# The Factors Influencing Trust in Health and Safety Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: In the Case of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand

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## Abstract

The current global situation of COVID-19 has severely affected Thailand's tourism. This study aims 1) to study the levels of tourists' trust in health and safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province; and 2) to study the factors that affect tourists' trust in health and safety amid the pandemic there. This study employed quantitative research methodology, and a questionnaire was used as the instrument for collecting the data. The sample groups were tourists for a total of 214 people from Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. The data analysis method employs frequency, percentage, standard deviation distribution, and inferential statistics, such as Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis and path analysis using multiple regression analysis techniques. The findings of this research reveal that tourists who decided to travel to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province amid the COVID-19 pandemic have a high level of trust in the overall health and safety measures. The factors that were seen to significantly influence the tourists' trust in health and safety were their perception and attitude. Personal factors such as income, perception and attitude also indirectly influenced tourist decisions with trust variables. The only age factor did not directly or indirectly influence tourist decisions, was age.

**Keywords:** Tourist, Trust, Health, Safety, Decision, COVID-19 Pandemic

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# ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความไว้วางใจของนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีต่อมาตรการความปลอดภัยทางสุขอนามัยช่วงโควิด-19 : กรณีศึกษาเขตพื้นที่จังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์

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*รับวันที่ 27 มกราคม 2565 ส่งแก้ไขวันที่ 6 พฤษภาคม 2565 ตอบรับตีพิมพ์วันที่ 4 กันยายน 2565*

## บทคัดย่อ

ท่ามกลางสถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดของโควิด-19 ส่งผลกระทบต่อสถานการณ์การท่องเที่ยวไทยเป็นอย่างมาก การวิจัยครั้งนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระดับความเชื่อมั่นไว้วางใจด้านความปลอดภัยทางสุขอนามัยของนักท่องเที่ยวท่ามกลางสถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดโควิด-19 ในเขตพื้นที่จังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์ และศึกษาปัจจัยที่ส่งผลความเชื่อมั่นไว้วางใจด้านความปลอดภัยทางสุขอนามัยของนักท่องเที่ยวท่ามกลางสถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดโควิด-19 ในเขตพื้นที่จังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์ ดำเนินวิธีวิจัยเชิงปริมาณโดยใช้แบบสอบถามเป็นเครื่องมือเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างคือ นักท่องเที่ยวจังหวัดประจวบคีรีขันธ์ จำนวน 214 คน และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา ได้แก่ การแจกแจงความถี่ ค่าร้อยละ ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และสถิติเชิงอนุมาน ได้แก่ การวิเคราะห์สัมประสิทธิ์สหสัมพันธ์แบบ Pearson และการวิเคราะห์เส้นทาง (Path analysis) โดยใช้เทคนิคการวิเคราะห์ถดถอยพหุคูณ ผลการศึกษา พบว่า นักท่องเที่ยวมีความเชื่อมั่นไว้วางใจในภาพรวมอยู่ในระดับมาก โดยปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความเชื่อมั่นไว้วางใจด้านความปลอดภัยทางสุขอนามัย คือ การรับรู้และทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ และปัจจัยส่วนบุคคลด้านรายได้ การรับรู้และทัศนคติของนักท่องเที่ยวมีอิทธิพลทางอ้อมต่อการตัดสินใจท่องเที่ยวของนักท่องเที่ยวผ่านความเชื่อมั่นไว้วางใจด้วย มีเพียงปัจจัยส่วนบุคคลด้านอายุที่ไม่มีอิทธิพลทั้งทางตรงและทางอ้อมต่อการตัดสินใจท่องเที่ยวของนักท่องเที่ยว

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## 1. Introduction

The current COVID-19 situation has severely affected Thailand's economy and society. The global economy is slowed down thanks to the inability to perform economic activities as a source of income. The tourism industry is one of the huge revenue-generating industries in many countries. With the outbreak of the pandemic, the number of tourists has dropped sharply, and in the first quarter of 2020, the number of tourists dropped by more than 22% and was expected to continue to decline between 60 and 80 % by the end of 2020 (UNWTO, 2022).

