

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION OF THE SELECTION OF FOREIGN TOURISTS FOR A TOURIST DESTINATION: A STUDY IN DA NANG CITY, VIETNAM.

Tran Phi Hoang Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam	Ha Trong Quang Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam
Nguyen Nguyen Phuong Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam	Nguyen Thu Ha Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

ABSTRACT

The satisfaction of guests is one of the most important factors deciding the percentage return of tourists and the development of a tourist destination. The higher their satisfaction is, the more loyal towards the destination is increasing, especially through customers' loyalty, the destination will have many other visitors. Results of the study are to analyze the factors affecting the choice decisions of foreign tourists to the tourist destinations of Danang city. Result study surveyed on 577 visitors with 38 observed variables is to determine the factors affecting the choice decisions of foreign tourists to the tourist destinations of Danang city. The study results showed that there are 5 group factors affecting as follows: Subjective Standard, perceived value, informative strategy, marketing strategy and Tourism Environment. After data being analyzed, the main objectives of this study are to: First, identify the factors affecting the choice decisions of foreign tourists to the tourist destinations of Danang city. Second, determine the priority order of the impact degree of the factors affecting the choice decisions of foreign tourists to the tourist destinations of Danang city. Third, propose solutions to enhance the attraction of foreign tourists to the tourist destinations of Danang city.

Keywords: Destination, decision, foreign tourists and DaNang tourism

Introduction

Tourism has become a crucial, vital which is constantly increasing in modern industrial life. Tourism has made important contributions to the economic development structure and become has been the key industry in many cities and many countries in the world. The competition among tourist destinations of Danang City and other cities in Asean are constantly increasing. Despite being one of the three largest cities of Vietnam, there is much tourism capacity and tourism resources, the number of foreign visitors to Danang is not high. There are many reasons for this situation is not good as a marketing strategy; Research activities tourists psychological needs are modest; service and quality of services are still weak and so makes stays and expenditure of foreign tourists in Danang less than other destinations in VN and Asean. There are many causes of existing situations such as marketing strategies are not good; psychological studies of tourists' demands are poor. According to statistics, the average number of days of stay per visitor in Danang is less than other destinations such as Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi (Vietnam), Bangkok, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. On average a foreign guests stayed 2.1 days in Da Nang, HCMC was 3.45 days while, Ha Noi was 3.18 days, 4.05 days Bangkok, Singapore 3.95 and Kuala Lumpur 4.38 days (Statistics of EU projects in Viet Nam). Because the stay is few, so their spendings also decrease. Expenditure per foreign tourist in Danang is 69 USD / day; HCMC is 83 USD / day, Bangkok is 139 USD / day, Kuala Lumpur 120 USD / day and Singapore 178 USD / day (Saigon Economy Times, Vietnam, 2014). The expenditure of foreign tourists in Danang destination is mainly accommodation, sightseeing fees and food. Entertainment services account for a very small proportion of the expenditure structure of the tourists. Danang Destination is lack of service, attractive sightseeing, and entertainment to retain visitors. According to data survey from experts of the European Union (EU funded project for Vietnam, 2013), only 6% of foreign visitors return to Danang City. Percentages of visitors return expressing competitiveness of tourist destinations Danang is modest. The strong competition among domestic and Asean destinations shows many challenges for the destination Danang, which requires this destination to have drastic changes in a positive direction turning Danang City into an actual tourist destination, attracting tourists all over the world.

Literature Review

Many authors studied the factors affecting tourists' satisfaction and choice decisions to a tourist destination such as Mohammad Bader Badarneh et al (2013), Yuksel et al (2012), Zhang Xiaoli (2012), Assaker (2011), Bigne (2010), Chi & et al (2008), Tasci et al (2007); Chen & Tsai (2007), Take for & Martin (2007), Hsu et al (2006), O'Leary & Deegan (2005), Kyle & Chick (2002), Crompton (1997), Fakeye & Crompton (1991), Ajzen (1991), Gallarza et al (2005); Reilly (1990) and Zeithaml (1988). These authors have shared a common conclusion that the impact factors to decide on the selection of foreign visitors to a tourist destination are tourism environment, perceived value, subjective standards, marketing strategies and communication strategies.

