

# The relationship among **destination quality, place attachment, and happiness**: Perspectives of **long-term Chinese tourists** in **Thailand**

Li-Na Li<sup>1</sup> [li.lina@rmutr.ac.th]

Sun-Yu Gao<sup>2</sup> [1098171980@qq.com]

Jian-Hao Huang<sup>3</sup> [rollancekimo@gmail.com]

Yi Ying Tsai<sup>4</sup> [tsaiying0126@gmail.com]

**Abstract** | Destination quality and place attachment are pivotal factors in enhancing tourist happiness and fostering sustainable tourism development. High-quality destinations not only encourage visitors to affirm their positive experiences but also cultivate a unique sense of place attachment. These emotional connections attract tourists while enriching their journeys with meaningful spiritual experiences. This dynamic not only enhances tourist happiness but also plays a crucial role in driving sustainable development in the tourism industry. The primary purpose of this study is to examine relationships among long-term Chinese tourists' perceptions of destination quality, place attachment, and happiness in Thailand. Understanding the intricate interplay among these factors provides deeper insights into tourism development and informs improved destination management strategies. The ultimate goal is to enhance the attractiveness

---

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer in the Department of Management, Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin, Thailand. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2669-8676>

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer in the School of Educational Science at Taizhou University, China. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3191-584X>

<sup>3</sup> Assistant professor in the Department of Education Management, Chinese International College, Dhurakij Pundit University, Bangkok, Thailand. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8059-7657>

<sup>4</sup> Organizer and researcher in Department of International Business at Tamkang University.

and competitiveness of tourist destinations by improving destination quality. This study employed a questionnaire survey method, collecting data from 372 long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand. The results indicate that destination quality directly enhances happiness and fosters place attachment. Moreover, place attachment fully mediates the relationship between destination quality and happiness. These findings underscore the importance of prioritising destination quality and nurturing place attachment as key considerations for tourism development. Result findings also provide valuable references for advancing tourism development, offering theoretical and practical insights for future research and strategic growth in tourist destinations.

**Keywords** | destination quality, happiness, long-term Chinese tourists, place attachment, Thailand

## 1. Introduction

The pursuit of happiness in the context of tourism has garnered substantial attention, with researchers examining various dimensions of this complex phenomenon (Garner et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2021; Lengieza et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022). Tourism, particularly in countries like Thailand, has been identified as a significant source of happiness (Fan et al., 2021; McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Notably, Thailand has consistently ranked as the happiest country on Bloomberg's Misery Index for five consecutive years (Royal Thai Embassy, Washington D.C., 2019). Renowned for its ability to sustain stable employment and control living costs, Thailand has been considered one of the happiest places globally (Royal Thai Embassy, 2016). The substantial influx of Chinese tourists has further bolstered Thailand's tourism revenue and economic growth, highlighting their critical role in the country's tourism development (Panthamit, 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

In tourism-related research, destination quality is of paramount importance (Assaf & Tsionas,

2015; Dedeoğlu et al., 2020; Mlejnkova, 2021). Destination quality significantly influences tourists' happiness (Lipovčan et al., 2014). Rooted in the concept of service quality, destination quality refers to visitors' overall evaluation of a destination's four dimensions among image, products, services, and experiences (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Generally, higher destination quality leads to a better visitor experience. Furthermore, a strong sense of destination experience contributes significantly to tourists' happiness (Lee et al., 2018). Destination quality that fosters a sense of happiness enhances visitors' overall well-being (Chen & Li, 2018). An empirical study examining factors affecting young tourists' happiness identified destination quality as a key influence (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2019). Recent research has also indicated that tourists' choices of destinations can have a significant impact on their overall travel experience outcomes (Oliveira et al., 2023). This suggests that, particularly for younger long-term Chinese tourists, perceived destination quality in Thailand may play a pivotal role in shaping their happiness.

Numerous studies have demonstrated a close relationship between place attachment and happiness (Berg, 2020; Han & Chang, 2021; Maricchiolo et al., 2021). Place attachment refers to the emotional connection that develops through interactions with a specific place (Yuksel et al., 2010). Empirical research highlights how place attachment significantly enhances tourists' happiness (Garner et al., 2022). Additionally, studies have shown that destination quality positively influences place attachment (Jia & Lin, 2017). Consequently, place attachment serves as an important mediating factor in the relationship between destination quality and happiness.

A review of previous research further underscores the mediating role of place attachment (Chen et al., 2020; Nasir et al., 2020; Cho, 2021). For instance, destination attraction has been found to indirectly influence destination loyalty through place attachment (Nasir et al., 2020). Similarly, place attachment mediates the relationship between perceptions of place and support for sustainable tourism development (Man Cheng et al., 2021). It also bridges the connection between local social identity and happiness (Lalicic & Garaus, 2022). Based on this evidence, the present study proposes that place attachment plays a crucial mediating role in the

relationship between destination quality and the happiness perceived by long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand.

This study explicitly adopts the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory as its theoretical framework to explain the relationships among the independent variable (destination quality), the mediating variable (place attachment), and the dependent variable (happiness). The SOR theory, proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), posits that environmental stimuli (Stimulus) influence an individual's internal psychological state (Organism), which ultimately leads to specific behavioral responses (Response). This theory has been widely applied in the fields of tourism, consumer behaviour, and environmental psychology to explore how environmental characteristics impact behavioural outcomes through emotional or cognitive processes.

Specifically, in this study, destination quality is regarded as an external stimulus (S), which enhances tourists' perceived value and emotional experience in a destination, thereby triggering their emotional response — place attachment (O). Place attachment represents an emotional bond characterised by a sense of belonging and dependence for a specific destination. This emotional response subsequently fosters positive emotions in tourists, including joy and satisfaction, ultimately enhancing their overall happiness (R). This process clearly illustrates how destination quality indirectly affects tourists' happiness through place attachment. Therefore, this study leverages the SOR theory to elucidate relationships among destination quality, place attachment, and happiness, while further uncovering the mediating role of place attachment. Through this theoretical framework, the study delves into how destination quality shapes tourists' place attachment and ultimately enhances their happiness. This research provides significant theoretical insights for improving tourism experiences and offers practical implications for appropriate applications.

In summary, this study aims to address several research gaps and discern practical needs. Firstly, previous studies on destination and happiness have often utilised limited samples of Chinese tourists (Chen & Li, 2018). Secondly, few studies have explored mediating variables' effects between destination quality and happiness. In addressing these gaps, this research aims to

examine long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand as a sample to explore the impact of destination quality on tourists' happiness. Specifically, it investigates the critical mediating role of place attachment, with the ultimate goal of enhancing tourist destinations' attractiveness and competitiveness through improvements in destination quality. The study aims to provide practical implications for service providers, contributing to filling these research gaps, and laying the foundations for future research on tourism destination managers and tourism development.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Destination Quality**

Destination quality is the foundation of tourism competitiveness (Mukherjee et al., 2018). Improving destination quality is one of the most important strategies to enhance competitiveness in many international tourism markets (Lopez-Toro et al., 2010). The abundance of natural, historical, and cultural resources, coupled with scenic landscapes and diverse ecotourism activities, plays a significant role in enhancing destination quality and attracting international tourists (Montes-Guerra et al., 2023). The importance of destination quality is increasingly recognised (Vinodan & Manalel, 2019), especially in sunny and beach destinations (Lenehan & Harrington, 1998). For example, Thailand is often perceived by tourists as having a high level of destination quality due to its year-round sunshine, beautiful beaches and friendly people. Destination quality refers to tourists' perceptions or assessments among the products and services in destination tourism (e.g., tourist attractions, tourism facilities and service quality) that meet their requirements or expectations (Rajaratnam et al., 2015; Cong, 2016). It has been suggested that destination quality is about what visitors perceive, including: attractions, leisure, shopping, accommodation, dining, transport and services (Cai & Woods, 1993). Other studies have pointed out that destination quality involves the exploration of various elements of macro environment, including natural, social, political, cultural and technological elements (Murphy et al., 2000). This study focuses on long-term Chinese tourists'

perceptions or assessments of destination quality in Thailand. Therefore, the study defines destination quality as tourists' comprehensive evaluation of the products, services and overall experience at a destination. The concept of destination quality is often defined through five key dimensions: general attraction quality, reception services, public services, entertainment services, and 3S services (sand, sun, and sea) (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). This framework has been widely adopted in empirical studies, with researchers such as Ageeva and Foroudi (2019), Suherlan and Hidayah (2021), and Marques et al. (2021) incorporating these dimensions to explore various aspects of tourism destination quality.

