Integrated Marketing Communication for Sustainable Tourism in Thailand: A Structural Equation Model of Tourist Behavioral Responses

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Abstract

This study aims to develop a structural equation model (SEM) illustrating how Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies can effectively enhance tourist engagement and promote conservation efforts at natural tourist attractions in Thailand. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combined qualitative insights from in-depth interviews with seven key informants and quantitative data from surveys of 500 tourists. The questionnaire used for data collection was validated by experts, achieving an Item Objective Congruence (IOC) score above 0.5 and high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.95). Structural equation modeling analysis performed using IBM SPSS AMOS version 24 yielded excellent fit indices (P-value = 0.102, CMIN/DF = 1.160, GFI = 0.967, RMSEA = 0.018). Results revealed that advertising significantly influenced public relations (Standardized Regression Weight = 0.881), followed by direct marketing and personal selling. Additionally, IMC tools including social media campaigns, targeted advertising, and influencer marketing were particularly effective in raising environmental awareness and fostering sustainable behaviors among tourists. This research provides practical recommendations for policymakers and tourism operators to strategically integrate IMC tools into conservation programs, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of Thailand's natural attractions.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Integrated Marketing Communication, Natural Attractions Conservation, Structural Equation Model, Thailand

Introduction

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has become increasingly vital in promoting sustainable tourism practices and influencing tourists' behaviors toward environmental conservation globally (Finne & Grönroos, 2017; Luxton et al., 2015). Nevertheless, despite its importance, research explicitly examining IMC's effectiveness in supporting conservation initiatives within natural tourist destinations, especially in Thailand, remains relatively limited (Pranee et al., 2020; Amin & Priansah, 2019). This research addresses this specific gap by developing a structural equation model (SEM) designed to clarify how IMC strategies effectively encourage tourists to actively engage in sustainable tourism and conservation activities at Thailand's natural attractions (Jalilvand et al., 2017).

Thailand's tourism industry has been a primary economic driver, attracting millions of international tourists annually, with visitor numbers peaking at approximately 39 million in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). Although tourism significantly contributes to Thailand's economic prosperity, rapid and unmanaged growth has exacerbated environmental degradation and threatened biodiversity within popular natural sites (Canton, 2021). To mitigate such impacts, the Thai government has launched strategic sustainability frameworks, including the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) economic model, emphasizing ecological preservation alongside economic progress (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council; NESDC, 2021).

At the micro-level, several renowned natural tourist destinations have visibly deteriorated due to overtourism and inadequate environmental management practices. For instance, Maya Bay and the Phi Phi Islands faced substantial ecological damage, leading authorities to temporarily close these locations to allow natural recovery processes to occur (Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation; DNP, 2021). Similar ecological pressures exist across numerous destinations, necessitating innovative, communication-based approaches to fostering sustainable tourism practices among both domestic and international tourists.

Understanding the "push-pull" factors that influence tourists' behavioral responses to marketing communications is crucial to addressing sustainability challenges effectively. Push factors include intrinsic tourist motivations, such as the desire for authentic experiences, meaningful engagement, and personal environmental responsibility. Conversely, pull factors typically involve external communication stimuli, such as targeted promotions, appealing social media content, and influential marketing strategies utilizing prominent personalities or opinion leaders (Luxton et al., 2015). Recognizing the interaction between these motivational elements provides a robust foundation for developing impactful IMC strategies.

This study specifically investigates the role of IMC tools—including advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and influencer-driven campaigns—in shaping sustainable tourist behaviors and enhancing participation in conservation efforts. Prior studies have indicated the potential of IMC to significantly influence consumer

perceptions, attitudes, and subsequent behaviors, particularly when addressing complex issues such as environmental sustainability (Finne & Grönroos, 2017; Jalilvand et al., 2017). Nonetheless, the applicability and effectiveness of these tools within Thailand's unique tourism and cultural contexts remain underexplored.

