



Factors Influencing Tourist Behavior in Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Post-Covid-19 Pandemic

Chanita Jongjit ^{1*}, Chonlakan Benjasak ²

Graduate study in Innovation Management and Business Development, School of Accountancy and Finance, Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat, 80160, Thailand

* Corresponding Author: **Chanita Jongjit**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2583-6641

Volume: 04

Issue: 01

January-February 2025

Received: 09-10-2024

Accepted: 13-11-2024

Page No: 17-23

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the factors influencing tourist behavior in Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it investigated the relationship between personal factors, attitudes towards COVID-19, and tourism push factors with tourist behavior. Data were collected from 400 Thai tourists using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS for frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Chi-Square tests at a significance level of 0.05. The findings revealed that most respondents were female, aged 30–40 years, married, employed as government officers or state enterprise employees, with an average monthly income of 15,000–30,000 THB, and had received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. The primary travel motivation was to gain new experiences, with personal vehicles being the preferred mode of transportation. Popular activities included visiting the community learning center in Ban Khiriwong, with day trips being the most common travel duration. Tourists typically spent less than 2,000 THB per visit and expressed an intention to revisit due to satisfaction with the services provided by local entrepreneurs. Hypothesis testing revealed that personal factors such as gender, age, occupation, income, and vaccination status significantly influenced various aspects of tourist behavior, including travel purpose, preferred activities, travel duration, expenditure, and intention to revisit, while marital status had no significant impact. Attitudes towards COVID-19 were significantly related to behavior, particularly in terms of social distancing, choosing destinations with preventive measures, and using technology for booking and payments. Furthermore, tourism push factors, including COVID-19 preventive measures, standardized facilities (SHA-certified), economic considerations, and social media, were significantly associated with travel purpose, planning, duration, expenditure, and intention to revisit. These findings provide insights for stakeholders to enhance tourism management and strategies in the post-pandemic era.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourist Behavior, COVID-19

Introduction

Thailand has faced the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020, marking one of the most severe crises in a century, with the tourism sector being the hardest hit. Tourism revenues contracted by 83% due to border closures and travel restrictions. However, by 2023, the situation began to recover as COVID-19 transitioned into an "endemic disease," and the tourism industry started to regain momentum. Ban Khiriwong, located in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, has experienced a remarkable increase in tourist interest, particularly following the ecological restoration efforts during the crisis. In 2022, the number of tourists surged by 104,011, generating over 179 million baht in revenue. This study focuses on identifying the factors influencing tourist behavior in Ban Khiriwong post-pandemic to provide insights for improving and developing sustainable and safe tourism practices.

Additionally, it aims to support the recovery of Thailand's tourism industry (National Institute for the Development of Public Administration, 2021).

Literature Review

Tourism plays a significant role in recreation and the creation of new experiences for individuals. Scholars and organizations have defined tourism from various perspectives. Pimolsompong (2003) ^[11] described tourism as voluntary travel to another place on a temporary basis for purposes unrelated to income generation, while also viewing it as an activity that alleviates stress from daily routines. Tourism encompasses not only leisure activities but also other pursuits such as sports, cultural education, attending seminars, or visiting relatives, with such travel requiring a clear purpose and being unrelated to occupational endeavors. Tourism can be categorized into various types depending on objectives and activities. Smith proposed seven classifications: **1) Ethnic tourism**, focusing on the lifestyles and wisdom of indigenous communities; **2) Cultural tourism**, centered on learning about local traditions and culture; **3) Historical tourism**, exploring historical sites and past events; **4) Environmental tourism**, aiming to conserve nature and foster environmental understanding; **5) Recreational tourism**, emphasizing relaxation and entertainment, such as beach visits or amusement parks; **6) Business tourism**, combining business activities with leisure; and **7) Incentive tourism**, organized as a reward for employees or individuals. Additionally, Thammabut (2006) ^[19] identified five key components of tourism: Accessibility, which refers to transportation and infrastructure such as roads, airports, or transport stations; Accommodation, encompassing a variety of lodging options, including hotels, resorts, and homestays; Attractions, highlighting unique destinations such as natural sites, cultural landmarks, or historical monuments; Activities, which include hiking, rafting, or cultural events; and Ancillary services, comprising supporting facilities like shops, restaurants, and tourist information centers. Tourism is a vital activity for enhancing the quality of life, as it not only provides relaxation but also fosters knowledge and new understandings through exposure to diverse cultures, nature, and activities. Comprehensive tourism components attract visitors while also serving as key elements in creating meaningful and sustainable experiences for tourists.

