

# Creative Tourism as Competitive Image Building for Tourist Satisfaction in Thailand

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to clarify a conceptual insight of creative tourism and to propose a conceptual framework with factors influencing on of travel intention by connecting to the current phenomenon.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Based on the meta-analysis, the authors address the multidisciplinary “creative” related research through a review of 50 specialist journals and the SCOPUS database, and identify significant research themes and creative experience research and tourism context in this paper.

**Findings/Proposed Model:** Noteworthy, the creative tourism is embedded within creativity, cultural, co-creation and other specific events for adding value of tourist experience and destinations. From the meta-analysis, a conceptual framework is provided creative experience-related factors with considering on the roles of cultural contact, destination image, social media, attitude and health risk concerns driving on travel intention.

**Research limitations/implications:** The study contribute insights of knowledge based on meta-analysis with significant implication for future study and practices.

**Practical implications:** For destination marketing and tourism planning, the tourism organizations, stakeholders and other related service providers should recognize the characteristics of creative tourism resources and products to frame the strategies and design activities in the experience consumption process. This is for better opportunities and challenges for future development to build competitive image, particularly in Thailand.

**Originality/value:** The paper represents our understanding of concept and theory by integrated additional factors to the model of creative tourism and travel behavior intention, which remain underexplored in previous studies.

**Keywords:** Creative tourism, Destination Image, Cultural Contacts, Social Media, Health Risk Concerns, Travel Intention

## Introduction

The travel and tourism industry are recognized as one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economic sectors, as well as a leader in job creation, socioeconomic development, and cultural development (UNWTO, 2020). Significantly, in the global competitiveness report, tourism industry account for 99% of the world's GDP (World Economic Forum, 2019), it grew faster than the global economy reaching 3.5 percent in 2019 for the ninth consecutive year (WTTC, 2021). In tourism industry, cultural activities are significant in terms of major attractiveness and improved local quality of life; tangible and intangible

cultural heritages can contribute significantly to the unique image and identity of cities and regions (OECD, 2018). With high popularity of cultural tourism, tourism product diversification especially physical or tangible tourism products are offered such as iconic objects in key visitor attractions (Ram et al., 2016; Viet et al., 2020). While the intensive evolution in cultural supplies are evidenced, severe concerns on series of reproduction in cultural tourism products, over tourism, congestion and other unpleasant impacts on local residents and communities are widely discussed on academics, conferences and organizations to new path of cultural development. Furthermore, the pattern of tourist consumption has shifted to more authentic and experiential seekers, and destination managers and developers around the world are looking for effective strategies of longer and repeat stays at destinations, including Thailand. As shifting pattern of tourist consumption and behavior lead to new tourism scenario considering on creative tourism for providing more experiential consumption of cultural resources and avoiding a high volume of short visits (Z. Chen et al., 2021; OECD, 2020; Richards, 2020, 2021; Singh & Nazki, 2019; Slak Valek, 2020; Souca, 2019). With this, destinations rich in cultural resources, such as Thailand, can create a distinct image of themselves, provide meaningful experiences from cultural capitals and creativities, and serve as a major driver of positive economic, social, and cultural outcomes.

More attention on creativity and creative tourism, previous studies have focused on its roles with integrated tourism approach, such as creativity as a key element of developing tourism destination for tourism competitiveness and differentiation (Adamo et al., 2019; Pulido-Fernández et al., 2021), as a tool for making places and cities more attractive and becoming a creative atmosphere (Richards, 2020), as revitalization of rural tourism on the role of community (Souca, 2019), and as meaningful experience among tourist and artist in the destination (Slak Valek, 2020). Significantly, many countries have promoted the creative experience to attract more tourists visiting countries. Like, Wang et al. (2020)'s study, a variety of creative tourism is adopted to diversity of marketing tools, for example "Creative Tourism New Zealand", "Creative Tourism Australia", "the Scottish Creative Sector", and the "Creative Life Industry" in Taiwan. Hence, the competitive advantage of such tourist destinations image with developed and developing countries, including Thailand, can be highlighted in the creative tourism sector.

The context of creative tourism in Thailand based on experienced learning was initially implemented into community-based tourism as it has been anticipated as an active tool for adding value of cultures and enhancing the quality of life in the local community (Wisansing, 2019). Noticeably, the concept of creative tourism has been shared and pilot projects for emerging creative community-based tourism since 2003 by Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA). As a result, DASTA has implemented the creative tourism program in all communities throughout Thailand. Currently, 9 designated areas with over 80 communities offering a wide range of creative activities in which visitors can learn and participate. While the number of creative tourism experience is increasing in terms of participation, interaction, and learning through first-hand experience, marketing plans and strategies have been revised and launched to motivate tourists from around the world. However, Thailand tourism has declined dramatically in the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, Thailand tourism dropped dramatically in the first quarter of 2020, then to zero, and then to a very limited number of tourists at the end of 2020, down from 40 million in 2019. All tourism experiences in the country have been avoided, including creative tourism at local communities.

With global shock of COVID-19 pandemic, traveling break, social distancing and vaccinations are executed to overcome this unprecedented era. As a result of travel restrictions and governments going into lockdown, tourism has been dropped steeply as tourism depends

on human mobility (Bhati et al., 2021). Many academics have conducted research on tourist perspectives in this health pandemic environment. In uncertainty and unprecedented situations especially health risk situations, tourism is defined as a very vulnerable sector as the tourist perception related health-risk and safety measures (Bhati et al., 2021; Rather, 2021b; Sánchez-Cañizares et al., 2021). Remarkably, in the cultural and creative industry negative consequences are reflective on social, psychological, socioeconomic, and cultural pressures on numerous stakeholders and participants in the ecosystem (Abbas et al., 2021). Without a doubt, cultural heritage sites, festivals and events, venues and institutions are all suffering from revenue losses and forced closures, reducing their competitiveness and market differentiation from the COVID-19 pandemic (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2021).

