

Marketing the Community-Based Eco-tourism for Thai and Chinese under the New Media Era for Local Authorities

Wei YANG¹, Chuanchen BI²

Abstract

Based on a research of a Thailand's Best Responsible Tourism award-winner in Sapphaya Community in Chai Nat Province, this study uncovered the critical sustainability drivers for effective social marketing or Community-Based Eco-tourism (CBTEs). One way to protect the environment and boost the local economy is through ecotourism. It does, however, overlook the local community, which is a crucial component of sustainable development. A type of ecotourism known as community-based ecotourism (CBET) places greater emphasis on the advantages for, and ability to participate in, local communities. Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which represents more positive trends than those linked to more traditional forms of tourism in Thailand, has grown significantly in the last ten years thanks to the efforts of researchers, environmental activists, non-governmental organisations, and public officials. Even though certain rural communities in Thailand have difficulty organising, starting, and maintaining CBT programs, successful CBT may still be pursued under the correct conditions. The study also looks at how the CBTE might improve local cooperation amongst several stakeholders. According to our research, leadership and local involvement are two important sustainability drivers for sustainable social companies. It is suggested to use an emerging leadership and community involvement strategy to promote the sustainability of CBTEs. It suggests that CBTE leadership is important and plays a crucial role in developing social capital and preserving community endowments, such as historical places and cultural treasures. The main driver of sustainable tourism is local involvement with a strong feeling of ownership and community participation. The findings also point to potential policy implications and practical procedures for growing sustainable social companies.

Keywords: *Social Marketing, CBTE Leadership, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), Community Endowments, Social Capital, Ecotourism, Environment, Thailand, Cultivating Sustainable, Non-Governmental Organizations, Local Engagement, CBT Projects..*

Introduction

Rich natural and human resources make China and Thailand ideal locations for growing ecotourism in accordance with sustainable development [1]. But within the same state-run tourist sector, government operations need to be strengthened in order to promote ecotourism in China and Thailand. In the post-pandemic period of environmental contamination worldwide, ecotourism is one type of "cleaner tourism" that is needed for tourist development [1, 2]. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) between China and Thailand as well as the growth of tourism in both nations may be aided by ecotourism [2, 3]. The SDGs and ecotourism are closely related. When ecotourism initiatives are developed under the direction of a proactive and strong local government and involve all project stakeholders, there is a greater chance that they will help the local tourist sector achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [2, 3].

Comparatively examining the economic, ecological, and social functioning of community-based ecotourism (CBET) programs in local communities, this study generates pertinent conclusions that may be built upon [1, 2]. According to the New Public Service Theory, a government that is "service-oriented" must prioritise and maintain open lines of contact with the general public. Social media may assist local governments in streamlining government operations and disseminating information to the public in order to offer more convenient and better public services [2, 3]. Social media serves as a medium for quick communication between the government and the public, [3], as well as for the promotion of local tourism initiatives and citizens' experiences [2, 3]. The platform can also be used to gather feedback from the public so that locals support and enthusiastically engage in ecotourism projects. This not only raises locals' awareness of and pride in their hometowns' natural environments, [3, 4], but it also spreads this positive attitude to foreign

¹ International College Khon Kaen University, weiya@kku.ac.th.

² College of Graduate Study in Management, Khon Kaen University.

tourists taking part in the tourism project, making it more appealing to visitors and drawing more of them to take part in community tourism initiatives, which helps to increase local revenue [2, 4].

Due to its relatively favourable impact on creating jobs and revenue, tourism has emerged as a desirable instrument for boosting economies, improving rural livelihoods, and bringing about beneficial changes in the way money is distributed in developing nations. In particular, ecotourism is thought to be the tourist industry area that is expanding the quickest due to increased environmental concerns [2, 4]. The China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) declared 1999 to be "China Ecotourism Year," and since then, the industry has played a significant role in anti-poverty initiatives and GDP growth. The host communities, a crucial component of sustainability, are disregarded, [2, 5], nevertheless. A relatively recent concept that focusses on local communities as well as resource protection is community-based ecotourism. It is now seen as a key factor in rural communities' economic growth, as these areas would not have as many chances to reduce poverty otherwise [5].

Mei County, in China's Guangdong Province, is one of the areas where the government is focussing its efforts to promote ecotourism. It is referred to as "the Hometown of Hakka Culture" and enjoys a remarkable edge over natural and cultural resources [5, 6]. It emphasises the growth of ecotourism and cultural tourism and is driven by the development plan of "fostering green industry, constructing Available homestead and creating a Hakka pearl". It now possesses fourteen well-known tourist attractions, [5, 6], including the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit – Qiaoxi and the most stunning and abundant tea fields – Yearning Tea Plantation Tourist Attraction (the National 5A-level Tourism Destination) [6, 7]. The government wants to use the local Hakka communities as the foundation for developing it as an ecotourism destination in order to maximise the advantages of economic growth while giving greater regard to community engagement [5, 6].

Theoretically and practically, community-based tourism (CBT) originated in industrialised nations. Research on community involvement in tourism in Canada and the UK are two examples of this [5, 6]. The bulk of the CBT literature has lately originated from underdeveloped nations, where the notion has, however, gained greater traction. Community-based Ecotourism (CBET) in Taiwan, planning in Indonesia, community involvement in tourism in China, and the increasing popularity of this idea of travel. CBT has been used to problems pertaining to participation, community development, empowerment, and poverty reduction. Though conceptually it has been a popular topic, [6, 7], there has been comparatively little study on the practice of CBT, making the signs of its effectiveness less definitive. Research needs have been recognised in many areas of CBT, [7], and in order to address the issue of local community engagement in tourist development projects, a number of studies, including the ones described above and referred in parenthesis below, have been conducted [8,].

These findings have demonstrated the necessity of:

1. Determining the kinds and intensities of participation used in CBT development.
2. The phases of growth in which individuals find themselves [8, 9].