Tourist behavior refers to the expressions and actions of tourists that stem from their thoughts, feelings, and actions at various stages of travel, along with the factors influencing these behaviors. Scholars have provided diverse perspectives on this topic. Techataveewan (2002) ^[18] defined tourist behavior as the actions and expressions of tourists primarily aimed at facilitating service planning, marketing strategies, problem prevention, and technological advancements. The study of tourist behavior involves a rational analysis of behavioral components to predict future outcomes. Proyrungroj (2015) ^[12] elaborated that tourist behavior spans three stages: pre-trip behavior, behavior during the trip, and post-trip behavior, all influenced by various factors. Uthayan (2008) ^[21] categorized tourist behavior into observable external actions and internal emotions or feelings, emphasizing their interrelation. Pearce noted that tourists form expectations and plans during each stage of travel, evaluating their experiences during and after their trips. These experiences are frequently recorded and shared through diaries or social media platforms, providing insights

into their journey. Furthermore, Techataveewan (2002) ^[18] identified several factors influencing tourist behavior, such as economic conditions, where tourists from economically stable countries demonstrate higher spending patterns; demographic characteristics, including population size and social structures that shape behavior; geographical factors like climate and cultural background influencing preferences; political stability, which affects tourist confidence; media reports that shape decision-making; and personal factors such as health and time availability, which are critical for travel decisions. Additionally, technological advancements significantly enhance convenience in travel planning and service bookings. Tourist behavior is best encapsulated in the concept of the "Customer Journey," which includes actions and expressions before, during, and after travel. Understanding this journey allows service providers to design strategies and services that cater more effectively to tourists' needs. In conclusion, the concepts and theories of tourist behavior underline the importance of understanding the characteristics and influencing factors of tourist actions, providing crucial insights for developing improved tourism strategies and management practices.

The decision-making process for tourism involves nine critical steps, as outlined by Jittangwatana (2005) ^[7]. First, marketing promotion plays a significant role in providing information through various media channels to stimulate interest. Second, needs arise from a desire to change the environment or gain new experiences. Third, motivational factors are divided into push factors, such as boredom, and pull factors, such as the attractiveness of a destination. Fourth, decision-making involves evaluating key factors such as destination, timing, costs, and travel companions. Fifth, budget planning entails preparing sufficient funds to cover all travel-related expenses. Sixth, travel preparation includes arranging necessary documents, booking accommodations, and ensuring essential items are ready. Seventh, the travel experience is assessed during the journey, where tourists evaluate their experiences. Eighth, tourist satisfaction is determined by whether or not the destination meets or exceeds expectations. Lastly, attitudes are shaped by the overall travel experience, influencing future travel decisions. Collectively, these processes reflect the factors affecting each tourist's choices and experiences, highlighting the complexity of decision-making and its impact on tourism behavior.

Demographics involve the study of diversity and differences among individuals, including variables such as gender, age, marital status, family characteristics, education, occupation, and income. These factors influence consumer behavior, decision-making, and the determination of target markets by marketers. Key demographic variables often employed include age, as products and services are tailored to meet the needs of different age groups; gender, which affects consumption behavior and roles in decision-making processes; family characteristics, where relationships within the family impact purchasing choices; and education and income, which shape lifestyle patterns, preferences, and purchasing power. Marketers utilize these demographic factors to identify and adjust strategies to align with the unique behaviors and needs of various target markets.

COVID-19, caused by a novel strain of coronavirus, is an emerging infectious disease with distinctive characteristics, including an average incubation period of 5.1 days and symptom onset within 12 days. Transmission occurs through respiratory droplets, bodily fluids, or direct contact (Thepjit,

2020)^[20]. Coronaviruses were first identified in 1960, with seven strains known to infect humans. The seventh strain, COVID-19, is a newly identified variant that has not been previously encountered and has resulted in a severe global outbreak (Rattanawongnara, 2020)^[13]. The COVID-19 pandemic presents significant challenges to the medical field, as it is a novel disease characterized by rapid transmission and requiring further research to develop effective response strategies.

