

The Development of Thai Hotels in The Perspective of Low Carbon Tourism

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Abstract: The significance of the study of low-carbon hotels in Thailand is to explore the sustainable development model of the tourism industry in terms of low-carbon and environmental protection, and to enhance the role of the tourism industry in the construction of ecological civilization through measures such as architectural design, environmental management and promotion of low-carbon and environmental protection concepts to achieve efficiency in the use of energy, protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable tourism. This study uses literature analysis, in-depth interviews and case studies to understand the development model of Thai hotels under the perspective of low-carbon tourism. The research results can help provide reference for hotels and tourist attractions in other regions and promote the sustainable development of global tourism, as well as help enhance public awareness of environmental protection and promote low-carbon and environmentally friendly lifestyles.

Keywords: Low Carbon Tourism¹, Low Carbon Economy², Thailand Hotels³.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Thai government released the Ecotourism Strategy 2020, which proposes a number of measures to promote low-carbon tourism in Thailand (Huang & Wang, 2021). These measures include promoting smart tourism, encouraging the public to adopt renewable energy (Guo & Ye, 2020), developing eco-friendly tourism products, promoting waste separation and encouraging travel agencies and hotels to participate in low-carbon tourism (Kumar & Bai, 2019). Thailand is also actively promoting the greening of urban transportation, encouraging people to use public transportation, and building public bicycle lanes to mitigate the environmental pollution caused by motor vehicle emissions (Jiang et al., 2021). Thailand's tourism industry has actively explored and developed low-carbon tourism by introducing a series of policies and measures dedicated to creating an environmentally friendly (Hou et al., 2020), sustainable and low-carbon tourism environment (Li et al., 2019). In addition, the Thai tourism industry has launched a series of low-carbon tourism products and services, such as green accommodation, eco-friendly travel routes, and eco-experience activities (Liu et al., 2014), to enhance the green and sustainable development of the Thai tourism industry in general (Meng et al., 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

LOW CARBON ECONOMY IN THAILAND

As global climate change and environmental pollution become increasingly serious, countries are making efforts to promote a low-carbon economy (Hu & Ritchie, 2020). As a country emphasizing the concept of environmental protection and sustainable development, Thailand is also actively promoting the development of a low-carbon economy (Lin et al., 2019). This paper will discuss the development of low carbon economy in Thailand from three aspects: definition, policy and practice of low carbon economy in Thailand (Teng et al., 2019).

DEFINITION OF LOW CARBON ECONOMY

Low-carbon economy is a way of economic activity that substantially reduces greenhouse gas emissions to address global climate change and environmental issues (Sun & Zuo, 2017). The practice of a low-carbon economy requires coordination among various national sectors, scientific planning, pooling of resources,

and the use of a combination of economic, policy, technological, and institutional instruments to promote energy conservation and emission reduction for sustainable economic development(Nambiar, 2015).

THAILAND'S LOW-CARBON ECONOMY POLICY

The Thai government believes that promoting a low-carbon economy is one of the key measures to maintain energy security and environmental sustainability. The development of a low-carbon economy in Thailand includes policies in the following areas:

The Thai government has formulated the "Roadmap for Low Carbon Society Development in Thailand"(Jiang et al., 2021), which defines the low carbon strategy and specific targets for the next 10 years, including a 25% to 30% reduction in national greenhouse gas emissions by 2030(Ren et al., 2021). Development of the Thailand Clean Energy Plan: The Thai government has launched a plan called the Thailand Clean Energy Plan (PDP)(Luo et al., 2021), which provides guidance for building clean energy infrastructure in Thailand in the future. Under the plan(Shen et al., 2019), clean energy will account for 40% of Thailand's total electricity generation by 2036(Luo et al., 2021).

