



# Managing the Sharing Economy in Thailand's Tourism Industry: Strategic Approaches from Phuket Province



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### Abstract

This research is a qualitative study aiming to 1) examine the current state of the sharing economy business in tourism, 2) explore the economic, social, and legal contexts influencing the sharing economy business in tourism, and 3) propose management strategies for the digital and post-pandemic era. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and focus groups with private sector stakeholders, government agencies, academics, tourism representatives, and local communities. Findings reveal the rising popularity of sharing economy business, especially in food services, transportation, and accommodation, driven by convenience and changing consumer behavior. However, challenges remain, particularly in regulatory clarity, management, and quality control. To strengthen the sector's sustainability and competitiveness, the study recommends developing clear legal frameworks, specialized governance structures, and standardized quality measures.

**Keywords :** Sharing economy business, tourism management, strategic management approach

### Introduction

The sharing economy has transformed the global tourism industry by offering alternative services in accommodation, transportation, and food through digital platforms (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Cheng, 2016). It has rapidly gained momentum in recent years, especially within the tourism industry by leveraging digital technologies to facilitate the exchange of goods and services between providers and consumers. This model has been widely adopted in accommodation services through

platforms like Airbnb and in transportation via services such as Uber and Grab. The growth of these platforms reflects a shift in consumer behavior with tourists seeking affordable, convenient, and unique experiences (Zervas et al., 2015). However, the rise of sharing economy business has impacted traditional tourism businesses, particularly legally regulated accommodations with a decline in revenue, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hossain, 2020). However, despite their benefits and rapid expansion, the sharing economy business operates in a regulatory gray area, leading to challenges related to legal oversight, competition with traditional businesses, and service quality standards, which can affect service quality (Edelman & Geradin, 2018). Without appropriate regulatory frameworks, the continued growth of these platforms may compromise service standards and the long-term sustainability of destinations. It is important to distinguish between two transformative forces influencing the tourism industry nowadays: the digital age and the post-pandemic era. The digital age refers to the ongoing evolution of business models driven by technology, which is characterized by widespread adoption of digital platforms, mobile apps, and big data in service delivery. On the other hand, the post-pandemic era signifies the period following the COVID-19 outbreak during which tourism businesses have had to adapt to new health standards, shifts in consumer expectations, and the need for greater business resilience. While these forces are interconnected, they stem from distinct drivers, which are technological advancements versus socio-economic disruption related to heal, and require different strategic responses.

In Phuket, a major tourism destination in Thailand, sharing economy business has gained popularity due to its affordability and convenience, appealing to both tourists and local communities (Dolnicar, 2019). The rise of sharing economy platforms has resulted in a significant increase in the number of available accommodations, affecting local hotels and leading to a loss in tax revenue. While the sharing economy offers new opportunities for both entrepreneurs and tourists, it faces challenges in regard to the lack of clear regulations and standards, which could affect the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry. (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byers, 2017). Governments and tourism authorities worldwide have struggled to balance the benefits of the sharing economy with the need for regulatory oversight and destination management (Frenken & Schor, 2017). Therefore, this research aims to explore the aforementioned issues in regard to the Phuket tourism industry with a focus on how to manage and regulate sharing economy business to minimize negative impacts on traditional tourism operations and to enhance management efficiency in the digital age and post-COVID era.

## Research Objectives

1. To examine the current situation of sharing economy business in Phuket's tourism industry.
2. To analyze the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal contexts related to sharing economy business in the tourism industry.

3. To propose management strategies for sharing economy business in Phuket's tourism industry categorized according to long-term digital transformation trends and post-pandemic recovery needs.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Sharing Economy**