Ajzen (1991) confirmed that customers are affected by "subjective attitude" or "subjective standards" and "perceived control" or "perceived value" in "behavioral and perceived theory". Xiaoli Zhang (2012) had the same statements and inherited "perceived control" in "Study of factors affecting the return of Chinese tourists to Thailand destination". The same point of view, Zeithaml (2008); Gale (2009); Holbrook (2011) and Woodruff (2012) clarified that "perceived value" is the overall evaluation of customers on the usefulness of products and services based on their feeling of what they have received. They suggested that good feeling about a destination will inspire visitors to perform an act for that tourism destination. Oh et al (2012), Petrick & Backman (2009), Petric (2004), Bixler (1999), Jayanti Ghosh & (1996), Wildt (1994),

Bolton & Drew (1991) who had many research also confirmed the importance of "perceived value". They demonstrated that the "perceived value" of the tourist destinations will gain further competitive advantage to any other tourism destinations.

Kyle & Chick (2002) expressed the experiences of a tourist destination are subjective, emotional, or "Subjective Standards" (Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Nowadays, visitors are affected by many factors and the relationships among relatives, friends, colleagues and community social networks. In the digital age, the Internet forums and social networks are the places where visitors often experience and share experiences after each trip or survey conducted before deciding to choose the destinations (Zaichkowsky, 2012; Gross & Brown, 2013). Thus, according to these authors, the destination must have "marketing strategies" and "informative strategies" on forums, social networks to raise awareness of visitors about the image of a destination (Gürsoy & Gavcar, 2012; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2011); Sherif & Sherif, 2010; Poira et al, 2010; Laurent & Kapferer, 2009; Havitz & Dimanche, 2007). O'Leary & Deegan (2009) demonstrated that "the image of a destination" that affect recollection, act and choice decision a suitable destination of tourists. Hsu et al., (2010), Brogowicz et al (1999) agreed with this statement and added that "The image of the destination" is an important factor to determine its popularity for tourists". According to these authors, good "marketing strategies" need enhancing the value of "image of a destination". When they love a destination, they will come back or inspire others. Of course, an attractive destination consists of many elements of marketing mix, however, indispensable, unique, diversified and rich products must be considered (Loberto, 2012; Atony L., 2010; David did the, 2011).

Nabeel Siddiquei (2012), Muhammad Ahmad Raza et al (2012), M. Hayat Awan et al (2012) also agreed with these conclusions and emphasized that the "service quality", "perceived value" and Customer satisfaction will determine the choice and the return rate of tourists. Parasuraman et al (1985) in "Model of service quality gap" said that "the service quality is the gap between the expectations of the customers and their perception (feeling) in using service", in other words, customers' satisfaction depends much on the level of providing information to customers. All sources of information that consumers receive before, during and after using the service have had a huge influence to the level of expectation that they would expect that service product. Making a useful and easy to approach of information line will increase customers' satisfaction not only to help customers' multidimensional information but also to create a good mouth to mouth about the product service of the Enterprises. (Lee Young, 2012). Xiaoli Zhang (2012) added that an invisible element is vital for an attractive destination, affecting choice decision of guests is "tourism environment" including sightseeing environment; atmosphere; culture, civilization, food safety and security for travelers. The study of Chann (2015), Yuksel & Bilim (2011) also made the issue clear polluted environment, looting, food safety, 11-9 terrorist event and terrorist threats occurring have reduced attraction for many destinations worldwide.

From the research and analysis, it can concluded factors affecting the choice decisions of foreign tourists to the tourist destinations of Danang city focus on the following key points: subjective standard, perceived value, marketing strategies, informative strategies and tourism environment.

Subjective Standards: Chan, T (2001) suggested that "subjective standard" is a system of standards, thoughts, perceptions and subjective thinking of an individual or group in many particular cases and times". Ajzen (1991) defined "subjective standards are the awareness of the influenced people who would think that the individual should perform or not perform the behavior. "

Hypothesis H1: "Subjective Standards" affect the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination.

Perceived Value: Zeithaml (2005) defined "perceived value" is the overall assessment of the utility consumers of a product or service based on their perceptions of what is received and what is left." That was the value the customer perceives in terms of currency technical benefits, economic, and social services that customers can get compared to the price they pay for a product, which set in consideration of price and making available offers of providers (Anderson et al., 2012). According to Woodruff (2012), Butz & Goodstein (2009), The perceived value of customers is emotional relationship established between clients and provider after the client has used a product or a service of suppliers and seen that the products or services create added value.

Hypothesis H2: "Perceived Values" affect the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination.

Marketing strategy: The tourism marketing strategy is an overall tourist activities and philosoph that thanks to its administrators, researchers could predict, plan and implement policies aimed at satisfying the needs of tourists and achieving the goals of the organization (Haml L.D, 2013; Lee Nguyen, 2009). The marketing strategy is the strategy to satisfy customers' needs (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991)

Hypothesis H3: "Marketing Strategies" affect the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination.

