



Reframing Relic-Based Spiritual Tourism in Anuradhapura: A Comparative Global Perspective and Experiential Model Development

G.G.T.Y. Gunathilake*, R.H. Banduge, S.P. Dodantenna, K.P.D.S. Kandangamuwa

Faculty of Business, NSBM Green University, Homagama, Sri Lanka

*tharindu.g@nsbm.ac.lk

Received: 28 January 2026; Revised: 15 February 2026; Accepted: 20 March 2026; Available online: 10 April 2026

Abstract: The historic city of Anuradhapura represents a deeply layered sacred landscape shaped by relic veneration, ritual continuity, and Buddhist philosophical traditions over more than two millennia. Anchored by revered sites such as Ruwanweliseya and the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, the city holds exceptional spiritual and cultural values. However, its translation into a cohesive and globally competitive spiritual tourism experience remains limited, with current offerings lacking integration, interpretive clarity, and experiential depth. This paper re-examines Anuradhapura through an experience-oriented lens, positioning it as a dynamic spiritual system rather than a collection of isolated heritage sites. Drawing on a qualitative comparative analysis of prominent pilgrimage destinations such as Bodh Gaya and the Shikoku Pilgrimage, the study explores how structured movement, symbolic narratives, ritual practices, and institutional coordination contribute to meaningful pilgrim engagement. The analysis reveals a significant gap between Anuradhapura's intrinsic sacred value and the experiential frameworks required to support contemporary spiritual tourism. Limitations are particularly evident in route design, interpretive storytelling, guided contemplative practices, digital facilitation, and stakeholder alignment. To address these challenges, the study introduces a Relic-Centered Experience Architecture (RCEA), a multidimensional framework designed to organize and enhance pilgrimage experiences. The model integrates sequential pilgrimage pathways, narrative interpretation, meditative engagement, digital augmentation, local enterprise participation, and coordinated governance mechanisms. By shifting focus from site-based heritage presentation to experience-based design, this research advances a novel perspective within spiritual tourism studies. It further provides actionable insights for strengthening Anuradhapura's global positioning while ensuring the preservation of its sacred character and supporting sustainable community development.

Index Terms: Anuradhapura, Buddhist Pilgrimage, Experience Architecture, Spiritual Tourism.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka's sacred city of Anuradhapura is one of the oldest continuously inhabited religious capitals in the world and a centerpiece of Theravāda Buddhist civilization for more than twenty-three centuries [1]. The city contains several most revered Buddhist relic sites such as the Ruwanweliseya (Maha Seya), traditionally believed to hold the largest deposit of the Buddha's corporeal relics; the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, the oldest historically documented sacred tree; the monumental Jethawanaramaya stupa; the Thuparamaya, Sri Lanka's first stupa; and the Samadhi Buddha statue, celebrated for its profound meditative expression [2]. Together, these elements form a unique sacred geography with no parallel elsewhere in the Theravāda world.

Despite this extraordinary heritage, Anuradhapura remains significantly underutilized as a global spiritual tourism destination. According to Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2025) [3], religious or spiritual motivations account for less than one percent of inbound tourism, and Sri Lanka has not yet positioned itself within the competitive landscape of global pilgrimage networks. Prior research notes that although Sri Lanka's sacred assets possess high symbolic and cultural value, their economic and experiential potential remains largely unrealized due to fragmented site management, inadequate interpretation, and the absence of structured circuits or spiritual programming [4].

A comparison with leading pilgrimage destinations reveals sharp contrasts. At Bodh Gaya, pilgrimage is organized through spatial sequencing, ritual pathways, monastic engagement, and curated narratives [5]. The Shikoku Henro pilgrimage in Japan follows an 88-temple circuit with credentialing, symbolic progression, and deep ritual meaning while Camino de Santiago employs an internationally recognized passport system, route markers, and an ecosystem of spiritual hospitality [4]. Mecca-Medina exemplifies advanced crowd-flow systems, ritual sequencing, and digital facilitation on an unparalleled scale while Jerusalem integrates multi-faith layers of narrative, interpretation, and heritage stewardship [6].

These destinations demonstrate that *sacredness alone does not guarantee impactful spiritual tourism*. Rather, impactful destinations succeed through *experience architecture* in the intentional design of narrative, movement, ritual, interpretation, identity, community, and meaning making.

Currently, Anuradhapura lacks (a) a unified relic-centered narrative, (b) a sequenced pilgrimage circuit, (c) a credentialing system, (d) structured meditation integration, (e) modern interpretation or digital facilitation, and (f) unified governance across heritage and religious stakeholders. The absence of these critical components results in a fragmented visitor experience and restricts the city's ability to position itself alongside global spiritual tourism leaders. Accordingly, this study holds the following aims.

1. Analyze Anuradhapura's current utilization as a relic-centered spiritual site
2. Benchmark Anuradhapura ancient city against leading global pilgrimage destinations across multiple faith traditions and
3. Develop a theoretically grounded and practically implementable *Relic-Centered Experience Architecture (RCEA)* for Anuradhapura.

The proposed architecture integrates sacred narrative, ritual movement, meditation pathways, spiritual credentialing, interpretive enhancements, Micro Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

(MSME) participation, and multi-stakeholder governance. By drawing from global best practices while honoring the authenticity of Sri Lanka's Theravāda tradition, the model provides a structured blueprint for elevating Anuradhapura's standing in global spiritual tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptualizing Spiritual Tourism

Spiritual tourism is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by motivations of meaning-seeking, existential authenticity, and psychological restoration [7], [8]. Unlike religious tourism, which is bound to institutional doctrine, spiritual tourism encompasses broader experiences including pilgrimage, meditation, mindfulness travel, sacred-site visitation, and personal transformation journeys [9].

Wang's (1999) [10] concept of *existential authenticity* helps explain why contemporary spiritual tourists pursue experiences that stimulate inner reflection and emotional resonance rather than external markers of religiosity. This shift, reinforced by global post-crisis demand for well-being travel [11], situates spiritual tourism as both a cultural and psychological phenomenon. In Sri Lanka, however, the spiritual tourism sector remains structurally underdeveloped relative to the country's rich sacred geography, particularly the relic-based heritage of Anuradhapura [4].