The sharing economy has reshaped many industries including tourism by offering alternatives to traditional services such as accommodation, transportation, and food. In tourism, the sharing economy is defined by peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms which allow individuals to share goods and services directly with consumers, bypassing traditional businesses (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). These platforms have grown significantly, driven by consumer demand for more affordable, convenient, and unique experiences (Cheng, 2016). The development of digital technologies such as mobile applications, real-time booking systems, AI recommendations, and user-generated content has fueled the growth of the sharing economy in what is commonly referred to as the digital age. This era is characterized by rapid technological innovation and the increasing integration of digital tools into everyday life, which has enabled sharing platforms to scale rapidly and reach global audiences. The study of Lutz and Newlands (2018), highlighted the growing popularity of platforms like Airbnb. However, consumer segments within the sharing economy vary, with some tourists preferring the personal touch of private accommodations while others are attracted by lower cost. This segmentation is critical in understanding how sharing economy business is reshaping the tourism business. According to Zhang et al. (2025), tourists increasingly seek experiences that are more personalized and reflective of local culture, which is often provided by sharing economy businesses. However, the rapid rise of sharing economy platforms has led to challenges for traditional tourism, particularly hotels, which have faced revenue declines as some platforms offer lower prices (Fang, Ye, & Law, 2016). The post-pandemic era further intensified these challenges as the COVID-19 crisis brought heightened awareness of health and safety, shifting tourist behavior and accelerating the need for contactless service, enhanced hygiene measures, and business resilience. Such new expectations forced sharing economy platforms to adapt quickly to maintain user trust and operational continuity. Furthermore, the rapid growth of the sharing economy has raised concerns about regulatory oversight, legal compliance, and the enforcement of service quality standards which could affect both consumers and businesses in the tourism sector (Edelman & Geradin, 2018). Nevertheless, sharing economy platforms are fundamentally transforming the tourism industry, making it essential for scholars and industry professionals to examine their impact more closely.

### **Management Strategies for Sharing Economy Business in the Tourism Industry**

The continued growth of sharing economy business in tourism calls for effective management strategies that ensure their sustainability and address regulatory challenges.

According to Cakmak, Lie, and McCabe (2018), one key strategy is fostering collaboration between sharing economy platforms and local authorities to establish a balanced regulatory framework which would ensure legal compliance, tax collection, and fair competitive while preserving the flexibility and innovation that characterize the sharing economy. In the digital age, embracing advanced digital tools is essential for enhancing customer experiences and optimizing operations. Platforms increasingly use data analytics to understand consumer preferences, forecast demand, and personalize services, resulting in improving competitiveness and enhanced customer satisfaction (Frenken & Schor, 2017). Post-COVID, tourists have become more conscious of health and safety, making it essential for sharing economy platforms to implement strict hygiene protocols and demonstrate their commitment to consumer protection. In addition, sustainable practices should be integrated into the business models of sharing economy platforms. Sigala (2017), emphasized the need for businesses to adopt eco-friendly policies, such as reducing carbon footprints and promoting local sourcing, which aligns with the growing consumer demand for environmentally conscious travel options. Furthermore, platforms should ensure that they are contributing positively to local communities, especially in terms of supporting local businesses and promoting community-based tourism (Fang, Ye, & Law, 2016). Finally, fostering collaboration between sharing economy businesses and traditional tourism entities can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes. Combining the strengths of both sectors can provide tourists with a wider range of services while reducing the tensions between these two business models (Edelman & Geradin, 2018). For example, hybrid models that incorporate elements from both sectors could help to bridge the gap and create a more cohesive tourism ecosystem.

## **Concept of Value Co-Creation (VCC) in the Sharing Economy and Tourism Industry**

Value Co-Creation (VCC) is a fundamental concept in the sharing economy where consumers and service providers collaborate to create value together rather than simply exchanging goods and services, emphasizing the active role of consumers in the production of services and experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). VCC in a tourism context refers to the collaboration between tourists, local communities, and service providers to create unique and personalized experiences that benefit all parties (Pera, Viglia, Furlan, & Fede, 2016). In the tourism industry, VCC is particularly relevant as it allows for more flexible, personalized, and authentic experiences. Tourists are not passive consumers but are actively involved in creating the experiences they seek, often through interactions with hosts or service providers (Sigala, 2017). For example, some platforms enable tourists to connect with hosts who offer not only accommodation, but also local experiences, such as guided tours or cultural exchanges, creating a sense of mutual value (Cheng, 2016). The digital age has significantly accelerated the adoption and effectiveness of VCC in tourism. Digital platforms provide the infrastructure that facilitates seamless communication between tourists and providers, supports real-time feedback mechanisms, and

