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The Behavior of Thai Tourists in Wellness Tourism at Khung Bangkachao, Samut Prakan, Thailand

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Abstract

This research investigates the wellness tourism behavior of Thai tourists visiting Khung Bangkachao, Samut Prakan, and proposes development guidelines aligned with their needs. A quantitative approach was employed, and the sample consisted of 400 Thai tourists who visited the area. The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1997) formula for an infinite population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Convenience sampling was used, with screening criteria that ensured participants had engaged in health-related activities such as recreation, cycling, nature-based relaxation, or other wellness-focused experiences. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results reveal that most respondents were female, aged 44–58, single, had a bachelor's degree, and worked in private companies, with monthly incomes of 20,000–30,000 Baht. Most participants had visited Khung Bangkachao more than once (typically three times), primarily for relaxation, and usually traveled with family members using private cars. Online platforms were identified as their primary sources of information about the destination. The findings also show significant relationships between demographic factors and visit frequency ($p < 0.05$), particularly age, marital status, education level, occupation, and monthly income. The study highlights the need for wellness tourism activities that align with tourists' behavioral patterns and expectations. Moreover, the development of Khung Bangkachao's tourism elements should address all core components attractions, accessibility, facilities, accommodation, people, services, and activities to effectively support diverse tourist needs. These insights contribute to the design of urban nature-based health tourism experiences and strengthen Khung Bangkachao's potential as a model urban green wellness tourism destination.

Keywords: *Thai tourists; behavior; Khung Bangkachao; wellness tourism*

1. Introduction

Wellness tourism is widely defined as travel associated with maintaining, enhancing, or restoring an individual's well-being through physical, psychological, or spiritual activities (Global Wellness Institute, 2023). It has significantly drawn people's interest over the last few years and has been recognized as one of the global tourism industry's most rapidly expanding sectors. Tourists' primary focus for their travel shifted considerably to destinations offering activities that help improve their physical, mental, and emotional well-being during the post COVID-19 (Smith & Puczkó, 2022). According to (Global Wellness Institute, 2018) wellness tourism involves travel motivated by the desire to improve health and quality of life while respecting local culture and sustainability principles. The wellness tourist, therefore, is not a resident but a traveler who visits destinations offering health-related and restorative experiences (Wang et al., 2020). Likewise, TAT Academy also states that wellness tourism has become the global tourism industry's essential trend, especially during the post COVID-19 when people paid more attention to both physical and mental healthcare. Therefore, relaxation is not only their travel's purpose, but they also seek experiences elevating both their physical and psychological well-being.

As a renowned health and wellness destination, Thailand's "Wellness Hub" policy has been highlighted to achieve its goal of becoming a leading nation for wellness tourism in Southeast Asia. However, it is discovered that there is still a gap regarding domestic wellness tourism behaviors to be explored, particularly in community-based or urban green areas because the previous studies primarily emphasize destinations related to international tourists or luxury spa destinations (Majeed & Kim, 2022; Voigt & Pforr, 2021). To address the identified gap, this

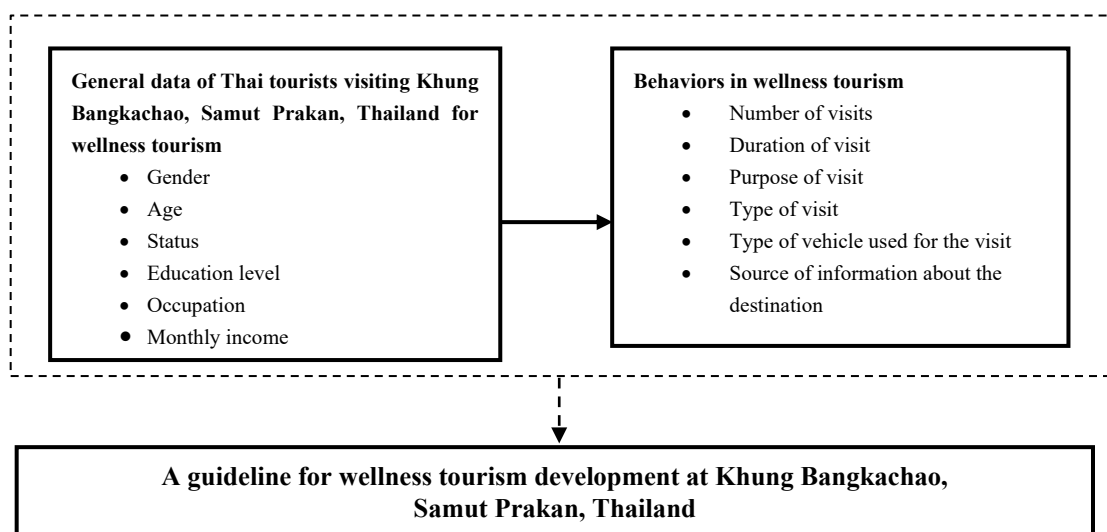
research intends to investigate Thai tourists' behaviors associated with wellness tourism at Khung Bangkokachao, a widely acknowledged green space located near the city, which is often called "the best urban oasis of Asia". Khung Bangkokachao is located in the Phra Pradaeng district, Samut Prakan, one of the most popular wellness tourism destinations among Thai tourists. It is also known as "the best urban oasis of Asia" (Mongkolchat et al., 2022) because it plays a vital role as a forest that boasts three types of aquatic ecosystems and a thriving mangrove forest, all teeming with biodiversity. It also offers a glimpse into the local people's way of life (Thepprasit et al., 2020). Furthermore, Khung Bangkokachao is regarded as the largest green area near Bangkok, which helps produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, and filter air pollution from the neighboring factories and communities in both Samut Prakan and Bangkok. Khung Bangkokachao is a well-known urban green space that supports people's health and well-being, in addition to its ecological functions. Visitors can engage in activities such as cycling, walking, relaxing in nature, and participating in community events that promote physical and mental health (Wongprayoon et al., 2020; Tangon, 2021). The area has been designated as an environmental protection zone and a sustainable tourism site, reflecting its importance as both a resource conservation area and an urban well-being space (Kittiprapas & Danieri, 2025). These traits suggest that Khung Bangkokachao could be a suitable destination for both ecotourism and nature-based health tourism.

