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Beyond Demographics: Mapping Psychographic Influences in Spiritual Tourism in India - An Empirical Study of Motivations, Preferences, and Segment Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study explores the multidimensional drivers influencing consumer decision-making in the context of spiritual tourism in India, focusing on psychographic segmentation over traditional demographic profiling. As spiritual tourism evolves into a transformative travel form, the study aims to understand the motivations and experiences shaping this trend.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study using a mixed-method approach was conducted between December 2024 and January 2025 in Indore, Bhopal, and Gwalior. Convenience snowball sampling yielded a final sample of 120 respondents, preceded by a pilot test with 25 participants to validate the instrument. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire via Google Forms, focusing on spiritual tourism motivations and experiences. Analytical tools included reliability testing, descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, KMO-Bartlett's test, correlation analysis, ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity, and Hotelling's T-Squared Test. Pearson's Chi-Square Test was used for hypothesis testing, with IBM SPSS Version 23.0 for all analyses.

Findings: Spiritual tourism decisions are driven by three main dimensions: amenities, well-being, and heritage. Safety and infrastructure emerged as key motivators. Elements like yoga, meditation, and Ayurveda are important but vary in priority. Large gatherings evoked mixed reactions, reflecting the subjective nature of spiritual experiences. Demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education showed limited influence, while personal values, spiritual intent, and cultural alignment played a more central role. Marketing strategies should thus focus on psychographic rather than demographic profiling.

Implications: Psychographic and experiential factors influence spiritual tourism more than demographics. Safety, transport, and accommodation must be prioritized by planners. Marketing should highlight well-being and heritage to attract spiritually inclined travellers. The findings also support enhancing infrastructure in spiritual destinations and inform policy shifts that reflect changing motivations beyond religious obligations.

Originality: This study offers a holistic perspective by identifying three key dimensions—amenities, wellbeing, and heritage—through factor analysis, moving beyond traditional religious tourism frameworks. It shifts attention from demographic to psychographic motivations and applies advanced statistical tools like Hotelling's T-squared and ANOVA for nonadditivity, which are rarely used in spiritual tourism research.

1. Introduction

India has long stood as a global epicenter for spiritual pursuit, offering pathways to inner transformation through its sacred landscapes, age-old traditions, and a wide array of contemplative experiences. From the Himalayan monasteries to ashrams in Rishikesh and the temple towns of South India, spiritual tourism has emerged as a profound form of travel, rooted in self-exploration, emotional healing, and mindfulness (Sharma, 2022). Unlike conventional religious tourism, which is often ritualistic and community-oriented, spiritual tourism is intrinsically personal. It emphasizes individual growth through practices such as yoga, meditation, silent retreats, nature immersion, and holistic therapies (Halim, 2021). As modern life becomes increasingly fast-paced and disjointed, there is a growing inclination among individuals to seek experiences that restore psychological balance

and offer existential clarity. This shift reflects a broader transformation in contemporary tourist behavior—from leisure-based recreation to value-driven, introspective travel (Sahin & Guzel, 2024). Spiritual tourism, therefore, is not merely about visiting sacred spaces; it encapsulates a mindset that prioritizes well-being, inner peace, and meaningful engagement with one's surroundings.

The motivations underlying spiritual travel are multifaceted and influenced by a range of psychographic factors such as lifestyle orientation, personal values, and intrinsic motivations. While socio-demographic variables like age, gender, income, and education have traditionally guided segmentation in tourism research, there is increasing recognition of the need to move beyond demographics to better understand the psychological dimensions of travel behavior. Scholars argue that psychographic profiling offers deeper insights into how individuals derive meaning from travel and how their inner dispositions influence destination choice and experiential expectations (Rao, 2019). Despite the increasing popularity of spiritual tourism, there remains a theoretical and empirical gap in understanding its psychographic drivers, especially in the Indian context. Existing studies have largely focused on demographic correlates, leaving the psychological and lifestyle-based segmentation underexplored. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating how psychographic variables—such as personal values, self-determination, and internal motivations—interact with demographic profiles to shape spiritual travel behavior in India.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To explore and identify the underlying psychographic factors influencing consumer participation in spiritual tourism in India.
- To examine the relationship between demographic variables (e.g., age, income, education, occupation) and consumer preferences for spiritual tourism.
- To assess the role of internal motivations, perceived spiritual experiences, and socio-cultural values in influencing travel decisions related to spiritual destinations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Spiritual Tourism: Concept and Evolution

India has historically been revered as a land of spirituality, drawing millions in search of transcendence, healing, and inner peace. The country's sacred geography—ranging from the ghats of Varanasi to the ashrams of Rishikesh—has positioned it as a global epicenter for spiritual travel (Sharma, 2022). While earlier notions of spiritual tourism were closely linked to pilgrimage and ritual-based religious journeys (Anilkumar & Adi Narayana, 2019), recent scholarship describes a more expanded and inclusive form of experiential travel. This evolution reflects a transition from collective religious expression to individualized quests for meaning and self-realization.

Nair and Dileep (2021) emphasized that spiritual travel now encompasses mindfulness, wellness, meditation, and introspection. Spiritual tourism is increasingly viewed not as a fixed itinerary but as a transformational process. The pursuit of personal equilibrium, emotional healing, and self-discovery defines the modern spiritual tourist, often transcending religious boundaries and institutionalized faith.

2.2. Tourist Motivations and Experience Seeking

Travel motivations have been widely studied through the lens of push-pull theory, where "push" factors are internal (e.g., stress relief, existential search), while "pull" factors are external attractions (e.g., ashrams, sacred landscapes). Spiritual tourists are primarily "pushed" by inner needs rather than external stimuli (Garg *et al.*, 2021). These include a longing for silence, purpose, and balance.

This psychological drive aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where self-actualization sits atop the motivational pyramid. Spiritual tourism often fulfills higher-order needs—such as self-transcendence and personal growth—rather than basic or material desires (Sahin & Guzel, 2024). Kaur and Pahuja (2021), in their narrative-based study, found that despite physical discomfort and logistical constraints, spiritual travellers reported high emotional satisfaction, often describing the experience as "transformative."

2.3. Psychographic and Lifestyle Orientation in Travel Behavior

While demographic segmentation (age, gender, education) remains common in tourism studies, it often falls short of capturing the complexity of human behavior. In contrast, psychographic segmentation considers internal characteristics such as values, motivations, lifestyle orientation, and personality traits—offering deeper insights into why individuals travel the way they do.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan, posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are core human needs driving intrinsic motivation. Applied to spiritual tourism, SDT explains how travellers are intrinsically motivated to engage in self-directed journeys, seek spiritual competence through practice, and connect meaningfully with like-minded

individuals or environments. These psychographic attributes often shape not only destination choice but also the nature of the experience sought.

Despite the increasing relevance of psychographics, there is limited research applying such frameworks to spiritual tourism in India. Most existing studies (e.g., Upreti, 2023) have focused on who travels rather than why they travel, thereby neglecting the inner drivers that define modern spiritual behavior. This presents a significant gap in the Indian context.

2.4. Digital Transformation and the Modern Spiritual Traveller

The digital revolution has profoundly altered the way spiritual tourism is experienced and promoted. Agarwal et al. (2021), using structural equation modeling, demonstrated how social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube significantly influence destination selection, perception, and emotional preparedness for spiritual journeys. These platforms often serve as stimuli in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, influencing the tourist's internal state and behavioural intent.

