



# Factors Affecting the Learning Satisfaction of Foreign Monks at the Buddhist Temples in Bangkok, Thailand: The Case of Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram

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**Abstract.** The research was aimed to study 1) the Demographic factor of monks studying at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram, 2) the Lifestyle of monks studying at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram, 3) the causal relationship model between the demographic factor, lifestyle, and monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram. The questionnaires were constructed as a research tool for collecting data from 80 samples of monks studying at Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram. The data were analyzed by using second-order confirmatory factor analysis. The research findings indicated that the confirmatory factor model of the factors affecting the satisfaction of monks studying at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram had validity, and the developed causal relationship model was confirmed with the empirical data (Chi-square = 18.367,  $df = 27$ ,  $P = 0.892$ ,  $CMIN/DF = 0.68$ ,  $GFI = 0.955$ ,  $AGFI = 0.909$ ,  $NFI = 0.972$ ,  $IFI = 1.014$ ,  $CFI = 0.909$ ,  $RMR = 0.014$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.00$ ) and the developed causal relationship model between the demographic factor, lifestyle, and monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram had predicting ability at a reasonable and acceptable level at 44.4% with its acceptance more than 40%

**Keyword:** Factors Affecting the Satisfaction

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

For over seven centuries, Buddhist temples were the centers of learning and the only formal educational institutions in Thailand. This changed in Thailand in the late nineteenth century when King Chulalongkorn - Rama V (1853–1910) - set out to establish a public education system. Although Prince Vachirajan (1860–1921), Rama V's half-brother, proposed introducing primary education in the provinces in 1875, it was not implemented until 1898 (McDaniel, 2008).

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Due to the longstanding connection between Buddhism and schooling, Prince Vachirajon began to experiment with combining the original monastic structure with the national education system by giving government autonomy over textbooks and their use to pious leaders in each province of Thailand (Tepsing & Boonprakarn, 2019). This merger of government and temple proved effective because the state did not have the resources to support the new educational infrastructure. Therefore, it made sense to utilize the support of Buddhist temple school facilities (Murphy et al., 2006). Eventually, Thailand established its own primary and secondary educational institutions.

## 1.2 Significance of the Problem

In the 21st century, Thailand has developed into an economic and cultural center of Southeast Asia with the development of the Thai economy. And the investment in educational resources has attracted Buddhists and lay people from all over the world to come to Thailand for new studies and life. Therefore, given the living customs and food habits of different countries and regions, the study of monks' satisfaction with living and studying in Thailand, the analysis of different living and environmental indicators of monks, and the proposal of some constructive modifications will help to improve the attractiveness of Thai monastic education to monks and the future development of international education in monasteries.

## 1.3 Objective of the Research

- 1) To study the demographic factor of monks studying at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.
- 2) To study the lifestyle of monks studying at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.
- 3) To study the causal relationship model between the demographic factor, lifestyle, and monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.

## 2 Literature Review

Monastic university education in Thailand is provided through Buddhist universities to educate the general population by studying religious and modern subjects with monks. Although there are 31,071 monasteries in Thailand, only a tiny percentage have schools (McDaniel, J.T., 2008). Some students become monastic scholars upon completing their studies and return to the monasteries where they reside, while others serve as teachers. Therefore, these devout scholars should be familiar with the traditional education received at the monastery and the formal education received at the university (Schedneck, Khansamrong & Epstein, 2019).

Princess Sirindhorn was a princess of the Zakri dynasty of Thailand (McCargo, 2010). She is loved by all Thais. The temple investigated and studied in this paper is Sirindhorn Temple, which was established with the support of the princess and currently has 91 monks living in the temple, including 18 foreign monks. The temple school is a public institution of higher education with facilities such as a school building, library,

office building, student dormitory, cafeteria, and Buddhist hall, offering undergraduate and master's programs in Buddhist education.

The school's administration needs to be aligned with government educational policies and other national standards to ensure that the needs of 21st-century students are met. While the characteristics of temple students may be atypical in that they are expatriate monks or sanyasins (Wei, Zhang & Wang, 2008). However, the issues, problems, and questions of the modern world are still relevant to these students. Their training and education in Buddhism will enable them to understand, model, and transmit correct Buddhist philosophy to the modern world (Long, 2014).

