Factors Influencing Visitors' Desire to Visit a First Class Temple on Rattanakosin Island, Bangkok, Using Regression Tree

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Abstract

Visitors' desire to visit a first-class temple on Rattanakosin Island in Bangkok is analysed in this quantitative study. We used closed-ended questions along with Likert scales (1-5) to survey 974 respondents. The questionnaire served as a research instrument, and the sample was chosen randomly through accidental sampling methods. The data was analysed using computer programs. The pull factor analysis demonstrates that the model effectively predicts outcomes with significant predictive capacity (MSE: 0.48, RMSE: 0.219, MAE: 0.170, MAPE: 50.84%, R2: 0.952). The push factor analysis also shows high explanatory power (MSE: 0.040, RMSE: 0.200, MAE: 0.157, MAPE: 46.08%, R2: 0.962). The study identifies key pull factors, including place identity, sacred sites, and adherence to COVID-19 guidelines. Push factors comprise connecting with the divine, purifying the mind, and discovering new things.

A key strategy for enhancing the appeal of Bangkok's royal temples is to preserve and promote significant landmarks, integrate educational and cultural experiences, prioritise health and safety measures during COVID-19, and provide exceptional customer service. Furthermore, the study recommends incorporating Dharma practices and preserving sacred sites to facilitate merit-making opportunities. By focusing on these recommendations, religious sites can increase their appeal to visitors and contribute to their overall well-being.

Introduction

Tourism plays a significant role in the global economy, contributing to GDP and employment (WTTC, 2022). Thailand, celebrated for its vibrant cultural heritage and breathtaking landscapes, draws millions of tourists annually. As the tourism sector continues to evolve, integrating physical, Thai art, and cultural data is crucial for sustainable development and efficient resource allocation (UNESCO, 2020). By harnessing these datasets, a comprehensive understanding of visitor preferences, behaviour, and the influence of physical features on their choices can be achieved. Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, has traditionally been a popular destination, attracting a large number of visitors annually (Kariyapol & Agarwal, 2020). Countries heavily reliant on tourism, like Thailand, are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of the pandemic (Behsudi, 2020).

The temples in Bangkok, such as Wat Arun, Wat Pho, and Wat Pra Kaew, have a unique appeal to visitors, offering spiritual experiences, cultural immersion, and historical exploration (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). The sacred atmosphere, intricate architecture, and religious rituals captivate and fascinate visitors (Smith, 2010). Tourism planners, marketers, and policymakers must identify the motivations that drive visitors to visit temples in Bangkok. However, the absence of visitors due to the pandemic has significantly affected the financial stability of these temples, which heavily rely on entry fees and donations (Mroz, 2021). Moreover, the emotional and spiritual factors influencing visitors' motivation to visit a temple in Bangkok have not been adequately explored. Understanding visitors' experiences is crucial for the success and long-term development of tourist destinations (Wang & Li, 2023). Currently, there is a lack of specific information about segmenting visitors' motivations for exploring temples in Bangkok.

The Royal Monastery of the First Rank, situated on Rattanakosin Island in Bangkok, is surrounded by the historic city of Bangkok and Thailand. Currently, there are several places of national historical value, including palaces, temples, religious sites, bridges, canals, and various architectural structures, particularly temples. This island, located to the east of the Chao Phraya River, covers an area of approximately 2,588.75 rai and is surrounded by water. The district administration divides the territory of Phra Nakhon District (Vejasongserm, 2022). Utilising segmentation techniques to categorise visitors based on their unique characteristics and motivations can enhance our understanding of the factors that attract individuals to this remarkable place. However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the motivations of visitors to this specific monastery. The research can uncover critical issues that may have been previously overlooked, such as the impact of cultural events on visitor preferences, the role of local art in shaping visitor experiences, or the influence of natural landscapes on visitor behavior. By addressing these issues, Thailand can continue to be a premier destination for visitors while maintaining its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty.

Understanding visitors' motivations is essential for developing effective marketing strategies and enhancing the visitor experience (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008). Researchers have undertaken a comprehensive examination of the factors that draw visitors to the royal monastery and have identified a range of motivations that contribute to their desire to visit this revered site. These motivations include cultural interest (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008), spiritual fulfilment (Qiao et al., 2021), leisure (Zhou et al., 2022), socialisation (Bigné et al., 2019), and education (Tsaur et al., 2015). Segmenting the visitor based on these motivations can help tailor marketing strategies, improve visitor satisfaction, and encourage revisits (Zhou et al., 2022). Understanding the motivations behind temple travel in Bangkok can provide valuable insights for tourism planners, marketers, and policymakers. This information can be used to

design targeted marketing strategies, highlight unique temple experiences, preserve cultural heritage, and ensure a positive visitor experience (Bigné et al. , 2019) . By employing classification analysis techniques, this research can contribute to the understanding of visitor motivations for temple travel in Bangkok. Segmenting visitors into distinct groups based on their motivations allows destination marketers and policymakers to develop targeted strategies, create tailored experiences, and allocate resources effectively, ultimately enhancing the overall visitor experience in temple travel in Bangkok.