PROMOTION OF LOW-CARBON TOURISM IN THAILAND

Low-carbon tourism refers to the sustainable development of the tourism industry while protecting the environment and reducing carbon emissions(Pechlaner & Volgger, 2014). Thailand, as a famous tourist destination in Southeast Asia, tourism is one of its important pillar industries. With the increasing awareness of environmental protection and the popularization of the concept of sustainable development, the Thai government and related agencies have begun to pay attention to the development of low-carbon tourism(Wu et al., 2017), and the Thai government released the "2020 Ecotourism Strategy" in 2015, and launched a series of policies and measures(Peng et al., 2019).

- Promote smart tourism: improve the transparency and accessibility of tourism information through mobile Internet, Internet of Things and other technical means, and realize the digitalization and intelligence of the tourism process(Meng et al., 2017).
- Encourage the public to adopt renewable energy sources:Promote the use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy, and reduce the use of fuel and fossil energy(Nambiar, 2015).
- Develop environmentally friendly tourism products:Integrate environmental protection and sustainability concepts into tourism product design and production, and launch tourism products that meet the requirements of low-carbon tourism(Ma et al., 2015).
- Promote waste separation and disposal:Encourage tourists to separate and dispose of waste during the tourism process to reduce the pollution caused by waste to the environment(Sun et al., 2021).
- Encourage travel agencies and hotels to participate in low-carbon tourism:Through incentive mechanisms and tax reductions, travel agencies and hotels are encouraged to actively participate in low-carbon tourism and cooperate with local communities and ecological conservation organizations(Repulles et al., 2018).

The Thai government also actively promotes the greening of urban transportation, encourages people to use public transportation, and builds public bicycle lanes to mitigate the environmental pollution caused by motor vehicle emissions. These measures provide the foundation and support for the development of low-carbon tourism in Thailand(Shen et al., 2019).

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOW-CARBON TOURISM IN THAILAND

In addition to policies and measures, the Thai tourism industry has introduced a series of low-carbon tourism products and services, such as green accommodation, eco-friendly tourism routes, and eco-experience activities, to enhance the green and sustainable development of Thailand's tourism industry in a comprehensive manner(Ma et al., 2015).

- Green accommodation: The Thai tourism sector supports and promotes hotels and tourist accommodation facilities that meet low-carbon standards, with attention to energy conservation and emission reduction in catering, energy use, and waste disposal (Lee & Lin, 2016).
- Eco-friendly tourism itineraries: Travel agencies offer eco-friendly tourism itineraries that usually choose destinations associated with nature reserves and eco-villages to promote local ecological conservation and community economic development (Li et al., 2020).
- Environmental experience activities: Tourists can participate in environmental activities such as beach cleaning and reforestation to feel the joy of low-carbon living (Sun & Zuo, 2017).

In recent years, the development of low-carbon tourism in Thailand has achieved remarkable results. It is reported that the number of green accommodations in Thailand continues to grow and has exceeded 500 by 2019 (Li et al., 2020). In addition to this, the carbon emissions of Thailand's tourism industry are decreasing year by year. According to the Ministry of Tourism of Thailand, the carbon emissions of Thailand's tourism industry decreased by 22% in 2018 compared to 2013 (Idris & Sasaki, 2021).

Low carbon tourism is the future trend of tourism and the need for sustainable development. As an important tourism country in Southeast Asia, Thailand has actively explored and promoted the development of low-carbon tourism and achieved certain results (Liu et al., 2014). The exploration and practice of policies, products and services have provided Thailand with a wide space and rich resources for low-carbon tourism. However, it should also be noted that the development of low-carbon tourism requires the joint efforts of tourism practitioners and tourists, and only the participation of the whole society can achieve the goal of low-carbon tourism (Gossling & Scott, 2014).

LOW CARBON HOTELS IN THAILAND

As a country with a developed tourism industry, Thailand's natural environment is an important part of its tourism resources. With the growing problem of global climate change, low-carbon environment has become one of the main demands of Thailand's tourism industry. The low-carbon hotel business in Thailand is also gradually developing and growing, and the following details the current situation of low-carbon hotels in Thailand (Park et al., 2013).

