

Workation Destination Attractiveness in Urban Locations: Insights from Hybrid Thematic Analysis

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Abstract

Changes in tourist behaviors and technological advancements increasingly influence traditional tourism patterns, resulting in a hybrid form of tourism termed “workation.” Despite this trend, the attractiveness of workation destinations has yet to be systematically evaluated by integrating empirical measurements of supply and demand indicators with insights derived from hybrid thematic analysis. This study employed a qualitative research methodology to examine the attractiveness of workation destinations within an urban-based location. A hybrid thematic analysis of qualitative data was adopted. Preexisting factors were established through an exhaustive literature review, representing the deductive aspect. Subsequently, in-depth interviews were conducted with 27 key informants representing the supply and demand sides, utilizing a semi-structured interview to capture the inductive aspect. The interviews were facilitated by a purposive sampling method, supplemented with a snowball sampling approach. Data analysis was conducted using NVivo software. Results revealed that the key themes of attractiveness for workation destination are soft power, livability, working facilities, and accessibility. Understanding these elements equips tourism authorities and entrepreneurs with valuable insights for developing effective destination management strategies aimed at attracting and enhancing the experiences of workationers.

Keywords

Workation, Soft power, Livability, Working facility, Accessibility

Introduction

In a globalized world, individuals undergo significant transformations driven by technological advancements, evolving work structures, and an increased emphasis on entrepreneurial activities (Makimoto & Manners, 1997). These changes gradually blur the distinctions between work, leisure, home, and travel (Bassiyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023). While traveling, people can set up workspaces in locations, such as cafés, coworking spaces, hotel rooms, rental properties, coffee shops, or resort facilities (Chevtaeva, Neuhofer, & Rainoldi, 2022). It is primarily driven by technological advancements that expand work beyond the conventional office setting, enabling individuals to blend work tasks with leisure activities, even during vacations (Pecsek, 2018).

This continuing discussion provides a useful framework for understanding contemporary trends, especially the new interactions between work and vacation, known as “workation” (Bassiyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023). In the postmodern era, workation has emerged as a prevalent trend, influencing how travelers approach their journeys (Pecsek, 2018). Nonetheless, most existing workation studies have primarily focused on health-related aspects and strategies to mitigate the pandemic's effect on tourists' perceptions of satisfaction and safety. There remains a notable gap in the literature addressing workation destinations within the broader tourism context. Consequently, there exists a need for further exploration of potential opportunities arising from emerging market segments and the development of workation destinations. For a destination to thrive in the global tourism market, its overall attractiveness must be at least on par with, or preferably higher than, that of its competitors. Destinations with limited supply are not perceived as attractive (Krešić & Prebežac, 2011). Moreover, to ensure tourism sustainability and foster market development, tourism destinations must constantly innovate and actively seek new sources of attractiveness.

According to a survey conducted by Booking.com in 2020, which included 20,000 travelers from 28 countries, revealed that 37 percent of respondents had relocated for workation purposes, with the United States accounting for the largest share at 42 percent (Donovan, 2020; Petvirojchai, 2021). Additionally, data from tourism companies such as Booking.com and SiteMinder reveal travel trends for 2024, indicating that travelers of all age groups intend to significantly increase their international travel. The five countries with the highest number of overseas travel plans are Germany, the United Kingdom, Thailand, China, and France, where the predominant travel patterns are largely focused on “workation” and digital nomad lifestyles (The Intelligence Team, 2023).

Although tourism literature has shown an increasing interest in exploring the concept of destination attractiveness and effective methods for measuring it, these approaches are unsuitable for the characteristics of a workation destination. Several

destination attractiveness theories may be criticized for their exclusive focus on leisure. As workation travel becomes more prevalent in a digitalizing world, these theories may need to be updated and relevant. Existing theories need to adequately identify or define the specific dimensions or factors that contribute to the attractiveness of workation destinations, failing to advance the theoretical knowledge in the field of workation and the availability of guidance for workation destination management. Furthermore, most studies focusing on workation have largely overlooked the unique attractiveness of the destinations as well as their development strategies. A research gap remains in understanding the specific characteristics of workation destinations that make them attractive to visit.

Therefore, the fundamental dimensions of workation destination attractiveness should be investigated by considering supply and demand side perspectives. This study aims to enhance the current understanding of workation destination attractiveness, which needs to be explored, particularly concerning urban-based locations. Findings of this study will help establish a foundational framework for developing and managing workation destinations. Understanding the factors influencing workation destination attractiveness can improve tourism authorities' and entrepreneurs' grasp on establishing effective strategies for destination management and enhancing workationers' experiences.

Literature Review

Workation

In the digitized world, the division between business and leisure travel needs to be updated (Bassiyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023). The merging of work and leisure has become a common trend in the postmodern era, shaping how travelers approach their journeys. This transformation is primarily driven by technological advancements, enabling work outside traditional workplace settings, even while on vacation (Pecsek, 2018). Particularly, work has become pervasive due to the emergence of small and wireless devices, such as tablets, laptops, and smartphones. These technologies have expanded the possibilities for exerting control over work and performing work-related tasks (Rainoldi, Ladkin, & Buhalis, 2022).

Tourist behavior and technological advancements are transforming traditional tourism patterns, leading to the emergence of hybrid tourism known as "workation." This neologism combines the words "work" and "vacation" (Amano, 2018, as cited in Yoshida, 2021). Workations unite extremes and blur the lines between work and vacation and between business and leisure travel (Bassiyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023). Pecsek (2018) observed that the term "workcation" appears in slang dictionaries, defined as "a paid work trip that can be combined with aspects of taking a vacation." Despite the increasing trend of working while on vacation, there exists a need for more literature focusing on workation from a tourism perspective. Most existing studies have examined the topic of work-life balance,

leaving the concept of workation destination attractiveness largely unexplored in academic discourses.

Destination Attractiveness

Several studies have explored the factors influencing destination attractiveness, offering insights into global tourist destinations. Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015) identified accessibility, amenities, attractions, entertainment, and local communities as key influences on tourists' well-being. Islam and Chaudhary (2021) introduced the Index of Destination Attractiveness for the Kashmir Valley, evaluating hygiene, food, transport, and cultural attractions. Richmond and Cornelius (2021) emphasized that natural resources, cultural heritage, accessibility, amenities, and services primarily influence destination attractiveness. Similarly, Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021) highlighted the importance of cultural attractiveness and hospitality in enhancing Silk Road tourism in Uzbekistan. Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022) highlighted natural landscapes, climate, accommodation, infrastructure, and transportation in Bandung, Indonesia. Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019) also explored the correlation between tourism destination competitiveness and performance, noting core resources, infrastructure, globalization, and pricing as significant factors. Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022) argued that destination value can be categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, which significantly influence a destination's perceived worth. Although destination attractiveness is key to tourist satisfaction, its classification often needs more detail for specific demographics, such as workationers (Islam & Chaudhary, 2021).

Destination Attractiveness for Remote Workers

Remote workers can be classified into three categories: workationers, expats, and digital nomads (Lidman, 2023). Workationers temporarily relocate to integrate work and leisure, contrasting with digital nomads who prioritize mobility and use digital tools for remote work (Winarya & Pertiwi, 2020). Kurniasari, Isbah, and Azca (2022) examined the behaviors, motivations, and settings of workationers, highlighting their preference for diverse environments, such as accommodation, coworking spaces, cafés, and outdoor areas. Workationers use various information and communication technology (ICT) tools and engage in leisure activities, such as beach relaxation and culinary exploration. Similarly, research on digital nomads has emphasized the importance of reliable internet connections, natural and cultural assets, accessibility of work opportunities, and community networks in attracting this group, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lhakard, 2022; Parreño-Castellano et al., 2022).

These insights highlight the evolving dynamics of remote work and destination preferences among remote workers. A substantial body of research has highlighted the significant effect

of accommodation on a destination's attractiveness, particularly for remote workers. Pavia, Floričić, and Mrnjavac (2022) investigated the readiness of hotels to offer workspaces, supporting the integration of work and leisure. They emphasized hotels' remote work amenities and categorized specific services contributing to the "workspitality" concept. Workspitality combines "work" and "hospitality" (Floričić & Pavia, 2021), integrating traditional hospitality elements with office functionalities, such as coworking and hotdesking spaces (White, 2023). This hybrid hospitality model offers adaptable spaces, excellent on-site amenities, 24/7 services and access, maximum flexibility, a "hospitality-first" experience, and comprehensive connectivity (EHL, 2022).

