

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY TOURISM TOWARDS CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN VIETNAM: A MOLECULAR APPROACH TO THE WILLINGNESS OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS TO APPLY CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN COMMUNITY TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY TOURISM ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

The research paper examines the factors influencing the development of community tourism in the direction of circular economy in Vietnam based on the approach of the willingness to apply circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments. The results of the study of 240 respondents showed that social and community factors, institutions, inter-sectoral coordination between parties and green consumption behaviors all have a positive impact on the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments. In which, the influence of social and community factors is 23.5%, institutions are 24.6%, inter-sectoral coordination between parties is 35.6% and green consumption behavior is 18.4%. On that basis, the article proposes a number of solutions to promote the readiness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments, on the basis of which to develop community tourism in the direction of circular economy in Vietnam

KEYWORDS: community tourism, circular economy, Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of sustainable development becoming an inevitable trend, Vietnam's tourism industry is facing the requirement to transform its growth model towards minimizing negative impacts on the environment and increasing socio-economic value. Community tourism, characterized by relying on indigenous resources and people's participation, is seen as a suitable direction to promote inclusive development. However, practice shows that this model still faces many challenges such as unreasonable resource exploitation, waste generation, and limited resource efficiency. In this context, the circular economy has emerged as an effective approach to optimize resources, reduce waste, and enhance the value of the tourism chain.

While the potential for circular economy adoption in community tourism is significant, the readiness of businesses still varies and is impacted by many factors. First of all, social and community factors play a fundamental role, as awareness, participation, and social norms can drive or hinder the transition. In addition, support institutions and policies from the State are meaningful to orient and motivate through incentive and implementation guiding mechanisms. In addition, interdisciplinary coordination between parties such as governments, businesses, communities and supporting organizations is a necessary condition for the formation of a circular tourism ecosystem. Finally, the green consumption behavior of tourists is also an important factor, contributing to creating market pressure and encouraging businesses to change towards sustainability.

From the above issues, the paper focuses on analyzing the impact of these four factors on the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities in Vietnam, thereby proposing appropriate policy and governance implications.

2. Overview of research works

The relationship between social and community factors and the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments in Vietnam

Current studies, while not directly measuring the relationship between socio-community factors and the willingness to adopt the circular economy in community tourism, provide important theoretical and empirical evidence that this is a fundamental and multidimensional relationship. On the basis of integrating research streams on social capital,

community participation, social exchange theory and destination governance, some of the main influencing mechanisms can be identified as follows:

In the context of community tourism, social capital is seen as an intangible resource but plays a decisive role in promoting collective action. According to Moscardo (2017), social capital includes factors such as beliefs, social norms, and networks of connections, enabling individuals to coordinate actions to achieve a common goal.

From a circular economy perspective, practices such as resource sharing, product reuse, and community waste management require a high level of collaboration between local actors. Rocca et al. (2022) point out that in communities with strong social capital, the ability to implement sustainable development initiatives is enhanced thanks to the existence of trust mechanisms and informal cooperation. Therefore, it can be argued that social capital not only has a direct impact, but also serves as a prerequisite for the readiness to adopt the circular economy, through reducing the cost of social transactions and strengthening coordination capacities within the community (Moscardo, 2017; Rocca et al., 2022).

One of the core characteristics of community tourism is the involvement of local residents in the entire tourism development process. According to Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2020), the level of participation not only reflects the community's ownership of tourism but also determines the sustainability of development initiatives.

Research by Su et al. (2018) shows that active community involvement increases environmental responsibility and promotes eco-friendly behaviors in tourism. In the context of the circular economy, this is particularly important, because the circular economy is not just a technical model but a system that requires a change in collective behavior. Therefore, community involvement can be seen as a mediating mechanism that helps transform positive perceptions and attitudes into specific actions related to the circular economy, thereby improving the level of readiness to adopt (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2020; Su et al., 2018).

Social Exchange Theory provides an important theoretical framework for explaining residents' attitudes and behaviors towards tourism development initiatives. According to Ap (1992), individuals tend to favor activities when they perceive the expected benefits to outweigh the costs. Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) expand on this argument by demonstrating that perceptions of economic, social, and environmental benefits have a positive effect on public support for tourism. In the context of a circular economy, the readiness to adopt depends significantly on whether the community is aware of benefits such as improved livelihoods, improved environmental quality, and increased destination value. At the same time, fairness in the distribution of benefits also plays an important role. If the benefits from the circular economy are concentrated in a small group or are not transparent, social trust will decline, leading to a decline in willingness to participate. Thus, the perception of benefits and fairness can be seen as motivational drivers of the willingness to adopt the circular economy (Ap, 1992; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011).

