

From Vacation to Workation: Transforming Phuket into a Digital Nomad Hub

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The rapid expansion of remote work and digital technologies has transformed the way individuals engage with travel and professional life. In recent years, the concept of workation has emerged as a hybrid form of mobility in which individuals combine professional responsibilities with leisure travel. This shift has contributed to the rise of digital nomads, a growing group of professionals who rely on digital infrastructure to work remotely while residing temporarily in different destinations. As a result, tourism destinations around the world are increasingly exploring strategies to attract this emerging segment of long-stay travelers. This conceptual study examines the potential transformation of Phuket from a traditional vacation destination into a digital nomad hub within the evolving landscape of workation tourism. The study aims to explore the conceptual foundations of workation and analyze how tourism destinations can adapt to the needs of remote professionals. By synthesizing insights from the existing literature on tourism development, digital nomadism, and remote work mobility, the paper discusses the attributes that help destinations attract digital nomad communities. Particular attention is given to factors such as digital infrastructure, co-working environments, accommodation options, lifestyle quality, and supportive destination ecosystems that enable individuals to maintain productivity while experiencing travel. Phuket is considered a relevant case due to its established tourism infrastructure, international accessibility, appealing lifestyle, and growing digital connectivity. Traditionally recognized as one of Thailand's leading leisure tourism destinations, Phuket possesses several characteristics that align with the preferences of remote workers and digital nomads seeking extended stays. The study discusses how integrating tourism amenities into professional work environments could help Phuket diversify its tourism market and position itself within the global network of workation destinations. The paper also highlights theoretical and practical implications related to the transformation of tourism destinations in the digital era. The findings contribute to broader discussions on the evolving relationship between tourism, work, and lifestyle mobility. From a practical perspective, the study suggests that investments in digital infrastructure, development of co-working spaces, flexible accommodation arrangements, and supportive policy frameworks may strengthen Phuket's attractiveness for digital nomads. Overall, the study provides conceptual insights into how established tourism destinations may adapt to changing travel behaviors and the growing demand for workation experiences in the contemporary global tourism environment.

Keywords: Digital Nomads; Remote Work; Tourism Development; Destination Competitiveness.

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Introduction

The global tourism landscape has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, shaped by technological advancement, shifting work cultures, and evolving traveler motivations (Khalid et al. 2023, Schifilliti et al. 2025). Traditionally, tourism has been associated with leisure travel in which individuals temporarily escape their daily routines to relax, explore new environments, and experience different cultures. However, the rapid expansion of digital technologies and remote work arrangements has begun to blur the boundaries between work and travel (Wilkesmann & Bassyouny 2025). As organizations increasingly adopt flexible work models and professionals gain the ability to perform their tasks from virtually any location, a new form of mobility has emerged that integrates productivity with leisure. This phenomenon, widely referred to as workation, represents a shift from conventional vacation practices toward a more flexible lifestyle in which individuals combine professional responsibilities with travel experiences (Khongsawatkiat & Agmapisarn 2024). Workation reflects broader changes in the global labor market and the digital economy. Advances in high speed internet, cloud computing, collaborative software, and mobile technologies have enabled many professionals to perform their duties remotely without being tied to a fixed office location. As a result, a growing population of remote workers, freelancers, entrepreneurs, and digital professionals now seek destinations that allow them to maintain their work commitments while enjoying the lifestyle benefits of travel (Wąsowicz-Zaborek 2025b). These individuals, often described as digital nomads, typically prioritize destinations that offer reliable digital infrastructure, a supportive community, affordability, cultural experiences, and high quality living environments. Consequently, tourism destinations around the world are increasingly positioning themselves to attract this new segment of travelers who remain for extended periods and contribute to local economies in ways that differ from traditional short term tourists (Mancinelli & Bozzi 2026).

Within this evolving context, the concept of transforming established tourism destinations into digital nomad hubs has gained increasing attention. Destinations that were historically known primarily for leisure tourism are now exploring strategies to accommodate remote workers who combine professional activities with travel experiences (Voll et al. 2023). This transformation involves more than simply attracting visitors; it requires the development of supportive ecosystems that include digital infrastructure, co working spaces, accommodation suited for longer stays, networking opportunities, and policies that facilitate remote work mobility. Such developments create opportunities for destinations to diversify tourism demand, stabilize visitor flows across seasons, and stimulate local economic development through longer visitor stays and deeper engagement with local communities (Su et al. 2025).

