



Evaluation and Influencing Factors of Urban Tourism Economy Resilience in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the resilience of Bangkok's urban tourism economy by analyzing key factors such as economic diversification, infrastructure quality, governance quality, community engagement, environmental sustainability, and innovation and technology. The goal is to identify strengths and weaknesses within these areas and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing resilience against various disruptions. A quantitative research approach was utilized, with data collected from 300 respondents through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire in the tourism area in Thonglor, Ekkamai, and Promphong. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to gauge perceptions and satisfaction levels and multiple linear regression analysis to determine the impact of these factors on the resilience of Bangkok's tourism sector. However, the regression analysis revealed no statistically significant predictors of tourism economic resilience, highlighting the exploratory and perception-based nature of this study. These findings provide practical insights for policymakers, tourism managers, and local stakeholders by identifying areas where strategic improvements, such as digital infrastructure and community engagement, could strengthen the sector's adaptive capacity.

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Introduction

Bangkok's tourism sector has been a cornerstone of economic development, attracting millions of visitors annually with its rich cultural heritage, vibrant street life, and diverse attractions. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (2020), tourism accounted for approximately 21.6% of Thailand's GDP, with Bangkok being a significant contributor. This economic dependency on tourism has rendered the city vulnerable to external shocks such as political instability, natural disasters, and, more recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic. To capture the perspectives of communities most directly impacted by tourism activities, this study focused on three major business tourism districts in Bangkok: Thonglor, Ekkamai, and Promphong. These areas were selected because of their high density of tourism-related businesses and their diverse mix of residents and stakeholders. The pandemic, in particular, exposed the fragility of Bangkok's tourism economy, leading to unprecedented declines in tourist arrivals, business closures, and job losses. The city's heavy reliance on international tourism has underscored the need for a resilient urban tourism economy that can withstand and recover from such shocks (World Bank, 2020).

Economic resilience in the context of urban tourism refers to the ability of the tourism economy to absorb, adapt, and recover from external disruptions while maintaining essential functions and

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structures (Simmie & Martin 2010). In Bangkok, the resilience of the tourism economy is influenced by various factors, including economic diversification, infrastructure robustness, governance effectiveness, and the capacity for innovation and adaptation. One of the critical issues facing Bangkok's tourism sector is its lack of diversification. The city's tourism offerings have historically centered around cultural and historical sites, shopping districts, and nightlife, which, while popular, do not provide sufficient economic diversification to buffer against sector-specific shocks.

Another significant problem is the infrastructure constraints that limit the city's ability to accommodate and manage the influx of tourists effectively. While Bangkok boasts a well-developed transportation network, including an extensive public transit system, the city's infrastructure has struggled to keep pace with the rapid growth in tourist numbers. Congestion, pollution, and inadequate waste management are persistent issues that detract from the overall tourist experience and pose environmental challenges (Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M., 2021). Furthermore, the city's tourism infrastructure has not fully leveraged technological advancements that could enhance operational efficiency and visitor satisfaction, such as smart tourism technologies and digital platforms.

The Objectives of this Study are:

- To identify and analyze key economic and non-economic factors influencing the resilience of the urban tourism economy in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.
- To assess the perceived strengths and weaknesses of existing tourism infrastructure and governance mechanisms.
- To explore the implications of these findings for sustainable tourism policy and practice.

Literature Review

This literature review establishes the theoretical foundation for studying urban tourism resilience by synthesizing key concepts and empirical findings. It focuses on six critical factors: economic diversification, infrastructure quality, governance quality, community engagement, environmental sustainability, and innovation technology, ultimately identifying the research gap that this study aims to address.

The Concept of Urban Tourism Economic Resilience

Urban tourism economic resilience refers to the sector's capacity to absorb, adapt to, and recover from external shocks while maintaining its essential functions and structure (Simmie & Martin, 2010). In the context of Bangkok, a global tourism hub, this concept is crucial due to the city's high exposure to disruptions ranging from pandemics to political instability (World Bank, 2020). The resilience of a tourism economy is not inherent but is built upon a complex interplay of various economic, social, technological, and environmental factors, which are explored in the following sections.