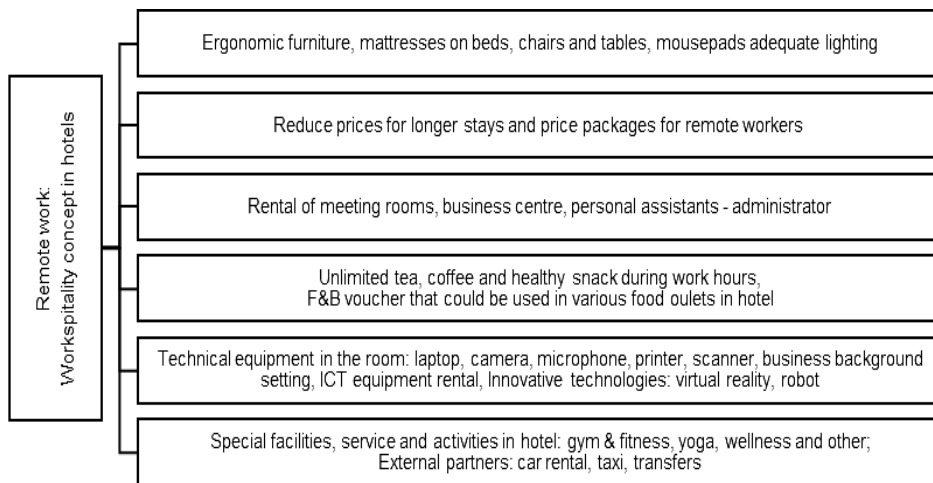


Figure 1 Specific services that contribute to the hotel workspitality concept

Source: Pavia, Floričić, and Mrnjavac (2022)

Urban Tourism Attractiveness

Despite the increasing interest in exploring destination attractiveness and its measurement in the tourism literature, previous studies need more generalizability, particularly regarding the unique attractiveness of workation destinations in urban settings. Boivin and Tanguay (2019) examined urban tourism attractiveness in two Canadian cities, identifying four levels of perceived attractiveness: core, complementary attractions, tourist precinct, and contextual factors. Other studies, such as McDowall and Ma (2010) assessed Bangkok's performance as a tourist destination using factor analysis, highlighting significant factors including image, safety, quality of attractions, entertainment, political environment, and local accessibility. Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016) argued that Bangkok's destination attributes, such as accommodation, shopping, transportation, restaurants and food, tourist attractions, culture and history, safety, entertainment, local attitudes toward visitors, and accessibility, are crucial. Nevertheless, existing research has not thoroughly

investigated the attractiveness of workation destinations within urban settings, indicating a notable gap in the literature.

Tourism Functions as a Soft Power

Tourism functions as a soft power instrument, playing a role in enhancing a nation's reputation and image through the cultivation of goodwill and positive sentiments (Claro, Huguet, & Serrano, 2023). As soft power is conveyed through a country's cultural attributes, values, political ideals, and foreign policies, it effectively positions and portrays a nation, enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations and increasing visitation. Attractiveness is one of the main aspects of soft power (Jureniene & Jurene, 2019). Tourism enhances soft power by promoting national culture, democracy, and internationally favourable travel agreements. The attractiveness and appeal of a society's culture, customs, political ideologies, and policies are deliberately communicated via tourism, aiming to establish their legitimacy and acceptance by other populations and nations (Hunter, Chung, Gretzel, & Koo, 2015). Soft power assets encompass culture, values, political ideals, and policies. Cultural components, including language, history, literature, art, music, popular culture, and tourism, collectively cultivate a positive national image (Claro, Huguet, & Serrano, 2023).

Methods

This study investigated the attractiveness of workation destinations in urban settings using a qualitative research methodology. This approach was selected for its ability to capture participants' subjective perspectives, allowing for a deep exploration of phenomena that may not be fully accessible through other methods (Berkwits & Inui, 1998; Cresswell, 2007). Hybrid thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Hoang et al., 2022) was employed as the analytical method, combining elements from Crabtree and Miller (1999) a priori template of codes and Boyatzis (1998) data-driven inductive approach. This methodology uses pre-established themes from an extensive literature review (deductive aspect) while also generating themes directly from the data (inductive aspect). The integration of these themes creates a synergistic enhancement (Proudfoot, 2022). The process of hybrid thematic analysis is illustrated in Figure 2.

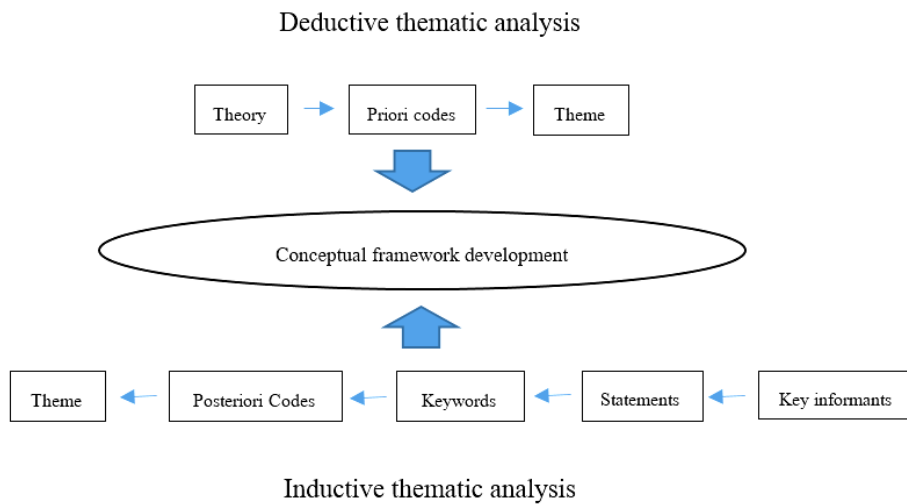


Figure 2 Hybrid thematic analysis process

Source: Adapted from Naeem, Ozuem, Howell, and Ranfagni (2023)

Deductive Thematic Analysis

The deductive approach is appropriate when predefined categories are drawn from an extensive review of relevant literature (Hoang, Kousi, & Martinez, 2022). Due to the lack of a specific theoretical framework for workation destination attractiveness, themes and *a priori* codes were derived from existing literature covering various related aspects, as discussed in the literature review. These served as the foundational structure for the initial data categorization. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that codes are succinct or basic elements, whereas themes represent a more comprehensive and broader articulation of concepts. Table 1 presents the codes extracted from the relevant literature review.

Table 1 Priori codes derived from the existing literature review

Study focus	Authors	Codes
Tourism destinations	Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022)	Climate and weather, physical geography, biodiversity, environmental livability, environmental protection, landscaping, artifacts, F&B culture, religion and beliefs, traditions, special events, political will, international relations, safety and security, local political atmosphere, legal system, education and research, infrastructure, hospitality, transportation, human resources, popularity.
	Islam and Chaudhary (2021)	Hygiene and cleanliness (at transportation, sites, food outlets, accommodation), food attractions (quality, varieties, local food, customer support, hospitality), transport facilities (inside transport, accessibility over the world, quality of transport, road signage, shopping), accommodation facilities (varieties, quality, location recreational activities), site attraction, communication facilities (cellular, internet, banking and ATMs, toilets and washrooms), cost (F&B, transport, accommodation, tours), cultural attractions (handicrafts, costume, monuments), tourist amenities (information centers, licensed guides), natural attractions (climatic pleasantness, natural beauty), tourist activity (sightseeing opportunities, heritage walk).
	Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021)	Historic/heritage sites and museums, artistic/architectural features, unique local architectures and buildings, traditional performing arts, traditional rituals, biodiversity of plants and animals, national parks/nature scenery, pleasant climate, good natural environment, hospitality of the local people, ease of communication between tourists and residents, hotels and accommodation facilities, number of restaurants and local cuisine, policies/regulations for safety issues, financial institutions and currency exchange facilities, competitive price of the destination, reasonable price level.
	Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015)	Many alternative ways to get to this destination; many convenient ways to get to this destination; many convenient transportation possibilities for getting around; interesting places to visit; excellent local cuisine; high-quality restaurants; artificial attractions originally built for other purposes (such as cathedrals); manmade purpose-built attractions (theme parks); events or festivals; plenty of fun and entertainment, sports, and recreational opportunities; excellent nightlife and evening entertainment; local people made a good impression; local people were friendly.