Research objective

The objective of the research is to analyse the factors influencing visitors' desire to visit first- class temples on Rattanakosin Island in the capital of Thailand. By employing advanced research methodologies and statistical tools, the study seeks to uncover quantitative insights that can inform relevant strategies and policies.

Literature Review

Religious tourism is a vital aspect of cultural exploration, influencing various facets of individuals' lives (Poria et al., 2003). As an integral component of the tourism industry, it encompasses visits to religious monuments and engagement with religious culture, expanding beyond the confines of religious believers to cater to the general public (Nyaupane et al., 2015). Pilgrimage remains a prevalent form of religious tourism, particularly in religions like Buddhism and Catholicism (Kocyigit, 2016).

The search results provide a range of literature on push and pull factors in tourism, including religious tourism. Push factors are internal motivators that drive individuals to travel, such as the desire for escape, adventure, relaxation, and self-exploration. Pull factors are external factors that attract individuals to a particular destination, such as the attractiveness of the destination, cultural heritage, and temple architecture (Said & Maryono, 2018; Piramanayagam et al., 2021). The literature suggests that push and pull factors are interrelated and can influence each other. For example, the desire for spiritual fulfilment and the need for relaxation can both be push factors that motivate individuals to visit religious destinations, while the cultural heritage and beauty of the destination can be pull factors that attract visitors (Liro, 2021).

The research on push and pull factors in religious tourism highlights the importance of understanding the diverse motivations of visitors and tailoring offerings and communication strategies accordingly. For instance, promoting the unique cultural heritage and beauty of a religious destination can enhance its appeal to visitors, while providing opportunities for spiritual fulfilment and relaxation can cater to the intrinsic motivations of visitors (Ghaffari et al., 2022).

Motivations and attractions vary across different tourist destinations and activities, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of push and pull factors for effective market segmentation (Camilleri, 2022). The recognition of these motivations leads to improved products and heightened customer satisfaction during travel experiences (Camilleri, 2022). Examining the literature on motivation for travelling to sacred places reveals early attempts to categorise types of travellers and, more recently, a focus on specific groups such as golfers, health enthusiasts, and divers (Voigt et al., 2011; Ong & Musa, 2012). Understanding the motivations of these distinct groups contributes to the development of targeted marketing strategies, acknowledging the diverse needs of various visitor segments (Katsikari et al., 2020).

Methodology

Sampling Method

The survey instrument used in this study was developed based on contributions from various authors in the field of tourism research who have extensively studied different aspects of visitor motivations and destination choices. The survey included components related to push factors (Smith & Kelly, 2006) and pull factors (Giddy, 2018). The aim was to include the most commonly used and relevant variables for the analysis. Participants rated different elements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strong dismotivation) to 5 (strong motivation) (Hair et al., 2019). tion) to 5 (strong motivation) (Hair et al., 2019).

The study examines an unspecified number of visitors visiting the four first-class royal temples in Bangkok, acknowledging their substantial size. While the population number (N) remains unknown, the study centres on the population mean (μ). To address this, the researcher utilised a sample size of 974, determined through a computer programme (Soper, 2022). This considered an expected effect size of 0.3, 24 latent variables, 7 observed variables, a significance level of 0.05, and a power of 0.80 (Westland, 2010). Data quality procedures included cross-verification, outlier removal, and cleansing. Expert evaluations determined average question scores. The Index of Congruence evaluated expert opinions on question consistency, retaining those between 0.50 and 1.00 and revising others below 0.50 (Turner & Carlson, 2003). Questions with an IOC value of 0.86 were determined to be suitable for use, as the value exceeded the threshold of 0.5. Questions with an IOC value lower than 0.50 will be reviewed for potential improvement or elimination (Turner & Carlson, 2003).