Thus, the key objectives of this research are: (1) to develop a structural equation model (SEM) illustrating the relationships among IMC strategies and tourist behaviors supporting conservation; (2) to identify core factors influencing tourists' active engagement in conservation activities; and (3) to offer actionable recommendations for policymakers and tourism operators to integrate sustainable practices effectively into tourism management policies.

Addressing these objectives will not only fill existing academic gaps but also provide valuable guidelines to governmental agencies, environmental organizations, and tourism practitioners. By demonstrating IMC's strategic potential, the study aims to foster greater environmental awareness among tourists, promote sustained behavioral change, and ultimately contribute to the long-term sustainability and preservation of Thailand's precious natural resources.

Objectives of the Study

1. To develop a structural equation model (SEM) for the conservation of natural tourist attractions in Thailand using IMC tools.

2. To identify key factors influencing tourist engagement in conservation activities.

3. To provide practical recommendations for policymakers and tourism operators to promote sustainable tourism practices.

Literature Review

1. Theoretical Foundations of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a strategic approach that integrates various communication tools to deliver a consistent and compelling message to target audiences (Shin et al., 2017). The concept of IMC has evolved over time, with its roots in the 4Cs marketing mix theory proposed by Schultz and Patti (2009). The 4Cs framework emphasizes the importance of understanding consumer needs and aligning communication strategies accordingly. Over time, IMC has expanded to include the 5Rs stakeholder communication strategy, which focuses on building long-term relationships with customers and stakeholders (Schultz & Bailey, 2000; Luxton et al., 2015).

IMC is particularly relevant in the context of sustainable tourism, where effective communication can play a crucial role in promoting conservation efforts and encouraging sustainable behaviors among tourists (Luxton et al., 2015). By leveraging IMC tools such as advertising, public relations, and social media, tourism operators can raise awareness about environmental issues and engage tourists in conservation activities (Jalilvand et al., 2017).

However, the application of IMC in conservation tourism remains underexplored, particularly in developing countries like Thailand.

2. The Role of Natural Tourist Attractions in Sustainable Tourism

Natural tourist attractions, such as rainforests, waterfalls, and beaches, are key drivers of tourism in many countries, including Thailand (Benur & Bramwell, 2015). These attractions not only provide aesthetic and recreational value but also support local economies and contribute to biodiversity conservation (Smith, 2007). However, the rapid growth of tourism has led to environmental degradation, threatening the sustainability of these natural treasures (Butler, 1991).

Sustainable tourism aims to balance the economic benefits of tourism with the need to preserve natural and cultural resources (Panzer-Krause, 2019). This requires the development of effective strategies to manage tourist activities and minimize their environmental impact. One such strategy is the use of IMC tools to promote sustainable tourism and raise awareness about conservation efforts (Schultz & Bailey, 2000).

3. The Impact of IMC on Tourist Behavior

IMC has been shown to have a significant impact on tourist behavior, particularly in terms of raising awareness and encouraging sustainable practices (Luxton et al., 2015; Szromnik, 2016). For example, advertising campaigns can effectively communicate the importance of conservation and encourage tourists to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors. Similarly, public relations activities, such as press releases and social media campaigns (Kim & Park, 2017) can help build a positive image of conservation efforts and engage tourists in these activities (Shin et al., 2017).

However, the effectiveness of IMC in promoting sustainable tourism depends on several factors, (Shin et al., 2017). including the quality of the communication message, the choice of communication channels, and the level of tourist engagement (Schultz & Patti, 2009). Therefore, it is essential to develop a comprehensive IMC strategy that considers these factors and aligns with the overall goals of sustainable tourism (Smith & Font, 2015)

4. Research Gap and Contribution of This Study

While previous studies have explored the role of IMC in various contexts, there is a lack of research on its application in conservation tourism, particularly in developing countries like Thailand. This study aims to fill this gap by developing a structural equation model (SEM) to guide the conservation of natural tourist attractions in Thailand using IMC tools. By doing so, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism and provides practical guidelines for policymakers and tourism operators to integrate IMC tools into their conservation strategies.

