Place Attachment and Destination Loyalty of Religious Tourists in Chiang Mai, Thailand: Examining the Role of Emotional Solidarity and Risk Perception

Waret Ruttanavisanon and Charoenchai Agmapisarn *

Graduated School of Tourism Management,
National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand

Abstract

Chiang Mai is the most popular destination in Thailand for religious tourism. Religious tourism refers to contemporary travel to religion-themed tourist destinations for religious and/or recreational purposes. The growth of religious tourism is inextricably linked with the worldwide increase in spiritual searching by individuals of all ages, cultures, and religions. Religious destinations are places of development, commitment, and vitality; however, they often attract attention owing to their emotional significance. This research performs partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) as a quantitative method to investigate the destination loyalty of tourists through their emotional connection with a place, emotional solidarity with the locals, and risk perception. Data was collected from 543 Thai tourists who have visited temples in Chiang Mai. Results indicate that place attachment has a direct influence on tourists' emotional solidarity. In addition, the emotional solidarity of the tourists with the locals is a significant predictor of their destination loyalty. Furthermore, this research finds that the emotional solidarity of the tourists mediates the relationship between their place attachment and destination loyalty. Moreover, the risk perception of the tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that the moderating effect of their emotional solidarity and destination loyalty is insignificant. Finally, the implications of the findings recommend that religious destinations should organize local religious events and promote them to tourists. Establishing a sense of solidarity among tourists, religious destinations, and nearby communities, would strengthen destination loyalty among tourists.

Keywords

Introduction

Religious tourism is regarded as the earliest and most primitive type of tourism (Álvarez-García et al., 2018). Religious tourism refers to contemporary travel to religion-themed tourist destinations or pilgrimage sites to fulfill a religious obligation and/or for recreational purposes. Religious tourism is also the most widespread form of tourism, accounting for a sizable portion of the industry (Rashid, 2018; Rinschede, 1992). According to the World Tourism Organization (2014), religious tourists account for more than half of all travelers worldwide each year. Religious tourism contributes between $50 million and $100 million in revenues to the global economy annually (Ministry of Tourism and Sports Thailand, 2021), resulting in the direct and indirect generation of jobs and industries through numerous associated industries and in an increase in revenue distribution to localities and governments, thereby stimulating economic growth and ensuring a country's economic stability (Butthipsakul & Soontayatron, 2017; Detmit, 2020; Pompai et al., 2020). The rise in religious tourism is strongly related to the global increase in spiritually interested by individuals of all ages, cultures, and religions. Therefore, experts predict that this specialized section of tourism will continue to expand (Butthipsakul & Soontayatron, 2017; Chuamuangphan & Mulmit, 2018; Chuamuangphan et al., 2018; Ministry of Tourism and Sports Thailand, 2021).

Chiang Mai is the most popular destination in Thailand for religious tourism (Infosearch, 2021; Ministry of Tourism and Sports Thailand, 2021). Chiang Mai is known as the "city of a hundred temples" and developed a reputation as a major religious tourism destination owing to its numerous Buddhist temples and opportunities to connect with monks and learn about Buddhist practices (Choe & O' Regan, 2015, 2020). Additionally, Ruttanavisanon and Agmapisarn (2022) discovered that religious tourism research in Chiang Mai is abundant. The environment of Chiang Mai, with numerous historical landmarks, temples, and cultural heritage sites, promotes a sense of calm and tranquility. The local people's wisdom and way of life as well as belonging to the community can promote feelings of comfort and appreciation for the culturally unique and open-minded residents among tourists. In addition, Chiang Mai can provide tourists with a sense of satisfaction at reasonable prices (Ministry of Tourism and Sports Thailand, 2021). Thais are attentive regarding temple to worship for prosperity and happiness in life. Religious tourism accounts for 33.6% of the tourism market in Thailand, second only to leisure tourism (Infosearch, 2021).

As numerous religious faiths and rituals are consolidated in a place, a study on the psychosocial factors influencing a place (i.e., sense of place and place attachment) may characterize a variety of different outcome indicators within the context of a tourism destination depending on their recent use in hospitality and tourism studies. While the traditional idea of place attachment is based on how people interact with the environment, research shows that place attachment is often influenced by social factors (Patwardhan et al., 2020). Religious

destinations are places of development, commitment, and spiritual energy; however, such places attract attention owing to their emotional significance. Tourists visit such places for a variety of reasons. People are inextricably linked with sacred environments at the physical and emotional level. In this sense, a place can represent social contact, an emotional bond, and an affiliation. Emotional bonds are formed from people's interactions and relationships with places (Silva et al., 2018; Xu & Gursoy, 2020).

Destination loyalty may be defined as a tourist's prior experiences, willingness to recommend a destination to others, and revisit intention. Noneconomic factors that can affect destination loyalty include overall satisfaction, the destination image, place attachment, and emotional solidarity (Patwardhan et al., 2020). Place attachment, as a determinant of emotional solidarity; emotional solidarity; and the relationship between residents and visitors are significant predictors of destination loyalty (Aleshinloye et al., 2019; Woosnam et al., 2016).

An analysis of the literature demonstrates that tourists' place attachment and emotional solidarity have yet to be used to examine destination loyalty to Thailand. While the importance of tourists' risk perception is well-understood, the context of risks associated with global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is underexplored, especially from the point of view of destination risk management (Zhan et al., 2020). According to an Infosearch (2021) survey on Thai people's travel behavior in 2020, 57.17% reported that their top reason for not traveling was fear of contracting COVID-19. In this case, the studies on tourists' risk perception in Thailand during the COVID-19 pandemic are limited. This research aims to examine the relationship between place attachment, emotional solidarity, and destination loyalty. In addition, this research examines how risk perception moderates the indirect impact of emotional solidarity on the destination loyalty of Thai domestic tourists to Chiang Mai, Thailand as a religious tourism destination during the COVID-19 pandemic. On this point, place attachment, emotional solidarity, destination loyalty, and risk perception are research gaps in this study, which are rarely found in Thai domestic tourist studies, particularly in religious tourism destination and tourism sector studies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Place Attachment

Place attachment is the emotional bond between a person and a place and a major concept in environmental psychology. Place attachment is significantly affected by an individual and his/her personal experiences (Dwyer et al., 2019). Religious places provide tourists with a range of psychological, spiritual, and personal benefits (Al-Ansi et al., 2020). Place attachment can influence how people perceive, feel, and experience a place and includes emotive and meaningful gestures. The attractiveness of a destination, such as scenery and amenities, has a significant impact on tourists' attachment to the destination.

