

## Abstract

While there is increasing research on resident's attitudes and perceptions toward tourism development, there is limited research on other community group's perceptions of various tourism matters. The literature suggests that it is essential to appreciate community groups' perceptions and attitudes because the measurement of these perceptions plays a vital role in the future success of a destination.

As a result, this study was conducted to measure the perceptions of tourism development in two Cha-am community groups: resident reliant on tourism and non-reliant on tourism. The aim was to compare the perceptions and attitude of the present level of tourism and future tourism development held by two groups of local community in Cha-Am, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand.

This study collected quantitative data from both group members through distribution of a questionnaire. A population of 360 residents (who reliant and non-reliant on tourism) was chosen randomly and surveyed.

The results indicate that each of the two groups have different perceptions about the current level of tourism development with respect to its socio-cultural, economic and environmental aspects. Cha-am local communities have mixed emotions about the tourism industry in the destination. Tourism is perceived as both good and bad on different issues. Local residents perceived tourism as generating more positive than negative aspects in economic and they were concerned of the impacts of tourism on the environment. However, residents view tourism as a negative influence on the Cha-am's natural environmental resources. Some believe that tourism is a bad influence on their community's infrastructure, cost of living as well as a negative influence on housing costs and their leisure time and activities.