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Factors Influencing the Decision-Making Process of Bicycle Tourists in the Khung Bang Krachao Area of Phra Pradaeng District, Samut Prakan Province

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the motivational factors that influence tourists' intentions to travel via bicycle in the Khung Bang Krachao area of Phra Pradaeng District, Samut Prakan Province. The findings will provide guidelines for the development of bicycle tourism in Khung Bang Krachao and other communities, benefiting various organizations. Five key variables, namely memorable travel experiences, attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intention, were investigated. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a specific sampling method, resulting in 358 survey respondents. The results demonstrated a good fit between the model of factors affecting the decision-making process of bicycle tourists and the empirical data. The goodness of fit index (GFI) was found to be 0.996, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.041, and the path coefficient of memorable travel experiences was 0.875. Attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control exhibited coefficients of 0.042, 0.466, and 0.42, respectively. Notably, memorable travel experiences emerged as the most influential factor in the decision-making process of bicycle tourists, whereas behavioral attitudes showed no significant influence.

Keywords:
Decision-making of bicycle tourists, Bicycle tourism in Khung Bang Krachao, Theory of Planned Behavior, Memorable Experience

1 Introduction

The late 1800s witnessed the popularity of bicycles as a mode of independent transportation across various societal classes before the rise of mass-produced motor vehicles. Despite a decline in popularity due to the affordability of motorized travel for the middle and upper classes, the bicycle boom had a lasting impact, leading to the establishment of organizations advocating for improved cycling infrastructure and increased bicycle usage, such as the League of American Wheelmen and the Cyclists' Touring Club in the United Kingdom (Tobin, 1974).

Thailand, recognizing the health benefits and environmental advantages of cycling, has implemented strategies to promote this activity (Thailand Transport Portal, 2015). However, despite active efforts to promote cycling for health and tourism purposes, the frequency of bicycle use among Thai people remains relatively low. Therefore, understanding the motivations of bicycle tourists can provide valuable insights for developing effective strategies to promote cycling activities.

Bicycle tourism has emerged as a significant niche market within the sports industry, known for its flexibility, accessibility, and eco-friendly nature (Nilsson, 2019). In the context of tourism, bicycles are not merely vehicles or sports equipment; they serve as a means for cyclists to engage with their surroundings (Lamont, 2009). While bicycle tourism has remained a niche market, accounting for approximately 2-4% of all tourist holidays in the late 1990s (Lamont, 2009), countries like France and Denmark have reported that bicycle tourism represents 3% of their tourism market. The popularity of leisure cycling has also seen significant growth in countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia (Buning et al., 2019; Ritchie & Hall, 1999). Traveling by bicycle has become a trending activity in tourism, attracting individuals who wish to maintain their health while immersing themselves in the natural ambiance along cycling routes. This mode of travel allows people to establish a close connection with the environment (Buning et al., 2019). In countries like Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, bicycle tourism extends beyond leisure, encompassing a deeper exploration of landscapes, local interactions, cultural experiences, and culinary delights (Seyitoğlu & Atsız, 2022). Bicycle tourists make significant contributions to local economies by stimulating infrastructure development, such as roads, bicycle rentals, repair shops, and accommodations, and driving growth in service sectors, including food and beverage establishments. These contributions also bring about social changes in the regions visited by bicycle tourists (Yeh et al., 2019).

Khung Bang Krachao (KBK), located in Samut Prakan Province, Thailand, is renowned for its abundant tourism resources, favorable climate, and natural beauty along the Chao Phraya River. This area serves as a green sanctuary where farming, particularly orchards and decorative plants, thrives. Its lush greenery and proximity to the Chao Phraya River make it an ideal location for cyclists. Additionally, Khung Bang Krachao preserves Thai and Mon traditions, offering cultural attractions like the Bang Nam Phueng Floating Market, which

not only showcases local products but also contributes to the community's income. The area's proximity to Bangkok further enhances its accessibility for travelers (Caichompoo et al., 2017). Since 2006, Khung Bang Krachao has been recognized as Asia's Best Urban Oasis by Time Magazine due to its exceptional attributes.

