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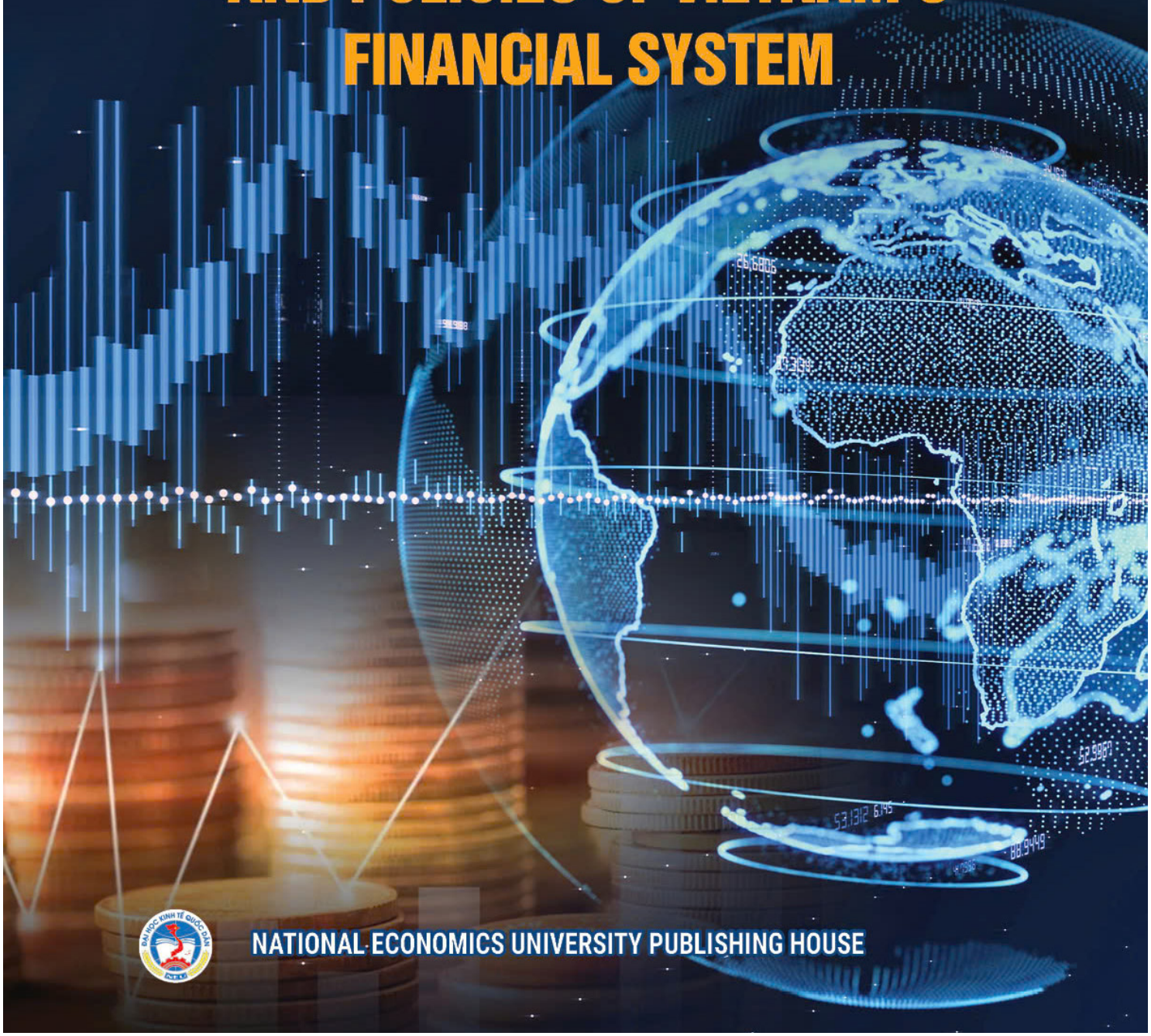

