Cultural Contact as a Catalyst:
Determinants of Revisit Intention Among Phnom Penh Tourists to Siem Reap

Akaraphun Ratasuk[*] and Measmeilee Thai

International College, Panyapiwat Institute of Management, Nonthaburi 11120, Thailand

(*Corresponding author's e-mail: akaraphunrat@pim.ac.th)

Abstract

This study examines the determinants of revisit intention among domestic tourists from Phnom Penh visiting Siem Reap, with a focus on the mediating role of cultural contact. A quantitative survey was conducted among 504 prior visitors, and the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) against a model that incorporated destination attractiveness, image, accessibility, hospitality, and authenticity. Results confirm that all five destination factors significantly and positively predict revisit intention. The strongest direct drivers were Hospitality ($\beta = 0.359$) and Authenticity ($\beta = 0.291$). Crucially, Cultural Contact was identified as a vital experiential mediator. Its most substantial mediating effect was observed between authenticity and revisit intention ($\beta_{indirect} = 0.130$, $p = 0.003$), and it also significantly transmitted the effects of attractiveness ($\beta_{indirect} = 0.082$) and accessibility ($\beta_{indirect} = 0.050$). These findings confirm that strategies prioritizing hospitality and authentic cultural engagement are essential for tourism managers and policymakers to cultivate long-term loyalty and sustainable tourism growth in Siem Reap.

Keywords: Revisit intentions, Cultural contact, Destination attractiveness, Domestic tourism, Siem Reap, Destination image, Hospitality, Authenticity

Introduction

Tourism stands as one of the world's most dynamic and rapidly expanding industries, serving as a cornerstone for economic growth, cultural exchange, and social development on a global scale (Luo & Ratasuk, 2024; Pan et al., 2024). In recent years, the sector has evolved beyond leisure and recreation to become a critical driver of employment, infrastructure investment, and community well-being (Lin, 2024; Tosyali et al., 2025). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2025), tourism now accounts for over 10% of global GDP, underscoring its significance for both developed and developing economies. The industry has witnessed substantial innovation, including the integration of digital technologies, the rise of experiential and sustainable tourism, and a renewed emphasis on cultural and heritage tourism (Fatema et al., 2024). The post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery has been marked by a surge in domestic tourism, digital transformation in service delivery, and an increased

focus on resilience and sustainability, as international tourist arrivals have rebounded to nearly pre-pandemic levels (Efthimiou, 2024).

Within Southeast Asia, tourism is a vital economic pillar, with countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia leveraging their rich cultural assets and natural beauty to attract millions of visitors annually (Hussain et al., 2024; King & Chin, 2024). Cambodia, in particular, has emerged as a significant player in the regional tourism landscape, experiencing robust growth and rapid recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic (Li et al., 2022). The country's tourism sector is characterized by its competitive pricing, rich cultural heritage, and growing emphasis on domestic travel. Siem Reap, home to the iconic Angkor Wat temple complex, is the nation's premier tourism destination, drawing both international and domestic tourists (Vanchan, 2021). The city's tourism market is shaped by its cultural significance, competitive dynamics

within the ASEAN region, and the growing importance of domestic travelers, especially from the capital, Phnom Penh. Despite these strengths, Siem Reap and Cambodia as a whole face ongoing challenges, including infrastructure limitations, seasonal fluctuations, and the need for more targeted domestic marketing strategies (Zhao & Tan, 2023).

The intensifying competition in the regional tourism market, coupled with changing traveler preferences and the lingering impacts of the pandemic, presents a significant challenge for Siem Reap in sustaining and increasing tourist arrivals, particularly repeat visits (Nghiem et al., 2024; Sophat et al., 2024). As travelers from Phnom Penh and other regions gain more options, both domestically and internationally, Siem Reap must differentiate itself to maintain its appeal. The ability to encourage revisit intention among domestic tourists is crucial for the long-term sustainability and resilience of the local tourism industry (Pan et al., 2024). However, gaps in infrastructure, limited appreciation of local cultural assets, and insufficient engagement strategies have hindered the city's ability to fully capitalize on its domestic tourism potential (Mohamed Al Matris, 2023).

This study focuses on revisit intention as the primary outcome variable, reflecting tourists' likelihood of returning to Siem Reap after an initial visit. Revisit intention is a vital indicator of destination loyalty and satisfaction, directly influencing the stability of tourism revenues and the sustainability of local businesses (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2025; Thipsingh et al., 2022). For stakeholders in Cambodia's tourism sector, fostering strong revisit intentions among domestic tourists is essential for mitigating the risks associated with external shocks, such as global pandemics, and for ensuring a steady, year-round flow of visitors (Burton-Tairu, 2020; Hudson, 2025).

