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# SOCIO - CULTURAL RISK ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY - BASED TOURISM IN SAMCHUK MARKET COMMUNITY DESTINATION IN SAMCHUK DISTRICT, SUPHANBURI PROVINCE

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## ABSTRACT

*The objectives of this study were (1) to assess the level of socio-cultural risk associated with community-based tourism in the Sam Chuk Market community destination, Sam Chuk District, Suphan Buri Province, and (2) to examine factors influencing tourists' perceptions of such risks. A quantitative approach was employed. The sample consisted of 400 tourists who had visited Sam Chuk Market at least twice, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that tourists perceived the overall level of socio-cultural risk as moderate (mean = 3.35). However, the most significant risk concerned the transformation of local ways of life and socio-cultural patterns to accommodate excessive tourism demand, leading to the erosion of community identity (mean = 4.34). This indicates that moderate aggregate scores may conceal critical long-term threats to community identity and cultural sustainability in heritage community-based tourism destinations such as Sam Chuk Market. Regression results showed that three of six demographic variables were statistically significant predictors ( $p \leq 0.05$ ): income, education, and gender. Tourists with monthly incomes above 10,000 baht and female tourists perceived lower risk levels, whereas tourists with at least a bachelor's degree perceived higher risk levels. These findings provide useful insights for developing CBT management policies that emphasize identity preservation, participatory governance, cultural carrying capacity management, and culturally sensitive tourism design to ensure long-term sustainability.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Socio-cultural Negative Impacts, Risk Perception, Thai Tourists, Community-based Tourism, Sam Chuk Market

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Thailand possesses substantial potential and opportunities for tourism development due to its strategic location at the heart of Southeast Asia, together with its rich diversity of natural resources, cultural heritage, traditions, environment, and the renowned hospitality of the Thai people. These factors enable the development of various forms of tourism, such as cultural tourism, ecotourism, health tourism, and specialized tourism, in response to the evolving needs of travelers.

The tourism market is greatly affected by the behavior of the tourists. In the last few years, the expansion of new models of tourism such as community-based tourism (CBT), ecotourism, religious tourism, and other forms of MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition) tourism, etc) has made this visible. It forces sub-sectors in the tourism industry to adjust their business to cover these trends while enhancing their competitiveness (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2017).

The challenges for the government is not simply to boost tourism income, but also to build resilience in communities surrounding destination hotspots, so that when the next crisis hits, they too can weather the storm. Likewise, the growth of community-based tourism is notorious, yet not very organized and systematically paved out; it has created plenty of issues, for instance; resource degradation, lifestyle alterations, cultural conflicts and the loss of their identity. Most communities are still unfamiliar with systematic socio-cultural risk assessment and management, and real participatory processes with the public sector, private sector, community and tourism stakeholders, are very scarce (UNESCO, 2016).

Thus, socio-cultural risk assessment is important in tourism destination management, in particular the tourism destination based on community-based tourism model. These evaluations enable the detection of tourism-related threats, the quantification of risk levels in several areas, and the ranking of risks with the highest extent of impacts (Simanavicius et al., 2015). This gives a platform for participatory and sustainable development planning in tourism.

One successful cultural tourism site, Sam Chuk Market in Suphan Buri province which has revitalized its community, was recognized in 2009 with the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation. However, the increase of tourists and local businesses has also posed on different levels, social, cultural and environmental risk. These include an increase in congestion, competition between community members and tourists, loss of local identity, and an excessive focus

on market-driven demands that distort the equilibrium of a community (Sam Chuk Market Conservation Development Committee, 2020).

Within such a context, the evaluation of socio-cultural risks from the point of view of the tourists represents a key tool to assess the main risks and opportunities for sustainable community-based tourism development. This research intends to assess socio-cultural risks on the Sam Chuk Market community as perceived by Thai tourists, in hopes of creating tools that enable adequate-risk assessment while offering guidelines to fortify communities in the continuity of local identity and the simultaneous promotion of sustainable socio-economic development.

