



**Tourism Cooperation between China and Thailand: Opportunities, Challenges,
and the influences on Sustainable Tourism Development**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Business Administration in Hospitality and Tourism Management (International Program)**

Prince of Songkla University

2023

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Thesis Title Tourism Cooperation between China and Thailand: Opportunities,
Challenges, and the influences on Sustainable Tourism Development

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Academic Year	2022

ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to explore the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand; the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand and how the tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry. The qualitative method is adopted in this study and interview are conducted. Fifteen participants from the government, travel agency, other tourism companies (offices in Thailand/China) would be recruited. The research questions are answered the themes which are resources maximization (resources exchange, knowledge sharing, shared market), tourism economic recession (disruption of tourism, low inflow tourists, low spending power), and providing better service (high quality of management, meet the demand of tourists, high performance of tourist experience). The findings of this study show that there are opportunities for resource optimization, service improvement, and sustainable development in China-Thailand tourism cooperation. The study highlights the need to address the challenges of tourism recession, tourism disruptions, low tourist inflows and low spending power to ensure the sustainable development of the tourism industry. In addition, with high-quality management, meeting customer needs, and efficient tourist experience to provide better services, so as to achieve sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Keywords: Tourism Cooperation, Sustainable Tourism Development, Thai-Sino Relationship

ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์ โอกาสและความท้าทายของความร่วมมือทางการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างประเทศไทย
และสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน และอิทธิพลต่อการพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืน

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บทคัดย่อ

ภาคการเดินทางและการท่องเที่ยวมีความสำคัญในประเทศจีน ตั้งแต่เริ่มการปฏิรูปและเปิดประเทศเมื่อหลายสิบปีก่อน ปริมาณการท่องเที่ยวได้เพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมาก ทั้งการเพิ่มขึ้นของชนชั้นกลางที่ร่ำรวยขึ้นใหม่และการที่รัฐบาลจีนคลายข้อจำกัดด้านเสรีภาพในการเคลื่อนไหวของประชาชน ต่างก็มีส่วนทำให้อุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวของประเทศเพิ่มขึ้น การศึกษามีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจโอกาสของความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างจีนและไทย สำรวจความท้าทายของความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างจีนและไทย และสำรวจผลประโยชน์สำหรับการพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืนในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยว การศึกษาใช้วิธีการเชิงคุณภาพด้วยการสัมภาษณ์ผู้ปฏิบัติงานด้านการท่องเที่ยวและเจ้าหน้าที่ของรัฐที่สำคัญ การศึกษาในปัจจุบันได้ตั้งคำถามการวิจัยสามข้อและสร้างหัวข้อที่จะตอบตามลำดับ คำถามวิจัยข้อแรกเกี่ยวกับ “โอกาสของความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างจีนและไทยคืออะไร” และใช้หัวข้อของการใช้ทรัพยากรให้เกิดประโยชน์สูงสุดเพื่อตอบคำถามนี้ หมายความว่าโอกาสของความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างจีนและไทยคือการใช้ทรัพยากรที่มีอยู่ในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวให้เกิดประโยชน์สูงสุด คำถามการวิจัยที่สองคือ “อะไรคือความท้าทายของความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างจีนและไทย” และหัวข้อที่ใช้ในการตอบคือภาวะถดถอยของเศรษฐกิจการท่องเที่ยว นับว่าความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างจีนและไทยอาจได้รับผลกระทบและท้าทายจากภาวะเศรษฐกิจการท่องเที่ยวที่ถดถอยสุดท้าย คำถามวิจัยข้อที่สามคือ “ความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวทำให้เกิดการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวได้อย่างไร” และหัวข้อที่ใช้ในการตอบคำถามวิจัยนี้คือการให้บริการที่ดีขึ้น หมายความว่าความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวทำให้ผู้ให้บริการทั้งไทยและจีนสามารถให้บริการได้ดียิ่งขึ้น และเกิดการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืนในอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยว การศึกษาได้ระบุถึงโอกาสความท้าทาย และผลลัพธ์ของความร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างจีนและไทย โอกาสในการร่วมมือด้านการท่องเที่ยวอยู่ที่การใช้ทรัพยากรให้เกิดประโยชน์สูงสุด เช่น การแบ่งปันความรู้ตลาดแบ่งปัน และการแลกเปลี่ยนทรัพยากร สิ่งนี้ทำให้อุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวสามารถขยายไปสู่ตลาดที่ใหญ่ขึ้น ลดความเสี่ยงของการขาดทุน

คำสำคัญ: ความร่วมมือทางการท่องเที่ยว การพัฒนาการท่องเที่ยว สถานการณ์หลังโควิด-19

ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างประเทศไทยและจีน

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have received a great deal of support and assistance.

First of all, I would like to express sincere gratitude to my advisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Tatiyaporn Jarumaneerat, who put a lot of time and effort into giving me great advice and in-depth guidance at every step of the process. Thank you very much for every piece of your advice, guidance, encouragement, motivation, care, and assistance.

Secondly, I would like to thank all the lecturers who have helped me a lot by providing me with valuable knowledge and suggestion, and MBA staff at the Prince of Songkla University, Phuket campus.

I would also like to thank my friends who gave me great encouragement, motivation, help, and support during my MBA studies.

Finally, I would like to express my love and thanks to my parents for their unconditional support and encouragement.

SHUYU HOU

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

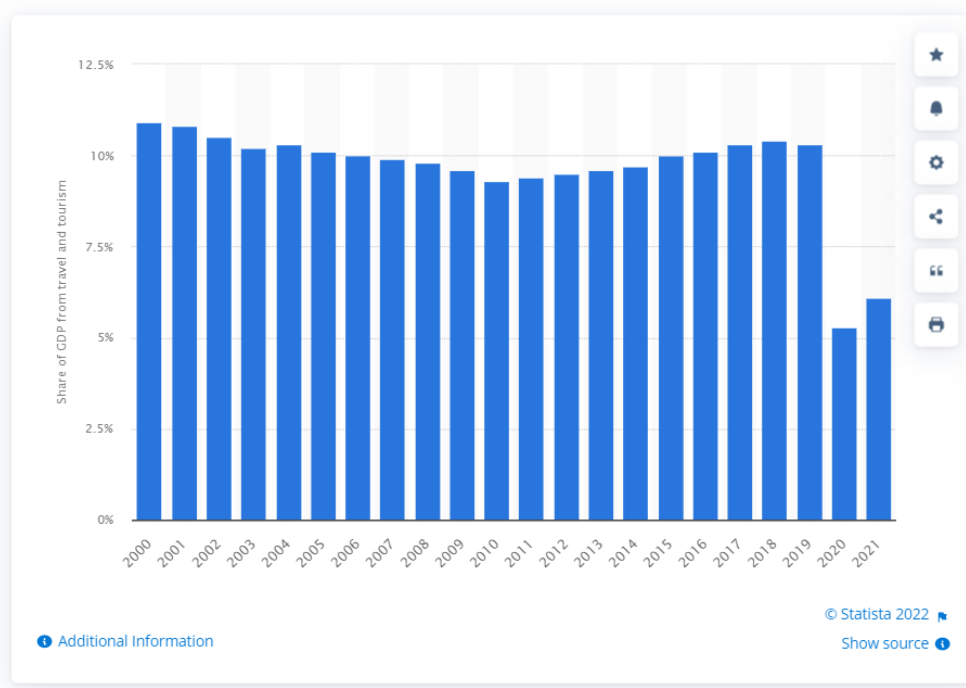
1.1 Background of Study

1.1.1 Growing Trend of Tourism

The phenomenon of tourism is one that is especially challenging to comprehend. It has consequences in the social, political, cultural, and economic areas of activity as a consequence of the action that it has taken (Bunghez, 2016). The expansion of the travel and tourism industries can be attributed to the sheer volume as well as the complexity of the supply of services geared toward tourists. As a result of this, the phenomenon of tourism ought to be dealt with as a separate component of the economy. This sector of the economy is deeply intertwined with the other sectors of the economy in terms of their respective degrees of development and rates of expansion. Because of the diverse array of activities that are included in the tourism industry and the fact that some of these activities overlap in the organizational framework of other economic branches, the tourism industry is an economic sector that is highly dependent on association and interconnectedness (Assessment, 2020). This specifies the scope as well as the level of complexity of the links that exist between tourism and other parts of the economy.

The total cost of all goods and services produced in a country in a given year is its gross domestic product (GDP). A positive change in GDP is indicative of an expanding economy, which is why it is regarded such a crucial indication of a nation's overall economic health. Based on Figure 1.1., The gross domestic product (GDP) of travel and tourism as a sector of the global economy in 2021 was 6.1%. This represented an improvement over the previous year's figure (2020), although it was still lower than the numbers that were published before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The overall economic impact of travel and tourism on countries throughout the world in 2021 was estimated to be equivalent to around 5.81 trillion U.S. dollars (Statista Research Department, 2022).

Figure 1.1 GDP of Tourism Contributed to Global



Source: (Statista Research Department, 2022)

The success of a great number of economies all over the world is directly attributable to the growth of the tourist sector. The tourism business provides a number of benefits to the communities that are willing to host visitors. The income of the economy is improved by tourism, which also creates thousands of new work opportunities, aids in building a nation's infrastructure and promotes cross-cultural interaction between domestic visitors and foreign tourists. Tourism is promoted in a broad range of settings, one of which is to facilitate the generation of a large number of job opportunities (Yehia, 2019). There were around 28.25 million individuals directly employed in China's travel and tourism business in 2019, which is a modest decrease from the 28.26 million people who held those jobs in 2018 (Blazyte, 2022). During that year in China, the travel and tourism industry directly and indirectly provided roughly 79.9 million people with employment opportunities.

An rise in the number of jobs in a tourist area, both directly and indirectly, within the companies that provide the services that are necessary for tourists, is one of the most significant benefits of tourism in terms of its ability to stimulate economic growth (Winchenbach, Hanna & Miller, 2019). Serving visitors is an activity that is appealing to a broad and diverse workforce since

it requires a wide range of different skill sets. The creation of employment in the direct administration of hotels, restaurants, stores, and transportation services is one of the advantages of tourism activities inside a location that is one of the most obvious benefits of tourist activities (Bunghez, 2016). Support industries and professions are less noticeable but make a significant contribution to the local economy. This is due to the fact that the wages in these fields are typically higher than those of jobs that fall into the more visible category of employment, such as those held by wait staff in restaurants. The growth of a tourist attraction results in the establishment of new employment possibilities, which in turn leads to a rise in the standard of living among the local population (Tosun, Çalişkan, Şahin & Dedeoğlu, 2023). This, in turn, leads to an increase in consumer spending as more people have more money to spend as well as economy growth.

Essentially, globalization is one of the parts that accelerated the tourism industry. It is common practice to use the term "globalization" to refer to a wide range of economic, social, political, and cultural shifts that have reshaped the world, particularly over the course of the last half-century or more (Ritzer, 2016). The term "globalization" refers to a process (or a series of activities) that entails the tightening of time and space as well as the escalating of economic, social, political, and cultural interconnectedness on a global scale. Although it can be defined from a variety of angles, the most prevalent definition of globalization is that it involves not only a highly dispersed geographical distribution of economic activity but also intricate functional integrations of economic activity at the local and regional levels. (Song et al., 2017). This is because globalization enables economies to better compete with one another on a global scale. The integration of, and interdependence among, economic systems is brought into sharper focus by globalization. From the economic point of view, globalization is known as worldwide commerce, international banking, and the movement of people throughout the world (Song et al., 2017). These three spheres are strongly intertwined with tourism endeavors in their various forms. Tourism is recognized as an important component in the process of globalization; yet, globalization itself has been a primary driving force behind the expansion of tourism across the world.

1.1.2 Importance of Tourism Industry in China and Thailand

In term of the growing of the tourism industry in the globalized world, China and Thailand are standing firm in the tourism industry. The tourism industry is one of China's largest and most important sectors, contributing significantly to the country's economy (Rasool, Maqbool &

Tarique, 2021). China's rich cultural heritage, breathtaking natural beauty, and fascinating history attract millions of tourists every year. In fact, China has consistently been one of the world's top tourist destinations for decades. The importance of this industry cannot be overstated, as it provides employment opportunities and generates revenue for the government (Luković & Stojković, 2020). China's tourism industry has also become one of the largest employers in the country, providing jobs to millions of people. Continuing this trend, the government has invested heavily in infrastructure projects to improve transportation and accommodation for tourists. For example, the recent construction of high-speed railways and modern airports has made travel within China more convenient and comfortable, further boosting the tourism sector. Moreover, the government has implemented several policies to further promote the tourism sector, which include improving infrastructure, building new tourist attractions, and offering visa-free travel to certain countries (Zhao & Liu, 2020). These efforts have not only enhanced the overall experience for visitors, but also increased the number of tourists who choose China as their travel destination.

Similarly, the tourism industry plays a crucial role in the economy of Thailand. With the country's natural beauty, rich culture and history, and delicious cuisine, Thailand is a popular travel destination. The sector contributes significantly to the country's GDP (Hwande & Phumchusri, 2020). In recent years, the government has made efforts to promote sustainable tourism, which not only benefits the economy but also safeguards the environment and local communities. In addition, the tourism industry in Thailand helps to preserve and promote cultural heritage sites, which in turn attracts more visitors (Hwande & Phumchusri, 2020). This sector is continually expanding, and the government has invested heavily in infrastructure development to improve the overall tourism experience for visitors. Such policies include investing in infrastructure, developing new tourist spots, and offering attractive incentives to businesses willing to invest in the sector.