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LOW-CARBON HOTELS IN THAILAND

In 2015, after the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Thai government has also started to actively participate in the global environmental protection cause. In addition, Thailand's tourism industry is also in rapid development, therefore, if more attention can be paid to sustainable development and environmental aspects, it can not only improve the benefits of the tourism industry, but also reduce the damage to the natural environment, create a greener and healthier tourism environment, and promote the development of Thailand's tourism industry (Ding et al., 2017).

ADVANTAGES OF LOW-CARBON HOTELS IN THAILAND

As a tropical country, Thailand has natural advantages and unique conditions for energy use (Pechlaner & Volgger, 2014). The Thai government is committed to promoting the use of renewable energy, such as solar energy and wind energy. This makes Thailand's low-carbon hotels have a strong competitive edge and can practice low-carbon and environmental protection concepts more quickly (Cunha & Anton, 2017).

STATUS OF LOW-CARBON HOTELS IN THAILAND

At present, the number of low-carbon hotels in Thailand is still relatively small. However, with the increasing awareness of environmental protection and the government's promotion, more and more hotels are paying attention to environmental protection and recognizing the importance of rational energy use

and waste reduction to reduce costs and promote sustainable development(Baxter & Ramage, 2014). The following is the current status of low-carbon hotels in Thailand:

- The concept of low carbon and environmental protection is gradually gaining popularity:More and more Thai hotels have begun to realize the urgency and importance of environmental protection issues and have started to shift to a low carbon and environmental protection model in terms of service and management. For example, most hotels have banned the use of disposable plastic tableware and switched to biodegradable and environmentally friendly materials, while also supporting guests to bring their own water bottles and setting up facilities such as water bottles and filters in guest rooms and lobbies to facilitate guests' access to drinking water(Kim et al., 2020).
- Adopting renewable energy:The Thai government has been actively promoting renewable energy sources such as solar energy and wind energy. More and more hotels are adopting solar panels, wind turbines and other equipment to reduce dependence on traditional energy sources and to lower energy costs(Guo & Ye, 2019).
- Promoting circular economy:Some low-carbon hotels in Thailand have also started to try to implement circular economy models, such as waste recycling and reuse, to reduce waste and environmental pollution. Also, some hotels have started to use devices such as water savers and optimize their water usage to save renewable resources(Hassink & Verbaas, 2015).
- Establishing a strict management and evaluation system:In order to ensure the effectiveness and performance of low-carbon hotel operations, the Thai government has gradually established a comprehensive management and evaluation system and provided relevant training courses to help hotels understand the concepts related to low-carbon environmental protection and implement them into practical operation(Sun et al., 2021).

Overall, although the number of low-carbon hotels in Thailand is still relatively small, more and more hotels have started to pay attention to the field of low-carbon environmental protection and actively participate in it as the awareness of environmental protection increases and the government promotes it. In the future, with the continuous development of technology and environmental awareness, the development prospects of low-carbon hotels in Thailand will be even broader.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study that uses literature analysis, in-depth interviews and case studies to find out the specific actions of hotels implementing low carbon economy in Thailand and the future trends that can contribute positively to the sustainable development of Thailand and the development of low carbon tourism globally.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

By collecting relevant literature, such as government announcements, research reports, and news reports, a comprehensive and in-depth analysis and comparison of the current situation of low carbon economy in Thailand's hotel industry is conducted to find out the development trend, influencing factors, and future development direction of low carbon economy in Thailand's hotels.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Through semi-structured in-depth interviews with experts, practitioners, tourists and other groups related to the low-carbon economy of Thai hotels, the actual situation, problems and challenges and suggestions for improvement of the low-carbon economy of Thai hotels are obtained, which enriches the case materials of the low-carbon economy of Thai hotels and deepens the understanding and verifies the conclusions obtained from the literature analysis method.

CASE STUDY

By selecting representative cases related to low-carbon economy in Thai hotels, we analyze their practical experiences, strategies and characteristics in depth, discover the success factors and challenges, study the similarities and differences among different types and scales of low-carbon economy cases in Thai hotels, and provide experiences and suggestions that can be applied to the development of low-carbon economy in Thai hotels.

