

Factors Influencing Cultural Tourism Decisions in Ubon Ratchathani

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the factors influencing Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani and to propose guidelines for developing these factors. The study employs a quantitative research method, focusing on Thai tourists visiting Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism. The sample consisted of 400 respondents, and data were collected via questionnaires using convenience sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique. The data analysis employed descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations, as well as stepwise multiple regression. The findings reveal that four main factors significantly influence cultural tourism decisions at the 0.05 level of significance: accommodation, accessibility, political stability, and cultural activities. Together, these variables can predict cultural tourism decisions with an accuracy of 76.40%. Among them, accommodation, accessibility, and political stability emerge as the most influential. The results indicate that both the government and private sectors, in collaboration with local communities, should prioritize the development of cultural tourism in Ubon Ratchathani. In particular, accessibility can be improved through reliable, safe transportation systems, such as shuttle bus services linking major cultural sites. Political stability must be maintained to enhance tourists' confidence regarding safety and security. Additionally, cultural activities should be diversified and designed to appeal to tourists of all ages and backgrounds, fostering participation, interaction, and memorable experiences. Overall, the study highlights the importance of infrastructure readiness, political stability, and community engagement in promoting cultural tourism in secondary provinces. These elements are essential for building tourist confidence and ensuring economic, social, and cultural sustainability. Furthermore, the findings help bridge knowledge gaps in understanding tourist decision-making in secondary destinations and provide practical guidelines for promoting sustainable cultural tourism in Thailand.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Factors Influencing Decisions, Ubon Ratchathani

INTRODUCTION

Ubon Ratchathani is a province in Thailand's northeastern region, also known as southern Isan. It is rich in history, culture, and tradition. It also has the readiness and the potential to support tourists (Kanoknisa Thanachokpisit & Alongkorn Akasang, 2021). Its uniqueness and cultural values are different from other places and full of cultural attractions in terms of lifestyle and culture related to religion and belief, like the famous candle festival, which can attract several domestic and international tourists (Nichanun Ornrat, 2018). This allows Ubon Ratchathani to be categorized as part of southern Isan's civilization tourism development, whose primary purpose is to elevate civilization and local wisdom to create tourism values and to connect with neighboring countries commercially (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). To drive cultural tourism, the province is implementing several projects to generate revenue while preserving culture and local traditions. This means the company balances economic development and local culture by developing tourist attractions that meet standards, improving facilities, and adopting a proactive strategy to promote tourism year-round. This includes promoting tourism via online channels to build perception and attract increasing tourists interested in cultural tourism in the minor provinces (Ubon Ratchathani Governor's Office, 2018).

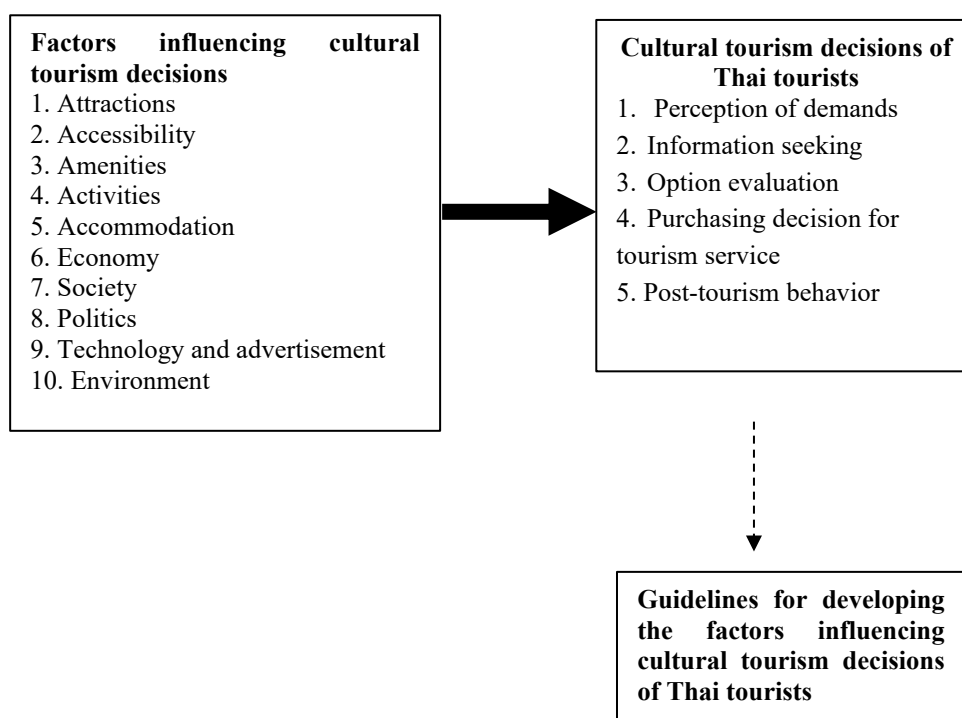
From 2020 to 2021, Thai tourists paid more attention to tourism in minor cities since there are various types of tourism with a sustainability focus. Their combination of culture, tradition, local wisdom, and Thai identity provided unique experiences to the tourists (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023). Moreover, they wanted to learn more about the local community's indigenouness or authenticity as highlighted by Kritsana Neanhom and Khampanart Wongwattanapong in 2021. Likewise, the Tourism Authority of Thailand's survey results reveal that 39.86% of Thai tourists decide to travel to minor cities and visit historical and cultural tourist attractions. Regarding activities, 32.79% choose to visit a religious site, 28.61% choose to taste local food, 18.26% decide to learn about the local community, 16.53% choose to learn about the history, and 14.51% decide to join local activities/annual festivals. All these are considered cultural tourist activities. Other survey results from tourism-related websites, such as McKinsey, Tripadvisor, and EIC, reveal similar findings: tourists worldwide demand exceptional experiences, diverse activities, and opportunities to learn about the destination's local history and lifestyle. In addition, they tend to place more importance on sustainability (AEC10News, 2023).

