

DEVELOPING TOURISM CULTURE IN ASSOCIATION WITH ENHANCING COMMUNITY ADAPTIVE CAPACITY IN HO CHI MINH CITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW GLOBAL ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the emerging global economy characterized by digital transformation, green growth, and increasing uncertainties, urban tourism is facing significant challenges in maintaining adaptability and sustainable development. As the most dynamic economic and cultural hub in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City has been strongly influenced by globalization, destination competitiveness, and rapid digitalization in tourism activities. This study aims to examine the role of tourism cultural development in enhancing community resilience within the framework of the new global economy. Grounded in the theoretical foundations of sustainable tourism and community resilience, the study proposes a quantitative research model to investigate the impacts of three key factors: (1) tourism cultural values, (2) the level of digital transformation in tourism activities, and (3) policy support on community adaptive capacity. Primary data are collected through surveys of tourism-related households and local participants in Ho Chi Minh City. Data analysis techniques include Cronbach's Alpha, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The expected findings clarify the relationship between tourism cultural development and community adaptability in response to market fluctuations and digital transformation pressures. The study also provides policy implications to promote sustainable, flexible, and human-centered urban tourism development. By offering empirical evidence from a major metropolitan context in Vietnam, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on community resilience in tourism within rapidly transforming global economic environments.

Keywords: Tourism culture, community resilience, digital transformation, sustainable tourism, new global economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the global economy has undergone profound transformations driven by digitalization, sustainability imperatives, and increasing uncertainty arising from crises such as pandemics, climate change, and geopolitical instability [1]. Within this evolving landscape, the tourism industry - particularly urban tourism - faces mounting challenges in maintaining competitiveness, adaptability, and long-term sustainability. Traditional growth models based primarily on mass tourism are increasingly being replaced by approaches that emphasize resilience, inclusiveness, and cultural sustainability.

As one of the fastest-growing economic sectors globally, tourism is highly sensitive to external shocks while simultaneously contributing to socio-economic development and cultural exchange. In this context, the concept of community resilience has emerged as a critical framework for understanding how local communities can adapt to, recover from, and transform in response to disruptions [2], [3]. For urban destinations, resilience is not only about infrastructure and economic recovery but also about maintaining cultural identity and social cohesion.

Ho Chi Minh City, as Vietnam's largest economic and cultural hub, exemplifies the opportunities and challenges associated with tourism development in the new global economy. The city has experienced rapid growth in international and domestic tourism, supported by digital platforms, diversified tourism products, and increasing global integration. However, it also faces significant pressures, including cultural commodification, digital inequality, environmental degradation, and vulnerability to global market fluctuations. In this study, the "new global economy" is conceptualized as a multidimensional transformation framework characterized by the convergence of digitalization, sustainability imperatives, and heightened systemic uncertainty. The new global economy is not simply an expansion of free trade but is shaped by global digital networks and platform-based business models [4]. Unlike the traditional global economy, which primarily emphasized trade liberalization and industrial expansion, the new global economy is shaped by algorithmic business models, data-driven decision-making, green growth strategies, and increased exposure to global disruptions such as pandemics, climate change, and geopolitical tensions. Furthermore, it is characterized by geoeconomic fragmentation, where the resilience of local destinations depends heavily on their capacity for strategic coupling within complex global production and service networks [5].

Within the tourism sector, this transformation manifests in the rapid adoption of digital technologies, the growing importance of sustainability and cultural authenticity, and the need for adaptive governance systems. Therefore, the new global economy in this study is not merely an external context but serves as an embedded structural condition that redefines how tourism systems operate and how communities build resilience.

In this regard, tourism cultural development plays a pivotal role. Beyond its economic value, tourism culture contributes to the preservation of local identity, strengthens social capital, and fosters a sense of belonging among community members. When effectively integrated with digital transformation and supportive policy frameworks, it can enhance the adaptive capacity of local communities, enabling them to navigate uncertainties and sustain long-term development.

