

Review (Research Article, Review, Case Report, etc.)

Exploring the Tourism Products Development Theoretical Framework

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Abstract

This article investigates the theoretical framework for tourism product development, emphasizing its significance in enhancing the global tourism sector. As tourism increasingly drives economic growth and cultural exchange, the demand for innovative and sustainable tourism products has surged. This study defines a tourism product as a combination of tangible and intangible elements that provide unique experiences for travelers. The framework integrates insights from various disciplines, including economics, marketing, and environmental studies, to address the complexities of tourism management.

Central to this framework is the sustainable tourism development model, which prioritizes economic efficiency, environmental protection, and social responsibility. The article highlights the importance of destination management, asserting that effective tourism product development relies on competitive capacity, product innovation, and stakeholder collaboration. This collaborative approach ensures that products meet diverse market needs while leveraging local resources and cultural heritage. The research also emphasizes the importance of context-specific strategies in tourism development, particularly in regions like Vietnam. Here, regional characteristics and economic integration are vital for tailoring tourism offerings to meet local and international tourist expectations. Government policies play a crucial role, with supportive regulations and infrastructure investments fostering a conducive environment for sustainable tourism growth.

Furthermore, the role of digital technologies and innovations is explored, showcasing how tools like big data and online platforms can enhance customer experiences and streamline operations. The article concludes by synthesizing theoretical and practical insights into a comprehensive framework for tourism product development. This framework serves as a guide for practitioners and researchers, enabling them to navigate challenges and seize opportunities in an evolving tourism landscape. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector, ensuring its resilience in a rapidly changing global environment.

Keywords

Tourism, Tourism product, Product development process, Tourism theoretical framework

1. Introduction

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Tourism has become a vital component of the global economy, significantly contributing to job creation, cultural exchange, and sustainable development. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism sector accounts for a substantial percentage of global GDP and employment, illustrating its importance to both developed and developing nations. As travelers increasingly seek unique and immersive experiences, the demand for innovative tourism products has never been higher. This evolving landscape necessitates a comprehensive framework for tourism product development that can adapt to changing consumer preferences while ensuring sustainability and economic viability.

The concept of a tourism product extends beyond mere physical offerings; it encompasses a blend of services, experiences, and interactions that together create memorable journeys for travelers. As defined in the context of tourism, products can be both tangible, such as accommodations and transportation, and intangible, like experiences and perceptions. This duality adds complexity to the development process, requiring a nuanced understanding of various factors that influence consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

A robust theoretical framework for tourism product development is essential for guiding both practitioners and researchers. This framework integrates insights from multiple disciplines, including economics, marketing, and environmental studies, to create a holistic approach to tourism management. Central to this framework is the recognition that tourism development must prioritize sustainability, balancing economic growth with environmental protection and social equity. The sustainable tourism development model, introduced by Inskeep (1991), serves as a foundational pillar, emphasizing the need for economic efficiency, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility in tourism product offerings.

Furthermore, destination management plays a crucial role in the development of tourism products. Ritchie & Crouch (2003) highlight that effective destination development relies on a competitive capacity, product innovation, and the collaboration of various stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensures that tourism products are not only appealing but also meet the diverse needs of different market segments. By leveraging local resources, cultural heritage, and

community involvement, tourism enterprises can create unique products that resonate with travelers while supporting local economies.

In Vietnam, the importance of context-specific strategies cannot be overstated. Hoa (2014) argues for tourism development solutions that consider regional characteristics and levels of economic integration. This localized approach enables stakeholders to tailor their offerings to the preferences and expectations of both domestic and international tourists. Additionally, the role of government policies in fostering a conducive environment for tourism development cannot be ignored. By implementing supportive regulations and investment incentives, governments can enhance the infrastructure, training, and resources necessary for effective tourism product development.

As digital technologies continue to transform the tourism landscape, the theory of the tourism innovation ecosystem has emerged as a vital consideration. Buhalis (2003) discuss how digital tools, big data, and online platforms can facilitate the creation of innovative tourism products and improve customer experiences. This evolution underscores the importance of adaptability in tourism product development, enabling businesses to respond swiftly to changing consumer behaviors and preferences.