In this pandemic era, decision making to travel depend on individual perception related to attitudes (Sánchez-Cañizares et al., 2021), while tourist perceptions, destination image, and travel intentions have all been negatively influenced by perceived health risks (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Prior research proclaimed the topics of behavior intentions connecting to experience quality, satisfaction, and memorability, additional factors are intensively pointed out as major variables with the significant effects of travel behavior intentions and tourist loyalty, such as social media (Harrigan et al., 2017; H. Li et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021; Rather, 2021b), and destination image (Ahmad et al., 2020; Dean et al., 2019; Stylos & Bellou, 2019; Vongurai, 2018; H. Zhang et al., 2018). Furthermore, one of the importance features in cultural and creative tourism experience involve in cultural contact (Y. Q. Li & Liu, 2020; Viet et al., 2020) as the level of visitor engagement has the potential to increase the level of cultural contact (H. Chen & Rahman, 2018). Particularly, after reopening travel, tourists' perceptions of the safety and risks associated with various travel activities (Godovykh, 2021).

As creative tourists are active tourist and co-creators in the service consumption (Ali et al., 2016; Remoaldo et al., 2020). Likewise, the value of creative tourism experience develop on the process of involvement on learning, interaction, and participation among tourists, locals and professionals at destinations (Lu et al., 2020; Y. Zhang & Xie, 2019). Nevertheless, health and risk concerns implementing social distancing and private activities may be more desirable shift and trends, this will play a major role in the choice of destinations, local communities and tourism service providers. How creative tourists and creative tourism affected from this pandemic are blurred in theoretical and practice facets. What people want and changing trends are the critical aspects in remaining competitive and need to focus strongly (WTTC, 2021). Although a diverse range of creative tourism activities in Thailand have been made available throughout the country, with new normal travel practices and restrictions on social distancing and health-protection regulations, the values of creative tourism may be limited. It is still unclear how to adopt and influence tourists for Thailand's creative tourism.

As most evidences are discussed on travel intention in the normal situations, pre-COVID-19 pandemic, and previous studies remain underexplored and there is still little evidence of creative tourism experience under the health risk concerns. In Thailand, all stakeholders, particularly service providers in creative tourism, must understand not only how to implement health standards, protocols, and guidelines and modify facilities, but also tourist behavior and travel intention toward creative tourism are critical in determining which factors influence on travel decision and increasing tourist satisfaction at the destination. Therefore, to address this issue this study provides overview of creative tourism and related to antecedents of travel intention; cultural contact, destination image and social media can be impacts of tourists' attitudes and travel intention to engage creative tourism. In addition, a conceptual

model of creative tourism based on travel intention is proposed by connecting to the current phenomenon of health risk concerns. Adopted critically, what major factors can explain the gap that occurs in the mechanism of decision-making process on the context of creative tourism based on participation and involvement, a new approach needs bring up-to-date and recover tourism. Since the core value of creative experience is deemed on how to deliver and enhance the creativity among tourists, locals and service providers in covid-19 pandemic environment, at that point, it needs to pay attention both short term and long term of planning consideration well in order to create a positive perception of health and safety and tourist satisfaction.

## **Literature Review**

### **Creative tourism**

The evolution of experience economy and creative industry is tracing a new pattern of post-modern consumers, including creative tourism (Richards, 2021; Slak Valek, 2020). While the post-modern consumers demand more than traditional marketers or service providers can offer, the customer's role has shifted from passive receivers to active creators. Traditional tourism has been transformed into a new tourism scenario in order to respond to these new tourist behaviors in the context of tourism (Singh & Nazki, 2019). Combining creativity or creative concept at destination are deliberated in a great number of benefits at destination such as more competitive advantages in destination marketing strategy, local economy benefits, social and cultural enhancement, and sustainability at destination (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2021; Richards, 2020; Singh & Nazki, 2019). Evidently, creative tourism through creativities is as new opportunities for adding value of goods and services (UNCTAD, 2021). Design, fashion, gaming, fine handicrafts, film and animation, and the food industry are examples of creative industries that can contribute to a destination's competitive advantage (OECD, 2018). The 246 cities currently designed by UNESCO Creative Cities (UCCN) are working toward a common goal: putting creativity and cultural industries at the center of their local development plans and actively cooperating on a global scale.

Creative tourism is recognized as an amalgam of various related topics such as creativity, the creative industry, the creative workforce, cultural tourism, and co-creation (Carvalho et al., 2019; Z. Chen et al., 2021). Correspondingly, the definition of creative tourism is considered on views of slow tourism and local community, tourists' development and the reflexivity of tourism social agents (Carvalho et al., 2019). It has evolved in the cultural tourism as a niche form with unique experience and learning process (Duxbury & Richards, 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Then, it has grown into various approaches, including co-creator, creative spectacle, and a diverse range of creative resources in an enabling environment. Furthermore, the roles of stakeholders are critical for engagement to be successful. Residents in the destination can also be key stakeholders due to their strong attachment to and identification with the destination while the stakeholders are service providers who co-create value, and for activities celebrating local culture or traditions (Dean et al., 2019). On the other hand, creative and unique place can create quality holidays for tourists (Eirini & Kostas, 2017).