**Monk:** Sanskrit upādhyāya, Pali upajjhāya. Refers to a highly respected monk. Translated as a pro-teacher, forceful student, close reciter, dependent student, and teacher of the masses. It also refers to the teacher who teaches the precepts and the two teachers, namely, the professor and the Karmapa. According to the "Great Wisdom" Volume 13: "Shakyamuni, Shakyamuni of the monk to receive the precepts, should seek two teachers, one for the supreme, one for the Ajahn; supreme as the father, Ajahn as the mother". This means that one should give up one's birth parents and seek the monk's parents. In Tibetan Lamaism of the four kinds of rank, the monk for the top of the fourth, its power is second only to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, abiding in the great monasteries. Among the Japanese Buddhist monastic ranks are titles such as the great monk position and the monk position, which later changed to the honorific title for senior monks (Yang, 2016).

**Buddhist temples:** Buddhist temples (monasteries of Buddhism) are important places for Buddhist practice and education. In a broader sense, it is also a Buddhist school. Young people are usually allowed to become monks in the monastery after their parents apply for permission and begin a life of abstinence under the discipline of the precepts. In addition to begging from the benefactors, they study under the guidance of monks appointed by the monastery. The study content is Buddhist classics. To facilitate study, the method is to explain the scriptures in the local language (not in Sanskrit). Anyone who wishes to become a monk can attend the monastery for practice. To become a monk, one must "leave the house", abandon all wealth, and cut off family ties. The monastery has a large amount of property thanks to the alms of the followers and the donations of the rich and powerful families. The monks are provided with clothing, food, and housing, have a hall with many sutra scrolls and are supervised by adult monks who study and practice hard. In the preliminary study stage, the teachers taught orally, and the students memorized; in the advanced stage, the students argued and debated. After 12 years of study, a monk who has passed the test is called a bhikkhu (i.e., monk). However, according to the requirement, those ordained must be at least 21 years old. After graduation, a few monks stay in the monastery for further study, and two monks are appointed to teach and supervise the teaching and life. Those who have completed 10 years of training and passed the examination can be appointed monks in the monastery (Gu, 1992).

**Course Perceived Value:** People don't buy things. They expect them. Consumers expect to achieve a certain level of customer value in the transaction process. The essence of customer value is customer perception, which is a subjective perception of the process

and outcome of a customer's interaction with a company, including the comparison and trade-off between the customer's perceived benefits and perceived losses (Zhou, 2022). Thus, the perceived value of a course is the expectations students have about the course they are taking (Wang & Qi, 2022).

**Perceived quality of learning:** Customer-perceived service quality is a comparison between customers' expectations of service and actual service performance. The perceived service quality of customer satisfaction is at least the experience that matches or is slightly higher than the expected quality. Perceived quality of learning is a comparison between students' expectations of learning outcomes and the actual situation. The perceived quality of education is good if the learning outcome exceeds the learning expectation (Hu & Zhu, 2022).

### 3 Research Method

#### 3.1 Scope of the Research

In this article, the researchers study Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram. The data collection was during 24 - 25 September 2022 with Thai and foreign monks who stay and learn at Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.

#### 3.2 Population and Sample

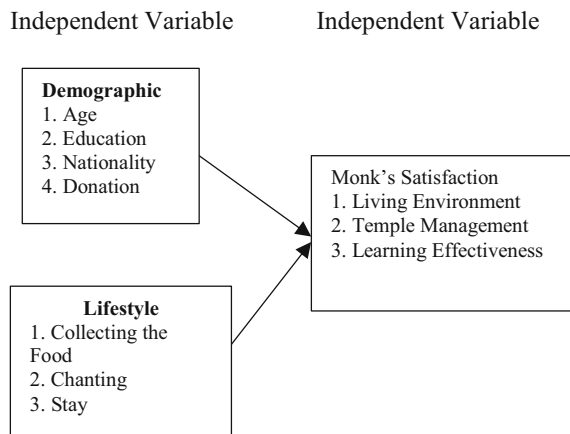
Thai and foreign monks who stay and study at Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram are the target population which can be called a finite population because it can be counted.