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ASYMMETRIC IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ON TOURISM RECEIPTS: A PANEL ANALYSIS OF ASEAN'S MEMBER COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The study aims to assess the asymmetric impact of institutional quality on tourism receipts in 10 Southeast Asian countries during the 2002 – 2022 period, utilizing the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). Previous research has shown that improving institutional quality facilitates the growth of tourism receipts. However, such research neglects inherent non-linearities, which lead to misleading inferences. With the purpose of minimizing these shortcomings, this study employed the Nonlinear Autoregressive Distributed Lag (NARDL) model and further found that tourism receipts respond asymmetrically to changes in 4 out of the 6 indicators. Specifically, Government Effectiveness, Control of Corruption, Political Stability & Absence of Violence, and Voice & Accountability exhibit non-linear effects on tourism receipts. Contrary to Expectations, Regulatory Quality and Rule of law indicated negligible impacts. Following the results, the study offers several recommendations for governments and policymakers in ASEAN countries to formulate short- and long-term policies, targeting the improvement of institutional frameworks within the region and developing comprehensive tourism strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism and its role in economies have been extensively explored in numerous studies, such as those by Nikolaos Dritsakis (2012, p.801), Ding Du et al. (2014, p.454), and María del P. Pablo-Romero (2013, p.28). Beyond catalyzing general economic development, tourism plays a critical role in implementing sustainable tourism strategies in Southeast Asia and its member countries (Yulinda Nurul Aini, 2024, p.157).

Situated between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Southeast Asia is a bridge region connecting continents and countries worldwide. As such, the region's tourism sector has become one of the most vibrant and rapidly growing destinations globally. The World Economic Forum (2022) has also recognized Southeast Asia as one of the most tourist-friendly destinations. Annual tourist arrivals are estimated at 125.78 million, reflecting a growth of 65.9%, equivalent to approximately 82.99 million international tourists (WTTC, 2019). Tourist inflows to Southeast Asia have been increasing steadily, with Thailand and Malaysia consistently attracting the highest number of tourists in the region since the early 21st century. Conversely, countries like Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar have not demonstrated significant strength in attracting tourists. This disparity can be attributed to factors such as foreign direct investment, international trade, and institutional quality, among which domestic

institutional stability has a clear impact on tourism activities in both the short and long term (Oyebanji J. Ibitoye, 2023, p.6). Additionally, political instability has been identified as a cause of declining tourism demand, even for UNESCO-designated heritage sites (Yap et al., 2013, p.587).

In the first half of 2023, approximately 46.5 million tourists visited Southeast Asia, with about 43% coming from within the region. Achieving the pre-pandemic level of 143.6 million visitors by the end of the year remains a challenging task. In 2023, Asia as a whole reached 73.2% of pre-pandemic tourist arrivals (2019) and 77.1% of receipts, marking a significant recovery compared to 2022, when tourist arrivals and receipts stood at only 28.8% and 36.5% of 2019 levels, respectively. However, Asia's tourism recovery lags behind other regions, such as the Middle East, which recovered 108.7% of its pre-pandemic tourist arrivals, or Europe, which achieved 117.6% of pre-pandemic tourism receipts by 2023. This disparity can be explained by factors such as stringent travel restrictions in Asia, including the ASEAN region, between 2020 and 2022, as well as macroeconomic and political considerations that prompted potential tourists to carefully weigh travel decisions.

While previous studies have emphasized the critical role of institutional quality in economic and financial development (Huynh Nguyen Mai Tram, 2022, pp.23–35) and in the tourism sector (Claudio Detotto et al., 2021, p.6), most of these studies focus on linear relationships. This has resulted in a significant limitation, as the possibility of asymmetric impacts has not been adequately addressed. In other words, the positive and negative effects of institutional quality on tourism receipts may differ in intensity and duration. Particularly in the ASEAN region, where institutional and governance quality varies widely among member states, there is a lack of cross-national studies analyzing these differences in depth. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the nonlinear impact of institutional quality on tourism receipts in 10 ASEAN member countries using the nonlinear autoregressive distributed lag (NARDL) method on panel data. It also seeks to provide valuable policy implications for sustainable tourism development, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, within the context of tourism recovery post-COVID-19.

II. CONTENT

1. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

1.1. Theoretical Framework of Institutions and Institutional Quality

Institutions are defined in various ways, depending on the research perspective, whether economic or socio-political. Schotter (1981) describes institutions as the consistency in communication and social behavior that all members of society respect and adhere to, which may include rules, cultural customs, or beliefs. Alternatively, Dixit (2004) defines institutions as policies and regulations enacted by humans. The most common definition, however, refers to institutions as the "rules of the game" in society, binding rules that regulate and shape human interactions to minimize risks and uncertainties in daily activities (North, 1990).