The research examines a set of independent variables hypothesized to influence revisit intention: Destination Attractiveness, Destination Image, Accessibility, Hospitality, and Authenticity. Each of these factors plays a critical role in shaping tourists' perceptions and experiences. Destination attractiveness and image capture the appeal and reputation of Siem Reap. Accessibility refers to the ease with which tourists can reach and navigate a destination. Hospitality reflects service quality and local interactions, while authenticity

pertains to the genuineness of cultural and heritage experiences. These variables are interrelated and collectively contribute to the formation of positive tourist experiences, which, in turn, drive revisit intentions.

The study is grounded in established theories of tourist behavior, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. These comprehensive models provide the essential analytical structure for our research. The TPB helps us link tourists' beliefs and attitudes to their intention to revisit (Abbasi et al., 2021), while the S-O-R framework is crucial for understanding the experiential journey (Şahin & Kılıçlar, 2022). Together, these models provide a robust foundation for analyzing how external stimuli and internal processes, including destination features and emotional and cognitive responses, which we model through Cultural Contact, interact to influence the key behavioral outcome: the decision to revisit Siem Reap. The selection of these complementary theories is justified by their widespread success in tourism research and their capacity to capture the complex interplay between destination features, tourist experience, and behavioral intentions.

While previous studies have explored revisit intention in various international contexts (Luo & Ratasuk, 2024; Pan et al., 2024), there is a notable lack of comprehensive research focusing on Siem Reap, particularly concerning the mediating role of cultural contact (Chen et al., 2022; Phon et al., 2024). Existing literature often overlooks the unique characteristics of Cambodian domestic tourism and fails to account for the specific factors that influence repeat visitation among tourists in Phnom Penh (Lin, 2024; Sophea et al., 2021). For example, Nguyen (2020) investigated the intention to revisit as a result of influencing Vietnamese tourists to return to Korea. Sophat et al. (2024) studied the factors influencing tourists' loyalty to revisit Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Peng et al. (2023) investigated the contributions of tourists' happiness to their revisit intentions in the Traditional Chinese Medicine cultural tourism. Lyu et al. (2023) investigated the impact of innovation on tourists' revisit intentions toward tourism destinations in China. Kou and Xue (2024) explored the influence of rural tourism landscape perception on tourists' revisit intentions, a case study in Nangou

village, China. Thipsingh et al. (2022) investigated the social and sustainable determinants of tourist satisfaction and revisit intention in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Furthermore, the application of relevant theoretical frameworks to this setting has been limited, leaving a gap in both empirical evidence and conceptual understanding.

The primary objective of this study is to identify and analyze the determinants of revisit intention among domestic tourists traveling from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap. Specifically, we examine the crucial mediating effect of cultural contact in transmitting the influence of destination attributes, such as authenticity and hospitality, on the intention to revisit. By empirically addressing these aims, the research provides new insights that inform both academic behavioral theory and practical strategies for enhancing sustainable domestic tourism in Cambodia.

This research advances academic knowledge by filling a critical gap in the literature on domestic tourism in Cambodia and by extending the application of established behavioral theories to a new context. The findings are expected to refine theoretical models of revisit intention and cultural contact, offering a more nuanced understanding of the drivers of tourist loyalty in heritage destinations. From a practical perspective, this study provides actionable recommendations for tourism managers, policymakers, and businesses aiming to enhance the appeal of Siem Reap to domestic tourists. By identifying the key determinants of revisit intention and elucidating the role of cultural contact, the research supports the development of focused marketing approaches, improved service offerings, and policy interventions designed to foster sustainable tourism growth and long-term destination loyalty.

Literature review

The literature on tourist behavior consistently highlights the complex interplay of psychological, experiential, and contextual factors that shape the decision to revisit a destination. Despite a robust body of research across international contexts, for example, Vietnam, China, and Indonesia, a comprehensive and synthesized study focusing on the unique dynamics of domestic tourism in the Cambodian context, specifically, the crucial market of Phnom Penh tourists visiting Siem Reap, remains a critical gap. This review

synthesizes key theoretical frameworks and empirical findings to clarify the roles and relationships of these determinants, providing the conceptual foundation for our study. The following five attributes are conceptualized as external Stimuli (S) that tourists perceive, directly influencing their attitude (TPB) and setting the stage for their experiential response (Cultural Contact in the S-O-R framework).