Previously, Thailand's research on wellness tourism has primarily focused on foreign tourists or luxury destinations. Studies on the behavior of Thai tourists in urban green areas, such as Khung Bangkokachao, remain limited, resulting in a lack of profound understanding of domestic tourists a gap this research aims to address (Kieanwatana et al., 2018). As a result, this study focuses on examining the general characteristics and behaviors of Thai tourists who visit Khung Bangkokachao, Samut Prakan. The aim is to apply the findings to marketing activities and to the development of wellness tourism to attract more domestic tourists. Khung Bangkokachao, Samut Prakan, is a highly potential urban green area for wellness tourism due to its rich ecosystem, distinctive local way of life, and various health-promoting activities, such as cycling, learning about traditional herbs, and staying in nature-based homestays. Therefore, this research emphasizes investigating the behavior of Thai tourists visiting the area to propose guidelines for sustainable wellness tourism development that can respond to the demands of the future health and wellness tourism market.

2. Objectives

- 1) To investigate Thai tourists' behaviors in wellness tourism at Khung Bangkokachao, Samut Prakan, Thailand
- 2) To propose guidelines for wellness tourism development at Khung Bangkokachao, Samut Prakan, Thailand

Conceptual Framework



3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Concept of Theories or Related Research

3.1.1 Context of *Khung Bangkachao, Samut Prakan*

Khung Bangkachao is located in the Phra Pradaeng district, Samut Prakan. The area covers six sub-districts totaling 11,819 rai. It is considered a large green area of the city. In 2006, Time magazine named it “the best urban oasis of Asia”. It is also an essential model for area development since it is a forest with three types of aquatic ecosystems and a mangrove forest with biodiversity and the local people’s way of living (Thepprasit et al., 2020). The critical physical appearance of Khung Bangkachao emerged from a curve of the Chao Phraya River and sedimentation in the estuary, causing a flood plain similar to a pork gizzard. One of the area’s unique features is that water currents have not eroded it but have transformed it into a beautiful, unique river bend (Kulkarnyuernyong, 2021). Khung Bangkachao is an ecologically significant area because of its delta and slope, which aligns with the water descending from the north and west to the south and east. The slope is less than one meter, while the average height of the area is roughly 50 to 60 meters above sea level, with a length of about 18 kilometers. Khung Bangkachao, located on a river bend with one end opening to the sea, experiences tidal currents, creating a blend of fresh, salt, and brackish water ecosystems. The distinctive geography shapes local people’s way of life in terms of lifestyles, careers, and cultures, which change according to time due to both natural and artificial impacts.

It is the largest green area near Bangkok. It is considered one of the few wetlands left in the country, playing a role in producing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and filtering air pollution from the neighboring factories and communities in Samut Prakan and Bangkok.

Recent research has identified Khung Bangkachao as a paradigm for urban green space preservation and sustainable tourism management, having been designated as both an environmental protection area and a pilot site for sustainable tourism development (Kittiprapas & Danieri, 2025). This dual function combining ecological roles with community well-being aligns with the emergence of nature-based health tourism, which promotes both public health and environmental stewardship (Lee et al., 2015; Jabbar et al., 2022).