## **2.2. Place Attachment**

Place attachment is a hot topic in tourism-related research (Mou & Brito, 2021). The study of the relationship between people and place began around 1960. For example, Fried (1962) found that people have strong feelings about place, whereas Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) suggested that length of residence and kinship were the most effective predictors of attachment. Shumaker and Taylor (1983) explicitly stated that place attachment symbolises the emotional connection between people and their place of residence. Low and Altman (1992) suggest that place attachment refers to positive emotions in proximity to a specific place. According to Halpenny (2010), place attachment may have a legacy effect. Place attachment is increased by tourists' identification with place. Empirical studies have shown that tourists visiting Thailand develop emotional connections and consequently place attachment (Chubchuwong et al., 2015). Furthermore, empirical research found that place attachment had a significant positive impact on place image and destination development. The study suggests that future research should consider affective attributes (e.g., affective attachment) when exploring place attachment (Ganji et al., 2021). Therefore, this study defines place attachment as a state of emotional bonding between a tourist and proximity to a specific place in interaction. It consists of three dimensions: place dependence, affective attachment and place identity (Yuksel et al., 2010). Many empirical studies in the past have adopted these definitions and connotations (Dwyer et al., 2019; Hsu & Scott, 2020; Li et al., 2021).

### **2.3. Happiness**

Happiness not only promotes psychological well-being but also enhances overall life satisfaction (Seligman et al., 2005), being regarded as one of the highest values in human life (Godovykh et al., 2021) and consisting of a key contributor to a better quality of life. People consistently strive to achieve the greatest possible happiness (Cordero et al., 2017). In recent years, tourism-related research has increasingly focused on tourists' happiness (Godovykh et al., 2021; Huang, 2021; Lee et al., 2021). Happiness is considered a desirable psychological experience that evokes positive emotions (Tan et al., 2022). Mehrdadi et al. (2016) defined happiness as an enhanced mood and deeper positive emotions compared to the norm. The present study specifically examines the happiness of Chinese tourists in Thailand, defining happiness as the positive emotions experienced by visitors and the psychological satisfaction derived from their trip (Moeinaddini et al., 2020). Previous empirical studies have often adopted such single-dimensional definitions and interpretations of happiness (Dwyer et al., 2019; Hsu & Scott, 2020; Li et al., 2021).

### **2.4. Model Development and Hypotheses**

#### **2.4.1. The Relationship Between Destination Quality and Happiness**

Previous studies have found that destination quality is closely related to happiness (Chen & Li, 2018; Uysal et al., 2016). When choosing a destination, tourists consider various factors such as cost, comfort, safety, and distance. Satisfaction with these quality factors increases subjective happiness (Deutsch-Burgner et al., 2014). The quality of a destination has a significant and positive impact on residents' subjective happiness (Lipovčan et al., 2014). Carneiro and Eusébio (2019) state that high destination quality includes factors such as tour composition, destination type, and social gatherings. Greater satisfaction with these destination quality factors is associated with increased happiness; the more satisfied individuals are, the happier they tend to be. Destination quality is indeed shaped by factors such as hospitality, public services, and entertainment services. Higher destination quality leads to greater satisfaction among tourists

(Sumaryadi et al., 2021), which in turn enhances their overall happiness (Pai et al., 2020). It is inferred that the higher the level of happiness in the destination country, the higher the satisfaction and happiness of tourists. A recent empirical study has shown that the better the coordination between the living environment and the mode of transport in a destination, the more positively it affects tourists' happiness (Fan et al., 2021). Based on the above analysis, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Long-term Chinese tourists' perceived destination quality in Thailand has a significant positive effect on their happiness.

#### **2.4.2. The Relationship Between Destination Quality and Place Attachment**

Existing research highlights that destination quality has a significant impact on place attachment (Lee et al., 2020). A high level of destination quality meets the diverse needs of visitors and serves as a necessary condition for fostering place attachment (Hou et al., 2005). For example, visitors' satisfaction with destination quality increases their place attachment (Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015). Higher perceived environmental quality is also associated with increased place attachment among residents (Stedman et al., 2021). Similarly, place attachment tends to develop in destinations where residents report greater environmental satisfaction (Lee & Jeong, 2021). Place attachment is generated by residents' satisfaction with places with high destination quality (Chen & Dwyer, 2018). Destinations of high quality are impressive and unforgettable to visitors, as tourists develop attachment to impressive and unforgettable destinations (Vada et al., 2019). Long-term interactions between tourists and destinations generate emotions that also increase tourists' destination attachment (Cao et al., 2021). Destination quality is closely related to destination image; the more positive the image, the stronger the degree of place attachment (Tasci et al., 2021). Jia and Lin (2017) examined the relationship between destination quality and place attachment using Chinese tourists as study subjects. Their findings indicate that high quality destinations foster stronger place attachment. Based on the above analysis, this study proposes the following hypothesis:



H2: Long-term Chinese tourists' perceived destination quality in Thailand has a significant positive effect on place attachment.

#### **2.4.3. The Relationship Between Place Attachment and Happiness**

Previous research has shown that place attachment is one of the main reasons for enhancing happiness (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010; Yuan & Wu, 2021). Scannell and Gifford (2017) report that place attachment is beneficial to an individual's psychological well-being; people with higher place attachment were happier than those with low attachment (Knez & Eliasson, 2017). In fact, changes in place attachment triggered changes in older people's social happiness (Afshar et al., 2017). Han et al. (2021) disclosed that increasing older people's place attachment can increase older people's happiness. Sawada and Toyosato (2021) proposed that place attachment was beneficial to ameliorate happiness among older adults with lower economic status. According to Maricchiolo et al. (2021), when individuals identify strongly with their location, they experience greater happiness. Thus, place identity significantly and positively influences happiness. An empirical study found that place attachment promotes physical and mental health, as well as happiness (Basu et al., 2020). Another empirical study found that place attachment was beneficial to repairing trauma caused by disasters. The process of resettlement creates a sense of familiarity and place, which helps to restore the psychological resiliency and well-being among refugees and enhances their happiness (Albers et al., 2021). Recent empirical studies found that tourists with higher place attachment had higher happiness (Vada et al., 2020; Garner et al., 2022). Accordingly, this study proposes that:

H3: Long-term Chinese tourists' place attachment in Thailand has a significant positive effect on happiness.

#### **2.4.4. Place Attachment: Mediating Effects**

Place attachment may be one of the key mediating variables between destination quality and

happiness, but it has not received sufficient attention in the past. Specifically, destination quality significantly and positively influences place attachment (Jia & Lin, 2017; Berg, 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Cao et al., 2021). Place attachment also has a significant positive effect on happiness (Basu et al., 2020; Garner et al., 2022; Yuan et al., 2021). Furthermore, many researchers have examined it as a mediating variable (Halpenny, 2010; Nasir et al., 2021; Ramkissoon & Mavondo, 2015). For example, environmental stress was found to indirectly influence happiness through place attachment. Middle-aged and older adults, in particular, can enhance their happiness in the face of environmental stress by developing stronger place attachment (Yuan et al., 2021). Destination quality is derived from service quality (Park & Jeong, 2019), and place attachment plays a mediating role in the relationship between loyalty and service quality (Theodorakis et al., 2009). Place attachment is considered to be a potential psychosocial mechanism, as it helps explain human-nature connections and their relationship with happiness (Cleary et al., 2017). A recent empirical study found that it plays an important mediating role in the relationships between nature connectivity and happiness (Basu et al., 2020). Another recent study revealed that natural connectedness promoted happiness by enhancing place attachment and social connections (Yoshida et al., 2022). Therefore, it is seen that place attachment often plays a critical mediating role in past empirical studies. This study inferred that place attachment played a complete mediating role between destination quality and happiness. Thus, this study proposes that:

H4: Long-term Chinese tourists' place attachment in Thailand plays a complete mediating role between destination quality and happiness.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Sample and Data Collection**

The pilot test questionnaire for this study began on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and was due to be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> May. The study questionnaire began on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and was completed on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021. The study was conducted using long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand as the sample,

primarily because this group offers unique insights into the relationship between perceived destination quality, place attachment, and happiness. Compared to short-term tourists, long-term tourists have more opportunities to explore hidden attractions and engage in unique experiences, leading to a richer and more diverse travel experience. In this study, long-term tourists are defined as visitors who stay at a destination for several months to years. These tourists are typically engaged in activities such as work, study, or semi-permanent residence, and they tend to integrate more deeply into the local culture and community. Short-term tourists, on the other hand, are visitors who stay at a destination for a few days. Their main activities usually include sightseeing, leisure, and other tourism-related activities, with limited interaction with the local community or culture (Mussalam & Tajeddini, 2016).