Despite the growing importance of these issues, empirical research examining the interplay between tourism culture, digital transformation, policy support, and community resilience remains limited, particularly in emerging urban contexts such as Ho Chi Minh City. Most existing studies focus either on technological innovation or sustainability in isolation, without adopting an integrated perspective.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by developing and testing a structural model that investigates the impact of tourism cultural values, digital transformation, and policy support on community adaptive capacity in Ho Chi Minh City. By providing empirical evidence from a rapidly transforming metropolitan context, the study contributes to both theoretical advancement and practical policy-making in sustainable urban tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Tourism Culture and Sustainable Development

Tourism culture has increasingly been recognized as a central component of sustainable tourism development [6]. It encompasses not only tangible heritage such as architecture, cuisine, and cultural sites but also intangible elements including traditions, practices, and local identity [7]. Unlike conventional tourism products, cultural tourism creates deeper interactions between visitors and host communities, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and cultural preservation [8].

From a sustainability perspective, tourism culture contributes to economic diversification while reinforcing social cohesion and identity. It also plays a key role in creating unique destination branding, which enhances competitiveness in the global tourism market. However, excessive commercialization may lead to cultural commodification and loss of authenticity, posing challenges for sustainable management [9], [10].

2.2. Community Resilience in Tourism

Community resilience refers to the capacity of a community to anticipate, respond to, and recover from external shocks while maintaining essential functions and identity [2], [3]. In tourism contexts, resilience is closely linked to the ability of local stakeholders to adapt to market changes, environmental risks, and socio-economic disruptions [11], [12].

Theoretical frameworks of resilience emphasize the importance of various forms of capital, including economic, social, human, and cultural capital. Among these, cultural capital is increasingly acknowledged as a key driver of adaptive capacity, as it fosters community cohesion, identity, and long-term sustainability.

2.3. Digital Transformation in Tourism

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the tourism industry, influencing how services are produced, distributed, and consumed [13]. Technologies such as online booking platforms, social media, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics have enhanced operational efficiency and improved tourist experiences [7], [14], [15].

Beyond business performance, digital transformation also affects community participation in tourism. By lowering entry barriers, digital platforms enable local residents to engage directly in tourism activities, such as homestays, local tours, and cultural experiences. However, unequal access to digital technologies can create disparities, highlighting the importance of inclusive digital strategies.

2.4. Policy Support and Institutional Frameworks

Government policies play a crucial role in shaping tourism development by providing regulatory frameworks, financial incentives, and strategic direction [16]. Effective policy support can facilitate sustainable practices, promote community participation [17], and mitigate risks associated with tourism development [18].

In developing countries, policy frameworks often face challenges such as limited implementation capacity, lack of coordination, and insufficient focus on local communities. In the context of an increasingly complex urban tourism ecosystem, Vietnam's institutional framework and policy support mechanisms are undergoing a profound restructuring to cope with the fluctuations of the new global economy. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity and aligning policies with sustainability goals are essential for enhancing community resilience.

2.5. Research Gap and Hypothesis Development

Although previous studies have examined tourism culture, digital transformation, and policy support individually, limited research has explored their combined effects on community resilience, often driven by planned adaptive behaviors [18]. Moreover, empirical evidence from emerging urban contexts remains scarce.

Based on literature, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Tourism cultural values positively influence community adaptive capacity.

H2: Digital transformation positively influences community adaptive capacity.

H3: Policy support positively influences community adaptive capacity.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and Model

This study adopts a quantitative research approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships among variables. SEM is particularly suitable for this research as it allows simultaneous analysis of multiple relationships between latent constructs and observed variables. The proposed research model consists of four main constructs:

Tourism Cultural Values (TCV)

Digital Transformation (DT)

Policy Support (PS)

Community Adaptive Capacity (CAC)

The model hypothesizes that TCV, DT, and PS directly influence CAC.

The conceptual research model is illustrated in Figure 1, which depicts the hypothesized relationships among Tourism Cultural Values (TCV), Digital Transformation (DT), Policy Support (PS), and Community Adaptive Capacity (CAC).