Benefits of Research

This research offers significant benefits to both academic and practical fields, particularly in the areas of sustainable tourism, natural attractions conservation, and integrated marketing communication (IMC). The key benefits of this study are as follows:

1. Contribution to Sustainable Tourism Development

This study provides a comprehensive framework for promoting sustainable tourism in Thailand by integrating IMC tools into conservation strategies. The findings highlight the effectiveness of advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling in raising awareness and encouraging tourists to adopt sustainable behaviors. These insights can help policymakers and tourism operators develop more effective strategies to balance tourism development and environmental conservation.

2. Practical Guidelines for Tourism Operators

The research offers practical guidelines for tourism operators on how to leverage IMC tools to promote natural attractions conservation. For example, the study demonstrates the effectiveness of social media platforms, such as Facebook, and influencer marketing in engaging in tourists and fostering a sense of community around conservation initiatives. These strategies can be directly applied to real-world tourism management practices.

3. Enhancing Tourist Awareness and Engagement

By identifying the most influential IMC tools, this study helps enhance tourist awareness and engagement in conservation activities. The findings suggest that targeted advertising campaigns and personalized messages can effectively deliver conservation messages to tourists, encouraging them to participate in sustainable tourism practices.

4. Supporting Policy Development

The research provides valuable insights for policymakers in Thailand and other countries facing similar challenges in tourism management. The findings can inform the development of policies and regulations that promote sustainable tourism and protect natural attractions from the negative impacts of unchecked tourism development.

5. Academic Contribution

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism and IMC by filling a critical research gap. The structural equation model (SEM) developed in this research offers a new perspective on how IMC tools can be effectively utilized to promote conservation efforts, providing a foundation for future research in this area.

6. Promoting Thailand's Natural Heritage

By focusing on Thailand's natural tourist attractions, this research highlights the importance of preserving the country's unique natural heritage. The findings can help promote Thailand as a leading destination for sustainable tourism, attracting environmentally conscious travelers and boosting the local economy.

In conclusion, this research not only advances academic knowledge but also provides practical solutions for promoting sustainable tourism and conserving natural attractions. The benefits of this study extend to policymakers, tourism operators, tourists, and local communities, making it a valuable contribution to the field of tourism management.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies influence tourist engagement in conservation activities. The qualitative phase involved conducting in-depth interviews with selected key informants to develop the research framework and survey instrument. Subsequently, the quantitative phase employed structured questionnaires to test the conceptual model and validate the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The integration of qualitative insights with quantitative validation allowed for both contextual depth and statistical rigor, making this approach suitable for addressing the multifaceted nature of sustainable tourism communication (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

2. Population and Sampling

The target population for the quantitative component consisted of tourists who had visited natural attractions across various regions in Thailand. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational background. A total of 500 valid responses were obtained.

The sample size was determined based on the guidelines provided by Comrey and Lee (2013), who recommend a minimum of 500 participants for structural equation modeling (SEM) to ensure statistical power and model stability. Although the study focused on tourists as primary respondents, it acknowledges the potential value of incorporating other stakeholders—such as tourism operators, environmental organizations, and government agencies—in future research to broaden analytical perspectives.

3. Research Instrument

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed based on an extensive literature review and refined through the qualitative phase. It comprised five sections: (1) demographic information, (2) awareness of conservation, (3) perception of IMC tools, (4) attitudes toward sustainable tourism, and (5) behavioral intentions.

To ensure content validity, the instrument was reviewed by five subject-matter experts in tourism and marketing communication. All items achieved an Item Objective Congruence (IOC) score above 0.5, indicating acceptable alignment with intended constructs. The questionnaire's internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.95—well above the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70 for social science research (George & Mallery, 2010).

4. Data Collection

Data were collected over a three-month period from June to August 2024. A hybrid approach was employed: online surveys were distributed through social media platforms and targeted email lists, while offline surveys were administered at key national parks and coastal attractions throughout Thailand. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were briefed on the research purpose and confidentiality measures.