1.1.3 International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Tourism Industry

Since the tourism is critical for the countries, China and Thailand has been searching ways and putting effort in making it sustainable. Indeed, for sustaining in the globalization era and maintain the benefits of the economy that are brought by the tourism industry, most of the countries are chosen for international cooperation in tourism industry. It also known as tourism cooperation. The international cooperation of tourism between China and Thailand has great potential to further the sustainable development goals of both countries. By sharing best practices and promoting

responsible tourism practices, both countries can learn from each other and work towards a more sustainable and equitable tourism industry. Additionally, collaboration between governments and industry leaders can lead to the development of cross-border tourism initiatives that benefit both countries.

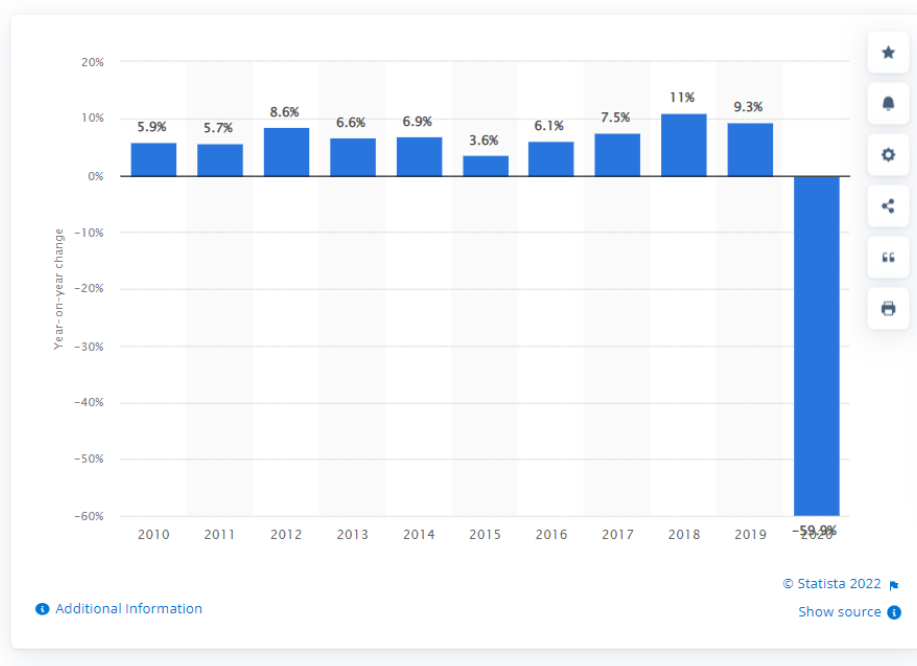
Under the Belt and Road, China has cooperated with several countries. In term of that, Thailand is one of the main countries in Belt and Road and China has been cooperating with Thailand (Naksinn et al., 2021). International cooperation between China and Thailand has been further strengthened by China's One Belt One Road initiative, which aims to promote economic development and connectivity across Asia and beyond. This initiative has provided opportunities for both countries to collaborate on various projects, including the development of sustainable tourism. By working together, China and Thailand can attract more visitors, engage in cultural exchanges, and promote sustainable tourism practices. Through initiatives like One Belt One Road, the two countries can continue to build on their already strong partnership and lead the way in sustainable tourism development.

1.2 Problem Statement

The travel and tourism sector are a significant industry in China. Since the commencement of reform and opening some decades ago, there has been a significant increase in the quantity of tourism that has taken place. Both the rise of a newly wealthy middle class and the Chinese government's loosening of limitations on people's freedom of movement are contributing to an increase in the country's tourist industry (Baatarsuren, 2021). China has rapidly developed into one of the most watched and most lucrative inbound and outbound tourism marketplaces in the world (Qiu, Lin, Feng, Peng & Fan, 2020). Tourism has grown here after the rest of the world started to learn a little bit about China and its people since the country of China has a rich history that has been unfurled through time and the area is full with historic locations. On the other hand, the flourishing culture and increasingly contemporary amenities in China have given a boost to the lively operation of the tourism. The Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City, and other sights in China, such as the Silk Road, are just some of the many reasons why tourists flock to China (Baatarsuren, 2021). However, based on Figure 1.2, it could be clearly seen that the contribution of China's travel and tourism industry to the country's gross domestic product shrunk to -59.9 percent

in 2020, a significant decrease from 9.3 percent in the 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic. There is a need to deal with such issue.

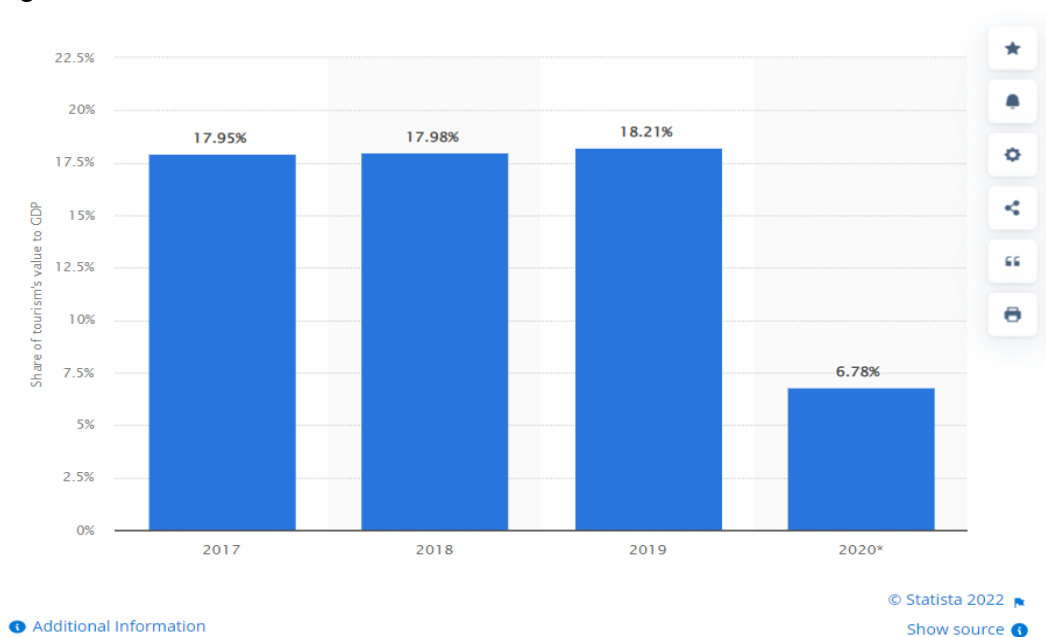
Figure 1.2 Growth of travel and tourism industry's contribution to GDP in China from 2010 -2020



Source: (Blazyte, 2022)

At the same time, the tourism industry is one of the most significant contributors to Thailand's economy and has the potential to continually bring in a significant amount of revenue for the country. Thailand, one of the most popular locations in the area, is highly reliant on revenue generated by tourists. According to Mastercard's 2019 Global Destination Cities Index, Bangkok took the top spot as the most popular travel destination in the world in 2019 and the city hosted over 22.7 million tourists from other countries in 2018 (Talty, 2021). Based on figure 1.3, Thailand has more than 15% of the GDP are contributed by the tourism industry. However, the pandemic caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) resulted in a significant decline in the tourist industry's contribution to Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) in the year 2020, which was around 6.78 percent. During the same time period, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Thailand had a total value of around 15 trillion Thai baht.

Figure 1.3 Share of tourism to GDP value Thailand 2017-2020



Source: (Manakitsomboon, 2021)

Essentially, China and Thailand both have their stance on the global for tourism and it is always important for their economy. However, based upon the discussion above, it could be clearly seen that Covid-19 pandemic has made the economy made by tourism shrunk dramatically. Indeed, the performance of the tourism is still relatively low because most of the Chinese are in health risk concern for the pandemic and this make them in low sustainability development. But then, nowadays, the pandemic is started to be in the recovery stage and the tourists are started to intend to visit to the other countries. Indeed, it is actually a need to help the tourism to get back to the situation before the pandemic and international cooperation actually a way to help for it, which means tourism cooperation between the countries such as China and Thailand will be helpful for the sustainable development of tourism industry. However, there are only few studies have been found to examine the international cooperation and sustainable development, but only one of them is talking about tourism and none of them is up to date to deal with the pandemic situation. Hence, this study is in need and will be explore the relevance of the tourism cooperation as well as its relation with sustainability development.

1.3 Research Objectives

- 1.3.1 To explore the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand.
- 1.3.2 To explore the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand.
- 1.3.3 To explore the benefits for sustainable development in the tourism industry.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1.4.1 What are the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand?
- 1.4.2 What are the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand?
- 1.4.3 How the tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study could benefit the individual related to the tourism as well as China and Thailand. The current study explores the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand and challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand, as well as how the tourism cooperation makes sustainability development in tourism industry, this could allow the individual in the tourism industry, no matter employers or employees to be sustain in the market. On the other hand, the sustainable development of the tourism could benefit the GDP of the country and so the economy of China and Thailand will be benefited.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Development

There are many various taxonomies of the meaning of the word development that can be found in the published works, but the following definitions are the ones that are stressed the most: 1) development as structural change, 2) development of human potential, 3) development of democratic institutions and procedures, and 4) development as environmental sustainability (Tomislav, 2018). The ability to preserve something over time, whether it be an entity, an outcome, or a process, is what the word "sustainability" refers to precisely. The concept of sustainability and development can be used to conceptualize and define what is known as sustainable development. This particular definition of sustainability is built on the foundation of numerous other fundamental ideas in addition to the concept of substitutability (Emas, 2015). The concept of intergenerational equality may be found within the more general definition of sustainable development. This concept acknowledges the importance of long-term sustainability in order to meet the requirements of future generations.

The basic objective of sustainable development is to maintain the long-term health of the environment and the economy (Sala, 2021). In order to achieve this goal, the process of decision-making must first and foremost include consideration of all relevant factors, including those pertaining to the economy, the environment, and society. When putting this idea of sustainable development into practice, one difficulty that arises is the degree to which capital may be substituted. There are several forms of capital, the most common of which are social, natural, and man-made (Holden, Linnerud & Banister, 2014). Natural capital can be replaced by manufactured, or man-made, capital. The idea of weak sustainable development, which holds that the aggregate level of capital is the only level of capital that matters, provides an explanation for this. Strong sustainability, on the other hand, recognizes the unique properties of natural resources, which are incomparable to capital created by humans and cannot be duplicated.

To be sustainable, activities must be carried out that do not deplete the resources upon which preservation is dependent. As a result, the following constitutes sustainable development (Tomislav, 2018): 1) the idea of progress and advancement (socio-economic

development in line with ecological constraints); 2) the idea that one has needs (redistribution of resources to ensure the quality of life for all); 3) the idea of generations to come (the potential for a continued use of resources over an extended period of time in order to guarantee a certain standard of living for future generations).

Sustainable Development in Tourism Industry

Based on the discussion about the concept of the sustainable development above, it could be summarized that sustainable development is something has the ability to stay in the industry in a long-term period. In term of that, sustainable development in tourism industry could be known as the ability of the organizations in the tourism industry has the ability to stay in the market in a long-term period (Sharpley, 2020). Indeed, it could be shown in different dimensions as the debate on the past studies. Several sets of indicators have been produced in the intention of being able to quantify sustainability in an effort to make the notion of sustainable tourism more operational. This was done in an effort to operationalize the concept of sustainable tourism. The process of striking a balance between the economic, environmental, and social demands of all stakeholders while taking into consideration the effects of tourism is known as "sustainability" as it relates to the tourist business(Guo, Jiang & Li, 2019). This is in spite of the fact that there is ongoing debate over the subject of sustainability. Tourism is one of the businesses that has some of the most interesting and promising possibilities for the foreseeable future. It is of the highest significance to plan and cultivate tourism in a manner that is both meaningful and sustainable through the process of finding for compromises between the social, economic, and environmental aims of society (Rasoolimanesh, Ramakrishna, Hall, Esfandiar & Seyfi, 2020). The management of sustainable tourism development calls for maintaining a high level of tourist satisfaction, assuring meaningful experiences for customers, increasing their understanding of sustainability-related concerns, and motivating them to use sustainable tourism practices.

Indeed, sustainable development in tourism industry is more towards to be based on economic, environmental, and social (Streimikiene, Svagzdiene, Jasinskas & Simanavicius, 2021). As the global economy, social, and technological development processes continue to spread, the tourism industry must analyze new and specialized business forms in order to achieve sustainable development. Concerns pertaining to the development of tourism that is compatible with the environment are inextricably linked with competitiveness as a result of the

proliferation of innovations in all facets of business operations (Streimikiene, Svagzdiene, Jasinskas & Simanavicius, 2021). Additionally, tourism is regarded as a business that is distinguished by its vast diversity, integrity, and multi-planning. Precisely, the extensive interdependence of tourist industry's structural elements enables service-providing businesses to cooperate in the implementation of innovations (Franco & Estevão, 2010). Indeed, one of them could be tourism cooperation in term to have shared resources that could be implementing innovative ideas and achieve sustainable development.

