Sustainable Tourism Development: A Case Study of Southern Red River Delta, Vietnam

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Abstract Tourism development in general and sustainable tourism development in particular play an important role in promoting socio-economic development in most countries. This empirical study is conducted according to qualitative methods to study influencing factors such as environment, society, and economy that affect the sustainable tourism development of the South Red River Delta. The author has collected the opinions of experts, surveyed tourists, people, tourism businesses to present the scale of the above factors. On the basis of this research, future researchers can apply this method to research by quantitative methods to verify the reliability of the scale and check whether the above three factors and the variables. Whether the survey is included in each factor or there are other latent factors as well as testing the reliability of the research model. By identifying the factors, the author will expand the scope of the study further and will try to propose possible solutions that can ensure proper use of each factor to remove obstacles in the South Delta. Red River becomes a sustainable tourism destination.

Keywords: sustainable tourism development, southern red river delta, economic development

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1. Introduction

Tourism is a combination and interaction of four groups of factors in the process of serving tourists, including: visitors, service providers, residents and main the right to welcome tourists (Michael Coltman). Today, with the economic development and deep integration, tourism has always been evaluated as an economic sector with potential financial, revenue, profitability and other social issues. In tourism, many in-depth studies on tourism development have been carried out by researchers and managers so this brings contributions to the industry. Therefore, tourism activities and organizations always get attention and interest in researchers, experts, managers and even people who love to travel, research and learn [8].

In the economic development strategy of Southern Red River Delta, tourism has an important role in the local economic development in particular, the whole province in general. Tourism development is one of the solutions to increase income, improve people's lives, and increase budget revenues. Southern Red River Delta have an area of about 4,600 km2 and a population of 4.6 million people. There are 5 biodiversity areas with values Outstanding global biodiversity, they impact on the lives of mankind and recognized as the world's first Biosphere Reserve in Red River Delta of Vietnam under the Convention on Wetlands Convention (RAMSAR) by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) since 2004. Those have diverse types of terrain: low-lying plains, coastal plains, hilly and semi-mountainous areas. The coast is 142 km long so southern Red River Delta has a lot of tourism values with a variety of natural landscapes (beaches, historical sites, unique landscapes). Therefore, this is a destination that attracts the attention of domestic and foreign tourists. In recent years, these provinces have initially promoted the advantages of tourism development and achieved remarkable results. In 2018, southern Red River Delta welcomed 9.9 million visitors (900,000 international visitors), their tourism brought about 4,486 billion VND (approximately 204 billion USD) and created thousands of jobs.
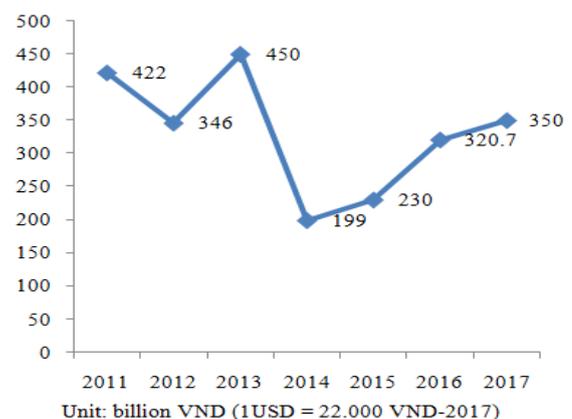

Figure 1. Total investment capital in southern Red River Delta for the period 2011-2017 (Source: Vietnam Development Indicators)

Growth of tourism in Southern Red River Delta: in the 2005 - 2018 period the average GRDP growth rate is approximately 8%; of which agriculture - forestry – fishery is 3%; industry - construction sector increased 12%; service growth is approximately 8%. The tourism growth rate is high and continuous, 18.78%, much higher than the GRDP growth rate in general and the service industry growth rate. In particular, tourism has affirmed the importance of local economic development.

Tourists (both domestic and international) traveled to Southern Red River Delta allocated expenditure as follows: the majority of spending on the two services is food and accommodation. Therefore, the contribution of these two services is largest in the structure of tourism (accounting for about 50% of total revenue). Meanwhile, the structure of revenue from shopping and entertainment services accounts for a small proportion but showed signs of increasing in recent years.