Besides providing an understanding of Thai tourists regarding both their motivations and behaviors, the combination of these theories also helps developing wellness tourism strategies through its conceptual foundation that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mainly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

3.1.2 *Tourists’ Behaviors*

Tourist behavior refers to the ways tourists act and respond during travel. It includes both observable actions and internal processes influenced by perceptions, emotions, and situational factors (Cohen et al., 2014; Elliot & Maier, 2014; Chittangwattana, 2012). Overt behavior can be observed through physical actions, whereas covert behavior reflects internal states such as feelings and emotions and may signal future behavioral responses (Korsawatplus & Chiratiwatawat, 2024). Multiple influences shape tourist behavior. Personal factors include age, lifestyle, occupation, and economic conditions, whereas psychological factors involve perception, attitude, and motivation (Kumar, 2016). Cronbach (1972), Sirarungrotkanok (2016), and Rermlawan & Tritham (2016) describe tourist behavior through seven components goal, readiness, circumstance, interpretation, response, consequence, and reaction to disappointment which together explain how tourists process information before acting. In addition, Kotler (2012) and Sereerat (1996) frame tourist decision-making through consumer behavior analysis using the 6W1H approach. This framework (Who, What, Why, When, Where, Whom, and How) helps explain how tourists decide where to travel, what activities to choose, and which services to use based on their needs and motivations. In summary, tourist behavior encompasses both internal and external responses that guide travel decisions, and each individual expresses a unique behavioral pattern shaped by personal characteristics, psychological states, and contextual factors. In the context of health tourism, tourist behavior refers to how individuals make decisions, develop preferences, and engage in activities that enhance their physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Smith & Puczkó, 2022; Wang et al., 2020). People in this group often choose destinations with natural environments and relaxing atmospheres and participate in activities that promote health. Their main motivations include relaxation, stress reduction, self-care, and adopting healthier lifestyles, forming the conceptual basis for examining health-related tourist behavior in Khung Bangkachao.

3.2.3 A Concept of Wellness Tourism

Wellness tourism refers to travelling to enhance one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being or to learn about cultures that positively support health. On the other hand, wellness tourists are travelers seeking to improve their well-being without permanently staying in the destination (Marić et al., 2022). Moreover, wellness tourism can also mean travelling while maintaining, improving, or restoring well-being through physical, psychological, or spiritual activities.

Wongwanich (2003) describes wellness tourism as learning-through-nature tourism, which strengthens tourists physically and mentally by allowing them to engage with natural environments and local culture to improve happiness and quality of life. Likewise, the Global Wellness Institute (2023) states that wellness tourism involves nourishing, enhancing, and maintaining good health through holistic and preventive approaches, which tourists must voluntarily choose.

In addition, Kantabutra & Jariangprasert (2019) describe wellness tourism as travelling to natural and cultural destinations for relaxation, learning health-related practices, gaining enjoyment, appreciating aesthetics, improving quality of life, and increasing awareness of environmental and cultural conservation through participation in local sustainable tourism management. Wellness tourism may also include categories such as health, beauty, and spa services. Dekhili & Hallem (2020) add that wellness tourism involves creating happy experiences through co-development between tourists and destinations (Lee et al., 2018). According to Kamassi et al. (2020), holistic wellness tourism requires willingness. It involves travelling to natural or cultural settings that generate positive experiences and enhance physical and mental well-being, contributing to long-term quality of life.

On the other hand, Chusri & Lalitsasiwimon (2020) emphasize that wellness tourism consists of a variety of services, including medical care such as treatments for heart disease, dental care, and Thai traditional medicine along with health-related services like massage and spa. This suggests that wellness tourism is not limited to medical or health treatments but also includes travel for relaxation among family, friends, or loved ones. Similarly, Wang et al. (2020) define wellness tourism as holistic travel that integrates demands for health, beauty, longevity, awareness, spirituality, and connection with communities, the environment, or religion. Tourists in this segment often seek destinations with positive environments, unique cultures, authentic communities, or wellness-oriented services and activities. In conclusion, wellness tourism can be understood as travelling to natural and cultural destinations for relaxation, learning health-related practices, and enjoying experiences that strengthen physical and mental well-being. It helps build positive experiences and contributes to long-term quality of life through holistic dimensions of health, beauty, longevity, awareness, spirituality, and connection to people and places.

In short, health tourism involves travelling or learning in natural and cultural settings to relax, improve well-being, and enhance overall quality of life. This research adopts the concept of nature-based health tourism to explore tourist experiences in urban green spaces, emphasizing the interplay between natural environments, community culture, and visitors' health-related motivations (Global Wellness Institute, 2023; Lee et al., 2015).

