
The Belt and Road Initiative and ASEAN Tourists: A Survey on Geographical Distribution and Cross-Border Tourism Patterns

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Abstract

This survey paper examines the impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on ASEAN tourists, focusing on its influence on travel patterns, cultural exchange, and geographical distribution with a particular emphasis on Guangxi, China. The BRI, launched in 2013, aims to enhance global connectivity through infrastructure development, fostering regional economic integration and cross-border tourism. This paper is structured into six sections, beginning with an introduction to the BRI's objectives and its significance for ASEAN tourists. It explores how infrastructure improvements under the BRI have reshaped travel experiences and facilitated cultural exchanges, especially in Guangxi, a critical hub for tourism and regional development. The analysis highlights the economic implications of geographical distribution and tourism patterns, supported by data on tourism revenue and employment in Guangxi. Furthermore, the paper delves into the challenges and opportunities of cross-border tourism, underscoring the need for effective governance and institutional frameworks to manage these initiatives. The findings suggest that while the BRI offers substantial opportunities for economic growth and cultural exchange, its success depends on overcoming infrastructural and institutional barriers. The survey concludes by emphasizing the importance of continued research and strategic policy development to optimize the BRI's benefits for ASEAN tourists and regional connectivity, ensuring sustainable tourism growth and environmental conservation.

1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the Survey

This survey comprises six sections that critically examine the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its effects on ASEAN tourists. The introduction contextualizes the BRI as a significant global development strategy, highlighting its influence on ASEAN tourists and their geographical distribution, particularly in Guangxi, China. The second section provides a background overview, detailing the BRI's objectives and its role in enhancing regional connectivity and economic integration, while defining key terms such as ASEAN tourists, geographical distribution, and cross-border tourism essential for this study.

The third section investigates the BRI's impact on ASEAN tourists, emphasizing shifts in travel and cultural exchange patterns, alongside the importance of infrastructure and collaborative projects in promoting cross-border tourism. This analysis is enriched by Hall's review of tourism innovation and its relevance to development strategies [1]. The fourth section focuses on the geographical distribution and tourism dynamics in Guangxi, elucidating the economic ramifications and contributions to regional development.

The fifth section explores the interplay between regional development and cross-border tourism, assessing how BRI initiatives foster economic growth in Guangxi and adjacent areas. It also discusses