Revisit intention

Revisit intention refers to a tourist's likelihood or willingness to return to a previously visited destination, reflecting a valuable measure of destination loyalty and affective commitment (Lin, 2024; Naing & Ratasuk, 2024). As a key indicator of long-term sustainability, revisit intention is strongly correlated with stable revenue streams and positive word-of-mouth promotion. Prior studies have established revisit intention as a dependent variable influenced by cognitive and affective factors such as satisfaction, perceived value, and memorable experiences (Hossain et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2024). While some research has explored innovative factors, such as digital technology (Lyu et al., 2023) or landscape perception (Kou & Xue, 2024), the consensus is that positive experiences and strong destination branding are key drivers of repeat visitation. In the competitive Cambodian context, understanding this intention is vital for sustaining the Siem Reap tourism industry (Sophat et al., 2024).

Theoretical foundation: Integrating TPB and S-O-R

This study's conceptual model is grounded in the integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework.

TPB: The TPB posits that behavioral intentions (like revisit intention) are directly influenced by an individual's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991; Conner, 2020). Previous tourism research has frequently employed the TPB to explain decision-making by integrating additional variables, such as destination image (Fan et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021). In our model, the five destination attributes act as the antecedents of the core

TPB component (Attitude/Perception), directly influencing the final intention.

S-O-R: The S-O-R framework extends this approach by explicitly modeling the experiential process, viewing external stimuli (S) as inputs that lead to internal, organismic responses (O), which in turn result in observable behavioral responses (R) (Kim et al., 2018). This framework is crucial for our study because it provides the structure to position Cultural Contact as the central 'Organism' variable, the internal experiential process that mediates the effect of the destination attributes on the final revisit intention (Al-Sulaiti, 2022).

Destination attributes: Stimuli (S) and antecedents

Destination attractiveness refers to the perceived appeal of a destination's resources (Jung et al., 2022; Mursid & Anoraga, 2022). While often studied as a prerequisite for initial visitation, its role in repeat visits is critical as it shapes the perceived value of returning (Woyo & Slabbert, 2023). Studies focused on heritage and cultural sites confirm that unique resources are strong drivers of both initial and repeat visits (Amini et al., 2024; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Thea & Mardy, 2023). A key synthesis point is that attractiveness provides the cognitive foundation, the perceived benefit, that must be confirmed by positive experience.

Destination image

A destination image is the integrated set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions a tourist holds about a place, acting as a mental filter that manages expectations and satisfaction (Luong, 2023). It is important because it influences tourists' expectations, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, including the decision to revisit (Yuan & Vui, 2023; Zulfiqar et al., 2024). The literature confirms that a strong, positive image is both an antecedent of satisfaction and a critical determinant of behavioral intentions (Baniya et al., 2021; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Saut & Ly, 2023). Comparative studies have highlighted how images influence decisions across diverse tourism forms, from cultural experiences in Jeonju (Carpio et al., 2021) to medical tourism (Cham et al., 2021), and are shaped by various information sources (Guo et al., 2021). In this research model, the

image is examined as a cognitive stimulus that directly shapes the tourist's overall perception of Siem Reap.

Accessibility

Accessibility encompasses the ease of reaching and moving within a destination, including transportation and infrastructure (Benjamin et al., 2021; Sánchez-Rivero et al., 2024; Wara et al., 2022). Accessibility is a pragmatic, yet powerful, determinant; poor accessibility can deter even highly motivated travelers and represents a significant barrier to repeat visits (Stankov et al., 2024). The majority of research establishes accessibility as a significant predictor, especially in developing regions where infrastructure variability is a challenge (Ariesta et al., 2020; Biswas et al., 2020). This study positions accessibility as a key facilitating factor that directly affects the perceived behavioral control (TPB) and the practical ease of the tourist experience (S).

Hospitality

Hospitality refers to the quality of service and the warmth of interactions with service providers and locals (Eijdenberg et al., 2024). This factor is a leading driver of emotional satisfaction and is consistently linked to enhanced destination image and revisit intention (Bastaman & Yodfiatfinda, 2021; Fusté-Forné, 2024). The literature synthesizes its importance across diverse contexts, from mediating sustainability in Indonesian tourism (Nugroho et al., 2021) to influencing restaurant loyalty (Sirimongkol, 2022). Studies also emphasize the role of local people's sincerity (Bastaman & Yodfiatfinda, 2021; Kazmi et al., 2020). In the S-O-R framework, hospitality serves as a highly impactful interpersonal stimulus that directly feeds into the 'Organism' (O) response.