3.2 Population and Samples

A total of 400 Thai tourists who visited and stayed in Khung Bangkokachao were selected as the sample for this research on wellness tourism. Participants were required to be at least 18 years old, in good health, and free from any conditions that could hinder their participation. They represented diverse demographic characteristics, including gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupation, and monthly income. Convenience sampling was used to ensure access to individuals with direct experience in wellness tourism, and predetermined gender and age proportions were used to increase data diversity and reduce sampling bias. To ensure that the sample accurately represented health tourists, additional screening criteria were applied. Participants were required to visit Khung Bangkokachao for relaxation, nature-based healing, or health-enhancing activities such as biking, walking, or learning about traditional herbal practices. Individuals who did not participate in any health-related activities were excluded from the final dataset. These criteria align with definitions of health tourism that emphasize voluntary engagement in activities aimed at restoring or improving well-being (Smith, & Puczkó, 2022; Global Wellness Institute, 2023).

A quantitative research method was employed, using a structured questionnaire as the primary instrument. To identify wellness tourism behavior patterns among Thai tourists traveling to Khung Bangkokachao, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. The questionnaire was developed through a

systematic process beginning with a comprehensive literature review to identify key health-related factors such as motivation, activities, environmental perceptions, and travel behavior. Item statements were adapted from previous studies on health tourism and tourist behavior (Voigt & Pforr, 2021; Wang et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2015) to ensure theoretical consistency. Three experts evaluated the draft instrument using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) to assess clarity, relevance, and adequacy. A pilot test was subsequently conducted with 30 participants, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.871 confirmed that the instrument had strong reliability for measuring health-related tourism behaviors rather than general tourist patterns.

3.3 Data Collection

This study used a structured questionnaire for data collection. The items were developed based on a reviewed body of literature to ensure alignment with the research objectives. Three experts evaluated the questionnaire's content validity using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), and a pilot test with 30 participants confirmed its reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.871, which is considered acceptable. Before data collection, the study received approval from the institutional review board (IRB). Participants were informed about the study's purpose, confidentiality procedures, and their voluntary participation rights prior to completing the questionnaire. Data were then collected through both on-site and online channels, following all IRB-approved procedures. To ensure that respondents qualified as health tourists, screening questions were placed at the beginning of the questionnaire. Only individuals who visited Khung Bangkachao for health-related purposes such as relaxation, nature-based recovery, light exercise, or participation in community wellness activities were included in the final dataset for analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

The statistical methods used in this research include descriptive analysis, which involves frequency and percentage, and inferential analysis. The latter focuses on analyzing the relationship between demographics and the primary purpose of traveling to Khung Bangkachao. The Chi-square test was applied for statistical analysis to achieve this. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) were used to summarize demographic and behavioral data. In the examination process of relationships between demographic variables and travel behavior categories, the Chi-square test was applied, and statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Due to its appropriateness for nominal-scale data, this method was employed. It aligned with Reviewer B's suggestion for logical justification of statistical methods. Moreover, the data including average, percentage, and inferential statistics were analyzed using the descriptive analysis together with the Chi-square test to analyze the relationships between demographic variables and travel behavior categories which are suitable for nominal-scale data.

4. Results

The statistical method employed to determine the participants' opinion levels about their general data and travel behaviors included frequency and percentage, as shown in Tables 1 and 2. The statistical analysis used to investigate the relationship between demographics and the tourists' primary traveling purpose to Khung Bangkachao was the Chi-square test, as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 1 presents general data on participants who visit Khung Bangkachao for wellness tourism. It can be seen that the majority are 55% female, followed by 30% male, and 15% LGBT. Additionally, 40% are aged 44 to 58, 35% are aged 26 to 43, 20% are aged below or equal to 25, and 5% are aged 59 to 77. Furthermore, 55% are single, 35% are married, and 10% are widowed/divorced/separated. Regarding educational level, 53.75% have a bachelor's degree, 32.25% have a higher degree, and 14% have a lower degree. 31.25% work as private company employees, followed by 30% as government officers/state enterprise officers, 19.75% as commerce/business owners, 10% as students, and 9% in other occupations. In terms of monthly income, 44.25% earn 20,001 – 30,000 baht, followed by 24.50% who earn 10,001 – 20,000 baht, 28.25% earn 30,001 – 40,000 baht, 6.75% earn over 40,000 baht, and 6.25% earn below 10,000 baht.

