

TOURISM SITUATION IN THAILAND AND APPROPRIATE STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS

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Abstract: Tourism serves as a vital engine for the Thai economy, contributing significantly to national wealth; however, persistent disparities exist in income distribution between primary and secondary provinces. This study aims to analyze the current tourism situation in Thailand and identify appropriate strategic adjustments to enhance the industry's resilience and sustainability. By evaluating the concentration of visitors and revenue, the research seeks to provide a roadmap for more equitable economic growth through tourism. This research utilizes secondary time-series data from 2012 to 2023 obtained from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). Descriptive statistics and box plot analyses were performed using SPSS to observe data distribution across 77 provinces. Furthermore, the study employs Mapping Strategy Groups and heat maps to classify provincial tourism characteristics into distinct tiers. Finally, a SWOT and TOWS Matrix analysis was conducted to evaluate the internal strengths and external competitive environment, formulating strategic recommendations for policymakers. The findings reveal that tourism revenue and arrivals are heavily concentrated in a few major provinces, specifically Bangkok, Phuket, and Chonburi, which consistently act as "Maxi-Outliers." While domestic tourism shows a slightly more balanced distribution, it generates significantly lower income compared to international tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected primary provinces, whereas secondary provinces remained stagnant due to a pre-existing lack of infrastructure and clear destination identity. Interpretation suggests that Thailand must shift toward a decentralized strategy. This involves expanding transportation infrastructure to secondary cities and leveraging unique local cultural landmarks to create distinct value. Implementing a more diverse tourism model will not only attract repeat international visitors but also encourage high-spending Thai tourists, who usually travel abroad, to explore domestic destinations. Ultimately, addressing these structural imbalances is essential for reducing economic inequality and ensuring long-term tourism growth.

Keywords: Thai tourism, strategic management, major provinces tourism, first-tier provinces tourism, second-tier provinces tourism, inequality

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INTRODUCTION

Thailand has an overall population of approximately 71.7 million and received around 315.5 million tourists in 2023. This includes 249.08 million Thai visitors (people traveling for tourism and other purposes, such as visiting friends or relatives, both overnight and non-overnight) and 66.46 million foreign visitors (foreigners who traveled to Thailand before the immigration checkpoint was closed and resided in various provinces). This tourism generated income for the country of approximately 2.17 trillion baht, divided into income from Thai tourists of 0.858 trillion baht and foreign tourists of 1.31 trillion baht (TAT, 2023). Moreover, tourism has been proven to contribute to the economic growth of Thailand in the long term and helps promote economic activity both regionally and macro-economically, especially in developing countries (Sungkaew, 2020). For example, food tourism that impacts the regional economy of Thailand, particularly in areas with a strong food identity such as the Central, Southern, Eastern, and Northern regions, will be positively affected by the expansion of tourism (Thongkaw et al., 2024). In addition, stimulating tourism in second-tier provinces had a significant impact on economic growth in those provinces (Chanthawong & Choibamroong, 2020).

On the other hand, although many studies confirm that tourism contributes to economic growth and increases income for local people, and that tourism promotion policies have a positive effect on the country's economy, there are still some limitations that prevent tourism from having a positive effect on the country's economy in all dimensions such as income distribution. From the study by (Wattanukuljarus & Coxhead, 2008); it was found that tourism growth increases overall household income but worsens income distribution. This is because the tourism sector is not labor-intensive in the Thai context, and tourism expansion creates general equilibrium effects that reduce the profitability of the trade sectors on which the poor depend for their income. In addition, promoting tourism in 55 second-tier provinces in Thailand is a policy aimed at reducing poverty and income inequality. The 22 first-tier provinces can reduce the poverty rate, but overall income inequality increases. However, increasing domestic tourism can slightly decrease income inequality (Sudsawasdt et al., 2022). As with a study of tourism in 13 countries, it was found that tourism growth did not reduce

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poverty or income inequality, but it did narrow the poverty gap (Mahadevan & Suardi, 2019). As for the tourism situation in Thailand, it was found that the tourism industry is an important engine that drives the country's economy and increases the wealth of its people. However, tourism is unable to influence better income distribution, especially in second-tier provinces that benefit less from the tourism sector than first-tier provinces.

Past tourism statistics from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) have found that tourism is concentrated only in first-tier provinces such as Bangkok and Chonburi, while second-tier provinces receive significantly fewer tourists compared to these major provinces. Although, second-tier provinces have planned tourism strategies to attract tourists such as: Sakon Nakhon Province promotes cultural tourism by leveraging its unique identity to attract visitors (Panich et al., 2014). The strategic linkage between rural villages in Tom Lod, Mae Hong Son Province, and high-potential tourism in Chiang Mai Province can significantly enhance the economic impact of rural tourism (Lacher & Nepal, 2010).

Nong Khai Province employs a religious tourism strategy, capitalizing on its numerous famous religious ritual sites to draw tourists (Maneenetr & Tran, 2014). Additionally, Chanthaburi Province uses marketing strategies focused on creating the right image and awareness to attract tourists (Srisangkaew, 2017). Recent studies also highlight the importance of faith-based and cultural attractions in promoting tourism distribution to secondary provinces, such as Nakhon Si Thammarat, which can generate significant local economic impact (Waiyasusri, 2025).

However, it has not succeeded in elevating the level of tourism in these provinces as expected. Therefore, it is necessary to reassess the tourism situation in Thailand to develop strategies that are appropriate for each tourism area.

Previous literature emphasizes the significant effect of tourism on economic development in rural areas and second-tier cities. A comprehensive study of tourism in China found that tourism impacts 341 cities and suggested that cities should leverage the tourism influence of neighboring cities. By establishing inter-city tourism organizations or agencies, cities can enhance the efficiency of tourism development (Yang & Wong, 2012).

Moreover, the development direction of rural tourism in China is guided by government policies that focus on investing in infrastructure, upgrading tourist attractions, and increasing local income to attract tourists. Additionally, future planning is influenced by the rural tourism development blueprints of developed countries. This includes promoting the culture and identity of rural communities to create unique experiences for visitors and attract more tourists. It also involves implementing tax reduction measures to encourage tourism (Wang et al., 2013). A study in Japan found that the development of high-speed rail (Shinkansen) played an important role in attracting tourists to non-major city prefectures and influenced regional economic activities (Kurihara & Wu, 2016). As with rural tourism in France, tourism in general has not significantly improved the local economy because tourists tend to spend less on tourism activities. Visitors' stays in three rural regions during the summer season often involve visits to friends or relatives. However, more expensive stays are the most common, involving activities aimed at experiencing the outdoors or enjoying local sights, based on natural and cultural amenities mainly located in regional natural parks. The main forms of accommodation are campsites and rural cottages. Gastronomic tourism has also emerged as an activity that attracts higher-spending visitors (Bel et al., 2015).

On the other hand, the tourism situation in Indonesia demonstrates that tourism can significantly stimulate the economy and generate impressive income for primary tourism provinces. However, the results in second-tier provinces are disappointing. It is the duty of the government to continue promoting tourism policies in these provinces (Rahmayani et al., 2022). Similar to South Africa, where tourism is concentrated in major cities while secondary cities rely heavily on domestic tourism, this leads to uneven development, making these areas prone to high poverty and low development (Rogerson, 2015).

