

การวิเคราะห์พฤติกรรมการท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง ของนักท่องเที่ยวชาวไทยในจังหวัดนครพนม

An Analysis of Behavior towards Mekong River Cruise Tourism of Thai Tourists in Nakhon Phanom Province

วชิรญา ตติยนันท์กุล¹ ชลิดา ช่วยสุข²

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาพฤติกรรมการท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง ในจังหวัดนครพนม และเพื่อเปรียบเทียบความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับองค์ประกอบการท่องเที่ยวที่ส่งผลต่อการเลือกใช้บริการการท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง จำแนกตามลักษณะส่วนบุคคลด้าน ด้าน เพศ อายุ ระดับการศึกษา อาชีพ และรายได้ต่อเดือน ใช้แบบสอบถามในการเก็บข้อมูล จากกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขงในจังหวัดนครพนม 400 คน ใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา และสถิติเชิงอนุมาน ทดสอบหาความแตกต่าง ค่าที (t-test) และ การวิเคราะห์ความแปรปรวนทางเดียว ในกรณีที่เกิดผลการศึกษาพบความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ จะดำเนินการเปรียบเทียบความแตกต่างในรายคู่ด้วยสถิติ Fisher's Least-Significant Difference (LSD) ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามส่วนใหญ่เป็นเพศหญิง มีอายุระหว่าง 21-30 ปี มีระดับการศึกษาปริญญาตรีหรือเทียบเท่า มีอาชีพรับราชการ/รัฐวิสาหกิจ มีรายได้ต่อเดือน 10,001 – 20,000 บาท มีจุดประสงค์ของการท่องเที่ยวเพื่อการพักผ่อน ส่วนใหญ่ไม่เคยมีประสบการณ์ในการท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขงก่อนหน้านี้ ใช้เวลาในการเดินทางท่องเที่ยวภายในจังหวัดนครพนมและพักผ่อน 1 คืน ด้านรูปแบบการท่องเที่ยวส่วนใหญ่ท่องเที่ยวเพียงจังหวัดนครพนม ไม่ข้ามฝั่งเพื่อพักค้างคืนในประเทศลาว ผลการศึกษาค้นคว้าความคิดเห็นต่อองค์ประกอบการท่องเที่ยวที่ทำให้ตัดสินใจท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง พบว่า นักท่องเที่ยวตัดสินใจท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขงจากองค์ประกอบการท่องเที่ยวด้านโรงแรมที่พักและสถานที่เพื่อการพักผ่อนอยู่ในระดับมากที่สุด ผลการเปรียบเทียบความคิดเห็นของนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีต่อองค์ประกอบการท่องเที่ยวที่ส่งผลต่อการเลือกใช้บริการการท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง พบว่า นักท่องเที่ยวที่มีเพศ อายุ และระดับการศึกษาที่แตกต่างกัน จะมีความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับองค์ประกอบการท่องเที่ยวที่ส่งผลต่อการเลือกใช้บริการการท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง ไม่แตกต่างกัน ในขณะที่นักท่องเที่ยวที่มีอาชีพ และรายได้ต่อเดือนที่แตกต่างกัน จะมีความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับองค์ประกอบการท่องเที่ยวที่ส่งผลต่อการเลือกใช้บริการการท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง ที่แตกต่างกัน ที่ระดับนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ 0.05

คำสำคัญ: พฤติกรรมการท่องเที่ยว, การท่องเที่ยวสำราญทางน้ำโขง, แม่น้ำโขง, จังหวัดนครพนม, องค์ประกอบการท่องเที่ยว

¹ อาจารย์ประจำสาขาวิชาการท่องเที่ยว คณะศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีราชมงคลกรุงเทพ, กรุงเทพฯ
อีเมลล์: wachiraya.t@mail.rmutk.ac.th

² อาจารย์ประจำสาขาวิชาการท่องเที่ยวและอุตสาหกรรมบริการ มหาวิทยาลัยนครพนม
อีเมลล์: chalida@npu.ac.th

An Analysis of Behavior towards Mekong River Cruise Tourism of Thai Tourists in Nakhon Phanom Province

Wachiraya Tatiyanantakul ¹ Chalida Chuaysook²

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Abstract

This study aimed to study behavior towards Mekong River Cruise Tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province and to compare opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River Cruise Tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province classified by gender, age education level, occupation, and monthly income. The 400 questionnaires of Mekong River Cruise tourists were used. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used as well as t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), to test for differences were employed. When the results indicated a statistically significant difference, Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) test was used for pairwise comparisons. Finding most of respondents were female, aged 21-30, holding bachelor's degrees or equivalent. They were employed in government/state enterprises officers with a monthly income of 10,001 - 20,000 baht, and their primary purpose for travel was relaxation. Most had never experienced of river cruise before and typically traveled within Nakhon Phanom Province, staying for 1 night. They usually did not cross the border to stay overnight in Laos. The study found that the tourism components affecting the decision to travel on the Mekong River at the highest level were hotels, accommodations, and places to stay. The comparison of tourists' opinions on the tourism components affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River Cruise Tourism revealed that tourists of different genders, ages, and education levels had similar decisions in all aspects. In contrast, tourists with different occupations and monthly incomes had significantly different opinions on the tourism components affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River Cruise Tourism at the 0.05 statistical significance level.