The main goal of CBT is community engagement in the development process. Like the participatory ideologies of the 1970s in urban and regional planning, CBT is supported by many academics because they think it improves the effectiveness of the planning process at the local level by promoting public education, community-wide economic development, greater tourist satisfaction, meeting local needs, and bolstering the democratic process [8, 9]. Furthermore, the local knowledge that residents' engagement provides might aid with tourist planning and execution as well as long-term community sustainability [9, 10]. Through cooperation and the creation of consensus, community involvement may help minimise locals' resistance to the growth of the tourist industry and the detrimental effects of it. Community involvement in the tourist planning process often include, [8],

"The participation of persons in a community focused on tourism in the formulation and execution of policies pertaining to significant political and socioeconomic activities" [8, 9].

In the development process, involvement should be seen from both benefit sharing and decision-making participation, at the very least [8, 9]. Including the community in decision-making is crucial to empowering the locals to set their own objectives based on their preferences and concerns. Participating in benefit sharing entails raising wages, finding work, and enhancing education. According to studies, [9, 10], CBT can boost the local economy, preserve the area's natural resources and cultural heritage, enhance the standard of living, and give the local population more authority [9]. While the concept of including the host community into tourist planning and development is not new, the emphasis on CBT has increased during the 1990s, when discussions about sustainable tourism became more prevalent. Focussing on local engagement has been seen as one strategy to manage the speed of growth and lessen sociocultural, environmental, [9, 10], and economic effects due to the serious negative effects of excessive and uncontrolled tourist development. The government has launched and grown tourism in several nations by employing a top-down planning strategy [9, 10].

But in recent times, there has been a steady shift in emphasis towards bottom-up methods of tourist development. Residents in the area who will be touched by the development are becoming more and more eager to participate in the planning and decision-making procedures. The locals themselves are frequently a major draw; [9, 10], this is especially true in places where members of ethnic minorities live. As a result, the government shouldn't be the only factor in the growth of tourism. Murphy maintained that, [11],

“Since the activity happens at the local level, tourism development is a local concern”.

This study looks at a CBT program in the Amphawa Floating Market (AFM) in Central Thailand from the viewpoint of the locals. In particular, [11, 12], the goals of this work are to look at: 1. The methods used to include the neighbourhood in the creation and marketing of the floating market as a tourist destination. Two locals' opinions about tourism-related community involvement. The impact of tourism on local livelihood opportunities and associated tourist costs. The report also highlights the drawbacks of local CBT participation [12, 13]. The social and economic fabric of the Thai people has been deeply woven by rivers and canals since ancient times. Rivers and canals functioned as important thoroughfares, supplies of water for residential use and agriculture, and venues for cultural celebrations [13, 14]. In the past, floating marketplaces in rural Thailand were important hubs for the trading and interchange of regional agricultural goods [14, 15].

Through its five floating markets, the province of Samut Songkhram has preserved its long-standing custom of using canals for economic reasons [15]. In that province, there are several floating markets that are renowned for their community-based strategies and serve as illustrations of locally driven development initiatives backed by the government [14]. The province has been well-known as a primary location to experience the traditional way of life and floating market culture since 2004 [15, 16]. The province features a vast network of canals, wetlands, mangrove forests, ancient structures, temples, and landmarks. It also has a mix of fresh, brackish, and salt water resources [14, 15]. The Amphawa Market was chosen because it has been acknowledged as a successful community-based project and has won several national and international accolades [15].

"Sustainable tourism" was described by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as, [16]

“Travel that fully considers the economic, social, and environmental effects it will have both now and in the future while attending to the demands of travellers, [16], the travel industry, the environment, and host communities”.

The body of knowledge in the area of sustainable tourism has expanded ever since. Community-based tourism, or CBT, [16], is a unique approach to sustainable tourism. A different approach to encouraging social empowerment and local community development while fostering sustainable economic growth through tourism is community-based tourism, or CBT.

In general, CBT is regarded as one kind of sustainable tourism that strives to accomplish the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by promoting sustainable development in the county and community. Since

CBT may promote sustainable and rural tourism, which intentionally helps to create employment and produce incomes for nearby and distant communities or rural regions in the bottom of the pyramid, [15], it has attracted a lot of attention on a global scale. The importance of the tourist industry in emerging economies has led to a rise in the acceptance and popularity of CBT in many developing nations, including Thailand [14, 16].

Additionally, CBT encourages the growth of social businesses and community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs), [16, 17], especially in the small- and medium-sized business sector. According to the most recent research, these CBT businesses could be the primary force behind social change and community development that leads to socioeconomic sustainability. However, there hasn't been much study done on how social companies like CBTEs may evolve in the future. The subject is becoming more and more of a major worldwide concern [17].

Locals are instantly the best defenders of the resources that the sector depends on because of their expertise, sense of ownership, and local understanding [17]. There is growing global consensus that ecotourism should have a community focus as it is implemented everywhere. Stated differently, evaluating the potential of tourism to enhance environmental preservation and community welfare hinges on the active participation of local communities and the encouragement of connections between economic growth and conservation. For several reasons, Thailand is a great area to research the growth of ecotourism. Currently, tourism accounts for 6% of Thailand's GDP, [17, 18], and about 30% of the country's workforce works in the travel and tourism sector [18]. It is obvious that one of the key drivers of Thailand's economic expansion is mainstream tourism. Because of their wealth of natural resources and scenic splendour, northern Thai provinces like Chiang Mai, Chaing Rai, and Mai Hong Sorn have grown to be very popular travel destinations for eco-tourists and adventure seekers. But as tourism grows in significance, a number of once-pristine locations are now dealing with resource depletion and cultural decadence [18].

Whether or not eco-tourism is a suitable activity everywhere is another argument against it. The harm to the delicate ecosystem is irrevocable and of incalculable magnitude. Some eco-tourism detractors think it is preferable to persuade travellers to stay at an established resort rather than pushing them to see the pristine villages and protected regions right away. This can have the opposite effect of what is intended and not resolve the current issues [18, 19]. The growing criticism of the detrimental effects of mass tourism and the misuse of the term "eco-tourism" led to the development of the CBET method [18, 19]. It attempts to explain a sustainable approach to tourism in natural reserves that gives locals a means of economic growth and communal development without endangering their natural environments and cultural systems. It differs from other forms of tourism in that, as opposed to regional or national development, it places more emphasis on community development and the involvement of marginalised groups [18, 19]. It was created to increase the local communities' sense of empowerment, self-reliance, and communal self-worth about their indigenous culture. This was accomplished by cooperating with stakeholders, employing a group method for local decision-making, and teaming together to solve issues in the community [19].