In Thailand, the tourism industry is the main income of the country, accounting for 16% of the total national product in 2019 (Gross Domestic Product: GDP). The income from foreign tourists, at 10% of the total national product, is 61% of the total tourism revenue. In 2013, Thailand was unable to accept foreign tourists, resulting in a loss of income from foreign tourists and having to rely on tourism within the country. In addition, the country has experienced a new wave of pandemic outbreaks, affecting plans to stimulate tourism in Thailand in the form of a "travel bubble," which is open to tourists from any country with a low number of new infections (Krungthai, 2020). However, the COVID-19 situation in Thailand is still unstable. Furthermore, the re-pandemic has caused the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to postpone the tourism incentive plan by enforcing travel restrictions across the area of COVID-19 in the country.

Such a situation, therefore, affects the trust in the health and safety of tourists who want to visit. Tourists' trust in health and safety is of paramount importance amid the COVID-19 pandemic. If tourists lack trust, it results in their not traveling at all, which will cause tourism-related business operators to suffer a loss of income and risk bankruptcy. This also will affect a lot of workers. In particular, Prachuap Khiri Khan, the province with the highest income from tourism in the central region of Thailand in 2020, earned 2,317.85 million baht, with a total of 3,641,101 tourists from January to November, ranked 6th in the country. Revenue reached 16,045.76 million baht, ranked 8$^{th}$ in the country (Department of Tourism, 2020). Therefore, if there is a lack of trust on the part of tourists, it will cause a massive loss in the country's income.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in studying the factors influencing the trust in the health safety of tourists amid the COVID-19 pandemic in the area of Prachuap Khiri Khan

Province. The aim is to provide business groups related to tourism in the aforementioned area with useful information. Additionally, the information provided can be used to formulate health safety measures in order to meet the needs of tourists, including setting up government policies and measures at the local level related to tourist attractions in the future.

### 1.1 Research Objectives

1.1.1 To study the level of trust in the health safety of tourists amid the COVID-19 pandemic situation in the area of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province

1.1.2 To study the factors affecting the trust in the health safety of tourists amid the COVID-19 pandemic situation in the area of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province

### 1.2 Research Hypotheses

1.2.1 The age and income of tourists influence trust in health safety.

1.2.2 The perception of tourists influences their trust in health safety.

1.2.3 The attitude of tourists influences their trust in health safety.

1.2.4 The trust in health safety influences tourists' traveling decisions.

1.2.5 Age, income, perception, and the attitude of tourists indirectly influence tourists' traveling decisions through trust.

## 2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Literature Review

#### 2.1.1 Concepts and Theories about Tourist's Behavior

The concepts and theories of tourist behavior are based on the concept of consumer behavior, focusing on the service sector as a form of consumption. Consumers of tourism are, therefore, called "tourists," which means a person that is a visitor that travels to a primary destination outside his or her area of primary residence for less than a year for business, leisure, or other personal purposes (UNWTO, 2008). Tourist behavior is, therefore, a tourist's decision to use a service in the tourism industry for satisfaction by considering all internal and external factors related to decision-making processes, activities, ideas, and experiences. Tourist behavior consists of nine key concepts: 1) the complicated decision-making of the tourists; 2) guided values; 3) motivation for decision-making;

4) personality as a key factor in the decision-making process; 5) expectations about the upcoming experiences; 6) attitudes determined by the relationship between tourists and material attributes; 7) tourists' perceptions tending to focus on perceived risks and safety, crime, terrorism, or the pandemic of some disease; 8) satisfaction as an important factor in assessing decision-making; and 9) trust and loyalty related in the consumer behavior model (Juvan, Omerzel, and Maravic, 2017). There are also four factors that influence tourist behavior: 1. cultural factors, 2. social factors, 3. personal factors, and 4. psychological factors (psychological factors) (Kotler, 2000).

### 2.1.2 Concept and Theory about Health and Safety

Safety is one of the human needs according to Maslow's hierarchical needs theory regarding both physical and mental safety. This is why tourists are all in need of safety, especially health and safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic situation, which has affected global tourism, stagnating tourism due to hygiene concerns. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) defines health as the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not just being strong and infirm. Tianprapakun (2013) mentioned that safety means the state of being free from danger or being out of danger, including injury, risk, or loss. Therefore, health and safety mean that a person is free from disease. The physical and mental integrity of the body can survive in society well through protection, monitoring, and surveillance. Ukpabi, Olaleye, and Karjaluoto (2021) also stated that a clean and safe destination will ensure the trust of tourists. Hygiene safety has thus become an important criterion in the decision-making process of travelers. Tourists will prioritize and consider hygiene safety before deciding to travel in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2020). Each country's government must work with the private sector to set new standards in health safety to restore trust and stimulate the demands of tourists.