While the creative tourism has been recognized into the tourism industry, the definition has been proposed and adopted in different tourism contexts extensively by academics and practitioners. Even though the characteristics of a cultural tourist are very similar to those of a traveler looking for creative experiences, they are still demonstrated different characteristics (Remoaldo et al., 2020). In tourism, the experience of creativity is strongly linked to novelty, learning, memorability, arousal, and interaction, and it can elicit more engagement and thus produce positive outcomes (Richards, 2020). Regarding to creative tourists' profiles in Portugal, there were three clusters discovered: novelty seekers, knowledge and skills learners,

and leisure creative seekers, with differences in level of engagement, involvement, and interaction. (Remoaldo et al., 2020).

Due to ever-changing tourists' need and behavior in the experience economy era, complexity and multidimension in tourist consumption pattern is on debating. Prior studies on the quality of cultural and creative experience, constructs and dimensions are explored in varying in practical concerns such as destination choices, type of activities, socio-demography, and personality traits. Given the concept of creative tourism, recent studies are investigated in the site-specific context such as museum (Antón et al., 2018), leisure attractions (Y. C. Huang et al., 2020), sightseeing tour (Zatori et al., 2018), cultural and heritage sites (Pawlusiński & Kubal, 2018), art and cultural center (Y. Zhang & Xie, 2019), urban town (Slak Valek, 2020), medium and small cities (Remoaldo et al., 2020), and resort hotel (Ali et al., 2016) and event-specific context such as cultural festival (C. X. Zhang et al., 2019), and food and wine festival (Rachão et al., 2021). With the main value of creative tourism experience, numerous studies on dimensions of tourist experience are recognized in previous studies (Table 1).

<b>Table 1</b>		
<b>Variety of creative context and core experience</b>		
<b>Authors</b>	<b>Core creative experience on studies</b>	<b>Creative specific context</b>
Ali et al. (2016)	Components of tourist creative experience (namely escape and recognition, peace of mind, unique involvement, interactivity, and learning)	Resort hotels in the Malaysian states of Terengganu and Kedah
Suntikul & Jachna (2016)	Value of co-creation experience on personalization, engagement, co-production	Heritage sites in the UNESCO listed Historic Centre of Macao
Prebensen & Xie (2017)	Value of co-creation experience on physical and psychological participation	Adventure tourism
Buonincontri et al. (2017)	Sharing of tourism experience, experience co-creation, active participation	Hotels and other accommodations in Naples (B&Bs and hotels)
Zatori et al. (2018)	Experience-involvement construct (emotional, mental, flow-like and social experience-involvement.)	Sightseeing tour (On-site tour experience)
C. Huang & Liu (2018)	Tourist experience (escape and recognition, peace of mind, unique involvement, interactivity, and learning)	Religion tourism (Taiwanese Temples)
C. F. Chen & Chou (2019)	Perceived coolness (uniqueness, identification, and attractiveness),	Cultural Art Center in Taiwan
Dean et al. (2019)	Construct of creative tourist experience (escapism, peace of mind, involvement, learning and recognition)	Creative tourism attractions in Bandung region, Indonesia
Singh & Nazki (2019)	Creative tourist behavior on education, esthetics, entertainment and escapism	Kashmir valley in India
Y. Zhang & Xie (2019)	Tourist Perception toward creative tourism (vernacular heritage, service quality, participatory experience)	Art space in Macau
Mijnheer & Gamble (2019)	Value of co-creation process (encounter processes, value facilitators, and value co-creator)	Heritage visitor attractions in Edinburgh
Assiouras et al. (2019)	value co-creation (co-production and value-in- use)	Lodging sectors
Wang et al. (2020)	Creative Experience (escape, recognition, relaxation, interactivity, and learning)	Creative tourism parks in Shanghai
Y. C. Huang et al. (2020)	Tourist experience on Psychological needs (dimensions of autonomy, competence and relatedness)	Cultural creative Leisure Trip attractions in north, south and east Taiwan
Slak Valek (2020)	involvement, inspiration, creativity, co-creation	the Abu Dhabi Art Hub in the United Arab Emirates
Lu et al. (2020)	Experience quality (escape, peace of mind, involvement, learning, and recognition),	Cultural creative attractions in Taichung, Taiwan
Ahn et al. (2020)	interaction, knowledge sharing, and responsive	five integrated resort sites in Croatia.
Viljoen & Kruger (2020)	Tasting experience (socialized, edutainment, aesthetics, uniqueness, sensory amenities and festival amenities)	Afrikaans national arts festivals in South Africa (culinary experiences within an arts festival setting)
Rachão et al. (2021)	Experience of co-creation and interaction (among tourists with front-line tourism workers, local residents, and other tourists)	Food-and-wine tourism
Rather et	Customer engagement, customer experience, value	Tourist destinations in India's northernmost



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al.,(2021)	cocreation, and involvement	state with cultural, recreation, leisure, adventure, and religious activities

The majority of studies measuring tourist experience quality propose a multidimensional construct in the scope of creative cultural tourism. They are showing into two main groups of experience dimensions; 1) escape and recognition, peace of mind, unique involvement, interactivity, and learning and 2) esthetic, entertainment, education and escapism. Psychological perspective is also introduced for developing the studies, while some integrated with co-creative experience or co-creation approach are extensively identified into engagement, involvement, interaction and sharing information. At the destination level, understanding creative tourist behavior and need is much more important for sustainable destination in marketing and management. With this reason, recent studies are still required more comprehensive on behavior intentions and tourist loyalty in the creative context. Hence, additional factors are considered; tourist motivation, authenticity, service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, destination image, travel benefits (relaxation benefits and health benefits), subjective well-being, positive emotions, and memorability. As well, it is evident on creative tourists' need and benefits in terms of the involvement and the role of co-performers and co-creators (Ali et al., 2016; Duxbury & Richards, 2019; Rachão et al., 2021; Zatori et al., 2018). For example, tourists have to interact with tour guide on sightseeing tour (Zatori et al., 2018), frontline tourism employees in food and wine experience (Rachão et al., 2021), residents in creative tourism attractions (Dean et al., 2019), artists (Slak Valek, 2020), employees at resort hotels (Ali et al., 2016), employees and other tourists on whale watching experience (Xie et al., 2020) and so on. In the experiential consumption, particularly in creative tourism, participatory and interactivity through people and place at the destinations is noteworthy to create unique and authentic experience.