When considering the tourists visiting southern Isan's tourism development area, it was discovered that they came from the same provinces. However, some from other provinces chose to visit Nakhon Ratchasima, Buriram, Surin, and Sisaket rather than Ubon Ratchathani (Tourism Marketing Research Center, 2023). This reflects a decline in the number of tourists visiting the province, despite its interesting and culturally unique attractions. Therefore, it is essential to understand tourists' demands to enhance its competitiveness in cultural tourism and to formulate an effective, responsive tourism strategy to attract more tourists. Studying the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions is another approach that helps stakeholders better understand tourists' demands and use them as a guideline to develop cultural tourism for the province. Developing cultural tourism without understanding the actual demands would result in Ubon Ratchathani losing its competitiveness, and the tourists would decide to visit other areas instead. This could lead to a decrease in the number of tourists and provincial revenue, negatively impacting local employment and income. As a result, the researcher would like to study the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions of Thai tourists traveling to Ubon Ratchathani, develop guidelines for their development, and utilize them to optimize cultural tourism.

Objectives

- To study the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions of Thai tourists traveling to Ubon Ratchathani
- To propose guidelines for developing the factors influencing the cultural tourism decisions of Thai tourists

Conceptual Framework



Definition of Terms

1. Cultural tourism refers to traveling to study, learn, and seek experiences in local culture, traditions, customs, or lifestyles from tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani.
2. Tourists refer to Thai tourists who travel to cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani.
3. Factors influencing cultural tourism refer to the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani, including 10 factors: 1) attractions, 2) accessibility, 3) amenities, 4) tourism activities at the tourist attractions, 5) accommodation, 6) economy, 7) society, 8) politics, 9) technology and advertisement, and 10) environment
4. Decision-making refers to Thai tourists' decisions for cultural tourism in Ubon Ratchathani, including five key factors: 1) perception of demands, 2) information seeking, 3) option evaluation, 4) purchasing decision for tourism service, and 5) post-tourism behavior.

Concept and Theory or Related Research

Factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani

Attractions

Attractions are key factors that draw tourists to a place. They are unique resources in the area that can draw tourists' attention and interest. They can be divided into three types: natural, historical, and activity attractions (Taisu, 2016). Thanyaphat Phuripinitnun et al. (2022) also agree that tourist attractions, activities, and cultures that reflect a unique and attractive local civilization can attract tourists. In addition, Samaraweera & Upekshani (2019) mentions that there are five key success factors of tourist attractions (5As) including attractions, accessibility, amenities, accommodation, and activities (Thanyaphat Phuripinitnun et al., 2022; Sgeerazi, 2008; Hua et al., 2020). Regarding tourist attractions, Hartanto, Firmansyah, & Adhrianti (2022) argue that attractions should be promoted through digital marketing channels to create a tourism image that persuades tourists to visit (Hussien et al., 2020; Gustiani, 2018; Taiminen & Karjaluto, 2015; Xie, 2015). Ding et al. (2024) state that tourist attractions visited by tourists are nodes in the tourist movement network, and the movement between two tourist attractions is the bond between those nodes.

Huang et al. (2024) explains that tourist attractions represent tourists' expectations in various aspects such as entertainment, food and accommodation, cultural diversity, natural beauty, and facilities.

Shafiee (2025) emphasizes that tourist attractions play roles as factors that attract tourists to visit a particular area. They can be divided into several categories, including natural attractions, cultural attractions, and recreational activities. Having a variety of high-quality tourist attractions can help promote the development of tourism destinations, increase economic value, and create impressive experiences for tourists.

According to literature, cultural tourism attractions are unique tourism resources that can draw tourists' attention and interest in visiting a place. They represent a unique culture and a social lifestyle. They can be tourist attractions, activities, and traditions reflecting the civilization.

Accessibility

Accessibility facilitates convenient and safe transport to cultural tourist attractions (Sarocha Amornpongmkol, 2018). Morrison (2013) states that routes to tourist attractions require suitable public utility systems and infrastructure. Furthermore, Saengrawee Ketsuwan (2020) also proposes that accessibility is one of the key elements for tourism development. There should be routes or transport networks connecting nearby tourist attractions. Natalia et al. (2019) also state that accessibility is required for any destination so that tourists can enjoy it, an essential element they should receive. Taiminen and Karjaluto (2015) add that traveling to tourist attractions in rural areas nowadays requires awareness of the environment and sustainability. This can be achieved by presenting the use of sustainable transport systems and transport evaluation standards that consider the environment and social justice, to encourage local people to be part of sustainable tourism. Teixeira et al. (2025) define accessibility as the ability of all tourist groups, including those with special needs such as the elderly, the disabled, or individuals with limited mobility, to access and use tourist attractions equally and conveniently. Rubio-Escuderos et al. (2025) state that making tourist attractions "accessible to all" still faces many obstacles and requires improvements in places, services, and policies to ensure that all tourist groups can visit conveniently and equally.

It can be concluded that accessibility is a key factor in enabling tourists to reach tourist attractions. It should be convenient, fast, and safe, with suitable public utility systems and good infrastructure. It should connect with nearby tourist attractions, and it is essential to be aware of the environment and sustainability.

Amenities

Amenities are essential for tourism at tourist attractions (Chitchanok Srimueang, 2018; Simanihuruk, 2019). They are key factors influencing tourists' decisions to choose a destination that meets their needs. Mandić, Mrnjavac, & Kordić (2018) propose that basic amenities include transport, communication, and public utilities such as electricity and water. They are essential to tourist attractions because they allow them to reach the destination faster, safer, and more conveniently (Khairi, & Darmawan, 2021; Ginting, & Sasmita, 2018). Thanyaphat Phuripinitnun (2022) adds that technology should be integrated into tourist attractions, for example, as a tool that helps tourists search for information about the place or service and provides greater convenience. In addition, Kanokporn Kingket and Chanpen Wannarak (2019) say that the tourist attractions' image and amenities help build loyalty among tourists, which can benefit the Thai tourism industry in the aspect of sustainable development (Tomej & Liburd, 2019).

All in all, amenities at cultural tourist attractions refer to services and basic public utilities essential to tourism at the attractions, provided for tourists' convenience.