Authenticity

Authenticity is the degree to which tourism experiences are perceived as genuine and reflective of local heritage (Carreira et al., 2022; Rickly, 2022). Critical engagement with the literature reveals that authenticity is not merely about historical facts; it is a perceived quality that generates meaningful and memorable experiences, making it a crucial driver of loyalty in cultural tourism (Genc & Gulertekin Genc, 2023; Jebbouri et al., 2022; Niu et al., 2025). Its role as

a direct and indirect driver of revisit intention is well-documented in heritage destinations. In the context of Siem Reap, Authenticity is hypothesized to be a defining Stimulus (S), creating the most profound connection to the destination's heritage..

Cultural contact: The organism (O) and experiential mediator

Cultural contact refers to the interaction and exchange between the tourist and the host community's cultural environment (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020). This construct is positioned as the central 'Organism' (O) variable in our S-O-R model. It represents the experiential and emotional processing that occurs when tourists are exposed to destination stimuli. Research consistently highlights the mediating role of cultural contact, as it enriches the overall experience, deepens emotional connections, and transforms positive destination attributes into concrete loyalty (Irwin, 2020; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Osman et al., 2020). The gap we address is clarifying which destination attributes are most effectively channeled through cultural contact to predict revisit intention in a developing heritage context.

Hypothesis development

Drawing on the synthesis of the literature and the integrated TPB/S-O-R framework, this study proposes a set of hypotheses to examine the direct and indirect pathways to revisit intention.

Direct effects (S → R)

The destination attributes (S) are hypothesized to directly influence revisit intention (R), consistent with established literature showing these factors directly affect a tourist's attitude and decision to return (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Soliman, 2021).

H1: Destination attractiveness has a positive effect on revisit intention.

H2: Destination image positively affects revisit intention.

H3: Accessibility positively influences revisit intention.

H4: Hospitality has a positive impact on revisit intention.

H5: Authenticity promotes revisit intention.

Indirect/mediated effects (S → O → R)

Based on the S-O-R framework, Cultural Contact (O) is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between the destination attributes (S) and revisit intention (R). This reflects the understanding that experiential engagement strengthens the link between perception and behavioral outcome (Irwin, 2020; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020).

H6: Cultural contact mediates between destination attractiveness and revisit intention.

H7: Cultural contact mediates between destination image and revisit intention.

H8: Cultural contact mediates between accessibility and revisit intention.

H9: Cultural contact mediates between hospitality and revisit intention.

H10: Cultural contact mediates between authenticity and revisit intention.

By testing these hypotheses, the study aims to clarify the direct and indirect pathways through which key destination factors influence the revisit intentions of domestic tourists, providing an empirically grounded model within the Cambodian tourism context.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the determinants of revisit intention among tourists from Phnom Penh visiting Siem Reap, with a focus on the mediating effect of cultural contact. The research model was developed based on established theories in tourism behavior, incorporating variables such as destination attractiveness, destination image, accessibility, hospitality, authenticity, and cultural contact.

Population, sample, and data collection

The target population for this study consisted of Phnom Penh residents who had visited Siem Reap within the past 12 months. Given the impracticality of obtaining a complete sampling frame, we employed a stratified purposive sampling method (Mongtoeun et al., 2023). The purposive criterion ensured that only individuals meeting the core inclusion criteria (i.e., residents and previous visitors) were targeted. The stratification involved ensuring proportional reach across all 14 administrative districts of Phnom Penh (Chamkar Mon, Daun Penh, Prampir Makara, Tuol

Kouk, Dangkao, Mean Chey, Russey Keo, Sen Sok, Pou Senchey, Chroy Changvar, Prek Pnov, Chbar Ampov, Boeng Keng Kang, and Kamboul). This specific geographic stratification was necessary to maximize demographic representation of the capital's population. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through popular social media online communities, including Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Telegram. This approach was chosen to efficiently access the dispersed target population, and all respondents were required to pass a mandatory screening section to verify their status as Phnom Penh residents and prior visitors to Siem Reap before completing the survey.

