


Article

Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in An Giang Province, Vietnam

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Abstract: This study aims at sustainably developing rural tourism in An Giang Province, an agricultural province located in the South of Vietnam, by identifying the determinants of the satisfaction and revisit intention of tourists based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. From exploratory interviews with experts and comprehensive group discussions, we developed a questionnaire for an official survey of 507 tourists at different tour-sites in An Giang Province. It is found that: (1) there are seven key factors affecting the satisfaction of the tourists, including: spirituality, tourism safety and security, people, food and beverage, natural environment, service prices and tourism infrastructure; and (2) revisit intention of tourists is affected by six factors, including: satisfaction, spirituality, tourism safety and security, people, food and beverage and service prices. Among them, spirituality is a new factor to be thoughtfully considered due to its significant influence on both the tourist satisfaction and revisit intention. From these findings, we proposed some managerial implications for the sustainable development of rural tourism in An Giang Province by enhancing the satisfaction and revisit intention of the tourists after they visit the province.

Keywords: rural tourism; agricultural tourism; tourist satisfaction; revisit intention; An Giang

1. Introduction

Nowadays, tourism is considered as one of the key economic sectors in creating jobs, increasing the receipt of foreign currency, improving the living standards of local people, supporting the growth of other industries [1,2], as well as the renovation process and international integration of Vietnam in the current context [3,4]. Tourism is defined as “the sum of the phenomena and relationships resulting from travel and stay of non-residents” [5]. It is highly appreciated with the name of “smokeless industry” and prioritized as a crucial economic driving force [2]; and it is also called the “green economy” [6]. Everett and Aitchison [7] and Demirović et al. [8] found a strong relationship between tourism and the local life, culture and heritage, while Petrović et al. [9] discovered that tourism is closely related to natural attractions. As a consequence, tourism can improve the national identity [6] and bring huge benefits to society [10].

Rural tourism is defined as a type of tourism that relates to all activities occurring outside municipal areas and encompasses the natural and cultural heritage of rural regions [11]. Several researches have well emphasized its important role in contributing to the development of local territories [12]. According to Sanagustin-Fons et al. [13], good conservations of natural and cultural resources, environment-integrated lodging, local products, foods, traditions and other local services are the keys for the development of rural tourism products and activities.

Among various tourism types available in Vietnam, rural tourism takes the largest proportion because Vietnam has an attractive natural environment, various cultural characteristics and local vestiges [14]. Among the 63 provinces in Vietnam, An Giang is an agricultural one, located between the Tien and Hau rivers in the west of the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, as shown in Figure 1. Specifically, An Giang shares a 100-km border with Cambodia in the northwest, borders with Dong Thap Province in the east, Can Tho City in the southeast and Kien Giang Province in the southwest. According to its official portal, An Giang has two main topography types, including midland areas and seven low mountains in Tinh Bien and Tri Ton districts. Regarding the climate aspect, An Giang has only two seasons in a year; specifically, its rainy season falls from May–November, and the rest is its sunny season. The annual average temperature is about 27 °C with the highest temperature of about 38 °C recorded in April–May and the lowest temperature of about 20 °C recorded in December and January. Its annual rainfall is 1400–1500 mm. These natural characteristics provide special conditions to produce agricultural products such as rice and corn and aquatic products such as basa fish, shrimp, cuttle fish, etc. An Giang is also famous for its traditional handicrafts, such as Tan Chau silk and the woven fabrics of the Cham ethnic group. Moreover, it is rich in natural resources and attractive tourism sites for the development of its rural tourism. It has many special cultural characteristics of different ethnic peoples such as the Kinh, Khmer, Cham and Chinese [15]. Besides, it has several age-old historic monuments worth exploring and some famous geographical names such as That Son mountainous region with its primeval beauty, Ba Chua Xu Temple in Chau Doc City, Oc Eo vestige in Thoai Son District, etc. Additionally, An Giang is also famous for its annual cultural activities, for example Ba Chua Xu Festival, Chol Chnam Thomay Festival, Dolta Festival and the Bay Nui Ox Racing Festival. Among them, Ba Chua Xu Festival held at Ba Chua Xu Temple is the most attractive one because the Temple not only has a long and miraculous history but also gains the public trust in having good blessedness and lucks from a hallowed Goddess named “Holy Mother of the Realm”. An annual three-day festival in her honour is held on 23rd–25th of every lunar April and usually magnetize hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and loyal followers. After visiting the Temple, tourists usually visit Thoai Ngoc Hau Royal Tomb nearby to memorize his special merit towards the local people. Besides the Temple and the Royal Tomb, An Giang has many appealing religious destinations, such as Tay An Old Temple, Van Linh Temple, Huynh Dao Temple, Phuoc Dien Temple, Ta Pa Temple, Phuoc Thanh Temple, Ba Chua Xu Bau Muop Shrine, etc. Consequently, An Giang has special advantages in developing its rural tourism.

