



Research on the Attractiveness of Night Tourism Destinations: Thanh Hoa city

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Abstract

This study examines the attractiveness of night tourism destinations in Thanh Hoa City through in-depth interviews with 28 respondents. The research identifies eight key issues impacting tourist satisfaction: tourism products, entertainment services, pricing, promotion, transportation, safety and security, sustainable development and hygiene, and operating hours. The findings reveal a lack of distinctive tourism products, limited entertainment options, and insufficient promotional activities, coupled with concerns about pricing, transportation, and cleanliness. Based on these insights, the paper provides actionable recommendations, including developing unique night tourism products, diversifying entertainment services, improving public transportation, and enhancing safety measures. Additionally, the study emphasizes the need for sustainable tourism practices and extended operating hours to better meet tourists' needs. By addressing these issues, Thanh Hoa City can enhance its competitiveness, attract more visitors, and establish itself as a leading destination for night tourism in Vietnam.

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1. Introduction

The attractiveness of tourist destinations has garnered the interest of numerous researchers, highlighting the complexity and multidimensional nature of this topic. In their theoretical studies, Gearing (1974) ^[3] and Sebastian Vengesai (2003) ^[9] have emphasized the need for a multidimensional approach to understand the attractiveness of destinations. Among these approaches, studies focusing on tourists' evaluations—those who generate tourism demand—have gained significant attention. The authors outlined that the attractiveness of destinations reflects the emotions and perceptions of tourists regarding the ability of these destinations to satisfy their needs during their journey. Although this perspective has been emphasized, the identification of factors influencing attractiveness remains inconsistent among studies, particularly in establishing unified criteria for a common evaluation framework. This inconsistency creates a theoretical gap that warrants further attention to enable the comprehensive identification and evaluation of destination attractiveness.

Thanh Hoa City, a locality with substantial potential for tourism development, serves as a case in point. In recent years, Thanh Hoa's tourism products have undergone continuous development and improvement. Various forms of tourism, such as leisure tourism, visits to historical and cultural relics, ecological tourism, spiritual tourism, and MICE tourism, have shown promising growth. However, night tourism development has not received adequate attention and support. Although certain night tourism activities have been implemented in Thanh Hoa City, they still lack specific investment and direction. Sustainable development of night tourism is not only a goal for local authorities but also a responsibility shared by the local community. Addressing these theoretical and practical challenges, the author has selected the topic "Research on the Attractiveness of Night Tourism Destinations: Thanh Hoa City," with the objective of identifying factors influencing attractiveness and proposing solutions to

enhance the domestic tourist experience.

2. Content

2.1. Theoretical Basis

Night Tourism

The concept of the nighttime economy was initially proposed with the aim of urban regeneration, as highlighted in studies by Valentine *et al.* (2010). Nighttime activities have increasingly become an indispensable part of urban life, focusing primarily on production or consumption activities related to entertainment and other services, according to research by Rowe and Lynch (2012). These studies position the nighttime economy within a framework of socialization and entertainment, emphasizing its social attributes, although economic activities remain the primary focus. Recent research by McArthur *et al.* (2019) also emphasizes the consumption aspect of the nighttime economy, particularly in terms of relaxation and recreation.

Theoretically, there is a strong link between the nighttime economy and the tourism industry. Nightlife has become a significant feature of both entertainment and urban tourism; the nighttime economy, including night tourism, plays a vital role in enhancing the economic competitiveness of cities, as stated by Smith *et al.* (2021). Consequently, both practitioners and scholars agree that tourism activities play a crucial role in driving the growth of the nighttime economy and that night tourism is poised to become an increasingly important component of the tourism industry in the future.

The term "night tourism" is commonly understood as all tourism service activities occurring after 5:00 PM and concluding before 6:00 AM the following morning. These activities include dining, arts, music, entertainment programs, festivals, events, and even visits to tourist sites open at night.

Previous studies have demonstrated that nightlife has become a key product of tourist destinations and a primary attraction at these locations (Zhanget *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the nighttime landscape of a given location often provides a more personal and captivating experience for tourists (Huang & Wang, 2018). In summary, tourists have become an essential consumer group in the nighttime economy of urban cities, particularly among younger demographics (Diaz-Fernandez & Evans, 2020). Thus, entrepreneurs in this sector can attract more customers and create competitive advantages through innovation and the development of new products and services (Liu & Fang, 2016).

