Sustainable Tourism in Vietnam: Current situation and future development

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This thesis examines the sustainability of Vietnam's tourism sector amidst its recent emergence as a popular destination, celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. With tourism experiencing considerable growth and contributing significantly to Vietnam's socio-economic development, the government has shifted focus towards sustainable tourism, aiming to preserve the nation's environmental and cultural assets while supporting the increasing visitor economy. Despite the positive economic impact, critics point to environmental concerns and community disruptions caused by the influx of tourists, such as pollution, depletion of resources, pressures on infrastructure, and cultural dilution. As Vietnam seeks to further expand its tourism market, questions are raised regarding the ability to align this growth with sustainable tourism principles without overburdening the country's infrastructure and environment.

The thesis work on sustainable tourism in Vietnam aims to evaluate and improve the sustainability of Vietnam's tourism industry. It will analyze the current state of tourism, recognize challenges to sustainability, and suggest strategies for promoting sustainable practices. The goal is to ensure that tourism contributes positively to the economy while preserving cultural and environmental resources for future generations. The thesis would likely highlight the importance of aligning with global sustainable development principles and goals, and address balancing economic growth with environmental stewardship and social equity.

The document analysis method was chosen to explore the current and future development of sustainable tourism in Vietnam. Collecting documents from various sources across Vietnam provides comprehensive data and insights into the current situation, as well as potential opportunities and challenges for its future development. This method also allows for an in-depth examination of papers related to sustainable tourism, leading to a deeper understanding of the existing framework and areas for improvement.

Research suggests that a holistic approach to sustainable tourism in Vietnam, incorporating community-based tourism, environmental protection, cultural preservation, and economic development, can contribute to long-term stability and prosperity for the communities involved. The study emphasizes fair distribution of benefits, job creation, positive environmental impacts, and respect for the natural and cultural environment as key marketing strategies. Introducing educational programs into community initiatives and school curriculums raises awareness about the importance of environmental preservation and cultural conservation in tourism development. Furthermore, leveraging advanced technologies through smart tourism is essential for enhancing efficiency and promoting sustainable development within this industry.

| **Key words** |
| Sustainable tourism, Vietnam tourism, Sustainable development |

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1 Introduction

Vietnam has become an attractive tourist destination in recent years, with its rich history, stunning natural landscapes, and vibrant culture (Tien, Ho & Nguyen., 2019). Vietnam's tourism sector has experienced substantial growth, contributing to the nation's economic advancement and employment opportunities. With the government's focus on sustainable tourism, there is a growing emphasis on preserving the country's natural and cultural assets while also catering to the increasing number of visitors. This thesis aims to explore the current state of sustainable tourism in Vietnam and propose strategies for future development in the industry. Through this research, we hope to contribute to the ongoing efforts to ensure that Vietnam's tourism sector continues to thrive responsibly and sustainably.

However, some analysts contend that the swift expansion of tourism in Vietnam has resulted in adverse effects on the environment and indigenous populations (Ngọc & Quang, 2020). The influx of tourists has strained natural resources, leading to issues such as pollution, deforestation, and habitat destruction. Additionally, the increase in tourist numbers has put pressure on local infrastructure and traditional ways of life, leading to concerns about cultural degradation and loss of authenticity.

Furthermore, the focus on attracting more tourists to Vietnam may compromise the principles of sustainable tourism, as the sheer volume of visitors may overwhelm the country's capacity to manage and mitigate the environmental and social impacts of tourism (Tien et al., 2019). This raises questions about the feasibility of achieving sustainable tourism goals in the face of increasing demand and commercialization. These opposing arguments highlight the complexity of achieving sustainable tourism in Vietnam and pose challenges that need to be addressed in the future development of the industry.

Research objectives

The main objective of the thesis work focused on sustainable tourism in Vietnam is to assess and enhance the sustainable development of Vietnam's tourism industry. It aims to examine the current state of tourism in Vietnam, identify challenges to sustainability, and propose strategies for promoting sustainable tourism practices. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the tourism sector contributes positively to the national economy while preserving the country's cultural and environmental resources for future generations. The thesis would likely emphasise the need for Vietnam to adopt practices that align with global sustainable development goals and address the specifics of balancing economic growth with environmental stewardship and social equity.

Thesis structure

The thesis begins with an introduction that offers the initial perspective on the thesis topic, outlines the objectives, methodology, and scope, and presents important concepts relevant to the research

field. Following this is a detailed explanation of sustainable tourism and its historical evolution. The theoretical framework of the thesis presents fundamental ideas and elements related to sustainable tourism, both in a global context and with specific reference to Vietnam. It outlines the underlying principles and objectives of sustainable tourism, as well as provides reasons for the significance of sustainable development. Additionally, it explores previous efforts aimed at promoting sustainability in Vietnamese tourism and examines the influencing factors on tourism development in Vietnam.

After presenting the topic of study, the empirical section illustrates the methodology used in this research and offers rationale for its choice. This is followed by a summary of how it was applied throughout the thesis journey. The thesis then presents the findings by categorizing them into significant themes identified during data analysis. Lastly, it presents conclusions based on these findings. The thesis concludes with an examination of credibility and a subjective reflection on personal learning and growth.

2 Defining sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is a form of tourism that operates in such a way that it remains viable over the long term, providing benefits to the host community and the environment while offering a high-quality visitor experience. It seeks to guarantee that growth aligns with the requirements of current visitors and local communities, while also safeguarding and improving prospects for the future (Ecological Tourism in Europe, 2009). Tourism development is often considered a fundamental principle aimed at reducing adverse effects on the environment and indigenous culture, while also supporting economic growth, employment opportunities, and the preservation of local ecosystems. (Vu, Nguyen, Nguyen Thi & Le., 2020; WTO, 2005; Zeng, Li, Jotikashira, Sun & Mao., 2022.)

2.1 History of sustainable tourism

The trajectory of sustainable tourism is closely intertwined with the broader environmental movement and the rising awareness of tourism's far-reaching impacts, which started to come to the forefront in the late 1980s. We can chart its progress through several key stages:

1980s

Brundtland Report
The concept of "sustainable development" was introduced.

1992

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro
Sustainable tourism has been identified as a crucial element of sustainability at various levels.

1990s & 2000s

Established a multidisciplinary foundation for sustainable development field.

2002

The World Summit on Sustainable Development
Emphasized the significance of integrating sustainability into the tourism industry

2001 - 2010

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism
Sustainable tourism has experienced a phase of policy advancement with the goal of encouraging creativity.

2010-now

There is now a greater emphasis on comprehensive approaches that integrate community involvement, protection of cultural heritage, and environmental conservation.
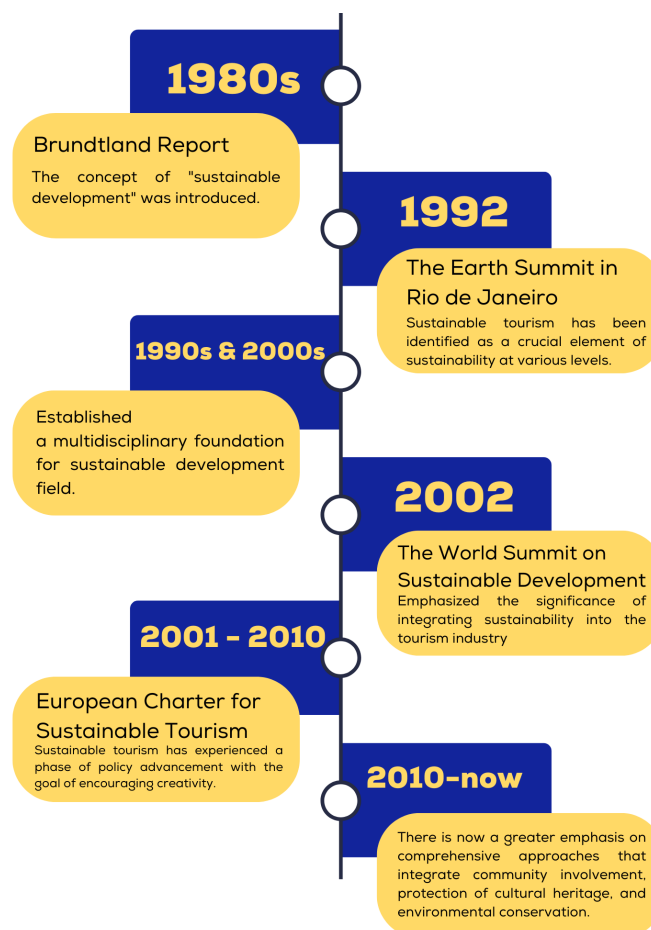
Figure 1. Sustainable tourism timeline

In the 1980s, the release of the Brundtland Report was a seminal moment, introducing the world to the concept of "sustainable development" and sparking conversations about its application within the tourism industry. This report laid the groundwork for what would become known as sustainable tourism (Roblek, Drpić, Meško, Milojica., 2021). The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was another critical juncture. Here, within the broader Agenda 21 document, sustainable tourism was positioned as a significant component of sustainability on several scales - local, national, and global. (Roblek et al., 2021; WTO, 2005.) The 1990s and 2000s brought about a wealth of new research, studies, and publications that explored and refined the concept of sustainable tourism. These works often employed various academic lenses, from tourism and economics to environmental management, thus establishing a multidisciplinary foundation for the field. (Roblek et al., 2021; Buckley, 2012.)

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg emphasized the significance of integrating sustainability into the tourism industry. The summit's plan of implementation addressed, among other things, the imperative to attend to the specific needs of tourism in the context of sustainability (Roblek et al., 2021). Between 2001 and 2010, sustainable tourism underwent a period of policy development aimed at stimulating innovation in business, job creation, and the conservation of landscapes. It was also during this time that the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected areas was introduced, serving as a guiding framework for responsible tourism development (Roblek et al., 2021).

In the current century, there has been a concerted effort to further refine sustainable tourism practices. The focus has shifted toward more holistic models that incorporate local community engagement, cultural heritage conservation, and environmental preservation. This has included embracing systems thinking, considering tourism demand, and contemplating the relationship between tourism and natural resource management. (Roblek et al., 2021; Liu, 2003.)

The history of sustainable tourism shows the growing awareness of balancing economic growth with environmental protection and social equity. It is constantly evolving, with ongoing debates about the best ways to achieve sustainability within the tourism sector. The journey of sustainable tourism represents an increasing understanding of harmonizing economic growth with environmental stewardship and social justice. The debate continues as the industry seeks effective strategies to reach its sustainability goals.