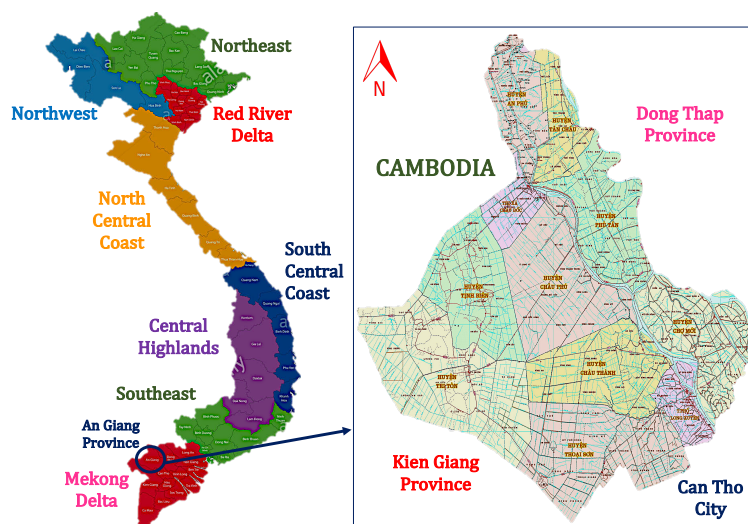


Figure 1. The location and map of An Giang Province, Vietnam.

There were more than eight million tourists visiting An Giang in 2017. However, the number of long-stay tourists and those using the local tourist services are quite limited, though the annual

festival of Ba Chua Xu in Sam Mountain has been well-known for decades. Over the years, the number of tourists visiting An Giang varies significantly among seasons; i.e., there are too many tourists on special occasions, while there are only a few in other times of the year. Therefore, having more tourists in An Giang in low seasons is very important. Moreover, as repeat visitors tend to have longer stays [16,17], it is always desired to make every tourist satisfied and revisit An Giang as many times as possible. Thus, this paper aims at identifying the determinants of the satisfaction and especially revisit intention of the tourists so that we can have proper policies and solutions for the sustainable development of An Giang's rural tourism.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly presents the literature reviews about sustainable development, customer satisfaction, revisit intention and our proposed research model, while the research method used in this study is presented in Section 3. Section 4 demonstrates the empirical results, which are critical for our discussion, and managerial implications are developed in the last section.

2. Literature Reviews

2.1. Sustainable Development

With a long history dating back to the late 1980s, the term “sustainable development” is defined as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [18]. In the tourism industry, Muller [19] considered sustainability in terms of: (i) economic health; (ii) cultural health; (iii) local people's welfare; (iv) protection of natural resources; and (v) visitor's satisfaction. Meanwhile, the term “sustainability” is referred to as “a condition of tourism based on the principles of sustainable development, taking full account of its current and future economic, social, and environment impacts” [20]. There are currently more than 200 different definitions existing in the literature [21,22]. However, generally, sustainable development consists of three key development areas including: (1) economy; (2) sociocultural; and (3) environment; and it has two levels: (1) planning and management to achieve key objectives; and (2) particular actions and critical measures of the objectives [1]. A good balance among the three areas determines the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry [20]. Several research works identified direct impacts of sustainability on the competitiveness of the industry [23,24]. In addition, sustainability is an important variable to be integrated into the business strategies of related parties in the tourism industry [25]. As such, sustainable development has been an interesting research topic, attracting the special attention of numerous scholars worldwide in the tourism industry well.

2.2. Customer Satisfaction

Over the past few decades, customer satisfaction has received great academic attention with extensive research works conducted in this field because it influences future and repeat purchase by word-of-mouth communication and complaint behavior [26]. Recently, more and more organizations have well recognized the importance of customer satisfaction in their survival and growth because there is a strong relationship between customer satisfaction, customer retention and organizational profitability [27–29]. Thus, many organizations have set customer satisfaction as the key goal in their business operation.

There are several definitions of customer satisfaction. For example, Johnson et al. [30] defined it as the customers' evaluation of the difference between their expectation prior to using and their actual perception after using a product/service. In fact, customers usually have certain expectations before using a product/service; and if it meets their expectations, they are satisfied with it. On the other hand, Um et al. [31] defined it as a post-consumption emotion experienced after purchase. Basically, their satisfaction level significantly depends on how much difference exists between their expectation and their perception [32,33]. Oliver [34] defined customer satisfaction as the consumer's fulfillment

response, while Hill and Alexander [35] defined it as a measure of how an organization's total product performs in relation to a set of customer requirements.