In summary, this article aims to explore the theoretical foundations of tourism product development by synthesizing existing literature and providing a comprehensive framework. By addressing key concepts, components, and influencing factors, the study seeks to enhance understanding of how tourism products can be effectively developed and managed. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector, ensuring its resilience in a rapidly changing global environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concepts

2.1.1. Products

A product encompasses all elements that can satisfy a need

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or desire and are offered for sale in the market with the aim of attracting consumer attention and usage. According to Kotler & Kevin (2013), a product is anything that can be introduced to the market to generate attention, acceptance, usage, or consumption and has the potential to fulfill a legally permissible desire or need.

Products can be classified into tangible and intangible categories. Tangible products include items such as automobiles, bicycles, refrigerators, food, and books. Intangible products may consist of services such as airline services, hotel accommodations, banking services, and healthcare services. In the context of retail, products are often referred to as goods, while in manufacturing, products are typically purchased in the form of raw materials.

Kotler and Kevin (2013) further categorize products into five levels:

Core Benefits: These are the fundamental benefits that the buyer seeks.

Generic Product: This refers to the basic product as it exists in its true form.

Expected Product: This encompasses the attributes and conditions that buyers typically anticipate when purchasing a product.

Augmented Product: This includes additional services and benefits that sellers provide to differentiate their product from competitors.

Potential Product: This refers to a collection of new attributes and services that may eventually be added to the goods.

From a marketing perspective, products are divided into three primary levels: core product, actual product, and augmented product.

Level 1 - Core Product: When creating a product, manufacturers must research and understand factors such as: What do buyers need? What core benefits does this product provide that customers seek? These are the values that businesses aim to offer to consumers. The underlying benefits may vary depending on contextual factors and individual goals of customers. Thus, marketers must conduct thorough research to identify the varying demands and aspects of their customers' needs.

Level 2 - Actual Product: This level includes the tangible features of the product, such as characteristics, design, and specific brand identity. Customers rely on these factors to make purchasing decisions and to differentiate between brands.

Level 3 - Augmented Product: This encompasses elements such as installation convenience, additional services offered at the point of sale, warranty conditions, and credit arrangements. These factors contribute to the varying degrees of completeness in consumer perceptions.

2.1.2. Tourism Product

In economics, tourism services are defined as similar to goods but in an intangible form (such as experiences and perceptions) provided by individuals, organizations, or establishments to satisfy the needs of tourists. This begins with the traveler's movement to their accommodation, aiming to maximize their recreational and leisure needs while generating economic benefits for the service providers and ensuring compliance with legal regulations.

In a broader sense, tourism services (referred to in English as "Travel Services") can be understood as "all economic activities and outcomes that one party can offer to tourists, which are primarily intangible and do not lead to ownership of a tangible product." The products of tourism services may or may not be linked to a physical product.

According to the Tourism Law enacted by the National Assembly of Vietnam in 2017, tourism services are defined as "the provision of services related to transportation, travel, accommodation, entertainment, dining, guiding, and other services to meet the needs of tourists."

Thus, tourism services represent a process through which tourists benefit from interactions with tourism service providers. These interactions yield advantages for the service providers while meeting the tourists' needs. The primary characteristics of tourism services include:

- **Intangibility:** This characteristic indicates that tourism products cannot be touched, seen, or experienced prior to consumption. Tourists are unable to evaluate the quality of tourism services beforehand but can only assess them through personal experiences. For example, when purchasing an all-inclusive tour, customers receive a contract and a promise regarding service quality at the destination. Tourists can utilize amenities such as hotel rooms and recreational facilities during their trip but cannot take them with them. After the trip, tourists can only evaluate the quality of the all-inclusive tour based on their perceptions.

In practice, tourism services are often accompanied by other physical products; however, this does not alter their intangible nature. Therefore, tourism service providers must offer comprehensive information that not only describes the services but also emphasizes the benefits that tourists will receive to persuade them to purchase their services.

- **Inconsistency:** Tourism services are subject to variability, with quality depending on the provider, location, and timing. Since services are produced and consumed simultaneously, quality control cannot be implemented. Additionally, fluctuations in customer demand hinder consistent service delivery, especially during peak seasons. Service provision relies on staff interaction, meaning they cannot ensure uniformity in service quality even during the same working hours.

- **Non-transferability of Ownership:** In the provision of

tourism services, no ownership rights are transferred from the service provider to the tourist (the seller and buyer of the service). Tourists have rights only to the service process and not to the ownership of the services. In other words, tourists pay to access the services provided by the service providers, which they can use for a specific period corresponding to the amount they spend, rather than owning the tourism service products. For instance, when dining at a restaurant, tourists can only use the facilities such as tables and chairs for a limited time.

