

## Factors Influencing Chinese Golf Tourists' Intention to Visit Thailand

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### Abstract

*The study's objective is to analyze the factors influencing Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand. The total population for the study is those who traveled from China to Thailand for tourism purposes. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), approximately 1.6 million Chinese visited the country in the first six months of 2023. (Khaosod English, 2023) The 1.6 million Chinese tourists in Thailand represents 5% (0.05). Using the basic formula for calculating sample sizes (Yamane, 1973), the sample size has been expanded to 426 respondents. The study uses quantitative methodology and a closed-end questionnaire to collect data. The study uses five experts to do the item objective congruence (IOC) test before collecting data. In the pilot study, 30 respondents chosen for the pre-study, have understood and answered the questionnaire. Online surveys are often prepared using the questionnaire, and data are gathered using QQ and WeChat. The analysis is carried out using correlation, path analysis, mediating effect, and coefficient of determination. SPSS 26 software is utilized for correlation analysis, and AMOS 24 software is used for route analysis, mediating effect, and coefficient of determination.*

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*the study finding shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between internal factors, external factors, and perceived value. There is also a significant and positive relationship between perceived value, internal factors, external factors, and Chinese golf tourist's intention to visit Thailand. In the same way, perceived value mediates the relationship between internal factors, external factors, and Chinese golf tourist's intention to visit Thailand.*

**Keywords:** Internal Factor, External Factor, Perceived Value, Chinese Tourist, Golf

## 1. Introduction

Several trends that challenge conventional ideas of travel have evolved in the dynamic global tourism industry (Bhandari et al., 2023). One such pattern is the rising influence of Chinese visitors as a disruptive force in the sector. These tourists have grown to be the biggest category of outbound visitors and have also displayed distinctive travel choices, driven by rising wealth, shifting lifestyles, or an expanding middle class. The growing trend of Chinese golfer tourists who travel to foreign countries like Thailand to pursue their passion for the game while simultaneously experiencing new cultures is particularly fascinating (Howard, 2008). China's rapid economic growth in the twenty-first century has propelled millions of people into the middle class and given their access to disposable income and previously unheard-of leisure time (Li & Shapiro, 2020). Chinese visitors are now able to travel abroad in quest of adventure and relaxation because of this country's increasing economy, which has thrown open doors to innovative experiences (De Checchi, 2023). Many Chinese tourists have been seduced by the appeal of golf, a sport that perfectly combines talent and pleasure, creating a specialized market within the broader context of overseas tourism. Because of this, places with a diverse array of golf courses, like Thailand, have become popular playgrounds for these fans.

Several elements combine to make Thailand a popular golf vacation spot for Chinese golfers (Cham et al., 2021). Each element is important in the process of making choices. Chinese travelers are increasingly looking for immersive experiences that let them interact with local customs and lifestyles, making cultural reasons stand out as a significant driver. Travelers seeking to go beyond simple recreation and immerse themselves in true cultural experiences will find Thailand's diverse culture, historical sites, and mouth-watering cuisine to be a fascinating option. Chinese tourists have a special opportunity to state their wants for relaxation and cultural exploration because of the inclusion of golf in this larger cultural narrative (Spennemann, 2021).

The trend of Chinese visitors pouring into Thailand has received a lot of attention lately (Van Uhm & Wong, 2021). Several reasons that impact Chinese golf travelers' decisions to select Thailand as their favorite location can be ascribed