Informative Strategies: Tim Cook (2013) described information is a reflection of nature and society with words, symbols, images or in broader way it is all means working on human senses. Henry P. L (2011) suggested that tourism informative strategy is a collection of all things and phenomena, facts, events or ideas that enlarge the understanding of human knowledge, experiment and experience to a destination.

Hypothesis H4: "Tourist Information" affects the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination.

Tourism Environment: Environment includes natural and artificial physical factors which have close ties with each other surrounding people. It also affects the lives and production, survival, development of human and nature (Law on Environmental Protection of Vietnam, 1993). Tourism environment is the natural, economic – social and humane factors which tourism activities exist and develop. (Pham Trung Luong, 2010). Tourism Environment is the set including the atmosphere, the natural landscape, tourism, culture, civilization, food safety and security for guests (Wild, 2015).

Hypothesis H5: "Tourism Environment" affects the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination.

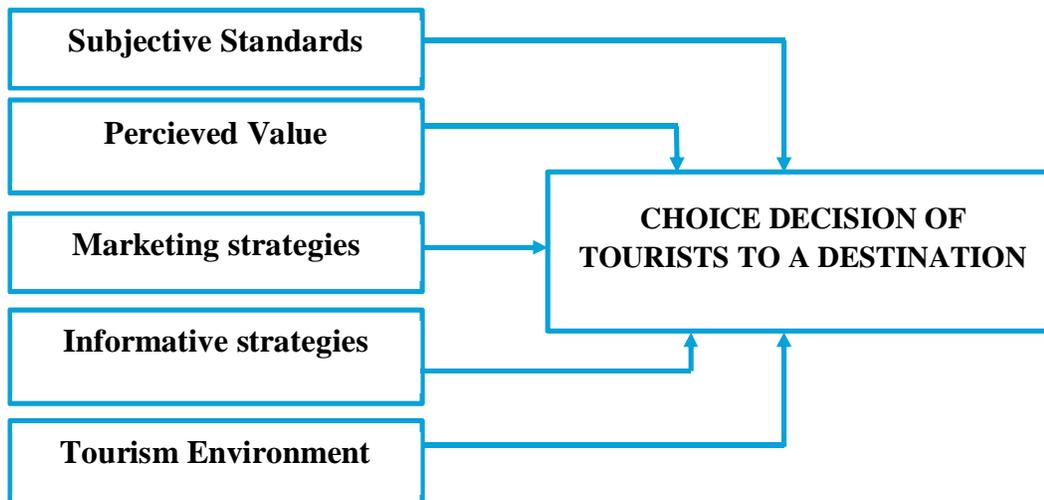


Figure 1: Model study of the factors affecting the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination.

Methods of Research

The research results were done through 02 qualitative and quantitative research methods which had three phases. Stage 1: Based on the doctrine, the theory and the results of scientific research concerning the above, the authors used qualitative research methods to conduct group discussions, consultation of experts aims to select the variables and variable observation group. Stage 2: Based on the factors affecting the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination, survey questionnaires were designed to collect comments from 477 visitors from 17 countries and regions visiting the Mekong Delta. The model consisted of 5 scales with 38 observed variables (research question), using 5- point Likert scale (Likert scale with a 5- point), Distance value = $(\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum}) / n = (5 - 1) / 5 = 0.8$: 1. Completely disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. No opinion / Normal; 4. Agree; 5. Totally agree. Survey results input was used SPSS 20.0 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient to test reliability of the scales. Stage 3, After testing the reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, Exploratory Factor Analysis - EFA was analyzed to shrink and summarize the data of the scale. This method is based on extraction ratio factor (Eigenvalue), under which only those factors having ratio (Eigenvalue) greater than 1 will be kept, those smaller than one will not show information better than origin variable because after standardizing, each original variance is 1. The method of extracting the main components (Principal components) and original method of factor rotation (Varimax Procedure) were used to minimize the number of variables that have large coefficients for the same factor, which increases explaining the factors. This result is used to analyze multiple linear regressions for testing assumptions of the model, which consider the impact level of factors, since the impact extent of these factors affecting the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination is considered.

