

Household Participation in Community-Based Tourism Management in Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao PDR

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to investigate the following: 1) household participation; 2) factors relating to household participation; and 3) recommend guidelines for household participation promotion in community-based tourism management in Don Det village, Khong District, Champasak province, Lao PDR. Households were unit of analysis in this study and respondents in this study consisted of 104 households in Don Det village. A set of questionnaires passing content validity and reliability test was used for data collection. The reliability values of the questionnaire on attitude of the head of household was 0.78 and on household participation in community-based tourism management was 0.92.

Findings showed that household participation in community-based tourism management of Ban Don Det community, most of the respondents participated at a moderate level (mean = 3.00). The three aspects were also found at a moderate level: (1) participation in management community tourism activities (mean = 2.66); (2) participation in the process preparing communities to support tourism (mean = 2.67); (3) participation in evaluation from the tourism community activities (mean = 3.05). However, participation in benefiting from the tourism community activities was found at a high level (mean = 3.71).

Significant factors that could predict the relationships towards household participation in community-based tourism management were two independent variables: the number of household members involved in tourism and the attitude of the head of household were correlated with the household participation in the management of community-based tourism at a moderate level ($R = 0.449$, $P < 0.05$). This could explain the relationships between independent variables as mentioned and household participation in community-based tourism management with a statistical significance level of 20.20 percent.

The following were suggestions in the policy level: 1) There should have meetings in the village so that some people who are not involved in tourism get to know the tourism, importance of tourism and benefits of tourism; 2) Provincial Information, Culture and Tourism Office of Champasak Province should support and promote tourism marketing for Don Det village. And other suggestions were as follows: 1) There should be a mutually agreement upon sharing benefits to each individual household within the community as appropriately; 2) it should promote more people to be involved in community tourism; and 3) the training should be provided to educate people in the community about tourism management and should raise awareness about conservation of tourism resources in the community.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism, Household participation, Tourism Management

1. Introduction

Laos opened the door to international tourists relatively late compared to its neighboring countries. Tourism has played an increasing role in moving the country toward regional and global integration. Since the 1990s, Laos has experienced double digit growth in tourism and the industry became one of the top foreign exchange earners. Fortunately, the majority of tourism enterprises are characterized as family and locally owned (Harrison & Schipani, 2007). This implies that a large proportion of tourism income remains within the local economy later creates multiplier effects and enlarges capital stock for future investment. Community-based tourism (CBT) means that the local community operates the majority of tourism affairs within the tourism supply chain. Since the introduction of the Nam Ha Ecotourism Project in 1999, CBT has been promoted as a tool for nature conservation and fighting against poverty across the country. One of the obstacles that prevent CBT from fulfilling objectives is that the local communities, who have been regarded as the main beneficiaries, do not benefit enough from its development. Furthermore, it is often the case that the local people bear a larger proportion of the costs incurred from tourism development. Local communities play a major part in shaping the tourism image of a location, thus they must also be included in efforts to promote the items associated with it. (Pike, 2004). Other choices for tourism development have been prompted by the realization of how important local community involvement is in the creation of sustainable tourism destinations. Community-based tourism (CBT) is the term used to describe the substitute. The importance of community-based tourism is highlighted by Tosun and Timothy (2003) as a crucial component of sustainable tourist development. The primary goal of this strategy is to actively involve local communities in the planning and development of tourism. While the creation of sustainable tourism destinations is thought to be possible in theory when local communities participate in the tourism industry, in reality.

Don Det Village is a village that has the potential of tourism resources such as natural, historical, cultural and local wisdom resources suitable for developing into a tourist destination, both man-made and naturally occurring tourist destinations. Another option for tourists traveling to Don Det Island Village, Champasak Province is to speed up the importance of developing those resources into the tourism industry at the central, provincial, district and local levels Within Don Det Island village to become a tourist destination with systematic management, starting from gathering the opinions of the people within the community to see the importance and benefits of bringing tourism as a tool for community development which has an effect on the economy, society and the environment of the community. Therefore, there should really be a survey to design tourism activities to suit the tourism resources in that area and implement them with government investment under the sustainable tourism development program.