From the review of foreign tourism literature, it was found that promoting tourism in secondary cities requires the development of transportation infrastructure, accommodation, and various facilities before issuing policies to promote tourism in these areas. Moreover, in developing countries, tourism in secondary cities primarily comes from domestic tourists and has not yet generated sufficient income to develop the local economy as expected. In addition, uncertainties such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical issues have significantly affected the tourism sector. Thailand should analyze the data to determine appropriate tourism strategies for each area, addressing the problems and promoting tourism effectively. Furthermore, recent literature highlights the significance of transportation infrastructure (Srihwan & Choibamroong, 2025) and tourist behavior in ecotourism (Praprom & Laipaporn, 2025) as crucial factors for developing sustainable tourism destinations in Thailand.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses time-series secondary data between 2012 to 2023 from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). And considered from observation of the distribution of data by descriptive statistic explore method form SPSS program. Tourism data such as number of total visitors, number of foreign visitors, number of domestic visitors, total tourism revenue, foreign revenue, and domestic revenue of 77 provinces are arranged in a graph (Box plot) to show the distribution of data as shown in Figure 1. The concentration of tourists will cause the data for first-tier provinces to fall into the Maxi Outlier range, indicating that these provinces benefit significantly from tourism.

In contrast, second-tier provinces do not benefit as much from tourism promotion. Moreover, all data will be plotted on a graph to illustrate the differences in tourism activity across each province. This will help visualize the dynamics of tourism data and assess the impact of tourism promotion policies and uncertain events. The data obtained will then be analyzed to create a Mapping Strategy Group. The Mapping Strategy Groups, shown in Figure 2, illustrate the number of tourists and tourism income for each province. These groups classify the character of tourism in each province by considering overall tourism, international tourism, and domestic tourism. This classification helps identify gaps and problems in the country's tourism sector and serves as a tool for policy making and strategy determination. Finally, the study results will be subjected to a SWOT analysis to evaluate the competitive situation of tourism in Thailand.

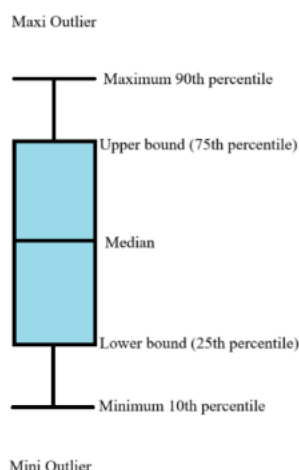


Figure 1. The Box plot shows the distribution of data

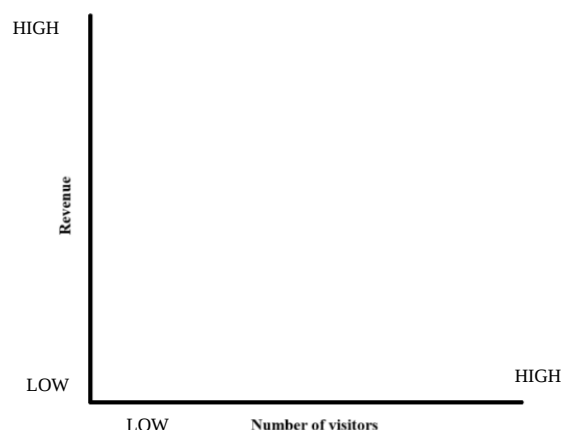


Figure 2. Strategic Positioning Map based on Number of Visitors (Low-High) and Revenue (Low-High)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study will be classified into overall tourism, international tourism, and domestic tourism, considering the number of tourists and tourism revenue, as well as the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. The overall data on tourists by province revealed that many of Thailand's 77 provinces fell into the Maxi-outlier range. Bangkok (BKK) was the most significant Maxi-outlier, standing out the most from other provinces. Following Bangkok were Chon Buri (Chon), Kanchanaburi (KAN), Phuket, Prachuap Khiri Khan (PACHOB), Phetchaburi (PECHBURI), Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima (Nakornrajsima), and Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya (Ayutthaya), all of which were clustered in the Maxi-outlier range. While there remains a significant difference in the number of tourists between first tier and second-tier provinces, this disparity is evident across the data range, including the maximum, upper bound, lower bound, and minimum levels, as shown in Figure 3. Figure 3 illustrates the impact of tourist adjustments on nine specific provinces, with Bangkok being the most affected. In contrast, the overall number of tourists in provinces outside these nine have remained relatively nearly stable from 2012 to 2023. In addition, the COVID-19 outbreak during 2020-2021 significantly impacted the overall number of tourists in the country. Bangkok experienced the most substantial decline, while the other eight provinces were less affected. The outbreak led to a decrease in tourist numbers across 68 other provinces, resulting in no significant difference between the upper-bound and lower-bound ranges of tourist numbers, which exhibited similar values as shown in Figure 4.

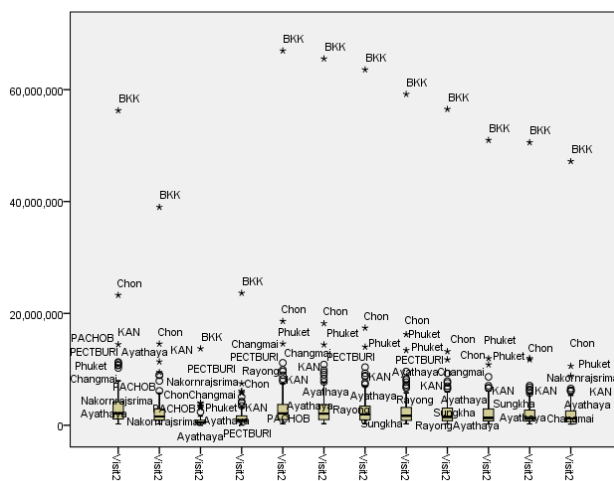
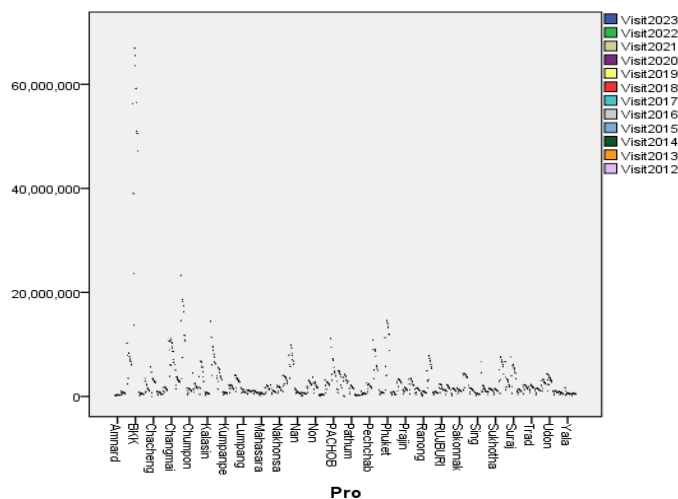
Figure 3. The box plot shows the distribution of tourism visitor data for each province from 2012 to 2023
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)Figure 4. The data plot shows the number of tourists in each province from 2012 to 2023
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

Figure 5 presents data on the number of foreign tourists across various provinces. Bangkok, Chonburi, and Phuket are identified as Maxi-outliers, exhibiting significantly higher numbers of foreign tourists compared to other provinces. Bangkok remains the province with the highest influx of foreign tourists. Other provinces within the Maxi-outlier range, such as Surat Thani, Chiang Mai, Songkhla, Krabi, Rayong, Chiang Rai, and Ayutthaya, display clustering patterns distinct from the top three provinces. In contrast, the distribution of foreign tourist data in the other provinces (especially in second-tier provinces) is stable and does not show significant variation. Figure 6 confirms that the distribution of tourists is concentrated in first-tier provinces, whereas several second-tier provinces have not experienced a significant increase in tourist numbers. The spread of COVID-19 has significantly impacted the number of foreign tourists.

