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### ASSESSING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FOR CAN GIO TOURIST DESTINATION IN HO CHI MINH CITY

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

This article pay research attention to the local tourism destinations in Vietnam based on example of Ho Chi Minh City. The need to attract domestic visitors is particularly important in the time of Covid-19 pandemic while we have seen a significant decrease of international visitors coming to all the national tourist sites. This is the right moment for Vietnamese tourism companies to assess and enhance domestic customer satisfaction to offset the reduced income from foreign guests.

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

From past to present, tourism is considered a smoke-free industry, not only providing a significant source of income for the country's economy but also contributing to creating jobs, increasing people's income as well as promoting national and local image. Therefore, Vietnam has always focused on investment and development of the tourism industry, aiming to be a spearhead economic sector promoting the country's development. In particular, the long coastline along the country from the North to the South has enormous potential to exploit and develop the tourism industry (Duc et al, 2019). In Vietnam, tourism development strategy with a vision to 2030 of the Government has been identified as follows: "Focusing on investment in developing all types and tourism products to boost strength of tourism resources of the country and of each of its localities; Prioritizing the

development of tourism associated with sea and islands, emphasizing unique cultural and ecological factors in tourism products; Focusing on developing high-quality, brand-name and competitive marine tourism compared to the region and the world” (Tourism Law, 2005).

Can Gio district is one of five suburban districts of Ho Chi Minh City, located about 50 km from the City center, in the southeast estuary of the City. This is the only locality of the City with mangroves associated with a network of rivers and canals, famous Rung Sac revolutionary war zone and many potentialities to attract tourists. In general, forests and sea are two very important factors to promote ecotourism and socio-economic development of Can Gio district. With the advantages of natural and social conditions, Ho Chi Minh City leadership is very interested in identifying solutions to develop Can Gio tourism, especially ecotourism (Tuan, 2015; Tuu & Cam, 2012; Dung et al, 2019, 2019a; Viet et al, 2020). Each year, Can Gio welcomes hundreds of thousands to millions of tourists. But how the Can Gio tourism experience leaves an impression on visitors when coming here is even more important than the growth in that number of tourists. The question is how do tourists return to Can Gio more times and introduce Can Gio to friends and relatives around. It depends a lot on the experiences they feel about many different factors throughout the travel. Therefore, there should be more in-depth researches and reports on satisfaction of tourists for Can Gio with the aim of proposing appropriate solutions promoting Can Gio tourism to "take off" (Tien, 2018, 2018a, 2018b & 2018c).

The general goal of this paper is to study domestic tourists' satisfaction with Can Gio destination, on that basis, to propose some governance implications to further improve tourist satisfaction to Can Gio tourist destination in the future.

Based on the general goal, specific goals include:

Firstly, to determine factors affecting domestic tourist satisfaction with destination Can Gio - Ho Chi Minh City. Secondly, to assess the satisfaction of domestic tourists for destination Can Gio - Ho Chi Minh City. Thirdly, to propose some governance implications to further improve domestic tourist satisfaction with the destination Can Gio - Ho Chi Minh City. The paper uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to address the above goals. Qualitative research is conducted by group discussion with experts including lecturers in the tourism industry, experts with many years of researching on tourism in Ho Chi Minh City in general and Can Gio district in particular, tourism companies to adjust and supplement the scales established in previous studies at home and abroad to suit the reality of the research topic. Quantitative research's data collected through direct surveys with questionnaires will be analyzed with SPSS 22 software, specifically the processing steps are as follows:

- Analyzing descriptive statistics of collected data

- Using Paired-Samples T-Test to analyze the difference between visitor's experience and pre-travel expectations. This significant research may contribute to supplement and enrich the research achievement on tourist satisfaction. It could be the reference source for the next researches in the same field. In addition, in practical terms, this study helps to evaluate the satisfaction of domestic tourists to the destination Can Gio - Ho Chi Minh City, thereby providing very useful information for the government as well as tourism companies in Can Gio district with appropriate policies to attract more and more tourists to this land.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

#### ***Theoretical framework***

#### ***Tourism and tourist concept***

According to Article 4 of the Tourism Law (2005): "Tourism is activities related to the trip of people outside of their regular residence in order to satisfy their needs to visit, to learn, to entertain, and to relax in a certain period of time".