2.2 Buddhist Pilgrimage, Relics, and Theravada Contexts

Theravāda Buddhist pilgrimage historically centers on *sarīrika dhātu* (relics of the Buddha), *paribhogika dhātu* (objects or places used by the Buddha), and *uddissaka dhātu* (representational symbols) [12]. Relic veneration constitutes a major axis of Buddhist devotional practice across South and Southeast Asia [13]. According to UNESCO World Heritage Centre as cited by Strong (2004) [12] Sri Lanka's Anuradhapura stands out globally due to:

- The Ruwanweliseya, traditionally believed to enshrine the largest Buddha relic deposit.
- The Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi (288 BCE), the oldest historically documented sacred tree.
- Monumental stupas such as Jethawanaramaya, once the tallest brick structure in the ancient world.

These features create significant potential for designing a structured relic-centered pilgrimage experience. However, this potential has not been systematically transformed into a coherent spiritual tourism product [4]; [14].

2.3 Global Model of Pilgrimage Experience Architecture

Highly successful global pilgrimage destinations share identifiable "experience architecture" components:

1. **Ritual Sequencing** (Ex: Hajj rites from *ihram* to *Arafat*) [15].

Ritual sequencing refers to the carefully structured progression of sacred actions that pilgrims are

expected to perform throughout their journey. For example, the Hajj in Islam follows a clearly defined sequence beginning with the state of *ihram*, moving through the standing at *Arafat*, and concluding with rituals such as *tawaf* around the Kaaba. This structured pathway helps pilgrims experience the spiritual transformation intended within the pilgrimage.

- **Credentialing** (Ex: Camino Compostela) [16].

Credentialing involves the formal recognition of a pilgrim's journey through documented proof, such as stamps, certificates, or records issued by an authorized body. Beyond simply marking completion, credentialing also motivates pilgrims, verifies authenticity, and provides a tangible symbol of spiritual achievement. A well-known example is the *Camino de Santiago*, where pilgrims collect stamps in the *Credencial* at various points along the route and receive the *Compostela certificate* upon reaching the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. This process adds legitimacy and emotional significance to the pilgrimage experience.

- **Narrative Curation** (Ex: Enlightenment story at Bodh Gaya) [17]

Narrative curation is the intentional shaping, preservation, and presentation of religious or historical stories associated with a pilgrimage site. At *Bodh Gaya*, for instance, narratives describing the enlightenment of the Buddha are shared through monuments, storytelling, and site interpretation, helping visitors connect emotionally and spiritually with the sacred event that the site represents.

- **Meditation/Spiritual Practice Integration** (Ex: temple-stays in Japan) [18]

This element emphasizes the inclusion of contemplative or devotional practices within the pilgrimage experience. Activities such as meditation, chanting, reflective prayer, or participation in monastic routines allow pilgrims to deepen their spiritual engagement and cultivate inner transformation. An example can be seen in *temple-stay programs in Japan*, where visitors join monks in daily rituals, meditation sessions, and spiritual exercises that enhance the overall meaning and intensity of their pilgrimage.

- **Interpretive Infrastructure** (Ex: museums, guide services) [19]

Interpretive infrastructure consists of the physical, informational, and educational resources that help pilgrims understand the significance of the sites they visit. Museums, visitor centers, interpretive panels, and professional guide services all contribute to a richer and more informed experience by explaining historical events, religious symbolism, and cultural context. Such infrastructure, as highlighted in many pilgrimage destinations worldwide, helps transform simple visitation into meaningful engagement with the site's heritage.

- **Digital Facilitation** (Ex: Hajj digital permit system) [20]

Digital facilitation refers to the use of technology to support and enhance the pilgrimage experience, improving aspects such as accessibility, safety, navigation, and administrative processes. Modern pilgrimage management increasingly relies on digital tools including mobile apps, GPS guidance, online booking systems, and authentication technologies. For example, during the *Hajj*, digital permit systems and application-based monitoring tools help regulate crowd

movement, verify pilgrim identity, and streamline logistical coordination.

- **MSME Integration** (Ex: Camino rural economy) [21]

MSME integration highlights the role of micro, small, and medium enterprises in strengthening the economic and social ecosystem surrounding pilgrimage routes. Local businesses such as guesthouses, food outlets, transport providers, and craft shops offer essential services that support pilgrims while also benefiting from the steady flow of visitors. Along routes like the *Camino de Santiago*, these enterprises form a vital part of the rural economy, fostering community development and sustaining livelihoods through pilgrimage-based tourism.

These components elevate spiritual sites from mere heritage locations into immersive spiritual journeys.

2.4 Comparative Synthesis of Global Pilgrimage Architectures

To understand how Anuradhapura can be repositioned as a world-class relic-centered spiritual destination, a comparison with historically significant and high-performing global pilgrimage sites is necessary. Table 1 synthesizes key characteristics from major Buddhist and non-Buddhist sites to identify transferable mechanisms.

2.4.1 Interpreting the Global Comparison

The comparative analysis highlights three key insights relevant to Anuradhapura:

1. Global pilgrimage destinations employ deliberate structuring of spiritual journeys, combining ritual order, narrative continuity, and spatial sequencing:

Across world religions, high-performing pilgrimage destinations are intentionally designed to guide pilgrims through coherent spiritual progressions rather than a set of disconnected sites. These structures integrate ritual order as seen in the mandatory sequencing of Hajj rites [15]; [20], narrative continuity that links sacred points into a unified story [19], and spatial sequencing such as Shikoku's clockwise 88-temple circuit [18] or the stage-based walking logic of the Camino de Santiago [22]. Such intentional experience architectures deepen emotional resonance and doctrinal understanding [8], [10]. In contrast, Anuradhapura's current visitor flow remains largely self-navigated and un-sequenced despite its exceptional sacred heritage [10].

2. Credentialing systems are central to motivation, legitimacy, and memory, yet Sri Lanka has no equivalent for Anuradhapura:

Credentialing frameworks constitute a powerful motivational engine across global pilgrimage traditions. The Camino's *Credential* and *Compostela* formalize progress and authenticate completion [22], while Shikoku's *Nokyochō* creates symbolic milestones that reinforce spiritual commitment [18]. Similar systems underpin legitimacy in large-scale pilgrimages such as Hajj, where digital permits regulate access and structure ritual participation [20]. Credentialing also functions as a memory artefact, strengthening post-journey attachment and shaping pilgrim identity [19]. Despite its profound traditions, Anuradhapura lacks any unified credentialing mechanism, representing a major experiential, motivational, and symbolic gap [4]. These insights

justify the methodological approach adopted in this study and the subsequent development of a relic-centered experience model.