A total of 504 valid responses were collected from tourists in Phnom Penh who had previously visited Siem Reap, from May to July 2025. With a near-even split between genders, comprising 48.2% males (n = 243) and 51.8% females (n = 261). In terms of age, the most significant proportion of respondents falls within the 18-25 age bracket, accounting for 42.7% (n = 215), followed by those aged 26-30 at 21.2% (n = 107), indicating a predominantly younger sample. Regarding education, a significant majority of the participants hold a Bachelor's Degree (50.6%, n = 255) or a Master's Degree (25.6%, n = 129), indicating a well-educated sample. Lastly, the income distribution shows that the largest group of respondents earns between $251 and $500, representing 31.0% (n = 156) of the sample, followed by those earning $501-$1,000, at 24.0% (n = 121), as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Characteristics of the sample and descriptive statistics

Characteristics	Categories	Descriptive Statistics	
		Frequency (*f*)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	243	48.2%
	Female	261	51.8%
Age	18 – 25	215	42.7%
	26 – 30	107	21.2%
	31 – 40	97	19.2%
	41 – 50	64	12.7%
	51 – 60	16	3.2%
	61 or older	5	1.0%
Education	Below High School	9	1.8%
	High School	28	5.6%
	Associate Degree	15	3.0%
	Bachelor's Degree	255	50.6%
	Master's Degree	129	25.6%
	Doctoral Degree	68	13.5%
Income	Under $250	44	8.7%
	$251 - $500	156	31.0%
	$501 - $1,000	121	24.0%
	$1,001 - $1,500	76	15.1%
	$1,501 - $2,500	86	17.1%
	$2,001 and above	21	4.2%

Measures

All constructs in this study were measured using established multi-item scales adapted from previous tourism research that have been proven reliable and valid with satisfactory composite reliability and average variance extracted values (Genc & Gulertekin Genc, 2023; Hossain et al., 2024; Mursid & Anoraga, 2022; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2024; Sio et al., 2024; Sugiama et al., 2024). Respondents rated items related to destination attractiveness, destination image, accessibility, hospitality, authenticity, cultural contact, and revisit intention on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These measures were designed to capture tourists' perceptions and experiences during their visit to Siem Reap, ensuring both content validity and comparability with prior studies.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. PLS- SEM was chosen for its suitability in handling complex models and smaller sample sizes, as well as its ability to assess both measurement and structural models simultaneously (Ratasuk, 2022; Yang & Ratasuk, 2024). The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated using composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity (Niu et al., 2025). Hypothesized relationships, including mediation effects, were tested using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to determine the significance of direct and indirect effects.

Ethical considerations

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary and anonymous. All respondents were clearly informed about the purpose and scope of the research prior to their involvement and provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality was strictly maintained; all collected data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes, with no identifying information retained. The research protocol received formal ethical approval from the Panyapiwat Institute of Management Research Ethics Committee (REC number: PIM-REC 068/2567), ensuring adherence to established ethical standards for research involving human participants.

Results

As shown in Table 2, convergent validity assessment confirms that all seven constructs in the study demonstrate excellent psychometric properties, with factor loadings ranging from 0.808 to 0.952 (all above the 0.70 threshold), Composite Reliability values between 0.957 and 0.981 (exceeding the 0.70 requirement), and Average Variance Extracted values from 0.762 to 0.882 (all surpassing the 0.50 criterion) (Hair Jr et al., 2017; Ratasuk, 2023a). Revisit Intentions showed the strongest convergent validity (CR = 0.981, AVE = 0.882), while all constructs met the recommended thresholds, establishing that the observed variables adequately measure their respective latent constructs and providing a robust foundation for structural equation modeling analyses (Ratasuk & Gajesanand, 2023). The reliability analysis reveals that all seven constructs exhibit exceptional internal consistency, with Composite Reliability values ranging from 0.957 to 0.981 and Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.948 to 0.978, all of which exceed the 0.70 threshold (Zhu & Ratasuk, 2024).

Table 2 Convergent validity & reliability

Variables	Items	FL	CR	CA	AVE
Revisit Intentions (RI)	1. I strongly intend to bring friends or colleagues here.	0.921	0.981	0.978	0.882
	2. I plan to visit this destination again.	0.933			
	3. I would like to return in the future.	0.937			
	4. I have a clear intention to come back.	0.942			
	5. I am willing to revisit this place.	0.952			
	6. I can afford to come back.	0.943			
	7. I would gladly spend the time and money to come back here.	0.947			
Destination Attractiveness (DA)	1. I feel a strong positive connection to what Siem Reap offers.	0.917	0.965	0.956	0.820
	2. Siem Reap reflects values and qualities that I appreciate.	0.929			
	3. Siem Reap embodies characteristics that align with my interests.	0.91			
	4. I am impressed by the unique qualities that Siem Reap represents.	0.915			
	5. I am inspired by what Siem Reap symbolizes.	0.913			
Destination Image (DI)	1. Siem Reap has stunning scenery and landscapes.	0.848	0.960	0.951	0.802
	2. The climate here is enjoyable and pleasant.	0.896			
	3. The environment is clean and well-preserved.	0.854			
	4. The cultural heritage of this destination is well-preserved and authentic.	0.878			
	5. The destination offers unique and interesting attractions.	0.901			

