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# The Influence of Customer Trust and Loyalty on Repurchase Intention of Domestic Tourism: A Case Study in Thailand During COVID-19 Crisis\*

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## Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the level of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intention of coastal tourism in Thailand during the COVID-19 crisis; to test the different levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intention by local tourists between East-side and West-side coasts of Thailand; and to examine the influence of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intention in coastal tourism. Using multistage sampling, this study sampled 487 Thai local tourists who had experienced coastal tourism in Thailand during the COVID-19 crisis. A questionnaire, descriptive analysis, independent sample *t*-test, correlation matrix, and multiple regression analysis were used to collect and analyze the data. All customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions in coastal tourism by local tourists were at a high level. There were significantly different levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions by local Thai tourists between the East-side and West-side coasts of Thailand. Moreover, the study found that there was a significant positive influence of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal tourism by local tourists in Thailand during the COVID-19 crisis. This study indicates that Thai tourism industry still must develop and improve its local customer loyalty and trust because these positively influence customer re-purchase intentions.

**Keywords:** Customer Trust, Customer Loyalty, Repurchase Intentions, Thailand, COVID-19

**JEL Classification Code:** L20, L83, M31

## 1. Introduction

In 2020, The World Health Organization announced a novel coronavirus to the world. This type of virus was originally found in Wuhan, China. On 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the first recorded case outside of China was found in Thailand.

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There was an officially-confirmed case of COVID-19 in Thailand (WHO, 2021). COVID-19 dramatically spread in many countries around the world. WHO then made the assessment that COVID-19 should be categorized as a pandemic. The outbreak caused chaos worldwide with emergency responses. Many industries have been affected by the pandemic, especially the tourism industry. As the coronavirus can easily transmit from human to human, many tourists are afraid to travel, while countries and airlines have hindered or blocked much of international travel. Moreover, many countries declared internal lockdowns in order to prevent the outbreak from spreading. As a result, many businesses related to the tourism industries have been temporarily closed down or maintain only minimal operations (Bakar & Rosbi, 2020).

The tourism industry has played a vital role in the economic development of Thailand. In 2019, the tourism industry was one of the top industries when ranked by income to the country (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). Many local businesses exist because of the tourism.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis Thailand's tourism industry has largely collapsed, particularly Thai coastal tourism in the country's southern peninsular. As a consequence, the Thai government has launched policies to support the local tourism by encouraging domestic tourism to maintain this industry on a life support, until foreign tourists return. The policies and campaigns to promote domestic tourism include "Share happiness through travel", "We Travel together", or "Pay half" (ThaiGov, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, the uncertain situation has driven local businesses to adapt themselves and move on to new ways, as in a "new normal", in order to survive the toughest period. The local businesses have to find strategies to maintain their customers. One essential strategy is to build trust and loyalty of customers. This is because the more trust and loyalty there is, the more opportunity the business has to gain a customer base to support survival of the business (Kabiraj & Shanmugan, 2011) also with re-purchases of products and services (Pong & Yee, 2001). Likewise, Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) mention that when the customers have loyalty, they will express this in their behavior by repurchasing products and/or services. Therefore, the notion of trust and loyalty can be viewed also in the context of coastal tourism in Thailand. The local entrepreneurs can stimulate sales by pursuing customer trust and loyalty. This notion is connected to the way in which local businesses can develop trust and loyalty with the local tourists to strengthen their re-purchase intentions. The link of customer loyalty and trust with the re-purchase intentions can be explained by social exchange theory of human relationships (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005). Thus, the social exchange theory is utilized in this study to explain relationships among the factors.

Although there are numerous studies on trust and loyalty effects on re-purchase intentions, most of the studies appear to confirm this relationship during a normal situation. However, during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation might be changed. Hence, this prompts the queries of this study on whether the relationship of trust and loyalty with re-purchase intentions remains the same during the crisis? Do these factors still have an influence on the re-purchase intentions of local customers? Do local customers still want to support the coastal tourism?