The famous tourist products of Don Det village and known to domestic and foreign tourists are Li Phi Waterfalls (Tat Somphamit), Old French Railway Bridge, Mekong river, Khong Phapheng Waterfalls, Don Khon Island, Wat Khon Tai, Local villages, Sunset viewpoints, Don Det beach, Local markets, Irrawaddy dolphin spotting. The Mekong River can be explored by kayak, canoeing, kayak tours, swimming, tubing, hiking, fishing, lounging, visiting local temples, local markets, and festivals, among other tourist activities. Motels, guesthouses, Riverside Bungalows, and homestays are available as tourist amenities.

Despite the recognized potential for economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation through community-based tourism (CBT), the level of household participation remains

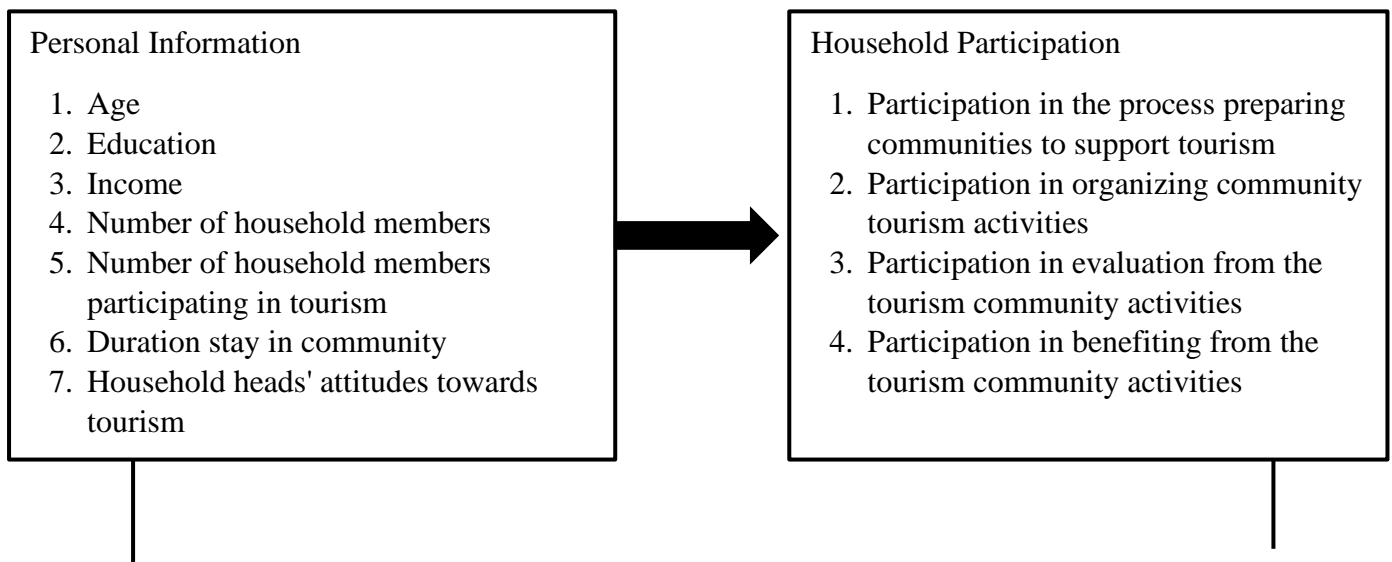
notably insufficient, leading to several pressing challenges that need to be addressed comprehensively. The limited engagement of local households in tourism management and activities is not only resulting in significant economic disparities, where many households are unable to benefit financially from the tourism industry due to a lack of involvement and the necessary skills, but also posing risks to the preservation of the local culture and environment, as the community's underinvestment in tourism activities may lead to cultural erosion and environmental degradation, ultimately undermining the sustainability of tourism in the long run. Additionally, the village faces infrastructural challenges, as it currently lacks the necessary facilities to support an influx of tourists, which adversely affects the quality of tourist experiences and the daily lives of residents. Furthermore, many households are not adequately informed or trained in sustainable tourism practices, hospitality management, and effective marketing strategies, which limits their ability to participate meaningfully in the tourism sector. Finally, the inequitable distribution of tourism benefits creates social inequalities and potential conflicts within the community, highlighting the need for a comprehensive strategy to enhance household participation in CBT, focusing on capacity building, infrastructure development, inclusive decision-making, and equitable benefit-sharing to ensure that all community members can contribute to and benefit from sustainable tourism development. Therefore, researchers are interested in investigating the level and nature of family participation in community-based tourism management and exploring ways to enhance family involvement in managing tourism activities, including accommodation services, cultural tourism, and other tourism activities, to promote sustainable tourism development.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To study household participation in community tourism management, Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao PDR.
2. To study factors related to household participation in community tourism management, Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao PDR.
3. To recommend guidelines for household participation promotion in community-based tourism management.

