



## INFLUENCE OF TOURISM PRODUCTS ON TOURIST SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF CHAU THANH DISTRICT, BEN TRE PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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### Abstract:

Tourism products are crucial elements that create the attractiveness and competitiveness of a destination. Tourist satisfaction serves as a predictive indicator of future customer behavior. Analyzing the relationship between these two factors can provide valuable insights for destination managers. However, this topic remains underexplored. This study is conducted in Chau Thanh District, Ben Tre Province, Vietnam, to examine this relationship. Data for the research was collected through a survey of 144 tourists using a structured questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that tourism products consist of various components: types of tourism, human resources in tourism, tourism infrastructure, tourism facilities and services, and attractions. The results from multiple linear regression analysis indicated that these factors have a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction. This research contributes new insights by incorporating the type of tourism into the components of tourism products and demonstrating its influence on tourist satisfaction. Based on empirical evidence, several management implications are proposed to enhance the quality of tourism products in Chau Thanh District, and tourist satisfaction.

**Keywords:** tourism, tourism products, tourists, tourist satisfaction, Vietnam

### 1. Introduction

Tourism is recognized as one of the largest and fastest-growing service industries globally (Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016). This sector holds substantial economic, social, and

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cultural significance on a global scale (Nguyen & Huynh, 2024). The development of tourism products is essential for ensuring the long-term benefits of the tourism industry and meeting the evolving needs of travelers (Smith, 1994). The competitive advantage and sustainable development of a destination also rely on the advancement of tourism products (Nguyen *et al.*, 2024). Customer satisfaction is a critical factor for success in the tourism sector (Abror *et al.*, 2019) as it influences repeat purchases, intentions to revisit, and recommendations of the destination (Hui *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, both tourism products and tourist satisfaction are vital for the sustainable development of destinations. However, the relationship between these two factors has been relatively under-researched. Understanding the connection between tourism products and tourist satisfaction can help managers develop offerings that meet market demands, reduce costs, and utilize natural and cultural resources effectively at the destination (Smith, 1994).

In the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam, there are several districts named Chau Thanh, particularly located near cities or towns. This paper focuses on Chau Thanh District in Ben Tre Province, an administrative unit covering an area of 225 km<sup>2</sup> and home to a population of over 177,159 people. The district is characterized by numerous rivers, canals, islets, and fruit orchards. It is traversed by four significant branches of the Mekong River system: the Tien River, Ba Lai River, Ham Luong River, and My Tho River. In addition to its intricate river systems, Chau Thanh boasts several river islets, with Con Phung Islet, known for the Dao Dua founded by Nguyen Thanh Nam, being particularly famous for tourism. With over 15,839.2 hectares of various crops, Chau Thanh is regarded as one of the most representative garden regions in the Mekong Delta. Alongside its natural beauty, the district is rich in culture, exemplified by the Dao Dua site and traditional coconut product manufacturing. Leveraging its diverse natural and cultural tourism resources, the local government has identified tourism product development as a key task and direction for the future to meet the varied needs of tourists and enhance the competitiveness of the destination (Nguyen *et al.*, 2024). This study examines the relationship between tourism products and tourist satisfaction in line with these objectives. The aim of this paper is to analyze the factors of tourism products that influence tourist satisfaction. Theoretically, this research expands knowledge on the connection between tourism products and tourist satisfaction. Based on research findings, practical management implications are proposed, focusing on developing tourism products and enhancing tourist satisfaction.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Tourism products

When discussing any business sector, it is essential to mention the products associated with that activity. Therefore, understanding what constitutes a tourism product is crucial when exploring the tourism industry (Nguyen & Tran, 2004). A clear comprehension of the concept of tourism products serves as the starting point for research in this area (Dong

& Vuong, 2001). A tourism product is a composite of resources, services, and facilities that tourists can utilize at a specific location and time to satisfy their needs (Makuzva & Ntloko, 2018). It comprises both tangible and intangible elements. Tangible elements refer to physical goods, while intangible elements pertain to services. The tourism resources or attractions, infrastructure, and facilities form the material aspects of tourism products. Service components include transportation, accommodation, dining, sightseeing, entertainment, and shopping (Nguyen & Tran, 2004). The type of tourism is created through the combination of tangible elements (attractions and facilities) and intangible elements (tourism services). Moreover, human resources in tourism not only emerge from the industry itself but also play a vital role in connecting destinations with customers and delivering services. Various perspectives exist regarding the components that make up tourism products. A literature review indicates that tourism products encompass attractions, tourism services (Tahiri & Kovaci, 2017; Mira *et al.*, 2018; Melese & Belda, 2021), infrastructure (Chau, 2015; Mira *et al.*, 2018), tourism facilities (Tahiri & Kovaci, 2017; Madafuri, 2018; Makuzva & Ntloko, 2018), tourism human resources (Tran, 2006; Chau, 2015), and types of tourism (Chau, 2015).

