

Research article

Understanding Tourist Motivations and Challenges in Buriram, Thailand, Using the Theory of Planned Behavior

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Received
April 25, 2025

Revised
May 9, 2025

Accepted
June 11, 2025

Abstract

Buriram, emerging as a prominent sports city in Thailand, is rapidly developing a reputation for hosting international sporting events and attracting significant tourism. However, as competition intensifies among global sports destinations. Understanding the behavior of its visitors is essential to improve tourist experiences and sustain a competitive edge. This study aims to identify the key factors that encourage and discourage tourists from visiting Buriram as a sports hub, utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Employing a qualitative approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with seven stakeholders in Buriram who were either directly or indirectly involved with Buriram's "Sports City" initiative. The participants were chosen using judgmental (purposive) sampling, based on their roles and expertise, level of experience with the initiative, and willingness to participate. Data were analyzed using Atlas.ti 24, was explored through the core constructs of the TPB. Findings reveal that tourists are attracted by Buriram's world-class sports facilities, high-profile events such as MotoGP and Buriram United football matches, and strategic social media sports marketing. Conversely, issues such as limited accommodation during peak seasons, transportation challenges, and the capacity of Buriram International Airport serve as barriers to visitation. The research provides valuable insights for marketers and policymakers to better promote Buriram as a leading sports tourism destination by improving visitor experiences and addressing key challenges.

Keywords: tourist motivations, Buriram, Thailand, theory of planned behavior

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Introduction

Tourist motivation has long intrigued researchers, with numerous studies exploring related factors which influence travel behavior such as psychological, social, and cultural aspects (Bui, 2022a, 2022b; Prayag et al., 2015). The existence of these factors have provided valuable insights into how internal character traits, psychographic attributes, and external social and cultural forces shape tourists' motivations to visit a destination (Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci, 2020). As a form of tourism, sports tourism activities involve traveling to participate in or watch sports activities, events, or venues (Higham, 2021). Sports tourism can have various economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts on the host destinations and communities, depending on the type, scale, and frequency of the sports activities or events (Herbold et al., 2020). It is also influenced via various factors, such as motivation, travel behavior, destination image, satisfaction, and loyalty (Higham, 2021). To understand the motivations behind tourists' decisions, behavioral theories are suitable to be employed as the theories provide fundamental baseline on how these motivations help generate tourist attitudes and how these attitudes contribute to behavioral intentions (Adel et al., 2021).

One such theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), considers both social and psychological variables in the decision-making process of individuals. TPB has been widely adopted to predict behaviors such as destination choice, accommodation preference, and other social psychology studies (Abbasi et al., 2021; Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). The theory's emphasis on volitional control makes it particularly relevant for studying behaviors that individuals consciously decide upon, such as travel intentions (Abd Hamid & Mohd Isa, 2015). By incorporating three key components—attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—TPB provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals form intentions and ultimately engage in specific behaviors. Attitude reflects an individual's evaluation of the behavior, where positive or negative perceptions influence their likelihood of acting upon it. (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). Subjective norms capture the perceived social pressure from others, such as family, friends, or society, which can encourage or discourage a particular action (Abbasi et al., 2021). Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform the behavior, which is shaped by both internal factors, such as self-efficacy, and external constraints, such as resources or situational barriers (Abd Hamid & Mohd Isa, 2015).

In the context of tourism, motivational drivers can be categorized into push and pull factors. Push factors are internal desires that motivate tourists to seek new experiences, such

as the need for relaxation, adventure, or social interaction. Pull factors are external attributes of a destination that attract tourists, such as natural beauty, cultural heritage, or recreational facilities (Abbasi et al., 2021). Despite these appealing pull factors, several barriers may deter tourists from visiting a destination. These barriers could include perceived safety concerns, lack of awareness about the destination, inadequate infrastructure, or negative social influences (Abd Hamid & Mohd Isa, 2015).