Goeldner et al. (2000) interpret tourism as the sum of phenomena and relationships based on the interactions between the four factors: tourist, business, government and local community for the purpose of attracting and serving tourists or visitors. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2005) defines tourism as activities of individuals moving to a site outside of their habitual habitats for no more than one year in a row for a primary purpose of absence. From the above concepts, it can be seen that tourism is described as an activity involving an individual, a group of people or an organization when moving outside of their daily living place in a short or long time to another location except for the purpose of making money. The term "tourist" or "visitor" also has many different definitions. To set the standard for world tourism statistics, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2005) in 1963 unified the definition of "tourist". Accordingly, "tourist is a person who visits and stays in one or several places outside of his regular residence, for a period of not more than one year, for entertainment and other purposes unrelated to the professional purpose to receive income in the visiting place".

#### ***Tourist satisfaction***

According to Oliver (1997), satisfaction is the psychological state that customers perceive when their expectations are met or exceeded through the use products or services of the company. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), customers' satisfaction is their response to the perceived difference between experience and expectations. That is, the customer's known experience of using a service and the results obtained after the service is provided. Kotler and Keller (2006) argue that satisfaction is the degree of one's sensory state resulting from the comparison of a perceived product versus expectations. Accordingly, the satisfaction includes 3 levels: (1) If the customer's perception is lower than expected, they feel dissatisfied; (2) If the

customer's perception is equal to expectation, they feel satisfied; (3) If the customer's perception is greater than expected, they feel satisfied and interested. Tribe and Snaith (1998) based on the concept of satisfaction defined tourist satisfaction with a tourist destination based on the degree of perceived attributes that are exceeding their expected level. Kozak and Rimmington (2000) argue that visitor satisfaction is a very important aspect that directly affects the success of the tourism destination marketing process because it influences destination choice and consumption, the use of goods and services and intentions to buy and decision to return. Reisinger and Turner (2003) find that positive satisfaction can arise when a visitor's experience is not as expected. The authors proposed three levels of positive satisfaction from "very satisfied", "completely satisfied" to "satisfied". The level of satisfaction is high or low depending on initial expectations (Ritchie & Brent, 1978). In a nutshell, visitors' satisfaction can be understood as their emotional state about a tourism product or service determined by their perceived versus expected experience before using the product or service (Tuan et al, 2019).

### ***Tourist destination***

According to Article 4 of the Tourism Law (2005), "tourist destination is a place with attractive tourism resources, serving the needs of visitors". Goeldner et al. (2000) suggested that tourist destinations are places where tourists aim to conduct their recreational activities and overnight stays. Tourist destination is a collection of many accommodation systems, transportation and other services, it is the place where socio-economic activities from tourism take place. According to the UNWTO (2005), tourist destination is a physical space where visitors stay at least one night. A destination defines the physical and administrative boundaries it manages, the image and perception identified in the market where it competes (Pearce, 1997). Local tourism destinations often include multiple stakeholders as an organized community and can be linked together to form a larger tourism destination.

### ***Theoretical models of research on satisfaction***

#### ***Expectation - perception model***

Davidoff (1994) said that the satisfaction of tourists with service is measured by the comparison between the service perceived and the service expected by themselves. The formula is as follows:  $S = P - E$  (Satisfaction = Perception - Expectation).

If  $P < E$ : The value that the customer receives from the actual provided service is lower than the customer's expectation, then the service quality is rated as poor.

If  $P = E$ : The value received by the customer from the actual service provided is equal to the customer's expectation, then the service quality is rated at the level of satisfaction.

If  $P > E$ : the value received by the customer from the provided service is higher than the customer's expectation, then the service quality is assessed as good.

### ***Model of technical / functional quality***

To measure service quality affecting customer perception after using, Gronroos (1984) gave three main factors: functional quality, technical quality and image.

Accordingly, these factors are shown as follows:

- Functional quality represents the way the service is provided or in other words how the service is delivered to the customer.
- Technical quality shows what service is provided and what customers receive after using that service.
- This image is a factor built on functional quality and technical quality that customers perceive when using.

The customer perceptions of service quality are overall assessed on the service and the difference between the ratings and their service expectations.