enables personalized service customization based on user data. According to Lutz and Newlands (2018), some platforms allow consumers to engage directly with service providers, where their preferences and feedback influence the experience and, consequently, the value derived from it. This type of co-creation helps to build a stronger connection between the consumer and the destination, leading to higher satisfaction and loyalty (Heo, 2016). Nevertheless, the success of VCC depends on the quality of interaction and the ability of platforms to manage relationships effectively. Poor communication, misunderstandings, or unmet expectations can detract from the co-creation process and lead to negative experiences for both tourists and service providers (Pera et al., 2016). Therefore, it is essential for sharing economy platforms in the tourism sector to develop mechanisms that facilitate and enhance the co-creation process while ensuring high service standards. In the post-COVID era, VCC is particularly important as tourists now seek more authentic and personalized experiences that meet their evolving needs and preferences, which is crucial to the recovery of the tourism sector. As Cheng (2016) suggested, tourism platforms must integrate VCC principles to maintain competitiveness and relevance in the digital age.

Although the existing literature has explored the development of the sharing economy, management strategies, and value co-creation in tourism, most studies tend to focus on global or Western contexts with a significant gap in knowledge in specific regions, particularly in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, few studies have integrated the three dimensions of trends, strategies, and co-creation within a single framework that captures the post-pandemic realities encountered by tourism businesses in Thailand. Current research may overlook how these concepts play out in community-based tourism settings where local culture, informal networks, and regulatory ambiguities heavily influence business practices. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by exploring the sharing economy in Phuket's tourism industry by highlighting how local businesses navigate digital transformation, co-create value with tourists, and adopt management strategies that align with the evolving demands of the digital age and the post-pandemic era.

## Research Methodology

1. **Research Type:** This research employed a qualitative approach to examine the impact of the sharing economy on the tourism industry in Phuket. The methodology included semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to understand the current state of the sharing economy and to explore relevant contexts.

2. **Population and Samples:** A purposive sampling technique was employed to select key informants and stakeholders with extensive experience and direct involvement in Phuket's sharing economy. The key informants were carefully categorized into four groups: 1) private sector/business representatives to provide firsthand information on operational challenges, market trends,

and strategic responses within the sharing economy business environment; 2) the government sector to understand the regulatory environment, compliance challenges, and efforts to balance innovation with public interest; 3) tourism agencies in Phuket as they influence tourism development and marketing strategies, and 4) academic representatives to provide analytical insights and to contextualize findings in regard to existing theory and empirical evidence.

2.1 In-depth interviews: the sample consisted of key informants who had at least five years' experience in the tourism industry in Phuket and were directly involved in the sharing economy. 26 participants were selected from four groups: the private sector/business representatives, government and tourism related-agencies, tourism agencies in Phuket, and academic representatives.

2.2 Focus group discussion: The sample consisted of stakeholders who had at least two years' experience in the tourism industry and were directly impacted by the sharing economy. The 15 participants were designated into three groups: the private sector, the government sector, and tourism communities.

3. Research Instrument: This study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews with questions focused on Phuket's tourism industry experiences, challenges and impacts and a discussion framework for the focus group.

#### 4. Data Collection

4.1 In-depth interviews were employed to gather detailed insights from key informants, particularly those with extensive experience in the tourism industry in Phuket. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face or via digital platforms, depending on the participants' availability.

4.2 Focus group interviews were conducted with experts and stakeholders directly affected by the sharing economy in Phuket. These groups consisted of individuals with at least two years' experience in the tourism industry. The aim is to identify common themes, challenges, and perspectives related to the sharing economy from different sectors, including the private sector, the government sector, and tourism communities.

5. Data Analysis: This research employed two key data analysis techniques as follows.

5.1 Interpretative analysis was conducted based on recorded interview data, drawing insights from observable phenomena and multiple related events. Data triangulation was applied to enhance validity, and irrelevant or inconsistent data were eliminated.