This study, thus, aimed (1) to investigate the level of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions of coastal tourism by local tourists in Thailand during the COVID-19 crisis; (2) to test the levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions by local tourists between East and West side coasts of peninsular Thailand; and (3) to examine the influences of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions of coastal domestic tourism. Therefore, there were three main research questions: (1) What is the level of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic tourism in Thailand during the COVID-19 crisis? (2) Are there different levels of customer trust, loyalty,

and re-purchase intentions by local tourists between East and West side coasts of Thailand? (3) Are there influences of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal tourism by local tourists.

This study provides some contributions in terms of theoretical and practical issues. Firstly, in terms of the theoretical contributions expected, social exchange theory will be tested whether it can explain the influences of customer loyalty and trust on re-purchase intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic similar as during ordinary non-pandemic conditions. In addition, the study results will add to the literature on customer loyalty, customer trust, and re-purchase intentions in emerging economies. In terms of the practical contributions expected, this study can assess government policies and campaigns to heal and support the tourism industry in Thailand during the COVID-19 crisis. The tourism industry, which consists of accommodation, transportation, food and beverage, travel, souvenirs and products, and other related businesses, can use the study findings to develop and improve their customer loyalty and trust, if the study indicates positive influences of customer loyalty and trust on re-purchase intentions.

Structurally, this study begins with the theoretical perspective where the social exchange theory is used to explain the influences of customer loyalty and trust on re-purchase intentions as well as the different levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions in local tourism between the East and West coasts of Thailand. The literature review and hypothesis development are based on prior literature on customer trust, customer loyalty, and re-purchase intentions. Next, population and samples, data collection, variable measurements, and data analysis are explained in the methods section. Findings and discussion then follow. Finally, summary and suggestions for future studies are provided, emphasizing the contributions and implications of the study results, and its limitations.

## 2. Theoretical Perspective

Social exchange theory is one of the most significant conceptual paradigms in the study of social behavior. In social psychological context, social exchange theory was developed by sociologist George Homans for the study of social behavior in terms of interpersonal exchanges (Homans, 1950, 1958, 1961). Homans (1961) applies behaviorism and basic economics to explain human behavior when receiving rewards for cost. The root of the social exchange theory is grounded on the relationship of two or more actors that calculate and compare costs and rewards. Homans (1961) emphasizes that any social interaction between actors relates to costs and rewards. The costs and rewards are evaluated from the effort of actors that contribute in such relationship. The pros and cons of the relationship are counted and evaluated by the actors in terms of effort in the relationship.

The underlying notion of the social exchange theory is based on belief in the propositions of human nature and the nature of human relationships. The first proposition is that humans tend to seek rewards and avoid punishments. The second proposition is that one actor will initiate the interactions when one expects maximum profit at minimum cost. The third proposition is related to the reciprocity by which humans perceive the reciprocal returns to each person. Likewise, Tittenbrun (2017) mentions that the concept of social behavior by Homans (1961) is synonymous with the concept of interaction by which the emitted behavior of an actor is rewarded or punished by the action released by the other actors; this is considered an interaction regardless of the type of emitted behavior. Accordingly, it can be noted that the key proposition of the social exchange theory lies in the study of social behavior particularly in terms of rewards and punishments (Cook, Cheshire, Eric, & Nakagawa, 2003). The exchange of tangible and intangible activities and rewards between the parties are considered social exchanges. He concludes that the concept of “social behavior as exchange” supports analyzing human interactions (Homans, 1958).

Social exchange theory has been widely used to explain human behavior in various disciplines, such as in marketing. Muhammad, Zahra, and Yaeen (2017) applied social exchange perspective in the study of trust effects on re-purchase intentions in the airline industry. Sierra and McQuitty (2005) apply the social exchange theory in an explanation of shared responsibility, emotion and loyalty in service setting. According to Lawler (2001), emotion is one of the core features of social exchange processes. The emotion is incorporated in the explanation of consumer behavior where social exchange is conceptualized as joint activity of at least two parties involved. As a result, this study employs the social exchange theory as the core theoretical frame in examining loyalty, trust and re-purchase intentions, in a study of coastal domestic tourism in Thailand.