Activities

Tourism activities at the tourist attractions allow the tourists to participate. Tourists can participate in local activities that are important to those seeking unique experiences. The activities should be varied and responsive to the tourists' demands (Rid, Ezeuduji, & Pröbstl-Haider, 2014; Omarova et al., 2021). Similarly, Tien et al. (2021) note that cultural tourism activities are essential for tourists seeking unique experiences, so it is vital to offer them activities to participate in to prevent boredom and ensure they leave with a positive impression of the place. They can be part of the locals' way of living (Winter et al., 2019). Thanyaphat Phuripinitnun (2022) considers activities to be significant elements. Not only is tourism about traveling to see the beauty of tourist attractions, but it is also essential for visitors to have experiences that are preserved in their memories. Moreover, the activities help generate income for the local community.

In conclusion, activities allow tourists to participate in local life. They are essential to those seeking unique experiences and memorable memories. The activities usually help generate income for the community.

Accommodation

Accommodation is a vital factor in the tourism value chain, and it increases by the growth of both domestic and international tourism (Gössling & Lund-Durlacher, 2021). Accommodation services at cultural tourist attractions are essential for creating a positive image for visitors (Kuhzady, Seyfi, & Béal, 2022; Moliner et al., 2019). Thanyaphat Phuripinitnun (2022) states that an accommodation service requires a sufficient number of rooms, a variety of prices and services, and a convenient distance to tourist attractions. Furthermore, Samaraweera & Upekshani (2019) add that accommodation services are high on tourists' demands during their trip. The accommodation should also be clean and safe. This is similar to Ratchatasorn Chantornworasit (2021) who states that accommodation supporting those who want to stay overnight at the destination includes several types of accommodation providing different amenities such as hotels, resorts, guesthouses, and homestays.

It can be concluded that accommodation services at cultural tourist attractions play an important role in building a positive image for tourists. The services should be located near the attractions so that tourists can access them conveniently.

Economy

Economics studies social status based on income, occupation, nationality, and family background. A market can be divided based on demographics, including age, gender, family size and status, income, occupation, and education. Demography is essential to economic factors, as it can reflect a nation's status. Moreover, it can reflect tourists' behavior (Comerio & Strozzi, 2019). Similarly, Lim & To (2022) also see economic factors as essential in attracting tourists to the area, and this can influence tourists' spending on accommodation, food, and souvenirs. However, their spending potential is usually constrained during each trip (Wang et al., 2020). Lim & To (2022) further state that economic factors can affect tourism development. If tourism is affected by economic factors, almost all sectors will be affected as well. Therefore, it is another influential variable that could significantly affect tourism.

In summary, the economic factors mirror both the nation's status and tourists' behavior, reflecting spending across all aspects, such as accommodation, food, and souvenir purchases.

Society

Social factors are aspects of a society's culture and norms that reflect the values and experiences of its people. Meanwhile, customs, culture, festivals, history, and traditions draw tourists from other institutions to visit the area (Thawanrat Yarnthossil, 2021; Uslu, Alagöz, & Günes, 2020). Romtheera Jirawiphuset (2021) argues that social factors in daily life influence tourists' behavior. People with different statuses will have different purchasing

decisions. Nusara Paramee (2021) notes that social factors influence tourists' behavior by shaping their personalities and thoughts, including social values, nationality, religious beliefs, and geographical residence. These factors play a significant role in tourism decisions and the type of tourism that tourists choose, which are constantly changing and being developed (Wondirad, Kebete, & Li, 2021).

All in all, social factors are part of daily life and influence tourists' behavior. They specify consumption behavior and are shaped by people's personalities and thoughts. Meanwhile, customs, culture, festivals, history, and traditions draw tourists from other societies to visit the place.

Politics

Kotler & Keller (2012) state that political factors impact the tourism industry. Narinsiri & Rakphong (2017) mentions that political factors, policies, and situations influence tourism purchasing decisions. Instability in the political arena in a country can also affect consumers' feelings regarding travel security. Thawanrat Yarnthossil (2021) adds that a country with a stable political situation can encourage tourists from other countries; however, government policies can restrict or promote tourism. Likewise, Duangkamon Boonthaweessup (2012) agrees that a stable country will encourage tourists from other countries to visit. Abahre & Raddad (2016) also see political stability as a challenge to tourism. Several researchers have studied the impact of political stability on the tourism sector, and it is regarded as an obstacle that influences investor motivation and tourist numbers (Nunkoo, 2015; Ghalia et al., 2019; Pradeep, 2020).

In summary, political factors affect the tourism industry. Unstable political situations in a country can affect tourists' feelings about travel security, whereas government policies can restrict or promote tourism.

Technology and Advertisement

Technology, especially digitalization, is considered an outstanding factor today. It significantly facilitates visitors and those who purchase tourism products (Narinsiri & Rakphong, 2017; Kaushik, Agrawal, & Rahman, 2015; Buhalis, 2019). Nowadays, technology is built in and utilized in almost every industry, including tourism. Technology and innovation have been adapted to the tourism industry based on the context of tourist attractions; for example, the use of social media, touchless technology, virtual technology, and artificial intelligence (AI) which is bringing challenges to Thailand's tourism sector (Xiang, 2018; Cai, Richter, & McKenna, 2019; Buhalis, 2020). Chitchom Kanchula (2020) proposes that technology factors include products and services in tourism manufacturing that facilitate tourism. In addition, Wanasanan Phopetch (2019) adds that technology used in tourism services provides accommodation and air ticket booking systems as well as ticket issuing by the airlines which provides an efficient service to tourists. All this can raise confidence while showing their credibility as a service provider. Thawanrat Yarnthossil (2021) also says that technological advancement allows people to travel faster and more conveniently. It offers them more options and safer ways to travel. Moreover, it can attract tourists to the destination.

In summary, technology factors are extremely important for the tourism industry. It helps facilitate both service providers and users to get faster results while minimizing errors. Technological advancement can motivate tourists and influence their decisions at some tourist attractions.

Environment

Wanasanan Phopetch (2019) states that environmental factors influence the tourists' impressions. Geographic factors are considered the most influential factors in shaping their impressions, since social and cultural factors will shape them before they translate into attitudes. Attitudes and local cultures reflect tourists' tastes, travel values, and purchase decisions for products and services. They affect tourism product and service improvement while showing the level and type of improvement (Su & Swanson, 2017; Tang, 2015; Panwanitdumrong & Chen, 2021). The benefits include helping preserve the environment while traveling and encouraging the community to recognize the value of tourism resources. As a result, people can help maintain the community's landscape to attract more tourists. Additionally, the community can generate more income from tourism and use it to support environmental preservation in the area. This is considered an optimal utilization of tourism resources (Panwanitdumrong, & Chen, 2021).