The concept of "New Normal" refers to a transformed way of life resulting from significant global changes, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This transformation necessitated behavioral adaptations across various dimensions to align with the pandemic context. These changes include a focus on health-conscious consumption, reduced physical interactions, and increased reliance on online technology for work, education, business operations, and daily life. Tourism and everyday activities have similarly undergone adjustments, emphasizing the integration of technology to enhance safety and convenience in response to the evolving circumstances (Boonsiriphan, 2021)^[2].

Ban Khiriwong is located in Kam Lon Sub-district, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. It is a historic community with over 200 years of history, originally named "Ban Khun Nam" before being renamed "Ban Khiriwong," which translates to "a village surrounded by mountains." The community was founded by commoners fleeing conscription during the early Rattanakosin era and established in a fertile area with perennial water flows from Khao Luang's watershed. The villagers of Ban Khiriwong lead simple lives, primarily engaging in fruit farming. The community has faced three major natural disasters and has cooperatively rebuilt by developing water management systems and conserving natural resources. Today, Ban Khiriwong is recognized as a model for eco-tourism and received awards from the Tourism Authority of Thailand in 1998. The village offers trekking activities and homestay accommodations through its Eco-Tourism Club (Aimjai & Lert, 1994)^[1].

This study aims to achieve the following objectives: 1) to examine the relationship between personal factors and tourist behavior of visitors to Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, post-COVID-19 pandemic; 2) to analyze attitudes toward the COVID-19 pandemic and their relationship with tourist behavior in the same context; and 3) to explore tourism push factors and their relationship with tourist behavior of visitors to Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

The study titled Factors Influencing Tourist Behavior in Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Post-COVID-19 Pandemic investigates the factors affecting tourist behavior. These factors are categorized into three main groups: 1) Personal Factors, including gender, age, marital status, occupation, average monthly income, and vaccination status; 2) Attitudes Toward the COVID-19 Pandemic, focusing on social distancing, COVID-19 preventive measures, and the use of technology; and 3) Tourism Push Factors, encompassing COVID-19 prevention measures, facilities, and social media. Tourist behavior is examined across various dimensions, such as travel purpose, travel patterns, preferred activities, duration of stay, and travel expenses. Based on the literature review, three research

hypotheses were developed:

H1: Personal factors are related to the tourist behavior of visitors.

H2: Attitudes toward the COVID-19 pandemic are related to the tourist behavior of visitors.

H3: Tourism push factors are related to the tourist behavior of visitors.

These hypotheses aim to explore the relationships between the identified factors and the behavior of tourists visiting Ban Khiriwong in the post-pandemic context, providing insights for enhancing tourism management and planning.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of tourists visiting Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. Given the uncertainty of the total number of tourists, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula for an unknown population size (W.G. Cochran, 1953) with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$. The calculation determined a required sample size of 385 participants to achieve an acceptable margin of error not exceeding 0.05 at a 95% confidence level. To ensure robustness and compliance with the calculated criteria, the researcher collected data from 400 participants, which exceeded the minimum required sample size of 385, thereby meeting the specified conditions for sample adequacy.

Research Instruments

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey research approach. The primary research instrument was a questionnaire designed to collect data on general tourist information, tourist behavior, attitudes toward the COVID-19 pandemic, and tourism push factors influencing tourist behavior in Ban Khiriwong, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

1. **General Information of Tourists:** This section collected demographic data of the respondents, including gender, age, marital status, occupation, average monthly income, and vaccination status. It comprised six closed-ended questions.
2. **Tourist Behavior:** This section investigated various aspects of tourist behavior, including travel purposes, travel patterns, preferred activities, travel duration, and expenses. It consisted of seven closed-ended questions.
3. **Attitudes Toward the COVID-19 Pandemic:** This section examined tourists' attitudes toward the pandemic, focusing on social distancing, COVID-19 preventive measures, and the use of technology. A five-point rating scale was used for three closed-ended questions.
4. **Tourism Push Factors:** This section explored factors influencing tourist behavior, such as COVID-19 prevention measures, facilities, and social media. It included 12 closed-ended questions using a five-point rating scale.