People develop a sense of belonging, identity, and dependence on such places; thus, place attachment is a comprehensive concept that incorporates two parts (place dependence and place identity) and was applied mainly to the tourism sector in recent years (Aleshinloye et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2021; Counted & Zock, 2019; Hanks et al., 2020; Hosany et al., 2019; Li & Liu, 2020; Silva et al., 2018; Stăncioiu & Dițoiu, 2016; Stylidis, 2020; Woosnam et al., 2016; Xu & Gursoy, 2020). Place dependence is defined as tourists' functional attachment to a specific place and understanding of its significance. Meanwhile, place identity is a relational element that refers to the relationship between a place and one's personal identity, which may include cognitive or affective components.

Emotional Solidarity

Emotional solidarity is the degree of closeness and connection perceived by locals and tourists in a particular destination (Aleshinloye et al., 2019; Juric et al., 2020; Moghavvemi et al., 2017; Stylidis, Woosnam, & Ivkov, 2020; Woosnam & Norman, 2009; Woosnam et al., 2009). Hammarström (2005) defined emotional solidarity as the affective bond between individuals, characterized by perceived closeness and degree of interaction. Woosnam and Norman (2009) developed the Emotional Solidarity Scale, which consists of three components (Joo & Woosnam, 2019; Juric et al., 2020; Moghavvemi et al., 2017), that is, welcoming nature, emotional closeless, and sympathetic understanding. The welcoming nature component involves an individual's enthusiasm for tourism and sociability. This research focuses on individuals' feelings of warmth and wellbeing. An individual's perceived or expected level of warmth and hospitality may have a beneficial effect on his/her intention to travel. Meanwhile, emotional closeness demonstrates the harmony between locals and tourists. The degree of emotional closeness between people supports bonding and the building of friendly connections. Positive interactions between locals and tourists are likely to develop into strong relationships. Lastly, sympathetic understanding is an individual's ability to put himself/herself in another's shoes and understand his/her situation, thereby allowing both parties to develop respect and admiration for the other and understand the other's sentiments. People learn from others' cultures and way of life. Woosnam et al. (2016) observed that in the context of religious festivals, place attachment features (i.e., place identity and place dependence) emphasize numerous dimensions of emotional solidarity shared by tourists and locals (i.e., welcoming nature, emotional closeness, and sympathetic understanding).

Religious places and places of worship function as crucial gathering spots for a wide variety of visitors and hosts. Tourism connects individuals and communities across cultural and religious boundaries, thereby resulting in an increased capacity for cross-cultural understanding and enhanced social cohesion (CBI The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). Places are constructed with a variety of symbolic meanings, and tourism often leads to individuals' emotional and psychological attachment to certain places. An individual's

emotional connection with a place is referred to as his/her attachment to the place (Kastenholz et al., 2020). The concept of emotional solidarity (i.e., emotional closeness, sympathetic understanding, and welcoming nature) and place attachment (i.e., place dependence and place identity) may help further establish the emotional relationship between religious tourism destinations and tourists. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> *Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c:* Place dependence is positively related to (a) welcoming nature, (b) emotional closeness, and (c) sympathetic understanding.
>
> *Hypotheses 1d, 1e, 1f:* Place identity is positively related to (d) welcoming nature, (e) emotional closeness, and (f) sympathetic understanding.

Destination Loyalty

Destination loyalty is an important marketing strategy element and the most accurate indicator of post-visit behavior (Chen & Chen, 2010). Destination loyalty refers to a tourist's intention to revisit a destination and recommend it to others. This type of loyalty develops when a destination exceeds a tourist's expectations, can provide unique experiences, and can establish a relationship with visitors (Cossío-Silva et al., 2019). The principle of destination loyalty is widely used in the hospitality and tourism industry. The three most important benefits of customer loyalty are as follows: it can minimize consumers' market sensitivity, it can reduce a company's expenditure per tourist purchase, and it can raise a company's profit margin (Eom et al., 2020). Destination loyalty is often studied in terms of tourists' previous experiences, willingness to recommend a destination to others, and intention to return to a destination (Cossío-Silva et al., 2019; Patwardhan et al., 2020). As shown by decades of research on destination loyalty, the concept is typically considered as a significant predictor of tourist destination success. Tourists who are loyal to a destination will travel for long periods, engage in social and cultural activities, and make positive recommendations. Moreover, destination loyalty is more cost effective than other similar promotional strategies (Stylidis, Woosnam, & Ivkov, 2020; Stylidis, Woosnam, Ivkov, et al., 2020).

Emotional solidarity describes tourists' attitude toward the locals, which may be characterized based on their degree of closeness. Recognizing tourists' emotional connection with the locals is critical for destination planning, marketing, and development success. The fundamental driver of destination revisits is the relationship (i.e., social bond) between tourists and locals. Tourists' perception of their interactions with the locals may have a substantial impact on their destination loyalty (Stylidis, Woosnam, & Ivkov, 2020). A limited number of researchers examined the outcomes of studies using emotional solidarity as an antecedent component, including the perceived effect of tourism on residents and growth of tourism, perceived safety, and tourists' loyalty to a destination (Erul et al., 2020; Konu et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020; Patwardhan et al., 2020; Suess et al., 2020; S. Wang et al., 2021). Based

on these findings, the three dimensions of emotional solidarity may significantly influence destination loyalty.

> *Hypothesis 2a:* Welcoming nature is positively related to destination loyalty.
>
> *Hypothesis 2b:* Emotional closeness is positively related to destination loyalty.
>
> *Hypothesis 2c:* Sympathetic understanding is positively related to destination loyalty.

Mediating Role of Emotional Solidarity in the Relationship between Place Attachment and Destination Loyalty

In the context of tourism, research has examined the relationship between place attachment and emotional solidarity, between emotional solidarity and destination loyalty, and between place attachment and destination loyalty (Patwardhan et al., 2020). While emotional solidarity is significant in tourism research, its use as a mediator in the relationship between place attachment and destination loyalty is unique in religious tourism. The three principles (welcoming nature, emotional closeness, and sympathetic understanding) should also provide an understanding of how individuals establish emotional relationships from their interactions with places, events, and identities within a community. Several studies tried to combine place attachment, emotional solidarity, and destination loyalty into a single integrated paradigm. However, the principles were extensively explored in the tourism literature as antecedents of one another in various models. Given that place attachment and destination loyalty are concerned with tourists' emotional bonds with residents and the community, proposing that a high level of emotional solidarity and place attachment to a religious site will strengthen a tourist's intention to return (i.e., destination loyalty) would be logical. Thus, the mediating role of emotional solidarity with residents in the relationship between place attachment and destination loyalty is proposed.

> *Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3c:* The influence of place dependence on destination loyalty is mediated by (a) welcoming nature, (b) emotional closeness, and (c) sympathetic understanding.
>
> *Hypotheses 3d, 3e, 3f:* The influence of place identity on destination loyalty is mediated by (d) welcoming nature, (e) emotional closeness, and (f) sympathetic understanding.