Buriram is the first province in Thailand to use sports tourism as a strategy for city development (Thanachit & Trimek, 2022). Located in the lower part of the Northeastern region, about 410 kilometers from Bangkok, the province covers a total area of 10,322 square kilometers. Buriram is known for its motto: "The city of sandstone sanctuaries, land of volcanoes, beautiful silk, rich culture, and the best city of sport" (Buriram Provincial Authorities 2022). Originally a rice-farming area famous for its Khmer relics and native crafts such as silk weaving, Buriram has transformed into a regional sports hub with modern infrastructure, including the "Chang Arena" stadium, officially opened in 2012. Adjacent to the stadium is the Chang International Circuit, Thailand's first Formula One-certified track, which became an official leg of the prestigious MotoGP in 2018. Although the Thailand MotoGP Grand Prix was canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it resumed in 2022, attracting 178,463 attendees and raising four billion baht (The Nation, 2022).

The "sport city" concept in Buriram entails developing innovative models for hosting international sports events to attract tourists interested in sports and culture (Thirachaya & Leruksa, 2020). Both municipal and provincial government agencies have played significant roles in advancing sports and their potential as travel destinations. In 2017, the Buriram Provincial Administrative Sports City Act was established by the Buriram Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) to promote and support the development of sports tourism in Buriram province (Thirachaya & Leruksa, 2020). Buriram's emerging reputation as a sports hub presents a unique pull factor that can attract sports enthusiasts and fans to the region.

This research aimed to explore the key drivers and barriers influencing tourists' intentions to visit Buriram as a sports hub in Thailand. TPB was applied as a fundamental concept to gain deep understanding on exploring how attitudes towards Buriram, subjective norms from social circles, and perceived control over the travel decision affect visit intentions. The outcomes of the research are hoped to be beneficial in providing actionable insights for destination marketers and policymakers to devise strategies that can effectively promote Buriram as a premier sports tourism destination in Thailand.

Objectives

This study is conducted with the following objectives:

1. To explore the key motivating factors that attract tourists to visit Buriram as a sports hub in Thailand
2. To identify the primary barriers or challenges that discourage tourists to visit Buriram as a sports hub in Thailand

Literature Review

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a well-established psychological concept that helps us understand and predict human behavior. This theory postulates that behavior is determined by two main factors: behavioral intentions and perceived behavioral control (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). Behavioral intentions refer to the individual's motivations and willingness to perform a certain behavior (Abbasi et al., 2021). Three key factors influence an individual's intentions: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes involve evaluating the behavior under consideration as positive or negative. Subjective norms involve perceiving what others expect of them. Perceived behavioral control involves assessing the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Abbasi et al., 2021; Kan & Fabrigar, 2017).

TPB builds upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by recognizing the limitations of assuming all behaviors are under complete volitional control (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). Since it does not consider non-volitional factors like resources and opportunities that can have an impact on behavior. As a result, some researchers suggest extending the TRA model to include both volitional and non-volitional aspects. This is where the TPB comes in, which builds upon the TRA by also considering Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). The TPB offers a robust framework for understanding human behavior through multiple psychological dimensions (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017).

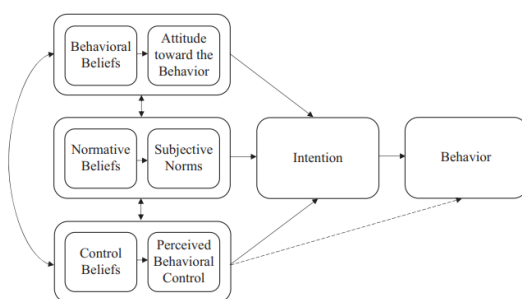


Figure 1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) Framework

(Source: Kan & Fabrigar, 2017)

The TPB has been extensively utilized to unpack the complexities of tourist behavior. (Luu, 2018) applied the TPB framework to study visitor behavior at the Glaciers in Westland National Park, New Zealand, showcasing its practicality in real-world settings. Empirical investigation by Anantamongkolkul (2021) have highlighted that tourist attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioral control positively impact the likelihood of travel. Bui (2022) further corroborated that perceptions of behavioral control directly boost tourist behavior intent. Research by Soliman (2021) suggested expanding the TPB model to enhance its predictive power within tourism contexts. Abbasi et al. (2021) supported this notion, noting that incorporating additional constructs into the TPB model provides deeper insights into tourist behavior. Previous studies have shown that TPB's predictive accuracy improves when new antecedents are added, thereby contributing significantly to understanding travel intentions and actual tourist behaviors (Bayramov, 2022).