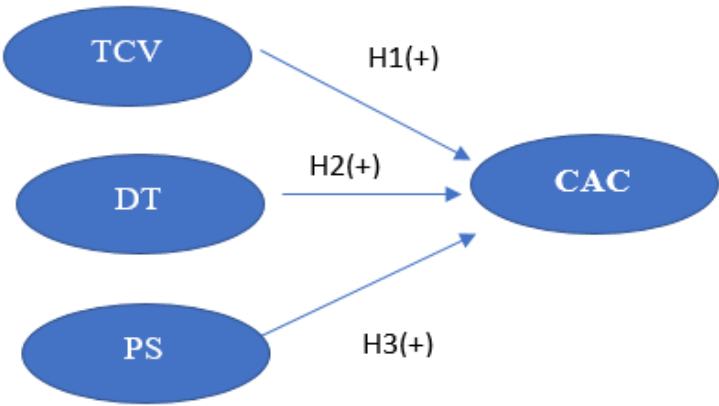


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the proposed relationships

(Source: Authors' elaboration based on literature review, 2026)

In addition to the direct relationships hypothesized in the model, this study also acknowledges the potential moderating effects among key constructs. Specifically, digital transformation and policy support may condition the strength of the relationship between tourism cultural values and community adaptive capacity. Although the present study focuses

primarily on direct effects, the inclusion of interaction terms represents a promising direction for extending the model in future research.

3.2. Measurement Scales

All constructs are measured using multi-item scales adapted from previous studies and adjusted to the local context [21]. Responses are recorded using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Tourism Cultural Values (TCV): cultural preservation, identity, community pride

Digital Transformation (DT): use of digital platforms, online marketing, digital skills

Policy Support (PS): government support, training programs, financial incentives

Community Adaptive Capacity (CAC): ability to adapt, recover, and sustain livelihoods

3.3. Data Collection

Primary data are collected through structured questionnaires distributed to tourism-related households, small business owners, and local residents involved in tourism activities in Ho Chi Minh City. A convenience sampling method is employed due to accessibility constraints.

The target sample size ranges from 250 to 400 respondents, which is considered adequate for SEM analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is conducted using SPSS and AMOS software, following these steps:

Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha to assess internal consistency

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): to identify underlying factor structure

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): to validate measurement model

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): to test hypotheses

Model fit is evaluated using standard indices: Chi-square/df (< 3); CFI (> 0.90);

TLI (> 0.90); RMSEA (< 0.08).

3.5. Validity and Reliability

Convergent validity: assessed through factor loadings (> 0.5) and AVE (> 0.5)

Discriminant validity: ensured when constructs are distinct

Composite reliability (CR): > 0.7

3.6. Ethical Considerations

All respondents participate voluntarily, and their information is kept confidential. The study ensures anonymity and adheres to ethical research standards.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Sample Characteristics

A total of 342 valid responses were collected from tourism-related households, small business owners, and local residents in Ho Chi Minh City. The sample demonstrates adequate diversity in terms of age, occupation, and level of involvement in tourism activities. Approximately 58% of respondents are directly engaged in tourism services (e.g., accommodation, food services, tour operations), while the remaining 42% participate indirectly through supporting activities.

4.2. Reliability and Validity Analysis

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency:

Tourism Cultural Values (TCV): $\alpha = 0.89$

Digital Transformation (DT): $\alpha = 0.87$

Policy Support (PS): $\alpha = 0.85$

Community Adaptive Capacity (CAC): $\alpha = 0.91$

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) results confirmed the appropriateness of the factor structure, with KMO = 0.914 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity significant at $p < 0.001$, indicating suitability for factor analysis.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) further validated the measurement model. All factor loadings were above 0.60 and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Convergent validity was confirmed with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50 and Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70 for all constructs.

Discriminant validity was also established, as the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs.