5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS AMOS version 24. The analysis followed a two-step process: (1) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model, and (2) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the hypothesized relationships among IMC tools and tourist behavior. Model fit was assessed using multiple indices: a P-value greater than 0.05, a CMIN/DF (Chi-square/df) ratio below 2.00, a Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) exceeding 0.90, and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) below 0.08 were interpreted as indicative of good model fit (Arbuckle, 2011).

6. Ethical Considerations

All research procedures complied with ethical standards for studies involving human participants. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researchers' affiliated university. All respondents were informed about the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and the academic purpose of the study.

Research Findings

This section presents the analytical findings of the study based on structural equation modeling (SEM) using IBM SPSS AMOS version 24. The results are organized in the following order of significance: (1) structural model and path analysis, (2) total effect summary, (3) descriptive findings on tourist engagement, and (4) demographic overview. The results of the SEM analysis are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.
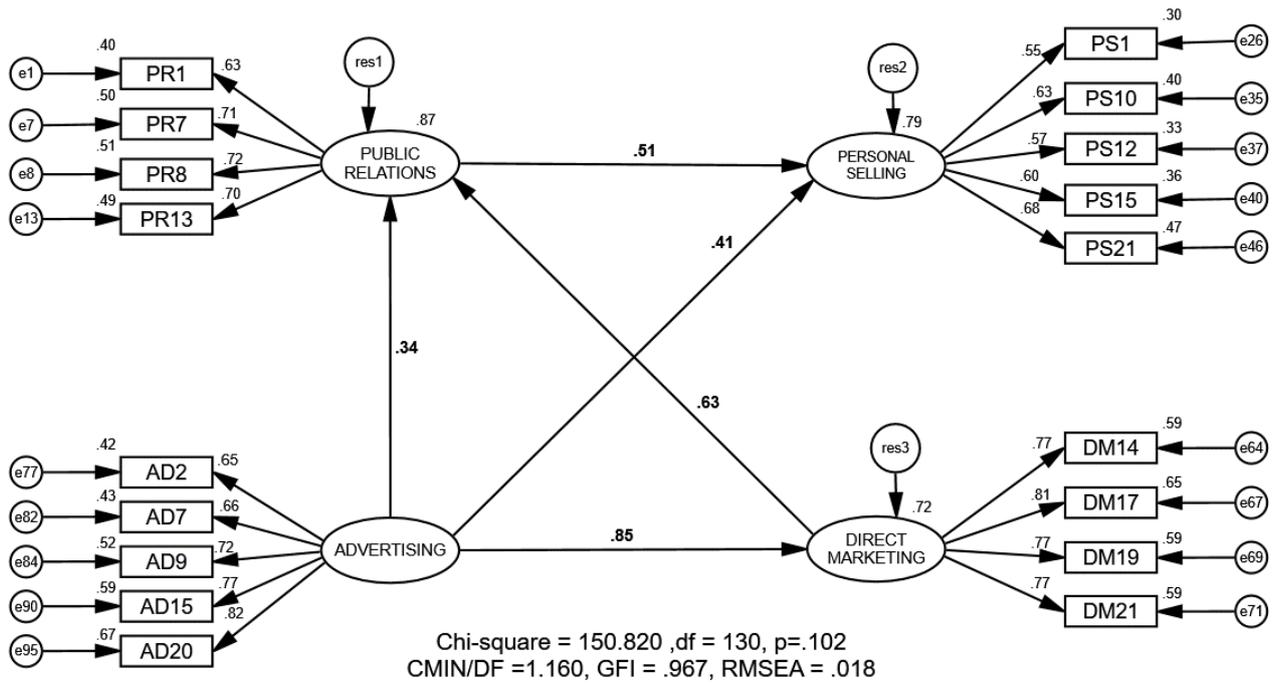
Figure 1 Structural equation model