Keywords: Tourism behavior, Mekong River cruise tourism, Mekong River, Nakhon Phanom Province, Tourism Components

¹ Independent Researcher E-mail: 62011060002@msu.ac.th

² lecturers of Tourism and Service Industry College of Nakhon Phanom University. Thailand.
E-mail: chalida@npu.ac.th

Introduction

Cruise Tourism is an attempt of Thailand to push tourism as a significant agenda for long-term development of the country, according to the master plan of Thailand's National Strategy - the 5th Strategy on Tourism, and to place importance on maintaining as the destination of world class tourism. Holistic development of tourism has been focused on quality group of tourists, created diversity of tourism to be conformed with tourists' requirements. Moreover, tourism is developed not only in potential aspects, but also maintains the country's strengths in aspect of Thai custom, tradition, culture and identity as well as valuable environment. The 6 minor plans are consisted of; 1) Creative and Cultural Tourism, 2) Business Tourism, 3) Health, Beauty and Thai Traditional Medicine Tourism, 4) Water-based Tourism, 5) Regional Connectivity Tourism and 6) Development on Ecosystem of Tourism. It is regarded as a pattern of Thai tourism with high level of potentiality that has been mentioned and specified in the 3rd strategy for enhancing of tourism experiences by providing of the comprehensive tourism experiences (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2023).

“Cruise Tourism means the travelling of tourists to tourist attractions in the area of coast, sea, river and water tourist attractions or activities operating by entrepreneurs of cruise, yacht or local boat including other entrepreneurs and agencies who are service providers in related activities. Tourism routes are connected with tourist attractions to meet tourist's requirements and to impress them throughout the trip with standard of services and safety of proper infrastructures and amenities”.

From the operational definition as mentioned above that obtained from data report according to indicators under the master plan of Thailand's National Strategy - the 5th Strategy on Tourism of the Office of the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Tourism and Sports (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2022), such definition places importance on the cruise tourism consisted of travelling, water resources both of sea and fresh water, places and activities of tourism, tourists, organizations and persons related with tourism, requirements and impression of tourists, infrastructures and amenities as well as standard and safety of cruise tourism. Moreover, it is a systematic management of tourist attractions works together with players from private sector who are stakeholders at tourist destinations to deal with interests that happened from the cruise tourism (Tomej & Durlacher, 2020). Therefore, it can be said that cruise tourism is a pattern of tourism integrated with many components and a holistic system that the cruise tourism can bring benefits for water resources, environmental conservation, biological diversity and sustainable local ecosystem (Fernández et al., 2018).

Nakhon Phanom is a province in the upper northeastern region of Thailand as the one of areas that has its history more than hundreds of years. In former time it was a prosperous town in Srikottaboon Kingdom, at that time there was not any division of area which was Thailand of Lao People's Democratic Republic and travelling between towns on the bank of Mekong River had to use the river as their main route. Nakhon Phanom Province is located along the bank of Mekong River about 153 kilometers of length, at its eastern side is closed to Khammoun Province of Lao PDR and has Mekong River as border line (Nakhon Phanom Provincial Office, 2022). Both study of Janmoean et al., (2022) and Khamwan & Charumanee, (2017) indicated opportunities on tourism development of Nakhon Phanom Province for pushing Thailand towards international level through tourism management with high level of quality and standard of tourism services by using the strength of Nakhon Phanom as a province located on the bank of Mekong River that has beautiful scenery. It was a significant occasion to make Nakhon Phanom Province could be connected with neighboring country and Indochina.

Based on the study of cruise tourism behavior by Arnupab Meesin et al. (2019), which investigated the cruise travel behavior of tourists in the Bangkok area, it was found

that the majority of respondents were female, aged between 31-40 years, held a bachelor's degree, worked as private company employees, and had an average monthly income of 20,000-30,000 baht. The hypothesis testing indicated that personal factors were related to cruise travel behavior in Bangkok. Specifically, factors such as gender, age, and education level were found to be related to cruise travel behavior, whereas occupation and average monthly income were not related. The study concluded that cruise tourism is particularly suitable for older adults (Meesin A. et al, 2019). Additionally, Pongpipat Sanedee's (2023) research examined factors influencing the choice of Chao Phraya River cruise services in Bangkok. The study aimed to investigate the quality-of-service factors affecting the choice of river cruise services and compare personal factors impacting service quality. The sample consisted of Thai tourists using Chao Phraya River cruise services. The results showed that overall service quality was rated very high. When comparing personal factors affecting service quality, it was found that: 1) different genders had varying levels of empathy; 2) different ages influenced perceptions of service reliability and responsiveness; 3) marital status did not affect the choice of river cruise services; 4) different education levels influenced perceptions of service reliability and confidence; and 5) different occupations significantly affected the tangibility of services, service reliability, and confidence at a 0.05 significance level (Pongpipat Sanedee, 2023). Considering these related studies on river cruise tourism behavior, the researcher posed the question: "Do personal factors such as gender, age, education level, occupation, and monthly income influence the components of tourism in the choice of Mekong River cruise tourism services in Nakhon Phanom Province differently?"