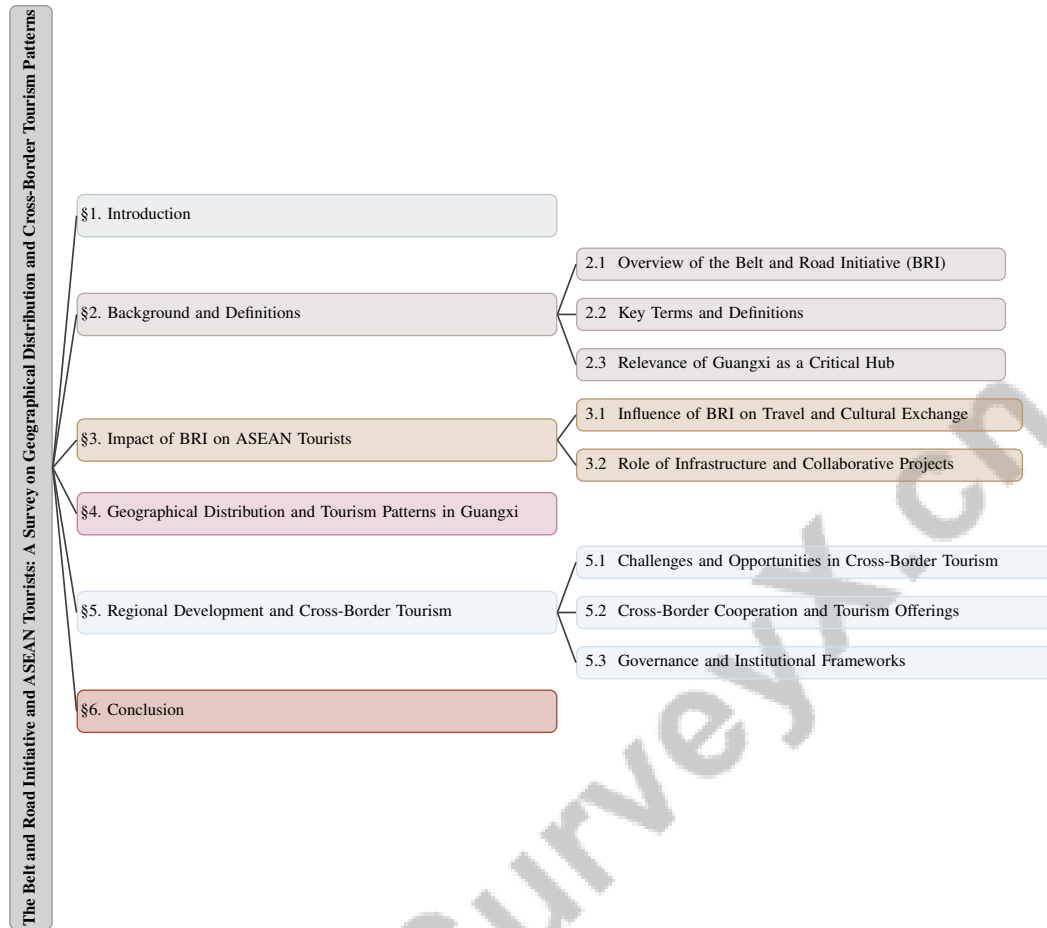


Figure 1: chapter structure

the challenges and opportunities inherent in cross-border tourism, the significance of cross-border cooperation, and the governance and institutional frameworks that underpin these initiatives. The survey concludes by synthesizing key findings, reflecting on the BRI's implications for ASEAN tourists and regional development, and emphasizing the necessity for ongoing research and policy advancement to bolster cross-border tourism and regional connectivity. The following sections are organized as shown in Figure 1.

2 Background and Definitions

2.1 Overview of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), introduced by China in 2013, is a transformative economic and strategic endeavor designed to foster sustainable development across 65 countries [2]. Its primary objective is to build an extensive infrastructure network, encompassing railways, highways, and ports, to boost regional connectivity and economic integration [3]. This infrastructure is pivotal for facilitating trade, optimizing resource distribution, and supporting diverse economic activities [2]. The BRI significantly impacts spatial interactions and economic outcomes, aligning with strategic coupling concepts essential for regional development [4, 5].

Beyond economic goals, the BRI incorporates cultural and political dimensions that advance sustainable regional development, integrating local and regional frameworks within a global context [6]. Its positive influence on tourism demand in ASEAN countries underscores infrastructure's role in driving tourism growth and attracting investments [7]. However, challenges in governance and environmental sustainability persist. Effective governance is crucial for managing cross-border partnerships, categorized by Ferrer et al. into dimensions like scale and institutional differences [8].

Sustainable tourism management is vital to mitigate environmental impacts, especially in border regions [9]. The BRI's success depends on overcoming these challenges while balancing economic growth, environmental conservation, and social inclusion.

2.2 Key Terms and Definitions

Understanding key terms is vital for analyzing the BRI's impact on tourism dynamics. The "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" is a strategic framework aimed at enhancing global connectivity through infrastructure and economic collaboration [10]. "ASEAN tourists" are travelers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, influenced by tourism demand, macroeconomic conditions, and political stability [7]. This group is significant in the BRI context as active participants in cross-border tourism [11].