### ***Model of customer satisfaction by function - relationship***

Customer satisfaction depends on product (service) characteristics and relationships with each other. Customer satisfaction consists of 2 components:

- Functional satisfaction: is achieved by purchasing quality goods or services at reasonable prices. Functional satisfaction includes also price, the value of product or service converted to money. Service quality is based on the following characteristics: Reliability, Response, Assurance, Empathy, Tangibility. Product quality is based on: Performance, Special Features, Reliability, Conformance, Durability, Serviceability, Aesthetics, Perceived Quality.
- Relationship: is resulted from business transactions that accumulate over time such as trust in service providers, staff expertise, customer service attitude, contact and relationship quality. Those are factors related to professional qualifications, employee's attitude. Doing exactly what is committed to customers will affect customer satisfaction.

### ***IPA model***

Martilla and Jame (1997) propose a model of importance performance analysis (IPA). Accordingly, service quality is determined by the difference in customer opinions about the importance level and the implementation level of service quality assessment criteria. The IPA model is seen as an effective means of identifying service providers' competitive advantages and disadvantages, helping them to make appropriate strategic decisions to improve service quality. The IPA model is used by many authors to assess the

quality of tourism services and thereby proposes solutions for effective improvement. Accordingly, tourism managers can identify a service feature that is important to customers and how much it is assessed and perceived by the customer.

### *Holsat Model*

Tribe and Snaith (1988) were the first to propose and use this model to evaluate visitor satisfaction to the famous tourist resort Varadero of Cuba. HOLSAT model is built on the basis of SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman (1994) and previous studies. However, it overcomes limitations of other models by measuring satisfaction for a tourism destination rather than measuring a particular service. Tribe and Snaith (1998) suggest that visitor satisfaction with a tourist destination is determined when the perceived level of destination attributes exceeds level of expectation. An important feature of the model is the supplier's ability to measure visitor satisfaction with a destination instead of a specific service of the supplier. In addition, the HOLSAT model has special feature that is directed towards the multidimensionality of customers satisfaction by comparing their perceptions in a set of attributes with initial expectations. Furthermore, the HOLSAT model does not use a fixed list of attributes for all destinations, but can be flexibly changed to ensure coverage for each specific destination. The HOLSAT is different from other models as it uses both positive and negative attributes. Positive attributes are those that convey a good impression of a tourist destination, while negative attributes show negative impressions. Tourists visit a particular place with the expectation of having a positive experience, yet they also have concerns about negative aspects (such as pollution, noise, crowding). Tribe and Snaith (1998) suggest that adding negative attributes that visitors do not want to experience will be necessary to the model because these attributes also contribute to the satisfaction of visitors by positive attributes. For example, tourists envision the difficult travel to tourist site before their trip, but perceive the fact that traffic is not bad as they previously thought, this can increase their satisfaction. The HOLSAT survey questionnaire has special feature that the surveyed person gives a point of expectation for each attribute and gives a perception score for each attribute on the Likert scale. The mean score for each attribute is determined for both expectation and perception. Visitor satisfaction is determined by the difference between the expectations and the perceptions of each attribute. The advantage of HOLSAT model compared to the previous models is that HOLSAT model does not use a fixed generic list of properties that applies to all destinations that they are built and supplemented in accordance with each destination's specific features. This ensures that the attributes being used are the best match for the destination under study. The HOLSAT model is in contrast to the SERVQUAL model which uses 22 fixed attributes, irrespective of different destinations. In addition, the negative attributes are used but visitors can still show satisfaction if the actual negativity is lower than the initial concern. This is a novel approach and gives us a more comprehensive insight when studying visitor satisfaction with a tourist destination. With the above advantages, we

decided to choose the HOLSAT model to be used in this study.