However, the definition of Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province was created by the research in this research as: - tourism was related to 3 components of activity as: - 1) Khong River-Base Tourism, 2) Service and amenities and 3) Attractions and activities or events by using Mekong River to connect tourists with relaxation. Mekong River cruise tourism is regarded as integration of collaborative working between tourism destinations and relaxation of tourists who use services, it is the system of Mekong recreational traveling and tourism activity destination. From the viewpoint of cruise tourism development for making maximized benefits on changing this resource to sustainable socioeconomic property, therefore, the researcher has to study behaviors of tourists for managing of good and proper quality of Mekong River cruise tourism. This shall bring benefits and values as tourist' requirement and can develop quality of life of local people in Nakhon Phanom Province.

Research Objectives:

- 1 . To study behaviors towards Mekong River cruise tourism of Thai tourists in Nakhon Phanom Province.
- 2 . To compare opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province classified by personal characteristics as gender, age, education level, occupation, and monthly income.

Literature Review

Tourism behavior refers to the expressions of tourists that are related to decision-making process for purchasing tourism products and services (Suchitra Noomee and Charoenchai Ekmapaisan, 2020). It is the characteristic of using tourism products and services to meet their own needs. (Cheewatrakulkit et al., 2018) and to achieve personal satisfaction (Nusara Paramee, 2021). Regardless of whether tourists are aware of their actions or whether others observe these actions, the internal behavior of tourists, in terms of emotions and feelings, often influences their external behavior (Sukanya Puaksanit, 2020). In other

words, tourist behavior is a manifestation of the search for tourist destinations, the purchase of tourism-related products and services, and the evaluation of tourism products and services that are expected to meet the needs of tourists (Pearaya Sukkitjea, 2019).

It can be concluded that Tourist behavior refers to tourists' expressions in consuming tourism products and services to satisfy their own needs. Whether the action is done with external motivation or a push from within the traveler's mind. This expression encompasses thinking, decision-making, and internal feelings occurring before, during, and after travel. Individual tourist behaviors are often expressed differently based on personal characteristics and varying motivations. Therefore, the behavior of pleasure tourism along the Mekong River refers to the expressions of tourists involved in traveling along the Mekong River, consuming tourism products and services, and includes various expressions to satisfy their needs. These expressions can be both observable by others and internal responses such as thoughts and emotions that are not visible externally.

A study on the behavior of river cruise tourists by Suraporn Mulkuni in 2017 examined the travel behavior of cruise ship tourists. It was found that the majority of respondents had taken cruises more than five times, primarily for leisure purposes. When considering various aspects of cruise travel behavior, it was noted that most respondents were motivated by the cruise itinerary when deciding to take a cruise. Cultural attractions were the most popular among cruise tourists. Additionally, sightseeing activities were of the highest interest to these tourists. The respondents reported receiving information about Laem Chabang Port from the cruise line's website and typically engaged in shore excursions by purchasing tours from the cruise line (Suraporn Mulkuni, 2017). However, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, studies have indicated changes in tourism behavior. Borisuth Saenkam's 2021 study highlighted that the pandemic has altered domestic and international travel behaviors, with an increased emphasis on hygiene and safety. Post-COVID-19, Thai tourists' behaviors have changed in three key ways: prioritizing domestic travel, choosing short-distance trips that can be reached by personal vehicle, and opting for less crowded, previously unexplored destinations (Borisuth Saenkam, 2021). Additionally, Patchareeya Kaewchoo's 2021 study examined factors influencing the new normal travel behavior changes post-COVID-19 among Bangkok residents. The study found that the majority of respondents were female, aged between 26-35 years, held a bachelor's degree, were government employees or state enterprise workers, and had an average monthly income of 15,000-25,000 baht. The results indicated that demographic factors such as gender, education level, and occupation significantly influenced changes in new normal travel behavior post-pandemic at the 0.05 significance level, whereas age and average monthly income did not have a significant effect (Patchareeya Kaewchoo, 2021). Furthermore, the study of Thai tourists' adjustment behavior after the COVID-19 outbreak. It was found that the behavior of Thai tourists can be divided into 8 groups as: (Theeranuch Pusaksrikit and Piriya Pholphirul, 2021)

1. Relaxed Oriented Travelers: This group tends to have lower incomes, comprises mostly elderly individuals, works in general labor occupations, and resides in the northeastern region. They focus on traveling within their own region or to the northern region, usually by private car. Their travel emphasizes mountains and relaxation, often with family or friends. They have a high participation rate in government-supported programs.