Table 1. Internal Tourism Structure of Southern Red River Delta (Unit: %)

Structure	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Accommodation	20,39	19,72	19,67	19,73	18,5	18,43	18,58	19,23	19,56
Food	33,35	33,34	29,96	33,23	32,16	30,85	29,26	30,08	30,56
Travel, transportation	14,34	11,43	11,27	12,21	15,13	15,92	17,07	17,22	17,45
Shopping and entertainment	15,28	15,91	17,09	16,1	16,9	19,24	20,035	20,11	20,15
Other services	16,64	19,6	22,01	18,73	17,31	15,56	15,055	13,36	12,28

Source: Vietnam Development Indicators.

Tourism in the Red River Delta can make a greater contribution to local economic development. Currently, tourism in Southern Red River Delta contributes to the budget and creates jobs for workers not commensurate with the potential; polluted environment. The heritage values have not been brought into play, the heritage is compromised, lack of sustainable development, and the resources for conservation are still low. (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2020).

The question is how to promote the potentials and advantages of tourism in Southern Red River Delta before the requirement of extensive international economic integration, strong competition from other regions in our country and countries in the region. Tourism development must be associated with a sustainable direction in order to help economic development, ensure social problems, preserve heritages, protect natural resources, protect the living environment for the whole region and improve benefits the community. (Provincial tourism department, 2019)

Thus, with this in mind, the author focused on the tourist's perceptions; of tourism managers, tourism businesses, and local people in southern Red River Delta and also tried to assess factors influencing the development of southern Red River Delta as a global sustainable tourism destination. This paper will facilitate the path of making the southern Red River Delta a sustainable tourism destination through identifying crucial variables that may have significant impact on the sustainable tourism sector of Southern Red River Delta.

2. Objectives

The research objectives of this study are:

1. Identifying and analyzing factors influencing sustainable tourism development of Southern Red River Delta (Vietnam).

2. To suggest recommendations for the development of key sustainable tourism development in Southern Red River Delta (Vietnam).

3. Methodology

3.1. Scope of the Study

This research paper will try to cover surveys of tourist, state management agencies, tourism business units and local population. The scope of the information will be limited within the opinions of its respondents.

3.2. Research Method

In the first stage, the author revised the main elements towards developing the sustainable tourism. After studying, the author presented the 7 factors affecting to the sustainable tourism such as Environment, Development Policy; Support Services; Human resources; Association and cooperation; Customer and local people satisfaction; Tourism Promotion; Other factors (Impacts of climate change and disaster risks, Industrial Revolution 4.0...). These 7 factors were regarded as stable factors to support the sustainable development for local tourism.

In the second stage, the author delivered a list of observed questions for the 7 mentioned factors and collected the experts' opinions to choose the questions for these factors properly with Southern Red River Delta (Vietnam) environment. After that, the author will synthesize to give out the observed variables for factors contributing to measure the sustainable tourism development for Southern Red River Delta (Vietnam).

3.3. Research Design

Consistent with the research purposes of this study, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted among the target population. The survey was conducted on 670 respondents, including: 142 votes for managers, 193 votes from businesses, 190 votes from tourists and 145 votes from local residents.

3.4. Data Collection & Analysis

This research is done on the basis of descriptive method of research. The term descriptive research refers to the

type of research question, design, and data analysis along with descriptive statistics, while inferential statistics try to determine cause, solution and effect. The respondents were asked to fill questionnaire and rate the importance of the items based on five-point Likert scale. The selection of the sampling units was left primarily to the interviewer.

Primary data were being collected through the questionnaire that has been prepared for collecting the responses. With this data, the authors would run index analysis to find out the mean value of each variable and thus, to determine the positive and negative impact of each of them to consider sustainable tourism in southern Red River Delta. The author will also conduct a factor analysis to classify the variables into factors that describe the decisive groups of variables to establish southern Red River Delta as a sustainable tourism destination.

Secondary information has been collected from annual reports, website of ministry of Vietnam, publications of world trade organizations, different research papers and survey of the author.

3.5. Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Background

Three demographic variables in were being given in the questionnaire to find out different demographic features; such as- age, gender, occupation of the survey respondents. The following tables show the categorization the respondents on their gender, age, occupation.