While previous studies have explored factors such as tourist satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and perceived value in relation to bicycle tours in Khung Bang Krachao, the motivations behind tourists' decisions to visit this area remain unexplored (Kaplan et al., 2015). Consequently, this study aims to identify the motivational factors that influence tourists' intentions to explore the natural beauty of Khung Bang Krachao by bicycle. The findings will provide guidelines for the development of bicycle tourism not only in Khung Bang Krachao but also in other communities. The insights gained from this study will assist various agencies in implementing tourism promotion models and adapting strategies to increase awareness among tourists. Additionally, this study highlights the need for future research in this field to further enhance understanding and knowledge of bicycle tourism.

2 Literature Review

Research on human behavior often focuses on behavioral intentions, which reflect individuals' willingness or unwillingness to engage in specific behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is widely used to predict behavioral intentions based on subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Bosnjak et al., 2020). This model has been applied in various service industries, including studies on general marketing (Napontun & Senachai, 2023; Senachai et al., 2023), environmentally friendly drone food delivery services (Choe et al., 2021; Pillai et al., 2022), as well as in tourism research (Manosuthi et al., 2020). However, limited research has explored the mediating effects of secondary predictors.

Memorable travel experiences play a significant role in shaping attitudes, subjective norms, social norms, and perceived control over one's behavior. Personal beliefs and the perceived ability to control one's behavior influence individuals' choices and intentions. Social norms also impact perceptions and behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Driver, 1992).

Each traveler creates unique and subjective travel experiences based on their perceptions and emotions during service encounters (Kim et al., 2012). Even when participating in the same activities at the same location, travelers can have different experiences and feelings due to individual differences in emotions and the passage of time (Manosuthi et al., 2021a). When making travel decisions and conducting destination research, tourists often rely on their past experiences and memories, which influence their future travel choices (Hosany et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2012; Manosuthi et al., 2021a). Therefore, it is hypothesized that memorable travel experiences influence traveler attitudes (H1).

Attitudes reflect individuals' evaluations of specific behaviors and are influ-

enced by their beliefs about the outcomes of those behaviors (Ajzen & Driver, 1992). For example, individuals may view cycling tourism as an opportunity to experience environmentally friendly places and indulge in local cuisine, contributing to a positive attitude toward this behavior. The more favorable the attitude, the higher the intention to travel by bicycle (Han et al., 2017; Meng & Han, 2016). Attitudes are shaped by a person's overall evaluations of various assessments, both conscious and subconscious, and can vary across individuals (Ajzen, 1991). Based on these notions, it is hypothesized that attitudes influence tourists' intentions (H2).

Subjective norms represent individuals' perceptions of social expectations and influence from close and distant groups (Bosnjak et al., 2020). When individuals perceive that influential groups desire or discourage certain behaviors, they are more likely to comply. Subjective norms are subjective perceptions of others' expectations and can be influenced by personal beliefs and faith (Manning, 2009). Therefore, subjective norms are distinct from attitudes toward behavior, as they pertain to the beliefs formed by others in one's life (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2020). Consequently, it is hypothesized that subjective norms influence tourists' intentions (H3).