The expansion of the tourist sector is intrinsically intertwined with the aforementioned three elements of sustainable development since tourism has such a huge influence on the modern world's economy, environment, and society (Aall, 2014). The overall concept that serves as the driving force behind the whole development process is known as sustainable development. One of them relates to the clusters, which are becoming increasingly important for locating in a network geographical companies and endeavors that closely cooperate with one another and are focused on shared commercial results as well as ones that complement one another (Rasoolimanesh, Ramakrishna, Hall, Esfandiar & Seyfi, 2020). This may be accomplished by placing them in close proximity to one another geographically. It is anticipated that the innovations will lead to breakthroughs on a worldwide scale, which might influence how businesses operate under new effective organizational forms that generalize concepts, provide some competitive advantage, and create new opportunities in the tourism sector (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017; Rasoolimanesh, Ramakrishna, Hall, Esfandiar & Seyfi, 2020). As a consequence of this, issues surrounding the development of sustainable tourism are closely linked with the expansion of competitiveness by means of a rise in innovations in all aspects of the operations of corporate businesses. In addition, tourism is regarded to be an industry, which may be differentiated from other industries owing to the industry's enormous diversity, steadfast constancy, and capability for multiple-level planning (Higgins Desbiolles, 2020). More specifically, the firms that offer tourist services are able to collaborate on the implementation of innovations and benefit from doing so due to the broad interconnectedness of the structural elements that create the tourism sector. This is because the widespread connectivity of these structural components shapes the tourism industry.

In short, sustainability development in tourism industry could be meant to be the ability to sustain in the market in term of the three dimensions, which are economic,

environmental, and social. In term of that, the organizations in the tourism industry could achieve sustainable development in the industry through cooperation with gaining competitiveness.

2.2 Tourism Cooperation

Tourism Cooperation is defined as collaboration between the public and private sectors, both directly and indirectly involved in tourism, to promote the consolidation and valorisation of the destination through the sharing of resources, knowledge, and strategies that enable tourism development and more efficient service and product management (IGI Gloabal, 2022). There are two types of the tourism cooperation which are tourism cooperation within domestic and international tourism cooperation because borders may act as barriers to human, economic, cultural and social exchanges and movements, if international cooperation are achieved in tourism, attractive and innovative ideas would be introduced and implemented in term to achieve the sustainable development. Borders have the potential to encourage tourism innovation by means of the introduction of new products or services to the region that is adjacent to the border, thereby boosting the region's attraction to tourists (Makkonen, Williams, Weidenfeld & Kaisto, 2018). The similarities in the tourism cooperation industry make this potential for knowledge transfer and innovation easier to realize. On the other hand, the capacity for learning and innovation increases in proportion to the degree of divergence that exists between two neighboring border regions such as China and Thailand. These concepts are in line with the concept of "related variety," which in the tourism sector refers to shared technological skills and comparable educational backgrounds that can encourage knowledge transfer between different economic sectors and, as a result, enable re-composition of technologies that are already in use (Makkonen, Williams, Weidenfeld & Kaisto, 2018).

2.3 Tourism Cooperation and Sustainable Development in Tourism Industry

Sustainable Development is a notion that has gained traction in recent years as a result of a slew of critiques levelled at the global economic development model, which has put the existence of all living species on the planet, including humans, in jeopardy (Amador et al., 2021). Sustainable tourism development is defined as tourism that fully considers its current and future economic, social, and environmental repercussions and meets the needs of travelers, businesses,

the environment, and the communities that welcome them (Dunets et al.,2019). The capacity of these components will be decided by the growth of new tourism-related activities. Each activity is influenced by biophysical, environmental, social, and managerial elements, all of which alter the circumstances of resource functioning and provision. Some bilateral agreements need at least two countries to agree on specific concerns of sustainability.

International cooperation began to emerge in Europe in the 1950s. Its principal goals revolved around the removal of obstacles that separated communities along the borders of several European countries (Dunets et al.,2019). International cooperation helps to mitigate the negative impacts of state boundaries and the perimeter of border areas, therefore improving the socioeconomic status of local residents. It is necessary to research the cross-border region in order to discover the requirements for boosting tourism cooperation. International collaboration is characterized by the continuity and reciprocal influence of two or more independent links situated on opposing sides of the border, the intersection of the geopolitical interests of neighboring nations, and the asynchrony and asymmetry of change on opposing sides of the border (Statham, Scuzzarello, Sunanta & Trupp, 2020). The establishment of international cooperation is critical for increasing economic efficiency. International cooperation is a natural function of border areas and one of the most important aspects in their growth (Li, Shi, Yang & Ren, 2020). It is a geographically integrated kind of political collaboration in the face of difficulties that border areas may jointly handle. Cross-border regionalism has increased as a result of interconnectedness and individual governments' and international organizations' limited capacity to address some global issues (Dunets et al.,2019). With so, tourism could be benefited from it and achieve sustainable development.

2.3.1 Relationship between China and Thailand

More than four decades have passed since the People's Republic of China and Thailand first established diplomatic relations with one another. On July 1, 1975, the two nations formally established diplomatic ties, and since that time, they have opened a new page of friendly cooperation (Bunyavejchewin, Intasi & Buddharaksa, 2022). This accomplishment was made possible by the consideration and dedication of leaders from the preceding generation. Over the course of the previous 45 years, the two countries' relationship has grown in a healthy and steady

way, serving as a model for peaceful coexistence and the pursuit of shared advancement (Zawacki, 2021).

China and Thailand are two of the most important emerging countries in Asia, and each of them has a long and illustrious past. The relationship of friendship that has existed between the two nations dates back to prehistoric times. The Western Han Dynasty is the earliest period for which there is evidence of trade between China and Thailand (Miksic, 2021). Beginning in the 10th century, frequent commercial exchanges took place between the two nations, and by the 12th century, Chinese people were moving to Thailand. Over the course of the past two thousand years, friendly dialogue has brought our two countries much closer together.

The two nations have achieved significant strides toward their shared goals over the course of the previous 45 years. China has become the country with the second biggest economy and the largest industrial country in the world since it began its reform and opening up process (Xie, 2020). China has also started on its path to socialism with Chinese characteristics. It has been successful in lifting more than 700 million people out of poverty, has consistently contributed more than 30 percent to the growth of the global economy, and promotes peace and the advancement of civilization (Jian, 2018). Thailand has been looking at the economic path that best suits its national circumstances in the meantime. This entails working to preserve political stability, promote economic and social progress, and raise the standard of living for all. As a significant member of ASEAN and the organization with the second largest economy, Thailand is sometimes referred to as one of the "Tiger Cub Economies" (Azaria & Sihaloho, 2021). It is a strong force that promotes peace, development, and cooperation in the region as well as across the entire world. It actively participates in regional collaboration based on the ASEAN as well as global collaboration on sustainable development.

In addition to flourishing alongside one another, China and Thailand's people-to-people and cultural contacts, as well as their multifaceted cooperative efforts and trust in one another on the political and economic fronts, all contribute to the process of joint growth (Das, 2017). Many of the top officials in China have traveled to Thailand, and numerous members of the Thai royal family as well as the heads of government, parliament, and the armed forces have traveled to China on various occasions in order to guide and advance the bilateral relationship. For the past five years in a row, Thailand's most important commercial partner has been China, and

China has also been Thailand's third most important source of foreign investment. China is third among ASEAN countries in terms of the amount of trade it does with Thailand (Jian, 2018). The successful completion of the first stage of the China-Thailand railway cooperation project has introduced an innovative facet to the interconnectedness of the surrounding area. China is sending an increasing number of enterprises that are technologically sophisticated, competent, and inventive to Thailand. As a result, Sino-Thai economic cooperation is receiving a fresh boost of energy in the form of new economy and new knowledge. The two nations are engaged in increasingly robust efforts to foster cultural and interpersonal connections amongst their citizens. There are more than 30,000 Chinese students living and studying in Thailand, whereas there are more than 5,000 Thai students living and studying in China (Jian, 2018). There are around more than 1,500 volunteers now working in various locations of Thailand to teach Chinese as a second language. Additionally, the two parties work together to provide practical education in a range of fields. Almost 10 million Chinese visitors arrived in Thailand in 2017 (Gong, Detchkhajornjaroensri & Knight, 2019). The connection that exists between the people of China and Thailand is the unending source of vitality that propels the friendship between the two countries forward.

Both China and Thailand are currently confronted with the reality that the globe is currently undergoing significant development, transition, and adjustment. Traditional and non-traditional security challenges continue to emerge. Unstable and unknown elements continue to be on the increase. Hegemony and power politics continue to exist. In the same vein, globalization of the economy, multipolarization of the world, informatization of society, and cultural diversity are all picking up steam (Kyrylov, Hranovska, Boiko, Kwilinski & Boiko, 2020). Peace, progress, and cooperation continue to be the overarching trend, as well as the ambition that the people have in common. President Xi Jinping has proposed the idea of creating a community of shared future for all of humanity with the goals of preserving world peace and fostering common growth, as well as fostering a new type of international relations that is based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation, given that he has an in-depth and accurate understanding of the current state of the world and the times in which we live (Jian, 2018).

2.3.2 Tourism Cooperation between China & Thailand

In 2013, China has issued the “Belt and Road”. It is a strategic concept of a Chinese initiative to foster win-win global cooperation, is being implemented progressively (Li & Zhang, 2020). International tourist collaboration has become a vital aspect of the Belt and Road strategy's cooperation plate, as it is a positive investigation of international cooperation and its governance model. The nations along the route have stronger growth vigor and vast room for collaboration as the tourist hub of "the Belt and Road" and the heart of tourism development.

"The Belt and Road" is the most active and developing section of the world's tourist road, with its cultural and geographic unique, and other benefits for the growth of international tourism collaboration (Ahmad & Ullah, 2023). More than sixty-five nations and international organizations are currently participating in the project, but tourist collaboration is still in its infancy. It is crucial for "Belt and Road" countries to dedicate their efforts and actively follow the path of tourist cooperation in order to support the global tourism pattern of positive transformation and growth and therefore promote the project (Zhifei & Chenchen, 2020). From the beginning of the program, the number of Chinese visitors traveling to nations along the "Belt and Road" has been continuously rising, with a 77 percent growth from 2013 to 2017. (Li & Zhang, 2020). While it is projected that the consumption of tourism would surpass 110 billion and that two-way tourist expenditures between China and countries along the route will approach 85 million. Two of the most well-known tourist destinations in the world are connected via the "Belt and Road" route. Together, these two destinations account for more than 70% of all global tourism (Li & Zhang, 2020).

In order to assist the development of all nations and promote global economic growth, it is crucial at this time to recognize the practical value of international tourist cooperation. To begin, it contributes to the consolidation of intercultural connections. In addition to enhancing cultural interaction and integration, international tourism cooperation would advance human civilisation (Li, Kim & Lee, 2021). A conduit for contact between civilizations of nations who, due to their geographic position, have many historical roots in their cultures and have revived the cultural sensibilities is provided by international tourist cooperation. Second, increase the number of easily available international tourism services (Michopoulou, Darcy, Ambrose & Buhalis, 2015). The "Belt and Road" strategy has increased the quantity and quality of tourist destinations,

enhanced tourism products, diversified and rationalized route and product portfolios, and given tourists more choices, making international travel significantly more alluring. Last but not least, it is beneficial to embrace the idea of upscale customer service. International tourism cooperation offers domestic tourism greater learning chances, enabling it to recognize disparities, make up for shortcomings, enhance and avoid shortages, and make an effort to narrow the gap with other nations (Khartishvili, Muhar, Dax & Khelashvili, 2019). Because of this, international tourism cooperation was able to achieve a situation in which all parties involved came out ahead, and domestic tourism was given the opportunity to understand the actual worth of international tourism cooperation.

Up to date to the recovery stage of Covid-19 pandemic, China and Thailand has been discussing about the travel for cooperation. Thailand wants to conduct travel bubble discussions with China and Malaysia. Thailand reinstating a quarantine-free visa program aimed at boosting tourist arrivals, which are viewed as critical to the country's economic recovery (Yuvejwattana, 2022). Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Administration Ocha's will meet with China's Minister of Culture and Tourism shortly to discuss the terms of a prospective bilateral travel agreement, according to Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana, a government spokesperson. After the waiver of quarantine for vaccinated visitors and the so-called tourism sandbox trials failed to attract a big number of tourists, Thailand is pursuing bilateral accords to jumpstart a larger recovery in its pandemic-wounded tourism industry (Yuvejwattana, 2022). The sector sees the return of Chinese and Malaysian tourists, the two main groups of visitors to the Southeast Asian nation before the outbreak, as critical to a long-term recovery.

2.4 Social Capital Theory

Based on the previous section, it could be known that the international cooperation between the countries in tourism industry is related to the tourism development. In order to illustrate how tourist collaboration relates to sustainable development, this study really used the social capital theory as its theoretical underpinning.

It is possible to trace the origins of the fundamental components of what is now known as social capital all the way back to classical sociology and economics. These fundamental aspects include the idea that participation in a social group imposes duties and benefits on people (Hawe & Shiell, 2000). The value of social networks has been extensively analyzed through the

lens of social capital theory. The term "social capital" refers to intangible assets or essential resources that may be acquired via one's network of social connections (Ghahtarani, Sheikhmohammady & Rostami, 2020). Numerous studies undertaken in a variety of commercial situations have widely utilised the idea of social capital. The structural, cognitive, and relational aspects are the three characteristics of relational ties that exist at the corporate level, according to the social capital theory (Zhu & Lai, 2019). According to what they discussed, several pieces of study have shown that the aforementioned elements might have an impact on collaborative activities as well as relationships between two parties.

Shared representability, interpretation, and systems among network participants serve as a proxy for cognitive capital. (Lee & Ha, 2018). Participants that have a shared understanding of the managerial and contractual controls that govern their connection are said to have cognitive social capital. Shared codes, languages, and narratives are crucial for achieving the objective of this cognitive social capital dimension. Because of common recognition of certain knowledge or events enabled by cognitive capital, members of social networks might share goals, ambitions, and values (Sun, Zhou, Jeyaraj, Shang & Hu, 2019). The relational bonds that are developed via joint operations are advantageous for the exchange of resources and communication between partners that are working toward comparable goals and objectives because of the shared vision as well as increased information availability and accessibility.