### 3. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

There are four main topics in this section, namely, customer trust, customer loyalty, re-purchase intentions, and hypothesis development.

#### 3.1. Customer Trust

Trust is a concept that is variously utilized in a number of disciplines in different contexts (i.e., philosophy, sociology, management, and marketing). Since trust has been studied in many disciplines, the concepts, definitions and findings are variously produced depending on the discipline. Trust is established by belief in honesty and reliability of one side by the other (Moorman, Deshpande, & Zaltman, 1992). Bicchieri, Duffy, and Tolle (2004) indicate that trust relates

to social exchanges in terms of a disposition to engage in social exchanges that involve vulnerability and uncertainty, but that are potentially rewarding. On the one hand, trust is a customer’s willingness to be involved with future transactions in relationship marketing that lead to a perception of reduced future risk (Steenkamp, Kumar, & Geyskens, 1998; Kotler & Keller, 2015). On the other hand, some scholars argue that trust relates to cognitive expectation about what to believe that fulfill expectations and gain emotional support (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Palmer, 2008; Milan, Eberle, & Bebber, 2015). Trust abounds in customer relationships by which it is a significant bond between brand and customers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). As a consequence, consumer who has trust in a brand and/or a company is more satisfied and more willing to commit to it.

#### 3.2. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is one of the key concepts in managing customer relationships. Customer loyalty supports intentional behavior of a customer in relation to the provided service. The intended behaviors are such as customer intention to support and patronage the company, spread positive word-of-mouth, protect the company, and reinforce the image of the company (Lubis, Dalimunthe, Absah, & Fawzee, 2021; Upamannyu, Gulati, Chack, & Kaur, 2015; Riyadi, 2021). The more loyalty there is from a customer, the more there is willingness to pay to support the business (Brown, 1952). Loyalty is generated when the customer perceives value from the business (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) divide loyalty into two parts: attitude and behavior. The attitude is a psychological characteristic related to opinion and tendency to purchase in the future; the behavior is related to re-purchase behavior. Oliver (1999) characterizes loyalty in four parts, namely, cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action loyalty. Cognitive loyalty is the stage when a customer perceives information about the product and service (Riyadi, 2021). Affective loyalty is the stage when a customer has an attitude towards the product and service. Conative loyalty is the stage when a customer shows the intention to purchase products and services, including trial purchases. Action loyalty is the stage when a customer shows re-purchase behavior.

#### 3.3. Re-Purchase Intention

Re-purchase intention is an individual’s judgement about purchasing again from the same company (Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003). In other words, it is an intention to buy the product or the brand again. In line with Chen and Cheng (2009), they define re-purchase intention as repeat intention in the study of Internet shoppers for the buying of products or service. Likewise, Khalifa and Liu (2007) define re-purchase intention as the behavior of customers who

purchase the product over and over again. By the same token, Hellier et al. (2003) mention that a consumer's decision to rebuy the products from the same company is considered re-purchase intention. Zhang, Fang, Wei, Ramsey, McCole, and Chen (2011) state that re-purchase intention involves customer confidence in future performance. The re-purchase intention is necessary in business because it is an indicator of future sales.

