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**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
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**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE
SOUTH CENTRAL COAST REGION OF VIETNAM
TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

**Major : Development Economics
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SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

1. The rational

The tourism industry has long been identified as a key economic sector. For many countries, tourism is seen as a major tool in local or regional development because it can affect the total income of both residents and businesses, increasing revenue and creating jobs. However, the development of tourism has not been associated with the orientations. The plans can cause many inadequacies such as degrading tourism resources, damaging natural landscapes, destroying natural habitats, and even adversely affecting local practices and customs. Therefore, the sustainable development of tourism has been attracting the attention of researchers and state management agencies. The sustainable development of tourism not only needs to facilitate tourism to develop, but also carefully consider the consequences of this process. Accordingly, it should be understood comprehensively on all three aspects: (i) Stable economic growth. (ii) Good social progress and justice, and (iii) Reasonable exploitation and efficient use of natural resources (Hall and Testoni. 2004); (Sudhir and Amartya. 1996); (Phan and Vo. 2017).

In Vietnam, the sustainable development of tourism is an important part of sustainable development of the United Nations and the Strategic Orientation of Sustainable Development in Vietnam, which was confirmed at the IX Congress “Economic growth must go hand in hand with social progress and justice, and environmental protection”; “Socio-economic development is closely linked with environmental protection and improvement, ensuring the harmony between the artificial environment and the natural environment, preserving biodiversity” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2001). Besides, the Prime Minister issued the Strategic Orientation for Sustainable Development in Vietnam (Vietnam's Agenda 21) which aims at sustainable development of the country on the basis of the close, rea-

sonable and harmonious combination of social-economic development and environmental protection (Prime Minister, 2004). The sustainable development of tourism is closely associated with preserving and promoting of national cultural values; conserving landscapes and protecting the environment; ensuring national defense and security, social order and safety” (Prime Minister, 2011). This is considered as a strategic framework and action plan that includes major orientations and solutions as a legal basis for ministries, sectors, localities, organizations and individuals to implement and take concerted actions to ensure the sustainable development of the country.

The plan for the sustainable development of tourism to 2020-2030 of the South Central Coast region of Vietnam, including Da Nang city and 7 provinces: Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan, has been approved by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in Decision No. 2350/QĐ-TTg dated 24/12/ 2014 (Prime Minister, 2014). The South Central Coast region of Vietnam is home to many historical and cultural sites, festivals, and famous traditional craft villages associated with Sa Huynh culture, Champa culture, cultures of ethnic minorities in the East Truong Son, wars to build the country, and protect the nation's sovereignty, among which the system of relics of Champa culture is the most prominent. This is a typical humanistic tourism resource of the region. Besides, the region also has a favorable position for tourism development. Tourism in South Central Coast of Vietnam is located on the trans-Vietnam tourist route, a bridge connecting North and South tourism; the starting point of tourist routes "Central Heritage Road", "Highland Green Road", the gateway to the Central Highlands; the bridgehead and also the gateway to the East Sea of the East-West tourism corridor. According to the orientation and planning of tourism development to 2020-2030, the South Central Coast region will simultaneously develop sea-

island tourism, cultural tourism and eco-tourism, among which the island-marine tourism is the key and cultural tourism the foundation; closely combine tourism development with the assurance of national defense and security and environmental protection; strengthen the links among localities in the region to maximize tourism potentials and strengths in the whole region.

However, the development of tourism in the South Central Coast region has not been commensurated with its inherent potentials and strengths. It is still fragmented and lack of an overall vision; tourism infrastructure still has many aspects which are not synchronized. The connection of tourism development in the whole region is still weak and unstable; tourism resources have not been properly exploited. Infrastructure is still lack of synchronicity; service quality is still limited. The phenomena of disturbing customers of street vendors, frauds, unsanitary conditions at tourist destinations are still popular. Besides, human resources is also a weak point in the process of tourism development of the region. In particular, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of 2019, global economy has been adversely impacted. Many countries, including Vietnam, have applied unprecedented epidemic prevention measures in history to ensure people's safety, which has exponentially reduced the number of international and domestic tourists, leading to a temporary halt in activities of service tourism, hotels, transportation, restaurants, shopping malls, and tourism destinations. According to the United Nations Report, international tourist arrivals fell by about 1 billion, or 73% in 2020, while in the first quarter of 2021, the figure was 88% (Kieu Giang, 2021). This fact has substantially affected the region's sustainable development of tourism. In addition, up to now, there are still disagreements about the concept, content, criteria, and factors affecting the sustainable development of tourism. Some authors approach the content according to three major features of sus-