H1: Social and community factors have a positive impact on the willingness of businesses to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities in Vietnam

The relationship between institutional factors and the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments in Vietnam

In the context of the transition to a circular economy, community tourism businesses (homestays, households, cooperative groups, small businesses) are not only affected by internal factors but also strongly depend on the institutional environment. Regulatory institutions include a system of laws, policies and norms related to environmental protection, waste management and sustainable tourism development.

Studies have shown that mandatory regulations (e.g., restrictions on single-use plastics, garbage segregation requirements, environmental standards in accommodation establishments) create coercive pressure to force businesses to change their behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

In the context of the circular economy, incentives such as financial support, tax breaks, or training programs also play an important role in reducing the cost of transition and improving the readiness to adopt (Ghisellini et al., 2016). However, in many community tourism destinations, the regulatory system is lacking in specificity or ineffective enforcement, leading to a limited level of willingness to apply the circular economy.

A clear and stable institutional environment reduces uncertainty, enabling businesses to invest in circular economy models. Financial and technical support policies help reduce barriers to entry and increase the feasibility of circular economy adoption (Ghisellini et al., 2016).

Institutions not only create pressure, but also shape how actors understand and approach the circular economy. An institutional environment that supports learning and innovation will help improve the absorptive capacity of the business, which in turn increases the readiness to adopt (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

Q2: Institutional factors have a positive impact on the willingness of businesses to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities in Vietnam

The relationship between the inter-sectoral coordination between the parties and the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments in Vietnam

According to Freeman (1984), the business is influenced and at the same time affects many different stakeholders. In tourism, the success of sustainability initiatives depends on the ability to balance interests and coordinate actions

between parties. In the context of the circular economy, this is especially important because the circular value chain (e.g., recycling garbage, using local products, sharing resources) cannot be implemented by a single actor. Network governance theory argues that complex issues such as sustainable development should be solved through multi-agent networks of cooperation rather than traditional management mechanisms (Provan & Kenis, 2008). In community tourism, this network includes businesses, governments, support organizations, and local communities. The quality of the network (trust, information sharing, coordination mechanisms) directly affects the ability to implement circular economy initiatives.

According to the innovative ecosystem approach, the adoption of new models such as the circular economy depends on the interaction between actors in the ecosystem (Adner, 2017). In community tourism, the circular economy can be considered as a form of system innovation, requiring the synchronous participation of many parties such as: suppliers (farmers, craft villages), accommodation facilities, waste treatment units, authorities and supporting organizations.

Studies show that cooperation between parties reduces costs and increases resource efficiency, thereby improving the adoption of the circular economy (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). According to research by Rizos et al. (2016), collaborative networking plays an important role in increasing the awareness and innovation capacity of small businesses in the transition to a circular model.

H3: The factor of inter-sectoral coordination between parties has a positive impact on the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments in Vietnam

The relationship between green consumption behavior factors and the willingness to apply circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments in Vietnam

In the context of the transition to a circular economy, the green consumption behavior of tourists is increasingly becoming an important factor shaping the strategy and behavior of tourism businesses. Green consumption behavior is understood as the tendency to choose products and services with low environmental impact, including behaviors such as prioritizing environmentally friendly accommodation facilities, limiting waste, using local products, and advocating for sustainable tourism models (Han et al., 2010). In community tourism, where businesses are often small and highly dependent on market demand, changes in consumer behavior of tourists can become market-driven for circular economy adoption.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, an individual's behavior is determined by attitudes, subjective norms, and the perception that controls behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Applied to this context, when tourists have a positive attitude towards the environment and are influenced by social norms that favor green consumption, they will tend to choose sustainable tourism services. This creates market pressure forcing business establishments to adjust their operations in a circular direction. This theory holds that environmentally friendly behavior is rooted in individual values and beliefs (Stern, 2000). As more and more tourists become environmentally conscious, they create a new norm, which in turn influences corporate behavior through social and market pressures.

Businesses that adopt eco-friendly practices are often more appreciated by tourists, thereby enhancing their image and competitiveness (Chen, 2010). According to research by Verma and Chandra (2018), customer perception can indirectly influence business behavior through the process of service interaction.