Table 1. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
TCV (Tourism Cultural Values)	TCV1	0.78	0.89	0.91	0.62
	TCV2	0.81			
	TCV3	0.83			
	TCV4	0.76			
DT (Digital Transformation)	DT1	0.75	0.87	0.89	0.58
	DT2	0.79			
	DT3	0.82			
	DT4	0.74			
PS (Policy Support)	PS1	0.73	0.85	0.88	0.55
	PS2	0.77			
	PS3	0.80			
	PS4	0.72			
CAC (Community Adaptive Capacity)	CAC1	0.84	0.91	0.93	0.68
	CAC2	0.86			
	CAC3	0.82			
	CAC4	0.79			

(Source: Authors' calculation, 2026)

The Fornell–Larcker criterion was applied to assess discriminant validity. The square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, confirming that all constructs are empirically distinct and that discriminant validity is established.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Construct	TCV	DT	PS	CAC
TCV	0.79			
DT	0.54	0.76		
PS	0.49	0.52	0.74	
CAC	0.63	0.58	0.55	0.82

(Source: Authors’ calculation, 2026)

The discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. As presented in Table 2, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (TCV = 0.79, DT = 0.76, PS = 0.74, and CAC = 0.82) is greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. Specifically, each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. This result confirms that all constructs are empirically distinct from one another, thereby establishing satisfactory discriminant validity for the measurement model.

4.3. Model Fit Assessment

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) results indicate a good overall fit with the observed data. Specifically, the Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) is 2.14, which is below the recommended threshold of 3.0, suggesting an acceptable model fit. In addition, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.942) and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI = 0.931) both exceed the commonly accepted benchmark of 0.90, demonstrating a strong level of model fit. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.058) falls well below the threshold of 0.08, indicating a reasonable approximation error. Collectively, these fit indices confirm that the proposed model exhibits a satisfactory level of goodness-of-fit and is appropriate for subsequent hypothesis testing and structural analysis.

Table 3. Model Fit Indices (CFA & SEM)

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Result	Evaluation
Chi-square/df	< 3	2.14	Good
CFI	> 0.90	0.942	Good
TLI	> 0.90	0.931	Good
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.058	Good
SRMR	< 0.08	0.049	Good

(Source: Authors’ calculation, 2026)

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

The results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis provide strong empirical support for all proposed hypotheses. Among the three factors, tourism cultural values exert the strongest influence on community adaptive capacity, followed by digital transformation and policy support. Specifically, tourism cultural values exert a significant and positive influence on community adaptive capacity ($\beta = 0.42, p < 0.001$), confirming H1. This finding indicates that cultural elements play a central role in enhancing the ability of local communities to adapt to changing conditions. In addition, digital transformation is also found to have a positive and statistically significant impact on community adaptive capacity ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.001$), thereby

supporting H2. This suggests that the adoption of digital technologies contributes meaningfully to improving community resilience. Furthermore, policy support demonstrates a positive effect on community adaptive capacity ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$), supporting H3, although its influence is comparatively weaker than the other two factors. Overall, these results highlight the combined importance of cultural, technological, and institutional dimensions in strengthening community adaptability within the tourism context.

In addition, correlation analysis suggests a positive association among the independent variables, implying potential interaction effects. Although not formally tested, this finding supports the possibility of an integrated framework where culture, technology, and policy reinforce each other.

Table 4. Structural Model Results (SEM Path Analysis)

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized β	p-value	Result
H1	TCV $\rightarrow$ CAC	0.42	*** ($p < 0.001$)	Supported
H2	DT $\rightarrow$ CAC	0.31	*** ($p < 0.001$)	Supported
H3	PS $\rightarrow$ CAC	0.28	** ($p < 0.01$)	Supported

(Source: Authors' calculation, 2026)

Following the assessment of the measurement model, the structural model was estimated to examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. The results of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis are presented in Figure 2, which illustrates both the strength and direction of the relationships between tourism cultural values, digital transformation, policy support, and community adaptive capacity.

In addition to the structural paths, the correlations among the exogenous constructs are also illustrated in Figure 2. These correlations range from 0.49 to 0.54, indicating moderate positive relationships among tourism cultural values, digital transformation, and policy support. This result suggests that while the constructs are related, they remain empirically distinct, further supporting the discriminant validity established in Table 2.