All in all, environmental factors influence tourists' impressions. When tourism emerges, the community in the area will recognize the value of its tourism resources, which will encourage them to help maintain the community's landscape to attract more tourists.

Factors Influencing Tourist Decisions

Kitiya Manothammaraksa (2016) states that a consumer behavior model examines the motivations underlying product purchasing decisions. It begins from the stimulus creating demand when it passes by the consumers'

feelings and thoughts (Madhavan, & Kaliyaperumal, 2015; Mandel, 2017; Vijayalakshmi, & Gurumoorthy, 2018). Internal and external stimuli impact the purchase of products and services, including cultural factors such as social behavior, family, fondness, attitude, and so on, which are shared among groups of people. Furthermore, they indicate basic demand based on people's behavior; 1) personal factors are buyers' decisions influenced by their personality; 2) psychological factors are individuals' purchasing behaviors influenced by five psychological procedures, which are attitude, learning, perception, belief, and motivation. Moreover, Mandel (2017) proposes three key elements in tourist decisions, including the factors influencing the decision, the decision process, and the decision itself. Siriwan Sereerat, Parin Raksitanon, and Suporn Sereerat (2003) state that consumers will face five steps during the decision-making process: 1) acknowledging problem refers to those who understand the demand and need for the product, 2) information seeking, 3) option evaluation, 4) purchasing decision, and 5) post-purchasing behavior, which can either be satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

It can be concluded that the factors influencing the consumers' behavior consist of 1) cultural factors, 2) social class, 3) personal factors, and 4) psychological characteristics. Meanwhile, purchasing processes include 1) understanding demands, 2) seeking information on the products and services, 3) option evaluation, 4) making decisions about purchasing and traveling to the destination, and 5) post-traveling behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Samples

This research adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire for data collection. Cochran's (1997) formula for an infinite population is used to determine the sample size. The reliability level is also set at 95% and the ultimate error is set at 5%. The research analysis employs convenience sampling, a nonprobability sampling method. The calculations in the research are shown below.

$$n = \frac{Z^2}{4e^2}$$

When n refers to a desired sample size
 e refers to an acceptable margin of error, which is specified at 5% (level of 0.05)
 Z refers to a reliability level specified at 95%

$$\text{The calculation will four } n = \frac{(1.96)^2}{4(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 384.16$$

According to the above calculation, the sample size should be 384.16; however, 400 samples were used to facilitate the evaluation and account for survey errors.

Data Collection

The research utilizes a questionnaire for data collection and validation. The questions were carefully selected from the literature review, using reliable sources, to ensure alignment with the research's objectives. It was divided into three parts: 1) seven single-answer questions about personal data, 2) 54 questions about the 10 factors influencing Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani, and 3) 26 questions about Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in five aspects, with a 5-level Likert scale used for the rating scale.

Three experts examined the validity of the research questionnaire. Subsequently, 30 sets of questionnaires were administered to the sample group, and reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.852. As the result was close to 1, it was considered acceptable. Moreover, the institute verified the questionnaire for Human Research Ethics.

Data Analysis

The statistical methods used for data analysis include descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, and standard deviation, as well as Stepwise multiple regression analysis. The details are as follows.

Frequency distribution and percentage are used to analyze the tourists' data.

Descriptive analysis, including mean and standard deviation, is used to analyze opinion levels on the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani.

Inferential statistics, including stepwise multiple regression analysis, are used to analyze factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Part 1 of the research results presents an assessment of opinion levels regarding the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions among Thai tourists in Ubon Ratchathani, while Part 2 examines these factors using inferential statistics, including Stepwise multiple regression, for a more thorough analysis.

In part 1, the analysis presents results on opinion levels regarding factors influencing 'Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani. Descriptive analysis, including mean and standard deviation, was applied for this evaluation. The results are shown in Tables 1-4.

Table 1. Presents the average, standard deviation, interpretation, and rank of participants' opinions on the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions across all aspects.

Factors Influencing Cultural Tourism Decisions in Ubon Ratchathani	Opinion Levels (n = 400)			
		S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
Attractions	4.45	0.39	Highest	1
Accessibility	4.33	0.36	Highest	3
Amenities	4.25	0.47	Highest	5
Activities	4.39	0.48	Highest	2
Accommodation	4.23	0.52	Highest	7
Economy	3.85	0.39	High	10
Society	4.10	0.48	High	8
Politics	4.24	0.46	Highest	6
Technology and advertisement	4.10	0.47	High	8
Environment	4.30	0.51	Highest	4
Total aspects	4.23	0.36	Highest	

According to Table 1, the average opinion levels on the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani across all aspects are the highest ($X = 4.23$, S.D. = 0.36). When analyzing the three highest, the first highest aspect is an attraction ($X = 4.45$, S.D. = 0.39), followed by activities ($X = 4.39$, S.D. = 0.48) and accessibility ($X = 4.33$, S.D. = 0.36), respectively.

Table 2 shows the average, standard deviation, interpretation, and rank of the participants' opinion levels on the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in each aspect.