- **Simultaneity of Production and Consumption:** The simultaneity of production and consumption in tourism services is a crucial characteristic that distinguishes them from the tangible attributes of conventional goods. The service interactions between providers and customers are inseparable. The process of service delivery and usage occurs nearly concurrently in the same time and space. Unlike conventional goods, which customers can purchase to store and use later, tourism services cannot be reserved or stocked. This implies that tourism service providers lose potential revenue if they do not have tourists. For example, the operation of transportation services is continuously dependent on customer consumption without any breaks. When customers wish to use a service, they must be present at the location, as the service cannot be transported to them.

- **Immobility of Tourism Services:** The immobility of tourism services is evident in that some tourism service products cannot be transported from one location to another like conventional goods. For example, in the case of services such as resort rentals, hotels, restaurants, and beaches, tourism establishments serve as both the production site and the service delivery location. Therefore, tourists must visit these establishments to consume the services.

To effectively provide tourism services, service providers must thoroughly analyze and evaluate all factors, including natural and social conditions, before deciding to develop rental and leisure services. Additionally, for immobile tourism service products, service providers need to engage in robust marketing and promotional activities to attract tourists to the destinations.

- **Comprehensiveness of Tourism Services:** The comprehensiveness of tourism services reflects the tendency to offer all-inclusive packages that cater to diverse needs and desires of tourists for recreation and relaxation at a single destination, thereby saving time spent searching for different providers. All-inclusive tourism services encompass basic services (transportation, accommodation, bar services), supplementary services (spa, haircuts, souvenirs, and communication services), and distinctive services (entertainment, sports, sightseeing, and exploration of the destination).

- **Seasonality of Tourism:** Seasonality is significantly

influenced by natural and social factors. For instance, Da Lat experiences a higher influx of tourists in autumn and winter due to favorable weather and appealing seasonal cuisine. The seasonality of tourism can lead to imbalances in service supply and demand, resulting in potential declines in service quality during high-demand periods and wastage of resources during off-peak times. To mitigate these imbalances, tourism service providers should implement strategies to attract tourists, offering appealing promotional programs and alternative travel packages to engage customers during off-peak periods.

2.2. Components of Tourism Products

2.2.1. Destination

A destination is a fundamental component of a tourism product. It encompasses landmarks, tourist sites, regions, or countries that travelers seek to explore and experience. Destinations may possess unique characteristics such as natural landscapes, cultural heritage, distinctive architecture, beautiful beaches, or notable events and festivals.

2.2.2. Destination

The transportation factor pertains to the means and infrastructure used for travel to and within a destination. This includes various modes of transport such as airplanes, trains, buses, boats, bicycles, automobiles, and public transportation systems. The convenience, safety, and diversity of transportation options play a crucial role in influencing travelers' decisions regarding destination choice and their overall experiences.

2.2.3. Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure encompasses the facilities and services that support the tourism industry, including hotels, guesthouses, resorts, restaurants, tourist information centers, golf courses, fitness and sports facilities, parks, and recreational areas. The development and quality of tourism infrastructure significantly impact the comfort, convenience, and overall experiences of travelers.

2.2.4. Tourism Services

Tourism services encompass all activities, experiences, and services provided to travelers during their engagement with tourism products. This may include organized tours, travel guidance, ticketing services, transportation services, culinary experiences featuring local cuisine, shopping services, and recreational activities. The quality and diversity of tourism services are critical determinants of the tourist experience and significantly influence their overall satisfaction.

2.2.5. Activities and Experiences

Tourism activities and experiences encompass the various engagements that travelers may partake in while exploring and experiencing a destination. These activities can include hiking, mountaineering, scuba diving, fishing, visiting historical sites and scenic attractions, and participating in cultural events such as festivals, artistic performances, and the exploration of local art and culture. Additionally, travelers may engage in recreational activities such as golfing, visiting amusement parks, cruising, and participating in sports like surfing, rock climbing, cycling, and skiing. Culinary experiences, including sampling local dishes and participating in cooking classes or special dining events, also form an integral part of the tourism experience.

2.2.6. Culture and History

Cultural and historical factors play a significant role in tourism products. A destination may feature cultural heritage, museums, historical landmarks, and unique traditions and customs. Tourists have the opportunity to explore and learn about the local culture, visit important historical sites, and engage in activities related to cultural and historical significance.