Moreover, long-term tourists typically develop deeper emotional connections with the destination and participate in more social interactions. These factors enable them to provide a more comprehensive perspective, especially in the post-pandemic era, where their behavioral patterns and travel experiences differ significantly from those of short-term tourists. Long-term tourists are more likely to immerse themselves in local culture, form meaningful relationships, and develop a sense of belonging—all of which contribute to an enhanced sense of happiness.

In this study, an e-questionnaire was distributed via the WeChat group of long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand using the "Questionnaire Star" platform. The purposive sampling method was employed to circulate the questionnaire among the Chinese population in Thailand. In addition, to increase the return rate of the questionnaire, those who completed the questionnaire were given a random bonus as an incentive.

This study focuses on long-term Chinese tourists residing in Thailand, with a purposive sampling approach to accurately select samples that align with the research objectives. According to Tinsley and Tinsley (1987), in studies involving multiple scales, the sample size should be at least 5 to 10 times the number of items on the scales to ensure data representativeness and analytical stability. Given that the three scales used in this study comprise a total of 36 items, the minimum required sample size for this research is 360 subjects.

The study sample size was 390. After 18 invalid questionnaires were excluded, a total of 372 valid questionnaires were collected. The return rate of the questionnaires was 95%.

### 3.2. Descriptive Analysis and Sample Demographics

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the 372 long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand who participated in the study. It includes information on gender, age, education, marital status, length of stay in Thailand, and monthly income, showing a diverse range of backgrounds among the participants.

Table 1 | Demographic Profile

| Demographic Category     | Subcategory         | Percentage(%) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Gender                   | Male                | 51.61%        |
|                          | Female              | 48.39%        |
| Age Group                | 20 and below        | 1.08%         |
|                          | 21-30               | 38.44%        |
|                          | 31-40               | 36.56%        |
|                          | 41-50               | 23.12%        |
|                          | 51 and above        | 0.81%         |
| Education Level          | Tertiary and below  | 3.49%         |
|                          | Undergraduate       | 36.56%        |
|                          | Master              | 31.99%        |
|                          | Doctorate and above | 27.96%        |
| Marital Status           | Married             | 57.8%         |
|                          | Unmarried           | 42.2%         |
| Time of Stay in Thailand | 1 year and below    | 5.11%         |
|                          | 2-5 years           | 35.48%        |
|                          | 6-9 years           | 26.08%        |
|                          | 10 years and above  | 33.33%        |
| Monthly income (Baht)    | 10,000 and below    | 4.56%         |
|                          | 10,000-30,000       | 26.61%        |
|                          | 30,000-50,000       | 25%           |
|                          | 50,000 or more      | 48.82%        |

Source: Authors' Elaboration

### 3.3. Instrument Development

This study conducted an item analysis of the pilot test questionnaire results, removing items with a Critical Ratio (CR) < 3 and those that did not achieve significance (Streiner & Norman, 2008). It used the varimax rotation to conduct an exploratory factor analysis for the research instrument. Factor loadings greater than 0.4 are considered a stable criterion (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988).

#### 3.3.1. Destination Quality Scale

The destination quality scale (Jia and Lin, 2017), which consists of 17 items and is suitable for Chinese respondents, was employed in this study. The five dimensions identified were general attraction quality, reception service, public service, entertainment service, and 3S service (Sand, Sun, Sea). A five-point Likert scale was used in this study (with 1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree). Based on the item analysis results, three items were excluded, and 14 items were finalised. The rotated component matrix revealed that five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted, with factor loadings ranging from 0.409 to 0.875. The cumulative total explained variance was 67.791%, indicating good validity. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for total destination quality scale was 0.840, indicating good reliability.

#### 3.3.2. Place Attachment Scale

This study used the place attachment scale (Yuksel et al., 2010), nine items with three dimensions: place dependence, affective attachment, and place identity. A five-point Likert scale was used (1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree). The varimax rotation was used to conduct an exploratory factor analysis for the place attachment scale. The rotating component matrix revealed that three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were generated, with factor loadings ranging from 0.605 to 0.928, which met the criterion. The cumulative total explained variance was 65.387%, indicating good validity. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for total place attachment

scale was 0.842, indicating good reliability.

### **3.3.3. Happiness Scale**

The happiness scale (Moeinaddini et al., 2020), a 13-item, single-dimension measure with a five-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree; 5 = totally agree), was employed. An exploratory factor analysis of the happiness scale was conducted using varimax rotation. According to the results of the exploratory factor analysis, the KMO value was 0.929, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ( $p < .001$ ), indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Therefore, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the happiness scale. The results revealed a single factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1, with factor loadings ranging from 0.582 to 0.905, which met the acceptable standards. The cumulative total explained variance was 58.722%, indicating good validity. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for total happiness scale = 0.940, indicating good reliability.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

SPSS version 22.0 and AMOS version 22.0 were used to conduct statistical analysis for this research. The pilot test questionnaire data were used for exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis, formal data were used for Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA), descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and mediation model.

This study had begun by employing Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the underlying factor structure of the scales. EFA has been particularly useful for elucidating, exploring and understanding relationships within the data, making it well-suited for the scale structures' initial validation. Subsequently, during the formal data analysis phase, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been applied to validate the factor structure identified through EFA, ensuring its stability and consistency in the sample. CFA had also helped establish the construct validity of the scales, making them more robust.

Although the scales used in this research are adapted from the sociology field, additional steps were taken to ensure their applicability in the tourism context. Specifically, we invited tourism management experts to conduct expert validity assessments of the scales. Through their professional expertise, these experts ensured that the scales accurately reflect the psychological and behavioural characteristics of tourists, further confirming their validity and relevance for tourism research.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. CFA Model Comparison**

The present study employed confirmatory factor analysis to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of a key structure. A three-factor model of destination quality, place attachment, and happiness was compared with several alternative models. The results showed that the nine-factor model showed best fit with the data ( $\chi^2/df = 1.779$ , GFI = 0.870, CFI = 0.929, RMSEA = 0.046, RMR = 0.046). Furthermore, all factor loadings in each variable were significant, indicating good convergent validity and supporting the discriminant validity of these nine structures.

### **4.2. Descriptive Statistics**

Through descriptive statistical analysis in table 2, mean values for each item range from 3.20 to 4.56, indicating that the current situation is of a medium to high standard. According to Kline (2005), skewness can range from -3 to +3 and kurtosis can range from -10 to +10. Table 1 shows the results of the normal distribution of skewness and kurtosis. The skewness ranged from -1.526 to 0.051 and the kurtosis ranged from -0.024 to 3.591, satisfying normality.