From above literature, it can be concluded that the concept of creative tourism is acknowledged on creativity, culture, events, creative networks and the co-creation of experiences. Therefore, creative tourism is characterized by a wide range of cultural settings from urban cities to rural areas. Again, in creative tourism ecosystem tourists and stakeholders are more powerful to create delightful and valuable experience and contribute positive consequences through interaction and engagement.

### Growing attention for Creative tourism in Thailand

From global view, there are four dominant cities in Thailand designed by the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), as following Phuket as a 'Creative City of Gastronomy' in 2015, Chiang Mai as a 'Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art' in 2017, lastly in 2019 Bangkok as a 'Creative City of Design', and Sukhothai as a 'Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art'. These four cities represent the creative potential for sustainable urban development. On the other hand, Thailand's creative tourism context was initially introduced and employed in community-based tourism (Wisansing, 2019). One of the dominant organizations, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA), was established in 2003 and is in charge of Thailand's tourism development program geared toward sustainability, as well as facilitating creative programming for communities. DASTA has been developed and projected as a community-based tourism concept with a focus on sustainability. Furthermore, the context of creative tourism has been shared and implemented through local learning activities in order to add value to cultural resources. The importance of Thainess, creativity, and cultural assets is recognized in order to develop tourism activities and services. DASTA outlined 39 potential activities from local cultural assets in 6 designated areas throughout Thailand in 2019, with the core concept of creative tourism devised. DASTA for now has 9

designated areas for more than 80 communities that are being planned and developed for domestic and international tourists. One of the handbooks published by DASTA in 2020, titled "Be a Local Artist for a Day," contains a collection of 21 creative tourism experiences launched in 11 provinces. Tin-Chok Textile weaving in Sukhothai province, art of mask in Loie province, Lanna Egg Cuisine in Nan province, and White clay ceramic in Ranong province are just a few examples. There are numerous attractions and destinations in urban, rural, and secondary tourist cities throughout Thailand that provide creative experiences and activities.

According to DASTA, the following are the characteristics of creative tourism: (1) Both visitors and hosts interact with one another; (2) engagement in cross-cultural/cultural experience; (3) spirit of place/deep meaning/understanding of the place's specific cultural feature; (4) hands-on experiences; (5) exchange of information/transformation and transformative experiences; (6) more participants than observers; (7) Tourists are given opportunities to develop their creative abilities and participate in decision-making (co-creating tourism experience); (8) authenticity in both process and product/genuine experience; (9) memorable/I hear, and I forget, I see, and I remember, I do, and I understand concept; and (10) tailor-made approach (Wisansing, 2019). From the foregoing, it can be concluded that the cores of creative tourism are all about learning and experiencing through participation, interaction, and the sharing of ideas among tourists, locals, and other service providers. As a result, creative tourism in Thailand is not only facing challenges in developing tourism products and services in such areas / communities to sustainability and creativity, but also in motivating tourists to engage in these creative activities in a pandemic environment.

### **Theory of planned behavior (TPB)**

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a theoretical model that attempts to determine the relationships between three significant predictors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). This theory is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) which is one of the most widely used psychological models for explaining and forecasting human behavior (Chaulagain et al., 2021). Various studies often use the theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) for building the model to predict individuals' behavioral intentions, including in tourism (Bhati et al., 2021). A number of scholars continue to argue that the theory should be expanded, some adopted psychological framework to explain human/tourist behavior. To explain tourist revisit intentions to a tourist destination, Abbasi et al. (2021) proposed additional factors in the extended TPB model, including satisfaction, destination image, perceived risk, service quality, and perceived value. In the context of creative tourism experience, Meng & Cui (2020) utilized the TPB to examine tourists' intention on home-based accommodation in uncertainty situation on health risk concerns by combining further factors such as perceived value, and memorability. Furthermore, the model throughout on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Perceived Risk Theory (PRT) is proposed to investigate the personal beliefs and attitudes of domestic and international tourists toward refugee mobility, as well as their purchasing behavior and visiting intentions. (Glyptou, 2021). The study of Rather (2021b) extends Theory of Planned Behavior (TBP), Protection Motivation Theory (PMT), and Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) in COVID-19 context. TPB are often used in predicting behavioral studies, on the other hand, based on its affective and cognitive factors in COVID-19 situation the study of Bhati et al. (2021) draw the adaptation of Prevention Motivation Theory with adding two mediating factors (tourists' media engagement and health related protective behavior) in order to examine the relationship between destination perception and post-crisis travel intentions.

From above, although TPB is often used for explaining and predicting human behavior, in conjunction with the evident of threats on pandemics especially health related risk issues future study may need to be extended. Hence, to understand the tourists' behavior intentions to visit the destinations, the current study extends the TPB and PMT in this study based on pandemic concerns.