Digital media has also democratized spiritual exploration. Reviews, testimonials, virtual tours, and influencer content now shape how travellers assess spiritual authenticity and emotional resonance, aligning well with value-based consumption behavior.

2.5. Demographic vs. Psychographic Segmentation: A Comparative Lens

Traditional studies, such as those by Upreti (2023) and KPMG (2024), have extensively examined demographic influences on spiritual travel—highlighting the roles of age, income, and education. However, these variables, while helpful for market segmentation, do not explain the deeper psychological and lifestyle orientations that often govern travel preferences and satisfaction.

In contrast, a psychographic approach seeks to capture these intangible yet influential aspects of behavior. Psychographic segmentation can differentiate between individuals who seek meditative solitude versus those drawn to structured spiritual learning, even if they share the same demographic profile. This more nuanced lens offers tourism scholars and practitioners a better foundation for experience design, message targeting, and policy-making.

2.6. Conceptual Gaps and Research Direction

Despite the growing academic and policy attention to spiritual tourism in India, a substantial research gap persists. Most existing studies emphasize the physical, demographic, or infrastructural aspects of travel behavior. Few have applied behavioral or psychological models—such as Maslow's hierarchy, Self-Determination Theory, or the SOR model—to understand the inner motivations and decision-making processes of spiritual tourists.

This study addresses that gap by integrating psychographic profiling into the analysis of Indian spiritual tourists. It aims to investigate how values, motivations, lifestyle orientations, and internal drivers interact with demographic factors to shape travel preferences, experiences, and satisfaction levels. By anchoring the research in established behavioral theories, this study contributes a more conceptually grounded understanding of spiritual tourism in contemporary India.

2.7. Gap Analysis on Spiritual Tourism in India

2.7.1. Research Gap and Objectives

While the field of spiritual tourism has received growing academic attention in recent years, much of the existing literature remains concentrated on infrastructural issues, destination development, and demographic profiling of tourists. Studies have effectively examined factors such as religious motivations, cultural heritage, and economic impacts. However, they often lack a deeper exploration of the internal psychological and emotional dimensions that drive individuals toward spiritual travel. The dominant approach in prior research has been to categorise travellers based on age, gender, income, and education, which, though useful for surface-level segmentation, offers limited insight into the values, motivations, and inner experiences that shape spiritual tourism behavior.

Several scholars have acknowledged that modern spiritual travel is more experiential and transformative in nature, often involving introspection, emotional healing, and personal growth. Yet, very few studies have attempted to analyse these aspects through a structured psychographic lens. Specifically in the Indian context, there is a notable absence of frameworks that integrate constructs such as personal values, self-determined motivation, spiritual orientation, and lifestyle factors. This gap is particularly relevant given the cultural and spiritual richness of India and the rising trend of wellness and mindfulness-based travel within and outside the country.

To address this gap, the present study draws on established behavioral and psychological theories. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) offers a foundational understanding of how intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and relatedness influence human behavior, especially in contexts driven by personal meaning and self-growth. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is also relevant, as it frames spiritual travel as an attempt to fulfil higher-

order psychological needs such as self-actualisation and self-transcendence. Additionally, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model provides a lens to understand how external stimuli, such as destination appeal or social media content, interact with an individual's internal states to influence travel decisions.

Grounded in these theoretical perspectives, this study seeks to move beyond the traditional demographic-centric analysis of spiritual tourism. It aims to examine how psychographic factors—such as personal values, motivations, and experiential orientation—interact with demographic characteristics to shape the travel behavior of Indian spiritual tourists. The goal is to offer a more holistic understanding of spiritual travel behavior that can inform both academic discourse and practical applications in tourism planning and destination marketing.

Based on the above rationale, the study is guided by the following objectives:

- To explore and identify the underlying psychographic factors influencing consumer participation in spiritual tourism in India.
- To examine the relationship between demographic variables (such as age, income, education, and occupation) and consumer preferences for spiritual tourism.
- To assess the role of internal motivations, perceived spiritual experiences, and socio-cultural values in influencing travel decisions related to spiritual destinations.

2.8. Conceptual Framework Linking Theories, Constructs, and Behavioral Outcomes

The present study is grounded in an integrative conceptual framework that brings together key theoretical models—Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model—to explain consumer behavior in the context of spiritual tourism.

Table 1: Key Theoretical Constructs

Theoretical Foundation	Key Constructs	Role in Framework
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Self-actualization, Self-transcendence	Provides the foundation for understanding the higher-order needs driving individuals to seek meaning, healing, and transformation through travel.
Self-Determination Theory (SDT)	Autonomy, Intrinsic motivation, Relatedness	Explains how internal drivers such as personal growth, control over decisions, and emotional connection influence the intent to undertake spiritual travel.
Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model	Stimuli (e.g., social media, destination appeal), Organism (psychographics), Response (travel behavior)	Describes how external stimuli interact with internal psychological traits to shape the behavioral outcome—i.e., participation in spiritual tourism.
Psychographic Constructs	Values, Lifestyle, Emotional drivers, Spiritual orientation	Act as mediators between theoretical needs/motivations and actual behavior, helping explain why travellers choose certain spiritual experiences.
Demographic Variables	Age, Gender, Income, Education	Serve as moderating variables that influence how different psychographic profiles interpret stimuli and engage in spiritual travel behaviors.
Behavioral Outcomes	Visit intention, Destination preference, Experience type	Final responses are shaped by the interplay of internal motivation, psychographic traits, and demographic context.

Table 1 summarises the relationships among these theories, psychographic constructs, demographic moderators, and behavioral outcomes. This framework positions psychographic variables such as values, lifestyle, and motivation as central mediators influencing travel decisions, while demographic factors provide contextual depth. Table 1 serves to guide both the design of the research instrument and the interpretation of results in relation to tourist behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional design using a mixed-method approach that incorporates both primary and secondary data sources. This design, depicted in Table 2, is suitable for exploring current preferences, attitudes, and patterns of behavior related to spiritual tourism in India, particularly when evaluating associations

among variables at a single point in time (Creswell, 2014). The mixed-method approach enabled a comprehensive understanding by combining structured data collection with contextual insights derived from secondary literature. Descriptive studies are particularly effective in tourism research where capturing demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral data is central to understanding emerging trends (Veal, 2017).

Table 2: Descriptive Cross-Sectional Design

Parameters	Brief Note
Type of Research	Descriptive Cross-Sectional Design
Data Collection Method	Primary & Secondary (Mixed Method)
Data Collection Time	December 2024 to January 2025
Pilot Testing	Conducted in January 2025 with 25 respondents
Geographic Location	Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh, India)
Research Instrument	Survey Questionnaire
Survey Administration	Google Form
Sampling Type	Convenience Snowball Sampling
Sample Size	120 respondents
Statistical Analysis	Reliability Test, Descriptive Statistics, Factor Analysis, KMO Bartlett, Correlation Analysis, ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity & Hotelling's T-Squared Test
Hypothesis Testing	ANOVA & t test
Software Tools Used	IBM SPSS Version 23.0

3.1.1. Sampling Design

The sampling technique used was non-probability snowball sampling, initiated through a convenience sample. This approach was considered appropriate due to the absence of a defined sampling frame for spiritual tourists and the exploratory nature of the study. Snowball sampling enables researchers to access hard-to-reach or niche populations, especially when respondents share similar interests, behaviors, or affiliations—in this case, individuals engaged in or interested in spiritual travel. As Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) note, snowball sampling is particularly useful when studying socially embedded populations where trust and referral are critical for participation. Given the subjectivity and personal nature of spiritual experiences, this method allowed for richer data collection through extended peer networks. The final sample size comprised 120 respondents, who were administered the survey through Google Forms. The research instrument included psychographic and demographic variables related to spiritual tourism preferences and motivations.

