EXAMINING THE DESTINATION ATTRACTIVENESS OF BINH DUONG PROVINCE FOR DOMESTIC TOURISTS

Nguyen Thi Hoai Phuong[1]

(1) Thu Dau Mot University
Corresponding author: phuongnth@tdmu.edu.vn

Abstract

This study aims to determine and measure the influence of factors attracting domestic tourists to Binh Duong province through quantitative research with 129 domestic tourists, convenience sampling method, data collected from the period from March 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022. There are 5 selected sites: Hoi Khanh pagoda, Dai Nam tourist area, Thuy Chau eco-tourism area, Phu An bamboo village, Cau Mountain - Dau Tieng Lake relic complex. The results of EFA exploratory factor analysis using SPSS software show that there are 5 factors affecting the attraction of domestic tourists to Binh Duong province, including: (1) tourism resources; (2) travel services; (3) tourism products; (4) tourism infrastructure; (5) promotion of tourism. However, the results of the regression analysis show that only the factors "tourism infrastructure" and "tourism resources" affect the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong, while the other factors don`t have enough grounds to conclude. On the basis of the research results, this paper proposes management implications to improve the ability to attract more tourists to visit.

1. Introduction

Tourism is considered a key economic driver, not only bringing in foreign currency but also contributing significantly to the GDP of the whole economy. It also creates many jobs for local people, plays an important role in the economic structure and becomes a key economic sector of many cities and countries around the world. However, the development of the tourism (measured mainly by the number of tourists) depends on many different factors, destinations that better meet tourists' needs are more likely to be chosen to be chosen by tourists to visit.

Located in the Southern key economic zone, Binh Duong province has great potential for tourism development (beautiful natural landscape, charming river system, many historical relics, complete infrastructure), close to the center of Ho Chi Minh City (30 kilometers from the center), convenient transportation by road, rail and river. However, compared to the development of the industry, the tourism industry of Binh Duong province accounts for a

very modest proportion in the economic structure (accounting for less than 1% of GRDP), not reflective of its current tourism potential. Compared to other provinces in the same region in the period 2009-2021 (except Ho Chi Minh City), the number of domestic tourists to Binh Duong province grew more slowly, only 1.76 times, Dong Nai province increased 3.68 times and Tay Ninh province increased 3.3 times (Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, 2022). Attracting tourists to a locality depends on many influencing factors, therefore, the government, business community, and local community need to join hands to promote for industry in Binh Duong' tourism to develop further.

2. Literature Review

Destination attractiveness the ability to attract tourists to a destination have been studied by many domestic and foreign scientists in many different aspects such as: Chen & Tsai (2007), Chi et al. (2008), Assaker (2011), Mohammad Bader Badarneh et al. (2012), Yuksel & et al. (2012); Chin & Lo (2017). These authors all have the same conclusion that the factors influencing tourists' choice to a tourist destination are the tourism environment, perceived value, subjective standards, marketing strategy and communication strategy.

For example Asuncion Beerli and Josefa Martin (2004) stated that there are 6 factors: (1) Natural environment, (2) General infrastructure, (3) Tourism infrastructure, (4) Intellectual entertainment services, (5) Cultural, historical and artistic values, (6) Political economic factors. Meanwhile, Park Yumi and David Njite (2010) studied Jeju Island, Korea and found that there are 4 factors that attract tourists: (1) Environment, (2) Destination attraction, (3) Value for money, (4) Climate. Kozak et al. (2009) concluded that (1) Service quality factors, (2) Infrastructure, (3) Facilities and activities related to tourism, (4) Cultural and natural attractions affect the ability of a destination to attract tourists. Nguyen Thi Minh Nghia et al. (2017) concluded that there are 2 factors representing the ability to attract domestic tourists to Hoi An: (1) Nature and climate, (2) Accommodation and cuisine. The research methods used in this study are a synthesis of theory and practice through qualitative and quantitative surveys.