### 2.1.3 Concept and Theory about Tourist Trust

Trust is a matter of the mental state of a tourist who intends to accept something based on the positive expectation that the attraction will proceed in the direction he or she expects (Mcshane and Von Glinow, 2005). It is related to feelings, perceptions, and attitudes. A tourist's trust is the willingness of the tourist to visit a specific destination due to the expectation that the attractions will meet his or her needs. (Tassawa &

Banjongprasert, 2019). This is also related to the traveler's belief in physical and mental safety based on the cognitive and emotional aspects of being willing to travel (McAllister, 1995). Tourists trust that they are getting full-service quality. Furthermore, they expect that tourism-related businesses will be able to satisfy them with credibility, fairness, and honesty (Reina and Reina, 1999 cited in Woranat Samart, 2014). Discussing the elements of trustworthiness, there are three components of tourists' trust: 1. the ability or potential to build trust in the security policy of the government; 2. maintaining commitment or straightforwardness in accordance with the measures of relevant sectors; and 3. attention to the safety of tourists. The trust of tourists is very important to all involved in travel. Once tourists have faith in a business, it can lead them to make travel decisions and even bring them back, which can bring money and profits to businesses at all level.

**Conceptual Framework**

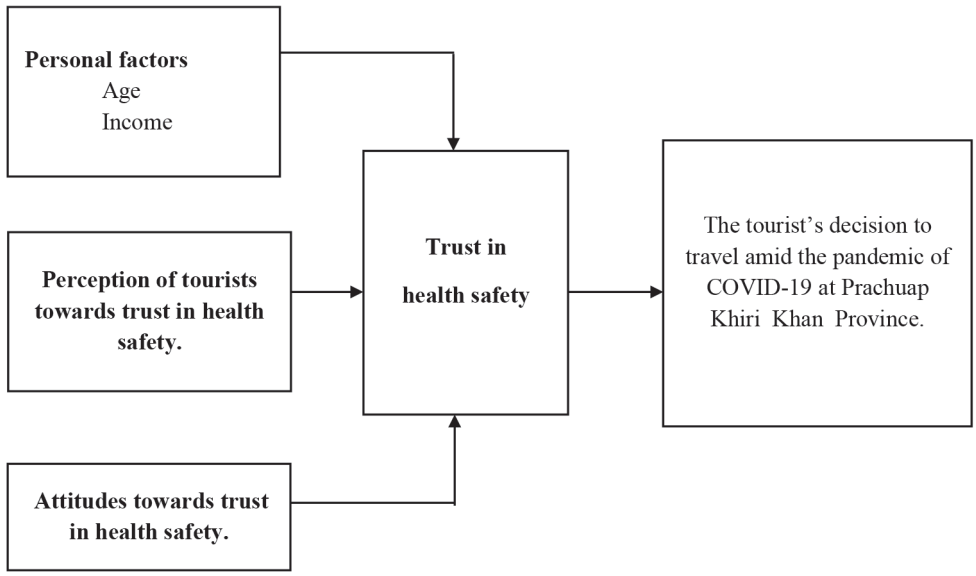


**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

## 3. Research Methodology

This is quantitative research which studies tourists in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. As Prachuap Khiri Khan, the Province with the highest number of tourists, ranked 6th in the country. In 2020, from January to November, there were a total of 3,641,101 tourists.

The sample group was calculated using Taro's formula to get a sample number of 385 people. This research used questionnaires as the data collection tool.

The questionnaire was created based on a conceptual literature review and related theories. The questionnaire was divided into six parts. Part I is the respondents' personal information questionnaire, consisting of six questions. Part II is a questionnaire for assessing the level of tourists' perceptions of health and safety in tourism, consisting of 15 questions. Part III is a questionnaire about tourists' attitudes toward health and safety in tourism, consisting of 10 questions. Part IV is a questionnaire for assessing the level of trust of tourists regarding health safety in tourism, consisting of five questions. Part V is a questionnaire evaluating tourists' travel decisions amid the COVID-19 pandemic, consisting of six questions. Part VI is comments or additional recommendations for the tourists' health safety measures.