3. Interpretation and digital facilitation strongly influence spiritual value perception, an area where Anuradhapura lags all major comparators: Interpretive infrastructures are central to transforming sacred landscapes into meaningful visitor experiences. Destinations such as Bodh Gaya integrate strong narrative explanation for Enlightenment symbolism [17], while Shikoku and Jerusalem use multilingual guides, curated legends, and layered historical narratives to deepen understanding [18]; [19]. Digital facilitation further enhances accessibility: Mecca employs advanced crowd-flow systems and digital permits [20]. Camino routes use apps and GPS tools, and Buddhist sites across Japan and Thailand utilize AR, QR-linked story panels, and structured online resources [23]. These interpretive and technological layers directly influence perceived spiritual value and visitor satisfaction, aligning with theories of meaning-making [10] and spiritual authenticity [8]. Anuradhapura, however, offers minimal formal interpretation and lacks dedicated digital infrastructure, significantly weakening its comparative experiential depth despite possessing relics of global importance [1].

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Rationale

This study adopts a *qualitative, multiple case comparative design* combined with *conceptual model building*. The focal case is Anuradhapura's relic-based sacred landscape, which is analytically compared with a purposively selected set of global pilgrimage destinations. This aligns with the logic of *multiple case study research* as articulated [24], where each case is treated as a “whole study” and cross-case comparison is used to generate robust theoretical insights rather than statistical generalization.

In pilgrimage and religious tourism research, comparative case-based designs are well-established. For example, Sharma [25] conducted an importance–performance and comparative analysis of two Hindu religious sites (Kedarnath and Omkareshwar) to assess destination attractiveness; [26] it was examined weekend religious trips in India using comparative case logic; [27] studies employed a mixed-methods cross-cultural comparison of Katra (India) and Kyoto (Japan) [28]; [29] developed a toolkit for designing pilgrimage routes in Latin America using best-practice comparative insights. These studies collectively demonstrate that comparing structurally different but functionally similar destinations is an appropriate and rigorous strategy for generating design principles and best-practice models in religious/spiritual tourism.

Given the study's objective to *design a prototype experience model for Anuradhapura*, the research is *primarily conceptual and exploratory*, grounded in systematic secondary data analysis and comparative synthesis rather than large-scale primary survey data. This is consistent with calls in pilgrimage scholarship for more conceptual and structural analyses of religious tourism destinations [6]; [19].

Table 1: Comparative Characteristics of Major Global Pilgrimage Destinations

Dimension	Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka)	Mahabodhi / Bodh Gaya (India)	Wat Phra That Doi Suthep (Thailand)	Shikoku Henro 88-Temple Pilgrimage (Japan)	Camino de Santiago (Spain)	Jerusalem / Holy Land (Israel/Palestine)	Mecca–Medina (Hajj) (Saudi Arabia)
Core sacred basis	Relics; Bodhi Tree; ancient Theravāda capital	Site of Enlightenment; Bodhi Tree	Relic (shoulder bone); white elephant legend	88 temples linked to Kūkai	Tomb of St. James; medieval Christian pilgrimage	Biblical, Jewish, and Islamic sacred history	Rites linked to Abrahamic traditions and Prophet Muhammad
Scale of pilgrims / visitors	211,837 recorded visitors to Anuradhapura heritage destination (2017); no consolidated modern data for total pilgrims	≈4 million visitors to Mahabodhi (2024)	Up to 120,000 visitors/month in peak periods	≈150,000–300,000 pilgrims/year (range; all modes)	530,919 Compostelas issued (2025)	4.55 million foreign tourists (2019), majority religious	1,833,164 Hajj pilgrims (2024)
Experience architecture	Fragmented site visits; no formal route sequencing	Structured worship and monastic clustering	Ascent pathway to relic chamber; symbolic movement	1,200 km sequential pilgrimage circuit	Waymarked routes; ritual milestones	Themed sacred routes; strong spatial layering	Highly formalized ritual sequence with crowd-flow engineering
Credentialing	None	Local temple stamps	Local stamps; no unified system	Nokyochō stamp book	Credencial & Compostela	Tour-issued certificates	Digital Hajj & Umrah permits
Narrative curation	Rich chronicles but weak interpretation	Enlightenment narrative central	Strong founding legend	Kūkai’s spiritual life narrative	St. James narrative curated across routes	Multi-layered sacred narratives	Quranic and prophetic narratives embedded
Meditation integration	Minimal structured programming	Strong monastic retreat options	Regional meditation programmes	Temple stays; zazen options	Limited	Retreats by religious orders	Spiritual preparation encouraged; ritual focus
Interpretation quality	Basic, uneven, limited multilingual	Increasing signage, exhibitions	Moderate; mix of signage and guides	Varies by temple; basic materials	Highly developed visitor centers and guidebooks	Extensive museum and guided-tour infrastructure	Strong digital and physical guidance systems

	content						
Digital facilitation	Very low	Moderate	Moderate	Low–moderate	High	High	Very advanced (apps, AI-assisted systems)
MSME integration	Weak informal ecosystem	Strong local economy	Strong tourism–temple linkages	Local inns and services	Highly developed MSME ecosystem	Strong tourism economy	Mixed formal & micro-enterprise ecosystem
Stewardship	Fragmented (DoA, temples, state)	Joint ASI + temple/state	Temple + state	Temples + local gov.	Church + regional gov.	Multi-actor governance	Centralized state + religious authority

Sources: Authors. Based on data compiled from Sri Lanka Tourism Research Journal (Anuradhapura visitor counts, 2017) ; Times of India (Mahabodhi visitor estimates, 2024) ; Tourism Chiang Mai / cultural sources on Doi Suthep visitor trends ; Henro International and Samurai Tours (Shikoku annual pilgrims) ; Camino Pilgrim’s Office (2024 Compostela statistics) ; Israel Ministry of Tourism (2019 visitor statistics) [30] ; General Authority for Statistics, Saudi Arabia (Hajj 2024 pilgrims)

Note. Visitor volumes are indicative of approximations based on the most recent publicly available secondary sources. Annual counts vary significantly by year, counting method, and inclusion criteria. Consolidated pilgrim-flow statistics for Anuradhapura are not publicly available and represent an important data gap for Sri Lanka.