### 3.4. Hypothesis Development

The effects of trust on re-purchase intentions have been extensively studied. For instance, Kim, Ferring, and Rao (2009) found that trust has an influence on revisit intentions in the service recovery in luxury hotels. They also suggest that trust has a positive influence on customer retention. Consequently, when strong trust is formed between the service provider and the customer, a long-term relationship can be established. Several studies have found trust to be a major antecedent of customer re-purchase intentions. For example, Gao (2011) finds that it is more likely for customers to have intentions to re-purchase when they have a high level of trust towards a website. Nursiana, Budhijono, and Fuad (2021) found the positive affect of customer trust on re-purchase intention of insurance policies in Indonesia. In the same manner, Check and Ho (2016) found a positive relationship between trust and re-purchase intentions. Rita, Oliveira and Farisa (2019) also found that customer trust has a positive relationship with re-purchase intentions in online shopping. Similarly, Muhammad et al. (2017) found that trust is important for developing re-purchase intentions in the airline industry. Therefore, the prior literature leads to the following hypothesis:

*H1: There is a positive influence of customer trust on re-purchase intentions in coastal tourism.*

Crosby, Evan, and Cowles (1990) mention that in general, there are differences in customer loyalty towards products and services. Loyalty is required to develop a relationship between the seller and the customer in a service business, while communications between seller and customer are required when operating a product business. Nevertheless, the shared objective of both product and service businesses still is the same, namely, to encourage customer re-purchases consistently. A most effective way to increase repeat purchase intentions of customers is to have products and services that meet the expectations and reward loyalty (Kim et al., 2009). Those consumers will be repeat customers who are loyal. Upamannyu et al. (2015) found that customer loyalty has a positive relationship with re-purchase intentions. On examining the influences

of customer loyalty on re-purchase intentions, most prior literature has found positive influences (Nursiana et al., 2021; Deng, Lu, Wei, & Zhang, 2010; Kim et al., 2004). The reason for positive influences of customer loyalty on re-purchase intentions is explained by social exchange theory (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005).

The business interactions and communications can directly reflect on customer behaviors including customer loyalty. The businesses can forecast the level of re-purchase intentions from the level of customer loyalty (Deng et al., 2010). Wathne, Biony, and Heide (2001) stated that customer re-purchase intentions depend on their past experiences during service encounters. Zhang et al. (2011) found that re-purchase intentions are a customer behavior about value evaluation of business products and services. The value evaluation is considered from customer perspective comparing costs and benefits (Lovelock, 2000; Lee & Cunningham, 1996). Customer loyalty will emerge if the customers feel that they have more benefits from product or service than their cost is (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). For example, a great relationship between customers and a business organization provides several advantages to both sides, such as greater business performance, better business reputation, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. However, the prior related studies have not investigated and tested the influences of customer loyalty on re-purchase intentions during a pandemic. Thus, customer loyalty needs to be tested again, whether it is still influencing re-purchase intentions during the Covid-19 crisis. This study hypothesizes that:

*H2: There is a positive influence of customer loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal tourism.*

## 4. Methods

To investigate the level of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic tourism in Thailand during the COVID-19 crisis, the levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions of local tourist between East and West coasts of Thailand need to be assessed. The population of this study comprised all Thai local tourists who had experienced coastal tourism either on West or East coast of Thailand. In the scope of this current study, the West coast consists of Ranong, Krabi, Phang Nga, Phuket, Trang, and Satun provinces, while the East coast consists of Chumphon, Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phatthalung, and Songkhla provinces. Using multistage sampling, 400 samples were divided between the two sides of Thailand by using quota sampling. In addition, purposive sampling was used with the local tourists who had experienced coastal tourism in Thailand, including 200 tourists to the West coast and 200 tourists to the East coast (Ministry of Tourism and

Sport, 2020). Finally, there were 487 samples in this study including 247 tourists who had experienced travel to the West coast, and 240 who had experienced East coast tourism.

The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from prior related studies by Solomon (2018), Sierra, and McQuitty (2016), Upamannyu et al. (2015), and Deng et al. (2010). There were four main parts in the questionnaire including (1) general information of tourist such as gender, domicile of tourist, travel frequency, and travel period, (2) customer loyalty (5 questions), (3) customer trust (5 questions), and (4) re-purchase intentions (5 questions). From the second part to the last part of the questionnaire, a 5-point Likert scale (1 = lowest, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high, and 5 = highest) was used to indicate the level of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions in domestic Thai coastal tourism. Summary of the data records collected is given in Table 1.