Given this context, assessing socio-cultural risks from the perspective of tourists becomes a vital mechanism to identify potential threats and opportunities for sustainable community-based tourism development. This study aims to evaluate socio-cultural risks in the Sam Chuk Market community from the viewpoint of Thai tourists, with the ultimate goal of developing tools that facilitate appropriate risk assessments and provide guidelines to strengthen communities in preserving local identity while simultaneously fostering long-term socio-economic development.

### 1.1 Research Objectives

1. To assess the level of socio-cultural risk of community-based tourism in the Sam Chuk Market community destination in Samchuk district, Suphan Buri Province,
2. To examine the factors influencing socio-cultural risk of community-based tourism in the Sam Chuk Market community destination in Samchuk district, Suphan Buri Province

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Concepts of Socio-Cultural Risk Assessment

The researcher reviewed relevant concepts and theories to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding socio-cultural risk assessment. The details are as follows:

### 2.2 Definition of Socio-Cultural Risk

Socio-cultural risk is defined as any events or actions that may happen based on the assumption of uncertain conditions which could have negative impacts towards the social and cultural aspects of the community-based tourism destination. These dangers will threaten socio-cultural security, damage the image of tourism activities or experiences, and impair communal development goals as destination tourism (Naripat Chansawat, 2008).

### 2.3 Risk Management in Community-Based Tourism

The term socio-cultural risk management is used to describe the systematic action of planning, administration, and management of community-based tourism household planning processes to be best able to minimize problems where and when they do occur through a risk reduction strategy for future social situations. The goal is to minimize the loss to an acceptable level with the right automation in place, and ensure that that risks are measurable, controllable, and monitorable. The goal of risk management is to help the organization achieve its objectives effectively and efficiently, at the least possible cost. Risk management in community-based tourism is systematic planning to avoid losses, remove the root causes of all threats and mitigate the severity of impacts across all dimensions.

Government agencies, private enterprises, nearby communities, but also tourists who need to be safeguarded against loss of life or property are risk stakeholders. That is why risk assessment and analysis is an important process to identify possible threats. Risk management is one of the eight fundamental components according to the framework of the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO, 2018) which are

1. **Internal Environment** – The foundation of the risk management framework that consists of environment codes (the ethics of the community), management – extensive management styles, management methods, and philosophies that affect its strategy, objectives, and risk responses.
2. **Objective Setting** – Establishing clear objectives aligned with strategic goals and acceptable risk levels.
3. **Event Identification** – Internal and external events, which could impact strategy and objectives, must be identified. (Strategic, financial, operational, legal, environmental, social).
4. **Risk Assessment** – Determining the probability and effect of risks Likelihood is about the probability that something like this happens, and impact is about how serious the consequences would be if the event does happen.
5. **Risk Response** – Determining feasible and effective strategies to manage risks once they are identified and evaluated.
6. **Control Activities** – Designing the policies and procedures that ensure risks are managed in the right context for each community.
7. **Information and Communication** – Establishing effective information systems and

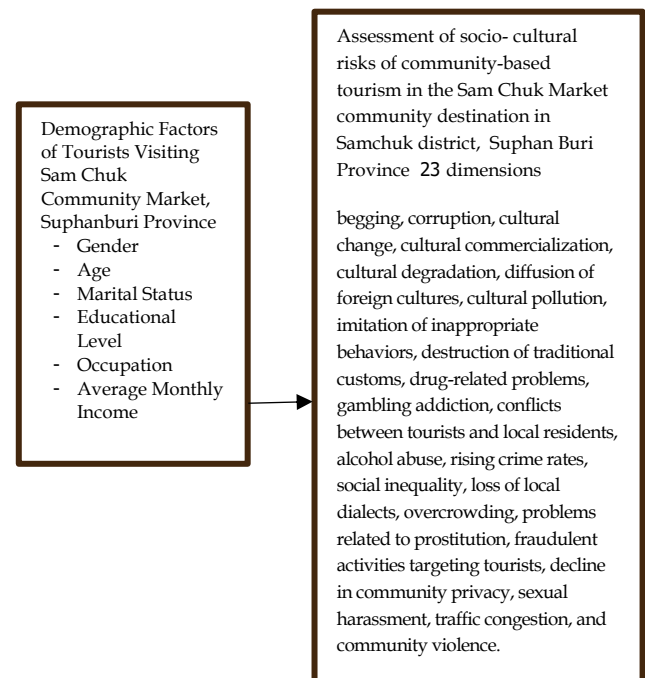
communication channels to support decision-making and implementation of risk management processes.

