Response to Reviewer Comments

Dear Reviewer,

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for your time and thoughtful evaluation of our manuscript titled: **"Multi-Criteria Decision Making for Assessing and Evaluating Health and Wellness Tourism Destination Potential Using the 6AsTD Framework: A Case Study of Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand."**

Your insightful feedback and specific suggestions were extremely valuable in improving the manuscript. The detailed observations you provided—helped us enhance the conceptual clarity, methodological explanation, and overall presentation of the study.

We have carefully revised the manuscript in line with your recommendations, and we provide a detailed, point-by-point response to each of your comments below. We believe that the changes have significantly strengthened the quality and clarity of the paper.

Thank you once again for your constructive input and support in improving our work.

Questions for General Evaluation

Questions for General Evaluation	**Reviewer's Evaluation**	**Response and Revisions**
Is the content succinctly described and contextualized with respect to previous and present theoretical background and empirical research (if applicable) on the topic?	Can be improved	We have revised Section 2.3 by separating it into two detailed subsections: (1) The 6AsTD Framework in Tourism Destination Development and (2) Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) in Tourism Studies. These revisions include a literature review of MCDM methods—especially TOPSIS—and their application in tourism research, thereby improving theoretical contextualization.
Are the research design, questions, hypotheses and methods clearly stated?	Yes	Thank you. No revisions needed.
Are the arguments and discussion of findings coherent, balanced and compelling?	Yes	Thank you. No revisions needed.
For empirical research, are the results clearly presented?	Can be improved	We have clarified and strengthened the presentation of results in both the abstract and results section. This includes highlighting the priority criteria identified through TOPSIS and detailing the distinct strengths of each district in Nakhon Ratchasima in relation to HWT potential.
Is the article adequately referenced?	Can be improved	We ensured all references are correctly formatted according to MDPI guidelines. This enhancement

		supports the theoretical background, methodology, and findings.
Are the conclusions thoroughly supported by the results presented in the article or referenced in secondary literature?	Can be improved	We have revised the conclusion to more clearly link it to the results derived from the TOPSIS analysis and 6AsTD framework evaluation. It now provides a stronger synthesis of findings and offers clearer policy and practical implications supported by the data.

Point-by-point response to reviewer

Comment 1: Please shorten the summary. In its current form, it contains more than 500 words. In the requirements of the journal, the abstract should be a maximum of 200 words.

Response 1: We fully agree with your suggestion. The abstract has been revised to comply with the journal's requirement and is now a single paragraph of under 200 words, structured according to Background, Methods, Results, and Conclusion.

"Health and wellness tourism is a rapidly expanding segment of the global tourism industry, driven by increasing consumer awareness of well-being and lifestyle enhancement. As the demand for wellness travel grows, destinations are expected to offer high standards of safety, hygiene, rehabilitation, and holistic experiences. This study aims to identify and evaluate the key attributes and determinants for developing health and wellness tourism destinations by applying the 6As Tourism Development framework: Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Activities, Available Packages, and Ancillary Services.

A Multi-Criteria Decision-Making approach, specifically the TOPSIS, was employed to assess destination potential through a case study of Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand. The results indicate that Attractions, Accessibility, and Amenities are the top three priorities for wellness tourists. Sub-criteria such as natural scenery, cultural significance, accessibility for all, safety, and accommodation quality are particularly influential.

Three districts in Nakhon Ratchasima were found to exhibit distinct strengths: Pak Chong is best suited for rehabilitative tourism (e.g., aroma and water therapy), aligning with mind and nutrition wellness components; Wang Nam Khiao is ideal for ecotourism and cultural experiences, supporting environmental and nutritional dimensions; while Mueang Nakhon Ratchasima excels in sports tourism, supporting physical and nutritional wellbeing.

The study offers practical insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders to design sustainable, visitor centered wellness destinations. The proposed framework supports strategic planning and resource allocation for health-focused tourism development."