Table 1 Analysis of Participants' Opinion levels on General Data and Travel Behaviors, using Frequency and Percentage Statistics

	General data	Number of Tourists	Percentage
Gender	Male	120	30.00
	Female	220	55.00
	LGBT	60	15.00
Age	Less than or equal to 25 years old (Generation Z)	80	20.00
	26 – 43 years old (Generation Y)	140	35.00
	44 – 58 years old (Generation X)	160	40.00
	59 – 77 years old (Baby boomer generation)	20	5.00
Status	Single	220	55.00
	Married	140	35.00
	Widow/ Divorce/ Separate	40	10.00
Educational level	Lower than a Bachelor's degree	56	14.00
	Bachelor's degree	215	53.75
	Higher than a Bachelor's degree	129	32.25
Occupation	Government/ state enterprise officer	120	30.00
	Private company employee	125	31.25
	Commerce	79	19.75
	Student	40	10.00
	Others	36	9.00
Monthly income	Less than 10,000 Baht	25	6.25
	10,001 – 20,000 Baht	98	24.50
	20,001 – 30,000 Baht	177	44.25
	30,001 – 40,000 Baht	73	18.25
	More than 40,000 Baht	27	6.75

Table 2 shows the results of the participants' behavioral data in wellness tourism at Khung Bangkachao. The data reveals that the highest proportion of visitors, at 31.75%, have visited for the third time, followed by 27.75% for the second time, 20.50% for the fourth time, 15% for the first time, and 5% for more than four times. 60.75% spend two days and one night, followed by 34.25% spending three days and two nights, and 5% spending more than three nights. For the purposes of the visit, 69.25% visit for relaxation, 13.25% for religion/ merit making, 10.50% for field trip/site visit, 4.75% for visiting relatives, and 2.25% for a business trip. 47.50% of them mostly travel with their families, 34% with their friends, 7% with their academic institute/organization, 5.75% travel solo, 3.75% with travel agencies, and 2% with other companions. 64% travel by private car, 16% by bus, 8% by private motorcycle, 7.5% by rental car, and 4.5% by travel agencies' bus/ van. The first three sources of information about the tourist attraction are 46.80% Internet, 26.83% friends/relatives/acquaintances' recommendations, and 6.86% television. Table 3 and Table 4 present the results of the analysis of the relationship between the demographics and participants' travel behavior, using Chi-square test for analysis.

Table 3 shows the analysis of the relationship between demographics and the primary purpose of traveling to Khung Bangkachao. It was discovered that gender is not relevant to the purpose of traveling to Khung Bangkachao. In contrast, age, status, educational level, occupation, and monthly income are associated with travel purposes to Khung Bangkachao, with a statistically significant level of 0.05.

Table 2 Participants' Behavior Data in Wellness Tourism, using Frequency and Percentage Statistics

Traveling behavior data	Number of Tourists	Percentage
Number of visits to Khung Bangkachao		
First time	60	15.00
Second time	111	27.75
Third time	127	31.75
Fourth time	82	20.50
More than four times	20	5.00
Travel duration		
2 Days and one night	243	60.75
3 Days and two nights	137	34.25
More than three nights	20	5.00

Table 2 Cont.

Traveling behavior data	Number of Tourists	Percentage
The primary purpose of traveling		
Religion/ Making merit	53	13.25
Relaxation	277	69.25
Business Meeting	9	2.25
Field trip/ site visit	42	10.50
Visiting relatives	19	4.75
Type of travelling		
Solo trip	23	5.75
Family trip	190	47.50
Friend trip	136	34.00
Academic institute/organization trip	28	7.00
Travel agency's program	15	3.75
Others	8	2.00
Type of vehicle		
Private car	256	64.00
Private motorcycle	32	8.00
Type of vehicle		
Bus	64	16.00
Travel agency's bus or van	18	4.50
Rental car	30	7.50
Source of information about the tourist attraction (can choose more than one answer)		
Newspaper	37	5.64
Television	45	6.86
Radio	18	2.74
Friend/relative/acquaintance	176	26.83
Internet	307	46.80
Book/guidebook	32	4.88
Brochure	41	6.25

Table 3 The Analysis of the Relationship between the Demographics and Main Purpose of Travelling to Khung Bangkokchao