The story of tourism in Thailand is still shaped by stories about mass tourism that are either negative or sensationalist. However, in the last ten years, a significant but less well-known story has emerged about the successful efforts of rural communities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to promote community-based tourism (CBT), [19, 20], which aims to address the negative aspects of traditional tourism in Thailand [19, 20]. Some rural communities in Thailand have chosen to pursue a type of tourism that transfers ownership, benefits, and control from external actors to community members despite a number of obstacles, including geographical remoteness, national policies that favour large and well-connected travel firms, and a lack of knowledge, [19], financial resources, and managerial experience. The research on cognitive behavioural therapy presents a contentious issue about success, mostly based on individual viewpoints and expectations [20]. One may argue that few communities in Thailand engaging in CBT have shown success if success is defined as absolute financial benefits, the eradication of poverty, or escape from the fragility and instability that characterise agricultural employment. A less idealistic perspective, on the other hand, leads to a different conclusion, one in which the attainment of success is determined by net improvements in community benefits and strong community engagement in tourism [20, 21].

In a similar vein, empowering community people to assess their own achievements and define success according to their own standards positively highlights initiatives to support CBT in Thailand. This study examines the planning and growth of CBT in Thailand by focussing on Mae Kampong, a northern Thai community well-known for its CBT activities [21, 22]. The history of CBT in Mae Kampong, an assessment of the advantages and difficulties of community and individual CBT involvement, and an identification of the key success factors in Mae Kampong are the main goals of this study [20]. Mae Kampong has gained recognition as a model, or showcase, CBT village throughout Thailand as a result of tourist officials' marketing of the area [20, 21].

Mae Kampong also benefits from being the capital of the province of the same name, which attracted 2.5 million Thai and 1.9 million international visitors in 2011—one of Thailand's most sought-after tourist destinations—and from being only 50 kilometres from Chiang Mai, the main city in northern Thailand. Many reasons draw tourists to Chiang Mai and northern Thailand: nature tourism, which includes jungle trekking, [20], outdoor adventure activities, and encounters with captive wildlife like monkeys, snakes, tigers, and elephants; and cultural tourism, which takes the form of visits to religious, historical, and ethnic sites like indigenous minority "hill tribe" villages. Over the last 10 years, as more travellers have been to northern Thailand, there has been a growing demand from some travellers for more genuine travel experiences that stay off the typical tourist path [20, 21]. One such location is Mae Kampong, which exemplifies a successful attempt to engage in tourism while averting some of the more severe adverse effects [20, 21].

Other than a few studies, there isn't much peer-reviewed research on CBT, [20, 22], despite the fact that Thai media, tourist authorities, and academics writing primarily for Thai audiences have given the issue a lot of attention [20]. Thus, this paper tackles a neglected subject that merits greater attention because it offers a different perspective on the nature of tourism in Thailand as well as insights and lessons on how to best support community control over and growth of tourism in Thailand [23]. This research examines the particular aspects that have contributed to the effectiveness of CBT in the Mae Kampong community after outlining the main features of CBT and the procedures utilised to collect data for the study. In the end, this essay contends that Mae Kampong's achievements may be attributed to three things: serendipitous circumstances, substantial outside assistance, and personal initiative among community members. Furthermore, [22], it could be challenging for communities in other parts of Thailand to duplicate Mae Kampong's high degree of success because this particular mix of variables is rather unique [23].

Foundational Ideas, Features, and Constraints of Community-Based Tourism

The majority of evaluations of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) date their scholarly interest in the topic to Peter Murphy's 1985 book *Tourism: A Community Approach*. Though earlier in an age of increased interest in CBT, a number of writers examined the communal aspects of tourism. Systems theory is used to argue that effective connections between the environmental, commercial, social, [23, 24], and management aspects of tourism are essential to a successful community-oriented tourism strategy, with the goal of placing the needs and capabilities of communities at the forefront of tourism development, which typically favours powerful business and state interests [24, 25]. Numerous academics, businesspeople, community activists, and tourist planners have worked to define, expand upon, and pinpoint the best practices related to cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) since the mid-1980s. Because CBT has received such extensive attention, opinions on its precise definition are divided. Notwithstanding these variations, the majority of definitions of community-based tourism (CBT) found in the literature typically incorporate some or all of the following features: community empowerment, [25], equitable financial benefit distribution, environmental sustainability, community participation, improvements in living standards, and community management, control, and ownership of tourism projects [25, 26].

A number of variables, including ownership, involvement, and engagement from the community, leadership, and the use of local resources, [26, 27], contribute to the sustainability of community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) [27]. Since locals are "embedded" in and a part of tourist goods, the literature highlights the significance of leadership and community engagement as the critical success components of CBTE. Prior research on CBTEs has looked at how they maintain their organisations by networking with

external stakeholders and leveraging local social capital [27]. The fine-grained level study and research insights of how individuals (i.e., enterprise/community leaders and entrepreneurs) in CBTEs mobilise resources and interact with local and external parties are scarce, however, and they tend to concentrate on sustainability at the macro, organisational level [27, 28].

With the use of a grounded-theory qualitative case study, this research attempts to explore the major sustainability drivers of prosperous CBTEs. Our main goal is to learn more about how the community and business leaders of Sapphaya Community, a nationally recognised CBTE in Chai Nat Province, [26, 27], Thailand, can create value by revaluing its local resources and cultural history in order to establish sustainable community-based tourism. Furthermore, our aim is to investigate the ways in which the CBTE might enhance local involvement with many stakeholders [27]. Consequently, the main research issues we address are:

1. How can leaders of the community and business at Sapphaya Community, a nationally recognised CBTE in Thailand, [27, 28], create value to establish sustainable community-based tourism?
2. In what ways might the CBTE foster more local interaction among various stakeholders?

All things considered, the goal of our work is to add to the scant information in this nascent topic, especially in the context of CBSE research in a nation rapidly growing like Thailand. We will later share the pertinent literature review and the study's research methods. Lastly, we will each take up important discoveries, [28], their ramifications, their shortcomings, and potential avenues for further research [24, 28].