Conceptual Frame Work

Independent Variable





2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

In this study will be use the quantitative methods. For the quantitative data, a questionnaire will be drafted following our research objectives for use in collecting data and providing input to the analysis process.

2.2. Research population and sampling

2.2.1. Population

According to the data from the villager of Don Det, there are 145 households, (Source: Don Det Village Headman, Khong District, Champasak Province, September 14, 2023) Because Don Det Village has more potential and prominence in community tourism management than other villages in Khong District, the researcher decided to focus on this village after conducting an initial survey.

2.2.2. Sampling

The sample group used in this study was representatives of households involved in community tourism in Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, which had a total population of 145 households. Since this research will use a quantitative research design to obtain a sample group because there were too many households to collect data, the appropriate sample size was determined by using the sample determination table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Therefore, the sample group used in this research was 104 households, which was selected using the systematic random sampling method. The head of the household was assigned to be the representative to answer the questionnaire. Data were collected until all 104 households were collected.

2.3. Research instruments

In this research, the researcher used a questionnaire and focus group discussion as a data collection tool. The quality of the questionnaire was tested for content validity and reliability to ensure it accurately measured the variables under study.

The test results showed that the reliability of the questionnaire on the attitude of the household head was 0.78 and the participation was 0.92, which was higher than the standard criteria of 0.70. This indicates that the questionnaire is stable and can be used to collect data from the informants.

2.4. Data Analysis

A study of household participation in community tourism management in Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic. The researcher will use statistical tools to analyze the data. The obtained data are analyzed and processed statistically using a computer program. The analysis is performed according to the following steps:

2.4.1. Descriptive statistics analysis, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The researcher analyzed according to the theoretical concept and presented in the form of tables and accompanying discussions.

2.4.2. Inferential statistics analysis using reference statistics to find values. Multiple regression analysis to analyze household participation in community tourism management and factors affecting household participation in community tourism management at Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province.

3. Research findings

3.1. Personal Information of Respondents

Table 1 Persona Data

Personal Data	Respondents (N = 104)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Age	104	100.00
Under 30 years	6	5.77
31-40 years	25	24.04
41-50 years	34	32.69
51-60 years	25	24.04
Over 60 years	14	13.46
Education	104	100.00
Primarily school	45	43.27
Secondary school	30	28.85
Upper secondary	13	12.50
Bachelor	16	15.38
Higher than bachelors	0	0
Duration stay in community	104	100.00
Under 20 years	15	14.42
21-30 years	30	28.85
31-40 years	23	22.12
41-50 years	16	15.38
Over 50 years	20	19.23
Member in family	104	100.00
Less 3 people	10	9.6
4-6 people	52	50.0
More than 6 people	42	40.04
Number of household members participating in tourism	104	100.00
Less 2 people	61	58.7
3-4 people	32	30.8
More than 4 people	11	10.6
Monthly income	104	100.00
Less 500,000 KIP	34	32.69
500,001 – 1,000,000 KIP	26	25.00
1,000,001 – 2,000,000 KIP	20	19.23
2,000,001 – 3,000,000 KIP	12	11.54

3,000,001 – 4,000,000 KIP	8	7.69
More than 4,000,000 KIP	4	3.85

3.2. Household participation in community-based tourism management.

Table 2: Household participation in community-based tourism management in Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao PDR.