Moderating Role of Risk Perception in the Relationship between Emotional Solidarity and Destination Loyalty

A tourist's risk perception can be described as his/her probability of being subjected to significant risks while traveling and assessment of the severity of such risks (Biswakarma, 2017). Risk perception was found to be a crucial factor affecting tourists' decision making and behavioral intentions. Although the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the

tourism and hospitality sectors (e.g., imposed travel restrictions in a number of countries and regions), tourists' behaviors following the relaunch are influenced by their perception of the safety and risks associated with various destinations. Furthermore, tourists' perceptions and attitudes towards risk play a crucial influence in their decision-making process on whether or not to travel a destination. However, risk perception is not equivalent to actual risks. Actual risks can be defined as the ambiguity of the consequences of an activity and possibility of desired outcomes, whereas perceived risks are determined by an individual's subjective perceptions, which are influenced by a variety of social, cultural, and situational variables as well as the individual's judgment, attitudes, experiences, and emotions (Godovykh et al., 2021; Hang et al., 2020). Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, three risk dimensions, namely, health, psychological, and social risks, became significant to tourists with plans to travel in the near future (Matiza, 2020). Li et al. (2020) investigated the processes through which psychological distance affects risk perception associated with COVID-19 in six dimensions, including health risks, psychological risks, social risks, performance risks, country image risks, and time risks. Similarly, Zhan et al. (2020) evaluated Chinese tourists' perception of risk associated with travel to Wuhan during the COVID-19 pandemic. The core concept of risk perception is categorized into four dimensions, including health, financial, social, and performance dimensions. As risk perception was found to impact destination choice and travel behaviors, whether risk perception modifies the indirect effect of emotional solidarity on tourists' destination loyalty would be worth investigating. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> *Hypothesis 4a:* The influence of welcoming nature on destination loyalty is moderated by risk perception.
> *Hypothesis 4b:* The influence of emotional closeness on destination loyalty is moderated by risk perception.
> *Hypothesis 4c:* The influence of sympathetic understanding on destination loyalty is moderated by risk perception.
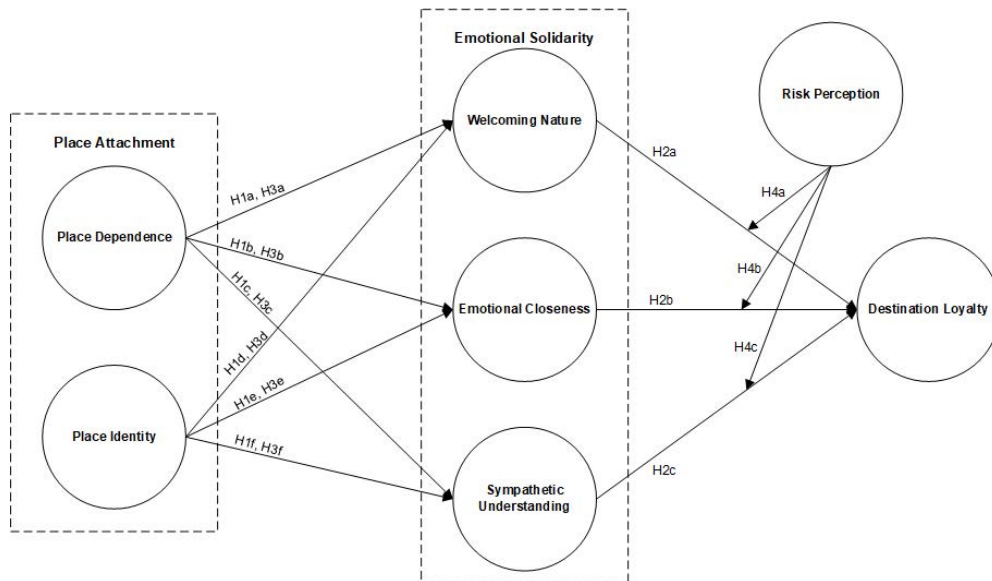
Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

In this research, data were collected from Thai tourists who visited Chiang Mai temples between August and October 2021. A multistage sampling method was conducted (Kuno, 1976). First, a simple random sampling was employed to select twelve from thirty-six temples on the database of tourist destination in Chiang Mai from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). After that purposive sampling was used to select the respondent on the basis of a Thai tourist who traveled to Chiang Mai from other places and stayed at least twenty-four hours (overnight) but less than one year. A total of 543 visitors were intercepted following the sampling strategy across all twelve locations and asked to participate by completing an on-site self-administered questionnaire. As such the minimum sample size, a rule of thumb in the PLS-SEM analysis is 10 cases/observations per indicator component (Hair, Black, et al., 2019; Wang & Wang, 2012). So, the minimum sample size of this study was 440 samples. Among the 543 participants, 54.1% were female. In addition, most of the tourists were between the ages of 25 and 34 years (37.8%). The majority of the tourists was single (57.8%), followed by married (26.7%), and most had a bachelor's degree (58.4%). Furthermore, most of the visitors (30.4%) earned less than 20,000 baht per month. In terms of their occupation, a large proportion of the tourists were company employees (30.2%). In terms of their travel behavior, the tourists' average number of visits to Chiang Mai was 8.58 times, their mean number of nights spent in Chiang Mai was 4.53 nights, and their overall number of

religious places visited or expected to visit in Chiang Mai was 3.84. The majority of the tourists agreed that Chiang Mai was a religious tourism destination ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40), and religious places should be included in a Chiang Mai itinerary ($\bar{x}$ = 4.63). Nonetheless, the tourists' reason for visiting a religious place in Chiang Mai was neutral ($\bar{x}$ = 3.49), serving religious and recreational purposes. The detailed demographic profile of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic profile of final survey sample (n = 543)

Characteristic	n	Percentage
Gender		
Male	215	39.6
Female	294	54.1
LGBTQ+	32	5.9
Prefer not to answer	2	0.4
Total	543	100
Age		
18 – 24 years old	96	17.7
25 – 34 years old	205	37.8
35 – 44 years old	130	23.9
45 – 54 years old	69	12.7
More than 55 years old	43	7.9
Total	543	100
Marital Status		
Single	314	57.8
Married	145	26.7
Living with Partner	56	10.3
Separate	1	0.2
Divorced	5	0.9
Widowed	6	1.1
Prefer not to answer	16	2.9
Total	543	100
Education		
Lower than High School	22	4.1
High School	68	12.5
Diploma	40	7.4
Bachelor's degree	317	58.4
Master's degree	86	15.8

Table 2 Demographic profile of final survey sample (n = 543) (Continued)

Characteristic	n	Percentage
Education (cont.)		
Ph.D. or Doctoral Degree	10	1.8
Total	543	100
Income		
Lower than 20,000 Baht	165	30.4
20,001 – 30,000 Bath	130	23.9
30,001 – 40,000 Bath	67	12.3
40,001 – 50,000 Bath	36	6.6
More than 50,000 Bath	85	15.7
Prefer not to answer	60	11
Total	543	100
Occupation		
Student	75	13.8
Academic/Researcher	22	4.1
Government Official	72	13.3
State Enterprise Employee	11	2
Company Employee	164	30.2
Business Owner	40	7.4
Freelance	97	17.9
Unemployed	12	2.2
Prefer not to answer	37	6.8
Others	13	2.4
Total	543	100