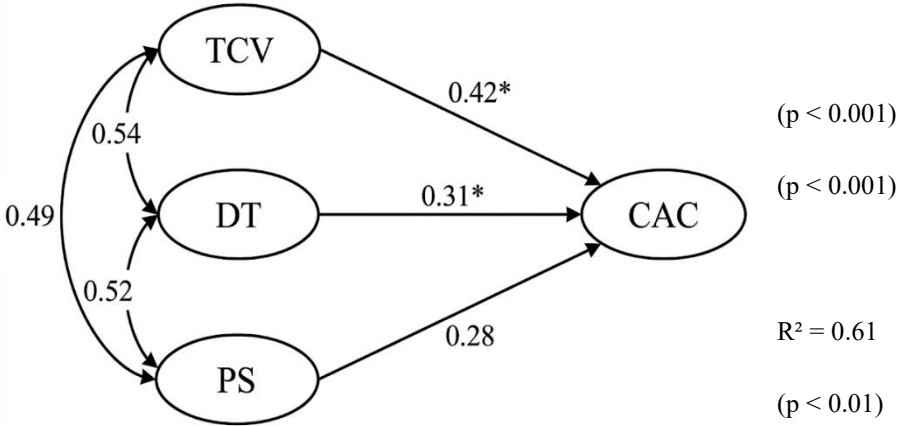


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model Results

(Source: Authors' calculation based on SEM analysis, 2026)

5. DISCUSSION

The research results yield several important findings, contributing to the clarification of the relationship between cultural tourism development and community resilience in the context of digital transformation and globalization. Notably, all three factors – cultural tourism value, digital transformation, and policy support – have a positive and statistically significant impact on community resilience, thereby confirming the validity of the proposed research model.

Previously, it was found that cultural tourism value has the strongest impact on community resilience ($\beta = 0.42$), attempting to argue that cultural tourism is not only an economic resource but also the foundation of social capital and community identity. This aligns with Richards' view that cultural tourism acts as a "social regeneration mechanism" helping communities maintain cohesion and adaptability to fluctuations [7]. In the context of Ho Chi Minh City – a place with a strong intermingling of tradition and modernity – cultural values are not only exploited as tourism products but also act as an "anchoring system" helping communities maintain stability in the face of economic and social shocks.

From the perspective of resilience theory, this result also reflects the role of cultural capital as a core element in enhancing endogenous adaptability. Unlike financial or technological capital – which are easily affected by market fluctuations – cultural capital is robust and accumulates over the long term, thereby creating "soft resilience" for the community. This is particularly important for developing urban areas, where globalization can erode local identity without appropriate preservation strategies.

While the findings highlight cultural capital as a form of "soft resilience" that enhances community stability, it is essential to further contextualize this role within the dynamics of the new global economy. Specifically, several structural features of the new global economy directly shape how cultural capital contributes to adaptive capacity. One key dimension relates to the increasing digitalization of tourism, which has transformed the way cultural values are produced, represented, and consumed. Digital platforms such as social media and online travel services enable local cultural assets to be disseminated more widely, thereby amplifying the economic and symbolic value of cultural capital. In this context, cultural resources are no longer confined to physical spaces but become scalable and globally accessible, strengthening their role as stable and renewable assets compared to volatile financial capital. Another important aspect concerns the growing emphasis on sustainability and experiential tourism, which has elevated the importance of authenticity and local identity. Tourists are increasingly seeking meaningful cultural experiences rather than standardized services, thereby reinforcing the strategic value of cultural capital in destination competitiveness. As a result, communities with strong cultural identity are better positioned to adapt to shifting market preferences and sustain long-term resilience.

