

# Do Different Religious Architectures Have Differentiated Positioning for Tourism Experience and Place Attachment? Take Nankunshen Daitian Temple in Taiwan as an Example

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**Abstract.** Religious architecture is an essential resource for tourism to attract tourists. This research's primary purpose is to define the experience of religious architecture to tourists and how it affects tourists' identification and attachment. This study takes the Nankunshen Daitian temple as an example; it is one of Taiwan's oldest and most important temples. This study adopts convenient sampling to collect samples and the multi-scale analysis method. The results are 1. Experience: Nankunshen's magnificent architecture is the highest. 2. Attachment: Nankunshen is an important pilgrimage site, which the highest. 3. Participating in the guided commentary will improve tourists' experience and attachment. 4. Religious construction experience and attachment are divided into four groups: the statue of the god and religious literature are the highest experience group and the highest attachment group. Therefore, different architecture has different experiences and attachments to tourists.

**Keywords:** Religious Architecture, Religious Tourism, Temple, Multidimensional Scaling(MDS)

## 1 Introduction

Religious architecture is an important cultural heritage. Tourists appreciate the unique atmosphere of religious architecture, grand architecture, and works of art [1]. These architecture are often marked as local must-see attractions [1,2]. Tourists visit religious architecture to learn about architecture, culture, and history [1,2]. Therefore, religious architecture is essential in attracting tourists [1,2]. Especially in rural areas, religious architecture is usually a critical tourist hotspot [1], showing that religious architecture is essential in religious tourism.

Tourism experience is the subjective perceptual feeling and experience of physiology and psychology obtained by tourists in the interaction between activities and the environment [3]. It leaves profound and unforgettable memories in the hearts of tourists [4]. This tourism

experience is also the core value of leisure tourism [5-7]. In religious tourism, religious architecture show legends about gods, people's admiration, religious functions, religious culture and art, the relationship between people and gods, social and cultural history, space for religious activities, and local culture and customs. These are important religious and cultural assets and essential elements of spiritual experience [8]. Therefore, whether religious architecture can provide visitors with a profound experience is the core value of religious tourism, and it is a topic worthy of study.

The application of attachment theory in religious tourism research explores the attachment to God arising from the intimate attachment relationship between people and God [9,10]. Patwardhan, et al. [11] also used place identity and place dependence in religious activity attachment to analyze its relationship with emotional experience and tourist loyalty. Religious architecture can be regarded as a tourist destination for religious tourism [12] and is vital for people to communicate with Gods and participate in religious activities [1,13]. Therefore, it is a topic worthy of study whether it will cause tourists to have a local attachment related to the sustainability of religious tourism and community development.

NanKunShen Temple is in Wangye Temple, Beimen District, Tainan City, Taiwan. This religious architecture is very spiritual, cultural, historical, and artistic. Many tourists visit and travel annually, and the number of tourists in 2020 reached 6,626,000, which has also driven the economic development of nearby communities.

This study investigates the religious experience and attachment of tourists to NanKunShen Temple. Research topics include 1. What kind of experience and attachment does religious architecture bring to tourists? 2. Conduct a positioning analysis of the experience and attachment of various types of religious architecture. 3. Analyze whether the guide's interpretation will have a differential impact on the tourists' experience and attachment.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Religious Architecture**

Religious architecture is where followers of a particular religion gather and meet their spiritual needs by participating in various ceremonies or prayers [1,8]. Sacred architectural spaces, handicrafts, and decorations are designed for ceremonial activities [1,2,8]. The theme of religious architecture decoration depicts religious stories and teachings, as well as religious legends, culture, and history. A specific space inside the religion is used for faith worship and meditation, where one can feel the presence of God and seek inner peace. Tourists are often driven by history and architecture to visit religious architecture [1,2]. Rebenstorf and Körs [2] consider religious architecture to be masterpieces of art, culture, and architecture and are often tourist hotspots for their historical relevance, impressive architecture, and unique interior atmosphere.

The architectural connotation reflects social values, including religious concepts, social history, culture, and ideas. Society creates religion, and the social structure forms a model of the spiritual world, which is reflected in religious architecture. Religious architecture provides space for religious activities; also, it demonstrates the development of people and society and meets people's spiritual needs [8]. At the same time, religious architecture, culture, and art, as a symbol

of inheritance, have become objects that the public can appreciate and worship. It enables people to get spiritual healing and emotional release to gain positive feelings and vitality [13].

## **2.2 Experience**

The holy place formed by religious architecture is holy and clean, a place of serenity indisputable from the world, self-sufficiency, and pure practice, and a sacred place for spiritual cleansing, learning, and enlightenment. [13]. Huang [14] adopted the five experiences of sensory, emotion, thinking, action, and association proposed by Schmitt [15] as the measurement dimension of the religious tourism experience in the Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum. The sensory experience is to arouse the tourists' feeling of value through the beauty of sacred art architecture and the furnishings in the museum. Emotional knowledge is the tranquility tourists feel when they get rid of dirt and dust in their hearts through a solemn atmosphere, emotional attachment, and respect for religion. Thinking experience generates interactive feelings with tourists through religious experience activities, creating tourists' surprise and curiosity different from the past. Action experience means that tourists can take photos and punch in the architectural art to commemorate, buy books and cultural relics of Buddha light culture in the museum, or participate in action experience learning to experience a different life and cultural backgrounds. The related knowledge is that the tourists establish the solemn and compassionate image of the scenic spot through the Giant Buddha standing nearly 36 stories high in the museum, establish the identity and emotional belonging of the recreation place, and connect the Buddha culture with the Buddha Memorial Hall [14].