Household participation in community-based tourism management in Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao PDR.	Respondents (N = 104)		
	\bar{X}	S.D	Participation Level
1. Participation in the process preparing communities to support tourism	2.67	0.22	Moderately
2. Participation in management community tourism activities	2.66	0.47	Moderately
3. Participation in evaluation from the tourism community activities	3.05	0.39	Moderately
4. Participation in benefiting from the tourism community activities	3.63	0.24	Moderately
Total	3.00	0.33	Moderately

The research findings indicate that household participation in community-based tourism management in Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao PDR, was moderate across various aspects. Participation in preparing communities for tourism scored a mean of 2.67, in management activities 2.66, and in evaluating tourism activities 3.05, all at moderate levels. The highest engagement was observed in benefiting from tourism activities (mean = 3.63), suggesting that households are more involved in the outcome of tourism rather than in strategic roles such as planning and management. Overall, the total participation level averaged at 3.00, reflecting a moderate degree of community participation. These findings align with more recent research in the field. A study by Ndagijimana et al. (2017) emphasized that while local communities benefit from tourism, their involvement in planning and management remains limited, much like in Don Det Village. Rasoolimanesh et al. (2017) found that residents' participation in tourism development is often hindered by a lack of empowerment and decision-making roles, highlighting the importance of inclusive governance to foster stronger community engagement. Similarly, Stone et al. (2019) identified that communities tend to engage more in the economic benefits of tourism rather than in the management or evaluation phases, which mirrors the findings from Don Det Village. Recent work by Thongma et al. (2022) also emphasizes the need for capacity building and community education to enhance participation in all stages of tourism management, supporting the notion that Don Det Village's residents may require further opportunities and training to actively contribute to tourism management processes.

Table 3: Participation in the process preparing communities to support tourism

Participation in the process preparing communities to support tourism	Respondents (N = 104)		
	\bar{X}	S.D	Participation Level
1. Have you or any household member attended a community meeting about community tourism?	3.21	1.1	Moderately

2. Participate in the establishment of groups/organizations related to tourism in the community.	2.35	1.65	Moderately
3. Participate in the planning meeting for community tourism activities	2.60	0.21	Moderately
4. Participate in setting tourism regulations in the community.	2.20	1.72	Moderately
5. Participate in developing tourism routes of the community	2.34	1.59	Moderately
6. Participate in training on tourism	3.34	1.34	Moderately
Total	2.67	1.34	Moderately

The findings in table 3 indicated that overall community participation in tourism preparedness processes was classified as moderate. The highest level of engagement was identified in participation in tourism-related training initiatives (mean = 3.3). This was followed by involvement in the formation of tourism-related groups or organizations within the community (mean = 2.60). Participation in the development of community tourism routes recorded (mean = 2.34). Additionally, household attendance at community meetings concerning tourism registered (mean = 3.21). The lowest level of engagement was noted in participation in the formulation of tourism regulations within the community, which produced (mean = 2.20). The study results indicated that community participation in organizing tourism activities in Don Det village was moderate, primarily limited to household members. Participation in tourism services such as accommodation, food and beverage provision, and souvenir production was low. This aligns with the framework by Suwana Mongkhon, & Pathan. (1985), which categorizes participation into four types: decision-making, operations, benefit sharing, and monitoring and evaluation.

