



Guidelines for Strengthening Collaboration in the Sustainable Development of Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism: A Case Study of Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province

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Abstract

This research aimed to: (1) examine the level of sustainable development in Buddhist faith-based tourism at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province; (2) compare the perceptions of tourists and stakeholders toward the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism, classified by personal characteristics; (3) investigate the causal relationships between religious, cultural, community, and management factors influencing the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism; and (4) propose guidelines for enhancing collaboration among temples, communities, government agencies, the private sector, and tourists to promote sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism. The sample group comprised 384 tourists and pilgrims visiting Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, and 10 key informants including monks, community leaders, and representatives from tourism-related agencies in Maha Sarakham Province. The research instruments consisted of a questionnaire and an in-depth interview form. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, multiple regression analysis, and content analysis. The findings revealed that the overall level of sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism was high. Pilgrims with different ages, educational backgrounds, and levels of religious experience showed statistically significant differences in their perceptions of tourism development. Religious and cultural factors—such as Dhamma-related activities, faith in Buddhist teachings, participation of temples and communities, and government support—were found to have a positive influence on the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism. Guidelines for strengthening collaboration include: (1) establishing temple–community–government networks, (2) promoting the integration of Dhamma learning with tourism activities, (3) designing sustainable religious tourism routes, and (4) developing spiritual learning centers aligned with the philosophy of sufficiency economy.

Keywords: collaboration, religious tourism, Buddhist faith, sustainable development

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism has emerged as a vital branch of cultural tourism that has gained increasing popularity in Thailand, particularly in an era when people are seeking inner peace and spiritual fulfillment alongside physical relaxation (Hemprapai, P. K., Nilnama, S., Sriyad, K., Pangthrap, K., Faith-based Buddhist tourism plays a significant role in disseminating the Dhamma, cultivating moral values, and fostering sustainable local economic

development within the context of Thai culture (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2024). Thitadhammo, P. M., Varadhammo, P. W., & Pornbandalchai, D. (2023).

The development of Buddhist faith-based pilgrimage tourism is not solely aimed at generating income from visitors, but also at preserving and promoting Buddhist values as sources of spiritual learning, cultural enrichment, and ways of life that harmoniously connect temples, communities, and pilgrims Worapongpat, N. (2023d). This form of tourism contributes to the preservation of Buddhist arts and culture—such as temple architecture, meditation practices, merit-making, and Dhamma-related activities—thereby strengthening the link between faith and sustainable development. Maha Sarakham Province possesses exceptional potential for faith-based tourism development, as it is home to numerous forest monasteries and meditation centers. Worapongpat, N. (2023c). Among these, Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen stands out as a prominent center of Vipassana meditation practice in the forest tradition. Manop Nakkanrian, B., Nakkanrian, B., & Saramas, C. (2022). The temple regularly welcomes monks and laypeople seeking spiritual cultivation and has been recognized as a Dhamma learning hub of the central Northeastern region. Worapongpat, N. (2023b). Its tranquil natural surroundings and the active participation of the surrounding community in temple maintenance and Buddhist activities such as meditation retreats, Phra Vessantara sermons, walking pilgrimages following the path of Luang Pu Mun, and volunteer programs reflect a strong collaborative model among temples, communities, and government agencies that effectively drives faith-based tourism. Palmer, N. J., & Chuamuangphan, N. (2021).

Nevertheless, the current management of this form of tourism remains fragmented, particularly in terms of coordination among key sectors-temples, tourism authorities, government agencies, private organizations, and local communities. The lack of structured collaboration networks and clear development guidelines may hinder the continuity and sustainability of Buddhist faith-based tourism (Department of Religious Affairs, 2023). Therefore, studying guidelines for strengthening collaboration in the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism is essential to establish a management framework that aligns with Buddhist principles and contributes to the long-term development of local communities.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the level of sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province.
2. To explore the perceptions of tourists and stakeholders toward the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province.
3. To compare the perceptions of tourists toward the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism, classified by their personal characteristics.

4. To investigate the causal relationships between faith-based tourism factors—namely tourist attractions, accessibility and transportation, temple and community services, religious activities, and facilities and the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism.