Table 2. Occupation of the Respondents

Categories	No. of respondents
Work in a tourism management agency	142
Tourism Businesses	193
Tourists	190
Local residents	145

Table 3. Gender of the Respondents

Gender	No. Of respondents
Male	369
Female	301

Table 4. Age of the Respondents

Age classes	No. of respondents
Under 18	35
18-30	208
31-45	224
46-60	118
Over 60	85

4. Theoretical Basis and Proposed Research Model

4.1 Theoretical Basis

The strong development of the world economy in general and the strong boom in tourism in particular have gradually appeared negative impacts on the long-term socio-economic development of the countries. Sustainability is studied broadly in all sectors of the economy. The concept of sustainable development was mentioned in the 80's of the last century, it was not until the early 1990s that the concept of sustainable tourism studied, when the negative impacts on the environment is becoming more and more obvious. There are many criteria to evaluate sustainable tourism from studies.

Bhuiyan et al. (2012) [3], sustainable tourism development combines ecotourism, tourist destination and regional development in an area. The evaluation criteria include economy, environment and society.
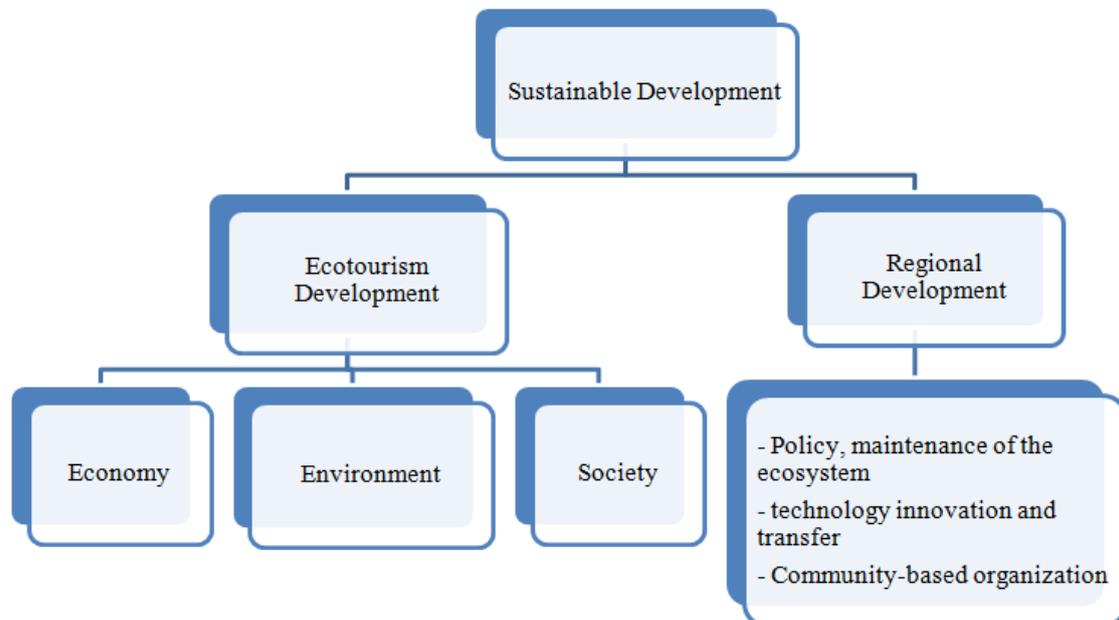