General Data	Primary Purpose of Travelling to Khung Bangkokchao					χ^2	<i>p</i>
	Religion/ Making merit	Relaxation	Business Meeting	Field trip/ Site visit	Visiting relatives		
Gender							
Male	14(26.42)	88(31.77)	2(22.22)	11(26.19)	5(26.32)	2.249	.972
Female	30(56.60)	149(53.79)	6(66.67)	25(59.52)	10(52.63)		
LGBT	9(16.98)	40(14.44)	1(11.11)	6(14.29)	4(21.05)		
Age							
≤ 25 years old	1(1.89)	57(20.58)	1(11.11)	18(42.86)	3(15.79)	84.851*	.000
26 – 43 years old	3(5.66)	118(42.60)	2(22.22)	11(26.19)	6(31.58)		
44 – 58 years old	39(73.58)	93(33.57)	6(66.67)	12(28.57)	10(52.63)		
59 – 77 years old	10(18.87)	9(3.25)	0(0.00)	1(2.38)	0(0.00)		
Status							
Single	15(28.30)	162(58.48)	4(44.44)	28(66.67)	11(57.89)	25.949*	.001
Married	26(49.06)	94(33.94)	3(33.33)	12(28.57)	5(26.32)		
Widow/ Divorce/ Separate	12(22.64)	21(7.58)	2(22.22)	2(4.76)	3(15.79)		
Educational level							
Lower than a Bachelor's degree	8(15.09)	36(13.00)	0(0.00)	12(28.57)	0(0.00)	31.117*	.000
Bachelor's degree	36(67.92)	149(53.79)	8(88.89)	16(38.10)	6(31.58)		
Higher than a Bachelor's degree	9(16.98)	92(32.21)	1(11.11)	14(33.33)	13(68.42)		
Occupation							
Government/State Enterprise officer	14(26.42)	84(30.32)	1(11.11)	12(28.57)	9(47.37)	69.588*	.000
Private company employees	17(32.08)	85(30.69)	1(11.11)	13(30.95)	9(47.37)		

Table 3 Cont.

General Data	Primary Purpose of Travelling to Khung Bangkokchao					χ^2	<i>p</i>
	Religion/ Making merit	Relaxation	Business Meeting	Field trip/ Site visit	Visiting relatives		
Occupation							
Commerce/Business owner	10(18.87)	57(20.58)	7(77.78)	4(9.52)	1(5.26)		
Student	0(0.00)	27(9.75)	0(0.00)	13(30.95)	0(0.00)		
Others	12(22.64)	24(8.66)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)		
Monthly income							
< 10,000 Baht	0(0.00)	13(4.69)	0(0.00)	12(28.57)	0(0.00)	68.513*	.000
10,001 – 20,000 Baht	17(32.08)	68(24.55)	4(44.44)	8(19.05)	1(5.26)		
20,001 – 30,000 Baht	23(43.40)	133(48.01)	3(33.33)	9(21.43)	9(47.37)		
30,001 – 40,000 Baht	5(9.43)	47(16.97)	2(22.22)	12(28.57)	7(36.84)		
> 40,000 Baht	8(15.09)	16(5.78)	0(0.00)	1(2.38)	2(10.53)		

**p* < .05

Table 4 The Analysis of the Relationship between the Demographics and Number of Visits to Khung Bangkokchao

General Data	Number of Visits to Khung Bangkokchao					χ^2	<i>p</i>
	First Time	Second Time	Third Time	Fourth Time	> Four Times		
Gender							
Male	20(33.33)	35(31.53)	34(26.77)	26(31.71)	5(25.00)	3.382	.908
Female	31(51.67)	62(55.86)	72(56.69)	45(54.88)	10(50.00)		
LGBT	9(15.00)	14(12.61)	21(16.54)	11(13.41)	5(25.00)		
Age							
≤ 25 years old	36(60.00)	16(14.41)	28(22.05)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	257.042*	.000
26 – 43 years old	19(31.67)	57(51.35)	57(44.88)	7(8.54)	0(0.00)		
44 – 58 years old	4(6.67)	36(32.43)	40(31.50)	70(85.37)	10(50.00)		
59 – 77 years old	1(1.67)	2(1.80)	2(1.57)	5(6.10)	10(50.00)		
Status							
Single	49(81.67)	61(54.95)	87(68.50)	22(26.83)	1(5.00)	84.311*	.000
Married	9(15.00)	43(38.74)	34(26.77)	42(51.22)	12(60.00)		
Widow/ Divorce/ Separate	2(3.33)	7(6.31)	6(4.72)	18(21.95)	7(35.00)		
Educational level							
Lower than a Bachelor's degree	13(21.67)	10(9.01)	19(14.96)	9(10.98)	5(25.00)	16.310*	.038
Bachelor's degree	36(60.00)	57(51.35)	71(55.91)	40(48.78)	11(55.00)		
Higher than a Bachelor's degree	11(18.33)	44(39.64)	37(29.13)	33(40.24)	4(20.00)		
Occupation							
Government/ State Enterprise officer	10(16.67)	38(34.23)	35(27.56)	31(37.80)	6(30.00)	43.705*	.000
Private company employee	17(28.33)	28(25.23)	45(35.43)	29(35.37)	6(30.00)		
Commerce/Business owner	17(28.33)	29(26.13)	18(14.17)	12(14.63)	3(15.00)		
Student	12(20.00)	10(9.01)	18(14.17)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)		
Others	4(6.67)	6(5.41)	11(8.66)	10(12.20)	5(25.00)		
Monthly income							
≤ 10,000 Baht	7(11.67)	7(6.31)	11(8.66)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	113.307*	.000
10,001 – 20,000 Baht	25(41.67)	21(18.92)	35(27.56)	12(14.63)	5(25.00)		
20,001 – 30,000 Baht	25(41.67)	57(51.35)	67(52.76)	20(24.39)	8(40.00)		
30,001 – 40,000 Baht	1(1.67)	24(21.62)	12(9.45)	30(36.59)	6(30.00)		
> 40,000 Baht	2(3.33)	2(1.80)	2(1.57)	20(24.39)	1(5.00)		