3.1.2. Instrument Design

The data collection instrument was a structured survey questionnaire distributed digitally using Google Forms, as stated in Table 2. The instrument included a quantitative component, which included Likert-scale items measuring multiple factors such as safety, amenities, well-being practices, and cultural heritage. These items were derived and adapted from validated scales in past studies on tourism motivations and spiritual well-being (Sharma & Sharma, 2023; Halim, 2021).

The survey comprised two sections:

- Section A: Demographics (age, gender, education, income, occupation)
- Section B: Motivational and experience-based items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 - Not Influencing to 4 - Most Influencing)

Scale reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha, and factor structures were examined using exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

3.1.3. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted between December 2024 and January 2025 using online distribution methods due to geographical spread and logistical ease. The survey link was initially shared with personal and professional networks and was further propagated through referrals, thereby facilitating snowball sampling. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. Responses were recorded anonymously, and each submission was reviewed for completeness before inclusion in the dataset. The chosen locations—Indore, Bhopal, and Gwalior—were selected due to their cultural relevance in spiritual tourism circuits in

central India, and their demographic diversity made them ideal for preliminary regional exploration.

3.1.4. Data Analysis Tools

The collected data were cleaned and coded using IBM SPSS Version 23.0. The following analyses were conducted:

- Reliability Test: Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency of scale items.
- Descriptive Statistics: Used to summarise demographic data and general trends in tourism behavior.
- ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity & Hotelling's T-Squared Test
- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): Applied to group variables into latent factors using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to test sampling adequacy.
- Correlation Analysis: Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine relationships between demographic variables and factors identified through EFA.
- Hypothesis Testing: ANOVA and t-tests were employed to test associations between categorical demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, income) and factor preferences such as well-being and amenities.

The selection of these tools was justified based on the nature of the data (categorical and ordinal) and the research aim of examining associations and latent structures, consistent with methods outlined by Field (2013).

4. Results & Data Analysis

4.1. Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.937 for 18 items in Table 3 indicates excellent internal consistency of the instrument used. This suggests that the items are highly interrelated and measure the same underlying construct with a high degree of reliability. According to widely accepted guidelines (George & Mallery, 2003), a Cronbach's Alpha above 0.9 indicates excellent reliability, suggesting that the scale items are highly interrelated and consistently measure the underlying constructs. This validates the internal consistency of the instrument and ensures the robustness of subsequent factor analysis and interpretation.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

Metric	Value	Interpretation
Cronbach's Alpha	0.937	Excellent internal consistency; items strongly measure the same underlying construct.
Number of Items	18	All 18 items were used to compute the reliability score.
Threshold for Acceptability	≥ 0.70	Values above 0.70 are considered acceptable; values above 0.90 indicate excellent reliability.
Conclusion	-	The scale demonstrates excellent reliability and is highly suitable for further analysis, such as factor analysis and hypothesis testing.

4.2. Descriptive Analysis: Key Insights

To explore initial patterns in respondent preferences and motivations for spiritual tourism, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted. This section summarizes the most frequently cited travel motivations and mean responses across various influencing factors. Findings are presented thematically to highlight dominant trends, perceived importance of amenities, and emotional or cultural drivers. The Maha Kumbh Mela was also assessed for public sentiment. Tables 4 and 5 below consolidate these insights.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Theme	Key Observations	Insights
Primary Motivator: Security & Safety	45.8% cited as most influential factor	Ensures peace of mind, particularly for mass gatherings like the Kumbh Mela
Recreational Value	41.7% reported 'Enjoying & Resting' as a major reason	Spiritual travel serves both devotional and relaxation purposes
Importance of Basic Amenities	Food & Accommodation (38.3%)	Comfort and logistics play a major role in destination preference

Theme	Key Observations	Insights
Cultural/Traditional Relevance	Family rituals (37.5%), wellness (35%), personal development (34.2%)	Cultural continuity and inner growth are integral to spiritual travel
Maha Kumbh Perceptions	Overcrowded (35.8%), Spiritual (24.2%), Divine (22.5%), Moderately Spiritual (13.3%)	Mixed feedback signals need better planning without losing their spiritual charm.

The insights drawn from Tables 4 and 5 collectively highlight that spiritual tourism in India is not solely rooted in religious devotion but is strongly shaped by practical, emotional, and cultural considerations. The descriptive findings suggest that safety, emotional well-being, and familial bonds emerge as dominant motivators for spiritual travel. This indicates that tourists increasingly seek reassurance and personal comfort when engaging in large-scale spiritual events, such as the Kumbh Mela, aligning with the broader shift toward experience-driven tourism. Additionally, spiritual travel appears to straddle both devotional and recreational dimensions. Elements like "enjoying and resting" being rated highly reflect a growing preference for combining inner reflection with leisure. At the same time, the importance of food, accommodation, and basic infrastructure reinforces the role of logistical factors in destination preference, pointing to rising expectations among spiritual travellers regarding comfort and accessibility.

While traditions and rituals maintain cultural relevance, aspects like Ayurveda, yoga, and acts of service received lower influence ratings, suggesting that these may either be undervalued or not adequately integrated into mainstream offerings. This indicates an opportunity for destination managers to broaden the scope of spiritual experiences beyond the conventional. Overall, as shown in the summary tables, the interplay between emotional needs, cultural identity, and modern travel expectations is redefining spiritual tourism. The findings underscore the importance of not only maintaining spiritual authenticity but also ensuring that the journey is perceived as safe, fulfilling, and meaningful for contemporary travellers.

Table 5: Mean Score Categorisation of Influencing Factors

Influence Level	Factors (Mean ± SD)	Interpretation
High (Mean > 3.00)	Family Rituals (3.09 ± 0.90), Enjoying/Resting (3.06 ± 1.01), Security & Safety (3.05 ± 1.06)	Emotional comfort, safety, and family bonding are key motivators.
Moderate (2.80–2.99)	Personal Development, Wellness, Transport, Accommodation, Food, Enlightenment, Public Amenities, Rituals, etc.	Balanced blend of physical comfort, cultural interest, and learning
Low (< 2.70)	Ayurveda, Yoga/Meditation, Education, Acts of Service, Folk Customs	Possibly underexplored or perceived as niche interests

4.3. ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity & Hotelling's T-Squared Test

To ensure the appropriateness of the dataset for advanced multivariate analysis, it was essential to evaluate certain assumptions post-reliability testing. The decision to conduct ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity was driven by the need to examine whether relationships among items were additive in nature—a core assumption in many multivariate techniques. Nonadditivity can introduce distortions in interpreting factor loadings or interaction effects, potentially leading to misleading conclusions (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Tukey's test specifically helps in identifying the presence of interaction or nonlinear patterns among items that may violate additivity assumptions (Tukey, 1949).

