SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD AND REVISIT INTENTION FOR TEA TOURISM DESTINATIONS: AN APPLICATION OF THEORY OF REASONED ACTION

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims to investigate the revisit intention of tea tourists, and its determinants, including attitude, subjective norm, and tea tourism satisfaction. The sample included 409 tea tourists with experiences of visiting the tea tourism destinations. Research instruments were developed from the related literature. The structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data for the study.

The results showed that tea tourism satisfaction, subjective norm and attitude are influential to revisit intention of the tea tourists. Additionally, sustainable livelihood has a positive significant effect on tea tourism satisfaction. Based on theory of reasoned action and sustainable livelihood approach, the study extended the application of the theory of reasoned action by focusing on the revisit intention, rather than the intention to visit. In addition, prior to this study, the concept of sustainable livelihood approach has not been used in the context of tea tourism.

The findings of the research help tea tourism destination managers develop the guidelines to increase the satisfaction of the tea tourists and to increase the revisit intention. Moreover, this research also found that promoting sustainable livelihood of the tea community can be an effective strategy to attract and satisfy the tea tourists. Past research in tea tourism has not applied the theory of reasoned action for revisit intention and this study used the satisfaction factor as one of the predictors for revisit intention. In other words, the current research expanded the usage of the theory of reasoned action. Additionally, past research did not investigate the concept of sustainable livelihood of tea tourism destinations where tea plantation is usually located in the local community, supported by the local peoples and their ways of life.

Keywords: Sustainable Livelihood, Tea Tourism, Destination, Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Tea is known as one of the most popular beverages in the world, just after water. Tea can also represent different characteristics and cultural dimensions of the tea consumption in various continents, ranging from Europe, Asia, and South America (Ozen et al., 2012). Tea tourism represents the tradition, the local tea product and tea culture, representing the tea communities in each location, such as China, India, Taiwan and (Jolliffe, 2007). Tea tourism is one of the fastest growing areas of niche tourism in different parts of the world.

The current study aimed to focus on tea tourism in Chiang Rai province which is one of the most important tea plantation areas in Thailand. Many tea plantation areas are in the local communities, usually managed by local people with the support and exchange with other

stakeholders within the same neighborhood and some areas are under the royal project of the former king of Thailand. According to the American Specialty Tea Alliance (2020), Thailand was considered the 14th largest tea producer in the world with around 60,000 tons per year. In addition, the two main areas for tea plantation and production are in the Northern part of Thailand, namely Chiang Rai province.

In terms of the tourism destination, tea plantation has become one of the most popular tourism destinations in the northern parts of Thailand. Tea plantation tours in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces of Thailand are the two most well-known tea tourism destinations in Thailand. Moreover, with the simple search of *"tea tourism"* in Thailand, there are a great number of websites, ranging from tour companies, local tour guides and tea plantation own-websites, providing the range of activities to do around the plantation sites. Many of these sites were operated by the local owners or communities.

Moreover, tea plantation or tea tourism destinations can sell their own tea and related products or be a center to help sell the products of the tea related products from the tea communities. For tea tourism activities, the tourists can consume a variety of tea, learn the process of growing tea, walk along the plantation, dress up as a tea farmer or put their hands on the tea production tools and enjoy the scenery of the tea covering mountains (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2020).

According to Statista (2020), tea can provide several health benefits and furthermore the culture of tea consumption in different locations around the world, for example, Turkish preferred hot black tea, British consumers drink tea with milk while American enjoy their iced tea. According to Siam Teas (2020), Thailand has a long history of tea for more than one hundred years as the country is located in the southern part of China and there were various trading ports with China. The tea culture in Thailand started with Oolong tea and expanded to other types of tea later. The tea consumption can be found in all demographic characteristics, and the main areas for growing tea have always been in the northern regions, especially Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces.

In the current study, the tea tourism destinations are those located in Chiang Rai province. In the study of Chaoprayoon & Panyadee (2014), tea tourism destinations in Thailand are located in the northern mountainous parts of the country, close to the neighboring countries, including Laos and Myanmar. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2020), one of the destination image symbols of the province is the tea plantation, namely Choui Fong Tea Plantation. There are several tea plantation sites known as tea tourism destinations due to its geographical location on the mountainous areas with suitable environment for tea production.