To ensure ethical practices in research involving human participants within the tourism sector of Thailand, a controlled sampling technique was employed. This approach followed internationally recognised guidelines for considering ethical aspects in human research. Adhering to these guidelines is crucial for maintaining integrity and protecting the rights and well-being of individuals involved in the studies. Participants were selected through a random sampling process and were provided with a comprehensive explanation of the research objectives. They were also given strict assurances of confidentiality before providing their informed consent. These procedures were carried out in accordance with the approved protocol by the Institutional Review Board (COA 091/2023).

Data Collection

An initial survey was carried out at multiple locations in Ayutthaya city, resulting in the collection of 30 questionnaires. Following data analysis, specific questions were eliminated, and the remaining ones were refined to shape the final survey instrument, which consists of three sections. The first section comprises six questions focused on gathering demographic information, including gender, age, education level, occupation, marital status, and monthly income of the respondents. The second section, aimed at understanding visitors' behaviour patterns, contains seven items. The third and concluding section explores push and pull motivations through 31 questions. A proportional sampling technique was utilised to ensure a representative sample. The data collection period spanned from May 1st to August 31st, 2023, specifically at four first-class royal temples in Bangkok—Wat Arun, Wat Phra Chetuphon, Wat Mahathat, and Wat Suthat. These temples were chosen strategically due to their high visitor volume, facilitating efficient primary data collection.

Data Analysis

The quantitative survey data underwent classification analysis to categorise respondents based on their motivational factors. In contrast to conventional regression models, this study utilised regression tree techniques, a departure from previous approaches that segmented visitors based on specific characteristics (Legohérel et al., 2015). Unlike traditional regression models that rely on predetermined relationships, regression trees employ recursive binary splitting to unveil causal links between covariates and the dependent variable (Sela & Simonof, 2012). This approach avoids making assumptions about the phenomenon, marking a departure from standard econometric analysis (Kuhn et al., 2014).

The utilisation of a hierarchical tree structure serves as a visual representation of variable interactions, offering a deeper understanding that goes beyond conventional econometric analysis (Pagliara et al., 2020). In this study, the Classification and Regression Tree (CART) algorithm, following the methodology outlined by Breiman (2017), is employed. This algorithm employs recursive binary splitting, where each parent node splits into left and right child nodes. Further splits occur at internal nodes, while terminal nodes represent the end points and contain class assignments. The splitting process is concluded when an impurity decrease threshold of 0.01, as suggested by Montella et al. (2012), is reached. For the analysis of visitor heterogeneity at the Bangkok royal temples, JASP version 0.17.3, a statistical software that possesses regression tree classification capabilities, will be utilized. This technique aims to objectively segment visitors based on their key motivating attributes.
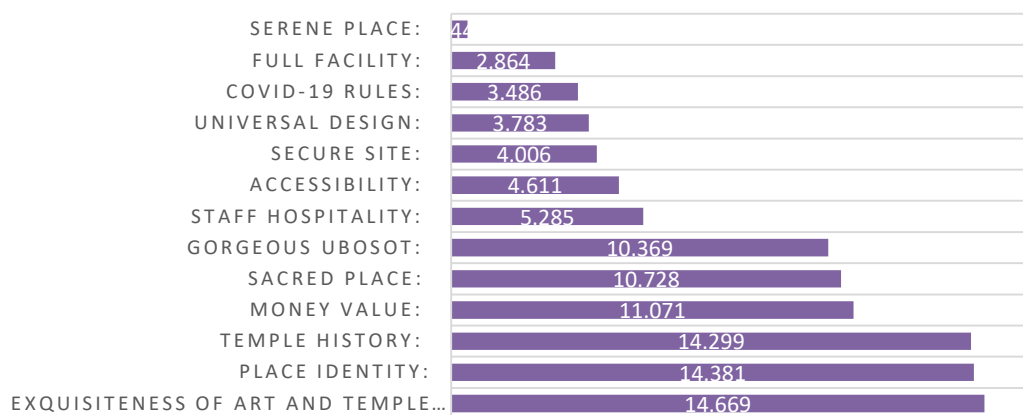
Results

A decision tree grouped Royal Temple visitors. Pull factor model performance was assessed. Model evaluation yielded favorable results (Table 1). MSE of 0.048 indicated low prediction error. RMSE of 0.219 represented average error magnitude. MAE of 0.170 reflected high accuracy. MAPE of 50.84% suggested reasonable accuracy. R^2 of 0.952 demonstrated strong predictive ability with over 95% variance explained. Collectively, metrics showed the model predicted values with low error and high explanatory power. The push factor model was evaluated using five metrics (Table 1). MSE was 0.040 indicating average squared prediction errors. RMSE of 0.20 represented average magnitude of errors. MAE of 0.157 reflected average absolute errors. MAPE of 46.08% quantified average percentage errors. R2 was 0.962, suggesting a strong ability to predict outcomes, with over 96% of variance explained. Lower MSE, RMSE, MAE and MAPE with higher R^2 indicate a good model fit to the data.