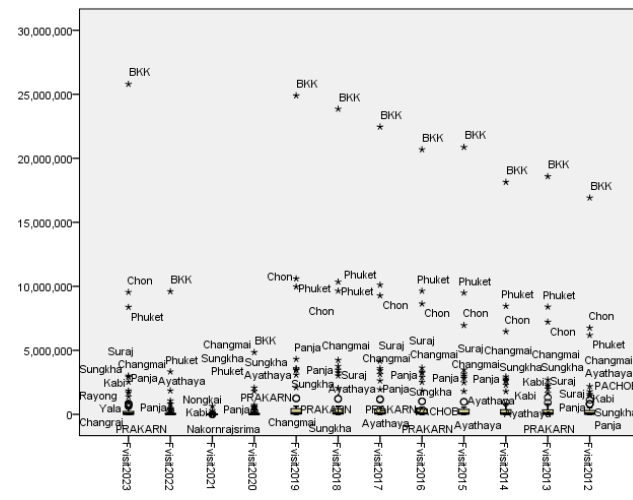


Figure 5. The box plot shows the distribution of foreign tourism visitor data for each province from 2012 to 2021 (Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

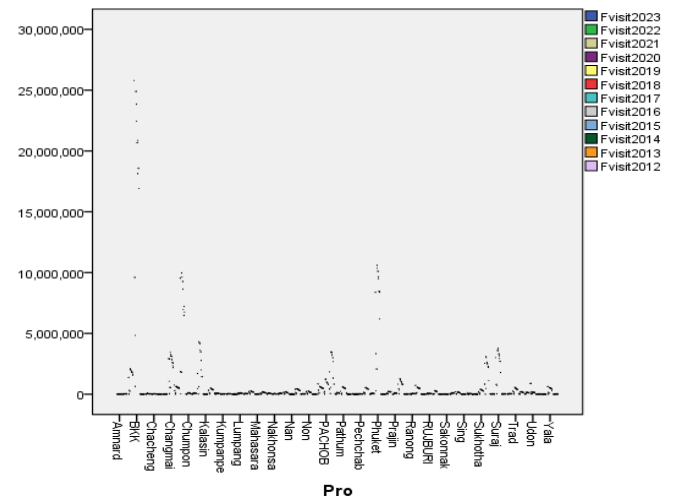


Figure 6. The data plot shows the number of foreign tourists in each province from 2012 to 2023
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

The data on the number of domestic tourists reveals that Bangkok remains the province with the highest number of tourists, significantly outpacing other provinces. It is followed by Kanchanaburi, Chonburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Ayutthaya, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima, Rayong, and Phetchaburi, among others. These provinces are categorized as Maxi-Outliers. Furthermore, an analysis of the data range, including the maximum, upper bound, lower bound, and minimum, indicates a significant difference in the number of domestic tourists between primary and secondary provinces, as shown in Figure 7. Figure 8 illustrates the distribution of foreign tourists across various provinces. The data reveals that most tourists concentrate in major first-tier provinces such as Bangkok. While secondary provinces also experience fluctuations in tourist numbers, these changes are not as pronounced as those in the main provinces. Nonetheless, the number of tourists in secondary provinces still shows significant variation. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted tourist numbers across various provinces, particularly in major first-tier countries. In other provinces, a noticeable decline in tourist numbers has resulted in a lower than normal for 2020 and 2021. This is evident from the maximum and upper bound values shrinking to approach the lower bound and minimum values, compared to other years.

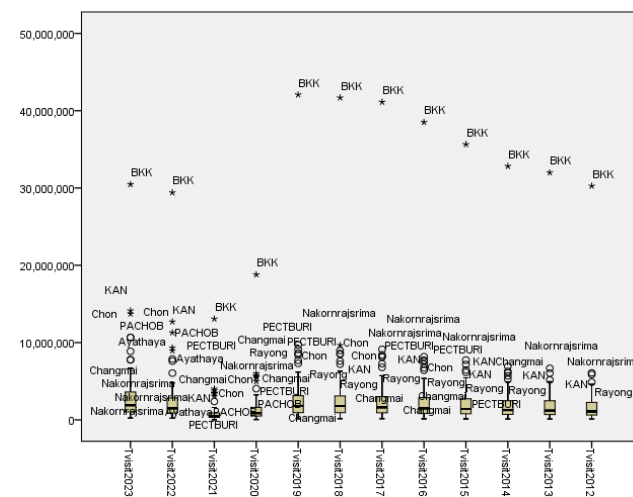


Figure 7. The box plot shows the distribution of domestic tourism visitor data for each province from 2012 to 2023
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

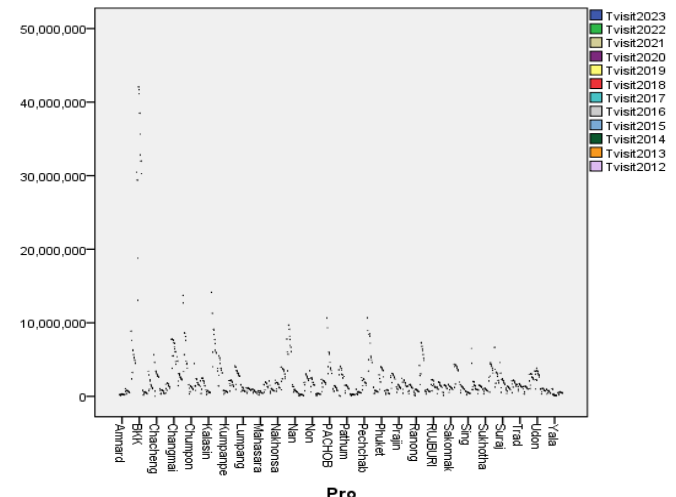


Figure 8. The data plot shows the number of domestic tourists in each province from 2012 to 2023
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

The analysis of tourism income across 77 provinces revealed that Bangkok generated the highest revenue from tourism, significantly surpassing other provinces. Following Bangkok, the provinces of Phuket, Chon Buri, Surat Thani, Krabi, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Songkhla, Phang Nga, Kanchanaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, and Phetchaburi also exhibited high income levels, classified as Maxi-outliers. In contrast, the remaining 65 provinces displayed relatively uniform tourism income levels, as illustrated in Figure 9. This pattern aligns with the distribution of tourism income, which is heavily concentrated in the primary provinces, leading to notable disparities in the data. Consequently, the other 65 provinces did