Institutional quality is reflected in the completeness and effectiveness of policies and regulations that govern relationships among individuals within each country or territory. Moreover, institutional quality indicates the nature and level of development of a country's political system.

To measure institutional quality, many studies use the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). This comprehensive index, recognized and widely used, has been published annually by the World Bank since 1996. It measures six key dimensions: "Control of Corruption; Government Effectiveness; Political Stability and Absence of Violence; Regulatory Quality; Rule of Law; Voice and Accountability," rated on a scale from –2.5 to +2.5. This study utilizes this index to measure institutional quality.

1.2. Literature review

In recent years, the determinants of tourism demand have attracted strong attention because of their profound influence on economic and social development in the tourism economy, the relationship of which has been confirmed in theory and practice. According to many studies, poor institutional quality and management will create conditions for corruption in the tourism industry and the possibility of embezzlement of tourism receipts; because tourism receipts are not used to develop economic infrastructure or any other goals that are capable of providing economic growth, based on the model study of Adedoyin, F. F., Erum, N., & Bekun, F. V. (2022, p.1311). However, some studies such as Yap and Saha (2015, p.272) have shown that corruption does not necessarily always have a positive impact on tourism, corruption encourages tourists to visit countries with outstanding historical and natural heritage. Corruption can have both positive and negative effects on tourism demand, depending on the level of corruption, management strategies and policies of each country.

Institutional quality can play an important role in tourism receipts, specifically the law plays an important role in the fight against corruption, weak laws leading to high levels of corruption are not new (Leff, 1964, p.8). The United Nations believes that the law has a direct impact on the development of tourism industries in each country. Gozgor et al. (2019, p.24) found a positive impact of legal system quality and property rights protection on tourism in 152 countries over the period 1995–2015. However, Romania, Coros and Lupu (2015, p.395) found that tourism and travel regulation hinders the development of the industry rather than promoting it. Tang (2018, p.1000) studied government management and domestic tourism demand, policy makers suggested that improving governance and institutional quality in Malaysia is necessary, as better governance and institutions are expected to increase tourist arrivals. The studies found that government effectiveness index has a significant impact on tourism demand. In short, institutional improvements instead of increasing the volume of domestic tourism, it improve the well-being of the people and society at the destination.

Hall and O'Sullivan (1996, p.105) argue that institutional changes in perceptions of political stability and absence of violence are deeply influenced by the perception of tourist arrivals, suggesting that prolonged political stability can negatively influence tourists' perceptions of affected destinations and neighborhoods. Violent protests, social unrest, civil war, tourist actions, perceived human rights violations, or perceived threats to tourism can all contribute to tourists changing their behavior. On the institutional side, destination branding (Shams, 2016a, p.140) and the power of local stakeholders (Shams, 2016b, 2016c, 2017, p.671, p.139, p.376) are also important determinants that tourists consider. When a regime derives political legitimacy from outside the political system, the intensity of the norm increases and causes violence and community unrest if the government fails to implement public demands (Neumayer, 2004, p.259).

Considering the impact of voice and accountability, higher levels of citizen participation and government transparency are associated with better economic growth. Tourists are more likely to visit countries with transparent institutions and guaranteeing citizens' rights, Khandaker and Islam (2017, p.389) demonstrate that only this index has a positive correlation to input from tourism; Muhammad Asif Khan (2020, p.1223) also found that higher levels of accountability correlate with tourists' perceptions of destination country security, which has a significant influence on their decisions. However, research in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region demonstrates that the impact on GDP is found to be very small compared to other factors such as government effectiveness and quality of governance (Emara & Chiu, 2016, p.34). Similarly, this index also shows a reverse effect supporting economic development through attracting FDI in BRICS countries (Jadhav, P., 2012, p.5).

Overall, although it is clear that quality can have a profound and multidimensional impact on tourism, studies on this relationship, especially using the NARDL approach, are still limited. Building good quality can not only provide tourism receipts but also contribute to the sustainable development of the information economy by enhancing tourist experience and social stability at the destination.