H4: The factor of green consumption behavior has a positive impact on the willingness of business establishments to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities in Vietnam

On the basis of the basic theory and overview of research works, the hypothetical model is built as follows:

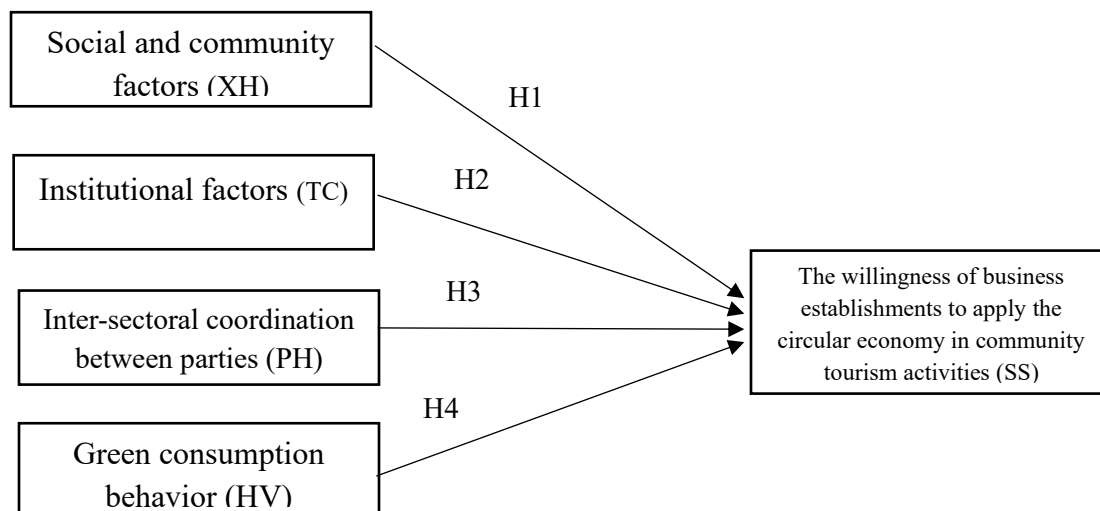


Figure 1. Research Hypothesis Model

Source: Proposed Author

3. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to analyze the multiple regression to yield optimal results, Hair et al. (2014) suggested that the minimum sample size should be five times the number of variables observed. Therefore, with 20 observed variables, the minimum required sample size for this study was determined to be 100. The official survey was conducted in January 2026 using a questionnaire on Google docs. A total of 250 responses were collected, of which 240 were valid. After screening and coding, the dataset is processed using SPSS 25.0. The quantitative data is analyzed through the following steps: checking the reliability of the scale, probing factor analysis (EFA), and performing regression analysis.

Table 1. Coding and checking the reliability of the scales

Item	Code	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
Social and community factors				
The local community understands and demonstrates the spirit of "linking — cooperating — for the common good" in developing a community tourism model in the direction of a circular economy	XH1	.741	.842	.878
Local people are actively involved in activities that support community tourism in the direction of a circular economy, such as providing services, conserving local resources, and preserving the environment.	XH2	.728	.846	
Local communities are clearly aware that community tourism in the direction of circular economy brings economic benefits, diversifies livelihoods and ensures sustainable green jobs (increasing income and jobs for local people).	XH3	.735	.843	
The local community feels that the community tourism model in the direction of circular economy contributes to preserving traditional cultural values and enhancing pride in local identity.	XH4	.740	.841	
Institutional factors				
Local infrastructure planning and investment policies are clearly promulgated and facilitate the development of community tourism in the direction of circular economy.	TC1	.721	.878	.896
Policies on environmental protection and landscape renovation are fully implemented, helping establishments develop community tourism in the direction of circular economy in a sustainable way.	TC2	.732	.875	
The policy on development of tourism human resources is promulgated and effectively implemented by the State, improving the quality of services at community tourist attractions and communities in the direction of circular economy.	TC3	.781	.864	
Financial and technical support policies really help community tourism businesses in the direction of the circular economy operate more efficiently	TC4	.751	.871	
The policy of promoting and promoting community tourism in the direction of	TC5	.735	.875	