Sports Tourism

Gibson (1998) was among the first to systematically define sport tourism as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities.”. Higham and Hinch (2009) introduced the concept of sportscape, emphasizing how the design, atmosphere, and cultural elements of sporting destinations shape tourist experience and satisfaction. Weed and Bull (2004) provide a socio-cultural perspective, examining how sport tourism serves as a mechanism for identity formation, social integration, and even political diplomacy. According to UNWTO (2022) definition, sports tourism includes all forms of sports, whether direct or indirect, official, or unofficial.

Gratton and Taylor (2000) argue that sport tourism significantly contributes to local and national economies through direct spending on accommodation, transport, food, and event tickets, as well as through long-term investments in infrastructure and job creation. This aligns with the multiplier effect theory in tourism economics, where initial spending by visitors leads to broader economic benefits across sectors. In the context of sustainability, Higham and Hinch (2011) also stress the importance of aligning sport tourism development with ecological and cultural sustainability principles. Their framework suggests that poorly managed sports events can lead to negative environmental impacts, displacement of local communities, and cultural homogenization—issues that planners must address through inclusive and sustainable tourism strategies.

Mesci et al. (2021) has defined two types of sports tourism based on the purpose of the sport. The first type is "Sport for Health", which involves tourists traveling with the primary goal of exercising by playing sports such as golfing, diving, rowing, and other similar activities. The second type is "Sport to Compete In", which involves athletes traveling to compete in national and international competitions, and tourists who indirectly benefit from better health. It not only provides a recreational experience, but also has significant economic and social benefits for the host country, local businesses, and politics. It helps to enhance cultural identity and social interaction as well.

The Role of Social Influence and Engagement in Sports

Rai et al. (2023) emphasize the strong link between fan engagement, particularly through social media, and favorable perceptions of event credibility and brand image. Their findings suggest that increased online involvement contributes to social validation and influences participation decisions, aligning with the subjective norm construct in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Similarly, Park et al. (2021) found that informational and motivational content posted on official marathon Facebook pages significantly enhanced user engagement and behavioral intention, especially when events had high prestige and the audience demonstrated strong involvement. These effects were further influenced by the perceived image of the event and the degree of user interaction, suggesting a socially driven dynamic in decision-making. Complementing these insights, Morgan et al. (2021) argue that destination branding, particularly when integrated with co-branding efforts, fosters customer engagement and strengthens intention to visit, as engagement acts as a mediator between branding and behavior.

The Perceived Control in Driving Participation

Park et al. (2021) observed that the availability of timely and relevant information through social media enhances individuals' ability to prepare for and attend sports events. When participants feel informed and equipped—especially through motivational and practical content—their likelihood to engage increases. This highlights the importance of communication clarity, infrastructure readiness, and access to real-time updates in empowering tourists to overcome participation barriers. Moreover, Rai et al. (2023) emphasized that fan involvement in sporting events positively influences the event's reputation and brand image, which in turn enhances fans' intentions to participate and make purchases, reflecting the role of perceived control in shaping behavior.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative research design. This approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex phenomena that are not easily quantifiable. The nuanced understanding of tourists' motivations, attitudes, and perceptions requires a flexible and detailed method of data collection, which qualitative research provides. Participants were chosen using a judgmental or purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Method

The primary data collection method employed was semi-structured interviews. To ensure the validity and reliability of the interview instrument, the semi-structured interview guidelines were developed based on the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and refined through a formal evaluation process. The initial set of interview questions underwent Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) evaluation by three experts in the fields of tourism, behavioral studies, and qualitative research. Based on the IOC results, all questions were accepted by the experts, though several required revisions in sentence structure and phrasing to improve clarity and flow.