Table 1 Priori codes derived from the existing literature review (continued)

Study focus	Authors	Codes
Destination attractiveness	Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019)	Hotel rooms, ATMs accepting VISA credit cards, sanitation and hygiene standards, number of operating airlines, internet users, telephone lines, broadband internet subscribers, mobile broadband internet subscribers, mobile network coverage, visa requirements, air transport infrastructure, quality of roads, railroad infrastructure, ground transport network, attitude of the population toward foreign visitors, air transport network, destination marketing and branding, available of tourism and data, government prioritization of the travel and tourism industry, education system, qualified labor, local availability of specialized training services, carbon dioxide emission per capita in metric tons, environmental regulation, ticket taxes and airport charges, purchasing power parity, hotel price index, fuel price.
	Krešić and Prebežac (2011)	Image of the country, feeling of personal safety, quality of the country's promotion, climate, scenic beauty, accessibility, quality of information in destination, urban and architectural harmony of the place, environmental preservation, tidiness of the place, friendliness, quality of accommodation, quality of restaurants, variety of restaurants, presentation of cultural heritage, entertainment opportunities, sport and recreation opportunities, shopping opportunities, value for money.
	Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022)	Natural scenery, cool and comfortable weather, accommodation and restaurants, infrastructure (road, internet, hospitals), public transportation.
	Richmond and Cornelius (2021)	Natural resources (comfortable climate, scenic beauty, beautiful landscape, quality of sandy beaches, lush vegetation, dramatic landforms), cultural history/manmade resources (historical/artistic buildings, traditional arts, unique cultural heritage, shrines, museums, souvenir shops, libraries), accessibility (accessible transport, good road network, long working and opening days and hours of attraction sites, affordable entry fee, proximity to nearby attractions, accessibility on the internet and in guidebooks), accommodation (affordable, sufficient, quality, service staff), food (number of restaurants, variety, quality services), friendliness of residents, cleanliness and tidiness, availability of visitor centers/receptions, recreational sites, banks, forex bureau, insurance firms, ATMs, visibility of police, health services, telecommunication system and internet connection speediness, entertainment (cinemas, bars, pub).

Table 1 Priori codes derived from the existing literature review (continued)

Study focus	Authors	Codes
Destination attractiveness for remote workers	Kurniasari, Isbah, and Azca (2022)	Spend time outdoors (at the beach, in the forest, hiking); culinary tourism; going to cafés and restaurants (hangout); doing yoga, exercising, jogging, and visiting cultural and historical places; digital infrastructure (Wi-Fi, internet, electricity); affordable workcation packages; comfortable workspaces, hospitality, and services.
	Lhakard (2022)	Culture, weather, nature, work infrastructure, internet and Wi-Fi, coworking spaces and cafés, living infrastructure, convenient transportation and accommodation, reasonable medical expenses, and safety.
	Parreño-Castellano, Domínguez-Mujica, and Moreno-Medina (2022)	Good weather; air quality; safety; tolerant urban environment for women, foreigners, or LGBTQ+; ease of using English in everyday life; low cost of living; feasibility of outdoor leisure activities; cultural resources; possibility of moving around cities on foot; availability and quality of educational and health services.
	Pavia, Floričić, and Mrnjavac (2022)	Workspitality (ergonomic furniture, mattresses on beds, chairs and tables, mousepads, adequate lighting); reduced prices for longer stays and price packages for remote workers; rental of meeting rooms, business center, personal assistants/administrator; unlimited tea, coffee, and healthy snacks during work hours; F&B voucher that can be used in various food outlets in the hotel; technical equipment in the room (laptop, camera, microphone, printer, scanner, business background setting, ICT equipment rental); innovative technologies (virtual reality, robot); special facilities, services, and activities in the hotel (gym and fitness, yoga, wellness); external partners (car rental, taxi, transfers).
Urban tourism destinations	Boivin and Tanguay (2019)	Museums and art galleries, monuments and historical sites, theaters, concerts and nightlife, festivals and events, fairs, conventions and exhibitions, nearby excursions, architecture, public spaces, parks, gardens, pedestrian-friendly places, urban atmosphere, contact with residents, accommodations and restaurants, tourist information, shops and commercial services, access and signage, public services.

Table 1 Priori codes derived from the existing literature review (continued)

Study focus	Authors	Codes
	(McDowall & Ma, 2010)	Amazing place for cultural sightseeing; family vacation place; architectural buildings and historical sites; budget vacation; hospitality of residents and beautiful smiles; safe place to visit; quality of goods/services; cleanliness of tourist areas; free from drug-related activities, threats of AIDS or sexual disease, threats of terrorism, and prostitution; accessibility to other countries; variety of cuisine; shopping opportunities; quality and good Thai cuisine; quality of lodging facilities; quality of Thai massages and spas; sex tourism; variety of nightlife and entertainment; stable political situation; local transportation; good traffic flow.
	Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016)	Accommodation, shopping, transportation, restaurant and food, tourist attractions, culture and history, safety, entertainment, local attitudes toward visitors, accessibility.

Inductive Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with 27 key informants underwent an inductive analysis to identify keywords, codes, and themes aligned with preestablished priori codes derived from a deductive analytical approach. The methodology employed for inductive thematic analysis is delineated as follows.

Unit of Analysis

An appropriate setting to explore the attractiveness of a workation destination is the world's best city for workation, Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand (Royal Thai Embassy Washington D.C., 2021). In a survey conducted by The Holidu2 travel website, among the significant 147 workation destinations worldwide, Bangkok was selected as the best workation destination in 2021 (Bangkok Post, 2022).

Population and Sample Size

The study focuses on key informants possessing direct involvement in workation destinations, incorporating viewpoints from the supply (government and business) and demand (visitors) sides. Employing triangulation of data from governmental, business, and visitor perspectives ensures data reliability and representativeness and mitigates organizational culture biases (Carter et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The sample size, determined based on criteria including information power, informational redundancy, and data saturation (Boddy, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Malterud et al., 2016), consists of 27 key informants purposively selected across diverse sectors. As noted by Hennink and Kaiser (2019), comprehensive exploration of complex issues typically necessitates larger sample sizes, typically involving a minimum of 24 interviews. Therefore, the selection of the 27 key informants for this study is considered appropriate, with their details provided in Table 2.

Table 2 List of key informants

ID	Side	Sector	Type of organization/business	Position	Country of origin
A1	Supply	Government	Ministry of Tourism and Sports	Chief inspector general	Thailand
A2	Supply	Government	Tourism Authority of Thailand	Deputy governor	Thailand
A3	Supply	Government	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	Deputy governor	Thailand
A4	Supply	Business	Workation hotel	General manager	Thailand
A5	Supply	Business	Coworking space and shared office space	Founder	Thailand
A6	Supply	Business	International hotel chains	Cluster director of sales	Thailand

Table 2 List of key informants (continued)

ID	Side	Sector	Type of organization/business	Position	Country of origin
A7	Supply	Business	Public coworking space	Customer service manger	Thailand
A8	Supply	Business	International hotel chains/property development	Executive director	Thailand
A9	Supply	Business	Private coworking space	Managing director	Thailand
B1	Demand	Visitor	Technology	Programmer	France
B2	Demand	Visitor	Technology	Project manager	Taiwan
B3	Demand	Visitor	Manufacturing	Factory general manager	India
B4	Demand	Visitor	Healthcare	Marketing manger	Sweden
B5	Demand	Visitor	Education	Faculty staff	Germany
B6	Demand	Visitor	Technology	Software engineer	United Kingdom
B7	Demand	Visitor	Consulting	Business consultant	China
B8	Demand	Visitor	Finance	Investment analyst	Russia
B9	Demand	Visitor	Entertainment	Producer	South Korea
B10	Demand	Visitor	Manufacturing	Marketing director	China
B11	Demand	Visitor	Real estate	Property consultant	Singapore
B12	Demand	Visitor	Technology	Solution architect	Japan
B13	Demand	Visitor	Retail	Managing director	Malaysia
B14	Demand	Visitor	Consulting	Legal manager	China
B15	Demand	Visitor	Trading/import/export	Purchasing manager	Italy
B16	Demand	Visitor	Technology	System specialist	Russia
B17	Demand	Visitor	Retail	Oversea purchasing	China
B18	Demand	Visitor	Technology	Programmer	United States

Research Instrument

The initial steps of the interview process involved creating an interview guide template based on McCracken's (1988) approach. A comprehensive literature review informed the development of the guide, which included specific questions for the key informants to facilitate semi-structured interviews. These questions aimed to address the research objectives with detailed and probing inquiries, such as "What factors contribute to

the attractiveness of an urban-based workation destination?" and "What kind of working facilities do you think are the most important?"