Further, the use of Hotelling's T-Squared Test was conceptually aligned with the goal of determining whether the means of multiple variables differ significantly across observations. This multivariate generalization of the t-test is particularly useful when evaluating whether a set of observed variables collectively represents distinct dimensions, supporting the suitability for factor extraction or group mean comparisons (Hair et al., 2018). It offers a preliminary check on the multivariate normality and mean structure, crucial before proceeding with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) or MANOVA.

Together, these tests confirmed that the data structure was statistically sound, and that item-level differences and assumptions aligned with the requirements for further dimensional reduction and hypothesis testing.

Table 6: ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity

Component	Value	Interpretation
Between People	SS = 1090.109 (df = 119)	Captures variance between individual respondents.
Between Items	SS = 59.598 (df = 17)	Measures the variability across different items/questions.
F-value for Items	6.095 (p = 0.000)	Statistically significant; item means differ significantly across the scale.
Nonadditivity	SS = 0.227 (p = 0.530)	Not significant; indicates that the assumption of additivity is not violated.
Tukey's Power Estimate	0.754	Indicates the transformation needed for perfect additivity; values close to 1 are ideal.
Grand Mean	2.8324	Overall average response across all items and respondents.

As shown in Table 6, ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity was conducted post-reliability testing to assess item-level variation and data suitability for further analysis. The significant between-items effect (p = 0.000) confirmed that responses varied meaningfully across factors such as amenities, wellbeing, and heritage, which were later extracted through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The non-significant nonadditivity result (p = 0.530) indicates that the assumption of additivity is met, validating the appropriateness of using ANOVA-based techniques. Tukey's power estimate of 0.754 also suggests no major transformation is needed. These outcomes indicate strong item-level discrimination and data suitability, thereby justifying the next step of conducting Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to uncover the latent dimensions underlying the spiritual tourism constructs.

Table 7: Hotelling's T-squared Test

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
Hotelling's T^2	120.721	Measures multivariate mean differences from a hypothesized mean vector (e.g., zero).
F-value	6.146 (df = 17, 103)	The multivariate test statistic is converted to an F-distribution.
Significance	p = 0.000	Statistically significant; indicates multivariate means differ significantly.

As shown in Table 7, the significant p-value (0.000) from Hotelling's T-squared test indicates that the item means differ significantly from the grand mean. This provides statistical justification for exploring underlying dimensions through factor analysis, suggesting that the set of observed items reflects multiple distinct latent constructs.

The internal consistency of the survey instrument was first assessed using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.937$), indicating excellent reliability. Following this, ANOVA with Tukey's Test for Nonadditivity was conducted, which showed no significant nonadditivity ($F = 0.394$, $p > 0.05$), satisfying the assumption for additive models. Hotelling's T-squared test further confirmed significant differences across item means ($T^2 = 120.72$, $F = 6.146$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting the presence of meaningful latent constructs. With these conditions met, the dataset was deemed suitable for exploratory factor analysis.

4.4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

To assess the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted. The KMO value as per Table 8 is 0.878, which is well above the recommended threshold of 0.80, indicating meritorious sampling adequacy. This suggests that the variables in the dataset share sufficient common variance, justifying the application of factor analysis. Furthermore, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a Chi-square value of 1597.220 with 153 degrees of freedom and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. The significant result confirms that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, and the variables are sufficiently correlated to proceed with exploratory factor analysis. Together, these results provide strong statistical evidence that the dataset is appropriate for factor extraction and subsequent dimension reduction.

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.878
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1597.220
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

4.5. Grouped Rotated Component Matrix (Varimax Rotation)

Factor analysis was conducted in this study to identify the underlying dimensions influencing spiritual tourism decisions among respondents. This technique is particularly useful in data reduction, where several interrelated variables are grouped into fewer, interpretable components without substantial loss of information (Hair *et al*., 2019). The method employed was Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalisation, both of which are commonly recommended when the objective is to derive orthogonal (uncorrelated) factors that are easy to interpret. Varimax rotation simplifies the loading structure by maximising the variance of squared loadings within each component. This results in a more interpretable factor solution, where each variable loads highly onto one factor and has minimal loadings on others. This orthogonal approach was suitable in this context, as the aim was to isolate distinct themes—such as amenities, well-being, and heritage—within spiritual tourism motivations, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrixa			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Traditional Practices	.040	.134	.883
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Family Rituals	.304	.097	.828
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Spiritual Trips	.087	.330	.723
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Folk Customs	.020	.320	.665
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Wellness and Healing	.329	.687	.297
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Enlightenment	.265	.785	.150
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Yoga Meditation	.248	.730	.206
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Ayurveda	.272	.747	.226
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Escaping Daily Routine	.562	.465	.082
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Acts of service	.471	.676	.077
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Food	.775	.322	.143
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Accommodation	.837	.296	.067
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Public Amenities	.869	.232	.013
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Security and Safety	.790	.205	.131
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Enjoying and Resting	.656	.459	.142
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Transportation	.784	.246	.206
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Personal Development	.309	.699	.322
Rate the influence level of the factors that impact the traveller's decision to go on a spiritual journey: Educational Needs	.269	.631	.270
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

Table 9.1: Summary of Extracted Components

Factor	Variables with High Loadings	Loading Range
Component 1: Amenities	Food, Accommodation, Public Amenities, Security and Safety, Enjoying and Resting, Transportation	.656 – .869
Component 2: Wellbeing	Wellness and Healing, Enlightenment, Yoga Meditation, Ayurveda, Acts of Service, Personal Development, Educational Needs	.631 – .785
Component 3: Heritage	Traditional Practices, Family Rituals, Spiritual Trips, Folk Customs	.665 – .883

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
Note: Rotation converged in five iterations.

Kaiser normalization ensures that each variable contributes equally to the factor solution during rotation, preventing any one item from dominating the rotated structure due to scale differences. Factors were retained based on the Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues greater than 1), which indicated that three components accounted for a significant portion of the total variance. These components presented in Table 9.1 were clearly interpretable: Component 1 grouped logistical and comfort-related items (amenities), Component 2 clustered wellness and spiritual growth elements (well-being), and Component 3 encompassed cultural and ritualistic dimensions (heritage). The factor analysis thus enabled clear segmentation of 18 observed variables into three meaningful latent constructs, providing a robust framework for further statistical testing and hypothesis formulation.

The item *"Escaping Daily Routine"* displayed moderate loadings on both Component 1 (.562) and Component 2 (.465), without achieving a strong, distinct association with a single factor. Given this cross-loading and the absence of a loading exceeding the threshold of .60, it was excluded from the final component categorization to preserve the conceptual clarity and statistical robustness of the factor structure.

Items such as *"Acts of Service"* and *"Personal Development"* showed minor secondary loadings on Component 1; however, they exhibited stronger loadings on Component 2 and were conceptually more aligned with the Wellbeing construct. Hence, they were retained under Component 2 in the final factor model.

Table 10: Reliability and Multivariate Test Results for Extracted Factors

Component	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Tukey's Nonadditivity Sig.	Hotelling's T^2 Sig.
Amenities	6	.924	.249 (Not Significant)	.007 (**Significant**)
Wellbeing	7	.910	.487 (Not Significant)	.000 (**Significant**)
Heritage	4	.834	.960 (Not Significant)	.000 (**Significant**)

Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 indicates acceptable internal consistency. Tukey's Sig. > .05 = no serious nonadditivity concerns. Hotelling's T^2 significant = group means differ significantly from the grand mean.