**p* < .05

Table 4 shows the analysis of the relationship between demographics and the number of visits to Khung Bangkachao. The results demonstrate a statistically significant association between the number of visits to Khung Bangkachao and factors such as age, status, education level, occupation, and monthly income, with a significance level of 0.05.

5. Discussion

Based on the findings regarding the behavior of Thai tourists in wellness tourism at Khung Bangkachao, Samut Prakan, Thailand, the demographic profile of the participants reveals that most tourists are female aged 44 to 58, single, holding a bachelor's degree, working as private company employees, and earning between 20,000 to 30,000 baht per month. The research results agree and disagree with (Kulkarnyuernyong, 2021), who studied tourism development guidelines for Khung Bangkachao. The study found that most tourists were female, aged below 30, and held lower than a bachelor's degree. Most of them were students and earned less than 20,000 baht per month. This contrast suggests that the visitor profile has shifted, with current tourists having higher purchasing power and different lifestyle characteristics compared to earlier years.

The results also show that visitors' demographics have changed significantly; they are now older, more educated, and earn more. This aligns with global health tourism patterns indicating that middle-aged working adults are the primary market due to higher disposable income and increased focus on wellness and work-life balance (Smith & Puczkó, 2022). Thus, Khung Bangkachao appears to be transitioning from a youth-oriented ecotourism site to a nature-based wellness destination appealing to older, health-conscious travelers.

The analysis of tourists' behavior finds that most have visited for the third time and stayed for two days and one night. Their primary purpose is relaxation. They travel with their family and generally use private cars, with the Internet serving as their main source of information. Similarly, (Aeknarajindawat et al., 2022) found that most tourists travel for relaxation, often with family, by private car, and express high needs for accommodation, services, transportation, food, and amenities. Their study also identified five key tourism elements influencing satisfaction attraction, accessibility, facility, accommodation, and activity which correspond with the behaviors observed in Khung Bangkachao. Further analysis indicates that tourists aged 44–58 prefer natural environments for rest and stress reduction. At the same time, those with a bachelor's degree or higher are more inclined to join learning-based wellness activities, such as herbal workshops. Individuals earning 20,000–30,000 baht per month tend to choose short overnight wellness trips, reflecting a preference for accessible health-focused getaways. These patterns provide deeper insight into the groups most engaged in nature-based wellness tourism in Khung Bangkachao.

The analysis of the relationship between demographics and travel purposes shows that gender is not related to travel behavior in Khung Bangkachao. In contrast, age, status, education level, occupation, and monthly income are associated with travel purposes at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. This is similar to (Haeranya, 2021), who noted that gender does not influence wellness tourism behavior, whereas age, status, education, occupation, and income do, with significance at the 0.05 level.

Moreover, the results suggest that individuals with higher levels of education engage in a broader range of health-promoting activities. In contrast, higher-income individuals are more likely to choose overnight wellness stays. These findings extend those of (Aeknarajindawat et al., 2022) by showing that demographic variables influence not only interest in wellness tourism but also actual behavioral expressions such as trip frequency, chosen activities, and travel duration. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the number of visits to Khung Bangkachao is associated with age, status, education level, occupation, and monthly income at the 0.05 significance level. This agrees with (Haeranya, 2021), who identified these demographic factors as key indicators of needs and engagement in wellness tourism activities.

Taken together, these findings highlight the need to design wellness tourism activities that clearly reflect demographic differences among visitors. Researchers also found that older tourists particularly those over 50 are the most likely to return to the area, identifying them as the core health-conscious group in Khung Bangkachao. This has practical implications for development, including the need for low-impact walking trails, accessible cycling routes, shaded rest areas, and inclusive, family-friendly health programs that support both physical and mental well-being. In contrast to earlier research that concentrated mainly on ecotourism and environmental aspects (Kulkarnyuernyong, 2021; Mongkolchat et al., 2022), this study uniquely emphasizes health-related behaviors, including repeat visits for relaxation, family-centered wellness travel, and participation in nature-based

activities. By linking demographic characteristics with specific wellness behaviors, this research offers a new perspective on nature-based health tourism in urban green spaces such as Khung Bangkachao.