The data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 23). Within the three main objectives of this study, a descriptive analysis was used to investigate the levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic Thai tourism. The averages and standard deviations were taken into consideration. The averages of interval scales were labeled as follows (Srisa-ard, 2010): 1.00 to 1.50 is the lowest level, 1.51 to 2.50 is a low level, 2.51 to 3.50 is a moderate level, 3.51 to 4.50 is a high level, and 4.51 to 5.00 is the highest level. Furthermore, independent sample *t*-test was used to test the differences in customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions by local tourists between East and West coasts of Thailand, while correlation was tested to detect potential multicollinearity among all the variables used in this study. Finally, multiple regression analysis was carried out to examine the influences of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic tourism. The equation for testing the study's hypotheses was:

$$\text{INTENT} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{LOYAL} + \beta_2\text{TRUST} + \beta_3\text{GENDER} + \beta_4\text{DOMIC} + \beta_5\text{FREQUEN} + \beta_6\text{PERIOD} + \varepsilon \text{ (Main Model)}$$

In addition, sensitivity analysis was used in this study by separating samples from different coastal sides, i.e., the West and the East coasts. Therefore, there were another two equations used in this study:

$$\text{INTENT} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{LOYAL} + \beta_2\text{TRUST} + \beta_3\text{GENDER} + \beta_4\text{DOMIC} + \beta_5\text{FREQUEN} + \beta_6\text{PERIOD} + \varepsilon \text{ (West Coast Model)}$$

$$\text{INTENT} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{LOYAL} + \beta_2\text{TRUST} + \beta_3\text{GENDER} + \beta_4\text{DOMIC} + \beta_5\text{FREQUEN} + \beta_6\text{PERIOD} + \varepsilon \text{ (East Coast Model)}$$

## 5. Results and Discussion

Based on the 487 questionnaires, there were 247 tourists (50.72%) visiting the West coast, and 240 tourists (49.28%) visiting the East coast (Total = 487 respondents). As for the results, customer trust (Mean = 4.0534, and SD = 0.5701), loyalty (Mean = 4.0527, and SD = 0.5965), and re-purchase intentions of coastal domestic tourism (Mean = 4.0739, and SD = 0.6572) were on a high level (Table 2).

To test different levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions by local tourists between East and West coasts of Thailand, independent sample *t*-test was used (Table 3). For customer trust and loyalty, there were significantly different levels between East and West coast tourists at 0.01 probability level. Moreover, the study also found significantly different re-purchase intentions by local tourists between West and East coasts in Thailand at 0.01 level. The local tourists who travel to the West coast of Thailand had higher re-purchase intentions, loyalty, and trust than the East coast tourists did. The reason is that the West coast of Thailand is a global tourism destination including Phuket island, Phi Phi island, Similan island, and Lanta island, with normally large numbers of tourists, great hotels and tourist attractions, and larger entrepreneur investment than on the East coast of Thailand. The latter does include as famous tourist destinations Samui island, and Pha Ngan

**Table 1:** Variables Measured in this Study

Variable	Symbol	Measurement scale
Re-purchase intention	INTENT	Five level Likert scales
Customer loyalty	LOYAL	Five level Likert scales
Customer trust	TRUST	Five level Likert scales
Gender	GENDER	Dummy variable: 1 = male; 0 = female
Domicile	DOMIC	Dummy variable: 1 = coast citizen; 0 = the others
Travel frequency	FREQUEN	Travel frequency as time per year
Travel period	PERIOD	Travel period as average days per time

**Table 2:** The Levels of Customer Trust, Loyalty, and Re-purchase Intentions in Coastal Domestic Thai Tourism

Variable	Min.	Max.	Medium	Mean	SD	Level
INTENT	2.0000	5.0000	4.0000	4.0739	0.6572	High
LOYAL	2.0000	5.0000	4.0000	4.0527	0.5965	High
TRUST	2.2500	5.0000	4.0000	4.0534	0.5701	High