circular economy through mainstream media raises the identity of business establishments and attracts visitors who are interested in the environment.				
Inter-sectoral coordination between parties				
Local stakeholders share a clear common goal in promoting the development of community tourism towards a circular economy.	PH1	.768	.816	.870
Inter-sectoral parties regularly support and trust each other to jointly develop a community tourism model in the direction of circular economy	PH2	.688	.848	
Local intersectoral parties have clear coordination rules, regulations, or processes	PH3	.709	.840	
Inter-sectoral parties regularly organize coordination activities such as interdisciplinary meetings, seminars, workshops, and joint project groups to ensure linkage in the management and implementation of community tourism in the direction of circular economy.	PH4	.729	.832	
Green consumption behavior				
Consumers tend to prioritize using environmentally friendly services when choosing homestays	HV1	.757	.842	.881
Consumers are often influenced by family, friends, or social networks when choosing eco-friendly services	HV2	.722	.855	
Consumers have a basic understanding of measures to reduce environmental impact when traveling	HV3	.731	.852	
Consumers tend to choose to book services at homestays that promote "green" certification or a clear message about the environment	HV4	.758	.841	
The willingness of business establishments to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities				
The facility is ready to use natural, environmentally friendly materials in production and services, instead of materials with negative impacts.	SS1	.614	.648	.759
The facility is willing to use items that can be replaced or repaired from old, damaged items (e.g., reuse, recycling repairs).	SS2	.597	.674	
Facilities that regularly reuse items (e.g., packaging materials, accommodation items) to reduce waste	SS3	.563	.709	

(Source: Compiled author)

4. Research results

After examining the reliability of 20 observed variables (Table 1), the study conducted an exploration factor analysis with the 20 observed variables mentioned above.

Table 2. KMO coefficient and Bartlett testing of components

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.828
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2156.715
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS Analysis Results

The criteria for the application and selection of variables for EFA analysis include: the Bartlett criterion and the KMO coefficient used to assess the suitability of EFA. In Table 2, KMO = 0.828 satisfies condition $0.5 < KMO < 1$, Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that the study data are consistent with EFA. Perform factor analysis according to key components with Varimax rotation. The results of Table 3 show that these 4 factors best summarize the information of the 20 observed variables contained in EFA. The total variance extracted by these 4 factors is 72,801% >50%. Thus, the 4 factors cited explain 72.801% of the data change of the 20 observed variables associated with EFA.

Table 3: Results of total variance extracted

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.642	21.422	21.422	3.642	21.422	21.422	3.547	20.866	20.866
2	3.083	18.133	39.554	3.083	18.133	39.554	2.984	17.553	38.419
3	2.982	17.544	57.098	2.982	17.544	57.098	2.945	17.325	55.745
4	2.669	15.703	72.801	2.669	15.703	72.801	2.900	17.056	72.801
5	.495	2.913	75.714						
6	.441	2.595	78.309						
7	.432	2.539	80.848						
8	.424	2.495	83.343						
9	.394	2.316	85.659						
10	.381	2.244	87.903						
11	.358	2.103	90.006						
12	.342	2.012	92.018						
13	.298	1.755	93.773						
14	.295	1.737	95.509						
15	.283	1.667	97.176						
16	.261	1.538	98.714						
17	.219	1.286	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: SPSS Analysis Results

Table 4 presents the matrix of rotating elements as follows:

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix^a

Rotated Component Matrix ^a				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
TC3	.870			
TC4	.842			
TC5	.837			
TC2	.828			
TC1	.823			
HV1		.867		
HV4		.867		
HV3		.853		
HV2		.843		

XH3			.856	
XH1			.855	
XH4			.855	
XH2			.852	
PH1				.877
PH4				.853
PH3				.841
PH2				.819
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.				

Source: SPSS Analysis Results

The results of the group of factors are as follows:

Group 1 includes variables: TC3, TC4, TC5, TC2, TC1 (factor load coefficient from 0.823 to 0.870). This group of factors is called the institutional factors

Group 2 includes variables: HV1, HV4, HV3, HV2 (factor load coefficient from 0.843 to 0.867). This group of factors is called green consumption behavior

Group 3 includes variables: XH3, XH1, XH4, XH2 (factor load coefficient from 0.852 to 0.856). This group of factors is called social and community factors

Group 4 includes variables: PH1, PH4, PH3, PH2 (factor load coefficient from 0.819 to 0.877). This group of factors is called inter-sectoral coordination between parties

According to the Table 5 data, the value of $R^2 = 0.294$ shows that the regression model explains 29.4% of the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments through 4 independent variables: social and community factors, institutional factors, inter-sectoral coordination between parties and green consumption behavior. This reflects that the model has a fairly good level of explanation in the context of social research. The corrected R^2 value = 0.282 indicates that the model still maintains its relevance when adjusted for the number of variables, avoiding overestimation due to adding more variables to the model. The Durbin-Watson index of the study model = 1.871~2, so the model has no autocorrelation