5. To propose guidelines for strengthening collaboration among temples, local communities, government agencies, and the private sector in the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

The literature on religious and faith-based tourism is broad and interdisciplinary, drawing on tourism studies, religious studies, cultural geography, and community development, (Phra Kru Pariyatti Wachirakhun, 2021). Scholarship in this area addresses both the experiential dimensions of pilgrimage and religious travel (motivation, meaning, ritual practice) and the structural dimensions (planning, management, economic impacts, and sustainability). Worapongpat, N. (2023a). This review synthesizes key findings and theoretical perspectives relevant to the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism, with particular focus on temple–community state collaboration, factors that shape visitors' perceptions and behaviour, and the managerial conditions that enable resilient, culturally sensitive tourism at monastic sites, Phra Supakit Supanyo, & Phra Methee Pariyatti Wiboon., (2023).

2.1 Religious tourism and faith-based tourism: concepts and typologies

Religious tourism has been conceptualized variously as pilgrimage, spiritual tourism, and faith-based tourism, each carrying different emphases. Worapongpat, N. & Sandusit Borivongtrakul. (2022). Pilgrimage research foregrounds ritual movement, sacred geography, and transformative experience, seeing pilgrim journeys as practices of devotion and identity formation (Phraathikanchaiya Piyatharo, Muangmai Sirirote, & Namsena, P. (2023) Spiritual tourism broadens the frame to include secular seekers pursuing wellness, mindfulness, or meaning (Worapongpat, N. (2022d). Faith-based tourism—particularly when tied to an established religious tradition such as Buddhism—combines elements of ritual, doctrinal learning, and community engagement; it often involves temple-based activities (retreats, observance days, merit-making) that function both as religious practice and as tourism supply (Rai, H. D., 2020). Distinguishing these typologies is important because motivations, expectations, and acceptable management interventions differ across categories (Sanvises, D., & Kaewnuch, K., 2025).

2.2 Motivations, visitor characteristics, and experiential outcomes

A consistent body of research identifies multiple, overlapping motives for religious travel: devotion and ritual obligation, spiritual growth and wellbeing, cultural curiosity, and leisure (Santachitto, P. P., 2021). Demographic and personal factors age, education, religiosity, prior pilgrimage experience mediate these motives and shape satisfaction and perceived authenticity (Worapongpat, N. (2022c). Studies focused on Buddhist contexts report that many visitors seek a combination of doctrinal instruction (Dhamma learning), meditative practice, and participation in ritualized merit-making; others are attracted by heritage and aesthetic qualities of temple architecture and landscape (Shinde, K.

(2021). Understanding this heterogeneity is essential for designing differentiated services and interpretive programming that respect religious meanings while meeting visitor needs. Worapongpat, N. (2022b).

2.3 Sacred sites, cultural heritage, and authenticity

The literature emphasizes the centrality of authenticity and heritage interpretation at sacred sites, Sotrin Chokkatitwattana, 2022). Authenticity is both a perceived quality and a negotiated practice: management interventions (interpretive signage, guided tours, commodified religious souvenirs) can enhance access yet may risk commodifying or diluting sacredness if not carefully calibrated (Worapongpat, N., 2022a). In Buddhist contexts, scholarship shows that maintaining ritual integrity—respect for monastic rules, appropriate visitor behaviour, and prioritization of devotional over commercial activities—is a recurring concern (Tuntipisitkul, P., Tsusaka, T. W., Kim, S. M., Shrestha, R. P., & Sasaki, N., 2021). Effective heritage management therefore balances open access and protection of religious practice, through zoning, temporal regulations (e.g., event scheduling), and community stewardship.

2.4 Accessibility, services, and facilities as determinants of sustainability

Physical accessibility (transport links, signage, walkability) and quality of visitor services (accommodation, interpretation, sanitary facilities) are often treated as pragmatic determinants of tourism development (Worapongpat, N., Wongkumchai, T., Sopranan, C., Bhasabutr, P., & Somchob, P., 2023). Accessibility enhances inclusivity allowing older pilgrims, families, and international visitors to participate but can increase pressures on fragile temple ecologies and on monastic rhythms. The literature encourages low-impact infrastructure and context-sensitive amenities that support extended stays for retreats and learning, rather than short, consumption-oriented visits (Worapongpat, N., Nirandon, C., Issaralam, C., Khamsai, S., Hemchatluechai, M., 2023). Studies recommend participatory planning that aligns facility provision with local carrying-capacity assessments and with monastic schedules.

2.5 Community participation and local economic impacts

Community-based approaches to religious tourism receive strong support in the literature for their potential to distribute benefits and to sustain cultural practices (Worapongpat, N., Phokanittanon, C., 2020). When local residents are involved in service provision (homestays, food, guiding, craft production) and governance, tourism can strengthen local livelihoods and deepen custodial ties to sacred spaces (Worapongpat, N., 2021). However, community involvement is not automatic: power asymmetries, weak capacity, and unclear benefit-sharing mechanisms can marginalize locals or generate conflict (Worapongpat, N., Choothong, R., Piamsuphakpong, T., Salathong, P., & Issalam, C., 2021). Research therefore highlights the need for institutional arrangements—cooperatives, community enterprises, and formal agreements with temples—to ensure equitable participation.