**Assessing the Questionnaire**

In this study, the researcher developed a questionnaire and then verified its validity and reliability. 1. To assess validity, the questionnaire prepared by the researcher was presented to a research advisor to verify the correctness of the content and the use of idioms and words for the understanding of the respondents. After that, it was improved and processed in the next step. Then, construct validity was determined by using statistical techniques such as factor analysis for the researcher to consider the consistency of the questions and the initial variables from the Eigenvalues greater than 1 in order to eliminate the factor components at a level of 0.5. The results of the analysis revealed that the question items and variables had a KMO value of 0.918 and Eigenvalues greater than 1 for all variables. 2. To assess reliability, the researcher applied a modified questionnaire to be tried out with tourists in Hua Hin District, a sample group that was similar to the sample studied, numbering to 30 people. After that, the researcher used the data to ascertain the coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha was 0.907, with 35 questions and a coefficient value of between 0.899-0.923, divided into 4 variables, each variable having a coefficient greater than 0.75, so the questionnaire was considered acceptable according to the criteria.)

**Data Analysis**

For the data analysis and quantitative interpretation of the research data, the researcher used the questionnaires received to perform action on the data. Data analysis was performed by using a statistical computer program for statistical calculations, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which employs the following methods:

1. The analysis of the sample's personal data: gender, age, status, education level, and income, using frequency distribution and percentage

2. The data were analyzed using percentage (percentage), mean (x), and standard deviation (SD).

3. A correlation analysis was employed for the variables of age, income, perceptions, and attitudes of tourists to determine their relationship with tourists' trust in health safety using Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis by considering the correlation coefficient. If the relationship the variables does not exceed .80, there will be problems with the independent variable's having multicollinearity.

4. Path analysis was used to find the causal relationships of the factors influencing tourists' trust in health safety that might affect their travel decisions. this research uses multiple regression analysis techniques to find Path analysis. To determine the standard regression coefficient, which was used to estimate influence, and the t-value to test the significance of the regression coefficient.

## 5. Result

### 5.1 The General Condition of the Sample Group

From the data collection of the sample group, the researcher conducted the data collection by distributing questionnaires to the tourists. travel, food, and accommodation in Prachuap Khiri Khan's group from Facebook with a response rate of 235 questionnaires, categorized as 214 sets of tourists who had traveled to Prachuap Khiri Khan during the COVID-19 pandemic and 21 sets of tourists who had never been to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. However, in this study, the researcher analyzed only the data from tourists that had with been to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. It was found that most of the respondents were female with 152 people aged 21-30 years. It represents 71%, and 142 people are single,

representing 66.4%. 171 people are employees of private companies, representing 79.9%. 86 people have a bachelor's degree, representing 40.2%. 160 people who earn between 10,001 and 20,000 baht per month, representing 74.8%. 111 people, representing 51.9%.

### 5.2 The Results of the Analysis of the Opinions of the Respondents

#### 5.2.1 Tourist Perceptions of Health Safety in Tourism

When looking at the respondents' opinion levels on their perceptions of each question individually, the top-three questions revealed that the average question was "How much do you know about social distancing measures?" with an average of 4.54, followed by "Tourist attractions providing hand sanitizer with 70% alcohol or more in common areas such as entrance-exit information points or in front of the elevator, etc.," with an average of 4.30, and "You expect to receive health safety from traveling in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province" with an average of 4.25.

#### 5.2.2 Tourist Attitudes Regarding Health Safety in Tourism

When considering the opinion levels of the respondents about their attitudes toward each of the top-three questions, it was found that the average question was "Do you agree with the social distancing measure?," with an average of 4.29, followed by a mean score of 4.29. The next ones were "To what extent do you accept and comply with the Tourism Health Safety Measures Policy?" with an average of 4.29, and "Do you have a good understanding of the Tourism Health Safety Measures Policy?" How much?," with an average of 4.26.

#### 5.2.3 Tourists' Trust in Tourism Health Safety

When considering the opinion levels of the respondents regarding trust in each of the top-three questions, it was found that the question with the highest average was, "You believe that the tourist attractions in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province comply with the policy on measures for strict government tourism health safety," with an average value of 4.05, followed by "You believe that the tourist attractions in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province have the potential to manage health safety for tourists." The average was 4.05, and "You believe that a tourist attraction will honestly disclose information related to health safety for tourism" at an average of 4.03.

**5.2.4 Tourist Decision Making Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic Situation**

When considering the opinion levels of respondents regarding the travel decisions of tourists in each of the top-three questions, it was found that the average question was, "You decide to travel to a tourist attraction in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province after having comments on health safety in a positive direction," with an average of 3.90, followed by "You plan to travel to tourist attractions in Prachuap Khiri Khan in the near future," with an average of 3.71, and "The frequency of your travel is in the range of 5.3. The results of the data analysis of the tourists' health safety trust level use percentage, mean (x), and standard deviation (SD). From the sample, 214 people in general, have trust in health safety at an average of 3.43.