In the tourism industry, tourist satisfaction is the emotional comparison of practical experience against the anticipation of a tourism destination [36–38]. Chen and Tsai [39] defined tourist's satisfaction in a trip as a measure of the overall enjoyment or contentment perceived from the actual experience in the fulfillment of the tourist's desires, anticipations and needs. The satisfaction level is usually measured with multilinear structural models, which consider the perception of tourists towards entertainment programs, professional service quality and adventurous experiences during the trips [40]. Whisman and Hollenhorst [41] claimed that satisfaction can be measured through the quality of offered services, ecological conditions, natural landscapes and secure facilities available at destinations. Once these conditions are satisfied, tourists tend to have a positive attitude and perception of the leisure episode and quality of the tourism destination as there is a positive relationship between the perceived quality of a destination and the tourist satisfaction [31,42–44].

2.3. Revisit Intention

Consumer intention is defined as the behavior by which consumers search, use and evaluate their expected products/services to fulfill their individual needs [45]. According to Schiffman and Kanuk [46], consumer behavior is a dynamic interplay of factors that affect cognitive, behavioral and environmental outcomes, through which human behavioral intentions change their lives. Kotler [47] claimed that the customer's buying process is influenced by several factors such as culture, social, personality and psychology.

In the tourism industry, the revisit intention can closely refer to the concept of intentional behavior, which normally exists before the actual behavior occurs; thus, intention is considered as the premise of behavior [48]. Hence, when visitors have a positive attitude towards a destination, they will choose that destination for their next vacation. The positive attitude depends on the satisfaction level in terms of destination image [39,40]; environment, famous places, travel costs, climate [49]; territories, personal services and human factors [50], etc. Besides, Prideaux [51] and Leanza et al. [52] pointed out that cultural heritage is a destination attraction's uniqueness, which is extremely important in the tourism industry [53,54]; therefore, it plays vital roles in attracting visitors and affecting their revisit intention [55]. In addition, the interpretation of heritage is critical to stimulate visitors to enjoy new knowledge and positive attitudes towards the heritage [52,54]; thus, it is also a significant element affecting the intention [56]. Clearly understanding the determinants of the revisit intention helps us to have effective tourism marketing and management strategies [17,57,58].

2.4. Related Studies

In the case of tourism in Ho Chi Minh City, Khuong and Nguyen [3] pointed out that visitor satisfaction is positively affected by several factors, including: food and beverage, price, safety and security, infrastructure, natural environments, leisure activities and entertainment and the destination image; however, it is negatively affected by the cultural/historical sites and adverse social behaviors. Meanwhile, the revisit intention of a tourist is positively affected by cultural/historical sites, food prices, safety and security, infrastructure, natural environment, amusement and entertainment activities, destination image and their satisfaction; and negatively affected by adverse social behaviors. Many other research works in the field of tourism have also identified similar factors; for instance, tourist's satisfaction is affected by: quality of transportation services [59], destination image [4,59,60], tourism infrastructure, service prices, natural and cultural environments [4], leisure and entertainment, relationships with tourists, social relations, the prestige of the destination [61], perceived value, novelty, distance to the destination [60], etc.

Several research works have also found that the above factors also significantly affect the revisit intention of a tourist. Especially, the satisfaction of a tourist has a strong and positive impact on his/her revisit intention. Díaz and Rodríguez [23] identified a positive relationship between the long-term

performance of a tourism destination and its sustainability factors including: key resources and supply chain, security, alternative leisure and governance.

2.5. Proposed Model

From the above literature reviews and especially the findings by Puad and Badarneh [60], Khuong and Nguyen [3], Loi et al. [59], Som et al. [61] and Ngoc and Trinh [4], we developed a list of key factors to be considered in group discussions and expert interviews. The listed factors appeared appropriate and supported for our further study. However, through such qualitative discussions and interviews, we found a new factor named “spirituality” to be included in our research model because An Giang is very famous for its sacred and beautiful temple system which includes Ba Chua Xu Temple in Sam Mountain, Tay An Old Temple, Van Linh Temple, Huynh Dao Temple, Phuoc Dien Temple, Ta Pa Temple, Phuoc Thanh Temple, Ba Chua Xu Bau Muop Shrine, etc. There are several spiritual festivals organized, attracting a large number of tourists to An Giang annually. Consequently, this study examines the impacts of the following factors on the satisfaction and revisit intention of tourists after visiting An Giang.