Table 2 | Descriptive statistics of items

| Items   | Mean±SD    | Normal distribution |          |
|---|------------|---------------------|----------|
|   |            | Skewness            | Kurtosis |
| Destination quality   |            |                     |          |
| DQ <sub>1</sub> : Thailand has a famous human landscape.  | 4.31±0.604 | -.634               | 1.862    |
| DQ <sub>2</sub> : Thailand has well known legendary stories.  | 4.19±0.683 | -.716               | 1.319    |
| DQ <sub>3</sub> : Thailand has good food and drink services.  | 4.12±0.631 | -.294               | .251     |
| DQ <sub>4</sub> : The price of food and drink in Thailand is reasonable.  | 3.97±0.752 | -.598               | 1.031    |
| DQ <sub>5</sub> : Accommodation services in Thailand are good.  | 4.06±0.697 | -.424               | .162     |
| DQ <sub>6</sub> : Accommodation in Thailand is reasonably priced.   | 3.89±0.725 | -.591               | .807     |
| DQ <sub>7</sub> : Easy access to information in Thailand.   | 4.07±0.920 | -.869               | .110     |
| DQ <sub>8</sub> : Easy access to public transport in Thailand.  | 3.20±0.903 | -.260               | -.060    |
| DQ <sub>9</sub> : Public health in Thailand is good.  | 4.04±0.928 | -1.022              | .823     |
| DQ <sub>10</sub> : The shopping environment in Thailand is good.  | 4.33±0.693 | -1.274              | 3.591    |
| DQ <sub>11</sub> : Thailand's cuisines offer a diverse range.   | 4.23±0.714 | -.986               | 2.090    |
| DQ <sub>12</sub> : Thailand's beaches are clean.  | 4.38±0.760 | -1.218              | 1.634    |
| DQ <sub>13</sub> : Thailand's sky is blue.  | 4.54±0.637 | -1.191              | .861     |
| DQ <sub>14</sub> : Thailand's oceans are beautiful.   | 4.56±0.587 | -1.036              | .509     |
| Place attachment  |            |                     |          |
| PA <sub>1</sub> : For the activities that I enjoy most, the settings and facilities provided by Thailand are the best.              | 4.23±0.572 | -.127               | .086     |
| PA <sub>2</sub> : Thailand means a lot to me  | 4.27±0.575 | -.170               | -.024    |
| PA <sub>3</sub> : For what I like to do, I could not imagine anything better than the settings and facilities provided by Thailand. | 4.20±0.531 | .051                | .530     |
| PA <sub>4</sub> : I feel a strong sense of belonging to Thailand.   | 3.98±0.861 | -.821               | .768     |
| PA <sub>5</sub> : I enjoy visiting Thailand and its environment more than any other destinations.                                   | 4.40±0.705 | -.614               | 1.278    |
| PA <sub>6</sub> : I feel Thailand is a part of me.  | 3.93±0.986 | -.989               | .788     |
| PA <sub>7</sub> : I am very attached to Thailand.   | 4.13±0.751 | -.749               | .823     |
| PA <sub>8</sub> : I identify strongly with Thailand.  | 4.04±0.830 | -.793               | .619     |
| PA <sub>9</sub> : Visiting Thailand says a lot about who I am.  | 4.00±0.901 | -.951               | 1.063    |
| Happiness   |            |                     |          |
| HA <sub>1</sub> : Life is very rewarding.   | 4.25±0.695 | -.618               | .151     |
| HA <sub>2</sub> : Always have a cheerful effect on others.  | 4.21±0.711 | -.734               | .911     |
| HA <sub>3</sub> : I am always committed and involved.   | 4.08±0.919 | -1.060              | 1.139    |
| HA <sub>4</sub> : Life is good.   | 4.33±0.696 | -.926               | 1.305    |
| HA <sub>5</sub> : Laugh a lot.  | 4.52±0.706 | -1.381              | 1.547    |
| HA <sub>6</sub> : I am well satisfied about everything.   | 4.36±0.776 | -1.169              | 1.219    |
| HA <sub>7</sub> : I feel very happy   | 4.48±0.779 | -1.453              | 1.791    |
| HA <sub>8</sub> : Find beauty in some things.   | 4.20±0.669 | -.801               | 1.843    |



|  |            |        |       |
|--|------------|--------|-------|
| HA <sub>9</sub> : Always have a cheerful effect on others. | 4.40±0.737 | -1.158 | 1.286 |
| HA <sub>10</sub> : Find time for everything.               | 4.27±0.703 | -1.039 | 2.323 |
| HA <sub>11</sub> : I am fully mentally alert.              | 4.44±0.776 | -1.287 | 1.178 |
| HA <sub>12</sub> : I often experience joy and elation.     | 4.50±0.761 | -1.447 | 1.394 |
| HA <sub>13</sub> : I have a great deal of energy.          | 4.47±0.802 | -1.526 | 1.851 |

Note: DQ = Destination quality, PA = Place attachment, HA = Happiness, SD = Standard Deviation

Source: Authors' Elaboration

### 4.3. Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficients of the variables ranged from 0.228 to 0.668, indicating that there was no significant collinearity between the variables (Rodgers & Nicewander, 1988), and the correlation coefficients were all significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the two variables in this study was greater than the squared correlation coefficient between the two variables, meeting the criteria for assessing discriminant validity (Fornell & Laecker, 1981). This is shown in table 3.

Table 3 | Descriptive analysis and correlation amaysis

| Variable | Mean  | SD    | DQ 1         | DQ 2         | DQ 3         | DQ 4         | DQ 5         | PA 1         | PA 2         | PA 3         | HA           |
|----------|-------|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| DQ 1     | 4.259 | 0.524 | <i>0.567</i> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| DQ 2     | 4.010 | 0.504 | .228***      | <i>0.612</i> |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| DQ 3     | 3.772 | 0.703 | .374***      | .341***      | <i>0.634</i> |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| DQ 4     | 4.277 | 0.576 | .370***      | .408***      | .482***      | <i>0.589</i> |              |              |              |              |              |
| DQ 5     | 4.495 | 0.530 | .501***      | .307***      | .560***      | .468***      | <i>0.678</i> |              |              |              |              |
| PA 1     | 4.233 | 0.407 | .284***      | .387***      | .297***      | .400***      | .291***      | <i>0.546</i> |              |              |              |
| PA 2     | 3.981 | 0.726 | .320***      | .412***      | .602***      | .521***      | .509***      | .412***      | <i>0.766</i> |              |              |
| PA 3     | 4.056 | 0.678 | .373***      | .397***      | .595***      | .543***      | .534***      | .387***      | .792***      | <i>0.717</i> |              |
| HA       | 4.346 | 0.549 | .463***      | .308***      | .634***      | .518***      | .659***      | .412***      | .629***      | .668***      | <i>0.714</i> |

Note: Bold and italicised values in the table are the values after the AVE root sign. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

DQ 1 = General attraction quality, DQ 2 = Reception service

DQ 3 = Public service, DQ 4 = Entertainment service, DQ 5 = "3S" services

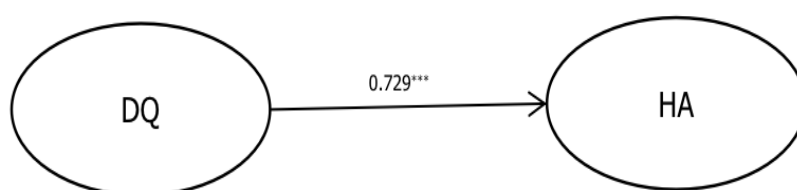
PA 1 = Place dependence, PA 2 = Affective attachment, PA 3 = Place identity, HA = Happiness

Source: Authors' Elaboration

#### 4.4. Structural Model

The results of the t-test analysis indicated that there were no significant differences in happiness by gender ( $t = 1.563$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Therefore, without considering gender, this study tested the effect of destination quality on happiness and the complete mediating role of place attachment between destination quality and happiness.

This research included three steps to conduct a structural model analysis. As a first step, after examining the direct effect of destination quality on happiness, this study showed that destination quality had a significant positive effect on happiness ( $\beta = 0.729$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, H1 was supported. See figure 1 and table 4. The fit indices were as follows:  $\chi^2 = 6992.455$ ,  $df = 319$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.171$ ,  $GFI = .879$ ,  $RMR = .029$ ,  $SRMR = .049$ ,  $NFI = .858$ ,  $CFI = .917$ ,  $RFI = .844$ ,  $IFI = .918$ ,  $TLI = 0.909$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.056$ , indicating that the direct effect model and the fit of the observed data are acceptable (McDonald & Ho, 2002).



Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , DQ = Destination quality, HA = Happiness

Figure 1 | Main effect of the destination quality on Happiness

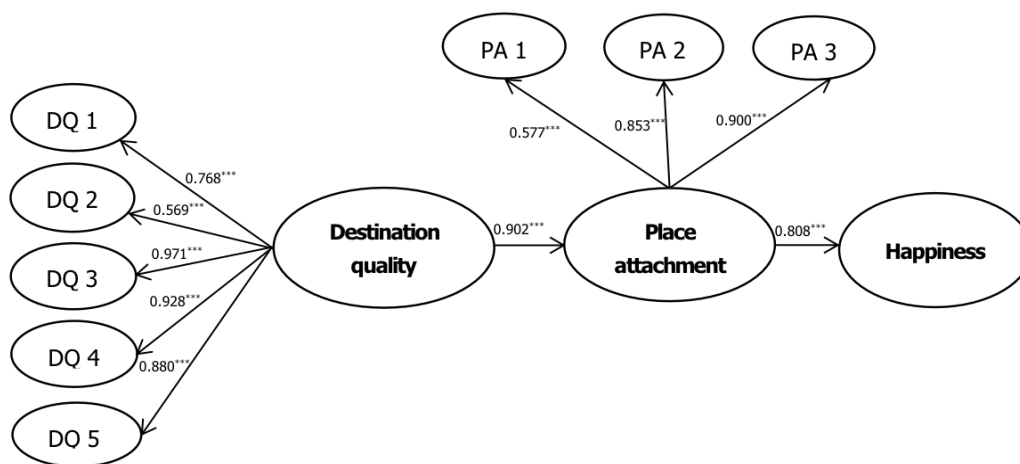
Source: Authors' Elaboration

In the second step, the complete mediating role of place attachment between destination quality and happiness was examined. The results showed that destination quality had a significant positive effect on place attachment ( $\beta = 0.902$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Place attachment had a significant positive effect on happiness ( $\beta = 0.808$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). There was a complete mediating role of place attachment between destination quality and happiness ( $\beta = 0.729$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, H2, H3, and H4 were supported. See figure 2 and table 4. The fit indices were as follows:  $\chi^2 = 11171.449$ ,

$df = 585$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.002$ , GFI = 0.845, RMR = .033, SRMR = .057, NFI = 0.827, CFI = 0.905, RFI = 0.814, IFI = 0.905, TLI = 0.897, RMSEA = 0.052, indicating an acceptable fit of the complete mediation model to the observed data (McDonald & Ho, 2002).

In this study, the three-factor model refers to the three main constructs: destination quality, place attachment, and happiness. In subsequent model comparisons, the study tested a nine-factor model, which builds on the three-factor model by further dividing each main construct into multiple sub-factors. For instance, destination quality was subdivided into general attraction quality, reception service, public service, entertainment service, and 3S services (Sand, Sun, Sea). Similarly, place attachment was broken down into place dependence, affective attachment, and place identity.

Thus, the nine-factor model is essentially an extension of the three-factor model rather than a completely different framework. This hierarchical approach provides a more granular understanding of each construct while maintaining the core structure of the original model.



Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; DQ 1 = General attraction quality, DQ 2 = Reception service, DQ 3 = Public service, DQ 4 = Entertainment service, DQ 5 = “3S” services, PA 1 = Place dependence, PA 2 = Affective attachment, PA 3 = Place identity

Figure 2 | Mediating test (complete mediation)

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Table 4 | Analysis of the structural model

| Hypothesised path | Path     | $\beta$ | Results   |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-----------|
| H1                | DQ→HA    | .729*** | Supported |
| H2                | DQ→PA    | .902*** | Supported |
| H3                | PA→HA    | .808*** | Supported |
| H4                | DQ→PA→HA | .729*** | Supported |

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' Elaboration

In the third step, 2000 samples were set through the Bootstrap resampling procedure. Bootstrap bias-corrected confidence intervals were set at 95%. This method is widely recommended and used in mediation analysis to determine indirect effects (Hayes, 2013). The results show that the 95% confidence intervals for the direct, indirect and total effects of the bias-corrected non-parametric percentile do not contain 0 (see table 5). This suggests that there is a complete mediating role for place attachment in the relationship between destination quality and happiness.

Table 5 | Structural parameter estimates

| Effect          | Path     | Estimate | 95% LLCI | 95% ULCI |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Direct effect   | DQ→PA    | .902***  | .377     | .865     |
|                 | PA→HA    | .808***  | 1.586    | 3.369    |
| Indirect effect | DQ→PA→HA | .729***  | .953     | 1.917    |
| Total effect    | DQ→HA    | .729***  | .953     | 1.917    |

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' Elaboration

## **5. Discussion and Implications**

### **5.1. Discussion and Theoretical Implications**

This research focuses on long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand, a group of significant importance in the global tourism market, especially considering their behavioural and psychological changes in the post-pandemic era. As one of the largest outbound tourist groups in the world, long-term Chinese tourists experienced substantial shifts in travel motivations, behaviour patterns, and destination preferences during the pandemic, particularly in the context of health concerns and travel restrictions. With the easing of the pandemic, their expectations and needs have undergone fundamental transformations. In Thailand, long-term Chinese tourists not only retain their identity as visitors but also develop deep connections with the local society and culture, fostering a strong sense of place attachment. In the post-pandemic context, this emotional bond has emerged as a crucial factor influencing their travel behaviour and happiness. Specifically, the perceptions and needs of long-term tourists have shifted from traditional sightseeing and leisure activities to a greater emphasis on destination quality, safety, health, and emotional belonging.

By analysing this group, the study aims to elicit the profound impact the pandemic exercised on travel psychology and behaviour of Chinese tourists and to further explore the interactive relationships among destination quality, place attachment, and happiness. This research not only enriches the theoretical framework of tourist behaviour studies in the post-pandemic era but also provides practical insights for tourism managers and destination marketers. These insights can help them address new market demands and adapt to the evolving landscape of global tourism.

This study verifies that long-term Chinese tourists' perception of destination quality in Thailand directly affects happiness and that place attachment plays a fundamental role between destination quality and happiness. First, it was found that destination quality had a significant positive effect on happiness, which is consistent with previous research (Fan et al., 2021; Lipovčan et al., 2014). This consistency may be due to the fact that high destination quality has

been shown to provide visitors with more possibilities and conveniences, including better transport solutions, quality of food and beverages, shopping environment, entertainment facilities and recreational activities. When destination quality is perceived to be better, happiness increases (Lipovčan et al., 2014). Secondly, the results of this study show that destination quality has a significant positive effect on place attachment, which is also consistent with previous studies (Jia & Lin, 2017). This congruence may be due to the feeling of home and consequent place attachment that occurs when visitors experience outdoor recreational activities for extended periods of time (Stedman, 2006). Unique destinations are attractive to tourists. Tourists interact with the destination, receive physical and psychological benefits, and develop emotional connections or attachments (Cao et al., 2021). Third, place attachment has a significant positive effect on happiness, also consistent with previous findings (Albers et al., 2021; Garner et al., 2022). This consistency may arise from the fact that place attachment promotes psychological need satisfaction and, in turn, facilitates happiness (Scannell & Gifford, 2017). As place attachment becomes stronger, positive emotions and life satisfaction increase. The perceived happiness also becomes higher (Basu et al., 2020). Fourth, this study found that place attachment plays a fundamental role between destination quality and happiness, similar to previous studies. Place attachment often plays an important mediating role in tourism-related research (Yuan et al., 2021; Yoshida et al., 2022). This consistency may be due to the fact that people have unique memories of the destinations they have visited, thus creating an emotional attachment and consequently, place attachment (Sang et al., 2018). In addition, Thailand is often used as a location for film productions, which also increases foreign tourists' fascination with Thailand (Klemm, 2019). Due to the halo effect, tourists have a positive subjective impression of destinations visited by historical celebrities and film stars and have an attachment to these destinations (Wong & Lai, 2015).