In addition, the heightened level of global uncertainty - driven by crises such as pandemics, climate change, and geopolitical instability - has exposed the vulnerability of traditional growth models based on mass tourism and financial capital. In contrast, cultural capital provides a more stable foundation for resilience, as it is deeply embedded in local social structures and less susceptible to external shocks. This helps explain why tourism cultural values exert the strongest influence on community adaptive capacity ($\beta = 0.42$). Also, the platform-based and networked nature of the new global economy facilitates the co-creation of cultural value between tourists and local communities. This interactive process not only enhances economic benefits but also strengthens social cohesion and collective identity, thereby reinforcing the role of cultural capital as a driver of adaptive capacity. Taken together, these dynamics suggest that the effectiveness of cultural capital as a form of "soft resilience" is not static but is significantly amplified by the structural conditions of the new global economy.

Secondly, the research results show that digital transformation has a significant positive impact on community resilience ($\beta = 0.31$), thus confirming the role of technology as a crucial tool in enhancing adaptive capacity. This finding is consistent with recent studies on smart tourism, which emphasize that digital technology improves access to information, optimizes business operations, and enhances customer experience [20].

The findings of this study make an important contribution by clarifying that digital transformation not only brings benefits at the enterprise or destination level but also exerts a direct impact on local communities - an aspect often overlooked in previous research. Specifically, the application of digital technologies, such as online booking platforms, digital marketing, and intelligent management systems, enables local residents to participate more deeply in the tourism value chain, thereby increasing income and mitigating risks associated with shocks such as pandemics or economic downturns.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the effects of digital transformation are not entirely uniform. In practice, a “digital divide” persists among different community groups, particularly between urban and suburban areas. This implies that, in the absence of appropriate policy support, digital transformation may exacerbate inequality rather than enhance resilience. Accordingly, the findings not only reaffirm the critical role of technology but also underscore the need for inclusive digital governance to ensure equitable and sustainable outcomes. Thirdly, policy support has a positive impact on community resilience ($\beta = 0.28$), indicating the indispensable role of the state in creating a favorable environment for sustainable tourism development.

The existence of the digital divide reflects structural inequalities in access to digital infrastructure, technological literacy, and financial resources among different community groups. In the context of Ho Chi Minh City, this divide is particularly evident between central urban districts and peri-urban or marginalized communities, where limited access to digital tools constrains participation in tourism value chains.

Beyond access, the digital divide also encompasses disparities in the ability to effectively utilize digital technologies for economic and social benefits. As a result, while digital transformation enhances overall adaptive capacity, its uneven distribution may lead to differentiated resilience outcomes, potentially reinforcing existing socio-economic inequalities rather than mitigating them.

However, the impact of policies is lower than that of cultural values and digital transformation, suggesting that the state’s role may be more “indirect” than “direct”. In other words, policies act as catalysts (enablers) rather than determinants. This also reflects the reality in Vietnam, where many tourism policies remain general in nature and do not truly delve into the depths of local communities.

Another noteworthy point is the potential interaction between the three elements in the model. Although this study has not yet identified the detailed effects, the results suggest the possibility of a complementary relationship between culture, technology, and policy. Specifically, cultural values can be “amplified” through digital technology, while policy plays a facilitating role in enabling both of these elements to be effective. This opens up a new research direction on integrated models (integrated frameworks) in sustainable tourism development. To further advance this line of inquiry, the potential interaction effects among these variables warrant more rigorous examination. In particular, digital transformation and policy support may not only exert direct effects on community adaptive capacity but also moderate the relationship between tourism cultural values and resilience outcomes.

For instance, the positive impact of cultural capital on community adaptive capacity may be significantly strengthened in contexts where digital transformation is more advanced. Digital technologies can amplify the visibility, accessibility, and market value of cultural

resources, thereby enhancing their contribution to resilience. Conversely, in digitally constrained environments, the effectiveness of cultural capital may remain underutilized.

Similarly, policy support may function as an enabling or constraining condition that shapes how cultural and technological resources are translated into adaptive capacity. Strong institutional frameworks, targeted training programs, and financial incentives can reinforce the synergy between cultural values and digital transformation, whereas weak or fragmented policies may limit their combined impact.