DISCUSSION

CASE STUDY

BABOON HILL RESORT

Baboon Hill Resort is a hotel with sustainable tourism as its core concept, and it uses various means to achieve a low carbon economy. The hotel not only conserves water, reduces waste and chemical use, but also uses various energy-saving technologies to reduce its carbon footprint(Deane & Wu, 2012).

First, the hotel provides a self-sufficient energy supply through solar panels and a water reservoir, which means the hotel can reduce its reliance on traditional fuel sources and reduce its carbon footprint. The hotel also employs energy-efficient systems. For example, the air conditioning and lighting fixtures use energy-efficient technology, which reduces electricity consumption and energy dependence(Huang et al., 2012).

Second, the hotel uses locally sourced raw materials for food and dishes in its food service. This improves the income of local farmers and workers, and reduces carbon emissions during food transportation, while supporting the sustainable development of the local community(Lin et al., 2019).

In addition, Baboon Hill Resort has introduced various low-carbon activities, such as providing free bicycles so that guests can use them to explore the nearby attractions and also reduce the carbon emissions generated by guests using cars. The hotel also offers wellness massages to help guests relax while also supporting the traditional Thai culture of health and wellness(Cho & Kim, 2019).

Finally, the hotel is committed to reducing waste and garbage creation. To this end, the hotel employs recycling mechanisms, such as converting food waste and organic waste into useful fertilizer, and recycling paper and plastic(Ren et al., 2021).

In conclusion, Baboon Hill Resort is a low-carbon economy hotel that aims to be sustainable by adopting a range of technological tools and business strategies that both reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions and play an active role in promoting sustainable tourism and an eco-friendly culture. The hotel has also been awarded the "Green Hotel" certification for its efforts to reduce waste and garbage production. In addition, the hotel is also supporting the local community by purchasing local raw materials (Wang et al., 2021).

OTHERS

Thailand's tourism industry is popular with tourists from all over the world, but the high volume of tourist traffic also puts a huge strain on the environment. Other hotels that promote a low carbon economy including:

Anada Beach House - Anada Beach House is also equipped with many low-carbon facilities, such as air-conditioning systems and lighting fixtures that use energy-saving technology, and it has a beach that invites visitors to join in an annual clean-up day to call for everyone to give their share to the environment(Sun et al., 2020).

Manchurian Chinese Hotel - Manchurian Chinese Hotel is a long-established hotel and a low-carbon hotel that employs many technological means to reduce carbon emissions and save energy. For example, the hotel uses energy-saving light bulbs, as well as geothermal and solar equipment in the restaurant(Wu et al., 2017).

In summary, low-carbon and eco-friendly hotels are emerging in Thailand, which not only comply with the concept of sustainable development, but also provide a good model for the healthy development of tourism in Thailand(Li et al., 2020).

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

With the increasing global awareness of environmental protection, more and more people are paying attention to and pursuing a low-carbon and environmentally friendly lifestyle(Chen et al., 2020). In the tourism industry, low-carbon eco-friendly hotels in Thailand have become a new type of low-carbon eco-friendly tourism product. These hotels have adopted many intelligent and energy-saving measures in order to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment, and also guide guests to actively participate in a low-carbon and eco-friendly lifestyle by promoting eco-friendly culture and sustainable tourism.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Thailand's low-carbon hotels have adopted many energy-saving and intelligent technologies in their architectural design, thereby reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions. Specific measures include:

- Adopt renewable energy: the hotel adopts renewable energy such as solar energy and wind energy to meet its own energy demand and reduce the dependence on traditional fuels.
- Optimize the design of lighting, ventilation, air conditioning, heating, etc.: Reasonable arrangement of windows, installation of shading facilities, increase heat and sound insulation, etc., to reduce energy waste.
- Green building materials: the hotel pays attention to environmental protection when choosing building materials, using less polluting and recyclable materials, such as bamboo, natural stone, wood, etc(Wei et al., 2016).