Phuket, one of Thailand's most prominent tourism destinations, presents a compelling case for examining the transition from vacation oriented tourism toward workation based mobility. For decades, Phuket has been internationally recognized for its beaches, cultural attractions, hospitality services, and vibrant tourism economy. The island has long attracted millions of international tourists seeking leisure experiences, making tourism a central pillar of the local economy. At the same time,

Phuket possesses several characteristics that align closely with the needs of digital nomads and remote workers (Pongwat et al 2026). These include an appealing tropical environment, relatively affordable cost of living compared with many Western countries, a well established hospitality sector, diverse accommodation options, and an increasingly connected digital infrastructure. Such attributes position Phuket as a potential destination not only for short term vacationers but also for long stay remote workers seeking a productive yet lifestyle oriented environment (Bahri 2024, Sawangchai et al. 2024).

The emergence of digital nomadism and workation trends has also been reinforced by broader global developments that encourage remote work mobility. Many organizations have recognized the productivity and flexibility benefits associated with remote work arrangements, while individuals increasingly value experiences that combine professional growth with personal well being and lifestyle exploration (Heo et al. 2026). In this context, destinations that can successfully integrate tourism amenities with professional work environments are likely to gain a competitive advantage in the evolving global tourism market. Phuket's tourism infrastructure, international accessibility, and established reputation as a world class destination provide a foundation upon which such transformation can occur (Kitika & Suwatharapinun 2024).

Despite the growing popularity of workation and digital nomad travel, the conceptual understanding of how traditional tourism destinations can strategically reposition themselves as digital nomad hubs remains limited. Much of the existing discourse focuses on the lifestyle aspects of digital nomads or the economic benefits associated with longer visitor stays, yet fewer studies examine how destinations can transition from conventional leisure tourism models toward hybrid tourism and work ecosystems (Acuner et al. 2025). Understanding this transformation is particularly important for destinations like Phuket that already possess mature tourism industries but seek to adapt to new travel behaviors and technological realities.

This conceptual study, therefore, explores the transition from vacation-oriented tourism to workation-driven mobility, with a specific focus on Phuket as an emerging digital nomad hub. The paper aims to examine the conceptual foundations of workation, identify the destination attributes that support digital nomad communities, and discuss how Phuket can strategically position itself within this evolving global landscape. By analyzing the intersection between tourism development, remote work culture, and digital infrastructure, the study contributes to the broader discussion on the future of tourism destinations in an increasingly mobile and digitally connected world. Ultimately, understanding the potential of workation tourism may provide insights for policymakers, destination managers, and tourism stakeholders seeking to adapt to changing traveler expectations while promoting sustainable and innovative tourism development. The study' critically explore the conceptual foundations of workation and digital nomadism, systematically applying these established frameworks specifically to the context of Phuket, while simultaneously examining how a well-established, mature tourism destination with a long history of mass leisure tourism can strategically reinvent and reposition itself to accommodate the growing demand from remote workers, digital nomads, and long-stay professionals seeking

destinations that offer both productive work environments and high-quality lifestyle experiences.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Workation and Digital Nomadism

The concept of workation has emerged as a response to changing patterns of work and travel in the digital age. Traditionally, vacations were associated with temporary leisure activities during which individuals disengaged from professional responsibilities. In contrast, workation represents a hybrid arrangement where individuals continue to perform their professional tasks while staying in travel destinations that offer leisure and lifestyle benefits (Koll et al. 2025). This shift reflects broader transformations in the global workforce where technological advancements allow many occupations to be performed remotely. Remote communication platforms, cloud based systems, and portable digital devices have significantly reduced the need for workers to remain physically present in traditional office environments (Mancinelli & Bozzi 2026).

Digital nomadism is closely linked with the workation phenomenon. Digital nomads are individuals who rely on digital technologies to carry out their professional work while moving between different locations. Unlike conventional tourists who visit destinations primarily for leisure purposes, digital nomads often remain in a location for extended periods, combining daily work routines with exploration and cultural experiences (Moussa et al. 2022, Orel et al. 2025). This lifestyle is increasingly attractive to professionals such as software developers, designers, consultants, writers, marketers, and entrepreneurs who can operate independently of geographic constraints.