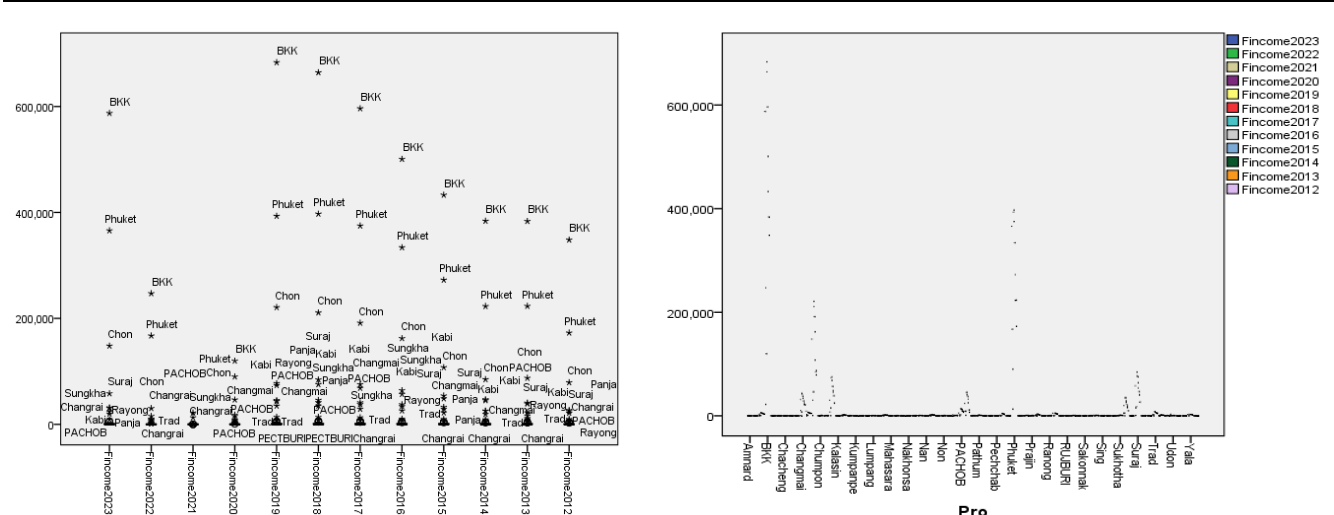


Figure 13. The box plot shows the distribution of income from foreign tourists' data for each province from 2012 to 2023
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

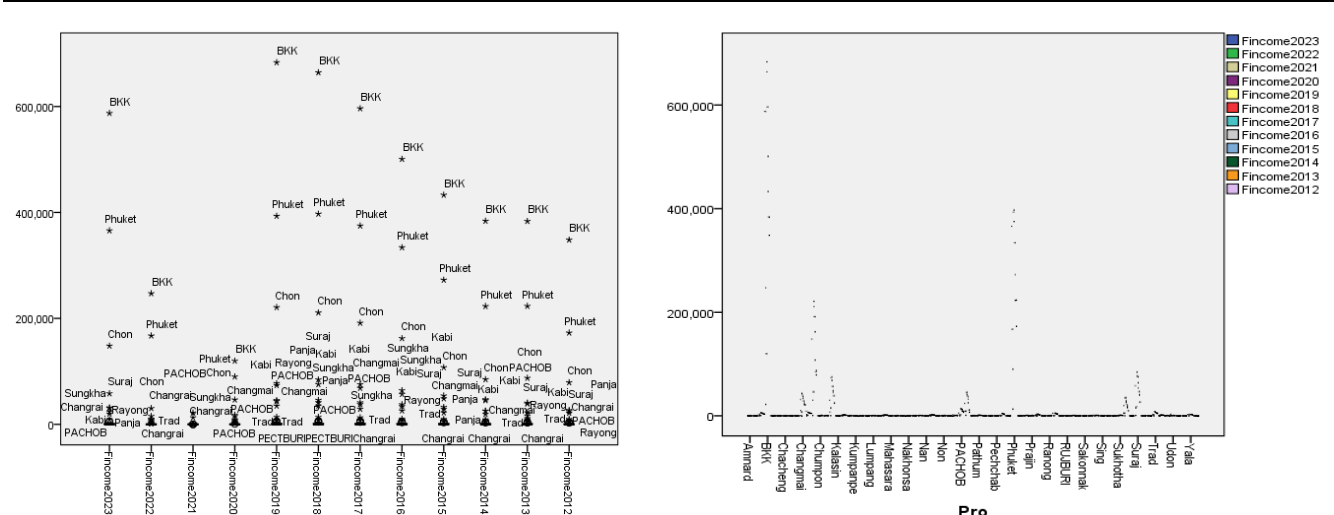


Figure 14. The data plot shows the income from foreign tourists in each province from 2012 to 2023
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

Based on the above information, a heat map of Thailand can be created to display the number of tourists. This map will classify tourists into domestic and international categories, as well as show overall tourism, as illustrated in Figure 15 to 20.