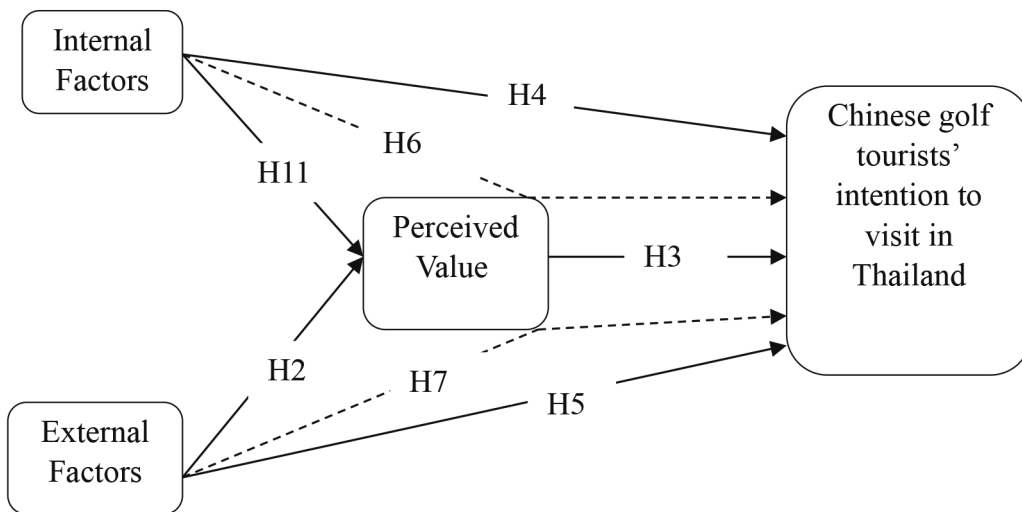
to this increase. The patterns of Chinese tourism in Thailand are shaped by various economic, cultural, geographic, and marketing factors combined (Hu et al., 2022). Economically, China's expanding middle class and rising standard of living have allowed more Chinese individuals to partake in recreational pursuits like golf tourism. Thailand appeals to those looking for a premium experience without paying outrageous prices due to its affordability in terms of lodging, travel, and golf-related fees. Furthermore, Thailand's appeal as a golf destination is increased by the availability of a variety of golf courses that cater to various price points (Korn, 2020). Chinese travelers are drawn to Thailand's rich cultural heritage and welcoming friendliness. Chinese guests feel at home and secure because of shared cultural characteristics including esteem for tradition and links to family (Liu et al., 2019). Additionally, both nations' high concentrations of Buddhists create a spiritual bond that may affect traveler's choices. Thailand is a tempting destination for Chinese tourists since the appeal of visiting cultural sites and golfing excursions offers a new depth to the trip experience.

However, there are difficulties associated with the rise in Chinese golf tourists. The increase in tourists may strain the area's infrastructure and resources, thereby causing problems like overcrowding and environmental damage. To preserve the scenic splendor and cultural authenticity of Thai destinations for future generations, it is crucial to strike an equilibrium between growth in tourism and sustainability. In conclusion, the reasons that influence Chinese golfing tourists to select Thailand as their favorite location are complex and interconnected. A combination of economic accessibility, cultural similarity, proximity, and successful marketing techniques influences this trend. The rise in Chinese golfing tourists offers prospects for economic development, but it also highlights the necessity for sustainable tourism methods to protect the allure and originality of Thailand's travel destinations. Therefore, the objectives of the study are:

- a. To analyze the relationship between internal and external factors, perceived value, and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

- b. To identify the mediating effect of perceived value on the relationship between internal factors and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.
- c. To examine the mediating effect of perceived value on the relationship between external factors and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

## 2. Literature Review



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## 3. Literature Reivew

Travel preferences and experiences are greatly influenced by the complicated interplay between an individual's self-concept and the pictures connected to a particular destination (Zhang et al., 2022). The self-concept of travelers, which includes their attitudes, beliefs, and views of themselves, is crucial in determining their travel inclinations and activities (Bianchi et al., 2017). This notion of oneself might be anything from an adventurous and naturalist to a culturally curious or opulent person. On the other side, a destination's images are a combination of its physical characteristics, cultural products and services, historical significance, and how it is portrayed in media and marketing campaigns. An enjoyable and fulfilling

travel experience frequently results when an individual's self-concept matches their perceptions of a destination (Karagoz & Uysal, 2023).

Golf tourism is a growing sector that takes advantage of the popularity of golf as a pastime. People from all over the world look for vacation spots that provide opportunities to discover other cultures and landscapes in addition to great golfing. Around the world, golf resorts and courses have proliferated, each with its distinctive appeal and difficulties (Mishra & Kureti, 2022). Thailand, often known as the "Land of Smiles," has won praise from visitors from all over the world for its beautiful scenery, fascinating culture, and mouth-watering food. With a distinctive combination of top-notch golf courses, opulent facilities, and friendly people, it is also quickly becoming a top vacation spot for golf aficionados. With more than 300 golf courses spread out over the nation, Thailand has solidly cemented its reputation as a golfer's paradise (Joo & Medriano, 2022). The development of golf in Thailand is a remarkable story of change. The Royal Hua Hin Golf Course, which still stands as one of Asia's oldest and most recognizable courses, served as a modest beginning for it in the 1920s.