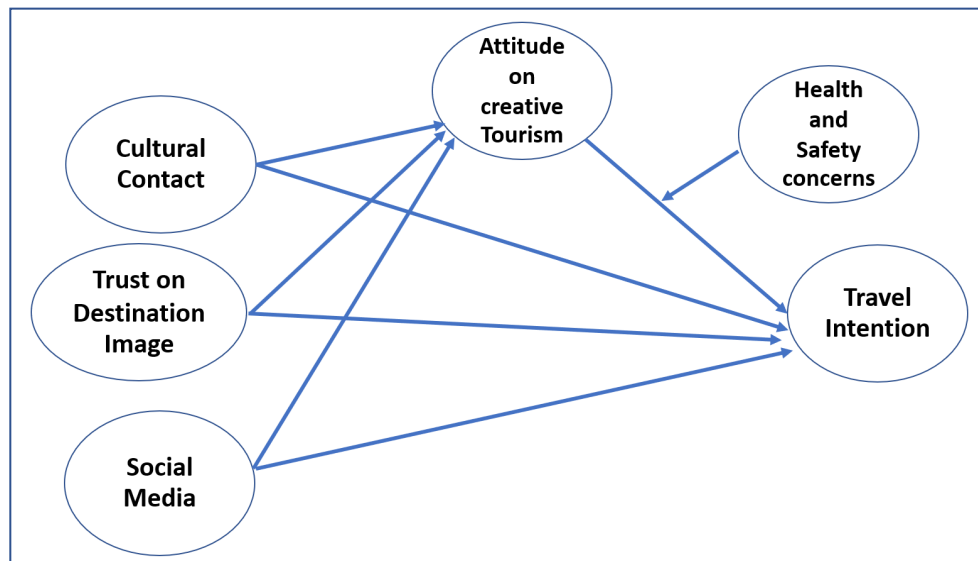
### **Methods**

Based on the meta-analysis approach, this study has generalized and combined the findings and proposed the conceptual framework of travel intention in creative tourism. Initially, we conducted a series of online search on major databases, including Scopus, ISI Web of Science, Sage Journals, ScienceDirect, and Emerald, published between 2016 and 2021 for reviewing and analysing. Based on the literature review, all articles were coded to identify major aspects such as research topic, year of publication, variables, method, theoretical themes, research framework, key findings, and suggestion for future study. As this study focused on approaching creativity and cultural tourism, more specifically, a combination of keywords was used to collect data; creative tourism, cultural, creativity, co-creation, associated with their variations on travel intention from 2016 to 2021. With significant differences in tourist behavioral intention, topics such as destination image, social media and cultural contact were included because of its relevant founded. Furthermore, the research for this review focuses on issues more relevant to travel and tourism topics in the current pandemic situation, specifically health and risk concerns on travel from 2020 to 2021. The COVID-19 may be limited for this study because it is still evolving and has unknown limitations. However, a total of 50 articles were scrutinized and retrieved for a more detailed review with proposed model for future studies.

### **Proposed Model**

As tourists' individual behavior is multi-dimension, their needs and preference are different. From the meta-analysis approach, the study reveals that creativity is adopted into cultural tourism regarding the shift in tourist needs and preferences. Thailand has developed creative tourism for a variety of reasons, including the provision of authentic tourist experiences, the well-being of local residents, the preservation of traditional culture, and the sustainability of community. While the changing pattern of tourist consumption is highlighted in the tourism world, Thailand's tourism, particularly creative tourism, requires research into future tourist trends in order to effectively plan and develop the destination's image and serve tourist satisfaction. As a result, this study demonstrates the factors influencing on tourists' attitude and travel intention. Cultural contact, destination image and social media are identified as the key factors influencing on attitude and travel intention to creative destinations. Due to COVID-19 and associated with the health risk concerns, travel break and other implication and regulations like isolating, social-distancing, and vaccinating, are significant possible impact on future travel behavior plans. To gain insight from this conceptual framework, hence health risk concern is adopted as a moderator for the relationship between attitude toward creative tourism experience and tourists' travel intention. The conceptual framework is proposed below (figure 1).





**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

From Figure 1, the conceptual framework is drawn from the understanding of the major factors on creative tourism researches and interrelated concepts responding to tourist behavior intention studies. As a result, there are identified three major variables; namely cultural contact, destination image, and social media, which are set of the relationship on attitudes and travel intention underpinning the creative tourism context. As well, the belief of the health risk concerns is consolidated in the tourist experience by considering on the nature of creative tourism with mainly participating and interacting arrangement. Hence, this study is to conceptualize and connect the understanding of thought on themes to elaborate its interrelated concept. They are as following:

### **Theme 1: Cultural contact, and attitude in forming travel intention**

One of the dominant characteristics of the creative tourists, that is cultural contact, is addressed in the recent studies. H. Chen & Rahman (2018) highlight that cultural contact focuses on the “what” and the “how” of culture, it explains how tourists use cultural tourism resources and their specific behaviors in relation to cultural tourism sites. The researchers point out that cultural contact can increase tourists’ potential and opportunity to interact and engagement with social environment in the destinations. According to Li & Liu (2020), the study on cultural contacts through creative experience confirmed tourists’ satisfaction and attitudes, enhancing positive relationships between cultural memories and destination attachment. Furthermore, Viet et al. (2020) confirm the significance of the role of cultural contact on tourist satisfaction, especially among Western tourists in Vietnam.

Tourism is about the link between people and place or environment settings. Corresponding, when tourists interact with other people at cultural destination, tourism impacts happened. When tourists come into contact with each other, the root causes of tourism impacts are their cultural interactions and their attitude or behavior. (Lin et al., 2021). However, studies on the relationship between cultural contact and a well-known related to tourism factor are still limited on tourists’ behavior (Viet et al., 2020). Few studies to date, however, focus on different views of cultural interaction in cultural tourism setting, such as interaction among people and social contact. Richards (2019) remarks on the theme of personal interaction and one-to-one contacts between tourists and locals in creative tourism approach, not just depth of place experience. Viewing on creative tourism, social interaction among people based on cultural capitals and environment can be expected. The results from a study among tourist in

Macau shows that social contact is one of primary motivations in creative activities of the Albergue Art Space (Zhang & Xie, 2019).