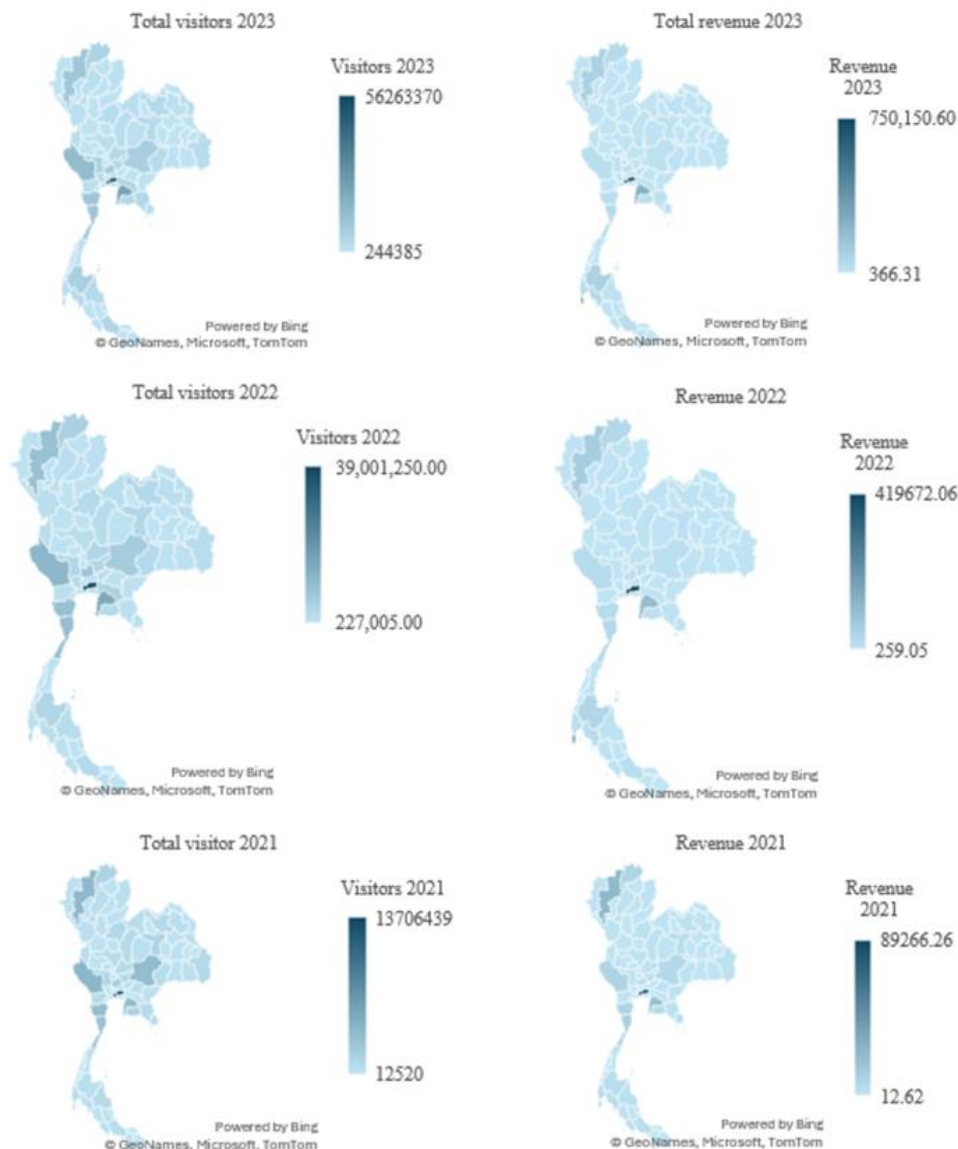


Figure 15. Heat map shows the total tourism visitors and total tourism revenue from 2023, 2022, 2021
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

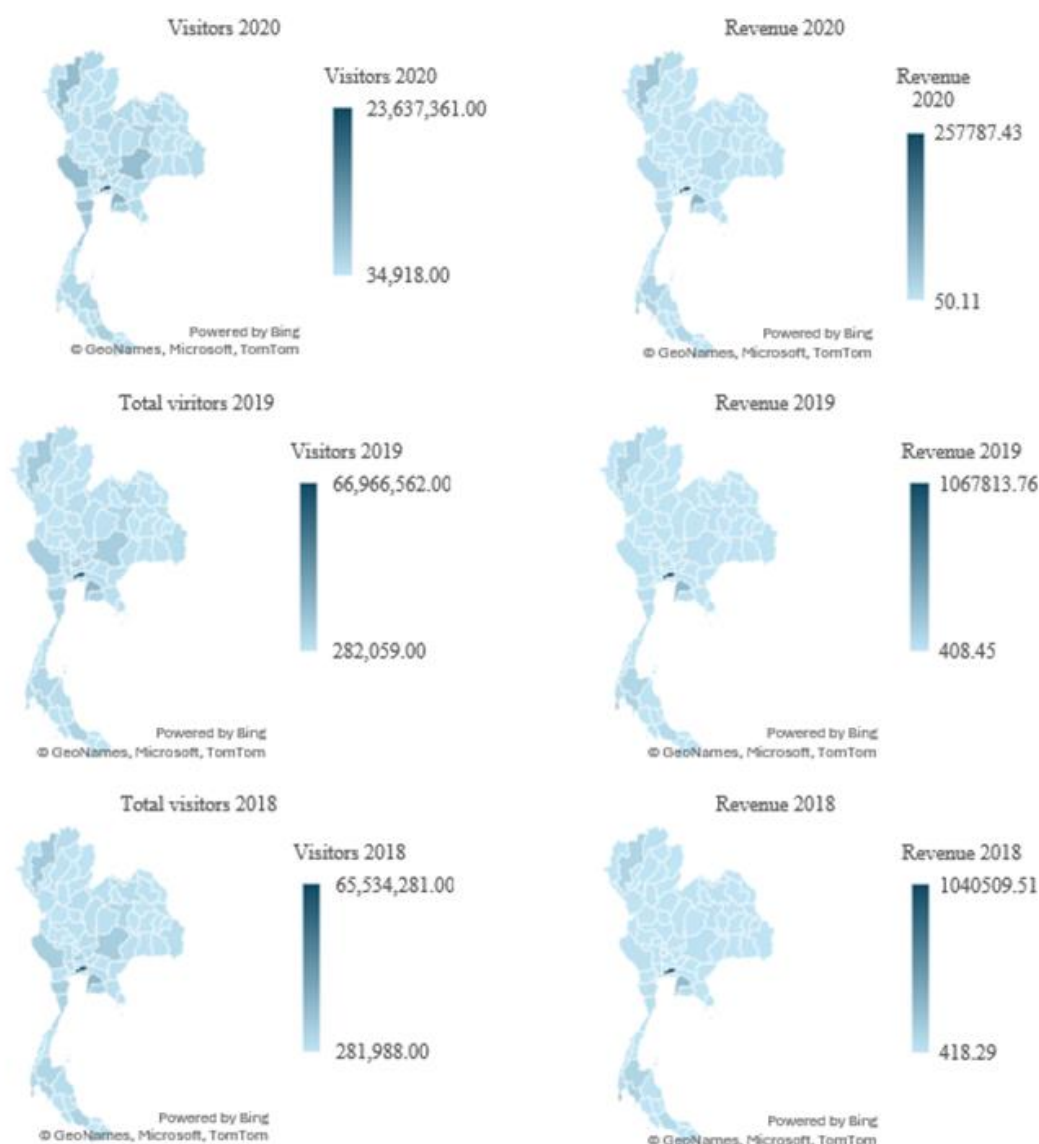


Figure 15. Heat map shows the total tourism visitors and total tourism revenue from 2020, 2019, 2018
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

The findings indicate that: For overall tourism in the country, it was found that both income and the number of tourists are concentrated in a few main provinces, particularly Bangkok. Bangkok has the highest number of tourists and tourism income, significantly surpassing other provinces. In contrast, secondary provinces have a much lower number of tourists and tourism income compared to the main provinces, as illustrated in Figure 15. When analyzing the data using the Mapping Strategy Groups tool, as shown in Figure 16, it was found that Bangkok ranks among the top provinces in terms of the number of tourists and tourism income. Several factors contribute to this dominance. As the only metropolis in the country, Bangkok boasts the most extensive infrastructure and facilities, as well as the greatest cultural diversity. It serves as the central hub for job opportunities, business ventures, and various other prospects, making it difficult for other provinces to replicate its success.

Phuket, on the other hand, generates the second-highest tourism income after Bangkok and attracts a comparable number of tourists to other leading provinces. Its unique geographical features and infrastructure, such as a large port capable of accommodating tourists and supporting the construction of hotels, resorts, and luxury residences amidst beautiful natural scenery, draw a significant number of high-income tourists. This is another factor that is challenging for other provinces to imitate. Chonburi is also a notable tourism province, ranking just behind Bangkok in terms of tourist attractions.

Although it does not generate as much tourism income as Phuket, Chonburi benefits from its coastal location and proximity to Bangkok. Its infrastructure is similar to that of Bangkok, which has helped it become a frequent destination for tourists. This advantage sets it apart from other major tourism provinces that struggle to compete with Bangkok, Phuket, and Chonburi. In contrast, many secondary provinces are often overlooked by tourists due to their significantly fewer supporting factors compared to the leading provinces. In terms of domestic tourism, it was found that the number of tourists and income from domestic tourists were better distributed compared to overall tourism. The heat map indicates that the number of tourists and income from tourism were more evenly spread across various provinces. However, when all the data were analyzed using Mapping Strategy Groups, Bangkok remained the province with the highest number of tourists and income from domestic tourism, due to a lock-in factor that prevented other provinces from replicating its success.