2.2 Advantages of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism has earned widespread recognition for the constellation of advantages it provides, encompassing contributions to environmental conservation, cultural preservation, economic enhancement, and social improvement. These multifaceted benefits have been substantially documented in "Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers" by the World Tourism Organization, which acts as a foundational reference in this field. From an environmental stand-

point, sustainable tourism proposes a suite of strategies designed to shrink the tourism industry's ecological footprint. (WTO, 2005.) This is achieved through the implementation of practices that focus on reducing waste generation, enhancing the energy efficiency of tourism-related activities, and meticulously preserving the natural habitats that are vital for the survival of wildlife and the ecological balance.

Culturally, sustainable tourism is rooted in a deep-seated commitment to the guardianship and enrichment of the cultural wealth inherent in travel destinations (WTO, 2005). This approach involves a concerted effort to safeguard historic sites, and intangible heritage, and to honour the traditions that collectively contribute to the cultural identity and continuity of each locale. The objective is not just to protect these aspects for their inherent value but also to maintain the unique cultural appeal that draws visitors and differentiates each destination.

Economically, the adoption of sustainable tourism practices translates into tangible benefits such as job creation, income generation, and local enterprise support. These initiatives encourage the support of local businesses, thereby fortifying the economic tapestry of destinations and fostering a more diverse and resilient local economy. The emphasis on economic benefits also includes creating opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, often the backbone of local economies, and providing them with the platform to thrive within the tourism industry. (WTO, 2005.)

Community empowerment is another key principle of sustainable tourism. The framework provided by sustainable tourism emphasizes the imperative of actively including local communities in the planning, governance, and operational processes of tourism development. This creates a participatory model that strengthens community development processes and enhances the engagement and collaboration of local stakeholders. By giving residents a voice and stake in tourism development, sustainable tourism helps to ensure that the benefits of tourism are equitably shared and that the local community is a protagonist in its own developmental narrative. (WTO, 2005.)

Education and awareness play a pivotal role in sustainable tourism initiatives. Through various programs and communications, both travellers and local residents are educated about the significance of conserving the environment and cultural assets. This educational component seeks to instil a greater environmental ethic and appreciation for cultural diversity, leading to more responsible behaviour by all parties involved. (WTO, 2005.)

Looking toward the future, sustainable tourism is ardently focused on ensuring the longevity and viability of destinations. This long-term orientation underscores the importance of maintaining the charm and allure of these places so that they remain enticing to visitors well into the future. Through careful planning and responsible management of resources, the aim is to safeguard destinations against over-tourism and the degradation of natural and cultural assets, which could compromise their appeal and viability. This foresight ensures that future generations will have the

opportunity to experience and enjoy these destinations just as much as the current one does. (WTO, 2005.)

The improved quality of life is another fundamental goal of sustainable tourism, as it stresses the importance of equitable economic distribution and social equity. These goals are pursued through strategies that extend the economic benefits of tourism to a broad range of community members, enhancing living standards through better job opportunities, fair wages, and access to improved services and infrastructure. This includes not only the direct employment generated by tourism but also the indirect benefits that cascade through local economies as tourism dollars are spent on local services and goods. (WTO, 2005.)

By integrating these sustainable practices, as outlined in the guidelines of the WTO publication, stakeholders in the tourism industry can ensure that their growth and development are managed in ways that are not only profitable but also conscientious of the long-term health of the environment and beneficial to the society that hosts them. Ultimately, sustainable tourism champions a balanced approach that simultaneously addresses the needs of the environment, the local community, and the visitors, creating a more ethical and rewarding tourism experience for all parties involved.

2.3 Principles and Goals

The principles and goals of sustainable tourism are designed to ensure that tourism development is carried out in a way that is environmentally responsible, socially equitable, and economically viable. The following principles and goals are informed by sources such as the World Tourism Organization's "Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers" (WTO, 2005). of tourism offerings beyond mass tourism can help distribute visitor numbers more evenly, reducing overcrowding at popular attractions and promoting the exploration of lesser-known destinations. Emphasizing authentic cultural experiences and eco-tourism opportunities can contribute to a more sustainable and enriching tourism experience for visitors.

2.3.1 Principles of Sustainable Tourism

The principles of Sustainable Tourism are foundational pillars that underpin the responsible and considerate development of tourism. These principles are vital in ensuring that the activities related to travel and hospitality have enduring positive effects while mitigating any negative consequences. (WTO, 2005.)

A Holistic Approach is the cornerstone of these principles, demanding a recognition of the multitude of ways in which tourism activities are interlinked and how they collectively influence the environment, culture, and economy of a destination. This approach advocates for a comprehensive evaluation of tourism's broad impact and calls for an integrated strategy to manage these effects holistically. (Commission of the European Communities, 2007.)

Stakeholder Engagement is another critical principle, which underscores the importance of involving a broad range of participants in the tourism industry's planning and governance. This includes garnering input and participation from local communities, tourism businesses, government entities, and the tourists themselves. It ensures that the development of tourism is equitable and beneficial for all involved parties, helping to foster a sense of collaboration and shared benefit among stakeholders. (WTO, 2005.)

Embracing a Long-Term Perspective is essential for the sustainability of tourism. This principle focuses on the future, promoting tourism management and planning that preserves and sustains the destination's natural and cultural resources. The intention is to ensure long-lasting viability and attractiveness for both present and future generations of travellers, avoiding the depletion or destruction of the very attributes that make a place worth visiting. (WTO, 2005.)

The principle of providing a Quality Experience for visitors is about offering a satisfying and enriching encounter with the destination. This goes beyond mere enjoyment to encapsulate an educational component, where tourists are made aware of the importance of sustainability and conservation efforts, thereby fostering a more informed and respectful traveller. Minimized Impact is a principle that involves active efforts to reduce the burden that tourism can place on the environment, local culture, and community life. This includes initiatives to manage waste, conserve resources, and protect the social fabric of the destination from potential strain or disruption. (WTO, 2005.)

Conservation and Enhancement of natural and cultural heritage is a principle that not only seeks to protect but also to actively improve environmental assets and cultural richness. The goal is to leave these invaluable resources in a better state for subsequent visitors and for the local population that cherishes them (WTO, 2005).

Economic Viability as a principle focuses on the economic aspects of sustainable tourism. It aims to ensure that tourism is an economic boon for a destination, contributing to job creation, revenue generation, and the overall financial health of the area, without compromising on environmental and social responsibilities (WTO, 2005).

Finally, Equity and Respect are principles that recognize the importance of fair treatment and inclusivity in tourism. They champion the idea that tourism development should promote social equity, paying particular attention to its effects on local populations and cultures. It's about giving voice and opportunity to all stakeholders, particularly those whose lives are most impacted by tourism. By respecting local traditions, customs, and values, and by ensuring fair distribution of the economic benefits of tourism, these principles align the growth of the tourism sector with the welfare and aspirations of the host community (WTO, 2005).

Each principle is an essential component of a sustainable tourism strategy, together forming a blueprint for managing and developing tourism in a manner that is conscious of its responsibility to

people, the planet, and prosperity. The holistic approach ensures that all facets of sustainability - environmental, socio-cultural, and economic - are addressed; stakeholder engagement guarantees that the policies and practices have broad support and are tailored to local needs; a long-term perspective assures that decisions made today will benefit, not burden, the future; quality experience ensures that tourism offerings are enriching and authentic; minimising impact is about making tourism a force for good, rather than a cause of harm; and conservation and enhancement are about leaving a legacy of improved assets for future generations.

2.3.2 Goals of Sustainable Tourism

The goals of Sustainable Tourism serve as the foundation for a tourism model that prioritizes long-term viability and overall prosperity. They weave together the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural strands of travel into a cohesive tapestry that delineates the direction in which the industry should move for the benefit of all stakeholders involved.

Economic Growth and Diversification stand as critical goals, with a clear focus on ensuring that tourism acts as a catalyst for a flourishing economy. The aim is to nurture a tourism sector that is robust enough to stimulate income generation and employment for local populations. It also stresses the importance of diversifying the economic activities related to tourism to build resilience against market fluctuations and other external pressures. Ensuring the sustainability of these activities is not just about maintaining current standards, but enhancing the economic fabric of the destination so that it can continue to provide benefits well into the future (WTO, 2005).

Efficient utilization and Protection of Resources are also pivotal goals, reflecting the principle that the natural resources which attract visitors to a destination must be safeguarded. This means adopting practices that minimize environmental impacts, such as reducing waste, promoting recycling, conserving water, and using energy efficiently. The intent is to leave the natural surroundings as unspoiled as possible, ensuring that tourism does not deplete the very resources that make a destination unique and attractive (WTO, 2005).

Cultural Preservation and Enhancement go beyond merely maintaining the status quo. They involve actively upholding traditions, languages, and heritage sites that give a community its identity, while also recognizing the need for these cultural elements to evolve organically. By fostering a tourism industry that respects and highlights cultural diversity, travellers gain an appreciation for the destination's unique characteristics, creating a richer experience and encouraging repeat visitation (WTO, 2005).

The goal of Social Well-being and Community Development is to ensure that the benefits of tourism permeate throughout the host community, improving the quality of life for residents. This involves enhancing local facilities such as schools, healthcare, transportation, and public services that can be strained by increased tourism. It requires tourism development to be planned in con-

junction with community needs, ensuring that it supports, rather than undermines, the social fabric of the destination (WTO, 2005).

Education and Interpretation are goals aimed at deepening the understanding of tourists and local residents alike about the importance of sustainability in preserving cultural and natural environments. This goal promotes programs that educate and engage visitors, providing them with insights into the local ecosystem and cultural context, thereby fostering a more conscientious and informed traveller (WTO, 2005).

Lastly, the goal of an Equitable Distribution of Benefits is a call to ensure inclusivity in tourism development. This objective seeks to ensure that the wealth generated from tourism is shared generously across the entire host community. It attempts to move away from models where the spoils of tourism accrue only to those at the top, often external entities, and instead create a model where the local populace at all levels from small business owners to employees in the hospitality industry gains economically (WTO, 2005). Achieving this requires conscious policy and structural adjustments that direct flows of tourist expenditure toward local enterprises and facilitate employment and entrepreneurial opportunities aligned with tourism.

Spreading the economic benefits of tourism throughout the community isn't just about financial gain; it's essential for fostering social cohesion and empowerment. When tourism development is inclusively structured, it can catalyze a broad spectrum of the community to take part in and actively contribute to, the industry's success, resulting in increased local engagement and a strong sense of ownership and pride. This inclusive approach is critical to counter the potential negatives of tourism development that sometimes result in societal disparities, ignite feelings of discontent, or create a local populace that feels detached from the thriving economic sector in their midst. Having community members feel they are contributors to, rather than mere onlookers of, the tourism within their locale is fundamental to sustainable tourism development (Saarinen, 2019). This also aligns with the concept that the development of tourism should not only yield costs but also benefits, where strategies should aim to work with these aspects by reducing the former and enhancing the latter (Saarinen, 2019; Wibawa, Prijambodo, Fauzi, Shabrina., 2020).