Measures and Preliminary Statistical Verification

To address each hypothesis, the concept of place attachment, emotional solidarity, destination loyalty, and risk perception was used to examine the correlation between Chiang Mai tourists' place attachment and destination loyalty. Place attachment was composed of two factors, that is, *place dependence* and *place identity*, which were assessed with five items adopted from Aleshinloye et al. (2019), Li and Liu (2020), and Woosnam et al. (2016). The three aspects of emotional solidarity, namely, *welcoming nature*, *emotional closeness*, and *sympathetic understanding*, with four items each, were integrated and developed based on Aleshinloye et al. (2019), Patwardhan et al. (2020), Stylidis, Woosnam and Ivkov (2020), Woosnam et al. (2016), and Woosnam and Norman (2009). Destination loyalty comprised of seven items, which were synthesized and modified based on Godovykh and Tasci (2020),

Patwardhan et al. (2020), and Y. C. Wang et al. (2021). Risk perception, dependent on the COVID-19 pandemic, included a total of 15 items from Caber et al. (2020), Sánchez-Cañizares et al. (2020), and Zhan et al. (2020). All the items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (0 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree).

The descriptive statistics and reliability analyses were performed using SPSS. All the reliability tests were retained after completion. Table 2 shows that the Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.801 to 0.961, thereby indicating that the constructs were internally consistent (George & Mallery, 2016). Moreover, a comprehensive exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using a varimax rotation to determine the construction's unidimensionality. Finally, seven variables with appropriate default eigenvalues of 1 were identified (reliability α = .920, KMO = .941, Δ_{χ^2} = 18,751.896, df = 946, p < .001).

Table 3 Results of EFA and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Constructs	EFA	CFA
Place Dependence (PD) (α = .801)		
Chiang Mai is the best religious tourism destination for me. (PD4)	.669	.829
There is no other religious tourism destination that compares to Chiang Mai. (PD5)	.559	.783
I would love to do the same activities at a related destination as I do in Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination. (PD3)	.538	.772
When I am away from Chiang Mai, I miss Chiang Mai. (PD1)	.665	.710
Place Identity (PI) (α= .866)		
Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination is a reflection of the individual I am. (PI1)	.659	.833
Chiang Mai gives me a sense of belonging. (PI2)	.687	.823
Visiting Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination speaks volumes of who I am. (PI4)	.680	.810
Chiang Mai has a special meaning for me. (PI3)	.689	.780
Welcoming Nature (WN) (α= .815)		
I believe locals appreciate the advantages of my travel to Chiang Mai. (WN2)	.713	.887
I feel honored to be a guest to Chiang Mai. (WN1)	.563	.861
I believe locals appreciate our (as tourists') contribution to the local economy. (WN3)	.785	.779
Emotional Closeness (EC) (α= .910)		
I have established friendships with a few locals in Chiangmai. (EC2)	.795	.940
I developed a relationship to several locals that I met during my travel to Chiang Mai. (EC1)	.716	.931

Table 4 Results of EFA and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Continued)

Constructs	EFA	CFA
Sympathetic Understanding (SU) (α= .851)		
I have a lot in common with locals in Chiang Mai. (SU3)	.682	.879
I understand locals in Chiang Mai. (SU4)	.625	.874
I have feelings for locals in Chiang Mai. (SU1)	.634	.795
Destination Loyalty (DL) (α= .916)		
I would like to revisit Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination. (DL2)	.818	.855
I am going to recommend Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination to others. (DL3)	.773	.855
I am going to share positive experiences of Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination with others. (DL4)	.716	.855
I have a beautiful memory of Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination. (DL6)	.780	.847
As a religious tourism destination, I remain for longer lengths of time in Chiang Mai than in any other. (DL5)	.751	.826
Risk Perception (RP) (α= .961)		
I am concerned that Chiang Mai's facilities would be unsanitary. (RP1)	.738	.873
I am concerned about other physical injury during my travels. (RP3)	.820	.855
I am concerned that the prices would be higher than before. (RP5)	.819	.851
I am concerned that I may not be getting reasonable value for my travel expenses. (RP7)	.847	.851
I am concerned that the tourist services would be inadequate. (RP12)	.839	.774

Note: *Cronbach's alpha (α) = .920, KMO = .941, Δ_{χ^2}= 18,751.896, df = 946, p < .001.*

Results and Discussion

EFA and CFA

Table 2 reports the EFA, conducted via SPSS, and CFA results for each item. PLS-SEM (Smart PLS 3.0) was used to examine the measurement model's fit, validity, and reliability, with 10,000 bootstrapping subsamples (Ali et al., 2018; Hair, Risher, et al., 2019).

The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is the variation between the observed and implied correlation matrices of the model. Therefore, it allows for the use of the average magnitude of the observed and expected correlation differences as an absolute measure of the (model) fit criterion. A value of less than 0.10 or less than 0.08 (in a more conservative version) is regarded as a good fit. The SRMR, as a measurement of a model's goodness of fit in the PLS-SEM, could be used to avoid model measurement errors (Ringle et

al., 2015). The results indicated that the SRMR saturated model was 0.05, and the SRMR estimated model was 0.08, which met the recommended model fit.

Table 3 Correlations, discriminant validity, Cronbach's alpha, construct reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE)

	DL	EC	PD	PI	RP	SU	WN	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	CR	AVE
DL	**.848**							.902	.902	.902	.718
EC	.456	**.936**						.858	.861	.859	.876
PD	.615	.445	**.775**					.777	.789	.780	.600
PI	.627	.461	.703	**.812**				.827	.837	.827	.659
RP	-.083	-.146	-.159	-.136	**.842**			.901	.906	.899	.708
SU	.524	.627	.536	.591	-.137	**.850**		.807	.806	.806	.723
WN	.503	.440	.503	.524	.003	.497	**.844**	.800	.816	.801	.712

Note: Value on the diagonal (bolded) are square root of the AVE while the off-diagonals are correlations.

DL = Destination Loyalty, EC = Emotional Closeness, PD = Place Dependence, PI = Place Identity,

RP = Risk Perception, SU = Sympathetic Understanding, WN = Welcoming Nature.