The motivations behind workation and digital nomad mobility extend beyond economic considerations. Many remote workers seek greater autonomy, flexibility, and improved quality of life. The ability to work from attractive destinations offers opportunities to experience new cultures, environments, and lifestyles while maintaining professional productivity. As a result, destinations that offer pleasant living conditions, reliable digital connectivity, and vibrant social environments have become particularly appealing to this group of travelers (Swetha et al., 2026).

Workation also represents a transformation in the way tourism is conceptualized. Instead of being limited to short term leisure visits, tourism experiences are becoming integrated into everyday life for remote workers. This integration blurs the traditional distinction between work spaces and leisure spaces, leading to the emergence of destinations that function simultaneously as tourism hubs and temporary professional environments (Wąsowicz-Zaborek 2025a). The growing popularity of this lifestyle indicates that tourism destinations may increasingly need to adapt their infrastructure and services to accommodate individuals who require both productive work settings and leisure opportunities.

Destination Attributes for Digital Nomad Hubs

The transformation of tourism destinations into digital nomad hubs requires a set of supporting attributes that differ from those traditionally associated with leisure tourism. While natural attractions and recreational experiences remain important, digital nomads typically evaluate destinations based on additional factors related to their professional and lifestyle needs (Zhou et al. 2024). One of the most critical elements is reliable digital infrastructure. High speed internet connectivity, widespread availability of Wi Fi, and stable communication networks are essential for remote workers who depend on digital tools to perform their tasks and maintain communication with clients or employers (Chivandi & Mlilo 2024, Mitra & Paul 2025). Accommodation options also play an important role in attracting digital nomads. Unlike short term tourists who often stay in hotels for brief periods, digital nomads usually prefer accommodation suitable for extended stays. Serviced apartments, co living spaces, and rental properties that offer comfortable work environments are particularly appealing. Such accommodation arrangements allow remote workers to establish temporary routines while maintaining productivity and work life balance (Bednorz et al. 2025).

Another important attribute is the availability of co working spaces and professional environments. Co working spaces provide dedicated work areas, meeting rooms, and networking opportunities for remote professionals. These environments not only support productivity but also foster a sense of community among individuals who may otherwise experience social isolation while working remotely. The presence of such facilities contributes to the development of collaborative ecosystems where digital nomads can interact, exchange ideas, and build professional networks (Eban 2025, Rasethuntsa 2023).

Cost of living is also a significant factor influencing the choice of destination. Many digital nomads seek locations where living expenses are relatively affordable compared with major metropolitan areas in their home countries. Destinations that offer safety, reasonable accommodation costs, affordable food options, and accessible transportation systems are more likely to attract long-stay remote workers (Ji et al. 2024, Raza & Salman 2025). At the same time, lifestyle quality remains an essential consideration. Pleasant climate, cultural diversity, safety, recreational opportunities, and vibrant social environments contribute to the overall attractiveness of a destination for workation experiences.

Government policies and visa regulations can also influence the development of digital nomad hubs. Some destinations have introduced specialized visas or long stay permits designed specifically for remote workers (Akgış İlhan et al. 2025). Such policies facilitate extended stays and provide legal frameworks that support international mobility for professionals who work online. Supportive regulatory environments, combined with infrastructure development and community engagement, play a critical role in shaping destinations that successfully attract digital nomad populations (Poulaki et al. 2023). Table 1 explains the destination attributes of Phuket.

Table 1. *Destination Attributes for Digital Nomad Hubs and Evaluation of Phuket*

Attribute	Description	Phuket
Digital Infrastructure	High-speed internet, Wi-Fi, and reliable communication networks essential for remote workers (Berinato 2014, Halford 2005).	Phuket have high speed internet offerings and fiber services.
Co-Working Spaces	Dedicated professional workspaces, meeting rooms, and community environments that support productivity and networking (Bouncken & Reuschl 2018, Fuzi 2015).	Phuket have a lot of co working spaces with basic facilities, hotels with dedicated meeting rooms and coffee shops with stable WIFI.
Accommodation Options	Serviced apartments, co-living spaces, and flexible long-stay rentals that integrate work and living needs (Molz 2012, Yrigoy 2019).	Phuket offers diverse range from luxury resorts to long-stay apartments.
Affordability / Cost of Living	Reasonable accommodation, food, and transportation costs relative to nomads' home countries (Inkson & Myers 2003, Mayerhofer et al. 2004).	Phuket is more affordable relative to Western cities
Lifestyle Quality	Pleasant climate, cultural diversity, safety, recreational opportunities, and vibrant social environments (Benson & O'reilly 2009, Florida 2017).	Phuket has tropical environment, beaches, cultural attractions, and diverse leisure options with premium facilities.
International Accessibility	Air connectivity and transportation networks enabling convenient travel to and from global destinations (Dobruszkes & Mondou 2013, Graham 2006).	Phuket have international airport with direct connections to major regional and global hubs
Supportive Policy and Visa Framework	Long-stay visas, remote work permits, and regulatory frameworks that facilitate extended professional residency (Kofman 2014, Koskela & Beckers 2024).	Thailand have introduced various visas for short and long term stays.