These observations suggest that the relationships among culture, technology, and policy are likely to be conditional rather than purely additive. Therefore, future research should incorporate moderating effects into the analytical framework to better capture the complexity of community resilience in tourism systems.

Furthermore, the research results are also significant in the post-COVID-19 context, as the global tourism industry is shifting from quantitative growth to qualitative growth and sustainability.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the study achieved its objectives and provided findings with both theoretical and practical significance, several limitations remain that need to be seriously acknowledged to guide future research.

Firstly, the study was conducted within the context of a specific urban area, Ho Chi Minh City, thus limiting the generalizability of the results to other contexts. While it is a major economic and cultural center and highly representative of developing cities in Vietnam, its unique economic structure, tourism development levels, and cultural characteristics may make the results not entirely applicable to other localities, especially rural areas or heritage tourism destinations. Therefore, future studies should expand the scope of the survey to include various localities, including coastal and mountainous tourist destinations and heritage areas, in order to test the stability and generalizability of the research model.

Secondly, the study uses a cross-sectional design, where data is collected at a specific point in time. While this approach is suitable for testing the relationship between variables, it cannot fully reflect the dynamic nature of community resilience – a process that changes over time and is influenced by economic, social, or environmental shocks. Therefore, subsequent studies should adopt a time-series research design (longitudinal studies) or panel data to track changes in factors and more accurately assess causal relationships.

Thirdly, the measured variables in the study are primarily based on self-reported data from survey participants. This can lead to biases due to subjective perceptions, social desirability bias, or limitations in respondents' ability to evaluate. In the future, studies may combine various data sources, such as secondary data, behavioral data, or in-depth interviews, to enhance the reliability and validity of the results.

Fourthly, the research model focuses on three main factors: cultural tourism value, digital transformation, and policy support, while community resilience is a multidimensional concept influenced by many other factors such as social capital, local governance capacity, community participation level, and environmental factors. The failure to include these variables in the model may limit the comprehensive explanatory power of the study. Therefore, future studies should expand the model towards multidimensional integration, while also considering the moderating or mediating effects of these factors.

Fifthly, the study has not fully considered the potential negative impacts of tourism development and digital transformation, such as the commercialization of culture, loss of local identity, or increased social inequality due to the “digital divide”. These are issues of increasing concern in sustainable tourism research. Therefore, subsequent studies need a more

balanced approach, not only assessing benefits but also analyzing risks and unintended consequences of the development process.

Based on the above limitations, several directions for future research can be suggested. First, it is necessary to develop integrated research models that combine cultural, technological, institutional, and environmental factors to fully reflect the complexity of the tourism system. Moreover, applying mixed-method research approaches, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, will help clarify the mechanisms of impact and provide deeper insights into community behavior and perceptions.

In addition, in the context of increasingly widespread digital transformation, research should focus on exploring the role of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and digital platforms in enhancing the resilience of tourism communities. Simultaneously, digital governance and the inclusiveness of the digital transformation process should be considered to ensure that all community groups benefit from this development. Furthermore, the study does not explicitly test moderating or interaction effects among the constructs, which may limit the ability to fully capture the complexity of the relationships. Future research should incorporate moderation or mediation analysis to provide a more nuanced understanding of how cultural, technological, and institutional factors interact in shaping community resilience.

Finally, comparisons across different countries or regions are also a potential research direction, helping to clarify the role of institutional and cultural contexts in shaping the relationship between tourism development and community resilience. These comparative studies not only contribute to expanding the theory but also provide an important practical basis for policy planning in the context of globalization.

7. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Conclusion

This study examines the role of tourism cultural development in enhancing community adaptive capacity within the context of the new global economy, using Ho Chi Minh City as a case study. The findings confirm that tourism cultural values, digital transformation, and policy support all play significant roles in strengthening community resilience.

Among these factors, tourism culture emerges as the most influential determinant, highlighting its dual role as both an economic resource and a foundation of social cohesion. Digital transformation is identified as a key enabler that enhances participation and adaptability, while policy support functions as an important facilitating mechanism.