Factors Influencing Cultural Tourism Decisions in Ubon Ratchathani	Opinion Levels (n = 400)			
		S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
Attractions				
1. Beauty of the historic sites	4.40	0.57	Highest	4
2. Interesting background of the historic sites, cultural, and local beliefs	4.33	0.70	Highest	6
3. Outstanding and unique local food derived from cultural heritage	4.57	0.53	Highest	2
4. Popular and interesting local traditions	4.41	0.61	Highest	3
5. Attractive local lifestyle and wisdom	4.39	0.52	Highest	5
6. Indigenouness or authenticity of the tourist attractions	4.59	0.53	Highest	1
Total	4.45	0.39	Highest	
Activities			Highest	
1. Various tourism activities suitable for all tourist groups	4.51	0.52	Highest	1
2. Tourism activities reflecting the uniqueness of the place and its relation with history, culture, belief, and the local way of living	4.31	0.58	Highest	4
3. Tourism activities offering new experiences and impressions to the tourists	4.37	0.53	Highest	3
4. Tourism activities build relationships in families, groups of friends, and organizations	4.46	0.52	Highest	2
5. Tourism activities with security	4.29	0.59	Highest	5
Total	4.39	0.48	Highest	
Accessibility			Highest	

1. The cultural tourist attractions can connect to other places conveniently.	4.41	0.49	Highest	2
2. Roads for accessing the cultural tourist attractions are convenient with good standards.	4.27	0.58	Highest	4
3. Direction signs for the cultural tourist attractions are clear and easy to read.	4.17	0.67	High	5
4. Public vehicles for accessing the cultural tourist attractions are provided.	4.45	0.55	Highest	1
5. Accessing the cultural tourist attractions is safe, worry-free, or accident-free	4.36	0.57	Highest	3
Total	4.33	0.36	Highest	

According to Table 2, it can be noticed that the average of the top three opinion levels on the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in each aspect are as follows.

For attraction, the average opinion level is generally at the highest levels ($\bar{X} = 4.45$, S.D. = 0.39). When considering each item from the three highest, the highest is indigenouness or authenticity of the tourist attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.59$, S.D. = 0.53), followed by outstanding and unique local food derived from cultural heritage ($\bar{X} = 4.57$, S.D. = 0.53) and famous and interesting local traditions ($\bar{X} = 4.41$, S.D. = 0.61), respectively.

For activities, the average opinion level is overall at the highest levels ($\bar{X} = 4.39$, S.D. = 0.48) When considering each item from the three highest, the highest is various tourism activities suitable for all tourist groups ($\bar{X} = 4.51$, S.D. = 0.52), followed by tourism activities encouraging relationship building among family, friends, or colleagues ($\bar{X} = 4.46$, S.D. = 0.52) and tourism activities offering new experiences and impression to the tourists ($\bar{X} = 4.37$, S.D. = 0.53), respectively.

For accessibility, the average opinion level is overall at the highest levels ($\bar{X} = 4.33$, S.D. = 0.36). When considering the three highest items, the highest is public vehicle accessible to the cultural tourist attractions ($\bar{X} = 4.45$, S.D. = 0.55), followed by cultural tourist attractions connecting to other nearby destinations ($\bar{X} = 4.41$, S.D. = 0.49) and overall traveling to the cultural tourist attractions is safe, worry-free, or accident-free ($\bar{X} = 4.36$, S.D. = 0.57), respectively.

Table 3 shows the average, standard deviation, interpretation, and rank of the participants' opinion levels on Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in all aspects.

Cultural Tourism Decisions in Ubon Ratchathani	Opinion Levels ($n = 400$)			
		S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
Perception of demands	4.35	0.34	Highest	2
Information seeking	3.99	0.37	High	5
Option evaluation	4.31	0.45	Highest	3
Tourism product purchasing decision	4.40	0.38	Highest	1
Post-tourism behavior	4.30	0.50	Highest	4
Total aspects	4.27	0.36	Highest	

According to Table 3, it is discovered that the average opinion level on Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in all aspects is at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.27$, S.D. = 0.36). When considering the three highest, the highest is tourism product purchasing decision ($\bar{X} = 4.40$, S.D. = 0.38), followed by perception of demands ($\bar{X} = 4.35$, S.D. = 0.34) and option evaluation ($\bar{X} = 4.31$, S.D. = 0.45), respectively.

Table 4 shows the average, standard deviation, interpretation, and rank of the participants' opinion levels on Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in each aspect.

Cultural Tourism Decisions in Ubon Ratchathani	Opinion Levels ($n = 400$)			
		S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
Tourism Product Purchasing Decision				
1. You would decide to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism at a conveniently accessible place.	4.41	0.50	Highest	3

2. You would decide to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism at an interesting place.	4.50	0.51	Highest	2
3. You would decide to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism at a safe place.	4.58	0.49	Highest	1
4. You would decide to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism at a place that meets all of the travel members' demands.	4.24	0.74	Highest	5
5. You would decide to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism at a place with well-rounded facilities.	4.28	0.71	Highest	4
Total	4.40	0.38	Highest	
Perception of demands				
1. You would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism due to photos, reviews, or videos about the destination on social media.	4.48	0.50	Highest	2
2. You would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism due to the marketing promotion of the cultural tourist attractions, accommodations, and restaurants.	4.38	0.50	Highest	4
3. You would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism due to people's recommendation.	4.42	0.56	Highest	3
4. You would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism due to the demand for people's or acquaintance's acceptance.	4.19	0.68	High	5
5. You would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism due to the demand for meeting new people.	4.10	0.61	High	6
6. You would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism due to the demand for new experiences.	4.56	0.50	Highest	1
Total	4.35	0.34	Highest	
Option evaluation				
1. You compare different tourist attractions before deciding to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism.	4.13	0.72	High	5
2. You attempt to find the most travel-worthy cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani	4.22	0.70	Highest	4
3. The reputation of the cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani impacts your tourism decision.	4.49	0.51	Highest	1
4. The popularity of the cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani impacts your tourism decision.	4.32	0.71	Highest	3
5. The image of the cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani impacts your tourism decision.	4.36	0.52	Highest	2
Total	4.31	0.45	Highest	

According to Table 4, it appears that the average opinion level on cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in each aspect is as follows.

For tourism product decisions, the average opinion level is overall at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.40$, S.D. = 0.38). When considering the three highest, the highest item is you will decide to travel in Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism because of its safety ($\bar{X} = 4.58$, S.D. = 0.49), followed by you will decide to travel in Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism because of its interesting points ($\bar{X} = 4.50$, S.D. = 0.51) and you will decide to travel in Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism because of its convenient access ($\bar{X} = 4.41$, S.D. = 0.50), respectively.

For the perception of demands, the average opinion level is overall at the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.35$, S.D. = 0.34). When considering the three highest items, the highest is you would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism because of new experiences ($\bar{X} = 4.56$, S.D. = 0.50), followed by you would like to travel to Ubon Ratchathani for cultural tourism because of information received from photos, reviews, or videos shared on social media ($\bar{X} = 4.48$, S.D. = 0.50) and popularity of the tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani influencing your tourism decision ($\bar{X} = 4.32$, S.D. = 0.71), respectively.