Key Determinants of Tourism Resilience

• Economic Diversification (ED)

Economic diversification is a cornerstone strategy for mitigating risk in tourism-dependent economies. It involves developing a variety of tourism products and services to reduce reliance on a single market or segment (Hesse, 2008). Destinations with diversified supply chains and multi-sector offerings, such as cultural, eco, and adventure tourism, demonstrate a greater capacity to absorb sector-specific shocks. Recent studies in Southeast Asia further underline how product and market diversification are critical for post-crisis economic stabilization (ASEAN Secretariat, 2024).

• Infrastructure Quality (IQ)

Robust infrastructure is the backbone of a functional tourism sector. Ghosh and De (1998) emphasized that the adequacy and reliability of transportation, accommodation, and digital services are fundamental. In dense urban areas like Bangkok, infrastructure quality directly influences both recovery speed and long-term resilience. Analyses of Bangkok's transit-oriented corridors show that improved connectivity and digital infrastructure enhance visitor distribution and crisis readiness (ITF/OECD, 2024).

• Governance Quality (GQ)

Effective governance is pivotal for coordinating responses during a crisis. It encompasses policy flexibility, stakeholder coordination, and transparent communication platforms. Studies in ASEAN and OECD contexts emphasize that adaptive governance—characterized by cross-sector alignment and participative planning—is essential for building systemic resilience and guiding recovery efforts (OECD, 2023).

- **Community Engagement (CE)**

Community engagement transcends socio-cultural ideals to become a practical resilience strategy. When local residents are actively involved in tourism, it fosters a sense of ownership and builds social capital. Murphy (1985) argued that tourism initiatives must align with local interests. Field studies in Thailand demonstrate that community-based tourism and active resident participation lead to more shared benefits and collaborative adaptation during disruptions.

- **Environmental Sustainability (ES)**

Embedding sustainability into tourism operations reduces the environmental footprint and decreases dependence on volatile mass tourism models. Practices such as energy efficiency, green infrastructure, and robust waste management enhance a destination's long-term viability. Recent empirical work highlights that integrating eco-friendly practices within tourism supply chains significantly strengthens the sector's adaptive capacity (ASEAN Secretariat, 2024).

- **Innovation Technology (IT)**

The post-pandemic era has unequivocally shown that digital transformation is vital for tourism resilience. Digital tools, including mobile platforms, big data analytics, and contactless services, enable destinations to maintain operations and adapt more effectively during disruptions (Liu et al., 2024). The adoption of smart tourism technologies is now a key differentiator for destinations seeking a competitive advantage.

Synthesis and Identification of the Research Gap

The reviewed literature confirms that the six constructs—ED, IQ, GQ, CE, ES, and IT—are pivotal to understanding tourism resilience. However, much of the existing research examines these factors in isolation or combines only a subset of them. Although tourism resilience literature has expanded since 2020, few studies provide a multi-dimensional framework that integrates all these structural, governance, community, environmental, and technological domains into a holistic model—especially in the context of Southeast Asian urban settings (Jiang, Ritchie, & Verreyne, 2019).

This study addresses this gap by integrating these six interrelated constructs into a comprehensive conceptual framework to evaluate the resilience of Bangkok's urban tourism economy. This integrated approach allows for a more nuanced analysis of the perceived strengths and vulnerabilities within the sector, offering valuable insights for both theorists and practitioners.

Conceptual Framework

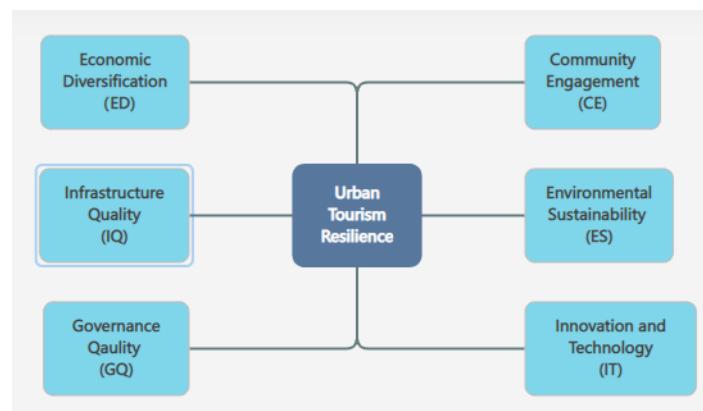


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Constructed by the authors based on literature review

As shown in Figure 1, the conceptual framework links six constructs—Economic Diversification (ED), Infrastructure Quality (IQ), Governance Quality (GQ), Community Engagement (CE), Environmental Sustainability (ES), and Innovation Technology (IT)—to the development of Urban Tourism Resilience. Each construct corresponds to a research hypothesis (H1–H6), reflecting their potential contributions to strengthening Bangkok's urban tourism economy in the face of disruptions. This framework bridges the study's objectives with the empirical model and guides the subsequent analysis.