Phuket as an Emerging Workation Destination

Workation is when people work remotely from a leisure destination, blending their professional responsibilities with vacation experiences (Voll et al. 2023). Further, Shin et al., (2024) defines workcation is when someone travels to a destination and works from there, mixing their daily work life with the experience of being a tourist. Phuket has long been recognized as one of Thailand's most prominent tourism destinations, attracting visitors from around the world due to its natural beauty, hospitality services, and cultural attractions. Historically, tourism development in Phuket has focused primarily on leisure-oriented experiences such as beach tourism, recreational activities, and short-term holiday stays. However, the evolving dynamics of global travel and remote work have created opportunities for Phuket to expand its tourism profile beyond conventional vacation tourism (Pattanameteewit 2025). Several characteristics make Phuket particularly suitable for the development of workation tourism. The

island offers a combination of attractive environmental conditions, established tourism infrastructure, and accessibility that aligns with the preferences of digital nomads. Its tropical climate, coastal landscapes, and diverse leisure activities provide an appealing lifestyle environment for individuals who wish to balance work responsibilities with relaxation and exploration. At the same time, Phuket's hospitality sector provides a wide range of accommodation options ranging from luxury resorts to long stay apartments that can support extended visitor stays (Acuner et al. 2025).

The presence of international airports and transportation connectivity further strengthens Phuket's position as a potential hub for remote workers. A remote worker is an employee who carries out their job responsibilities from home or any location outside the traditional office, enabled by digital technology (George et al. 2022). Accessibility allows digital nomads to travel conveniently between Phuket and other regional or global destinations, which is particularly important for individuals who maintain international professional networks. In addition, the growth of digital infrastructure and increasing availability of co working spaces on the island have begun to create environments that support professional productivity alongside tourism experiences (Chuanchen & Wei 2025). Local communities and businesses in Phuket are also increasingly recognizing the potential benefits associated with attracting digital nomads. Digital nomads are people who use technology to work from anywhere in the world, freely choosing where and how often they move, while blending their work and travel lifestyle (Cook 2023). Unlike short term tourists who may spend only a few days in a destination, digital nomads typically remain for weeks or months, contributing to local economies through accommodation, dining, transportation, and other services. Their longer stays can help stabilize tourism demand and create more consistent economic activity for local businesses (Basu 2024).

At the same time, the transformation of Phuket into a digital nomad hub requires careful consideration of sustainable development and community integration. Balancing the needs of long stay remote workers with the interests of local residents and traditional tourism markets is essential for maintaining social and economic harmony. Infrastructure planning, environmental management, and community participation will play important roles in shaping how workation tourism evolves within the destination (Hunt & Thaveeseng 2024). The study of Lacarcel & Huete (2023), mentions a long-stay tourist is someone who moves to a new destination and stays for an extended period because they are looking for a better quality of life. Further, a lifestyle migrant is someone who chooses to relocate to another place not out of necessity, but simply because they want to live a better, more fulfilling life. As global mobility patterns continue to evolve, Phuket's potential transition from a conventional vacation destination to a workation oriented hub represents an important area of conceptual exploration. Understanding the attributes that support digital nomad communities and examining how these attributes align with Phuket's existing tourism ecosystem provides valuable insights into the future development of tourism in the digital era (Moussa et al. 2024, Rillo et al. 2025).

Methodology

This study adopts a conceptual research design to explore the transformation of Phuket from a traditional vacation destination into a potential digital nomad hub within the context of workation tourism. Conceptual research focuses on developing theoretical understanding and synthesizing existing knowledge to explain emerging phenomena (Salawu et al. 2023). In this study, the methodology is based on an extensive review and interpretation of existing academic literature, industry reports, policy discussions, and tourism development perspectives related to workation, remote work mobility, and digital nomadism (Arslan 2024).