In general, attitude toward the behaviour refers to favourable or unfavourable with respect to a personal behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude is considered as psychological feature which related to tourist's decision making for travel intention or revisit intention. Attitude refers to an individuals' feelings associated with engaging in a behavior (Soliman, 2019). Recent studies have focused on attitudes and its relationship on travel intention (Ahn et al., 2020; Chaulagain et al., 2021; Y. Q. Li & Liu, 2020; Soliman, 2019). While the attitude is also highly important in the cultural and creative event (Y. Q. Li & Liu, 2020), in five resort sites Croatia customers' interaction and responsive attitudes influence their future behavioral intention positively (Ahn et al., 2020). According to the study's Soliman (2019), based on the TPB model applying with important factors in tourism marketing and behavior study among international visitors in Egypt, the results confirmed that the a mediating role of attitude has influenced into tourists' intention to revisit. Attitudes, on the other hand, play an important role in behavior intention with a direct effect that is only slightly lower than that of perceived behavior control (PBC) (Sánchez-Cañizares et al., 2021). Given other tourism context, individuals' intentions to engage in medical tourism were positively influenced by attitude, while perceived benefits were negatively influenced by attitude (Chaulagain et al., 2021). Additionally, tourist attitudes are influenced by their socio-cultural backgrounds, as a result, the festival's quality had a positive impact on tourists' intentions to return to the Badagry Diaspora Festival (Arasli et al., 2021).

Therefore, cultural contact play important role as it draws spaces for socializing and interacting with people and place at destinations. Meanwhile, it is believable that those tourists who are willing to participate in the creative tourism are not only seeking the novel destinations, but value of cultural contact also can enhance their needs and preference and may rise individual favorable on attitude for travel intention. Therefore, cultural contact could serve as potential feature in determining their destination choice for creative experience. While travel intention is important to explore, intended travel participation and engagement in the creative activities provided is imperative to disclosure. So far, social distancing and other isolating practices are implemented and introduced for health protection, some tourists are willing to avoid people and plan for individual travel experience. Also, the attitudes toward creative tourism experience influencing on travel intention is not clear and little attention in the literature during the time of COVID-19. With a view to determine on the relationship among cultural contact, attitude and travel intention, therefore, hypotheses are proposed:

P1: Cultural contact has a significant effect on travelers' attitudes toward a creative tourism experience

P2: Cultural contact has a significant influence on tourists' travel intention.

P3: Attitude toward a creative tourism experience has a significant influence on tourists' travel intention.

## **Theme 2: Destination Image, and attitude in forming travel intention**

Destination image is about attributes at the destinations defined on the belief and knowledge (Viet et al., 2020). On previous studies, they have examined on destination image as a key concept of the decision-making process to choose a destination (pre-visit) and as antecedents of satisfaction and tourist loyalty (post-visit). Martín-Santana et al. (2017) reveal that the image of a tourist destination may change during and after a visit. While the destination image is created on tourists' decision making process, either a positive or negative views can be perceived (Perpiña et al., 2019). The destination image is presented based on tourists'

impressions, opinions and thoughts, therefore, Herle (2019) confirms on the destination image affected tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty through visiting at tourist destinations. That is why many researchers have paid attention on the perception of destination image and focus on how to avoid negative and increase positive gap.

Some studies refer to the attributes of destination as primary perception of destination image in various aspect. The attributes of destination image are explained by studies varying from respondents and attendees. Viet et al. (2020) demonstrate that destination attractiveness and accommodation service are as major components of destination image in Binh Thuan. The quality of human interaction within the destination is critical for Romanian tourists (Herle, 2019). Moreover, the author describes that the quality on staying and potential on revisiting at the same place are major impacts when the locals in a destination are friendly and welcoming to tourists. In Thailand, Vongurai (2018) posit international tourists' image perception that diversification of resources and a wide range of accommodations, exceptional food and beverages, quality of services, etc. contribute Thailand becoming more popularity. From these, the destination image can be diverse on tourists' perception about the destination features and characteristic.

Measuring on destination image are applying various aspects. Many studies use important construct based on cognitive and affective image while others are concepted as a multi-dimension with cognitive, affective, and conative components. On cognitive and affective destination images, Khan et al. (2017) study's results found the positive effect of cognitive and affective images to the visit intention on young women travelers' views to India while the negative effects are presented on the dimensions of perceived travel risks and travel constraints. In the study of Huete Alcocer & López Ruiz (2020) focusing on the destination image formation, the affective component is more important than the cognitive in the image of an archaeological heritage destination formed. With board concept of the destination image, the construct consisting of cognitive, affective and conative components are explored on the relationship of behavior intention. For instance, the image of a destination has a direct impact on both tourists' attitudes toward revisiting and their intention to revisit (Hasan et al., 2019). Based on three image components (cognitive, affective and conative) and holistic image, the findings confirmed that all are important in predicting tourist revisit intention, and the relative importance of image components varies between British and Russian tourists (Stylos et al., 2017). Cognitive image contributes more to overall image formation than affective image in the context of cultural event, while destination image can be developed and boost through the cultural events (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2018).