2.6 Institutional arrangements, governance, and multi-sectoral collaboration

Effective governance for faith-based tourism often requires coordination across multiple stakeholders: monastic authorities, local government, tourism organizations, civil society, and private entrepreneurs. The literature draws on stakeholder theory and collaborative governance frameworks to argue that networked arrangements (multi-stakeholder platforms, memoranda of understanding, joint management committees) foster shared visioning, resource pooling, and conflict resolution (Awais-E-Yazdan, M., Popescu, V., Birau, R., & Bărbăcioru, I. C., 2025). Case studies show that where such networks are weak or ad hoc, initiatives suffer from duplication, inconsistent quality, and short-termism (Ghimire, H. L., 2019). Conversely, successful models combine respect for religious autonomy with clear roles for public agencies in infrastructure and marketing, and for communities in services and cultural mediation.

2.7 Sustainability frameworks and ethical considerations

Sustainability in religious tourism is multidimensional—environmental, socio-cultural, and economic—and must also account for spiritual integrity (And Worapongpat, N., 2023f). Scholars propose frameworks that integrate carrying-capacity assessment, cultural impact evaluation, and participatory monitoring to ensure that tourism supports rather than undermines sacred functions. Ethical dimensions include the commodification of devotion, privacy of monastic life, and the potential for external actors to instrumentalize religion for commercial ends (Kanchanathaveekul, K., Buddhapoompitak, W., Srithongphim, W., & Tangmungmee, H., 2024). In Buddhist settings, compatibility with principles such as non-harm (ahimsa) and moderation resonates with the Thai concept of the sufficiency economy—suggesting culturally congruent pathways for sustainable practice.

2.8 The role of learning, interpretation, and Dhamma education

A distinctive component of faith-based Buddhist tourism is the pedagogical role of temples: Dhamma instruction, meditation training, and moral education. Research indicates that integrating educational programming into tourism-structured retreats, Dhamma lectures, volunteer-based learning can deepen visitor engagement and lengthen stays, producing more meaningful outcomes than passive sightseeing (Unhasuta, S., Sasaki, N., & Kim, S. M., 2021). However, scaling such programming requires institutional capacity (trained instructors, curricula adapted for diverse audiences) and clear boundaries to preserve monastic priorities.

2.9 Gaps in the literature and implications for the present study

Despite an expanding evidence base, several gaps remain relevant to this study. First, empirical research on faith-based tourism in inland Thai forest monasteries particularly in the Isan (Northeastern) region is limited compared with studies on major pilgrimage circuits and Buddhist heritage sites. Second, few studies comprehensively link micro-level visitor perceptions (motivation, satisfaction) with meso-level service and accessibility factors and macro-level governance arrangements in a single analytical model. Third, while the need for multi-sector collaboration is widely acknowledged, there is limited systematic guidance on how to operationalize temple–community–state partnerships in ways that respect monastic autonomy and ensure equitable benefit sharing.

2.10 Theoretical framing for the current research

To address these gaps, the literature suggests a multi-theoretical approach combining stakeholder theory (to analyze governance and collaboration), sustainable tourism and carrying-capacity frameworks (to evaluate environmental and socio-cultural impacts), and pilgrimage/spiritual tourism theories (to interpret visitor motivations and experiential outcomes). This integrative framing allows the present study to examine causal relationships among site attributes (attractions, accessibility, services, religious activities, and facilities), visitor perceptions, and collaborative governance mechanisms, while grounding recommendations in culturally resonant principles such as sufficiency and Dhamma practice.

The literature converges on the view that sustainable development of faith-based tourism requires attentiveness to spiritual authenticity, careful infrastructure and service planning, inclusive community participation, and robust institutional collaboration. Building on these insights, research at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen can contribute empirical evidence on how temple–community–state networks and specific tourism factors interact to support sustainable, faith-centered tourism in a forest monastery context—and can offer practical, ethically grounded guidelines for strengthening collaboration in similar settings.