## **2.2 Tourist satisfaction**

Tourist satisfaction is one of the most extensively studied topics in tourism research (Kozak *et al.*, 2003). It reflects the emotional states of tourists during their experiences (Huang *et al.*, 2015). Satisfaction is essentially the feeling of excitement or disappointment that arises after comparing actual performance with expectations. When the performance of a product or service meets expectations, tourists feel happy; conversely, if it falls short, they may feel dissatisfied (Berybe *et al.*, 2023). The importance of tourist satisfaction for the tourism industry is widely recognized (Huang *et al.*, 2015). It serves as a strong indicator of intentions to revisit, recommend the destination, and generate positive feedback about it (Le & Dong, 2017). However, dissatisfied tourists may choose not to return to the same destination, refrain from repurchasing products or services, and potentially express negative comments about their experience. This can lead to a loss of competitive advantage and reputation for the destination in the market (Reisinger & Turner, 2003).

## **2.3 The relationship between tourism products and tourist satisfaction**

Tourism products consist of both tangible and intangible elements that are combined to create a service package offered to the market. The essence of tourism products lies in their ability to provide convenience, fulfill experiences, and evoke emotions in tourists. Tourism businesses typically offer both tangible and intangible products, with these elements complementing each other and being perceived as essential parts of the overall travel experience. Given their distinct characteristics, the impact of tangible and intangible elements on tourist satisfaction varies; thus, the integration of both enhances overall satisfaction (Albayrak *et al.*, 2010). Empirical studies have shown that tourist

satisfaction is significantly influenced by tourism products (Albayrak *et al.*, 2010; Payangan & Munir, 2018; Cempena *et al.*, 2019).

### 3. Material and Methods

#### 3.1 Model and hypotheses

Based on the literature review and group discussions, this study's model comprises six independent variables representing the factors of tourism products: attractions, infrastructure, tourism facilities, human resources in tourism, tourism services, and types of tourism. Additionally, the research model includes one dependent variable reflecting tourist satisfaction. The definitions and relationships of these factors with tourist satisfaction are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Definitions and relationships of tourism product factors with tourist satisfaction

Measure	Definition	Relationship with tourist satisfaction	Source
Attractions	Natural and cultural elements that attract tourists to the destination (Weaver & Lawton, 2014)	✓	Simanihuruk (2019); Bhuiyan & Darda, (2020)
Infrastructure	Physical facilities not built by tourism organizations but by society (Nguyen & Tran, 2004)	✓	Long & Nguyen (2018); Blazeska <i>et al.</i> (2018)
Tourism facilities	All technical means provided by tourism organizations to meet tourists' needs (Nguyen & Tran, 2004)	✓	Simanihuruk (2019); Bahar <i>et al.</i> (2020)
Human resources in tourism	The entire workforce directly and indirectly involved in serving tourists (Nguyen, 2014)	✓	Son <i>et al.</i> (2023)
Tourism services	Outcomes derived from interactions between tourism providers and tourists (Nguyen & Tran, 2004)	✓	Ali & Howaidee (2012); Al-Ababneh (2013)
Types of tourism	A collection of tourism products with similar characteristics or organization methods (Nguyen & Tran, 2004)	✓	Tran (2006)

**Source:** Compiled by the authors.

From the literature referenced in Table 1, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

**Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>):** Attractions in Chau Thanh District positively and significantly influence tourist satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 2 (H<sub>2</sub>):** Infrastructure in Chau Thanh District positively and significantly influences tourist satisfaction.

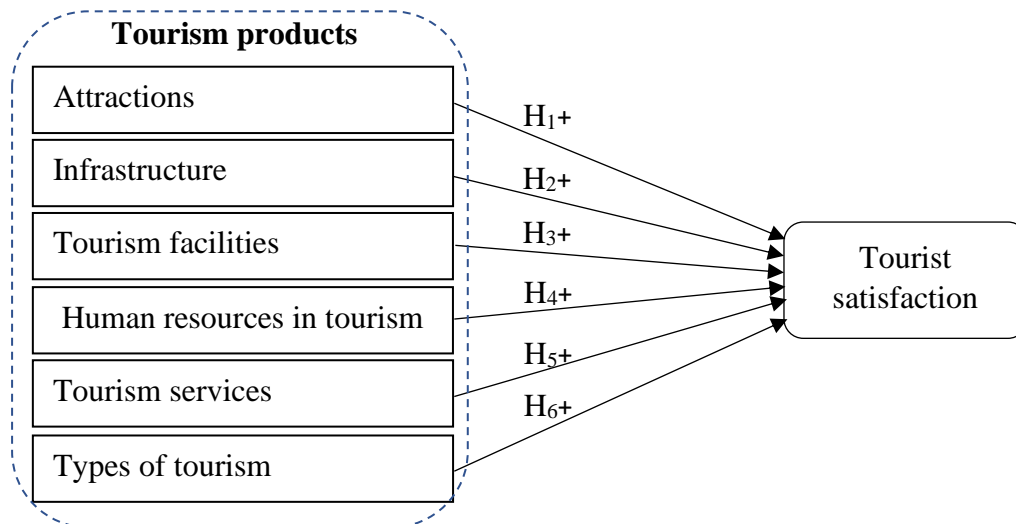
**Hypothesis 3 (H<sub>3</sub>):** Tourism facilities in Chau Thanh District positively and significantly influence tourist satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 4 (H<sub>4</sub>):** Human resources in tourism in Chau Thanh District positively and significantly influence tourist satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 5 (H<sub>5</sub>):** Tourism services in Chau Thanh District positively and significantly influence tourist satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 6 (H<sub>6</sub>):** Types of tourism in Chau Thanh District positively and significantly influence tourist satisfaction.