Additionally, equitable distribution reinforces the other goals of sustainable tourism. When communities see tangible benefits from conservation efforts or cultural preservation, they are more likely to support and participate in these initiatives. This creates a virtuous cycle where tourism not only minimizes its negative impact but actively contributes to the enhancement of the destination. The robustness of sustainable tourism's impact is tested by its ability to transform communities and environments positively. Whether by preserving ecosystems that are vital for tourism and local livelihoods, by maintaining a fabric of cultural authenticity that can continue to draw visitors, or by catalyzing economic and social development that uplifts the broader community, sustainable tourism positions itself as a conscientious and viable model of development.

3 Sustainable tourism in Vietnam

Sustainable tourism is becoming an increasingly important aspect of global travel, focusing on balancing economic growth with environmental and social considerations. Tourism is one of the most profitable economic activities in the world, with Vietnam being a popular destination due to its rich culture, history, and natural beauty. Nevertheless, with the rapid expansion of tourism in Vietnam, it is imperative to focus on its sustainable development and management in order to minimize adverse effects on the environment, local communities, and cultural heritage (Lipscombe & Thwaites, 2003).

Moreover, research has shown that if tourism is not properly managed, it can have detrimental effects on the environment and society. Tourism in Vietnam has experienced significant growth over the past few decades. The number of international tourists coming to Vietnam has been increasing steadily (Phương, 2019). According to the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, the number of international tourists to Vietnam has been steadily increasing over the years, with 11,616,490 foreign tourists visiting Vietnam in the first nine months of 2018 alone (Vnexpress, 2019). This indicates the great potential of Vietnam's tourism industry and the need for sustainable development to ensure long-term success. Factors such as natural resources, cultural heritage, and local community involvement play a crucial role in the sustainable development of tourism in Vietnam (Phương, 2019).

Additionally, the Vietnam Tourism Association has been actively engaging with local communities and stakeholders to raise awareness about sustainable tourism practices and to foster a sense of responsibility towards preserving the country's natural and cultural assets (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2021). They have implemented various initiatives such as promoting community-based tourism, encouraging responsible travel practices, and supporting sustainable tourism certification programs.

These initiatives aim to provide the legal and policy foundations for developing tourism in Vietnam while ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and promoting social, cultural, and environmental sustainability. While sustainable tourism in Vietnam is undoubtedly important for preserving the environment and cultural heritage, there are opposing arguments that emphasize the economic benefits of rapid tourism growth. Some proponents of rapid tourism expansion argue that the economic benefits far outweigh the negative environmental and social impacts (Vu et al., 2020). They believe that the boost in employment opportunities and the influx of foreign investment resulting from increased tourism can significantly improve the standard of living for local communities.

There is contention regarding the feasibility of enforcing sustainable tourism practices in a country with a rapidly developing infrastructure. Critics argue that enforcing sustainability standards may hamper economic development by placing restrictions on infrastructure expansion and tourism-related construction projects. Moreover, some believe that the emphasis on sustainable tourism

might limit the potential for Vietnam to compete with other popular tourist destinations in the region, potentially hindering the country's ability to further advance its tourism industry and capitalize on the economic opportunities it presents.

While there are differing opinions on the development of sustainable tourism in Vietnam, it is important to recognize the long-term benefits and positive impacts it can have on the country. By prioritizing sustainable tourism practices, Vietnam has the opportunity to preserve its natural and cultural heritage and to position itself as an environmentally and socially responsible destination. Embracing sustainable tourism not only differentiates Vietnam from other destinations but also attracts a growing segment of conscious travellers who seek authentic experiences that support environmental conservation and local communities. As Vietnam progresses in the advancement and administration of its tourism sector, it will be essential to incorporate sustainable methods to secure enduring prosperity and enhance the general welfare of the nation and its citizens.

3.1 Vietnam as a Tourism Destination

Vietnam has increasingly become an alluring destination for travellers worldwide, characterized by its vibrant cultural tapestry, breathtaking landscapes, and rich historical heritage. The lifting of the 20-year-old trade embargo by the United States gave a tremendous boost to Vietnam's economic and tourism sectors (Jansen-Verbeke & Go, 1995). As a destination bypassed by mass tourism in the 1960s due to war and political constraints, Vietnam presented an untapped potential for travellers seeking new experiences (Jansen-Verbeke & Go, 1995).

Khanh Hoa Province in Vietnam is an example of an area that has seen tourism growth. Employing Information and Communication Technologies, it offers a variety of traveller needs and has shown that including environmental protection in its growth strategies is essential, albeit with mixed results so far (Pham, Nguyen & Tran., 2021). Key attractions in Vietnam range from the stunning coastline, such as the white sandy beaches of Nha Trang, to the mystic karst landscapes of Ha Long Bay, and the bustling streets of Hanoi, offering an array of experiences from serene natural beauty to dynamic urban energy.

The Vietnamese are known for their warm hospitality, a trait deeply ingrained in the nation's identity and portrayed as a cornerstone of Vietnam's burgeoning tourism brand. The human touch and the genuine interactions with local people often become defining moments for visitors, leaving indelible impressions that beckon them back.

Vietnam's tourism sector also faces challenges such as environmental concerns, including water pollution, air quality issues, and impacts of climate change, which are progressively being addressed through various tourism initiatives and legal frameworks ensuring sustainable tourism development (Pham et al., 2021). Moreover, the economic relevance of destinations like the strategic

Cam Ranh Bay emphasizes the complexity of balancing development and security concerns (Pham et al., 2021).

As the Vietnamese tourism industry seeks to build a strong brand, it underscores the hospitable nature of the Vietnamese people, which adds to the country's allure (Tien et al., 2019). The tourism industry is supported by numerous policies and initiatives that aim to increase Vietnam's competitiveness, such as promoting its tourism at international fairs and fostering partnerships with airlines to streamline access for visitors (Tien et al., 2019).

In summary, Vietnam's varied attractions, from natural wonders and heritage sites to urban excitement, combined with concerted efforts towards sustainability and brand-building, hold the promise of a thriving tourism future that respects its cultural legacy and natural environment while contributing to the nation's socio-economic growth (Jansen-Verbeke & Go, 1995; Pham et al., 2021; Tien et al., 2019)

3.2 Factors Affecting Tourism Development in Vietnam

3.2.1 Environmental pressures

Excessive tourism development can lead to environmental degradation, such as pollution, deforestation, and habitat destruction (Tien et al., 2019). As the number of tourists increases, the demand for resources like water, energy, and land also rises, putting strain on the natural environment. The delicate balance of ecosystems can be disrupted, leading to irreversible damage to biodiversity and ecosystems. It is essential to address these environmental pressures and implement measures to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment.

Sustainable environmental practices, including robust waste management, prudent utilization of natural resources, and rigorous conservation actions, are pivotal in reducing the environmental burden associated with tourism. The introduction of stringent regulatory measures and vigilant monitoring mechanisms can aid in curbing the environmental footprint of tourism-related activities. Furthermore, endorsing eco-friendly practices and enhancing tourist education concerning environmental stewardship are essential measures towards fostering sustainable tourism in Vietnam (Lipscombe & Thwaites, 2003; Phương, 2019; Tien et al., 2019)

Furthermore, the preservation of natural landscapes and cultural heritage sites is imperative for maintaining the authenticity and attractiveness of Vietnam as a tourist destination. Balancing the preservation of these assets with the increasing influx of visitors is a significant challenge that requires comprehensive planning and management.

3.2.2 Lack of infrastructure and resources

The existing gap in infrastructure and resources is a hindrance to Vietnam's sustainable tourism ambitions, limiting the capacity to manage and lessen the adverse impacts of tourism on the envi-

ronment and local society. The dearth of infrastructure and resources stands as a considerable obstacle within Vietnam's tourism sector. Across many areas, the insufficient transportation, water and sanitation systems, and waste management facilities restrict capabilities to accommodate the burgeoning numbers of tourists, influencing not just the quality of the tourist experience but also exerting pressure on the local resources and the communities they support Insufficient infrastructure and limited resources can hinder the development of sustainable tourism initiatives, as they may limit the capacity to manage and mitigate the environmental and social impacts of tourism. The lack of infrastructure and resources presents a significant challenge to the sustainable development of tourism in Vietnam. In many regions, inadequate transportation networks, water and sanitation systems, and waste management facilities constrain the ability to support growing numbers of tourists. This not only affects the overall visitor experience but also puts strain on local resources and communities. (Tùng, 2020). This lack of adequate infrastructure can lead to negative environmental outcomes. For example, without a robust waste management system in place, increased tourism can result in heightened pollution and destruction of ecosystems. Similarly, inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure can lead to the overutilization of local water resources, affecting the availability of clean water and proper sanitation for tourists and locals alike (Choe & Phi, 2022).

The insufficiency of infrastructure can inflict serious environmental damage. In the absence of effective waste management systems, the surge of tourists could lead to the contamination and deterioration of natural environments (Tien et al., 2019). Moreover, lacking adequate water and sanitation infrastructure might result in the excessive exploitation of local resources, impacting the availability of potable water and proper sanitation for visitors and residents alike (Choe & Phi, 2022). By addressing the challenges associated with the lack of infrastructure and resources, Vietnam can pave the way for responsible and sustainable tourism growth that benefits both the environment and local communities (Phương, 2019).

3.2.3 Lack of awareness and education

Inadequate awareness and education about sustainable tourism among key stakeholders - including visitors, local populations, and industry operators - can be a significant barrier to rolling out sustainable initiatives in the tourism sector. To ensure the fruition of sustainable tourism endeavours in Vietnam, it is crucial to enhance awareness and deliver educational programs on sustainable practices. A shortfall in this knowledge can foster unsustainable behaviours among tourists, insubstantial conservation measures, and a dearth of backing for eco-conscious tourism from local enterprises and the communities they are part of. (Vu et al., 2020; Phương, 2019.)

Tourists, as key stakeholders in the tourism industry, play a crucial role in shaping the environmental and social impact of their travel. Without proper awareness and education, tourists may engage in activities that have negative consequences for the environment and local communities. This could include littering, damaging fragile ecosystems, and participating in exploitative activities. By

promoting awareness and providing educational resources, tourists can be empowered to make informed and responsible decisions during their travels. (Saarinen, 2019.)

Local inhabitants, however, might not grasp the significance of sustainable tourism methods and the advantages they can have on their surroundings and means of living. Efforts in education and outreach can assist these communities in recognizing the importance of conserving their natural and cultural resources, as well as comprehending the economic prospects associated with sustainable tourism. (Saarinen, 2019.)

Businesses within the tourism sector also require education and support to adopt sustainable practices. This includes implementing eco-friendly operations, promoting responsible tourism experiences, and engaging in community-based tourism initiatives. Lack of awareness and education may result in businesses prioritizing short-term gains over long-term sustainability, leading to negative impacts on the environment and local cultures. (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2017.)