Research Conceptual Framework

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to comprehensively explore and analyze the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism. The conceptual framework of this study was developed based on the theory of sustainable tourism development and the participatory community development model which emphasize collaboration among multiple stakeholders—including temples, local communities, government agencies, and the private sector—in promoting sustainable tourism grounded in spiritual and cultural values. The framework consists of the following components:

Section 1: Personal Information of Respondents

This section collects demographic and background data of the respondents, including gender, age, educational level, occupation, average monthly income, and frequency of participation in religious tourism activities. These characteristics are used to compare perceptions and behaviors among different groups of tourists and pilgrims.

Section 2: Independent Variables:- Faith and Religious Tourism Factors

This section focuses on the core independent variables influencing sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism development, which include:

Faith and Spiritual Motivation – the level of individual belief, devotion, and intention to engage in religious travel and Buddhist practices.

Religious Activities and Faith Experience – participation in religious rituals, meditation, Dhamma talks, and pilgrimage experiences.

Accessibility and Religious Facilities – convenience of travel routes, accommodation, and facilities supporting pilgrims and visitors.

Temple and Community Participation – collaboration and engagement between temples and local communities in organizing religious tourism activities.

Government and Private Sector Support – involvement of public and private organizations in promoting, funding, and maintaining sustainable religious tourism.

Religious Media and Public Relations – communication channels and promotional activities that disseminate knowledge about Buddhist faith-based tourism.

Section 3: Dependent Variables — Sustainable Development of Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism

This section identifies the dependent variables representing the outcomes of sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism development, which are divided into four dimensions:

Economic Dimension – the contribution of faith-based tourism to local economic growth, employment creation, and income distribution.

Socio-Cultural Dimension – the preservation and promotion of local culture, social cohesion, and intergenerational learning within the community.

Environmental and Indigenous Knowledge Dimension – the conservation of natural resources, temple landscapes, and traditional wisdom associated with sustainable tourism practices.

Spiritual and Moral Dimension – the enhancement of inner peace, moral behavior, and understanding of Buddhist teachings among visitors and local people.

Research Process / Instruments / Study Area / Target Group

Process: Mixed-methods research combining survey and in-depth interviews.

Instruments: Structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides.

Study Area: Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province.

Target Group: 384 tourists and pilgrims visiting Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, and 10 key informants including monks, community leaders, and tourism officers.

Independent Variables:

Faith and religious tourism factors (faith and spiritual motivation, religious activities, accessibility, temple and community participation, government and private sector support, religious media and promotion)

Process / Instruments / Study Area / Target Group:

Mixed-methods approach using questionnaires and interviews conducted at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province, among tourists, pilgrims, and stakeholders

Dependent Variables:

Sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism (economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and spiritual dimensions)

