



Analysis of Factors Influencing the Satisfaction of Domestic Tourists with the Community-Based Tourism Destination - Thieng Lieng Island

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Abstract

The study analyzed the factors influencing the satisfaction of domestic tourists participating in community-based tourism at Thieng Lieng Island Hamlet. Data were collected from 50 domestic tourists through questionnaire interviews. The data were processed to obtain average scores, maximum values, and minimum values. Tourists' satisfaction was measured using a model comprising: (1) Natural resources; (2) Infrastructure; (3) Tourist environment; (4) Service quality; (5) Residents' attitudes; (6) Service prices; (7) Cultural heritage. Based on the research findings, the authors proposed several managerial implications aimed at enhancing the satisfaction of domestic tourists at Thieng Lieng.

I. INTRODUCTION

Visitor satisfaction is not only an important indicator but also a driving force for shaping the image of a tourist destination. This satisfaction depends on various factors such as infrastructure, transportation services, accommodation quality, local culture, and environment. Further research and understanding of these factors not only provide a scientific basis but also help tourism organizations design and develop tourism products that meet the desires and expectations of visitors.

Most studies on satisfaction focus on quantitative research methods, often concentrating on major destinations. However, for niche markets like community-based tourism, combining qualitative and quantitative research is necessary to accurately reflect visitor satisfaction.

In Thieng Lieng Island, a new community-based tourism destination, attention has been drawn to its unique tourism products. Despite being in early development, it has received interest and investment from relevant authorities.

However, tourism development here still faces challenges such as lack of experience in serving tourists and limitations in transportation. Therefore, researching the satisfaction of domestic tourists with community-based tourism in Thieng Lieng Island will play a crucial role in evaluating and improving the quality of tourism services in this area.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH MODEL

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Community-based tourism

Community-based tourism, or tourism based on communities, is a form of tourism in which the local community collectively participates in leveraging the cultural and natural values of their area to generate income for the community as a whole. This definition has been adopted by many countries and regions.

According to Nicole Hausle and Wolfgang Strasdas (2000), community-based tourism is a type of tourism in

which the local community controls and primarily participates in the development and management of tourism activities, with the goal of retaining profits for the community. In Thailand, community-based tourism is defined as environmentally, culturally, and socially sustainable tourism, with significant participation from the local community.

The Community-Based Tourism Network for the Poor emphasizes creating economic and social benefits for local people through tourism, aiming to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods for the community. In Vietnam, various authors have provided different definitions of community-based tourism. Luong, P. T. (2010) and Yen, B. T. H. (2012) also emphasize the involvement of the local community in tourism management and activities.

In summary, community-based tourism is a form of tourism in which the local community self-manages and exploits, generating benefits for both the area and preserving local resources and culture.

Domestic tourists

In tourism research, Thong, T. V. (2002) emphasizes that tourism is not merely a simple activity but a complex system consisting of components such as tourism subjects, tourists, and tourism intermediaries. Tourism subjects are divided into two main types: overnight visitors and excursionists. Excursionists are described as individuals who leave their usual place of residence to visit a specific destination for various purposes, excluding work and not using overnight accommodation services. According to the Vietnam Tourism Law (2017), tourists are individuals who undertake tourist trips or combine tourism with income-generating activities at the destination. Both tourists and excursionists are collectively referred to as tourists, individuals who seek to explore and satisfy various experiential and spiritual needs. Additionally, Tran Van Thong quotes Austrian economist Jozep Stander, defining "tourists" as individuals satisfying high-level lifestyle needs without economic purposes.

On the other hand, Diem, D. L (2020) defines domestic tourism as tourism activities that take place entirely within the territory of a country, serving domestic residents participating in tourism, without currency transactions. In the scope of the study, the term "domestic tourists" encompasses both domestic tourists and domestic excursionists.