3.2.4 Inadequate policy and regulatory frameworks

The absence or ineffective implementation of policies and regulations that promote sustainable tourism can hinder its development. Without clear guidelines and regulations, tourism development in Vietnam may prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability (Tien et al., 2019). Inadequate policy and regulatory frameworks can significantly impede the sustainable development of tourism in Vietnam. This can result in unchecked exploitation of natural and cultural resources, leading to irreversible damage and negative impacts on local communities.

The establishment and enforcement of solid policy and regulatory frameworks are indispensable to direct the tourism sector towards sustainable operations. These frameworks should incorporate legislation and regulations focused on protecting the environment, prudent resource management, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, policies must also confront aspects like responsible tourism conduct, community involvement, and equitable profit distribution within the tourism industry (WTO, 2005; Roblek et al., 2021.)

Vietnam needs to have effective policy and regulatory frameworks to lay the groundwork for sustainable tourism development. These frameworks play a crucial role in directing the planning and administration of tourism to align with the principles of sustainability and responsible approaches to tourism. Moreover, by establishing such frameworks, there can be a boost to investments in sustainable infrastructure and motivation for businesses to embrace environmentally sound practices. They are also key in fostering active participation of local communities in the decisions affecting the tourism industry. (Lipscombe & Thwaites, 2003; Bui, 2009.)

Collaboration between government agencies, environmental organizations, and stakeholders in the tourism industry is crucial for the formulation and implementation of effective policies and regulations. It is important to engage in meaningful dialogue and consultation to ensure that the regulato-

ry frameworks address the diverse needs and concerns of all involved parties. Additionally, regular monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of policies are essential to keep pace with the evolving dynamics of tourism and address any emerging challenges.

3.2.5 Unsustainable Tourism Practices

The sustainability of tourism in Vietnam is threatened by certain prevalent practices, such as excessive development, the influx of high tourist numbers, and the overuse of natural resources. These unsustainable approaches to tourism can exert adverse effects on the environment, local populations, and the authenticity of the cultural heritage. Excessive development can manifest in the construction of expansive resorts and accommodations in areas of ecological sensitivity, which can lead to the destruction of habitats, deforestation, and the disruption of untouched landscapes (Tien et al., 2019).

Moreover, the practice of mass tourism aims at attracting the highest possible number of visitors without adequate regard for the environmental and social capacity of the destination. This can overburden the local resources and infrastructure (Tien et al., 2019). It results in overpopulated tourist spots, congested transport routes, and a lopsided economic benefit distribution. Additionally, mass tourism can lead to the commodification of culture and the displacement of indigenous ways of making a living, which in turn, can dilute the genuine cultural expressions and practices of local communities (Tien et al., 2019).

The unsustainable utilization of natural resources for tourism - specifically water, land, and wildlife - can lead to severe, irreversible impacts. Overdrawing water to service tourism establishments, unregulated development along coastlines and marine areas, and insufficient waste management practices all contribute to environmental degradation and pollution, compromising the natural attractions that make Vietnam a popular tourist destination. (Vuong & Rajagopal, 2019; Phương, 2019.)

Achieving a sustainable tourism model in Vietnam necessitates a harmonious balance between development and ecological preservation. Encouraging responsible travel norms, expanding tourism offerings to move away from solely mass-tourism experiences, and endorsing community-led tourism initiatives are strategic moves toward a respectful and protective stance towards Vietnam's rich natural and cultural endowments, ensuring their longevity for future generations. (Vuong & Rajagopal, 2019; Phương, 2019; Vu et al., 2020.)

3.2.6 Limited Community Engagement

It is crucial for sustainable tourism development to engage local communities in decision-making processes and ensure that they derive benefits from tourism activities (Vu et al., 2020). Limited community engagement can be detrimental to the sustainable development of tourism in Vietnam. When local communities are not adequately involved in decision-making processes and do not

reap the benefits of tourism activities, it can lead to a disconnect between the industry and the people who call the destination their home.

The importance of community engagement in heritage conservation and tourism development cannot be overstated. It engenders a profound sense of responsibility and pride among local residents for the protection of their environmental and cultural assets. When locals are emotionally and culturally connected to the conservation process, they become proactive collaborators in initiatives to preserve the integrity and vitality of their heritage resources (Han, Yang, She, Liu, Wall., 2016).

Engaging community members in the development and planning of tourism endeavours also leads to more authentic tourism experiences that accurately reflect the local culture and heritage. This engagement can encourage the promotion of indigenous handicrafts, traditional cuisines, folk performances, and the overall essence of the community's cultural identity (WTO, 2005). Moreover, this approach not only supports environmental sustainability but also serves as an effective means of nurturing and showcasing Vietnam's rich cultural diversity, ensuring that tourism development aligns with cultural preservation objectives.

Furthermore, when local communities benefit from tourism, it can contribute to economic empowerment and poverty alleviation. This can be achieved through the creation of employment opportunities, the establishment of community-owned and operated tourism enterprises, and the fair distribution of tourism revenues.

3.2.7 Limited financial resources

Limited funding and investment for sustainable tourism initiatives can hinder their implementation and development. Limited financial resources pose a significant challenge to the sustainable development of tourism in Vietnam. Without adequate funding and investment, it becomes difficult to support and implement initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable tourism practices (Le, Nguyen, Ngo, Le & Hoang, 2020).

One of the key areas where limited financial resources can impede progress is in the development of sustainable infrastructure. Investments in eco-friendly accommodations, renewable energy solutions, waste management systems, and efficient transportation options are essential for minimizing the environmental footprint of tourism activities. However, without the necessary financial backing, the adoption of these sustainable practices may be slow or even unattainable (Le et al., 2020).

Additionally, limited financial resources can restrict the capacity for destination management and planning. Effective destination management requires comprehensive strategies for visitor management, infrastructure development, conservation, and community engagement. However, without adequate funding, it becomes challenging to implement and sustain these long-term strategies, ultimately hindering the sustainable development of tourism in Vietnam.

Efforts to address limited financial resources should also involve advocating for the recognition of the economic and social benefits of sustainable tourism. Highlighting the potential for job creation, economic growth, and the preservation of natural and cultural resources can garner support for increased funding and investment in sustainable tourism initiatives.

4 Methodology

Qualitative research methods are approaches used to gather deep insights into the social structures of particular groups or societies, primarily through collecting non-numeric data. It's used in various disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology, to understand complex phenomena within their contexts. Major qualitative research techniques include case studies, participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis.

Qualitative research aims to understand the meaning behind various aspects of social life and to explore the ways individuals construct reality. These methods are often exploratory and are geared towards answering the 'how' and 'why' questions regarding human behaviour, social phenomena, and experiential understanding. This inquiry style is also sensitive to the context in which data are collected, often focusing on the nuances of human behaviour and experience (Busetto, Wick, Gumbinger., 2020).

Document analysis is a qualitative method where researchers evaluate written material to understand social phenomena. It involves a systematic search for and appraisal of documents and can be used alone or to complement other data collection methods, providing historical or contextual background to a research question (Busetto et al., 2020). In this research, the document analysis method was chosen due to its effectiveness in exploring the current situation and future development of sustainable tourism in Vietnam. Firstly, scope is important in this case since the topic is about Vietnam as a country, documents are required to be collected from various sources from different locations all over Vietnam. This could provide more comprehensive data and insights into the current situation of sustainable tourism, as well as the potential opportunities and challenges for its future development. Secondly, document analysis allows for an in-depth examination of policies, regulations, and guidelines related to sustainable tourism in Vietnam. By analyzing these documents, a deeper understanding could be gained of the existing framework and identify gaps or areas for improvement.

Data analysis in qualitative research commonly involves coding and identifying themes or patterns from the collected data. Researchers may use methods like thematic analysis, where they analyze data for recurring themes that are common among the responses. Qualitative data management software often assists in organizing, coding, and interpreting data (Busetto et al., 2020).

Ultimately, the value of qualitative research lies in its ability to produce sophisticated understandings of complex human-oriented phenomena. By emphasizing subjective experiences, context, and open-ended inquiry, qualitative methods can uncover rich narratives that statistics alone might fail to communicate. Unlike quantitative approaches, the qualitative research process is often as valuable as its findings, providing a foundation for lifelong learning and a deep appreciation for the complexities of human life and society.

4.1 Document analysis research method

Document analysis involves a structured approach to examining or assessing documents in qualitative research, covering a wide range of printed and digital materials. According to Glenn A. Bowen in "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," document analysis is a valuable qualitative research tool, allowing researchers to interpret and draw meaning from documents, thereby contributing to the development of empirical knowledge. (Bowen, 2009.)

In the process of document analysis, researchers engage in skimming, which is a superficial examination to identify the potential usefulness of documents. This is followed by a thorough reading, where researchers engage deeply with the content to understand the material within the context of their research questions. The final step is interpretation, which is an iterative process of deriving meaning and implications from the content. The wide array of document types that can be analyzed includes, but is not limited to, newspapers, government reports, letters, diaries, meeting minutes, transcripts of interviews, official records, photographs, and videos. Each type of document has unique features that can be instrumental in answering research questions and substantiating study findings. (Bowen, 2009.)

One of the main advantages of document analysis is its non-reactive nature; the researcher's presence does not influence the data, as it might in interviews or observations. This allows for a level of authenticity in understanding behaviours, practices, and events as they are naturally represented in the documents. Bowen emphasizes the importance of researchers conducting document analysis in a systematic, disciplined manner to ensure that this method significantly contributes to the overall richness and depth of understanding of the research findings. Researchers must demonstrate rigour in evaluating the evidence and integrate document analysis effectively within the qualitative research framework to provide a nuanced exploration of the social phenomena under study. (Bowen, 2009.)

When engaging in document analysis, researchers embark on a journey of discovery that demands attention to detail, critical thinking, and a systematic approach to discerning relevance and synthesizing information. The researcher identifies, selects, and appraises relevant data contained within documents, often using tools like content analysis or thematic analysis. Content analysis entails the classification of data into specific categories related to the main inquiries of the study. Conversely, thematic analysis involves identifying recurring patterns within the data, with these recurrent themes serving as the basis for analysis. (Bowen, 2009.)

To ensure the responsible use of document analysis, researchers must consider the make-up of the documents they are using: their origins, creation context, and potential biases. Glenn A. Bowen in "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method" notes that documents must be appraised for their substance and contribution to the issues being explored, ensuring their relevance and alignment with the research framework. Moreover, the availability of digital archives and online

databases has expanded the sphere of document analysis, enabling qualitative researchers to access a large variety of sources from different regions and periods with just a few clicks. Simultaneously, technology also brings challenges related to data security and the potential digital manipulation of documents, which researchers must navigate carefully to preserve the integrity of their studies. (Bowen, 2009.)