Table 4: Participation in management community tourism activities

Participation in management community tourism activities	Respondents (N = 104)		
	\bar{X}	S.D	Participation Level
1. Participate in providing tour services to community tourist attractions, such as Kayaking, Boat Trips and visiting waterfalls.	3.54	1.23	High
2. Participate in providing accommodation services to tourists within the community	3.44	0.32	High
3. Participate in providing food and beverage services to tourists	3.23	0.12	Moderately
4. Participate in the production and distribution of souvenir products for tourists.	3.25	0.34	Moderately
5. Participate in providing explanations or knowledge to tourists in tourist attractions	2.52	0.34	Moderately
Total	2.66	0.39	Moderately

The findings in Table 4 indicate that community participation in managing tourism activities is generally moderate overall (mean = 2.66). The highest participation levels were found in providing tour services to tourist attractions such as Kayaking, Boat Trips and visiting waterfalls (mean = 3.54) and accommodation services (mean = 3.44), both categorized as high. These results are consistent with research by Tosun (2006) and Mtapuri & Giampiccoli (2013), which suggest that communities often engage more actively

in tourism activities that generate direct financial benefits. Participation in food and beverage services (mean = 3.23) and the production and distribution of souvenirs (mean = 3.25) were rated as moderate, which may be due to challenges related to limited resources and skills, as supported by Ashley & Roe (2002). The lowest participation was observed in providing explanations or knowledge to tourists (mean = 2.52), which aligns with the findings of Su & Wall (2009), who note that communities often face barriers such as lack of training and language limitations in educational roles. Overall, these results reflect the common patterns of community engagement in tourism, where operational roles dominate over decision-making and monitoring, as outlined by Patan Suwana Mongkol’s (1983) participation framework. This highlights the need for capacity-building and training programs to enhance community involvement in all aspects of tourism management, particularly in educational and interpretive roles.

Table 5: Participation in evaluation from the tourism community activities

Participation in evaluation from the tourism community activities	Respondents (N = 104)		
	\bar{X}	S.D	Participation Level
1. Participate in monitoring and evaluating the conservation of community tourism resources	3.21	0.23	Moderately
2. Participate in evaluating the assessment of the capacity to support community tourists	2.31	0.32	Moderately
3. Participate in considering positive and negative impacts on community tourism.	3.12	0.11	Moderately
4. Participate in monitoring and evaluating various community activities.	3.25	0.43	Moderately
5. Participate in the assessment of tourist safety	3.40	0.02	Moderately
Total	3.05	0.22	Moderately

The findings in table 5 demonstrate that the level of community participation in tourism management activities is predominantly moderate, with significant engagement observed in specific areas such as providing tour services (mean = 3.54) and accommodation services (mean = 3.44), both of which are rated as 'Very High.' However, participation in other activities, such as food and beverage services (mean = 3.23), souvenir production and distribution (mean = 3.25), and providing explanations or knowledge to tourists (mean = 2.52), is characterized as 'Moderate.' The overall participation score (mean = 2.66) suggests that while there is some level of community involvement, it remains moderate across most activities. These findings align with the body of literature on community participation in tourism. Tosun (2006) highlights the critical role of community involvement in ensuring sustainable tourism development, arguing that higher participation fosters local ownership of tourism projects, thereby enhancing economic benefits and preserving cultural and natural resources. Pretty (1995) adds that the depth of participation significantly impacts project success, with active engagement, especially in service provision-contributing to greater long-term sustainability and satisfaction for both tourists and the local community. Similarly, Okazaki (2008) emphasizes that the inclusion of local stakeholders in tourism services not only improves the tourist experience but also ensures that the benefits of tourism are more evenly distributed within the community, thus promoting social equity.