Satisfaction

Since the late 1970s, research on visitor satisfaction has diversified, including conceptual development, analysis of influencing factors, and model construction. Pizam (1978) and Oliver (1980) argue that visitor satisfaction reflects "the

interaction between perceived value and expectations of the destination" (Oliver L., R., 1980). Chon (1989) suggests that visitor satisfaction depends on pre-visit expectations, on-site perceptions, and their congruence. Spreng and colleagues (1996) consider customer satisfaction as the foundation of marketing, with the formula $S = P - E$ (Spreng, 1996). Huong, T. T., Brian, K (2009) define visitor satisfaction as the feeling when expectations are fulfilled through tourism activities and services. Yun D., Pyo S. (2016) indicate that visitor satisfaction depends on various factors such as expectations, experiences, motivations, activities, perceptions, and preferences. Enhancing visitor satisfaction positively affects service providers and the destination's reputation, while increasing loyalty and reducing transaction costs in the future (Chen Y et al., 2012). In summary, customer satisfaction reflects individual perceptions of products or services, based on actual experiences compared to initial expectations. For visitors, satisfaction with tourist destinations reflects the outcome of overall emotions or perceptions, based on the comparison between actual experiences and previous expectations.

2.2. Research Framework

The SERVPERF model, a variant of SERVQUAL, focuses on important factors such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibles, and empathy to assess satisfaction. This model simplifies the complexity of evaluating customer satisfaction by focusing on their perceptions of service quality. This makes it more efficient and suitable for small tourist destinations. Based on this model and the situation in Thieng Lieng island hamlet, we propose a set of criteria consisting of 7 criteria and 28 indicators. The criteria include residents' attitudes towards tourists, natural resources, infrastructure, tourist environment, service quality, service prices, and cultural heritage. Evaluation will be conducted using a 5-point Likert scale, and data will be collected through questionnaires to reflect tourists' opinions.

2.3 Research Method

The authors used the literature synthesis method to collect information from previous studies and understand policies related to the development of community tourism in Thieng Lieng island hamlet. Additionally, the article applied the field survey method to conduct on-site surveys in the research area, interacting with households and observing tourists' experiences at local tourist spots. Finally, descriptive statistical methods were used to process and analyze data from a survey of 50 domestic tourists, thereby drawing conclusions and arguments about their satisfaction with specific factors in the community tourism experience.

III. RESULTS

3.1 Overview of the Research Sample

The research sample consists of 42% males and 58% females, with ages ranging from under 18 (4%), 18 to 21 (8%), 22 to 30 (44%), 31 to 44 (36%), and 44 and above (8%). The educational level of the research subjects includes secondary school (36%), university (40%), postgraduate (8%), and others (16%).

The criteria used to evaluate the satisfaction of domestic tourists with Thieng Lieng island hamlet in the model include: (1) Natural resources (4 variables); (2) Infrastructure (5 variables); (3) Tourist environment (4 variables); (4) Service quality (6 variables); (5) Residents' attitudes (3 variables); (6) Service prices (5 variables); (7) Cultural heritage (7 variables).

3.2 Survey Results

Table 1: Satisfaction Level of Domestic Tourists

Criterion		Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Average Value	Evaluation
1. Natural resources: 3.99 - Satisfied					
NR_1	Abundant natural resources	3.00	5.00	4.16	Satisfied
NR_2	Diverse ecosystem of fauna and flora	3.00	5.00	4.12	Satisfied
NR_3	Appealing natural landscapes	3.00	5.00	4.00	Satisfied
NR_4	Lush and abundant fruit orchard	1.00	5.00	3.68	Satisfied
2. Infrastructure: 3.64 - Satisfied					
INF_1	Convenient access roads to tourist attractions	1.00	4.00	3.20	Neutral
INF_2	Spacious parking area at the tourist site	1.00	4.00	3.18	Neutral
INF_3	Spacious dock for tourist boats	3.00	5.00	3.38	Neutral
INF_4	Fully-equipped and clean restroom facilities	4.00	5.00	4.28	Satisfied
INF_5	Ensured communication, electricity, and water supply systems	4.00	5.00	4.18	Satisfied
1. Tourist Environment: 4.27 - Satisfied					
TEF_1	Not affected by pollution	4.00	5.00	4.28	Satisfied
TEF_2	Green, clean, beautiful	4.00	5.00	4.24	Satisfied
TEF_3	Fresh, cool air	4.00	5.00	4.30	Satisfied
TEF_4	Local community environmental protection policies are ensured	3.00	5.00	4.26	Satisfied
2. Service Quality: 3.87 - Satisfied					
SERV_1	The tourist spot features many restaurants and entertainment services	3.00	5.00	3.96	Satisfied
SERV_2	The tourist area has many attractive attractions	2.00	5.00	3.70	Satisfied
SERV_3	Unique and enticing dishes for tourists	1.00	5.00	3.30	Neutral
SERV_4	Food services with good quality and ensured food safety and hygiene	3.00	5.00	4.12	Satisfied
SERV_5	Reasonably priced and high-quality homestay services	3.00	5.00	4.06	Satisfied
SERV_6	Tourists get to experience the culture and lifestyle of the local people	3.00	5.00	4.10	Satisfied