Variables	Items	FL	CR	CA	AVE
	6. The overall atmosphere of this place is welcoming and inviting.	0.927			
Accessibility (AC)	1. Public transportation is readily available here.	0.916	0.957	0.948	0.762
	2. There is a well-connected access network to nearby areas.	0.859			
	3. The area is easily accessible for pedestrians.	0.918			
	4. This destination is conveniently located.	0.914			
	5. Visiting this place is likely to be affordable.	0.885			
Hospitality (HS)	1. Local people are genuinely kind and respectful.	0.808	0.975	0.969	0.865
	2. Local people are friendly and helpful.	0.863			
	3. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming.	0.858			
	4. Local people are knowledgeable and eager to share local tips.	0.930			
	5. The service makes me feel valued as a guest.	0.930			
	6. The Hospitality reflects Siem Reap's welcoming spirit.	0.937			
Authenticity (AT)	1. Visiting Siem Reap connects me with authentic Cambodian culture and its unique identity.	0.913	0.972	0.967	0.834
	2. My experiences at Siem Reap align with my personality and preferences.	0.934			
	3. Siem Reap makes me feel connected to the local heritage in its true setting.	0.938			
	4. The experiences in Siem Reap helped me better understand my desires and preferences.	0.909			
	5. The activities in Siem Reap inspire personal satisfaction and fulfillment.	0.928			
	6. Being in Siem Reap strengthens my relationships with family, friends, and fellow travelers.	0.924			
	7. Visiting Siem Reap connects me with authentic Cambodian culture and its unique identity.	0.921			
Cultural Contact (CL)	1. I like to learn about different customs, rituals, and ways of life.	0.925	0.966	0.956	0.850
	2. The more I see, hear, and sense about this culture, the more I want to experience it	0.907			
	3. I would like to get involved in cultural activities.	0.878			
	4. Contact with this culture forms a very important part of my experience during this visit.	0.909			
	5. I feel that engaging with the local culture adds great value to my travel experience.	0.898			

Note: FL=Factorloadings, CR=Composite Reliability, CA=Cronbach's Apha, and AVE=Average Variance Extracted

Table 3 The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	RI	DA	DI	AC	HS	AT	CL
RI							
DA	0.749***						
DI	0.748***	0.867***					
AC	0.64***	0.649***	0.662***				
HS	0.782***	0.833***	0.846***	0.732***			
AT	0.652***	0.813***	0.851***	0.654***	0.791***		
CL	0.764***	0.835***	0.859***	0.683***	0.79***	0.866***	
Full Collin. VIF	3.058	4.373	5.009	2.206	4.584	4.36	4.909

Note: * * * = P- value≤ 0. 001, RI= Revisit Intentions, DA= Destination Attractiveness, DI= Destination Image, HS=Hospitality, AT=Authenticity, CL=Cultural Contact.

Discriminant validity assessment using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) confirms all seven constructs are empirically distinct, with all values below the 0.90 threshold (Ab Hamid et al. , 2017; Ratasuk, 2024a) . The highest ratios were between Destination Attractiveness and Destination Image (0.867) and between Authenticity and Cultural Contact (0.866) , which slightly exceed the stricter 0.85 criterion but remain acceptable, providing strong evidence of discriminant validity for the measurement model as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 presents the Full Collinearity VIF values, which range from 2.206 to 5.009, with most values below the PLS-SEM threshold of 3.3 for multicollinearity. However, some constructs (4.373, 5.009, 4.584, 4.36, 4.909) exceed this but remain below the 5.0 threshold for common method bias, confirming acceptable levels and supporting the measurement model's validity (Kock, 2017; Lyu & Ratasuk, 2024).