An essential idea in marketing and customer behavior is the connection between internal characteristics and perceived value (Tuncer et al., 2021). The term "perceived value" describes the arbitrary judgment that customers make about the value of a good or service based on how much they believe they get for their money. On the other hand, internal factors cover a wide range of personal and psychological aspects that affect how consumers view and assess goods or services. These internal variables are essential in assessing how consumers perceive value since they significantly impact overall satisfaction and the possibility of repeat business.

One of the fundamental ideas in marketing and customer behavior is the connection between outside circumstances and perceived value. Consumers' subjective evaluation of a good or service's worth in comparison to its cost is known as perceived value. External factors include a wide range of components that are not under the individual consumer's control and are frequently outside the consumer's

or the provider of the product or service's control (Muranko et al., 2021). A combination of personal, psychological, and environmental factors influences the relationship between internal determinants, perceived value, and the intention of Chinese golf tourists to travel to Thailand. Understanding this link is essential for Thailand's tourism sector since it can aid in the creation of efficient marketing plans and improve Chinese golf tourists' overall experience. Internal elements are the qualities and motives of Chinese golf tourists that affect their choice to travel to Thailand. These variables may include individual preferences, viewpoints, and golf tourism-related reasons. For instance, a person's love of golf, desire for new golfing adventures, or need for leisure and relaxation may be internal causes that motivate them to travel to Thailand for golf tourism.

A complicated interplay that profoundly affects travel choices in the area is the relationship between external variables, perceived value, and the purpose of Chinese golf tourists visiting Thailand. Chinese tourists have long flocked to Thailand, and in recent years, the appeal of its golf courses has increased. The Thai tourism sector needs to comprehend how external circumstances and perceived value affect the intent of Chinese golf tourists to build efficient marketing tactics and improve the entire visitor experience. Thus,

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal factors and perceived value.

H2: There is a significant and positive relationship between external factors and perceived value.

H3: There is a significant and positive relationship between perceived value and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

H4: There is a significant and positive relationship between internal factors and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

H5: There is a significant and positive relationship between external factors and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

H6: Perceived value mediates the relationship between internal factors and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

H7: Perceived value mediates the relationship between external factors and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The objective of the study is to analyze the factors influencing Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand. The questionnaire for internal factors consists of perceived benefits, personal preference, motivation, psychological factors, and interest developed (Fauzi et al., 2022). The questionnaire for external factors consists of competing destinations, promotional champions, infrastructure, and facilities government policy, and agreements developed (Florido-Benitez, 2022). The questionnaire for Perceived Value consists of Social Value, Economic Value, Functional Value, and Epistemic Value developed by (Chi et al., 2021). The questionnaire for Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit in Thailand consists of golf course quality and variety, ease of access and connectivity, word-of-mouth, and reviews online presence and booking platform developed (Sun & Fang, 2021). The Likert scale for the indicators shown in Table 3.1 represents 1 as “strongly disagree”, 2 as “disagree”, 3 as “Neutral”, 4 as “agree”, 5 and as “strongly agree”.

The study uses quantitative methodology and drafted a closed-end questionnaire to collect data. The total population for the study is those who traveled from China to Thailand for tourism purposes. The current market for Chinese visitors visiting Thailand, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), approximately 1.6 million Chinese visitors visited the country in the first six months of 2023 (Khaosod English, 2023). The sample size refers to the number of people or observations that comprise a study. Choosing the appropriate sample size is critical for the results of studies to be reliable and generalizable. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique used in quantitative analysis to acquire data. Purposive sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher employs their discretion to select people from the population to participate in the study. It is also known as selective,