Figure 1: Research model



Source: Authors.

### 3.2 Data collection and analysis

The research data was collected using a questionnaire survey method. The interview content focused on the demographic information of the respondents, their evaluations of the quality measures of tourism products, their satisfaction with tourism products, and suggestions for developing tourism products. A 5-point Likert scale was employed to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Various recommendations exist regarding sample size for quantitative research. This study determined the sample size based on the guidelines provided by Hair *et al.* (2010), which suggest a minimum of 100 observations when using exploratory factor analysis. During the research process, several face-to-face interviews were conducted in July 2023 and January 2024. As a result, the research team obtained 144 completed questionnaires that met the requirements for analysis. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing of the measurement scales, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis, utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Overview of respondent demographic information

The gender distribution of the survey sample consists of 52.1% female and 47.9% male respondents. The majority of tourists are aged between 18 and 28 years, accounting for 71.5% of the sample, followed by those aged 29 to 39 years at 16.7%. The age groups of 40 to 50 years and over 50 years are relatively small, comprising 6.9% and 4.9%, respectively. In terms of educational attainment, the respondents have a high level of education, with 97.9% having completed high school or higher, while only 2.1% have education below high school level. The occupations of the tourists are diverse; among them, those working as homemakers, sales staff, engineers, students, and other roles represent 57.6%. This is followed by office workers at 16.6%, and civil servants account for 9.7%. The categories of small business owners, workers, and farmers make up a negligible percentage at 16.1%.

### 4.2 The impact of tourism products on tourist satisfaction

To assess the impact of tourism products on tourist satisfaction, techniques such as reliability testing of the measurement scales, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis were applied. The results of the reliability testing indicated that Cronbach's alpha values for the six independent variables and one dependent variable ranged from 0.821 to 0.936, with the minimum corrected item-total correlation for the observed variables being 0.491 (see Table 2). Therefore, the measurement scales and observed variables are deemed reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

**Table 2:** Reliability analysis of measurement scales

Factor	Encode	Observed variables	Correlation coefficient	Cronbach's alpha
Attractions	At	At1, At2, At3, At4	0.621 - 0.757	0.850
Infrastructure	In	In1, In2, In3, In4, In5	0.491 - 0.764	0.842
Tourism facilities	Tf	Tf1, Tf2, Tf3, Tf4	0.610 - 0.664	0.821
Tourism human resources	Thr	Thr1, Thr2, Thr3, Thr4	0.813 - 0.879	0.936
Tourism services	Ts	Ts1, Ts2, Ts3	0.622 - 0.770	0.827
Types of tourism	Tt	Tt1, Tt2, Tt3, Tt4	0.759 - 0.773	0.894
Satisfaction	S	S1, S2, S3	0.764 - 0.774	0.881

**Source:** Authors.

The next step involved conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The results of the data analysis indicated that the measure of sample adequacy was 0.889, which is considered meritorious (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, sufficient correlation exists among the variables, as confirmed by Bartlett's test of sphericity, which was statistically significant (sig. = 0.000) (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Using the Principal Components method with Eigenvalues greater than 1 and Varimax rotation, the data were extracted into five factors, explaining a total variance of 72.151% (which exceeds the 50% threshold) (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Following the recommendations of Hair *et al.* (2010), this study retained only those variables within each factor that had a loading coefficient of at least 0.5.

**Table 3:** Results of exploratory factor analysis

Order	Factor name	Observed variables	Loading coefficient
1	Types of tourism	Tt2, Tt1, Tt4, Tt3, Ts3	0.630 - 0.808
2	Human resources in tourism	Thr2, Thr1, Thr3, Thr4	0.728 - 0.819
3	Infrastructure	In3, In2, In5, In4	0.723 - 0.750
4	Tourism facilities and services	Tf3, Ts1, Tf4, Ts2, Tf2	0.540 - 0.761
5	Attractions	At3, At4, At2, At1	0.593 - 0.788

Source: Authors.