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- Procurement of environmentally friendly products: The consumables used by the hotel, such as toiletries and tableware, choose environmentally friendly products as much as possible and reduce the use of disposable items.
- Waste management: The hotel sets up recycling points to guide guests to sort and recycle used tableware and garbage to reduce the amount of waste and pollution to the environment.
- Operation management: The hotel takes energy-saving measures to rationalize the use of water, electricity, gas and other resources, thus reducing energy consumption. For example, add intelligent appliances in rooms and realize remote control to avoid energy wastage caused by forgetting to turn off(Xie et al., 2020).

PROMOTE LOW-CARBON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CONCEPT

- Environmental education: The hotel conveys low-carbon and environmental protection concepts to guests through notice boards, TV broadcasts, environmental protection lectures, etc., to raise their awareness of environmental protection.
- Promotion of sustainable tourism: The hotel actively promotes sustainable tourism and guides guests to learn and experience a low-carbon and environmentally friendly lifestyle through various outdoor activities, green tourism routes, etc.
- Social responsibility: The hotel fulfills its social responsibility through donations and volunteer services to promote the concept of low carbon and environmental protection and to stimulate the environmental awareness of the community(Tao et al., 2017).

To sum up, the ways to implement low-carbon environmental protection measures in Thailand's low-carbon hotels include architectural design, environmental management and the promotion of low-carbon environmental protection concepts. These measures not only provide the hotel with a more intelligent and energy-saving environment, but also provide guests with a healthier, more comfortable, low-carbon and environmentally friendly accommodation experience, which is a new and sustainable tourism product.

IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTIVENESS

With the increasing awareness of environmental protection, more and more travel industry players and hotels are focusing on and promoting sustainable tourism and low carbon economy. A good example of this is the low-carbon eco-friendly hotel in Thailand, which has achieved remarkable results in practice(Gossling & Scott, 2014).

First of all, low-carbon hotels can reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions during construction and operation by adopting smarter and more energy-efficient building designs(Hou et al., 2020). For example, these hotels use renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power to meet their own energy needs, and optimize the design of lighting, ventilation, air conditioning, and heating to reduce energy waste and also reduce reliance on traditional fuels. Through these measures, low-carbon hotels can achieve higher energy use efficiency, reduce operating costs, and provide guests with a more comfortable stay(Lee & Lin, 2016).

Second, low-carbon hotels are more environmentally conscious and sustainable in their procurement and use. These hotels are decorated and furnished with locally farmed organic produce and renewable materials whenever possible, reducing waste of resources and pollution to the environment. At the same time, these hotels also make their guests feel low-carbon and eco-friendly by providing quality eco-friendly supplies, such as paper straws and wooden slippers, etc. from the guests' perspective(Li et al., 2020).

In addition, low-carbon hotels also enhance guests' awareness of environmental protection by promoting eco-friendly culture and sustainable tourism(Huang & Wang, 2021). We set up recycling points in the hotel and use the buffet and canteen to guide guests to separate and recycle used tableware and their own household waste to reduce the amount of waste and pollution to the environment. In addition, low-carbon hotels also organize activities with the themes of energy saving, emission reduction and environmental protection, such as bicycle tours, outdoor picnics, etc., to provide guests with more opportunities to experience low-carbon life(Hu & Ritchie, 2020).

Overall, low-carbon hotels in Thailand have made a great contribution to sustainable tourism and low-carbon economy(Guo & Ye, 2020). By building intelligent and energy-efficient architectural designs, adopting locally produced organic agricultural products, and promoting eco-friendly culture and sustainable tourism, Thailand's low-carbon eco-friendly hotels have made positive explorations and attempts to reduce environmental pollution and improve resource utilization efficiency(Huang et al., 2012). At the same time, it is also an experience that other hotels and tourism operators should learn from and study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

As a major tourist country, Thailand's tourism industry contributes significantly to its economy, but this also means that Thailand generates a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions under the traditional business model, which puts a lot of pressure on the environment(Li et al., 2019). As a result, the Thai government has set the goal of green and low-carbon development to address climate change and environmental issues and to promote sustainable development(Kumar & Bai, 2019).