To ensure clarity and comprehensibility, the interview guide was reviewed by four professionals from tourism authorities, coworking spaces, workation hotels, and tourism academia. Their feedback helped refine the guide. In addition, the interview guide was tested on two workationers to validate its effectiveness and ensure logical sequencing, as suggested by Merriam (2009). Following Patton (2015) guidelines, the interview protocol was scrutinized to confirm that the questions were congruent with the research objectives before conducting in-depth interviews with the key informants. This rigorous process ensured that the interview protocol was relevant and aligned with the research objectives.

Data Collection

Data collection involved conducting in-depth interviews from September 2023 to January 2024, employing purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Figure 3 provides the schematic of the procedures for purposive and snowball sampling.

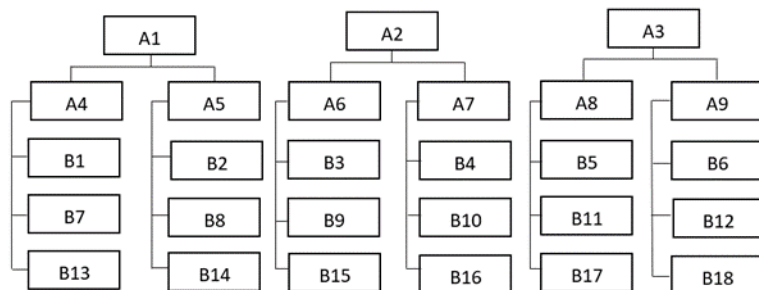


Figure 3 Schematic of purposive and snowball sampling

Note: A = Supply side, B = Demand side

Initially, three top executives from the government sector—the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration—were purposively chosen for their expertise. These informants were then asked to recommend additional key informants from the business sector, specifically targeting three accommodations and three coworking spaces. Subsequently, the business sector informants were asked to recommend three workationers.

The workationers are foreigners who combine work and vacation by temporarily relocating to a different destination, allowing them to strike a balance between work and leisure during their time away from their usual work location. Their work is remote, and they are employed by companies outside the destination region. These individuals choose to stay at an international destination for an extended period (two weeks or more). The recognized differentiation between the two lies in the fact that digital nomads are characterized by

continuous physical mobility, implying that they predominantly maintain a nomadic lifestyle without truly staying in one place, frequently transitioning to various locations throughout the year (Cohen, 2011). While workationers typically do not engage in frequent or extended travel.

Invitations were extended via telephone and email, including consent letters and sample interview questions. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and clear explanations of the interview purposes were provided. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes, with field notes taken to ensure information validity and audio recordings made with consent. According to Research Ethics Board (2015), the researchers prioritized respondent privacy by safeguarding sensitive information and conducting confidential and anonymous research. Access to respondent information was restricted, with oversight from ethics committees allowed for specific purposes. Measures such as locked cabinets, password protection, and encryption were implemented to prevent unauthorized access. In addition, data and information were securely disposed of within a two-year period to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a hybrid thematic analysis methodology, integrating deductive and inductive approaches (Swain, 2018). Guided by constructivist epistemology, the coding process combined theoretical frameworks and empirical data from semi-structured interviews, facilitating the identification of thematic patterns (Xu & Zammit, 2020). The analytical process consisted of deductive data coding (priori codes), inductive data coding (posteriori codes), and code and theme identification. Initially, 196 priori codes were derived from the literature review. Inductive analysis followed, generating codes directly from the data, using a six-stage framework by Naeem et al. (2023): transcript creation, data familiarization, keyword identification, code selection, theme development, conceptualization, and conceptual model construction. NVivo software facilitated the analysis. The inductive process identified 25 posteriori codes from interviews corresponding to the priori codes. Priori codes not supported by posteriori data were excluded. A new key theme, "soft power," and a subcategory, "time zone," emerged.

Results

This research aims to explore the factors contributing to the attractiveness of workation destinations. Following the implementation of hybrid thematic analysis, 25 subcategories were identified and subsequently consolidated into four overarching themes. The synthesis of the analytical findings is delineated in Table 3. Each one of the categories is discussed in more detail.

1) Soft Power

Soft power has emerged as a novel theme in the examination of workation destination attractiveness, marking a previously unexplored dimension in this research area. This finding is consistent with Jurenienė and Jurene (2019) assertion that attractiveness represents a fundamental aspect of soft power. All the primary key informants from the governmental sector, deliberately selected for their extensive knowledge and expertise in workation destinations, emphasized that soft power significantly contributes to destination attractiveness. They identified several subcategories within this theme, including 1) culture and tradition, 2) traditional foods, 3) various cuisines, 4) festivals and events, 5) friendliest people, 6) tourist attractions, and 7) social media. Although the key informants from the demand side did not explicitly use the term “soft power,” they acknowledged and discussed related subcategories. The following statements represent the idea of this theme:

“Last three years, the results of an Airbnb survey showed that Thailand was one of the destinations that workationers wanted to visit most. Since I have never been here before, I started searching for more information, this country has very interesting historical and cultural traditions. You can see the local lifestyle along the Chao Phraya River or visit a historic landmark, the Grand Palace. So, I decided to come to Thailand at least once, and this is my first time here.” (B4, December 12, 2023)

“What matters to me is having a wide variety of food, how tasty it is, and how clean the place is. Normally, I work from 7 AM to noon, and after that, it's time to go out and enjoy some delicious food. You can find restaurants and street food almost everywhere around here, which is really convenient.” (B8, November 21, 2023)

“Festivals are one of Thailand's important strategies for attracting foreign tourists to visit. One cultural event that is well-known globally is Songkran. UNESCO has officially selected Songkran as an intangible cultural heritage. The government and business sectors have worked together and discuss about how to organize international events in Thailand like Singapore. Singapore uses events strategy like Formula 1 races, and they're planning to host Taylor Swift for a concert soon, with their financial backing, aiming it'll draw tourists to the country.” (A2, September 15, 2023)

“Influencers, YouTubers, and travel bloggers create vlogs to share info about the destinations via their social media, giving people a real feel for the local scene. Nowadays, people trust micro-influencers more than big names or mass media because it feels like advice from a friend. In my view, promoting destinations through third parties has made it possible to market any place as a great workation destination.” (A4, September 14, 2023)

2) Livability

According to Liu, Bi, and Wang (2020), the concept of livability encompasses related ideas such as safety, leisure facilities, income level, and medical services. It represents a composite of economic, social, and physical factors that collectively define the living environment. In this study, livability emerged as a significant factor influencing the attractiveness of workation destinations, as indicated by almost all the key informants. They highlighted specific subcategories of livability, including 1) cost of living, 2) safety and security, 3) recreational activities, 4) climate and weather, 5) medical services, and 6) cleanliness and hygiene. The details of these points are illustrated in the following statements:

“When comparing living expenses, Singapore is three times higher, so if I choose Singapore, I have to pay much more. That’s why Bangkok is the top destination of my choice. Living here is incredibly affordable. I can get a hotel room with a nice view for very little cost.” (B14, November 21, 2023)

“The main things I care about for my workation trip are safety and security. Last month, there was a shooting at a very famous department store. Sadly, a tourist got killed, and many others were injured. It really scared us, even now people are still talking about it.” (B7, November 18, 2023)

“This week, I am taking a Thai cooking class, I really love Thai food, you know. As for next week, I am undecided between learning Muay Thai or yoga—any suggestions on which one I should do? And, of course, I will make sure to schedule a Thai massage—it is a must.” (B6, January 28, 2024)

“Many guests still worry about how clean and hygienic everything is. But don’t need to worry, our hotel maintains strict hygiene and cleanliness standards even the pandemic is getting better, especially in high-traffic areas such as the lobby, gym, workspaces, and business centers; to make sure their stay is safe and hygienic.” (A6, October 7, 2023)

3) Working Facilities

Another significant theme related to the attractiveness of workation destinations identified during data collection was working facilities. Clear distinctions in preferences between workationers and leisure travelers became evident, particularly concerning the presence of adequate working facilities, including: 1) internet speed and reliability, 2) internet network coverage, 3) workspitality, 4) coffices or internet cafés, 5) coworking spaces, and 6) time zone compatibility. This finding aligns with the study by Kurniasari, Isbah, and Azca (2022) and Matsushita (2021), which indicated that workationers favor working facilities, such

as Wi-Fi connectivity, electricity, laptops, smartphones, power outlets, and working spaces, to maintain work productivity. Representative statements explaining these points are as follows:

"If you look at the Wi-Fi speed ranking, Bangkok stands out as one of the places with good Wi-Fi connectivity, with average internet speeds of around 28 Mbps. Also, more than 450,000 free Wi-Fi spots are available so tourists can easily access Wi-Fi wherever they go in the city. This guarantees that those on a workation will have an effective working online." (A3, September 20, 2023)

"The hotel's facilities are very important to me because I spend 5–6 hours a day working inside the hotel. Working here is better than coworking spaces or coffee shops; those places are not open 24 hours, but here, we can work whenever we need to. One great thing is the flexibility to work without stressing over time zones. The hotel I stayed in had private workspaces, Wi-Fi that covered the entire area both inside and outside, and easily accessible power sockets. What truly impressed me was the laundry service, a lifesaver during my several-month stay, so I did not need to pack many clothes." (B17, January 22, 2024)

"I enjoy working at cafés, having meals along with a tasty coffee while working comfortably all day. In Bangkok, getting some work done is quite easy, as there are plenty of cafés where you can spend the whole day working without charging any fee like in some countries. Most of the cafés provide free Wi-Fi, plug, and working areas with quiet and privacy." (B18, January 28, 2024)

4) Accessibility

Accessibility, defined as the ease of reaching a specific destination, relates to the facilities and infrastructure available, alongside the time and effort required for travel (Yen, Chen, & Ho, 2021). The data collection process highlighted accessibility as a pivotal theme influencing the attractiveness of workation destinations. Critical factors contributing to this theme encompass 1) entry permission, 2) flight networks, 3) flight frequency, 4) airport services, 5) inner-city transportation, and 6) pedestrian-friendly environments. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019), emphasizing the significance of complementary conditions, such as visa requirements and infrastructure quality, including air transport infrastructure, international flight networks, and ground transportation, in enhancing the competitiveness of tourist destinations. The following statements exemplify these perspectives:

"Visa entry is primary concern. I want to stay here for two months, so the visa-on-arrival, which allows only 30 days, doesn't match. Before coming here, I applied a visa from the Thai Embassy, which lets me stay for up to 60 days. Even though the visa application

process was easy and uncomplicated, if I want to stay longer, I have to exit and re-enter the country. It would be good if Thailand issued visas specifically for workationers that allow longer stays.” (B15, December 14, 2023)

“In Thailand, one important thing is the number of flights we have. At Suvarnabhumi Airport, we’ve got two runways. One can handle up to 30 flights coming and going every hour. This setup lets the airport handle many international flights from all over the world each day. The government plans to expand airport services. We aim to have planes take off and land for 24 hours to increase flight frequency.” (A1, September 7, 2023)

“Getting here is very easy—lots of flights, convenient airports, and two international airports handle domestic and international flights. Good airport service is really important. For example, immigration lines need to move quickly; luggage should never get lost or damaged. Getting from the airport to downtown should be easy and fast. And when it comes to taxis, they shouldn’t scam passengers either.” (B17, January 22, 2024)

“I’m thinking about how to get around in the city. Two main things are on my mind: getting from the airport to my hotel and then moving around within the city. Having chosen a downtown hotel for convenience, I discovered Bangkok’s transportation system to be very good. It only takes about an hour to get from the airport to downtown using options like the airport rail link, metered taxis, Grab, or buses. And once you’re in the city, getting around is not difficult. There are plenty of choices: tuk-tuks, taxis, the BTS Skytrain, and the MRT subway, which make it easy to travel around. I tried a tuk-tuk, which was a lot of fun and exciting.” (B10, December 12, 2023)

“We’re working on improving 1,700 kilometers of sidewalks within next four years to make walking safer and more convenient for everyone in the city. Better sidewalks can also help ease traffic by encouraging more people to walk instead of driving. This benefits tourists too - they can enjoy sightseeing and walking around without worrying about accidents.” (A3, September 20, 2023)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Theme 1: Soft power			
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Casado Claro, Huguet, and Serrano (2023), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), Lhakard (2022), McDowall and Ma (2010), Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Culture and tradition	18	"I love exploring different cultures. When I plan a trip, history, museums, temples, and all that stuff really matters to me. It's not just about sightseeing; I want to experience the essence of a place—its traditions, culture, art, and how people live." (B1, October 8, 2023)
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), McDowall and Ma (2010), Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021), Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015).	Traditional foods	21	"From the ranking of the 100 best dishes in the world by TasteAtlas, many Thai dishes, such as Phat Kaphrao and Khao Soi, are ranked among the best in the world. Thai food is an important soft power in attracting tourists, and it is a unique selling point of the country." (A2, September 15, 2023)
Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), Lhakard (2022), McDowall and Ma (2010), Poquiz (2019), Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Various cuisines	20	"The variety of food is one of the attractive things that influenced my choice of visit. There is a wide selection of food here, from street food to Michelin three-star, whether local Thai dishes, European cuisine, Japanese sushi, or even Chinese food like dim sum and Hainanese chicken rice. And that food is everywhere, on every corner, even on the sidewalks. Bangkok is amazing; you can find food from all over the world, not just Thai food." (B5, January 12, 2024)
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Casado Claro, Huguet, and Serrano (2023), Jurenienne and Jurene (2019), Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015)	Festival and events	23	"I chose to visit Bangkok around this period because it has many festivals. This month's big one is Loy Krathong, which is very exciting because of the large river. In two weeks, there's a New Year celebration with a drone show at ICONSIAM and lots of fireworks around here." (B15, December 14, 2023)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes (continued)

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Theme 1: Soft power			
Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), McDowall and Ma (2010), Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021), Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021).	Friendliest peoples	17	"Local people act as hosts and friends, becoming storytellers and assisting tourists with recommendations for attractions, guidance on exploring the community, and advice on avoiding scams. We provide training for locals to ensure they have comprehensive knowledge of their community and the nearby area." (A3, September 20, 2023)
Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Lhakard (2022), McDowall and Ma (2010), Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Tourist attractions	22	"Our family went to Tokyo last year because my son wanted to go to Disneyland. My wife dreamed of wearing a kimono and walking through the historic Asakusa Temple; that old area feels like the Edo period. So, when planning our trips, I chose destinations based on the attractions I want to visit. After that, I checked out how well the working facilities in that area met my needs." (B11, January 12, 2024)
Casado Claro, Huguet, and Serrano (2023), Ooi (2015)	Social media	16	"Tourists themselves are an important part of soft power. They are always sharing information through their social media platforms, like Instagram and TikTok." (A1, September 7, 2023)
Theme 2: Livability			
Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), McDowall and Ma (2010), Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Cost of living	27	"The main reason we chose this destination is that it's affordable to live here, plain and simple. The cost of living in Bangkok is cheaper compared to other urban cities. Living here is inexpensive; I can enjoy good food and a nice hotel for a reasonable price." (B17, January 22, 2024)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes (continued)

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), McDowall and Ma (2010), Raimkulov, Juratgunov, and Ahn (2021), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021), Winarya and Pertiwi (2020)	Safety and security	22	"When I decide where to go, safety and security are my top priorities. You see? I have to carry important things like a laptop and iPad in my bag. These items are expensive, which could make me a target for thieves. So, I won't travel to places I think are unsafe." (B10, December 12, 2023)
Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), McDowall and Ma (2010), Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Recreation al activities	24	"I usually spend four to five hours each day working, and the rest is for leisure. Tonight, I'm going on a dinner cruise along the Chao Phraya River, and then I'll relax at a rooftop bar. And the day after tomorrow, I am planning to visit the Grand Palace and the floating market. (B9, December 14, 2023)
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022), Raimkulov, Juratgunov, and Ahn (2021), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Climate and weather	19	"I prefer a destination with good weather. Although the weather in Bangkok may be a bit hot on some days, overall, it is considered to be in a good range. Importantly, the weather here is neutral, without many different seasons. It is comfortable, so I can travel around and work in an open-air location. There is no fluctuating weather like in some countries." (B7, November 18, 2023)
Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022), Richmond and Cornelius (2021)	Medical services	17	"I have an experience to tell. The first day when I arrived, hot weather and jet lag made me weak, and I had a fever for a few days. Lucky me, a hospital is close to my hotel. So, I went to the doctor and got some medicine, within the next day, it went back to normal." (B4, December 12, 2023)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes (continued)