In examining the utility of documents in research studies, one must ask questions about the document's authenticity, credibility, accuracy, representativeness, and comprehensiveness. This evaluative lens is imperative to address issues of biased selectivity and to ascertain the evidentiary value of the documents. While analyzing documents, researchers must be vigilant about how the document's content supports or challenges their initial expectations and theories.

4.2 Research question and document list

A research question is a narrowly focused, specific, and clear inquiry into an issue, problem, or topic that requires an answer which is not immediately obvious or generally known. It directs the research process and defines the scope and objectives of a study. A well-constructed research question should guide the researcher's methodological approach and influence the choice of research design, population, setting, and types of data to be collected and analyzed. According to the source "Developing Great Research Questions" by Earlene Lipowski, a research question should challenge researchers to view problems from new perspectives and expand the knowledge base on the subject matter. Lipowski articulates that the research question is evaluated based on the potential for achieving its goal, the impact of the research, and its feasibility within available resources and time frames (Lipowski, 2008).

The significance of formulating concise and well-thought-out research inquiries, goals, and aims is underscored in the article "Establishing a Research Question, Aim, and Objective" by Owen Doody and Maria E. Bailey. Doody and Bailey assert that a research question should evolve from a relevant issue in practice into a research inquiry after engaging with the relevant literature and informed individuals. This careful formulation is crucial for successful study development and to ensure that the research remains focused and significant. (Doody & Bailey, 2016.)

In the context of the research question "How to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and local community in Vietnam?", the specificity comes from the desire to address the particular challenges associated with tourism in Vietnam, with a focus on both the environmental and socio-cultural consequences. This question requires exploring a broad spectrum of literature, consulting various stakeholders, and considering innovative approaches to sustainable tourism, all while remaining aligned with the operational definition of what constitutes 'negative impacts' and 'minimization' in this unique context.

Table 1. List of documents

	Name	Author	Type of document	Year of publication	Volume
1	Phát triển bền vững các sản phẩm du lịch văn hoá Chăm ở tỉnh Ninh Thuận: Tiếp cận các bên liên quan (Sustainable development of Cham cultural tourism products in Ninh Thuan province: Approaching relevant parties)	Quảng Đại Tuyên	Article	2019	6
2	Phát triển Du lịch thông minh hiện nay ở Việt Nam hướng tới phát triển bền vững (Smart tourism development in Vietnam is currently focused on achieving sustainable growth)	Trần Doãn Cường	Article	2021	
3	Giải pháp phát triển du lịch sinh thái bền vững tại vườn quốc gia Ba Vì (Solutions for sustainable ecotourism development in Ba Vi National Park)	Bùi Thị Minh Nguyệt	Journal	2012	1
4	Sustainable Tourism Development: Roles of Government, Business and Educational Instituations	National Economics University of Vietnam	Journal	2016	1 & 2
5	Quản lý điểm đến du lịch có trách nhiệm với môi trường và xã hội, hướng tới mục tiêu phát triển bền vững (Managing tourist destinations in an environmentally and socially responsible manner while aiming for sustainable development)	Chiến Thắng	Article	2019	
6	Quản lí điểm đến du lịch bền vững - Một số vấn đề lí thuyết và gợi ý quản lí (Sustainable tourism destination management - Some theories and management suggestions)	Vũ Hương Giang	Journal	2020	72

7	Đánh giá tài nguyên sinh khí hậu phục vụ phát triển du lịch Quảng Trị (Assessing bioclimatic resources for Quang Tri tourism development)	Nguyễn Thám, Nguyễn Hoàng Sơn	Journal		2011	65
8	Factors affecting the sustainable ecotourism development: A case study in Ca Mau Province	Nguyễn Phước Hoàng	Journal		2021	17
9	Developing the community based tourism towards a sustainable development in Hoi An	Trần Văn Anh	Conference Paper		2021	
10	Vai trò các bên liên quan trong quy hoạch phát triển du lịch bền vững: Nghiên cứu trường hợp tại Tà Xùa, huyện Bắc Yên, tỉnh Sơn La (The role of stakeholders in sustainable tourism development planning: Case study in Ta Xua, Bac Yen district, Son La Province)	Lã Thị Bích Quang	Journal		2020	281
11	Exploiting intangible cultural values of people living in Thua Thien Hue coastal zone in the context of sustainable tourism development	Nguyễn Thị Hoài Phúc	Journal		2018	127
12	Investigate the potentials, identify some tourism products and suggest some solutions to develop the sustainable tourism in moutainous districts in the West of Quang Nam Province	Trần Văn Anh	Conference Paper		2021	
13	Phát triển sản phẩm du lịch cạnh tranh, đảm bảo cho du lịch Việt Nam phát triển bền vững (Tourism products competitive development, ensuring sustainable development of tourism in Vietnam)	Lê Văn Minh	Article		2020	
14	Community participation in tourism development at Thanh Thuy Chanh village, Hue	Nguyễn Đoàn Hạnh Dung, Trương Thị Thu Hà	Journal		2019	128

15	Sustainable Ecotourism development in Ha long Bay, Quang Ninh	Tô Ngọc Thịnh	Journal	2022	8

4.3 Data analysis process

Data analysis is the process of systematically examining data using various techniques and tools to uncover patterns, extract insights, and support decision-making. In research, data analysis is a crucial phase where data is cleaned, transformed, and modelled with the goal of discovering useful information that aligns with the research objectives or hypotheses (Bowen, 2009).

Coding and thematic analysis were used in this case. Coding is the process of organizing and categorizing qualitative data to identify patterns and themes. The initial stage of this process is "open coding," where data is meticulously examined to highlight significant points and categorize them into discrete codes. This is a fundamental step for identifying emergent themes and understanding the underlying narratives in the dataset. According to Miles Matthew B and Huberman A. Michael, reflection on the impact of the research design and approach to analysis on the results presented is vital. After open coding, "axial coding" proceeded where they began connecting and relating codes to each other, forming larger categories that reflect more complex relationships in the data. This step is crucial for consolidating the analysis and ensuring that it is meaningful in the context of the research question. Finally, "selective coding" is the process through which refine and narrow down the categories to core themes that are most relevant to the research objectives (B & Michael, 2008).

Thematic analysis is a qualitative technique used in data analysis that focuses on identifying recurring themes throughout the data (B & Michael, 2008). This method emphasizes understanding the broader context and how different themes relate to each other within the data, serving as a means to interpret the rich, complex tapestries of qualitative data (Thorne, 2000). The approach is particularly beneficial for exploring the different perspectives and experiences of participants, making it valuable for studies that aim to understand social phenomena, such as consumer behaviour, educational practices, or, as in the given research question, the environmental and local community impacts of tourism in Vietnam.

Validity in qualitative analysis does not hinge on the notion of a single 'truth' but on how well the analysis represents the collected data. Triangulation, where data is gathered and analyzed from multiple sources, enhances the rigour of the analysis by providing a fuller perspective and uncovering complexities within the data. (B & Michael, 2008.) This method is essential for qualitative studies because it aids in validating and enriching the findings through a multi-faceted view of the subject matter (Thorne, 2000). In this research, 15 different sources were selected and analysed altogether to facilitate triangulation and ensure a comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism in Vietnam. Throughout the analysis process, maintaining a rigorous methodological approach is key. Researchers document every step taken, from data collection to the selection of codes and

themes. This creates an audit trail that ensures the analysis is replicable and reliable, contributing to the transparency and credibility of the research findings. (Bailey, 2004.)

In qualitative research, reflexivity is also critical. One must be aware of their own biases and how these could shape the collection, interpretation, and presentation of the data. The goal of data analysis, particularly in the context of a research question such as "How to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and local community in Vietnam?", is to extract meaningful insights that can be translated into practical recommendations or contribute to theoretical knowledge. After coding and thematic analysis, typically interpret and discuss the findings in light of existing theories and literature, placing their new insights within the broader academic and practical discourse. (Seeler & Schänzel, 2019; Bui, 2009.)

In summary, data analysis is not just a technical procedure but a thoughtful process that requires engagement with the data. It's a balanced combination of systematic techniques such as coding and thematic analysis, ongoing critical evaluation for validity, and the thoughtful integration of findings into current research and practice, all of which are essential to producing strong and impactful research outcomes.

The collection of documents was conducted through a comprehensive systematic review of relevant literature from diverse sources including academic journals, articles, and official reports. The selection process was guided by specific criteria encompassing relevance to the research topic, recency of publication, and credibility of the sources. In total, 15 sources were selected for data analysis in this study. These sources include academic journals from numerous universities in Vietnam such as National Economics University of Vietnam and Hanoi Open University. Additionally, select articles were obtained from the Institute for Tourism Development Research of Vietnam.

Table 2. List of sub-questions

1	What roles does the government play in promoting sustainable tourism development in Vietnam?
2	What is the involvement of local residents in promoting sustainable tourism in Vietnam?
3	What roles do businesses play in the advancement of sustainable tourism in Vietnam?
4	How are the stakeholders collaborating with each other?
5	What are the challenges in achieving sustainable development in Vietnam?
6	What are possible approaches to this issue?
7	What are future potential developments?

Initially, a comprehensive list of sub-questions is conducted based on the theoretical framework and research objective to support the main research question (Table 2). The extensive volume of

data had to be condensed for analysis, a process carried out through two stages involving coding and thematic categorization. The data was carefully examined using different coloured markers to identify sections of the same theme.

Four main themes were established according to the sub-questions, objective and theoretical framework for example Embracing a Long-Term Perspective, Conservation and Enhancement of natural and cultural heritage, Equity and Respect,… in principles of sustainable tourism. Quotations extracted from the data were then categorized according to key themes, condensing the information and removing any extraneous details (Figure 3). Next, the identified themes were further refined and organized into sub-themes, creating a hierarchical structure for analysis.