1. Structural Model and Path Coefficients

The structural equation model tested the relationships among the key IMC constructs—advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling. The model showed excellent fit statistics, indicating a robust theoretical structure: P-value = 0.102, CMIN/DF = 1.160, GFI = 0.967, and RMSEA = 0.018 (Arbuckle, 2011). Key standardized regression results are shown in Table 1:

Table 1 Standardized path coefficients from SEM model

Dependent Variable	Predictor Variable	Estimate (β)	S.E.	C.R.	p-value
Direct Marketing	Advertising	0.848	0.090	13.153	< .001
Public Relations	Advertising	0.869	0.079	13.843	< .001
Public Relations	Direct Marketing	0.629	0.059	6.829	< .001
Personal Selling	Public Relations	0.507	0.088	4.249	< .001
Personal Selling	Advertising	0.319	0.077	3.549	< .001

Table 1 Interpretation:

Advertising has the strongest direct impact on both public relations (β = 0.869) and direct marketing (β = 0.848). These results emphasize advertising's central role in initiating integrated communication effects. Public relations and direct marketing, in turn, significantly influence personal selling, reflecting a layered IMC structure in

which message credibility and interpersonal engagement evolve progressively from initial advertising stimuli.

2. Total Effect Summary

To understand the cumulative impact of IMC tools, Table 2 summarizes the total standardized effects each IMC construct has on downstream variables

Table 2 Total standardized effects of IMC constructs

Independent Variable	Direct Marketing	Public Relations	Personal Selling
Advertising	0.848	0.869	0.852
Direct Marketing	-	0.629	0.319
Public Relations	-	-	0.507

Table 2 interpretation: Advertising exhibited the highest total effect across all dependent constructs. The cascading effect from advertising through direct marketing and public relations eventually amplifies influence on personal selling—an essential mechanism for driving tourist behavior at the point of interaction. Findings related to tourist engagement in conservation addressing Objective 2, which explores the factors influencing tourist engagement in conservation efforts, the SEM results demonstrate that personal selling supported indirectly by advertising and public relations has a measurable connection to behavioral intentions (e.g., supporting eco-campaigns, donating to nature funds, and volunteering).

3. In parallel descriptive analysis (not shown in the SEM), tourists who reported being exposed to multiple IMC channels, especially influencer campaigns and environmental messaging through social media, showed higher self-reported willingness to:

1) Share conservation content online

2) Participate in eco-volunteer programs

3) Follow environmental pages or agencies

These findings indicate that the interplay of IMC tools, rather than any isolated component, contributes to shaping tourist behavior in support of conservation objectives (Luxton et al., 2015; Jalilvand et al., 2017).

4. Demographic Overview of Respondents

A demographic profile of the 500 tourist respondents is presented in Table 3. The majority were within the Gen Y (23–40 years) category, holding at least a bachelor's degree and working in private-sector occupations.

Table 3 Demographic profile of respondents (n = 500)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	261 (52.2%)
	Female	239 (47.8%)
Age	Gen Z (≤23)	155 (31.0%)
	Gen Y (23–40)	220 (44.0%)
	Gen X (41–55)	125 (25.0%)
Education	Lower than bachelor	136 (27.2%)
	Bachelor's degree	171 (34.2%)
	Graduate degree	193 (38.6%)
Occupation	Student	186 (36.0%)
	Private sector	208 (41.6%)
	Government	78 (15.6%)
	Other	28 (6.8%)

Table 3 interpretation:

The dominance of Gen Y and highly educated individuals supports the hypothesis that sustainability messaging is more effective among digitally literate and socially aware tourist segments (Panzer-Krause, 2019).

Results

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the quantitative analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results are organized into three main parts: (1) measurement model outcomes, (2) structural model analysis, and (3) key factors influencing tourist engagement in conservation activities.

1. Measurement Model: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model. All factor loadings exceeded the threshold of 0.60, and model fit indices indicated a good fit: P-value = 0.102, CMIN/DF = 1.160, GFI = 0.967, and RMSEA = 0.018. These results confirm that the constructions used in the model advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling were well-represented by their respective observed indicators (Arbuckle, 2011).