"Geographical distribution" refers to the spatial arrangement of economic activities, crucial for analyzing tourism dispersion [12]. This concept is enhanced by agent-based modeling and spatial interactions, offering a framework for understanding economic dynamics geographically [4]. "Cross-border tourism" involves activities beyond national borders, requiring effective cooperation across jurisdictions [13]. It focuses on sustainable development goals, balancing economic growth with natural area protection [9]. Challenges include legal issues, resource management, communication barriers, and ineffective marketing strategies [14].

"Tourism innovation" involves developing new products and services to enhance competitiveness and facilitate knowledge transfer in the tourism sector [1]. Supported by institutional frameworks, these innovations enable regions to engage with global production networks [5]. These definitions are crucial for comprehensively analyzing the BRI's impact on ASEAN tourists and the broader tourism landscape.

2.3 Relevance of Guangxi as a Critical Hub

Guangxi, in southern China, is a pivotal region in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) due to its strategic location and economic potential. BRI projects have enhanced Guangxi's connectivity, establishing it as a key gateway for ASEAN tourists and a natural bridge for cross-border tourism, fostering cultural exchange and economic interactions [11]. Since the BRI's inception in 2013, Guangxi's integration into broader regional frameworks has been strategic, promoting tourism and economic growth [10].

Economic dynamics in Guangxi are highlighted by datasets analyzing establishment volumes and spatial distribution, reflecting a vibrant economic landscape [12]. Understanding tourism efficiency across Guangxi's cities informs policy decisions to enhance tourism development and maximize BRI benefits [15]. However, infrastructural limitations and socio-cultural conflicts with bordering states require effective cross-border cooperation and infrastructure development to optimize tourism offerings [16]. Localized data on infrastructure quality underscores the need for targeted improvements to support sustainable tourism growth in Guangxi [3].

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing tourism dynamics within the ASEAN region. As illustrated in Figure 2, the initiative not only enhances infrastructure and connectivity but also significantly impacts travel and cultural exchange among member states. This figure highlights essential factors influencing tourism demand, including the governance and policy contexts that shape these interactions. Furthermore, it emphasizes the critical role of collaborative projects and infrastructure enhancements in promoting cross-border tourism, thereby fostering a more integrated and vibrant regional tourism landscape.

3 Impact of BRI on ASEAN Tourists

3.1 Influence of BRI on Travel and Cultural Exchange

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) significantly alters travel and cultural exchange patterns among ASEAN tourists by enhancing connectivity and infrastructure. The initiative's focus on developing transportation networks, particularly in strategic regions like Guangxi, enhances accessibility and serves as a pivotal hub for cultural exchange [12]. These infrastructure improvements not only strengthen physical connections but also foster cultural interactions that transcend national boundaries [10].