One component of social capital is known as the structural dimension, and it implies that there are organized ties linking the interactions. The formal definition of structural capital is "the network of links between individuals or organizations" (Lee & Ha, 2018). It is constructed on the basis of a straightforward concept about who would be connected to whom or how individuals might get in touch with one another. In point of fact, it is investigated from a wide variety of perspectives and angles, such as the features of networks, the dissemination of information and knowledge, and the extent of social interactions. This opens the door for enhanced cooperative planning, problem-solving, and goal-achieving for the execution of the collaboration since the presence of structural social capital puts formal control on the implementation, including contractual specifications and managerial control. (Zhu & Lai, 2019). This is because formal control on the implementation includes contractual specifications. Because of this, it might be

possible to control the activities of international collaboration in the tourism industries of various countries more effectively.

Relational capital, which is one of the three components that make up social capital, has received the most attention among these studies since it relates to the personal connections that people make with one another over the course of their shared experiences (Sun, Zhou, Jeyaraj, Shang & Hu, 2019). It is common practice to define relational capital as the mutual trust, respect, commitment, and obligations that exist between two parties (either individuals or organizations). Relational can be of service in distributing environmental management techniques; nevertheless, information openness that supports long-term orientation amongst channel partners is crucial for partner participation in poor nations (Zhu & Lai, 2019). Because the members' behavior is influenced to be more collaborative with one another as a result of the created connection, which is founded on respect and trust, this enables them to trade valuable resources with one another.

The social capital idea has the potential to be proven by research that demonstrates how it contributes to driving competitiveness. For instance, according to studies by Steinmo and Rasmussen, the use of university-industry collaboration in the process of innovation is considered as a critical driver of business competitiveness (2018). Steinmo and Rasmussen (2018) explore how businesses with varying levels of experience working with universities and public research organizations rely on various facets of social capital to achieve successful collaborations. They do this by using longitudinal case studies of 15 different innovation projects. Specifically, They examine how these businesses collaborate successfully with universities and public research institutions by utilizing social capital. According to the findings of the study, experienced firms initially develop external collaborations on the basis of cognitive social capital. However, as time passes, this foundation is enhanced by relational social capital. On the other side, Less seasoned enterprises initially rely on relational social capital when collaborating with universities, which is later strengthened by cognitive social capital as the cooperation advances. On the basis of these findings, the study provided support for the interplay between the many dimensions of social capital that are present throughout the duration of the relationship between the institution and the industry.

Golgeci et al. (2019) look at how businesses' relational skills and social capital affect how they function in terms of the environment. By examining the roles that cross-functional alignment and environmental collaboration play in mediating the connection, they are able to

achieve this. In accordance with the findings of an investigation into dual responses from 270 Turkish companies. The research provided conclusive evidence that social capital and relational capability have a role in determining a company's environmental performance.

Al-Omouh et al. (2020) investigate the role that social capital and collaborative knowledge production play in the process of developing e-business proactiveness in the context of the COVID-19 issue. In order to obtain data from sectors that needed to keep operating despite the crisis, such as the pharmaceutical and cleaning materials industries, an online poll was carried out. The sample included 198 people in managerial positions. The findings indicate that social capital and the formation of collaborative knowledge play a crucial role in the achievement of e-business proactiveness in the face of the pandemic. The findings also demonstrate that organizational agility can be improved by fostering collaborative knowledge production and being proactive with regard to e-business during times of crisis.

The tourism industry has long been understood to have a significant impact on local economies, both in terms of economic growth and social development. Scholars have explored various theories to explain this phenomenon, including social capital theory. This theory suggests that social networks and relationships play a crucial role in promoting economic growth and development. Social capital theory can be a valuable framework for analyzing the tourism industry. This theory posits that social networks and relationships are important resources that can lead to economic and social benefits. In the context of tourism, social capital can be seen as the relationships between actors such as tourists, local residents, businesses, and community organizations. Understanding these relationships can help explain why some destinations are more successful than others, and can inform strategies for improving destination management and sustainability. The concept of social capital has become increasingly significant in the tourism industry. It refers to the networks, relationships, and trust that individuals and organizations build with each other over time. Through the lens of social capital theory, tourism can be understood as a highly social phenomenon that depends on collaboration and cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders. Researchers have explored the role of social capital in various aspects of the tourism industry, including destination development, community involvement, and marketing strategies.

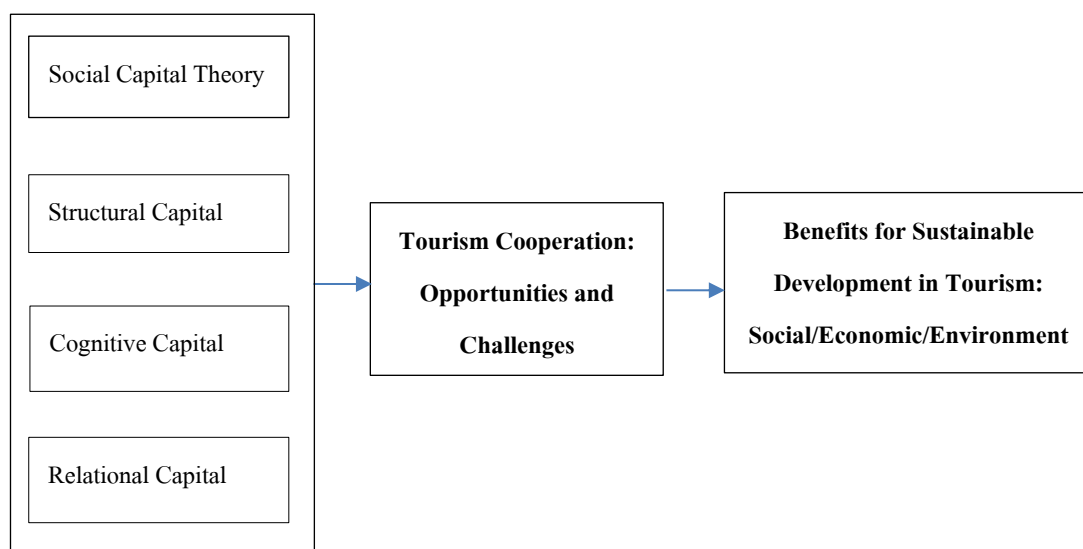
In the context of the tourism industry, social capital theory highlights the importance of building strong relationships between tourists, locals, and industry professionals. Social capital

theory has been widely studied and applied in various industries, including tourism. It focuses on the relationships and connections between individuals and how they contribute to collective benefits. In the tourism industry specifically, social capital can be seen in the collaborations and partnerships between businesses, government organizations, and local communities to improve the overall experience for tourists. The tourism industry heavily relies on the social capital theory to enhance its success rates. Social capital involves networks, norms, and trust among members of a social unit. In the tourism industry, networks of individuals and institutions play a vital role in ensuring quality services and customer satisfaction. Norms determine how actors in the tourism industry interact, and trust builds loyalty between service providers and clients. Research has shown that greater levels of social capital can lead to higher economic growth and development in tourism destinations.

In term of that, tourism industry is facing declination as mentioned in the problem statement of the current study and this means that social capital could be very well theory to serve as the theoretical foundation of this study. With so, the framework of this study is formed as per following:

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Figures 2.1 Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative Method

The current study is adopted the qualitative method as the research methodology. As the study of phenomena' nature, qualitative research is particularly useful for answering the issue of why something is observed (or not), analyzing complex multi-component therapies, and improving interventions. As per mentioned earlier, the scarcity of the research related to the international cooperation in the tourism industry remains. Hence, this study would use qualitative study instead of quantitative to gain in-depth information.

3.2 Population and Sample

Population means the target group of the research, while the sample is the subgroup with certain characteristic in the population. The current study aimed to explore the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand; the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand and how the tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry. All these research objectives are related to the tourism in China and Thailand; hence, the population of the study is the one who works in tourism industry in China or Thailand. Based on the past studies, there are actually strong tied of relationship and cooperation between China and Thailand, and as this study are studying cooperation based on these two countries, the one who works in the cooperation between the countries should provide more information that valuable for this study than those are not. In term of that, the sample of the current study is the ones who are from the government, travel agency, other tourism companies (offices in Thailand/China). This is because employees from management level might have a deeper understanding to the industry. In short, fifteen participants from the government, travel agency, other tourism companies (offices in Thailand/China) would be recruited and no more recruitment will be needed as the data are saturated. Purposive sampling method and snowball sampling method were used for recruiting the participants.

3.3 Data Collection

In-depth interviewing was used for the current study's data collecting. A restricted number of respondents are interviewed in-depth one-on-one using the qualitative research technique known as in-depth interviewing to gain their opinions on a particular idea, plan, or situation (Mears, 2012). It is feasible to do this to collect as much data as you can. When it comes to gathering primary data, conducting in-depth interviews is one of the most effective approaches (Malbašić, Posarić & Gregurec, 2019). An in-depth interview, as opposed to a standard questionnaire or rating scale, is performed with the goal of eliciting in-depth information regarding the interviewee's experiences as well as their perspectives on a certain topic. When compared to other methods of data collecting, such as surveys, one of the most significant advantages of conducting in-depth interviews is that they are both more efficient and less organized (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). As a result, they are able to unearth more specific and comprehensive information. In-depth interviews with a single person and are often performed with a limited pool of respondents. The person conducting the interview is responsible for first making the respondent feel at ease and then asking questions in an effort to get the most accurate information feasible from them. All participants were required to participate the interview section and disclose their perception on the topic. The researcher in this study would record the audio of the discussions as the data of the study.

3.4 Interview Questions

3.1 Interview Questions

Variables	Interview Questions	Target informants (5 people)	Target informants (10 people)
Social Capital Theory	-	Government	Travel/Tour agencies
Structural Capital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How long China and Thailand spend time together in social occasions? How do you think China and Thailand maintain a close social relationship? How do you think China and Thailand communicate frequently? 	<p>How long have Chinese and Thai government started their cooperation?</p> <p>Is the relationship between two nations considered close relationship? And why?</p> <p>How often do the government of China and Thailand communicate? How do they communicate?</p>	<p>Who is your business partner (s) in China? How long have you had relationship with these companies?</p> <p>Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?</p> <p>How often do your company communicate with the Chinese business partners? How do you communicate?</p>
Cognitive Capital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How are the tourism organizations in China and Thailand share the same ambitions and vision? 	<p>In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both government?</p>	<p>In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?</p> <p>Which other organisations in Thailand and China</p>

Table 3.1 Continued

Variables	Interview Questions	Target informants (5 people)	Target informants (10 people)
Social Capital Theory	-	Government	Travel/Tour agencies
	2. How are the tourism organizations in China and Thailand enthusiastic about pursuing a collective goal for the whole supply chain?	Which organizations are part of tourism supply chain in Thailand and China? Are they working closely together? How enthusiast are they when working together?	Are you working with? Are they working closely together? How enthusiast are they when working together?
	3. How are the tourism organizations in China and Thailand share similar corporate culture and management style?		
	4. How are the tourism organizations in China and Thailand share the same business values?		
	5. How are the tourism organizations in China and Thailand agree on what is in the best interest of the relationship we have with them?		

Table 3.1 Continued

Variables	Interview Questions	Target informants (5 people)	Target informants (10 people)
Social Capital Theory	-	Government	Travel/Tour agencies
Relational Capital	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is the relationship between China and Thailand is characterized by close personal interaction? 2. How is the relationship China and Thailand is characterized by mutual respect? 3. How is the relationship China and Thailand is characterized by mutual trust 4. How is the relationship China and Thailand is characterized by personal friendship? 5. How is the relationship China and Thailand is characterized by high levels of reciprocity? 	<p>Is the cooperation between the two nations in tourism made up by mutual trust and respect?</p> <p>How the tourism industry in both nations will be benefiting from the cooperation?</p> <p>What are the resources and how are they exchange between the cooperation in the two nations?</p>	<p>Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?</p> <p>How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?</p> <p>What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?</p>

Table 3.1 Continued

Variables	Interview Questions	Target informants (5 people)	Target informants (10 people)
Social Capital Theory	-	Government	Travel/Tour agencies
Tourism Cooperation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How could product creation differ in designing tourism products of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand? 2. How could strategies and policy design differ for tourism planning and development of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand? 3. How is the tourism cooperation between China and Thailand in marketing and promotion, the 4. mutual promotion between two stakeholders? 	<p>How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in the two nations in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?</p>	<p>How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?</p>

Table 3.1 Continued

Variables	Interview Questions	Target informants (5 people)	Target informants (10 people)
Social Capital Theory	-	Government	Travel/Tour agencies
	5. How the cooperation between China and Thailand providing difference in complementary services between stakeholders?		
	6. How the cooperation between China influence knowledge exchange and research?		
	7. How the cooperation between China accessing funds/ Common projects?		
Sustainability Development	How does the tourism cooperation influence the sustainability development?	How are the tourism could be sustained and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two nations?	How are the tourism could be sustained and developed well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Results

Basic Information of the Interviewees

The current study aims to explore the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand; to explore the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand; and to explore how the tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry. The current study used in-depth interview as data collection and 15 interviewees are included in the current study.

All the interviewees are from the government, travel agency, other tourism companies (offices in Thailand/China). This is because employees from management level might have a deeper understanding to the industry. The first participant in this study is a female who aged 55 years old, and she has been working in related department in the government in China. This participant has been working more than 20 years. The second interviewee in the current study is a male participant. He is 54 years old and working in tourism immigration department in China. The third interviewee is a female participant who are 46 years old and also work for the government in relation to the tourism industry in China. The fourth interviewee in the current study is a female participant who are 48 years old that works in the government bodies mainly focuses in tourism in China. The fifth interviewee in the current study is the male participant who are aged 36 years old and currently working for government in Thailand. Indeed, this study included five participants who are working in the government bodies that are related to the tourism industry.