Comment 2: Keywords – we write the abbreviation TOPSIS without "-", it is a well-known abbreviation for the method. There is no need to include the full name in the keywords.

Response 2: Thank you for pointing this out. We have revised the keywords accordingly and removed the full name of TOPSIS, retaining only the abbreviation as recommended.

"Keywords: Health and Wellness Tourism (HWT); Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM); 6As Tourism Destination (6AsTD); TOPSIS**"**

Comment 3: The paper lacks a literature review on MCDM methods and the TOPSIS method. Please take this into account. Why did the authors choose to use the TOPSIS method? Please justify this and include it in the manuscript.

Response 3: Thank you for your valuable suggestion. We have revised Section 2.3 of the manuscript by dividing it into two subsections: (1) The 6AsTD Framework in Tourism Destination Development and (2) Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) in Tourism Studies. This restructuring helps clarify the distinct contributions of the 6AsTD framework and MCDM methods.

In particular, we have incorporated a literature review of MCDM techniques with a focus on TOPSIS.

The rationale for selecting TOPSIS is summarized as follows:

- It ranks alternatives based on their proximity to ideal and anti-ideal solutions.
- It provides clear, interpretable results and handles multiple criteria efficiently.
- It integrates expert judgment quantitatively, aligning well with our research design.
- It has been widely validated in tourism studies, including those applying the 6AsTD framework [24,27].

Below is the revised part in the manuscript:

2.3. Tourism Destination Development: The 6AsTD Framework and Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM)

2.3.1 The 6AsTD Framework in Tourism Destination Development

The 6AsTD framework is a widely used model for evaluating tourism destinations, focusing on six critical components: Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Available Packages, Activities, and Ancillary Services As shown in **Fig. 1** [13,14]. Each component consists of several sub-criteria that contribute to a destination's success, offering a holistic perspective from the tourist's viewpoint. Numerous studies have adopted the 6AsTD framework to guide strategic planning and resource allocation.

Based on review literature on 6AsTD framework, the criteria and sub-criteria of the six key components of the 6AsTD framework are defined as follows: Attractions (A1): This component focuses on features that draw visitors to the destination, such as natural landscapes (A11), artificial tourism sites (A12), cultural attractions (A13), and special events (A14). Accessibility (A2): This evaluates how easy it is for tourists to access the destination, considering transportation routes (A21), terminals (A22), and both internal (A23) and ex-ternal (A24) public transportation options. Amenities (A3): Amenities include necessary facilities such as lodging (A31), restaurants (A32), public utilities (A33), and shopping centers (A34), ensuring tourist comfort. Available Packages (A4): The availability and variety of tour packages, such as guided

tours (A41), organized packages (A42), and special interest tours (A43), contribute to the destination's appeal. Activities (A5): This component assesses the range of activities, from sightseeing to adventure sports and cultural experiences, that engage tourists during their visit. Ancillary Services (A6): Supporting services such as communication channels (A61), internet access (A62), financial services (A63), medical services (A64), and postal services (A65) are crucial for enhancing the tourist experience [25-31].