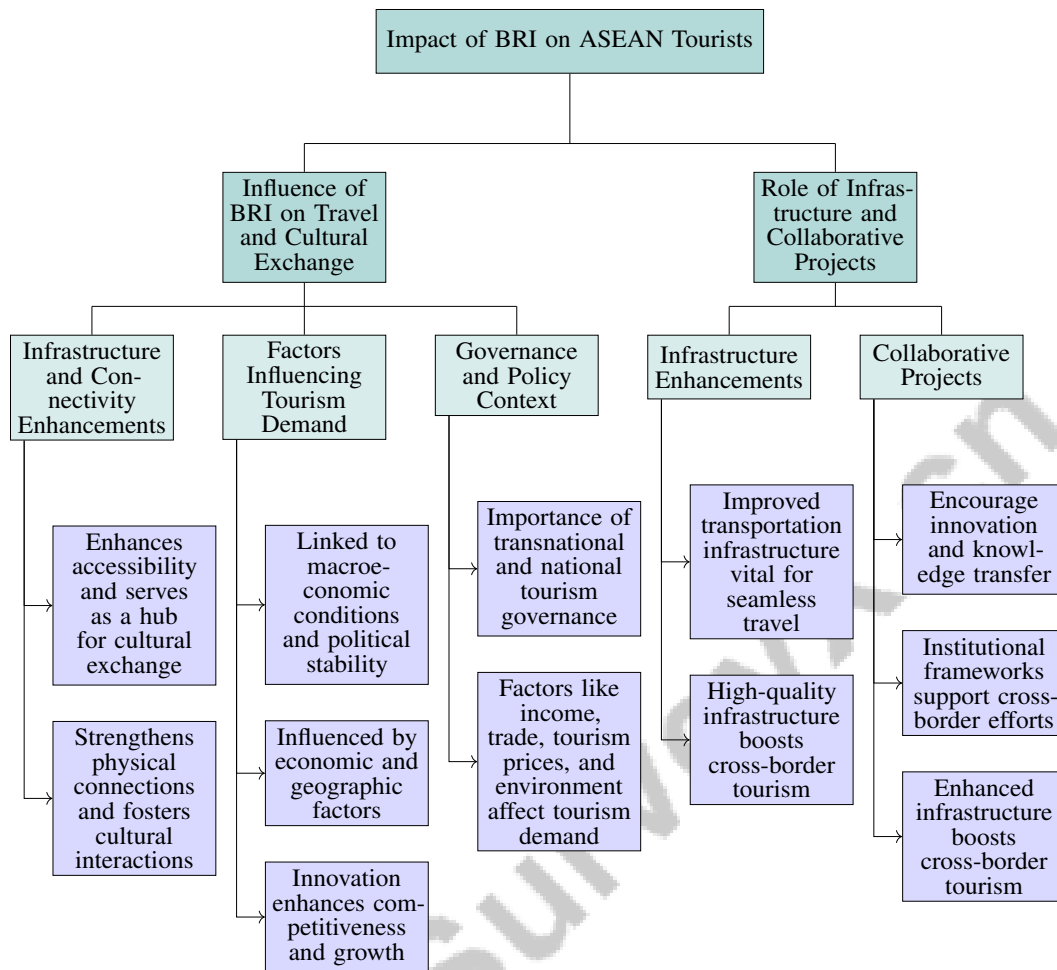


Figure 2: This figure illustrates the impact of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on ASEAN tourists, highlighting the influence on travel and cultural exchange through infrastructure and connectivity enhancements, factors influencing tourism demand, and governance and policy contexts. It also emphasizes the role of infrastructure enhancements and collaborative projects in promoting cross-border tourism.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the influence of the BRI on travel and cultural exchange is multifaceted, encompassing key aspects such as infrastructure and connectivity, factors affecting tourism demand, and the role of innovation and governance in shaping these dynamics. This visual representation underscores the interconnectedness of these elements, providing a clearer understanding of the BRI's impact.

Tourism demand in ASEAN countries is closely linked to macroeconomic conditions and political stability, which are integral to the BRI's framework. Nguyen's theoretical model highlights the importance of these factors in shaping tourism dynamics, as they create a conducive environment for travel and cultural exchanges [7]. The variation in tourism efficiency within Guangxi, influenced by economic and geographic factors, underscores the BRI's role in addressing these complexities through strategic policies and investments [15].

Innovation, as outlined by Hall, is essential for enhancing competitiveness and growth in tourism sectors within BRI regions [1]. This innovation is supported by a systems approach that considers the interplay of economic efficiency, equity, and policy, impacting travel and cultural exchanges among ASEAN tourists [17]. Understanding both transnational and national tourism governance contexts is crucial for comprehending the BRI's influence on these dynamics [18].

Wakimin’s study highlights that factors such as income, trade, tourism prices, and environmental considerations also affect tourism demand under the BRI [19]. These elements contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how the BRI reshapes travel patterns and enriches cultural interactions, enhancing the tourism experience for ASEAN tourists.