Table 1 Evaluation metrics

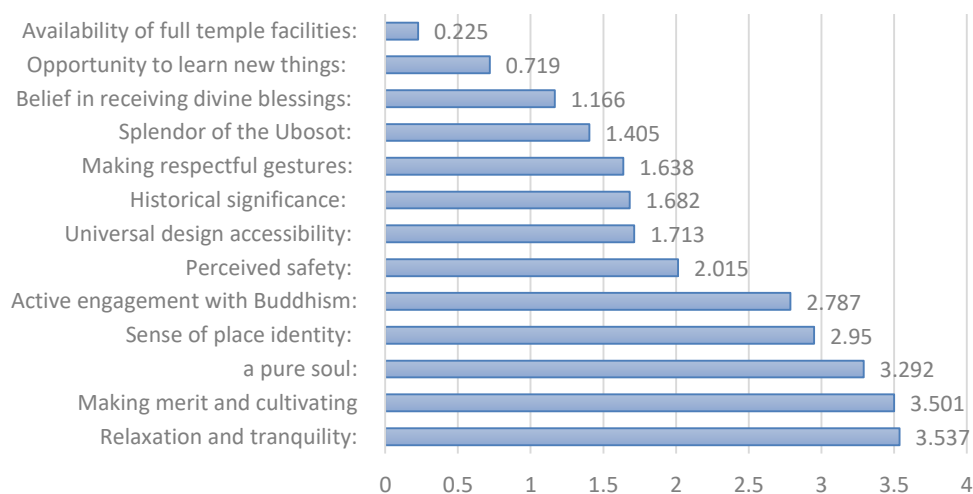| Pull factor index	Value	Push factor index	Value
MSE	0.048	MSE	0.040
RMSE	0.219	RMSE	0.200
MAE / MAD	0.170	MAE / MAD	0.157
MAPE	50.84%	MAPE	46.08%
R²	0.952	R²	0.962

The pull factor data provided includes relative importance scores for various features. The exquisiteness of art and temple culture ($\bar{x} = 14.669$), place identity ($\bar{x} = 14.381$), and temple history ($\bar{x} = 14.299$) have the highest importance scores. These characteristics are thought to be the most influential. Following them are money value ($\bar{x} = 11.071$), sacred place ($\bar{x} = 10.728$), and gorgeous Ubosot ($\bar{x} = 10.369$). Staff hospitality ($\bar{x} = 5.285$), accessibility ($\bar{x} = 4.611$), secure site ($\bar{x} = 4.006$), universal design ($\bar{x} = 3.783$), COVID-19 rules ($\bar{x} = 3.486$), full facility ($\bar{x} = 2.864$), and serene place ($\bar{x} = 0.448$) are all rated relatively low. The importance scores reflect each feature's relative importance in the pull factor data, with higher scores indicating more significance.

PULL FACTORS

Feature	Score
SERENE PLACE:	44
FULL FACILITY:	2.864
COVID-19 RULES:	3.486
UNIVERSAL DESIGN:	3.783
SECURE SITE:	4.006
ACCESSIBILITY:	4.611
STAFF HOSPITALITY:	5.285
GORGEOUS UBOSOT:	10.369
SACRED PLACE:	10.728
MONEY VALUE:	11.071
TEMPLE HISTORY:	14.299
PLACE IDENTITY:	14.381
EXQUISITENESS OF ART AND TEMPLE…	14.669

Figure 1 Pull factor (Source: Researcher, 2023)

PUSH FACTORS

Feature	Score
Availability of full temple facilities:	0.225
Opportunity to learn new things:	0.719
Belief in receiving divine blessings:	1.166
Splendor of the Ubosot:	1.405
Making respectful gestures:	1.638
Historical significance:	1.682
Universal design accessibility:	1.713
Perceived safety:	2.015
Active engagement with Buddhism:	2.787
Sense of place identity:	2.95
a pure soul:	3.292
Making merit and cultivating	3.501
Relaxation and tranquility:	3.537