Additionally, normality assessment reveals that none of the seven constructs are normally distributed, as indicated by both the Jarque-Bera and Robust Jarque-Bera tests, justifying the use of PLS-SEM for this study (Kock, 2016; Ratasuk, 2024b). The model fit indices from PLS-SEM demonstrate excellent fit across all ten indices, with a significant Average Path Coefficient (0.169), exceptional explanatory power (ARS and AARS both at 0.930), acceptable multicollinearity levels (AVIF = 3.873, AFVIF = 3.500), and large Tenenhaus GoF (0.911), confirming the model's robustness and high predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2019; Ratasuk, 2023b).
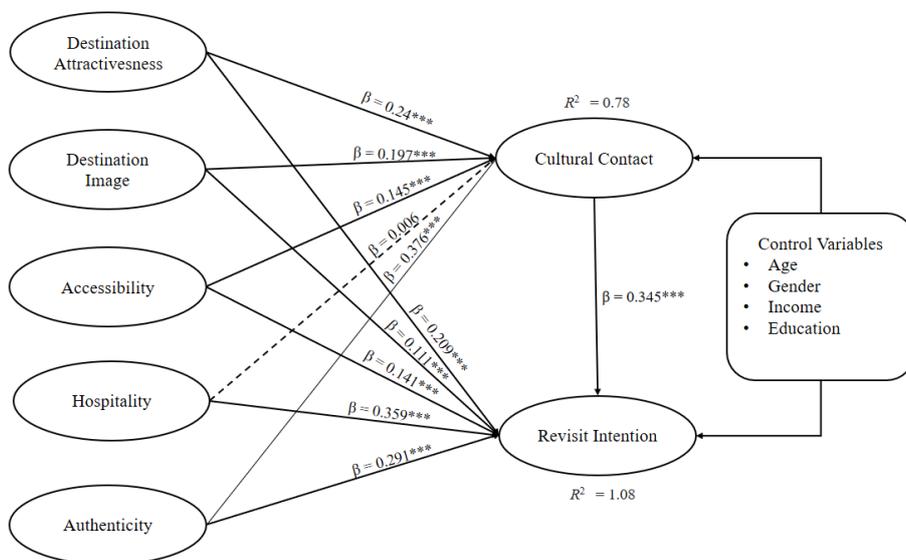

Figure 1 PLS-SEM Results
Source: Author

Direct effects:

H1: Destination Attractiveness positively affects revisit intention (β=0.209, p<0.001), as supported.

H2: Destination Image positively affects revisit intention (β = 0.111, p = 0.006), as supported.

H3: Accessibility positively influences revisit intention (β=0.141, p<0.001), as supported.

H4: Hospitality positively impacts revisit intention (β=0.359, p<0.001), as supported.

H5: Authenticity promotes revisit intention (β=0.291, p<0.001), as supported.

All direct effects were statistically significant, indicating that these attributes individually contribute to tourists' intention to revisit Siem Reap.

Mediation effects of cultural contact:

H6: Cultural Contact significantly mediates the relationship between Destination Attractiveness and Revisit Intention (β = 0.082, p = 0.019, SE = 0.039, f^2 = 0.060), as supported.

H7: Cultural Contact marginally mediates the effect of Destination Image on Revisit Intention (β = 0.068, p = 0.061, SE = 0.044, f^2 = 0.049), as not supported.

H8: Cultural Contact significantly mediates the effect of Accessibility on Revisit Intention (β = 0.050, p = 0.018, SE = 0.024, f^2 = 0.034), as supported.

H9: Cultural Contact does not mediate the relationship between Hospitality and Revisit intention (β = 0.002, p = 0.474, SE = 0.034, f^2 = 0.002), as not supported.

H10: Cultural Contact significantly mediates the effect of Authenticity on Revisit Intention (β = 0.130, p = 0.003, SE = 0.046, f^2 = 0.084), as supported.

The mediation results from bootstrapping confirm that Cultural Contact operates as an important pathway through which Destination Attractiveness, Destination Image (marginally), Accessibility, and Authenticity influence revisit intention. However, cultural contact did not mediate the link between hospitality and revisit intention.

These findings underscore the importance of promoting cultural contact experiences to enhance the impact of key destination attributes on driving revisit intentions among tourists from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap. The model explains substantial variance, with R² = 0.78 for Cultural Contact and R² = 1.08 for Revisit Intention, indicating strong explanatory power.