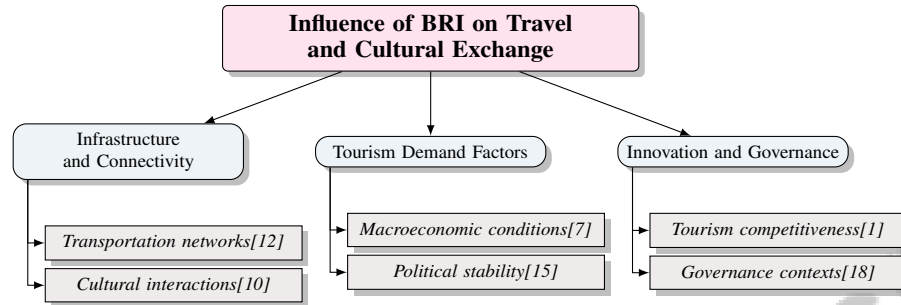


Figure 3: This figure illustrates the influence of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on travel and cultural exchange, highlighting key aspects such as infrastructure and connectivity, factors affecting tourism demand, and the role of innovation and governance in shaping these dynamics.

3.2 Role of Infrastructure and Collaborative Projects

The BRI plays a crucial role in promoting cross-border tourism through infrastructure enhancements and collaborative projects. Improved transportation infrastructure is vital for providing seamless travel experiences for ASEAN tourists. Choi’s innovative crowd-sourced road quality classification underscores the importance of maintaining high-quality infrastructure to facilitate efficient and comfortable travel, thereby boosting cross-border tourism [3].

Collaborative projects within the BRI framework are essential for fostering tourism by encouraging innovation and facilitating knowledge transfer. Hall’s study outlines the innovation process stages, emphasizing the importance of institutional frameworks in supporting these developments [1]. These frameworks are crucial for coordinating cross-border efforts, ensuring infrastructure projects align with regional connectivity and economic integration goals.

In Malaysia and other ASEAN nations, Anuar demonstrates how enhanced infrastructure and collaborative initiatives have significantly boosted cross-border tourism [11]. These efforts not only improve physical connectivity but also foster cultural exchanges and economic interactions, strengthening the tourism sector. By addressing infrastructural challenges and leveraging innovative solutions, the BRI continues to facilitate cross-border tourism, contributing to regional development and integration.

4 Geographical Distribution and Tourism Patterns in Guangxi

4.1 Geographical Distribution and Economic Implications

The distribution of ASEAN tourists in Guangxi is influenced by a blend of geographical and economic factors. Zhang highlights the region’s diverse tourism resources, where physical geography, combined with cultural and political elements, plays a pivotal role in attracting tourists [20]. This spatial relationship underscores the importance of natural and cultural assets in shaping tourist flows.

Economic variables such as exchange rates, private investment, and political stability are positively correlated with tourism demand, as Nguyen notes [7]. In contrast, inflation and foreign direct investment can negatively impact tourism, reflecting the complex interplay between economic conditions and tourist behaviors. These insights are crucial for policymakers aiming to enhance tourism efficiency and economic benefits in Guangxi.

Researchon provides an in-depth analysis of tourism’s economic aspects in Guangxi, examining employment in the tertiary sector, fixed asset investments, total tourism revenue, and tourist numbers [15]. These metrics are vital for assessing ASEAN tourists’ economic impact and guiding strategic investments to optimize tourism outcomes. Additionally, Boonchai’s study on cross-border consumer

typologies offers valuable insights into spending patterns, informing targeted marketing and service strategies to maximize economic returns from ASEAN tourists [21].

4.2 Tourism Patterns and Regional Development

Tourism patterns in Guangxi, shaped significantly by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), are instrumental in the region's economic and social development. As a strategic entry point for ASEAN tourists, Guangxi has developed distinct tourism patterns characterized by increased international visitor numbers and the integration of local tourism offerings. The region's cultural and natural attractions, such as its rich heritage and scenic landscapes, enhance its appeal [20].