Research Results

Testing reliability of the scale

Table 1 - Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Code	Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
IDV	A	Subjective Standards	0,846
	B	Perceived Value	0,903
	C	Marketing strategies	0,889
	D	Informative strategies	0,870
	E	Tourism Environment	0,761
DV	F	Choice Decision	0,818

(Source: The researcher's collecting data and SPSS)

The test results showed that scales were high precision, Cronbach's alpha coefficient were > 0.6 and the correlation coefficients of total variables of measurement variables were standardized (> 0.3). The above scales are acceptable. Two variables A4 - "Communication activities on social networking sites impact the choice decision to destination" was deleted for the reliability of this factor to increase to 0.846 and variable E2 - "Destination is sanitation, modern and civilization" was deleted for the reliability of this factor to grow to 0.761 that make the scales better. From 38 initial observed variables turned to 36 observed variables. Thus, this result ensures to analyze factors for EFA the next step.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.436	29.486	29.486
2	3.469	10.842	40.328
3	2.381	7.439	47.767
4	1.986	6.206	53.973
5	1.745	5.455	59.428

(Source: The researcher's collecting data and SPSS)

Results of EFA in Table Total Variance Explained showed eigenvalues = 1.745 > 1 which represented the fraction of variation explained by each factor, the factors extracted had the best meaningful summary. The total variance extracted (Cumulative %) = 59.428% > 50%. This proved that 59.428% of the data variance is explained by five factors, the remaining 40.572% is explained by other factors.

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Code	Observed Variables	Component				
		1	2	3	4	5
B5	Destination is a paradise for shopping	.770				
B6	Transport system brings exciting feeling for tourists	.761				
B8	There are many unique tourism festivals	.739				
B7	Teams of tourist volunteers are enthusiastic, fun and professional	.738				
B4	There are many unique entertainment destinations	.719				
B3	There are many attractive destinations for sightseeing	.700				
B2	There are delicious, cultural and rich culinary	.671				
B1	It is unique and architectural destination	.559				
C4	There are many reputable tourism service businesses voted		.761			
C8	Tourism Human resource are good at languages		.738			
C3	Pricing policy and travel services are reasonable		.736			
C1	There are many unique tourist products		.727			
C5	Destination is promoted professionally		.720			
C6	It is easy to find Destination on the websites of travel ads		.716			
C2	There are many types of tourism to choose		.714			
C7	Serving staff are professional, friendly and hospitable		.688			
D5	There are many good slogans, signs, banners for promoting tourism			.802		

(Source: The researcher's collecting data and SPSS)

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Code	Observed Variables	Component				
		1	2	3	4	5
D2	Information on tourism for visitors is clear			.770		
D1	Advertisement match the reality			.761		
D6	Destination provides visitors a deeper understanding before arrival			.712		
D4	The hotline support tourists actively			.696		
D3	There are many websites providing useful travel information for visitors			.689		
A5	I think I have a lot of experiences in tourism				.755	
A3	The tourist destination is voted by the Journal, tourism associations or tourists which have a decisive impact on my tour				.746	
A1	Relatives, friends and colleagues have decisive impact to my travel				.735	
A2	The tourism promotion program has an impact on my decision				.692	
A6	I use good English while traveling				.688	
E5	There are good and modern accommodation facilities					.758
E1	I choose destinations with pleasant climate					.749
E4	I choose destinations with friendly, open and hospitable locals					.697
E7	I choose destination with easy, quick and simple custom procedure					.655

Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

E6	There are good infrastructure and public services (internet, wifi, toilets CC, access for people with disabilities ...)					.620
D1	Advertisement match the reality			.761		
D6	Destination provides visitors a deeper understanding before arrival			.712		
D4	The hotline support tourists actively			.696		
D3	There are many websites providing useful travel information for visitors			.689		
A5	I think I have a lot of experiences in tourism				.755	
A3	The destination is voted by the Journal, tourism associations or tourists which have a decisive impact on my tour				.746	
A1	Relatives, friends and colleagues have decisive impact to my travel				.735	
A2	The tourism promotion program has an impact on my decision				.692	
A6	I use good English while traveling				.688	
E5	There are good and modern accommodation facilities					.758
E1	I choose destinations with pleasant climate					.749
E4	I choose destinations with friendly, open and hospitable locals					.697
E7	I choose destination with easy, quick and simple custom procedure					.655
E6	There are good infrastructure and public services (internet, wifi, toilets CC, access for people with disabilities ...)					.620

The analysis results in table Rotated Component Matrix entering the second time show that observed variables can be divided into five groups of factors, all variables are Loading Factor coefficient > 0.5. This shows that the analytical data are consistent and qualified to conduct multiple regression analysis with 5 independent variable respectively: "perceived value " (B), "Marketing Strategies" (C) , "Informative Strategies" (D), "subjective standard" (A), "tourism Environment" (E). Cronbach's alpha overall coefficients of the independent factor scales are values > 0.6, so the scales meet standard and statistical significance.