2.2.7. Security and Safety

Security and safety factors are essential for ensuring trust and peace of mind for travelers engaging with tourism products. This encompasses personal security, property security, traffic safety, food safety, and emergency medical services. Reliable and effective security and safety measures facilitate a secure and assured travel experience for tourists. These factors are closely interconnected and contribute to the overall integrity of tourism products. The level of development and quality of each factor significantly influences traveler satisfaction and the success of tourism offerings.

2.3. Factors Influencing the Development of Tourism Products

2.3.1. Political Factors

Stable political conditions serve as a foundation for the formation and development of relationships across various sectors globally, particularly in the current era of globalization. On a global scale, international tourism continues to expand. Both tourism in general and international tourism specifically can only thrive in an atmosphere of peace, stability, and friendship among nations. The improving global climate of peace, characterized by nations moving towards cooperation and dialogue rather than confrontation, has led to

unprecedented growth in international tourism.

In practice, peaceful and stable countries tend to attract a significant number of visitors. For instance, countries in Northern and Western Europe exemplify this trend. A stable political and security environment allows tourists to explore and engage with local communities freely and joyfully, without the fear of instability diminishing the appeal and enjoyment of their travels. Conversely, nations with unstable political situations—such as coups, civil wars, or terrorism—not only experience a decline in tourist numbers but also face the risk of cultural heritage sites being damaged during conflicts.

In the context of globalization, the ongoing expansion of international tourism underscores the necessity for a peaceful and stable environment, fostering goodwill among nations. The current trend towards improved global peace, with countries prioritizing cooperation and dialogue over conflict, has enabled international tourism to flourish as never before.

Thus, peace and political stability serve as crucial catalysts for tourism activities. Conversely, through tourism, individuals express their desire to live and work in an environment of peace and friendship.

2.3.2. Economic Factors

The development of the economy is a crucial factor in generating the demand for tourism and transforming human desires into reality. It is implausible to assert that there is an increasing demand for tourism within society if the economy is underdeveloped and residents' incomes are low.

The role of economic factors manifests in various dimensions. Economic growth stimulates the demand for leisure and leads to the development of tourism services. Economists have indicated that the emergence and expansion of diverse needs, including those related to tourism, are a direct result of advancements in social production. As social production develops, the demand for tourism among residents increases, and the quality of services diversifies.

In developing countries, the demand for tourism is generally limited. In contrast, in developed nations, the demand for tourism is high and varied. In addition to weekend getaways, citizens often seek extended vacations at coastal areas during the summer or in mountainous regions during the winter, whether domestically or internationally. Clearly, such demands must be based on a stable and robust foundation of social production.

The evolution of social production primarily facilitates the emergence of tourism and subsequently accelerates its growth. There exists a certain gap between demand and reality, which largely depends on the level of development of social production: the higher the level, the shorter the gap. The development of tourism is also influenced by social production. To address the needs for accommodation,

transportation, leisure, and travel, appropriate infrastructure and technical facilities must be established. Essential conditions for tourists, such as railway networks, transportation means, hotels, restaurants, and recreational areas, cannot be relied upon in economies that are still developing.

The development of social production creates conditions for various other factors impacting tourism, including the demand for leisure, entertainment, living standards, and free time, as well as both material and intangible products serving tourists. Within the economy, the activities of certain sectors, such as industry, agriculture, and transportation, are critical for tourism development.

Technical infrastructure is closely linked to economic development. Infrastructure includes systems of roads, train stations, airports, ports, railways, telecommunications, water supply and drainage systems, and electrical networks. Well-developed infrastructure serves as a catalyst for socio-economic activities in general and the tourism sector in particular. For tourism, it is a prerequisite that ensures tourists can easily access attractions and meet their communication and other needs during their trips. Among the infrastructural elements, the transportation system is the most significant for tourism development, as it directly relates to ensuring safety and convenience for tourists, providing increasingly affordable transportation services, accelerating transit times, and extending the duration of stays at destinations, even to remote areas. Favorable infrastructure conditions facilitate the construction and implementation of tourism development initiatives. Conversely, if infrastructural conditions are limited, the development of tourism must prioritize improving the system to meet evolving demands.

The analysis above demonstrates that infrastructure is closely intertwined with tourism development and serves as a critical basis for the planning and advancement of tourism in each locality.