**5.3 The Results of the Data Analysis of the Tourists' Trust Level of Health Safety Using Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation**

Trust in the health safety of tourists amid the COVID-19 pandemic in the area of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province using the mean (x) and standard deviation (SD) from a sample of 214 people. Overall, it was found that the average level of trust in the health safety of the tourists who decided to travel to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province amid the COVID-19 pandemic was 3.43.

**5.4 Results of the Analysis of the Relationship among the Independent Variables, the Mediator Variables, and the Dependent Variables**

The correlations among the three independent variables were: 1. age and income as personal factors; 2. perceptions; and 3. attitudes. The central variable was the level of trust in health safety, and the dependent variable was the travel decisions of tourists. Pearson's coefficient was used to find the relationship among the variables and to consider the correlation coefficient of each pair of variables such that they were not so correlated that caused multicollinearity. It was found that independent variables, including tourist perceptions and attitudes, were related to the central variable and were statistically significant at the .01 level. Trust was related to the dependent variable, such as decision-making. The number of tourists was statistically significant at the .01 level. The variable had a correlation coefficient of between -0.03 and 0.633. The most correlated variables were tourist perception and trust. The correlation coefficient was 0.633, followed by attitude and perception. The correlation coefficient was 0.522. The variable with the lowest

correlation were age and perceptions of tourists. It had a correlation coefficient of -0.003 and every pair of variables had a coefficient of less than 0.75, so there was no multicollinearity. Therefore, it can be used for further regression analysis, as seen in the following table.

**Table 1:** The Correlation Coefficient of Independent Variables, Mediator Variables, and Dependent Variables

| Variable | Age | Income | Perception | Attitude | Trust | Decision Making |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 1 | | | | | |
| Income | .249** | 1 | | | | |
| Perception | -.003 | -0.77 | 1 | | | |
| Attitude | .027 | .019 | .522** | 1 | | |
| Trust | -.032 | .025 | .633** | .373** | 1 | |
| Decision Making | .169* | .005 | .352** | .408** | .409** | 1 |

*Note*: ** = P < 0.01 * = P < 0.05

### 5.5 Results of Regression Analysis of Variables

From the conceptual framework used in the study, the structural equation of the correlation model can be created as follows:

$$\text{Trust} = \beta\text{Age} + \beta\text{Income} + \beta\text{Perception} + \beta\text{Attitude} \quad .....(1)$$

$$\text{Decision} = \beta\text{Trust} \quad .....(2)$$

**Table 2:** Regression Analysis Results of Independent Variables and Central Variables (Equation 1)

| Variable | Regression Coefficient $\beta$ | t | sig |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | -0.059 | -1.364 | 0.174 |
| Income | 0.053 | 1.224 | 0.222 |
| Perception | 0.347 | 7.020 | 0.000** |
| Attitude | 0.556 | 11.288 | 0.000** |
| Trust | | 0.139 | 0.889 |
| R = 0.796 $R^2$ = 0.633 Adjusted $R^2$ = 0.626 SEE = 0.392 F = 90.088 Sig. = 0.000 | | | |

According to Table 2, two independent variables were found to have a significant positive correlation at the .01 level, namely, tourist perceptions and attitudes. Trust were at 62.6%. The tourists' attitudes had the highest correlation with trust, followed by tourists' perceptions.

**Table 3:** The Results of the Regression Analysis of the Central Variables and the Dependent Variables (Equation 2)

| Variable | Regression Coefficient $\beta$ | t | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|
| Decision making | 0.409 | 6.531 | 0.000** |
| Constant | | 8.520 | 0.000** |
| R = 0.409 $R^2$ = 0.167 Adjusted $R^2$ = 0.164 SEE = 0.526 F = 42.650 Sig. = 0.000 | | | |

According to Table 3, it was found that trust was positively correlated with travel decision-making ($\beta$ = 0.409) at the statistically significant .01 level. Trust could explain 16.4% of the variation in travel decisions.