The statistical techniques to analyse the structural equation model (SEM) with a multivariate method are applied to determine the sample size. The sample size is 5 times the observed variables used for the sample determination in the AMOS program (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). In this research, 16 were observed variables with a confidence level of 95 percent. The sample size, therefore, was equal to  $16 \times 5 = 80$  samples.

This research collected data using accidental sampling or convenience sampling to collect data from the temple. The data collection started from 24 to 25 September 2022, Saturday and Sunday.

The research tool closed-ended questionnaires were used as the research tool in this study. The 80 questionnaires were distributed, and we got back 80 responses. After examining the validity of the questionnaires, 80 complete questionnaires were registered and used for data analysis.

### 3.3 Conceptual Framework



### 3.4 Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: The demographic factor correlated with and monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.

H<sub>0</sub>: The demographic factor didn't correlate with and monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.

H<sub>1</sub>: The demographic factor correlated with and monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.

Hypothesis 2: The lifestyle correlated with monk satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram correlated.

H<sub>0</sub>: The lifestyle didn't correlate with monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram correlated.

H<sub>1</sub>: The lifestyle correlated with monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram correlated.

### 3.5 Statistics

A statistical package for analyzing mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis and confirmatory factor analysis using P-Value > 0.05, GFI ≥ 0.90, AGFI ≥ 0.90, CFI ≥ 0.90, and RMSEA < 0.05, CMIN / DF < 3 (Kline, 2005) was used (Table 1).

## 4 Research Results

### 4.1 The Descriptive Statistics

#### 4.1.1 The Results of the Demographic Factor

**Table 1.** The Descriptive Statistics of Age

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent Frequency</b>
Less than 20 years old	21	26.3
21–25 years old	38	47.5
26–30 years old	12	15.0
31–40 years old	6	7.5
More than 40 years old	3	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2.** The Descriptive Statistics of Education

<b>Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent Frequency</b>
Bachelor Degree	59	73.8
Master Degree	14	17.5
Doctor Degree	7	8.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3.** The Descriptive Statistics of Nationality

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent Frequency</b>
Thai	62	77.5
Cambodian	12	15.0
Nepalese	5	6.3
Other nationality	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4.** The Descriptive Statistics of Donation

<b>Donation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent Frequency</b>
Less than 1000 Baht/month	73	91.3
1000 to 2000 Baht/month	7	8.8
2001 to 3000 Baht/month	0	0
More than 3001 Baht/ month	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4.1.2 The Results of the Lifestyle Factor

**Table 5.** The Descriptive Statistics of Collecting the Food

Collecting the Food	Frequency	Percent Frequency
Less than 30 times/months	34	42.5
30 times/month	46	57.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 6.** The Descriptive Statistics of Chanting

Chanting	Frequency	Percent Frequency
Less than 30 times/month	11	13.8
30 times /month	57	71.3
More than 30 times /Month	12	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 7.** The Descriptive Statistics of Stay at Temple

Stay at Temple	Frequency	Percent Frequency
Less than 5 years	59	73.8
5 to 7 years	11	13.8
More than 7 years	10	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

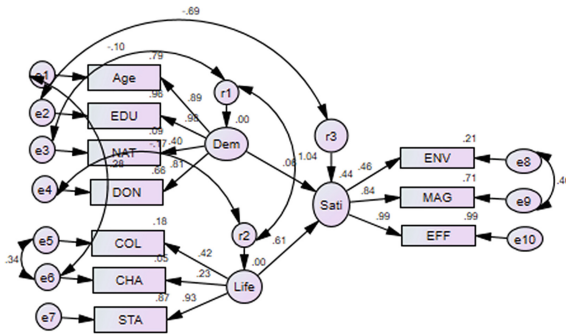
**Table 8.** Mean and standard deviation of sample groups classified by Satisfaction level of a monk. (n = 80)