2. Methodology and Data

2.1. Data

This study utilizes data from 2002 to 2022 for 10 ASEAN member countries with prominent tourist destinations and significant international tourism receipts within the region, including Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore, Cambodia, and Myanmar. The dependent variable, international tourism receipts, is sourced from the World Tourism Organization (WTO). The independent variable, institutional quality, is measured through six indicators obtained from the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) database of the World Bank. According to Demir et al. (2019), when analyzing the impact of press freedom on domestic tourism, selected control variables were identified as crucial for evaluating the significant effects of institutional quality on tourism. Based on these findings, the authors have chosen the Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) as a control variable. REER data is derived from Bruegel's database, which provides REER information for 178 countries and regions, calculated using the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Additionally, other control variables include international trade, sourced from the International Trade Statistics reports by the WTO, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, which is collected from the World Bank (WB). This ensures data consistency and reliability throughout the research analysis. This dataset facilitates a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between institutional quality, macroeconomic factors, and the economic performance of the tourism sector across the 10 ASEAN countries.

2.2. Description of Variables

Table 1 and Table 2 provide detailed information on the variables used within the scope of this study, as follows:

Table 1: Summary of variables in the study

Variable	Symbol	Measurement	Unit	Previous Studies
Dependent Variable				
International Tourism Receipts	lnITR	The logarithm of total expenditure by international visitors to the host country, including spending on local services, domestic transport, prepaid expenses, and day-trip expenditures.	Logarit	Khan, M. A. et al (2020)
Independent Variables				
Control Of Corruption	CC	Measures the government's effectiveness in controlling, preventing, detecting, and penalizing corruption and embezzlement.	Unit	Mushtaq, R., Thoker, A. A., & Bhat, A. A. (2021)
Government Effectiveness	GE	Assesses the quality of public services and civil services, and their independence from political influence.	Unit	Mushtaq, R., Thoker, A. A., & Bhat, A. A. (2021)
Political Stability & Absence Of Violence	PV	Evaluates perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and violence within a country, including terrorism.	Unit	Mushtaq, R., Thoker, A. A., & Bhat, A. A. (2021)
Regulatory Quality	RQ	Measures the government's ability to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations for the development of citizens and private enterprises.	Unit	Mushtaq, R., Thoker, A. A., & Bhat, A. A. (2021)
Rule Of Law	RL	Evaluates adherence to and enforcement of legal rules by government institutions.	Unit	Mushtaq, R., Thoker, A. A., & Bhat, A. A. (2021)
Voice & Accountability	VA	Assesses citizens' rights to express opinions and elect their government.	Unit	Mushtaq, R., Thoker, A. A., & Bhat, A. A. (2021)

Control Variables				
Real Effective Exchange Rate	lnREER	Logarithm of the real effective exchange rate, calculated as the multilateral real exchange rate.	Logarit	Khan, M. A. et al. (2020) Demir et al. (2019)
International Trade	lnTrade	Logarithm of international trade, measured through indicators such as trade value (USD), volume of goods (tons), and trade price indices.	Logarit	Khan, M. A. et al. (2020) Demir et al. (2019)
Gross Domestic Product Per Capita	lnGDP	Logarithm of GDP at current market prices (USD), divided by the total population.	Logarit	Khan, M. A. et al. (2020) Demir et al. (2019) Fabro, G., et al. (2009)

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Kurtosis
lnITR	210	21.54006	2.039592	13.81551	24.88793	3.327284
CC	210	-0.2709893	1.001112	-1.672809	2.301146	3.8724
GE	210	0.1170905	1.0152	-1.684041	2.46966	2.669085
PV	210	-0.1488341	0.9316254	-2.211743	1.599123	2.090163
RQ	210	-0.0329794	1.00401	-2.348573	2.252235	3.120308
RL	210	-0.2161554	0.8917317	-1.736289	1.837814	2.849287
VA	210	-0.7623062	0.6805365	-2.233271	0.3215166	1.929062
lnREER	210	4.689057	0.1634724	4.325456	5.092351	2.702621
lnTrade	210	10.54676	1.812228	5.70711	13.15348	2.18317
lnGDP	210	8.243267	1.589055	4.982356	17.49011	7.175176

Source: Calculations by the authors.