8. **Monitoring** – Continuously tracking and evaluating risk management practices to ensure effectiveness, quality, and integration across community levels.

### 2.4 Dimensions of Socio-Cultural Risk

Niraphai Chansawat (2008) proposed 23 dimensions for evaluating negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism, including: begging, corruption, cultural change, cultural commercialization, cultural degradation, diffusion of foreign cultures, cultural pollution, imitation of inappropriate behaviors, destruction of traditional customs, drug-related problems, gambling addiction, conflicts between tourists and local residents, alcohol abuse, rising crime rates, social inequality, loss of local dialects, overcrowding, problems related to prostitution, fraudulent activities targeting tourists, decline in community privacy, sexual harassment, traffic congestion, and community violence. These dimensions collectively highlight the breadth of socio-cultural risks associated with tourism development and underscore the importance of systematic assessment and management for sustaining community-based tourism.

## 3 RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The research on socio-cultural risk assessment of community-based tourism in the Sam Chuk Market community destination in Samchuk district, Suphan Buri Province is a quantitative study. The researcher has formulated the conceptual framework based on

relevant theories and previous studies, which has led to the identification of independent and dependent variables as the research framework, as follows.

#### 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design aimed at explaining the relationship between socio-cultural risk assessment and the perspectives of tourists visiting the Sam Chuk community in Suphan Buri Province. The methodological procedures are outlined as follows:

##### 4.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised Thai tourists who had visited the Sam Chuk community, Sam Chuk District, Suphan Buri Province, at least twice. This group was chosen because of their direct experience in perceiving the socio-cultural atmosphere of the area.

The sampling method was non-probability sampling, with a purposive sampling technique of tourists who visited on weekends and were willing to voluntarily complete this questionnaire.

To calculate sample size, we used Cochran's (1977) formula at a confidence level of 95% ( $p = 0.5$ ) and tolerable error 0.05. The minimum sample size required was 384. For greater analytical accuracy, the final sample consisted of 400 respondents.

##### 4.2 Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire based on a conceptual framework formed from literature and similar studies. The questionnaire itself comprised of two sections:

1. Demographic related personal information: 6 checklist questions on gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, and monthly income
2. Socio-cultural risk assessment - 23 items measured using five-point Likert scale ranging from very high risk to very low risk;

##### 4.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through fieldwork at Sam Chuk Market, where questionnaires were distributed to 400 Thai tourists who had visited the community at least twice. Participation was voluntary, and respondents completed the questionnaire on-site. All completed questionnaires were reviewed for accuracy and completeness prior to statistical analysis.

##### 4.4 Instrument Quality Testing

The quality of research instrument was examined by two different methods.

1. Content Validity - Three experts assessed the

content of structure, construct, and language of the questionnaire. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated for each item and the lowest IOC was 0.50 for all items before modification and finally accepted.

2. Reliability Testing - A pilot test was conducted on 30 respondents that have similar characteristics, demography of this study sample. Cronbach Alpha was used to measure reliability, and alpha was found to be equal to 0.89, which suggests high internal consistency (values  $\geq 0.70$  are considered acceptable).

##### 4.5 Data Analysis and Statistical Methods

After data collection, responses were coded, verified, and processed using a statistical software package. Data analysis was carried out using:

1. Descriptive Statistics - Frequency, percentage, mean, median, and standard deviation to describe respondents' demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, and monthly income).
2. Inferential Statistics - Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was employed to examine the relationship between personal demographic factors and socio-cultural risk assessment from the perspective of tourists visiting Sam Chuk community.

## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Among 400 Thai tourists as the sample group who visited the Sam Chuk Market community, most of them were female (60.50%). Most respondents were between 21 and 40 years old (71.0%), and more than half were married (52.30%). The largest group was found to hold a bachelor's degree (47.50%). Most of them were company/private employee (32.50%) by occupation. The average monthly income was most commonly between 10,001 and 20,000 baht (68.80%).