3.2 Case Selection

Using theoretical sampling [24], the study examines *one primary case* Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka), a relic-centered Theravāda capital featuring major stupas and the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi and *six comparative cases*. Three are Buddhist comparators: *Bodh Gaya* (India), the site of Enlightenment; *Wat Phra That Doi Suthep* (Thailand), a relic-centered hilltop shrine and regional spiritual hub; and the *Shikoku Henro 88-Temple Pilgrimage* (Japan), a structured multi-temple circuit. Three are non-Buddhist global exemplars: the *Camino de Santiago* (Spain), a credential-based Christian pilgrimage network; *Jerusalem/Holy Land* (Israel–Palestine), a multi-faith sacred city; and *Mecca-Medina* (Saudi Arabia), the world’s largest organized pilgrimage system with advanced ritual sequencing and crowd-flow management.

The selection is justified on three grounds. First, *functional comparability*, as all destinations are major pilgrimage or spiritual tourism sites in their respective traditions. Second, *diversity of experience architectures*, ranging from relic-centered single sites (e.g., Doi Suthep) to extended multi-site circuits (Shikoku, Camino) and mega-scale state-managed ritual systems (Mecca–Medina). Third, *theoretical replication* following Yin’s logic, whereby the cases offer contrasting yet complementary models of narrative curation, credentialing, experience design, and governance that inform Anuradhapura’s strategic repositioning.

The study draws on *systematic secondary data*, integrating four main categories of sources to build a comprehensive comparative foundation. First, a wide range of *academic literature* was reviewed, including peer-reviewed articles and books on pilgrimage and spiritual tourism (e.g., [7]; [13]; [18]; [19]; [26]), as well as empirical and conceptual studies on major pilgrimage routes such as the Camino de Santiago and Shikoku ([16]; [18]; [22]). Recent comparative analyses of religious tourism destinations [6]; [25]; [27] further informed the selection of analytical dimensions for cross-case evaluation.

Second, the study integrates *official statistics and policy documents*, including Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority reports on visitation patterns in Anuradhapura, Hajj statistics from the General Authority for Statistics [20], Camino Compostela records [22], and national tourism datasets from Spain, Israel, and Thailand relevant to Bodh Gaya and Doi Suthep visitor flows. Third, *institutional and destination-level materials* such as UNESCO World Heritage documentation [31], along with resources from Camino route organizations, Shikoku Henro associations, and Thai tourism authorities, were utilized to contextualize site-level characteristics. Finally, the study builds on prior national-level work on Sri Lanka’s spiritual tourism landscape, particularly the authors’ earlier assessment identifying the underutilization of the country’s spiritual heritage assets [4].

Inclusion criteria: for sources were: (a) explicit focus on pilgrimage or spiritual/religious tourism; (b) relevance to at least one of the analytical dimensions defined below; (c) publication within the last 15 years for empirical studies, with foundational classics (e.g., [10]; [24] [32]) retained regardless of age.

3.2 Analytical Dimensions

Based on the literature review, ten analytical dimensions were defined ([24] [32]) and aligned with multi-dimensional pilgrimage destination analyses proposed in the literature [19] for cross-case comparison:

Core sacred basis: Pilgrimage destinations are fundamentally shaped by the sacred source that anchors their significance—whether a *relic* (as in Anuradhapura, Shikoku’s Kūkai associations, and Doi Suthep’s Buddha relic), an *Enlightenment site* (Bodh Gaya), a key *life-event location* (Jerusalem’s multi-faith sacred events), or a powerful *symbolic narrative space* (Camino’s association with St. James). The nature of this sacred basis

influences not only the intensity of devotional practices but also the interpretive depth and emotional meaning visitors derive from the site.

Scale of pilgrims and visitors: The magnitude of annual pilgrim flows reflects both global visibility and institutional capacity. Some destinations, such as Mecca and Medina, accommodate millions within highly organized structures, whereas routes like Camino de Santiago draw several hundred thousand annually through credential-based tracking. Others, such as Shikoku and Doi Suthep, show moderate but spiritually intensive flows. Anuradhapura, despite its profound sacred heritage, receives comparatively lower documented volumes, illustrating clear potential for growth.

Experience architecture: Leading pilgrimage routes employ a deliberate “experience architecture,” which includes route logic, ritual sequencing, and spatial organization that enables visitors to progress through meaningful stages. Camino’s stage-based path, Shikoku’s clockwise 88-temple circuit, and Mecca’s tightly sequenced ritual progression (ihram → tawaf → sa’i → Arafat) exemplify this. Anuradhapura’s current layout, while historically rich, lacks an equivalent structured progression and relies largely on uncoordinated, self-guided movement.

Credentialing systems: Credentialing plays a symbolic and motivational role in many pilgrimage traditions. Systems such as Camino’s *Credencial* and final *Compostela*, Shikoku’s *Nokyochō* stamp book, and Hajj’s digital permits provide pilgrims with tangible markers of progress, reinforce commitment, and authenticate the spiritual journey. These systems often strengthen behavioral engagement, deepen ritual meaning, and generate powerful memories that encourage return visitation.

Narrative curation: Effective destinations curate clear, engaging narrative frameworks that communicate historical events, legends, doctrinal meaning, and symbolic interpretations. Bodh Gaya emphasizes the Enlightenment story, Shikoku foregrounds the life of Kūkai, Doi Suthep promotes the white elephant relic legend, and Jerusalem integrates multiple religious’ narratives. In contrast, many aspects of Anuradhapura’s sacred narratives—such as the arrival of the Bodhi Tree, King Dutugemunu’s Ruwanweliseya story, or ancient meditation traditions—remain under-communicated.

Meditation and spiritual practice integration: Modern spiritual travelers increasingly seek contemplative or experiential engagement. Destinations like Bodh Gaya, Chiang Mai, and Shikoku offer structured meditation retreats, temple-stay programmes, or guided spiritual practices. These elements allow visitors not only to observe sacred sites but to embody spiritual teachings. While Sri Lanka has deep meditation lineages, Anuradhapura currently offers few formalized programmes accessible to international visitors.

Interpretive infrastructure: High-performing spiritual destinations invest heavily in interpretive systems multilingual signage, museums, visitor centers, guided tours, ritual explanations, artefact displays, audio guides, and thematic pathways. Such infrastructure translates the site’s historical and spiritual depth into visitor understanding. Although Anuradhapura hosts several monumental structures, the lack of robust interpretive mechanisms limits visitor comprehension and engagement.

Digital facilitation: Digital platforms increasingly shape modern pilgrimage experiences. Examples include Camino apps for route navigation, crowd-flow dashboards for Mecca, digital passes for certain temple complexes in Thailand and Japan, and AR reconstructions at major Buddhist sites. These tools support navigation, safety, interpretation, and documentation. Anuradhapura currently lacks cohesive digital support systems, which limit accessibility, especially for foreign travelers.