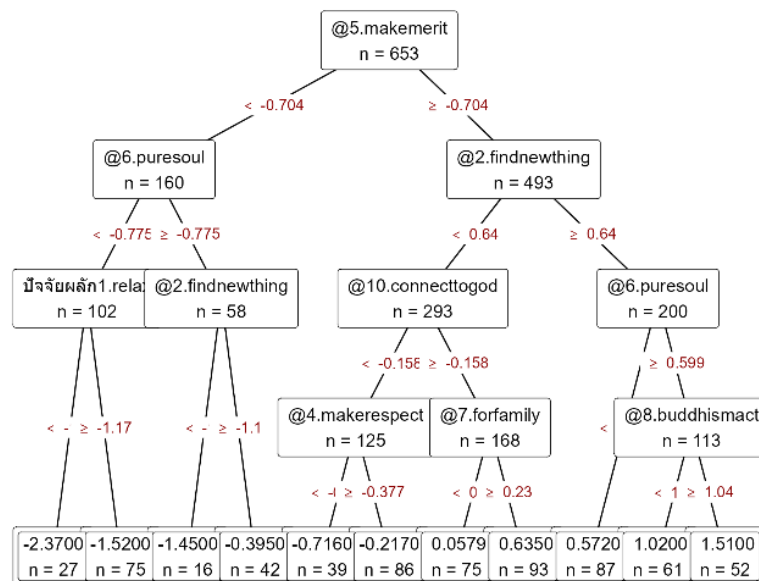**Figure 2** Push factor (Source: Researcher, 2023)

The following are the major push factors that motivate visitors to Bangkok's most visited royal temple. For starters, some visitors are drawn to the temple grounds because they want to relax and find tranquility ($\bar{x} = 3.537$). Furthermore, the opportunity to make merit and cultivate a pure soul ($\bar{x} = 3.501$ and $\bar{x} = 3.292$) serve as motivators for some visitors. The temple's sense of place identity ($\bar{x} = 2.950$) and active engagement with Buddhism ($\bar{x} = 2.787$) contribute to the attraction for some visitors. The temple's perceived safety ($\bar{x} = 2.015$) and universal design accessibility ($\bar{x} = 1.713$) also play a role in influencing visitors to choose this destination. Other, less influential factors include the temple's historical significance ($\bar{x} = 1.682$) and the desire to make respectful gestures within the temple ($\bar{x} = 1.638$). The splendor of the Ubosot ($\bar{x} = 1.405$) and the belief in receiving divine blessings ($\bar{x} = 1.166$) are two other factors that draw visitors to the temple. Factors such as the opportunity to learn new things ($\bar{x} = 0.719$). Finally, the availability of full temple facilities ($\bar{x} = 0.225$) is a less significant push factor for visitors.

Tree Analysis

Figure 5 shows a decision tree breakdown of push motivation factors for visitors. The overarching factor for the majority (n=653) was making merit, splitting into two branches. The first branch was purifying the mind (n=160). The second, discovering new things (n=493), split further into connecting with divines (n=293) and purifying the mind (n=200). Purifying the mind split again into worship/ blessings (n=125) and family time (n=168). Worship/ blessings then split into subgroups (n=39, n=86). Discovering new things split into Buddhism activities (n=113) and relaxing/discovering (n=160). Buddhism activities split again into (n=61, n=52). Relaxing/discovering split into relaxing (n=102) and discovering (n=58), becoming terminal nodes. A subgroup did not consider Buddhism activities (n=47). Additional terminals existed for relaxing (n=27, n=75) and discovering (n=16, n=42).

Figure 6 depicts the primary pull motivation factors influencing visitors using a decision tree. Place identity emerged as the overarching factor of greatest importance, splitting into two sub-branches. The first branch, sacred place (n=269), further split based on an appreciation for the beauty of art and culture (n=131) versus a preference for full facilities (n=138). The art and culture sub-group outpaced those prioritizing facilities (n=37 vs n=101). The second branch considered COVID-19 rules (n=359), splitting by staff friendliness (n=163) and accessibility (n=139). More visitors noted staff friendliness (n=51) than accessibility (n=88). However, a sizeable group (n=196) were not significantly influenced by COVID protocols. Universal design was also a consideration, with some visitors noting its importance (n=107) and others not (n=24).