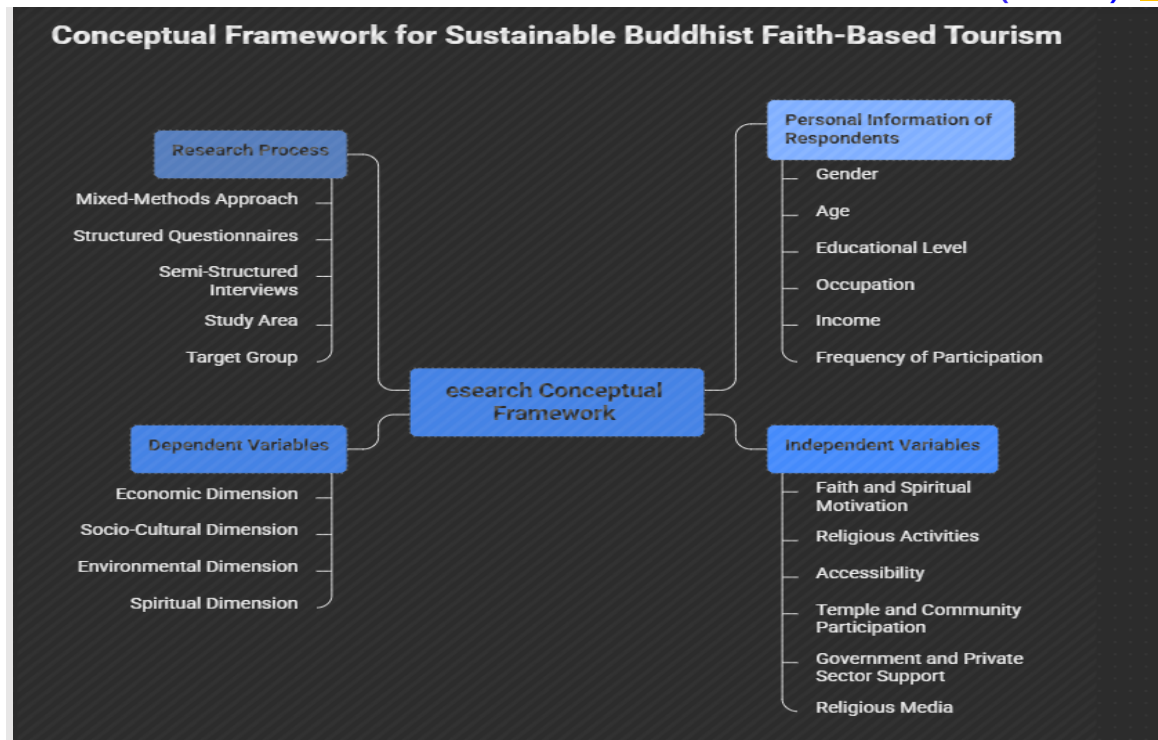


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study: Factors Influencing the Sustainable Development of Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component aimed to analyze the perceptions of tourists and pilgrims, while the qualitative component sought to obtain in-depth insights from key stakeholders involved in the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province.

3.1 Population and Samples

Population

The population comprised tourists and pilgrims who visited Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province, in 2025 for meditation retreats, Dhamma study, or participation in Buddhist religious activities. The total population size was unknown.

Sample

The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula resulting in a total of 384 respondents. The sampling method used was purposive sampling, selecting tourists and pilgrims who had participated in Buddhist faith-based tourism activities in the area at least once.

Key Informants

Ten (10) key informants were selected for qualitative data collection, consisting of:

The abbot of Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen (1 monk)

Buddhist lecturers or development monks (2 monks)

Members of the temple committee or community leaders (2 persons)

An officer from the Maha Sarakham Provincial Office of Buddhism (1 person)

An officer from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Maha Sarakham Office (1 person)

Local service providers (restaurant, homestay, or transport operators) (2 persons)

A Buddhist devotee/tourist with strong religious faith (1 person)

Total: 10 informants

3. 2 Research Instruments**3.2.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

Section 1: Demographic information — gender, age, educational level, occupation, average monthly income, and frequency of religious travel.

Section 2: Faith and Religious Tourism Factors -consisting of six dimensions:

Faith and spiritual motivation

Religious activities and faith experiences

Accessibility and religious facilities

Temple and community participation

Government and private sector support

Religious media and communication

(A total of 24 items measured using a five-point Likert scale).

Section 3: Sustainable Development of Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism — divided into four dimensions:

Community economic development

Socio-cultural preservation

Environmental conservation and local wisdom

Spiritual and moral enrichment

3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview guide was used for in-depth data collection with key informants.

Questions focused on the following themes:

Local strategies for developing Buddhist faith-based tourism

Forms of participation among temples, communities, government, and private sectors

Creation of collaborative networks across sectors

Challenges, obstacles, and pathways toward sustainable development

3.3 Data Collection Procedures**Quantitative Data:**

The researcher personally distributed questionnaires to 384 tourists and pilgrims during major Buddhist festivals (e.g., Visakha Bucha Day, Magha Bucha Day, and the annual meditation retreat at the temple).

Qualitative Data:

In-depth interviews were conducted with the 10 key informants using the semi-structured interview guide. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data accuracy and reliability were verified using data triangulation to enhance the credibility of findings.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Personal characteristics were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Opinions on the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Differences in opinions among respondents with varying demographic characteristics were examined using One-Way ANOVA.

Causal relationships between faith-based tourism factors (faith, participation, and support) and sustainable tourism development were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis.

3.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using content analysis by categorizing and coding interview responses according to key themes such as participation, sustainability, obstacles, and collaborative development. The synthesized results were then presented as policy recommendations and practical guidelines for promoting sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism.

3.5 Instrument Quality Assurance

Content Validity: The questionnaire was reviewed and validated by three experts in Buddhist studies and tourism management to ensure content relevance and accuracy.

Reliability Testing: Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, with an acceptable threshold of 0.70 or higher, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 Analysis of the Level of Sustainable Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism Development at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province

Aspect of Development	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Rank
Faith and Spiritual Motivation	4.02	0.76	High	1
Community and Temple Participation	3.96	0.81	High	2
Environment and Local Wisdom	3.78	0.83	High	3
Government-Private Sector Support	3.69	0.87	High	4
Religious Communication and Public Relations	3.61	0.85	High	5
Overall	3.81	0.79	High	—

The results in Table 1 indicate that the level of sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism development at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen was at a *high level*, particularly in the aspect of *faith and spiritual motivation*, which represents the core foundation of faith-based tourism.