MSME and community integration: Successful pilgrimage routes generate inclusive local economies through micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) participation. Camino and Shikoku demonstrate how homestays, small eateries, craft producers, and local transport services can be integrated into the spiritual

journey. Such integration strengthens rural livelihoods, preserves local traditions, and embeds social meaning into the route. Anuradhapura's potential in this area remains largely untapped and informal.

Stewardship and governance: Governance models vary widely across global pilgrimage sites—from highly centralized state oversight (Mecca) to Church-led or monastic governance (Camino, Shikoku), to hybrid models (Jerusalem). Strong governance ensures safety, quality standards, narrative consistency, and sustainable site management. Anuradhapura's governance—currently divided among the Department of Archaeology, temples, tourism bodies, and provincial authorities requires greater coordination to deliver a unified spiritual tourism experience.

These dimensions are consistent with structural analyses of religious tourism destinations such as those by [6], [25], and [29], who examine destination content, governance, and visitor experience attributes comparatively.

3.3 Cross-case Matrix Construction

Following [31] guidance on qualitative matrix displays, a cross-case matrix was created with destinations as rows and analytical dimensions as columns. Descriptive entries for each destination dimension pair were populated using secondary sources and then checked for consistency, triangulation, and currency particularly for visitor volumes and governance features. The matrix was iteratively refined to produce comparative Table 1 presented in the Literature Review. This matrix served two purposes namely to (a) synthesize extant knowledge on global pilgrimage architectures; (b) identify gaps and opportunities specific to Anuradhapura when benchmarked against global exemplars.

Abductive Conceptual Modelling

The final step of analysis involved abductive reasoning: iteratively cycling between empirical patterns in the comparative matrix and theoretical constructs from spiritual tourism and pilgrimage literature ([7]; [8]; [19]). Through this process, a Relic-Centered Experience Architecture (RCEA) model was developed, specifying (a) key components of a full spiritual tourism experience, (b) their interrelationships, and (c) the specific design features required to translate Anuradhapura's relic landscape into a structured spiritual circuit. This approach is similar in spirit to [29] "toolkit" development for pilgrimage routes and to [6] structural modelling of religious tourism destinations.

Ensuring methodological rigor, several strategies were employed to enhance the credibility, dependability, and transparency of the study. First, *triangulation of sources* was undertaken, whereby data for each destination and analytical dimension were cross-checked across multiple academic, institutional, and statistical references; visitor counts were treated as indicative and used only when clearly referenced and recent to avoid over-claiming. Second, the study *explicitly acknowledged data limitations*, particularly the absence of consolidated pilgrim-flow statistics for Anuradhapura, which was recognized as a significant structural knowledge gap and further justified the need for improved spiritual tourism monitoring in Sri Lanka. Third, *analytical decisions were systematically documented*, with case-selection criteria, inclusion and exclusion decisions, and matrix coding rules reviewed among all co-authors to reduce interpretive bias [24]; [31]. Fourth, the methodological approach was *aligned with established standards in pilgrimage and religious tourism scholarship*, drawing on the multi-level analytical frameworks outlined by [19] and the structural-comparative approaches seen in recent high-quality studies such as those by [26] and [6]. Although the study relies primarily on secondary data and conceptual modelling, this approach is appropriate for its

objective: to synthesize global best-practice architectures and propose a theoretically grounded, practically implementable model for the relic-centered spiritual tourism development of Anuradhapura.

4. FINDINGS

Drawing from the cross-case matrix, nine key insights emerged regarding Anuradhapura's current spiritual tourism positioning.

Core Sacred Basis

Anuradhapura holds exceptional relic-centered significance through sites such as the Ruwanweliseya, Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, and its major stupas. However, global exemplars (e.g., Bodh Gaya, Doi Suthep) convert sacredness into structured experiential meaning through curated narratives and ritual design. *Insight 1:* Sacredness alone is insufficient; experiential positioning drives visitors' resonance.

Pilgrim and Visitor Scale

Global pilgrimage destinations attract substantial flows Bodh Gaya (~4 million), Camino (~500,000), Shikoku (150,000–300,000), Mecca (1.8 million). Anuradhapura recorded ~212,000 visitors in 2017 and lacks consolidated pilgrim-flow statistics. *Insight 2:* Weak visibility and data gaps undermine strategic positioning.

Experience Architecture

Leading destinations employ clear sequencing: Camino's staged routes, Shikoku's 88-temple order, Doi Suthep's symbolic ascent, Mecca's prescribed ritual flow, and Bodh Gaya's spatial circulation. Anuradhapura remains a collection of discrete sites lacking thematic or ritual progression. *Insight 3:* A structured relic-based journey must replace fragmented site visitation.

Credentialing Systems

Credentialing motivates engagement in global sites Credencial/Compostela (Camino), *Nokyochō* (Shikoku), digital permits (Mecca). Anuradhapura has no unified credential or pilgrimage identity. *Insight 4:* A national "Spiritual Passport" is essential.

Narrative Curation

Key narratives of the Bodhi-tree's arrival, King Dutugemunu's legacy, stupa engineering traditions, monastic meditation culture are inconsistently communicated. Other destinations foreground curated storytelling (e.g., Bodh Gaya's Enlightenment story, Shikoku's Kūkai narrative). *Insight 5:* Narrative interpretation requires systematic, visitor-oriented curation.

Meditation Integration

Although Sri Lanka has a strong meditation tradition, Anuradhapura offers no structured visitor programmes in contrast to temple-stays (Japan), meditation networks (Thailand), and monastic retreats (Bodh Gaya). *Insight 6:* Meditation pathways should complement relic worship.

Interpretation and Digital Facilitation

Global exemplars use multilingual signage, audio guides, AR tools, apps, and real-time management systems. Anuradhapura's interpretive offerings remain limited, outdated, or absent. *Insight 7:* Upgraded interpretive and digital infrastructure is critical.

MSME Integration

Along Camino and Shikoku, MSMEs (lodging, crafts, food services) are embedded into the pilgrimage experience. In Anuradhapura, MSMEs operate informally and are disconnected from any structured spiritual route. *Insight 8:* A curated spiritual trail can stimulate livelihoods and local enterprise.