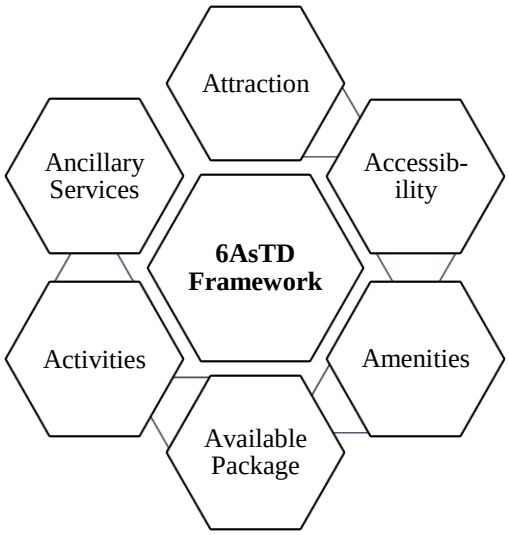


Figure 1. The 6AsTD Framework

2.3.2. Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) in Tourism Studies

Decision-making in tourism often involves evaluating multiple, sometimes conflicting, criteria. MCDM techniques provide systematic and robust tools for comparing alternatives based on various qualitative and quantitative factors. Several studies have applied the 6AsTD framework in conjunction with MCDM techniques. For example, Arif et al. [25] combined the 6AsTD framework with the TOPSIS method to prioritize tourism destinations based on the destination's attributes, providing a comprehensive analysis of tourism potential. In another study, Arif et al. [26] integrated the 6AsTD framework with blockchain technology to rate tourism destinations using data collected from tourists, enabling more accurate and decentralized destination evaluations. Arif et al. [27] applied the 6AsTD framework to develop a Multi-Criteria Recommender System (MCRS), which utilizes rating values between users to provide recommendations for selecting tourist destinations.

Similarly, Agustan et al. [28] employed the 6AsTD framework with TOPSIS to assess local governments' priorities for destination development in Wakatobi, Indonesia. The analysis highlighted the significance of each 6AsTD component—in determining tourism potential. Each variable within these components was evaluated, revealing important insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the destination. Other studies have applied the pure 6As framework to different tourism contexts. Govekar et

al. [29] used the framework to develop a model for smart beach management, emphasizing sustainable and innovative strategies. Additionally, Agustina Riski & Wulandari [30] applied the 6As framework to assess the educational tourism potential of Desa Coklat Bali, demonstrating its versatility across different types of destinations. Lopes and Rodríguez-López [31] conducted a study to rank wellness tourism destinations in Northern Portugal using MCDM methods, specifically the PROMETHEE and GAIA approaches. These tools assist tourism experts and planners in identifying optimal destinations. Unlike the 6AsTD framework, the study utilizes the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI), which comprises five subindexes: enabling environment, tourism policy and conditions, infrastructure, tourism demand drivers, and sustainability.

Among the various MCDM methods, TOPSIS has emerged as one of the most popular approaches. TOPSIS ranks alternatives based on their distance to an ideal (best) and anti-ideal (worst) solution, making it highly suitable for tourism destination evaluation where both strengths and weaknesses must be considered simultaneously [25,28]. The selection of TOPSIS in this study is based on several reasons: It provides clear and interpretable rankings of alternatives as well as can handle multiple criteria effectively and is computationally efficient. Moreover, TOPSIS supports quantitative integration of expert judgments, making it ideal for studies like this one that relies on stakeholders and expert inputs. Other MCDM methods such as AHP, PROMETHEE, and GAIA have their own merits, but they often involve more complex pairwise comparisons or assumptions not as well suited to the structure of this study. Hence, TOPSIS is selected for its simplicity, compatibility with 6AsTD, and demonstrated effectiveness in tourism-related decision-making contexts. It has been widely validated in tourism research, including applications involving the 6AsTD framework [25,28].

The 6AsTD framework has proven to be an effective tool for evaluating and developing tourism destinations, particularly when integrated with MCDM methods specifically. In the context of HWT, this study aims to identify the critical attributes and determinants within 6AsTD essential for developing and accessing HWT destinations. Experts' insights into the tourism industry, related stakeholders, tourists etc.., gathered through a survey questionnaire, will be utilized to evaluate the sub-criteria within each primary variable of the 6AsTD framework.

Comment 4: Expert selection and data collection

How were the experts selected? How many experts participated in the assessment? Were the experts trained on the rating scale and on the method? How were the evaluation criteria identified? Please describe this in detail.

Response 4: We appreciate your request for more methodological detail. We have significantly expanded Section 3.3 of the manuscript to clarify the process of expert selection and data collection.