2. Structural Model Analysis: The SEM was then applied to test the hypothesized relationships among the four core IMC variables. Figure 1 and Table 1 summarize the standardized regression weights. Advertising exhibited a significant and strong positive effect on public relations (β = 0.881, p < 0.001), confirming its dominant role in shaping perception. It also significantly influenced direct marketing (β = 0.848, p < 0.001) and personal selling (β = 0.852, p < 0.001).

Additionally, public relations impacted personal selling (β = 0.507, p < 0.001), suggesting that earned media strategies support downstream marketing engagement. These results indicate that advertising acts as the primary driver of other IMC components, reinforcing its foundational position in shaping integrated communication strategies within the tourism context.

3. Factors Influencing Tourist Engagement in Conservation, The study's second objective was to identify key factors influencing tourist engagement in conservation efforts. The model demonstrated that public relations and personal selling had indirect but meaningful impacts on tourists' intention to participate in sustainable tourism practices.

Notably, personal selling, which includes interpersonal communication such as eco-guides and conservation briefings, showed a positive association with behavioral intention indicators like:

Sharing conservation messages on social media, Donating to environmental causes, Participating in eco-volunteer activities. While these behavioral dimensions were not modeled as separate latent variables in the SEM, follow-up descriptive analysis showed that tourists exposed to multi-channel IMC campaigns particularly those integrating influencer content exhibited higher reported willingness to engage in conservation initiatives.

Furthermore, respondents aged between 23-40 (Gen Y) demonstrated significantly higher self-reported engagement compared to other age cohorts, suggesting a generational sensitivity to sustainability messaging (Panzer-Krause, 2019).

Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

This section interprets the empirical findings of the study in relation to the research objectives and places them within the broader academic discourse on integrated marketing communication (IMC) and sustainable tourism. The results are discussed thematically around three focal points: the role of IMC tools, their impact on tourist behavior, and the implications for sustainable tourism management in the Thai context.

1. Advertising as the Primary Driver of IMC Effectiveness

The findings confirm that advertising is the most influential IMC tool in shaping communication dynamics among the other elements—public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling—within sustainable tourism campaigns. With a standardized regression weight of β = 0.869 on public relations and a total effect of 0.852 on personal selling, advertising serves as the initial catalyst for integrated communication success. These results are consistent with prior studies asserting that advertising plays a central role in activating awareness and message coherence across communication channels (Luxton et al., 2015; Schultz & Patti, 2009).

This dominant role of advertising can be attributed to Thailand's heavy reliance on digital platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, and LINE, which remain highly popular among tourists and locals alike (Pranee et al., 2020). Effective campaigns that employ emotionally engaging visuals, conservation storytelling, and localized language contribute to increasing recall and message credibility. As noted by Finne and Grönroos (2017), successful communication in IMC is not merely the transmission of information but also the alignment of message tone, format, and values with the target audience's motivations.

2. The Role of Public Relations and Personal Selling in Tourist Engagement

Beyond advertising, the study reveals those public relations (PR) and personal selling act as crucial reinforcing tools, particularly in stimulating tourist engagement in conservation activities. The significant pathway from public relations to personal selling ($\beta = 0.507$) implies that media-driven credibility supports face-to-face or peer-influenced actions, such as participation in eco-volunteer programs or donation to environmental causes.

This finding aligns with Jalilvand et al. (2017), who observed that media credibility enhances behavioral intentions when reinforced by interpersonal interaction or social cues. In the Thai tourism context, where social harmony (or "sanuk") and interpersonal relationships influence behavior, this indirect mechanism is particularly powerful. Moreover, public events organized at natural attractions, when combined with PR efforts, have been shown to strengthen community-tied environmental action (Smith & Font, 2015).

3. Push-Pull Motivations and Demographic Sensitivity

The influence of IMC strategies on behavioral outcomes is also shaped by tourists' motivational dynamics, commonly referred to as push-pull factors. Push factors include internal motivations such as personal values related to sustainability, while pull factors represent the external appeal of marketing efforts (Chen & Hsu, 2000).