**Table 3:** Different Levels of Customer Trust, Loyalty, and Re-purchase Intentions by Local Tourists Visiting West and East Coasts of Thailand

Variable		Mean	SD	t	Sig.
INTENT	West-side	4.1812	0.6386	3.700	0.000**
	East-side	3.9635	0.6592		
LOYAL	West-side	4.1688	0.5606	4.443	0.000**
	East-side	3.9331	0.6097		
TRUST	West-side	4.1366	0.5207	3.302	0.000**
	East-side	3.9677	0.6061		

\*\*is significant at 0.01 level, and \*is significant at 0.05 level.

island. Therefore, the levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions of tourists visiting the West coast were significantly higher than on the East coast.

Before conducting a multiple regression analysis, the assumption that the data are not multicollinear was first tested. Table 4 is the correlation matrix used to test for multicollinearity between the seven variables used in this study, consisting of one dependent variable, two independent variables, and four control variables. An individual correlation should not exceed 0.750, and the variables used in this study satisfy this requirement with the highest Pearson correlation being 0.729 between INTENT and LOYAL. Moreover, VIF scores of each variable used in this study did not exceed 10, with the highest 1.677 VIF for LOYAL. From the correlation coefficients between the seven variables used in this study, there were significant positive correlations between INTENT, LOYAL, and TRUST at 0.01 level, while there was a negative correlation between INTENT and GENDER at 0.01 level.

To examine the influence of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic tourism, multiple regression analysis was carried out (Table 5). In the main model ( $N = 487$ ), the  $R$  squared was 0.667 and the adjusted  $R$  squared was 0.673 showing that the model explained 67.715 percent of the variance in the data. There was a significant positive influence of LOYAL and TRUST on INTENT at 0.01 level, while there was a significant negative influence of GENDER and DOMIC on INTENT at 0.05 level. However, this study found no relationship

between FREQUEN, PERIOD, and INTENT at 0.05 level. Therefore, regarding the hypotheses of this study, both H1 and H2 were accepted.

The positive influence of customer loyalty on re-purchase intentions in this study is consistent with Upamannyu et al. (2015), Deng et al. (2010), and Kim et al. (2004). The reason of positive influence by customer loyalty on re-purchase intentions is explained by the social exchange theory (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005). The business interactions and communications can directly reflect customer behavior, including customer loyalty. The businesses can forecast the level of re-purchase intention from the level of customer loyalty (Deng et al., 2010). In addition, one of the most effective ways to encourage repeat purchase intentions is to serve products and services that meet the expectations, which supports loyalty (Kim et al., 2009). Loyal consumers are likely to be repeat customers.

The positive influences of customer trust on re-purchase intentions in this study are similar to Gao (2011), Check and Ho (2016), Rita et al. (2019), and Muhammad et al. (2017). This is because, when strong trust is formed between the service provider and the customer, a long-term relationship can be established. Moreover, social exchange theory also can be used to explain the positive relationship between customer trust and re-purchase intentions because the theory can explain customer behavior including customer trust when receiving rewards for cost, therefore, tourist businesses can evaluate the level of re-purchase intentions from customer trust (Deng et al., 2010).

**Table 4:** Correlation Matrix for Multicollinearity Test

Variable	INTENT	LOYAL	TRUST	GENDER	DOMIC	FREQUEN	PERIOD
INTENT	1	0.729**	0.713**	-0.157**	0.016	-0.019	0.038
LOYAL	-	1	0.631**	-0.112*	0.103*	0.011	0.007
TRUST	-	-	1	-0.094*	0.082	0.026	-0.025
GENDER	-	-	-	1	0.062	0.161**	-0.165**
DOMIC	-	-	-	-	1	0.095*	-0.065
FREQUEN	-	-	-	-	-	1	-0.096*
PERIOD	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mean	4.0739	4.0527	4.0534	0.4189	0.6920	5.5513	3.1807
SD	0.6572	0.5965	0.5701	0.4938	0.4621	4.6981	1.6406
VIF	-	1.6770	1.6670	1.0700	1.0260	1.0400	1.0370

\*\*Is significant at 0.01 level, and \*is significant at 0.05 level.