4.5.1. Interpretation (Post-Factor Extraction Reliability Analysis)

• Amenities Component

The Amenities factor, comprising six items—food, accommodation, public amenities, security and safety, enjoying and resting, and transportation—demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of **.924**. Table 10 indicates that the items reliably measure a unified construct related to tangible service quality and comfort-related motivations in spiritual tourism. The non-significant result in Tukey's test for nonadditivity (p = .249) confirms that the observed relationships among variables are linear and additive. However, Hotelling's T-squared test was statistically significant (F = 3.345, p = .007), suggesting that the multivariate mean of this group significantly differs from the overall sample mean, reinforcing its distinctiveness as a psychological construct.

• Wellbeing Component

The Wellbeing factor included seven items: wellness and healing, enlightenment, yoga meditation, Ayurveda, acts of service, personal development, and educational needs. It achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of .910, which also signifies a high level of internal consistency. The Tukey's nonadditivity test was non-significant (p = .487), indicating no violation of the additivity assumption. The Hotelling's T-squared test was significant (F = 7.914, p < .001), affirming that the collective mean responses for this factor are statistically distinct from the grand mean shown in Table 10. This

supports the validity of Wellbeing as an independent motivational domain in the spiritual tourism framework.

• Heritage Component

The Heritage factor—comprising traditional practices, family rituals, spiritual trips, and folk customs—also demonstrated strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .834. Table 10 confirms that these items reliably measure a unified latent construct tied to cultural and heritage-driven motivations. Tukey's test for nonadditivity returned a non-significant result (p = .960), confirming linearity. The Hotelling's T-squared test was highly significant (F = 17.653, p < .001), further validating the distinctiveness of the Heritage factor and underscoring its relevance as a separate psychographic influence in travel decisions.

4.6. Hypothesis Development

Following the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), three core dimensions influencing spiritual tourism decisions were identified — Amenities, Wellbeing, and Heritage. These latent constructs were further examined in relation to key demographic variables to understand whether personal characteristics significantly shape traveller preferences.

Table 11: Hypothesis Statements

Hypothesis No.	Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)
$H_1$1	There is a significant association between the age of travellers and their preference for amenities in spiritual tourism.
$H_1$2	There is a significant association between gender and the importance placed on wellbeing factors during spiritual travel.
$H_1$3	There is a significant relationship between the educational qualification of travellers and their preference for heritage-related experiences in spiritual tourism.
$H_1$4	Occupation significantly influences the importance given to wellbeing during spiritual journeys.
$H_1$5	There is a significant association between family income and the perceived importance of amenities in spiritual tourism experiences.

To explore these relationships, five alternative hypotheses (H_1) were developed, each linking a demographic variable with one of the identified spiritual tourism factors. These hypotheses are listed in Table 11.

4.6.1. Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is a significant association between the age of travellers and their preference for *Amenities* in spiritual tourism.

Table 12: One-Way ANOVA Table (Preference for Amenities by Age Group)

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Between Groups	3	0.406	0.451	0.717
Within Groups	116	0.901		
Total	119			
Welch Test	3, 52.41	—	0.497	0.686
Brown-Forsythe	3, 82.58	—	0.421	0.738

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether preference for amenities differed significantly across different age groups of spiritual tourists, as shown in Table 12. The results indicated no statistically significant difference, F(3, 116) = 0.451, p = .717. To verify robustness against potential violations of homogeneity of variances, Welch's and Brown-Forsythe tests were also performed, both of which confirmed the non-significant result (Welch's F = 0.497, p = .686; Brown-Forsythe F = 0.421, p = .738). These findings suggest that age group does not significantly influence the importance placed on amenities during spiritual travel experiences.

H2: There is a significant association between gender and the importance placed on Well-being factors during spiritual travel.

Table 13: Independent Samples t-Test Table (Wellbeing Preferences by Gender)

Group	N	Mean	SD				
Male	83	2.67	0.88				
Female	37	3.03	0.80				
Test			**t**	**df**	**p (2-tailed)**	**Mean Diff.**	**95% CI (Lower, Upper)**
Equal variances assumed			-2.074	118	.040	-0.352	(-0.689, -0.016)

Group	N	Mean	SD				
Male	83	2.67	0.88				
Equal variances not assumed			-2.157	76.157	.034	-0.352	(-0.678, -0.027)

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether the importance placed on wellbeing factors during spiritual travel differed by gender. Results revealed in Table 13 clearly reflect a statistically significant difference between males and females, t(118) = -2.074, p = .040. On average, females (M = 3.03, SD = 0.80) placed significantly greater importance on well-being-related aspects (such as yoga, meditation, personal development, and healing therapies) compared to males (M = 2.67, SD = 0.88). This indicates that gender plays a meaningful role in shaping well-being motivations within spiritual tourism. Levene's test showed no significant violation of equal variances (p = .139), so the equal variances assumed result was retained.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the educational qualification of travellers' and their preference for Heritage-related experiences in spiritual tourism.

Table 14: One-Way ANOVA (Preference for Heritage-related Experiences by Educational Qualification)

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	3	0.714	0.998	0.397
Within Groups	116	0.716		
Total	119			
Welch Test	(3, 29.15)	—	0.876	0.465
Brown-Forsythe	(3, 45.97)	—	0.927	0.435

A one-way ANOVA was performed to assess whether preference for heritage-related experiences in spiritual tourism varied based on educational qualification. The results revealed in Table 14 indicate that the differences in mean heritage preference across the four educational groups were not statistically significant, F(3, 116) = 0.998, p = .397. Further robust tests (Welch and Brown-Forsythe), used to account for potential violations of homogeneity of variances, confirmed these findings (Welch's F = 0.876, p = .465; Brown-Forsythe F = 0.927, p = .435). These results suggest that educational qualification does not have a significant impact on how much importance travellers place on heritage-based aspects such as traditional practices, rituals, or folk customs during spiritual travel.

H4: Occupation significantly influences the importance given to *Wellbeing* during spiritual journeys.

Table 15: One-Way ANOVA (Wellbeing Importance by Occupation)

Between Groups	4	0.963	1.280	0.282
Within Groups	115	0.752		
Total	119			
Welch Test	(4, 11.58)	—	1.179	0.370
Brown-Forsythe	(4, 6.56)	—	0.923	0.504

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether travellers' occupation status significantly influences the importance placed on wellbeing during spiritual journeys. The test data as per Table 15 suggest that it did not reveal any statistically significant difference in wellbeing preferences across occupational groups, F(4, 115) = 1.280, p = .282. To further account for unequal group sizes and potential violations of variance assumptions, Welch's and Brown-Forsythe tests were examined, which also confirmed non-significant outcomes (Welch's F = 1.179, p = .370; Brown-Forsythe F = 0.923, p = .504).These results suggest that occupation does not have a significant impact on how travellers prioritize wellbeing factors—such as yoga, healing practices, and personal development—within the context of spiritual tourism.

H5: There is a significant association between family income and the perceived importance of Amenities in spiritual tourism experiences.

Table 16: One-Way ANOVA *(Amenities Preference by Annual Family Income*)

Source	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	3	1.449	1.658	0.180
Within Groups	116	0.874		
Total	119			
Welch Test	(3, 47.47)	—	1.983	0.129
Brown-Forsythe	(3, 79.46)	—	1.658	0.183

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether spiritual travellers' annual family income significantly influences their perceived importance of amenities—including factors like food, accommodation, public facilities, safety, rest, and transport. The ANOVA results indicated in Table 16 suggest

that there is no statistically significant difference in amenities preference across income groups, F(3, 116) = 1.658, p = .180. Additionally, both Welch's test (p = .129) and the Brown-Forsythe test (p = .183), which adjust for unequal variances, also confirmed the absence of significant variation. Although the highest income group (>30 lakhs) reported the highest mean score (M = 3.25), the differences were not strong enough to reach statistical significance. Thus, income level does not significantly impact the prioritization of amenities in the context of spiritual tourism among the respondents surveyed.