These evolving tourism patterns align with regional development strategies focused on infrastructure enhancements and cultural heritage preservation. The BRI's emphasis on improved connectivity through transportation networks has facilitated greater access to Guangxi, boosting tourist arrivals and promoting economic growth [3]. Such developments align with the BRI's broader goals of regional economic integration through infrastructure and collaborative projects.

Economic indicators like total tourism revenue and tertiary sector employment highlight tourism's substantial contribution to Guangxi's regional development [15]. The influx of ASEAN tourists has stimulated local economies, spurred investments in hospitality and service sectors, and created job opportunities, fostering economic diversification. Boonchai's analysis of cross-border consumer behavior further informs marketing strategies, enhancing tourism's economic impact [21].

Integrating tourism with regional development initiatives is supported by innovative governance and policy-making approaches. Recognizing tourism as a regional development driver requires aligning tourism strategies with broader economic and social objectives. This alignment promotes sustainable and inclusive tourism growth in Guangxi, consistent with the BRI framework, enhancing the region's long-term economic prosperity through improved banking efficiency, strong institutional support, and strategic tourism policies that leverage local resources and technological advancements [2, 15, 16, 10, 1].

5 Regional Development and Cross-Border Tourism

Category	Feature	Method
Challenges and Opportunities in Cross-Border Tourism	Data-Driven Strategies	CSRQC[3]

Table 1: This table presents a summary of methods addressing the challenges and opportunities in cross-border tourism within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) framework. It highlights data-driven strategies, specifically the CSRQC method, which are employed to overcome barriers such as inadequate infrastructure and resource management, thereby promoting sustainable regional development.

The growing emphasis on regional connectivity and economic integration underscores the significance of cross-border tourism, particularly within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Table 2 provides a comprehensive comparison of the methods addressing challenges and opportunities in cross-border tourism, with a focus on governance and institutional frameworks within the Belt and Road Initiative context. This section examines the complexities of cross-border tourism dynamics, focusing on the challenges and opportunities in regions like Guangxi, which are pivotal for fostering ASEAN tourism. Understanding these factors is crucial for optimizing cross-border tourism to advance sustainable regional development and integration.

5.1 Challenges and Opportunities in Cross-Border Tourism

The BRI introduces a multifaceted landscape for enhancing cross-border tourism, especially in Guangxi, a crucial ASEAN tourist hub. Key challenges include inadequate infrastructure and the lack of agreements on tourist projects, which complicate cross-border relations necessary for tourism growth [16]. Additionally, the absence of precise road quality classifications impedes effective resource allocation, affecting tourism planning [3]. Geographical size, peripheral location, uneven development, and institutional disparities further hinder cross-border tourism enhancement, creating barriers to cohesive tourism development within the BRI framework [8]. Zhang highlights the diverse

land border tourism resources that, despite their economic potential, present challenges in resource management and strategic planning [20].

Despite these challenges, the BRI offers opportunities for economic development, community participation, and diplomatic relations through cross-border tourism initiatives. Research suggests such initiatives can enhance cultural exchange and economic prospects for local communities, contributing to sustainable regional development [14]. Shah's benchmarks provide valuable tools for assessing financial development and addressing limitations, enabling more effective tourism strategies [2]. Malaysia exemplifies the potential benefits of cross-border tourism under the BRI, with collaborative projects and infrastructural improvements driving tourism growth [11]. By addressing challenges and leveraging BRI opportunities, regions like Guangxi can enhance their roles as critical hubs for cross-border tourism, promoting sustainable development and regional integration.

5.2 Cross-Border Cooperation and Tourism Offerings

Cross-border cooperation is essential for enriching tourism offerings and fostering regional development within the BRI framework. This collaboration addresses shared challenges and utilizes collective strengths, as demonstrated by Malaysia's cross-border tourism initiatives [11]. By working together, regions can overcome structural barriers and enhance tourism offerings, ultimately benefiting regional development.