Literature Review

Community-Based Tourism Enterprise Overview (CBTE)

The literature views balance in communities and society, as well as socioeconomic and environmental sustainability, as alternatives to community-based tourism, or CBT. The book *Tourism: A Community Approach Reference* (1988) by Peter Murphy introduced the notion of CBT in 1985. Murphy explained how the socio-cultural, [24, 25], environmental, and economic aspects of tourism are interdependent and crucial to creating a successful CBT approach using systems theory. Community-based tourism (CBT) is a tourist development approach that prioritises community involvement in the conception, [25], administration, execution, and assessment of tourism offerings.

(Hawkins, M 2021) [24] Through involvement, community-based ecotourism (CBET) seeks to strengthen local communities. Thailand is an excellent illustration of a developing nation where the empowerment of the local population needs sustained assistance from stakeholders. This research fills in the gap in the literature by examining the relationship between policy, tourism stakeholders, and practices with regard to the authenticity and commodification of CBET [25]. This is because the inauthenticity and commodification of CBET have not yet been discussed in terms of the influences of external stakeholders and policy [25, 26]. Central Thai government departments and associated Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) took part in in-depth interviews to better understand the policies pertaining to the CBET operation. Using ethnographic methods, this study examined a case study in the Khiriwong community, Thailand's first CBET community (established in 1996) [26].

(Chuamuangphan, N. 2021) [25] This essay begins with the claim that community-based ecotourism is an activity in which not every member of the community can participate (due to obstacles or exclusionary causes) or desires to participate (due to personal preference). This has an impact on conversations about governance, stakeholders at the local level, and the growth of tourism. The study first examines the relationships between the actors in relation to the environment and resource utilisation. This subject includes elements of sustainability and more particular sets of social interactions. These components emphasise important elements, starting with the actors and how resources are used, and going on to show

the impact of various resource management regimes, power and authority, social networks, patterns of governance, and interactions with actors both inside and outside of the nearby villages.

Case Location: Chai Nat, Thailand's Sapphaya Community

Sapphaya is a tiny town situated 200 km from Bangkok, Thailand, in the Chai Nat province in the country's centre Figure 1 [26].



Fig. 1: Thailand map (licensed under Creative Commons). On the map, the star indicates the province of Chai Nat. [24, 26]

Three thousand people live in this neighbourhood. For inhabitants of Bangkok, a vacation to the town of Sapphaya might be a weekend escape or a day excursion. The Chao Phraya River is fundamental to the community's way of life [26, 27]. There are several cultural capitals within this robust society. The strength of Sapphaya village comes from its deeply ingrained cultural heritage. There are several places to view, including the historic church Figure 2a, b, the Sapphaya temple, the old town market, and the old police station [28].



Fig. 2: A map showing the Old Market Walking Street and Sapphaya. Source: Authors' photo ((a) Cultural heritage and national resources map of Sapphaya for major tourist destinations). [24, 25]

Constructed around a century ago during the time of King Rama V, the historic police station building is now a community museum and a local icon [25, 26]. The Association of Siamese Architects under Royal

Patronage presented this building with the 2018 "Best architectural preservation project" award Figure 3 [26].



Fig. 3: The historic Sapphaya police station. [26, 27]

(Lee, T. J. 2022) [26] In Thailand, there has been significant promotion of community-based tourism (CBT), especially in rural areas [27, 28]. Rural areas' naturally occurring and culturally significant attractions are turned into consumable goods by tourism. Additionally, tourist development creates a direct link between the community and tourism. Thus, it is necessary to look into the interests of locals and make provisions for their involvement before beginning any tourism development projects [28]. In order to give the local community control over future tourist development—a move that is ideal for developing tourism in rural Thailand—this article presents community arts, foresight tools, and a community goal-setting approach [28, 29]. The purpose of this research is to assist the local community members better understand what tourism is and how it affects their community, so that they may utilise that knowledge to create their own future growth [29].

(Bayrak, M. M. 2023) [27] Community-based tourism, or CBT, places a strong focus on qualities including sustainability, local involvement, and maximising the positive effects on the community. What makes a community in a tourist location, however, has been the subject of few critical debates and intellectual interventions. Different ethnic groups living in Taman Negara, Malaysia, define the community and its boundaries quite differently. Contradictory claims and attitudes exist among Malay, Malaysian Chinese, and Orang Asli Batek on who is Indigenous, who is a local, and who is the legitimate host community of Taman Negara.

(Duangsaeng, V. 2014) [28] The prevailing discourse around tourism in Thailand mostly focusses on the adverse social and environmental effects of fast development. However, a lesser-known tale has surfaced among the tremendous boom of traditional tourist. Community-based tourism, or CBT, has grown significantly in the last ten years as a result of the efforts of researchers, environmental activists, non-governmental organisations, and government representatives. It represents more positive trends than those linked to more traditional types of tourism in Thailand.

(Satarat, N. 2010) [29] The second-largest source of income in Thailand is the tourism sector, which has contributed significantly to national income and revenue. The escalating number of visitors has had an adverse effect on the socioeconomic and environmental situations, namely on issues related to waste management, uneven income distribution, and natural resource exploitation. As a result, it is now crucial to expand tourism in a sustainable manner. The tourist Authority of Thailand (TAT) changed its approach to promote more sustainable tourist growth in Thailand by emphasising local community benefits and conservation. Developing a sustainable sector, preserving a healthy natural and social environment, and encouraging self-reliance in local people are the key objectives of ecotourism development in Thailand.

One of the successful CBT models that has been created in less than five years is the hamlet of Sapphaya. It is a year-round tourist attraction that is marketed as cultural tourism, drawing visitors who enjoy history and culture [29, 30]. Prior to the implementation of the CBT in 2015, the majority of Sapphaya's workforce

was employed in agriculture. Their family didn't have a lot of savings and they made do with a little salary. Following the opening of the Sapphaya old market, [30], local vendors and entrepreneurs brought in about 50,000 Thai baht (about 1500 US dollars) a day [30].