Part 2 presents the outcomes of a multiple regression analysis investigating the factors influencing Thai tourists' cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani. The cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani are specified as a criterion variable, while the 10 factors influencing the cultural tourism decisions are defined as predictive variables.

The predictive variables or factors influencing cultural tourism decisions and travel decisions include the following:

- Attractions (X_1)
- Accessibility (X_2)
- Amenities (X_3)
- Activities (X_4)
- Accommodation (X_5)
- Economy (X_6)
- Society (X_7)
- Politics (X_8)
- Technology and advertisement (X_9)
- Environment (X_{10})

Predictive variables or the cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani include the following decisions.

- Cultural tourism decisions in all aspects (Y)
- Perception of demands (Y_1)
- Information seeking (Y_2)
- Option evaluation (Y_3)
- Purchasing decisions for tourism services (Y_4)
- Post-tourism behavior (Y_5)

Table 5 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis

Cultural Tourism Decisions	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
All aspects	Regression	40.721	10	4.072	135.591*	.000
	Residual	11.682	389	0.030		
	Total	52.403	399			
Perception of demands	Regression	33.302	10	3.330	102.520*	.000
	Residual	12.636	389	0.032		
	Total	45.938	399			
Information seeking	Regression	29.557	10	2.956	46.414*	.000
	Residual	24.772	389	0.064		
	Total	54.329	399			
Option evaluation	Regression	56.762	10	5.676	88.106*	.000
	Residual	25.061	389	0.064		
	Total	81.823	399			
Tourism product purchasing decisions	Regression	34.537	10	3.454	54.932*	.000
	Residual	24.458	389	0.063		
	Total	58.995	399			
Post-tourism behavior	Regression	70.955	10	7.095	97.720*	.000
	Residual	28.245	389	0.073		
	Total	99.200	399			

* $p < .05$

Table 5 shows a notable linear relationship between the criterion variables encompassing cultural tourism decisions (perception of demands, information seeking, option evaluation, tourism product purchasing decision, and post-tourism behavior) and all 10 predictive variables at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 6 shows the weighting of the predictive variables influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in all aspects through Stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Predictive Variables	b	SE	T	Sig.
X_5	0.347	0.033	10.561*	.000
X_2	0.203	0.033	6.163*	.000
X_8	0.174	0.038	4.609*	.000
X_4	0.072	0.020	3.668*	.000
a = 0.870 R = .874 R ² = .764 SE _{est} = 0.176 F = 319.860*				

* $p < .05$

According to Table 6, it is discovered that the predictive variables influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in all aspects, which are at a statistically significant level of 0.05, include accommodation (X_5), accessibility (X_2), politics (X_8), and activities (X_4). They can predict cultural tourism decisions with an accuracy of 76.40%. The top three predictive variables influencing the decisions are accommodation ($b = 0.347$), followed by accessibility ($b = 0.203$) and politics ($b = 0.174$), respectively. The equation to predict cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in all aspects is as follows: $Y = 0.870 + 0.347X_5 + 0.203X_2 + 0.174X_8 + 0.072X_4$

Table 7 shows the weighting of the predictive variables influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in the aspect of perception of demands using Stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Predictive Variables	b	SE	T	Sig.
X_3	0.301	0.039	7.677*	.000
X_2	0.224	0.041	5.471*	.000
X_5	0.103	0.035	2.975*	.003
X_4	0.078	0.020	3.831*	.000
X_1	0.087	0.035	2.464*	.014
a = 0.941 R = .850 R ² = .722 SE _{est} = 0.180 F = 205.090*				

* $p < .05$

According to Table 7, it can be seen that the predictive variables influencing the cultural tourism decisions in the aspect of the perception of demands, which are at the statistically significant level of 0.05, include amenities (X_3), accessibility (X_2), accommodation (X_5), activities (X_4), and attractions (X_1). These variables can predict cultural tourism decisions with an accuracy of 72.20%. The top three predictive variables that influence the decisions are amenities ($b = 0.301$), followed by accessibility ($b = 0.224$) and accommodation ($b = 0.103$), respectively.

Table 8 shows the weighting of the predictive variables influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in the aspect of option evaluation using Stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Predictive Variables	b	SE	t	Sig.
X_5	0.438	0.048	9.066*	.000
X_8	0.234	0.058	4.002*	.000
X_1	0.158	0.053	2.992*	.003
a = 0.760 R = .827 R ² = .685 SE _{est} = 0.255 F = 286.466*				

* $p < .05$

According to Table 8, it is apparent that the predictive variables influencing the cultural tourism decisions in the aspect of option evaluation, which are at the statistically significant level at 0.05, include accommodation (X_5), politics (X_8), and attraction (X_1). This variable can predict cultural tourism decisions with an accuracy of 68.50%. The top three predictive variables influencing the decisions are accommodation ($b = 0.438$), followed by politics ($b = 0.234$) and attraction ($b = 0.158$), respectively. The equation used for predicting the cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani in the aspect of option evaluation is $Y_3 = 0.760 + 0.438X_5 + 0.234X_8 + 0.158X_1$

DISCUSSION

The analysis of opinions on the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani demonstrates that, on average, opinions on these factors across all aspects are consistently rated at the highest level. When considering the three highest, the highest is attractions including indigenouness or authenticity of the tourist attraction, outstanding and unique local food derived from cultural heritage, and famous and interesting local traditions.

Similarly, Sinambela (2021) sees attraction as a key factor determining how tourists visit a tourist attraction. In addition, Adiluk Phumaim (2023) also analyzes the potential of the elements regarding attractiveness and support for tourism that influence the historical tourist attractions management in Prachinburi. The result shows that the potential of attractiveness and support for tourism has a positive impact on cultural tourist attraction management.

The second aspect is activities including various tourism activities suitable for all tourist groups, tourism activities encouraging relationship building among family, friends, or colleagues, and tourism activities offering new experiences and impressions to the tourists. Likewise, Stone, Migacz, & Wolf (2019) define tourism activities as the factors influencing tourists' attitudes and behavior. This means that if the tourists are impressed and have a positive attitude towards the destination, they might revisit.