Figure 2. Combining sustainable tourism development

Pamela A. Wight (1997) [13] researched groups of economic, social and environmental indicators at equal levels, including: Community economy; Reasonable preservation; Economic integration with the environment.
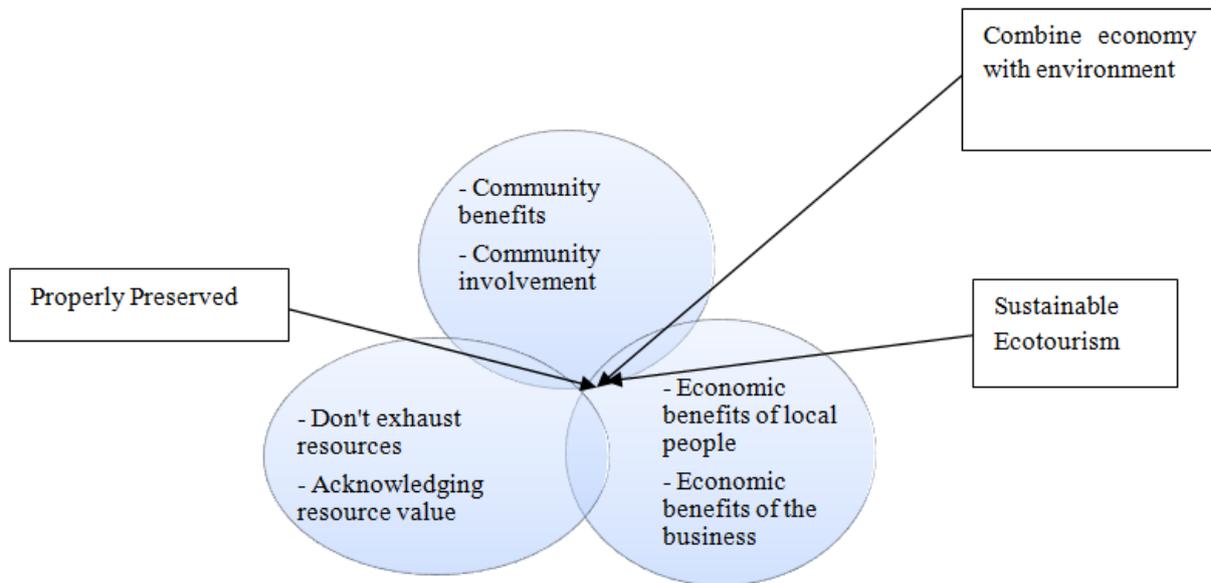
Figure 3. Model of principles for sustainable tourism development Pamela (1997)

In the study of Nusrat Jahan et al. (2016) [12] conducted a study assessing Bangladesh's potential to become one of the world's major sustainable tourism destinations. Bangladesh - a land of unique natural beauties like the Sundarbans, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Hill tracts - is a country that sits at the top of the Bay of Bengal and shares borders with India and Myanmar. The main focus of this paper will be to show the impact of different tourism sector variables on the development of Bangladesh as a sustainable tourism destination. By identifying the factors, the authors will then broaden the scope of the study even further and will try to propose possible solutions that can ensure a fair use of each factor to eliminate those obstacles on the way to making Bangladesh a sustainable tourism destination. According to the study done, more than half of the respondents said that Bangladesh has a lot of potential to become one of the major sustainable tourism destinations in the world. Clearly there are many ways for improvement to achieve greater success in building Bangladesh into a sustainable tourism destination and promoting sustainable Bangladesh tourism to attract more and more nature-loving tourists. . In this study, the authors tried to find the key factors that influence sustainable tourism growth in Bangladesh. These variables must be further analyzed and enriched to find ways to establish Bangladesh as a major sustainable tourism destination.

In the study by Selemon Thomas Fakana et al. (2019) [16] on tourism development at Gambella People's National Regional State, South West Ethiopia pointed out that: constraints such as poor infrastructure development, human resources inadequate training, lack of local tour guide associations, lack of linkage with tour operators, lack of information centers, poor promotion of tourist destinations, and not enough people to allocate accommodation are mainly unresolved factors hindering the development of the tourism industry. Requires contribution, integration, cooperation, association, commitment to play an important role of many stakeholders to ensure sustainable development of the tourism industry in the region. Therefore, the first activity

to enrich the development of the tourism industry is to improve infrastructure (roads, shipper accommodation, campsites, water facilities, internet cafes, telecommunications, banking and electrical services) to tourist destinations with input from a wide range of stakeholders. Through empirical evidence, Selemon Thomas Fakana et al. Also argued that proper infrastructure investments in Ethiopia need to be invested in an environmentally friendly development starting from the town of Gambella to the destinations. major travel destinations with integration of multiple stakeholders.

• Potential advertising and marketing strategies are being developed and implemented.