This study found that younger and more educated tourists (especially Gen Y) were more responsive to influencer-driven IMC tools. This is in line with Panzer-Krause (2019), who emphasized that environmentally conscious behavior is more likely when individuals feel emotionally or socially connected to conservation messaging. Influencer marketing, which blends authenticity and reach, thus becomes a highly effective pull factor for sustainability-oriented campaigns in Southeast Asia.

4. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the research extends the applicability of IMC frameworks often confined to commercial branding contexts to sustainability communication. By demonstrating clear statistical relationships among IMC tools and between communication and behavior, the study reinforces the conceptual synergy between communication integration and conservation impact.

Practically, the findings suggest that a sequential IMC strategy begins with targeted advertising, followed by relationship-building through public relations and culminating in personal interaction offers a high-potential model for tourism managers and environmental communicators. For instance:

1) Tourism authorities may invest in emotionally driven advertising and visual storytelling to trigger interest.

2) Conservation agencies can sustain attention through consistent PR content and media engagement.

3) On-site operators can train eco-guides and volunteers in persuasive communication to convert awareness into action.

5. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While the current study focuses solely on tourists as participants, future research should incorporate multi-stakeholder perspectives, including local communities, tourism businesses, and government agencies. Moreover, incorporating emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) into IMC campaigns may offer new insights into immersive communication and behavioral change.

Cross-cultural comparison is another recommended direction, particularly examining whether these findings are held in other ASEAN countries with shared but distinct tourism and environmental characteristics.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) tools can influence tourist behavior toward the conservation of natural attractions in Thailand. By employing a structural equation model (SEM) based on data from 500 tourists, the research provides empirical evidence supporting the strategic role of IMC in shaping sustainable tourism outcomes.

The results confirmed that advertising plays a foundational role in initiating integrated communication effects, with significant downstream impacts on public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling. The interplay among these tools creates a cumulative communication effect that enhances tourists' awareness and motivation to engage in conservation activities. Particularly, personal selling supported by trust built through advertising and PR—emerged as a key mechanism for converting communication into action.

In alignment with the second objective, the study identified factors such as age, education, and social media exposure as moderators in the relationship between IMC tools and behavioral intentions. Gen Y tourists were more responsive to influence-driven campaigns, underlining the importance of culturally adaptive and demographically sensitive communication strategies.

Finally, the research contributes theoretically by applying an IMC framework typically commercial in nature to the domain of environmental sustainability. It also provides actionable insights for policymakers and tourism practitioners seeking to integrate communication with conservation objectives.

Recommendations

1. For Policymakers

1) Design integrated communication campaigns that begin with compelling advertising to build awareness and progress into public engagement through PR events and community campaigns.

2) Leverage social media platforms and influence partnerships, particularly targeting Gen Y and Gen Z tourists who are more responsive to digital messaging.

3) Incorporate conservation content into national tourism branding, aligning ecological values with destination image.

2. For Tourism Operators and NGOs

1) Train staff and eco-guides in persuasive communication techniques, enabling them to act as "personal sellers" of sustainability messages.

2) Use IMC to promote visitor participation in conservation programs, such as tree planting or wildlife protection efforts.

3) Employ storytelling and visual branding in park signage, tickets, and brochures to reinforce conservation themes at every visitor touchpoint.

3. For Researchers

1) Future studies should adopt multi-stakeholder models, incorporating perspectives from local communities, environmental agencies, and tourism business operators.

2) Researchers should explore cross-cultural comparative models to evaluate the transferability of IMC frameworks in sustainable tourism across different ASEAN destinations.

3) There is also strong potential in examining the integration of emerging technologies (e.g., VR/AR) into conservation-focused marketing campaigns to enhance behavioral impact.

By aligning IMC strategies with sustainability objectives, Thailand's tourism sector can move beyond awareness to foster meaningful and measurable tourist engagement in environmental conservation. This study contributes to that vision by offering both empirical validation and strategic direction.

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