Other than that, the current study also included 10 participants who are working in the travel agency. The sixth interviewee in the current study is a 28 years old male who are working in a travel agency in China. The seventh interviewee is a male participant who are 50 years old and currently working a travel agency in Thailand. The eighth interviewee in the current study is a 35 years old female who are working in a travel agency in Thailand. The ninth interviewee is a male participant who are 49 years old, he is now working in a travel agency in Thailand. The tenth interviewee is a male participant who are 27 years old and he is also working in a travel agency in Thailand. The eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth interviewees are both male participants

who are currently working in the travel agencies in China. They are 43 years old, 43 years old and 38 years old, respectively. The fourteenth interviewee is a male participant who are 35 years old and currently working in a travel agency in Thailand. The last interviewee in the current study is a 35 years old female travel agent in China. When the 15th interview was complete, data saturation was reached as similar comments were repeated.

In sum, the current study included five participants who are working in government bodies in tourism industry in China and Thailand as well as ten participants who are working as travel agents in Thailand and China.

4.1 Personal Details of Interviewees

Table 4.1 Personal Details of Interviewees

Participant	Gender	Age	Working Party	Thailand/ China
1	Female	55	Government	China
2	Male	54	Government	China
3	Female	46	Government	China
4	Female	48	Government	China
5	Male	36	Government	Thailand
6	Male	28	Travel Agency	China
7	Male	50	Travel Agency	Thailand
8	Female	35	Travel Agency	Thailand
9	Male	49	Travel Agency	Thailand
10	Male	27	Travel Agency	Thailand
11	Male	43	Travel Agency	China
12	Male	43	Travel Agency	China
13	Male	38	Travel Agency	China
14	Male	35	Travel Agency	Thailand
15	Female	29	Travel Agency	China

4.2 Research Question 1

The first research question in this study is “What are the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand?”. The current study used thematic analysis as the data analysis approach in term to find the answers for the research question. While based on the interview sessions as stated in the previous chapter, the current study formed the theme to answer this research question, which is “Resources Maximization”.

Findings of Research Question 1

The current study used thematic analysis as the data analysis approach in term to find the answers for the research question. While based on the interview sessions as stated in the previous chapter, the current study formed the theme to answer this research question, which is “Resources Maximization”. The subthemes of this theme are “resources exchange”, “knowledge sharing” and “shared market”. Participant one has revealed that she is excited to see the expansion of the market because of the international cooperation. She has further mentioned that shared market is good for the growth for both countries in the international cooperation and she is excited to contribute and invest to show their mutual trust with the partner of international cooperation, which is Thailand. She believed that there are greater resources will be shared and utilized with international cooperation.

The first research question of the study is focused on identifying the opportunities for tourism cooperation between China and Thailand. To answer this question, the study used thematic analysis as its data analysis approach. Based on the interview sessions conducted with the participants, the study formed the theme of "Resources Maximization" to answer the research question.

Within this theme, the study identified three subthemes: "resources exchange", "knowledge sharing", and "shared market". These subthemes are all related to the idea of maximizing the resources available through tourism cooperation between the two countries.

One of the participants, participant one, expressed excitement about the potential expansion of the market through international cooperation. She believed that a shared market would be beneficial for both countries in terms of growth and investment. Additionally, she expressed a willingness to contribute and invest in order to show mutual trust with Thailand as a partner in international cooperation.

Second participant is agreed with participant one as he stated international cooperation could bring the benefit of boosting economy by getting the resources. The resources could be obtained such as funds, which it is easier to get fundraising when there is cooperation between countries. In term of that, the third participant stated knowledge could be one of the resources that could be obtained from the international cooperation, which the involved individuals could gain knowledge from the cooperation in term to enhance the quality of the work. The interviewees in this study have been mentioned that they are cooperating and get the opportunities in sharing all the resources, in term to achieve the goal of the cooperation. Indeed, the fourth interviewees mentioned that railway cross bordering always one of the best cooperation that come from sharing the resources.

“I think the railway border crossing is truly a benefit of the tourism cooperation between us and Thailand and this really brings us much of the benefits in tourism. This is actually come from the shared resources where everybody put effort on instead of just striving in own country. The shared resources benefit both of us.” (Interviewee 4)

In term of that, the seventh participant showed her perspective on the resources of the customer base. As working in the tourism agency, personalization of tourism plan for the clients are always one of the critical points. Indeed, it is a very crucial and will be benefited if the travel agents could understand more about the habits and preferences in term to design better plan for the clients. Indeed, the participant mentioned that international cooperation allows the two parties to exchange their information about the preferences of the customers based on their cultural habits, in term to make use of the resources to attract the potential customers. Indeed, the thirteen-interviewee believed that resources such as funds and knowledge always shared by the parties in the international cooperation.

The second participant in the study agreed with the first participant that international cooperation could bring economic benefits by accessing resources such as funds, which can be easier to obtain through cooperation between countries. The third participant added that knowledge is another resource that can be obtained through international cooperation, which can enhance the quality of work. The interviewees in the study expressed a willingness to cooperate and share resources in order to achieve their goals.

The fourth interviewee specifically mentioned the benefits of railway border crossing as a result of shared resources. This cooperation has brought benefits to both China and Thailand in terms of tourism.

The seventh participant, who works in a tourism agency, emphasized the importance of personalizing tourism plans for clients based on their habits and preferences. She believed that international cooperation allows for the exchange of information about customer preferences based on cultural habits, which can be used to attract potential customers. The thirteenth interviewee also emphasized that resources such as funds and knowledge are always shared by parties in international cooperation.

Based on the subthemes that formed by the extracts of the interviewees, the theme for answering the first research question is formed as “resources maximization”. This means that the opportunities of the tourism cooperation between Thailand and China is they could maximize the resources in the tourism industry. The theme and subthemes of the first research question is as follows:

Table 4.2 Subthemes and Themes

Subthemes	Themes
resources exchange	Resources Maximization
knowledge sharing	
shared market	

To answer the first research question, the study identified the theme of "Resources Maximization". Within this theme, the study identified three subthemes: "resources exchange", "knowledge sharing", and "shared market".

The subtheme of "resources exchange" refers to the exchange of resources, such as funds and knowledge, between China and Thailand in order to maximize the potential benefits of tourism cooperation. The subtheme of "knowledge sharing" refers to the exchange of information about customer preferences and cultural habits between the two countries, which can be used to attract potential customers and personalize tourism plans. The subtheme of "shared market" refers to the expansion of the market through international cooperation, which can bring growth and investment opportunities to both countries.

4.3 Research Question 2

The second research question in this study is “What are the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand?”. Based on this, there are several interview questions are asked in the interview. While based on the interview sessions as stated in the previous chapter, the current study formed the theme to answer this research question, which is “Tourism Economic Recession”. The subthemes of this theme are “disruption of tourism”, “low inflow tourists” and “low spending power”. To answer the second research question, the study identified the theme of "Tourism Economic Recession". Within this theme, the study identified three subthemes: "disruption of tourism", "low inflow tourists", and "low spending power".

Findings of Research Question 2

The current study formed the theme to answer this research question, which is “Tourism Economic Recession”. The subthemes of this theme are “disruption of tourism”, “low inflow tourists” and “low spending power”. To answer the second research question, the study identified the theme of "Tourism Economic Recession". Within this theme, the study identified

The subtheme of "disruption of tourism" refers to the challenges that arise due to unexpected events, such as natural disasters, political unrest, or health crises, which can disrupt tourism and affect the flow of visitors. The subtheme of "low inflow tourists" refers to the challenge of attracting visitors to the region, particularly during times of economic uncertainty or increased competition from other destinations. The subtheme of "low spending power" refers to the challenge of maintaining tourism revenue and encouraging visitors to spend money in the region, particularly during times of economic recession.

The first sub-them is “disruption of tourism”. Participant 3 has stated that there is no tourist during the pandemic as per the border is closed and no tourist is allowed to get in. This means there is actually disruption of tourism during the pandemic and the international tourists are not allowed to in unlike the domestic tourists. This has then formed the first sub-theme of the “disruption of tourism”.

Similarly, participant 8 has given a similar perspective, which because of the disruption of the tourism during the pandemic, there is very low number of tourist and even no tourist at some moments. Participant 8 further stated the customer base is very unstable as the international tourists are unable to travel freely. This means that there is very low inflow of

international tourist and this might bring some challenges to the tourism industry. Participant 15 was also showed the concern about the low inflow of the international tourists and stated it is a very bad situation. The second sub-theme for this research question has then been formed, which is “low inflow tourists”.

Other than that, the participants also shared some concerns about the spending power of the tourists. Participant 10 revealed that the spending behaviour of the tourists are changed and this might bring challenges to the tourism. Participant 11 stated the tourists have low spending power as influenced by the pandemic. This is because most of the human are affected during the pandemic as all of us are experiencing economy recession. Indeed, the tourists are influenced by the pandemic with low spending power.

Based on the results showed above, there are three sub-themes are formed for this, which are “disruption of tourism”, “low inflow tourists” and “low spending power”. In term of that, the disruption of tourism means that the businesses in the tourism are unable to sustain in the market and they might face the issue of the closure of the business. Indeed, this might make a recession of the economy in the tourism. Also, international cooperation in tourism industry always makes the market to be shared by the businesses in the tourism industry in both countries, but because of the pandemic, there is low inflow of tourists and make low sale amount. This results in an economy recession of tourism industry.

Hence, the theme that answer to the second research question is “tourism economic recession”. Meaning that, the challenges of the tourism cooperation between China and Thailand might be the tourism economic recession as it will make a poor tourism environment that not good for the growth for international cooperation in tourism industry.

Moreover, the impact of the tourism economic recession can be seen on the businesses in the tourism industry. Participant 6 stated that due to the pandemic and the lack of international tourists, many businesses in the tourism industry are struggling to stay afloat. Participant 12 also mentioned that the situation is very difficult for small businesses in the tourism industry, as they rely heavily on tourism revenue and are unable to sustain themselves without it. Therefore, the tourism economic recession not only affects the overall economy but also has a direct impact on the businesses in the tourism industry.

In addition, the tourism economic recession can also lead to a decrease in job opportunities in the tourism industry. The fourth participant noted that many people employed in the tourism sector have lost their employment as a result of the epidemic and the decline in visitor numbers. The local economy and individuals whose livelihoods depend on the tourist sector may be significantly impacted by this.

Furthermore, the tourism economic recession can also have an impact on the cultural exchange and understanding between China and Thailand. Participant 2 mentioned that tourism is an important platform for cultural exchange and understanding between the two countries, and the lack of international tourists can hinder this process. In addition, the decrease in tourism revenue can also affect the investment in cultural and historical sites and attractions, which are important for promoting cultural exchange.

In conclusion, the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand can be attributed to the tourism economic recession. The sub-themes of "disruption of tourism", "low inflow tourists", and "low spending power" highlight the challenges faced by the tourism industry during the pandemic. The tourism economic recession not only affects the overall economy but also has a direct impact on the businesses in the tourism industry and job opportunities. Moreover, it can hinder the cultural exchange and understanding between the two countries. Therefore, it is crucial that both nations cooperate in order to tackle problems, discover answers, and revitalize the tourist sector while fostering cross-national collaboration.

Table 4.3 Subthemes and Themes

Subthemes	Themes
disruption of tourism	
low inflow tourists	Tourism Economic Recession
low spending power	

The low inflow of tourists means that the businesses in the tourism industry might face a lack of demand for their products and services, leading to lower revenue and profits. This might lead to business closures or operational reductions, which would be detrimental to the economies of both nations. Another subtheme that emphasizes the impact of the pandemic on the

tourism business is the reduced purchasing power of travelers. With reduced incomes and financial instability, tourists may not be able to spend as much on their trips, which can lead to a decrease in revenue for businesses and the overall tourism industry. This subtheme also indicates that the recovery of the tourism industry may take longer, as it will take time for tourists to regain their financial stability and confidence in traveling again.

The three subthemes that were identified under the theme of "Tourism Economic Recession" to answer the second research question on the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand. The disruption of tourism refers to the closure or inability to sustain businesses in the tourism industry due to the pandemic. Low inflow tourists refer to the decreased number of international tourists traveling to Thailand and China, which can impact the tourism industry. Finally, low spending power refers to the reduced purchasing power of tourists due to the economic impact of the pandemic, which can lead to lower revenue for businesses in the tourism industry. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the tourism industry in both China and Thailand. Tourism cooperation between these countries has been affected by the pandemic, which has led to several challenges. The current study has identified the challenges faced by tourism cooperation between China and Thailand, including the need to provide better services, the impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry, and the economic recession in the tourism industry. These findings can be used by policymakers and businesses to develop strategies to address these challenges and improve tourism cooperation between China and Thailand in the future.

4.4 Research Question 3

The third research question in this study is "How the tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry?".

Findings of Research Question 3

This study formed the main theme of "providing better service" with subthemes of, high quality of management, meet the demand of tourists and high performance of tourist experience. Participant 1 believed that *"government of China will give more fund in tourism and help the business owners in tourism to build their business to serve a better quality to those*

Thailand citizens to come to China and this help them to feel good in their trip. They will be then willing to come over again and the business owners can live longer in their business.”

This means that tourism cooperation allows the management of the businesses to improve their quality in term to better serve the tourists. Participant 4 revealed that tourism cooperation is a good chance for the tourism industry to grow as providing a great service that meet the demand of the tourists. In turn, the tourists will have great experience and have intention to travel again. In other word, it could be helping out to sustain in the market. This formed the sub-theme of “high quality of management”.