• Recruit specialized human resources and strengthen cooperation, integration and commitment of all stakeholders involved

• Local tourist guide information centers and associations held at regional and local levels at different levels

According to Vuong Khanh Tuan et al. (2019) [18] analyzed the factors affecting sustainable tourism towards Vietnam in the new era. This empirical research is conducted according to qualitative methods to study influencing factors such as the environment, society, and economy that affect the sustainable tourism development of Vietnam in the new period. The author has collected the opinions of experts to discuss and present the scale to measure the above factors. On the basis of this research, future researchers can apply this method to research by quantitative methods to verify the reliability of the scale and check whether the above 3 factors and the variables. Whether the survey is lumped into each factor or there are other potential factors as well as testing reliability. of the research model. In addition, the author suggested policy makers, leaders of ministries, departments, culture, sports and tourism to apply this research to plan and implement tourism development policies in Vietnam. in the context of international integration as well as meeting the needs of tourists coming to Vietnam. The author suggests when planning a tourism business development strategy to have a long-term vision towards tourism and its benefits and

consequences. In addition, it is necessary to develop tourism in a professional and sustainable direction by protecting cultural beauty, tourist attractions, and researching reasonable prices for tourists.

4.2. Proposed Research Model

4.2.1. Reliability of Data

The reliability of data was verified using both Alpha and Split Half Technique. The data was found to be achieving 0.77 Cronbach's Alpha value. A Cronbach's Alpha of a study (0.70) is considered to be reliable.

Environment, Development Policy: 08 variables observed

Support Services: 08 variables observed

Human resources: 08 variables observed

Association and cooperation: 05 variables observed

Customer and local people satisfaction: 04 variables observed

Tourism promotion: 07 variables observed
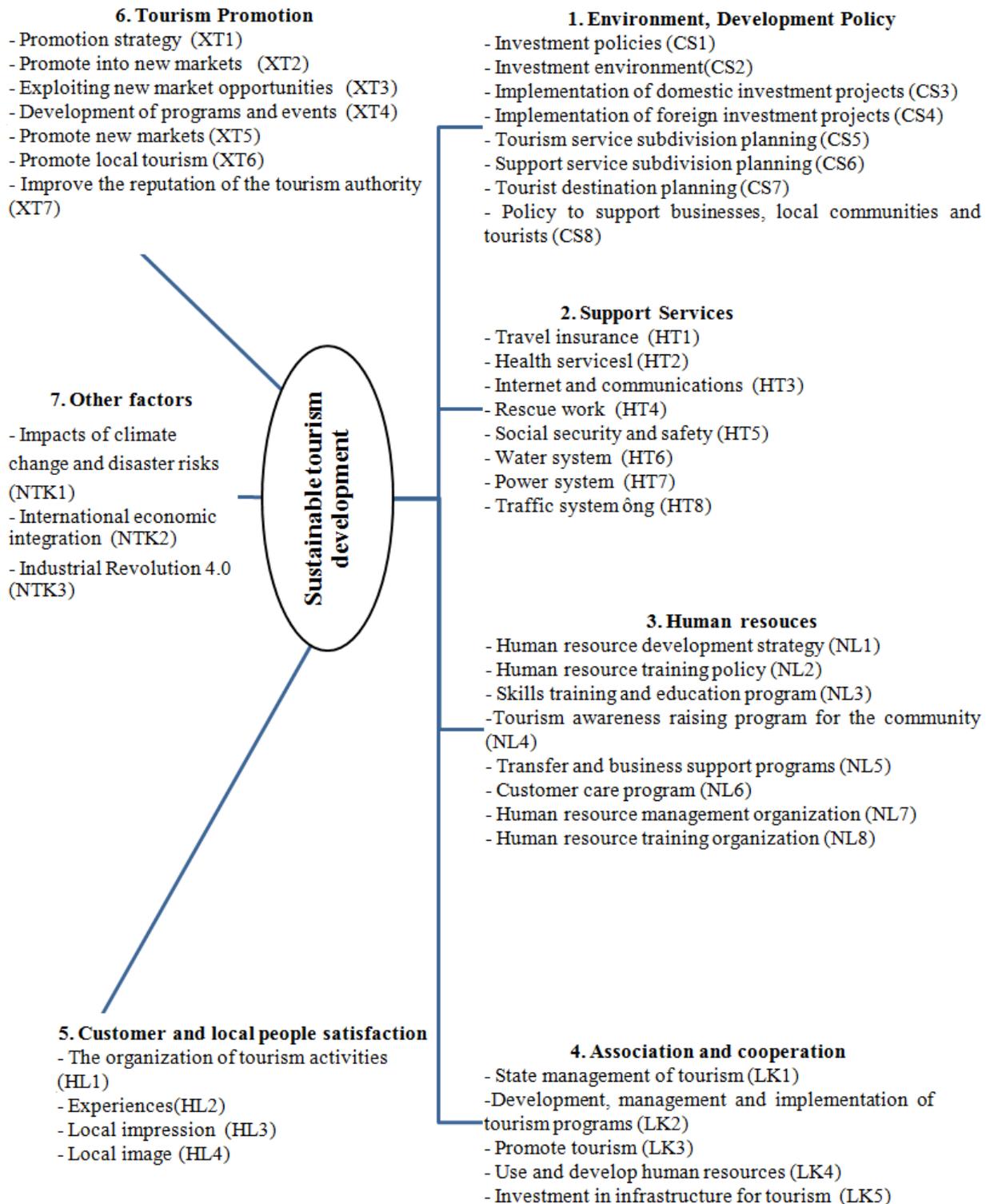
Other factors: 03 variables observed