4.7. Correlation Analysis

To further examine the relationships between the extracted factor dimensions—Amenities, Wellbeing, and Heritage—and various demographic variables, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed. This statistical test was chosen to determine the strength and direction of linear associations between the spiritual tourism preference factors and demographic attributes such as age, gender, educational qualification, employment status, and annual family income. The correlation coefficients helped assess whether there were any meaningful patterns or associations that could inform deeper insights into spiritual tourism behavior. While some weak correlations were observed (e.g., between income and preference for amenities), the majority of demographic variables demonstrated limited or non-significant correlations with the factor dimensions. This suggests that the motivations for spiritual tourism—such as the search for well-being or heritage experiences—may be more internally driven or psychographic in nature rather than heavily influenced by demographic characteristics.

These insights complement the chi-square analysis and collectively reinforce the finding that spiritual tourism preferences are less dependent on demographic profiles and more influenced by individual spiritual inclinations, values, and personal aspirations.

Table 17: Correlation Analysis: Perceived **Amenities Vs** Demographics

Demographic Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Significance	Remarks
Annual Family Income	0.187	0.040	Significant	Weak positive relationship. Higher income correlates with slightly better perception of amenities.
Age	–0.098	0.285	Not Significant	Weak negative relationship. Older individuals may value amenities slightly less, but effect is not significant.
Gender Identification	0.016	0.859	Not Significant	No meaningful relationship between gender and perception of amenities.
Educational Qualification	0.154	0.094	Not Significant (Close)	Slightly positive trend; higher education might relate to better expectations of amenities.
Employment Status	–0.049	0.599	Not Significant	No clear link between employment status and amenities.

A Pearson correlation was conducted to explore the relationship between perceived amenities in spiritual tourism and various demographic variables. Results indicated in Table 17 a weak but statistically significant positive correlation between annual family income and amenities (r = .187, p = .040), suggesting that higher-income individuals rated amenities more favorably. Other demographic variables, including age (r = –.098, p = .285), gender (r = .016, p = .859), educational qualification (r = .154, p = .094), and employment status (r = –.049, p = .599), did not show statistically significant relationships with amenities.

Table 18: Correlation Analysis: Wellbeing vs. Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Significance	Interpretation & Remarks
Annual Family Income	0.088	0.338	Not Significant	No meaningful relationship. Well-being is not influenced by income level.
Age	–0.136	0.137	Not Significant	A slight negative trend suggests younger respondents may feel more spiritual wellbeing, but this is not statistically significant.
Gender Identification	0.187	0.040	Significant	Weak but significant relationship. Gender appears to influence wellbeing perception.
Educational Qualification	0.117	0.202	Not Significant	Weak positive trend. Those with higher education might value spiritual wellbeing slightly more.

Demographic Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Significance	Interpretation & Remarks
Employment Status	–0.045	0.626	Not Significant	No significant effect. Whether a person is working or not doesn't impact wellbeing scores.

A Pearson correlation analysis was performed to explore the association between well-being and demographic variables. Table 18 suggests that among the tested variables, only gender identification demonstrated a statistically significant, albeit weak, positive correlation with well-being (r = .187, p = .040). No significant correlations were observed with income (r = .088, p = .338), age (r = –.136, p = .137), education (r = .117, p = .202), or employment status (r = –.045, p = .626). These findings indicate that demographic factors have a limited influence on perceptions of well-being in spiritual tourism.

Table 19: Correlation Table: Heritage vs. Demographics

Demographic Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Significance	Interpretation & Remarks
Annual Family Income	0.106	0.250	Not Significant	Slight positive trend, but not significant. Income does not notably affect heritage perception.
Age	–0.042	0.650	Not Significant	Virtually no relationship between age and heritage appreciation in spiritual tourism.
Gender Identification	0.066	0.474	Not Significant	No significant correlation. Heritage experiences are perceived similarly across genders.
Educational Qualification	0.053	0.563	Not Significant	Weak and non-significant trend. Education doesn't impact heritage appreciation strongly.
Current Employment Status	–0.137	0.135	Not Significant	Slight negative trend, but not statistically meaningful. Employment doesn't shape heritage perception.

A Pearson correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship between the Heritage factor and respondent demographics. Table 19 stated that none of the demographic variables showed statistically significant correlations with heritage perception. Specifically, correlations ranged from *r* = –.137 (employment status) to *r* = .106 (family income), with all p-values > .05. These findings suggest that the perception of heritage elements in spiritual tourism is not significantly influenced by age, gender, income, education, or employment status.

4.8. Key Findings and Discussion

- Spiritual tourism is driven by three core factors: amenities, wellbeing, and heritage.
- Safety and infrastructure are top motivators for spiritual travellers.
- Well-being elements are valued but vary in importance across individuals.
- Heritage practices remain central to spiritual tourism experiences.
- Large gatherings like Kumbh Mela evoke mixed emotional responses.
- Comfort, rest, and family bonding rank higher than abstract spiritual goals.
- Demographic factors show limited influence on spiritual travel preferences.
- Statistical tests found no significant differences across most demographic groups.
- Personal values and internal motivations outweigh external traits in decision-making.
- Psychographic profiling is more effective than demographic segmentation for targeting spiritual tourists.

5. Discussion

The present study deepens understanding of spiritual tourism behavior by identifying three motivational dimensions—amenities, well-being, and heritage—that influence traveller decision-making. These dimensions reflect an expanded interpretation of spiritual travel, moving beyond the traditional scope of religious pilgrimage toward broader frameworks involving cultural immersion, personal development, and psychological well-being. This supports Sharma (2022), who framed spiritual tourism as a transformative journey that encompasses both self-exploration and cultural introspection.

A key contribution of the study lies in the emergence of safety and infrastructural comfort as central considerations. While prior studies such as Garg *et al*. (2021) highlighted the increasing importance of logistical factors, the current findings position safety as a primary concern, particularly in the post-pandemic context. This shift aligns with behavioral decision-making theories such as Protection Motivation Theory, which suggests that perceived threats (e.g., health risks) influence behavioral intentions through cognitive appraisals of safety and efficacy. The emphasis on practical amenities thus coexists with, and sometimes even precedes, spiritual intent,

indicating a hybrid model of tourist motivation that blends functional and emotional considerations.

The wellbeing dimension, comprising interests in yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation, reinforces the convergence between wellness tourism and spiritual travel. This reflects an alignment with self-determination theory, particularly in its emphasis on intrinsic motivation and autonomy in experience-seeking. The findings suggest that spiritual tourists increasingly seek self-directed, meaningful experiences that satisfy psychological needs rather than adhering to externally imposed rituals or group-based journeys. This aligns with the observations of Nair and Dileep (2021), who described a segment of experiential spiritual travellers distinct from conventional pilgrims. Furthermore, this supports Gupta and Gandhi's (2018) assertion regarding the integration of spiritual and ecological values within the larger framework of global cultural tourism.