Table 2 Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (S.D.) of Opinions Toward Sustainable Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism Development (Case Study: Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province) n = 384 respondents

Aspect of Development	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Level of Opinion	Rank
1. Community Participation	4.38	0.54	High	1
2. Tourism Management and Administration	4.21	0.60	High	2
3. Attraction and Facility Development	4.09	0.63	High	3
4. Environmental and Religious Resource Conservation	4.02	0.57	High	4
5. Buddhist Learning and Faith Promotion	3.95	0.68	High	5
Overall Mean	4.13	0.60	High	—

Descriptive Analysis Summary

1. Overall Opinions: Respondents demonstrated a *high level of opinion* toward the development of sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism ($\bar{x} = 4.13$, S.D. = 0.60). This implies that both local people and tourists perceive faith-based tourism as a valuable activity that can enhance both spiritual and economic values for the community.
2. Highest-Rated Aspect – Community Participation ($\bar{x} = 4.38$): This reflects strong collaboration and devotion among local communities surrounding Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen through activities such as merit-making festivals, monastic retreats, and volunteer services for pilgrims.
3. Tourism Management and Administration ($\bar{x} = 4.21$): The temple demonstrates systematic and effective management, involving cooperation among monks, community leaders, and local administrative organizations.
4. Buddhist Learning and Faith Promotion ($\bar{x} = 3.95$): Although at a high level, this was the lowest-rated aspect, suggesting the need to enhance “*Dhamma-based tourism*” activities, such as meditation routes, Buddhist psychology learning, and integration with the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy.

Table 3 Comparison of Respondents’ Opinions Based on Demographic Characteristics (One-way ANOVA)

Demographic Variable	Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Gender	Between Groups	0.842	1	0.842	1.267	0.262	Not significant ($p > 0.05$)
	Within Groups	75.436	113	0.668			
Age	Between Groups	4.218	3	1.406	2.831	0.042*	Significant ($p < 0.05$); Age 41–50 highest
Education Level	Between Groups	3.912	3	1.304	2.665	0.051	Not significant ($p > 0.05$)
Occupation	Between Groups	6.247	4	1.562	3.017	0.021*	Significant ($p < 0.05$); Civil servants/teachers highest
Monthly Income	Between Groups	5.038	4	1.259	2.782	0.030*	Significant ($p < 0.05$); 20,001–30,000 Baht highest

Demographic Variable	Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Frequency of Religious Travel	Between Groups	8.493	3	2.831	4.245	0.007**	Highly significant ($p < 0.01$); ≥ 3 trips/year highest

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

ANOVA Summary:

1. Gender and Education Level: No statistically significant differences were found ($p > 0.05$), indicating similar perceptions across genders and educational levels.
2. Age, Occupation, Income, and Frequency of Religious Travel: Significant differences were observed ($p < 0.05$). Specifically, middle-aged adults (41–50 years), civil servants or teachers, individuals with monthly income between 20,001–30,000 Baht, and frequent religious travelers exhibited the highest opinions.
3. Policy Implication: Faith-based tourism promotion should primarily target middle-aged individuals with stable income and strong faith, while strengthening collaboration among temples, communities, and educational institutions to foster sustainable spiritual engagement.

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis of Causal Relationships

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable: Sustainable Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism Development
Faith and Spiritual Motivation	Strongest positive effect ($\beta \approx 0.31$, Sig. < 0.001)
Temple and Community Participation	$\beta \approx 0.27$, Sig. < 0.001
Government–Private Sector Support	$\beta \approx 0.22$, Sig. < 0.01
Religious Media and Communication	$\beta \approx 0.18$, Sig. < 0.05
Environment and Local Wisdom	Not significant (Sig. > 0.05)

The regression analysis indicates that *faith and community participation* are the most influential factors promoting sustainable Buddhist tourism. The predictive equation is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 0.642 + 0.313(X_1) + 0.274(X_2) + 0.219(X_3) + 0.182(X_4) \\ \hat{Y} = 0.642 + 0.313(X_1) + 0.274(X_2) + 0.219(X_3) + 0.182(X_4)$$

Where Y = Sustainable Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism Development

Four Integrated Development Guidelines Adapted to the Buddhist Context

1. Faith and Spirituality:

- Promote meditation retreats, Dhamma talks, and mindfulness practices.
- Develop pilgrimage routes tracing the lives of revered monks.
- Integrate Buddhist arts and culture into spiritual tourism experiences.

2. Temple–Community–Network Collaboration:

Establish a Faith-Based Tourism Development Committee.

-Create a Volunteer Faith Network to support tourists and preserve sacred spaces.