tainable development (sustainable economic, social and environmental development) Pham Que Anh (2017); Nguyen Quang Thai and Ngo Thang Loi (2007). Some other authors approach the content in the direction of what to do to develop tourism in a sustainable way. Accordingly, the main contents of tourism development includes zoning and planning tourism development, mobilizing and using resources effectively. Moreover, there has not been any work that analyzes and proposes a set of criteria to evaluate the sustainable development of tourism suitable to the scope, scale, characteristics of tourism development conditions, analytical and evaluation capacity of provinces at the provincial level in the South Central Coast region (Le Chi Cong (2015), Nguyen Thanh Tuong (2016), Vu Van Dong (2014); Anna et al (2017), Fernánde and Rivero (2009), Lucian and Julien (2007).

Stemming from the above reasons, the author chose the topic: "Tourism development in the South Central Coast region of Vietnam towards sustainability" to assess the level of tourism development of the region as well as of the provinces in the region on environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects, and at the same time, determine the influencing factors and the extent of their influence on the tourism development of the region, thereby proposing orientations, solutions to develop tourism in the South Central Coast region in a sustainable way.

2. New contributions of the thesis

2.1. About the theory

- + The thesis contributes to systematizing and clarifying the general theoretical basis of tourism development and sustainable tourism development.
- + The thesis determines the criteria for assessing the sustainability of tourism development of a region or a locality based on three main features of sustainable tourism development: economic sustainabil-

ity, environmental sustainability and socio-cultural sustainability.

2.2. About practice

+ The thesis indicates the localities that have achieved the highest level of economic sustainability of tourism in the region, Da Nang, Khanh Hoa, Binh Dinh, Quang Nam, Binh Thuan, Phu Yen, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Quang Ngai respectively.

+ The thesis indicates the localities that have achieved the socio-cultural level of sustainability, Quang Nam, Binh Dinh, Da Nang, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Phu Yen, and Quang Ngai in that order.

+ The thesis indicates the localities that have achieved environmental sustainability levels, Quang Nam, Binh Dinh, Da Nang, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Phu Yen, Quang Ngai and Binh Thuan in turn.

+ The thesis indicates factors that have an impact on the tourism development of the South Central Coast region, among which institutions and policies for tourism development have the strongest impact on the sustainable development of tourism in the region, followed by tourism resources, infrastructure, local community, relevant support services, tourism promotion and encouragement, human resources for tourism, the variety of services for tourism, activities of association and cooperation for tourism development, tourists' satisfaction.

+ The thesis proposes tourism development solutions in the South Central Coast region of Vietnam towards sustainability and conditions to implement the solutions.

3. The structure of the thesis

In addition to the summary, the list of tables, figures, conclusions and the list of references, appendixes, the thesis is structured into 4 chapters:

Chapter 1: Overview of research works and research directions of

the thesis

Chapter 2: Theoretical basis and practical experience on the sustainable development of tourism

Chapter 3: The current situation of tourism development in the South Central Coast region of Vietnam towards sustainability.

Chapter 4: The solutions for tourism development in the South Central Coast region of Vietnam towards sustainability.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF WORKS AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS OF THESIS

1.1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH WORKS AND RESEARCH GAPS

1.1.1. Studies on various perspectives of sustainable tourism development

From the studies of Seifi and Ghobadi (2017); Mrkša and Gajić (2014); Maldonado et al (1992); Stonch et al (1995); Clark (1990); Mai and Pham (2017); Zhenhua Liu (2003); Nguyen Quang Thai and Ngo Thang Loi (2007). However, they agree on assessing sustainable tourism development according to institutions, policies, economy, society, environment, and human resources for tourism and the variety of services for tourism.