## **2.3 Place Attachment**

The application of place attachment theory in tourism and leisure-related research shows that place attachment has an essential impact on understanding tourists' behavior [11] and is also an important variable affecting loyalty [11,16]. Although tourism scholars have analyzed place attachment as a multifaceted concept [17], many studies accept place identity and dependence as the dimension of place attachment [11,18,19].

Religious symbols and rituals are the materialization and signs of religious concepts, such as magnificent temples, sculptures, statues, instruments, murals, specific clothing, and other plastic arts. These all show the beauty of religion, culture, and art. Suppose the architecture in the scenic spots skillfully uses natural beauty, such as Putuo Mountain in China, which is close to the mountain and near the water, to create rich space art [20]. In that case, they often attract many tourists or believers to go sightseeing and pilgrimage every year [21], which shows the vital position of the religious and cultural landscape in tourism resources [22]. Religious sightseeing shows reverence for the gods through religious architecture. Religious tourism triggers a positive outlook on life, reflecting attachment to religion.

## **3 Research Methods**

This research mainly explores the research on religious architectural experience and attachment orientation. This study used a questionnaire survey method to collect data. Religious architecture is based on field surveys, divided into ten categories. The dimension of experience adopts the five incidents of sensory, emotion, thinking, action, and association.

This study was conducted on tourists over 20 years who had visited NanKunShan Temple. This research uses an online questionnaire to collect data and informs the purpose of this research before filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire distribution period was from July 1 to August 6, 2022. After the questionnaires were collected and sorted out, the two authors deleted the invalid questionnaires<sup>53</sup> after reviewing them together. Finally, there were 549 valid questionnaires.

## **4 Analysis and Discussion**

### **4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

Tourists' experience of NanKunShen Temple is the highest with "seeing magnificent architecture in NanKunShen Temple" (M = 4.43). The second highest is "NanKunShen Temple makes me feel the solemn atmosphere" (M = 4.28). Finally, "NanKunShen Temple gives me the feeling of purifying my mind" (M = 4.16).

In the dimension of tourist experience, sensory experience is the highest (M=4.35), followed by emotional experience ((M=4.14), while relational knowledge (M=3.92) and action experience (M=3.70) are lower.

In terms of local attachment, "NanKunShen Temple is an important pilgrimage site for me" (M=4.25) is the highest, followed by "Going to NanKunShen Temple is a special memory for me" (M=4.13). (M=4.11) and local dependence was high (M=4.11).

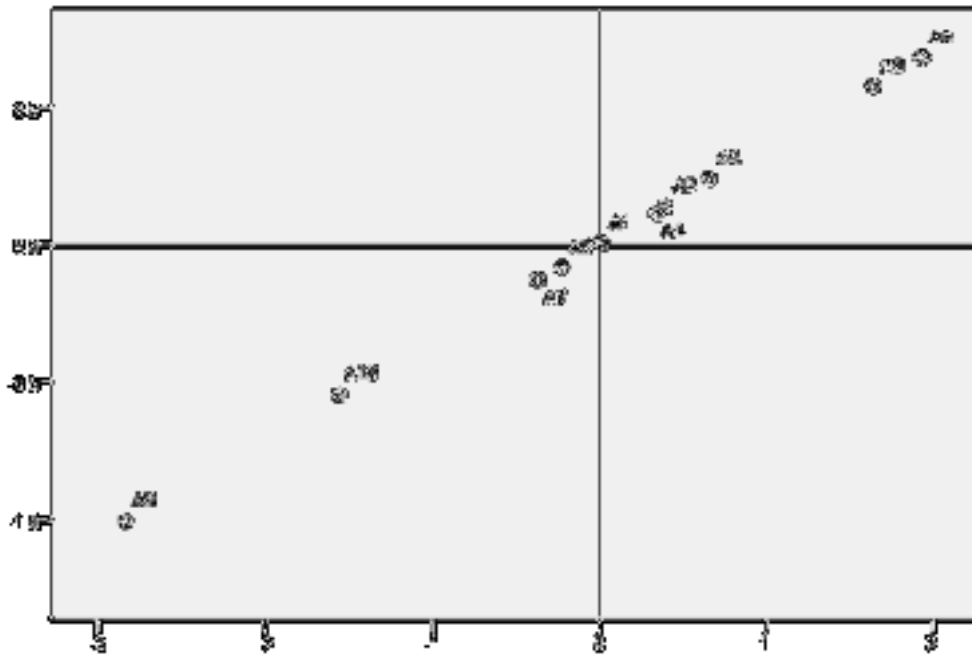
### **4.2 Architecture Positioning Analysis**

This chapter uses descriptive statistics to analyze tourists' experiences and place attachments to various architecture, as shown in Table 1. This study adopts a multi-scale analysis method to analyze religious architecture's positioning and place attachment in tourists' minds. The analysis found that the pressure coefficient is .32, and  $R^2$  is .87 (the positioning diagram is shown in Figure 1).