The research process involves examining scholarly discussions on the evolution of tourism behavior, particularly the shift from short term leisure travel toward hybrid travel patterns that combine work and tourism experiences. Relevant literature on digital nomads, remote work environments, tourism destination development, and lifestyle mobility is analyzed to identify key themes and conceptual relationships (Heo et al. 2026). Through this approach, the study integrates insights from tourism studies, mobility studies, and digital economy perspectives in order to understand how emerging forms of travel influence destination development strategies.

In addition to academic literature, the study considers secondary sources that discuss the characteristics of destinations that attract digital nomads. These include discussions related to digital infrastructure, accommodation patterns, community environments, lifestyle factors, and tourism ecosystems that support extended stays (Hannonen 2025). By synthesizing these perspectives, the research develops a conceptual understanding of how established tourism destinations may adapt their structures to support workation based travel. The analysis is interpretative in nature and aims to explain the conditions and attributes that may facilitate the positioning of Phuket as a digital nomad hub. This methodological approach allows the study to explore theoretical implications and propose insights for tourism development, destination management, and future research related to workation tourism.

Discussion of the Study

The emergence of workation represents a significant shift in the relationship between tourism, work, and mobility. The traditional understanding of tourism has long been centered on temporary leisure travel where individuals disengage from their professional responsibilities for their well-being (Khalid et al. 2026). However, the increasing adoption of remote work has altered this conventional model by allowing individuals to maintain productivity while traveling. This transformation has created new opportunities for tourism destinations that are capable of supporting both professional activities and leisure experiences (Cook 2023). In this context, Phuket demonstrates considerable potential to evolve from a conventional vacation destination into a workation oriented hub that attracts digital nomads and remote professionals. One of the key elements that supports this transformation is Phuket's established tourism infrastructure. The island has long developed accommodation facilities, hospitality services, transportation networks, and recreational attractions

that cater to international visitors. These existing resources provide a strong foundation for accommodating long stay visitors who seek both comfort and convenience during their workation experiences (Pongwat et al. 2026). Digital nomads often require environments that allow them to balance work commitments with relaxation and social engagement, and Phuket's lifestyle environment offers many of these qualities.

Digital connectivity is another important factor influencing the feasibility of Phuket as a digital nomad destination. Reliable internet access and the availability of co working spaces are essential for individuals who rely on digital platforms to conduct their professional activities (Grimley et al. 2026). As the demand for remote work environments grows, destinations that invest in digital infrastructure and professional working environments are more likely to attract long stay remote workers. Phuket has already begun to see the emergence of co working spaces and digital communities that support this evolving form of mobility (Engelhardt & Rogers 2026).

The economic implications of attracting digital nomads are also significant. Unlike traditional tourists who typically stay for short durations, digital nomads often remain in destinations for several weeks or months. Their extended stays contribute to local economies through spending on accommodation, food, transportation, and other daily services (Klimsch & Puapradit 2023). This form of tourism may create more stable economic activity compared with highly seasonal tourism patterns. As a result, the development of workation tourism may help diversify tourism markets and provide more consistent economic opportunities for local businesses (Treesuk 2025, Tsonev & Basmadzheva 2023). At the same time, the transformation of Phuket into a digital nomad hub requires careful planning and sustainable management. The growth of long stay remote workers may influence housing markets, local infrastructure demand, and community dynamics (Boonkrong et al. 2025). Ensuring that tourism development benefits local communities while preserving environmental and cultural resources is essential for maintaining long term sustainability. Collaboration between policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and local communities will therefore be necessary to manage the opportunities and challenges associated with workation tourism (Khongsawatkiat & Agmapisarn 2024). Overall, the shift from vacation-based tourism toward workation-oriented mobility reflects broader changes in the global economy and workforce. Phuket's combination of lifestyle attractiveness, tourism infrastructure, and accessibility positions it as a promising location for the development of digital nomad communities (Boonkrong et al. 2025). By recognizing these emerging trends and strategically adapting its destination development, Phuket may strengthen its position in the evolving global landscape of workation tourism.