**Table 5:** Multiple Regression and Sensitivity Analysis

Variable	Main Model		Sensitivity Analysis			
			West Coast		East Coast	
	B	t (sig.)	B	t (sig.)	B	t (sig.)
Constant	0.323	10.159**	0.365	10.278**	0.322	10.124**
LOYAL	0.566	15.302**	0.601	10.484**	0.531	10.873**
TRUST	0.450	11.647**	0.420	6.801**	0.476	9.690**
GENDER	-0.069	-2.927*	-0.085	-1.543	-0.051	-1.071
DOMIC	-0.089	-2.380*	-0.142	-2.232*	-0.060	-1.044
FREQUEN	-0.003	-0.682	-0.002	-0.393	-0.003	-0.648
PERIOD	0.012	1.105	0.009	0.615	0.013	0.754
R Square	0.677		0.628		0.710	
Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	0.673		0.618		0.703	
F-value	167.715 (0.000**)		67.387 (0.000**)		95.223 (0.000**)	
N	487		247		240	

\*\*Is significant at 0.01 level, and \*is significant at 0.05 level.

Sensitivity analysis was used to test for possible influences of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic tourism in areas of West coast (West side model) and of East coast (East side model). In both West and East side models, the study found positive influences of LOYAL and TRUST on INTENT at 0.01 significance level.

## 6. Conclusion

To answer the three main research questions regarding how the levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase

intentions in coast domestic Thai tourism during the Covid-19 crisis, and whether there are different levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions in local tourism between East and West coasts of Thailand, and whether customer trust and loyalty influence re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic tourism, this study found that customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions were all at a high level. There were significantly different levels of customer trust, loyalty, and re-purchase intentions between East and West coasts. Moreover, the local tourists who travel to the West coast of Thailand had higher re-purchase intentions,

loyalty, and trust than the East coast tourists did. Finally, the study found that there were significant positive influences of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic tourism during the COVID-19 crisis.

The results provide several contributions and implications. In terms of theoretical contributions, firstly, the study results demonstrate that social exchange theory can be used to explain the influence of customer trust and loyalty on re-purchase intentions in coastal domestic Thai tourism (as well as in other tourism targets). In addition, the findings extend the knowledge of customer trust, customer loyalty, and re-purchase intentions to the special conditions during the COVID-19 crisis. In terms of practical implications, this study supports the policies and campaigns by Thai government to heal and support tourism industry, to recover from COVID-19 pandemic during the year 2020. The tourism industry, consisting of accommodation, transportation, food and beverage, travel, souvenirs and products, and other related businesses, can use the study findings to develop and improve their customer loyalty and trust, because these positively influence re-purchase intentions. Moreover, Thai local tourists feel safe and trust tourism in Thailand during the pandemic.

However, the study suffers from some limitations. Firstly, there were only two main independent variables used in this study, namely, customer trust and customer loyalty, while there are other customer behavioral variables that may affect re-purchase intentions of Thai coastal tourists, such as motivation factor and/or service quality. Secondly, this study focused only on Thai coasts, while there are other tourist spots in Thailand, such as Northern Thailand, North-Eastern Thailand, and Thai capital city Bangkok that were left out. Finally, the time period addressed in this study was affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, as suggestions for future studies, other marketing and customer behavioral variables could be tested, not only in the coastal tourism hotspots of Thailand, but also at other tourism targets such as Bangkok, Northern Thailand, and North-Eastern Thailand.

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