5.2 Thematic analysis was used to systematically categorize and synthesize data. This process involved collection, classification, organization, summarization, and conclusion drawing from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.



## Findings

The semi-structured in-depth interview informants in this study were selected from four key stakeholder groups involved in the sharing economy in the tourism industry in Phuket. A total of 26 participants were interviewed comprising twelve individuals in managerial, ownership, or shareholder roles, nine experts or consultants, and five individuals in operational roles. Notably, the majority of informants (21 out of 26) were in managerial or expert positions, ensuring a balanced representation of strategic and industry insights. Although the operational group was smaller, their contributions did not impact the quality of data due to their professional knowledge and experience directly related to the tourism industry in Phuket. All informants had extensive experience in the tourism industry with the majority (12 participants) having between 11 and 15 years' experience. A smaller group (7 participants) had 16 to 20 years' experience, while six participants had 6 to 10 years' experience, and one participant had more than 21 years of experience. None of the informants had less than 5 years' experience in Phuket's tourism industry. These informants demonstrated a high level of familiarity and understanding of both traditional and sharing economy business in Phuket's tourism industry as many had lived and worked in the province for extended periods. Furthermore, a total of three focus group discussions were conducted, representing key sectors involved in tourism in Phuket. These included eight different community-based tourism groups, six relevant government agencies in Phuket, and eight participants from the private sector in tourism-related businesses affected by the sharing economy, including representatives from transportation services, restaurants, and accommodation businesses. The researcher analyzed the findings from the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions based on the main research objectives and each objective was explored through two types of qualitative analysis: 1) thematic analysis, which identifies patterns across responses, and 2) interpretative analysis, which presents participants' views and reasoning.

**Objective 1:** To examine the current situation of sharing economy business in the tourism industry.

*Interpretative Analysis:* The findings from the in-depth interviews revealed that the emergence of sharing economy business in Phuket's tourism industry has brought substantial shifts, especially during the COVID-19 era. Most informants noted a surge in demand for these services as consumers sought alternatives that were perceived to be more accessible, safer, and more cost-effective than traditional businesses. A hotel executive stated, "During the COVID-19 period, the demand for alternative service businesses increased and sharing economy services became more accessible. They met consumer needs, attracted more users, and were perceived as safer and more convenient." Informants also emphasized how the pandemic accelerated digital adoption, leading to the normalization of platform-based tourism services. One entrepreneur noted that digital platforms had become "a default entry point for consumers," underscoring a major behavioral



transformation post-pandemic. Moreover, the focus groups pointed out that the popularity of sharing economy business was driven by four main factors: the convenience of online platforms, the limitations of traditional businesses in service availability, efficiency, and safety, a greater variety of products and services at competitive prices, and faster service delivery and reduced waiting times. However, stakeholders also identified challenges and limitations: regulatory uncertainty for the absence of clear legal frameworks, government policies, and tax regulations, which creates operational challenges and service quality and safety risks in the form of inconsistent service standards and potential safety concerns.

*Thematic Analysis:* From the focus group discussions and interviews, the advantages and opportunities of sharing economy business were consistently highlighted and can be summarized into three core themes: 1) convenience and accessibility by providing easy, fast, and diverse service options aligning with evolving consumer lifestyles, 2) adaptation and technological advancement to encourage existing operators to adapt and apply new technologies, benefiting both service providers and consumers, and 3) market expansion and competition to create opportunities for small businesses, to redistribute market share, and to stimulate competition and investment.

Both the interpretative and thematic analyses confirmed the significant rise of sharing economy business during and after COVID-19, driven by convenience, accessibility and digital adaptability. Interpretative analysis revealed internal insights in regard to business agility, platform trust, and changing service models. Despite different focuses, both analyses underscored that the sharing economy has altered service delivery, competition, and customer expectations in Phuket.

**Objective 2:** To investigate the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal contexts related to sharing economy business in the tourism industry.