2.3. Methodology

This study employs the nonlinear autoregressive distributed lag (NARDL) model developed by Shin et al. (2014). The model adopts a single-threshold approach, in which the independent variable is decomposed into two cumulative components: positive and negative partial sums. After conducting

unit root tests, which indicated that the series are stationary at the first difference, the authors applied the NARDL model to identify potential asymmetric relationships between institutional quality and international tourism receipts in the short and long term by separating the positive and negative coefficients of the independent variables.

Following the studies of Khan et al. (2020) and Awan et al. (2023), the general form of the NARDL model is constructed as follows:

$$\Delta y_{it} = \beta_{0i} + \beta_{1i} y_{t-1} + \beta_{2i}^{+} x_{t-1}^{+} + \beta_{2i}^{-} x_{t-1}^{-} + \beta_{3i}^{+} \delta_{t-1}^{+} + \beta_{3i}^{-} \delta_{t-1}^{-} + \sum_{j=1}^{N1} \pi_{ij} \Delta y_{i,t-j}$$

$$+ \sum_{j=0}^{N2} (\omega_{ij}^{+} \Delta x_{i,t-j}^{+} + \omega_{ij}^{-} \Delta x_{i,t-j}^{-}) + \sum_{j=0}^{N3} (\gamma_{ij}^{+} \delta_{i,t-j}^{+} + \gamma_{ij}^{-} \delta_{i,t-j}^{-}) + \phi_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where y represents the logarithm of international tourism receipts for country *i* at time *t, x* represents institutional quality, δ represents the logarithm of control variables, and ε_{it} is the random error term. Additionally, $x^{+}$and x^{-} denote improvements and deteriorations in institutional quality, respectively. These institutional changes are estimated based on the cumulative positive and negative changes in institutional quality, as shown in the following model:

$$x^{+} = \sum_{k=1}^{t} \Delta x_{ik}^{+} = \sum_{k=1}^{t} max(\Delta x_{ik}, 0) \quad (2)$$

$$x^{-} = \sum_{k=1}^{t} \Delta x_{ik}^{-} = \sum_{k=1}^{t} max(\Delta x_{ik}, 0) \quad (3)$$

At the same time, when a cointegration relationship exists, the Error Correction Term (ECT) equation represents the long-term relationship between the variables as follows:

$$\Delta y_{it} = \theta_i \rho_{i,t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^{N1} \pi_{ij} \Delta y_{i,t-j} + \sum_{j=0}^{N2} (\omega_{ij}^{+} \Delta x_{i,t-j}^{+} + \omega_{ij}^{-} \Delta x_{i,t-j}^{-}) + \sum_{j=0}^{N3} (\gamma_{ij}^{+} \delta_{i,t-j}^{+} + \gamma_{ij}^{-} \delta_{i,t-j}^{-}) + \phi_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (4)$$

In the nonlinear ARDL model, $\rho_{i,t-1}$adjusts the error term to estimate the long-term equilibrium state, while the parameter θ_i adjusts the speed of convergence to measure the time taken to return to the long-term equilibrium state in the event of any shocks.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Panel Unit-Root test results

Table 3: Panel Unit-Root test results.

Variables	Levin-Lin-Chu		Im, Pesaran và Shin	
	I(0)	I(1)	I(0)	I(1)
lnITR	-3.2407 ***	-	-3.8266 ***	-
RQ	-1.8039 **	-	0.0984	-5.4592 ***
GE	0.8437	-8.3489 ***	1.1603	-7.1267 ***

Variables	Levin-Lin-Chu		Im, Pesaran và Shin	
	I(0)	I(1)	I(0)	I(1)
CC	-2.0846 **	-	-0.8110	-5.2317 ***
PV	-3.5688 ***	-	-2.1420 **	-
RL	-1.4202	-4.7208 ***	-0.0001	-5.4384 ***
VA	-3.0041 ***	-	-1.6879 **	-
lnREER	-2.6894 ***	-	-0.5851	-5.3468 ***
lnTrade	-4.1147 ***	-	-0.9269	-6.5551 ***
lnGDP	-5.8160 ***	-	-3.4481 ***	-

Note: ***, **, and * indicates significance level at 1%, 5%, and 10% respectively.