Lastly, the third aspect is accessibility including public vehicles available for accessing the tourist attractions conveniently, the tourist attractions connecting to nearby places, and safe, worry-free, and accident-free access to the cultural tourist attractions. Jin et al. (2020), who conducted a study on the influence of high-speed rail on ice-snow tourism in the northeastern region of China, discovered that shorter travel duration between cities

significantly increases the number of tourists, one-day and weekend trips significantly increase, an expansion of tourist attractions northbound and southbound occurs, tourism development in nearby cities emerges, and connection between tourism and economy increases.

Furthermore, Lung Ming Tsai & Kongkidakarn Sakulsinlapakorn (2016) conducted a study on push and pull motivation in tourism, focusing on the Songkran festival in Thailand, a destination the tourists had never visited before. According to the research results, it appears that both push and pull motivation have a positive influence on the tourists' willingness to join the festival celebration. For Taiwanese tourists, their motivation to visit is for relaxation, to gain foreign experience, and to spend time with their friends. The pull motivations for Taiwanese tourists include special events or activities during the Songkran festival, images of the festival, delicious Thai food, and friendly local people.

According to the research results, it is apparent that factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani province include accommodation, accessibility, political situation, and cultural activities, which aligns with the study of Gössling & Lund-Durlacher (2021), who state that accommodation arrangements and convenience during traveling influence tourists' satisfaction and willingness to revisit. Also, it agrees with the study of Farmaki & Pappas (2022), who propose that decisions in selecting cultural tourists' destinations are directly related to the quality of facilities and image of the tourist attraction.

The analysis results of opinion levels on cultural tourism decisions in Ubon Ratchathani are at the highest levels in all aspects. When considering the three highest, the first aspect is tourism product purchasing decisions with the overall average opinion level at the highest. This is followed by the perception of demands and option evaluation, both of which have average opinion levels at the highest levels.

Farmaki & Pappas (2022) state that the relationship with tourist attractions significantly affects tourism product purchasing decisions, perception of demands, attitude, personal norms, decision-making, and perception of behavior control. It agrees with Zhang, Saengon, & Pungnirund's (2022) study, which investigates the factors influencing digital marketing, image, and purchasing decisions of Chinese tourists who are loyal to traveling to Thailand. It discovered that digital marketing, image, and purchasing decisions significantly impact Chinese tourists traveling to Thailand. Moreover, it is also relevant to Laparojkit, S., & Suttipun, M's (2022) study noticed that motivation in the aspect of confidence, customer loyalty, and determination to revisit a destination have a positive effect on community tourism in Thailand. Additionally, Kesinee Jo and Saipin Punthong (2023) study on the factors influencing the audiences' decision process for choosing which Thai art and cultural performances to watch in theaters in Bangkok demonstrates that the factors impacting their decisions include a marketing mix aspect which are product, place, promotion, process, and physical appearance, as well as a service quality aspect that is creditable and responsive to the customers.

According to the analysis of the factors influencing cultural tourism decisions in all aspects, the factors that are at a statistically significant level of 0.05 include accommodation, accessibility, politics, and activities. Likewise, Jeanne R. Agnes and Ma. Ruzena R. Gamueda's (2019) study on the motivation and perception of the tourists traveling to Sagada for cultural tourism also demonstrates that individuals with push motivations including seeking adventure and escaping daily routines, and pull motivations, including accessibility to the destination, interesting places, and culture and history of the area are more likely to realize the economic impacts first. They will realize that traveling to Sagada can help to promote local employment and increase the local income.

This also agrees with Kitiya Manothamaraksa (2016), who studied the influence of motivation and satisfaction of Thai tourists: a case study of Ayothaya floating market, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province. It appears that the motivations influencing Thai tourists to visit the floating market are tourism resources, transport, promotion, and facilities such as accommodation at the destination, accessibility to the tourist attractions, transport inside the tourist attractions, and other amenities.

For the political aspect, Bangkok Biz News (2023) defines political factors as uncontrollable factors that directly affect the reliability of Thailand's tourism sector. Aushira Thiwasinghasiriporn et al.'s (2019) study on women traveling solo in Thai society discovered that the factors motivating them to travel alone consist of five key aspects: social, political, cultural, economic, and information. The political aspect is considered the main factor influencing Thai women's decision to solo travel due to vital issues like political conflict at the tourist attractions and personal opinions on the political situation. Generally, they do not choose to travel to a place where there is still political conflict due to a lack of trust in physical and asset security.

Factors regarding cultural activities also show positive effects on tourists' experiences and engagement, which is in line with Wondirad et al. (2021), who indicate that cultural and local food activities are key drivers for regional economic development, and Martínez et al. (2019), who confirm that tourist engagement in community activities can enhance the sustainability of a tourism destination for long term. Meanwhile, factors regarding political stability also play a role in building "psychological trust," which Ghalia et al. (2019) and Pradeep (2020) both state that political instability directly affects tourists' trust and decision-making.

Guidelines for Developing the Factors Influencing Cultural Tourism Decisions of Thai Tourists

Guidelines for improving factors impacting cultural tourism decisions among Thai tourists are proposed through this research based on its findings. Their main objective is to increase tourist attractions' competitiveness, inclusivity, and sustainability, especially in the secondary provinces such as Ubon Ratchathani. The guidelines consist of two dimensions including (1) ten key factors impacting tourists' decisions and (2) five stages of the cultural tourism decision-making process.

Attractions and Cultural Identity

Destination's image as well as tourists' motivation can be enhanced through cultural attractions which can be implemented by preserving their authenticity, like traditional festivals, arts, performing arts, and heritage sites. Moreover, it will lead to greater tourists' experiences and community pride. Also, local collaboration plays an important role in conveying cultural value through storytelling as well as interpretation in persuasive ways.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

Convenience and satisfaction during travel are affected by accessibility of the destination, so it is vital to provide efficient transportation systems, shuttle services, and facilities with universal design. Furthermore, travel will be more convenient and inclusive if digital navigation tools and multilingual platforms are applied.

Amenities and Infrastructure

To improve visitors' entire experience during travel, it is essential to develop modern, safe, and hygienic facilities. So, providing comfort together with cultural aesthetics to them should be conveyed through local architecture such as rest areas, Wi-Fi zones, and information centers.