Cronbach's alpha, CR, and rho_A were used to determine the reliability of the constructs (Hair et al., 2017; Hair, Risher, et al., 2019; Wong, 2019). The results demonstrated that all the values were greater than 0.7 (Table 3), thereby indicating adequate reliability. The AVE values were used to determine the convergent validity of the constructs, which ranged from 0.600 to 0.876 and thus higher than the proposed convergent validity criterion of 0.5 (Ali et al., 2018; Usakli & Kucukergin, 2018). To assess the discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait correlation ratio (HTMT) was employed, and the square root of the AVE values and interfactor correlations (Fornell–Larcker criterion) were compared (Ali et al., 2018; Usakli & Kucukergin, 2018). The value of the HTMT was less than the cutoff value of 1 (Poushneh, 2021). Additionally, AVE values greater than 0.5 and square root values greater than the interfactor correlation demonstrate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017; Hair, Risher, et al., 2019). The HTMT value of each construct is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 HTMT values

	DL	EC	PD	PI	RP	SU	WN
DL	-						
EC	.517	-					
PD	.729	.543	-				
PI	.723	.547	.874	-			
RP	.086	.161	.189	.153	-		
SU	.615	.754	.676	.722	.159	-	
WN	.583	.530	.623	.629	.052	.619	-

Note: - boxes are the standard reporting format for HTMT procedure.

DL = Destination Loyalty, EC = Emotional Closeness, PD = Place Dependence, PI = Place Identity,

RP = Risk Perception, SU = Sympathetic Understanding, WN = Welcoming Nature.

Robustness of the Model

The coefficient of determination (R^2), blindfolding-based cross-validated redundancy measure Q^2, and statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients are standard assessment criteria that should be addressed. The R^2 represents the in-sample predictive power, and its value should be between 0 and 1, whereas the Q^2 value should be greater than 0 for a specific endogenous construct to demonstrate prediction accuracy (Hair, Risher, et al., 2019). The analyses demonstrated that the R^2 value of welcoming nature was 0.311, the R^2 value of emotional closeness was 0.241, the R^2 value of sympathetic understanding was 0.378, and the R^2 value of destination loyalty was 0.372, which all met the criterion of between 0 and 1. The Q^2 value of welcoming nature was 0.209, the Q^2 value of emotional closeness was 0.207, the Q^2 value of sympathetic understanding was 0.270, and the Q^2 value of destination loyalty was 0.261, which are all greater than 0.

Table 5 Results of hypothesis testing

	β	t-value	p-value	Support
H1a: Place Dependence (PD) → Welcoming Nature (WN)	.266***	4.552	.000	Supported
H1b: Place Dependence (PD) → Emotional Closeness (EC)	.239***	3.989	.000	Supported
H1c: Place Dependence (PD) → Sympathetic Understanding (SU)	.238***	4.808	.000	Supported
H1d: Place Identity (PI) → Welcoming Nature (WN)	.337***	5.861	.000	Supported
H1e: Place Identity (PI) → Emotional Closeness (EC)	.293***	4.916	.000	Supported
H1f: Place Identity (PI) → Sympathetic Understanding (SU)	.423***	8.370	.000	Supported
H2a: Welcoming Nature (WN) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.298***	6.991	.000	Supported
H2b: Emotional Closeness (EC) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.147**	2.698	.007	Supported
H2c: Sympathetic Understanding (SU) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.290***	5.816	.000	Supported
H3a: Mediation effect: Place Dependence (PD) → Welcoming Nature (WN) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.079***	3.679	.000	Supported
H3b: Mediation effect: Place Dependence (PD) → Emotional Closeness (EC) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.035*	2.261	.024	Supported
H3c: Mediation effect: Place Dependence (PD) → Sympathetic Understanding (SU) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.069***	3.640	.000	Supported
H3d: Mediation effect: Place Identity (PI) → Welcoming Nature (WN) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.100***	4.170	.000	Supported
H3e: Mediation effect: Place Identity (PI) → Emotional Closeness (EC) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.043*	2.104	.035	Supported
H3f: Mediation effect: Place Identity (PI) → Sympathetic Understanding (SU) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.123***	4.481	.000	Supported
H4a: Moderation effect: Welcoming Nature (WN) → Risk Perception (RP) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	-.030[ns]	.567	.571	Unsupported
H4b: Moderation effect: Emotional Closeness (EC) → Risk Perception (RP) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	.012[ns]	.187	.852	Unsupported
H4c: Moderation effect: Sympathetic Understanding (SU) → Risk Perception (RP) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	-.063[ns]	1.169	.242	Unsupported

Note: *: $p < 0.05$, **: $p < 0.01$, ***: $p < 0.001$ (Two-tailed test), ns: not significant.

Model fit: SRMR Saturated Model = 0.05; SRMR Estimated Model = 0.08.

R^2 Welcoming Nature = 0.311; R^2 Emotional Closeness = 0.241; R^2 Sympathetic Understanding = 0.378; R^2 Destination Loyalty = 0.372.

Q^2 Welcoming Nature = 0.209; Q^2 Emotional Closeness = 0.207; Q^2 Sympathetic Understanding = 0.270; Q^2 Destination Loyalty = 0.261.

Results of Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was tested using PLS-SEM with 10,000 bootstrapping subsamples. As shown in Table 5, the structural path coefficients of the proposed model, mediation model, and moderation model were investigated.

Hypotheses 1 (a, b, c) were supported, thereby indicating that place dependence had a significant positive effect on the three dimensions of emotional solidarity, specifically, welcoming nature (Hypothesis 1a: $\beta = 0.266$, $p < 0.001$), emotional closeness (Hypothesis 1b: $\beta = 0.239$, $p < 0.001$), and sympathetic understanding (Hypothesis 1c: $\beta = 0.238$, $p < 0.001$). Place identity had a significant and positive effect on the three dimensions of emotional solidarity, that is, welcoming nature (Hypothesis 1d: $\beta = 0.337$, $p < 0.001$), emotional closeness (Hypothesis 1e: $\beta = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$), and sympathetic understanding (Hypothesis 1f: $\beta = 0.423$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting Hypotheses 1 (d, e, f).

Hypotheses 2 (a, b, c) examined the influence of the emotional solidarity dimensions on destination loyalty. The findings indicated that emotional solidarity had a significant positive influence on destination loyalty (Hypothesis 2a: $\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 2b: $\beta = 0.147$, $p < 0.01$; Hypothesis 2c: $\beta = 0.290$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting Hypotheses 2 (a, b, c).

A mediation analysis was conducted, inferring that the influence of place attachment on destination loyalty was mediated by emotional solidarity. The results demonstrated that the three dimensions of emotional solidarity were significant mediators in the relationship between place attachment and destination loyalty (Hypothesis 3a: $\beta = 0.079$, $p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 3b: $\beta = 0.035$, $p < 0.05$; Hypothesis 3c: $\beta = 0.069$, $p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 3d: $\beta = 0.100$, $p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 3e: $\beta = 0.043$, $p < 0.05$; Hypothesis 3f: $\beta = 0.123$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting Hypotheses 3 (a, b, c, d, e, f).