**Table 1.** Visitors' experience and place attachment to various architecture

	Sens	Feel	Thin	Act	Rel	IDE	DEP
Linsiao Hall (A1)	4.35	4.14	3.96	3.70	3.92	4.11	4.11
Da Kun Garden (A2)	4.40	4.19	4.03	3.79	4.00	4.19	4.20
Wan Shantang (A3)	4.36	4.18	3.94	3.56	3.92	3.95	3.94
Visitors' Lodge (A4)	4.50	3.93	3.93	4.14	4.07	4.00	3.96
Kang Lang Heights (A5)	4.30	4.10	4.30	3.90	3.90	4.07	4.20
Cloister (A6)	4.27	3.68	3.32	3.18	3.55	3.67	3.75
Religious Art (A7)	4.30	4.05	3.82	3.58	3.82	4.05	4.00
Religious Literature (A8)	4.63	4.38	4.13	4.00	4.19	4.25	4.28
Statue of God (A9)	4.43	4.39	4.23	3.93	4.11	4.37	4.48
Jiangnan landscape (A10)	4.04	3.77	3.67	3.50	3.60	3.75	3.71

According to Figure 1, religious architecture is divided into five clusters according to the tourist experience and place attachment positioning.



**Fig. 1.** Location map

Since religious tourism has both belief and leisure effects, religious architecture s are also significant in meeting the needs of tourists for relaxation [1] and religious and cultural learning [2].

This study used ANOVA analysis to understand whether different positioning clusters have differentiated experience and place attachment (the results are shown in Table 2).

**Table 2.** Difference analysis of different clusters

	Sens	Feel	Thin	Act	Rel	IDE	DEP
Cluster1	4.46	4.39	4.21	3.94	4.13	4.35	4.45
Cluster2	4.38	4.16	3.98	3.73	3.95	4.14	4.14
Cluster3	4.36	4.13	3.96	3.76	3.85	4.05	4.06
Cluster4	4.04	3.77	3.67	3.5	3.6	3.75	3.71
Cluster5	4.27	3.68	3.32	3.18	3.55	3.67	3.75
F	2.772*	4.785**	4.033**	2.559*	2.789*	5.872***	6.633***
P	0.027	0.001	0.003	0.038	0.026	0	0
Scheffé	1>4	1>4,5	1>5			1>4,5	1>3>4,5

Guide commentary will give visitors a deeper understanding of religious architecture, impacting visitor experience and place attachment. In this study, the independent sample t-test was used to analyze whether there were differences in the experience and place attachment of people who participated in guided activities or not (the results are shown in Table 3).

**Table 3.** Difference analysis of guide commentary

	Touring activities	Mean	SD	T	P
Sens	YES	4.36	0.58	.214	.831
	NO	4.35	0.53		
Feel	YES	4.27	0.67	2.090*	.037
	NO	4.11	0.68		
Thin	YES	4.19	0.71	3.244**	0.001
	NO	3.91	0.78		
Act	YES	3.90	0.83	2.736**	0.006
	NO	3.66	0.81		
Rel	YES	4.05	0.75	1.964*	0.050
	NO	3.89	0.76		
Ide	YES	4.21	0.63	1.888	0.060
	NO	4.08	0.62		
Dep	YES	4.23	0.66	2.003*	0.047
	NO	4.08	0.68		

## 5 Conclusions and Suggestions

The religious architecture contains religious belief, religious art, religious history, and architecture art and is an essential resource for spiritual tourism experience and local attachment. Through positioning analysis, the results of this research show that the beauty of religious architecture visual art [8] is the most likely to allow people to have a sensory and emotional experience and an experience of inner peace [1,2]. Religious architecture washes the minds of tourists and produces religious attachments [13].

Nankunshen temple architecture has low activity experience and connection experience, which may be due to the social value and religious art embodied in the religious architecture, which is not easy for the public to understand, so the people have low experience of religious activities. Another finding of this study is that Guide commentary helps tourists understand religious architecture more deeply. The results of this study show that tourists who participate in guided interpretation have a significantly higher emotional experience, action experience, association experience, and place attachment than those who do not, which means that guide commentary is essential in religious architecture experience and place attachment.

Since religious tourists have religious beliefs or leisure needs [1,2], religious architecture provides space for religious beliefs. It is vital to meet the needs of tourists for relaxation and religious and cultural learning. From the positioning analysis of the five clusters of religious architecture, this paper found that the statues of gods and religious literature in Cluster1 are more related to religious beliefs than Lingxiao hall, wanshantang, and religious art in Cluster3. The Da Kun Garden, Visitors' Lodge, Kang Lang Heights in Cluster 2, Jiangnan landscape in Cluster 4, and the abbey in Cluster 5 are more related to sightseeing and leisure.

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