Research Methodology

This research employs a quantitative methodology to investigate the resilience of Bangkok's urban tourism economy. A quantitative approach was deemed appropriate because it enables the collection of structured, measurable data and provides statistical insights that support evidence-based interpretation. By using structured questionnaires and statistical analyses, the study aims to quantify the relationships between various factors, such as economic diversification, infrastructure quality, governance quality, community engagement, environmental sustainability, innovation and technology, and their impact on tourism resilience.

- **Survey Instrument**

The questionnaire was adapted from a validated instrument (*Jiang, Ritchie, & Verreyne, 2019*) that has been widely applied in tourism resilience research, which has been widely applied in tourism resilience research. The original items were contextualized to fit the Bangkok urban tourism setting, ensuring conceptual relevance and measurement validity for constructs including Economic Diversification (ED), Infrastructure Quality (IQ), Governance Quality (GQ), Community Engagement (CE), Environmental Sustainability (ES), and Innovation Technology (IT). Each construct was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To ensure contextual appropriateness, a 15-person field pilot test was conducted in Bangkok to validate the clarity of language and cultural suitability of the items.

- **Data Collection**

Data were collected via Wenjuanxing (www.wjx.cn), a widely used and trusted online survey platform in Asia. This platform was selected for three primary reasons. First, Wenjuanxing provides high accessibility and acceptance among Bangkok's Chinese-speaking communities and their extended networks, which facilitated outreach and improved response rates in the Thonglor, Ekkamai, and Phrom Phong districts. Second, it offers a multilingual interface, including English, ensuring that respondents from diverse linguistic backgrounds could conveniently access and complete the survey. Third, the platform strictly complies with data security and privacy standards, using encrypted connections and secure servers to protect personal information, which enhanced respondent trust and willingness to participate. These advantages, combined with its mobile-friendly design and real-time data monitoring, made Wenjuanxing an efficient and reliable tool for collecting urban tourism resilience data in this study.

- **Reliability and Validity**

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha for each construct. As shown in Table 1, all six constructs demonstrated excellent reliability (α values between 0.92 and 0.96), far exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Although multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore predictive relationships, none of the independent variables showed statistical significance (all p -values > 0.05 , except the intercept, $p = 0.004$), suggesting that these results should be treated as exploratory and primarily descriptive rather than inferential.

- **Sample Characteristics**

A total of 300 valid responses were collected. While detailed demographic statistics (e.g., gender, age, education, and occupation) were recorded, the majority of respondents were between 25 and 40 years old, had at least a bachelor's degree, and had lived in Bangkok for more than five years. These characteristics indicate that the sample largely represents the urban resident population engaged with local tourism economies.

Summary of Results

- **Economic Diversification (ED)**

The analysis of Economic Diversification (ED) reveals varied perceptions among respondents regarding the diversity and growth of tourism products in Bangkok. The mean scores range from 2.88 to 3.12, which means "neither agree nor disagree" on a 5-point Likert scale with significant variability indicated by high standard deviations. Respondents recognize the importance of diversifying tourism products to mitigate economic disruptions, as reflected in the relatively high mean score (3.12) for this item. However, the lower mean score for the diversity of tourism products (2.88) highlights a potential area for development. This suggests that while stakeholders understand the importance of diversification, current efforts may not be effectively communicated.

- **Infrastructure Quality (IQ)**

The scores for Infrastructure Quality (IQ) show a wide range, with mean scores from 2.87 to 3.20, which mean "neither agree nor disagree" on a 5-point Likert scale. The highest mean score is for transportation infrastructure (3.20), indicating relative satisfaction with transport facilities. However, the high standard deviations suggest varied experiences and opinions. Lower mean scores for accommodation (2.87) and digital infrastructure (3.07) point to critical areas needing improvement. The high variability in responses indicates that while some respondents find the infrastructure adequate, others encounter significant shortcomings, impacting overall perceptions of resilience.