Governance and Coordination

Governance is fragmented across the DoA, temples, provincial bodies, and informal actors. Successful pilgrimage destinations operate under coordinated or centralized governance systems which is consistent with high-performance cultural systems that emphasize alignment, shared purpose, and coordinated execution [33]. *Insight 9:* A unified spiritual tourism authority or coordination mechanism is needed. Anuradhapura’s challenge lies not in sacred asset scarcity but in the absence of experience architecture. The city requires systemic integration of narrative, sequencing, credentialing, meditation, interpretation, MSME engagement, and governance to reach global standards.

4.2 PROPOSED RELIC-CENTRED EXPERIENCE MODEL FOR ANURADHAPURA

Drawing from comparative insights, this study proposes a *Relic-Centered Experience Architecture (RCEA)* a conceptual model outlining the core components required to elevate Anuradhapura into a globally competitive spiritual tourism destination.

4.2.1 Conceptual Foundation

The model synthesizes insights from pilgrimage theory, narrative identity and meaning-making [10], spiritual authenticity [8a], heritage interpretation literature, visitor-experience frameworks including constructs of sustained attentional engagement and experiential focus [34], and comparative governance work in religious tourism. It builds directly on experiential patterns observed across Camino de Santiago, Shikoku, Doi Suthep, Jerusalem, and Mecca–Medina.

The Seven-Pillar RCEA Model

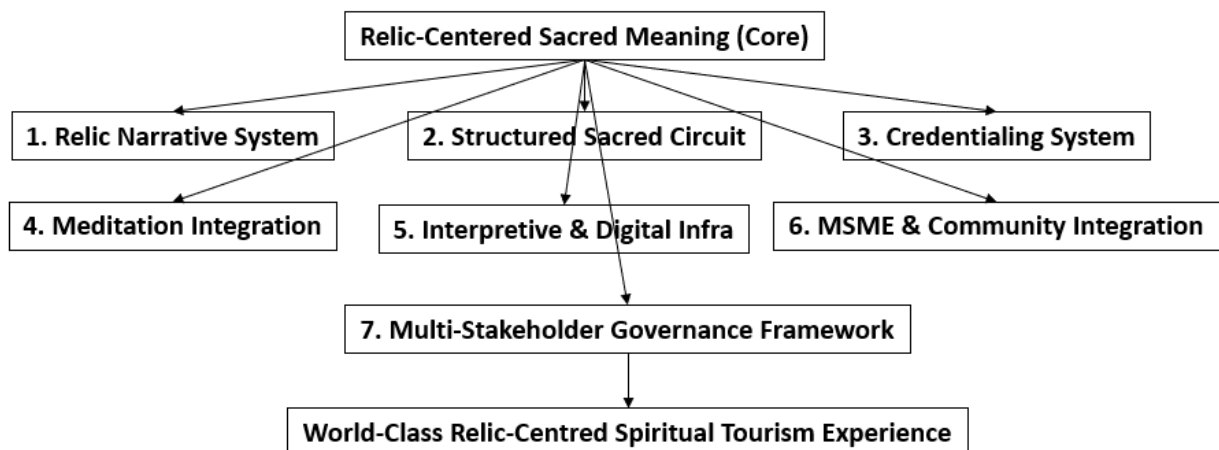


Fig. 1: *Relic-Centered Experience Architecture (RCEA) model for Anuradhapura.*

The proposed framework comprises seven mutually reinforcing pillars as illustrated in Fig. 1.

Pillar 1: Relic-Centered Narrative System: A unified storytelling framework connects Anuradhapura’s core narratives arrival of the Bodhi Tree, King Dutugemunu and Ruwanweliseya, early stupa engineering, Arhath Mahinda there’s mission, and monastic meditation heritage shifting the visitor experience from passive

observation to meaning-making.

Pillar 2: Structured Relic Pilgrimage Circuit: A designated “Anuradhapura Sacred Circuit” links major relic sites in a coherent progression, transforming scattered attractions into a sequenced spiritual journey.

Pillar 3: Credentialing System: A “Sri Lanka Spiritual Passport” (physical/digital) adapts global credentialing models (e.g., *Credencial* and *Nokyochō*), providing stamps, milestones, and completion recognition to motivate participation.

Pillar 4: Meditation and Mindfulness Integration: Purpose-built meditation encounters guided sessions, quiet zones, and a dedicated Vipassana and Relic Interpretation Centre embed practice within the pilgrimage journey.

Pillar 5: Interpretive and Digital Infrastructure: Modern interpretation (multilingual signage, audio guides, AR visualizations) and a unified digital platform enhanced accessibility, learning, and real-time visitor management.

Pillar 6: MSME and Community Integration: A network of certified local vendors, homestays, and craft-based enterprises embeds community livelihoods within the spiritual circuit.

Pillar 7: Multi-Stakeholder Governance: An Anuradhapura Spiritual Tourism Council (ASTC), integrating archaeological, religious, tourism, provincial, academic, and MSME stakeholders, ensures coherent, quality-driven destination management.

4.2.2 Operationalization Pathway

The model can be implemented in five progressive stages:

(1) *Foundational development* produces unified narratives, develops passports, and train guides/ monastic collaborators.

The first stage focuses on establishing the essential groundwork required for the model to function effectively. This involves developing a coherent and unified narrative that articulates the spiritual, cultural, and historical significance of the Sacred Relic Circuit. It also includes designing the official pilgrimage passport or credential system that will guide pilgrims, track their progress, and add symbolic value to the journey. In addition, this stage emphasizes training guides, monastic partners, and other frontline collaborators to ensure they can deliver consistent, culturally sensitive, and spiritually informed interpretation across the circuit. Structured competency frameworks could be developed to ensure consistent service quality and interpretive capability [35].

(2) *Circuit establishment* marks the Sacred Relic Circuit and introduces basic interpretive infrastructure.

The second stage centers physically and symbolically marking the Sacred Relic Circuit to make it identifiable, accessible, and meaningful for pilgrims. This includes placing signage, route markers, and orientation points that help guide movement across key sites. At this stage, basic interpretive infrastructure such as introductory panels, visitor information points, or small interpretive displays is introduced to provide pilgrims with essential context and enhance their understanding of the sacred narrative.

(3) *Meditation integration* partner with established centers to provide structured programs suited to pilgrims.

The third stage focuses on deepening the spiritual dimension of the pilgrimage by partnering with established meditation or spiritual practice centers. Through these partnerships, structured programs tailored specifically for pilgrims can be developed. These may include short meditation sessions, guided contemplative practices,

or immersive spiritual retreats that enrich the overall experience and help pilgrims reflect meaningfully on the themes of the Sacred Relic Circuit.