Research Method

A qualitative case study is an appropriate method for investigating complex environments and comprehending various data sources. When the theory in that field is still developing, qualitative research might be utilised to further the theory [30, 31]. The majority of tourism and hospitality research conducted in the last 20 years has used a quantitative approach; nevertheless, in recent years, the number of qualitative case studies in this area has increased. A qualitative case study research approach was used in this study to shed light on CBTE's leadership and community involvement [31, 32]. In order to obtain theoretical sensitivity of components (e.g., leadership, local involvement, and stakeholder management) in the award-winning Sapphaya community-based social enterprise (CBSE), [32], we read the literature on CBTEs and important success factors of CBTEs prior to beginning fieldwork [32, 33]. We planned the in-depth interview procedures and data collecting with the assistance of the literature [33].

To address the study questions, multiple data gathering methods were often used. Numerous interviews with community stakeholders, such as local business owners, leaders, and citizens, produced the core data. In-depth interviews with relevant external stakeholders, including visitors and the CBTE award committees for the Thailand Rural Tourism Award 2020, [33, 34], were also used to gather the main data. Twenty willing participants in all provided the primary data. The study was carried out onsite and online between 2020 and 2021, during the COVID-19 epidemic [34].

Table 1: Examples of core categories, selected codes, and open codes. [34]

Data	Open Codes	Selective Codes	Core Categories
Following discussions with locals, village chiefs, and municipal officials, it was agreed to provide funding for a historical research project to examine the history of the Sapphaya people.	A1.1.1 investigating their ancestry	A1.1 Recognise the importance of tradition	A1 Making use of chances provided by nearby resources
"The Sapphaya Wattanaram temple and our community wished to commemorate the 2013 discovery of the old reclining Buddha figure. One of the rarest Buddha images is this one [37]. "During King Rama V's reign, approximately 120 years ago, [34], our old police station was constructed."	A1.1.2 Finding old data		
"We want to establish a learning centre in the former police station to teach us about our history, the evolution of our community, [39], and the connections between our religions and monarchy."	A1.2.1 using a historical location as a teaching hub	A1.2 Converting regional resources into tourist ones	
"Because our old police station is one of a kind that still stands in excellent condition, we decided to renovate it [36]."	A1.2.2 Renovating locations		
"We began our CBT at zero. Our expertise of tourism was nonexistent. "We travelled to many tourist destinations, like Sukhothai and Chiang Rai, to widen our horizons and persuade ourselves that, [38], despite our small size, we can grow it into a CBTE."	B1.1.1 Closing the proficiency gap in tourism	B.1.1 Developing Sapphaya's potential for tourism	B1 Capacity for leadership at Sapphaya CBTE

"We wanted to set ourselves apart from other CBTEs, and we believed that our speciality would be our traditional dishes, like Med Kanoon, Laab Plara, Choochi Pla, and Kang Bon [curry]." In actuality, [34, 39], Sapphaya is a location where traditional Thai sweets are made.	B1.1.2 Setting themselves out in the tourism market		
Thankfully, the Mahidol University tourism lecturer Dr. KT gave a session to the community leaders. We chose to employ her as a consultant because we loved her approach to training. She gave us instructions on how to enhance Sapphaya's tourism services. Thankfully, [34], we had assistance from qualified specialists. It enabled us to swiftly create our own Sapphaya Model by providing us with shortcuts for every lesson we had learnt [33].	B1.2.1 requesting guidance and knowledge from authorities	B1.2	Networking with other parties to gain access to opportunities and information
Numerous governmental and non-governmental organisations provided assistance to us. The Sapphaya Old Market restorations were aided in the beginning by the Sapphaya sub-district municipality, Sapphaya district community development office, and Chai Nat Provincial office [35].	B1.2.2 looking for outside assistance.		

Our analytical conclusions are anchored in grounded theory methodology. The development of the Sapphaya social business towards sustainable tourism is facilitated by the identification of the main sustainability drivers in this section, [37, 38], which include leadership and local participation. Begins with how the government-funded historical research project introduced the Sapphaya community to the possibility of community-based tourism [38, 39]. Next, we discussed in more detail the leadership and community involvement methods that turned Sapphaya into a nationally recognised CBTE of Thailand that has won awards [39, 40].

Findings

Local Heritage's Possibility

Since they believed they lacked any natural tourism resources, the town had little interest in tourism before to 2013. "We didn't think that Sapphaya had any tourism potential," remarked a local. But only after they had coincidentally discovered their community's past via government-funded historical study, did they set out to transform their village into a community-based tourism destination. The history of the old, somewhat rare, reclining Buddha figure (Figure 4) shocked the inhabitants [40, 41]. "Our community and the Sapphaya Wattanaram temple wanted to celebrate the discovery of the ancient reclining Buddha image in 2013," a community official said, describing the beginnings of the Sapphaya CBT. One of the rarest Buddha images is this one [34, 36]. We were able to determine what was best for our community thanks to government assistance [37, 38].



Fig. 4: The Buddha picture of Sapphaya lying down. [38]

Initiative for CBTE and Leadership

The authorities of the town and municipality desired to highlight these locations as tourist attractions. But because they had any expertise, experience, [38], or understanding in tourism, they were unsure of their ability to succeed as a community-based tourist destination [38].

“We began our CBT at zero. We knew nothing about tourism”,

Stated a local. As a result, they travelled to neighbouring regions with a strong community tourism industry and studied how these CBTEs ran Fig. 5 [38]. A CBT instructor made a statement:

“We travelled to a lot of tourist destinations, such Sukhothai and Chiang Rai, to widen our horizons and persuade ourselves that, despite our tiny town, we can grow it into a CBTE”.



Fig. 5: Old market and Pedestrian Street in Sapphaya. [38, 39]

Connecting with Outside Parties to Find Opportunities and Information

To revitalise the Sapphaya old market, the CBTE management team and executives cultivated relationships with other players, including academic institutions, corporate entities, and local governments. The Sapphaya Old Market Restoration Club was established in 2013 with assistance from several governmental and non-governmental organisations [38, 39]. To conserve the customs and historical legacy, the Sapphaya old market underwent restorations with assistance from the Sapphaya sub-district municipality, Sapphaya district community development office, and Chai Nat Provincial office [40, 42]. Academics from several universities, such as King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Mahidol University, and Suan Dusit University, promote learning and offer guidance, [42], materials, and workshops for applying CBT [43]. To promote the location, the Tourism Authority of Thailand provides funds and advertising. Committee (B) of the Sapphaya Community-Based Tourism Enterprise made the following observation on the function of outside assistance: "A significant amount of outside collaboration and partnership has been

utilised to advance Sapphaya Community-Based Tourism [43, 44]. The Sapphaya sub-district municipality facilitated our communication with specialists in a variety of fields, including history, management, marketing, and community tourism. Additionally, we collaborate with the Lopburi office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand to market the trip program and combine it with other neighbouring charming settlements [45].