These sections collectively provided comprehensive data to analyze the relationships between personal factors, attitudes, and push factors with tourist behavior in the study area.

Development of Research Instruments

The questionnaire was developed through a systematic process that included reviewing relevant theories and prior

research to design a draft version. The draft questionnaire was presented to the research advisor for feedback, after which it was revised based on the suggestions provided. A pilot test was conducted with a sample group of 30 participants to evaluate the reliability of the instrument. Subsequent revisions were made, and three experts were consulted to assess the validity of the questionnaire. Their feedback was incorporated, and the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated to ensure the tool's accuracy. The finalized questionnaire was then used to collect data from a sample of 400 participants.

Data Analysis

After collecting the completed questionnaires, the data were processed and analyzed using the SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze personal factors such as gender, age, marital status, occupation, average monthly income, vaccination status, and tourist behavior. Frequency and percentage were used to describe categorical data, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze attitudinal data regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and tourism push factors. Inferential statistics were applied to test the three research hypotheses. Chi-Square analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between the variables, including personal factors, attitudes toward COVID-19, and tourism push factors. This comprehensive approach ensured a robust analysis of the data and its alignment with the study's objectives.

Results

1. Results of Hypothesis 1 Testing: Personal Factors and Their Relationship with Tourist Behavior

The study found that personal factors were significantly related to various aspects of tourist behavior. For travel purpose, variables such as gender, age, occupation, income, and vaccination status were significantly associated ($p < 0.05$), whereas marital status showed no significant relationship ($p > 0.05$). Regarding travel patterns, no personal factors were found to have a significant relationship ($p > 0.05$). For preferred activities, gender, age, marital status, occupation, and vaccination status were significantly associated ($p < 0.05$), while income was not ($p > 0.05$).

In terms of travel companions, gender, age, marital status, occupation, and income were significantly related ($p < 0.05$), while vaccination status showed no significant relationship ($p > 0.05$). For travel duration, gender, age, occupation, income, and vaccination status were significantly associated ($p < 0.05$), whereas marital status was not ($p > 0.05$). Regarding travel expenses, age, marital status, occupation, income, and vaccination status were significantly related ($p < 0.05$), while gender was not ($p > 0.05$). Finally, for intention to revisit, gender, age, occupation, income, and vaccination status were significantly associated ($p < 0.05$), while marital status showed no significant relationship ($p > 0.05$). The detailed results of these relationships are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Summarizing the findings of Hypothesis 1, which examines the relationship between personal factors and the tourist behavior of visitors to Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, in the post-COVID-19 pandemic context.

Tourist Behavior	Personal Factors					
	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Average Monthly Income	Vaccination Status
Primary Travel Purpose	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Travel Patterns	×	×	×	×	×	×
Preferred Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓
Travel Companions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Travel Duration	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Travel Expenses	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Intention to Revisit	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓

Note: ✓ indicates statistical significance at the 0.05 level; × indicates no statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

2. Results of Hypothesis 2 Testing: The Relationship between Attitudes toward the COVID-19 Pandemic and Tourist Behavior

Tourists' attitudes toward the COVID-19 pandemic were analyzed in three aspects. First, attitudes toward social distancing were found to have a significant relationship with travel purpose, travel patterns, preferred activities, travel duration, travel expenses, and intention to revisit ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant relationship was observed with travel companions ($p > 0.05$).

Second, attitudes toward COVID-19 preventive measures at destinations with established standards were significantly

related to travel purpose, preferred activities, and travel duration ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant relationship was found with travel patterns, travel companions, travel expenses, or intention to revisit ($p > 0.05$).