2.3.3. Government Policies

The role of government policy in the development of local tourism products is a critical aspect of building and promoting the tourism sector. The following points highlight the significance of these policies:

Encouragement and Support for Investment:

The government implements mechanisms and policies to encourage and support investment in the development of high-quality tourism infrastructure and services. Budget allocations for tourism facilities, such as transportation infrastructure, hotels, restaurants, and shopping centers, create a favorable environment for tourists and enhance their experiences.

Research and Development Guidance for Tourism Products:

The government influences tourism by supporting research

and guiding the development of tourism products. This includes identifying specific tourism products for each region, such as coastal tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, and community-based tourism. The government establishes development strategies based on market research, tourist demand, and local potential.

Training and Development of Tourism Human Resources:

The government invests in the training and development of tourism human resources, offering specialized programs in tourism management, guiding services, and related activities. This investment cultivates a high-quality workforce that enhances service quality and the image of the region.

Investment in New and Sustainable Tourism Products:

The government promotes investment in the development of new, distinctive tourism products that have a positive environmental impact. The focus on sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, community tourism, and cultural tourism, aids in resource conservation and provides long-term benefits to local communities.

2.3.4. Scientific and technological factors

Scientific and technological factors play a crucial role in the development of local tourism products. The following aspects illustrate how science and technology impact tourism:

Enhancing the Travel Experience:

Information and communication technology have transformed the ways in which individuals research, book, and experience travel. Mobile applications, websites, and online booking systems enable tourists to easily access information about destinations, select services, and make reservations without the need to visit travel agencies in person.

Resource Management and Environmental Protection:

Technology facilitates the monitoring of tourism resources, such as water, forests, and marine environments. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) enable effective management of tourist areas and ensure environmental conservation.

Development of New Tourism Products:

Technology allows for the creation of unique travel experiences, such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). Through these technologies, tourists can explore historical, cultural, and natural sites without needing to visit them physically.

Time Savings and Process Optimization:

Technology improves the management processes of hotels, restaurants, and other tourism services. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software optimize operations and save time.

Data Analysis and Forecasting:

Technology enables the collection and analysis of data regarding tourist behavior. Based on this data, tourism enterprises can anticipate trends and tailor their business

strategies accordingly.

In summary, scientific and technological factors are essential in the development of local tourism products, enhancing visitor experiences, protecting the environment, and optimizing management processes.

2.3.5. Social factors

Alongside labor activities, the population also has a need for rest and travel. As the population grows, the number of individuals participating in tourism activities increases correspondingly. The expanding workforce in production and services is directly linked to the tourism economy. Understanding the ethnic composition, demographic characteristics, and the distribution and density of the population is crucial for guiding tourism development. The demand for tourism is influenced by various social and demographic factors, including occupational structure, age distribution, population density, and community psychology, all of which impact the planning of tourism products.

The tourism sector provides significant employment opportunities, particularly for female workers. In rural areas, tourism generates numerous job opportunities for local residents, leading to positive social changes and improved living standards. It contributes to mitigating urbanization, balancing population distribution, and enhancing infrastructure from urban to rural areas, thereby alleviating the negative impacts of urbanization. Moreover, tourism serves as an effective means of promoting the culture and customs of the Vietnamese people to international visitors, creating further opportunities for various forms of tourism.

Closely associated with social factors are cultural and social infrastructures, including human resource training, cultural facilities, and cultural organizations. The advancement of the healthcare sector enhances public access to medical services, establishing a foundation for disease prevention and food safety, which contributes to tourism development. Improvements in education elevate the quality of the tourism workforce and enhance community awareness of the cultural environment within tourism. Strengthening the management, preservation, restoration, and promotion of historical and cultural heritage sites is essential for cultural tourism services. Additionally, the development of sports and physical activities is a significant factor in enhancing experiential tourism activities, such as beach sports and sports tourism tours.

2.3.6. Natural environment factors

In the development of tourism products, analyzing environmental factors plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of these offerings. The following are key natural environmental factors that should be considered:

Natural Tourism Destinations:

Tourism destinations may consist of readily available natural resources, such as scenic landscapes, plateaus, bays, beaches, lakes, waterfalls, valleys, and forests. Analyzing these locations helps to better understand the potential and limitations of tourism products. Climate and weather significantly influence tourist experiences and the viability of product development. A destination with favorable climatic conditions is inherently more appealing to visitors.

Ecosystems and Biodiversity:

Protecting ecosystems and maintaining biodiversity are essential for the sustainable development of nature-based tourism.

Natural Resources:

Resources such as water, soil, vegetation, wildlife, and minerals are vital in the construction of tourism products. Analyzing these resources allows for their optimal use and protection, ensuring that their exploitation does not harm the environment.