By integrating these three dimensions, the study proposes a comprehensive framework for understanding how urban tourism systems can become more resilient in the face of global uncertainties.

7.2. Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to literature in several ways. First, it extends resilience theory by incorporating cultural capital as a central element of adaptive capacity. Second, it bridges the gap between digital transformation and community resilience by demonstrating their direct relationship. Third, it offers an integrated model that connects culture, technology, and policy within a unified analytical framework.

7.3. Practical and policy implications

7.3.1. Strengthening Tourism cultural development

The findings of this study provide several important practical and policy implications for enhancing community adaptive capacity in the context of tourism development. First, strengthening tourism cultural development should be considered a central pillar of sustainable tourism strategies. Local authorities need to prioritize the preservation and promotion of cultural values by supporting community-based cultural tourism initiatives, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, and encouraging active participation of local residents in tourism planning processes. In this regard, cultural sustainability should not be treated as a supplementary element but rather integrated as a core component of destination branding and long-term development strategies.

7.3.2. Promoting inclusive digital transformation

While digital transformation has demonstrated a significant positive impact on community adaptive capacity ($\beta = 0.31$), policymakers must address the persistent issue of the digital divide to ensure equitable outcomes. Several targeted interventions are recommended.

First, governments should invest in expanding digital infrastructure, particularly in underserved and peri-urban areas, to ensure universal access to high-speed internet and digital platforms.

Second, capacity-building programs focusing on digital literacy and practical skills should be developed for local communities, especially small tourism businesses and informal sector participants. These programs should go beyond basic training and include hands-on applications such as digital marketing, online booking management, and data utilization.

Third, financial and technical support mechanisms should be introduced to assist small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs) in adopting digital technologies, including subsidies, tax incentives, public–private partnerships, and especially to develop procedures to guide businesses in integrating products and services into local tourism promotion channels.

Fourth, inclusive digital governance frameworks should be established to ensure that digital transformation processes are participatory, transparent, and responsive to community needs.

By addressing these structural inequalities, digital transformation can evolve from a growth driver into a tool for inclusive and sustainable resilience, ensuring that no community group is left behind in the new global economy.

7.3.3. Enhancing policy frameworks

There is a need to enhance existing policy frameworks by moving beyond general orientations toward more targeted, actionable, and community-centered interventions. Governments should develop clear and enforceable guidelines for sustainable tourism practices, while also providing financial incentives to encourage green and digital investments. In addition, stronger coordination mechanisms between public authorities and private sector actors are required to ensure policy coherence and effective implementation. In this sense, policy should function as a catalyst that facilitates both cultural preservation and technological innovation.

Moreover, local authorities must urgently prepare regulatory sandboxes to pilot new digital services and innovative business models. This proactive approach is essential to anticipate the comprehensive amendment of the 2017 Tourism Law expected in 2026. The upcoming legal revision will focus heavily on addressing the structural challenges posed by the platform economy, digital transformation, and green tourism models, which currently operate beyond the scope of existing legal frameworks. By establishing these testing

environments, policymakers can create a robust and adaptive legal ecosystem that protects local communities while fostering technological innovation.

7.3.4. Building community resilience

Building community resilience should be recognized as a fundamental objective of tourism development. This involves empowering local communities to take part in decision-making processes, thereby ensuring that tourism development aligns with their needs and values. It also requires strengthening local capacities in risk management and crisis response, particularly in the face of climate change and external shocks. Besides, promoting diversified livelihood opportunities linked to tourism can help reduce economic vulnerability and enhance long-term sustainability.

7.3.5. Toward an integrated development strategy

The study underscores the importance of adopting an integrated development strategy based on the interplay between culture, technology, and policy. This “strategic triangle” highlights that no single factor alone is sufficient; rather, a coordinated and synergistic approach is necessary to maximize impact. By effectively integrating these three dimensions, tourism destinations - especially in emerging urban and regional contexts - can significantly improve their adaptability, resilience, and overall competitiveness in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment./.

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