- **Governance Quality (GQ)**

Governance Quality (GQ) scores range from 2.87 to 3.18, which means "neither agree nor disagree" on a 5-point Likert scale, with considerable standard deviations. The highest score is for the overall importance of good governance (3.18), indicating strong recognition of governance as a cornerstone for resilience. However, the lower score for stakeholder engagement (2.87) underscores a critical gap in effective governance. This discrepancy between the perceived effectiveness of policies and actual stakeholder engagement highlights the need for improved communication and inclusive policy-making to enhance resilience.

- **Community Engagement (CE)**

Community Engagement (CE) scores range from 2.95 to 3.22, which means "neither agree nor disagree" on a 5-point Likert scale, again with notable variability. The highest mean score is for providing significant employment opportunities (3.22), reflecting positive views on tourism's role in local employment. However, the lower score for community tourism projects (2.95) suggests that these initiatives may not be as well-supported or effective as needed. This gap highlights the potential for targeted community engagement strategies to foster greater involvement and satisfaction, thereby strengthening resilience.

- **Environmental Sustainability (ES)**

The Environmental Sustainability (ES) shows a mean score from 2.92 to 3.18, which means "neither agree nor disagree" on a 5-point Likert scale. The highest score is for green hotel certifications (3.18), indicating a positive view of sustainable practices in accommodation. However, the lower score for waste reduction initiatives (2.92) reveals a critical area needing attention. This disparity suggests that while certain sustainable practices are recognized and valued, others require more robust implementation and awareness.

- **Innovation and Technology (IT)**

Innovation and Technology (IT) scores have means from 2.97 to 3.17, which mean "neither agree nor disagree" on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting varied perceptions of technological adoption in tourism. The highest score for digital marketing strategies (3.17) indicates a recognition of effective marketing practices. Conversely, the lower score for innovation grants (2.97) points to potential gaps in funding and support for innovative initiatives. This suggests that while some technological aspects are well-regarded, broader and more comprehensive support for innovation could enhance overall resilience.

- **Urban Tourism Economy Resilience (UTE)**

The Urban Tourism Economy Resilience (UTE) scores range from 2.87 to 3.12, which means "neither agree nor disagree" on a 5-point Likert scale. The highest score for recovery after crises (3.12) highlights a perceived strength in Bangkok's ability to rebound from disruptions. However, the lower score for maintaining tourism revenue despite disruptions (2.87) suggests challenges in sustaining financial stability. This indicates a need for strategies that enhance economic resilience, ensuring consistent revenue flows even in adverse conditions.

Overall, the results indicate that while there are areas of strength within Bangkok's tourism economy, significant variability and gaps exist in critical domains. Addressing these gaps through targeted policy and strategic initiatives could significantly enhance the resilience of Bangkok's tourism sector.

Table 1

Variable	p
Constant	0.004
ED	0.871
IQ	0.648
GQ	0.435
CE	0.953
ES	0.31
IT	0.314

All six predictors (ED, IQ, GQ, CE, ES, IT) have p-values well above 0.05, and each 95% CI crosses zero. Statistically, this suggests that none of these variables individually had a measurable linear impact on Urban Tourism Economy Resilience in the sample analyzed.

Discussion

The analysis of Bangkok's urban tourism economy resilience reveals significant insights into how various factors contribute to the sector's ability to withstand and recover from disruptions. Economic Diversification (ED) emerged as a key determinant, with high variability in responses indicating differing perceptions of the current diversity and growth of tourism products. While stakeholders recognize the importance of diversification, the relatively lower scores for the diversity of products suggest that efforts to broaden the range of offerings may need to be enhanced. Infrastructure Quality (IQ) also plays a critical role in tourism resilience, as highlighted by the wide range of scores and the significant variability in responses. High satisfaction with transportation infrastructure contrasts with lower satisfaction with accommodation and digital infrastructure, suggesting areas for improvement. These findings underscore the importance of investing in high-quality infrastructure to support tourism activities and ensure a positive visitor experience. Improved infrastructure not only enhances operational efficiency but also contributes to the overall attractiveness and competitiveness of Bangkok as a tourist destination.