**5.6 Path Analysis**

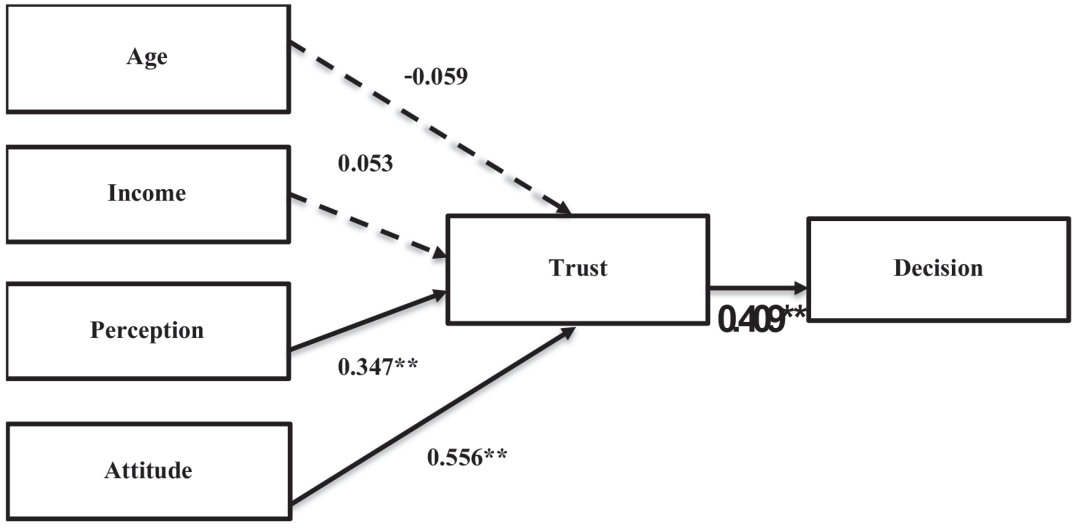


**Figure 2:** Path Analysis Result of Variable Relationship

*Note*: ——— The correlation path between variables with significant correlation
-------- The correlation path between uncorrelated variables

The results of the analysis of influence paths of independent variables, central variables, and dependent variables were from 4 independent variables: age, income, perceptions, and attitudes of tourists. Only two variables, namely tourists' perceptions and attitudes, had a significant direct influence on trust at the .01 level, with the central variable being trusted (0.409), having a direct influence on decision-making. Significant tourism is at the .01 level, and independent variables indirectly influence travel decisions through trust. The variables were visitor attitude (0.227), tourist perception (0.142), and income (0.022), respectively. The age variable had no direct or indirect influence on the travel decisions of the tourists. This is displayed in the following table.

**Table 4:** The Results of the Analysis of the Influence of Independent Variables, Central Variables, and Dependent Variables

| Variables | Amount of Influence on Trust | | | Amount of influence on Decision-making | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Direct | Indirect | Total | Direct | Indirect | Total |
| Age | -0.059 | - | -0.059 | - | -0.024 | -0.024 |
| Income | 0.053 | - | 0.053 | - | 0.022 | 0.022 |
| Perception | 0.347** | - | 0.347** | - | 0.142 | 0.142 |
| Attitude | 0.556** | - | 0.556** | - | 0.227 | 0.227 |
| Trust | - | - | - | 0.409** | - | 0.409** |

### 5.7 Test Results

From the testing of all five hypotheses, it was found that three hypothesis test results were consistent with the empirical data and two hypotheses were inconsistent with the empirical data, as seen in the following table.

**Table 5:** The Results of the Hypothesis

| Hypothesis | Results |
|---|---|
| **Hypothesis 1** The age and income of tourists influence trust in health safety. | Inconsistent |
| **Hypothesis 2** The perception of tourists influences their trust in health safety. | Consistent |
| **Hypothesis 3** The attitude of tourists influences their trust in health safety. | Consistent |
| **Hypothesis 4** The trust in health safety influences tourists' traveling decisions. | Consistent |
| **Hypothesis 5** Age, income, perception, and the attitude of tourists indirectly influence tourists' traveling decisions through trust. | Inconsistent |

### 5.8 Summary of Additional Comments on Tourist Health Safety Measures

In addition to the quantitative data collection, this research also had an open-ended question section to invite additional opinions or suggestions on security measures. Tourist hygiene, from the respondents, has additional opinions that could be categorized into the following issues:

1. For social distancing measures, there should be more stringent practices as in some tourist attractions. Tourists still can't keep their distance as well as they should. Places should not be crowded; more space should be provided appropriately.

2. For the screening measures, there should be more stringent screening points for tourists traveling across the province from high-risk areas to reduce the chances of spreading COVID-19. Take the screening seriously, don't ignore it. At all tourist attractions, there should be a screening point that strictly screens tourists, with no exceptions. Make tourists wear masks at all times. If there is a removal, there should be serious measures or penalties.