Destination Attractiveness

The attractiveness of a tourist destination is a complex and multidimensional concept that can be studied from various perspectives. According to Sebastian Vengesai, the attractiveness of a destination reflects the emotions and perspectives of tourists regarding its ability to satisfy their needs (2008: 638). Le Thai Phuong *et al.* also emphasized that the attractiveness of a tourist destination reflects tourists' evaluations of the destination's ability to meet their needs, based on specific factors such as tourism resources,

amenities, infrastructure, and macro-level elements like political-economic conditions, safety, and policies (2021: 212).

Studies also illustrate diverse approaches to understanding destination attractiveness. For example, Kresic and Prebezac focus on analyzing physical factors such as climate, landscapes, and activities at the destination while also addressing the formation of the destination's mental image (2011: 499). Similarly, Doan Thi Hoa highlights the destination's ability to meet tourists' needs and its competitiveness in the market (2008: 1).

The increasing competition among destinations has driven them to concentrate on building their image and improving service quality to attract visitors. Modern tourists have the freedom to choose among various destinations and tourism products. Destinations that best meet their needs are more likely to gain their attention and preference. This has created a new trend in which the attractiveness of destinations is primarily evaluated from the supply-side perspective, focusing on physical factors and the appealing imagery of the destination. However, there is still a lack of studies that evaluate destination attractiveness from the supply-side perspective, and the identification of influencing factors remains inconsistent. This inconsistency poses a challenge to gaining a deeper understanding of the construction and development process of each tourist destination.

2.2. Research Methodology

The in-depth interview method was employed in this study to collect detailed and specific information, providing a clearer understanding of the multidimensional aspects of the research problem. This method is particularly useful in eliciting profound insights and opinions from tourists regarding night tourism activities in Thanh Hoa City. Through these interviews, cultural, social, and psychological factors influencing tourist satisfaction were analyzed and clarified, thereby opening new perspectives for the study and enhancing the comprehensiveness of the results.

A total of 28 in-depth interviews were conducted with a diverse sample selected to ensure representation across demographic and social characteristics. Participants were chosen based on criteria such as gender, age, educational background, occupation, and place of residence to ensure the richness of the data collected. During the research process, responses were coded and analyzed until no new information emerged, ensuring that the results reached data saturation. This approach enabled the study to draw precise and reliable conclusions about the areas needing improvement in night tourism activities in the locality.

3. Results

The survey and in-depth interviews conducted with 28 respondents focused on the question: "In your opinion, what issues should be improved in Thanh Hoa City's night tourism destinations to enhance their attractiveness to tourists?"