Activities and Participation

Visitors' participation should be included in cultural tourism instead of non-interactive activities, for example, workshops, local food events, and traditional performances. They bring the visitors' learning, involvement, and emotional connection which will help increase their loyalty to the destination.

Accommodation and Service Quality

All hotels and homestays should be able to portray cultural identity, of which can be perceived through its local design and gastronomy because visitors' satisfaction and revisit depend on accommodation. It can be done by providing professional training in hospitality and safety in order to obtain a "Cultural Stay Certification" to guarantee the accommodation's authenticity and service standards.

Economic and Community Linkages

Economically, all stakeholders should obtain reasonable benefits from cultural tourism. Besides, it is important that revenues gained from tourism circulate within a community's economy and provide everyone with joint prosperity by promoting community-based tourism, markets for local products, and fair-trade systems.

Social Participation and Empowerment

Actively participating in the planning and management process is extremely important. A community can strengthen its ownership, pride, and sustainability through skill development program, youth contribution, and cross-generational learning.

Political Stability and Trust

Tourists' confidence can be built from creating political reliability, so transparent governance, risk management, and effective communication are required to enhance their trust in the destinations' safety and reputation while mentally building their security.

Technology and Digital Marketing

Visitors' behavior during their travels is reshaped by innovation. Consequently, official websites, mobile apps, and social media become effective tools that allow the destinations to provide useful information to the visitors promptly. For example, customized tourism promotion and tourists' satisfaction assessment can be easily done by applying data analytics and AI.

Environmental Sustainability

To create long-term sustainability, preserving environment is necessary which various implementations can be done such as waste management, energy conservation, and visitor capacity control. These will help balance tourism expansion and natural resource preservation.

Integration with the Cultural Tourism Decision-Making Process

Five guidelines below, aligning with the stages of the cultural tourism decision-making process, support the mentioned factors.

Perception of Demands

Tourists' awareness and perception of cultural tourism's value associate with their first impression towards the destination. Therefore, it is important to emphasize local authenticity, heritage, and connection through storytelling and emotional attraction when launching marketing campaigns. Both educational media, like documentaries as well as social media can be effective storytelling tools that draw the tourists' interest and portray cultural tourism as both meaningful and amusing.

Information Seeking

Generally, tourists will enthusiastically search for general information, activities to do, and travel options when they are interested in any destination. So, information presented via official websites, mobile apps, and other online platforms should be in various languages with trustworthiness and attractiveness. A way to maintain data accuracy is collaboration among stakeholders such as the government and private sectors in examining information about directions, events, and prices

Option Evaluation

Tourists usually select different destinations and activities as their alternative for deciding their travel. At this stage, tourism authorities can assist them in making decision by providing pictures of the places as well as reviews and recommendations from other visitors precisely through digital platforms or tools such as virtual tours and interactive maps so that the tourists can imagine what experience they will get and make the best decision for themselves.

Purchasing Decisions

The next stage following option evaluation is reservation and purchase. Every related process from online reservation to payment should be as convenient as possible and combined them into just one platform. The payment methods should be flexible, such as offering an installment option. Also, tour packages should be customizable. Moreover, to better persuade tourists' purchase decisions and revisit, reward programs and marketing promotions should be offered as well.

Post-Tourism Behavior

Digital platforms, like social media, online reviews and conversations are places where tourists often share their travel experiences which can influence other visitors in the future. So, it is essential to build their loyalty by encouraging feedback on digital surveys and keeping participation in newsletters or online communities. Another way to increase their loyalty and turn them to be long-term cultural ambassadors is providing special offers or membership programs to those revisiting the destination which they will later promote the places organically.

CONCLUSION

The proposed guidelines suggest a framework that includes cultural conservation, community participation, infrastructure readiness, technological innovation, and environmental sustainability aligning with five stages of tourists' decision-making. Thailand can enhance satisfaction, inclusivity, and international competitiveness by combining physical and socio-cultural development with tourism behavioral insights. As a result, authentic and sustainable cultural tourism models can be noticed from a secondary destination, like Ubon Ratchathani province these days.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Community, private sector, and other related organizations at the destination

1. Develop the potential of cultural tourist attraction management by promoting the creation of attractions and cultural tourism support. Additionally, they should support the tourist attraction through the

preservation of indigenesness or authenticity to make them outstanding and unique, such as the historic sites at the destination, tradition and culture, and local food.

2. Develop diverse and interesting cultural tourism activities at the destination to accommodate the participation of all tourist groups. Additionally, facilitates the building of relationships within families, groups of friends, or organizations by providing new experiences and impressions.
3. Enhance tourist perception through digital marketing for tourism at the cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani by updating photos, reviews, or videos about the tourist attractions on various social media channels, like Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram.

Government sector, private sector, and other related organizations at the destination

1. Support collaboration with the academic sector to educate students from nearby schools to raise awareness of hometown pride and the preservation of the nation's tourist attractions.
2. Support the development of a robust security system at the tourist attractions to build credibility among tourists, as it is a key factor influencing their decisions to purchase tourism products for cultural tourism in Ubon Ratchathani. Furthermore, related sectors can establish dedicated security departments, tourist police, or complaint centers at these attractions.
3. Enhance the accessibility of cultural tourist attractions by providing accessible public transport options, creating new tourism routes that can conveniently connect the tourist attractions, and providing safe, worry-free, or accident-free travel to the cultural tourist attractions.
4. Develop amenities at the cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani to cover all aspects including accommodation, food and beverage services, tour guide services, souvenirs, and other facilities.
5. Promote the use of digital devices at the cultural tourist attractions in Ubon Ratchathani to offer the tourists impressive and state-of-the-art experiences with simple, convenient, and fast access to tourism information. For example, incorporate advanced technology throughout the tourist attraction service process, from developing applications related to the cultural tourist attractions with GPS to providing interesting and approachable knowledge about the destinations. This can include providing smart ticket machines or utilizing robots to assist at the tourist attractions; and developing security or emergency alert systems within the application. Additionally, the tourist attractions should engage in digital marketing, which may require the government's assistance in terms of budget for implementation.

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