1.1.2. Studies on indicators and measurement criteria for the sustainable development of tourism

Anna et al (2017), Fernande and Rivero (2009), Vu Van Dong (2014), Le Chi Cong & Ta Thi Van Chi (2020), have conducted their studies based on sets of indicators and measurement criteria. It can be seen that domestic and foreign researchers have identified the as-

pects to evaluate the sustainable development of tourism, namely cultural - social aspects, economic aspects, and environmental aspects. However, there are differences in the criteria for measuring and evaluating each aspect.

1.1.3. Studies on linkages in the sustainable development of tourism

From the studies of Dwyer et al (2011), Tisdell (2013), Mahdavi et al., (2013), Pham Trung Luong (2012), it can be seen that regarding linkages in tourism development in a sustainable way, these studies have mentioned to strengthening regional linkages in tourism development, managing tourism at state level, improving the quality of tourism products, developing human resource, and promoting tourism brand. These are important bases for researching solutions for tourism development at regional and inter-regional levels.

1.1.4. Studies on factors affecting the sustainable development of tourism

Vuong Khanh Tuan et al. (2019), Natalia Restrepo (2019), Ruhanen (2012), Mowforth and Munt (2015), Ko (2005) Garcia-Melon et al (2012), Azizi et al (2011), Wang and Pei (2014). From the above studies, it can be seen that there are many factors affecting tourism development towards sustainability, including both macro and micro factors such as local authorities, local communities, tourism business enterprises, tourism infrastructure, perceptions of stakeholders, factors on tourism business environment or factors on the diversity of tourism products and support services, the increase of locals' income.

1.1.5. Research gap

1) There are still views that are not completely unified on the concept, content, criteria and factors affecting sustainable tourism development; 2) That how much correlation can be considered as

"combination" or "reasonable balance" between the three pillars: economy, society, environment and linkage in sustainable tourism development has not been analyzed in depth from a theoretical point of view; 3) The system of criteria for evaluating tourism development in the direction of sustainability has not been unified. Most of the new works provide only qualitative criteria, which are difficult to concretize into criteria for evaluating tourism development towards sustainability or not feasible to apply in practice. There is no work that analyzes and proposes a set of criteria for evaluating sustainable tourism development in accordance with the scope, scale, characteristics of tourism development conditions, analytical and evaluation capacity of localities at provincial level; 4) No doctoral thesis has studied the development of sustainable tourism from the economic perspective in the South Central Coast region with its own characteristics of nature, culture and society.

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, SUBJECTS AND SCOPE

1.2.1. Objectives of the study

1) Overall objectives

On the basis of a theoretical framework of research on sustainable tourism development, the thesis assesses the current situation in order to detect the lack of sustainability, thereby proposing solutions to promote tourism development in the South Central Coast of Vietnam towards sustainability.

2) Specific objectives

Systematizing and contributing to perfecting the theoretical basis and practical experience on sustainable tourism development; - Assessing the current situation and identify factors affecting tourism development in the South Central Coast region towards sustainability; - Proposing a number of solutions which contribute to promoting

tourism development in the South Central Coast region of Vietnam towards sustainability in the coming time.

1.2.2. Research subjects

The research object of the thesis is the issues of tourism, sustainable tourism development, criteria to evaluate tourism development towards sustainability, factors affecting sustainable tourism development and solutions to promote sustainable tourism development.

1.2.3. Research scope

The thesis focuses on researching issues related to tourism development in a sustainable way such as: overview of tourism, characteristics of the tourism industry and the role of tourism in socio-economic development, the current situation of tourism development activities of the South Central Coast provinces, Vietnam towards sustainability, solutions for tourism development in the provinces of the South Central Coast of Vietnam towards sustainability

1.2.4. Research question

1) In order to assess the level of sustainable tourism development of the provinces of the South Central Coast region, what aspects should be valued and what criteria and weights are suitable?

2) What factors affect the tourism development of the provinces of the South Central Coast region towards sustainability and how much influence does each factor have?

3) What solutions are appropriate to develop tourism of the South Central Coast provinces towards sustainability?