2. Faith Seekers: This group has relatively higher incomes, and a significant proportion are elderly. They enjoy religious tourism along with relaxation and building good relationships with friends and family. They seek private, beautiful, safe, and convenient travel destinations with local food and interesting local activities. They also have a high participation rate in government-supported programs compared to other groups.

3. Relationship Enhancers: Aged 18-25 with incomes not exceeding 30,000 Baht, this group includes a significant number of students and is mainly located in the northeastern and southern regions. Their travel focuses on building relationships with friends and family, with no specific standout travel patterns.

4. Popular Destination Seekers: Primarily from the middle class in Bangkok and its suburbs, as well as the northeastern region, this group has moderate incomes. They enjoy traveling to popular destinations and prefer places with interesting local food and activities. This group is willing to spend extra on various tourist activities and has the highest rate of morning-to-evening travel.

5. Local and Regional Seekers: Aged 36-45, with occupations including business owners, civil servants, and state enterprise employees. They often travel by private car, showing an interest in local stories, local cuisine, community culture, and local festivals. They are willing to spend on learning and participating in community activities, although their travel budgets are not high.

6. Intellectual Travelers: Mostly from Bangkok and its suburbs, this group has relatively high incomes and comprises mostly mid-level corporate employees. They enjoy diverse travel to understand the in-depth stories, community culture, and history of destinations. They have above-average daily spending per person compared to other groups.

7. Family Travelers: The smallest group, mostly from the eastern region, with a majority aged 56-65. They have moderate incomes and include a significant number of homemakers. Their travel aims to build relationships with family members, focusing on beautiful and safe seaside and mountain destinations for relaxation. They allocate the highest budget to travel, especially for transportation and food, despite having lower participation rates in government-supported programs.

8. Retreaters: Predominantly self-employed with lower incomes, this group seeks spiritual and stress-relief travel experiences. They prefer beautiful, safe, and private travel destinations. This group has the lowest travel budget and the lowest inclination to travel after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology

Population and Sample

Population and sample used in this research were Thai tourists and excursionists who travelled for cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province and the formula of W.G. Cochran (1953) with 95% confidence interval was used to calculate the sample size due to the amount of population was unknown and the sample group was specified at 385 participants. For preventing any errors that might be occurred, therefore 400 participants were used in this study.

Research Tools and Data Collection

Data were collected by the researcher from studying of documents and literature review in related issues to make questionnaire according to the conceptual framework of the study and also covered its objectives. Content validity of the questionnaire was examined by 3 experts to recheck language usage and clarity for being in line with all objectives of the research and asking suggestions to improve it. Then, such questionnaire was used with 40 persons who were not sampling group for testing its reliability by using Coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha and finally gained result at 0.944.

Data Analysis

Statistics used in this study were consisted of descriptive statistics for general data of informants, presented by frequency, quantity, percentage, mean and standard deviation (S.D.). Class Interval was used for interpretation of mean by using formular as shown in Table 1 (Srisa-ard, 2012). Inferential statistics consisted of t-test and F-test (One-way

ANOVA) were used in case of there were some statistically significant differences were found and paired-comparison analysis was used by Fisher's Least-Significant Difference (LSD).

Table 1 Criteria for interpretation of opinion level.

Mean	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Having opinion on this issue in the highest level.
3.41-4.20	Having opinion on this issue in high level.
2.61-3.40	Having opinion on this issue in moderate level.
1.81-2.60	Having opinion on this issue in low level.
1.00-1.80	Having opinion on this issue in the lowest level.

Results

The results of the questionnaire data analysis found that the majority of respondents were female (70.50%), aged between 21-30 years (36.80%), , followed by 31-40 years (23.50%), graduated in level of bachelor's degree or equivalent (62.30%), with 19.80% having education below this level. In terms of occupation, 29.50% were government/state enterprise officers and 21.30% were general worker, had their monthly income between 10,001 – 20,000 Baht (37.00%), followed by 20,001 – 30,000 Baht. Studied results of tourist's behaviors revealed that they had their purposes for leisure (63.30%), while the next was for the purpose of worshipping sacred places (51.80%). Most of respondents had no experience of cruise tourism before (74%), while those who had experiences were at 26%, 40.30% spent 1 days for travelling and staying overnight in Nakhon Phanom Province at while the next 37.80%. was staying overnight more than 2 days. In aspect of tourist pattern, it was found that most of them traveled only within Nakhon Phanom Province (49.00%), while the next was to travel in Nakhon Phanom Province and Laos PDR too at (37.25%).