"Tourism is activities related to human trips outside their usual place of residence for a period of no more than 01 consecutive year to meet the needs of sightseeing, relaxation, entertainment, learning, exploring tourism resources or in combination with other legitimate purposes." (Law on Tourism, 2017).

"Domestic tourists are Vietnamese citizens and foreigners residing in Vietnam traveling within Vietnam." (Law on Tourism, 2017).

Destination image is a reflection of the feelings, beliefs, and opinions that individuals have about the destination's ability to satisfy customers in relation to their specific travel needs (Hu & Ritchie, 1993, p.25).

Attraction is the main factor that brings the attractiveness of a destination, is the main driving force for tourists to visit one destination. This is often the force that pulls tourists from one place to another. According to Hu & Ritchie, there are 5 groups of factors that affect tourist destinations: (1) natural factors, (2) social factors, (3) historical factors, (4) entertainment and shopping facilities, (5) infrastructure, food and accommodation. Without attractive tourist spots, tourism is almost non-existent.

Goeldner et al. (2000) classified tourist attractions into five main groups: (1) cultural, (2) natural, (3) events, (4) entertainment, and (5) recreational. Similar to this study, Vengesayi (2003) argued that the ability of a destination to provide benefits is enhanced by its tourism

attributes and the importance of these attributes helps us to evaluate the attractiveness of a destination in order to make appropriate choices. Therefore, measuring the attractiveness of a destination can be done by assessing what a destination can offer to tourists.

3. Methods

To conduct this study, the methods used are synthesis, analysis from documents and secondary data collected from data agencies (Binh Duong Provincial Statistics Office, Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, Vietnam Statistical Data Center); field method; quantitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis: A questionnaire was established to interview domestic tourists about 24 attributes measuring the attractiveness of tourist destinations (Table 4), surveying 129 randomly selected domestic tourists at different tourist destinations in Binh Duong province from March 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022. Factors affecting the ability to attract visitors to a destination are designed on a 5-level Likert scale (1- Completely disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Normal; 4- Agree; 5- Totally agree). Survey results input was used SPSS and Cronbach's alpha coefficient to test reliability of the scales.

The minimum sample size of 120 (129 valid samples out of 160 samples issued) was determined by the formula $n \geq m*5$, in which the component factors are $m = 24$ (Bollen, 1989; Hair, 2014), meeting the sample size requirement as prescribed. The purpose of this survey is to present the findings and discuss tourists' perceptions of the general attributes that they consider important for the attractiveness of destinations through reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha, (EFA Exploratory Factor Analysis), regression and correlation analysis.

3.1. Brief introduction to tourism resources of Binh Duong province

Binh Duong is not blessed with a climate like Da Lat city or a beautiful coastline like the Central provinces of Vietnam, but with a system of reservoirs such as Dau Tieng lake, Than Tho lake, Can Nom lake, Da Ban lake, Phuoc Hoa irrigation lake, it has the potential to invest in developing resorts, entertainment areas on the water, sports activities, etc. Along with the river system such as Saigon river, Dong Nai river, Thi Tinh river as well as canals, it has created the potential for tourism development thanks to the river landscape system and lush green fruit gardens such as: Lai Thieu fruit garden (Thuan An city); Thanh Tuyen fruit garden (Dau Tieng district); Bach Dang grapefruit garden (Tan Uyen city); Orange and tangerine gardens (Bac Tan Uyen district) have the potential to develop various types of eco-tourism, garden tourism, weekend resort tourism, river tourism tours, etc. Binh Duong is also famous for its two mountains (Nui Cau and Chau Thoi mountain) with beautiful landscapes and cultural, historical and religious values (there is a temple on the mountain for visitors to pray).

The festivals are also very unique such as the Ba Thien Hau festival, the Ky Yen festival at Tan An communal house which is a national intangible cultural heritage, the "Lai Thieu ripe fruit season" festival, etc., of which the most prominent is the Ba Thien Hau Pagoda Festival of the Chinese ethnic group in Thu Dau Mot city. And it is impossible not to mention the famous traditional craft village, this is the cradle of lacquerware and fine art ceramics with skillful artisans, sophisticated and unique products that have created prestige in the domestic and foreign markets, containing the depth of Thu Dau Mot's culture.