### 5.2 Perceived Socio-Cultural Risk Levels

The findings revealed that the overall level of perceived socio-cultural risks among tourists visiting the Sam Chuk Market community, Suphan Buri Province, was at a moderate level (Mean = 3.35).

Table 1 reveals that socio-cultural risk of Sam Chuk Market community as a whole was at a moderate level (Mean = 3.35). When analyzing all 23 items individually, the item with highest risk perception level related to lifestyle changes and adaptations in social and cultural patterns—lifestyle, local

wisdom, costume, customs, and relationship which adapted too much according to visitor's preference so that it threatened community identity (Mean = 4.34). In a complete contrast to this, sexual violence,

encompassing blatant sexual harassment and subversive forms such as lewd words and actions, or intimidation (Mean = 1.97), was viewed as lowest perceived risk.

Table 1

Socio-Cultural Risk	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Mean	S.D.	Severity Level
1. begging	135 (33.75)	74 (18.50)	43 (10.75)	79 (19.75)	69 (17.25)	2.68	1.53	Moderate
2. corruption	92 (23.00)	100 (25.00)	50 (12.50)	91 (22.75)	67 (16.75)	2.85	1.43	Moderate
3. Cultural change		11 (2.75)	65 (16.25)	103 (25.75)	221 (55.25)	4.34	0.85	Very High
4. cultural Commercialization	14 (3.50)	70 (17.50)	117 (29.25)	127 (31.75)	72 (18.00)	3.43	1.08	high
5. Cultural degradation	24 (6.00)	71 (17.75)	88 (22.00)	100 (25.00)	117 (29.25)	3.54	1.25	High
6. Diffusion of foreign cultures	93 (23.25)	116 (29.00)	79 (19.75)	64 (16.00)	48 (12.00)	2.65	1.32	Moderate
7. Cultural pollution	3 (0.75)	19 (4.75)	41 (10.25)	157 (39.25)	180 (45.00)	4.23	0.87	Very High
8. Imitation of inappropriate behaviors	61 (15.20)	132 (33.00)	129 (32.30)	54 (13.50)	24 (6.00)	2.62	1.08	Moderate
9. Destruction of traditional customs	20 (5.00)	58 (14.50)	95 (23.75)	139 (34.75)	88 (22.00)	3.54	1.13	High
10. Drug-related problems	190 (47.50)	93 (23.25)	16 (4.00)	62 (15.50)	39 (9.75)	2.17	1.41	Low
11. Gambling addiction	140 (35.00)	76 (19.00)	46 (11.50)	82 (20.50)	56 (14.00)	2.60	1.48	Low
12. Conflicts between tourists and local residents		13 (3.25)	37 (9.25)	188 (47.00)	162 (40.50)	4.25	0.75	Very High
13. Alcohol abuse	140 (35.00)	97 (24.25)	56 (14.00)	64 (16.00)	43 (10.75)	2.43	1.38	Low
14. Rising crime rates	26 (6.50)	74 (18.50)	74 (18.50)	140 (35.00)	86 (21.50)	3.47	1.20	High
15. Social inequality	63 (15.75)	42 (10.50)	87 (21.75)	114 (28.50)	94 (23.50)	3.34	1.36	Moderate
16. Loss of local dialects	27 (6.75)	65 (16.25)	85 (21.25)	145 (36.25)	78 (19.50)	3.46	1.17	High
17. Overcrowding		6 (1.50)	35 (8.75)	213 (53.25)	146 (36.50)	4.25	0.67	Very High
18. Problems related to prostitution	36 (9.00)	17 (4.25)	85 (21.25)	160 (40.00)	102 (25.50)	3.69	1.16	High
19. Fraudulent activities targeting tourists	20 (5.00)	39 (9.75)	84 (21.00)	164 (41.00)	93 (23.25)	3.68	1.09	High
20. Decline in community privacy	64 (16.00)	35 (8.75)	110 (27.50)	117 (29.50)	74 (18.50)	3.26	1.30	Moderate
21. Sexual harassment	248 (62.00)	33 (8.25)	34 (8.50)	52 (13.00)	33 (8.25)	1.97	1.40	Low
22. Traffic congestion	3 (0.75)	7 (1.75)	28 (7.00)	184 (46.00)	178 (44.50)	4.32	0.74	Very High
23. Community violence	1 (0.25)	55 (13.75)	21 (5.25)	88 (22.00)	235 (58.75)	4.25	1.07	Very High
Total						3.35	0.29	Moderate