This study makes a significant contribution to the tourism industry in Thailand. Firstly, through exploring the relationships among destination quality, place attachment, and happiness, it offers crucial insights for tourism practitioners. Understanding the correlations between tourists' perceptions of destination quality, place attachment, and happiness can assist industry

professionals in shaping destination experiences, elevating destination service quality, and better meeting Chinese tourists' needs. Secondly, this research contributes to advancing sustainable development in the tourism sector. By identifying key factors influencing tourist happiness, practitioners can strategically enhance destination quality while strengthening emotional bonds with tourists. This fosters a more profound and enduring connection, contributing to the sustainable growth of the tourism industry. Lastly, this research provides vital support for tourism marketing and promotion in Thailand. Gaining insights into how Chinese tourists' experiences correlate with their happiness enables the formulation of more appealing promotional activities. By highlighting the unique aspects of the destination and improving service quality, these efforts aim to attract a greater influx of Chinese tourists, actively contributing to the continued prosperity of Thailand's tourism industry.

## **5.2. Practical Implications**

This study found that destination quality is beneficial to improving happiness. Therefore, it suggests that hospitality service providers can develop plans to improve destination quality for foreign tourists, with specific strategies including: protecting the scenery of the sea and beaches, which are regularly monitored; improving the public health environment; implementing effective waste sorting systems; creating a good shopping environment; allowing visitors to perceive the rationality of product prices and services; providing more convenient transportation; encouraging tourists to have fun on the island; optimising tourism carrying capacity; diverting traffic congestion and increasing the frequency of public transportation in popular scenic spots; providing convenient information platforms for international tourists (e.g., mobile apps, websites, etc.); and enhancing the quality and overall experience of dining, accommodation, and entertainment to help foreign visitors feel at home.

The findings indicate that place attachment fully mediates the relationship between destination quality and happiness. Therefore, it is recommended that service providers focus on enhancing place attachment among foreign tourists. For example, service providers can develop

destination-specific services and commemorative products to foster an emotional connection between foreign tourists and the destination. Organising meaningful local festivals and rituals—and encouraging tourists to participate in events such as the Loi Krathong Festival, Songkran Festival, and Makha Bucha Day—can help visitors integrate into the local cultural atmosphere and develop a sense of belonging. Additionally, increasing publicity through celebrity endorsements can enhance destination recognition. Previous studies have found that leveraging celebrities or internet influencers in advertisements and marketing campaigns effectively promotes attractions to foreign tourists (Chen, 2018).

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Research

First, limitations of this study can be supplemented by longitudinal studies in the future, including qualitative interviews, quasi-experimental design and cross-lagged panel analysis, or by combining quantitative and qualitative studies to gain insight into the relationship between destination quality, place attachment and happiness. Secondly, as the sample was drawn from long-term Chinese tourists in Thailand, the dissemination of findings is extremely limited. In the future, the population and the scope of the study could be expanded. Third, demographic variables should be considered in future studies. Research shows that happiness varies with age (Mogilner et al., 2011), with older individuals more likely to exhibit stronger place attachment (Mandal, 2016). Additionally, studies have found that women tend to have a stronger association with place attachment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Mesch & Manor, 1998). Therefore, future research could explore the moderating effects of age and gender on the relationship between place attachment and happiness.

### References

Afshar, P. F., Foroughan, M., Vedadhir, A., & Tabatabaei, M. G. (2017). The effects of place attachment on social well-being in older adults. *Educational Gerontology*, 43(1), 45-51.



<https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2016.1260910>

Ageeva, E., & Foroudi, P. (2019). Tourists' destination image through regional tourism: From supply and demand sides perspectives. *Journal of Business Research*, 101, 334-348.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.04.034>

Albers, T., Ariccio, S., Weiss, L. A., Dessi, F., & Bonaiuto, M. (2021). The role of place attachment in promoting refugees' well-being and resettlement: A literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(21), 11021.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182111021>

Alegre, J., & Cladera, M. (2009). Analysing the effect of satisfaction and previous visits on tourist intentions to return. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(5/6), 670-685.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560910946990>

Assaf, A. G., & Tsionas, E. G. (2015). Incorporating destination quality into the measurement of tourism performance: A Bayesian approach. *Tourism Management*, 49, 58-71.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.02.003>

Basu, M., Hashimoto, S., & Dasgupta, R. (2020). The mediating role of place attachment between nature connectedness and human well-being: Perspectives from Japan. *Sustainability Science*, 15(3), 849-862. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00765-x>

Berg, N. G. (2020). Geographies of well-being and place attachment: Revisiting urban-rural migrants. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 78, 438-446.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.06.041>

Bernini, C., Cerqua, A., & Pellegrini, G. (2020). Endogenous amenities, tourists' happiness and competitiveness. *Regional Studies*, 54(9), 1214-1225.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1712350>

Bimonte, S., & Faralla, V. (2016). Does residents' perceived life satisfaction vary with tourist season? A two-step survey in a Mediterranean destination. *Tourism Management*, 55, 199-208.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.02.011>

- Cai, L. A., & Woods, R. H. (1993). China's tourism-service failure. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 34(4), 30-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001088049303400408>
- Cao, L., Qu, Y., & Yang, Q. (2021). The formation process of tourist attachment to a destination. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 38, 100828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100828>
- Carneiro, M. J., & Eusébio, C. (2019). Factors influencing the impact of tourism on happiness. *Anatolia*, 30(4), 475-496. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2019.1632909>
- Chen, C. Y. (2018). Influence of celebrity involvement on place attachment: Role of destination image in film tourism. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2017.1394888>
- Chen, C., Luo, W., Kang, N., Li, H., Yang, X., & Xia, Y. (2020). Serial mediation of environmental preference and place attachment in the relationship between perceived street walkability and mood of the elderly. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(13), 4620. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134620>
- Chen, N., & Dwyer, L. (2018). Residents' place satisfaction and place attachment on destination brand-building behaviors: Conceptual and empirical differentiation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 57(8), 1026-1041. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287517729760>
- Chen, Y., & Li, X. R. (2018). Does a happy destination bring you happiness? Evidence from Swiss inbound tourism. *Tourism Management*, 65, 256-266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.10.009>
- Cheng, E. N. M., So, S. I., & Fong, L. H. N. (2021). Place perception and support for sustainable tourism development: The mediating role of place attachment and moderating role of length of residency. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 19(4), 279-295. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2021.1906740>

- Cho, H. (2021). How nostalgia forges place attachment and revisit intention: A moderated mediation model. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 39(6), 856-870. <https://doi.org/10.1108/mip-01-2021-0012>
- Chubchuwong, M., Beise-Zee, R., & Speece, M. W. (2015). The effect of nature-based tourism, destination attachment and property ownership on environmental-friendliness of visitors: A study in Thailand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(6), 656-679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2014.925482>
- Cleary, A., Fielding, K. S., Bell, S. L., Murray, Z., & Roiko, A. (2017). Exploring potential mechanisms involved in the relationship between eudaimonic well-being and nature connection. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 158, 119-128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.10.003>
- Cong, L. C. (2016). A formative model of the relationship between destination quality, tourist satisfaction, and intentional loyalty: An empirical test in Vietnam. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 26, 50-62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2015.12.002>
- Cordero, J. M., Salinas-Jiménez, J., & Salinas-Jiménez, M. M. (2017). Exploring factors affecting the level of happiness across countries: A conditional robust nonparametric frontier analyze. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 256(2), 663-672. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2016.07.025>
- Crossley, É. (2020). Ecological grief generates desire for environmental healing in tourism after COVID-19. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 536-546. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1759133>
- Dang, L., & Weiss, J. (2021). Evidence on the Relationship between Place Attachment and Behavioral Intentions between 2010 and 2021: A Systematic Literature Review. *Sustainability*, 13(23), 13138. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132313138>