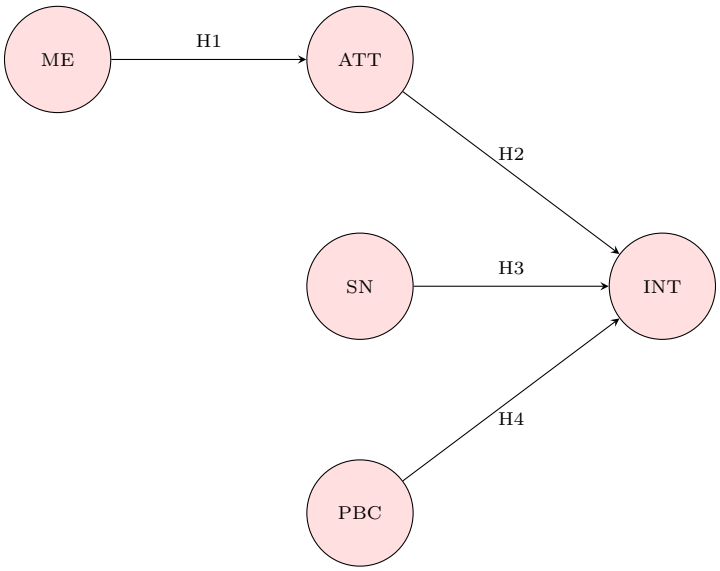
Perceived behavioral control refers to individuals' beliefs about their ability to perform a behavior when they have control or decision-making authority over it (Bosnjak et al., 2020; Meng et al., 2020). It encompasses situational and intrinsic factors that influence one's ability to engage in a behavior (Soliman, 2021). Individuals with high perceived behavioral control are more likely to engage in a behavior, even when encountering obstacles or resource constraints (Cop et al., 2020). It is hypothesized that perceived behavioral control influences tourists' intentions (H4).

Intention refers to an individual's subjective probability of engaging in a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Driver, 1992). It represents an individual's will and plays a pivotal role in shaping behavior (Kumar & Nayak, 2023). The destination image is a crucial factor in a traveler's decision-making process, influencing behavior before, during, and after the trip (Lin et al., 2022; Manosuthi et al., 2020). Destination images directly impact perception quality, satisfaction, and post-visit behavior intentions (Kumar & Nayak, 2023). Thus, intention reflects an individual's subjective probability of performing a specific behavior.

3 Research Conceptual Framework

This research examines the relationship between variables influencing the intention to travel in Khung Bang Krachao by bicycle. Figure 1 illustrates the main hypotheses explored in this study.

The variables considered in this study have been discussed in the literature review, with the exception of memorable travel experience. Memorable travel experiences are included in the framework as they influence travelers' attitudes. The theory of rational action suggests that individuals tend to behave rationally



ME = Memorable Experience, ATT = Attitude, SN = Subjective Norms,
PBC = Perceived Behavioral Control, and INT = Intention

Figure 1: The main research hypotheses

by considering available knowledge and evaluating the consequences of their actions, whether implicitly or consciously. This theory emphasizes deliberate behavior and posits that an individual's willingness to engage in a behavior is the immediate determinant of their action (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Driver, 1992; Bosnjak et al., 2020).

In this research framework, memorable travel experiences are hypothesized to influence traveler attitudes (H1). Attitudes, in turn, are expected to influence tourists' intentions (H2). Subjective norms are hypothesized to impact tourists' intentions (H3), and perceived behavior control is predicted to influence their intentions as well (H4).

The proposed research framework will be used to investigate the relationships among these variables and provide insights into the factors influencing tourists' intentions to travel in Khung Bang Krachao by bicycle.

4 Method

This research employed a quantitative data collection method to investigate the factors influencing the intention to travel in Khung Bang Krachao by bicycle. The data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of two parts. Part 1 gathered demographic information such as gender, age, and income. Part 2 focused on the factors influencing the intention to travel by bicycle in Khung

Bang Krachao. The measurement scale used for the questionnaire ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

The sample group consisted of both females and males aged between 20 and 39 years old, representing the early adulthood stage where individuals' intentions are of interest. To ensure a robust analysis, the sample size aimed to reach sufficient statistica power, as suggested by Manosuthi et al. (2021b). Therefore, data were collected from a total of 358 participants.

Data entry was conducted using the Microsoft Excel program to maintain accuracy and organization. The collected data were then analyzed using GSCA Pro 1.1 (Version 1.1.8), developed by Heungsun Hwang at McGill University (Hwang et al., 2021). This software facilitates the analysis of the structural equation model to examine the relationships between variables and test the research hypotheses.

5 Result

5.1 General Results

The analysis of the data collected from the 358 samples revealed key demographic characteristics, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 showcases the distribution of the samples in terms of gender, age groups, and income levels. The majority of the participants were female (55.03%), aged between 20 and 24 years old (70.67%), and had a high income (over 80,000 baht) (80.73%).