### *Previous related researches*

Tribe and Snaith (1998) built HOLSAT model to study visitor satisfaction to Varadero tourist area in Cuba. The authors believe that there are 6 factors affecting visitor satisfaction including: Natural resources and physical conditions; Environment; Catering services, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping; Cultural heritage; Money deposit; Accommodation. The above six factors related to destination were used to construct the research questionnaire, including 47 positive and 7 negative attributes. Only 11 positive attributes achieved a level of perceptions higher than initially expected. There are 3 negative attributes that have a lower perceived level than first expected, meaning visitors gain satisfaction. Truong and Foster (2006) studied the Australian tourists to Vietnam, they also used the HOLSAT model based on the research of Tribe and Snaith (1998). However, the authors' model consists of 25 positive and 8 negative attributes, designed in accordance with the Vietnamese destination. Attributes are built on five key components that make up a tourist destination, including Attractions; Activities; Convenience; Place of residence; Transport. The results of analysis showed that there were 21 positive attributes achieving satisfaction when the mean of perception was higher than the initial expectation. There are 3 negative attributes that achieve satisfaction when the perceived level is lower than initial expectations. The study of Meimand et al (2013) also used the HOLSAT model to measure the gap between the expectations and feelings of Japanese tourists coming to Malaysia for homestay services. The study shows 14 positive and 6 negative attributes, built on the basis of 5 main attributes of a destination that impact on visitor satisfaction, including: Landscapes; Meal; Place of residence; Toilet; Hospitality. Only 10 of these positive attributes achieved higher satisfaction than the initial expectation, negative attributes found no difference between expectation and feeling. Vietnam is one of the countries with good conditions for tourism development such as abundant tourism resources, stable politics, favorable geographical location. In parallel to these factors, quality of tourism service is an equally important factor, decisive to the development of the tourism industry. Therefore, measuring the quality of tourism services is very necessary and meaningful. The selection of research models must be appropriate and highly effective to contribute to the quality improvement of tourism services. On that basis, the HOLSAT model has been applied in Vietnam. Research by Tran Thi Luong (2011) on the satisfaction of domestic tourists to Da Nang also uses HOLSAT model. The author proposes 6 factors affecting visitor satisfaction, including: Natural resources and material conditions; Environment; Catering-sightseeing - entertainment - shopping; Accommodation; Money transfer, Cultural heritage. The factors used to build the model include 18 positive and 7 negative attributes. Through testing, there are 15 positive attributes achieving a perceived level higher than expected and 1 negative attribute has a perception lower than expected, meaning visitors are satisfied. Quach Phuong Giang (2013) assessed the satisfaction of international visitors to Hanoi also using the HOLSAT model. The author

mentioned 8 factors of the destination that affect the satisfaction of visitors to Hanoi including City environment; Experience; Variety of landscapes; Lodging; Traffic; Food and drink; Place of residence; Adventure and outdoor leisure activities. The 8 attributes of the aforementioned destination were used to construct a questionnaire of a total of 45 questions, including both positive and negative attributes. From there, the author conducted matrix analysis for each attribute of the destination and drew conclusions and recommendations. Ho Thi Suong (2014) applied HOLSAT model to measure the satisfaction of international tourists in the destination of Hue city. The author has built the questionnaire on the basis of factors including: Natural resources, Environment, Food service, Sightseeing- entertainment-shopping, Money transfer, Heritage and culture, Accommodation. The questionnaire includes 33 observed variables, of which 15 are positive and 8 negative attributes affecting the satisfaction of international tourists at Hue destination. With 25 positive attributes, there are 13 attributes achieving customer satisfaction while 8 negative attributes have 4 satisfied attributes. Nguyen Pham Tuan Minh (2015) conducted a domestic tourist satisfaction assessment at the tourist destination of Phu Quoc in Kien Giang province. The author proposes 6 factors affecting visitor satisfaction based on HOLSAT model including: Environment; Cultural heritage; Place of residence; Natural condition; Food and drink services - sightseeing - entertainment - shopping - banking - telecommunications; Traffic. The model uses a scale of 39 positive attributes and 14 negative attributes. The test results have 38 attributes with differences between expectations and feelings, including 29 positive and 9 negative. There are 22 attributes achieving satisfaction and 16 attributes failed to achieve satisfaction. Nguyen Thi Hong Nhung (2017) applied HOLSAT model to assess visitor satisfaction with Cua Lo destination in Nghe An province. The model measured visitor satisfaction with tourism services is given with the assumption that satisfaction has a positive relationship with 6 factors including: Environment; Natural resources and physical conditions; Heritage and culture; Catering, entertainment and shopping; Lodging; Money services. With a sample size of 250 observations, the author used the correlation regression method to study the effect of each group of factors in exploratory factor analysis on overall visitor satisfaction and the obtained result is that all 6 factors have a positive effect and statistical significance at the 5% level. In general, the previous studies using the HOLSAT model all developed on the basis of the research of Tribe and Snaith (1998). Models are built based on the attributes of the tourist sites that need to be studied. However, the questions are adjusted and added to suit each specific tourist destination and research content. The questionnaires included positive and negative attributes. Thereby, the studies all point out the positives and negatives of the destination in detail, thereby proposing practical ideas to develop the positives and improve the drawbacks. This shows the appropriateness of using the HOLSAT model for the study of visitor satisfaction with a tourist destination.