Source: Calculations by the authors

For panel data with a large time series dimension, it is necessary to test for unit roots before estimating the cointegration relationship among variables. The various types of unit root tests commonly used in the literature can be categorized into two groups. The first group includes first-generation unit root tests suitable for unbalanced panel data, such as Levin-Lin-Chu (2002, p.1) and Im, Pesaran, Shin (2003, p.53). The second group comprises second-generation unit root tests for balanced panel data, which account for cross-sectional dependence, such as Pesaran (2007, p.265). Based on the general theoretical framework, this study applies the tests proposed by Levin-Lin-Chu (2002) and Im, Pesaran, Shin (2003, p.53) to examine the stationarity of the variables in the model. The results, presented in Table 3, indicate that all variables are stationary at their levels I(0) or at their first differences I(1), with no variables exhibiting unit roots at order 2.

Table 4: Pedroni's panel cointegration test results.

Test Statistics	Statistics	P-value
Modified Phillips-Perron	2.8005	0.0026
Phillips Perron	-2.6051	0.0046
ADF	-3.2659	0.0005

Note: All test statistics are under a null of no-cointegration, and diverge to negative infinity.

Source: Calculations by the authors

Table 4 presents the results of the cointegration test between the dependent variable and the independent variables in the model. The Pedroni test was employed, indicating a strong cointegration relationship among the variables.

Table 5: Asymmetric panel ARDL estimation results.

Variables	Long Run Estimation	Short Run Estimation
	lnITR	lnITR
RQ_pos	1.076**	-1.3155
	(0.48)	(1.04)
RQ_neg	1.103	2.922
	(0.97)	(2.44)
GE_pos	2.014 **	-0.570
	(0.82)	(0.52)
GE_neg	-3.972 ***	0.478
	(1.30)	(1.01)
CC_pos	5.287 ***	-0.955
	(1.36)	(0.94)
CC_neg	-5.364 ***	1.687 **
	(1.62)	(0.86)
PV_pos	3.132 ***	-0.079
	(0.80)	(0.26)
PV_neg	-1.918 *	1.088 *
	(1.08)	(0.61)
RL_pos	0.023	-1.159
	(1.57)	(2.43)
RL_neg	-4.029 *	3.221
	(2.09)	(2.24)
VA_pos	2.391	-0.645

Variables	Long Run Estimation	Short Run Estimation
	lnITR	**lnITR**
	(1.67)	(2.47)
VA_neg	15.736 ***	-1.005
	(4.18)	(1.99)
LnREER	6.774 ***	2.123 **
	(1.37)	(0.86)
lnTrade	3.523 ***	-1.454 ***
	(0.75)	(0.49)
lnGDP	3.560 ***	-0.294
	(0.57)	(0.69)

Note: ***, **, and * indicates significance level at 1%, 5%, and 10% respectively. The numbers in parenthesis are standard errors.

Source: Calculations by the authors

The findings summarized in Table 5 underscore the asymmetric effects of key governance indices, including Government Effectiveness (GE), Control of Corruption (CC), Political Stability and Absence of Violence (PV), and Voice and Accountability. Notably (VA). Specifically, the findings indicate that the positive effect of the GE variable is 2.014 with a standard error of 0.82, implying that a 1% improvement in government effectiveness leads to a 2.014% increase in tourism receipts. Conversely, the GE_neg variable, despite having a moderate standard error of 1.30, is notably smaller than its regression coefficient and exhibits strong statistical significance, underscoring the robustness of the estimate. Specifically, the coefficient of -3.972 suggests that a deterioration in government effectiveness (an increase in GE_neg by 1%) results in a 3.972% decline in tourism receipts in the long term. The relatively small standard errors associated with the long-term coefficients, combined with the statistical significance of both variables, affirm the stability and reliability of these long-term estimates.

Similarly, the results for Control of Corruption (CC_pos and CC_neg) in the long term are highly statistically significant, with relatively low standard errors of 1.36 and 1.62, respectively, ensuring the high reliability of long-term estimates. This indicates that both positive and negative changes in corruption control exert asymmetric impacts on tourism receipts, with differing intensities and directions of influence.