Impact of Climate Change on Tourism:

Vietnam is among the five countries most severely affected by climate change (World Bank Group & Asian Development Bank, 2021). The manifestations of this impact include rising average temperatures, sea-level rise, extreme weather events (such as storms, heavy rainfall, and drought), saltwater intrusion, and the degradation of coastal and mountainous ecosystems. These changes have profound implications for tourism resources, infrastructure, tourist behavior, and product planning. Climate change leads to coastal erosion, rising sea levels, and affects recreational beaches. Elevated temperatures and harsh weather threaten forest ecosystems, streams, and caves, diminishing their inherent attractiveness. Droughts, floods, and saltwater intrusion disrupt seasonal patterns and rural landscapes, impacting seasonal experiential products. Roads, hotels, and recreational areas are affected by flooding, landslides, and storms, which degrade service quality and increase maintenance costs. Tourists increasingly prioritize climate safety, opting to avoid areas at risk of natural disasters. Climate change necessitates that businesses invest further in disaster preparedness and environmental protection.

2.4. Tourism Product Development Process

The development of tourism products is a fundamental aspect of tourism management and marketing. According to Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (2010), a tourism product encompasses not only the core service but also a combination of tangible and intangible elements designed to provide a comprehensive experience for travelers. To ensure attractiveness and feasibility, the construction of tourism products must adhere to a systematic process, encompassing the stages of idea generation, design, testing, implementation, evaluation, and adjustment.

Middleton and Clarke (2012) emphasize that the

development of tourism products must be linked to the analysis of target markets and the rational utilization of available resources. This process should commence with a thorough assessment of customer needs and the potential of the destination, followed by the design of the product structure and the implementation of trials. Subsequent steps include positioning, pricing, communication, and managing the customer experience.

From a destination management perspective, Cooper et al (2008) propose a model for the development of tourism products that integrates regional development strategies, highlighting the importance of SWOT analysis, market segmentation, and the connectivity of local tourism value chains. Buhalis (2003) expands the theoretical framework by incorporating technological factors into the product development process, particularly in the context of digital tourism and rapidly changing consumer behaviors.

In Vietnam, numerous researchers have approached this process from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Nguyễn Văn Đình and Nguyễn Đình Thọ (2006) assert that the construction of tourism products should begin with market analysis and the identification of target customer characteristics, followed by the development of appropriate content and services. Trần Thị Vân Hoa (2014) proposes a six-step process comprising: resource assessment, needs identification, product design, testing, refinement, and promotion, while also considering feasibility across different regions.

Additionally, applied research by Hạnh (2017) and Trang (2020) provides practical evidence for the specialized tourism product development process in the Red River Delta and mountainous areas of Northern Vietnam. These authors particularly emphasize the significance of local experiences, community involvement, and the ability to connect local service chains.

A synthesis of theoretical and practical viewpoints allows for the summarization of the tourism product development process into seven main steps: (1) Resource assessment, (2) Market analysis, (3) Idea generation for products, (4) Design of content and services, (5) Product testing, (6) Market launch, and (7) Evaluation and adjustment. This process must be implemented flexibly, considering the type of tourism, regional characteristics, and evolving consumer behaviors.

Step 1: Research and Assess the Potential of Tourism Resources

The objective of this task is to identify natural and cultural resources that can be leveraged to create products while analyzing accessibility, attractiveness, and differentiation compared to existing offerings. The content of Step 1 includes field surveys, evaluation of uniqueness, conservation status, organizational capacity for activities, and the identification of unique selling points.

Step 2: Target Market Research

The objective of this step is to understand the needs, preferences, purchasing capacity, and consumption trends of potential customer segments. The tasks involved include segmenting the market by age, nationality, purpose of travel, and consumer behavior; conducting competitor analysis (benchmarking); and forecasting visitor numbers and average spending.

Step 3: Designing Tourism Product Ideas

The aim of this step is to propose product ideas that align with available resources and market demands. This includes selecting the type of product (such as ecotourism, experiential, cultural, recreational, or spiritual tourism), determining the duration, itinerary, and accompanying services, and outlining the product name, messaging, and positioning strategy.

A critical aspect of this process is market positioning. Market positioning refers to the design of a service product that offers distinct characteristics compared to competitors' products, thereby creating a unique image for the target market. For tourism enterprises, market positioning also involves identifying the service product's place in relation to similar offerings from competitors. For instance, a tourism product in Mũi Né, such as windsurfing, may differ from similar offerings in Nha Trang by targeting customers seeking adrenaline-fueled water sports.