Binh Duong is the leading province in Vietnam in building smart cities. This can be a lever to help the province take advantage of creating comparative advantages with other

localities, turning smart cities into a special tourism product along with the advantages of other products currently being exploited.

3.2. Current status of tourist arrivals and tourism revenue in Binh Duong province

The total number of tourists to Binh Duong tended to increase and stabilize in the period 2009-2019, from 2,739 thousand to 5,150 thousand, of which domestic tourists increased from 2,717 thousand to 4,783 thousand and international tourists increased from 22 thousand to 367 thousand (Table 1). Thus, the total number of tourists to Binh Duong increased by 1.88 times (domestic tourists increased by 1.76 times and international tourists increased by 16.68 times). Domestic tourists account for the majority of the tourist structure of Binh Duong province (over 90%). In the period 2019-2021, due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, the number of tourists to Binh Duong decreased rapidly (from 5,150 thousand to 1,951 thousand).

TABLE 1. Number of tourists to Binh Duong, 2009-2021 (Binh Duong Statistical Office)

	Unit	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021
Total	thousand visitors	2,739	3,836	4,191	4,200	4,550	5,150	1,951
International	thousand visitors	22	50	61	200	240	367	133
% of international in total visitors	*%*	*0.80*	*1.31*	*1.46*	*4.76*	*5.27*	*7.13*	*6.82*
Domestic	thousand visitors	2,717	3,786	4,130	4,000	4,310	4,783	1,818
% of domestic in total visitors	*%*	*99.20*	*98.69*	*98.54*	*95.24*	*94.73*	*92.87*	*93.18*
Revenue	billion VND	419	580	1,084	1,120	1,280	1,440	612

In the period 2009-2019, tourism revenue tended to increase steadily, from 419 billion VND in 2009 to 1,440 billion VND in 2019 (increased 3.4 times). In the period 2011-2013, revenue increased on average in about two years higher than other periods. This was also the period when Binh Duong province had many socio-economic changes such as Thu Dau Mot, Thuan An and Di An cities being upgraded to urban areas, the bustling formation of Binh Duong New City, and the attraction of Dai Nam Tourist Area. In the period 2019-2021, due to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, revenue also decreased sharply (decreased more than 2.3 times).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Reliability test of the scale with Cronbach's Alpha

TABLE 2. Descriptive statistics sample *(Source: 2022 Survey)*

Statistical sample	Detailed description	Amount	Rate (%)
Age	6 < 22	54	41.9
	22 < 40	55	42.6
	40 < 50	14	10.9
	≥ 50	6	4.7
Sex	Male	51	39.5
	Female	78	60.5
Occupation	Student	26	20.4
	Officer	20	15.5
	Businessman	10	7.8
	Worker	35	26.8
	Other occupations	38	29.5

Income (million)	< 3	38	29.5
	From 3 to < 7	30	23.3
	From 7 to < 11	34	26.3
	From 11 to < 20	18	13.9
	> 20	9	7
Information sources determine travel choices	Friends, relatives	113	36.5
	Social network	101	32.6
	Books, magazines	38	12.2
	Television, radio	32	10.3
	Travel agency	18	5.8
	Others	8	2.6
Visitors from	Southern	102	79.1
	Central	27	20.9
	North	0	0

The results of Cronbach's alpha reliability test show that variables, minimum variable total correlation coefficient B3, D1, D2, D3, E4, G1, G2 and G3 are < 0.3 so they are eliminated, the remaining sixteen observation variables of the five factorial groups had a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient > 0.6, which shows that these variables are all reliable. The total item correlation coefficient also shows that the scale of the product and service quality group is < 0.3 (eliminated), the remaining scale groups are all greater than 0.3, showing that the observed variables have a linear correlation with the representative factor. The analysis results are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Reliability test of the scale with Cronbach's Alpha