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), McDowall and Ma (2010), Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021), Winarya and Pertiwi (2020)	Safety and security	22	"When I decide where to go, safety and security are my top priorities. You see? I have to carry important things like a laptop and iPad in my bag. These items are expensive, which could make me a target for thieves. So, I won't travel to places I think are unsafe." (B10, December 12, 2023)
Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), McDowall and Ma (2010), Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Recreation al activities	24	"I usually spend four to five hours each day working, and the rest is for leisure. Tonight, I'm going on a dinner cruise along the Chao Phraya River, and then I'll relax at a rooftop bar. And the day after tomorrow, I am planning to visit the Grand Palace and the floating market. (B9, December 14, 2023)
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022), Raimkulov, Juraturgunov, and Ahn (2021), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Climate and weather	19	"I prefer a destination with good weather. Although the weather in Bangkok may be a bit hot on some days, overall, it is considered to be in a good range. Importantly, the weather here is neutral, without many different seasons. It is comfortable, so I can travel around and work in an open-air location. There is no fluctuating weather like in some countries." (B7, November 18, 2023)
Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022), Richmond and Cornelius (2021)	Medical services	17	"I have an experience to tell. The first day when I arrived, hot weather and jet lag made me weak, and I had a fever for a few days. Lucky me, a hospital is close to my hotel. So, I went to the doctor and got some medicine, within the next day, it went back to normal." (B4, December 12, 2023)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes (continued)

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), McDowall and Ma (2010), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Cleanliness and hygiene	17	"Food hygiene is important. I am quite confident with food in hotels or restaurants, but if it's street food or a food stall, I still worry about the risk of getting food poisoning. I had a bad experience during my last trip in South Asian countries. The cook had dirty hands, flies buzzing around the food, and some landed on it. To make it worse, I found hair in my meal too." (B2, November 21, 2023)
Theme 3: Working facilities			
Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Winarya and Pertiwi (2020)	Internet speed and reliability	25	"I'm sure everyone will agree that the most important thing when choosing a destination is having good internet connection with coverage all over the city. More than that, the internet must be stable, reliable, and fast enough to keep things running smoothly without any interruptions. " (B4, December 12, 2023)
Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Kurniasari, Isbah, and Azca (2022), Lhakard (2022), Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Winarya and Pertiwi (2020)	Internet network coverage	26	"Bangkok's Wi-Fi is awesome for working on vacation. You can get an internet connection everywhere, at the hotel, in coffee shops, shopping malls, and even in public places around the city. The hotel I'm staying in claimed that it provides high-speed internet access, around 100 Mbps all over the area." (B14, November 21, 2023)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes (continued)

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Floričić and Pavia (2021), Pavia, Floričić, and Mrnjavac (2022)	Workspitality	19	"Our hotel is set up just for guests who work while on traveling. We have a business center and private workspaces with high-speed internet and plenty of power outlets for all devices. In the guest room, you'll find comfy, ergonomically designed tables and chairs that make it easy to work for long periods. The fast and stable internet isn't just in the guest room but it's all over the place. On top of that, guests can use the gym and swimming pool to get some exercise and relax after a long day of work ." (A8, October 20, 2023)
Lhakard (2022), Spence (2022)	Coffices or internet cafés	18	"I've been to London, and it's great for a workation. I worked in a café where everyone was on their laptops, some attending Zoom meetings. All the cafés provide free internet access and power sockets, making them the perfect places to work." (B8, November 21, 2023)
Winarya and Pertiwi (2020)	Coworking spaces	15	"Nowadays, people love the flexibility of working from different places like coworking spaces, coffee shops, or hotels, even while on vacation. I work for a digital tech company that lets me work remotely, so I don't have to be in the office. Since most of my work is online, coworking spaces are great for working while on vacation. Check out coworking spaces in Bangkok like Hubba in Ekkamai and Hive in Thonglor—they've been popular with foreigners for a while." (B12, January 28, 2023)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes (continued)

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Emergred from an in-depth interview.	Time zone	14	"I am from U.S.; my co-workers and customers are there. The time difference is a big problem when communicating or meeting online. Thailand is almost 11 hours ahead, which makes scheduling a bit of a headache." (B18, January 28, 2023)
Theme 4: Accessibility			
Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019), Parreño-Castellano, Domínguez-Mujica, and Moreno-Medina (2022)	Entry permission	22	"One big factor I look at is the visa regulation. I am planning to visit Korea for my upcoming workation trip. Korea has started offering special visas for remote workers, like digital nomads and people going on workation. These visas will let me stay longer than regular tourists." (B1, October 8, 2023)
Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), McDowall and Ma (2010), Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin (2015), Richmond and Cornelius (2021), Unal and Ozgurel (2021)	Flight network	17	"Ease of access is my top priority. Even if a destination has everything for a perfect workation, if the flight connections aren't good, I'll probably skip it because it's just too difficult." (B3, December 14, 2023)
Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019)	Flight frequency	18	"During and after COVID, the number of workation travelers has increased. Thailand has been quicker to open up compared to other countries. At first, we focused on islands like Phuket and Samui. And then extended to other cities like Chiang Mai and Bangkok. We address tourism's demand and supply aspects, including the number of flights." (A2, September 15, 2023)

Table 3 Extracts of data from the interview, connecting the codes, and identifying themes (continued)

Deductive approach (Sources)	Codes	Count	Inductive approach (Representative statements and keywords)
Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019)	Airport services	18	"Airport services like check-in, baggage drop-off, and immigration have gotta be quick; waiting a long time is not good. Besides that, airports should have plenty of workspace and facilities like power sockets. And, of course, there should be reliable Wi-Fi with a strong signal everywhere." (B6, January 28, 2024)
Bayraktaroglu and Kozak (2022), Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), McDowall and Ma (2010), Pratminingsih, Johan, and Salsabil (2022), Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), Unal and Ozgurel (2021), Winarya and Pertiwi (2020)	Inner-city transportation	20	"Having a good local transportation system is important. People who stay long will consider this. It helps us easily explore the city and get to nearby attractions. As you know, most urban cities have to deal with serious traffic issues, making it difficult to get around. When I'm thinking about where to stay, good public transportation is a must." (B9, December 14, 2023)
Boivin and Tanguay (2019), Islam and Chaudhary (2021), Richmond and Cornelius (2021)	Pedestrian -friendly	19	"Walking is the best way to explore and take in the place at a relaxed pace. So, good sidewalks matter a lot. They must be wide, safe, and easy to walk. Look at Singapore as an example. The walkway is designed for pedestrians. There are no blockages or holes that can make you trip and fall. If Bangkok has car-free zones or pedestrian-only walkways, it would be good." (B10, December 12, 2023)

Discussion

Workation is a notable trend within the tourism sector (Bassiyouny & Wilkesmann, 2023). The convergence of work and leisure, a hallmark of the postmodern era, significantly shapes travelers' attitudes toward tourism (Pecsek, 2018). After data analysis and interpretation, the key themes of workation destination attractiveness that emerged are 1) soft power, 2) livability, 3) working facilities, and 4) accessibility.

1) Soft Power

This discovery represents an unexplored dimension within the existing scholarly discourse on destination attractiveness, prompting the researchers to conduct a thorough literature review focusing specifically on the role of soft power in this theme. Soft power attracts and co-opts others to want what you want (Nye, 1990). It resides in the ability to shape the preferences of others and align those preferences to your own (Grix & Lee, 2013). Tourism functions as a soft power instrument, playing a role in enhancing a nation's reputation and image through the cultivation of goodwill and positive sentiments. As soft power is conveyed through a country's cultural attributes, values, political ideals, and foreign policies, it serves as a means to effectively position and portray a nation, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations and contributing to their increased visitation (Claro, Huguet, & Serrano, 2023). Ooi (2015) presented several ways in which tourism and soft power interact. He proposed that mega-events, such as the Olympic Games and World Expositions, play a crucial role in establishing geopolitical influence. These events draw tourists and serve as platforms to exhibit the destination and communicate its capacities. In Thailand, soft power has emerged as a crucial instrument in enhancing economic value, particularly in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Thai government's strategic objective involves fostering a creative economy grounded in knowledge, intellectual property, expertise, and creativity. In alignment with the policy framework, an emphasis is placed on leveraging Thailand's cultural assets through the "5 Fs": food, film, fashion, fighting (Muay Thai), and festivals (Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, 2022). However, this study's results identified seven distinct components of soft power, as depicted in Figure 4.