Based on the study of Chaoprayoon & Panyadee (2014), several tourism destinations in Chiang Rai province have been promoted to help support the local communities to create the tourism activities in the form of community-based tourism, integrating the local ways of life, tradition, culture, and livelihood of the local people as the tourism products for sustainable tourism development goals. In addition, according to Tan et al. (2018), Chiang Rai is one of the most diverse ethnic groups in Thailand, such as Aka and Lahu tribes. These communities are involved in the initiatives called ETC (Experience, Tea and Coffee), representing the ethnic community-based tourisms, where the members developed a tourism network and shared the experiences in the management of tourism activities in Chiang Rai province.

The objectives of this study were to firstly investigate the determinants of tea tourism satisfaction, secondly to identify the factors influencing revisit intention of tea tourism and lastly to provide the practical implications for tea tourism development. With the proposed objectives,

the theory of reasoned action was considered suitable to be used as a guideline for this current study. The details of the theory, concept and other factors are to be discussed in the following section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part, the author provided the definition of the key factors, including the theory of reasoned action, which are the foundation for the study.

Tea tourism can be defined as the experience where the tourists participate in activities ranging from tea growing methods, tea history and culture and consumptions of tea and its related products (Jolliffe, 2007). In addition, the tourists can view the tea plantation landscape, participate in tea tasting sessions, and walk through the tea production process. Some places offer restaurants and bakery shops with mainly tea related ingredients.

Theory of Reasoned Action

Theory of reasoned action (Ajzen, 1991) offered the explanation for the relationship of attitude and subjective norms toward intention and later on behaviors. Furthermore, Montaño & Kasprzyk (2015) further explained that the theory assumed that the individuals acquired information and rationally processed the information, leading to the intention or the behavior in a certain context or environment. The application of theory of reasoned action in this study was the modified version in that the study focused on the revisit intention, rather than the intention to visit (Ajzen, 2012). Suggested by the past research studies (e.g., Som & Badarneh, 2011; Waheed & Hassan, 2016), prior to the revisit intention, the tourists should have the satisfaction of their destination so that the revision intention can occur. Therefore, the current study added the tea tourism satisfaction as the antecedent of revision intention.

Sustainable Livelihood

Sustainable livelihood is considered one of the important aspects of tourism development, especially in the context of community-based tourism (Tao &Wall, 2009). In addition, tourism development for the local community is highly suitable for sustainable livelihood, where the community maintains their ways of living, with the concerns of the social, environmental, and cultural aspects of their livelihood and at the same time offer tourism products for the tourists to learn and appreciate the community's unique environment.

Furthermore, according to Su et al. (2019) sustainable livelihood can be categorized into different aspects based on livelihood index, including natural, physical, human, social, and financial dimensions. According to (Shi & Li, 2018) sustainable livelihood and multifunctional development of tourism can support the natural environment, cultural heritage, physical surroundings, social network and improvement and financial returns for the community. Therefore, sustainable livelihood of the local tea community can be presented in their day-to-day activities for working on the tea plantations and then the tourists can observe or participate in the activities of the local peoples.

Based on Su et al. (2019), sustainable livelihood outcomes are represented in the following dimensions: livelihood sustainability (e.g., diversity and freedom), natural resource sustainability and socio-cultural sustainability. Past study for the concept of tourism revealed that sustainable livelihood can have the direct impact on tourist satisfaction (Puhakka et al., 2014;

Elbaz & Abou-Shouk, 2016). Additionally, sustainable livelihood is shown to have the impact on tourist perception towards the tourism destination (Qian et al., 2017).

In several research studies, sustainable livelihood is regarded as the integrated approach related to different dimensions of the community or society, such as natural environment, income, socio-cultural aspect, and well-being (Sati & Vangchhia, 2016). De Haan (2000) noted that sustainable livelihood showed the approach where formal and informal organizations, including government and nongovernmental organizations, consumers, private enterprises or local people, can create civil society for the sustainable development within a certain area, region or even country with the sustainable development goals in mind. Morse & McNamara (2013) highlighted that the goal of sustainable livelihood is around three dimensions, which are economic, social and environmental with appropriate livelihood preservation of the people

In addition, Tao & Wall (2009) proposed that tourism, especially in the community, can be used as a guideline to develop sustainable livelihood strategy in that tourism products and services can help improve the income distribution, sociocultural development, and natural conservation. within each community, including household lifestyle, employment, savings behavior, or leisure activities.