👥 Community	🖼 Marketing	📖 Education & Training	🖼 Information Technology
Preserving ethnic cultural identity along with economic developr	To well perform the task of protecting the natural to	That confirms the role of tour guides in sustainal	Tourism products are relatively copious and dive
Exploitation does not exceed allowable limits, exploitation always	Expanding international cooperation and promoting	To raise people's awareness about tourism development and environmental protection in tourism development, it is necessary to provide people with complete information about the multidimensional impacts of tourism activities, including the impact positive and negative. (1- p269) TSDL	Although the application of information technolo
Therefore, protecting the natural environment is not only an urge	Researching the use of social networks in associati		It is necessary to develop synchronously and clo
Exploit and use tourism resources appropriately and minimize wa	Marketing tourism responsibly: Marketing and provi		Training quality human resources to develop sm
At the same time, improve working conditions and encourage pe	For the government, we should focus on finding sol		Tourism businesses need to proactively update a
It is necessary to empower local communities based on widespre	Propose or issue stable investment incentive policie		There is a need for a policy framework to manag
The reality of community tourism development shows that local ¡	Promotion of specific tourism products needs to be	Thus, the local government has also identified th	It is necessary to closely connect and share digi
Respecting the social and cultural aspects of local communities,	Tourism products belonging to Vietnam's World He	Mobilize people to participate in learning, improv	However, the number of people accessing and k
However, the exploitation and use are not reasonable, so the inh	Tourism products in the Mountain Resort Tourism g	In training, the initial step is to provide basic fore	Specific mechanisms and policies for smart tour
The Old Quarter's outskirts have a lot of potential and conditions	Most advertising businesses are small, spontaneou	Thus, the understanding of the villagers of Thanl	Tourism organizations and businesses still lack e
The development of community tourism destinations will create	It is possible to exploit and build high-end resorts (\	Ha Long Bay Management Board needs to coord	Information technology infrastructure is also an
In addition, during the planning process, local authorities and bu	In today's era, the needs and demands of tourists f	Furthermore, in the long term, it is necessary to	
Develop an appropriate set of criteria for sustainable tourism de\		Young people need to be equipped with comprel	
Those values are the "soul", most clearly expressing the achieve			
Focus on developing community tourism to maximize the particip			
In other words, sustainable tourism development is based on pre			
understanding of local tourism, active participation attitude, tou			
Therefore, local authorities and related parties need to increase			
However, it is necessary to clearly understand the characteristic			
In particular, tourism development should also focus on coordina			
But tourism only really brings tangible benefits when it creates e			
Tourism development must be placed in the overall socio-econor			
Management of local sustainable tourism development must be			
Therefore, there needs to be unified direction from state manage			

Figure 2. Coding & Theming process

5 Results

This section outlines the approach taken for conducting data analysis and presents the research discoveries associated with each primary topic. The findings are reported in the English language, despite the fact that the original materials were written in Vietnamese. While translations were done with a strong understanding of field-specific terminology, any potential inaccuracies or minor differences in meaning are the responsibility of the author.
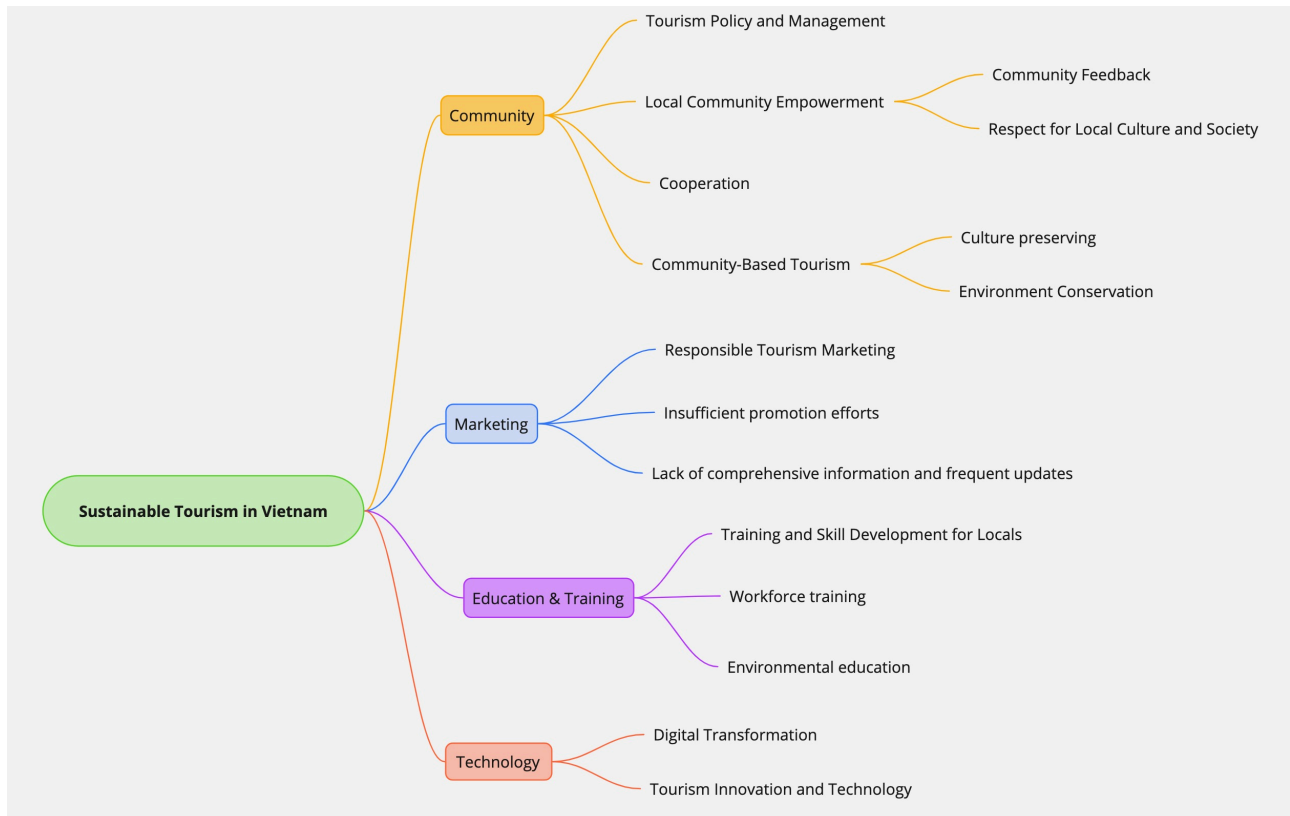

Figure 3. Theming hierarchy for data analysis

The themes were subsequently recorded on a Notion table, with direct quotations from the coded data listed under each main theme (Figure 2). The author then organized the quotations to establish a hierarchy of subthemes based on their content, as illustrated in the figure above (Figure 3). Through chart creation and theming of relevant content, the volume of data was condensed. This phase was also considered vital for identifying saturation within the data. Subsequent sections present research findings categorized by each main theme.

5.2 Community

Community-related subjects were the most frequently discussed across a set of 15 sources. Nine out of fifteen documents emphasized the importance of community involvement in promoting sustainability. Through data analysis, challenges and prospective solutions were identified about topics

such as tourism policy management, local community empowerment, collaboration, and community-based tourism.

Six documents extensively discussed the significance of tourism policy in shaping the role of the community. Three of them emphasized a pressing need for improved management of destination capacity to avoid over-tourism in popular places, which can lead to negative impacts on the environment. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of preserving a diverse range of resources including nature and cultural aspects. Sustainable tourism policy planning was mentioned five times across these sources, suggesting a comprehensive development plan and an appropriate set of criteria for sustainable tourism that stakeholders can implement effectively.

The involvement of local communities in tourism planning and management is crucial for sustainable development. The sources mentioned the issue of empowering local communities three times, emphasizing the importance of their participation in decision-making processes that directly affect their income sources. This increased community awareness can lead to better preservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. Furthermore, sharing information about the importance of protecting the destination's environment is vital; and tourists, businesses, and government need to respect and understand local traditional practices and culture to build a more trusting relationship as discussed in the sources.

> Therefore, local authorities and related parties need to increase the cohesion and consensus of people in the community with each other as well as their trust with other stakeholders through practical actions (Nguyễn & Trương 2019, 13).

In addition, it was emphasized that the importance of collaboration between stakeholders cannot be overstated. The relationship among stakeholders was recognized and discussed throughout the documents. Four documents stated the significance of cooperation between stakeholders in developing sustainable tourism in Vietnam. One document pointed out that cooperation between local authorities and tourism businesses has not yet reached harmony. Another perspective proposes that the advancement of tourism should also prioritize enhancing the connections between local governing bodies and community members by engaging the locals more in the process of developing tourism. The government's role in consulting and supporting the community, as well as creating connections with businesses engaged in tourism activities, was also mentioned because, from a community perspective, they need to have connections with businesses to ensure economic security. The partnership among businesses such as accommodations, restaurants, and tour operators needs to be enhanced as discussed in one source.

The concept and importance of community-based tourism in Vietnam were discussed quite well in the documents, focusing on the integration of cultural preservation with economic growth, particularly in territories inhabited by ethnic groups. Two sources emphasize the necessity of utilizing cultural heritage as a driver of economic development, whilst ensuring that such development does not compromise the cultural identity of local ethnic communities:

> Preserving ethnic and cultural identity along with economic development from those cultural values is an effective method that needs to be seriously focused and deployed in areas where ethnic groups live in the whole country (National Economics University 2016, 281).

One of the sources suggests that the proper development of community-based tourism in destinations like Hoi An can revitalize the area, boosting economic performance, creating jobs, and ensuring the cultural values of the local community are effectively leveraged. Another document mentioned that community tourism is underscored as an avenue for residents to engage directly in tourism services, which can spur the preservation of local cultural practices and traditional crafts. Sustainable tourism in this context is seen as inclusive of various aspects - cultural conservation, environmental stewardship, national security, and societal well-being - all of which contribute to poverty alleviation and ensure long-term stability for the community:

> In other words, sustainable tourism development is based on preserving and promoting national cultural identity, environmental protection, national defence and security, social order and safety, and has important significance for poverty reduction, aiming for long-term and stable development of the community (Nguyễn 2017, 1).

The ultimate measure of success for tourism initiatives, according to these documents, lies in tangible improvements to the livelihoods of local communities, which include job creation, positive environmental impacts, and enhanced commercial viability. They stated that when these conditions are met, the natural and cultural allure of a destination flourishes, naturally drawing more visitors and sustaining the tourism cycle. It indicates that benefits accrued from tourism should be equitably distributed, providing socio-economic upliftment while preserving the integrity of local cultures and environments:

> But tourism only really brings tangible benefits when it creates employment and improving the lives of local people, demonstrated through efficiency in commercial activities and positive impact on the environment (Thắng 2019).

5.3 Marketing

The marketing findings in this research highlight the critical role of sustainable tourism policy planning, the involvement of local communities, collaboration between stakeholders, and the development of community-based tourism in achieving long-term stability and prosperity for the communities involved. These results underscore the importance of incorporating these factors into a holistic approach to sustainable tourism in Vietnam. The research emphasizes the need for marketing strategies that focus on the equitable distribution of benefits, job creation, and positive environmental impacts while respecting and preserving the natural and cultural environment. Moreover, it stresses the significance of effectively communicating the cultural identity and environmental stewardship of the destinations to potential tourists and businesses.

One document highlights the importance of marketing in sustainable tourism by emphasizing the need to convey responsible messaging that promotes environmental hygiene and resource protection, thereby fostering sustainable development. It also suggests leveraging social media and innovative green technologies to connect cultural, sports, and tourism departments with hotels and international borders for integrated promotion. (National Economics University, 2016.)