Third, attitudes toward the use of technology in tourism were significantly related to travel purpose, preferred activities, travel duration, travel expenses, and intention to revisit ($p < 0.05$). Conversely, no significant relationship was observed with travel patterns or travel companions ($p > 0.05$). The detailed results of these relationships are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Summarizing the findings of Hypothesis 2, which examines the relationship between attitudes toward the COVID-19 pandemic and the tourist behavior of visitors to Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, in the post-COVID-19 context

Tourist Behavior	Attitudes Toward the COVID-19 Pandemic		
	Social Distancing	Destinations with Standard COVID-19 Prevention Measures	Use of Technology
Primary Travel Purpose	✓	✓	✓
Travel Patterns	✓	×	×
Preferred Activities	✓	✓	✓
Travel Companions	×	×	×
Travel Duration	✓	✓	✓
Travel Expenses	✓	×	✓
Intention to Revisit	✓	×	✓

Note: ✓ indicates statistical significance at the 0.05 level; × indicates no statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

3. Results of Hypothesis 3 Testing: The Relationship between Tourism Push Factors and Tourist Behavior

The analysis revealed that tourism push factors had significant relationships with various aspects of tourist behavior. For COVID-19 prevention measures, significant relationships were found with travel purpose, preferred activities, travel expenses, and intention to revisit ($p < 0.05$). Regarding facilities, significant relationships were observed with travel purpose, preferred activities, travel companions, travel duration, travel expenses, and intention to revisit

($p < 0.05$).

For economic factors, significant relationships were identified with travel purpose, travel patterns, preferred activities, travel duration, and travel expenses ($p < 0.05$).

Finally, for social media, significant relationships were found with travel purpose, preferred activities, travel duration, travel expenses, and intention to revisit ($p < 0.05$). The detailed results of these relationships are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summarizing the findings of Hypothesis 3, which examines the relationship between tourism push factors and the tourist behavior of visitors to Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, in the post-COVID-19 pandemic context

Tourism Push Factors	Tourist Behavior						
	Purpose	Travel Patterns	Preferred Activities	Travel Companions	Purpose	Travel Patterns	Preferred Activities
COVID-19 Prevention Measures	✓	×	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Facilities	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic Factors	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Social Media	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓

Note: ✓ indicates statistical significance at the 0.05 level; × indicates no statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

Discussion

1. Personal Factors and Their Relationship with Tourist Behavior in Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

The study revealed that personal factors, including gender, age, marital status, occupation, average monthly income, and vaccination status, had statistically significant relationships (at the 0.05 level) with certain aspects of tourist behavior, particularly travel expenses and intention to revisit. Tourists with higher average monthly incomes tended to select activities and travel arrangements that emphasized convenience and safety, such as traveling by private car and staying in high-standard accommodations. These findings align with the research of Chuthong (2021) [4], which highlighted that high-income tourists are more likely to prioritize quality services and hygiene standards.

In terms of age and occupation, working-age and elderly groups preferred low-energy activities, such as nature walks or relaxing in peaceful areas. This observation corresponds with the increasing trend of health-focused tourism in Thailand following the COVID-19 pandemic. It illustrates how tourist behavior has shifted post-pandemic, with a heightened emphasis on hygiene standards and avoidance of crowded areas. This is consistent with Boonsom (2020) [3], who reported that tourists are increasingly selecting destinations and activities that cater to their hygiene and safety needs.

Tourists visiting Ban Khiriwong exhibited a strong

preference for nature-based activities, such as hiking and enjoying scenic views, driven by the desire to escape the congestion of urban areas and prioritize health safety. The intention to revisit was significantly associated with positive experiences related to the village's natural environment, tranquility, and the quality of services provided by local entrepreneurs, which are key attractions of Ban Khiriwong. This reflects the increasing importance of health awareness and the value of natural and peaceful settings in shaping tourist behavior in the post-pandemic era.

2. Relationship between Attitudes toward the COVID-19 Pandemic and Tourist Behavior in Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

The study found that attitudes toward the COVID-19 pandemic were significantly associated with various aspects of tourist behavior ($p < 0.05$), including travel purpose, travel patterns, preferred activities, and intention to revisit. Tourists with positive attitudes toward COVID-19 prevention and control measures were more likely to select destinations with high hygiene standards, such as Ban Khiriwong, which caters to health and safety concerns. This aligns with Boonsom (2020) [3], who reported that post-pandemic destination selection is strongly influenced by tourists' perceptions of hygiene and safety.