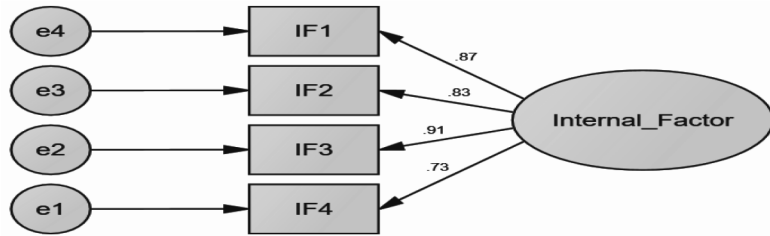
judgmental, or subjective sampling (Sharma, 2017). The basic formula for calculating sample sizes by (Yamane, 1973). The size of the population of Chinese tourist in Thailand is 1.6 million and  $e$  represent 5% (0.05). Using the formula above, it can be determined that the sample size for the study is 399.90 or 400 respondents. However, due to non-response and the inability to contact respondents, the sample size has been expanded to 426 respondents. The study uses five experts to do the item objective congruence (IOC) test before going for the data collection. In the pilot study, 30 respondents were chosen for the pre-study, and they understood and could answer the questionnaire. Online surveys are often prepared using the questionnaire star and data is gathered using QQ and WeChat. The Cronbach alpha for the study is 0.972 which is greater than 0.7 (Taber, 2018). The model can only be fit if the  $p$ -value is greater than 0.05, the RMSEA is less than 0.10, the  $\chi^2/df$  value is less than 5.0, and the goodness of fit (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and incremental fit index (IFI) are greater than 0.90 (Zainudin, 2012). In the study, SPSS 26 software is utilized for correlation analysis, and AMOS 24 software is used for route analysis, mediating effect, and coefficient of determination.

The total number of respondents in the study is 426 where 268 (62.91%) are male and 158 (37.09%) are female respondents which represents that there are a higher number of male respondents than female respondents. In the study 154 (36.15%) of the respondents are 36 to 40 years followed by 143 (33.57%) of the respondents are 31 to 35 years, 45 (10.56%) respondents are 26 to 30 years, 36 (8.45%) respondents are below 25 years, 25 (5.87%) of the respondents are above 46 years, 23 (5.40%) of the respondents are 41 to 45 years respectively. In this study, 110 (25.82%) respondents play golf 4 to 5 times a year, 106 (24.88%) respondents play golf 2 to 3 times a year, 87 (20.42%) respondents play golf 6 to 7 times a year, 77 (18.08%) respondents play golf 1 time a year, 46 (10.80%) respondents play golf 8 times or more in a year.

## 5. Data Analysis and Discussion

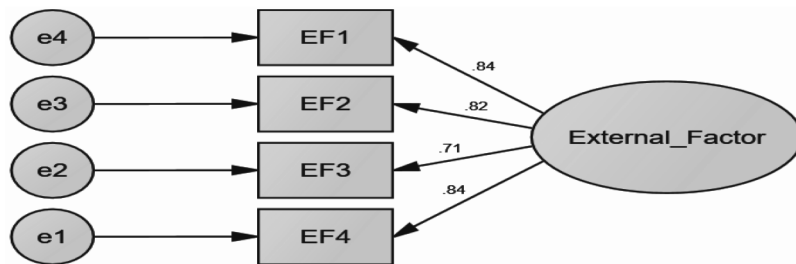
The data analysis of this study is hereunder:

**5.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis, or CFA, is a statistical approach for investigating the underlying structure of a set of observed data.



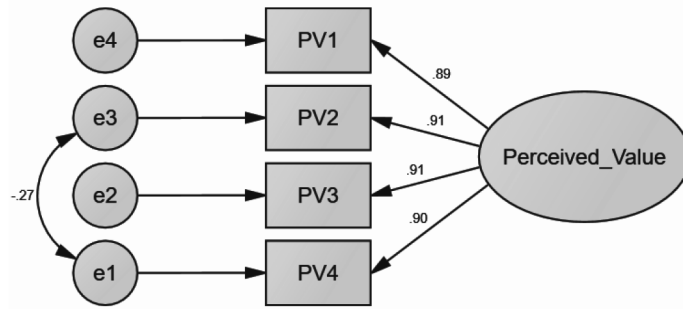
**Figure 2** Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Internal Factor

The model fit for confirmatory factor analysis of internal factor where RMSEA value is 0.028 which is less than 0.10, Chisq/df is 1.345 which is less than 5, and GFI, CFI, and IFI values are 0.997, 0.999, 0.999 which is greater than 0.9 so, it indicates that the model is fit.