6. Tourism Promotion
- Promotion strategy (XT1)
- Promote into new markets (XT2)
- Exploiting new market opportunities (XT3)
- Development of programs and events (XT4)
- Promote new markets (XT5)
- Promote local tourism (XT6)
- Improve the reputation of the tourism authority (XT7)

7. Other factors
- Impacts of climate change and disaster risks (NTK1)
- International economic integration (NTK2)
- Industrial Revolution 4.0 (NTK3)

1. Environment, Development Policy
- Investment policies (CS1)
- Investment environment(CS2)
- Implementation of domestic investment projects (CS3)
- Implementation of foreign investment projects (CS4)
- Tourism service subdivision planning (CS5)
- Support service subdivision planning (CS6)
- Tourist destination planning (CS7)
- Policy to support businesses, local communities and tourists (CS8)

2. Support Services
- Travel insurance (HT1)
- Health servicesl (HT2)
- Internet and communications (HT3)
- Rescue work (HT4)
- Social security and safety (HT5)
- Water system (HT6)
- Power system (HT7)
- Traffic system ông (HT8)

3. Human resouces
- Human resource development strategy (NL1)
- Human resource training policy (NL2)
- Skills training and education program (NL3)
- Tourism awareness raising program for the community (NL4)
- Transfer and business support programs (NL5)
- Customer care program (NL6)
- Human resource management organization (NL7)
- Human resource training organization (NL8)

5. Customer and local people satisfaction
- The organization of tourism activities (HL1)
- Experiences(HL2)
- Local impression (HL3)
- Local image (HL4)

4. Association and cooperation
- State management of tourism (LK1)
- Development, management and implementation of tourism programs (LK2)
- Promote tourism (LK3)
- Use and develop human resources (LK4)
- Investment in infrastructure for tourism (LK5)

Sustainable tourism development

Figure 4. Propose model of factors affecting sustainable tourism development

Table 5. Test results Cronbach's Alpha of Factors Affecting Sustainable Tourism Development