Discussion
Results in theoretical context

Destination attractiveness positively affects revisit intention among tourists from Phnom Penh visiting Siem Reap. The analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between destination attractiveness and revisit intention (β = 0.209, p < 0.001). This finding is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that positive attitudes toward a destination increase the likelihood of repeat visitation. It also aligns with prior studies (Huong et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021), which found that unique cultural and natural attractions enhance tourists' intention to return. Thus, the hypothesis is supported, reinforcing the importance of destination features in shaping behavioral intentions. Destination Image positively affects revisit intention. Results show that the destination image is a strong predictor of revisit intention (β = 0.111, p = 0.006), supporting the findings of Cham et al. (2021) and Giao et al. (2020), which suggest that a positive destination image promotes revisit intentions. This supports the S-O-R model, where a favorable image (stimulus) elicits positive emotional responses (organism), leading to revisit behavior (response). Accessibility positively affects revisit intention. Accessibility was found to have a moderate but significant effect on revisit intention (β = 0.141, p < 0.001), consistent with the work of Müller et al. (2020) and underscoring the practical importance of transportation and convenience in fostering

destination loyalty. Hospitality positively affects revisit intention. Hospitality demonstrated a significant positive relationship with revisit intention (β = 0.359, p < 0.001), in line with the findings of Keo and Banhidi (2023), emphasizing the role of service quality and local warmth in fostering repeat visits. Authenticity positively affects revisit intention. Authenticity emerged as one of the strongest predictors (β = 0.291, p < 0.001), supporting prior research (Biddulph, 2020; Sophat et al., 2024) and confirming that genuine cultural experiences are pivotal for destination loyalty.

Bootstrapping mediation analysis confirmed that cultural contact significantly mediates the relationships between destination attractiveness, authenticity, accessibility, and revisit intention (all indirect effects p < 0.05). The mediation effect for destination image was marginally significant (p = 0.061), while no significant mediation was found for hospitality (indirect effect p = 0.474). These findings align with Müller et al. (2020) and Terasaki et al. (2023), highlighting the crucial role of cultural engagement in translating positive destination perceptions into revisit behavioral intentions.

In Cambodia's domestic tourism context, destination attractiveness and authenticity most strongly predict revisit intention because they offer unique, culturally resonant experiences that distinguish Siem Reap from other destinations. Accessibility influences revisit intention by lowering travel barriers, making repeat visits more feasible for residents of Phnom Penh. Hospitality directly influences revisit intention by fostering emotional bonds and trust through positive service encounters, independent of cultural contact. Meanwhile, a strong destination image reinforces favorable expectations and memories, contributing to revisit intention both directly and through cultural contact.

Cultural contact amplifies the effects of these determinants by deepening tourists' emotional and cultural connections with Siem Reap, making the experience more meaningful and memorable. This emphasizes the importance for tourism planners and managers to integrate authentic cultural engagement opportunities alongside improvements in destination features to strengthen revisit intention and build long-term loyalty among domestic tourists. Among all variables, hospitality (β = 0.359) and authenticity (β =

0.291) exhibited the strongest direct effects on revisit intention, followed by destination attractiveness (β = 0.209), accessibility (β = 0.141), and destination image (β = 0.111). The mediating role of cultural contact remains important, as it enhances the indirect effects of all determinants, particularly authenticity and destination image (Irwin, 2020; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020). This highlights that strategies promoting cultural interaction can significantly amplify the influence of key destination attributes on tourists' intentions to revisit.

Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to the literature by empirically validating both the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model in the context of Cambodian domestic tourism. It extends previous research by demonstrating the mediating role of cultural contact, providing a more detailed understanding of how experiential and cultural factors facilitate the conversion of positive destination perceptions into actual repeat visitation intentions. The findings challenge the predominance of Western-based frameworks by emphasizing the vital role of cultural engagement in Southeast Asian tourism settings.

Managerial implications

For tourism managers and policymakers, the findings highlight the importance of prioritizing authenticity, enhancing destination image, and fostering meaningful cultural contact. Recommended strategies include developing authentic cultural events, upgrading transportation infrastructure for better accessibility, and training hospitality staff to deliver culturally sensitive and warm service. Marketing initiatives should focus on showcasing unique local cultural experiences and positioning Siem Reap as a destination where visitors can form a deep connection with its heritage. These integrated efforts are expected not only to increase tourists' revisit intentions but also to cultivate long-term loyalty among domestic travelers.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of stratified purposive sampling and self-reported data may limit the generalizability of the findings to all tourists in Phnom Penh or other regions. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference and may not capture changes in revisit intention over time. Third, cultural and contextual factors unique to Cambodia may limit the applicability of results to more individualistic or international tourist populations (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Future research directions

Future studies should consider longitudinal designs to assess how revisit intention evolves over time and in response to changing tourism dynamics. Comparative studies across different Cambodian provinces or between domestic and international tourists would offer deeper insights into the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, qualitative research could explore the nuanced ways in which cultural contact influences emotional attachment and loyalty, while cross-cultural studies could test the model in other Southeast Asian or global contexts to further refine theoretical frameworks.

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