The targeted stakeholders comprised government officials, business owners, media representatives, sports event organizers, local sports clubs and organizations, as well as customers. At least one representative from each stakeholder group was intended to be interviewed. In this context, the selection focused on individuals capable of providing rich and insightful perspectives on Buriram's "Sports City" initiative. Participants were chosen based on

several criteria: their role and expertise, ensuring representation from a diverse range of stakeholder groups; their experience with the "Sports City" initiative, whether through direct or indirect involvement, to ensure the depth of insight; and their availability and willingness to participate. However, after conducting the data collection in period of July - August 2024, seven participants were available for interviews (Table 1).

Table 1 Interviewee List

Interviewee	Background	Country
Person 1 (P1)	Government (Department of Sports and Tourism, Buriram Province)	Thailand
Person 2 (P2)	Media Representatives (Owner of Welcome to The Buriram Facebook Page)	France
Person 3 (P3)	Owner of Chanthana Boutique Hotel	Thailand
Person 4 (P4)	International Fans	USA
Person 5 (P5)	International Fans	France
Person 6 (P6)	Thai Fans	Thailand
Person 7 (P7)	Thai Fans	Thailand

Source: Authors (2024)

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and is applied during the data analysis phase to structure the interpretation of qualitative insights. After completing the transcription of interview data, the transcripts were imported into Atlas.ti 24, which facilitated systematic coding and theme identification. The initial coding process allowed for the extraction of key patterns, recurring themes, and notable stakeholder perspectives related to Buriram's development as a sports tourism destination.

These codes were then categorized and analyzed using the three core constructs of the TPB. First, Attitudes encompassed participants' personal evaluations and emotional responses toward Buriram's sports facilities, events, and branding strategies. Second, Subjective Norms included social influences such as peer encouragement, community pride, and social media endorsement that shape an individual's intention to participate in sports events. Third, Perceived Behavioral Control reflected the degree to which individuals felt capable of attending

or participating in sports activities, influenced by logistical factors such as transportation, accommodation, and access to timely information.

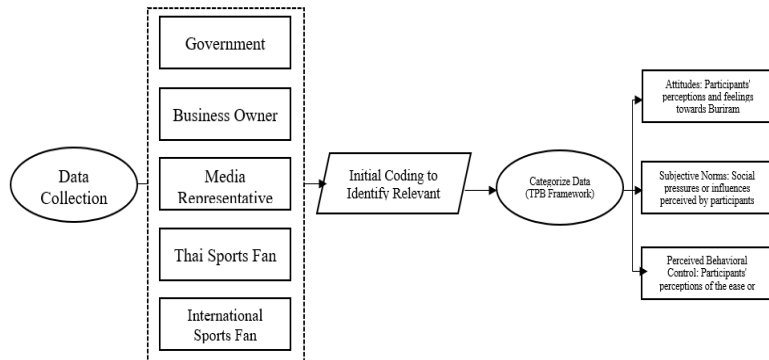


Figure 2 Data Analysis Processes

(Source: Authors, 2024)

Research results

This section presents the findings derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted with seven key stakeholders involved in Buriram's "Sports City" initiative. Specifically, the findings are presented in two parts: first, the motivating factors that attract tourists to Buriram's sports events and the barriers or challenges that may discourage visitation.

Tourist Motivations for Visiting Buriram as a Sports Hub

Participants expressed a consistently positive outlook toward Buriram's transformation into a sports city, viewing it as both a cultural and economic catalyst for the region. They showed enthusiasm for the city's modern sports facilities, strategic branding, and the vibrant atmosphere created by local sports events. Iconic venues such as Chang Arena and Chang International Circuit were frequently mentioned as key attractions that have elevated Buriram's profile as a sports destination. One participant remarked, "*Buriram has attractions like the Chang Arena and Chang International Circuit, which have been crucial in establishing the city as a sports destination. (P3)*" These venues not only symbolize the city's ambition but also serve as landmarks that attract visitors who might not otherwise consider Buriram as a travel destination.