In the short term, corruption control also demonstrates an asymmetric effect, as reflected by the statistical significance of CC_neg at the 5% level with a positive coefficient. However, its standard error is moderately high, indicating that the short-term impact of CC_neg on the dependent variable is considerable but less stable compared to long-term coefficients. Specifically, the results suggest

that when the level of corruption control weakens, tourism receipts tend to increase, whereas stronger corruption control does not lead to significant changes in tourism receipts.

This can be explained by the fact that, in the short term, some tourists may not immediately react negatively to adverse changes in institutional quality, especially if they had already planned their trips in advance (Enders, Sandlers, and Parise, 1992). This temporary phenomenon might result in tourism receipts not declining immediately despite reduced corruption control. Additionally, Dutt & Traça (2010, p.843) argue that the impact of corruption on tourism is not necessarily negative.

The Political Stability and Absence of Violence indicator demonstrates non-linear results, as PV_pos and PV_neg reveal the long-term elasticity of tourism receipts with respect to political stability. This indicates that strengthening political stability significantly increases tourism receipts, whereas heightened political instability does not lead to a clearly discernible reduction in tourism receipts. The standard error for PV_pos is relatively small (0.80), suggesting that the positive impact of political stability on tourism receipts in the long term is both reliable and stable. Conversely, the regression coefficient for PV_neg is -1.918, with a relatively large standard error (1.08), reducing the reliability of claims regarding the negative long-term effects of PV_neg. In a different context, there is no clear evidence of asymmetry between the effects of increasing and decreasing political stability on tourism receipts in the short term, which aligns with the findings of Enders, Sandlers, and Parise (1992).

For the Voice and Accountability indicator, the long-term results reveal an asymmetric relationship of the VA_neg variable with the dependent variable. Specifically, a worsening in voice and accountability is associated with a significant 15.736% increase in tourism receipts. This is an unexpected result in a typical context, as negative feedback is usually anticipated to adversely impact receipts. The VA_neg variable exhibits high statistical significance, with a large regression coefficient of 15.736 and a long-term standard error of 4.18. This suggests that despite the substantial standard error, the long-term impact of VA_neg is significant and statistically robust. However, the large standard error may reflect variability or heterogeneity in the data related to VA_neg across countries or over time.

Furthermore, incorporating control variables such as Real effective exchange rate, International Trade, and Gross Domestic Product Per Capita substantially strengthens the analytical rigor and bolsters the reliability and validity of the findings, thereby ensuring a higher level of precision and scientific robustness in the results.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shed light on the literature by explaining the asymmetric effects of institutional quality on tourism receipts in ten ASEAN member countries, 2002-2022 of the NARDL approach. The results show that Government Effectiveness, Control of Corruption, Political Stability & Absence of Violence, and Voice & Accountability, have long-run asymmetries in tourism receipts.

Understanding the study findings, in order to fully harness the tourism sector's potential, the member states of ASEAN must take steps to enhance institutional quality in seeking foreign tourist inflow. We also proposed the following policy recommendations for future guidance.

First, prioritize the development of robust legislation and the strengthening of high-quality administrative management systems to enhance the nation's image. Implement stricter controls on

corruption and enforce severe penalties to deter violations and misconduct among officials. A transparent and efficient public administration reduces barriers, for example, streamlines the process for visa issuance, or simplifies citizen identification, proceeding for tourists and tourism operators.

Second, governments must improve the quality of public services to improve the experiences of tourists. Expanding and upgrading infrastructure and tapping into new sources of tourism create new attractive areas while adding to the protection of existing tourist sites.

Third, it can be noted that ASEAN has to emphasize its role in the formation of an integrated tourism network among the member countries. In this regard, emphasis should be placed on marketing the cross-border regions in the context of the UNESCO-recognized culture as well as natural heritage. By linking destinations such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos, this will not only enhance the variety of tourism products but also enhance the economic integration of the region. At the same time, regional member states should enhance regional security integration while strengthening bilateral relations with their strategic partners. The establishment of a stable and secure national image not only reduces risk exposure from political catastrophe but also builds dependable relations with tourists in the long run.

Fourth, countries must be more concerned with raising awareness among local populations about social responsibility. Building awareness about the importance of tourism for economic growth will help them to focus on making the tourism environment more friendly and civilized. A companionable and hospitable community is a vital component of achieving a positive first impression and encouraging people to return. All of the above strategies will eventually lead to a trustworthy, safe, and healthy environment for both locals and visitors.

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