For the moderating influence of risk perception on the relationship between emotional solidarity and destination loyalty (Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4c), the findings indicated that risk perception had no moderating influence on the relationship between emotional solidarity and destination loyalty (Hypothesis 4a: $\beta = -0.030$, $p > 0.05$; Hypothesis 4b: $\beta = 0.012$, $p > 0.05$; Hypothesis 4c: $\beta = -0.063$, $p > 0.05$), which is inconsistent with Hypotheses 4 (a, b, c).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study expands prior research on place attachment (Chen et al., 2021; Counted & Zock, 2019; Hanks et al., 2020; Hosany et al., 2019; Patwardhan et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2018; Stăncioiu & Dițoiu, 2016; Stylidis, 2020; Woosnam et al., 2016; Xu & Gursoy, 2020), emotional solidarity (Aleshinloye et al., 2019; Juric et al., 2020; Moghavvemi et al., 2017; Stylidis, Woosnam, & Ivkov, 2020; Woosnam & Norman, 2009; Woosnam et al., 2009), and destination loyalty (Cossío-Silva et al., 2019; Patwardhan et al., 2020; Stylidis, Woosnam, & Ivkov, 2020; Stylidis, Woosnam, Ivkov, et al., 2020) to provide a better understanding of

tourists' emotional connections with places and the locals in relation to their destination loyalty at various risk perception levels. This study is motivated by the concept of tourists' loyalty to a destination and the locals as influenced by their emotional attachment to the place and relationships. There are variations depending on their risk perception, which was largely neglected in previous studies.

The findings of this research can provide significant theoretical contributions to the tourism literature for future studies on place attachment, emotional solidarity, destination loyalty, and risk perception, which are rarely used in Thai domestic tourist studies, particularly in religious tourism destination studies and tourism sector studies. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004) showed a reciprocal link between place and religion and that religion can promote place attachment and is a significant factor influencing the attachment of some people to specific places. According to these results, place attachment has a direct effect on emotional solidarity. Aleshinloye et al. (2019) and Woosnam et al. (2016) demonstrated that place attachment is a significant predictor of tourists' solidarity with residents. This research shows the significance of place identity in welcoming nature ($\beta = 0.337$) and sympathetic understanding ($\beta = 0.423$), which are more significant than the other variables. Thus, in managing tourists' place attachment to religious destinations, which is a primary concern to destination management organizations, practitioners should consider that tourists' sense of place identity will emphasize their perception of welcoming nature and sympathetic understanding among the locals. As expected, the findings show that there is a strong relationship between the tourist's identity and the image of Chiang Mai as a prominent religious tourism destination. When tourists travel to Chiang Mai, they will feel that they reflect the identity of religious tourists and have a connection to Chiang Mai, which will give them a sense of place and understand the locals more.

Moreover, the research results show that emotional solidarity is a significant predictor of destination loyalty, which aligns with the study of Ribeiro et al. (2017), which found that tourists' feelings of welcome and sympathetic understanding have a significant effect on their destination loyalty. This research is an extension of the research of Woosnam et al. (2016), which suggested that future research focus on the role of place attachment in the emotional solidarity model and its influence on visitors' revisit intention. This study also demonstrates the significant mediated relationship between place attachment and destination loyalty through the three dimensions of emotional solidarity. Therefore, the development of destination loyalty should emphasize a welcoming nature and sympathetic understanding by encouraging communities to participate in welcoming tourists or joint activities between locals and tourists, for example, engaging in merit-making activities during major religious festivals, makes tourists feel involved. This inclusion of tourists could also deepen their understanding of local customs.

The study results reveal that the relationship between place attachment and destination loyalty, as mediated by emotional solidarity, place identity facilitated by welcoming

nature ($\beta = 0.100$), and sympathetic understanding ($\beta = 0.123$) is more significant than the other variables. Patwardhan et al. (2020) indicated that the effect of place attachment on loyalty is partially mediated by the degree of emotional solidarity between tourists and destination residents. However, in this study, the degree of place attachment has a significant effect on loyalty and is fully mediated by the degree of emotional solidarity. Based on these findings, predicting the growth of destination loyalty is possible by impressing tourists with a sense of place identity through emotional solidarity with the destination and residents, with welcoming nature and sympathetic understanding of the destination and surrounding communities. Future research should explore the psychological dimension of the emotional bond which is formed either between tourists and places or between tourists and locals given its potential to increase the loyalty of tourists toward travel destinations.

Furthermore, the religious tourists' risk perception during the COVID-19 pandemic indicates that the moderated relationship between emotional solidarity and destination loyalty is insignificant. This finding implies that if the tourists' emotional solidarity develops into destination loyalty, then the influence of perceived risks, such as contracting COVID-19, cannot overcome the religious tourists' desire to travel to religious destinations. This finding is consistent with the study of Zhan et al. (2020), which indicated that human emotions play a significant role in how people perceive risks. People with close connections with Wuhan have a lower risk perception than those with a modest affiliation with Wuhan and a lower risk perception than those with no relationship with Wuhan. Similarly, Sánchez-Cañizares et al. (2020) discovered that though perception of COVID-19 has no significant effect on intention to travel, perceived risks associated with travel during the COVID-19 pandemic have a negative impact on attitudes and perceived behavioral control. The finding clearly shows that the close relationship between tourists and locals contributes to destination loyalty for Chiang Mai as a religious tourism destination since the number of tourists that are visiting religious places in the city has not decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic

In terms of policy implications, the findings show that government organizations and the private sector, including the Tourism Authority of Thailand, may use place attachment and emotional solidarity to increase tourists' loyalty to religious tourism destinations when planning, developing, and managing policy and marketing strategies. Governments may establish religious tourism promotion policies encompassing spiritual tourism and faith tourism to encourage the development of religious tourism destinations that can attract tourists, particularly those who form a place attachment as a result of perceiving a sense of goodness in the place and emotional solidarity from a feeling of affiliation with the community, which may increase their loyalty to the destination.

For managerial implications, this study demonstrates that tourists' connection with a place's physical environment and emotional attachment to a destination may contribute to their

destination loyalty. Consequently, religious tourism destination management organizations (DMOs) should adequately prepare for destination development by highlighting place attachment and emotional solidarity to meet tourists' expectations of religious tourism destinations' products and services. This study's findings are in line with those of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports Thailand (2021), which indicated that Chiang Mai's environment promotes a feeling of calmness and serenity. Respect for the indigenous people's knowledge and way of life and a sense of belonging can help tourists feel relaxed and appreciate being surrounded by culturally diverse and open-minded people. There are several strategies to promote tourists' destination loyalty. For example, place attachment and emotional solidarity can contribute towards the long-term loyalty of tourists to a destination because, from a psychological perspective, tourists can create their loyalty for both the place and the community, giving them a sense of belonging and bonding to both the place and the locals. Thus, DMOs should organize local religious events and welcome tourists to participate in activities that can develop a sense of solidarity between the tourists, religious destination, and surrounding communities, thereby increasing the tourists' positive word of mouth, revisit intention, and ultimately, destination loyalty.