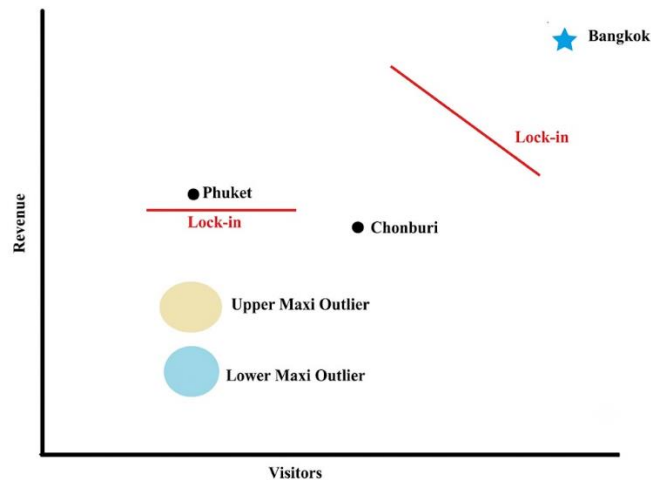


Figure 16. Mapping Strategy Groups for tourism in Thailand (Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

Meanwhile, provinces such as Chonburi, Chiang Mai, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Phetchaburi, Kanchanaburi, Ayutthaya, and Nakhon Ratchasima had competitive advantages stemming from infrastructure and natural resources that attracted tourists. Despite these advantages, they did not possess a unique factor that prevented other provinces from imitating them. Therefore, tourism promotion policies could still play a significant role in enhancing tourism in secondary and neighboring provinces as shown in Figure 17 and 18.

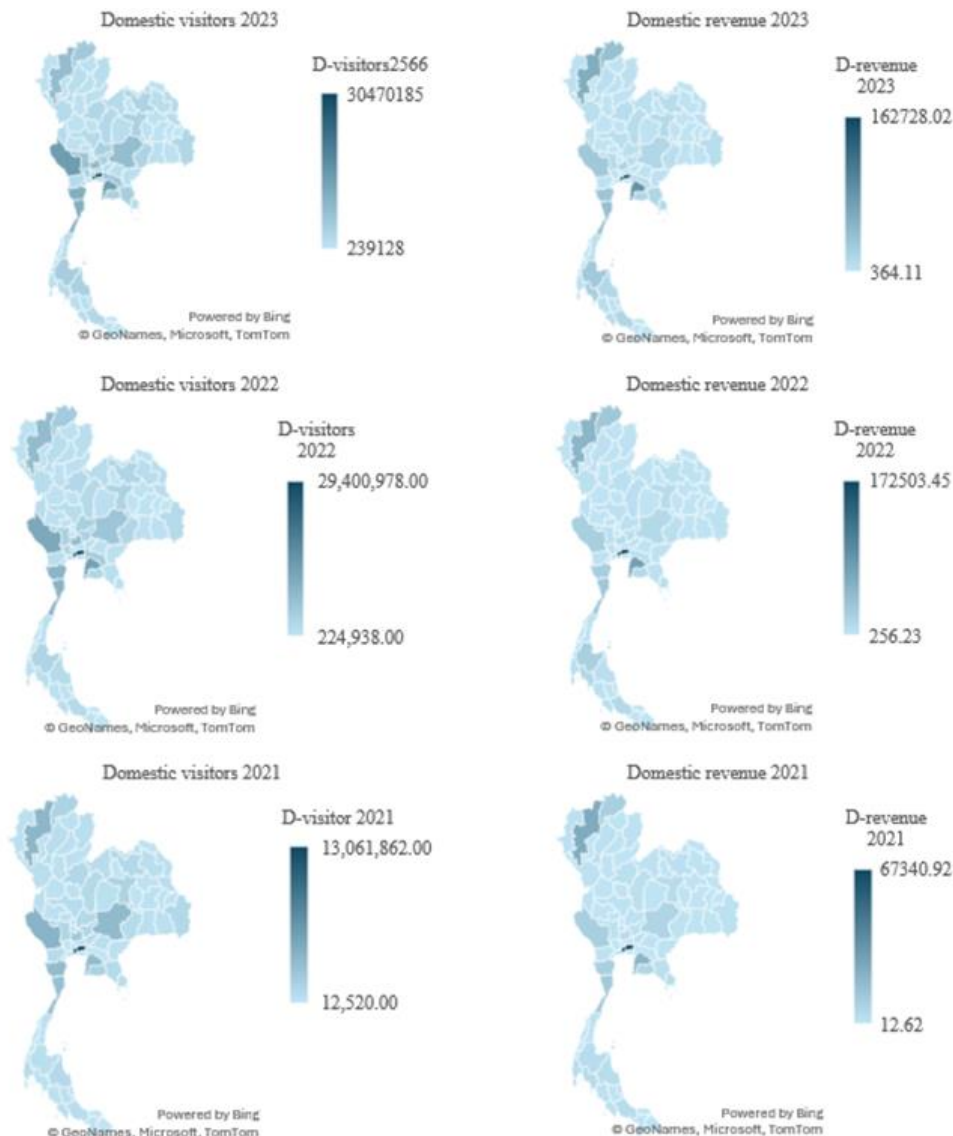


Figure 17. Heat map shows the domestic tourism visitors and domestic tourism revenue from 2023, 2022, 2021 (Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