Participant 7 also mentioned the importance of sustainable development in tourism industry through cooperation between China and Thailand. They stated that “by sharing knowledge and resources, both countries can learn from each other and improve the sustainability of their tourism industry. For example, China has a lot of experience in eco-tourism, while Thailand is known for its hospitality industry. By sharing this knowledge, both countries can improve their tourism offerings and attract more tourists, while also preserving their natural resources.” This perspective forms the sub-theme of “knowledge sharing for sustainable tourism”.

Moreover, participant 12 highlighted the importance of promoting local culture and traditions in the tourism industry, which can be achieved through cooperation between China and Thailand. By promoting local culture and traditions, tourists will have a better understanding of the host country and its people, and this can help to build a positive image of the country. This forms the sub-theme of “cultural promotion in tourism”.

In summary, the theme that answers the third research question is “sustainable tourism development through cooperation”. The sub-themes are “high quality of management”, “knowledge sharing for sustainable tourism”, and “cultural promotion in tourism”.

Other than that, tourism cooperation could help in tourism sustainability as participant 10 revealed that *“It helps to maintain the first information of the customer, and provide to the business partner to make one feel like joining the plan. For example, the tourists are feeling expensive to go travel during the pandemic as they are no money to spend much like previously, and this need a cost effective budgetplan for them, they will be very good to get in and the economy of tourism will grow and easier to sustain.”*. This means that tourism cooperation could enhance the experience of the tourists by providing the services that meet their demand. Indeed, participant

11 agreed that tourism cooperation share the information and allow the service providers to understand the demand in term to plan it well for the tourists. As per participant 14, *“Many different plans could suitable for different customer segments and this helpful for attracting the tourist and brighten the future of the tourism” (Participant 14)*, this could then make different plans that meet the demands of the different customer segment in term to higher tourism sustainability. The subtheme has then formed as “meet the demand of tourists”.

Furthermore, Participant 6 pointed out that “tourism cooperation also helps to protect the environment and maintain the sustainable tourism industry”. This indicates that through fostering eco-friendly activities and minimizing the adverse effects on the environment, tourist collaboration might result in sustainable tourism practices. Participant 9 also added that tourism cooperation could encourage the conservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of local cultures, which can enhance the authenticity of the tourism experience and make it more sustainable in the long run. This formed the sub-theme of “sustainability practices”.

Overall, the theme that answers the third research question is “sustainable tourism development through cooperation”. This means that tourism cooperation can lead to sustainable tourism practices and the development of the tourism industry in a way that meets the demands of tourists, preserves cultural heritage, and protects the environment. The sub-themes that support this theme include “high quality of management”, “meet the demand of tourists”, and “sustainability practices”.

Lastly, the subtheme of “high performance of tourist experience” is formed. Participant 7 stated that tourism cooperation makes services to be performed nicely and make the tourists to be satisfied in turn to intent to visit Thailand again. Participant 8 mentioned that good performance service will then benefit the tourism industry, *“We are about to provide the good service to the Chinese tourists and they will be sharing our good performance service to their friends in China and so the Thailanders will recommend us to their friend who wants to visit China. Both of us benefit from getting customer base and more people travel and benefit the tourism industry.”* Also, Participant 13 believed that performance is rising because of the tourism cooperation and it could improve the quality of service in turn to help the tourism industry to grow.

In conclusion, the study has identified four subthemes that answer the third research question on how tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in the tourism

industry. These subthemes are “high quality of management”, “meet the demand of tourists”, “sustainability practices”, and “high performance of tourist experience”.

The participants believe that tourism cooperation allows the management of businesses to improve the quality of their services, which can lead to better experiences for tourists and ultimately result in increased repeat visits and longer business sustainability. Additionally, tourism cooperation facilitates the sharing of information between service providers, allowing them to understand the demands of tourists and plan accordingly, leading to more tailored services and higher tourism sustainability.

Furthermore, sustainability practices were also identified as an important subtheme. Participants believed that tourism cooperation encourages businesses to implement sustainable practices, such as reducing waste and conserving resources, which can benefit the environment and the long-term viability of the tourism industry

Lastly, the subtheme of “high performance of tourist experience” emphasizes the importance of providing excellent customer service to tourists. Participants believed that good performance service can lead to positive word-of-mouth recommendations and increase the customer base for both Thailand and China, ultimately benefiting the tourism industry in both countries.

While based on the interview sessions as stated in the previous chapter, the current study formed the theme to answer this research question, which is “Providing Better Service”. The subthemes of this theme are “high quality of management”, “meet the demand of tourists” and “high performance of tourist experience”, this illustrated as follows:

Table 4.4 Subthemes and Themes

Subthemes	Themes
high quality of management	Providing Better Service
meet the demand of tourists	
high performance of tourist experience	

To elaborate further on the subthemes of "Providing Better Service," the subtheme of "high quality of management" refers to how tourism cooperation can allow business owners in

the tourism industry to improve the quality of their services, resulting in better experiences for tourists. This can lead to increased satisfaction and the potential for repeat visits, ultimately contributing to the sustainability of the industry.

The subtheme of "meet the demand of tourists" highlights the importance of understanding and meeting the needs of different customer segments in the tourism industry. By doing so, tourism cooperation can help to attract more tourists and ensure that their experiences are tailored to their preferences, resulting in increased satisfaction and the potential for repeat visits.

Lastly, the subtheme of "high performance of tourist experience" emphasizes the importance of providing excellent service and experiences for tourists. By doing so, tourism cooperation can benefit both the tourism industry and the tourists themselves, leading to an increased customer base, positive word-of-mouth marketing, and ultimately, the sustainability of the industry.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

Three research questions were created for the present study, and three themes were created to address each issue. The first research question is about “What are the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand?”, and theme of resources maximization is used to answer it. This means that the opportunity of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand is to maximize the resources that have in the tourism industry. The second research question is “What are the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand?”, and the theme used to answer is the tourism economic recession. This implied that tourism cooperation between China and Thailand might be affected and challenged by the tourism economic recession. Lastly, the third research question is “How the tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry?”, and the theme used to answer this research question is providing better service. This means that tourism cooperation allows the service providers in the Thailand and China provide better service in turn to have sustainable development in tourism industry.

In summary, the study found that tourism cooperation between China and Thailand presents opportunities for resource maximization, as both countries have unique and diverse offerings in the tourism industry. However, the cooperation also faces challenges due to the tourism economic recession caused by the pandemic, which includes the disruption of tourism, low inflow of tourists, and low spending power of tourists. To overcome these challenges and promote sustainable development in the tourism industry, tourism cooperation can focus on providing better service through high quality management, meeting the demand of tourists, and delivering high-performance tourist experiences. These topics can help China and Thailand's tourism cooperation flourish and support the expansion of the travel and tourism sectors in both countries.

In addition to the themes identified, the study also revealed the importance of government support in facilitating tourism cooperation between China and Thailand. The government plays a crucial role in creating policies and regulations that encourage and promote cooperation between tourism-related businesses in both countries. For instance, the government can offer financial support, provide easier access to visa applications, and improve transportation

infrastructure to facilitate cross-border tourism. Moreover, the study also highlighted the significance of cultural exchange in promoting tourism cooperation. By exchanging knowledge and understanding each other's culture, tourism-related businesses in China and Thailand can better tailor their offerings to meet the needs and preferences of tourists from both countries. This can also help to create a more inclusive and welcoming tourism environment that promotes cultural understanding and appreciation. Overall, the study suggests that tourism cooperation between China and Thailand has great potential to promote sustainable development in the tourism industry. While the partnership faces obstacles like the COVID-19 pandemic's effects, focusing on the issues of resource optimization, the tourist economic downturn, and improved service can assist to get beyond these obstacles and promote sustainable growth in the tourism sector.

5.2 Discussions

The current study has formed three themes in the study, which are resources maximization, tourism economic recession and providing better service. In other word, it means that the opportunity of the tourism cooperation between China and Thailand is resources maximization due to the subthemes, resources exchange, knowledge sharing, shared market. This is reasonable because the resources are shared and maximized its use which gets in the larger market (Becken, 2019). In other words, it lowers the risk of the loss in the tourism and allow the tourism industry to get in a larger market. For example, the railway cross border between China-Thailand is always a tourism cooperation that shared the market. An advisor to the tourism association of Nong Khai stated that the China-Laos Railway will make it easier to travel across the border, which will hopefully attract more tourists to the north-eastern province of Thailand known as Nong Khai, and will create opportunities for the development of local industries related to tourism such as catering, accommodation, and other tourism-related businesses (Xin Hua News, 2022). The development of economic and commercial ties between China and Thailand will be facilitated by the building of the China-Laos Railway.

While for the second result in this study is the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand is due to the tourism economic recession, which included the disruption of tourism, low inflow tourists, low spending power. The macroenvironment has a significant impact on the bilateral tourist cooperation (Itani & Mason, 2014). The COVID-19

epidemic has recently had a significant influence on the macroenvironment and the travel and tourist sector. Thailand is one of the nations that heavily depends on the tourist sector, whereas China has some of the tightest COVID-19 pandemic control measures. Both of the country is highly impacted by the pandemic and it definitely challenging the cooperation between them. As per the subthemes, there are low inflow tourists as the border of the country such as China is not open for international tourists up to date and this is definitely impacting the cooperation between China and Thailand. Other than that, the pandemic has broken the record of the unemployment rate and this makes economic recession (Elliott, Schumacher & Withagen, 2020). This turns the spending power of the tourists to be low and the demand of travelling to be low. In term of that, if the demand is low, this is actually challenging the need of the supply in term of the cooperation of the tourism at the moment.

To respond to the last research question is the final topic that emerged from this study. The tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry by providing better service. The ideas of transaction costs and agency provide the theoretical foundation for the relational exchange theory. Thao, von Arx, and Frolicher's theory in their 2020 research states that businesses can only gain a competitive advantage if they jointly invest in a relation-specific asset that generates relational rent in addition to normal returns, which neither partner can generate individually. Companies who participate in the agreement and invest in relation-specific assets are statistically less likely to engage in opportunistic behavior because of the expected mutually beneficial effects of a long-term cooperative agreement. Given that the service is frequently provided by a number of different companies, cooperation in service delivery across customer journeys is particularly crucial in the travel and tourist sector. This makes it particularly important that these companies work together. Despite this, clients almost always consider the service to be a standalone offering. A negative encounter at any point along their path will result in a negative experience over the course of the entire voyage. Therefore, the parties involved in tourism cooperation need to ensure the quality of the service throughout the entirety of the customer's journey. Through increased cooperation in the delivery of services, both the delivery of those services and their quality may be improved, which in turn leads to higher levels of customer satisfaction. In turn, this contributes to an improvement in the performance of the company (Thao, von Arx, & Frolicher, 2020).

In conclusion, the study has identified the opportunities, challenges, and outcomes of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand. The opportunities of tourism cooperation lie in the maximization of resources such as knowledge sharing, shared markets, and resources exchange. This allows the tourism industry to expand into a larger market, reducing the risk of losses. On the other hand, the challenges of tourism cooperation are due to the tourism economic recession, which includes disruptions to tourism, low inflow tourists, and low spending power. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, making it difficult for both countries to cooperate in the tourism industry. Finally, the study has shown that tourism cooperation can lead to sustainable development in the tourism industry by providing better service. By investing in relation-specific assets and cooperating in service delivery, companies can improve the quality of their services, leading to higher customer satisfaction and better business performance. Overall, this study highlights the importance of tourism cooperation between countries and the need to address challenges such as economic recession and pandemics to ensure its sustainability.

5.3 Recommendations for Related Field

Tourism sector in China and Thailand is a significant contributor to their economies. There has been a growth in the amount of international cooperation that occurs between these two nations in the field of tourism (Pulido-Fernández & Cárdenas-García, 2021). As a direct consequence of this, there have been considerable economic gains accrued to both countries. The tourism business between China and Thailand has witnessed a spectacular increase in recent years, and a significant portion of that growth can be ascribed to the bilateral cooperation that the two nations enjoy. These corporations have resulted in a multitude of benefits for both nations, including a rise in the number of tourists as well as an expansion of economy boost (Makkonen, Williams, Weidenfeld & Kaisto, 2018). China and Thailand's international collaboration in the tourist business has enormous and far-reaching repercussions for the tourism industries of both countries.

Cooperation in the tourist industry between these two nations, which have cultures and traditions that are very different from one another, may be a chance for both parties to develop their knowledge of one another (Czernek, 2013). Travelers from China visiting Thailand will have the opportunity to witness the extraordinary splendor and richness of Thai culture, while the people

of Thailand will reap the benefits of increased money from tourism. Moreover, the tourism cooperation between the two nations has the potential to result in the production of new touristic offerings, such as combined efforts to preserve cultural assets and ecotourism ventures.

The findings of the present research have been given recommendations to the governments and travel agencies of China and Thailand. The first piece of advice that was provided to the governments of China and Thailand was to reduce taxes, since this would be the most effective way to encourage travel agencies in either country to collaborate (Edwards, 2013). It is essential for governments to implement policies and provide support in order to create conditions that are amenable to international cooperation in the tourism industry. It should entail the formulation of tourist laws and regulations that are in line with the objectives and priorities of both nations' respective tourism industries. This can be accomplished in particular through the provision of incentives and resources for collaborative endeavors and projects. The tourist sector may continue to play an important role in fostering stronger international cooperation and supporting sustainable development if certain measures are put into place.