Figure 3 Decision tree plot, Push factor (Source: Researcher, 2023)
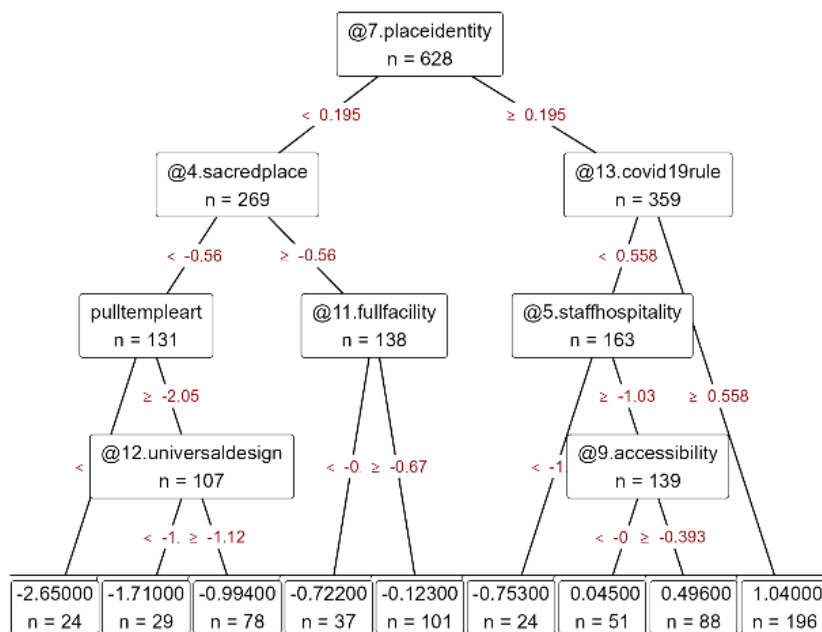
Figure 4 Decision tree plot, Pull factor (Source: Researcher, 2023)

Discussions

The royal temple in Bangkok attracts visitors for various spiritual, cultural, and experiential reasons. At its core, the sanctuary provides an opportunity for visitors to fulfill spiritual needs through worship, meditation, and connectedness with higher powers (Harrad et al., 2019; Prabnok, 2020). Its peaceful ambiance, created through sacred symbols and spaces for reflection, enhances this experience (Lee et al., 2012). Beyond its spiritual significance, the temple appeals through its architectural splendors, alluring sculptures, and overall serene atmosphere (Singh et al., 2023). Religious activities can positively impact physical and mental well-being by reducing stress (DeRossett et al., 2021). Visitors also value the staff's warm hospitality and service quality, feeling welcomed, comfortable and appreciated (Saengsutho & Supinit, 2016). Further, its COVID safety measures assure community health through precautions like mask-wearing (Sisti et al., 2023). The rich cultural and historical significance is another major draw, as visitors appreciate learning about traditional art forms and historical artifacts that showcase the temple's heritage (Prabnok, 2020). When considering its spiritual, cultural and experiential offerings, alongside value for money, it is not surprising the temple attracts a strong visitor base looking to enrich their travel experience.

Decision tree

This comprehensive study delved into the motivational forces behind religious tourism by drawing from influential works on push-pull factors and place identity formation (Antara & Prameswari, 2018). Visitor motivations and experiences play a transformative role in shaping identities (Katsikari et al., 2020). Place identity encompasses the socio-cultural and environmental dimensions that religious sites take on due to their historical and cultural significance, and how this contributes to their appeal (Ginting et al., 2022). Sacred sites hold immense educational, cultural, and spiritual value for religious visitors seeking truths, enlightenment, and divine connections (Terzidou et al., 2018). During crises, individuals often turn to faith and sacred locations that symbolize miracles, divinity, and hope (Terzidou et al., 2018). However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted visits through restrictions and safety protocols (Mróz, 2021).

Visitors experience a profound sense of sacredness through emotional and spiritual connections to the divine, while also engaging with socio-historical narratives (Singh et al., 2023). This research provides strategic guidance by offering deep insights into the psychological and contextual forces that shape spiritual tourism motivations and place attachments.

The friendliness of staff is a crucial factor in shaping visitors' experiences and satisfaction, making it an essential aspect of service quality (Chen et al., 2020). Particularly in the hospitality industry, positive interactions with staff have a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Chen et al., 2020). Sacred sites serve as destinations for religious tourism, offering various rituals and performances that enhance spiritual and cultural immersion. They also attract visitors through art, architecture, and historical significance, catering to both religious and non-religious interests (Aulet & Vidal, 2018). Ensuring accessibility is vital in these sites to accommodate individuals with disabilities and create inclusive spaces. Accessible sacred sites not only meet the specific needs of all individuals but also foster broader cultural and spiritual connections, contributing to spiritual sustainability (Aulet & Duda, 2020). The implementation of universal design principles aims to create inclusive and accessible spaces for worshipers of all abilities, following principles such as equitable use, flexibility, simplicity, perceptible information, and low physical effort (Tsironis, 2022).