Analysis of multiple linear regressions

Table 4: Summary model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.714 ^a	.510	.501	.460	.510	56.449	5	571	.000	1.789

The data of the above table shows the correlation coefficient adjustment: $R^2 = 0.501$ (Inspection F, sig. < 0.05); which means that 50.1% of variable Y shift is explained by the six independent variables (Xi). Coefficient Durbin - Watson (d) = 1.789; some observers $n = 577$, parameter $k = 5$, the level of significance of 0.01 (99%), the statistical tables Durbin - Watson, dL (less statistical value) = 1.623 and dU (above statistical value) = 1.725. So we have: $(dL = 1.623) < (d = 1.789) < [4 - (dU = 1.725) = 2.275]$ proves the model have no auto correlation.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	59.820	5	11.964	56.449	.000^b
	Residual	57.437	571	.212		
	Total	117.257	576			

(Source: The researcher's collecting data and SPSS)

The test results have value $F = 56.449$ and $Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05$ that shows the building model is consistent with the data set and the independent variables included in the model are related to the dependent variable. Generally, regression analysis with selected reliability of 95%, correspond with the selected variable and statistical significance level was $p < 0.05$. Thus, the results show that all variables satisfy the demand. Verification of conformity of the model also shows that multicollinearity does not violate (VIF < 10).

Table 6. The factors affecting the choice decision of foreign visitors to Da Nang destination.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.229	.205		1.118	.265		
	X1	.231	.050	.260	4.644	.000	.579	1.728
	X2	.189	.053	.171	3.549	.000	.777	1.288
	X3	.178	.046	.192	3.850	.000	.726	1.377
	X4	.221	.044	.261	5.022	.000	.669	1.495
	X5	.111	.044	.117	2.533	.012	.841	1.189

(Source: The researcher's collecting data and SPSS)

The results of regression analysis showed that factors affecting choice decision to Danang City and expressed priorities respectively as follows: (1) subjective standards: $\beta = 0.261$; (2) Perceived Value: $\beta = 0.260$; (3) Informative Strategies: $\beta = 0.192$; (4) Marketing strategies: $\beta = 0.171$ and (5) tourism Environment: $\beta = 0.117$. The regression equation takes the following form: $Y = 0,260X1 + 0,171X2 + 0,192X3 + 0,261X4 + 0,117X5$. The results of this research are the basis of the recommendations proposed to increase the attraction of foreign tourists to this destinations in the near future.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

This study shows that there are five factors that influence the choice decisions of foreign tourists to Da Nang destination and the influence degree of each factor is different. According to the analysis, five factors have impact positively correlated to decide of foreign tourists to Da Nang destination, in order respectively: subjective standard, perceived value, informative Strategies, marketing strategies and tourism environment. This is an important foundation for building appropriate strategies in the future.

Recommendations

Solutions for "subjective Standard"

Local authorities should develop strategies to raise awareness of travelers on Danang destination such as through the role of associations, tourism ambassador and image-building strategies on forums and social networks. These activities will help visitors identify Danang image destination which is beautiful, attractive, safe and friendly. Specifically, the database service providing travel information is built via the Internet. More sites, forums providing information, sharing travel experiences for travelers both domestic and foreign need setting up. Publications and articles serving tourism promotion, etc. to increase the impact on choice decision of the foreign tourists to Da Nang destination in future.

Solutions for "Perceived Value"

Product strategies towards diversification and a unique characteristic of Danang destination need building besides maintaining festivals, cultural events, the environmental advantages and tourism resources are the competitive advantages of this destination in order to further enhance the perceived value of the tourists to Danang destinations Danang in the future.

Solutions for "informative strategies"

A comprehensive information system needs building to implement promoting the destination image in a professional manner and emphasized to create a good impression for visitors. Building information systems helps travelers identify Danang destination sustainable tourism brand “green - clean - friendly - cultural - civilized and safe”. The process of gathering information and feedback from tourists helps authorities improve service quality at tourist destination.

Solutions for "Marketing strategies"

The psychological needs for each market need studying in order to build appropriate customer service product strategy, pricing strategy, distribution strategy and promotion strategy for each market. In particular, a unique special and different product strategy from other destinations in Vietnam and Asean needs building to create focal point to Danang destination. The facts prove if the more customers’ demands any destination comprehend and satisfy, the higher success they get and vice versa. A deep and comprehensive marketing strategy to Da Nang destination needs building to develop fast and sustainably.

Solutions for "Tourism Environment"

Agencies and departments need coordinating to develop and implement communications activities for advertising to ensure Danang destination friendly, hospitality, culture, civilization and hygiene food destination and security for travelers. Besides, awareness for local communities needs improving to conserve, preserve, restore and promote the heritage, values, traditions, cultural identity of nation so that they become the unique attractive tourism products for tourists.

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