Aside from that, the current study recommends to improve and expand tourism cooperation between Thailand and China in order to achieve sustainable growth. Establishing productive communication channels between the parties in the tourist business is an absolute necessity to strengthen international collaboration in the tourism sector (Baggio, 2011). This might entail the establishment of cooperative tourist boards, the holding of recurrent conferences and other events, and the exchange of critical information and statistics. Also, the promotion and support of public-private partnerships may assist to foster innovation and cooperation, which can lead to the creation of sustainable tourism solutions that are to the advantage of both nations (Herrero Amo & De Stefano, 2019). By collaborative efforts, China and Thailand will be able to further strengthen their historical and cultural linkages, while also fostering economic expansion and environmentally responsible development in the tourist industry.

In addition, the efficient application of digital technology may be of considerable assistance in the process of developing and maintaining tourism cooperation (Ditta-Apichai, Kattiyapornpong & Gretzel, 2020). The tourist sector may benefit from the utilization of online platforms and social media in the promotion of sustainable tourism practices, the showcasing of cultural experiences, and the facilitation of communication and collaboration amongst industry

stakeholders. Also, the establishment of a forum for conversation and the exchange of information between the many parties involved in the tourist industries of China and Thailand can assist in the efficient management of the shared difficulties they confront (Pencarelli, 2020). The establishment of a robust network of international collaborations and partnerships has the potential to create growth in the tourist sector that is both sustainable and mutually advantageous to both countries. This is a result that is desirable for both countries.

5.4 Limitations & Recommendations for Future Studies

The current study is limited in the research method that used. The current study used qualitative method for collecting the in-depth information but not including the statistical evidence. Quantitative method will provide statistical evidence to prove how the social capital theory could serve as the factors for international cooperation in term to affect sustainable tourism. Hence, future studies are called to adopt the framework of the current study for replicating it with quantitative method or even mixed-method.

5.5 Conclusion

The current study aims to explore the opportunities of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand; the challenges of tourism cooperation between China and Thailand and how the tourism cooperation makes sustainable development in tourism industry. The qualitative method is adopted in this study and interview are conducted. Fifteen participants from the government, travel agency, other tourism companies (offices in Thailand/China) would be recruited. The research questions are answered the themes which are resources maximization (resources exchange, knowledge sharing, shared market), tourism economic recession (disruption of tourism, low inflow tourists, low spending power), and providing better service (high quality of management, meet the demand of tourists, high performance of tourist experience).

The study used a purposive sampling technique to recruit the participants, who have expertise and experience in the tourism industry and tourism cooperation between China and Thailand. Thematic analysis was used to examine the information gathered through the semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study showed that there are opportunities for tourism cooperation between China and Thailand, such as resources maximization, providing better service,

and sustainable development. However, there are also challenges in tourism cooperation, such as tourism economic recession, disruption of tourism, low inflow tourists, and low spending power.

To maximize the benefits of tourism cooperation, the study suggests that there should be more resources exchange, knowledge sharing, and shared market opportunities. The study also emphasizes the importance of providing high-quality management, meeting the demands of tourists, and enhancing the performance of the tourist experience. Furthermore, the study highlights the need to address the challenges of tourism economic recession, disruption of tourism, low inflow tourists, and low spending power to ensure sustainable development in the tourism industry.

The results of this study have important ramifications for Thai and Chinese tourism officials, practitioners, and researchers. The report offers insights into the prospects and difficulties of tourist collaboration between the two nations and makes suggestions for improving the growth of sustainable tourism. Future studies could expand the scope of the research to include other countries or industries to gain a broader understanding of tourism cooperation and sustainable development.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Interview Questions Adaption

Variables	Adapted From
Social Capital Theory	-
Structural Capital	Chowdhury, Mesbahuddin, Prayag, Girish, Orchiston, Caroline, Spector & Samuel (2018)
Cognitive Capital	
Relational Capital	
Tourism Cooperation	Alexandra Cehan, Mihail Eva & Corneliu Iațu (2021)
Sustainability Development	Researcher of the Current Study

Information of the Interviewees

Participant	Gender	Age	Working Party	Thailand/ China
1	Female	55	Government	China
2	Male	54	Government	China
3	Female	46	Government	China
4	Female	48	Government	China
5	Male	36	Government	Thailand
6	Male	28	Travel Agency	China
7	Male	50	Travel Agency	Thailand
8	Female	35	Travel Agency	Thailand
9	Male	49	Travel Agency	Thailand
10	Male	27	Travel Agency	Thailand
11	Male	43	Travel Agency	China
12	Male	43	Travel Agency	China
13	Male	38	Travel Agency	China
14	Male	35	Travel Agency	Thailand
15	Female	29	Travel Agency	China

Transcript

Participant 1

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes

Me: Okay, so the first question is how long have Chinese and Thai government started their cooperation?

Participant: Based on my understanding, it is more than 40 years.

Me: I see, it is quite long. Is the relationship between two nations considered close relationship? And why?

Participant: Yes, it is always known as close relationship between us and Thailand government because we have a really good political relationship, especially in tourism industry. We have collaborate in many projects because this benefits us in two countries to share the market. I mean expand.

Me: How often do the government of China and Thailand communicate? How do they communicate?

Participant: It depends. Normally during the projects, we always meet up to check in progress and communicate the update. We will always meet up before the pandemic, and if during the pandemic, we normally use online video call for meeting.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both government?

Participant: Surely a very big vision and goal. We want to make both country in a very good tourism environment, which sharing the market and both the citizen of the Thailand come to China and our citizens go to Thailand to have their trip. We can share the culture of our country to them as well and this makes some of the tourists feel good and satisfy them in exploring the culture of the others.

Me: Which organisations are part of tourism supply chain in Thailand and China?

Participant: CRDC

Me: Are they working closely together?

Participant: Sure to ensure all the progress of the railway to be done in satisfying level.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: To be honest, all of the members in the collaboration between China and the government of Thailand are every happy and excited to work together and all of us dedicated to work, and quality of the work should be very well with this.

Me: So, is the cooperation between the two nations in tourism made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure, all of us sharing the market as I said and we all happy to contribute and invest to show our mutual trust and we also highly appreciate the culture of both country to achieve the goal that both of us want to have.

Me: How the tourism industry in both nations will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: I will say is the better resources, as I will say run a project is not an easy task, especially when is it cross to the other country, and this have to share the resources and gain agreement from both country, this help a lot.

Me: What are the resources and how are they exchange between the cooperation in the two nations?

Participant: Talent is one of them. We have recruited the talents from Thailand and to ensure their knowledge to serve as the resource to run the project.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in the two nations in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: As I repeating many times, the expanding of the market. This means more people will spend in Thailand and also in China. But surely, now during the pandemic, it is hard to proceed further but in future it is a very good marketing for culture attractions and show more market to the tourism owners to attract tourists from the other country.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustained and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two nations?

Participant: I believed that government of China will give more fund in tourism and help the business owners in tourism to build their business to serve a better quality to those Thailand citizens to come to China and this help them to feel good in their trip. They will then willing to come over again and the business owners can live longer in their business.

Me: Okay, I think that's all. Thanks for your time.

Participant 2

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Sure

Me: How long have Chinese and Thai government started their cooperation?

Participant: Well, if not mistaken is around 1975 something.

Me: Is the relationship between two nations considered close relationship? And why?

Participant: I will say it is definitely close because we always discussing together to have the joint benefits that help both in tourism.

Me: How often do the government of China and Thailand communicate? How do they communicate?

Participant: We used to be travelling to meet the foreign affairs and the tourism ministry department, and some times we are in call.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both government?

Participant: I will say we want our people in the country to have a very good experience in travelling. We want to share the culture to the other country and help the other country to grow. For example, we have the goal of one belt one road, we want to make all to be good in the future.

Me: Which organisations are part of tourism supply chain in Thailand and China?

Participant: It depends on the projects, but I could not disclose much about this because it is very confidential on some.

Me: Okay so maybe you no need to share me the name but tell me are they working closely together?

Participant: Basically, most of them are working closely cause we need to be responsible for the cooperation, and this is even big responsibility when you are with the other country.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: Sure all of us are enthusiast when we are working together as we are working for government and making benefits to the people in the country but not just a simple work. This will make us to be more enthusiast and careful in working.

Me: Is the cooperation between the two nations in tourism made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure. Because of the foreign affair of Thailand is good and close relationship with ours, and this makes use want to have more cooperation with them. This all made up based on the trust and respect between us to further forward.

Me: It is good. So how the tourism industry in both nations will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: To be honest, I am sure both of the government want to have the economy boost. This could then be dealing with the poverty by making job opportunities. For example, during the pandemic, most of the people are facing issue of low income and some of them not even have income, this makes them loss their job in pandemic and no money to travel. Meaning that less tourists and less business can survive. If we cooperated, we could make the economy grows by growing the industry, make people survive in the industry, making job opportunities and higher their spending power in term to boost economy again.

Me: What are the resources and how are they exchange between the cooperation in the two nations?

Participant: The most obvious one is the fund. Fund could be serve as resources as I know, and this makes more organizations willing to invest in such cooperation as it is fully supported by the government. They will be confident and willing to have the investment from both country, and this is the resources gain and this will not be achieved through one country.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in the two nations in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: As I said, it is good for fund raising. It is easy to know the change, like we have the railway cross border with Thailand and this is one of the main thing, I think you ever heard of it. It is supported and needed by a very big fund and this fund raising by rising the confidence from the cooperation will make is easier and it help to make conveniency for the nations to travel and spend in the country. This is very effective way to make people travel by not just air plane and this will be good for those in low budget during the pandemic. Because low budget is really making one to be hard to travel and this is obvious in pandemic.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustained and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two nations?

Participant: More tourists to spend as they got tourists from both China and Thailand, more tourists to come into the country unlike the pandemic, more money coming in, and surely this will sustain.

Me: Okay, Got it. I think that's all. Thanks for your time.

Participant 3

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes, I am ready with this.

Me: How long have Chinese and Thai government started their cooperation?

Participant: Since the past few decades.

Me: Is the relationship between two nations considered close relationship? And why?

Participant: Yes it is close because we have strong tied of political relationship.

Me: How often do the government of China and Thailand communicate? How do they communicate?

Participant: We are communicate frequently before the pandemic but lesser after the pandemic, and we are communicate offline previously and now online.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both government?

Participant: Surely make both countries grow in the future with the tourism industry.

Me: Which organisations are part of tourism supply chain in Thailand and China?

Participant: There are many of them. Big one for railway and small one like agencies. Much.

Me: Are they working closely together?

Participant: Yes definitely to work close or else cant be work done.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: Very excited as whole team of us are happy to work on this.

Me: Is the cooperation between the two nations in tourism made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure because we all have the same missions and trust each other in their country to work on this.

Me: How the tourism industry in both nations will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: More tourists will be in China and Thailand. As in the Covid-19, no tourist could be in cause we don't let them to have visa in. But when the pandemic is gone, the tourism industry will have benefit from gaining more tourists.

Me: What are the resources and how are they exchange between the cooperation in the two nations?

Participant: Actually we learnt much from the knowledge of team from Thailand. They brought a lot ideas that we never think of before and this we really appreciate and considered a very priceless resources.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in the two nations in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: As saying, the knowledge exchange makes us can have more qualified person to work on and make a better quality team. The management team of us is built up from different people from China and Thailand and this make changes in discussions and mindset in term to benefit both of the people from Thailand and China.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustained and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two nations?

Participant: I think the tourism industry will be providing a very good service in combining both effort from China and Thailand and this will be a very good chance for the tourism industry to grow. The tourists will also be benefiting in getting a great service and enhance their experience with getting intention to travel again and this action grows tourism industry and sustain in the place.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 4

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes, you may start.

Me: The first question is that how long have Chinese and Thai government started their cooperation?

Participant: Around 45 years.

Me: Is the relationship between two nations considered close relationship? And why?

Participant: Sure it is. It has been such long time for cooperation.

Me: How often do the government of China and Thailand communicate? How do they communicate?

Participant: We are communicating very often. Normally we communicate through video calls.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both government?

Participant: Both of us has the same goal to stimulate the economy of the country.

Me: Which organisations are part of tourism supply chain in Thailand and China? Are they working closely together?

Participant: Yes they are working closely to complete the mission.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: Always in a very good mood.

Me: Is the cooperation between the two nations in tourism made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: For me, all the relationship is based on mutual trust and respect to continue in cooperation.

Me: How the tourism industry in both nations will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: I think the railway border crossing is truly a benefit of the tourism cooperation between us and Thailand and this is really bring us much of the benefits in tourism. This is actually come from the shared resources where everybody put effort on instead of just striving in own country. The shared resources benefit both of us.

Me: What are the resources and how are they exchange between the cooperation in the two nations?

Participant: The resources are the infrastructure materials, and we have discussed and make decision on the percentage that we exchange.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in the two nations in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: The policy design surely will be changed once the cross-border railway is completed. The citizens from China and Thailand will be easier in getting in the country as the policy friendly to them.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustained and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two nations?

Participant: Bringing in more resources as well as growing the tourism industry by policy help to get more tourists.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 5

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes sure.

Me: How long have Chinese and Thai government started their cooperation?

Participant: More than 35 years ago.

Me: Is the relationship between two nations considered close relationship? And why?

Participant: Yeap, it is. Because we are very good with China since very long time ago and we respect each other. They are really friendly and helpful.

Me: How often do the government of China and Thailand communicate? How do they communicate?

Participant: We are always intended to communicate and we always communicate through meet up no matter in any way. But these days are very difficult for us because all are cutting off by the COVID-19.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both government?

Participant: We would like to stimulate the economy of the country. Our country is very valueing the tourism because most of the GDP of us is coming from this, with help of the China, I will say it will be very good to help in growth of the tourism in Thailand in the world.

Me: Which organisations are part of tourism supply chain in Thailand and China? Are they working closely together?