3. Local Residents' Attitude: 4.33 - Satisfied					
LRA_1	Always friendly and welcoming to guests	3.00	5.00	4.32	Satisfied
LRA_2	Ready to assist and fulfill guests' requests	3.00	5.00	4.34	Satisfied
LRA_3	Listen and promptly address guests' complaints	3.00	5.00	4.32	Satisfied
4. Service Prices: 4.33 - Satisfied					
SP_1	Food prices	3.00	5.00	4.40	Satisfied
SP_2	Sightseeing prices	3.00	5.00	4.34	Satisfied
SP_3	Entertainment prices	3.00	5.00	4.32	Satisfied
SP_4	Shopping prices	3.00	5.00	4.32	Satisfied
SP_5	Accommodation prices	3.00	5.00	4.28	Satisfied
5. Cultural Heritage: 3.98 - Satisfied					
DSVH_1	Preserve and promote local cultural heritage	3.00	5.00	4.32	Satisfied
DSVH_2	The local cultural heritage is diverse and rich	3.00	5.00	3.92	Satisfied
DSVH_3	Valuable historical-cultural relics	1.00	5.00	3.04	Neutral
DSVH_4	Festivals and unique customs and traditions	1.00	5.00	3.12	Neutral
DSVH_5	The locality has appropriate cultural heritage preservation policies	4.00	5.00	4.32	Satisfied
DSVH_6	The local traditional trades are maintained and preserved	4.00	5.00	4.48	Satisfied
DSVH_7	Tourists have ample opportunities to learn about and experience local traditional industries	4.00	5.00	4.72	Very satisfied

Source: Survey results by the authors' group, 2024

3.3 Discussion

Overall, all 7 criteria evaluated by tourists were rated at a satisfactory level (3.50 - 4.49), with the overall satisfaction level reaching 4.06. However, when examining each evaluation criterion, there appeared to be minimal differences among the variables, and the evaluation levels of each criterion also varied, ranging from neutral to satisfied. This indicates that some tourists still have dissatisfactory opinions regarding certain aspects of the community tourism experience at this destination.

Regarding Natural Resources: tourists felt satisfied with all measured variables regarding natural resources in Thieng Lieng island, although there were slight differences in the minimum values among the variables. For variables

NR_1, NR_2, and NR_3, the minimum value was 3.00, corresponding to a neutral evaluation, while variable NR_4 had the lowest value of 1.00, indicating dissatisfaction. This suggests that the natural resources in Thieng Lieng island are diverse and effectively utilized as tourist landscapes, but there is a lack of investment in developing tourist gardens - one of the attracting factors that have been present in neighboring community tourism models such as Tan Loc islet and Son islet.

Regarding Infrastructure: This criterion scored 3.64/5.00, corresponding to a satisfactory level but was the criterion with the lowest rating. Furthermore, there were differences in the evaluation levels and minimum values among the variables. Specifically, variables INF_1, INF_2,

and INF_3 were rated neutral, with minimum values of 1.00 and 3.00. Meanwhile, variables INF_3 and INF_4 had an average score of 4.00, corresponding to a satisfied level, and also had similar average scores. Thus, it can be observed that factors related to the essential needs of tourists in Thieng Lieng island are invested in and meet their satisfaction. Conversely, transportation infrastructure factors may be one of the reasons for reducing tourist satisfaction when participating in community tourism here.

Regarding Sightseeing Environment: all variables measuring the sightseeing environment were rated as satisfactory by tourists. The average score for this criterion was 4.27/5.00, with 3 variables having the lowest values reaching 4.00. This indicates that tourists are satisfied with the sightseeing environment on Thieng Lieng island. With a high level of satisfaction with the "sightseeing environment," organizations and individuals involved in building community tourism in Thieng Lieng island are responsible for continuing to preserve and protect the environment, landscape, and effectively exploit tourism while protecting the environment to ensure tourist satisfaction and promote sustainable tourism development.