-Encourage CSR projects aligned with Buddhist values.

3. Public–Private Sector Support:

-Develop integrated tourism plans linking religious and provincial tourism.

-Improve eco- friendly infrastructure such as electric shuttles and visitor centers.

-Promote interregional “Faith Tourism Routes” across the central northeastern provinces.

4. Creative Dhamma Communication:

-Produce multimedia campaigns, e.g., “Following the Path of Faith: Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen.”

-Create short documentaries and interviews with spiritual teachers.

-Utilize digital platforms (Facebook, YouTube, TikTok) to promote Dhamma alongside tourism experiences.

5. DISCUSSION

Objective 1: The findings revealed that the overall level of sustainable development of Buddhist faith- based tourism was high, particularly in the aspects of community participation and the continuous organization of religious activities. This can be attributed to the fact that Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen serves as a spiritual center for the community and regularly organizes traditional merit-making events aligned with the local Buddhist way of life. These findings correspond with Worapongpat, N., & Brorewongtrakhul, S., (2024). concept of Faith- Based Tourism, as well as study, which emphasized that community participation is a crucial factor in achieving sustainable development of religious tourism destinations.

Objectives 2–3: The results indicated that tourists with different levels of education, average monthly income, and frequency of religious travel exhibited statistically significant differences in their opinions toward faith-based tourism development. This may be because individuals with greater religious experience tend to value meditative and spiritual learning activities more than general tourists. This finding is consistent with Motivation for Religious Tourism theory and the study by Butcher, K., & Chomvilailuk, R. (2022). which found that the frequency of religious travel influences tourists’ perception of spiritual value.

Objective 4: Multiple regression analysis revealed that factors related to tourist attractions, temple and community services, and religious activities positively influenced the sustainable development of Buddhist faith- based tourism. This may be because the systematic improvement of religious infrastructure and well-organized activities enhance both the spiritual experience and satisfaction of visitors. These results align with the findings

of Worapongpat, N. (2023e), who highlighted the role of temples as central institutions in spiritual tourism development.

Objective 5: The study further identified suitable collaborative approaches, including the establishment of a joint tourism management committee among temples, local communities, and government agencies; the promotion of Dhamma-based tourism activities; and the creation of religious learning networks. Such multi-sectoral collaboration fosters integrated and sustainable management, consistent with Hall, C. M. (2006). Community-Based Tourism (CBT) model, which emphasizes community participation and the balance between economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

5.3 Originality and Body of Knowledge

This study, titled “Guidelines for Enhancing Collaboration in the Sustainable Development of Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism: A Case Study of Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen, Maha Sarakham Province,” generated new theoretical and practical insights conceptualized as the Integrated Faith-Based Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model.