The limited or non-significant influence of demographic variables (such as age, gender, education, and occupation) on spiritual tourism preferences indicates a shift from conventional segmentation models. While earlier approaches relied heavily on demographic profiling, the present results echo the argument by Sahin and Guzel (2024) that spiritual travel motivations are more psychographically driven, grounded in internal beliefs, value systems, and personal aspirations. This trend can be understood through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior, where attitudes and perceived control outweigh external identity markers in shaping intent. The implication is that spiritual tourists form a heterogeneous group united more by shared values than by age or occupational background.

The diversity of responses to large-scale spiritual events, such as the Maha Kumbh Mela, further illustrates the subjective nature of spiritual experience. While some participants described the event as uplifting and transcendent, others found it chaotic or overwhelming. This heterogeneity highlights the role of expectation, perception, and emotional readiness, consistent with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, where individual interpretation mediates between external stimuli (e.g., religious sites or events) and behavioral outcomes. The implication is that spiritual tourism experiences are co-constructed by the tourist's mindset, prior beliefs, and tolerance for ambiguity.

Moreover, the weak statistical link between occupation or education and preferences for heritage or wellness elements challenges the assumptions made by earlier studies, including those by Anilkumar and Adinarayana (2019), which viewed religious travel primarily through socio-cultural roles and responsibilities. In contrast, the present findings indicate a flattening of motivational differences across demographic strata. This suggests an increasing democratization of spiritual tourism, where motivations stem from individualistic pursuits of meaning rather than traditional caste, class, or role-based expectations.

Overall, the study contributes to psychographic tourism literature by foregrounding internal motivators such as well-being, self-identity, and personal growth over socio-demographic categorizations. It supports a shift in research from static typologies to dynamic, experience-based understanding of spiritual travellers. By integrating behavioral frameworks such as self-determination theory, protection motivation theory, and the SOR model, the study extends theoretical discourse in spiritual tourism and proposes a more nuanced, multi-dimensional framework suited to contemporary contexts in both Indian and global tourism research.

Table 20: Mapping of Research Objectives to Findings

Research Objective	**Status**	**Supporting Findings**
To explore and identify the underlying psychographic factors influencing consumer participation in spiritual tourism in India.	Fully Met	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) extracted three distinct psychographic constructs: • *Amenities* (safety, transport, food, accommodation) • *Wellbeing* (yoga, meditation, ayurveda, personal development) • *Heritage* (rituals, customs, spiritual practices). These constructs reflect multidimensional internal motivations.
To examine the relationship between demographic variables (e.g., age, income, education, occupation) and consumer preferences for spiritual tourism.	Partially Met	• *Income* was significantly associated with preferences for Amenities (p = .041). • No significant associations were found between age, education, or occupation and the extracted psychographic factors. • Gender showed a significant difference in preferences for *Wellbeing* (t = -2.07, p = .040).
To assess the role of internal motivations, perceived spiritual experiences, and socio-cultural values in influencing travel decisions related to spiritual destinations.	Conceptually Met	• The dominance of psychographic factors over demographics suggests a greater role of internal values, experiential aspirations, and spiritual goals in travel decisions. • Emotional and subjective interpretations of events like the Kumbh Mela further confirm the significance of personal and socio-cultural meaning in shaping tourism behavior.

6. Thematic Reflections

The present study aimed to explore the factors influencing consumer decisions in spiritual tourism and assess the role of demographic variables in shaping these preferences. Through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), three core dimensions—Amenities, Wellbeing, and Heritage—were identified as key influencers in spiritual travel. Among these, safety and security emerged as the most significant factor, highlighting the importance of basic infrastructure and trust for spiritual travellers. This reflects that spiritual tourism is not solely about religious or cultural aspects but also about comfort, accessibility, and personal well-being. The study further analysed the association between demographic variables and spiritual tourism preferences. The results indicated that demographics had limited influence, with only family income showing a weak but significant relationship with preference for amenities. Other factors such as age, education, and employment status did not exhibit statistically significant correlations with any of the three spiritual tourism dimensions. This suggests that internal motivations, spiritual inclination, and personal values are stronger drivers of spiritual travel decisions than demographic profiles. The diverse responses to events like the Maha Kumbh Mela reinforce the idea that spiritual experiences are highly individualistic and rooted in subjective interpretations rather than demographic trends.

6.1. Implications

The findings of this study offer several important theoretical, practical, and policy-level implications for advancing the understanding and management of spiritual tourism. Theoretically, the study contributes to the evolving discourse by applying a psychographic lens to explore spiritual travel motivations beyond conventional pilgrimage paradigms. By identifying three distinct dimensions—amenities, wellbeing, and heritage—the study extends traditional tourism behavior models and reinforces the relevance of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in this context. Spiritual tourists, particularly those drawn to wellness and heritage components, appear to be driven by intrinsic motivations related to self-discovery and personal growth, which aligns with SDT's core constructs of autonomy and self-actualization. Similarly, the findings resonate with Maslow's hierarchy, particularly the higher-order needs for belonging, esteem, and self-fulfillment, which seem to underpin the motivations of spiritually oriented travellers seeking more than religious obligation. The diversity in responses to spiritual experiences also reinforces the SOR model, suggesting that individual psychological states significantly mediate between external stimuli (such as sacred sites or events) and the decision to travel or revisit. Furthermore, the limited predictive power of demographic variables invites a reconsideration of longstanding segmentation strategies in tourism theory, encouraging a shift toward psychographic and experiential models as more relevant predictors of travel behavior.

In practical terms, the study offers actionable insights for destination management organizations (DMOs), spiritual institutions, and tourism marketers. The prominence of safety, transport, and food infrastructure in shaping destination choice suggests that DMOs must invest in basic yet critical amenities to enhance the appeal and comfort of spiritual destinations. This is particularly crucial in a post-pandemic context where health and hygiene concerns continue to influence travel decisions. Ashrams, wellness resorts, and spiritual retreat centers can leverage the growing interest in holistic well-being by offering integrated packages that combine yoga, meditation, and Ayurvedic therapies with cultural immersion experiences. For example, destination marketers could design "spiritual wellness circuits" that connect heritage-rich sites with wellness hubs, appealing to a broader demographic seeking both serenity and cultural depth. The finding that demographic factors like age and income have limited influence suggests that marketing strategies should pivot away from traditional segmentation models and instead embrace psychographic profiling. By understanding travellers' values, spiritual orientations, and lifestyle preferences, tourism operators can craft more personalized and emotionally resonant experiences.

From a policy standpoint, the study provides a framework for incorporating psychographic data into tourism planning and development. Tourism boards and state governments can benefit from shifting their planning approaches from broad demographic targets to value-driven segmentation models that align infrastructure, experiences, and messaging with the deeper motivations of spiritual travellers. Policies that support the development of inclusive spiritual tourism infrastructure—such as multilingual signage, culturally sensitive design, and accessibility features—can help broaden participation across social groups and regions. Additionally, incorporating well-being-focused tourism into national tourism strategies can help align with global development goals, particularly the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance, the promotion of spiritual wellness aligns with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), while infrastructure development in spiritual destinations supports SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and employment generation in rural and semi-urban spiritual hubs contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By aligning psychographic insights with policy directives, tourism authorities can foster more inclusive, sustainable, and

impactful tourism ecosystems that meet both spiritual and economic goals.