Integrating cross-border strategies facilitates resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and best practices, crucial for improving tourism experiences. Successful cooperation examples have led to significant local economic improvements, cultural exchanges, and environmental conservation, highlighting collaboration's role in sustainable regional development. Engaging diverse stakeholders—government agencies, local communities, and private enterprises—is vital for establishing a governance framework supporting cross-border tourism initiatives. This collaborative approach addresses the unique challenges of transnational and intra-national borders while leveraging shared cultural and historical ties among border regions to enhance tourism development. By fostering inclusive stakeholder engagement, regions can create integrated tourism strategies that promote economic growth, sustainable development, and social cohesion, overcoming barriers to regional cooperation and tourism success [13, 18, 8, 16, 14].

Agent-Based Modeling (ABM) offers insights into the interactions and potential impacts of cross-border cooperation on tourism dynamics and regional development. By simulating individual agent behavior in a shared environment, ABM captures emergent patterns from stakeholder interactions, revealing how governance structures, institutional alignment, and local resource characteristics influence tourism patterns and socio-economic growth in border regions. It emphasizes the need for multi-scalar analysis and collaborative stakeholder engagement in addressing cross-border tourism governance challenges, fostering sustainable development in transnational areas [13, 18, 20, 16, 4]. This modeling approach allows for the simulation of various policy scenarios, enhancing understanding of how cross-border initiatives can influence economic activities and spatial distribution. Furthermore, the emphasis on diverse development experiences and institutional roles supports the need for robust cross-border cooperation frameworks adaptable to varying regional contexts.

Future research should explore evolving ecotourism trends, focusing on how technology can enhance tourism management practices. Investigating robust cross-border cooperation frameworks is essential, as studies highlight tourism's potential to foster sustainable development in mountainous transboundary regions while addressing multi-scalar governance and institutional alignment challenges [18, 16]. Innovative data collection methods, such as crowdsourced data for infrastructure projects, can significantly improve infrastructure quality and support regional development. Moreover, government policies and international cooperation are vital in facilitating cross-border initiatives, emphasizing the importance of strategic partnerships that leverage community and business strengths. By fostering such collaborations, regions can enhance tourism offerings, promote regional development, and achieve broader BRI objectives.

5.3 Governance and Institutional Frameworks

Governance and institutional frameworks are critical to the success of cross-border tourism initiatives within the BRI context. Effective governance is essential for managing shared resources and stakeholder relations, ensuring smooth and efficient operations of cross-border tourism initiatives [18].

These frameworks must address institutional mismatches that can hinder cooperation and integration, underscoring the need for robust structures that facilitate collaboration across national boundaries.

Institutional cooperation is pivotal in forming effective cross-border partnerships, as highlighted by Ferrer et al. [8]. Aligning institutional objectives and establishing cooperative mechanisms are fundamental to overcoming barriers and promoting sustainable tourism development. Such cooperation ensures effective resource management and alignment of tourism initiatives with broader regional development goals.

However, existing studies often overlook certain border areas and fail to address the full spectrum of governance and resource management challenges [14]. This oversight highlights the need for comprehensive governance frameworks that consider diverse regional contexts and challenges. Addressing these gaps can enhance the effectiveness of governance structures in supporting cross-border tourism initiatives and their contributions to regional development.

Developing governance and institutional frameworks for cross-border tourism requires a multi-stakeholder approach, involving government agencies, local communities, and private sector entities. This collaborative approach integrates diverse viewpoints from various stakeholders, promoting inclusive and equitable tourism development that addresses unique challenges and opportunities within different regional contexts. This is particularly crucial in transnational areas, where effective governance and stakeholder engagement can enhance socio-economic growth and foster political cooperation across borders [10, 18, 1]. Moreover, integrating innovative governance models and best practices from successful cross-border initiatives can enhance the resilience and adaptability of these frameworks, ultimately supporting the broader objectives of the BRI.