Despite its contributions, this research has several limitations. First, this research used Thai domestic tourists in Chiang Mai, Thailand, as the participants, and the conclusions were based on this sample. Domestic and international tourists' characteristics may have an impact on the study's findings and conclusions. Thus, the generalizability of this research to other countries requires further investigation. Second, this research examined religious tourism, with a focus on Buddhism. Future studies may investigate religious tourism focusing on other religions. Due to different religions, the faith in religious tourism destinations may differ; thus, a comparative study of various religions may assist with more understanding about the function of place attachment and emotional solidarity in promoting destination loyalty. Last, data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic is seriously challenging and time consuming because activity requires a consideration of the safety and hygiene during the survey between the respondents and researchers. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many potential respondents refused to participate in the study. For this reason, future studies should collect data using a mixed mode survey involving the combination of face-to-face and online survey methods to collect useful information from respondents.

Acknowledgements

References

Al-Ansi, A., Han, H., Kim, S., & King, B. (2020). Inconvenient experiences among muslim travelers: An analysis of the multiple causes. *Journal of Travel Research*, *6*(6), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520934870

Aleshinloye, K. D., Fu, X., Ribeiro, M. A., Woosnam, K. M., & Tasci, A. D. A. (2019). The influence of place attachment on social distance: Examining mediating effects of emotional solidarity and the moderating role of interaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(5), 828-849. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519863883

Ali, F., Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Ryu, K. (2018). An assessment of the use of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in hospitality research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *30*(1), 514-538. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-10-2016-0568

Álvarez-García, J., Rama, M. d. l. C. d. R., & Gómez-Ullate, M. (2018). *Handbook of research on socio-economic impacts of religious tourism and pilgrimage* (J. Álvarez-García, M. d. l. C. d. R. Rama, & M. Gómez-Ullate, Eds.). IGI Global.

Biswakarma, G. (2017). Impact of destination image and perceived risk on behavioral intention of travelers to Nepal. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications*, *1*(5), 62-71.

Butthipsakul, T., & Soontayatron, S. (2017). Tourist behaviors on religion tourism at Buddhist temples in Nan Province. *Academic Journal Institute of Physical Education*, *9*(1), 63-76.

Caber, M., González-Rodríguez, M. R., Albayrak, T., & Simonetti, B. (2020). Does perceived risk really matter in travel behaviour? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *26*(3), 334-353. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766720927762

CBI The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2020). *The European market potential for religious tourism*. https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/religious-tourism/market-potential

Chen, C. F., & Chen, F. S. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management*, *31*(1), 29-35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.02.008

Chen, Z., Ryan, C., & Zhang, Y. (2021). Transgenerational place attachment in a New Zealand seaside destination. *Tourism Management*, *82*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104196

Choe, J., & O' Regan, M. (2015). Religious tourism experiences in South East Asia. In R. Raj & K. Griffin (Eds.), *Religious tourism and pilgrimage management: An international perspective* (2nd ed., pp. 191-204). CABI Publishing.

Choe, J., & O' Regan, M. (2020). Faith Manifest: Spiritual and Mindfulness Tourism in Chiang Mai, Thailand. *Religions*, *11*(4). https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11040177

Chuamuangphan, N., & Mulmit, P. (2018). Tourism patterns in tourist attractions for the development of revisit tourism destinations in Nakhon Pathom province and its linkage areas. *Journal of Hunamities and Social Sciences Surin Rajabhat University*, *20* (Special Issue), 133-145.

Chuamuangphan, N., Mulmit, P., Nomnumsab, W., Pratum, T., Kongprem, N., & Fakyen, A. (2018). The tourism destinations development for value added and revisting tourists in Nakhaon Pathom and related provinces. *Research and Development Journal Loei Rajabhat University*, *13*(46), 78-89.

Cossío-Silva, F.-J., Revilla-Camacho, M.-Á., & Vega-Vázquez, M. (2019). The tourist loyalty index: A new indicator for measuring tourist destination loyalty? *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, *4*(2), 71-77. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2017.10.003

Counted, V., & Zock, H. (2019). Place spirituality: An attachment perspective. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, *41*(1), 12-25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0084672419833448

Detmit, B. (2020). Opportunities and limitations of religion tourism (temple) in Thailand 4.0 era. *Business Review Journal*, *12*(2), 199-210.

Dwyer, L., Chen, N., & Lee, J. (2019). The role of place attachment in tourism research. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *36*(5), 645-652. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2019.1612824

Eom, T., Han, H., & Song, H. (2020). Discovering the perceived attributes of CBT destination travelers in South Korea: A mixed method approach. *Tourism Management*, *77*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104013

Erul, E., Woosnam, K. M., & McIntosh, W. A. (2020). Considering emotional solidarity and the theory of planned behavior in explaining behavioral intentions to support tourism development. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *28*(8), 1158-1173. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1726935

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2016). *IBM SPSS Statistics 23 Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference* (fourteenth ed.). Routledge.

Godovykh, M., Pizam, A., & Bahja, F. (2021). Antecedents and outcomes of health risk perceptions in tourism, following the COVID-19 pandemic. *Tourism Review*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/tr-06-2020-0257

Godovykh, M., & Tasci, A. D. A. (2020). The influence of post-visit emotions on destination loyalty. *Tourism Review*, *76*(1), 277-288. https://doi.org/10.1108/tr-01-2020-0025

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (Eighth ed.). Cengage.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (Second ed.). Sage.

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, *31*(1), 2-24. https://doi.org/10.1108/ebr-11-2018-0203

Hammarström, G. (2005). The construct of intergenerational solidarity in a lineage perspective: A discussion on underlying theoretical assumptions. *Journal of Aging Studies*, *19*(1), 33-51.

Hang, H., Aroean, L., & Chen, Z. (2020). Building emotional attaching during COVID-19. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *83*, 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.103006

Hanks, L., Zhang, L., & Line, N. (2020). Perceived similarity in third places: Understanding the effect of place attachment. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *86*, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102455

Hosany, S., Buzova, D., & Sanz-Blas, S. (2019). The influence of place attachment, ad-evoked positive affect, and motivation on intention to visit: Imagination proclivity as a moderator. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(3), 477-495. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519830789

Infosearch. (2021). *The survay of Thai travel behaviour 2020*.