Governance Quality (GQ) and Community Engagement (CE) were found to be essential for enhancing tourism resilience. The significant gap in stakeholder engagement points to the need for more inclusive policy-making and better communication between government bodies and tourism stakeholders. Effective governance and active community involvement are crucial for building a resilient tourism sector as they ensure that policies are well-implemented and that local communities support and benefit from tourism development. These findings suggest that strategies aimed at improving governance practices and fostering community engagement could significantly enhance the sector's resilience.

Environmental Sustainability (ES) and Innovation and Technology (IT) also emerged as important factors influencing resilience. While certain sustainable practices, such as green hotel certifications, are well-regarded, there is room for improvement in areas like waste reduction initiatives. Similarly, the adoption of smart tourism technologies and effective digital marketing strategies is recognized, but broader support for innovation could further enhance resilience. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive sustainability practices and technological advancements to ensure the long-term viability and adaptability of Bangkok's tourism economy. Overall, the study underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach to building tourism resilience, integrating economic, infrastructural, governance, community, environmental, and technological strategies.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study offer several critical managerial implications for enhancing the resilience of Bangkok's urban tourism economy. First and foremost, tourism managers and policymakers should prioritize economic diversification by developing and promoting a wider range of tourism products. This diversification can help mitigate the impacts of economic disruptions by reducing dependency on a single source of revenue. Efforts should be made to identify and support emerging tourism segments, such as eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and adventure tourism, to broaden the appeal of Bangkok as a tourist destination and ensure a steady flow of visitors even during challenging times.

Investments in infrastructure quality are essential for sustaining and enhancing the resilience of the tourism sector. Managers should focus on upgrading and maintaining transportation and accommodation facilities to meet the evolving needs of both international and domestic tourists. Enhancing digital infrastructure is also crucial, as it enables better connectivity and access to information

for tourists. High-quality infrastructure not only improves the overall visitor experience but also strengthens the operational efficiency and competitiveness of the tourism industry. Strategic planning and resource allocation should prioritize infrastructure projects that address identified gaps and enhance the sector's capacity to handle fluctuations in demand.

Effective governance and community engagement are vital components of a resilient tourism economy. Tourism managers should work closely with government agencies to ensure that policies and regulatory frameworks are conducive to sustainable tourism development. Emphasizing stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes can foster greater cooperation and alignment of interests among various tourism actors. Additionally, actively involving local communities in tourism planning and development can enhance their support and participation, leading to more sustainable and inclusive growth. By fostering a collaborative environment and promoting good governance practices, managers can build a more robust and adaptable tourism sector that is better equipped to handle future challenges.

Overall, these managerial implications highlight the need for a holistic and strategic approach to tourism management that integrates diversification, infrastructure development, governance, and community engagement to build a resilient and sustainable tourism economy in Bangkok.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the comprehensive nature of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relies on self-reported data collected through a structured questionnaire, which may be subject to response biases. Participants might have provided socially desirable answers or may not have fully understood some of the questions, potentially affecting the accuracy of the data. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling, focusing on specific tourism areas in Bangkok, may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population. Future studies should consider employing random sampling techniques and expanding the geographic scope to capture a more representative sample of Bangkok's residents.

Another limitation is the cross-sectional design of the study, which captures a snapshot of respondents' perceptions at a single point in time. This design does not account for changes in perceptions or the dynamic nature of the tourism sector over time. Longitudinal studies are recommended to track changes in tourism resilience and the effectiveness of implemented strategies over an extended period. Such studies would provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of various factors on tourism resilience and allow for the assessment of trends and patterns that may not be apparent in a cross-sectional study.

Conclusion

This study examined the resilience of Bangkok's urban tourism economy by assessing the perceptions of local residents in three key tourism districts. While the descriptive results highlighted strengths in transportation infrastructure and employment opportunities, they also revealed critical gaps in areas such as accommodation quality, digital infrastructure, stakeholder engagement, and waste management.

Importantly, the regression analysis did not identify any statistically significant predictors of tourism resilience, suggesting that the relationships between these factors and resilience may be more complex and require alternative analytical approaches in future studies.

From a practical perspective, these findings emphasize the need for integrated strategies to improve infrastructure, enhance governance and community engagement, and foster technological innovation to build a more adaptive and sustainable urban tourism sector. Theoretically, the study contributes by framing Bangkok's tourism resilience as a multi-dimensional and perception-driven phenomenon, offering a basis for future exploratory or mixed-method research.

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