Results of opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism found that tourists had their opinion in this matter overall in high level ($\bar{X} = 3.99$). For considering in each aspect, it was found that in aspect of hotels, accommodations, and places to stay for tourists was in the highest level ($\bar{X} = 4.19$) while the next was providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services was in high level ($\bar{X} = 4.09$); sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism was in high level ($\bar{X} = 4.00$); readiness of amenities for cruise tourism was in high level ($\bar{X} = 4.00$); Tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism was in high level ($\bar{X} = 4.00$); additional services and amenities for tourists was in high level ($\bar{X} = 3.97$); marketing promotion, advertising and public relation for cruise tourism was in high level ($\bar{X} = 3.97$); accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation was in high level ($\bar{X} = 3.95$) and recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism was in high level ($\bar{X} = 3.85$), respectively details as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Levels of tourist's opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province.

Management of cruise tourism on both bank of Mekong River	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Opinion level
1. Sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism.	4.00	.710	High
2. Recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism.	3.85	.777	High
3. Accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation.	3.95	.815	High
4. Hotels, accommodations, and places to stay for tourists.	4.19	.743	High
5. Providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services.	4.09	.761	High
6. Marketing promotion, advertising and public relation for cruise tourism.	3.97	.802	High
7. Readiness of amenities for cruise tourism.	4.00	.801	High
8. Additional services and amenities for tourists.	3.97	.802	High
9. Tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism.	4.00	.810	High
Total	3.99	.584	High

Comparison results of opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism classified by gender, age, education level, occupation, and monthly income found that tourists with different gender, age, and education level had no significant difference in opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism in all aspects. However, personal characteristics of tourists classified their occupation, there were significant differences at the 0.05 level in opinions on sightseeing places and tourist attractions, as well as accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation for Mekong River cruise tourism. (Table 6) Similarly, the comparison results based on personal characteristics classified by monthly income revealed that tourists with different monthly income had different opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism in aspect of readiness of amenities for cruise tourism, additional services and amenities for tourists and tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism with statistically significant at the 0.05 level. (Table 8)

Test results on differences of variance towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism, among the sample of Thai tourists with different occupations, the P-value for sightseeing places and tourist attractions for Mekong River cruise tourism was 0.25, while the P-value for accessibility and transportation for Mekong River cruise tourism was 0.013. Similarly, among the sample of Thai tourists with different monthly incomes, it was found that in aspect of readiness of amenities for cruise tourism had its P-value at 0.034, additional services and amenities for tourists had its P-value at 0.045 and tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism had its P-value at 0.006. Therefore, paired-comparison analysis with LSD was used by the researcher to find differences.

Table 3 Comparison of opinions towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism in tourist with differences gender.

Studied factors	Male		Female		t	Sig.
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
1. Sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise	3.97	.779	4.01	.680	.395	.693
2. Recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism.	3.85	.902	3.85	.720	.039	.969
3. Accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation.	3.94	.870	3.95	.792	.148	.883
4. Hotels and lodging places for tourists.	4.18	.823	4.20	.708	.253	.801
5. Providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services.	4.04	.851	4.10	.721	.724	.469
6. Marketing promotion, advertising and public relation for cruise tourism.	3.93	.940	3.93	.791	.005	.996
7. Readiness of amenities for cruise tourism.	3.93	.922	4.02	.745	.930	.354
8. Additional services and amenities for tourists.	4.00	.896	3.96	.761	.443	.658
9. Tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism.	4.03	.956	3.99	.743	.366	.715

* with statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

Table 4 Comparison of opinions towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism in tourist with differences of age.

Studied factors	Source of variat	SS	df	MS	F	p - value
1. Sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism.	Between	5.443	5	1.089	2.193	.054
	Within	195.554	394	.496		
	Total	200.997	399			
2. Recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism.	Between	3.769	5	.754	1.252	.284
	Within	237.231	394	.602		
	Total	241.000	399			
3. Accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation.	Between	5.082	5	1.016	1.541	.176
	Within	259.918	394	.660		
	Total	265.000	399			
4. Hotels and lodging places for tourists.	Between	3.061	5	.612	1.111	.354
	Within	217.116	394	.551		
	Total	220.178	399			
5. Providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services.	Between	3.074	5	.615	1.062	.381
	Within	228.036	394	.579		
	Total	231.110	399			

6. Marketing promotion, advertising and public relation for cruise tourism.	Between	3.757	5	.751	1.075	.374
	Within	275.420	394	.699		
	Total	279.177	399			
7. Readiness of amenities for cruise tourism.	Between	2.567	5	.513	.798	.551
	Within	253.423	394	.643		
	Total	255.990	399			
8. Additional services and amenities for tourists.	Between	4.361	5	.872	1.362	.238
	Within	252.337	394	.640		
	Total	256.698	399			
9. Tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism.	Between	5.920	5	1.184	1.822	.108
	Within	256.080	394	.650		
	Total	262.000	399			

* with statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

Table 5 Comparison of opinions towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism in tourist with differences education.