In the context of tourism, past studies indicated the sustainable livelihood of the tourism destination can be the factor related to the tourist satisfaction (Elbaz & Abou-Shouk, 2016; Su et al., 2016). In the study, sustainable livelihood was evaluated from the perception of the tea tourism community to reflect the tea destination development.

Revisit Intention

The definition of revisit intention is about the planning or willingness of the tourists to go back to the same tourism destination again in the near future (Chen & Funk, 2010; Cole & Scott, 2004). In some study, revisit intention is regarded as the long-term commitment of the tourists with the certain destination of their past visits (Jang & Feng, 2007).

Revisit intention is the important outcome of long-term tourism destination development where the revisit of the tourists reflecting the degree of loyalty towards the destination and this can further lead to positive recommendations to encourage other people to visit the destination in the future (Um et al., 2006; Jang & Feng, 2007). In addition, the concept of revisit intention is crucial of both researchers and practitioners because the evolutions of the tourism environments lead to continual study and adjustment to meet with the ever-changing expectations and satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2018; Loi et al., 2017; Stylos et al., 2017). Furthermore, new tourism destinations are always developed to compete for the visit or revisit of the tourists. In the context of this study, revisit intention refers to the revisit intention of the tea tourists to the same destination in the future.

Tea Tourism Satisfaction

For tourism study (Tribe & Snaith, 1998; Alegre & Garau, 2010), tourist satisfaction refers to the extent that an assessment of the tourists towards the characteristics, attributes or details of the tourism destination and surroundings in comparison to their expectations and if the assessment indicated that the experience is better than their expectations, then the tourists are satisfied with their tourism destination. Satisfaction can also be measured in terms of enjoyment, fun, or other positive perceptions towards the tourism destination (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Chi & Qu, 2008; Martín et al. 2019; Huang & Crotts, 2019; Kaosiri et al., 2019). Furthermore,

satisfaction is also known as the antecedent of revisit intention, as stated by Waheed & Hassan (2016); Som & Badarneh (2011).

Attitude

Attitude is defined as the individual's tendency to have a favorable (positive) or unfavorable (negative) response toward something, which can be an object or a concept (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In addition, attitude is referred to as a process of behavior beliefs and each person, affecting how the person assesses the object or the concept (Bagozzi, 1992; Lee & Back, 2007). In other words, attitude reflects the belief system of an individual regarding the outcome of the action or behavior. In this study, attitude is defined as a person's outcome evaluation towards tea tourism experience. Past research suggested that attitude is the antecedent of tourist satisfaction (Bosque & Martín, 2008; Valle et al., 2011). Furthermore, several studies highlighted the relationship between attitude and revisit intention, including the works of Huang & Hsu (2009); Li et al. (2010).

Subjective Norm

As one of the main factors in the theory of reasoned action, subjective norm (Schepers & Wetzels, 2007) can be referred to as how one perceives that his or her influential people consider whether one should or should not take an action in a certain behavioral context. Moreover, subjective norm can be defined as the perception of individuals about their actions or behaviors that may be judged by people who are important to them whether those actions are suitable, appropriate, right or wrong. For this reason, subjective norm can have the impact on a person's intention or action to do or not to do something in a particular environment (Kaushik et al., 2018; Shin & Hancer, 2016; Wan et al., 2018). For tourism research, the subjective norm is also used as a factor determining the influence of other people towards tourists in regard to their decision or action to visit a certain destination (Kaushik et al., 2015; Lo & Qu, 2015). Additionally, a number of research provided the relationship between subjective norm and revisit intention, such as Jang & Feng (2007); Lai et al. (2010).

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

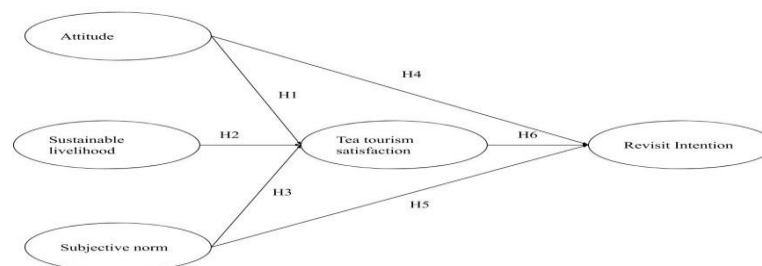From the literature review, the model was developed and proposed in Figure 1:

FIGURE 1
PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL

According to the proposed research model in Figure 1, six hypotheses were presented as follows:

      H_1:   *Attitude has a positive influence on tea tourism satisfaction.*

      H_2:   *Sustainable livelihood has a positive influence on tea tourism satisfaction.*

      H_3:   *Subjective norm has a positive influence on tea tourism satisfaction.*

      H_4:   *Attitude has a positive influence on revisit intention.*

      H_5:   *Subjective norm has a positive influence on revisit intention.*

      H_6:   *Tea tourism satisfaction has a positive influence on revisit intention.*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was quantitative research with a survey questionnaire as the measurement tool for data collection. The selection method for the sample was developed with the screening question to ensure that the tourists are qualified for the study. The sample was asked the question "Have you visited the tea tourism destinations in Chiang Rai province (such as tea plantations) in the past three months?" If the answer was "yes", the respondents proceeded to complete the survey. If the answer was "No", they stopped working on the questionnaire.

In addition, the questionnaire also inquired about demographic information and the nature of their trips to tea tourism sites, such as first-timers or repeat visitors and travelling alone or with others. The last part of the questionnaire was the measurement items for attitude, sustainable livelihood, subjective norm, tea tourism satisfaction and revisit intention.

Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data with measurement model and structural model. Validity tests and model fits indices were applied to verify the quality of the proposed model. The results of the study were reported in the following section of results.

In this study, the scales of the study were adapted from the past literature as follows; attitude (e.g., Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Choi et al., 2016; ÇELİK, 2019) sustainable livelihood (e.g., Qian et al., 2017; Elbaz & Abou-Shouk, 2016; Su et al., 2019); subjective norm (e.g., Paul, et al., 2016; Shan et al., 2020; Han et al., 2017); tea tourism satisfaction (e.g., Puhakka, Cottrell & Siikamäki,2014; Martín, Herrero & Salmones, 2019; Huang & Crotts, 2019); and revisit intention (e.g., Stylos Bellou et al., 2017; Loi et al., 2017; Zhang, et al., 2018).

RESULTS

The screening question for this study was that the respondents have visited the tea tourism destination sites in Chiang Rai province within the last three months. This is to ensure that the tourists have recent experiences with the tea tourism destinations. After the data collection was completed, the profile characteristics of the 409 tea tourists can be presented as follows.

Firstly, 53% of the respondents were female tourists. The largest age group was 25-34 years old, representing 49%, followed by age group of below 25 years old (21%) and 35-44 years old, which was 10%. The level of education was mostly bachelor's degree (65%), followed by master's degree (24%). Regarding the level of monthly income, the tourists who earned 22,000 - 35,000 Thai baht was the largest group (42%). 40% of the tourists are repeat visitors, while 60%

of the tourists were the first timers. Lastly, most of the tea tourists (83%) visited the tea tourism destinations (i.e., tea plantations) with their friends or relatives or as a group.

Table 1 TEST OF CONSTRUCTS' VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY Standardized Loadings, AVE and Composite Reliability			
Constructs / Items	Standardized Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability
Attitude			
I like the concept of tea tourism.	0.842	0.756	0.880
Joining tea tourism is a good idea.	0.875		
I have a positive attitude toward tea tourism.	0.903		
Tea tourism experience is worthwhile.	0.862		
It is desirable to visit a tea tourism destination.	0.863		
Sustainable Livelihood			
Tea tourism community ensures the sustainable use of natural resources.	0.843	0.726	0.856
Tea tourism community had a high sense of well-being among residents.	0.847		
Tea tourism helped create jobs for local people in the community.	0.855		
Tea tourism community can sustainably preserve their socio-cultural values.	0.862		
Subjective Norm			
People who are important to me think I should visit a tea tourism destination.	0.837	0.753	0.878
People who are important to me would want me to join tea tourism activities.	0.877		
People whose opinions I value would prefer that I join tea tourism.	0.883		
My friend's positive opinion influences me to participate in tea tourism.	0.847		
It is expected of me that I visit a tea tourism destination.	0.894		
Tea Tourism Satisfaction			
I think I made the correct decision to participate in tea tourism.	0.899	0.835	0.847
Tea tourism positively affects my life.	0.915		
I enjoy tea tourism activities.	0.928		
My choice to participate in tea tourism was wise one	0.912		
Revisit Intention			
It is likely that I will revisit the tea tourism destination again.	0.88	0.797	0.814
I definitely want to revisit the tea tourism destination in the near future.	0.905		

For reliability of constructs, all constructs had Cronbach's alpha values above 0.8, which were more than the acceptable level at 0.7 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). To test construct validity, as shown in Table 1, two types of validity tests were conducted to ensure that the data were suitable for further data analysis and for further interpretation of the findings. Firstly, convergent validity was achieved at the acceptable level with AVE (Average Variance Extracted) of each

construct was more than 0.5. Hair et al. (2006) stated that convergent validity provided the quality of measurement items to be greatly correlated with other measurement items of similar constructs.