Another source mentioned that responsible tourism marketing goes beyond just advertising; it informs tourists about the environmental, cultural, and social contexts of their travel destinations, which in turn cultivates respect and enhances visitor satisfaction. By educating tourists about these aspects, marketing can foster a greater appreciation for the destination, leading to more respectful behaviour towards the local environment and communities. This respectful engagement is likely to enhance the overall experience for visitors, culminating in higher levels of satisfaction with their trip. Essentially, responsible tourism marketing aims to align the interests of tourist satisfaction with the sustainability and well-being of the destination. (Bui, 2012.)

A document emphasizes that marketing strategies for tourism products should be multi-faceted and make use of a broad range of promotional channels. This includes both traditional media, such as printed brochures and guidebooks that tourists can physically hold and read, as well as modern digital media, which extends to online platforms, social media, and even television broadcasts. It also advised the inclusion of the Internet and television as part of the marketing mix acknowledging their powerful reach and impact:

> Promotion of specific tourism products needs to be done through many
> different channels. First of all, promote through publishing tourism
> publications (leaflets, guidebooks, maps, introductory videos, websites...). Besides,
> it is necessary to fully utilize the features of the Internet and television for
> marketing and promoting tourism products in the Western region. (Tran, 2021.)

The internet offers various tools for engagement (like social media, websites, and online ads), which can cater to different segments of the market, provide real-time information, and allow for interactive experiences. Television, with its visual and auditory appeal, can capture the essence of tourism experiences and convey them to a wide audience, potentially enticing them to visit the advertised destinations. (Tran, 2021.) By leveraging the distinct advantages of both traditional and modern channels, marketers can create a comprehensive campaign that maximizes exposure and appeals to a diverse audience, thereby enhancing the promotion of tourism products effectively.

One document highlighted the importance of targeting specific market segments, such as affluent, culturally curious tourists interested in heritage sites or those seeking luxurious mountain resorts with additional services like health care. The potential for developing high-end resorts was also discussed as an opportunity to create a distinct brand for Vietnamese tourism. The integration of a wide range of tourism products - including aquatic sports, golf, and wellness activities - could cater to visitors with high incomes and longer stays, contributing to the diverse appeal and sustainable growth of the tourism sector. (Le, 2020.) Overall, by identifying and catering to specific market

segments and creating a unique brand through high-quality tourism products, Vietnam can generate greater appeal and thus potentially secure a more significant share of the global sustainable tourism market.

A source underscores the inadequacies in international cooperation and promotional strategies for sustainable tourism. Limited collaboration with foreign countries and entities means fewer opportunities to enter new markets or to benefit from shared knowledge and resources, which could otherwise help to expand the sustainable tourism industry globally (National Economics University, 2016).

One document notes that there is not enough investment in advertising and promotion of sustainable tourism. This suggests that governments and other organizations involved in tourism are not dedicating sufficient funds or efforts toward marketing their sustainable tourism initiatives effectively. To address these issues, the source recommends that governments explore a wide array of promotional avenues to attract more tourists. This could include showcasing the tourism offerings at travel exhibitions, in movies, through television appearances, at fairs, in music videos, or by using tourism ambassadors - individuals who can positively represent and promote a destination. Using these diverse and creative channels would likely increase the visibility of sustainable tourism destinations and could spark greater interest among potential tourists, thus supporting market growth and the overall appeal of sustainable tourism. (Nguyen, 2021.)

Another challenge was pointed out that the tourism advertising landscape is scattered with numerous small businesses, each operating independently. Due to their size and fragmented nature, these businesses face challenges in pooling their resources and efforts to form a unified marketing strategy or branding for their region's tourism. This lack of collaboration and coordination means that there is no consistent or coherent image being presented to potential tourists, making it more difficult to establish a strong, recognizable brand for the area's tourism. (To, 2022.) The problem is further exacerbated by what the text indicates as inadequate and irregular information updates. The failure to provide timely and consistent information to tourists could lead to confusion or misinformation, hindering the ability to build trust and loyalty among visitors:

> Most advertising businesses are small, spontaneous, and have not gathered all the resources to create a common image of the province's tourism; information is not updated sufficiently and regularly, causing a great impact on brand and development of the tourism industry (To, 2022).

Ultimately, this fragmented state of affairs and inconsistent communication do not just affect the branding efforts but can also negatively impact the long-term growth and sustainability of the tourism sector. When a tourism destination cannot effectively market itself due to these constraints, it misses opportunities to attract visitors, which can be detrimental to its economic success and sustainable development.

5.4 Education and Training

Four documents indicate that there is a growing concern about the level of understanding among local communities regarding the multiple impacts that tourism can have on their area. These impacts can be both beneficial, such as creating jobs and bringing income, and detrimental, such as causing environmental degradation or cultural disruption (National Economics University, 2016).

The documents suggest that there should be a concerted effort to educate the local population about these different aspects of tourism. Full and clear information should be shared with the community to improve their comprehension of how tourism development intersects with the need for environmental preservation (Bui, 2012). To effectively raise awareness, the sources recommend that educational programs and initiatives be embedded within the community. These could involve workshops, seminars, or community meetings, and should be promoted and supported by various media channels, which could include television, radio, and online platforms. The aim of using mass media is to broaden the reach of legal education and to enhance the residents' knowledge base, thus encouraging better understanding and support for sustainable tourism practices among the local population. This comprehensive approach to community education is seen as essential for fostering a tourism industry that is responsible, respectful, and sustainable.

> Integrate community awareness about tourism development into programs and projects. Coordinate with mass media to promote legal education, raise people's knowledge, and increase understanding of sustainable tourism development for residents. (Bui, 2012.)

Another issue was pointed out that local authorities have predominantly offered only basic training for homestay operators without adequately focusing on wider community awareness. This critical gap requires more dedicated attention from local governments as raising awareness and improving the qualifications of local populations are prioritized. While acknowledged as a primary goal, effecting this change is acknowledged as challenging and time-consuming. (La, 2020.)

It also stated that it is crucial to engage the community in educational opportunities, encouraging them to discard outdated and unsanitary practices and evolve both ideologically and in self-perception. Targeted efforts to enhance tourism-related knowledge and skills should be extended to local officials and community members involved in tourism. (La, 2020.)

Additionally, workforce training was discussed multiple times in the documents. The sources highlight the critical role played by tour guides within the realm of sustainable tourism. These professionals are seen as more than just facilitators of tourist experiences; they are viewed as active participants in the preservation of the environment and culture of tourist destinations. Their daily interactions with tourists provide them with unique opportunities to influence tourist behaviour and attitudes towards sustainability. To maximize their positive impact on sustainable practices, the texts advocate for the inclusion of sustainable tourism principles in tour guide training programs. This

would enhance their ability to contribute to environmental conservation and cultural preservation efforts. (National Economics University, 2016.)

Furthermore, the texts stress the need for comprehensive human resource development within the tourism sector. This involves integrating sustainable practices into the standard operating procedures of tourism businesses and hiring local workers to add value to the tourism services offered. (Bui, 2012.)

One source comments that the training for workers, especially tour guides and interpreters, should begin with foundational foreign language skills to enhance communication and subsequently involve education about local cultures and customs. It recommended training strategy includes short-term courses and sessions led by experts who can provide insights into professional tourism practices, technological tools, cultural performance arts, and the promotion of effective communication, particularly among local officials. (Tran, 2021.)

> In training, the initial step is to provide basic foreign language communication training for management staff and staff working in tourism business and tourism services. Focus on training a team of tour guides and narrators with extensive knowledge of ethnic traditional cultures through short-term training classes, bringing experts to mountainous districts to foster knowledge, and professional tourism skills, using computers, organizing performance shows, and building a culture of communication for local officials. (Tran, 2021.)

The research also found that environmental education is a key component of sustainable tourism. In the document "Sustainable Ecotourism Development in Ha Long Bay, Quang Ninh", there is a call for the development of long-term education programs that emphasize environmental protection and resource conservation. These programs would be particularly relevant to ecologically sensitive areas like Ha Long Bay. By integrating environmental topics into educational curriculums within and near Ha Long Bay, the aim is to engender a sense of environmental responsibility among young people. The hope is that by informing students about the importance of preserving their natural heritage, they can grow to become stewards of the environment. (To, 2022.)

> Furthermore, in the long term, it is necessary to introduce educational programs about protecting the environment and resources in general and protecting Ha Long Bay in particular in lessons in schools of the city and the entire province (To, 2022).

Another source discussed the importance of educating youth on how tourism can both impact and be impacted by climate change. A comprehensive educational plan would provide young individuals with the knowledge to understand the interplay between tourism and the environment fully (Thang, 2019).

Overall, the notion is to prepare the younger generation not just to value and safeguard their surroundings but also to actively engage in sustainable tourism practices. This would contribute to a tourism model that not only respects but also benefits from, the conservation of the environment.

5.5 Technology

The documents stress the importance of a synchronized and collaborative approach to developing information technology and digital infrastructure that is capable of supporting smart tourism initiatives. These initiatives aim to enhance the tourism experience by integrating advanced technologies that enable efficient information sharing and innovative services.

It is necessary to develop synchronously and closely coordinate between the State - Businesses - Tourists on a widespread information technology and digital infrastructure system, upgrading high-tech applications (Tran, 2021).

The emphasis on training high-quality human resources reflects the recognition that the successful application of digital technologies in tourism requires skilled individuals. These individuals need to be well-versed in the latest digital tools and comfortable with the changing nature of the tourism industry as it becomes more technologically driven.

> Training quality human resources to develop smart tourism, adapt to the transition process, and apply digital technology, especially for human resources at state management agencies, tourism businesses, and tourist attractions, tourism experts (Tran, 2021).

Particular attention is given to the need for competent personnel across various sectors involved in tourism, including government staff responsible for tourism policy and infrastructure, employees of tourism businesses such as hotels and travel agencies, workers at tourist attractions, and industry experts and consultants. These stakeholders play vital roles in implementing smart tourism strategies, and their ability to use and adapt to new technologies is crucial for the advancement and competitiveness of the tourism sector. (Tran, 2021.)

Businesses within the tourism sector are urged to embrace smart tourism initiatives proactively by investing in new technologies, digital equipment, and platforms, such as websites and social networks as mentioned in the source. Key to this process is the establishment of a comprehensive policy framework that not only encourages and incentivizes business participation but also provides the tools and techniques necessary for operating such innovative services. (Tran, 2021.)

Some challenges were also discovered such as limited access to and familiarity with new software technologies, improper approaches to their application, unsuitable operating models, and high costs of digital conversion are noted as significant barriers. These hurdles are impeding both the achievement of desired outcomes in smart tourism and the broader development of products within this ecosystem, thereby stunting the anticipated expansion and success of smart tourism initiatives.