Table 1: Respondents' Opinions and Extracted Issues

No.	Gender	Age	Residence	Education Level	Occupation	Main Concerns
1	Female	36	Hanoi	Bachelor's Degree	Self-employed	Tourism products, Lighting system
2	Male	25	Ho Chi Minh City	College	Office worker	Tourism products, Entertainment services
3	Female	56	Hue	High school diploma	Housewife	Pricing
4	Male	42	Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor's Degree	Business manager	Tourism products, Promotion
5	Male	25	Nha Trang	Bachelor's Degree	Tour guide	Tourism products, Promotion
6	Female	27	Hanoi	Bachelor's Degree	Administrative staff	Transportation, Operating hours
7	Female	56	Hanoi	High school diploma	Housewife	Tourism products
8	Male	45	Da Nang	Bachelor's Degree	Civil engineer	Entertainment services
9	Female	25	Indonesia	Bachelor's Degree	International tourist	Shopping services, Entertainment services, Operating hours
10	Male	23	Ho Chi Minh City	College	Student	Transportation
11	Female	24	Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor's Degree	Student	Entertainment services
12	Female	38	Hanoi	Bachelor's Degree	Businesswoman	Security, Safety
13	Female	27	Can Tho	Bachelor's Degree	Salesperson	Sustainability, Hygiene
14	Female	32	Quang Ninh	Bachelor's Degree	Teacher	Transportation
15	Male	32	Dong Nai	Bachelor's Degree	Office worker	Sustainability, Hygiene
16	Male	62	Hanoi	Master's Degree	Retired official	Tourism products, Operating hours
17	Female	40	Hai Phong	Bachelor's Degree	Banker	Tourism products, Entertainment services
18	Female	35	Dong Nai	Bachelor's Degree	Self-employed	Shopping services, Operating hours
19	Male	32	Hai Phong	Bachelor's Degree	Office worker	Transportation
20	Male	37	China	Bachelor's Degree	Entrepreneur	Tourism products
21	Female	31	Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor's Degree	Office worker	Security, Lighting system
22	Female	21	Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor's Degree	Student	Promotion
23	Male	49	Dong Nai	Vocational Diploma	Worker	Entertainment services
24	Male	22	Dong Nai	College	Student	Operating hours
25	Female	37	Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor's Degree	Office worker	Healthcare services, Entertainment services
26	Male	26	Ho Chi Minh City	Bachelor's Degree	Marketing staff	Entertainment services
27	Male	36	Hanoi	Bachelor's Degree	Accountant	Dining services, Pricing
28	Male	32	Ninh Binh	Bachelor's Degree	Self-employed	Promotion, Tourism products

Source: Compiled by the author, 2024

Based on the opinions of tourists in the table above, several key issues have been identified as follows:

Tourism Products

Night tourism in Thanh Hoa currently lacks distinctive and outstanding products to attract visitors. Existing offerings such as city tours, food tours, or unique nighttime experiences are either absent or lack appeal. This leads to difficulties for tourists in organizing their own itineraries during the evening. One tourist stated, "To enhance the appeal of night tourism activities in Thanh Hoa, services should be improved, unique nighttime tours developed, and lighting quality enhanced." (Female, 36, Hanoi). Another added, "I think there should be city tours or food tours at night. We had to plan everything ourselves, which was quite challenging." (Male, 37, China).

Entertainment Services

Evening entertainment activities in Thanh Hoa remain monotonous, mostly limited to karaoke, coffee shops, or dining. These services fail to differentiate the destination from others, resulting in a lackluster night tourism experience. One tourist remarked, "In Thanh Hoa, the only activities at night are dining, enjoying food, having coffee, or karaoke, similar to other places. There aren't any street music events or night markets." (Female, 24, Ho Chi Minh City). Another shared, "The city square is spacious, but at night there are no activities to attract tourists, except for small food stalls, tea shops, or painting booths." (Male, 26, Ho Chi Minh City).

Pricing

The cost of services and cuisine in Thanh Hoa is perceived as higher than in other regions, posing challenges for many tourists. Some feel that the prices are not proportionate to the quality of services offered. One tourist commented, "The food in Thanh Hoa is very tasty, but the prices seem higher compared to other areas." (Female, 56, Hue). Another added, "The services here are either very high-end or very basic. The high-end options are quite expensive for families like ours." (Male, 36, Soc Son, Hanoi).

Promotion

Promotional activities for night tourism in Thanh Hoa are still limited, making it difficult for tourists to access information about key attractions and services. One respondent noted, "Currently, Thanh Hoa has some attractive tourist destinations, but promotional activities for these places are mostly targeted at daytime visitors and are not widespread or captivating enough." (Male, 42, Ho Chi Minh City). Another said, "I couldn't find much information about entertainment venues or restaurants on websites or social media platforms." (Female, 21, Ho Chi Minh City).

Transportation

Public transportation options in Thanh Hoa are not diverse, causing inconvenience for tourists traveling at night. Taxis are the primary choice but are unsuitable for various types of experiences. One tourist remarked, "We thought there would be electric vehicles for evening city tours, but there are only taxis." (Male, 23, Ho Chi Minh City). Another suggested, "Public bicycles should be provided for tourists to explore

freely at night.” (Female, 32, Quang Ninh).