To measure the convergent validity, Anderson & Gerbing (1988) offered the suggestion that the standardized factor loadings need to be greater than 0.60 to be considered an acceptable convergent validity. Secondly, discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) also met the acceptable criteria in that the squared root of AVEs were higher than the squares of correlation of each pair of the construct, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 TEST OF CONSTRUCTS' DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY Correlation Coefficient Matrix and The Square Root of AVEs					
Items	Attitude	Sustainable livelihood	Subjective norm	Tea tourism satisfaction	Revisit intention
Attitude	**0.869**				
Sustainable livelihood	0.404	**0.852**			
Subjective norm	0.339	0.630	**0.867**		
Tea tourism satisfaction	0.360	0.651	0.595	**0.892**	
Revisit intention	0.362	0.574	0.570	0.524	**0.913**

Regarding the model, all the fit indices indicated good fit for the data with Normed Chi-square = 1.553. The results indicated satisfactory fit indices for NFI, NNFI, CFI, and IFI with the values more than 0.900. In addition, the value of RMSEA was lower than 0.080, noting the good quality of the model (Hair et al., 2006). The details of the values of fit indices are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 MODEL FIT INDICES		
Model Fit Index	Model Value	Criteria
Chi-square/df (248.491/160)	1.553	< 3
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.987	> 0.900
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.994	> 0.900
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.995	> 0.900
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.995	> 0.900
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.037	< 0.08

From the results of structural model testing, the coefficients and significant relationships were presented in Figure 2. The results indicated that tea tourism satisfaction was the most influential factor affecting revisit intention while subjective norm and attitude also had significant positive effects on the revisit intention, respectively. Moreover, sustainable livelihood showed the highest level of influence on tea tourism satisfaction, followed by subjective norm and attitude.
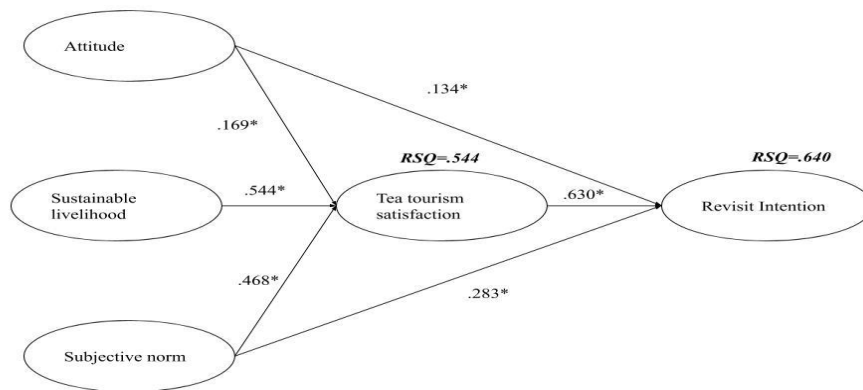
FIGURE 2
RESULT OF STRUCTURAL MODEL TESTING
Note: RSQ = R-squared and * indicated coefficients at significance level at 95%

The summary of the hypothesis testing of all the relationships are shown in Table 4 below. From hypothesis 1 to hypothesis 6, the data analyses confirmed the proposed hypotheses with all positive effects on both tea tourism satisfaction and revisit intention.