### ***Proposed research model***

Based on the theoretical basis of Tribe and Snaith (1998) with HOLSAT



model and research reality for the tourism industry of Can Gio in Ho Chi Minh City, we consult experts in tourism industry and domestic tourists in terms of attributes. Inheriting the results of previous studies and the HOLSAT model to assess visitor satisfaction at destination, we are given 6 factors that affect visitor satisfaction including 1 - Environment, 2 - Natural resources and physical conditions, 3 - Cultural heritage, 4 - Accommodation, 5 - Food and beverage services, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping, 6 - Transportation. We have removed the Money transfer service because after consulting with experts, this service is suitable for foreign but not for domestic tourists (Nhan, 2014). In addition, the author added factor 6 - Traffic because the studies of Truong and Foster (2006), Quach Phuong Giang (2013) showed that the traffic factor plays an important role for tourist's crush in a destination. Traffic is an important attribute affecting tourist destinations in general and Can Gio destination in particular. The proposed research model will study the positive and negative attributes based on visitors' expectation before arrival and how they feel after arriving at a destination. This is a difference compared to other models in the study of tourist satisfaction with destinations. The author builds a list of positive and negative attributes on the basis of feelings and expectations before and after traveling to Can Gio in Ho Chi Minh City.

## **RESEARCH PROCESS**

### *Qualitative research*

#### *Qualitative research to complete the model*

The study is based on the HOLSAT model of Tribe and Snaith (1998) and inherits the research results of domestic authors including Nguyen Pham Tuan Minh (2015) and Nguyen Thi Hong Nhung (2017). In order to be more suitable for the research environment at the destination Can Gio - Ho Chi Minh City, qualitative research is necessary in order to perfect author's proposed research model and scale as the foundation for official survey. Qualitative research was conducted according to the method of group discussion with experts and business representatives. Authors conducted group discussions with 10 people, including tourism lecturers and researchers in Ho Chi Minh City, managers of tourist companies. Their opinions will be very important information to achieve the research goal. The content of qualitative research is divided into two parts. The first part completes the research model. The second part adjusts the research scale from the draft scale. The purpose of the first section is to identify factors influencing domestic tourist satisfaction with the Can Gio destination. The results of group discussions used to complete the research model showed that all participants clearly understand the research content. All 10 discussion group members believed that the factors that authors mentioned during the discussion were adequate for domestic tourist satisfaction study of the Can Gio destination. Only 1 person has no opinion on the 3 Traffic factors. Those in the discussion group all agreed to keep the 6 proposed factors unchanged in the model.

### ***Qualitative research to build and adjust the scale***

Based on comments from the group discussion results, the members of the discussion group agreed on the factors that impact on visitor satisfaction with the Can Gio tourism destination. The authors propose a research scale based on the theory overview including 1 - Environment, 2 - Natural resources and material conditions, 3 - Cultural heritage 4 - Accommodation, 5 - Catering, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping, 6 - Traffic. Draft scale is inherited from the studies of Tribe and Snaith (1998), Nguyen Pham Tuan Minh (2015), Nguyen Thi Hong Nhung (2017) and adjusted to become preliminary scale for group discussions with expert. The authors used a 5-level Likert scale, which is used to sort from small to large, and the larger the number the more respondents agree with the statement.

### ***Quantitative research***

#### ***Preliminary quantitative research***

Before being included in official survey, preliminary survey was developed to inquire 50 domestic tourists who visited the Can Gio tourism destination with the aim of assessing the content and form of statements in preliminary scale. Since then, the scale and preliminary survey table is adjusted to become the scale and the official survey table used in official research. In which, the important task of this step is to evaluate whether the respondents understand or not the statements corresponding to the observed variables in order to remove the inappropriate attributes to form an official questionnaire. In addition, we evaluate whether the presentation of the questionnaire is reasonable, logical or not. The preliminary survey questionnaire is designed in the following 3 parts:

- Introduction: Introduces the purpose of survey and its commitment to confidentiality.
- Part A: Includes questions for respondents to provide personal information.
- Part B: Detailed information on domestic tourists, questionnaires were designed to measure satisfaction based on the 5-level Likert scale from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" to evaluate the level of consent/disagreement of surveyed subjects. Results of preliminary survey of 50 people showed that all of them clearly understand statements and presentation forms that are easy to see and understand. However, there are some suggestions to add open questions to contribute to improve visitor satisfaction with the Can Gio destination and the author acknowledges this opinion. Since then, the official survey is applied in official quantitative research.