Safety and Security

Although no major incidents have been reported, tourists express significant concern about safety when engaging in nighttime activities. Some suggest the need for additional support from tourist police and community patrols in crowded areas. One respondent shared, “Overall, it feels safe here, but I think places with large crowds of tourists should have tourist police or local guards.” (Female, 38, Hanoi). Another added, “I enjoy walking at night, but the area where I’m staying is poorly lit, and I didn’t see any security personnel.” (Female, 31, Ho Chi Minh City).

Sustainability and Hygiene

Tourists are increasingly aware of hygiene and sustainable development at tourist destinations. One visitor emphasized, “I think tourists should be more conscious about protecting the environment and reducing littering, especially around food stalls and mobile vendors near Lam Son Square.” (Male, 32, Dong Nai). Another remarked, “I ate at some street food stalls, and while the seasoning was great, they were still using plastic cups and plates, and the seating areas weren’t very clean.” (Female, 27, Can Tho).

Operating Hours

The operating hours of shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues in Thanh Hoa are currently too short, failing to meet tourists’ evening needs. One tourist mentioned, “Last night, at just past 10 PM, I wanted to buy some personal items after leaving a café, but all the convenience stores and local shops were closed. This is inconvenient for a tourist city.” (Male, 22, Dong Nai). Another noted, “In Hanoi, tourist attractions now stay open at night, while in Thanh Hoa City, they close at 5 PM. To attract more visitors and diversify experiences, I think there should be special programs in the evening at daytime attractions.” (Male, 62, Hanoi).

The insights above highlight the necessity for Thanh Hoa to comprehensively improve tourism products, entertainment services, transportation options, hygiene, and operating hours to better meet tourist needs. Developing a long-term strategy will not only make Thanh Hoa’s night tourism more competitive but also establish it as a distinctive and appealing destination.

4. Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the analyzed issues, the paper offers the following recommendations to improve and develop night tourism in Thanh Hoa City:

Develop distinctive tourism products: Invest in unique and characteristic night tourism products, such as organizing city tours, food tours, or nighttime experiential tours at renowned destinations. Particularly, local cultural activities, night festivals, and artistic programs should be promoted to provide distinctive experiences for tourists.

Upgrade entertainment services: Diversify nighttime entertainment services through street music events, night markets, outdoor recreational areas, or creative spaces like street art performances. This would not only enhance the attractiveness of Thanh Hoa’s night tourism but also increase its competitiveness with other localities.

Adjust pricing policies: Establish reasonable pricing frameworks for tourism and culinary services to reduce

financial pressure on tourists. Additionally, enhance price monitoring to avoid unjustified discrepancies between service quality and costs.

Strengthen promotion and communication: Leverage social media platforms and websites to promote information about entertainment venues, dining services, and unique nighttime events. Collaborate with travel agencies to introduce night tourism tours, enabling tourists to easily access and plan their journeys.

Improve transportation systems: Introduce eco-friendly and convenient public transportation options, such as electric vehicles and public bicycles, to facilitate tourist mobility during the evening. This not only enhances the travel experience but also contributes to sustainable tourism development.

Enhance security and safety: Ensure safety at crowded tourist spots by deploying tourist police and community patrols. Upgrade lighting systems in public areas to create a safer environment for tourists participating in nighttime activities. **Promote sustainability and improve hygiene awareness:** Intensify educational campaigns to raise awareness of environmental protection among tourists and local residents. Simultaneously, improve hygiene standards at dining and recreational areas to enhance Thanh Hoa’s image in the eyes of visitors.

Extend operating hours of services: Prolong the operating hours of shops, restaurants, and attractions during the evening to better meet the needs of tourists. This would contribute to creating a more vibrant and attractive night tourism atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

Night tourism in Thanh Hoa City holds significant potential to become a distinctive tourism product, contributing to the local economy and enhancing the destination’s appeal. However, the survey results indicate the need for substantial improvements in various aspects, including tourism products, entertainment services, transportation, promotion, hygiene, and operating hours.

The recommendations provided in this paper aim not only to address the current issues but also to pave the way for sustainable and comprehensive development of night tourism. If implemented effectively, Thanh Hoa has the potential to become a leading night tourism destination, attracting not only domestic tourists but also expanding its reach to international markets. The collaboration between local authorities, businesses, and the community will be a key factor in achieving this goal.

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