Implications of the Study

Conclusion of the Study

The growing phenomenon of workation represents a fundamental transformation in the intersection of tourism, work, and mobility. This study has examined Phuket's potential to transition from a conventional leisure destination into a competitive hub for digital nomads and remote professionals, drawing on the island's established

tourism infrastructure, lifestyle appeal, and emerging digital ecosystem. The analysis demonstrates that the convergence of remote work adoption and evolving travel behaviors has created new opportunities for tourism destinations that can support hybrid work-leisure experiences. Phuket's existing strengths, including its hospitality infrastructure, international accessibility, and developing co-working environment, position it favorably within the expanding global workation market. The economic benefits of attracting long-stay remote workers, such as reduced seasonal dependence and sustained local spending, further reinforce the strategic value of pursuing workation-oriented destination development. However, realizing this potential requires deliberate investment in digital infrastructure, flexible accommodation models, and coherent policy frameworks that support extended-stay visitors while safeguarding community well-being and environmental sustainability. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to broader discussions on lifestyle mobility, destination competitiveness, and the evolving boundaries of tourism in the digital economy. The workation model challenges traditional conceptualizations of tourists and travel purposes, suggesting that tourism must expand its frameworks to account for hybrid forms of mobility in which professional and leisure activities are deeply integrated. Ultimately, Phuket's ability to position itself as a premier workation destination depends on coordinated efforts among policymakers, tourism authorities, local businesses, and community stakeholders. By strategically aligning infrastructure development, destination branding, and regulatory support with the needs of the growing digital nomad population, Phuket can strengthen its relevance and resilience within the rapidly evolving global tourism landscape.

Theoretical Implications of the Study

The transformation of tourism by the emergence of workation and digital nomad mobility is a growing area of interest in tourism and mobility studies (Ji et al. 2024). This conceptual study contributes to the theoretical understanding of how tourism destinations evolve in response to changes in global work patterns and digital connectivity. Traditionally, tourism research has focused largely on leisure travel, seasonal visitation patterns, and short-term tourist experiences (Ladkin et al., 2023). The rise of remote work challenges these traditional frameworks by introducing new forms of mobility in which travel is no longer limited to leisure purposes but becomes integrated into everyday professional life.

One theoretical implication of this study is the expansion of the conceptual boundaries of tourism. The emergence of workation demonstrates that tourism experiences are increasingly embedded within broader lifestyle practices. Individuals who participate in workation do not separate work and leisure in the same way as traditional tourists (Stich et al. 2025). Instead, they engage in a hybrid form of mobility that combines professional productivity with recreational experiences. This shift suggests that tourism scholars may need to reconsider traditional definitions of tourists, travelers, and tourism experiences. The integration of work and travel suggests that tourism can serve not only as a leisure activity but also as a component of lifestyle mobility in the digital economy (Bassyouny & Wilkesmann 2023).

The study also contributes to the growing literature on digital nomadism and lifestyle migration. Digital nomads represent a distinct category of mobile professionals who rely on digital technologies to sustain their work while relocating across destinations (Gupta et al. 2026). Unlike conventional migrants who relocate permanently or tourists who travel temporarily, digital nomads occupy an intermediate space characterized by temporary yet extended stays in different destinations. The conceptual exploration of Phuket as a digital nomad hub highlights the importance of understanding how destinations adapt to this emerging form of mobility. By focusing on the transformation of a well-established tourism destination into a workation environment, the study contributes to theoretical discussions on the relationship among tourism infrastructure, lifestyle mobility, and digital work practices.

Another important theoretical implication relates to destination development and competitiveness. Traditional tourism competitiveness models often emphasize factors such as natural attractions, cultural heritage, hospitality services, and accessibility (Song & Xu 2024). While these factors remain important, the emergence of digital nomad tourism introduces additional elements that influence destination attractiveness. These include digital infrastructure, co-working environments, extended stay accommodation, and supportive social ecosystems. The study suggests that the competitiveness of tourism destinations in the digital era may increasingly depend on their ability to support remote work environments alongside leisure tourism experiences.

The study also highlights the intersection between tourism development and the digital economy. As remote work becomes more widely accepted across industries, tourism destinations may begin to function as temporary living and working environments for globally mobile professionals. This phenomenon challenges traditional distinctions between tourism spaces and residential spaces. From a theoretical perspective, the emergence of workation destinations reflects the broader restructuring of spatial relationships between work, residence, and leisure. Destinations such as Phuket may therefore be understood not only as tourism locations but also as temporary professional environments within global digital networks (Shin et al. 2024).

