

Factors Affecting Green Tourism Destination Development in Vietnam: Case Study of Sapa Town, Lao Cai Province

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research is to evaluate and analyze factors affecting green tourism destination development in Vietnam from surveys for the case of Sa Pa town, Lao Cao province. The study conducted a survey of 91 green destination managers and green hotel managers in Vietnamese cities (65 votes) and Sa Pa (26 votes). The collected data is statistically descriptive and analyzed to check the influence of factors in 3 groups (natural tourism resources, cultural tourism resources, green tourism development policies at the locality). method) to develop green destinations. The results show that green tourism destination development is greatly influenced by the resource characteristics of each destination, thereby creating appropriate green tourism destination development policies and ensuring the sustainability of the destination.

Keywords: tourism, influencing factors, green destinations, Sapa, Vietnam

INTRODUCTION

In some studies related to the factors affecting green destination development, which emphasize the input resource factors of the product supply process considered natural and tourism resource. In addition, the awareness from green destination suppliers in preserving and developing sustainably the resources used in providing green destination products is also especially emphasized. In their study of “Tourists' environmental-friendly behavior and attitudes,” Untaru and his colleagues suggest that factors such as the use of natural resources and non-renewable resources as well as understanding about the importance of protecting the natural environment

and the tourism environment, which has an impact on the process of “greening” the tourism destinations of the countries around the world. (Untaru and al., 2014).

Green tourism products are special products that require management in the use of state-owned resources and the development of green destinations must be included in the development policy factors from the government. Research on tourism by Shigui Ma and his colleagues highly appreciates the factor of green investment contributing to creating more green jobs in greening tourism (Ma et al., 2021). Additionally, local green tourism development policies play a tremendously important role, in which expanding and attracting private investment in green destinations in joining hands to protect the environment, offering innovative initiatives. Green initiatives with effective environmental protection strategies will create green jobs and promote the process of “greening” the tourism industry towards sustainable development.

According to the research results of Kostakis and his colleagues, the overheating of the regional tourism industry leads to a rapid increase in the number of tourists, putting pressure on tourism infrastructure and having a particularly negative impact on the environment climate change (Kostakis & Sardianou, 2012a). Small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs) have a major role in promoting the greening process to become more sustainable thanks to green initiatives, green cooperation and green investment and keeping up with world tourism trends. It is necessary and urgent to have a sustainable tourism management and operation policy, specifically a monitoring system to manage negative impacts on the tourism environment, sanctions, and strict supervision in localities.

Green destination act as local green tourism service providers. Factors affecting green destination development are said to be: (i) Natural tourism resources; (ii) Cultural tourism resources; and (iii) Policy mechanism to develop green tourism locally, these factors create unique attributes for local green tourism. Evaluating factors related to the ability to provide green tourism services locally will contribute to assessing the supply from green destinations and forecasting the impact on demand of local green tourism as well as predicting the development of the local green tourism market in the future. Sticking to ASEAN's assessment standards on the role of green tourism in sustainable economic, social and environmental development, this study selects input criteria corresponding to the environment (standards criteria for natural tourism resources), social (cultural tourism resources) and economic (local planning strategies in a reasonable and effective use of resources to ensure development lasting).

*** *Natural tourism resources***

The natural environment is an important foundation for developing a tourist destination. According to Hsiao and his colleagues., the natural environment needs special attention which is

necessary for sustainable green tourism development (Hsiao et al., 2014). At tourist destinations, the natural environmental conditions are suitable for human health, suitable for tourism activities to take place smoothly, and the tourist destination has conditions for sustainable development. Natural conditions and natural tourism resources are factors that create opportunities and events to attract tourists. The larger the scale of tourism resources, and the more unique and attractive the nature of tourism resources, the more benefits there are to attract tourists and expand the market for the development of green tourism. Natural tourism resources are considered the foundation for building and developing green tourism products. Any change in quantity and quality of natural tourism resources will affect green tourism development.

*** *Cultural tourism resources***

In the context of globalization, green tourism development needs to aim to meet the requirements of standards for evaluating the development of green tourism in the world, for example, according to ASEAN standards in 2016, cultural tourism resources in Vietnam, green destinations are considered an important standard. Cultural tourism resources include historical relics, architecture, local customs and traditions, and cultural festivals (Hau, 2018). The development of tourism in general, creates excitement for the tourism product market, on the other hand, it also poses challenges for preserving local humanity values. Climate change will lead to changes in the laws of evolution of major climatic factors such as temperature, humidity, etc., changing the conditions for developing resort tourism, one of the main types of tourism in Vietnam. (Hoang, 2018).