1.3. RESEARCH ACCESSORIES AND METHODS

1.3.1. Analytical frameworks and approaches

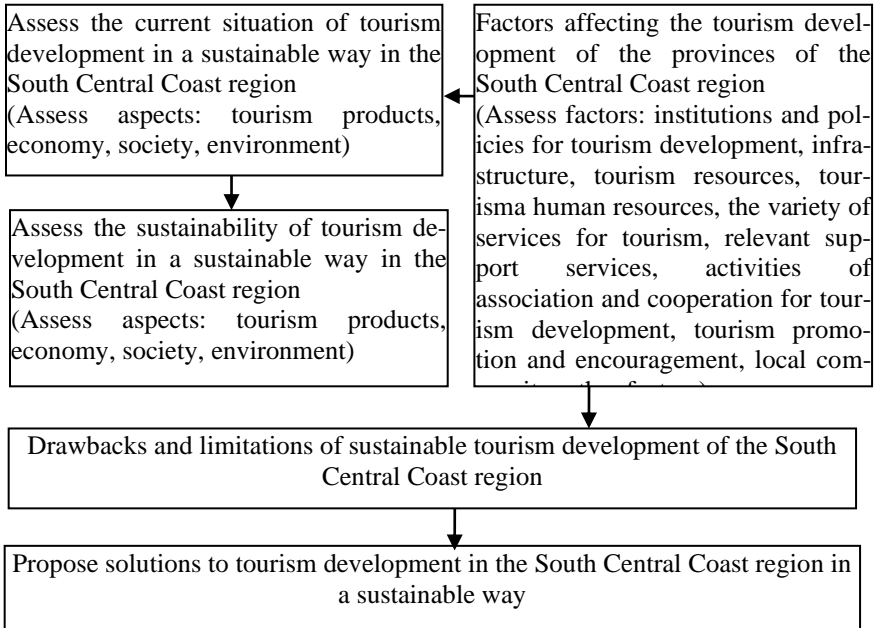


Figure 1.1: Framework for analyzing tourism development towards sustainability

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL BASIS AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

2.1. THEORETICAL BASIS ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

2.1.1. Research content on sustainable tourism development

1) Research on the current situation of tourism development

1) Development of tourism products; 2) Development from an economic perspective; 3) Development from a socio-cultural perspective; 4) Development from an environmental perspective; 5) De-

velopment from the perspective of regional linkage.

2) Research on sustainability in tourism development

The content of sustainable tourism development is a development process with the close, reasonable and harmonious combination of four aspects of development: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and cultural-social sustainability

2.1.2. Criteria for assessing sustainable tourism development

1) Economic sustainability; 2) Socio-cultural sustainability; 3) Environmental sustainability; 4) Linkage level

2.1.3. Factors affecting sustainable tourism development

1) Institutions and policies; 2) Tourism infrastructure; 3) Tourism resources; 4) Tourism human resources; 5) Tourism services; 6) Relevant support services; 7) Activities of association and cooperation for tourism development; 8) Tourism promotion and encouragement; 9) Tourists' satisfaction; 10) Local community; 11) Other factors

2.2. EXPERIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 3

THE REALITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COAST REGION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

3.1. NATURAL, ECONOMIC - SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL COASTAL REGION

The South Central Coastal region includes provinces and cities Da Nang, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan, with a length of about 800 km. The North borders the East Sea, the South borders The South East region, the West borders the Highlands, the North borders the North

Central region, and the North West borders Laos. The topography of the region includes coastal plains and low mountains, with bays (Xuan Dai Bay, Van Phong Bay, Cam Ranh..), lagoons, rapids and many famous beaches (My Khue, Cua Dai, Quy Nhon, Khanh Hoa, Mui Ne...). With a favorable geographical position for tourism development, the South Central Coastal region is also known as “Vietnam's island and sea tourism paradise”.

3.2. THE REALITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

3.2.1. Developing tourism products in the South Central Coast region

1) Development of tourism products by type

Type of sea and island tourism: The Region has famous beaches such as Son Tra, My Khe, Non Nuoc (Da Nang); Cua Dai beach (Quang Nam); Nha Trang (Khanh Hoa), Mui Ne, Phan Thiet, Phu Quy island (Binh Thuan). This is strength in the development of resort tourism in the Region.