*Interpretative Analysis:* The findings from both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed that stakeholders shared similar perspectives on the enabling and constraining factors affecting sharing economy business in Phuket's tourism industry. Participants viewed the sharing economy as closely intertwined with wider structural and policy frameworks, especially as the industry adapts to rapid technological change and post-pandemic recovery. Informants consistently emphasized that the evolution of the sharing economy was not only directed by market dynamics, but also by institutional, legal, and socio-political forces that either facilitate or hinder its growth.

*Thematic Analysis:* The contextual findings were categorized across six dimensions. 1) Economic context: stakeholders identified three main impacts of sharing economy business as increased business competition and investment opportunities, encouragement for businesses to adapt and integrate technology into tourism operations, and the stimulation of the tourism market by broadening economic participation. 2) Social and cultural context: respondents expressed two dominant viewpoints as the necessity for adaptation to digital lifestyles and the role of

sharing economy business in fostering societal learning and mindset shifts. 3) Technological context: sharing economy business was seen as highly dependent on the strength of digital infrastructure. Perspectives on technology were categorized into two points: the readiness and modernity of Thailand's technological infrastructure for business operations, and the need for businesses and individuals to enhance technological literacy and adaptation. 4) Political context: respondents answered three main aspects: the significant influence of political governance on business operations, criticism of Thailand's political system as a barrier to business growth, and suggestions for granting Phuket special economic zone status or increasing local government authority in managing and regulating businesses. 5) Legal context: two main concerns were revealed. Firstly, existing regulations are slow, complex, and outdated, and secondly, legal loopholes and conflicts of interest hindered effective governance and enforcement. 6) Environmental and regulatory context: three main areas were emphasized: the potential benefits of establishing a special tourism economic zone or decentralized authority, the need for improved knowledge management, data systems, and technological infrastructure led by the government, and the necessity for legal reforms and policy development to support the growth of sharing economy business.

Findings from both analyses revealed consistent challenges and opportunities across PESTEL dimensions. Thematic analysis identified six contextual domains which include regulatory gaps, digital adaptation, and economic inclusion while Interpretative analysis explored stakeholders' deeper concerns which included legal loopholes, governance limitations, and calls for decentralization. This suggests that the analyses display a shared view that the sustainable growth of the sharing economy requires synchronized reforms across policy, technology, and local governance systems.

**Objective 3:** To propose management strategies for sharing economy business in the tourism industry in the digital age and the post pandemic landscape.

*Interpretative Analysis:* Findings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions revealed a strong consensus among stakeholders on the need for strategic management approaches tailored to the realities of the digital economy and the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Informants consistently stated that while the sharing economy presents immense opportunities for innovation and inclusivity in the tourism sector, its continued growth depends on responsive governance, local empowerment, and digital capacity building. Stakeholders viewed the pandemic as an accelerant for platform-based business adoption, which further emphasizes the urgency of adaptive and forward-thinking strategies.

*Thematic Analysis:* The study revealed that participants from all three focus groups shared views that were consistent with the findings of the in-depth interviews regarding recommendations for managing sharing economy business in the tourism industry in the digital economy and COVID-19

era. The findings present three key recommendations for managing sharing economy business in the tourism industry: 1) a regulatory framework by establishing specific laws and policies at the national level to govern sharing economy business, 2) a special economic zone and taxation by designating Phuket as a special economic zone to allow local authorities to collect taxes for regional development, and 3) service improvement and standards by enhancing service quality by implementing standardized safety measures, environmental sustainability practices, and utilizing Big Data for effective management.

Both the interpretative and thematic analyses revealed consistent views across stakeholders on key strategies for managing sharing economy business in the digital and post-pandemic era. The three shared priorities include: 1) a regulatory framework for clear, updated laws, and national policies, 2) a special economic zone and taxation to support Phuket's designation as a special zone with local tax authority, and 3) service standards and digital tools with the emphasis on improving service quality safety, and use of Big Data. While the interpretative analysis provided advanced perspectives into governance challenges and policymaking gaps, the thematic analysis highlighted grassroots needs, digital literacy, and the role of community empowerment. Together, both analyses point to the importance of integrating top-down regulatory reforms with bottom-up support for inclusive, tech-enabled tourism development.