- Dedeoğlu, B. B., van Niekerk, M., Küçükergin, K. G., De Martino, M., & Okumuş, F. (2020). Effect of social media sharing on destination brand awareness and destination quality. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 26(1), 33-56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766719858644>
- Deutsch-Burgner, K., Ravualaparthi, S., & Goulias, K. (2014). Place happiness: its constituents and the influence of emotions and subjective importance on activity type and destination choice. *Transportation*, 41(6), 1323-1340. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-014-9553-2>
- 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>
- Fan, A., Chen, X., & Zhang, X. (2021). What factors contribute to higher travel happiness? Evidence from Beijing, China. *Journal of Advanced Transportation*, 2021(1), 8861841. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/8861841>
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104>
- Fried, M. (1963). Grieving for a lost home. In L. Duhl (Ed.), *The urban condition* (pp. 151-157). Basic Books. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429453496-20>
- Ganji, S. F. G., Johnson, L. W., & Sadeghian, S. (2021). The effect of place image and place attachment on residents' perceived value and support for tourism development. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(9), 1304-1318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1784106>
- Garner, B., Thornton, C., Pawluk, A. L., Cortez, R. M., Johnston, W., & Ayala, C. (2022). Utilizing text-mining to explore consumer happiness within tourism destinations. *Journal of Business Research*, 139, 1366-1377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.08.025>
- Godovykh, M., Ridderstaat, J., & Fyall, A. (2023). The well-being impacts of tourism: Long-term and short-term effects of tourism development on residents' happiness. *Tourism Economics*, 29(1), 137-156. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548166211041227>

- Guadagnoli, E., & Velicer, W. F. (1988). Relation of sample size to the stability of component patterns. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(2), 265–275. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0033-2909.103.2.265>
- Halpenny, E. A. (2010). Pro-environmental behaviours and park visitors: The effect of place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(4), 409–421. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.04.006>
- Han, B., Li, D., & Chang, P. J. (2021). The effect of place attachment and greenway attributes on well-being among older adults in Taiwan. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 65, 127306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2021.127306>
- Harman, H. H. (1976). *Modern factor analysis* (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jedm.12050>
- Hidalgo, M. C., & Hernández, B. (2001). Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(3), 273–281. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jevp.2001.0221>
- Hou, J.S., Lin, C.H., & Morais, D.B. (2005). Antecedents of attachment to a cultural tourism destination: The case of Hakka and non-Hakka Taiwanese visitors to Pei-Pu, Taiwan. *Journal of Travel Research*, 44(2), 221–233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287505278988>
- Hsu, F. C., & Scott, N. (2020). Food experience, place attachment, destination image, and the role of food-related personality traits. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 44, 79–87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.05.010>
- Huang, A. (2022). A network model of happiness at destinations. *Tourism Analysis*, 27(2), 133–147. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354221x16187814403100>
- Huang, Z., Huang, S., Yang, Y., Tang, Z., Yang, Y., & Zhou, Y. (2021). In pursuit of happiness: Impact of the happiness level of a destination country on Chinese tourists' outbound travel

- choices. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(5), 713–725.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2421>
- Israel, G. D. (1992). *Determining sample size (Fact Sheet PEOD-6)*. University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), EDIS.
- Kasarda, J. D., & Janowitz, M. (1974). Community attachment in mass society. *American Sociological Review*, 39(3), 328–339. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094293>
- Klemm, A. J. (2019). Thailand as a Foreign Film Production Destination: Developments and Challenges from 2016 to 2018. *Southeast Asian Media Studies*, 1(2), 1-18.
- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731509336986>
- Knez, I., & Eliasson, I. (2017). Relationships between personal and collective place identity and well-being in mountain communities. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 79. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00079>
- Konecnik, M., & Gartner, W. C. (2007). Customer-based brand equity for a destination. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(2), 400–421. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2006.10.005>
- Lee, C. C., Chen, M. P., & Peng, Y. T. (2021). Tourism development and happiness: International evidence. *Tourism Economics*, 27(5), 1101–1136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354816620921574>
- Lee, H., Lee, J., Chung, N., & Koo, C. (2018). Tourists' happiness: Are there smart tourism technology effects? *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(5), 486–501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2018.1468344>
- Lee, K. Y., & Jeong, M. G. (2021). Residential environmental satisfaction, social capital, and place attachment: The case of Seoul, Korea. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 36(2), 559–575. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-020-09780-2>

- Lee, R. J., & Nicewander, W. A. (1988). Thirteen ways to look at the correlation coefficient. *The American Statistician*, 42(1), 59–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00031305.1988.10475524>
- Lee, S. W., & Xue, K. (2020). A model of destination loyalty: Integrating destination image and sustainable tourism. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 25(4), 393–408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2020.1713185>
- Lee, S., Joo, D., Lee, C.-K., & Woosnam, K. M. (2020). Korean DMZ tourists' perceived similarity and shared beliefs in predicting place attachment and support for tourism development. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 18, 100467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100467>
- Lenehan, T., & Harrington, D. (1998). *Managing quality in tourism: Theory and practice*. Oak Tree Press.
- Lengieza, M. L., Swim, J. K., & Hunt, C. A. (2021). Effects of post-trip eudaimonic reflections on affect, self-transcendence, and philanthropy. *The Service Industries Journal*, 41(3–4), 285–306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2019.1636966>
- Li, J., Pan, L., & Hu, Y. (2021). Cultural involvement and attitudes toward tourism: Examining serial mediation effects of residents' spiritual well-being and place attachment. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 20, 100601. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2021.100601>
- Lipovčan, L. K., Brajša-Žganec, N., & Poljanec-Borić, S. (2014). What is good for tourists should be good for residents too: The relationship between the quality of the touristic offer and subjective well-being of residents. *Tourism Analysis*, 19(6), 719–730. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354214x14146846679448>
- Lopez-Toro, A. A., Diaz-Munoz, R., & Perez-Moreno, S. (2010). An assessment of the quality of a tourist destination: The case of Nerja, Spain. *Total Quality Management*, 21(3), 269–289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14783360903553164>

- Low, S. M., & Altman, I. (1992). *Place attachment: A conceptual inquiry*. In *Place attachment* (pp. 1-12). Boston, MA: Springer US. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4684-8753-4>
- Mandal, A. (2016). Size and type of places, geographical region, satisfaction with life, age, sex, and place attachment. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 47(1), 159–169. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ppb-2016-0018>
- Maricchiolo, F., Mosca, O., Paolini, D., & Fornara, F. (2021). The mediating role of place attachment dimensions in the relationship between local social identity and well-being. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 712364. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.645648>
- Marques, C., da Silva, R. V., & Antova, S. (2021). Image, satisfaction, destination, and product post-visit behaviors: How do they relate in emerging destinations? *Tourism Management*, 85, 104293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104293>
- Martin, M. W. (2008). Paradoxes of happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9(2), 171–184.
- McCabe, S., & Johnson, S. (2013). The happiness factor in tourism: Subjective well-being and social tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 41, 42–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-007-9056-3>
- McDonald, R. P., & Ho, M. H. R. (2002). Principles and practice in reporting structural equation analyses. *Psychological Methods*, 7(1), 64–82. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989x.7.1.64>
- Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Mehrdadi, A., Sadeghian, S., Direkvand-Moghadam, A., & Hashemian, A. (2016). Factors affecting happiness: A cross-sectional study in the Iranian youth. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research*, 10(5), VC01–VC03. <https://doi.org/10.7860/jcdr/2016/17970.7729>
- Mesch, G. S., & Manor, O. (1998). Social ties, environmental perception, and local attachment. *Environment and Behavior*, 30(4), 504–519. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001391659803000405>



- Mlejnkova, K. (2021). Quality of a rural destination: Visitor and resident approach. *Academica Turistica-Tourism and Innovation Journal*, 14(1), 87-99. <https://doi.org/10.26493/2335-4194.14.87-99>
- Moeinaddini, M., Asadi-Shekari, Z., Aghaabbasi, M., Saadi, I., Shah, M. Z., & Cools, M. (2020). Proposing a new score to measure personal happiness by identifying the contributing factors. *Measurement*, 151, 107115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.measurement.2019.107115>
- Mogilner, C., Kamvar, S. D., & Aaker, J. (2011). The shifting meaning of happiness. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2(4), 395–402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550610393987>
- Montes-Guerra, M. I., Zapata-Cuervo, N. A. T. A. L. I. A., & Miyoun, J. (2023). U.S. travelers' perceived image of Latin America as a future travel destination. *Journal of Tourism & Development*, 41, 95-112. <https://doi.org/10.34624/rtd.v41i0.27856>
- Mou, J., & Brito, P. Q. (2021). Destination meanings shaped by home environment: A schema-based intra-cultural comparison of Chinese and Macau outbound tourists in Europe. *Leisure Sciences*, 46(1), 61-81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2021.1913267>
- Mukherjee, S., Adhikari, A., & Datta, B. (2018). Quality of tourism destination—a scale development. *Journal of Indian Business Research*, 10(1), 70-100. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jibr-07-2017-0104>
- Murphy, P., Pritchard, M. P., & Smith, B. (2000). The destination product and its impact on traveler perceptions. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 43–52. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0261-5177\(99\)00080-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0261-5177(99)00080-1)
- Mussalam, G. Q., & Tajeddini, K. (2016). Tourism in Switzerland: How perceptions of place attributes for short and long holiday can influence destination choice. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 26, 18-26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2015.09.003>
- Nasir, M., Mohamad, M., Ghani, N., & Afthanorhan, A. (2020). Testing mediation roles of place attachment and tourist satisfaction on destination attractiveness and destination loyalty