#### ***Official quantitative research***

Formal quantitative research was conducted using a method of surveying domestic tourists traveling to Can Gio destination. When the results are available, the authors conduct statistical synthesis, analyzing the results based

on the information obtained from the survey. The study performed descriptive statistics of sample data, analyzed Paired-Samples T-Test to test the difference between feeling after going and expected before departure of tourists using SPSS 22 software.

### *Sampling and data collection*

How the sample size is called large is not clearly defined. Moreover, the sample size depends on the regression method used. However, Hair et al. (1998) stated that, if using the regression method, the minimum sample size should be between 100 and 150 observations. Hoelter (1983) again suggested that the minimum sample size should be 200 and there are also researchers of the opinion that the minimum sample size is 5 samples for one parameter of the regression (Bollen, 1989). Determining the appropriate sample size is rather complicated issue that is often based on experience by authors. Hair et al. (2006) suggested that the minimum sample size required is 50 samples, preferably 100 samples with an observed ratio of 5: 1, i.e. 1 measurement variable needs at least 5 observations, preferably 10: 1 or more. According to this formula, with 37 observed variables, the sample should have:  $n = 5 \times 37 = 185$  observations. However, in order to reduce sampling error, the criterion when doing this survey is that, under the permissible conditions, the collection of research data as much as possible, will help to increase the representation of the population. Therefore, the sample size or the number of domestic tourists that the author chose to survey is expected to be 220 people. Samples are collected by the convenient non-probability sampling method because of limited resources, the selection of non-probability samples saves time, costs and effort.

### *Data analysis*

The order of data analysis is as follows:

Step 1: Carry out descriptive statistics for the data

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic characteristics of data collected from empirical research in different ways. Descriptive statistics provide simple summaries of samples and metrics. This is the basis of all quantitative analysis of data. Some techniques are applied as follows:

- Graphical representation of data in which graphs depict or compare the data
- Present data into summary tables
- Summary statistics (in the form of unique statistical values) describing data

Step 2: Analyze the difference (Paired-Samples T-Test).

The Paired-Samples T-Test, 5% significance level (Hoang Trong & Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc, 2007; Tho, 2011) was used to compare the mean of post-travel perceptions and the mean of pre-travel expectations. If there is a statistically significant difference (Sig  $t < 0.05$ ) between two mean values of each attribute, we consider the value of perception - expectation to draw a conclusion about whether the visitor is satisfied or dissatisfied with that attribute.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Environment*

The study results show that international tourists are moderately satisfied with the environmental conditions in Can Gio. Tourists feel the environment is not polluted, the weather is pleasant and comfortable at sea, indigenous people are friendly and hospitable, and there is less frequent street vendors and tourists. That proves the current environment is good and clean. However, there are still some safety precautions when the road from Ho Chi Minh City center to Can Gio is quite deserted, sparsely populated, the hygiene of the sights has not been paid much attention and there is still a lot of rubbish. Environment is very important in tourism, so Can Gio is now trying to build a sustainable tourism environment with long-term ecological and socio-economic value (McKercher, 1993; Anh et al, 2021; Tien et al, 2020; Vinh et al, 2019, 2019a, 2019b).

### *Cultural heritage*

In general, tourists are temporarily satisfied with the factor "Cultural Heritage" in Can Gio. Historic sites and traditional cultural villages are famous places in Can Gio. Besides, the sightseeing works after many years in service for tourism have been degraded but not yet renovated. Local festivals and religious sites do not seem to really and potentially attract visitors. Therefore, festivals need to be promoted so that domestic and foreign tourists know about. The cultural relics need to be repaired and exploited more intensively in tourism (Thai et al, 2019, 2019a).

### *Natural resources and infrastructure condition*

Beautiful and wild primeval forests, rich and diverse fauna and flora are attractive to visitors when coming here with a high level of satisfaction. Can Gio has an advantage over other places that both have forests and sea, creating diversity for tourist landscapes like exploring nature. However, it is noted that the beach is not clean due to natural conditions, so many visitors only come to visit, eat, take pictures, but hesitate to swim. In addition, the facilities here make visitors dissatisfied because telecommunications services are not convenient, banking services are not performing well, and medical services are also limited. These are significant issues that Can Gio needs to deal with significantly to improve visitor satisfaction.