6.2. Proposed Conceptual Model

In light of the findings and supported by the theoretical frameworks used, this study proposes the Psychographic Preference Framework for Spiritual Tourism (PPF-ST). This original model represents a synthesis of both statistical insights (EFA, t-tests, ANOVA) and conceptual grounding (SDT, Maslow, SOR). It reflects the transition from demographic to psychographic segmentation in understanding the motivations of spiritual tourists in India.

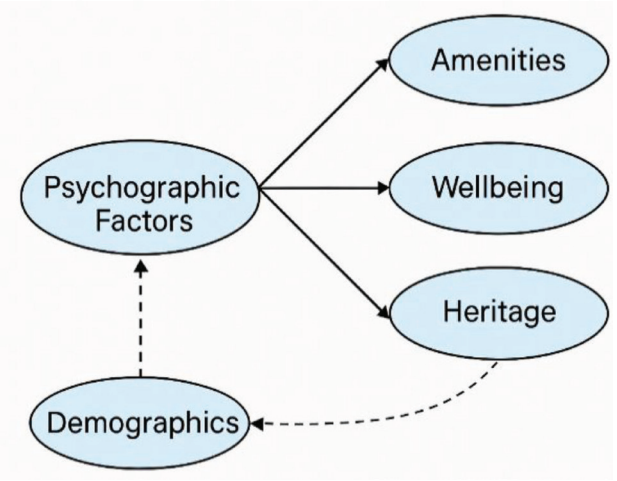

Figure 1: PPF Model (Psychographic Preference Framework)

The Psychographic Preference Framework for Spiritual Tourism (PPF-ST) is an outcome of this study's empirical investigation and theoretical synthesis. Grounded in self-determination theory, Maslow's hierarchy, and the S-O-R model, the framework illustrates how internal motivations—such as spiritual intent, wellbeing orientation, and cultural identity—shape traveller preferences for three key dimensions: amenities, wellbeing, and heritage. Unlike traditional models that emphasize demographics, PPF-ST prioritizes psychographic and experiential factors, offering a more nuanced understanding of spiritual travel behavior.

For researchers, this model provides a robust base for further exploration of value-driven segmentation, spiritual wellbeing, and tourist typologies in emerging markets. It can be adapted in qualitative or longitudinal studies to map evolving motivations. For the tourism industry, the model serves as a strategic tool to design emotionally resonant, personalized experiences. By understanding the "why" behind spiritual travel, destination managers, ashrams, and wellness centers can curate offerings that align more closely with travellers' intrinsic needs and expectations.

7. Conclusion

This study sought to explore the complex interplay between demographic attributes and psychographic factors influencing spiritual tourism in India. Drawing from a primary dataset of 120 respondents and structured around established theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the SOR model, and self-determination theory, the findings provide valuable insights into emerging patterns of spiritual travel behavior. The analysis revealed three core psychographic dimensions: amenities, well-being, and heritage. Each dimension encapsulates distinct motivational triggers that guide consumer decisions, and these were found to vary across age, gender, income, occupation, and education levels. Notably, female travellers placed a higher emphasis on well-being-oriented aspects such as meditation, personal development, and healing practices. Similarly, income level was moderately associated with preferences for amenity-based services, highlighting the growing expectation of comfort in spiritual settings. By shifting the analytical lens from traditional demographics to deeper psychographic segmentation, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in the spiritual tourism domain. It reinforces the idea that motivations for spiritual travel are no longer rooted solely in religious obligation but increasingly reflect lifestyle preferences, emotional needs, and individual value systems. The study addresses a crucial gap in Indian tourism scholarship and offers strategic implications for tourism marketers, wellness retreat planners, and destination management organizations. The adoption of psychographic profiling can enable more personalized, experience-rich offerings, fostering both tourist satisfaction and sustainable development within the spiritual tourism landscape.

8. Limitations

This study provides valuable insights into the influence of demographic and psychographic variables on spiritual tourism preferences in India. However, several limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the findings and inform future investigations.

First, the study employed a convenience-based snowball sampling method, which may limit the generalizability of the results to the broader population. The respondent pool was geographically restricted to three cities in Madhya Pradesh—Indore, Bhopal, and Gwalior—which may not fully capture the regional diversity of spiritual tourists across India. Second, the study relied on web-based data collection via Google Forms, potentially excluding non-tech-savvy individuals, older populations without digital access, or rural travellers, who often form a large part of the spiritual

tourism segment. Third, the use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to observe temporal variations in traveller motivations, behavior, and preferences. Since spiritual tourism may be influenced by life stages, social changes, or post-pandemic shifts in values, a longitudinal design would offer richer, more dynamic insights. Finally, the scope of psychographic variables, though structured around relevant theoretical frameworks, remains broad. More granular constructs such as levels of religiosity, spiritual intelligence, or emotional readiness could enrich future models.

9. Scope for Future Research

Future research could address these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples across different regions of India, including rural, semi-urban, and pilgrimage-centric towns. This would improve representativeness and enable region-wise comparisons. Additionally, adopting qualitative methodologies such as in-depth interviews, narrative inquiry, or ethnographic fieldwork may offer deeper insights into the spiritual and emotional dimensions of travel that quantitative approaches may overlook. There is also scope for comparative studies involving domestic versus international spiritual tourists. Such research could explore cultural nuances in spiritual expectations, destination perception, and travel behaviors, offering practical inputs for destination marketers. Finally, experimental or longitudinal designs could be used to observe how psychographic factors evolve over time or across different life stages. These approaches would help unpack the transformative nature of spiritual travel and its long-term psychological impact.

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Authorship Contribution

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Appendix A

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 120)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18 to 30	37	30.8
	31 to 40	19	15.8
	41 to 50	40	33.3
	50 and above	24	20.0
Gender	Male	83	69.2
	Female	37	30.8
Educational Qualification	12th Pass	8	6.7
	Graduate	31	25.8
	Post Graduate	49	40.8
	Professionally Qualified	32	26.7
Annual Family Income	Less than □8 lakhs	16	13.3
	□8 to □15 lakhs	49	40.8
	□15 to □30 lakhs	23	19.2
	More than □30 lakhs	32	26.7
Employment Status	Self-Employed / Business	40	33.3
	Services	52	43.3
	Student	18	15.0
	Retired	3	2.5
	Homemaker	7	5.8

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire Items

List of Questionnaire Items Used in the Study

Demographic Information	What is your age?	Multiple Choice (Age Range)
	What is your gender identification?	Multiple Choice
	What is your educational qualification?	Multiple Choice
	What is your annual family income?	Multiple Choice (Income Bracket)
	What is your current employment status?	Multiple Choice
Psychographic Influence Factors	Rate the influence level of the following on your decision to go on a spiritual journey:	4-point Likert Scale (1 = Not Influential to 4 = Most Influential)
	Traditional Practices	Likert Scale
	Family Rituals	Likert Scale
	Spiritual Trips	Likert Scale
	Folk Customs	Likert Scale
	Wellness and Healing	Likert Scale
	Enlightenment	Likert Scale
	Yoga Meditation	Likert Scale
	Ayurveda	Likert Scale
	Escaping Daily Routine	Likert Scale
	Acts of Service	Likert Scale
	Food	Likert Scale

	Accommodation	Likert Scale
	Public Amenities	Likert Scale
	Security and Safety	Likert Scale
	Enjoying and Resting	Likert Scale
	Transportation	Likert Scale
	Personal Development	Likert Scale
	Educational Needs	Likert Scale