5.2 Verification of the Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to assess the measurement model, which consisted of five variables: memorable travel experience, attitude, subjective norm, behavior control awareness, and intention. The researcher conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), following the recommendation of Manosuthi et al. (2021b) for GSCA$_M$. Convergent validity and discriminant validity were evaluated, with factor loadings exceeding 0.7 and average variance extracted (AVE) exceeding 0.5, and the HTMT ratio < 0.85 (Roemer et al., 2021), being used as indicators of validity. All observed variables exhibited statistically significant factor loadings (p-value < 0.01), indicating their importance in influencing the decision to travel in the Khung Bang Krachao area by bicycle. The factor loadings ranged from 0.764 to 0.94.

5.3 Structural Equation Model Analysis

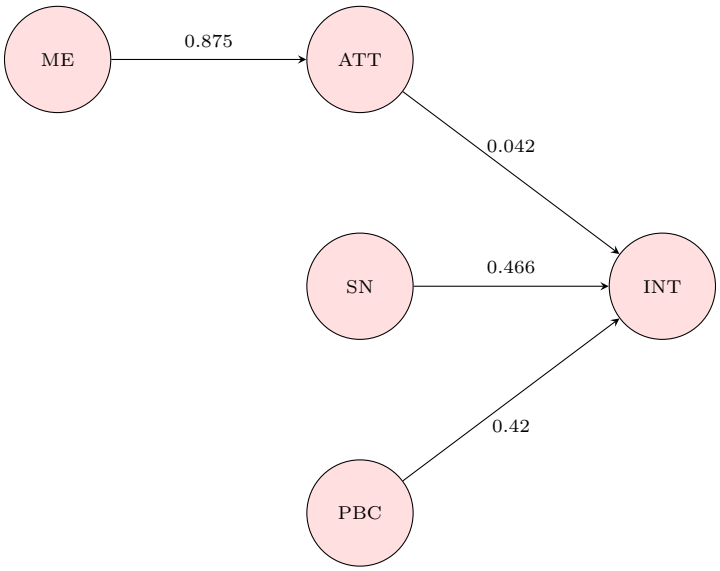
The structural equation model's consistency with the empirical data was assessed, considering the statistical fit of the empirical model, as depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2 illustrates that the factors influencing the decision-making process of bicycle tourism align well with the empirical data. The criteria for assessing

Item	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\hat{\lambda}$	95% CI ($\hat{\lambda}$)	AVE	ρ
Memorable Experience					.76	.943
I had many memorable experiences with bicycle tourism.	6.45	.91	.862	[.811,.892]		
Thinking of bicycle tourism brings back my good memories .	6.34	.81	.841	[.817,.885]		
I love the memories of bicycle tourism.	6.41	.93	.875	[.854,.942]		
Attitude: Bicycle is ... for me					.71	.947
Bad - Good	6.23	1.14	.855	[.838,.927]		
Unpleasant - Pleasant	6.21	1.17	.94	[.913,.952]		
Harmful - Beneficial	6.5	.86	.92	[.914,.969]		
Unattractive - Attractive	6.36	1.06	.919	[.883,.943]		
Subjective Norms					.854	.905
Most people who are important to me think I should go bike-traveling.	5.65	1.58	.855	[.813,.873]		
Most people who are important to me would want me to go on a bike trip.	5.52	1.61	.874	[.842,914]		
People who are important to me would prefer me to go bike-traveling.	5.6	1.56	.863	[.850,.921]		
Perceived Behavioral Control					.809	.911
It is entirely up to me whether or not I travel by bike.	5.92	1.3	.764	[.728,.817]		
I am confident that if I want, I can go on a bike trip.	5.81	1.42	.828	[.806,.849]		
I have enough resources, time, and opportunities to go bike-traveling.	5.12	1.86	.777	[.643,.808]		
Intention					.813	.921
I am planning to travel by bike in the near future.	5.62	1.91	.848	[.799,.914]		
I will make an effort to travel by bike in the near future.	5.16	1.8	.788	[.701,.843]		
I am willing to travel by bike in the near future.	5.28	1.79	.863	[.841,.908]		