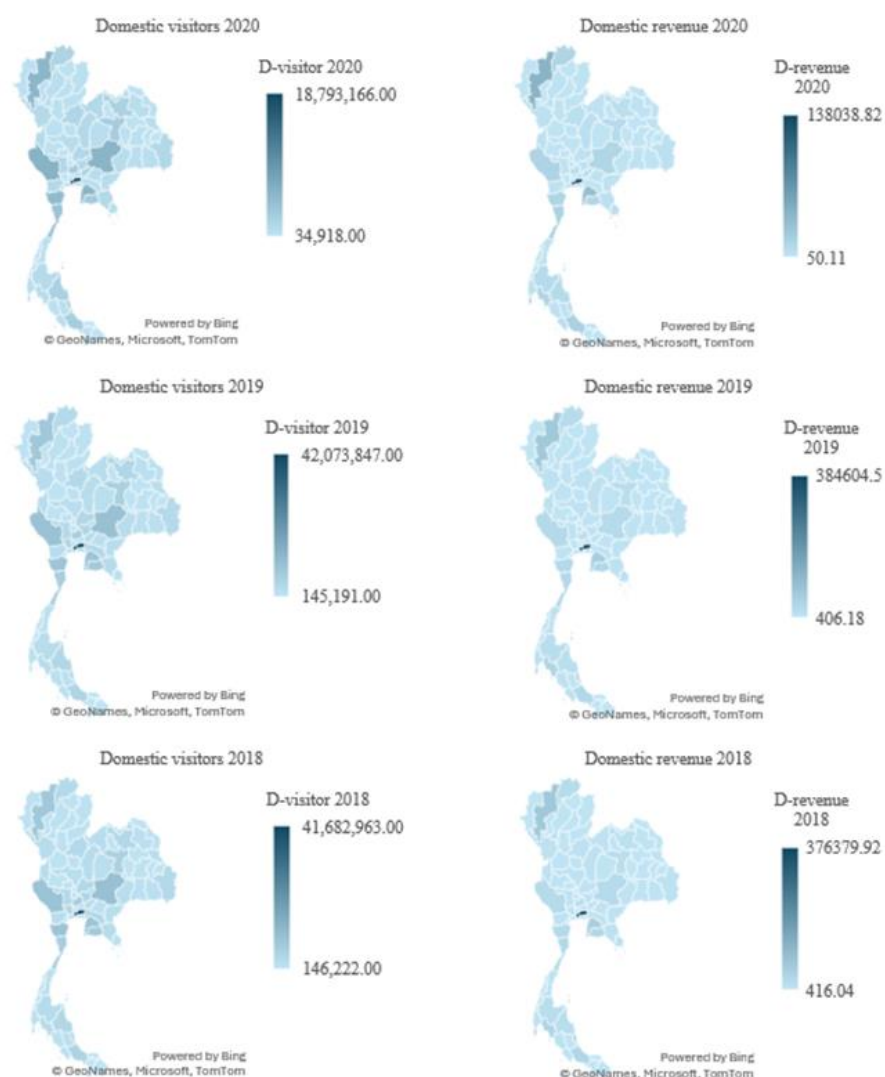


Figure 17. Heat map shows the domestic tourism visitors and domestic tourism revenue from 2020, 2019, 2018 (Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)



Figure 18. Mapping Strategy Groups for tourism form domestic tourist in Thailand (Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

In the tourism sector, it was found that the provinces with the highest number of foreign tourists and tourism income were Bangkok, Phuket, and Chonburi, respectively. In contrast, other provinces failed to attract any tourists, as indicated by the data presented in the heat map in Figure 19. Further analysis using Mapping Strategy Groups revealed that Bangkok, Phuket, and Chonburi possess advantages in infrastructure and resources that facilitate and attract foreign tourists. Conversely, other provinces have fewer advantages in these factors, resulting in a clear competitive disadvantage (lock-in). Additionally, provinces such as Krabi, Surat Thani, Songkhla, and Chiang Mai have some infrastructure and natural resources that could attract tourists. However, there remains a significant disparity compared to the three main provinces shown in Figure 20.

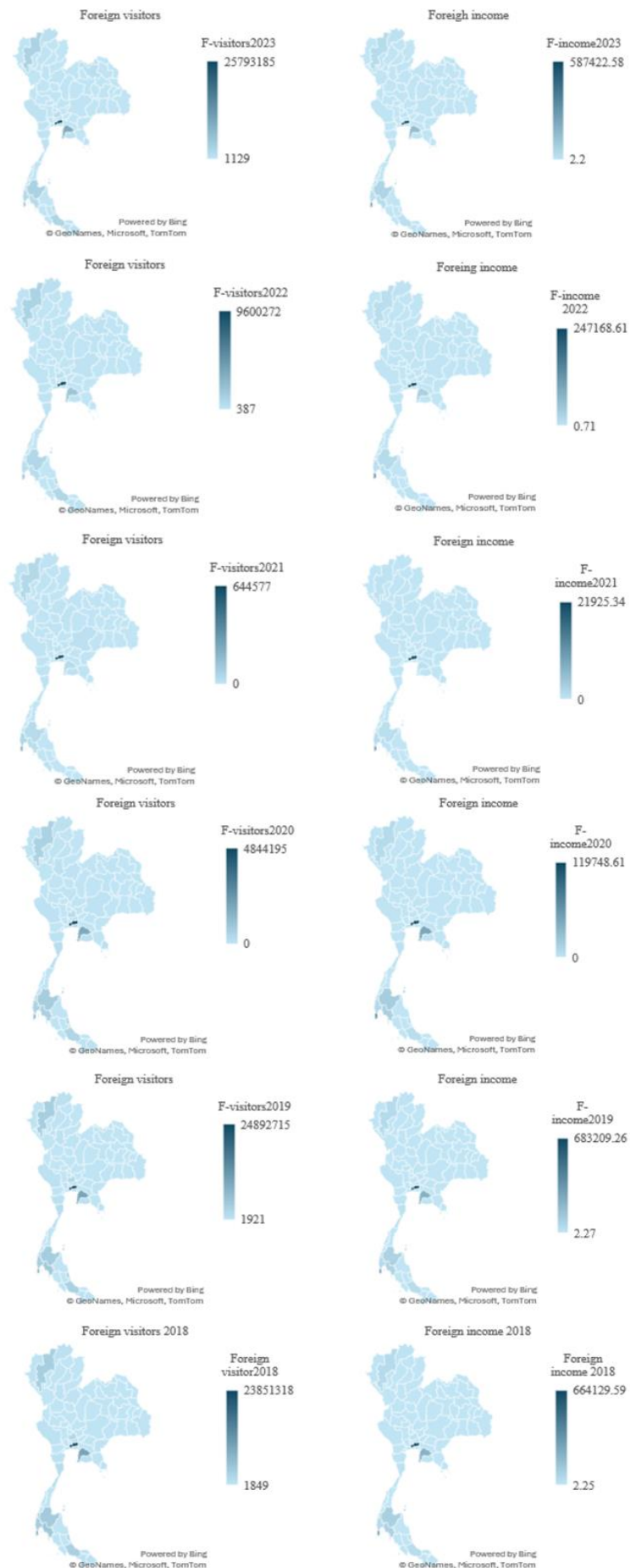


Figure 19. Heat map shows the foreign tourism visitors and revenue from foreign tourist 2018 to 2022
(Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

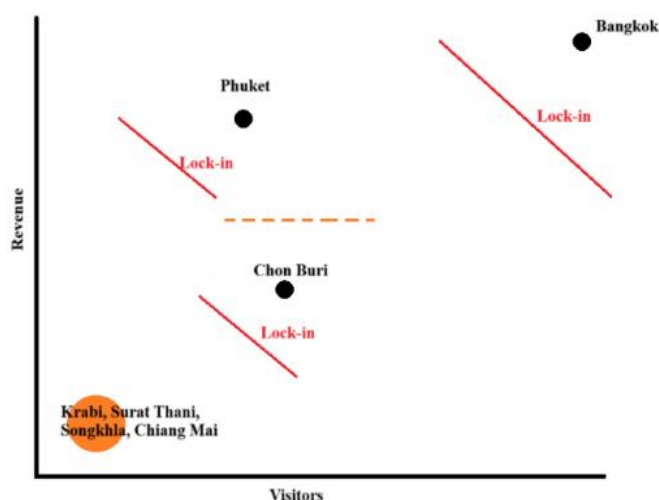


Figure 20. Mapping Strategy Groups for tourism from foreign tourists in Thailand (Source: Compiled by the author based on TAT data)

According to tourism data in Thailand from 2012-2023, tourism in Thailand remains concentrated in a few key provinces. When separating domestic tourism from foreign tourism, it is evident that foreign tourism continues to focus on major provinces such as Bangkok, Chonburi, and Phuket. However, domestic tourism has expanded to a wider variety of provinces, including Krabi, Surat Thani, Songkhla, and Chiang Mai.