Additionally, the adoption of technology, such as booking accommodations or activities online, was significantly

associated with repeat visits ($p < 0.05$). Tourists who used technology for travel planning were more inclined to revisit destinations due to its convenience and the sense of safety it provided. This finding is consistent with Chuthong (2021)^[4], who emphasized that digital-era tourists increasingly rely on online platforms for travel planning, playing a crucial role in creating memorable travel experiences.

Travel duration and expenses were also significantly associated with tourists' preferred activities ($p < 0.05$). Tourists with sufficient time and budget tended to engage in diverse activities, such as hiking and nature-based tourism. Udomsuk similarly noted that time and budget constraints influence the choice of activities, particularly among those prioritizing quality tourism experiences.

These findings highlight the critical role of attitudes toward hygiene and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic in shaping tourist behavior, including destination choice, activity preferences, and intention to revisit. The insights from this study can serve as a guideline for developing tourism promotion strategies that address the needs of tourists in the post-pandemic era, particularly in fostering health-conscious and safety-driven tourism practices.

3. Relationship between Tourism Push Factors and Tourist Behavior in Ban Khiriwong, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

The study found that COVID-19 prevention measures were significantly associated ($p < 0.05$) with tourists' primary travel purposes and preferred activities. Tourists exhibited greater confidence in engaging in outdoor activities compared to enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces. This highlights that safety measures in open-air settings are a primary consideration for tourists when deciding on travel destinations. However, these measures were not significantly associated with travel patterns or other factors. The findings confirm that while COVID-19 prevention measures influence decision-making to some extent, particularly regarding the primary purpose of travel, they do not significantly impact other forms of travel behavior. These results align with Saenkham (2021)^[14], who noted that Thai tourists prioritize health and safety measures after the pandemic, preferring destinations that are uncrowded and emphasize open-air environments.

Regarding facilities, elements such as SHA-certified accommodations and clean, safe dining establishments showed statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.05$) with several aspects of tourist behavior, including travel patterns, travel companionship, trip duration, travel expenses, and intention to revisit. This indicates that tourists place high value on the quality of facilities, which directly affects their travel experiences and decisions to return in the future. These findings are consistent with Faisaruttham, who reported that cleanliness and safety management in accommodations and restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic were critical factors in building tourists' confidence and supporting destination selection. Additionally, Sukasanti (2018)^[16] highlighted that facilities that meet tourist needs, such as convenient payment systems and comprehensive service options, enhance travel convenience and encourage spending at destinations. Suthiwong (2021)^[17] also emphasized that tourists choosing SHA-certified accommodations or restaurants indicates confidence in safety measures and contributes to positive experiences that can motivate repeat

visits.

In summary, tourism push factors, particularly COVID-19 prevention measures and facility standards, play significant roles in shaping tourist behavior. The results underscore the importance of ensuring safety and quality standards to meet tourist expectations and foster positive travel experiences, which ultimately encourage repeat visits.

Economic Factors: The study found that tourists with an intention to support local economic recovery demonstrated a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) with the duration of their trips. Additionally, a flexible economic environment was significantly associated with factors such as preferred activities, travel companions, and repeat visits ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that tourists who wish to contribute to local economic recovery tend to extend their travel duration but do not significantly alter their travel patterns or expenses. These findings align with Silapasupachart (2020)^[15], who noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, tourists prioritized supporting local economic recovery by opting for longer trips, though their travel patterns and expenditures remained unchanged. Similarly, Nopparat (2021)^[10] found that post-pandemic tourism behavior reflected a tendency for extended travel durations in areas where the local economy was recovering, fostering increased repeat visits.

Social Media Influence: The study also revealed that information about tourist destinations from online media and perceptions of destination image influenced travel decisions and confidence, showing statistically significant relationships ($p < 0.05$) with primary travel purposes, travel companions, and travel expenses. This suggests that tourists influenced by online media relied on such sources for decision-making and travel planning to Ban Khiriwong. These results are consistent with Wutiyakon who studied the impact of online media on travel decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that online information significantly influenced destination choice and instilled confidence in tourists. Tourists were particularly drawn to destinations whose image and details were positively portrayed in online media. Similarly, Jitsena (2022)^[6] highlighted the role of online media in promoting tourist destinations during the pandemic, showing that destination image presented through online platforms impacted travel decisions and encouraged repeat visits, especially when information was obtained from credible and trustworthy sources.