Furthermore, the study contributes to conceptual discussions on sustainable tourism development. The attraction of digital nomads who stay for longer durations may influence tourism patterns by reducing dependence on short-term mass tourism flows. Longer stays can encourage deeper engagement with local cultures, communities, and everyday environments (Jiwasiddi et al. 2024). At the same time, the presence of long-stay visitors may introduce new social and economic dynamics that require careful management. Understanding these dynamics contributes to broader theoretical debates about how tourism destinations can evolve to balance economic opportunities with social and environmental sustainability. Finally, this study provides a foundation for future research. As workation continues to grow as a global trend, researchers may explore various aspects, including the motivations of digital nomads, the experiences of local communities, the economic impacts of long-stay remote workers, and the policy frameworks that support digital nomad mobility. The conceptual insights generated through this study, therefore, contribute to the development of future research agendas in tourism, mobility studies, and digital economy research.

Practical Implications of the Study

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study offers several practical implications for policymakers, tourism authorities, destination managers, and local stakeholders interested in developing Phuket as a workation destination. The growing global community of digital nomads and remote professionals presents new opportunities for tourism destinations seeking to diversify their visitor markets and strengthen economic resilience. Understanding how Phuket can position itself as an attractive destination for workation tourism may help stakeholders design strategies aligned with emerging travel behaviors. One practical implication relates to the importance of digital infrastructure development. Reliable and high speed internet connectivity is a fundamental requirement for remote workers who depend on digital platforms to perform their professional tasks. Tourism authorities and local governments may therefore consider prioritizing investments in digital infrastructure across the island. Expanding internet coverage, ensuring stable connectivity, and supporting digital service providers can significantly enhance Phuket's attractiveness to digital nomads who require dependable communication networks for their work.

Another practical implication involves the development of co working spaces and professional environments. Dedicated workspaces equipped with modern facilities can play an important role in supporting productivity for remote professionals. The presence of co working spaces also fosters networking opportunities and social interaction among digital nomads. Local entrepreneurs and businesses may explore opportunities to establish co working hubs that integrate professional facilities with social and community activities. Such environments can contribute to the development of vibrant digital nomad communities within the destination.

Accommodation strategies also represent an important area for practical development. Since digital nomads often stay for longer periods compared with traditional tourists, accommodation providers may consider offering flexible rental arrangements and facilities that support both living and working needs. Serviced apartments, co-living spaces, and long-stay packages can be particularly attractive to remote professionals seeking comfortable environments for extended stays. Hotels and resorts may also adapt certain facilities to accommodate guests who require quiet workspaces and reliable connectivity. Marketing and destination branding strategies can also benefit from recognizing the growing demand for workation experiences. Tourism promotion efforts may highlight Phuket's lifestyle, cultural diversity, natural attractions, and supportive work environment. Emphasizing the ability to combine productivity with relaxation may help position Phuket as an appealing destination for digital nomads seeking balance between professional responsibilities and personal well being. Digital marketing campaigns, partnerships with remote work communities, and international promotion initiatives may further strengthen Phuket's visibility within global digital nomad networks.

Finally, policy frameworks may play a crucial role in facilitating workation tourism. Governments may consider regulatory measures that support long-stay visitors who work remotely while residing temporarily in the destination. Clear guidelines related to visas, taxation, and residency arrangements can help create an environment that encourages international professionals to choose Phuket as a

workation destination. By aligning policy initiatives with tourism development strategies, Phuket may strengthen its capacity to attract digital nomads while ensuring responsible and sustainable tourism growth. Overall, the practical implications of this study highlight the importance of strategic planning and collaboration among multiple stakeholders. By recognizing the opportunities presented by workation tourism and developing supportive environments for remote professionals, Phuket may successfully transition from a traditional vacation destination into a dynamic hub for digital nomad communities in the evolving global tourism landscape.

Limitations and Future Studies

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research adopts a conceptual approach and does not include empirical data or field-based evidence. As a result, the arguments presented rely primarily on interpretations of existing literature and theoretical discussions on workation, digital nomadism, and tourism development. Second, the study focuses specifically on Phuket as a potential digital nomad hub, which may limit the generalizability of the insights to other tourism destinations with different socio-economic and infrastructural conditions. Third, the study does not examine the perspectives of key stakeholders such as residents, tourism businesses, policymakers, or digital nomads themselves. Their experiences and perceptions could provide deeper insights into the practical realities of workation tourism. Future research may address these limitations by conducting empirical investigations, surveys, or case studies that explore the impacts and experiences associated with workation tourism in Phuket and similar destinations.

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