The final step involved conducting multiple linear regression analysis. The results indicated that the data did not violate multicollinearity (variance inflation factor = 1). The R<sup>2</sup> value was found to be 0.555, meaning that 55.5% of the variance in tourist satisfaction can be explained by the influences of tourism product factors. The p-value for the F-test was 0.000, indicating that the impact of tourism product factors on tourist satisfaction is statistically significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model is a good fit (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

**Table 4:** Results of multiple linear regression analysis

Factor	Hypothesis	$\beta$	p-value	VIF	Decision
Constant		0.013	1.000		
Types of tourism	H6	0.569	0.000	1.000	Accepted
Human resources in tourism	H4	0.314	0.005	1.000	Accepted
Infrastructure	H2	0.229	0.000	1.000	Accepted
Tourism facilities and services	H3, H5	0.181	0.002	1.000	Accepted
Attractions	H1	0.249	0.000	1.000	Accepted

Source: Authors.

The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 4. Hypothesis H1 ( $\beta = 0.249$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), H2 ( $\beta = 0.229$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), H3 and H5 ( $\beta = 0.181$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), H4 ( $\beta = 0.314$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ), and H6 ( $\beta = 0.569$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) were all accepted, indicating that the factors of tourism products positively and significantly influence tourist satisfaction. This finding demonstrates that tourism products have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction, aligning with the research conducted by Albayrak *et al.* (2010), Payangan & Munir (2018), and Cempena *et al.* (2019).

Hypothesis 1 posits that tourism attractions positively influence tourist satisfaction, which was accepted ( $\beta = 0.249$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This result is consistent with the studies by Simanihuruk (2019) and Bhuiyan & Darda (2020). Similarly, Hypothesis 2 was accepted as infrastructure positively and significantly affects tourist satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.229$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This was corroborated by research conducted by Long & Nguyen (2018) and Blazeska *et al.* (2018). Tourism facilities and services constitute one factor that positively influences tourist satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.181$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), leading to the acceptance of Hypotheses 3 and 5. This result supports the findings of Simanihuruk (2019) and Bahar *et al.* (2020); Ali & Howaidee (2012) and Al-Ababneh (2013), respectively. With  $\beta = 0.314$  and  $p = 0.005$ , Hypothesis 4 was accepted, indicating that human resources in tourism contribute positively to tourist satisfaction, as validated by Son *et al.* (2023). Finally,

Hypothesis 6 was accepted as types of tourism positively and significantly influence tourist satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.569$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This is regarded as a novel finding of this study and aligns with information in the literature (Tran, 2006).

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, several management implications for developing tourism products and enhancing tourist satisfaction at the destination can be proposed. Among the five factors influencing tourist satisfaction, the type of tourism has the strongest impact and should be prioritized. Therefore, the destination should offer a diverse, distinctive, and appealing range of tourism experiences that provide engaging and memorable activities for visitors. The second most influential factor on tourist satisfaction is human resources in tourism. This highlights the need for ongoing training and development of staff to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A destination with friendly, polite, open-minded, dynamic, skilled, and courteous personnel will have a significant advantage in fostering positive behaviors among tourists. Attractions represent the third most impactful factor affecting tourist satisfaction. Thus, in addition to ensuring diversity and appeal in attractions, the destination must also effectively manage and protect these assets. Infrastructure also plays a role in influencing tourist satisfaction. Consequently, it is essential for the destination to develop a comprehensive system that includes electricity, water supply, communication networks, and parking facilities. The factor with the least impact on tourist satisfaction is tourism facilities and services. Given this reality, it is crucial for the destination to provide safe and comfortable transportation options, a variety of shopping and souvenir outlets, convenient and secure accommodations, as well as dining establishments with diverse menus.

## 6. Conclusion

This study applies theories of tourism products and tourist satisfaction to address the research problem. Tourism products encompass various factors, including types of tourism, human resources in tourism, attractions, infrastructure, and tourism facilities and services. These factors positively and progressively influence tourist satisfaction. Theoretically, this research contributes in several ways. Firstly, it identifies the components of tourism products and their connections to tourist satisfaction. Secondly, it introduces the measurement of types of tourism as part of the tourism product and demonstrates that this is a significant factor influencing tourist satisfaction. Additionally, the study proposes several management implications, which are considered practical contributions. Despite these contributions, this research has some limitations. One limitation is that the sample size may not fully satisfy the requirements in terms of quantity and structure. Another limitation is that the observed variables within the tourism services and facilities factors were not stable. Future research is recommended



to replicate this study to verify the reliability of the results. Furthermore, it could analyze the relationship between tourism products and tourists' behavioral intentions.

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### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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