Review on existing literature on destination image, the relationship among attitude and travel intentions are highlighted. The study's Soliman (2019) point out the positive correlation of destination image with revisit intention while the perceived destination image was the best predictor of behavior visit intention among medical tourists (Chelliah et al., 2021). Regarding to tourists' personal beliefs and attitudes on refugee mobility, the findings' Glyptou (2021) confirm on the role of a destination image influencing on tourists' cognitive expectations (pre-visit) and their final travelling intention. The most important factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit are physical factors, whereas destination image has a considerable impact on visit intention and mediates the relationship between the factors and visit intention during post-crisis recovery (Ahmad et al., 2020). According to Rasoolimanesh, et al. (2021) predicting future behavioural intention post-COVID-19 with considering the media-shaped cognitive destination image during the COVID-19 outbreak, based on two groups with and without previous travel experience to a destination, the findings revealed that the model had a good prediction potential for travel behavioural intention. Moreover, Glyptou (2021) points out whether the strength of the destination's brand or previous image formulation is strong

enough to overcome any cognitive or perceptual fear, risk, or uncertainty of the impacted destination, and then continue with the purchasing intention. Although the destination image has been confirmed its roles, it is arguable that during the pandemic the destination image need further understanding on attitude and travel intention, particularly in the context of creative tourism. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed based on the preceding discussion, they are:

P4: Destination image has a significant effect on travelers' attitudes toward a creative tourism experience

P5: Destination image has a significant influence on tourists' travel intention.

### **Theme 3: The Role of Social media in Creative Tourism**

The ongoing development of technology and innovation has challenged, especially online social media platforms. Social media platform is widely consuming via different tools mainly for communication and exchange relevant information with consumers. Social media, as an interactive platform, which ideas, opinions, and experiences can be created, exchanged, shared, and discussed by users (Nguyen et al., 2021). Existing literature in the tourism and hospitality context, social media is valuable online platform for destinations and stakeholders. For destination management organizations (DMOs), it is a vital marketing tool to present their thoughts, opinions, and creations (Arasli et al., 2021). Given the importance of social media, Glyptou (2021) mentions that content and information like the important attributes can be shared on the platforms, whereas the phase of interaction can occur among real-time tourist-followers.

In the consumption process, tourists search information about destinations or events, but they also exchange and share valuable information of their experience from pre-, during-, and post- trip. Using social media is recognized are more important as it reflects human lifestyle (Nguyen et al., 2021), while Bhati et al. (2021) believe that the advancement in the digital age play an important role in influencing tourist decision to travel and their behavior. Therefore, social media has become more popular among travelers, as they can observe about shared experience during decision making and storytelling (Arasli et al., 2021). According to Nguyen et al. (2021), the findings with SEM determines that generation Z uses social media to learn, and it becomes their motivation and intention to visit for a genuine experience., while accessibility at any destinations are searched and clear and easy access like free visa is motivated highly. Furthermore, Narangajavana et al. (2017) found that tourists' expectation about the destination are placed on their trust in the contents receive via using the social media. On festival attendants' views in Nigeria, social media had a significantly positive relationship with festival satisfaction among tourists (Arasli et al., 2021). Furthermore, social media has transformed the behavior of travelers in a variety of ways, including the sharing of tourism experiences. According to H. Li et al. (2021), when travelers share their positive travel experiences on social media, their post-trip evaluations improve. Meanwhile, travelers' positive moods can positively influence on online viewers' response. However, Travel experience sharing can take place in person or via social media, and travelers may receive feedback from both online and offline audiences (H. Li et al., 2021).

Being a strong presence on the online platform of social media, it is crucial for destination marketers to understand why and how tourists participate in activities (Arasli et al., 2021). Based on tourists being as co-creator in travel experience, social media and technology are manipulated. Harrigan et al. (2017) believe that social media simplify customer engagement. Conversely, social media was not meaningfully for enhancing the value of co-creating in desert tourism experiences while authenticity, place attachment and engagement are mentioned as strong predictors of value in use (Michopoulou et al., 2021). This may consider

as site-specific for desert tourist experience as remote and unique area; hence they may focus on people and place with pleasure and delightful attractiveness, not focusing on using social media.

Understanding the role of social media is imperative as positive and negative perceptions through social media can occur. Recently, few studies have investigated on the role of social media and behavior intention to visit and revisit destinations in pandemic crisis (Bhati et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021; Rather, 2021a). During the pandemic the tourist's perception of safety and risk has a significant impact on their behavior and destination image (Bhati et al., 2021). Without freely traveling, tourists may be subjected to more media attention than usual, the image of destination is projected by both mass and social media (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Additionally, the positive significance of social media on the tourist brand engagement is confirmed, it then has an impact on co-creation and revisit intention in COVID-19 times (Rather, 2021a). Furthermore, Rather (2021b) disclosed that social media indirectly boost co-creation and revisit intention by raising tourist brand engagement and attitude toward the destination examined by the hybrid PMT-, TPB-, and SDL-informed models. Obviously, social media can drive the change in tourists' mind and behavior and shape to future behavior intention for traveling. As mentioned above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

P6: Social media use has a significant effect on travelers' attitudes toward a creative tourism experience

P7: Social media use has a significant influence on tourists' travel intention.