Other secondary provinces attract some Thai tourists, but the overall picture of Thai tourism shows that Bangkok, Chonburi, and Phuket are the three main provinces. Chiang Mai, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Phetchaburi, Kanchanaburi, Ayutthaya, and Nakhon Ratchasima have a fair number of tourists but cannot compete in terms of income with the three main provinces. Based on the above data, we can analyze the SWOT and define the TOWS Matrix strategy as follows. The analysis of the external environment enables us to identify and categorize the opportunities and threats facing Thai tourism as follows:

Opportunities: Increased travel and flights, the rise in the number of foreign tourists (including new groups from China and India), government tourism promotion policies, and public and private sector promotions have all contributed to the growth of the tourism industry.

Treat: Countries with significant potential for tourism in ASEAN include Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Singapore. These nations face various challenges such as geopolitical issues, trade wars, fluctuations in the global economy, and uncertain events. Additionally, alongside global uncertainties, local environmental challenges such as air pollution continue to negatively affect the overall number of tourists and the pace of recovery in Thailand (Nonthapot et al., 2024). For the analysis of the internal environment, the strengths and weaknesses of the country's tourism can be classified as follows:

Strength: The cost of tourism is low, and the infrastructure is quite comprehensive, particularly in large cities. Accommodation and food are abundant and diverse, with excellent service and beautiful natural resources.

Weakness: Convenient and comprehensive infrastructure is predominantly available in the Bangkok area, while other provinces have limited public transportation options. Accommodation, shops, and service businesses are concentrated mainly in the primary tourist areas of these provinces. Natural resources that attract tourists are concentrated in only a few provinces. The lack of a unique identity in secondary provinces makes tourists perceive them as less worthwhile destinations. Additionally, tourism relies heavily on income from foreign tourists.

From the SWOT analysis, we can derive strategies using the TOWS Matrix as follows:

Maxi-Maxi Strategy (SO): Develop packages and campaigns to attract tourists by enhancing the potential of transportation systems. Improve connections to airports and various tourist attractions to make them more convenient, thereby drawing more visitors to key landmarks. Enhance the quality-of-service systems to create a memorable experience and engage with tourists. Additionally, maintain and improve the aesthetics of tourist attractions and natural resources, ensuring they remain clean and beautiful at all times.

Maxi Mini Strategy (ST): Monitor competitors and adjust response strategies to build confidence, improve service quality, and optimize tourism costs, thereby creating competitive advantages. Ensure equal acceptance of tourists, regardless of race, religion, or language. Establish joint ventures and strategic alliances in various countries to promote tourism and mitigate geopolitical issues. Advocate for government implementation of neutral policies to maintain Thailand's political neutrality.

Mini Maxi Strategy (WO): To promote tourism in secondary cities for foreign tourists, several strategies can be implemented:

1. **Organize Tours:** Develop and offer organized tours that highlight the unique attractions of secondary cities.
2. **Improve Transportation:** Enhance both inter-provincial and intra-provincial travel and transportation channels to make these destinations more accessible.
3. **Promote Local Businesses:** Support and promote potential shops and accommodations in secondary provinces to boost local economies.

4. Highlight Unique Identities: Emphasize the distinct identities and charms of each province to attract tourists. Furthermore, integrating smart tourism technologies like augmented reality with local art routes can significantly enhance tourist engagement in secondary destinations like Songkhla (Trakulmaykee et al., 2025).

5. Create Attractive Packages: Develop tourism packages that include secondary provinces alongside main provinces, offering them at attractive prices to increase awareness.

6. Utilize Media: Publicize secondary provinces through various media channels to ensure foreign tourists are aware of these destinations

Mini Mini Strategy (WT): Promote tourism among high-income and high-spending domestic tourists to encourage more travel within Thailand. Enhance confidence, improve the environment, and develop infrastructure and facilities to attract potential foreign tourists to settle down.

CONCLUSION

From the literature review, data analysis, and SWOT analysis, it was found that the tourism sector is a key driver of the economy, generating economic circulation and effectively distributing income across various sectors. This is particularly true in developed countries, which benefit from robust infrastructure, facilities, and a variety of attractive tourist attractions and landmarks. In contrast, the situation in developing countries differs, particularly in terms of income distribution.

In these countries, tourism income is often concentrated in major urban areas and large business groups, rather than being distributed to communities. This is due to a lack of comprehensive basic facilities and the absence of attractive tourist attractions and significant landmarks in secondary provinces. As a result, these countries struggle to attract repeat visitors or regular tourists, as there is a lack of variety and uniqueness in each area. This makes tourism experiences in these regions monotonous, often leading to a one-time visit being sufficient for travelers.

Similar to the tourism situation in Thailand, income and tourists are concentrated in only a few important provinces, particularly Bangkok, Phuket, and Chonburi. Other provinces receive significantly less income from tourism due to insufficient infrastructure and facilities, as well as a lack of identity and charm to attract tourists. These factors prevent other provinces from competing equally with Bangkok, Phuket, and Chonburi (Pattaya).

When considering SWOT analysis along with basic information, it is evident that Thailand lacks distributed facilities and infrastructure beyond Bangkok and its vicinity. This results in tourists and tourism income being concentrated in Bangkok, with some distribution to Chonburi due to its beaches, tourist facilities, and numerous leading hotels. Chonburi's proximity to Bangkok (only an hour and a half by car) also contributes to this concentration. Meanwhile, Phuket attracts tourists with its beautiful natural resources, including beaches and mountains, as well as important ports and yacht piers that serve as gateways to islands and tourist beaches along the Andaman coast.

Additionally, Phuket's many luxury hotels and resorts appeal to high-income tourists. Data indicates that Thailand's tourism industry relies heavily on these three provinces. Other provinces are secondary destinations for tourists who have already visited Bangkok, Phuket, or Chonburi. Consequently, tourists, especially foreigners, are less likely to return to Thailand multiple times due to the lack of sufficient attractions.

Domestic tourism generates relatively little income compared to foreign tourism.

To address this, Thailand must adjust its tourism strategies by focusing on distributing infrastructure and facilities to other important and secondary tourism provinces. Strategies should also include promoting and encouraging tourists to explore other provinces. Additionally, promoting the uniqueness and landmarks of each area can create awareness and value among tourists. A more distributed and diverse tourism approach will attract repeat visits from foreign tourists and high-income Thai tourists who typically travel abroad. Thailand's beautiful natural resources, excellent service, diverse hotels, accommodations, and food (especially street food), along with low travel costs, are attractive to tourists. However, this advantage is not sustainable and can be easily challenged by competitors from neighboring ASEAN countries such as Vietnam or Malaysia, as well as countries with high tourism potential like Japan. Therefore, Thailand needs to adjust its tourism strategy to create a competitive advantage and generate more economic benefits.

Author Contributions: For research articles with several authors, a short paragraph specifying their individual contributions must be provided, as follows: Conceptualization, P.S.; methodology, P.S.; software, P.S.; validation, P.S.; formal analysis, P.S.; investigation, P.S.; resources, P.S.; data curation, P.S.; writing—original draft preparation, P.S.; writing—review and editing, P.S.; visualization, P.S.; supervision, P.S.; project administration, P.S.; funding acquisition, P.S. The author has read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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