2) Develop tourism products according to tourist routes

The tourist routes in the region were formed on the basis of the previous period in terms of geography and traffic and have created a springboard for businesses to build attractive travel programs to attract tourists to the Region.

3.2.2. Assessing the current situation of tourism development from an economic perspective

1) The current situation of infrastructure development and tourism services

Among the accommodation facilities of the Region, there are 40 5-star hotels; 94 4-star hotels; 165 3-star hotels; the rest are 2-star, 1-star hotels and motels which meet the tourist service standards. Accommodation establishments are mainly concentrated in coastal areas, in big cities such as Da Nang, Khanh Hoa, Binh Thuan, and

Quy Nhon.

2) Investment in the tourism industry in the region

In order to attract investment and develop tourism in the South Central Coastal region, the Prime Minister has issued Decision No. 2350/QĐ-TTg and the Master Plan on tourism development of the South Central Coastal region to 2020, vision to 2030.

3) The current situation of attracting tourists to the region

The speed as well as the number of visitors to localities in the region increased significantly, except in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Table 3.3 shows that the structure of the visitors has also changed, in which Da Nang is the locality with the leading number of visitors in terms of both the number of tourists and the proportion of tourists in the whole region.

4) The current situation of tourism revenue in the region

Although in 2020, most localities in the region applied directives 15, 16, or 19 of the government, from a national perspective, there were no any international visitors; however, the localities also still had tourism revenue this year due to the contribution of domestic visitors

3.2.3. Assessing the current situation of tourism development from a socio-cultural perspective

1) The current situation of labor in the tourism industry

Localities such as Quang Nam, Khanh Hoa, and Da Nang all have a very large proportion of workers participating in the tourism industry, accounting for over 10%. In which, Khanh Hoa is the locality where the proportion of workers participating in the tourism industry increases from 12.8% in 2015 to 23.56% in 2020. The localities of Phu Yen and Binh Dinh have both the number and proportion of laborers participating in the industry less than 2%.

2) The current situation of heritage sites, monuments, festivals and craft villages

The heritage sites of the provinces in the Region are currently attractive tourist destinations to attract tourists associated with cultural, spiritual and traditional cultural discovery tourism.

3.2.4. Assessing the current situation of tourism development from an environmental perspective

The exploitation of natural resources for tourism activities of the region in recent years has had certain impacts on the natural environment. Besides the impact of tourism on the natural environment, the organization of tourism activities in the region in recent years also has certain impacts on the socio-economic environment.

3.2.5. Assessing the current situation of tourism development from the perspective of linkage relationships

Localities in the region have actively linked environmental protection and sustainable tourism development, reducing waste and excessive consumption of resources and energy, managing natural and ecological diversity towards sustainability.

3.3. ASSESSING SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COASTAL REGION

3.3.1. Model for assessing sustainability in tourism development

It can be seen that the assessment of tourism development in the South Central Coast region towards sustainability is to assess the level of sustainability of three aspects which are economic sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability, environmental sustainability and linkage in development.

3.3.2. Assessing the level of sustainability in tourism development from model results

1) Economy

Table 3.12. The level of economic sustainability of the provinces in the region

Target	Provinces	Sustainability score	Sustainability ranking	Sustainability rating
Assess the level of economic sustainability of the provinces in the region	Da Nang	4.095	1	B
	Khanh Hoa	4.067	2	B
	Binh Dinh	3.897	3	B
	Quang Nam	3.872	4	B
	Binh Thuan	3.511	5	B
	Phu Yen	3.498	6	B
	Ninh Thuan	3.461	7	B
	Quang Ngai	3.151	8	C

(Source: Compiled from calculation results)

2) Culture-Society

Table 3.13: The level of cultural-social sustainability of the provinces in the region

Target	Provinces	Sustainability score	Sustainability ranking	Sustainability rating
Assess the level of cultural-social sustainability of the provinces in the region	Quang Nam	4.048	1	B
	Binh Dinh	3.849	2	B
	Da Nang	3.784	3	B
	Khanh Hoa	3.716	4	B
	Ninh Thuan	3.700	5	B
	Binh Thuan	3.535	6	B
	Phu Yen	3.453	7	B
	Quang Ngai	3.186	8	C

(Source: Compiled from calculation results)

