fundamental principles that currently influence the way sport tourism activities. Composed of factors including sport tourism strategic planning, resource integration, product development, marketing, and sustainable development. By

constructing and managing the above elements, a complete sport tourism management model can be formed. In practical applications, adjustments and optimizations need to be made according to specific circumstances to improve management effectiveness and achieve sustainable development.

CURRENT SITUATION

Buriram Province in Thailand has become a prominent destination for sports tourism, driven by its key attractions, growing visitor trends, and significant economic contributions. Located in the northeastern region of Thailand, Buriram is known for its modern infrastructure and passion for sports, particularly football, which has been a catalyst for tourism growth. The province is home to several sports-related attractions that draw both domestic and international visitors, contributing to the local economy and enhancing its global recognition.

Buriram's sports tourism is primarily centered around the Chang Arena, the home stadium of the Buriram United Football Club, a dominant team in Thai football. The stadium, with a capacity of over 30,000 seats, regularly hosts both local and international matches, drawing large crowds. Football matches at Chang Arena are often a major event, attracting tourists to the region for weekend games or tournaments, such as the Thai League matches and AFC Champions League games (Suksong et al., 2020).

Another major attraction is the Buriram United's Football Academy, one of the top football training facilities in Southeast Asia. This facility offers specialized football training for aspiring athletes and has drawn sports enthusiasts, coaches, and talent scouts from around the world. Additionally, the Chang International Circuit, a world-class motor racing track, hosts MotoGP events and international car racing competitions, further contributing to the province's reputation as a sports tourism hub. The circuit's hosting of MotoGP since 2018 has brought substantial international attention to Buriram and continues to attract motorsport fans globally (Suksong et al., 2020).

The Buriram Marathon, held annually, is another key event that attracts sports tourists. The event has gained popularity among both local and international participants, contributing to the province's tourism sector by promoting sports-related activities and showcasing Buriram's scenic landscapes.

The growth in sports tourism in Buriram has been notable, with increasing numbers of visitors attending sports events in the province. Data from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) indicates that attendance at major sports events, such as football matches and motor racing events, has steadily increased. In particular, the MotoGP events have proven to be a significant draw, with the 2019 MotoGP event attracting over 200,000 visitors (Suksong et al., 2020).

Visitor trends also indicate a growing interest in sports tourism that extends beyond the event itself, with many visitors combining sports events with leisure activities such as sightseeing, shopping, and dining. The provincial government has taken steps to support this trend by investing in tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, transportation networks, and entertainment venues that cater to both sports tourists and general visitors (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2020).

Sports tourism plays a crucial role in the economic development of Buriram. The influx of visitors for sports events has a direct impact on local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and retail shops. In addition, the construction of sports-related infrastructure, such as the Chang Arena and the Chang International Circuit, has provided employment opportunities and fostered the development of related industries, such as hospitality and transportation (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2020).

The economic impact is particularly significant during major international events like the MotoGP, where tourism revenues spike. In 2019, the MotoGP event alone generated an estimated 500 million baht in revenue for the province (Suksong et al., 2020). This financial boost has

encouraged further investment in sports tourism and related facilities, ensuring a sustainable future for sports tourism in Buriram.

Conclusion

Buriram's status as a rising star in sports tourism is evident in its key sports attractions, increasing visitor trends, and growing economic impact. With continued investment in sports infrastructure and tourism-related services, Buriram is well-positioned to maintain its status as a leading destination for sports tourism in Thailand. The province's development of sports-related events and attractions has fostered a positive cycle of tourism growth, benefiting both the local economy and the wider sports tourism industry.

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