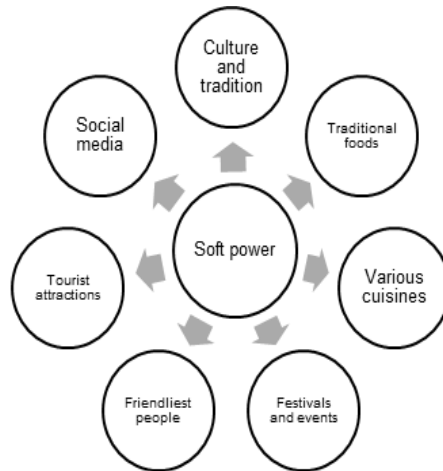


Figure 4 Workation destination's soft power

Source: Created by the authors

In addition, soft power is not noticeable as a tangible or intangible product or service; instead, it operates as a dynamic process necessitating deliberate strategic planning and execution. Initially, it is essential to formulate a compelling agenda to attract prospective workationers. The destination must then identify its strengths and determine which assets—such as culture, cuisine, and festivals—can effectively attract them. Following this, the development and implementation of pull marketing strategies become crucial. Pull marketing encompasses strategies or policies aimed at directly attracting consumers to a product. This approach effectively involves consumers with the organization's offerings (Idowu, 2019). Choosing the right communication channels—such as word of mouth, films, travel bloggers, or social media influencers—is crucial for sparking consumer interest and achieving desired results. This dimension extends to all travelers, whether leisure, business, or workationers.

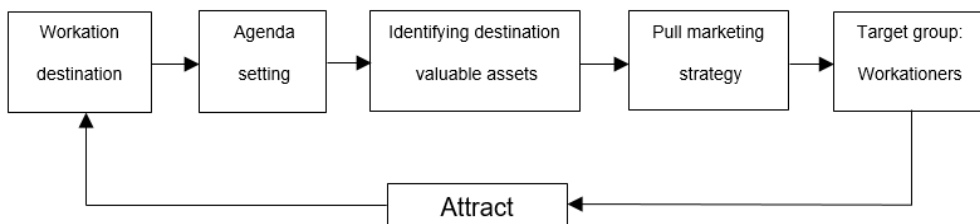


Figure 5 Process of soft power in attracting workationers to a destination

Source: Adapted from Hahm, Heo, and Song (2023) and Nye (2004)

The results of in-depth interviews with key demand-side informants suggest that festivals and events play a pivotal role in motivating their visits. The strategic application of soft power, particularly through the effective utilization of destination valuable assets,

requires initiatives designed to elevate the city's global image and attract international tourists. One such initiative involves the implementation of a pull marketing strategy that leverages User-Generated Content (UGC). By encouraging current visitors to share their own festival-related photos, videos, or stories, and highlighting these on social media or websites, destinations can enhance their visibility. UGC refers to any text, data, or actions created by users of digital platforms, which are published and distributed through independent channels and generate expressive or communicative effects, either individually or in combination with other contributions (Santos, 2021). Additionally, in conjunction with existing tourism promotion efforts, local governments should provide financial incentives to international event organizers to encourage them to choose the city as a host venue. However, for soft power to deliver substantial national benefits, the active involvement of local entrepreneurs is essential (Ajanapanya, 2024), as this ensures the alignment of local economic interests and the preservation of cultural authenticity.

2) Livability

Regarding livability, all the key informants, representing the supply and demand sides, commonly acknowledge the significance of the “cost of living” aspect. This view stems from the extended stay expected for workationers, often lasting several weeks or months, leading to escalated expenditures. Consequently, destinations with a lower cost of living and currency relative to the generating regions are poised to draw more workationers, thereby securing a competitive edge. Moreover, given the extended duration of workationers' stay at a destination, the probability of encountering illness or accidents would increase, highlighting the critical importance of accessible hospital services (Pratminingsih, Johan, & Salsabil, 2022). Thus, medical services significantly contribute to the attractiveness of workation destinations.

Moreover, the key informants highlighted safety and security because workationers often carry valuable work-related equipment, such as high-value electronic devices. The value of these items makes them susceptible to criminal activities. Therefore, workationers should prioritize accommodation equipped with secure lockers to safeguard their belongings. In addition, workationers using public venues, such as coffee shops, are advised to store their data in cloud-based systems and remain vigilant, given the increased risk of criminal incidents in these settings. This pattern has been observed in various cities worldwide (Elgan, 2024). Nonetheless, local governments can mitigate such incidents by increasing visibility through the deployment of security guards and police personnel (Richmond & Cornelius, 2021), as well as by utilizing technological solutions, such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance systems.

Furthermore, the key informants affirmed that recreational activities, such as river dinner cruises, visits to floating markets, guided biking excursions, traditional massage, and

local culinary classes, are significant factors in augmenting the attractiveness of Bangkok as a workation destination. This discovery aligns with the research conducted by Mokras-Grabowska (2018), which indicated that primary motivations for visiting designated recreational areas include dining establishments, cultural and entertainment events, historical exploration, physical activities, social gatherings, and relaxation.

Climate and weather also exerted a considerable pull factor on workationers' choice of destinations. Consequently, in locations where tourists encounter adverse climatic conditions and an inhospitable environment, their likelihood of being attracted to such destinations is diminished (Richmond & Cornelius, 2021). This study's discovery also implies that cleanliness and hygiene significantly enhance the attractiveness of workation destinations. Therefore, local governments and entrepreneurs must pay attention to cleanliness and hygiene, including food services, tourist attractions, transportation facilities, and accommodation establishments. The rigorous hygiene and disinfection procedures must become standard practices (Khongsawatkiat & Agmapisarn, 2021). It supports the conclusions drawn by Das, Sharma, Mohapatra, and Sarka (2007) and Islam and Chaudhary (2021), who highlighted the significance of hygienic conditions in attracting tourists to a destination.

3) Working Facilities

The discernible distinctions in preferences between workationers and leisure travelers primarily emerge in their considerations regarding the availability of working facilities at destinations. All the key informants agreed on the critical importance of a robust internet network and reliable connectivity. Workationers prioritize internet access due to their dependence on technological gadgets, such as laptops and smartphones, often for communication and information retrieval. This finding aligns with that of Kurniasari, Isbah, and Azca (2022), who asserted that workationers extensively utilize ICT tools, including Wi-Fi, laptops, smartphones, and office working platforms, throughout their workation experiences.

Furthermore, the subsequent essential working facilities assisting workationers during travel are encapsulated in the notion of "workspitality" (Turner & Wilson, 2022). A significant portion of the key informants on the demand side disclosed their inclination to perform work-related activities within the premises of a hotel before embarking on other leisure activities. According to the guidelines outlined by Floričić and Pavia (2021) and Pavia et al. (2022), hotels and accommodations play a crucial role in implementing the principles of workspitality to meet the needs of workationers. These principles include provisions such as complimentary Wi-Fi with consistent signal coverage throughout the premises, the availability of business assistant services, and various working amenities, including sufficient tabletop space with a comfortable chair, an abundance of nearby electrical outlets, a wireless mouse,

a laptop stand, noise-cancelling headphones, computers, printers, and scanners. In addition, accommodation should offer coffee, tea, water, and healthy snacks within guest rooms, which should be equipped with ergonomic furnishings and necessary equipment. Workspaces should be hygienic, disinfected, tranquil, and free from disturbances, with a contemporary ambience, pleasing views, and ample natural light. Access to hotel facilities, such as fitness centers and swimming pools, is also important. Moreover, the key informants emphasized the importance of laundry services.

In addition, alternative venues, such as co-working spaces and cafés are of considerable importance, offering viable options for the key informants seeking remote work settings. Consequently, coffee shops could benefit from embracing the “coffice” concept—a fusion of coffee shops and office space to enhance their range of services. This approach caters to the evolving preferences of their clientele by providing a welcoming ambience similar to that of an office environment, complete with amenities such as workstations, private rooms, relaxation areas, and furnishings characterized by ergonomic design, adaptability, and versatility, along with integrated technological features. This notion aligns with Kurniasari et al.’s (2022) findings, which revealed that many workationers operate from accommodations, local cafés, and coworking spaces.

Time zone emerged as a new subcategory based on information from the key informants representing demand-side perspectives. For workationers coming from areas with similar time zones to the destination, tourism authorities are recommended to promote night tourism—sightseeing activities conducted during the night (Song, Kim, & Park, 2020). This strategy assumes that workationers might dedicate more daylight hours to work-related tasks. Conversely, workationers from regions with substantial time zone differences compared to the destination, such as those traveling from the United States to Thailand, may encounter significant temporal gaps of up to 12 hours. Therefore, they must keep their colleagues informed about travel plans, including destination time zones, and ensure that they have accessible means of contact. Understanding the influence of time zones on communication is vital, emphasizing the need for clear communication within the team. Setting up a shared calendar to outline availability can help prevent scheduling conflicts and reduce confusion (Coe, 2022).