Climate change will directly affect the growth, development, and even the survival of many ecosystems and rare and endemic species of tourism value. At the same time, it also gives rise to many extreme weather phenomena with large scale and intensity, occurring in areas with less affect by traditional occurrence. The impact of storms, floods, and the resulting prolonged inundation will damage or even erase many historical and cultural monuments and structures - considered a special form of tourism resource that contributes to the development of green tourism (Hau, 2018; Hoang, 2018). Climate change, with its manifestations of changes in weather rules and the increasing occurrence of extreme weather phenomena, will have negative impacts on not only tourism but also other aspects of the economy in Vietnam.

Climate change, with its manifestations of changes in weather rules and the increasing appearance of extreme weather phenomena, will have negative effects on the organization of tourism programs and on their effectiveness tourism business activities, especially affect the rights and can endanger the health and lives of tourists (Bramwell, 1990; Chen et al., 2018). Thus, climate change has a direct impact on the quantity and quality of tourism resources,

thereby affecting the exploitation and promotion of cultural values in green tourism development in Vietnam locality (González & León, 2001).

****Policy to develop green tourism locally***

Developing green tourism in the context of international economic integration poses a challenge between balancing sustainable development goals and economic development goals. This requires a local green tourism development planning strategy associated with natural and cultural tourism resources. With the goal of “greening”, policies for green tourism development need to be built in accordance with the economic context, characteristics of natural resources, and local resource exploitation capacity (Anh, 2022). The assessment of green tourism development policies at green destinations is considered because this is one of the standards that contributes to assessing the level of development according to the sustainable economic development goals that ASEAN 2016 has set for locations providing green tourism services (Hai & Hien, 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Green tourism destinations act as local green tourism service providers. Factors affecting green destination development are said to be: (i) Natural tourism resources; (ii) Cultural tourism resources; and (iii) local green tourism development planning strategy. These factors create unique attributes for local green tourism.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Localities that orient tourism activities towards preserving and developing the availability of nature have a positive impact on the development of local green tourism.

Managing and exploiting natural tourism resources to develop green tourism plays an important role in the process of attracting tourists. The natural environment and tourism resources are important input factors for tourism activities and are also factors that impact the sustainable development of tourism (Anh, 2022). Quantity, type, structure, diversity, location and exploitation ability, and natural environment directly impact the orientation, development goals, and selection of typical tourism products (Chen et al., 2018). The larger the scale of natural tourism resources, the higher the quality, the uniqueness and attractiveness, and the protected natural environment, the more favorable conditions it will attract tourists and expand the green tourism product market. (Thanh, 2021). The natural environment and natural tourism resources are important factors affecting the scale, quality, type of tourism products and services of this industry (Hsiao et al., 2014).

Hypothesis 2: Localities that orient tourism activities towards preserving local cultural values have a positive impact on the development of local tourism.

Cultural tourism resources are preserved and put into exploitation to develop green tourism, which will bring many cultural experiences to tourists. For tourists, learning about local cultural values in a new destination always takes on an important position in their concerns. Tangible cultural heritage and intangible culture create attraction for sustainable tourism when exploited appropriately at destinations. Whether or not their sightseeing activities and experiences are deeply and fully evaluated depends on the extent to which local cultural values are understood. Exploiting cultural tourism resources into tourism activities at a destination, preserves traditional cultural values, on the other hand, meets the needs of tourists to learn about local culture (Holden, 2003).

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The promulgated green tourism development policy has a positive impact on the development of local tourism.

Travel is indispensable and is one of the modern needs of humans. The prospects of the tourism industry stimulate both developed and developing countries to direct their policies to become destinations for tourists from all around the world. Policy is a key factor to gain an advantage in competition between tourist destinations (Haxton, 2015). Furthermore, tourism policy clearly represents political decisions and affects tourism development (Hall, 2021). Meanwhile, the demand of tourists for environmental-friendly tourism products is increasing (Guo et al., 2019). The trend of tourism development continues to increase with tourists' choice of green suppliers becoming increasingly evident. This pushes the process of “greening” the tourism industry to be more vigorous than ever. At the same time, green tourism development policies are also urgent accordingly (Hong et al., 2003). Local green tourism development planning harmonizes the three goals, which are protecting the natural environment, ensuring economic benefits for the local community and preserving local traditional culture (Kearney, 1994). Groups of influencing factors are represented by the contents according to Table 1 and are considered in terms of importance from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important).

Table 1: Factors affecting green destination development

Factor	Encoding	Content	Source
Natural tourism resources	TN1	The availability of nature plays a decisive role in tourism development at the destination.	(Anh, 2022; Hâu, 2018; Hsiao et al., 2014; Jopp et al., 2015; Kearney, 1994; Kostakis & Sardianou, 2012b; Lee et al., 2016)
	TN2	Protecting national parks, conservation areas, flora and fauna and biodiversity to exploit and develop tourism products at destinations.	
	TN3	The natural environment and natural tourism resources contribute to attracting tourists.	
	TN4	Preserving biodiversity creates attraction for green tourism at the destination.	