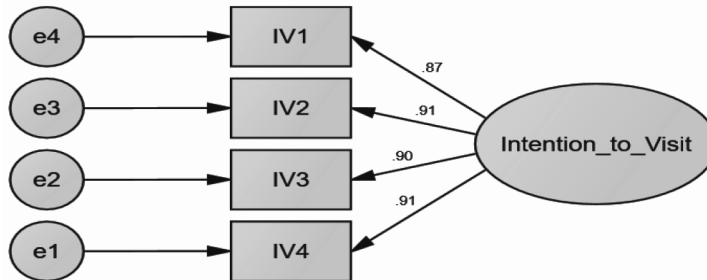
**Figure 3** Confirmatory Factor Analysis of External Factor

The model fit for confirmatory factor analysis of external factor where RMSEA value is 0.000 which is less than 0.10, Chisq/df is 0.862 which is less than 5, and GFI, CFI, and IFI values are 0.998, 1.000, 1.000 which is greater than 0.9 so, it indicates that the model is fit.



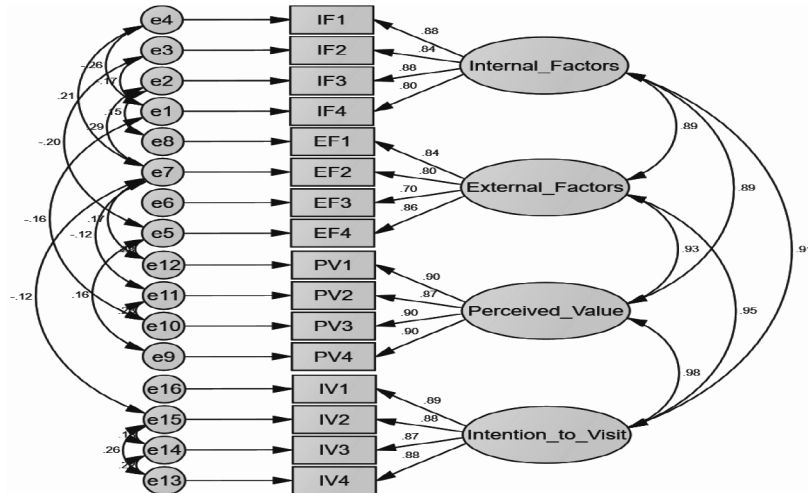
**Figure 4** Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Perceived Value

The model fit for confirmatory factor analysis of perceived value where RMSEA value is 0.000 which is less than 0.10, Chisq/df is 0.575 which is less than 5, and GFI, CFI, and IFI values are 0.999, 1.000, 1.000 which is greater than 0.9 so, it indicates that the model is fit.



**Figure 5** Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Intention to Visit

The model fit for confirmatory factor analysis of intention to visit where RMSEA value is 0.000 which is less than 0.10, Chisq/df is 0.498 which is less than 5, and GFI, CFI, and IFI values are 0.999, 1.000, 1.001 which is greater than 0.9 so, it indicates that the model is fit.

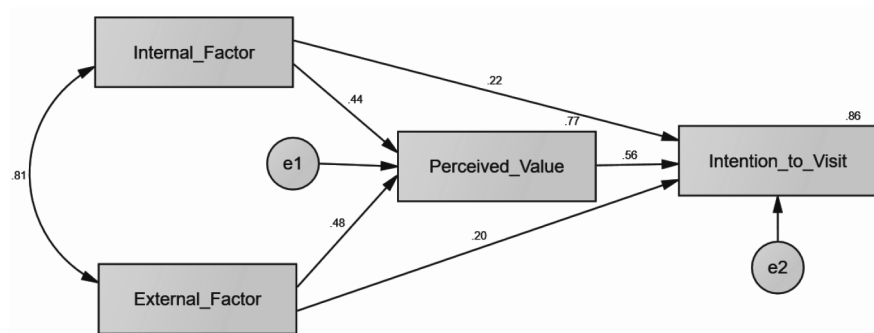


**Figure 6** Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The model fit for confirmatory factor analysis where the RMSEA value is 0.023 which is less than 0.10, Chisq/df is 1.218 which is less than 5, and GFI, CFI, and IFI values are 0.973, 0.998, 0.998 which is greater than 0.9 so, it indicates that the model is fit.

## 5.2 Path Analysis

Path analysis is a statistical tool for studying and evaluating relationships between latent variables.