### *Accommodation*

Tourists are still not really satisfied with the accommodation facilities. Although the location is convenient for visiting and the room is clean, fully equipped with basic amenities, there are not many types of hotels with reasonable prices because in many places, the rental price is quite high. In addition, the difficulty of booking on booking apps leads to travelers' hesitation because they do not take initiative in time. So this point needs to be

further improved along with the fact that many resorts and hotels are being built to serve and bring satisfaction to tourists.

### ***Food service, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping***

Food in Can Gio is quite rich and varied, especially seafood with skillful cooking of the local people, making the dish more attractive and unique. Affordable food and drink prices also achieve satisfaction of visitors. But there aren't many dining options specifically for large groups. The purchase of specialties and souvenirs is also considered by international tourists to be quite easy, with affordable prices. The ticket price is not too high or even free, the attentive staff is a positive side for Can Gio tourism. However, the restriction on places to visit, shopping and maintenance, especially at night makes Can Gio less attractive in the eyes of tourists coming here.

### ***Transport and communication***

Nearly the majority of tourists are dissatisfied with the traffic in Can Gio district and this is considered the biggest disadvantage that needs to be overcome first and foremost to develop tourism in this locality. Roads are degraded, travel is difficult, waterways are limited, and there is a lack of air routes leading to uncertainty for tourists.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Conclusions***

The measurement of visitor satisfaction with Can Gio tourist destination is considered as results of comparing perceptions with expectations about positive and negative attributes. Research using the HOLSAT model is built on 06 components of the destination that affect the satisfaction of visitors to Can Gio, including: Environment; Natural resources & physical conditions; Cultural heritage; Place of residence; Catering, sightseeing, entertainment & shopping; and Traffic. The study used convenient sampling methods and quantitative survey tables as data collection tools. The survey was sent out to 220 respondents, and we collected 209 responses meeting the requirements of data analysis and processing. The data was processed by SPSS 22 software. The analysis results of Paired-Samples T-Test showed that out of a total of 37 attributes (24 positive and 13 negative) analyzed, there were 24 positive and 13 negative attributes with difference between expectation and perception at significance level of 5%. The results are represented in the matrix to check for satisfaction or dissatisfaction, with 17 attributes when visitors are satisfied and 20 attributes when visitors are not satisfied. Attributes that visitors are not satisfied with are mainly related to accommodation services, dining, shopping and transportation. Attributes that visitors are satisfied with are related to physical conditions, accommodation, food & beverage services, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping and transportation.

### ***Management implications***

To promote and orient Can Gio tourism industry to develop rapidly and sustainably in the coming time, we should promote its strengths and overcome weaknesses, the authors propose some managerial implications to maintain and enhance service quality, attributes that visitors are satisfied with, as well as to overcome unsatisfied factors, contributing to improve the quality of tourist destination in Can Gio. According to development guidelines of the city, authorities and managers need to focus on the strategy of exploiting the strengths of sea tourism and resort tourism of Can Gio, in parallel with building smart urban areas and high-tech zones services, resorts, hotels towards a knowledge economic zone, attracting scientific activities, research, education and training for future development.

### ***Traffic infrastructure development investment***

Transportation and communication are important factors in tourism development. If the infrastructure and transportation are not good, visitors will hesitate to choose Can Gio as a tourist destination. In order to create momentum for development, Can Gio district needs to strongly invest in the development of transport infrastructure in coordination with the region's socio-economic resources. In parallel with continuing to improve the traffic infrastructure, the authorities need to regularly educate and raise awareness of the contingent of vehicle owners, drivers, execute safety inspections for vehicles, impose requirements to comply with the Traffic Law, as well as the current local regulations to ensure safety for local people and visitors. On top of that, a mobilization is needed for residents to stop roaming livestock, littering street, obstructing or causing traffic accidents.

### ***Environment***

Tourists do not feel the polluted environment, the weather is pleasant and comfortable on the sea. However, at present, a number of local people and tourists are not well aware of preserving their surroundings, and littering is still indiscriminate. In order to maintain and raise awareness of environmental protection, effectively exploit and protect the wild beauty of Can Gio, agencies and managers should soon adopt strong enough policies and measures to prevent environmental pollution, degradation and incidents caused by human activities (Hau, 2019). Early remediation of local pollution, and restoration of pollution and degradation, especially marine ecosystems, forest ecology, step by step improve the quality of the environment. Tourism managers need to carry out prevention of pollution at source for projects related to construction of tourist facilities such as accommodation facilities, entertainment facilities. In addition, it is necessary to make an environmental impact assessment report according to regulations before starting construction projects and they must be regularly supervised and checked by functional agencies, and any violation must be strictly dealt with. Agencies encourage project owners to invest in standard wastewater and waste collection and

treatment systems. It is necessary to encourage business establishments to apply clean and low-polluting technologies in their organizations and their operations according to the national environmental protection standards.