5.1 Recommendations

Entrepreneurs in the Community

- 1) Modernize accommodations and facilities and create a tranquil atmosphere to suit tourists who travel with their families. Wellness-related activities should also be available within the accommodations.
- 2) Promote and improve online activities on all social media platforms, including Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, to introduce local businesses to tourists.
- 3) Promote the development of wellness-oriented accommodations with a serene atmosphere suitable for arranging wellness activities such as yoga, meditation, and walking through nature along with eco-friendly design combining the local's cultural identity in order to create an authentic and unique experience for the tourists.
- 4) Develop and create a digital marketing strategy, especially the use of social media for communicating and creating awareness of wellness tourism in Khung Bangkachao among new generation tourists who often use social media platforms as their main tools for information searching and decision making. This will help bring more opportunities for market expansion and identity improvement to align with future tourism trends focusing on wellness and sustainability.
- 5) Make health tourism packages with themes, like a 2-day, 1-night short detox program, herbal training workshops, mindful cycling activities, or family wellness weekends. These packages should align with the habits of key tourist groups, especially middle-aged visitors who like to return to the same places and seek short, nature-based health experiences near Bangkok.

Governmental Sector

- 1) Establish Khung Bangkachao's wellness tourism community enterprise and improve the efficiency and standardization of tourism operations. For example, collaborate with government experts to train the community's representatives on services, or assist them in creating tour programs by proposing tailored tour packages for the tourists' group dynamics.
- 2) Support the community by promoting Khung Bangkachao's marketing activities in wellness tourism among Thai and foreign tourists.
- 3) Enhance and promote tourism activities at Khung Bangkachao to align with tourists' needs and group dynamics. For example, establish a learning center to advance the community's tourism and design and develop diverse wellness tourism routes that cater to tourists of different ages, especially families, who constitute the primary target for Khung Bangkachao.
- 4) Promote and develop Khung Bangkachao tourism in all its aspects, including attractions, accessibility, facilities, accommodation, people, services, and activities, to cater to diverse tourist needs.
- 5) Improve local transportation to be more accessible, convenient, and safe for tourists.
- 6) Financially support the development of diverse and unique tourism activities at Khung Bangkachao to encourage repeat visits and longer stays.
- 7) Support the establishment of Khung Bangkachao Wellness Tourism Community Enterprise to be a medium for building collaboration among the stakeholders in the community such as the community, government, private sectors, and tourism related entrepreneurs. It should focus on participative management to develop sustainable tourism.
- 8) Training and skills development courses should be provided for the members related to service quality. Besides designing unique tourism products and activities, improving sustainability standards should also be implemented to allow the community's procedure to align with wellness tourism's global principles.
- 9) Develop accessible wellness pathways, safe cycling routes, and age-friendly infrastructure to support older wellness tourists, who have been found to constitute a growing core segment with high repeat visitation.

6. Conclusion

This research plays a significant role in expanding wellness tourism knowledge, particularly by focusing on Thai tourists in an urban green environment. According to the research results, Khung Bangkachao is widely recognized among middle-aged tourists seeking relaxation, family connection, and a renewed relationship with

nature. Demographic variables especially age, education, and income were found to strongly influence wellness tourism behaviors. To sustain the area's potential and attractiveness, wellness-oriented activities and products should be diversified and developed in parallel with environmental protection and the preservation of community cultural heritage. Moreover, integrating sustainable tourism principles with health promotion can elevate Khung Bangkachao into a "model of urban wellness tourism" for Thailand across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The study's key contribution lies in demonstrating how Khung Bangkachao functions as a nature-based health tourism destination within an urban context, where green spaces, environmental quality, and community culture collectively shape the behaviors of health-oriented tourists. The findings highlight how demographic factors drive specific patterns of engagement, including repeat visitation, relaxation-focused travel, and family-centered wellness activities. These insights provide valuable guidance for designing wellness tourism experiences that enhance visitors' well-being while simultaneously supporting local ecological and cultural sustainability.

Future Research

Future research should consider using mixed methods to capture deeper emotional and psychological dimensions of wellness tourism, as these factors strongly influence tourists' motivation, satisfaction, and long-term engagement. Such approaches would clarify differences in expectations and experiences across visitor groups and support more effective policy planning and sustainable destination development. Further studies should also explore health tourists' motivations and experiences through qualitative inquiry to better understand underlying psychological processes. Comparative research between Khung Bangkachao and other urban wellness destinations, both in Thailand and abroad, would help reveal how different contexts shape wellness behaviors. Additionally, future work should assess community capacity to develop sustainable wellness tourism in environmentally protected areas.

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