3. For tourist, in each service point of each attraction, there should be enough alcohol gel, liquid soap, and disinfecting equipment, including having a proper place for disposing of hygienic masks is a must, and adding a sign for scanning a QR Code: Thai Chana. There is a sign to warn about social distancing, wearing a mask, and remind tourists to be responsible for themselves and society.

4. For other related departments, they should be ready to deal with tourists during a festival to accommodate their increasing numbers of tourists. During that period, many tourist attractions lack measures to cope with the increasing numbers of tourists. If there is a sufficient budget, masks should be distributed or provided everywhere. In addition, the relevant agencies should be thoroughly monitored. Public relations are needed. Being stricter with restaurants is also important. There should also be a tracking system for tourists that have traveled to Prachuap Khiri Khan province to determine if tourists have been infected with COVID-19.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Discussion of the Research Results

#### 6.1.1 Research Results Based on the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 2. Tourist perception influences trust in health safety. This indicates that perception is a psychological factor that affects a person's choices and influences his or her beliefs, experiences, needs, and emotions, including those triggered by stimuli such as smell, hearing, taste, sight, and feelings. Using the five senses, each traveler will have a unique perception based on their belief, experience, emotions, and the five senses. Thus, these senses give tourists a different kind of trust as well. Perception is, therefore, an important factor influencing the level of tourist trust. Generally, tourists want credibility concerning the destination. Most tourist perceptions focus on risk perception and safety, as well as the perception of crime, the perception of terrorism, or the spread of certain diseases (Juvan, Omerzel, and Maravic, 2017).

The results of this hypothesis testing are, therefore, consistent with the research by Janchai (2020) on the trust of tourists in the quality of healthcare businesses. Different needs of customers (empathy) in the environment can be perceived by the five senses. Tangibility and the customer's responsiveness affect the tourists' trust in health businesses with influence values of 0.270, 0.244, and 0.170. Therefore, the development of tourist perception factors in a positive direction will affect the trust of tourists.

Hypothesis 3: Tourist attitude influences trust in health safety. This can be described as an attitude as one of the psychological factors, like perception. It shows that a person's attitude is their derived from social determinants of reference groups such as family. A person's beliefs are composed of understanding (cognitive), feelings (affective), and behavior. Tourist attitudes are often determined by the relationship between tourists and the key attributes of an object, such as the nature of the destination. The measure of tourist attitudes toward destinations has an emotional aspect (behavior) (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). The results of this hypothesis testing are therefore consistent with Khwanmuang (2016). It was found that trust and attitude had a significant influence on a person's use of e-wallet transactions at the 0.05 level. Trust and attitude are key factors influencing consumer behavior in demonstrating safety. Therefore, there is a positive correlation between attitude and trust. That is, the higher the level of trust, the more likely

it is that tourists will have a positive attitude.

Hypothesis 4: Health and safety trust influence tourists' travel decisions. This suggests that hygiene, safety, and trust key factors influencing travelers' travel decisions. Trust consists of both the physical and mental perceptions and attitudes of the traveler and is based on the perceptions and emotions of being willing to travel in terms of expectations regarding a destination. Going in a positive direction, tourists tend to have trust in credibility, fairness, honesty, and trust that they will receive quality service, so that they make decisions.

The results of this hypothesis testing are, therefore, consistent with research by Seangsawat (2015) on the trust and loyalty that influence the decision to access department services. It was a case study of the department stores in Bangkok. There has also been a case study of leading department stores in Bangkok, and the results showed that trust factors of consumers had a statistically significant influence on the decision to use shopping malls at the 0.05 level. Additionally, in Rodklin's (2019) research on the factors influencing trust and the decision to buy gems and jewelry products via the Facebook live channel of Thai consumers, it was found that trust affects the decision to buy gems and jewelry products. Facebook Live was significant at the 0.05 level. It can be concluded that trust is a key factor that greatly influences a person's decision-making.

**6.1.2 The Research Results that did not Conform to the Assumptions**

Hypothesis 1: Personal factors of age and the income aspect influence the trust in health safety. This can be described as the fact that each person has different personal factors of age and income, but this does not mean that people have different trust in their safety. Everyone has the same trust in health safety in the same direction; they need the same assurance of health safety from the destination tourist destination. The difference in age and income does not make the level of trust in the destination high or low either.

The results of this hypothesis test are therefore consistent with the research by Taerungreaung (2019) on the factors that influence the trust of customers in using the applications (the KMA application service) of the Bank of Ayudhya Public Company Limited. It was found that gender, age, and income made no difference in the level of trust in using this service. People with different incomes all need the same trust in purchasing goods and in receiving travel services. Personal factor variables had no influence on health safety

trust, only psychological variables, including tourist perceptions and attitudes had a statistically significant influence.