Factor	Encoding	Content	Source
	TN5	The scale and level of tourism development at a destination depends on natural conditions and natural tourism resources.	
Cultural tourism resources	VH1	Exploiting local cultural values plays a decisive role in tourism development at the destination.	(Hall, 2021; Holden, 2003; Kearney, 1994; Kostakis & Sardianou, 2012b; Lee et al., 2016)
	VH2	Exploiting indigenous cultural values for tourism development.	
	VH3	The distinguishment of tourism products depends on how to exploit local cultural values in tourism activities at different destination.	
	VH4	Preserving historical relics and traditional cultural values makes an important contribution to sustainable tourism development at the destination.	
Policy to develop green tourism at locality	CS1	Green destination development planning according to ASEAN green urban standards is important for tourism development.	(Guo et al., 2019; Hải & Hiên, 2021; Hall, 2021; Haxton, 2015; Hong et al., 2003; Kearney, 1994)
	CS2	Planning the green area and increasing the green area at the destination is an urgent matter.	
	CS3	Promulgating mechanisms to attract investment in tourism infrastructure development towards greening and preserving local identity.	
	CS4	Training tourism human resources to be aware of environmental protection and preserving indigenous cultural values is necessary for tourism development	
	CS5	Organizing promotion and promoting green tourism products of the destination.	
	CS6	Establishing an interdisciplinary inspection team to monitor the implementation process of travel businesses and accommodation establishments at the destination.	

Source: Compiled by the author group

In this study, the author chose the expert method and descriptive statistical method. With 91 survey questionnaires from 25 Tourism Management departments under the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of provinces and cities with ASEAN green hotels, recognized green resorts, and ASEAN green destinations such as Hanoi, Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Thai Nguyen, Lao Cai, Ha Giang, Vinh Yen, Cao Bang, Ninh Binh, Thua Thien Hue, Lam Dong, Phu Yen, Ba Ria Vung Tau, Binh Dinh, Quang Nam, Ha Nam, and Quang Binh. In particular, the questionnaire was sent to 26 managers and

experts who are knowledgeable and directly work with the green tourist destination in Sa Pa town, Lao Cai province. This study conducted a survey to evaluate the impact of factors on green destination development such as: natural tourism resources; cultural tourism resources; and local green tourism development policies.

Table 2: Description of the research sample

Targets Content	Gender		Age				Qualification	
	Male	Female	Under 25 years old	From 26 to 40	From 41 to under 60	Over 60 years old	University	Postgraduate
Total number of research samples	48	43	0	38	41	12	27	64
Ratio %	52,7%	47,3%	0	41,7%	45%	13,3%	29,7%	70,3%
Number of research samples in Sapa.	17	9	0	19	7	0	23	3
Ratio %	65,4%	34,6%	0	73,1%	26,9%	0	88,5%	11,5%

Source: Complied by the author group

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Survey results from 91 observation samples at green tourism destinations within the territory of Vietnam show that the average value of the 3 factors "Natural tourism resources" reached a value of 3.98; "Cultural tourism resources" reached an average value of 3.83 and Green tourism development policy achieved an average value of 3.97. This leads to the assertion that the "Natural tourism resource" factor has the strongest influence on the development of local green destination compared to the other two factors in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of evaluating factors affecting green tourism destinations

Factor	Observed variable	Mimimum Value	Maximum Value	Average	Average Value
Natural tourism resources	TN1	1	5	3,90	3,98
	TN2	1	5	3,93	
	TN3	1	5	4,10	
	TN4	1	5	4,05	
	TN5	1	5	3,90	
Cultural	VH1	1	5	3,85	3,83

tourism resources	VH2	1	5	3,78	3,97
	VH3	1	5	3,95	
	VH4	1	5	3,76	
Policy to develop green tourism locally	CS1	1	5	4,00	
	CS2	1	5	3,90	
	CS3	1	5	4,00	
	CS4	1	5	4,02	
	CS5	1	5	3,98	
	CS6	1	5	3,90	

Source: Compiled from survey results by the author group

For 26 research samples in the green destination area of Sapa town, Lao Cai province, the specific results are as follows:

Table 4: Results of evaluating factors affecting green tourism destinations in Sapa town, Lao Cai province

Factor	Observed variable	Mimimum Value	Maximum Value	Average	Average Value
Natural tourism resources	TN1	1	5	3.54	3,38
	TN2	1	5	3.15	
	TN3	1	5	3.42	
	TN4	1	5	3.04	
	TN5	1	5	3.77	
Cultural tourism resources	VH1	1	5	3.92	3,79
	VH2	1	5	3.77	
	VH3	1	5	3.85	
	VH4	1	5	3.62	
Policy to develop green tourism locally	CS1	1	5	3.50	3,61
	CS2	1	5	3.62	
	CS3	1	5	3.50	
	CS4	1	5	3.81	
	CS5	1	5	3.88	
	CS6	1	5	3.35	

Source: Compiled from survey results by the author group

At Sapa, survey results from 26 samples showed the following results: the factor "cultural tourism resources" has an average value of 3.79; The factor "local green tourism development policy" reached an average value of 3.61; The factor "natural tourism resources" reached the lowest average value of 3.38.