International recognition of Buriram's sports appeal was also noted, with one tourist stating, "*As an international visitor, I've been here twice, and I think Buriram is a fantastic place. It's known for its soccer stadium and motorsport circuit, which are significant on a global scale.*"

(P4)” This global appeal has contributed to a rising number of foreign visitors, a trend noted by another interviewee: *“Back then, only a few foreigners came to Buriram, but now, I see a lot more people coming.”* (P5)” The hosting of major events such as MotoGP and Buriram United football matches has become a significant driver of tourism and local business growth, particularly during peak seasons when hotels and local shops benefit from increased footfall and consumer spending.

Beyond infrastructure and events, participants highlighted the social and emotional experience of attending sports events in Buriram. One stated, *“I enjoy the fun and sense of community involvement that comes with attending these events.”* (P6)” Sports were seen as not only entertainment but also a medium to strengthen community bonds. This sense of belonging was further reinforced through social media, which plays a vital role in shaping engagement and decision-making. One participant noted, *“Social media helps me stay updated with news and information about sports events in Buriram.”* (P6)” Platforms like Facebook were cited as tools that enhance trip planning and fan interaction.

Participants reported regularly engaging with sports content by liking, commenting, and sharing posts, which helped maintain a virtual sense of community and sustained interest in events even among those who could not attend physically. As one put it, *“I usually like, comment on, and share interesting sports content.”* (P6)” This digital engagement complemented physical attendance, creating a broader and more inclusive sports culture.

Social dynamics were also identified as motivators, with several participants stating that they attend events primarily because friends or family do. *“I usually go with friends and family, which makes it even more fun.”* (P7)” This indicates that peer influence and group participation significantly enhance the overall experience. Furthermore, the influence of local sports leadership, particularly Buriram United’s club president, was acknowledged as shaping community norms around sports. One participant shared, *“The club president’s idea is to strengthen the community by promoting community-based tourism, making local communities a part of the events.”* (P1)”

Participants also noted that large events such as MotoGP often serve as gateways to explore Isan culture, making sports tourism in Buriram a bridge between leisure and cultural immersion. As one interviewee stated, *“For smaller events, like BRIC, people usually stay only for the weekend. But for MotoGP, they often reach out to me to plan trips around Buriram, including exploring Isan culture.”* (P2)” This combination of sports and culture further reinforces Buriram’s appeal as a multidimensional destination.

Barriers to Sports Event Participation in Buriram

While the findings reveal many positive aspects of Buriram's growth as a sports destination, participants also identified several barriers that hinder participation, especially during large-scale events. One of the most frequently mentioned issues was the limited availability of accommodations during peak sports seasons. As one respondent pointed out, *"In terms of hotel accommodations, we don't have many rooms; even combining all, it's likely less than 10,000 rooms. (P1)"* The shortage of lodging options creates a significant challenge for visitors, particularly when international events attract large crowds. Another participant echoed this concern, stating, *"Sometimes it's a bit challenging to find suitable accommodations during peak times. (P7)"*

Beyond lodging, transportation difficulties were also identified as a major barrier. While Buriram has made improvements in transportation infrastructure, gaps remain—especially for those unfamiliar with the area or relying on public transport. These challenges are compounded by limited information availability, as several participants noted the difficulty of finding clear, updated details about accommodations and travel logistics. One participant expressed, *"Providing more information on travel and accommodation on websites would enhance the experience because sometimes I have to search last minute. (P7)"* This lack of centralized, user-friendly information can add to the planning burden and may discourage potential visitors.

Another recurring issue is the limited capacity of Buriram International Airport, particularly for international arrivals. While expansion plans are underway, the current volume of tourism flights remains insufficient. One participant stated, *"Tourism flights are still few, but now we're expanding Buriram International Airport. (P1)"* Until flight capacity increases, the accessibility gap for international tourists will continue to be a structural limitation, especially for those seeking convenience in travel.

Despite these challenges, participants widely acknowledged the enabling role of social media in overcoming some barriers. Platforms like Facebook and Agoda help users access real-time updates on event schedules, promotions, and available accommodations. *"Social media helps me stay updated with news and information about sports events in Buriram. (P6)"* This ease of access empowers visitors to plan with more confidence and stay engaged with the local sports scene, suggesting that digital tools may help mitigate some of the logistical shortcomings Buriram currently faces.