#### **Theme 4: Role of health risk concerns in Creative Tourism**

Many scholars discuss perceived risk as one of the most important factors influencing destination choice to travel decision-making. The uncertainty of risk plays a significant role in customer decision making (Chelliah et al., 2021). In the risk perception literature, many studies in term of cognitive attributes refer in a negative way such as crime, terrorism, or disease at tourist destination (Perpiña et al., 2019). On the other hand, giving the finding in prior literature that physical risks, psychological risks, terrorist risks, and monetary risks associated with travel destinations all have a significant impact on tourists' behavior and revisit intention in various tourism sites (Hasan et al., 2019). However, Bhati et al. (2021) stated that the perception of safety and risk can vary different tourists. Researches on health and risk concerns as part of behavior intention are evident on different tourism context, for example medical tourism on American adults 'perspectives (Chaulagain et al., 2021) Middle-Eastern medical tourists about Iran (Chelliah et al., 2021), coastal beach tourism in Bangladesh (Hasan et al., 2019), Dajia Matsu pilgrimage in Taiwan (Tseng et al., 2021), and on international tourists in Pakistan (Nazir et al., 2021) and domestic tourism on Australians (Volgger et al., 2021). For instance, the severity of disease interacts with the antecedent factors that influence individuals' intentions to engage in medical tourism. (Chaulagain et al., 2021). It also concluded the significance of intrapersonal barriers, strategies for reducing perceived risk, security concerns, and anxiety, which may increase the confidence of potential tourists in traveling to a foreign country for medical treatment. In coastal beach tourism, the study results suggest that perceived destination risks have no effect on tourists' attitudes toward revisiting or intentions to revisit. Tourist satisfaction and destination image, on the other hand, have a direct impact on both their attitudes toward returning and their intentions to return tourist destinations (Hasan et al., 2019).

During COVID-outbreak, some studies on health risk concerns have been strongly focused on travel behavior intentions. Realizing on fear of COVID-19 and perceived risk, the negative impact moderates the linkage between social media, customer brand engagement,



and co-creation/ revisit intention (Rather, 2021a). Evidently, the relationship between destination reputation, holidaymakers' trust, and intent to return are negatively moderated by fear arousal (Hassan & Soliman, 2021). Rather (2021b) confirm that fear of COVID-19 and perceived risk has a significant negative impact on travel attitude while brand co-creation and revisit intention are positively influenced by customer interaction and attitude. However, there is still a limitation of research on the power of fear arousal associated with COVID-19 on domestic tourists' attitude and behavior. The high level of fear arousal may improve domestic holidaymakers' perceptions of destination social responsibility, which may influence their intention to return to the destination (Hassan & Soliman, 2021).

Risk perceptions are strong predictors of future travel destination avoidance (Bhati et al., 2021). Travel intention was significantly related to travel decision and attitude toward epidemic prevention for Dajia Matsu pilgrimage participants; these should be recognized for event organizers to promote events in the future (Tseng et al., 2021). Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior examining on how the perceived risk affecting on travel behavior intention, Sánchez-Cañizares et al. (2021) point out the most notable effect on intention are perceived behavior control followed by attitudes. Moreover, potential tourists are willing to pay more for additional safety measures at the destination. In short, we can conclude that health risk concerns are a major factor to decide whether tourists should travel or just stay at home. Hence, the following hypothesis is:

P8: Health risk concerns has a moderation impact on the relationship between attitudes toward creative tourism and tourists' travel intention.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

On reviewing, the study highlights the growing attention for creative tourism experiences among tourism and hospitality scholars in the line with new normal environment. While creativity and creative tourism are paid more attention underpinning the cultural tourism as contributing more competitive advantage for tourist destination, it would be argued that more attention should be paid to employ contemporary study on tourists' behavior intention incorporating creative tourism context which are increasingly blurred in the pandemic environment. This paper, therefore, attempts to explore the concept of creative tourism from different tourism practices using the meta-analysis approach. Obviously, creative tourism is viewed as the integration of creativity, culture, and co-creation among various stakeholders on the experience consumption process. From literature, different results in prior studies are found factors influencing on travel intention and decision-making process. Then, another important finding from this study is the proposition of a conceptual framework with interplay of cultural contact, destination image, social media in driving travel intention through the mediating role of attitude and the moderating role of health risk concerns toward creative tourism

While the growth of tourism industry is increasing on attention for moving forward and on reviving the tourist destinations, particularly in the COVID-19 pandemic, this propose themes in this study could be helpful to clarify the strength and weakness of destinations and the need in novel implications and practices for upholding both macro and micro level of destinations. Among actors and stakeholders in creative tourism would predict and highlight the appropriate ways and methods with different touchpoint. In addition, it would be interesting to understand tourists' determinants and related factors for active involvement and engagement in creative tourism experience.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

This study develops the proposition on the TPB to contribute to the extent literature on the relationship between attitude and travel behavior intentions in the creative tourism. Understanding the antecedent factors of attitude toward travel intention to destinations is necessary for knowledge enhancement in the context of creative tourism. More findings emphasis on attitude as a mediator for the effects of cultural contact, destination image, and social media on travel intention in the creative tourism. On the other hand, concerning on health-related risk like covid-19 situation the application in this study also address as the moderator construct with attitude and travel intention to engage in creative tourism. However, the level of health and risk concerns may be different, and tourists' travel decision is subjective and individual based on their multi needs and preference. Therefore, it is believable that TPB could contribute to a better understanding and more concise tourist behavior intention and its antecedents toward creative tourism form.

### ***Practical and Social Implications***

Regarding practical and social implication, this research will be helpful to the stakeholders for future development in tourism industry. The findings, therefore, can provide practical implications on marketing activities for destination marketing organization (DMOs) to promote destinations as desirable destinations of creativity. For future purposes, government of Thailand would be useful for positioning of policymaking and planning and it will need to find innovative ways for adding value of creative tourism through creativity and culture resources in well-planned strategies. From these, countries like Thailand can be outstanding as a preferred destination for creativity and cocreation in the creative tourism form, in new normal traveling phase. Furthermore, tour operators, service providers and their partners will be able to enhance level of tourist satisfaction and service quality. Additionally, tourist will better understand and enhance their abilities and knowledge in local culture through place and people. Lastly, locals will be proud on themselves and lead to sustain their own resources for next generations. This is for better opportunities and challenges for future development to build competitive image, particularly in Thailand. Confidently, this is for all developed on creative places and people sustainably and effectively.

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