## 5.2 Factors Influencing Tourists' Risk Assessments

Based on the research framework, all independent variables—gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, and monthly income—were originally measured on a nominal scale and were therefore recoded into dummy variables (1 = group of interest, 0 = reference group).

After confirming the statistical assumptions, a Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was performed using the Enter method with a significance level of 0.05.

The results (Table 2) show that the model explained only a small proportion of the variance in the dependent variable ( $R^2 = 0.064$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.049$ ), suggesting that demographic variables alone are weak predictors of tourists' socio-cultural risk perception. Therefore, the results should be interpreted cautiously.

- Monthly income had a negative effect ( $\beta = -0.236$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), indicating that tourists earning more than 10,000 baht per month perceived lower levels of socio-cultural risk compared

with those earning less than 10,000 baht.

- Education level had a positive effect ( $\beta = 0.152$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), showing that tourists with at least a bachelor's degree perceived higher levels of socio-cultural risk than those with lower education.
- Gender also had a negative effect ( $\beta = -0.102$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), suggesting that female tourists perceived lower levels of socio-cultural risk than male tourists.

Psychological and experiential variables such as cultural awareness, perceived authenticity, level of interaction with local residents, motivation for cultural tourism, and prior experience with heritage destinations are likely to provide stronger explanatory power. Future research should incorporate these variables into more comprehensive models.

These findings suggest that tourists' socio-demographic characteristics have a limited but statistically significant association with their perceptions of socio-cultural risks in a community-based tourism context.

**Table 2:** presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the relationship between tourists' socio-demographic factors and their assessment of socio-cultural risks in the Sam Chuk Market community, Suphan Buri Province.

Independent Variables	Model	
	beta	S.E
Demographic factors		
Gender (Reference: Male)		
Female	-0.102*	0.025
Age (Reference: Under 20 years) 21 years and above	-0.062	0.040
Marital Status (Reference: Single)		
Married	0.022	0.415
Education Level (Reference: Below Bachelor's degree)		
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.152**	0.028
Occupation (Reference: Unemployed) various occupations	-0.028	0.172
Monthly Income (Reference: Below 10,000 THB) 10,000 THB or higher	-0.236***	0.035
Constant	2.385***	
R <sup>2</sup>	0.064	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.049	
F	4.455	
SEE	0.238	
* P ≤ 0.05, ** P ≤ 0.01, *** P ≤ 0.00		

## 5 DISCUSSION

The results for the first research objective showed that the overall level of perceived socio-cultural risk in the Sam Chuk Market community, Suphan Buri Province, was moderate (mean = 3.35). Among the 23 risk indicators, the most critical issue was the transformation of local ways of life and socio-cultural practices to accommodate excessive tourism demand, leading to the erosion of community identity (mean = 4.34). This finding is consistent with Sasipimmart Hongsombat and Pitaya Boonkongsan (2018), who reported that the transformation of Sam Chuk Market into a heritage tourism destination altered community relationships toward shared economic interests and reduced traditional social interaction. Similarly, Isarapong Polthanee (2017) emphasized the importance of heritage conservation to sustain cultural tourism in Sam Chuk Market. These findings suggest that adapting community life primarily to tourist demand may jeopardize destination authenticity and identity, which must be carefully considered in sustainable tourism planning.

Although the overall socio-cultural risk level was moderate, the very high score on identity-related risks indicates that aggregated averages may conceal critical structural threats. In heritage destinations such as Sam Chuk Market, identity erosion represents a long-term and cumulative process rather than an immediately visible crisis. Lower ratings on issues such as crime, drugs, or gambling reduced the overall mean score, but qualitative evidence from community interviews revealed concerns about commercialization, overcrowding, and loss of

authenticity. Therefore, the moderate overall risk level should be interpreted as an early-warning signal rather than evidence of minimal socio-cultural impact.