Table 6 Participation in benefiting from the tourism community activities

Participation in benefiting from the tourism community activities	Respondents (N = 104)		
	\bar{X}	S.D	Participation Level
1. Participate in receiving benefits from participating in groups related to community tourism equally among group members.	3.23	0.32	Moderately
2. Receive development in education, training, knowledge and assistance from the community.	3.32	0.34	Moderately
3. Receive knowledge from tourists to develop community tourism activities.	3.34	0.25	Moderately
4. Participate in receiving benefits from tourism activities such: cycling around village, boat tours, trekking and natural walks.	3.51	0.18	High
5. Participate in facilitating community lifestyles.	3.41	0.21	Moderately
Total	3.63	0.62	Moderately

The findings in Table 6 indicate that community participation in benefiting from tourism activities is moderate overall (mean = 3.63). The highest level of participation was observed in receiving benefits from engaging in tourism activities like cycling tours, boat tours, trekking, and nature walks (mean = 3.51), categorized as high. This result is consistent with studies by Scheyvens (1999), who emphasized that active participation in tourism activities tends to result in greater economic and social benefits for the local population. Moderate levels of participation were observed in receiving knowledge from tourists to develop community tourism activities (mean = 3.34), receiving development through education, training, and knowledge (mean = 3.32), and benefiting from participation in community tourism groups (mean = 3.23). This aligns with research by Ashley & Roe (2002), which points out that while communities often gain knowledge and skills from tourism, the depth and sustainability of these benefits depend on the extent of their involvement and access to external resources. Lastly, participation in facilitating community lifestyles (mean = 3.41) also rated moderately, suggesting that tourism contributes to maintaining and supporting local ways of life, a finding that mirrors studies like Su & Wall (2009), which underscore the importance of integrating tourism with local cultural and social structures. The results emphasize the need for continued support and training to help communities maximize their benefits from tourism activities and ensure equitable distribution of those benefits across different sectors of the community.

3.3. Factors related to household participation in community tourism management Don Det Village, Khong District, Champasak Province, Lao PDR

In analyzing the factors related to household participation in community tourism management, the researcher analyzed the data by performing the analysis in steps. The first step is to select factors to enter the multiple regression analysis equation by analyzing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between the independent variables to study whether the independent variables used in the study are independent of each other or not. If the independent variables are highly correlated or independent of each other, it will cause a multicollinearity problem and cannot be analyzed in a stepwise multiple regression analysis. The results of the analysis of the relationship between the independent variables found that the independent variables were correlated between -0.194-0.409, as detailed in Table 7.

Table 7: Pairwise relationships between independent variables

Independent Variable	X1	X1	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7
X1	1						
X2	-.155	1					
X3	.409	.036	1				
X4	-.003	.071	-.007	1			
X5	.061	-.083	.105	.193	1		
X6	.081	.101	.194	1.68	.049	1	
X7	.000	-.194	.050	.074	.337	-.069	1

Where:

X1 = Age

X2 = Education level

X3 = Duration of living in the community

X4 = Number of household members

X5 = Number of household members participating in tourism

X6 = Household income

X7 = Attitude of the household head towards tourism

From the selection of independent variables into the stepwise multiple regression analysis by analyzing the internal relationship between the independent variables, it was found that the correlation coefficient was between -0.003 - 0.409, which is a low to moderate value. When considering the relationship of the independent variables, it was found that all 7 independent variables had a low to moderate relationship, even though the independent variables had a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level. However, when considering the correlation coefficient, it was found that it did not exceed 0.80. Therefore, the researcher entered all independent variables into the stepwise multiple regression equation using the following symbols for analysis:

The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis found that age (X1), education level (X2), duration of residence in the community (X3), number of household members (X4), and household income (X6) were not significantly related to household participation in community tourism management. Therefore, the researcher eliminated the variables age (X1), education level (X2), duration of residence in the community (X3), number of household members (X4), and household income (X6), and then used the remaining variables, number of household members participating in tourism (X5) and attitude of the household head (X7), to analyze the stepwise multiple regression equation because they are variables that are moderately related to household participation in community tourism management ($R = 0.449$), which can explain the relationship with household participation in community tourism management by 20.20 percent with statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($R^2 = 0.202$; $\alpha 0.05$), as detailed in Table 8.