(4) *MSME certification* train and brand local enterprises under a “Sacred Circuit” standard.

The fourth stage involves creating an inclusive economic ecosystem by integrating and uplifting micro, small, and medium enterprises located along the route. A formal training and certification process is introduced under a unified “Sacred Circuit” quality standard. This ensures that local accommodation providers, food outlets, transport services, and craft vendors can offer consistent, reliable, and culturally appropriate services to pilgrims. The certification acts both as a quality guarantee and a branding tool, strengthening the local economy while enhancing the overall pilgrimage experience.

(5) *Governance activation* formalizes ASTC to oversee design, operations, and quality assurance.

The final stage activates a dedicated governance structure to ensure long-term sustainability, coordination, and quality assurance. This includes formalizing the Asian Sacred Tourism Council (ASTC) or an equivalent governing body with clear authority over design standards, operational guidelines, monitoring systems, and stakeholder coordination. By establishing institutional oversight, the circuit can maintain consistency, protect authenticity, manage growth responsibly, and continue to evolve in response to pilgrim needs.

This study makes an important contribution at both theoretical and practical levels.

Theoretically, the Relic-Centered Experience Architecture (RCEA) introduces a structured conceptual model that integrates Theravāda doctrinal principles with contemporary experience-design and pilgrimage scholarship. It explains how relic authority, narrative structure, and carefully sequenced experiences collectively shape spiritual meaning. The model also offers a transferable framework that can be applied to other Buddhist and cross-tradition pilgrimage contexts.

Practically, the study provides a strategic and scalable framework for managing sacred heritage sites in Sri Lanka, particularly in strengthening the international profile of Anuradhapura. It supports sustainable tourism development by enhancing visitor experience, preserving cultural authenticity, promoting coordinated governance, and generating community benefits.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Anuradhapura holds one of the most historically continuous and relic-centered sacred landscapes in the Buddhist world, yet the city remains significantly underutilized as an international spiritual tourism destination despite its globally recognized sites Ruwanweliseya, Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, Jethawanaramaya, Thuparamaya, and the Samadhi Buddha statue. Comparative evidence from Bodh Gaya, Shikoku Henro, Camino de Santiago, Jerusalem, and Mecca–Medina demonstrates that leading pilgrimage destinations succeed not merely because of sacred assets but through intentional experiential design, narrative curation, credentialing systems, meditation integration, and coordinated governance. In response, this study proposes the *Relic-Centered Experience Architecture (RCEA)*, a seven-pillar model that embeds relic narratives, structured circuits, credentialing mechanisms, meditation pathways, interpretive systems, MSME integration, and multi-stakeholder governance as the foundations for transforming Anuradhapura’s fragmented visitor experience into a coherent spiritual journey. Beyond its applied relevance, the model advances spiritual tourism research by introducing a relic-centered theoretical lens aligned with Theravāda traditions and

drawing from cross-cultural pilgrimage architectures, demonstrating how experiential structures shape destination competitiveness and spiritual value creation.

5.1 Policy Directions

A series of actionable pathways emerge from the RCEA. First, authorities should establish a unified *Anuradhapura Sacred Relic Circuit* with sequenced routes, clear milestones, and visitor-flow planning. Second, a national *Sri Lanka Spiritual Passport*, physical and digital, should be introduced to provide credentialing, stamp collection, and route completion recognition. Third, a *Relic & Meditation Interpretation Centre* combining narrative exhibits, stupa-construction visualizations, and guided meditation spaces can strengthen doctrinal engagement. Fourth, interpretation and digital facilitation must be modernized through multilingual signage, AR reconstructions, audio guides, and an integrated *Sacred Anuradhapura App*. Fifth, a certified *Sacred Circuit MSME ecosystem* should be developed to support homestays, craft-based enterprises, and heritage-linked food services. Sixth, governance must be coordinated through an *Anuradhapura Spiritual Tourism Council (ASTC)* involving temples, the Department of Archaeology, SLTDA, academics, and community representatives. Seventh, establishing a *pilgrim flow data system* with manual counts and digital logs is essential for strategic planning. Finally, meditation and mindfulness offerings should be embedded into programming via short-guided sessions, silent zones, and forest-meditation extensions.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

The study relied primarily on secondary data, limiting access to disaggregated pilgrim-flow statistics, especially for Anuradhapura. Future work should include primary visitor surveys, ethnographic observations, spatial behavior mapping, experience-flow tracking, longitudinal assessments of circuit performance, and econometric modelling of MSME impacts. Qualitative engagement with monks, devotees, guides, and local communities would further refine the narrative and meditation dimensions of the RCEA. Extending the model to Sri Lanka's broader Buddhist heritage network including Mihintale, Polonnaruwa, and Dambulla represents an additional avenue for research.

5.3 Overall Contribution

By integrating global best practices into a coherent relic-anchored framework, this study provides a structured pathway for repositioning Anuradhapura as a world-class Theravāda spiritual tourism destination. As global demand for spiritual and transformative travel continues to rise, Sri Lanka has a distinctive opportunity to reclaim its historic identity as a guardian of Buddhist heritage and elevate Anuradhapura's standing among the world's major pilgrimage cities.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] S. Seneviratne, "Situating world heritage sites in a multicultural society: The ideology of presentation at the Sacred City of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka," in *Archaeology and Postcolonial Critique*, pp. 177–195, 2008. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5771/9780759112353>
- [2] P. D. Wijesekara and H. Dissanayake, "Mapping the Scholarly Landscape: Quantifying the Evolution of Studies on Buddhist Culture," *Roczniki Kulturoznawcze*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 47–77, 2025, doi: <https://doi.org/10.18290/rkult25162.3>