Religious tourism has evolved beyond traditional pilgrimage- focused travel to encompass a wider range of activities. Božic et al. (2016) note that contemporary religious tourism includes not only pilgrimages but also visits to religious sites for sightseeing, personal growth, and recreation. In Buddhism, the pursuit of happiness involves understanding the interdependence of all things and reducing suffering. Kittiprapas (2019) explains that this process requires developing right views, cultivating a clear and purified mind, and engaging in self-cultivation practices such as meditation. These practices are not exclusive to monks and nuns but are embraced by all Buddhist practitioners. Dharma, a devotional tradition, holds significance for all Buddhists, and undertaking pilgrimages to sacred sites deepens one's connection and commitment to the teachings (Geary & Shinde, 2021). The physical act of prostration, as mentioned in the Pali Canon, along with meditation practices, serves as a means to purify the body, speech, and mind from negative karma and progress towards enlightenment (Geary & Shinde, 2021).

Research indicates that religious tourism has a positive impact on relaxation and well-being. Engaging in religious visitor activities can calm the mind, alleviate stress, and promote overall health (Behere et al., 2013). Religion and spirituality emphasize meaning and purpose in life, with studies showing that religious affiliation is associated with lower alcohol consumption, anxiety, and self-esteem (Behere et al., 2013). Both public and private religious practices can contribute to maintaining mental health, preventing mental illnesses, and coping with anxiety, fears, frustration, anger, and feelings of inferiority (Moreira-Almeida et al., 2006). Cultural and historically rich destinations play a significant role in religious tourism, allowing visitors to explore new facets and engage their minds. Lopes et al. (2021) suggest that visitors are motivated to learn about the destination's history, culture, and traditions while discovering new dimensions of their faith. Activities with religious relevance strengthen community bonds, reinforce values, and preserve traditions. Ceremonies and customs provide guidance and contribute to spiritual well-being (Antara & Prameswari, 2018), fostering stronger devotion and belief systems among followers.

Throughout history, people have had a strong desire to connect with the divine and show reverence to their gods, saints, prophets, and deceased loved ones. According to Martin (2021), individuals hold diverse conceptual beliefs about the divine, encompassing its existence, nature, involvement in human affairs, and the potential for communication. Research suggests that people may interpret certain events as divine messages, such as spontaneous thoughts, significant life events, and acts of kindness from others (Wilt et al., 2021). In times of seeking help or after experiencing loss, individuals may be inclined to seek divine messages or reassurance, often considering supernatural explanations (Rahtz et al., 2021).

In Buddhism, the focus lies on cause-and-effect relationships and the law of karma, rather than concepts of blessings or divine favor. As explained by Tanaka (2018), Buddhists believe that every action carries consequences, and the effects of our actions determine our future experiences. However, many Buddhists still engage with sacred objects and places to fulfill their desires, reflecting the syncretism of local traditions with influences from ancient Indus Valley civilization, Brahmin, and Vedic cultures. Buddhist worship, aimed at improving one's self-image, is associated with religiosity, considering the inherent human inclination towards fulfillment (Mair & Blofeld, 2006).

Undertaking a pilgrimage as a family creates enduring memories and strengthens one's connection to their faith (Trono et al., 2021). It provides an opportunity for spiritual growth and reinforces familial bonds (Tsironis, 2022). Traveling together to religious sites reinforces shared values and beliefs, contributing to a heightened sense of family identity. Prior research suggests that conducting research on religious sites before the trip enhances the educational

aspect of the experience (Trono et al., 2021). Religious tourism, including pilgrimage, holds a rich historical background and represents one of the earliest forms of tourism, with religious motives being the oldest form of non-economic travel. Researchers have explored the motivations, expectations, and contributions of religious tourism, shedding light on various concepts within this domain (Rybina et al., 2021). Therefore, religious tourism continues to shape cultural experiences, spirituality, and personal growth for individuals and communities alike.

Conclusion and suggestions

The results of regression tree showed that the model performed well in the pull factor evaluation, MSE = 0.048, RMSE = 0.219, MAE = 0.170, and MAPE = 0.952, and R^2 = 0.952. The push factor, the results showed MSE = 0.040, RMSE = 0.20, MAE = 0.157, MAPE = 44.08%, and R^2 = 0.962. Overall, the model's performance is reasonable and supports its use in various business and economics applications.