Table 8 Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of factors related to household participation in community tourism management.

Variable	Step 1		Step 2	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Number of household members participating in tourism (X5)	0.227	0.346	0.160	0.243
Attitude of the household head toward tourism (X7)			0.623	0.304

Constant	2.741	0.173
R	0.346	0.449
R²	0.119	0.202
F	13.839	12.745

From Table 8 in step 2, when considering the standardized regression coefficient (Beta) entered into the stepwise multiple regression equation, it was found that each variable was related to household participation in community tourism management as follows: The number of household members participating in tourism had a positive relationship with household participation in community tourism management with statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($\beta=0.243$; $\alpha=0.05$), meaning that if a household has many household members participating in tourism, there is a tendency for household participation in community tourism management to be high. Meanwhile, the attitude of the household head had a positive relationship with household participation in community tourism management with statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($\beta=0.304$; $\alpha=0.05$), meaning that if the head of the household had a high attitude towards tourism, there was a tendency for household participation in community tourism management to be high. In addition, the stepwise multiple regression analysis in Table 8 also found the significance levels of the variables as follows:

Step 1: The number of household members participating in tourism can explain 11.90 percent of the variation in household participation in community tourism management (R^2 in step 1 = 0.119; P 0.05)

Step 2: When the factors of the number of household members participating in tourism and the attitude of the household head are used together, it was found that the two variables together explain 20.20 percent of the variation in participation in community tourism management (R^2 in step 2 = 0.202; P 0.05), with the attitude of the household head able to explain an additional 8.3 percent (R^2 change = 8.3; P 0.05).

From the analysis of factors related to household participation in community tourism management according to the above steps, it can be seen that the variable that can explain the relationship that affects household participation in community tourism management the most is the attitude of the household head, followed by the number of household members who participate in tourism. The factors that can explain the relationship that affects household participation in community tourism management increase at a rate that decreases in order.

The study found that the variable that can explain the relationship that affects household participation in community tourism management is the number of household members who participate in tourism. Since the number of household members who participate in tourism is a person who directly works in tourism-related areas, it will have an influence on household participation in community tourism management, which is consistent with Weerapon Thongma (2011) Household members who work in tourism-related occupations are stakeholders in tourism. Participation in tourism activities generates income from tourism. In addition, the number of household members who work in tourism-related occupations also reflects the demand for labor in tourism activities in the area. The expansion of tourism creates a demand for labor, creates jobs and careers, and causes household members to enter tourism-related occupations. The number of household members who participate in tourism is a factor that influences household participation in community tourism management.

3.4. Suggesting guidelines for promoting household participation in community-based tourism management Don Det village.

1. There should have meetings in the village so that some people who are not involved in tourism get to

- know the tourism, importance of tourism and benefits of tourism;
2. Provincial Information, Culture and Tourism Office of Champasak Province should support and promote tourism marketing for Don Det village. And other suggestions were as follows:
 3. There should be a mutually agreement upon sharing benefits to each individual household within the community as appropriately;
 4. It should promote more people to be involved in community tourism; and 5) the training should be provided to educate people in the community about tourism management and should raise awareness about conservation of tourism resources in the community.

4. Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to SERA Grants for their generous financial support, without which this research would not have been possible. Their dedication to advancing academic research and promoting innovation has been a driving force behind this work, and I am deeply appreciative of their trust in my project.

I would also like to express my deepest thanks to my academic advisor, whose expert guidance and constructive feedback helped shape this research. Their encouragement and insights were invaluable in navigating the challenges and complexities of this study.

Special thanks to the participants who contributed their time and knowledge, as their input was essential in achieving the objectives of this research. I am also grateful to my colleagues and friends for their support and collaboration during this journey.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the unwavering support of my family, whose patience, encouragement, and belief in my work have been a source of inspiration throughout this process.

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