- [3] Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, "Tourism year in review (Jan.–Jun. 2025)," Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2025. Available: https://www.sltda.gov.lk/storage/common_media/Year_In_Review_2025_final.pdf, [Accessed: Dec.02,2025].
- [4] G. G. T. Y. Gunathilake *et al.*, "Spiritual tourism and rural development in Sri Lanka: Potentials, current utilization, and lessons from global experiences," *Journal of Management and Tourism Research*, 2025.
- [5] D. Geary, "Rebuilding the navel of the earth: Buddhist pilgrimage and transnational religious networks," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 645–692, 2014. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X12000881>
- [6] A. Zarkada, M. Smith, Y. Ram, and K. Smith, "The structure and content of the religious tourism destination image construct: an exploratory netnography of travelers' reviews of Makkah and Medina," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, vol. 16, no. 13, pp. 689–712, 2025. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-06-2024-0229>
- [7] C. N. Buzinde, "Theoretical linkages between well-being and tourism: The case of self-determination theory and spiritual tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 83, p. 102920, 2020, doi: [10.1016/j.annals.2020.102920](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102920).
- [8] A. Norman, "The varieties of the spiritual tourist experience," *Literature & Aesthetics*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2012.
- [9] N. Jain, "Beyond The Sacred Sites: What Influences Spiritual Tourism," *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 1–13, Feb. 2026, Available: <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/beyond-the-sacred-sites-what-influences-spiritual-tourism-17941.html>. [Accessed: Nov. 25, 2025]
- [10] N. Wang, "Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience," *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 349–370, 1999, doi: [10.1016/S0160-7383\(98\)00103-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(98)00103-0)
- [11] V. Iacob, J. Jesus, and C. Carmo, "An overview of mindfulness theories applied to tourism: Systematic review update and bibliometric analysis," *Quality & Quantity*, vol. 58, no 3, pp. 22130-2235, 2023, doi: [10.1007/s11135-023-01736-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-023-01736-2).
- [12] J. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, vol. 7. Princeton, NJ, USA: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- [13] A. Norman, *Spiritual Tourism: Travel and Religious Practice in Western Society*. London, U.K.: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011.
- [14] A. R. N. T. Jayasinghe and W. Wimalaratana, "Role of spiritual tourism to develop Sri Lanka tourism after COVID-19," *Journal of Tourism Economics and Applied Research*, vol. 4, Special Issue, pp.

83–97, 2020. Available: <https://www.slithm.edu.lk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Special-Issue-2020-on-Resilience-Building-Recovery-of.pdf>

- [15] J. Henderson, “Religious tourism and its management: The Hajj in Saudi Arabia,” *International Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 13, no. 6, pp. 541–552, 2011, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.825>
- [16] Oficina del Peregrino, “Estadísticas 2024: Camino de Santiago pilgrims,” Santiago de Compostela, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/estadisticas>. [Accessed: Dec.02,2025].
- [17] *Times of India*, “Gaya Ji sees 40 lakh visitors in 2024; Bodh Gaya emerges as major Buddhist tourism hub,” Jun. 13, 2025. Available: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/gaya-ji-a-global-pilgrimage-hub/articleshow/121699524.cms> [Accessed: Nov.26, 2025].
- [18] J. Choe and M. O’Regan, “Faith Manifest: Spiritual and Mindfulness Tourism in Chiang Mai, Thailand,” *Religions*, vol. 11, no. 177, pp. 1–15, 2020, doi: [10.3390/rel11040177](https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11040177)
- [19] N. Collins-Kreiner, “The geography of pilgrimage and tourism: Transformations and implications for applied geography,” *Applied Geography*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 153–164, 2010. doi: [10.1016/j.apgeog.2009.02.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2009.02.001)
- [20] General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT), “Hajj statistics publication 2024 (1445 H),” Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2024. [Online]. Available: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/carboncapture-and-utilization>. [Accessed: Dec.02,2025].
- [21] E. J. E. Graave, J. Klijs, and W. Heijman, “The economic impact of pilgrimage in Galicia: Santiago de Compostela and beyond,” *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 46–58, 2017, doi: [10.21427/D7HX0N](https://doi.org/10.21427/D7HX0N).
- [22] Office of the Pilgrim, “2024 Camino statistics summary,” Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 2024. <https://americanpilgrims.org/statistics/> [Accessed: Apr.02,2026].
- [23] Tourism Authority of Thailand, “Thailand tourism statistics 2023: Visitor arrivals and provincial tourism profiles,” 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://www.tat.or.th>. [Accessed: Dec.02,2025].
- [24] R. K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage, 2018.
- [25] S. R. Singh and A. K. Singh, "Using HOLSAT to evaluate satisfaction of religious tourist at sacred destinations: The case of religious travelers visiting sacred destinations in the Himalayas, India," *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, vol. 18, no. 5, pp. 511–528, 2023. doi; [10.1108/IJCTHR-10-2015-0120](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-10-2015-0120)
- [26] K. A. Shinde and D. H. Olsen, Eds., *Religious Tourism and the Environment*. Wallingford, UK: CABI, 2020. doi: [10.1079/9781789241600.0000](https://doi.org/10.1079/9781789241600.0000)

- [27] R. Raj, K. Griffin, and R. Blackwell, "Motivations for Religious Tourism, Pilgrimage, Festivals and Events," in *Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Festivals: An International Perspective*, CABI, pp. 103-117, 2015, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781780645230.0103>
- [28] Samurai Tours, "Shikoku 88 temple pilgrimage," Kyoto, Japan, 2025. Available: <https://www.samuraitours.com/tour/shikoku-88-temple-pilgrimage> [Accessed: Dec.02,2025].
- [29] M. C. Pardo, M. C. Cortés García, and G. Silva, "Developing pilgrimage tourism in Latin America: Lessons learned from the Camino de Santiago," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, vol. 11, no. 4, p. 5, 2023. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21427/X5YN-KN05>
- [30] Israel Ministry of Tourism, "Record tourist arrivals in 2019," Jerusalem: Government Press Office, 2020. Available: <https://itn.co.il/news/industry-corner/israeli-tourism-minister-2019-was-record-breaking/>. [Accessed: Dec.01,2025].
- [31] UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Sacred City of Anuradhapura." [Online]. Available: <https://whc.unesco.org>. [Accessed: Dec.02,2025].
- [32] M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage, 2014.
- [33] G. G. T. Y. Gunathilake and S. D. Jayasooriya, "Development of a theoretical model for High Performance Culture," *Journal of HRM Perspective*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 28–39, 2022. Doi: [10.4038/jhrmp.v7i1.57](https://doi.org/10.4038/jhrmp.v7i1.57)
- [34] G. G. T. Y. Gunathilake and S. D. Jayasooriya, "Employee work focus: Conceptualizing and developing a multidimensional scale," *Journal of Management Matters*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 101–134, 2022, doi: [10.4038/jmm.v9i1.34](https://doi.org/10.4038/jmm.v9i1.34).
- [35] G. G. T. Y. Gunathilake and S. Jayasooriya, "Development of a competency framework for site administrative officers in a Sri Lankan construction company," *Journal of HRM Perspectives*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 85–110, 2021.