- relationship using phantom approach. *Management Science Letters*, 10(2), 443–454. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2019.8.026>
- Ng, M. K., Yeung, T. C., Kwan, M. P., Tieben, H., Lau, T. Y. T., Zhu, J., & Xu, Y. (2021). Place qualities, sense of place and subjective well-being: A study of two typical urban neighbourhoods in Hong Kong. *Cities & health*, 6(6), 1122–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2021.1993038>
- Oliveira, A. J. de, Pereira, A. M., Augusto, L. P., Santo, P. M., & Santos, S. C. (2023). The influence of tourists' motivations when visiting different destinations: Evidence for destination communication. *Journal of Tourism & Development*, 40, 47–56. <https://doi.org/10.34624/rtd.v40i0.31420>
- Pai, C. K., Liu, Y., Kang, S., & Dai, A. (2020). The role of perceived smart tourism technology experience for tourist satisfaction, happiness, and revisit intention. *Sustainability*, 12(16), 6592. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12166592>
- Panthamit, N. (2021). Impacts of COVID-19 on BRI: A case study of Thailand. In *The reshaping of China-Southeast Asia relations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic* (pp. 199–220). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4416-7\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4416-7_8)
- Park, J., & Jeong, E. (2019). Service quality in tourism: A systematic literature review and keyword network analysis. *Sustainability*, 11(13), 3665. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11133665>
- Rajaratnam, S. D., Nair, V., Pahlevan Sharif, S., & Munikrishnan, U. T. (2015). Destination quality and tourists' behavioural intentions: Rural tourist destinations in Malaysia. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 7(5), 463–472. <https://doi.org/10.1108/whatt-06-2015-0026>
- Ramkissoon, H., & Mavondo, F. T. (2015). The satisfaction–place attachment relationship: Potential mediators and moderators. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(12), 2593–2602. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.05.002>

- Rollero, C., & De Piccoli, N. (2010). Place attachment, identification and environment perception: An empirical study. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30(2), 198–205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.12.003>
- Sang, L. X., Wang, L. J., Lu, X. Y., Zhang, S. W., & Wang, X. W. (2018). Research on the relationship between celebrity effect and tourist behavior intention: Mediating effect of place attachment. *Journal of Hefei University of Technology (Social Sciences)*, 32(2), 71–80.
- Sawada, S., & Toyosato, T. (2021). The moderating effect of place attachment on the relationship between economic status and well-being among older adults in Japan. *Geriatric Nursing*, 42(3), 721–726. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gerinurse.2021.03.003>
- Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2017). Place attachment enhances psychological need satisfaction. *Environment and Behavior*, 49(4), 359–389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916516637648>
- Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2017). The experienced psychological benefits of place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 51, 256–269. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2017.04.001>
- Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60(5), 410–421. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.60.5.410>
- Shumaker, S., & Taylor, R. B. (1983). Toward a clarification of people-place relationships: A model of attachment to place. In S. Shumaker (Ed.), *Environmental psychology: Directions and perspectives* (pp. 19-25). Sage Publications.
- Stedman, R. C. (2006). Understanding place attachment among second homeowners. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 50(2), 187–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764206290633>
- Stedman, R. C., Lathrop, R. C., Clark, B., Ejsmont-Karabin, J., Kasprzak, P., Nielsen, K., ... & Zhukova, A. (2007). Perceived environmental quality and place attachment in North American and European temperate lake districts. *Lake and Reservoir Management*, 23(4), 330–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07438140709354022>

- Streiner, D. L., & Norman, G. R. (2008). *Health measurement scales: A practical guide to their development and use (4th ed.)*. Oxford University Press.
- Suherlan, H., & Hidayah, N. (2021). Destination image dimension: A descriptive analysis of foreign visitors at Borobudur, Indonesia. *Journal of Industrial Tourism Development Studies*, 9(2), 117-127. <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jitode.2021.009.02.04>
- Sumaryadi, S., Hurriyati, R., Wibowo, L. A., & Gaffar, V. (2021). The relationship between the quality of destination and tourist satisfaction: The role of destination attributes. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics, and Business*, 8(4), 929–937. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2021.vol8.no4.0929>
- Tan, C. S., Chong, S. L., Masanda, A. B., & George, S. (2022). Psychometric qualities evaluation of the Interdependent Happiness Scale across Malaysia, Philippines, and India. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(1), 187. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010187>
- Tasci, A. D., Uslu, A., Styliadis, D., & Woosnam, K. M. (2021). Place-oriented or people-oriented concepts for destination loyalty: Destination image and place attachment versus perceived distances and emotional solidarity. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(2), 430-453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520982377>
- Theodorakis, N. D., Tsigilis, N., & Alexandris, K. (2009). The mediating role of place attachment on the relationship between service quality and loyalty in the context of skiing. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 6(3), 277–291. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijsmm.2009.029089>
- Tinsley, H. E., & Tinsley, D. J. (1987). Uses of factor analysis in counseling psychology research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 34(4), 414–424. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-0167.34.4.414>

- Uysal, M., Sirgy, M. J., Woo, E., & Kim, H. L. (2016). Quality of life (QOL) and well-being research in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 53, 244–261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.07.013>
- Vada, S., Prentice, C., & Hsiao, A. (2019). The influence of tourism experience and well-being on place attachment. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 47, 322–330. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.12.007>
- Vada, S., Prentice, C., Scott, N., & Hsiao, A. (2020). Positive psychology and tourist well-being: A systematic literature review. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 33, 100631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2019.100631>
- Veenhoven, R. (1995). World database of happiness. *Social Indicators Research*, 34(3), 299–313. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01078689>
- Vinodan, A., & Manalel, J. (2019). Examining the linkages of community intervention strategies and destination quality of ecotourism destinations. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 20(3), 362–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008x.2018.1537820>
- Wang, X. C., Wang, C. Y., & Kim, H. H. (2021). Research on the characteristics of Chinese tourist flow to Thailand: Application of the social network analysis (SNA) method. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(11), 243–251. <https://doi.org/10.56022/ceas.2022.28.2.87>
- Wong, J. Y., & Lai, T. C. (2015). Celebrity attachment and behavioral intentions: The mediating role of place attachment. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 17(2), 161–170. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1974>
- World Tourism Organization. (2016). *UNWTO tourism highlights 2016 edition*. <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284418145>
- Yang, F. X., & Wong, I. A. (2020). The social crisis aftermath: Tourist well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(6), 859–878. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1843047>

- Yang, W., Zhang, Y., & Wang, Y. C. (2023). Would travel experiences or possessions make people happier?. *Journal of Travel Research*, 62(2), 412-431. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875211064631>
- Yoshida, Y., Matsuda, H., Fukushi, K., Takeuchi, K., & Watanabe, R. (2022). The missing intangibles: Nature's contributions to human well-being through place attachment and social capital. *Sustainability Science*, 17, 809-822. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-021-01067-x>
- Yuan, K. S., & Wu, T. J. (2021). Environmental stressors and well-being in middle-aged and elderly people: The mediating role of outdoor leisure behavior and place attachment. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-021-13244-7>
- Yuksel, A., Yuksel, F., & Bilim, Y. (2010). Destination attachment: Effects on customer satisfaction and cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 274–284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.03.007>