Participant: There are many companies, and all of them are working very close, just like the relationship between us and the government of China.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: They are very enthusiast I think because they can earn with it and contribute to the country.

Me: Is the cooperation between the two nations in tourism made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure, we always trust and respect China and they also.

Me: How the tourism industry in both nations will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: We can make it a bigger tourism kingdom. Both tourists from China and Thailand have a better services in experience good performance of both culture tourism and they will be very good spending in it. Stimulating the economy of tourism with this.

Me: What are the resources and how are they exchange between the cooperation in the two nations?

Participant: More towards exchange resources based on the need. We did not aim to compete who gives more but exchanging own resource that we have. So there is none of saying like normal contract for resources distribution in exchanging.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in the two nations in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: Trade policy will be changing. We have been benefiting in entering China and we are welcoming China tourists to come.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustained and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two nations?

Participant: Truly all will be prosperous and we all will be earn from that, surely tourism will be growing.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 6

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes

Me: Who is your business partner (s) in Thailand? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: We have many business partners in Thailand, including agencies, hotels, restaurants and many. We have been cooperating with them more than 5 years.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: Not really close nowadays because during the pandemic, less tourists are bringing in to Thailand and getting lesser collaboration.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Thailand business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: I am communicating with them not so often nowadays.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: At first we want to gain more sales but now it is very hard as all of us low income and nobody want to travel.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: Now more toward cooperate with China in domestic tourism.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: We are enthusiast if the border is open.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure it is.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: All of can boost the sales but as I said, nowadays is very hard.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: We can provide tourists in bulk previously and they give us a cheap price.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: The products we get is very cheap and provide to the tourists that experience more.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: Both can go for win-win situation with boosting sales.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 7

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Can.

Me: Do you have business partner (s) in China? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: Yes I have. I have these relationship with the business partners in China more than 10 years.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: Yes very very close. We have been working on Thailand tour for Chinese tourists in the past.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Chinese business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: We have been communicating everyday in the past but now has less. It is actually depends on the number of the tourists in China that come to Thailand. Now has very less of tourists come and this make us very less to communicate as we need to find some new ways.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: We have actually have the goal of providing the best trip for the tourists who comes to Thailand.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: We are all like a team and we all work together in a close relationship.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: We are like family and we are happy to meet and work with each other.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure as I said we are like family, sure I trust and and respect them.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: We can have a very good service and more tourists choose us. For example, during the pandemic, we are very sad as hard to survive as no tourists come in. We are actually discussing with the China partners what to do. They actually providing many ideas to us and I will say these discussions made me learnt much in tourism knowledge.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: It is very much resources to be exchange. They are providing marketing and we are doing planning. For example, they are attracting tourists and help them in handling the plan and we are making tour and make up everything with it.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: To be honest, we can get more reasonable plan that based on the need of the Chinese tourists. The business partner will tell us more information about the wants and needs of them and we could make more that suitable them.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: This brings many good service in a great performance. As we know what they want, we can perform well in such service. They will then satisfy and want to come Thailand again. Both of us earn and great in sustain.

Me: Thank you for you sharing.

Participant 8

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Sure you can.

Me: Do you have your business partner (s) in China? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: Yes I have. We have the relationship for around 15 years.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: Surely close we have continue cooperating for years. We have been giving out plan for each other. Meaning I help to bring Thailanders to China and they come here.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Chinese business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: We communicate very often because we need to discuss the plan that up to date. We communicate through social media more such as WeChat.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: Sure both of us want to be the top in the industry.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: The main I work is the company I mentioned this, and other is more towards on and off.

Me: How enthusiast are you guys when working together?

Participant: To be honest, very enthusiast as I feel that our goal is achieving.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure, at first we will cooperate through kind of probation period to understand the thing that they could be give us and only we trust and make long term cooperation.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: We could get stable amount of the tourists come from the other country. For example, the border that started to open in Thailand in last year, we have tried to make plan for the Chinese partner and try to get back the tourists to in. Because the tourists were very very less during the pandemic but luckily some of them still willing to the our partner and want to get in to travel with our company plan.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: We are actually sharing the customer base I will say.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: Exchanging every need of the tourist and make them to be happy by providing the good service.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: We are about to provide the good service to the Chinese tourists and they will be sharing our good performance service to their friends in China and so the Thailanders will recommend us to their friend who wants to visit China. Both of us benefit from getting customer base and more people travel and benefit the tourism industry.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 9

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes lets start.

Me: Do you have your business partner (s) in China? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: Sure I have. As a travel agency, we have a lot of the partners is different aspects in a long term to have a best quoted price.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: It is considered as close as we always have collaboration. It depends on the service that they providing. For example, if they are gift manufacturer, then will be collaborating the souvenir for our customers.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Chinese business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: We communicate in a very often frequent because we have always need them to help in the supply chain.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: I want to provide best service to my customers and they want to gain more sales in term to help me with this.

Me: How enthusiast are you all when working together?

Participant: I think all of us are very enthusiast to work together as all of us benefit in this.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Yes sure we are.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: It is obvious that we are benefiting from sharing the same line. They are providing a bulk order for me and I used all this with us very affordable price to the customers. This is helpful for me in retenting my customers and the business partners benefit with my bulk orders.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: More towards the products order.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: The products could be sharing to more customers and gain their brand image. Surely, all these help to rententing the customers and help to attract more customers.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: Stable relationship help to gain more customer from the same market and bring them to be own customer and grow the tourism industry with their purchasement.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 10

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Good morning, I am ready to start.

Me: Do you have your business partner (s) in China? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: Yes I have. I have relationship with the company is started from 2018.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: I will say relationship is normal, not considered as very close as we have work together for a year and the pandemic has started and disrupted much for the tourism plan. We have been collaborating in providing resources for the on site plan operation.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Chinese business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: We communicate once we need each other and have the group of the people want to travel to China or some of them want to come to Thailand.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: We would like to build a team with good quality that serve the tourists in China and Thailand.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: I don't really have any other as the pandemic make changes for my business.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Yes I am. At first I am getting attention from the ideas that proposed by them and I respect them with this, surely I trust them could get benefit from this.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: We are providing better quality service to the tourists because we are making discussion in our management to manage all the process that provide to the tourists.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: The resources that could exchange is the knowledge of the management. They are exchanging through the meeting and coming out with many new plans that very attractive to one. I have been praising the strong of the resources knowledge of sharing these between our cooperation.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: All the travelling plan is proceeding very good and all the tourists under my company and the business partner company is very very happy with our services and always saying good with it.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: It helps to maintain the first information of the customer, and provide to the business partner to make one feel like joining the plan. For example, the tourists are feeling expensive to go travel during the pandemic as they are no money to spend much like previously, and this need a cost effective budgetplan for them, they will be very good to get in and the economy of tourism will grow and easier to sustain.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 11

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes you can start.

Me: Do you have business partner (s) in Thailand? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: Yes I have business partner there and have been more than 7 years I think.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: Yes close, we together make plan for the tourists.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Thailand business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: We communicate everyday before the plan start. We use the WeChat to communicate.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: We shared the goal to have a big market penetration in tourism industry.

Me: Any other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: Yes I am but they are not work together, I am cooperating one to one.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Yes

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: We gain more clients and higher the sales even during the recovery stage of the pandemic that everybody has low spending power.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: Consumer base.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: We have bigger pool to get the consumer as the partner help to expand the market in Thailand.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: The organization cooperation in China and Thailand let others know the country more and the tourists more toward to plan their trip there and the tourism will be benefiting in sustain.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 12

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes yes

Me: Do you have your business partner (s) in Thailand? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: I have it for a long time. I do not remember how long it is, maybe around 15 years since my dad is working on this company.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: Yes very close, we are collaborating in all the process in tourism agencies.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: I will say very often but I don't know how to specific the time because sometimes will be very long sometimes is very short. We will communicate through online app and sometimes I will fly to Thailand to meet them.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: Both of the management are very clear vision that we want to provide qualified personalized plan for the clients.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: Yes we work with the event company, both of the business partner and us also collaborate with the event company because it helps to decorate the location, as some times our clients will have proposed requirement in travelling.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: All of us are very close and we are enthusiast wo work together.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure it is.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: All of us maintain the stable customer group, sharing the market together and make it in a stable value chain.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: To be honest, the most important resource in the tourism industry is the client, which the market share. I think this sharing is very value.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: We all have the similar strategies and products services, which all of us discuss the same plan that we agreed and we promote in the local to help each other. This is better for us to promote to oversea, easier for us in growing in the other country to have brand identity.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: Tourism could be sustain and develop well if the market is growing and if the services are good enough and in both Thailand in China, we are happy to increase more tourists and easier to sustain the industry.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 13

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes.

Me: Do you have your business partner (s) in Thailand? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: Sure I have. Around 5-7 years.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: Yes very close. The collaboration we have together is to promote their culture to our citizens.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Thailand business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: Normally we call or we type in message for normal communicate, but we will have group meeting, and this will be video call. If the plan is done, we will need to go Thailand to meet the partner and check the tourist spot that the tourists will go.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: Sharing the culture to the world is the main.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: We are working with marketing company and also working closely as to promote the culture.

Me: How enthusiast are they when working together?

Participant: I will rate 7 out of 10.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Sure I appreciate that.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: All of us heading to the goal of the company by supporting by the business partners. Like I want to share the culture of Thailand to local Chinese, the business partner always help me to make the plan and communicate with the heritage and culture sport for the tourists to visit.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: We are exchanging the resources such as finance and knowledge, and this makes us better providing the service in cultural tourism.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: As per Chinese, we might face some difficulties in knowing more than the local, and the knowledge of the local is very very credible for us in doing cultural tourism. I will say the cooperation make changes in me and partner is that both of us getting a very high quality service because we could help the tourists to explore the culture that they wanted to do so and we earn the money from their need.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: I am pretty sure that if the performance is rising to the top because of the cooperation, there will be more tourists would like to explore the culture in Thailand. I know that it is very hard to sustain in tourism during the pandemic because the restriction of the border, no tourism events are working well and so low tourists number are coming in. But once it is reopen, the quality of the service surely attract them and make in stand firm and sustain.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 14

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Good morning. We can start now.

Me: Do you have your business partner (s) in China? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: I have a few of them. Most of them are partnership more than 5 years.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: Quite close. Together is planning strategy for the Chinese tourism agencies to come along.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the Chinese business partners? How do you communicate?

Participant: 1-2 times per month.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: Allowing the Chinese tourism agencies to get into the market of Thailand in tourism industry.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with?

Participant: Not really

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: Mutual trust and respect is the point but also the financial benefit.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: Both of us can gain financial benefits with this.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: We are providing strategic planning for them as the resources and the company. We have assigned and allocated talents and consultants to their management team.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: The talent input is always providing them a strategic planning with a good direction that leads them to be safeguard their position in the tourism industry even in the disruption of the tourism in pandemic.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: Many different plans could suitable for different customer segments and this helpful for attracting the tourist and brighten the future of the tourism.

Me: Thank you.

Participant 15

Me: Good morning, I am the interviewer today, could we start now?

Participant: Yes

Me: Do you have your business partner (s) in Thailand? How long have you had relationship with these companies?

Participant: Surely I have. I think since the first two years our company started operating, where around 2015 to 2016.

Me: Is your relationship close? What kind of collaborations do you have together?

Participant: I am always feeling close to the business partner so that we could have a better collaboration. We make collaboration in helping the Chinese tourism agencies to get the cheapest price in the tourism supply chain, including hotels, dining services, theme parks and so on.

Me: How often do your company communicate with the business partners?

Participant: To be honest, in the peak session, we have to communicate more than once in a day.

Me: In terms of tourism cooperation, what are visions and goals that are shared by both companies?

Participant: Promoting the tourism industry in the country and making one experience the best ever trip in their world with our company is the goal and vision.

Me: Which other organisations in Thailand and China are you working with? Are they working closely together?

Participant: Sure I have to get the best price. But I am really sad because some of them are actually close down their business due to the pandemic has make the tourism industry in a very down status earlier. There is no tourist want to come, and this makes very bad situation.

Me: Is the cooperation between you and the other organizations made up by mutual trust and respect?

Participant: I am truly trust and respect my partner.

Me: How both parties will be benefiting from the cooperation?

Participant: Firstly, like the pandemic situation, we can try to get the cheapest price for those who need a relaxation but with a budget plan. Then we provide the quoted price and earn some with it, the tourism agencies could promote the low budget plan for them. With this, all of us earn and gain something.

Me: What and how are the resources that could be exchange between the cooperation?

Participant: The resources could be exchanging is truly based on the need of the company, I can exchange the price quotation, the services, the team, and so on but is based on the partner.

Me: How are the tourism cooperation could make changes in the tourism industry in you and your cooperated partners in respect of the product, strategies and policy design, marketing and promotion, knowledge exchange, and assessing fund?

Participant: Many, for the products, low price given. In other word, giving a good service with lower expenses. For the marketing and promotion, we have local network and this helps to build a good image and allow them to choose the partner. And we provide good team. All these make changes from the others and make own grows.

Me: How are the tourism could be sustain and develop well in the industry through the cooperation between the two organizations?

Participant: The cooperation makes all the services become very valuable and I think those who wants to survive will make more better service and in such constructive competition, tourism will be better and sustain in the world.

Me: Thank you.

APPENDIX B**Certificate**

VITAE

Name Miss. Shuyu Hou

Student ID 6330121016

Educational Attainment

Degree	Name of Institution	Year of Graduation
Bachelor of Management	Ginkgo College of Hotel Management	2015
(Hotel management)	Chengdu University of Information Technology	

Work – Position and Address

2016-2017: Front desk clerk at Yaang Come Village Hotel

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