Factors	Total variable correlation coefficient	Cronbach's Alpha coefficients
1.Environment, Development Policy (CS) *Cronbach's Alpha = 0,933*		
- Investment policies CS1	0.753	0.925
- Investment environment CS2	0.768	0.924
- Implementation of domestic investment projects CS3	0.781	0.923
- Implementation of foreign investment projects CS4	0.761	0.925
- Tourism service subdivision planning CS5	0.767	0.924
- Support service subdivision planning CS6	0.725	0.927
- Tourist destination planning CS7	0.812	0.921
- Policy to support businesses, local communities and tourists CS8	0.785	0.923
2. Support Services (HT) *Cronbach's Alpha = 0,873*		
- Travel insurance HT1	0.570	0.864
- Health services l HT2	0.458	0.881
- Internet and communications HT3	0.631	0.858
- Rescue work HT4	0.710	0.849
- Social security and safety HT5	0.714	0.849
- Water system HT6	0.614	0.860
- Power system HT7	0.690	0.852
- Traffic system HT8	0.719	0.849
3.Human resources (NL)*Cronbach's Alpha = 0,925*		
- Human resource development strategy NL1	0.730	0.916
- Human resource training policy NL2	0.758	0.914
- Skills training and education program NL3	0.756	0.914
- Tourism awareness raising program for the community NL4	0.708	0.918
- Transfer and business support programs NL5	0.745	0.915
- Customer care program NL6	0.735	0.916
- Human resource management organization NL7	0.771	0.913
- Human resource training organization NL8	0.765	0.913
4.Association and cooperation (LK) *Cronbach's Alpha = 0,902*		
- State management of tourism LK1	0.667	0.899
-Development, management and implementation of tourism programs LK2	0.723	0.888
- Promote tourism LK3	0.790	0.874
- Use and develop human resources LK4	0.826	0.865
-Investment in infrastructure for tourism LK5	0.780	0.876
5. Customer and local people satisfaction (HL) *Cronbach's Alpha = 0,874*		
- The organization of tourism activitiesHL1	0.655	0.866
- ExperiencesHL2	0.765	0.824
- Local impression HL3	0.713	0.846
- Local imageHL4	0.798	0.813
6. Tourism promotion (XT) *Cronbach's Alpha = 0,94*		
- Promotion strategy XT1	0.739	0.936
- Promote into new markets XT2	0.773	0.933
- Exploiting new market opportunities XT3	0.824	0.928
- Development of programs and events XT4	0.840	0.927
- Promote new markets XT5	0.833	0.928
-Promote local tourism XT6	0.824	0.928
- Improve the reputation of the tourism authority XT7	0.778	0.932
7. Other factors (NTK) *Cronbach's Alpha = 0,795*		
- Impacts of climate change and disaster risks NTK1	0.746	0.600
- International economic integration NTK2	0.733	0.613
- Industrial Revolution 4.0 NTK3	0.466	0.881

Conducted factor analysis to discover EFA 2 times, from the results of the rotation matrix, variable HT1, variable HT2, variable NTK3 type away due to the variable load factor less than 0.5, so this variable does not load in the kernel Which factor. (Table 5).

Test the appropriateness of the model: The appropriate coefficient of the factor in the model (KMO) = 0.925> 0.5. Significance level (Sig.) = 0.00 (Data suitable for performing factor analysis).

Bartlett's significance test on correlation of observed variables: Significance level (Sig.) = 0.00 <0.05 (The observed variables are correlated with each other on the whole).

The specific value (Eigenvalue) = 1,053> 1 and extracted 7 factors with the best summary meanings. Suitable for performing factor analysis.

Test of cumulative variance = 71,541%. There is 71,541% variation of data which is explained by 07 factors (Table 5):

Environment, Development Policy: 08 variables observed
Support Services: 06 variables observed
Human resources: 08 variables observed
Association and cooperation: 05 variables observed
Customer and local people satisfaction: 04 variables observed
Tourism promotion: 07 variables observed
Other factors: 02 variables observed

Table 6. Factor Analysis Results

Rotated Component Matrix

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NL1	.827						
NL8	.791						
NL2	.775						
NL7	.771						
NL3	.689						
NL5	.668						
NL4	.635						
NL6	.632						
CS3		.832					
CS7		.814					
CS5		.805					
CS2		.805					
CS4		.804					
CS1		.795					
CS8		.776					
CS6		.762					
XT4			.790				
XT7			.756				
XT6			.748				
XT5			.734				
XT3			.718				
XT1			.635				
XT2			.624				
HT8				.806			
HT5				.804			
HT7				.800			
HT6				.758			
HT4				.664			
HT3				.592			
HL4					.893		
HL2					.863		
HL3					.821		
HL1					.810		
LK1						.685	
LK4						.632	
LK2						.621	
LK3						.606	
LK5						.597	
NTK1							.811
NTK2							.790

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Source: Analyzed by the author.

4.2.2. Findings from Factor Analysis

The first analysis with 7 observed variables CS, HT, NL, LK, HL, XT, NTK, the results showed that Sig tested the regression coefficient of the independent variables HL and NTK greater than 0.05. So, this independent variable has no explanation for the dependent variable, which is excluded from the model. The second analysis with 5 observed variables CS, HT, NL, LK, XT, the analytical results are shown in the Table 4.

The adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.6 ($R^2 = 0.6$), showing that the model's compatibility with 5 observed variables is quite large and 60% of sustainable tourism development is explained by the independent variable.

The statistic value F = 91,587, the significance level = 0.000 shows that the used model is appropriate and the 5 variables all meet the acceptance standard (Tolerance> 0.0001).

The coefficient Durbin - Watson = 2.143 is in the range of 1 to 3, so there is no first order series autocorrelation. Sig tested the regression coefficient of 5 independent variables are all less than 0.05, so 5 independent variables are significant to explain for the dependent variable.

Table 7. Results of Model Research

Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
.60	.31434	2.143

Model	Coefficient of Standard	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
CS	0.110	2.734	0.007	0.784	1.275
HT	0.292	6.733	0.000	0.676	1.479
NL	0.293	5.451	0.000	0.439	2.276
XT	0.141	2.383	0.018	0.362	2.760
LK	0.130	2.285	0.023	0.393	2.545

Source: Analyzed by the author.

The VIF coefficients of the independent variables are all less than 3, so no multicollinearity occurs. Regression analysis results have reflected the impact of 5 independent variables on sustainable tourism development in the south of the Red River Delta.

Mean value = 5.03E-16 is close to 0, standard deviation of 0.992 is close to 1 (appendix 5), so it can be said that the residual distribution is approximately standard. Therefore, it can be concluded that: The normal distribution assumption of the remainder is not violated.

The percentile points in the distribution of the remainder are concentrated into a diagonal (Appendix 5), thus assuming the normal distribution of the remainder is not violated.

The distribution normalized remainder is concentrated around the zero line (annex 5), so the assumption of linear relations is not violated

Sustainable tourism development has a linear relationship with the following factors: Environment and Development Policy; Support Services; Human Resources, Association and Cooperation; Tourism Promotion. The standardized beta coefficients are > 0, showing that the independent variables positively affect tourism development in a sustainable direction. 5 factors have been found from the factor analysis of the data collected by the survey. Among those 5 factors, top 2 factors can be announced as the most important factors that influence the future potential of southern Red River Delta as a Major sustainable tourism destination. Those 3 factors explain 58.5% of the variance and they are- Human resources (29.2%) and Support Services (29.3%). According to the findings from factor

analysis, in order to develop southern Red River Delta as a sustainable tourism destination, the policymakers have to undertake strategies: human resources need to standardize qualifications, professions and skills, especially the tour guide team. At the same time, the infrastructure - technical infrastructure must invest in improving the quality to attract and satisfy tourists.

5. Conclusion and Some Recommendations

After reviewing materials relating to the sustainable tourism, the author used the qualitative approach through questionnaires for experts, tourism businesses, tourists and local residents about the factors affecting to the sustainable tourism as well as the observed variables in Southern Red River Delta. Tendency to develop the sustainable tourism in Southern Red River Delta is to propose suitable solutions in developing the tourism industry without damaging the environment, local culture that affects to the next generation. The author synthesized and brought out 7 main factors affecting to the sustainable tourism. The author also recommended to policy makers, universities, traveling companies to have references of this paper as well as apply the measuring variables to plan the strategy for developing the local tourism. The author proposed that when planning the strategy to develop the tourism business, there needs to be long-term vision towards sustainability. Besides, it is necessary to develop tourism professionally and sustainably by protecting the cultural beauty, tourist attractions, studying a reasonable price for tourists.

Authorities in South Red River Delta need a reasonable mechanism to recruit and compensate highly skilled human resources. Tourism businesses must regularly train and retrain human resources to meet the needs of development and integration.

Authorities in South Red River Delta need to increase investment in tourism infrastructure. Appropriate infrastructure needs to be developed in an environmentally friendly way starting from the southern center of the Red River Delta connecting to major tourist destinations.

Tourism development perspective meets the requirements of sustainable development, in accordance with the tourism development planning of each province and the planning of relevant branches in the area; ensuring the preservation and promotion of the national cultural values; increasing tourist attraction and association in tourism development; promote the socialization of investment in activities and forms of tourism in a key direction, effectively and sustainably.

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