> However, the number of people accessing and knowing how to use new software technologies are not much, or the approach is not correct, the operating model is not appropriate, conversion costs are high... hindering the achievement of results and expanding the scope of development of products in the Smart Tourism ecosystems that have not achieved the expected goals. (Tran, 2021.)

The document highlights the importance of creating a digital ecosystem in which data can be easily accessed and shared between the tourism sector and other related industries, such as technology, communications, finance, and customs. This interconnectedness is essential for the successful implementation of smart tourism initiatives that aim to improve efficiency, enhance tourist experiences, and facilitate smoother operations and communications between tourists, businesses, and government agencies involved in tourism management. (Tran, 2021.)

There are comments that even though a wide variety and abundance of tourism products are available, the activities related to these tourism products are not widespread or broad in their reach. Especially, the technology utilized in these tourism products is not at a high level of advancement. (National Economics University, 2016.) This could mean that the methods, practices, and tools used to deliver or enhance these tourism experiences may be outdated or not utilise contemporary technological solutions, which could limit their appeal or efficiency.

Not to mention, the document also points out that there is a lack of specific mechanisms and policies designed to foster the development of smart tourism. There's a need for more detailed guidance to supplement existing policies and methods of investment attraction, as well as to drive innovations in information technology and digital infrastructure within the tourism industry. (Tran, 2021.)

Additionally, a significant disparity in information technology infrastructure between urban and rural/mountainous areas was noted. This uneven distribution may hinder the ability to deploy advanced technology solutions in less developed areas, potentially inhibiting the broad growth of a modern, technologically-equipped sustainable tourism industry. It suggests that more work is needed to ensure that all regions have the infrastructure required to support smart tourism, which is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals.

> Information technology infrastructure is also an inadequate problem.
> Information technology infrastructure (telecommunications network, accompanying modern equipment) in localities is uneven, with clear differences between urban areas and rural and mountainous areas. (Tran, 2021.)

6 Discussion

6.1 Conclusions

The main objective of thesis work focused on sustainable tourism in Vietnam is to assess and enhance the sustainable development of Vietnam's tourism industry. It aims to examine the current state of tourism in Vietnam, identify challenges to sustainability, and propose strategies for promoting sustainable tourism practices. The topic under investigation is intricate and vast, as evidenced by the substantial volume of data it generated. However, the discussions were unable to address all the diverse aspects related to sustainable tourism in Vietnam. However, specific themes emerged as more prominent in the discussions. These factors were extensively analyzed within the realms of tourism and closely linked to the importance of community, domestic and international marketing, education, and other contributing factors.

Community was the most frequently mentioned topic in the study, with a strong emphasis on its importance for social cohesion and support. The research findings demonstrate that a holistic approach to sustainable tourism in Vietnam - incorporating community-based tourism, environmental protection, cultural preservation, and economic development - can lead to long-term stability and prosperity for the communities involved. It is clear from the sources that sustainable tourism policy planning, the empowerment of local communities, collaboration between stakeholders, and the development of community-based tourism are essential factors for achieving long-term stability and development in the community. By prioritizing the equitable distribution of benefits and respecting and protecting the natural and cultural environment, sustainable tourism can contribute to the overall flourishing of destinations while ensuring the well-being of the local communities. This supports WTO's (2005) principles - Conservation and Enhancement, Equity and Respect - of how a country should manage and develop its tourism sustainably. The findings also align with WTO's (2005) goals of Social Well-being and Community Development, and Cultural Preservation and Enhancement, which serve as the foundation for a tourism model that prioritizes long-term viability.

Responsible tourism marketing plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism. By emphasizing the cultural and social aspects of travel destinations, marketers can contribute to fostering respect and enhancing visitor satisfaction. The multi-faceted approach to marketing, including the utilization of traditional and modern promotional channels such as printed materials, digital media, and television broadcasts, ensures a wide reach and impact. However, inadequate international cooperation and promotional strategies, insufficient investment in advertising and promotion, and the fragmented nature of small businesses in the tourism advertising landscape pose challenges to the effective marketing and branding of sustainable tourism destinations. Addressing these challenges by leveraging a wide array of promotional avenues and fostering collaboration and coordination among small businesses is crucial to building a strong, recognizable brand and establishing trust and loyalty among visitors. Fostering these efforts will not only enhance the branding and

marketing of sustainable tourism destinations but also contribute to the long-term growth and sustainability of the tourism sector as a whole. This matches with WTO's (2005) principles of Economic Viability, which aims to ensure that tourism is an economic boon for a destination.

Education and training were highlighted many times in the research, it plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism practices. By integrating comprehensive educational programs into community initiatives and schooling curriculums, we can raise awareness among the local population and future generations about the importance of environmental preservation and cultural conservation in the context of tourism development. The focus should not only be on providing basic training for homestay operators and tour guides but also on instilling a sense of environmental responsibility and sustainable tourism practices in the community. Furthermore, by involving local officials and members of the community in educational opportunities, we can work towards discarding outdated practices and evolving both ideologically and in self-perception. Ultimately, these efforts aim to foster a tourism industry that is responsible, respectful, and sustainable, which benefits from the conservation of the environment and cultural heritage. Reflecting on the implications from a sustainability perspective, it was initially seen as crucial to raise consciousness as the first step in the process of promoting sustainable tourism. This is because for a country to achieve success in fostering sustainability, it must be widely embraced and understood by its population (WTO, 2005).

The findings from the document also shed light on the intricate relationship between tourism and technology, and how the fusion of these two can substantially impact the tourism industry. It is clear that the integration of advanced technologies in tourism, also known as smart tourism, is pivotal for enhancing the overall tourism experience, improving efficiency, and ensuring the sustainable development of the industry. One of the key takeaways from the research is the emphasis on the need for synchronized and collaborative efforts across various sectors including government, businesses, and tourists in developing a comprehensive information technology and digital infrastructure system to support smart tourism initiatives. This coordination is essential for ensuring that all stakeholders are on board and can leverage digital technologies effectively to enhance tourism experiences. However, challenges in the adoption of smart tourism initiatives and advanced technologies were also identified, such as limited access to new software technologies, improper approaches to their application, unsuitable operating models, and high conversion costs. Addressing these barriers is imperative for overcoming the hindrances to the successful implementation of smart tourism and ensuring the broader development of products within this ecosystem. The results are consistent with the objective outlined by WTO (2005) to aim Quality Experience for visitors, offering a satisfying and enriching encounter with the destination. This goal forms the basis for a sustainable tourism model that emphasizes long-term sustainability.

Based on the findings that arose from the analysis, there could be several aspects to further expand and deepen the topic of sustainable tourism in Vietnam. Most vitally, the research indicated

that people's awareness of sustainable tourism is linked to their education about what sustainable development entails. If they did not understand the concept, they could not participate and contribute to the development of sustainable tourism. As a result, research about increasing the level of awareness in terms of sustainable tourism should be conducted to understand how to effectively educate and engage the local population in sustainable tourism practices.

6.2 Credibility

In this research, the evaluation of reliability and validity is crucial to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings and conclusions. Reliability refers to the consistency and repeatability of the research results, while validity pertains to the accuracy and truthfulness of the conclusions drawn from the data. (Brough, 2018.) Assessing the reliability and validity of the research methods, data sources, and analytical techniques is essential to ensure that the findings accurately represent the state of sustainable tourism in Vietnam.

Credibility in choosing documents for document analysis research is fundamental in establishing the trustworthiness and applicability of the research findings. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that the documents they select are authentic, credible, accurate, representative, and relevant to the research questions and objectives of their study. (Morgan, 2022.)

The process of this research began with verifying the authenticity of the documents, which means confirming they are original, unaltered, and valid sources of information. The credibility of the documents was also critical; this entails assessing the authority and trustworthiness of the authors or creators of the documents, along with the context and circumstances under which the documents were produced. In this part, data triangulation was applied, and the chosen documents varied across time, space, and different people. As mentioned in sub-chapter 4.3 Data analysis process, 15 sources were selected from numerous universities across Vietnam, they were also written in different timelines.

Credibility in document analysis research, which employs coding and theming methods, pertains to how believable and accurate the research findings are deemed. It's crucial in qualitative research, as it validates the connection between the data collected and the interpretations drawn from that data. In practical terms, credibility involves a meticulous and systematic coding process where researcher scans through the textual data, assigning codes that condense and encapsulate the essential concepts or patterns observed. This task necessitates a nuanced understanding of the content and its context to ensure the coding captures the data's essence accurately. Following Glenn A. Bowen's exploration of Grounded Theory, using the constant comparative method is key. Here, existing codes are compared with new data to refine and validate the themes, ensuring they're consistent across the analysis and adequately represent the data (Bowen, 2006).

The advancement of themes includes a subsequent, more abstract level of analysis where codes are combined into broader patterns or themes. The author remained actively involved as these themes arose and may begin with an outline of anticipated themes that change as further insights from the data are obtained. Themes are assessed not only based on their occurrence but also by how they helped to address the research questions, guaranteeing that the results truly represent important and relevant patterns. Another approach to enhance the credibility of this research involves incorporating direct quotations from the document into the final result. This helps in minimizing the inclusion of the researcher's personal opinions in the results and impacting the overall study.

These factors were considered during the data analysis phase and in crafting and interpreting the results to assess the author's ability to handle the data effectively, ensuring reliability and addressing the research question. The selection of relevant data for analysis was influenced by the researcher's subjective perception and experience in relation to their understanding of the subject matter. The potential impact of separating direct quotations from their original context on altering their meaning was also recognized by the author. To mitigate this effect, careful checks and translations of original texts were conducted throughout the progress of presenting findings.

6.3 Personal learning and development

At the initial phase of the thesis project, the writer had limited prior experience in undertaking such research and was unfamiliar with its framework, methodology, and demands at different phases. Consequently, writing the thesis presented an array of new challenges; however, it also led to the development of a diverse set of new skills and insights as the process unfolded. The author's expertise and understanding of the subject matter grew significantly over time. Engaging in thorough research and crafting a comprehensive thesis also fostered critical evaluation skills related to academic literature and knowledge sources, as well as a heightened awareness of all factors involved in carrying out research that can impact its reliability. Moreover, the choice of thesis topic was influenced by the personal interest in objectives subject matter.

The completion of the process took 8 months, slightly longer than initially planned. The primary learning achievement of the thesis process involves recognizing important and pertinent elements within academic literature and research data, as well as deciding what to omit. Formulating objectives that are both precise in scope and valuable was also found to be a challenging task. In terms of personal development, the thesis process has notably enhanced problem-solving abilities, independence when dealing with new challenges, resilience in working towards successful completion, as well as improved critical thinking skills and capacity for independent research.

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