3) *Environment*

Table 3.15. The level of sustainable tourism development on all three major features of economy, culture - society and environment of provinces in the region

Target	Provinces	Sustainability score	Sustainability ranking	Sustainability rating
Assess the level of sustainable tourism development on all three pillars of economy, culture - society and environment	Quang Nam	3.932	1	B
	Da Nang	3.930	2	B
	Khanh Hoa	3.912	3	B
	Binh Dinh	3.835	4	B
	Ninh Thuan	3.538	5	B
	Binh Thuan	3.499	6	B
	Phu Yen	3.487	7	B
	Quang Ngai	3.208	8	C

(Source: Compiled from calculation results)

4) *Assessing the level of linkage to sustainable tourism development of localities*

Table 3.16. The degree of sustainability in the regional linkage relationship

Target	Aspects	Sustainability score	Variance	Sustainability rating
The degree of sustainability in the regional linkage relationship	Economic link	3.895	0.431	B
	Cultural-Social link	3.598	0.327	B
	Environmental link	3.620	0.417	B
	Link on all three aspects	3.762	0.330	B

(Source: Compiled from calculation results)

3.4. ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COAST REGION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

3.4.1. Analysis model of influencing factors

Thus, based on the table of regression results, a regression equation for factors affecting tourism development in the South Cen-

tral Coast region towards sustainability can be seen as follows:

At the same time, the normalized regression model is defined as follows:

$$\text{PTDLVDHNTB} = 0.374 \cdot \text{CS} + 0.312 \cdot \text{HT} + 0.348 \cdot \text{TN} + 0.237 \cdot \text{NL} + 0.169 \cdot \text{SP} + 0.062 \cdot \text{DV} + 0.211 \cdot \text{LK} + 0.077 \cdot \text{QB} + 0.143 \cdot \text{HL} + 0.264 \cdot \text{CD} + 0.204 \cdot \text{K}$$

According to the standardized regression model, it can be seen that the factor CS has the strongest impact on the dependent variable PTDLVDHNTB (with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.374), followed by TN, HT, and CD (with standardized beta being 0.348; 0.312 and 0.264 respectively). The lowest influence on the dependent variable PTDLVDHNTB is the factor DV and QB (with the standardized beta coefficient being only 0.062 and 0.077, in turn), and other factors such as NL, SP, LK, HL and K are of nearly equal influence.

3.4.2. Analyze the influence of factors on sustainable tourism development from model results

Institutions and policies for tourism development; Infrastructure; Tourism resources; Human resources for tourism; The variety of services for tourism; Relevant support services; Activities of association and cooperation for tourism development; Tourism promotion and encouragement; Tourists' satisfaction; Local community; Other factors

3.5. GENERAL ASSESSMENT ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COASTAL REGION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

3.5.1. Achievements and causes

Most of the provinces in the Region have reached the sustainable level regarding economy; only Quang Ngai province has reached the temporary sustainable level of tourism regarding economy. At the same time, the province in the Region with the highest

sustainability score is Da Nang and the lowest is Quang Ngai. Most of the provinces in the region have reached the sustainable level of tourism in terms of culture and society, only Quang Ngai province has reached the temporary sustainable level of tourism in terms of culture and society.

Most of the provinces in the region have reached the sustainable level of tourism in term of environment, only Binh Thuan province has achieved the temporary sustainable level of tourism in term of environment.

3.5.2. Limitations and reasons

Tourism causes the prices of products, goods and services to increase, so it has a direct impact on the living standards of people in the Region and consequently affects other economic sectors; (ii) Although tourism creates opportunities to develop the digital economy in the Region and (iii) Tourism contributes to promoting international economic integration, the Region has not done well both of these criteria, only reaching the rating of 2,510 points and 2,800 points respectively. Therefore, it makes the sustainable score of tourism development of the provinces in the Region decreased.

Chapter 4

ORIENTATION AND SOLUTIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COAST REGION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

4.1. BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COAST REGION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

4.1.1. Context related to tourism development in the South Central Coast region

The global tourism context in the planning period is assessed as having many problems of political instability, economic difficulties, epidemics and natural disasters, which are great challenges for

tourism development prospects in the coming period.