Fostering Future Generation Engagement for CBT's Sustainability

The community leaders understood that in order to maintain the viability of the Sapphaya CBT, it was critical to involve all age groups living in the neighbourhood [44]. They focused more on educating Sapphaya's next generation and tried to instil in them a feeling of pride in and ownership over their community.

“Our vast history and culture are things we wish to protect. Thus, we consider how to transmit it to the following generation. Thus, we included this knowledge and material into the curriculum of the schools. The primary education office in the area helped us create the course, which covers Sapphaya's rich history, [44, 45], distinctive customs, and cultures that are possibly unique to the region. Our Sapphaya modules are now included in the primary school curriculum.”

—Head of Sapphaya community-based tourism enterprise

The Sapphaya course was created with collaboration and cooperation from academics and the government to instruct the next generation of students in schools [44]. There are two modules in the course. The first section covers Sapphaya's history.

Sharing Benefits

Members in the community who participate in CBT might profit more from tourism. Every participant concurred that the community's members are sharing fairly in the advantages that have resulted from CBT's success in the Sapphaya old market [46, 47]. The benefit-sharing program increases local residents' engagement and participation in the development and planning of tourism in their specialised areas [46]. Everyone survives when the group grows and grows. Households may now earn a consistent income from tourism, which also helps to revive the traditional home-grown market. Locals are open to taking part in neighbourhood initiatives. They support those projects with money, work, and time [47].

“The ancient market in Sapphaya Every home is informed about the advancements in social and economic growth via CBT. The local population shares and benefits from tourism [48]. Additionally, when more visitors attend the market, our community's image grows and local governments allocate more funds for neighbourhood-wide road improvements and direction signs.”

— Head of the community-based tourist business in Sapphaya

In conclusion, the active participation of local authorities, [48], leaders, and citizens who saw the potential of their historical places and customs contributed to the success of Sapphaya CBT. In order to create the CBTE swiftly, [48, 49], they also armed themselves with information about tourism and leveraged outside networks, including enterprises, government organisations, and consultants. Butler's Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) indicates that Sapphaya is now in the development phase [49]. Its success is mostly attributed to the external cooperation and assistance from the local government, colleges, and non-governmental organisations.

The Sapphaya green market and Pedestrian Street suffered greatly during the COVID-19 epidemic. Travel restrictions made it challenging for visitors to the market. Additionally, the market was stopped in accordance with the preventative measures mandated by the government as the number of COVID-19 infections surged significantly [49]. When compared to the market's pre-COVID-19 opening, the number of patrons fell precipitously. Both the quantity and value of tourists' expenditures have decreased since that

time [49, 50]. The committee and leader came up with the idea of selling the goods on social media and online. The Chai Nat office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, in collaboration with the sub district municipality and university scholars, offers financial support and guidance on online marketing [44]. It also opens shops in the e-marketplace and manages the ordering process from the point of customer satisfaction to product delivery.

“We may take advantage of the government's professional courses and new online and social media skills training during the COVID-19 epidemic. Our pedestrian street has been closed in accordance with the government's COVID-19 precautionary measures. Thus, the training aids in our community's search for an additional online and social media sales channel [48]. These new channels serve as a substitute sales channel to make up for the money that was lost.”

—Sapphaya community-based tourism enterprise's committee (B)

The Foundational Model of Local Engagement and Leadership Elements in CBTEs

We construct the model of how leadership and local involvement variables contribute to CBTE effectiveness from the examination of the Sapphaya example (Figure 6) [44]. First, using their own resources, communities identify potential for social entrepreneurship and tourism. These resources can be found in their social and cultural resources, such as their distinctive histories, artefacts, or tourist attractions, or in their natural resources, such as their gorgeous beaches, verdant woods, and picturesque landscapes [49]. This factor is displayed in Figure 9's Box a. In Sapphaya's example, the community's discovery of its history, traditions, and unique Buddha picture created an opportunity for their community-based social entrepreneurship.

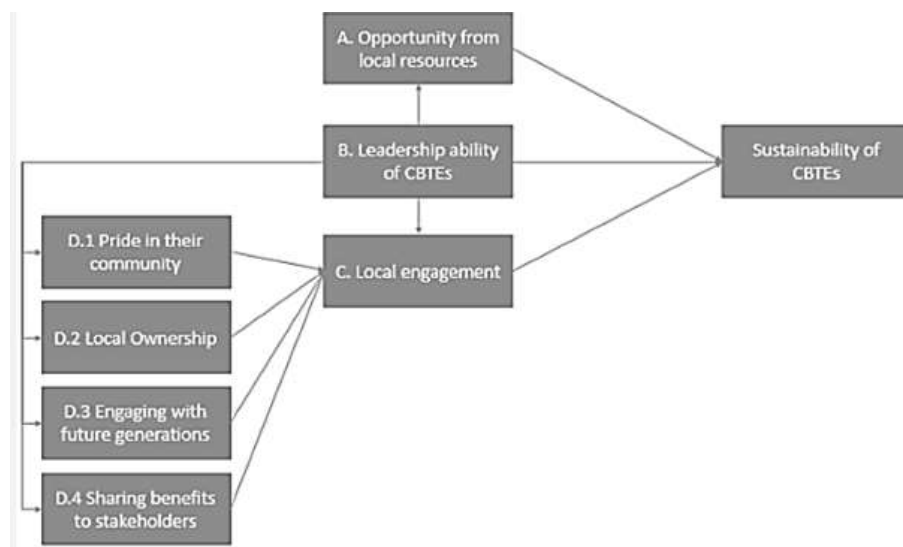


Fig. 6: New Leadership and Community Engagement Models to Promote CBTE Sustainability. [49]

Discussion

The main sustainability drivers for a sustainable social business at the Sapphaya CBTE have been uncovered by this study. In addition to breaking down the crucial steps involved in creating a successful CBTE, [38, 39], our article highlights the importance of leadership and local participation as success factors. Notably, [39], our investigation tackles the two research enquiries concerning:

- (1) How Sapphaya Community, a nationally recognised CBTE in Thailand, can create value through its enterprise and community leaders to promote sustainable community-based tourism, and

- (2) The CBTE's potential to boost neighbourhood involvement with several stakeholders [38].