In this context, Thailand's hospitality industry has also requested to explore low-carbon economic development and promote the use of clean energy and energy-saving technologies (Hassink & Verbaas, 2015). Many Thai hotels have adopted various measures such as free WiFi, amenities such as gardens and fitness centers, and eco-friendly designs for both interior and exterior to promote a low-carbon economy model. Also, some hotels have adopted solar panels and other clean energy technologies to reduce their environmental impact and lower energy costs.

Overall, green and low-carbon development has become an important goal for the Thai government and the hotel industry. As technology continues to advance and policy support is strengthened, it is believed that Thai hotels will adopt more energy-saving and emission reduction measures, promote clean energy, and make greater contributions to environmental protection and sustainable development.

PROMOTING GLOBAL LOW-CARBON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

As one of the world-renowned tourist destinations, Thailand's research on low-carbon hotels can both help the local tourism industry achieve sustainable development and provide experience for the development of global low-carbon tourism.

PROMOTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THAILAND'S HOTEL INDUSTRY

Low-carbon hotels are an important part of the sustainable development of hotels, and have an important role in promoting the reduction of energy consumption and environmental pollution.

PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THAILAND

Thailand is a country with a fragile ecological environment, and the impact of global climate change is particularly serious. Promoting the construction of low-carbon hotels can reduce the impact of the hotel industry on the environment and promote Thailand's environmental protection and response to climate change.

PROMOTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THAILAND'S ECONOMY

The construction of low-carbon hotels requires a large amount of resources, such as the renewal of energy-saving equipment and the training of hotel staff, which can promote the development of the local economy and bring more competitive advantages to the hotel industry and improve its market position.

In conclusion, the study of low-carbon hotels in Thailand has high practical significance and research value, and can make positive contributions to the sustainable development of Thailand and the development of global low-carbon tourism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Thai hotel industry has started to adopt some low-carbon technologies and measures, such as the use of clean energy and energy-efficient lighting fixtures (Kim et al., 2020). In order to better promote the low-carbon development of the Thai hospitality industry, I have the following recommendations:

Use more clean energy: Thailand is a country with plenty of light, more solar energy can be used as an energy source for hotels, which can reduce the reliance on traditional energy sources and lower carbon emissions.

Promote low-carbon transportation methods: Hotels can cooperate with the local area to provide guests with environmentally friendly travel methods such as cycling or walking to reduce the frequency of guests using motor vehicles and reduce carbon emissions.

- **Adopt energy-saving lamps and lanterns:** Replacing energy-saving lamps and lanterns can reduce energy consumption, thus reducing carbon emissions, as well as reducing energy costs for the hotel.
- **Promote water-saving technology:** Hotels can install water-saving devices in guest rooms and public areas to reduce the amount of water used by guests, which not only saves water but also reduces emissions.

- Build low-carbon awareness: Through staff training and promotion, we can raise the low-carbon awareness of staff and guests and encourage them to adopt environmental protection measures and contribute to environmental protection together.

In conclusion, the Thai hotel industry should continue to move toward low-carbon development by adopting measures such as clean energy, low-carbon transportation, energy-efficient lighting and water-saving technologies. It is also necessary to strengthen the construction of low-carbon awareness and promote the concept of environmental protection in order to make a greater contribution to sustainable development.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- [1] What do you think is the future trend of low carbon economy in Thai hotels?
- [2] How do you see the current development status of low carbon economy in Thai hotels?
- [3] What do you think are the responsibilities of the government, enterprises and individuals in promoting a low-carbon economy in Thai hotels?
- [4] What is the impact of low carbon economy in Thai hotels on tourists' experience? Do tourists tend to choose low-carbon hotels?
- [5] Can you give an example of a successful case of low carbon economy in Thai hotels and what are the factors of its success?
- [6] What do you think are the areas that need to be further explored and developed in the application of low carbon economy in the hotel industry?
- [7] What is your attitude towards the future development of low carbon economy in Thai hotels?