Studied factors	Source of variati	SS	df	MS	F	p - value
1. Sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism.	Between	.348	3	.116	.229	.876
	Within	200.649	396	.507		
	Total	200.997	399			
2. Recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism.	Between	1.407	3	.469	.775	.508
	Within	239.593	396	.605		
	Total	241.000	399			
3. Accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation.	Between	4.330	3	1.443	2.193	.088
	Within	260.670	396	.658		
	Total	265.000	399			
4. Hotels and lodging places for tourists.	Between	.812	3	.271	.489	.690
	Within	219.365	396	.554		
	Total	220.178	399			
5. Providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services.	Between	.625	3	.208	.358	.783
	Within	230.485	396	.582		
	Total	231.110	399			
6. Marketing promotion, advertising and public relation for cruise tourism.	Between	3.016	3	1.005	1.442	.230
	Within	276.161	396	.697		
	Total	279.178	399			
7. Readiness of amenities for cruise tourism.	Between	2.061	3	.687	1.071	.361
	Within	253.929	396	.641		
	Total	255.990	399			
8. Additional services and amenities for tourists.	Between	.280	3	.093	.144	.934
	Within	256.418	396	.648		
	Total	256.698	399			

9. Tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism.	Between	1.909	3	.636	.969	.407
	Within	260.091	396	.657		
	Total	262.000	399			

* with statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

Table 6 Comparison of opinions towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism in tourist with differences occupation.

Studied factors	Source of variati	SS	df	MS	F	p - value
1.Sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism.	Between	6.417	5	1.283	2.599	.025*
	Within	194.581	394	.494		
	Total	200.998	399			
2. Recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism.	Between	5.289	5	1.058	1.768	.118
	Within	235.711	394	.598		
	Total	241.000	399			
3. Accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation.	Between	9.559	5	1.912	2.949	.013*
	Within	255.441	394	.648		
	Total	265.000	399			
4. Hotels and lodging places for tourists.	Between	1.863	5	.373	.673	.644
	Within	218.314	394	.554		
	Total	220.178	399			
5. Providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services.	Between	1.631	5	.326	.560	.731
	Within	229.479	394	.582		
	Total	231.110	399			
6. Marketing promotion, advertising and public relation for cruise tourism.	Between	1.429	5	.286	.405	.845
	Within	277.748	394	.705		
	Total	279.178	399			
7. Readiness of amenities for cruise tourism.	Between	6.450	5	1.290	2.037	.073
	Within	249.540	394	.633		
	Total	255.990	399			
8. Additional services and amenities for tourists.	Between	5.633	5	1.127	1.768	.118
	Within	251.064	394	.637		
	Total	256.698	399			
9. Tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism.	Between	1.801	5	.360	.545	.742
	Within	260.199	394	.660		
	Total	262.000	399			

* with statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

Table 7 Results on pairwise comparison of mean in Thai tourists with different occupation.

Studied factors		Student	Government/ SEO	Private company	Business owner	General worker	other
	$\bar{X}$	4.20	4.02	4.12	3.95	3.81	3.91
In aspect of sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism.							
Student	4.2	-	.180	.079	.251*	.385*	.288
Government/State Enterprise Officers	4.0 ⁿ 2		-	-.101	.071	.205*	.108
Private company	4.1 ⁿ 2		-	-	.172	.306*	.209
Business owner	3.9 ⁿ 5				-	.134	.037
General worker	3.8 ⁿ 1					-	.097
other	3.9 ⁿ 1						-
In aspect of accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation.							
	$\bar{X}$	4.08	4.05	3.86	4.05	3.68	3.91
Student	4.0 ⁿ 9	-	.031	.219	.028	.400*	.173
Government/State Enterprise Officers	4.0 ⁿ 4		-	.188	-.003	.368*	.142
Private company	3.8 ⁿ 4			-	-.191	.180	-.046
Business owner	4.0 ⁿ 4				-	.372*	.145
General worker	3.6 ⁿ 8					-	-.227
other	3.9 ⁿ 1						-

* with statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

Table 8 Comparison of opinions towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism in tourist with differences of income.

Studied factors	Source of variati	SS	df	MS	F	p - value
1. Sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism.	Between	3.868	4	.967	1.938	.103
	Within	197.129	395	.499		
	Total	200.998	399			
2. Recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism.	Between	3.231	4	.808	1.342	.254
	Within	237.769	395	.602		
	Total	241.000	399			
3. Accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation.	Between	2.323	4	.581	.873	.480
	Within	262.677	395	.665		
	Total	265.000	399			
4. Hotels and lodging places for tourists.	Between	3.403	4	.851	1.550	.187
	Within	216.774	395	.549		
	Total	220.177	399			

5. Providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services.	Between	1.305	4	.326	.561	.691
	Within	229.805	395	.582		
	Total	231.110	399			
6. Marketing promotion, advertising and public relation for cruise tourism.	Between	4.005	4	1.001	1.437	.221
	Within	275.172	395	.697		
	Total	279.178	399			
7. Readiness of amenities for cruise tourism.	Between	6.625	4	1.656	2.624	.034*
	Within	249.365	395	.631		
	Total	255.990	399			
8. Additional services and amenities for tourists.	Between	6.245	4	1.561	2.462	.045*
	Within	250.453	395	.634		
	Total	256.698	399			
9. Tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism.	Between	9.442	4	2.361	3.692	.006*
	Within	252.558	395	.639		
	Total	262.000	399			

* with statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

Table 9 Results on pairwise comparison of mean in Thai tourists with different monthly income.