We looked at how community leaders of Sapphaya, a nationally renowned CBTE in Thailand that has won awards, create value by valuing its historical and cultural assets for CBT tourism [39]. We also looked at how they foster local ownership and raise involvement in their CBTE. It was discovered that the leaders of Sapphaya CBTE were driven to establish the CBTE in order to protect their community's endowments (historical landmarks, cultural legacy, etc.) and offer a supplementary source of income for the locals [39, 40].

First, the results imply that CBTE leaders actively contribute to the creation of wealth, the appreciation of regional assets, and the direction of the CBTE's entrepreneurial endeavours. The entrepreneurial prospects were recognised by the community leadership team (e.g., maintaining the historical site of the 100-year-old police station of Sapphaya) [40, 41]. To create the community initiatives, they took chances and mobilised social capital—that is, the solidarity, feeling of community, and reciprocity among neighbours, family, friends, professionals, and government officials [41]. Therefore, our results are consistent with other research on community-based businesses, which revealed that a high social capital in the community serves as a strong basis for community entrepreneurial endeavours [42].

Second, the results emphasise how important local participation is to the CBTE at Sapphaya's viability and success. Our article examines the components of local involvement, such as pride, local ownership, engagement with future generations, and benefit sharing, even if these results may suggest that local engagement is an important success element of the CBTE [42]. It highlights the initiative of local authorities who recognised the potential of their local endowments—such as their heritage and traditional way of life—and the money from tourism. Thus, leaders' efforts to aggressively convey to the community members in both official and informal settings the aims, objectives, legacy, [42, 43], and advantages of CBTE have resulted in local participation.

Third, our study looks at how businesses achieve organisational sustainability and resilience in response to the need for more empirical research [43]. According to the theoretical model of organisational resilience proposed by Kantabutra and Ketprapakorn, a common vision, values, and sustainable mind-set are the sources of organisational resilience [43, 50].

Limitation and Future Work

The study offers a perceptive analysis and outcomes based on grounded theory. Nevertheless, the outcome is based on a single case study conducted at the crucial period (during the COVID-19 pandemic when the travelling control and lock-down policies were applied). Only the CBTE setting may benefit from the contextual discoveries and understandings. Therefore, it's possible that the CBTE results cannot be applied to other social enterprises or organisations in non-tourism-related industries. More case studies in different areas have to be carried out for comparative purposes in order to broaden our little knowledge and comprehension of creating viable social businesses within the framework of CBTE. Since every nation and area has unique local resources (such as natural resources, cultural resources, and social heritage) for tourism, we anticipate that CBTE leaders and communities will employ a variety of approaches to maximise the value of these resources and draw in visitors.

Furthermore, the cross-sectional data were only gathered in Thailand during the height of the COVID-19 epidemic. The primary method the researchers required to get data from a small number of stakeholders was online video conferencing. Nevertheless, in order to verify the information from the interviews and secondary sources regarding the Sapphaya CBTE, our team went to the site and engaged in the tourist attractions (such as the neighbourhood café, temple, former police station, local shops, and grocery store). In order to make comparisons, future study may gather more information through voluntary resident and visitor interviews conducted during popular travel seasons. The viewpoints of both visitors and locals would be useful in helping the CBTEs improve their tourism offers and interactions with locals. Additionally, having this knowledge would guarantee the long-term viability of CBTEs.