## Discussion

From the research findings, there are three points of the discussion that align with the research objectives. Firstly, the study indicated that sharing economy business in the tourism industry has gained increasing popularity with both local communities and tourists utilizing these services frequently. This trend is evident in food delivery, transportation, and accommodation services. These findings align with the study by Ladcharoen and Kraiwanich (2019), who examined the use of sharing economy applications in Thailand and found that the platforms reduced operating costs and increased convenience and network expansion. The advantages included convenience, easy accessibility, a wide range of options, lower prices, and alignment with digital lifestyles. This supports the findings of Chongviriyachornchai, Chantanapha, and Piriya-kul (2020), who emphasized the influence of the sharing economy in terms of benefit sharing, network relationships, and the freelance profession on career commitment. However, there are disadvantages and limitations of sharing economy business in the tourism industry that include the lack of legal reputation, unclear government policies, service inconsistency, and safety concerns. This finding is consistent with Khowwilaikul's (2018) study which analyzed legal issues related to civil liability in sharing economy business and found that there were no laws in place to regulate or govern the legal relationships between parties involved in the sharing economy, nor were there legal principles to oversee this business. Thus,

the significant finding is that Thailand lacks legal measures to support and regulate sharing economy business through digital platforms. Secondly, the context surrounding sharing economy business in the tourism industry encompasses six dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, technological, political, legal, and environmental factors. This supports the effectiveness of the PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social/Cultural, Technological, Legal, and Environmental) analysis framework (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008). PESTEL analysis is a valuable tool for understanding the overall environment in which a business operates, allowing stakeholders to assess opportunities and threats in the area. Through this analysis, businesses can plan to take advantage of opportunities while minimizing potential risks. Therefore, this research confirms the relevance of PESTEL analysis in assessing the external environment for sharing economy business in the tourism industry. The current legal framework for managing sharing economy business in Thailand's tourism industry is slow, complicated, and outdated, with significant legal gaps and vested interests involved. This aligns with the study by Wansuth, Vichasilp, and Klarkkaew (2021), which examined the challenges posed by the growth of the sharing economy system. Their research concluded that managing the tourism industry to find balance and reduce the problems associated with the sharing economy should include legal and regulatory improvements such as ensuring legal tax payments and reform to improve regulations and consumer protection. Thailand's political and governance system may have a negative impact on the operations of sharing economy business despite the potential positive effects of restructuring the management system on the administration of sharing economy business in the tourism industry. This aligns with the study by Theerakosolpong (2020), who analyzed New Public Management (NPM): The contractual relationship in the form of outsourcing and the sharing economy. The author argued against the role of the government as governance in the sharing economy focuses on the private sector's role in providing public services and the benefits of the sharing economy including information sharing, organizational processes, and the external processes of public service delivery. Hence, the government's role in the sharing economy must consider both cost-efficiency and equity and fairness, which remains unclear in the context of Thailand. This view is also supported by the study of Cakmak, Lie & McCabe (2018), who suggested emphasizing the role of the government and resources within the framework of law and investment. Furthermore, a favorable environment for sharing economy business relies on knowledge management, data management systems, and the provision of technological infrastructure by the government. This aligns with the study by Lutz & Newlands (2018), which explored consumer groups within the Airbnb sharing economy system. This research emphasized the importance of Big Data in managing businesses in the sharing economy. In addition, the study by Cakmak, Lie & McCabe (2018), which investigated networks of entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai, Thailand, operating in the informal tourism sector, revealed that such businesses effectively meet the demand for innovative products and services, highlighting the importance of

academic data, legal frameworks, and relevant resources. Lastly, the study proposes three key principles for managing sharing economy business in the tourism industry: establishing national regulations and policies, designating Phuket as a special economic zone with a local tax system, and improving the service system through standards, safety measures, environmental friendliness, and Big Data. These recommendations align with Watthana (2020), who highlighted regulatory gaps in Thailand's sharing economy laws, leading to negative impacts like reduced traditional business income, dissatisfaction in local communities, lack of consumer protection, and lost tax revenue. Additionally, research by Fang, Ye & Law (2016) and Heo (2016) stressed the need for policies to address employment, income, and service standards while Chanthiwatsarakit (2017) examined the economic and social impacts of sharing economy models. These studies support the proposed management principles.