Sati	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Ranking	Results
ENV	4.20	0.772	1	High
MAG	3.94	0.703	2	High
EFF	3.65	0.827	3	High
Total	3.93	0.663		High

### 4.2 The Inferential Statistics

A causal relationship model between the demographic factor, lifestyle, and monk’s satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram developed with the First Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis technique was harmonized with empirical data, thus accepting the research hypothesis (Table 2). This was because the Overall Model Fit Measure found that the proportion of the chi-square statistic/degree of freedom ( $x^2/df$ ) was equal to 0.68, which passed the specified criteria. Less than 3, all indexes were GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, IFI and passed the requirements greater than or equal to 0.90 (Table 3). Furthermore, an index set at a level less than 0.05 was found that RMSEA also met the required criteria (Table 4). Also, each component of the model had validity since factor loading was 0.30 or more (absolute value) and was statistically significant (Kline, 1994) as well as the developed model also could predict the demographic factor, lifestyle, and monk’s satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram and able to predict it at a reasonable and acceptable level at 44.4% which its acceptance of more than 40% (Table 5).

The model Factors Affecting the Satisfaction of Monks Studying at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram that has been developed consists of factor 1: Demographic Factor (Dem) found that observable variables were Age (Age), Education (EDU), Nationality (NAT), and Donation (DON). All four aspects were consistent with the Demographic Factor (Dem) (Table 6). Factor 2: Lifestyle of the Monks (Life) found that observable variables were Collecting the Food (COL), Chanting (CHA), and Staying (STA) consistent with Lifestyle of the Monks (Life).Factor 3: Monk’s Satisfaction (Sati) found that observable variables consist of Living Environment (ENV), Temple Management (MAG), and Learning Effectiveness (EFF) (Table 7). All three were consistent with Monk’s Satisfaction (Sati), loading factor ranging from 0.30 up (absolute value)) and statistically significant at 0.05 ( $P < 0.05$ ). Factor Loading was 0.456, 0.842, and 0.994, respectively (Table 8). Each factor can explain the variation in monk’s satisfaction (Sati) of 20.8, 70.9, and 98.8, respectively. The model developed as a conceptual research framework can be presented in Fig. 1.



Chi-square = 18.367, df = 27, P = 0.892, CMIN/DF = 0.68,  
 GFI = 0.955, AGFI = 0.909, NFI = 0.972, IFI = 1.014,  
 CFI = 0.909, RMSEA = 0.00, RMR = 0.014

Fig. 1 Conceptual research framework



## 5 Discussion

The results obtained from this research can be discussed as follows.

1. In this research, the results of the demographic factor of monks found that most of them were 21–25 years old and studying bachelor's degree, Thai monks who donated to the temple less than 1000 per month.
2. For the lifestyle of the monks found that most of them collected food 30 times per month, chanted 30 times per month, and stayed at the temple for less than 5 years.

The level of opinion on monk's satisfaction found that the sample of monks agreed on monk's satisfaction at the high level, with the high in all respects: (1) Living Environment, (2) Temple Management, (3) Learning Effectiveness.

**Hypothesis 1:** The demographic factor correlated with monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram. The results showed that demographic factors positively correlated with monk satisfaction, consistent with Mahzad and Erfan (2015). In addition, the research found that demographic factors affect customer satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 2:** The lifestyle correlated with monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram. The results showed that the lifestyle directly related to monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram, consistent with research by Indah and Bambang (2021). In addition, the study found that lifestyle positively and significantly affects customer satisfaction with Shopee's e-commerce.

**Recommendation:** From the results of this study, Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram should improve learning effectively for monks by enhancing the learning curriculum and do more training to the lecturers to attract more monks to stay and learn at Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram.

**Future Research:** Future research should do research at the province level or country level.

## 6 Conclusion

The research findings showed that the model of Factors Affecting the Satisfaction of Monks Studying at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep Rattanaram was valid and consistent with the empirical data. 1) The demographic factor has a positive correlation with monk satisfaction. 2) The lifestyle was direct with the monk's satisfaction at the Wat Sirindhorn Thep based on the developed model presentation in Fig. 1.

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