Positioning aims to embed unique benefits into the minds of target customers. The market positioning of tourism services is determined by consumers based on specific attributes, indicating how the service has established a place in consumers' memories compared to competitors. Thus, to effectively position tourism products, marketers must actively seek strategies to create a favorable image of their services in the minds of their chosen target market. By understanding customer expectations, perceptions, and evaluations, effective positioning can be achieved through product attributes, pricing, quality, or visual imagery.

Positioning can follow two primary approaches.

The first approach is direct competitive positioning, where a company identifies its position in relation to that of its competitors. Competitors' positions serve as a benchmark for comparing the company's products, prompting the development of competitive strategies to capture market share. This approach is chosen when certain conditions are met, such as the company's ability to produce a superior product compared to competitors, the existence of a sufficiently large market for shared market share, and the company's stronger financial capacity aligned with its strengths.

The second approach involves positioning by identifying a market niche that is currently unaddressed by competitors. A company may choose this strategy when certain conditions are met: the ability to produce a product that meets the specific

requirements of the target market, ensuring that production costs do not exceed projections and that the market segment is not overly constrained.

Positioning serves as the foundation of product management. Businesses must clearly define their position and product portfolio in relation to competing products within a specific market segment. This process also involves understanding customer perceptions. Positioning entails establishing a destination or attraction that appeals to the target audience by examining direct competition and identifying unmet needs within specific customer groups

Burke and Resnick (1991) propose four positioning strategies:

Positioning in relation to the target market: This involves comparing the business with others targeting the same customer segments (e.g., business travelers, leisure travelers, families, students).

Positioning in relation to price and quality: This encompasses products that fall within high, medium, and low-price ranges.

Positioning in relation to product type: This includes categories such as beach tourism, mountain tourism, conference tourism, and seminars.

Positioning relative to competitors: An example is the campaign by Hertz Rental, which uses the tagline “We try harder.” Although Hertz is not the market leader, it strives to become one. Similarly, Sealink Ferries promotes itself with the slogan “Ferry nice Prices” to differentiate itself from more expensive competitors.

Businesses can adopt a combination of these strategies rather than relying solely on one. Effective product positioning is crucial for the successful introduction and development of new products in the market.

Ideas for developing tourism programs often arise from various sources. For instance, 55% of ideas originate internally within the company, where new concepts can be gathered through research and development departments, leadership teams, and especially from employees who directly interact with customers. Daily customer service activities provide invaluable feedback that can lead to innovative product ideas. Additionally, 28% of new product ideas emerge from direct observations or listening to customers during market research. Customer complaints and suggestions can also guide companies in refining and refreshing their products.

Research indicates that 27% of new product ideas are derived from competitor analysis. Many companies purchase competitor products and analyze their methods of operation and sales strategies to inform their own product development.

New product ideas may also come from distribution intermediaries and suppliers. Throughout the distribution process, these intermediaries and suppliers can provide insights into customer complaints and new product ideas.

Furthermore, new concepts can be sourced from various platforms, including media outlets, conferences, advertising agencies, market research firms, investors, and academic institutions.

Step 4: Organizing Product Content Development

The objective of this step is to develop a comprehensive product that can be implemented in practice. Key tasks include designing the travel experience script, which encompasses the destination, activities, services, guidance, and safety protocols; determining pricing, operational methods, and distribution channels; and selecting service providers (such as transportation, accommodation, and food services).

Step 5: Testing and Adjustment

The purpose of this step is to assess the feasibility and actual experience of the product prior to its market launch. Tasks involve organizing prototype tours, gathering feedback from customers, tour guides, and suppliers; adjusting itineraries, durations, and services that are deemed unsuitable; and finalizing the product script and documentation (including guides, brochures, and technical details).

During this phase, a limited quantity of the product is produced for testing, after which it can be scaled up. However, there are differing perspectives on this approach. Some argue that tourism products are services that customers cannot see or evaluate before consumption, making design and modification challenging. Therefore, it is recommended to limit the number of participants in the initial testing phase and to incorporate their feedback to refine the product before broader market distribution.

Once the product has been tested, experts analyze its financial, organizational, and technical feasibility, after which the enterprise officially introduces it to the market and employs flexible marketing mix strategies to facilitate market development.