Studied factors		≥10,000 THB	10,001 – 20,000 THB	20,001– 30,000 THB	30,001 – 40,000 THB	>40,001 THB up
	$\bar{X}$	4.21	4.06	3.90	3.79	3.87
In aspect of readiness of amenities for cruise tourism.						
≥ 10,000 Bahts	4.21	-	.146	.305*	.417*	.335*
10,001–20,000 Bahts	4.06	-	-	.159	.271	.189
20,001–30,000 Bahts	3.90	-	-	-	.112	.030
30,001–40,000 Bahts	3.79	-	-	-	-	-.082
More than 40,001 Bahts up	3.87	-	-	-	-	-
In aspect of additional services and amenities for tourists.						
	$\bar{X}$	4.19	4.01	3.92	3.84	3.74
≥ 10,000 Bahts	4.19	-	.177	.271*	.348*	.447*
10,001–20,000 Bahts	4.01	-	-	.094	.171	.270
20,001–30,000 Bahts	3.92	-	-	-	.078	.176
30,001–40,000 Bahts	3.84	-	-	-	-	.099
More than 40,001 Bahts up	3.74	-	-	-	-	-
In aspect of tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism.						
	$\bar{X}$	4.22	4.06	3.98	3.71	3.74

≥ 10,000 Bahts	4.22	-	.161	.240	.512*	.479*
10,001–20,000 Bahts	4.06	-	-	.079	.350*	.317*
20,001–30,000 Bahts	3.98	-	-	-	.272	.239
30,001–40,000 Bahts	3.71	-	-	-	-	-.033
More than 40,001 Bahts up	3.74	-	-	-	-	-

* with statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

The results of the pairwise comparison of opinions on the components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism among tourists' occupations (Table 7) revealed significant differences. For sightseeing places and tourist attractions, there were 4 pairs as: - tourists with general worker jobs with tourists who are students, the second pair was tourists with general worker with tourists who are government employees/state enterprise employees, the third pair was tourists with general worker with tourists working in private companies and the fourth pair was tourists who are business owner with tourists who are students.

In aspect of accessibility of cruise tourism and transportation, there were 3 significant pairs as: - tourists with general worker jobs with tourists who are students; tourists with general worker jobs with tourists who are government employees/state enterprise employees, and tourists with general worker jobs with tourists who are business owner.

Results on pairwise comparison of opinions towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism among monthly income of tourists (Table 9) found that in aspect of readiness of amenities for cruise tourism there were 3 pairs as: - tourists with monthly income more than 40,001 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB, the second pair was tourists with monthly income 30,001–40,000 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB and the third pair was tourists with monthly income at 20,001–30,000 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB.

In aspect of additional services and amenities for tourists there were 3 pairs as: - tourists with monthly income more than 40,001 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB, the second pair was tourists with monthly income at 30,001–40,000 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB and the third pair was tourists with monthly income at 20,001–30,000 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB.

In aspect of tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism there were 4 pairs as: - tourists with monthly income more than 40,001 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB, the second pair was tourists with monthly income at 30,001–40,000 THB up and those with monthly income lower than or at 10,000 THB, the third pair was tourists with monthly income at 40,001 THB up and those with monthly income at 10,001–20,000 THB and the fourth pair was tourists with monthly income at 30,001–40,000 THB and those with monthly income at 10,001–20,000 THB.

Conclusion and Discussion

1. From the objective of research to study tourist's behaviors on Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province, it could be concluded that most of tourists who traveled to Nakhon Phanom Province for river cruise tourism were female, aged between 21-30 years old, graduated in level of bachelor's degree or equivalent, were government/state enterprise officers and had their monthly income 10,001-20,000 THB. This conformed to the

research of Meesin et al., (2019) who studied behavior on cruise tourism of tourists in the area of Bangkok and found that most of them were female and graduated in bachelor's degree. Studied results of tourist's behaviors revealed that tourists primarily travel for leisure purposes. This conformed to the research of Cheewatrakulkit et al., (2018) who found that the main purpose of their trip was to relax with family and the first reason for travelling was for nature, this was the same as the study of Mulkunee (2017) who stated that tourists aimed to travel for leisure and tourism. The results of the tourist's behaviors study found that most of respondents had no experience of cruise tourism before and they spent 1 days for travelling and staying overnight in Nakhon Phanom Province. In aspect of tourist pattern, it was found that most of them traveled in Nakhon Phanom Province only without an overnight stay in Laos PDR. For opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province, it was found that in aspect of hotels and lodging places for tourists was in the highest level while the next was providers of cruise tourism with high quality of services was in high level.