The pull motive components grouped into eight distinct nodes. The pull factor relating to the place's identity is the highest importance for visitors, followed by sacred sites and COVID-19 guidelines. Staff friendliness and accessibility are other essential considerations. The splendor of arts and culture, as well as complete facilities, can be found at the sacred place. Consider the universal design pull factor as well. Push factor components are organized into ten distinct nodes. The motivating element associated to alms-giving was the highest priority, followed by spiritual purification and discovery. There is also a discovery something new. connection with God and mental purification. Pay your respects to the Buddha while spending time with family or relatives. Some visitors consider participating in religious activities and purification of their minds. Therefore, to relax and discover new things.

Theoretical Implication

The implications drawn from this study bear significant theoretical relevance for government agencies, tourism organisations, and the management of the temple. The identified pull motives, categorised into eight distinct groups, underscore the pivotal role of a destination's identity in attracting visitors. This suggests that visitors are primarily drawn to the destination's unique characteristics and cultural significance. The presence of sacred sites and adherence to COVID-19 guidelines also hold considerable importance for visitors. Additionally, factors such as staff friendliness and accessibility contribute to the overall allure of the destination. The study further reveals that the aesthetic richness of arts and culture, coupled with the availability of comprehensive facilities, contributes to the attraction of visitors to the sacred place. Notably, the study advocates for the consideration of universal design principles, emphasising inclusivity and accessibility for individuals with diverse needs. On the other hand, the identified push motives, organised into ten distinct categories, highlight the foremost motivating factor as almsgiving. This suggests that visitors are primarily motivated by the desire to engage in acts of generosity and contribute to the well-being of others. Strong motivating factors also include spiritual purification and the opportunity for discovery. Visitors express a desire to explore and learn new things, establish a connection with God, and undergo mental purification. Paying respects to the Buddha while spending time with family or relatives is considered important by some visitors. Engaging in religious activities and seeking mental purification are also mentioned as motivations. Ultimately, visitors aspire to relax and derive meaningful experiences while discovering new aspects of themselves and the world around them.

Practical Implication

The study highlights the importance of focusing on the unique aspects of religious sites to establish a compelling identity that attracts visitors. Understanding the factors that shape place identity, such as history, culture, and engaging interactions, can guide the creation of products and marketing strategies for the temple or relevant tourism organisations.

Investing in the preservation, promotion, and accessibility of significant landmarks can enhance the appeal of religious tourist destinations. Government agencies and tourism organisations play a crucial role in coordinating these efforts.

Incorporating sacred sites into offerings and ensuring health and safety practices during the COVID-19 pandemic are essential for building trust among potential visitors. Government agencies, tourism organisations, and temple management should work together to implement and communicate these measures effectively.

Providing exceptional customer service and accessibility for individuals with impairments are critical aspects that should be prioritized by government agencies, tourism organizations, and temple management to shape visitor experiences and satisfaction.

The study also provides practical guidance for religious tourism by recommending the promotion of merit-making opportunities and the incorporation of Dharma practices for personal development. Government agencies and tourism organisations can support and promote these initiatives.

Preserving sacred sites, maintaining cleanliness and serenity, and providing information about their value require coordinated efforts from the temple and tourism organisations.

Collaborating with healthcare professionals to offer wellness programmes, such as meditation retreats and mindfulness seminars, can enhance mental and physical well-being. This initiative involves the temple, tourism organisations, and healthcare experts working together.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

The research findings shed light on the first-class royal temple's strong sense of place identity and its active participation in Buddhism, aligning seamlessly with the broader context of religious tourism and the push-pull factor framework. These aspects have a significant impact on the Thai temple's soft power, influencing visitors' perceptions and choices. The temple's well-established place identity emerges as a crucial factor in visitors' decision-making processes, as it fulfils their spiritual and cultural expectations. Active engagement with Buddhism reflects intrinsic motivations, which align with the concept of push factors in the tourism industry.

Additionally, the research indicates that visitors are greatly influenced by the temple's perceived safety, universal design accessibility, and diverse learning opportunities. These elements demonstrate the complex interaction of push and pull factors, contributing to the overall attractiveness of religious destinations. From a policy standpoint, strategically promoting the temple's unique characteristics, for example, its cultural heritage, universal design accessibility, and educational offerings, can enhance the visitor experience and support sustainable development initiatives. This approach allows policymakers and stakeholders to leverage the temple's soft power, capitalising on the growing interest in religious tourism for the benefit of local communities and economies. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of understanding the diverse motivations that underlie religious tourism, encompassing both spiritual and secular interests.

Acknowledgments

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