### ***Natural resources and infrastructure condition***

The development of society in general and the rapid increase in the number of tourists coming to Can Gio create a threat to the forest ecosystem and the flora and fauna here, both on the forest and under the sea. Another very important issue is to pay full attention to the protection of forests and freshwater resources because forests create fresh air, preserving fresh water is a factor to ensure life for people. At the same time, it is a must to regularly organize propaganda and education activities to raise awareness and responsibility for environmental protection, not only in residential communities, service businesses, but also for the tourists coming from elsewhere. This work must be considered as an immediate and regular task, it must be carried out continuously and thoroughly to resolve local specific problems. In addition, managers need to build and upgrade public toilets at some moving points near the place of interest or along the coastline to create comfort and convenience for tourists.

### ***Cultural heritage***

It is necessary to rebuild the ancient craft villages and fake festivals. In the district's development history, there may be traditional craft villages or ancient festivals that are now lost or no longer relevant to the present. Therefore, Can Gio should be restored to help visitors coming here not only to know the current daily life of Can Gio but also to understand a part of ancient customs. In costumes, activities and labors, they should recreate the old times. Only then visitors will find it interesting to learn with their own eyes the people of ancient Can Gio. The festival can be fake, but it has the ability to attract and strike into the curious psychology of visitors. Parallel to the above problem, the district should consolidate and develop existing craft villages (mat village, fishing village, forest village, salt village) and orient the planning as well as proposing possible solutions to help them preserve the ecotourism.

### ***Accommodation***

Compared to the requirements of modern tourism, Can Gio accommodation facilities are still limited, accommodation facilities are not synchronous and insufficient in the tourist season, there are no modern and high-class resorts and hotels enough to serve events and conferences of international stature. In addition, the equipment arrangement in the rooms is not guaranteed to be good and quality. Service style of staff is not professional, due to lack of training and their communication ability in foreign language are limited. The organization of the service system, attitudes and service style of staff towards accommodation establishments are very important, and have a significant role in deciding most of the reasons for tourists' choice of accommodation (Tien,

2019). Therefore, in order to attract customers, there must be a cheerful, polite, civilized, responsible service attitude, creating trust and affection from guests from the first time, regardless of foreign or domestic guests. Enterprises should pay attention to recruitment and to regular train and foster professional skills for employees working at hotels and resorts in Can Gio.

### ***Food service, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping***

Government needs to develop plans and policies to encourage investment, maintain old craft villages with local values and characteristics as well as build new craft villages to create products with nice design and quality from local ingredients. The maintenance and development of craft villages is not easy at present, but in the long term it is very meaningful to attract tourists and contribute to local economic development, creating jobs for residents, contributing to the implementation of the targets of building a new countryside (Anh & Tien, 2019). Where possible, local government should organize exhibitions and sell impressive local products to attract visitors and promote own brands in combination with cultural performance, and at the same time, create conditions for tourists to participate directly in the production of these products.

### ***Limitations and next research directions***

The research results in this article are valuable reference sources for agencies and departments of Can Gio district and domestic and foreign investors. In addition to the achieved aspects, due to the limited time and conditions for conducting research, the scale of novelty and achievement are quite restrictive and limited, there are inevitably some of the following limitations:

Firstly, despite trying to do a lot in designing the questionnaire, with simple and easy-to-understand language, it is inevitable that some subjects do not understand the question and then answer incorrectly. Second, the research explores and draws out 6 factors of the destination about visitor satisfaction to Can Gio, in fact there may be some other factors about visitor satisfaction that the author has not discovered. Third, the survey is applied to domestic tourists and is not yet applied to measure satisfaction of all tourists coming to Can Gio city, including international tourists. Further research should be directed to this group of tourist as research object when Can Gio really has a strong development step in the future. Finally, the study was conducted with a convenient sampling method for Can Gio domestic tourists, the representativeness of the sample in the population is not high and the sample size is not really large. Therefore, the next study should have a larger sample size and use a stratified probabilistic sampling method for a more representative sample and for building a complete scale system.

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