Joo, D., & Woosnam, K. M. (2019). Measuring tourists' emotional solidarity with one another—A modification of the emotional solidarity scale. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(7), 1186-1203. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519878503

Juric, J., Lindenmeier, J., & Arnold, C. (2020). Do emotional solidarity factors mediate the effect of personality traits on the inclination to use nonmonetary peer-to-peer accommodation networks? *Journal of Travel Research*, *60*(1), 47-64. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519895127

Kastenholz, E., Marques, C. P., & Carneiro, M. J. (2020). Place attachment through sensory-rich, emotion-generating place experiences in rural tourism. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *17*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100455

Konu, H., Murphy, J., Komppula, R., & Mikkonen, T. (2020). Investigating emotional commitment towards a region and a hotel brand. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *87*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102467

Lai, H. K., Pinto, P., & Pintassilgo, P. (2020). Quality of life and emotional solidarity in residents' attitudes toward tourists: The case of Macau. *Journal of Travel Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520918016

Li, Y. Q., & Liu, C. H. (2020). Impact of cultural contact on satisfaction and attachment: Mediating roles of creative experiences and cultural memories. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *29*(2), 221-245. https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623. 2019.1611516

Li, Z., Zhang, S., Liu, X., Kozak, M., & Wen, J. (2020). Seeing the invisible hand: Underlying effects of COVID-19 on tourists' behavioral patterns. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *18*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100502

Matiza, T. (2020). Post-COVID-19 crisis travel behaviour: Towards mitigating the effects of perceived risk. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/jtf-04-2020-0063

Mazumdar, S., & Mazumdar, S. (2004). Religion and place attachment: A study of sacred places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *24*(3), 385-397. https://doi.org/10. 1016/j.jenvp.2004.08.005

Ministry of Tourism and Sports Thailand. (2021). *Spiritual Tourism* (Tourism Economice Review, Issue 1).

Moghavvemi, S., Woosnam, K. M., Paramanathan, T., Musa, G., & Hamzah, A. (2017). The effect of residents' personality, emotional solidarity, and community commitment on support for tourism development. *Tourism Management*, *63*, 242-254. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.06.021

Patwardhan, V., Ribeiro, M. A., Payini, V., Woosnam, K. M., Mallya, J., & Gopalakrishnan, P. (2020). Visitors' place attachment and destination loyalty: Examining the roles of emotional solidarity and perceived safety. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(1), 3-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287518824157

Pompai, P. J., Yupas, Y., & Phosing, P. (2020). Temples and tourism promotion on the Mekong river. *Journal of Social Science and Buddhistic Anthropology*, *5*(5), 158-170.

Poushneh, A. (2021). How close do we feel to virtual product to make a purchase decision? Impact of perceived proximity to virtual product and temporal purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *63*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser. 2021.102717

Rashid, A. G. (2018). Religious tourism – a review of the literature. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *1*(2), 150-167. https://doi.org/10.1108/jhti-10-2017-0007

Ribeiro, M. A., Woosnam, K. M., Pinto, P., & Silva, J. A. (2017). Tourists' destination loyalty through emotional solidarity with residents: An integrative moderated mediation model. *Journal of Travel Research*, *57*(3), 279-295. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 0047287517699089

Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., & Becker, J.-M. (2015). *SmartPLS 3*. SmartPLS. https://www.smartpls.com

Rinschede, G. (1992). Forms of religious tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *19*.

Ruttanavisanon, W., & Agmapisarn, C. (2022). Religious tourism in Thailand - A review of Thai literature from 2012-2021. *Social Science Asia*, *8*(1), 12-25.

Sánchez-Cañizares, S. M., Cabeza-Ramírez, L. J., Muñoz-Fernández, G., & Fuentes-García, F. J. (2020). Impact of the perceived risk from Covid-19 on intention to travel. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1829571

Silva, C., Abrantes, J. L., & Herstein, R. (2018). Linking sacred place preferences with place meaning: A conceptual model of relationship between sacred place motivations and place attachment. *International Journal of Multidisciplinarity in Business and Science*, *4*(5).

Stăncioiu, A.-F., & Dițoiu, M.-C. (2016). Place attachment. In J. Jafari & H. Xiao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Tourism* (pp. 724). Switzerland: Springer International.

Stylidis, D. (2020). Using destination image and place attachment to explore support for tourism development: The case of tourism versus non-tourism employees in Eilat. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *44*(6), 951-973. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020919157

Stylidis, D., Woosnam, K. M., & Ivkov, M. (2020). Tourists' emotional solidarity with residents: A segmentation analysis and its links to destination image and loyalty. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *17*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100458

Stylidis, D., Woosnam, K. M., Ivkov, M., & Kim, S. S. (2020). Destination loyalty explained through place attachment, destination familiarity and destination image. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *22*(5), 604-616. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2359

Suess, C., Woosnam, K. M., & Erul, E. (2020). Stranger-danger? Understanding the moderating effects of children in the household on non-hosting residents' emotional solidarity with Airbnb visitors, feeling safe, and support for Airbnb. *Tourism Management*, *77*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.103952

Tourism Authority of Thailand. (n.d.). *Temple in Chiang Mai*. Retrieved January 24 from https://www.tourismthailand.org/Search-result/attraction?category_id=5&destination_id=101&sort_by=datetime_updated_desc&page=1&perpage=15&menu=attraction

Usakli, A., & Kucukergin, K. G. (2018). Using partial least squares structural equation modeling in hospitality and tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *30*(11), 3462-3512.

Wang, J., & Wang, X. (2012). *Structural equation modeling : Applications using mplus*. Higher Education Press.

Wang, S., Berbekova, A., & Uysal, M. (2021). Is this about feeling? The interplay of emotional well-being, solidarity, and residents' attitude. *Journal of Travel Research*, *66*(6), 1180-1195.

Wang, Y. C., Liu, C. R., Huang, W. S., & Chen, S. P. (2020). Destination fascination and destination loyalty: Subjective well-being and destination attachment as mediators. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(3), 496-511.

Wong, K. K.-K. (2019). *Mastering Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS in 38 Hours*. iUniverse.

Woosnam, K. M., Aleshinloye, K. D., Strzelecka, M., & Erul, E. (2016). The role of place attachment in developing emotional solidarity with residents. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *42*(7), 1058-1066. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348016671396

Woosnam, K. M., & Norman, W. C. (2009). Measuring residents' emotional solidarity with tourists: Scale development of Durkheim's theoretical constructs. *Journal of Travel Research*, *49*(3), 365-380. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509346858

Woosnam, K. M., Norman, W. C., & Ying, T. (2009). Exploring the theoretical framework of emotional solidarity between residents and tourists. *Journal of Travel Research*, *48*(2), 245-258. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509332334

World Tourism Organization. (2014). *Tourism can protect and promote religious heritage*. Retrieved 11 January from https://www.unwto.org/archive/europe/press-release/2014-12-10/tourism-can-protect-and-promote-religious-heritage

Xu, X., & Gursoy, D. (2020). Exploring the relationship between servicescape, place attachment, and intention to recommend accommodations marketed through sharing economy platforms. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *37*(4), 429-446. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2020.1784365

Zhan, L., Zeng, X., Morrison, A. M., Liang, H., & Coca-Stefaniak, J. A. (2020). A risk perception scale for travel to a crisis epicentre: visiting Wuhan after COVID-19. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1857712