Table 5. Model Summary^b

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.542 ^a	.294	.282	.45351	.294	24.447	4	235	.000	1.871
a. Predictors: (Constant), HV, XH, PH, TC										
b. Dependent Variable: SS										

Source: SPSS Analysis Results

The results of the inspection of the level of significance are shown in Table 6 as follows:

Table 6. ANOVA^a analysis results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.112	4	5.028	24.447	.000 ^b
	Residual	48.332	235	.206		
	Total	68.444	239			
a. Dependent Variable: SS						
b. Predictors: (Constant), HV, XH, PH, TC						

Source: SPSS Analysis Results

The test result (Table 6) for the value Sig. = 0.000 allows to refute the hypothesis that all regression coefficients are equal to 0. Thus, the linear regression model is suitable for the dataset and can be used. The value $F = 24.447$ with $Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that the given model is consistent with the actual data. In other words, the

HV, XH, PH, TC variables are linearly correlated with the SS variable with 95% confidence. According to Table 8, the independent variables all have a coefficient of variance magnification (VIF) of < 2, with no multilinear phenomenon. The results of the analysis of the regression coefficients of the model are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Model regression system

Coefficients ^a											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Beta	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	.870	.277		3.138	.002					
	XH	.175	.041	.235	4.282	.000	.257	.269	.235	.995	1.005
	TC	.182	.041	.246	4.464	.000	.261	.280	.245	.993	1.008
	PH	.269	.041	.356	6.471	.000	.366	.389	.355	.996	1.005
	HV	.135	.040	.184	3.345	.001	.212	.213	.183	.993	1.007

a. Dependent Variable: SS

Source: SPSS Analysis Results

From the results of the analysis, the regression equation is estimated as follows:

$$SS = 0.175 * XH + 0.182 * TC + 0.269 * PH + 0.135 * HV + 0.870 + \epsilon$$

From the regression equation, it can be seen that social and community variables, institutional factors, inter-sectoral coordination between parties and green consumption behavior all have a positive impact on the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments. The level of willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments will increase if this factor is satisfied. Therefore, in order to promote the willingness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments, these factors need to be further improved. The Beta value indicates the importance of the independent variable over the dependent variable. Table 8 shows the degree of influence between the independent and dependent variables. Among the variables, the influence of social and community factors was 23.5%, institutions were 24.6%, intersectoral coordination between parties was 35.6%, and green consumption behavior was 18.4%

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that social and community factors, institutions, inter-sectoral coordination between parties and green consumption behavior all have a positive impact on the readiness to apply the circular economy in community tourism activities of business establishments. On that basis, this study proposes a number of solutions as follows:

Firstly, in terms of society and community, it is necessary to raise awareness of people and business households about the benefits of the circular economy through communication and practical training activities. At the same time, it promotes direct community participation in tourism activities such as the supply of local ingredients, waste segregation, and resource conservation. The exploitation of indigenous knowledge (reuse of materials, seasonal cuisine, handmade products) and the development of community conventions on environmental protection will contribute to the formation of a favorable social foundation for the application of the circular model.

Second, from an institutional perspective, it is necessary to improve policies that support the circular economy in community-based tourism by integrating them into local tourism development strategies. A specific set of criteria and practical guidelines should also be developed so that tourism facilities can apply them more easily. At the same time, implement financial and technical support policies such as capital incentives, energy-saving equipment, waste treatment and green governance training. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen inspection and supervision and have a mechanism to reward and certify green tourism establishments.

Thirdly, regarding inter-sectoral coordination, it is necessary to establish a linkage mechanism between the government, businesses, communities, cooperatives and supporting organizations. The connection with the agricultural, environmental, and cultural industries helps form a circular value chain, from the supply of raw materials to the treatment of waste. In addition, it is necessary to develop a network of experience sharing among business establishments and promote the role of intermediary organizations such as universities and tourism associations in consulting and transferring models.

Fourth, in terms of green consumption behavior, it is necessary to raise the awareness of tourists through communication at the destination and during the experience. Businesses need to develop green tourism products, use

local ingredients, and reduce single-use plastics. At the same time, apply incentive mechanisms such as incentives for guests with environmentally friendly behaviors and building green community tourism brands. In conclusion, the simultaneous improvement of the above four factors will create favorable conditions, increase motivation and capacity for business establishments in applying the circular economy, contributing to the development of community tourism in a sustainable direction.

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