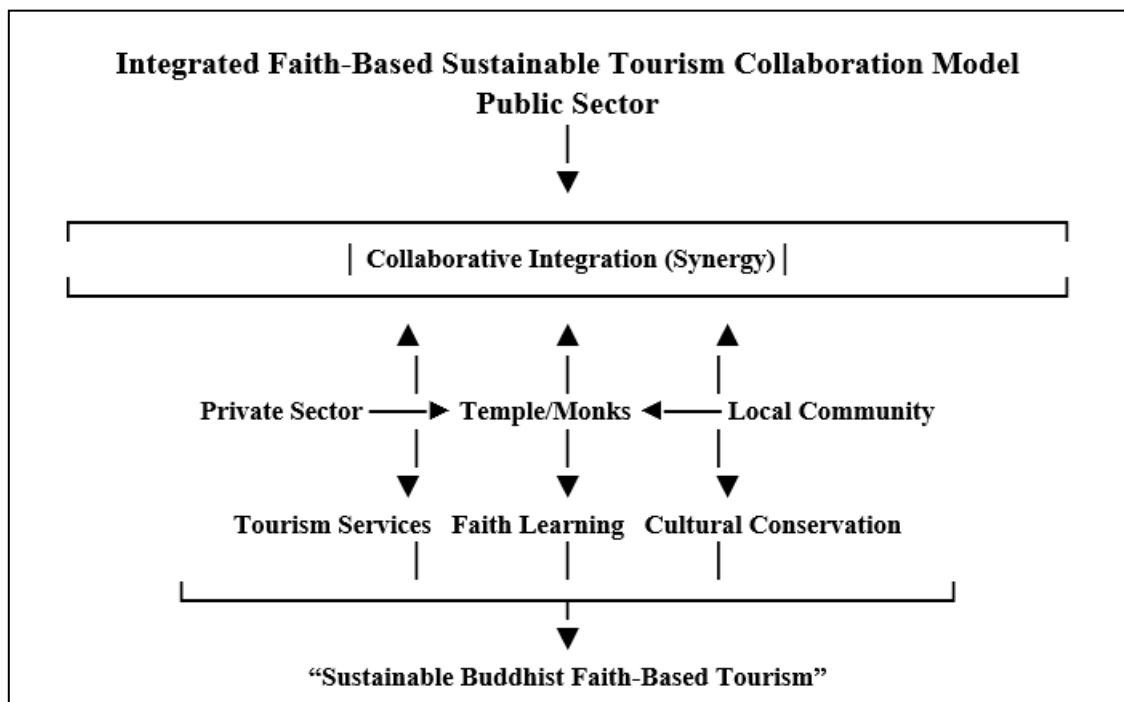


Figure 2 Integrated Faith-Based Sustainable Tourism Collaboration Model
Public Sector

Explanation of the Model

The diagram illustrates that the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen requires the integration of four key sectors:

Religious Institutions (Temples and Monks):

Act as the spiritual and moral center, preserving Buddhist teachings, values, and rituals that align with local traditions.

Local Communities:

Serve as the foundation for participation in management, tourist hospitality,

cultural product development, and environmental stewardship around the temple.

Public Sector:

Provides policy support, infrastructure development, budget allocation, and regional or national-level promotion.

Private Sector:

Contributes to investment, tourism business management, digital innovation, and creative marketing strategies.

The central mechanism linking these four sectors is Collaborative Integration, which balances Faith, Economy, and Environment, ultimately leading to the goal of Sustainable Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of New Knowledge

The findings suggest that sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism development depends on integrated collaboration among temples, local communities, government agencies, and the private sector. This collaboration should be grounded in the preservation of culture, traditions, and the environment, while simultaneously promoting local economic growth and spiritual learning among tourists.

This knowledge can be applied to faith-based tourism planning in other areas of Maha Sarakham Province and the broader Northeastern region of Thailand—particularly in the establishment of a “**Faith Learning Community**” that authentically connects temples and communities through shared cultural and spiritual values.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Recommendations for Practical Application

From Objective 1: The study found that the overall level of sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism development at Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen was high, particularly in tourism management and environmental conservation around the temple. Therefore, relevant agencies—such as the Office of Buddhism, the Subdistrict Administrative Organization, and the Office of Tourism and Sports of Maha Sarakham Province—should:

Promote the development of faith-based tourism in the form of a “Buddhist Cultural Learning Center.”

Develop faith-based tourism routes that connect Wat Pa Wang Nam Yen with nearby temples to expand economic benefits for local communities.

Improve infrastructure and facilities in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism.

From Objective 2: The results indicated that tourists expressed a high level of satisfaction with the sustainable development of Buddhist faith-based tourism, emphasizing the temple’s serene atmosphere, simplicity, and purity as essential spiritual qualities.

Therefore, temples and local communities should: Preserve the authenticity and sacredness of the temple and local culture without excessive modification for tourism.

Organize activities that foster spiritual faith, such as temporary ordination programs (nek khamma), meditation retreats, and pilgrimage-based Dhamma walks.

Encourage the community to act as “gracious local hosts” in welcoming visitors, thereby enriching tourists’ spiritual experiences.

From Objective 3: The research revealed that factors such as tourist attractions, accessibility, service quality, and religious activities had statistically significant causal relationships with sustainable Buddhist faith-based tourism development. Therefore, all relevant sectors should: Establish a “Faith-Based Tourism Coordination Center” to facilitate collaboration among temples, local communities, government agencies, and private organizations in joint management and development.

Develop digital and media-based tools, such as websites, mobile applications, or virtual tours, to promote Buddhist learning and awareness.

Implement low-impact tourism approaches that preserve the area’s tranquility and spiritual essence.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study produced an important finding — the “Integrated Collaborative Model for Sustainable Buddhist Faith-Based Tourism Development.” This model can be applied to other temples that serve as religious tourism destinations across the region to systematize and enhance sustainability in faith-based tourism.

Future research should therefore focus on the following areas: Examine the relationship between Pilgrim Behavior and Spiritual Motivation to design Dhamma-based tourism activities that better meet visitors’ spiritual needs. Develop a Faith-Based Economy Model linking religious tourism with community products and grassroots economic systems to promote inclusive local development. Investigate the impact of digital technology on Buddhist learning and Dhamma dissemination through tourism, exploring both its opportunities and challenges in sustaining faith-based education.

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