Regarding the second research objective, three demographic factors—monthly income, education level, and gender were significantly associated with socio-cultural risk perception. Tourists with higher monthly incomes and female tourists tended to perceive lower risks, whereas tourists with at least a bachelor's degree perceived higher risks. These results are consistent with Suthasinee Amphilasray (2021) and Narinsiri Chiangphan and Rakpong Wongsaroj (2017), who found that demographic characteristics influence perceptions of sustainability and socio-cultural impacts.

However, the regression model explained only a small proportion of the variance in perceived socio-cultural risk ( $R^2 = 0.064$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = 0.049$ ), indicating that demographic variables are weak predictors. This suggests that psychological and experiential factors such as cultural awareness, perceived authenticity, travel motivation, length of stay, and interaction with local residents may play a more important role. Future research should incorporate these variables to better explain socio-cultural risk perception in community-based tourism contexts.

Collectively, these findings suggest that demographic characteristics have a limited but statistically significant association with socio-cultural risk perception. Tourism management should therefore emphasize identity preservation, participatory governance, cultural carrying-capacity

management, and culturally sensitive tourism design to maintain the long-term sustainability of community-based tourism destinations such as Sam Chuk Market.

This study has several limitations. First, the regression model explained only a small proportion of the variance in socio-cultural risk perception, indicating that demographic variables are weak predictors. Future research should incorporate attitudinal and experiential variables such as cultural awareness, perceived authenticity, travel motivation, length of stay, and interaction with local residents. Nevertheless, this finding contributes to tourism research. It suggests that socio-cultural risk perception in Thai community-based tourism destinations such as Sam Chuk Market is shaped more by experiential and psychological factors than by basic demographic characteristics.

Because identity erosion emerged as the most critical socio-cultural risk in Sam Chuk Market, tourism management should prioritize the protection of local cultural capital. Practical measures may include:

1. Community identity protection guidelines to safeguard local traditions, architecture, dialects, and cultural practices.
2. Participatory tourism planning involving community leaders, youth groups, and local entrepreneurs to ensure shared ownership of tourism development.
3. Carrying capacity management and visitor zoning to reduce overcrowding and protect culturally sensitive spaces.
4. Culturally grounded interpretation strategies, such as community-led storytelling, heritage education programs, and locally curated tourism experiences, to strengthen authenticity.

These recommendations are consistent with Thailand's community-based tourism development policies and international sustainable tourism frameworks, including community-based tourism principles, cultural heritage conservation strategies, and sustainable destination management approaches. They highlight the importance of balancing tourism growth with the protection of local identity in heritage

destinations. Furthermore, these findings contribute to socio-cultural tourism literature by demonstrating that identity-related risks may emerge even when overall impact levels appear moderate, underscoring the need for early preventive governance in community-based tourism destinations.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Based on the study of socio-cultural risk assessment of community-based tourism in the Sam Chuk Market community destination in Samchuk district, Suphan Buri Province, the findings can be summarized according to the research objectives as follows.

In summary, tourists perceived Sam Chuk Community Market as the socio-cultural risk at the moderate level. Specifically, changes in the local lifestyle and cultural behaviour patterns to adapt to tourists, resulting in the loss of community identity was evaluated as the highest threat (mean = 4.34). The results are consistent with previous research showing how tourism development not based on community identity is likely to change traditional social relationship and cultural practices.

In addition, socio-cultural risk perception was found to be significantly associated with tourists' individual characteristics: income, education, gender. Higher-income tourists had a tendency to assess lower risk, while tourists with higher education levels assessed higher risk. Female tourists also registered a lower assessment of risk than male tourists, which points to discrepancies in attitudes and sensitivity to tourism impacts between different demographic groups.

Such findings provide valuable empirical evidence for developing culturally sustainable tourism policies, promoting cultural diversity in tourism planning, and strengthening socio-cultural risk management strategies in community-based tourism for the long-term benefit and protection of host communities. Even though the overall socio-cultural risk level was moderate, the high score on identity-related risks signals a serious long-term threat to community authenticity and sustainability.

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