Note: $\bar{X}$ = Average Value, SD = Standard Deviation, $\hat{\lambda}$ = Estimated Factor Loadings, CI = Confidence Interval, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, and ρ = DG-Rho

Table 1: Assessment of item reliability and validity



ME = Memorable Experience, ATT = Attitude, SN = Subjective Norms,
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Figure 2: Results of path analysis

the model's fit to the empirical data included a Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) greater than 0.9 and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) less than 0.08. In this analysis, the GFI was found to be 0.996, and the RMSEA was 0.041, indicating a good fit between the model and the empirical data (Cho et al., 2020), as mentioned by Kaewkhav et al. (2023).

Table 2 provides the empirical results of the hypotheses tested in this study, indicating the relationships between variables and their significance.

6 Discussion

The findings of this research shed light on the factors influencing the intention of tourists to travel in the Khung Bang Krachao area by bicycle. Memorable travel experiences were found to significantly influence the attitudes of tourists, with a robust path coefficient of 0.875. This suggests that positive and memorable travel experiences contribute to favorable attitudes towards bicycle tourism. The results align with previous research (Han et al., 2010; Han et al., 2017) that emphasized the impact of attitudes on behavioral intentions.

Subjective norm, which represents social expectations, also exerted a significant influence on tourists' intentions to travel by bicycle, with a path coefficient of 0.466. The findings are consistent with Bai et al. (2019), emphasizing the role of social pressure in shaping behavior. Individuals are more likely to engage

in bicycle tourism if they perceive that influential individuals or groups endorse and encourage such behavior. This confirms the influence of important people on individuals' decision-making processes, as noted by Ajzen (1991).

Perceived behavioral control demonstrated a positive influence on tourists' intentions to travel by bicycle, with a path coefficient of 0.42. This suggests that individuals' perception of their ability to control their behavior plays a role in shaping their intentions. The findings support the research conducted by Eastman and Marzillier (1984), which highlights the importance of individuals' belief in their capabilities to perform certain behaviors under specific circumstances.

Interestingly, attitude was found to have a relatively weak impact on tourists' intentions, with a path coefficient of 0.042. The study revealed that attitudes were influenced by memorable travel experiences. Positive attitudes were associated with a higher willingness to engage in bicycle tourism, while negative attitudes diminished the intention to participate. This finding corresponds to the research conducted by Han et al. (2010), which emphasized the role of attitude in influencing behavioral intentions.

The influence of the destination image on tourist decision-making processes was also highlighted. The image of the destination affected various behaviors, including destination selection, perceptions and behaviors during travel, and the evaluation of the overall travel experience (Bai et al., 2019). Consequently, it is crucial for organizations and communities to pay attention to the characteristics of bicycle tourism elements within their tourist attractions. Providing safe and enjoyable bicycle routes and enhancing the overall structure of bicycle tourism can contribute to increased tourist satisfaction and a higher likelihood of repeat visits or positive word-of-mouth.

7 Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study collected data from a significant sample of 358 participants, it primarily focused on individuals aged between 20 and 24, representing 70.67 percent of the sample. Future research should strive to include a broader range of age groups to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, exploring the attitudes of both Thai and foreign tourists towards bicycle tourism could provide valuable insights and expand the understanding of bicycle tourism education.

Researchers and organizations interested in tourist behaviors can leverage the results of this study to design and develop bicycle tourism initiatives and strategies. However, future studies should consider increasing the proportion of questionnaires collected from working individuals and exploring additional variables to enrich the model, such as a comparison of attitudes between Thai and foreign tourists. Future studies can enhance the analysis by incorporating multiple methods (e.g., Wattanacharoensil et al., 2023), conducting necessary condition analysis (NCA) (e.g., Meeprom et al., 2023), extracting the importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) (e.g., Fakfare & Manosuthi, 2023; Fakfare et al., 2023) or utilizing fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) (e.g.,

Manosuthi et al., 2022). By employing these additional approaches, a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research topic can be achieved. By addressing these aspects, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of bicycle tourism and its implications.

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