In summary:

- Experts were selected through purposive sampling based on professional experience in tourism or health and wellness.
- Number of experts: 20 from government and academia, supported by 30 general HWT tourists for initial criteria identification.
- Criteria Identification: Identified through a literature review and stakeholder input, then refined using mean threshold screening and weighting procedures. Participants were guided through structured sessions using pre-validated Likert scales and reviewed lists of criteria derived from literature.

  Below is the revised part in the manuscript:

  3.3 Data Collected

  3.3.1 Type of Data Collected

  The data collection process in this study was structured to systematically assess and evaluate the potential and sustainability of HWT in Nakhon Ratchasima Province.

  Primary data was collected through participatory surveys and semi-structured interviews, targeting key stakeholders such as business operators, local authorities, and tourists. The interviews, conducted with HWT experts, local government representatives, and community leaders, offered qualitative insights into the internal and external factors affecting the region's tourism landscape, contributing to a deeper understanding of strategic priorities.

  Secondary data was sourced through a literature review, which analyzed the sub-criteria of 6AsTD. This review, along with expert interviews and assessment, identified attributes and determinants relevant to potential of health and wellness destinations. The literature also provided context for sustainability, wellness tourism trends, and supply chain management, ensuring a robust theoretical foundation.

  3.3.2 Data Collection Procedures

  The data collection process in this study was structured to systematically assess and evaluate the potential and sustainability of health and wellness tourism (HWT) in Nakhon Ratchasima Province through both qualitative and quantitative methods.

  Phase 1: Criteria Identification, Elimination, and Weighting

  Primary data in the initial phase was collected from two key groups using participatory surveys and structured group discussions: (1) 30 general health and wellness tourists, and (2) 20 experts from tourism government agencies and academic institutions. These participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their experience and familiarity with general tourism and HWT. Participants were first asked to identify sub-criteria under the 6As Tourism Destination (6AsTD) framework. They were guided by a list of attributes and determinants identified through a prior literature review and their own opinion. Redundant or overlapping sub-criteria were then consolidated. To refine this list, the same respondents rated the importance of each sub-criterion using a 5-point Likert scale. A simple mean threshold was applied to

eliminate sub-criteria with scores below the overall mean. The resulting final set of sub-criteria was subsequently rated again using a 10-point Likert scale to determine their relative importance (weights). These weights served as inputs for the MCDM process in later stages.

Phase 2: District-Level Evaluation of Tourism Activities

In the second phase, data was collected through field-level surveys involving 50 participants in Nakhon Ratchasima province. This group included tourists, community members, tourism business operators, and local government officials. Participants were selected using a mix of purposive and randomized sampling to ensure relevant experience while avoiding sampling bias. Participants evaluated local HWT activities based on the finalized and weighted sub-criteria. Their ratings were used as input for the TOPSIS analysis, facilitating a comparative assessment of HWT development potential across the districts.

Table 1. Summary of Participant Demographics and Sampling Methods

Participant Group	No. of Participants	Gender (M/F)	Age Range (Years)	Occupation/Role	Sampling Method
Group 1: Criteria Identification & Weighting					
Health and Wellness Tourists	30	14 / 16	25–60	General tourists with interest in HWT	Purposive
Experts (Government and Academia)	20	11 / 9	30–65	Tourism officials, researchers, consultants	Purposive
Group 2: District-Level Evaluation					
Tourists	10	5 / 5	20–55	Domestic visitors	Random
Local Community Members	15	6 / 9	25–65	Shopkeepers, wellness providers	Random
Tourism Business Operators	15	8 / 7	30–60	Spa owners, resort managers, retreat operators	Random Sampling
Local Officials	10	6 / 4	35–60	District tourism officers	Purposive Sampling

Comment 5: Please cite some publications from Sustainability magazine.

Response 5: Thank you for the suggestion. We have reviewed relevant publications in *Sustainability* and incorporated citations where appropriate, particularly in the literature review and discussion sections. These references help strengthen our theoretical foundation and contextualize our findings within the existing body of work.