4.1.2. Perspectives and orientations for sustainable tourism development in the South Central Coastal region

The region's tourism development is consistent with the Strategy and Master Plan for Vietnam's tourism development; with the Master Plan of socio-economic development in the Central Key Economic region and in agreement with the relevant sectoral plans in the planning area.

4.2. SOLUTIONS TO DEVELOP TOURISM IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COASTAL REGION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

4.2.1. Completing policies to support tourism development

Firstly, provinces in the region need to coordinate with each other and coordinate with central agencies to perfect mechanisms and policies to facilitate tourism development in the region.

Secondly, the provinces in the region need to develop policies to exploit and take advantage of the location and natural conditions for sustainable development of tourism in the region.

4.2.2. Developing infrastructure for tourism

Firstly, localities in the region need to pay more attention to the development of infrastructure systems and attract large tourism projects into the locality. The government calls for investment to build and improve infrastructure on the island to meet the needs of residents and visitors; Second, it is necessary to improve the quality of infrastructure and accommodation; Third, it is essential to attract social resources, investors with experience and advanced level of tourism business management, with modern and environmentally friendly technology to invest in building tourism technical facilities.

4.2.3. Focusing on improving the quality of human resources for tourism

Firstly, the government should prioritize the review and adjustment of the network of tourism training institutions in the whole region in the direction of ensuring that priority is given to the expan-

sion of tourism training institutions in the areas with rapid tourism development in regions and localities such as Da Nang and Khanh Hoa.; Secondly, the government should organize training classes to cultivate knowledge and skills in management and administration of tourism activities for the staff who advise the state in terms of tourism management at all levels.

It is necessary to focus on training and developing tourism human resources according to the needs of the tourism labor market, improving the training quality of tourism training institutions; Secondly, it is essential to continue to promote the connection of tourism staff and tourists in creating a positive destination image through the professionalism and enthusiasm of servants.

It is necessary to strengthen training courses to improve communication skills, behavior, soft skills of employees and the way to promptly handle questions and requests of customers.

The local community in each place must be aware of the role, responsibility and beauty of the nation and the local culture in civilized behavior in tourism, in introducing the unique national cultural identity to international tourists and friends.

4.2.4. Developing and diversifying tourism products

Firstly, it is advisable to develop a model of a night market in the eastern sidewalk area on both sides of the Han River Bridge - Da Nang; Ly Son Night Market – in Ly Son District, Quang Ngai Province, Quy Nhon Night Market; Walking street - Bai Tien night market in Hon Mot mountain area (Vinh Hoa ward, Nha Trang); Second, it is necessary to promote and manage the value of the region's tourism resources. The provinces in the region have many different potentials to exploit and develop this type of tourism.

4.2.5. Strengthening tourism cooperation and association activities

Firstly, it is necessary to build mechanisms and policies for inter-sectoral coordination, facilitating tourism development; for ex-

ample, the most significant policy of the region, the "Central Heritage Road" has created the most important products and services, contributing to building tourism brand for localities in the region in particular and Vietnam in general.

Secondly, in terms of linking content, it is necessary to focus on linking tourism product development, promotion and tourism human resource development.

4.2.6. Strengthening tourism promotion and encouragement activities

Firstly, it is necessary to organize synchronous tourism promotion and encouragement activities among the provinces in the region to avoid the situation that each province improves its own image without paying attention to the general nature of the region in the tourism development.

Secondly, it is essential to link tourism promotion and encouragement activities through the common construction of tourist destinations and products; organize events and programs on tourism, cuisine and experiences; work together to exploit the source of visitors from big cities (Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh), to further markets throughout the North and South regions.

4.3. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATING SOLUTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL COAST REGION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

4.3.1. For the central government

Firstly, it is necessary to complete the legal corridor and policies on attracting investment sources and developing tourism, creating favorable mechanisms and policies for the South Central Coast region to attract tourists and tourism development.

Secondly, it is essential to improve the general infrastructure and tourism infrastructure, infrastructure of tourist destinations and ancillary infrastructure, and tourism infrastructure system connecting provinces in the region to facilitate tourism development.