These findings underscore the critical role of economic considerations and social media in shaping tourist behavior, particularly in fostering confidence, decision-making, and travel planning in the context of post-pandemic tourism recovery.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight that safety and hygiene management, the adoption of technology in tourism operations, and effective promotion through online media are critical factors in building tourists' confidence. Tourism operators should prioritize enhancing service standards and implementing robust COVID-19 prevention measures to promote tourism and increase the likelihood of repeat visits in the post-pandemic era. Furthermore, these findings can be utilized to develop and refine tourism promotion strategies that align with the evolving needs of tourists in the post-COVID-19 context. Emphasis should be placed on hygiene standards, safety, and facilities that cater to the preferences of health-conscious and sustainability-focused travelers. This

approach not only addresses immediate tourist concerns but also contributes to the long-term development of sustainable and health-oriented tourism practices.

References

1. Aimjai K, Lert P. General information about Kiriwong Village, Lan Saka District, Nakhon Si Thammarat: Nature and local way of life [Internet]; c1994 [cited 2023 Aug 15]. Available from: <https://mgronline.com/smes/detail/9590000062071>
2. Boonsiriphan M. Understanding "New Normal" according to the Royal Institute [Internet]; c2021 [cited 2023 Aug 15]. Available from: <https://www.thaipbs.or.th/news/content/292126>
3. Boonsom N. The impact of COVID-19 on tourism behavior in Thailand. *Journal of Economics and Management*. 2020;8(2):78-90.
4. Chuthong S. Natural tourism behavior in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. *Journal of Tourism Research*. 2021;12(1):45-56.
5. Daengroj P. *Tourism industry in the 21st century*. Bangkok: Duang Kamol Co., Ltd.; c2001.
6. Jitsena S. Online media usage in promoting tourist attractions in the post-COVID-19 era. *Journal of Tourism and Economy*. 2022;11(1):67-79.
7. Jittangwatana B. *Tourism industry*. Bangkok: Press and Design; c2005.
8. MGR Online. "Kiriwong Model": A tourism industry village that generates income through nature and local lifestyles [Internet]; c2016 [cited 2023 Aug 15]. Available from: <https://mgronline.com/smes/detail/959000006207>
9. National Institute for the Development of Public Administration. COVID-19 impact on the tourism sector [Internet]; c2021 [cited 2023 Feb 1]. Available from: https://www.mots.go.th/download/BannerLink/PBV01Covid_DigitalEd.pdf
10. Nopparat R. Impact of economic flexibility on repeat tourism after COVID-19. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*. 2021;10(2):56-65.
11. Pimolsompong C. *The meaning of tourism*. 4th ed. 2003.
12. Proyrungroj R. *Tourist behavior*. Bangkok: Odeon Store; c2015.
13. Rattanawongnara R. New Normal behavior: Adapting new habits [Internet]; c2020 [cited 2023 Aug 15]. Available from: <https://www.prachachat.net/rama-health/news-475431>
14. Saenkham B. Thai tourists' behavior after the COVID-19 situation. *Journal of Liberal Arts and Hospitality Industry*; c2021.
15. Silapasupachart T. Study on Thai tourist behavior during recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. *Journal of Tourism and Economy*. 2020;12(3):34-47.
16. Sukasanti K. The impact of amenities on tourist behavior: A case study of tourist attractions in Eastern Thailand. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*. 2018;9(2):25-40.
17. Suthiwong S. Tourism during the COVID-19 era: SHA standards and economic stimulus. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*. 2021;12(4):45-56.
18. Techataveewan R. *Tourist behavior*. Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Science: Khon Kaen University; c2002.
19. Thammabut P. *Educational materials on tourism components*. Bangkok: Institute of Ecotourism Development, Srinakharinwirot University; c2006.
20. Thepjit S. COVID-19 Pandemic: Public policy responses to a global crisis [Internet]; c2020 [cited 2023 Aug 15]. Available from: <http://www.setthasarn.econ.tu.ac.th/blog/detail/59>
21. Uthayan C. *Tourist behavior* [Internet]; c2008 [cited 2023 Aug 15]. Available from: <https://touristbehaviour.wordpress.com/>