From the integration of all three research objectives, this study contributes new knowledge to the management of sharing economy business in the tourism sector in the context of digital transformation and post-pandemic recovery. The findings reveal that while sharing economy business offers significant economic and social benefits such as accessibility, innovation, and inclusivity, it also presents challenges related to legal ambiguity, inconsistent governance, and service standards. The research confirms that effective management requires a holistic understanding of contextual factors, the decentralization of regulatory authority, and data-driven policymaking. The study therefore proposes an integrated management approach that balances innovation with regulation, and central oversight with local responsiveness to highlight the importance of adaptive policy frameworks, stakeholder collaboration, and the strategic use of technology in structuring the sustainable future of sharing economy business in tourism.

## **Theoretical Integration**

The findings of this study resonate with theoretical frameworks that examine how tourism businesses adapt under digital disruption and crisis conditions. First, the concept of digital resilience (Pan et al., 2024) offers a useful aspect to understand how sharing economy business enhances the ability to weather a crisis through digital technologies, platforms, innovation, and decision making. The emphasis on Big Data, digital literacy, and infrastructure investment observed in this research aligns with digital resilience strategies that promote long-term adaptability and sustainability. Second, the advance of hybrid tourism models which blend traditional tourism services with flexible sharing economy platforms (Abdalla et al., 2025) is reflected in the integration of informal providers and peer-to-peer platforms into the tourism value chain. These models support more personalized, localized, and often sustainable travel experiences, which are well-suited for both digital transformation and evolving post-pandemic consumer behaviors. Third, the study's emphasis on strategic responses to health and safety concerns, legal gaps, and market restructuring aligns with

literature on crisis-driven innovation in the service sector (El-Said et al., 2024). This body of research underlines how external unpredictable circumstances can be catalysts for systemic change and policy reform. Collectively, the research offers an insightful understanding into how sharing economy businesses in tourism navigate the dual pressures of digital stimulation and pandemic recovery. This integrated perspective advances current debates in tourism management, platform regulation, and innovation policy.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the growing popularity of sharing economy business in Thailand's tourism industry, particularly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the opportunities and challenges associated with this model, including its benefits such as convenience, accessibility, and promoting technological adaptation, are revealed. However, it also identifies significant issues such as the lack of regulatory frameworks, inconsistent service standards, and safety concerns. Thus, the study proposes actionable recommendations categorized into two main areas: responding to long-term digital trends and addressing post-pandemic realities. First, the long-term digital trends can be addressed by enhancing platform efficiency, promoting digital literacy among both service providers and consumers, and investing in strong data management systems and digital infrastructure to support policy development, monitoring, and innovation. Second, the post-pandemic realities require rebuilding traveler confidence through the implementation of standardized health and safety protocols, supporting small and informal tourism enterprises in adapting to new market conditions and consumer behaviors, and developing legal and policy frameworks that provide flexibility for emerging business models while ensuring accountability and consumer protection. Importantly, this research contributes to the understanding of the structural forces influencing the sharing economy in tourism. It underscores the need for integrated, future-oriented strategies that balance innovation, equity, and sustainability for more resilient tourism in Thailand and beyond.

## Recommendations

First, future studies could investigate customer perceptions and expectations to explore how the sharing economy business maintains service quality, safety standards, and customer satisfaction in comparison to traditional tourism enterprises. Next, a deeper examination of the displacement effect and adaptive strategies of traditional business on how the sharing economy business affects hotels, tour operators, transportation services, and local employment would contribute to policy discussions on industry regulation and co-existence. Furthermore, business resilience factors of the sharing economy could be explored for the business's adaptation with tourism seasonality, crisis situations, and post-pandemic recovery strategies. Last but not least, as legal uncertainties remain

a major challenge, future research should focus on how policy frameworks can evolve to address issues such as taxation, consumer protection, and licensing. Comparative studies of different regulatory approaches in various destinations could provide best-practice models for implementation.

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