Conclusions

To summarize the findings, the key motivating factors and barriers influencing tourist participation in Buriram's sports tourism are presented in the following table.

Table 2 Motivating vs. Barriers Factors

Motivating Factors	Barriers
1. Iconic sports facilities (Chang Arena, Chang International Circuit)	1. Limited accommodation during peak seasons
2. High-profile sports events (MotoGP, Buriram United matches)	2. Transportation and public transit challenges
3. Social media as a tool for engagement and trip planning	3. Lack of centralized information on lodging and logistics
4. Digital interactions fostering fan identity and loyalty	4. Limited international flight options at Buriram Airport
5. Integration of sports events with local cultural exploration	

Discussions

The findings reveal that tourists are motivated by a blend of cultural, historical, and recreational interests. Buriram's rich cultural heritage and historical landmarks, such as the Phanom Rung Historical Park, are major attractions. However, the study also identifies significant challenges, including limited accessibility, language barriers, and a lack of diverse accommodation options. Overcoming these challenges is essential to boosting Buriram's appeal and ensuring visitor satisfaction.

From Passion to Participation: Exploring Tourist Motivation

From Table 2, five motivations were identified, generally it could be grouped into three major factors, namely City's sports facilities, major events, and social media utilization. Sports fans consistently express positive attitudes toward Buriram as a sports destination, largely due to iconic venues like Chang Arena and Chang International Circuit. These world-class facilities enhance fans' experiences and evoke a sense of pride. As highlighted by Zhang et al. (2019) emphasize that such facilities strengthen positive attitudes by providing high-quality activities.

Major events like MotoGP and Buriram United football matches further bolster these attitudes by offering thrilling, memorable experiences for fans.

Key factors driving positive perceptions of Buriram include the presence of top-tier facilities like Chang Arena and Chang International Circuit, which offer high-quality sports infrastructure and elevate fans' perceptions (Kalandides et al., 2012). These venues are not just places for events but are emblematic of Buriram's evolution into a global sports hub. By offering state-of-the-art amenities—such as comfortable seating, excellent acoustics, and superior visibility—these venues create a "stadium experience" that fans equate with prestige and modernity. Additionally, these facilities serve as economic and cultural anchors. For instance, the Chang International Circuit, by hosting MotoGP, positions Buriram prominently on the global stage, fostering local pride and attracting international media attention. Nurfadillah et al. (2023) elaborate on this by showing that in tourism, visitor satisfaction is strongly shaped by both the positive images projected of a destination and the actual quality of its facilities.

Major events like MotoGP and Buriram United football matches attract international attention and offer thrilling experiences for fans. These events also generate vicarious prestige. Fans associate themselves with Buriram's global recognition, which strengthens subjective norms. For example, attending a MotoGP race becomes a socially endorsed "bucket-list" activity within fan communities. Additionally, social media platforms provide real-time updates and information, enabling fans to plan and engage with events effectively. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter provide real-time engagement, allowing fans to track event updates, purchase tickets, and share experiences. This reduces uncertainty (a PBC factor) and fosters a sense of control. Social media amplifies subjective norms by creating virtual communities. When fans see peers posting about Buriram United's victories or MotoGP highlights, they perceive attendance as a socially validated behavior, as noted by Filo et al. (2015).

Subjective Norm, community norms, social media interactions, and social circles significantly impact fans' decisions to attend events and engage online. According to Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991), subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a specific behavior, highlighting the influence of one's immediate social environment—such as family, friends, and community—on decision-making processes. In Buriram, the leadership of Buriram United Football Club exemplifies this dynamic by establishing community norms that significantly impact fans' behavioral intentions. The club president's vision for integrating sports with local culture and tourism resonates deeply with community members, fostering a shared sense of purpose and identity. This alignment creates

a community-wide support system where attending events is not merely an individual choice but a collective endeavor endorsed by respected local figures. As Filo et al. (2015) suggest, strong connections within a social environment enhance fans' likelihood of engagement, and in Buriram, the club's leadership effectively mobilizes community support, cultivating an environment where attending events is socially encouraged and celebrated.