Table 4 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING	
Hypothesis	Findings
H_1: Attitude has a positive influence on tea tourism satisfaction.	Supported
H_2: Sustainable livelihood has a positive influence on tea tourism satisfaction.	Supported
H_3: Subjective norm has a positive influence on tea tourism satisfaction.	Supported
H_4: Attitude has a positive influence on revisit intention.	Supported
H_5: Subjective norm has a positive influence on revisit intention.	Supported
H_6: Tea tourism satisfaction has a positive influence on revisit intention.	Supported

DISCUSSION

As the proposed hypotheses were supported by the data from the study, H1 showed that attitude had a positive influence on tea tourism satisfaction, meaning the tourists with a positive attitude towards tea tourism tend to have a high level of satisfaction when they visited the tea tourism destination. This finding was supported by Bosque & Martín, (2008); Valle et al. (2011). Regarding H2, sustainable livelihood showed the positive effect on tea tourism satisfaction, meaning that the tea community with sustainable livelihood is important for the tourists to have a satisfied experience. This hypothesis was supported by Elbaz & Abou-Shouk (2016); Su et al. (2016). Furthermore, H3 showed that subjective norm is influenced to tea tourism satisfaction, suggesting that the higher degree which the tourists perceived that visiting tea tourism destinations is the approved action from the people who are important to the tourists. This proposed hypothesis was confirmed by the works of Kaushik et al. (2015); Lo & Qu (2015).

Additionally, H4 offered the test of relationship between attitude and revisit intention and the results showed the positive effect from attitude towards revisit intention. The findings

showed that the higher degree of positive attitude towards the destinations, the more likely the tourists revisit the tea tourism destination. This hypothesis was similar to the studies of Huang & Hsu (2009); Li et al. (2010). H5 confirmed that subjective norm has the positive influence on revisit intention, referring that if the tourists perceive that people who are influential to them consider that revisiting the tea tourism destination is a good idea, then it is highly likely that the tourists revisit the destination in the future. This test was agreeable with the works of Jang & Feng (2007); Lai et al. (2010).

Lastly, H6 found that tea tourism satisfaction had a positive influence on revisit intention. As noted by Um, Chon and Ro (2006), Waheed & Hassan (2016) and Som & Badarneh, (2011), satisfaction is an important predictor of revisit intention. This can be explained that if the tourists are highly satisfied with their experience at the tea tourism destination, then the tourists are highly possible to revisit the destination. This finding truly highlights the importance of achieving tourism satisfaction and therefore, the destination can have more tourists come back again in the future.

CONCLUSION

This research achieved its objectives in investigating the determinants of tea tourism satisfaction and identifying the factors influencing revisit intention of tea tourism. For the third objectives, the practical implications for tea tourism development are discussed in the following section. Firstly, the findings indicate that attitudes, subjective norms, and sustainable livelihood showed significant and positive effects on tea tourism satisfaction. Secondly, tea tourism satisfaction, attitude and subjective norms had significant and positive influences on revisit intention to the tea plantation.

Theoretical Contributions

The current study provided the additional factor to the theory of reasoned action when it is used to explain the revisit intention in that according to Um et al. (2006) satisfaction is considered an antecedent of revision intention. Therefore, the researchers who adopted the theory of reasoned action in the future study are encouraged to include the satisfaction in the model to better explain the relationship of other factors in the model with revisit intention.

Managerial Implications

The tea tourism destination managers should conduct the survey on tourist satisfaction to learn and improve on the factors on how to improve their satisfaction, such as a group discount or promoting the destination as family and friend's destination and improve the activities for one day tourism package. Since the attitudes are important for the tea tourists, therefore, the tea community can continue to promote the positive image and benefits of tea which can lead to higher interests in tea consumption and this may lead to the intention to visit tea tourism destinations to learn and they can understand more about tea and the related products.

The tea plantation and its surroundings need to maintain the livelihood of their communities because the livelihood of the tea community leads to the satisfaction of tea tourists. Creating the systems and structure to help the community maintain their ways of life are crucial. Furthermore, subjective norms are influential to tea tourism satisfaction and therefore this suggests that tea tourism activities should be promoted for the group visit and in addition

participating tea tourism represents the positive image which the tourists consider their peers approve and support the tea tourism activities. This means that tea tourism represents the unique experience for the tourists.

Limitation of The Study

The current study is not without the limitations. First, the study focused on the major tea destinations of the country, but other destinations may have different characteristics or contexts. Secondly, the current study applied the cross-sectional approach and the degree of generalizability of findings may be limited for the long-term implications. Further research studies may consider studying the tea tourism destinations in different cultural and social contexts in order to understand the impacts of the factors (i.e., attitude, subjective norm, and sustainable livelihood). Additionally, future research may explore the sides of tea tourism providers or tea tourism destinations in terms of how they respond to the attitudes and expectations of the tea tourists.

<h2 style="text-align:center">REFERENCES</h2>

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