**Figure 7** Path Analysis

The direct effect of the path analysis is summarized in Table 1 below:

**Table 1.** Direct Effect

Direct Path	Standardized path coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P
Internal Factor---> Perceived Value	0.441	0.041	11.158	***
External Factor---> Perceived Value	0.481	0.042	12.169	***
Perceived Value ---> Intention to Visit	0.558	0.038	14.718	***
Internal Factor---> Intention to Visit	0.216	0.036	6.144	***
External Factor---> Intention to Visit	0.203	0.038	5.657	***

Source: Data and information from this research

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Table 1 shows the path coefficient and p-value for the relation between the variables in the study. The relationship between internal factors and perceived value has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.441,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H1 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between external factors and perceived value has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.481,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H2 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between perceived value and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.558,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H3 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between the internal factor and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.216,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H4 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between the external factor and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.203,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H5 hypothesis is accepted.

### 5.3 Mediating effect

Mediation occurs whenever a third variable, known as the mediating construct, moves between the two other directly related structures.

**Table 2** Indirect Effect

Indirect Path	Standardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
Internal Factor --> Perceived Value --> Intention to Visit	0.246	0.185	0.334	***
External Factor --> Perceived Value --> Intention to Visit	0.268	0.216	0.361	***

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Table 2 shows the path coefficient and p-value for the relationship between the variables. The mediating effect of perceived value in the relationship between the internal factor and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value of (Beta = 0.246,  $p < 0.001$ ) which shows that H6 is accepted. The mediating effect of perceived value in the relationship between the external factor and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value of (Beta = 0.268,  $p < 0.001$ ) which shows that H7 is accepted.

#### 5.4 Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )

The value of the coefficient of determination, or R squared ( $R^2$ ), is a statistical metric that measures the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables in a regression model. R square values less than 0.19 are regarded as very weak, 0.19 to 0.33 are considered weak, 0.33 to 0.67 are considered moderate, and R square values greater than 67 are considered substantial (Chin, 1998). The result shows that the  $R^2$  of perceived value is 0.77 and intention to visit is 0.86 which is considered as substantial. This indicates that the independent variable has a 77% variance in perceived value and an 86% variance in intention to visit.

## Discussion

The correlation coefficient and p-value of the internal factor and external factor is (0.807,  $p < 0.010$ ) showing a positive correlation between the variables. The correlation coefficient and p-value of the internal factor and perceived value is (0.829,  $p < 0.010$ ) showing the positive correlation between the variables. The correlation coefficient and p-value of internal factor and intention to visit is (0.842,  $p < 0.010$ ) showing the positive correlation between the variables. The correlation coefficient and p-value of external factor and perceived value are (0.837,  $p < 0.010$ ) showing the positive correlation between the variables. The correlation coefficient and p-value of external factor and intention to visit is (0.844,  $p < 0.010$ ) showing a positive correlation between the variables. The correlation coefficient and p-value of perceived value and intention to visit is (0.907,  $p < 0.010$ ) showing the positive correlation between the variables.

The relationship between internal factors and perceived value has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.441,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H1 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between external factors and perceived value has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.481,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H2 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between perceived value and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.558,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H3 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between the internal factor and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.216,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H4 hypothesis is accepted. The relationship between the external factors and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value (Beta = 0.203,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that the H5 hypothesis is accepted. The mediating effect of perceived value in the relationship between the internal factor and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value of (Beta = 0.246,  $p < 0.001$ ) which shows that H6 is accepted. The mediating effect of perceived value in the relationship between the external factors and intention to visit has a path coefficient and p-value of (Beta = 0.268,  $p < 0.001$ ) which shows that H7 is accepted.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendation

As a result investigation into the relationship between internal and external variables, perceived value, and the intention of Chinese golf tourists to travel to Thailand, it has shown several important lessons. Visitors' intents are significantly shaped by internal factors, such as personal preferences and views toward golfing in Thailand. Tourists' judgments of value are also greatly influenced by external variables, such as travel infrastructure, marketing initiatives, and destination image. There is a mediating role of perceived value in the relationship between internal, and external factors and Chinese golf tourists' intention to visit Thailand.

The desire of Chinese golf visitors to travel to Thailand must be increased, so a diverse strategy is required. To match the high expectations of Chinese golf lovers and guarantee a wonderful experience, Thailand should first make investments in golf course infrastructure and services. Second, specific marketing techniques should be used to promote Thailand's golfing opportunities and distinctive cultural attractions. Last but not least, simplifying visa procedures and offering on-site language and cultural assistance will greatly enhance Thailand's general appeal and accessibility as a golf tourist destination for Chinese visitors, strengthening their ambition to travel there. Thailand may position itself as a top alternative for Chinese golf tourists by fully resolving these problems.

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