4.3.2. For the provinces in the South Central Coast region

Firstly, the provinces in the region need to have provisions concretizing the implementation process of the comprehensive cooperation memorandum on issues related to tourism development of the region in a sustainable way to serve as a guideline for linking activities in tourism development.

Secondly, the provinces in the region need to issue policies/decisions to concretize the Government's Master Plan for Tourism Development in the South Central Coast region to 2020-2030. Accordingly, policies/decisions must be implemented synchronously and appropriately within the province and in linkages with other provinces in the region.

CONCLUSION

1. Conclusion

The South Central Coast region has many favorable conditions for tourism development. The region has outstanding strengths in marine and island tourism resources with a diversity of typical ecosystems, cultural tourism resources with unique features, rich in identity. In addition to the above-mentioned outstanding natural resources, the region also has a mountain ecosystem in the west (East Truong Son ecosystem), mineral water mines, and lakes. Culturally, it has a system of relics associated with the nation's war for national defense (the Tay Son period, the wars against the French and against the US), cultural features of coastal communities, culture of ethnic minorities in the East Truong Son, contributing to enriching and diversifying tourism resources of the region. Sea and island resources, Champa culture is an important premise to build regional tourism products with regional and international competitiveness. The system

of other natural and human resources contributes to the diversification of tourism products for the region. Therefore, tourism development in the South Central Coast region towards sustainability is not only the top concern of the provinces in the region, but also the concern of state management agencies on tourism, tourism enterprises, domestic and foreign tourists. However, the development of tourism in the South Central Coast region has not been commensurate with its potential and inherent strengths; it is still fragmented and lacks an overall vision; tourism infrastructure still has many aspects not synchronized; the connection of tourism development in the whole region is still weak and unstable; tourism resources have not been properly exploited; infrastructure is still lacking in synchronicity; service quality is still limited; the phenomena of disturbing tourists of street vendors, fraud, unsanitary condition at tourist spots are still common. Besides, human resources are also weak points in the process of tourism development of the region.

Within the scope of the research content, the thesis has focused on solving the following issues:

Firstly, an overview of domestic and foreign research works related to the research topic has been presented.

Secondly, the general theory of tourism and regional tourism development towards sustainability has been systematized and clarified, including contents related to the general theory of tourism, general theory of regions and regional linkages, and general discussion on tourist areas and regional linkages in tourism development, general theories on sustainable tourism development and evaluation criteria, factors affecting regional tourism development towards sustainability.

Thirdly, the research model and methods were clearly presented, including contents related to the research framework, model and ways of assessing the sustainability of tourism development in the

region and in the provinces in the region, the model and methods of determining the influencing factors, the process of designing the survey form and distributing samples to conduct the survey, the method of collecting and processing the collected data.

Fourthly, the current situation of tourism development in the South Central Coast in a sustainable way has been clarified, including the natural and socio-economic conditions of the South Central Coast affecting the region's tourism development towards sustainability; the sustainability of tourism development in the South Central Coast has been assessed; the factors affecting sustainable tourism development in the South Central Coast have been identified; and the research results have been discussed.

Fifth, solutions for tourism development in the South Central Coast region towards sustainability have been proposed, including the orientation in linking tourism development in the South Central Coast region, and solutions for regional tourism development towards sustainability and conditions to implement the solutions. At the same time, the limitations in the thesis's research have been listed and new research directions in the future have been proposed, showing that the thesis's research is inherited and can be developed in the future.

2. Limitations of the topic

Firstly, the survey of tourists is still limited because many tourists do not know English when approaching the interview, so they cannot answer the survey. At the same time, because the survey was carried out during the Covid 19 epidemic, it was very difficult to approach international visitors, only in provinces/cities such as Da Nang, Quang Nam, Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa but not all provinces in the region; Fourth, the study only assesses sustainability on four aspects, namely economic, cultural - social, environmental and institutional sustainability, so it has not covered all aspects of sustainable tourism development.

LIST OF ANNOUNCED WORKS RELATED TO THE THESIS OF THE AUTHOR

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6. Cong De Nguyen, Thang Loi Ngo, Ngoc My DO, Ngoc Tien Nguyen (2020), Key Factors Affecting Sustainable Tourism in the South Central Coast region of Vietnam, *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7 (12), 977 – 993.