Social media platforms further amplify the effects of subjective norms by providing digital spaces where fans can interact, share experiences, and reinforce their commitment to sports events in Buriram. The active use of social media among fans serves multiple functions that collectively enhance the perceived social pressure to participate (Rai et al., 2023; Rayo et al., 2024). Firstly, social media facilitates the creation of virtual communities where fans engage with each other and event organizers. By following the social media pages of Buriram's sports entities, fans are continuously exposed to content that highlights community involvement, shared achievements, and collective enthusiasm, fostering a sense of belonging and reinforcing the desirability of participation. Additionally, social media interactions provide visible evidence of others' participation and support for events, serving as social proof that can influence individual behavior (Park et al., 2021; Rosdiana et al., 2025).

When potential attendees see their peers actively engaging with events online through likes, shares, comments, and event attendance posts, they are more likely to perceive participation as a normative and valued behavior within their social circles. Yeni & Wahap (2025) studied mobile marketing and digitalization's impact on purchasing decisions, their findings support the broader idea that digital platforms, driven by social factors, motivation, and attitudes, significantly influence consumer behavior and accelerate decision-making through easy information access. This principle applies to the observed influence of social media on event participation norms in Buriram. Moreover, social media also serves as a critical channel for disseminating information about upcoming events, accommodations, transportation, and other logistical details.

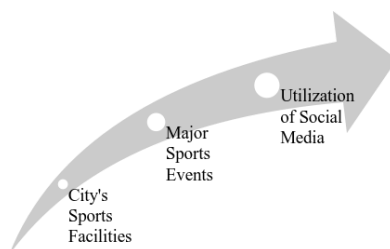


Figure 3 Key Drivers Summary

(Source: Authors, 2024)

Barriers to Engagement: What Holds Tourists Back from Visiting Buriram

Despite the significant appeal of Buriram's sports initiatives, three major barriers can deter tourists from attending events. One of the most pressing issues is the limited availability of lodging options during peak sports seasons, such as during MotoGP events. As noted by Herbold et al. (2020), the scarcity of hotel rooms can lead to inflated accommodation prices, which may force fans to settle for less desirable lodging options or even reconsider attending the events entirely. During peak seasons (e.g., MotoGP weekends), Buriram's limited hotel capacity creates a scarcity loop. Prices surge, and fans may settle for subpar lodging or avoid attending altogether. This scarcity not only affects domestic fans but also international visitors who might expect a range of accommodations from budget-friendly hostels to high-end hotels.

Additionally, transportation issues pose significant logistical challenges for both local and international visitors. Infrequent public transit options and traffic congestion during events can disrupt fan mobility, creating a stressful and inconvenient experience (Roche et al., 2013). Local fans who rely on public transportation or taxis may face significant delays, while international visitors may struggle with navigating unfamiliar transit systems. This situation is compounded by the limitations at Buriram International Airport, which offers limited international flights. As a result, many overseas fans are forced to travel through Bangkok, adding extra time, cost, and complexity to their journey. This "accessibility gap" not only diminishes PBC for fans but also makes the overall experience less attractive when weighed against the appeal of the events themselves.

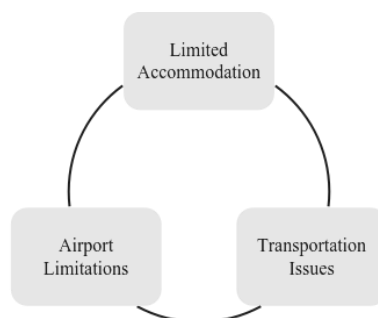


Figure 4 Key Barriers Summary

(Source: Authors, 2024)

Suggestions

Based on conclusion of this study, it is recommended to the stakeholders that in charge of sports tourism of the city to pay attention to in infrastructure development. Expand hotel capacity and diversify lodging options to address seasonal scarcity. Improve transportation networks, including public transit coordination and international flight access at Buriram Airport. Other important thing is leveraging social media use to reduce uncertainty and improve platforms that accommodate virtual fan communities. Future research should conduct tourists quantitative approach study to investigate the relationship between TPB variables and external factors such as cultural identity.

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