Hypothesis 5: Tourist' personal factor of age, income, perceptions, and attitudes indirectly influence tourists' travel decisions through trust. This indicates that, from the study of these four factors, it was found that only three influenced tourists' travel decisions through trust, thus making this assumption inconsistent with the set. The fact that age does not indirectly influence a traveler's travel decisions through trust is because it is the only socioeconomic factor that distinguishes people. Age does not reflect any ideas or feelings when talking about making travel decisions. It is different from the perceptions and attitudes of tourists, which are psychological factors. Moreover, all human beings have travel needs as it is a way to create happiness for themselves. Because the matter of man is a matter of the senses because man is not a machine but has a body of flesh and blood, feelings and thoughts (Attanit, 2011).

The results of this hypothesis test are consistent with Lueangthitikanchana (2016) on the factors affecting Thai consumer decisions to travel to Taiwan, which found that age does not affect tourists' decisions to travel there. Further, income was seen to affect the decision of Thai tourists to travel to Taiwan. This is also consistent with Pairojpiriyakul & Taweepornpathomgul's study (2012). They explored the factors affecting the decision-making of Thai tourists traveling to Luang Prabang. It was found that respondents who were Thai tourists traveling to Luang Prabang with different incomes made different decisions. Those with high incomes and stable careers make easier decisions than those with low incomes.

## 7. Recommendations

### Policy Suggestions

From the results of the study, it was found that tourist perceptions and attitudes influence the trust of tourists. Therefore, governments, agencies, and related parties should focus on the perceptions and attitudes of tourists by creating awareness and encouraging them to have a positive attitude toward various measures. The research also found that trust influences tourists' travel decisions. Therefore, strengthening and maintaining trust in the safety of tourists should be complied with. When tourists have trust, it will

lead to the decision to travel to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. In addition, the government will also need to focus on personal income factors, as a person's income indirectly influences his or her travel decisions. If an individual earns more, it will make it easier for him or her to make travel decisions and to travel more often. As a result, the number of tourists will increase, which will help stimulate the tourism economy of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province and Thailand because tourism plays an important role in generating income and driving the country's development from a middle- to a high-income country in the future.

2. Based on the results of the summary of the additional comments on the safety measures for tourist hygiene, governments and related agencies should organize and enforce more stringent measures during festivals. In order to be ready to accommodate the increasing number of tourists during those periods, budgets should be provided to support masks and cleaning supplies, and tourist attractions should be monitored according to whether the prescribed measures are followed or not thoroughly. In particular, social distancing measures should be enforced more strictly in some tourist destinations. It is still not possible for people to maintain a good distance from each other; and screening measures should have more stringent screening points for tourists traveling across the province from high-risk areas in order to reduce the chance of spreading COVID-19. Take the screening seriously. Do not ignore it. At all tourist attractions, there should be a screening point that strictly screens tourists, with no exceptions. A tracking system for tourists should also be developed that travels within Prachuap Khiri Khan Province to make it easier to track if tourists are infected with COVID-19. Every time a Tourist travels, that they need to scan QR codes, or may be should make apps that can be used on a wide range of devices like smart watches, etc.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

From the results of the present study, various suggestions can be made as follows.

1. Area sampling should be used by collecting the same amount of sample data for each district in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province in order to obtain more complete data. When concluding the research results, it will reveal the trust of tourists, classified into each district, which can result in improvements or the development of measures that are more relevant to the area.

2. Factors rather than perceptions and attitudes should be investigated as to what factors influence tourists' trust in the safety and hygiene of tourists.

3. Data analysis should be developed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with the AMOS program in order to test the consistency of the variables with the model (model fit) used in the research, which would make the research more efficient and reliable.

**Research Limitations**

Because this research was conducted in the midst of a new wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has established pandemic control areas, making it more difficult to collect the research data. Therefore, it was necessary to use a method for collecting data from a Facebook group called "The Group of Tourists, Places to eat, and Accommodation in Prachuap Khiri Khan," which is a tourist destination in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province with approximately 10,000 members.

The researcher was unable to collect all of the data according to the sample size of 385 people because the response rate was only 235 sets. Therefore, the researcher had to examine and select only the complete questionnaires to be used in the analysis of 214 data sets, representing 55.58% of the sample group, in order to make this research as complete as possible and be able to proceed efficiently.

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