	Scale	Observed variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Minimum variable total correlation coefficient	Code
A	Tourism resources	3	0,746	0,424	A1
				0,647	A2
				0,695	A3
B	Travel services	5	0,704	0,523	B1
				0,450	B2
				0,221 < 0,3	B3 (eliminated)
				0,755	B4
				0,688	B5
C	Tourism products	3	0,824	0,728	C1
				0,652	C2
				0,675	C3
D	Quality of products and services	3	0,336	0,223 < 0,3	D1 (eliminated)
				0,190 < 0,3	D2 (eliminated)
				0,168 < 0,3	D3 (eliminated)
E	Tourism infrastructure	4	0,762	0,451	E1
				0,593	E2
				0,554	E3
				0,255 < 0,3	E4 (eliminated)
F	Tourism promotion	3	0,624	0,505	F1
				0,507	F2
				0,624	F3
G	Tourism human resources	3	0,474	0,253 < 0.3	G1 (eliminated)
				0,220 < 0.3	G2 (eliminated)
				0,171 < 0.3	G3 (eliminated)

TABLE 4. Factors affecting domestic tourist attraction in Binh Duong province

Tourism resources	A1- Attractive ecological landscape A2- Valuable and outstanding cultural and historical relics A3- Long - standing craft village, diverse and unique products
Travel services	B1- Cultural, sports and festival events are held to attract a large number of tourists B2- Many attractive entertainment spots, rich shopping activities B3- Unique art and architectural products B4- Delicious and diverse cuisine B5- Comfortable and convenient accommodation
Tourism products	C1- Competitive product and service prices C2- There are many attractive types of tourism C3- Many attractive destinations
Quality of products and services	D1- Products and services with unique local characteristics D2- Products and services provided ensure quality D3- Unique goods and souvenirs
Tourism infrastructure	E1- Good transportation, convenient to move E2- Modern technology and communication infrastructure E3- Conference and exhibition center fully meets E4- Full public service response
Tourism promotion	F1- Professionally promoted destination F2- Diverse and effective tourism promotion information F3- Easily found on tourism promotion websites
Tourism human resources	G1- Staff are ready to help visitors G2- Professional and enthusiastic tour guide G3- Friendly locals

4.2. Testing by exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

TABLE 5. The EFA exploratory factor analysis results

Observed Variables	Components				
	A	B	C	E	F
A1- Attractive ecological landscape	0.639				
A2- Valuable and outstanding cultural and historical relics	0.759				
A3- Long - standing craft village, diverse and unique products	0.857				
B1- Cultural, sports and festival events are held to attract a large number of tourists		0.688			
B2- Many attractive entertainment spots, rich shopping activities		0.781			
B4- Delicious and diverse cuisine		0.658			
B5- Comfortable and convenient accommodation		0.739			
C1- Competitive product and service prices			0.849		
C2- There are many attractive types of tourism			0.534		
C3- Many attractive destinations			0.564		
E1- Good transportation, convenient to move				0.628	
E2- Modern technology and communication infrastructure				0.842	
E3- Conference and exhibition center fully meets				0.725	
F1- Professionally promoted destination					0.672
F2- Diverse and effective tourism promotion information					0.696
F3- Easily found on tourism promotion websites					0.763
KMO (Kaiser – Meyer -Olkin) 0.924					
Bartlett 's test of sphericity Sig. < 0.05					
Total variable explaned 67.316%					

Factors affecting the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong destination include 5 components (A, B, C, E, F) and are measured by 16 observed variables (after Cronbach's alpha test, 8 variables were eliminated).

EFA analysis of independent variables, the result is sixteen valid observed variables, KMO = 0.924, Sig = 0.000 < 0.5, This shows that factor analysis is appropriate. Total variable explained 67.316% (> 50%), showing that the observed variables have linear correlation with the representative factor. The factor analysis results show that five new factors were established, including: (1) Tourism resources; (2) Tourism services; (3) Tourism products; (4) Tourism infrastructure; (5) Tourism promotion.