2 . From the objective of research to compare opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province classified by gender, age, education level, occupation, and monthly income found that Thai tourists with different gender had their differences in opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism in aspect of sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism, recreational activities for tourists on cruise tourism, readiness of amenities for cruise tourism and in aspect of tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism with statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This conformed to the research of Fernández et al., (2018) proposed that tourism destination should be presented patterns of activities of cruise tourism suitable for different tourist groups for more participation. This study also showed that cruise tourism activities was good media for management to protect aquatic ecosystem affecting more awareness on responsible usage of water resources. Meanwhile, in aspect of age and education level, it was found that Thai tourists of different ages and education levels had similar opinions on the factors influencing their choice of Mekong River cruise services. This finding contradicts Pongpipat Sanedee (2023), who stated that individual factors such as age and education level significantly impact the choice of cruise services. The comparison results regarding occupation showed that Thai tourists with different occupations had significantly different opinions at the 0.05 statistical level on the sightseeing places and tourist attractions for cruise tourism, the accessibility of cruise tourism. It also found that Thai tourists with different monthly income had their differences in opinion towards components of tourism affecting the decisions on choosing Mekong River cruise tourism in aspect of readiness of amenities for cruise tourism, additional services and amenities for tourists and tourism programs of the province with activities of cruise tourism with statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This finding argues with Meesin A. et al. (2019), who indicated that personal factors in terms of occupation and average monthly income do not correlate with cruise tourism behavior. Results of data analysis could be concluded that guidelines for developing Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province should be provided amenities of cruise tourism with quality and standard of safety, promoted provincial tourism programs of Mekong River cruise tourism, placed importance on additional products and services in all aspect to facilitate tourists. This conformed to the study of Haesakul (2020); Esichaikul et al., (2018) ; they found that cruise tourism had its limitation on infrastructures and public utilities of piers and also lacked of resources for serving tourists in high season. This was in line with Mulkunee (2017) suggested guidelines for developing of cruise tourism management that infrastructures and amenities should be improved and developed its accessibility and

connectivity as well as integrated management of all piers including promoted cruise tourism of the country.

Suggestion

Suggestions from this research are as follows: -

1. From the study, it was found that travelers who went for Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province with their objectives to relax and stay overnight in Nakhon Phanom Province for 1 night. They focused on factor of hotels and lodging places for tourists and factor of service providers of cruise tourism with good quality services affecting the decisions on choosing services of Mekong River cruise tourism. Agencies, both of government and private sector, should promote and support entrepreneurs of hotel and lodging place for providing their services with good quality and safety standard. Those entrepreneurs should offer Mekong River cruise tourism programs of the province for visitors and interested persons in their places to facilitate and enhance opportunities on offering for selling visitors and interested persons with Mekong River cruise tourism programs. It is essential to develop Mekong River cruise routes and programs that combine leisure activities with faith-based and worship activities related to sacred entities and beliefs of the people of Nakhon Phanom and neighboring Laos. Creating narratives that intertwine with shared beliefs and cultures can foster Mekong River cruise tourism and align with the current behavior of tourists.

2. The study revealed that travelers with different gender chose services of cruise tourism from different factors in aspect of sightseeing places and tourist attractions and recreational activities of cruise tourism. The entrepreneurs of Mekong River cruise tourism should have various activities of cruise tourism to meet the needs of tourist's requirements of different genders and should have other recreational activities during the trip. Results also revealed that tourists with their monthly income at 30,001–40,000 baths and those with 40,001 baths up chose cruise tourism services from factor in aspect of readiness of amenities for cruise tourism, additional services for tourists and tourism programs of the province; differed from those with lower monthly income than them. Therefore, all sectors related to tourism development of the province should have their policies for promoting and allocating of investment budgets to develop additional infrastructures and amenities and cruise tourism. Promotions and supports should be granted to tourism entrepreneurs, companies on selling tourism services and entrepreneurs of travel agencies to introduce Mekong River cruise tourism with good quality for meeting requirements of quality tourist with high level of purchasing power for tourism. Collaborative working among agencies and stakeholders in the development of Mekong River cruise tourism should be integrated in level of province, provincial group and Mekong basin group of country to develop high-quality of Mekong River cruise tourism that can compete in the international tourism market.

Suggestions for further research;

1. Activity patterns of cruise tourism for high-income tourist group should be studied to develop activities of Mekong River cruise tourism.

2. Population of foreigner group should be studied to develop Mekong River cruise tourism in Nakhon Phanom Province and to meet more requirements of tourist.

3. Necessary infrastructures and amenities should be studied to create Mekong River cruise tourism for having suitability and competitiveness in international market of tourism.

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