4) Accessibility

Upon analyzing the remarks of the key informants regarding the attractiveness of workation destinations, six elements emerged as significant factors contributing to their accessibility. Among these factors, all the key informants from the demand side unanimously agreed that entry permission substantially influences destination attractiveness. Consequently, tourism authorities must develop strategies to entice workationers, such as

facilitating visa-on-arrival arrangements and extending the duration of permissible stays beyond 60 days. Ensuring a clear and uncomplicated visa application process is also crucial.

The key informants also highlighted the importance of connectivity and flight frequency from regions that generate workationers to the destination. The geographic location of a city plays a crucial role in attracting airlines for direct flights and transit routes, offering significant advantages. For instance, Bangkok, centrally located within ASEAN, is a pivotal transportation hub linking China and East Asia with India and South Asia. Furthermore, governmental policies underscore the significance of travel and tourism, including initiatives to position cities or nations as tourism hubs and enhance infrastructure to support increased air traffic. This involves developing international airports, expanding runway and terminal capacities, and augmentation of night flight operations during peak periods.

In addition, certain key informants expressed a need for airport services. Airports serve as the primary entry point for visitors upon their arrival at a particular destination. The paramount element of airport services pertains to the efficiency and precision exhibited across various facets, encompassing check-in procedures, baggage handling, and passport and visa verification. To enhance these operations, service providers should apply integrated innovative self-service technologies, such as mobile check-in platforms and self-service kiosks, for streamlined processes (Paraschi, Georgopoulos, & Kaldis, 2019). In addition, extending operational hours or maintaining round-the-clock accessibility can mitigate congestion, thereby augmenting service quality and expediting proceedings, particularly during peak periods. Following the research conducted by Prentice and Kadan (2019), which highlighted the effects of check-in procedures and airport amenities on destination selection, airports are recommended to offer comfortable seating, designated working areas, and dependable Wi-Fi connectivity with a strong signal.

Inner-city transportation, whether for long or short distances within the city, holds significant importance. The finding in this study is consistent with Thiumsak and Ruangkanjanases (2016), who noted that adequate local transportation is most notable in terms of destination accessibility. Hence, local governments should ensure the provision of diverse public transportation options, such as subway systems, sky trains, trains, buses, vans, and metered taxis. Nevertheless, in urban areas encountering traffic congestion challenges, motorcycle taxi services present a practical solution, facilitating rapid mobility for workationers covering short distances or seeking swift transportation alternatives. Moreover, incorporating English-language traffic signage is essential for improving accessibility and ensuring clear navigation.

According to the key informants, walking is considered the optimal way to experience the ambience of a city. This finding aligns with Davies (2016) observation that

walking is popular among tourists, offering various recreational opportunities, such as long-distance trail walks, structured walking retreats, and casual strolls across different destinations. Therefore, local governments should provide pedestrian-friendly walkways characterized by cleanliness, regular maintenance, and adequate width to accommodate multiple pedestrians walking side by side (FarkiĆ, Perić, Lesjak, & Petelin, 2015). In addition, attention should be directed toward the quality of street lighting (Hassanshahi, Soltani, Roosta, & Askari, 2023), ensuring clear visibility and minimizing obstructions to signage indicating walking routes (Ujang & Muslim, 2015). Addressing concerns related to safety from crime and traffic is also essential (RakaMandi, 2022).

Conclusion

Technological advancements have catalyzed a significant transformation in the contemporary digital era, allowing work to be conducted remotely, even during periods traditionally reserved for vacations. A recent survey by FlexJobs revealed that 75 percent of respondents favor work-from-anywhere policies (Kaplan & Sheidlower, 2024). To remain competitive in the global tourism market, workation destinations must sustain an attractiveness that rivals or exceeds that of their competitors. Moreover, to retain their market position and drive growth, workation destinations must continually innovate and actively pursue new sources of attractiveness.

This research provides a comprehensive guide for developing and managing workation destinations through the integration of theoretical constructs and empirical data. Appendix A demonstrates the conceptual model of workation destination attractiveness with the key recommendations. It equips tourism authorities and entrepreneurs with the essential understanding to formulate effective strategies for managing destinations that attract workationers and enhance their experiences. Moreover, in light of potential future crises like the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupt traditional office commutes and require remote work, this study's findings offer valuable guidelines for identifying suitable workation destinations.

The findings of this research study will enhance higher education by integrating the results into relevant courses, such as "Business Tourism." Additionally, a video will be developed as an online learning resource to further support instruction. Furthermore, for policy application, the study's outcomes, including a research article and a comprehensive research report, will be submitted to executives of relevant organizations, such as the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (Thailand), the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. These documents aim to inform and guide the development of tourism strategies, facilitating their effective implementation.

Theoretical Implications

This research enhances theoretical understanding by refining the conceptual framework of workation destination attractiveness, encompassing supply and demand aspects, in contrast to most existing studies that primarily concentrate on the demand side. A hybrid thematic analysis reveals four key themes crucial for future tourism planning. This methodology combines pre-established themes from an extensive literature review (deductive) with themes derived from the data (inductive), resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the subject and valuable insights for the academic community.

Practical Implications

The identified themes and elements contributing to the attractiveness of workation destinations offer valuable insights for tourism authorities and entrepreneurs. These insights can guide strategic initiatives, including soft power strategies. Initially, developing a compelling agenda to attract potential workationers is crucial. Following this, creating and implementing a pull marketing strategy necessitates that a destination identifies its strengths and determines which assets—such as cultural offerings, culinary delights, and festive events—are most appealing to workationers. It is essential to select appropriate communication channels - such as film, travel bloggers, or social media influencers - to promote these assets and achieve the desired outcomes. Tourism authorities and entrepreneurs must carefully plan and execute these activities to effectively attract new workationers, retain existing ones, and maintain a competitive edge in the tourism sector.

Policy Implications

Cities aspiring to become workationer hubs can leverage the insights from this study to formulate a range of policies aimed at attracting workationers globally. One crucial policy is the orange economy policy (Restrepo & Márquez, 2013), also known as the creative economy (Sandri & Alshyab, 2022). This policy should focus on production, reproduction, promotion, dissemination, and marketing of goods, services, and activities with cultural, artistic, or heritage content. Central to the creative economy are industries such as architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, video, photography, music, performing arts, and television/radio, which involve creating, producing, and distributing goods and services that rely on creativity and intellectual capital as their main inputs (Henderson et al., 2022).

In addition, cities can adopt night tourism and recreational policies to accommodate tourists who work during the day, such as offering museums with late-night events and night mini-golf courses. Immigration policies, such as providing visa-on-arrival options and extending the allowable duration of stays beyond 60 days, are also crucial. Enhancing communications infrastructure to provide comprehensive and robust internet Wi-Fi coverage

is critical for supporting workationers. Furthermore, implementing service policies under the concept of workspitality is essential. These recommendations are particularly relevant for urban areas established as workation destinations and those aspiring to assume such roles. By adopting these policies, cities can effectively attract new workationers, retain existing ones, and maintain a competitive edge in the tourism sector.

Limitation and Further Study

The study comprehensively examines workation destination attractiveness but acknowledges several limitations to consider. First, key informants should be interviewed before arriving at a destination to avoid bias from their current experiences. This approach ensures that the attractiveness index accurately reflects the destination's appeal during the travelers' decision-making process rather than being influenced by their stay (Krešić & Prebežac, 2011). Second, obtaining cooperation from key informants on the demand side for interviews is highly challenging due to their reluctance to allocate time for research. To address this, researchers should send interview questions in advance and schedule convenient times and locations for data collection. In addition, when time and location are constraints, online platforms, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, can be an effective alternative. Third, focusing solely on urban-based locations limits the direct applicability of managerial implications to other settings, such as rural areas or natural environments, suggesting the need for additional contextual studies. Fourth, including key informants solely from Bangkok, Thailand restricts the transferability of managerial implications to other cities or countries, indicating the necessity for broader geographic studies. Fifth, the study does not empirically test constructs, emphasizing the importance of further research to establish a theoretical model and validate construct validity, potentially through quantitative approaches and larger sample sizes. Lastly, future investigations could explore additional variables that mediate or moderate the relationship between workation destinations' attractiveness, destination attachment, and workationers' productivity. Such endeavors could offer valuable insights to tourism destinations seeking to enhance their competitive edge.

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