Step 6: Promotion and Market Launch

The objective of this step is to introduce the product to the target audience and stimulate sales. Key tasks include developing a marketing strategy (encompassing digital, offline, and word-of-mouth approaches); collaborating with online travel agencies (OTAs), agents, and distribution channels; and organizing promotional programs and complimentary trial experiences (FAM trips).

Step 7: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Product Improvement

The purpose of this step is to ensure that the product remains attractive and aligned with changing customer needs and real-world conditions. Tasks involve regularly collecting feedback from customers and partners; analyzing data regarding visitor numbers, revenue, and satisfaction levels; and enhancing itineraries, adding new services, and increasing seasonal appeal.

2.5. Theoretical Foundations of Tourism

Development Solutions

Tourism development is a comprehensive process that encompasses the exploitation, preservation, and enhancement of resource values, while organizing activities to meet the increasingly diverse needs of travelers. According to Hall & Page (2006), tourism development entails not only the expansion of operations but also the improvement of service quality, economic efficiency, environmental sustainability, and social equity. Therefore, the study and proposal of tourism development solutions must be grounded in a multidimensional theoretical framework that integrates perspectives from economics, management, environment, and culture.

One prominent theoretical foundation is the sustainable tourism development model introduced by Inskeep (1991), which emphasizes three pillars: economic efficiency, environmental protection, and social responsibility. This model guides solutions to ensure harmony between resource exploitation and conservation, as well as between local economic development and the maintenance of indigenous culture. Consequently, proposed solutions should aim not only to increase visitor numbers but also to ensure long-term value for the destination.

In parallel with the sustainability perspective, destination management theory plays a crucial role in formulating solutions. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) assert that effective destination development must be based on competitive capacity, product innovation, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Solutions within this model include infrastructure improvement, human resource development, product innovation, integrated marketing strategies, and enhanced tourism management institutions.

In Vietnam, Hoa (2014) argues that tourism development solutions must consider regional characteristics and the level of economic integration. These solutions should integrate infrastructure investment, the development of unique products, local human resource enhancement, and international market promotion. Meanwhile, Đinh & Thọ, (2006) emphasize the role of destination marketing strategies and the importance of customer demand research to provide solutions tailored to specific market segments.

Additionally, the theory of the tourism innovation ecosystem, as discussed by Buhalis and Amaranggana (2015), presents a new theoretical basis for adaptive solutions in the digital era. Digital technologies, big data, and online platforms serve not only as communication tools but also as critical elements in restructuring the tourism value chain and enhancing customer experience. Development solutions in this context include digital transformation, smart product development, and service personalization.

A synthesis of the aforementioned theoretical perspectives indicates that tourism development solutions should adopt an

integrated approach, addressing both macro-level (policy and planning) and micro-level (products, services, and communication) aspects. The selection and implementation of these solutions should be guided by destination characteristics, organizational capacity, and stakeholder engagement.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of tourism products is a complex and dynamic process that requires a multifaceted approach. This article has highlighted the importance of integrating various theoretical frameworks, including sustainable tourism development, destination management, and technological innovation, to create effective tourism offerings. As the tourism landscape continues to evolve, understanding the interplay between economic, social, and environmental factors becomes essential for stakeholders seeking to enhance their competitiveness in the market.

The findings emphasize that tourism products are not merely physical goods but encompass a blend of services, experiences, and interactions that contribute to travelers' overall satisfaction. By recognizing the intangible aspects of tourism products, businesses can better cater to the diverse needs and preferences of contemporary consumers. This understanding is crucial for designing products that not only attract visitors but also foster loyalty and encourage repeat visits.

Moreover, the role of government policies and community involvement is paramount in shaping the tourism product development process. Supportive regulations, infrastructure investments, and training initiatives can create an enabling environment that promotes sustainable tourism growth. Local communities should be actively engaged in the development process, ensuring that their cultural heritage and natural resources are preserved while benefiting economically from tourism activities.

As digital technologies transform the industry, the integration of innovative solutions will be key to staying relevant. The adoption of data analytics, virtual reality, and online platforms can enhance the customer experience, streamline operations, and facilitate personalized offerings.

Ultimately, the theoretical framework presented in this article serves as a guide for researchers and practitioners alike, providing insights into the critical components and influencing factors of tourism product development. By embracing an integrated approach, the tourism sector can navigate challenges and seize opportunities, ensuring its resilience and sustainability in an increasingly competitive global environment.

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