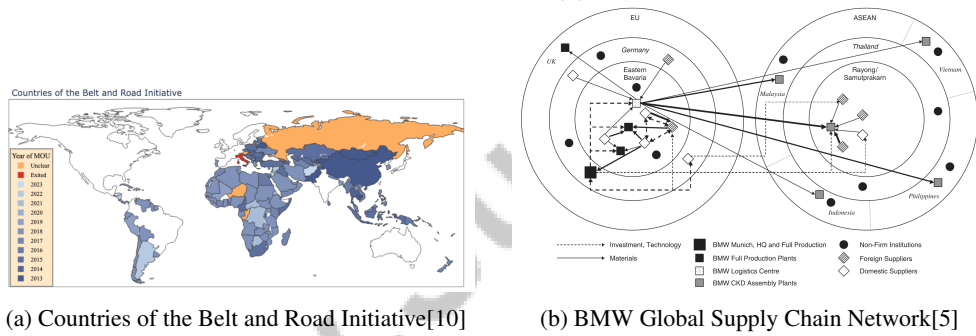


Figure 4: Examples of Governance and Institutional Frameworks

As illustrated in Figure 4, the examples of "Regional Development and Cross-Border Tourism; Governance and Institutional Frameworks" are represented through two interconnected visual representations: the "Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative" and the "BMW Global Supply Chain Network." The first image provides an overview of the BRI, highlighting the countries involved with a color-coded world map, underscoring the BRI's global influence and the temporal progression of agreements. The second image delves into BMW's global supply chain network, showcasing the flow of materials, investments, and technology across the European Union and ASEAN. Together, these images exemplify how governance and institutional frameworks facilitate regional development and cross-border interactions, whether through large-scale initiatives like the BRI or intricate corporate networks like BMW's, highlighting the multifaceted nature of global connectivity and cooperation [10, 5].

Feature	Challenges and Opportunities in Cross-Border Tourism	Cross-Border Cooperation and Tourism Offerings	Governance and Institutional Frameworks
Key Challenges	Inadequate Infrastructure	Structural Barriers	Institutional Mismatches
Opportunities	Economic Development	Cultural Exchange	Resource Management
Stakeholder Engagement	Not Specified	Diverse Stakeholders	Multi-stakeholder Approach

Table 2: This table presents a comparative analysis of the key challenges, opportunities, and stakeholder engagement strategies in cross-border tourism within the Belt and Road Initiative framework. It highlights the distinct aspects of cross-border tourism, cooperation, and governance, underscoring the complexities and potential benefits of regional integration efforts.

6 Conclusion

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) stands as a pivotal catalyst in reshaping cross-border tourism and regional development, particularly impacting ASEAN tourists. Through strategic infrastructure investments and collaborative endeavors, the BRI has markedly improved connectivity, thus facilitating smoother travel and enriched cultural exchanges. Tailored infrastructure development emerges as a crucial element in optimizing the benefits of the BRI for ASEAN tourists, enhancing regional growth and connectivity.

The advancement of sustainable development goals hinges on effective cross-border collaborations, which, despite challenges such as institutional variances, remain essential for maximizing economic and community benefits. These partnerships are instrumental in addressing opportunities and challenges in cross-border tourism, necessitating that policymakers craft sustainable tourism strategies that align with the overarching objectives of the BRI, ensuring both balanced growth and environmental stewardship.

The diverse outcomes of regional development highlight that the effectiveness of tourism initiatives is contingent upon the synergy between local institutions and global economic dynamics. This intricate interplay necessitates continuous research and policy innovation to bolster cross-border tourism and regional connectivity. By adopting innovative approaches and fostering collaborative efforts, regions can fully capitalize on the BRI's potential, thereby promoting sustainable economic advancement and cultural interchange. This survey underscores the importance of strategic planning and investment, advocating for coordinated policy frameworks and functional zoning to harmonize tourism expansion with environmental sustainability.

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