The factor "Natural tourism resources" with 5 observed variables, the results show that the average value of the observed variables ranges from 3.90 to 4.10. The factor considered the most important is the "Natural environment" (variable TN3) with the highest average value of 4.10, which made it to have a high impact on tourists. For the factor "Cultural tourism resources" with 4 observed variables, the average values of the variables are all below 4.0. This shows that all variables have an impact on the exploitation of cultural resources into green tourism products. However, when considering the importance of this factor through the average value, cultural tourism resources are also considered important for the development of green destinations. However, this factor is less important than the factor of natural tourism resources when the average value of the variables is lower than 4.0.

For the factor "Local green tourism development policy", with 6 observed variables, the average value of the variables ranges from 3.90 to 4.02. Variable CS4 - local green human resource training policy reached the highest average value of 4.02, which shows that practicing green tourism measures at the destination plays a more important role. Human resources determine the success of the process of greening local tourist destinations.

The results of the average values of the scales show that policy factors play a more important role than human tourism resources in building green destinations.

The analysis results show that the evaluation criteria of 3 groups of factors: (i) Natural tourism resources; (ii) Cultural tourism resources; (iii) Local green tourism development policies have many impacts at different levels on green tourism destination development.

For the group of factors "Natural tourism resources" has a major impact on the development of green tourism destinations. Exploiting the values of geomorphology, ecosystems, climate conditions and natural landscapes for tourism activities at destinations to enhance and attract tourism.

For the factor "Humanistic tourism resources", the role of humanistic tourism resources is considered important and contributes to enhancing the value of tourism products at the destination. Historical relics, cultural festivals, and folk culture are exploited and included in the sightseeing tour program to meet tourists' desire to learn about indigenous culture.

Exploiting the value of humanistic tourism resources in developing green tourism at the destination will be sustainable while meeting the needs of tourists, on the other hand, participating in the process of preserving and promoting traditional culture locally.

Regarding the factor "Green destination development policy", the role of green tourism development policy is considered important based on the assessment of local natural resources

such as green nature, biodiversity conservation biodiversity and biosphere for green tourism development. Furthermore, the survey also shows the importance of applying green practices to develop green hotels/green resorts by introducing the ASEAN green hotel standards and ASEAN clean tourism city criteria for tourist attractions. The role of imposing sanctions on accommodation establishments/restaurants and tourist attractions for non-compliance with environmental protection measures according to ASEAN standards will also be a barrier affecting government policy. For green tourism development policy in the locality, "Local green tourism development planning policy" plays the role of factors such as: Training green human resources; Preserving and developing local culture; Propaganda to raise environmental awareness among local people and tourists; promoting local green tourism products; attracting investment in green tourism infrastructure; Special emphasis is placed on monitoring the activities of travel businesses, managing tourist attractions and the "greening" process at accommodation establishments.

On the contrary, for different tourist destination, the implementation of measures and criteria for evaluating tourist destinations depends on the characteristics of each of which. The case of SaPa destination shows that **cultural tourism resource** factors have a greater impact than **natural tourism resource factors**. In fact, this is an area inhabited by many different ethnic groups such as H'mong, Dao, Tay, Giay, Sa Pho... creating a colorful cultural picture, an attractive place for tourists. Comparing the value of the average "natural tourism resources" factor of SaPa with destinations generally in Vietnam, shows that there is a variance (3.98 and 3.38), the factor "Local green tourism development policy" also has a big difference (3.97 and 3.61). This proves that developing green tourism destinations has a great impact due to the resource characteristics of each destination, thereby creating appropriate green tourism destination development policies to ensure sustainability of destination.

CONCLUSION

This study has identified factors affecting green tourism destination development in Vietnam including "Natural tourism resources", "Cultural tourism resources" and "Green tourism development policies at the destination". Although the survey results show that further research is needed to determine which factors affect the differences in building green destination structures, the limitation of this research is currently conducting a survey with a target group of state management agencies and tourism experts. This research needs to be expanded to tourists and businesses involved in the process of providing services to tourist destinations to have a multi-dimensional view of green tourism development at the destination. In the following research, we focus on the following issues: clarifying the factors that influence the differences in building green tourism destination structures and the needs of tourists for each green destination.

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