References

- Betz, David. 1998. CBMT: Aboriginal Art and Community-Based Tourism. Contribution to Community-Based Mountain Tourism Electronic Conference, Mountain Forum.
- Christ, C. 1998. "Taking Ecotourism to the Next Level, A Look at Private Sector Involvement with Local Communities." Ecotourism, A Guide for Planners & Manager. Volume
- Burlington, Vermont: The International Ecotourism Society. Drumm, A. 1998. "New Approaches to Community-based Ecotourism Management, Learning from Ecuador." Ecotourism, A Guide for Planners & Managers. Volume
- Burlington, Vermont: The International Ecotourism Society. Epler Wood, M. 1998. Making the Global Challenge of Community Participation in Ecotourism: Case Studies & Lessons from Ecuador. Washington D.C.: The Nature Conservancy.
- Epler Wood, M. and E. Halpenny. 2001. "Ecotourism certification and evaluation: progress and prospects" in X. Font and R. Buckley (eds). Ecolabels in tourism: certification and promotion of sustainable management. Wallingford, UK: CAB International.
- Grant, J. and A. Allcock. 1998. "National planning limitations, objectives and lessons: The development of Australia's National Ecotourism Strategy" in K. Lindber, M. Epler Wood and D. Engeldrum (eds). Ecotourism: A guide for planners and managers. Volume 2. Burlington, Vermont: The International Ecotourism Society
- Cohen, E. (2008). Explorations in Thai tourism: Collected case studies, Vol. 11. Bingley: Emerald.
- Cole, S. (2006a). Information and empowerment: The keys to achieving sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(6), 629–644.
- Cole, S. (2006b). Cultural tourism, community participation and empowerment. In M.K. Smith & M. Robinson (Eds.), *Cultural tourism in a changing world: Politics, participation and (Re) presentation* (pp. 89–103). Clevedon: Channel View.
- Dolezal, C. (2011). Community-based tourism in Thailand: (Dis-) illusions of authenticity and the necessity for dynamic concepts of culture and power. *ASEAS: Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 4(1), 129–138.
- Duffy, R., & Moore, L. (2011). Global regulations and local practices: The politics and governance of animal welfare in elephant tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(4–5), 589–604.
- Dwyer, L., & Edwards, D. (2000). Nature-based tourism on the edge of urban development. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 8(4), 267–287.
- Eagly, A., Johannesen-Schmidt, M., & Van Engen, M. (2003). Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(4), 569–591.
- France, L. (1998). Local participation in tourism in the West Indian islands. In E. Laws, H. Faulkner, & G. Moscardo (Eds.), *Embracing and managing change in tourism: International case studies* (pp. 227–238). London: Psychology Press.
- Giampiccoli, A., & Mtapuri, O. (2012). Community-based tourism: An exploration of the concept(s) from a political perspective. *Tourism Review International*, 16(1), 29–43.
- Goodwin, H., & Santilli, R. (2009). Community-based tourism: A success, ICRT Occasional Paper No. 11. Retrieved April 20, 2013.
- Elliot, J. (1983) 'Politics, power, and tourism in Thailand', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp.377–393.
- Kiss, A. (2004) 'Is community-based ecotourism a good use of biodiversity conservation funds?' *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, Vol. 19, No. 5, pp.232–237
- Suriyankietkaew, S.; Krittayaruangroj, K.; Iamsawan, N. Sustainable leadership practices and competencies of SMEs for sustainability and resilience: A community-based social enterprise study. *Sustainability* 2022, 14, 5762.
- Suriyankietkaew, S.; Nimsai, S. COVID-19 impacts and sustainability strategies for regional recovery in Southeast Asia: Challenges and opportunities. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 8907.
- World Tourism Organization. *Making Tourism More Sustainable—A Guide for Policy Makers*; World Tourism Organization: Madrid, Spain, 2005.
- Lane, B. Will sustainable tourism research be sustainable in the future? An opinion piece. *Tour. Manag. Perspect.* 2018, 25, 161–164.
- Galtung, J. (1996) 'On the social costs of modernization. Social disintegration, atomie/anomie and social development', *Development and Change*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp.379–413.
- Sonjai, N. P., Bushell, R., Hawkins, M., & Staiff, R. (2021). Community-based ecotourism: beyond authenticity and the commodification of local people. In *Stakeholders Management and Ecotourism* (pp. 50–65). Routledge.
- Palmer, N. J., & Chuamuangphan, N. (2021). Governance and local participation in ecotourism: community-level ecotourism stakeholders in Chiang Rai province, Thailand. In *Stakeholders management and ecotourism* (pp. 118–135). Routledge.
- Chatkaewnapanon, Y., & Lee, T. J. (2022). Planning sustainable community-based tourism in the context of Thailand: Community, development, and the foresight tools. *Sustainability*, 14(12), 7413.
- Fan, K. H. F., Ng, S. L., & Bayrak, M. M. (2023). Appraising the community in community-based tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(2–3), 594–614.
- Kontogeorgopoulos, N., Churyen, A., & Duangsaeng, V. (2014). Success factors in community-based tourism in Thailand: The role of luck, external support, and local leadership. *Tourism planning & development*, 11(1), 106–124.
- Satarat, N. (2010). Sustainable management of community-based tourism in Thailand. Bangkok: School of Public Administration, National Institute of Development Administration.
- Hewison, K. (2000) 'Resisting globalization: a study of localism in Thailand', *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp.279–296.
- Hipwell, W.T. (2007) 'Taiwan aboriginal ecotourism Tanayiku Natural Ecology Park', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp.876–897.

- Hiwasaki, L. (2006) 'Community-based tourism: a pathway to sustainability for Japan's protected areas', *Society & Natural Resources*, Vol. 19, No. 8, pp.675–692.
- Hustedde, R.J. (2009) 'Seven theories for seven community developers', in Phillips, R. and Pittman, R. (Eds.): *An Introduction to Community Development*, pp.20–37, Routledge, New York.
- Jamal, T., & Higham, J. (2021). Justice and ethics: Towards a new platform for tourism and sustainability. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(2–3), 143–157.
- Khanal, B. R., & Babar, J. T. (2007). Community Based Ecotourism.
- Kayat, K. (2008). Stakeholders' perspectives toward a community-based rural tourism development. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 1(2), Article 2.
- Lee, J., & Son, Y. (2016). Stakeholder Subjectives toward Ecotourism Development using Q methodology: The Case of Maha Ecotourism Site in Pyeongchang, Korea. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 21(8), 931–951.
- Mbaiwa, J. E. (2004). The socio-economic benefits and challenges of a community-based safari hunting tourism in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 15(2), 37–50.
- Munasinghe, M. (1993). *Environmental Economics and Sustainable Development*. World Bank Publications.
- Obua, J. (1997). The Potential, Development and Ecological Impact of Ecotourism in Kibale National Park, Uganda. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 50(1), 27–38.
- Jamal, T.B. and Getz, D. (1995) 'Collaboration theory and community tourism planning', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp.186–204.
- Joppe, M. (1996) 'Sustainable community tourism development revisited', *Tourism Management*, Vol. 17, No. 7, pp.475–479.
- Keogh, B. (1990) 'Public participation in community tourism planning', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp.449–465.
- Ibrahim, S. How to build collective capabilities: The 3C-model for grassroots-led development. *J. Hum. Dev. Capab.* 2017, 18, 197–222.
- Pansera, M.; Sarkar, S. Crafting sustainable development solutions: Frugal innovations of grassroots entrepreneurs. *Sustainability* 2016, 8, 51.
- Álvarez-García, J.; Durán-Sánchez, A.; De la Cruz Del Río-Rama, M. Scientific coverage in community-based tourism: Sustainable tourism and strategy for social development. *Sustainability* 2018, 10, 1158.
- Kontogeorgopoulos, N.; Churyen, A.; Duangsaeng, V. Success factors in community-based tourism in Thailand: The role of luck, external support, and local leadership. *Tour. Plan. Dev.* 2014, 11, 106–124.
- Bansal, S.; Garg, I.; Sharma, G.D. Social entrepreneurship as a path for social change and driver of sustainable development: A systematic review and research agenda. *Sustainability* 2019, 11, 1091.
- Hiwasaki, L. Community-based tourism: A pathway to sustainability for Japan's protected areas. *Soc. Nat. Resour.* 2006, 19, 675–692.
- Hallinger, P.; Suriyankietkaew, S. Science mapping of the knowledge base on sustainable leadership, 1990–2018. *Sustainability* 2018, 10, 4846.