4.3. Regression analysis

In order to determine the factors affecting the attraction of domestic tourists to Binh Duong, this study uses a regression model to represent the correlation of independent variables A, B, C, E, F with the dependent variable which is the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong (symbol: AT).

TABLE 6. Results of regression analysis of factors affecting the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong province

Dependent variable: Tourists are really satisfied when traveling to Binh Duong							
sample: 129							
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
Independent variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)			Tolerance	VIF
	-0.508	0.301		-1.423	0.152		
A	0.201	0.044	0.221	4.215	0.008	0.513	1.004
B	0.031	0.027	0.044	2.613	0.312	0.606	1.081
C	0.019	0.085	0.021	7.259	0.245	0.665	1.376
E	0.657	0.019	0.674	6.240	0.000	0.402	1.017
F	0.053	0.053	0.047	3.041	0.143	0.584	1.648
R^2 = 0.743							
DW (Durbin Watson) = 1.563							
F = 46.14							

The results of regression analysis show that the factors affecting the decision to choose tourism to Binh Duong are expressed in priority levels as follows: (1) Tourism infrastructure β = 0.674; (2) Tourism resources β = 0.221; (3) Tourism promotion β = 0.047; (4) Tourism services β = 0.044 and (5) Tourism products β = 0.021. The regression model shows the correlation between factors in the form:

$$AT = 0.221.A + 0.044.B + 0.021.C + 0.674.E + 0.047.F + e_i$$

The results show that F = 46.14 and Sig. of the F test = 0.000 < 0.05 (ie < 5%), so the linear regression model is appropriate. R^2 = 0.743 shows that the independent variables included in the regression analysis affect 74.3% of the variation in the dependent variable, the remaining 25.7% is due to factors other than the model and random errors. The variance inflation factor VIF of the independent variables (Likert scale) is 1.004 - 1.081 - 1.376 - 1.017 - 1.648 respectively, all within the allowable range, i.e. < 2 (Hair & colleagues, 2014), showing that the regression model is not multicollinear (independent variables are not correlated with each other).

The results of the regression coefficient test show that the independent variables A and E have Sig. < 0.05, proving that these two factors are correlated with each other. The remaining independent variables all have Sig. > 0.05, proving that these factors are not correlated with the dependent variable. This result also gives the DW (Durbin Watson) value to evaluate the phenomenon of first-order serial autocorrelation, DW = 1.563 (between 1.5 and 2.5), so the result does not violate the assumption of first-order serial autocorrelation. The regression model test also shows that in the factors affecting the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong in decreasing order, E (tourism infrastructure) - when E increases by 1 unit, the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong increases by 0.674 units; and next is A (tourism resources) - when A increases by 1 unit, the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong increases by 0.221 units (Table 6). The remaining factors are not sufficient to confirm a linear relationship with the ability to attract domestic tourists to Binh Duong.

5. Conclusions

The study shows that only two groups of factors clearly influence the decision to choose a destination of international tourists to Binh Duong (tourism infrastructure and tourism resources), the remaining three groups of factors are not sufficient to confirm and the level of influence of each factor is different (tourism services; tourism products and tourism promotion). This is an important foundation for building appropriate strategies in the future. The tourism industry accounts for a very modest proportion in the economic structure; the main tourists of tourist destinations are mainly Binh Duong people and a few in neighboring provinces such as Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Phuoc province, ... Compared to direct competitors, Binh Duong has many limitations, entertainment products and services, ... are not attractive enough to attract tourists. To promote the tourism industry of Binh Duong province to develop more and more, attracting a large number of visitors, not only relying on the advantages and potential of tourism but also promoting socialization, synchronizing many solutions, especially the government needs to have specific and thorough attention to policies, immediate and long-term plans.

Conflict of Interest and Data Availability Statement

The authors state no conflict of interest and there is no data associated with this article.

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