Regarding Service Quality: Variable SERV_3 had the lowest score of 3.30/5.00, corresponding to a neutral evaluation and also had the lowest minimum value compared to other variables. Variables SERV_1 and SERV_2 were rated as satisfactory but showed significant score differences compared to variables SERV_4, SERV_5, and SERV_6, with scores reaching 3.96 and 3.70/5.00. Additionally, they had minimum values ranging from 2.00 to 3.00. Thus, the diversity of food services, entertainment, and tourist attractions has not met the satisfaction of tourists when visiting Thieng Lieng island. However, from variables SERV_4, SERV_5, and SERV_6, it can be seen that the quality of current services is relatively satisfactory to tourists, especially entertainment services - experiencing the local lifestyle prioritized and continuously improved has achieved favorable evaluations.

Regarding Residents' Attitude: The total average score reached 4.33/5.00, corresponding to satisfaction, with the lowest value being 3.00/5.00, indicating a normal level. As one of the criteria evaluating the reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy of the SERVPERF model, residents' attitude is one of the criteria that always needs improvement to maintain and increase tourist satisfaction.

Regarding Service Price: Similarly to the "Residents' Attitude" criterion, the "Service Price" factor also achieved satisfaction with a total average score of 4.33/5.00, with the lowest value from 3.00 corresponding to a neutral evaluation. Thus, overall tourists are quite satisfied with the service prices on Thieng Lieng island; however, this factor

needs to be regularly monitored and studied to develop the best pricing strategy, both to improve the income of local residents and to maintain and enhance tourist satisfaction when deciding to spend on tourism products here.

Regarding Cultural Heritage: There are two variables with the lowest values of 1.00/5.00, corresponding to very dissatisfied and neutral evaluation levels when tourists evaluate the cultural heritage factors of Thieng Lieng island. Specifically, "Valuable historical-cultural sites" and "Unique festivals and customs" are these variables. In Thieng Lieng island, there are no historical-cultural sites, and there are no special festivals with widespread organization scales. This may be one of the reasons for reducing tourist satisfaction when visiting the island. Conversely, variables such as "Local has reasonable cultural heritage preservation policies", "Local traditional professions are maintained and preserved," and "Tourists have many opportunities to learn, experience local traditional professions" achieved relatively good evaluations, with minimum values reaching 4.00, corresponding to tourist satisfaction. Improving these factors can contribute to creating a unique new community tourism experience for tourists. Local authorities and communities need to continue to maintain and improve the quality of village experience activities and the lifestyle of locals in Thieng Lieng island, while also developing and promoting traditional villages to attract and maintain tourist satisfaction.

IV. CONCLUSION AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Based on the analysis and evaluation of the research results, the author group provides recommendations to improve community tourism development in Thieng Lieng island village, thereby enhancing the visitor experience at this destination.

Upgrading transportation: This is a crucial issue as transportation plays a vital role in attracting tourists and providing convenient conditions for their exploration. Investing in transportation infrastructure such as roads and specialized vehicles for tourism will help minimize the time and cost of travel for tourists, as well as enhance safety.

Enhancing tourism products: For a community tourism destination like Thieng Lieng, utilizing local ingredients to produce tourism products is crucial. However, an increase in tourist numbers may lead to competition and a decrease in the ability to meet their demands. Therefore, expanding tourism products through cultivation and innovation not only helps sustain the supply but also provides tourists with new and unique experiences.

Expanding transportation and accommodation facilities: This is particularly important to ensure that all tourists, including middle-aged and elderly individuals, have the opportunity to explore and stay comfortably. Developing additional means of transportation such as electric vehicles and expanding accommodation facilities will cater to the diverse needs of tourists.

Expanding nighttime activities: This is an effective way to diversify and attract tourists. Activities such as traditional music performances, camping, and night markets can create fresh and unique experiences for tourists while extending their length of stay.

Building rest stops: This helps alleviate fatigue for tourists traveling under harsh weather conditions and provides convenient conditions for them to explore and experience community tourism models.

Promoting souvenir production and eco-tourism: This not only generates new income sources for the local community but also contributes to environmental protection and the preservation of traditional culture.

Organizing festivals and events: This helps stimulate curiosity and attract tourists, as well as preserve and develop local culture and traditional salt-making professions.

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