2.5.1. Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure is referred to as all material and technical facilities created by the state and tourism organizations in order to exploit tourism potential, including the hotel and house systems, goods, amusement and recreation parks, transportation vehicles, architectural works, etc. [3]. Tourism infrastructure is one of the important factors to attract tourists to a country or a tourist destination [62]. Good tourism infrastructure will create favorable conditions for attracting more tourists [63]. According to Cracoli et al. [64] and Barbu [65], essential elements of successful tourism infrastructure include: (1) lodging and catering structures to accommodate tourists; (2) communications infrastructure, which includes transport and telecommunications; (3) human elements like hospitality, civic education and aesthetics; (4) recreational and leisure facilities such as sports complexes, art fairs, etc. Several existing research works revealed that traditional rural buildings used as the visitor’s accommodation are an important factor to be promoted for the development of rural tourism [52,54]. However, in An Giang, the traditional rural buildings, usually called as “houses on stilts”, are used by local households only, and none of these are available to accommodate tourists. Tourists can easily find good hotels or motels located within or nearby their destinations instead. As a consequence, rural buildings are not considered in the term “tourism infrastructure” used in this study.

With this factor, our Hypotheses 1 and 2 are posited as:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Tourism infrastructure has a positive influence on the tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Tourism infrastructure has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

2.5.2. Natural Environment

The natural environment refers to all elements that are in nature and not created by humans. In the tourism industry, Beerli and Martín [66] asserted that the natural environment includes several different factors such as weather, beaches, lakes, mountains, deserts, etc., while Mihalič [67] considered the natural environment of a destination in terms of beautiful landscapes, natural hydrological structures, clean water, fresh air and the diversity of animal/plant species. It is an important factor in rural tourism [11,64,68,69].

With this factor, our Hypotheses 3 and 4 are posited as:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *The natural environment has a positive influence on the tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *The natural environment has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

2.5.3. Food and Beverage

Food and beverage is one of the most important factors in the tourism industry [64,70,71] as it attracts tourists to enjoy new tastes of cuisine [72]. With the gastronomy, among the intangible cultural values of the destination, tourists can enjoy the local specialties and explore and perceive the authentic cultural identity of the local people [73–76]. Quan and Wang [77] suggested that the local vendors should broaden their knowledge of different cuisine cultures including eating habits, appetites, customs, etc., so that they can serve the tourists better and make them feel more comfortable during their trips.

With this factor, our Hypotheses 5 and 6 are posited as:

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *Food and beverage has a positive influence on the tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *Food and beverage has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

2.5.4. Safety and Security in Tourism

Safety and security is always one of the most important issues that almost every tourist is concerned with before visiting a place [3,78] because of the uncertainty and fickleness existing in contemporary society [79,80]. It refers to the protection from incidents and risks for the entire travel of the tourists. Ngoc and Trinh [4] defined security as the protection of travelers from permanent incidents and risks, and referred to safety as the protection of travelers from unexpected incidents and risks. Once the security and safety are well ensured at a destination, tourists will have a nice experience after their trip because they feel comfortable and secure to explore the destination, contributing to building a more beautiful, friendly and safe destination image. These tourists themselves will share their nice impressions with others who could be potential visitors to the destination. Burch [81] pointed out that “the rewards of security outweigh any possible rewards brought by the high costs of uncertainty”.

With this factor, our Hypotheses 7 and 8 are posited as:

Hypothesis 7 (H7). *Safety and security in tourism has a positive influence on the tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 8 (H8). *Safety and security in tourism has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

2.5.5. People

People living and working at a destination will create a unique cultural environment for that destination; therefore, people is also an important factor in the tourism industry [64,69]. Maunier and Camelis [50] claimed that positive attitudes from local people not only make tourists satisfied, but also promote the culture and image of the locality. Beerli and Martín [66] pointed out that the success of a tourist site heavily depends on the human factors, including: (1) local people for their intimacy, fun and enthusiasm, etc.; and (2) staff engaged in the tourism industry (tour guides, staff selling souvenirs, staff in hotel-restaurants, etc.). Similarly, Ryan and Devar [82] found a positive relationship between the competency of on-site interpreters and visitor's retention. Moreover, Ulus and Hatipoglu [83] found that the effective management of human factors greatly helps tourism organizations to achieve their sustainability.

With this factor, our Hypotheses 9 and 10 are posited as:

Hypothesis 9 (H9). *People has a positive influence on the tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 10 (H10). *People has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

2.5.6. Service Price

The service price refers to what visitors actually pay for their trip, including the destination, the level of safety, the quality of service, etc. Prices must go with the quality of products and services [4], though price has been used as an alternative of the value of a destination [84]. It is one of the important factors related to customer satisfaction and service quality. Therefore, service providers at the destination need to prove to the visitor that the value of the services is commensurate with their price so that they can feel satisfied with what they received [85]. Murphy et al. [84] claimed that tourists' perception of such a value in a trip is a rational evaluation of the experiences gained in a trip against the time and/or money spent.

With this factor, our Hypotheses 11 and 12 are posited as:

Hypothesis 11 (H11). *Service price has a positive influence on the tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 12 (H12). *Service price in tourism has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

2.5.7. Spirituality

Milan and Rok [86] claimed that spirituality is an important motive for many tourists to visit some certain destinations. Spirituality is referred to as the transcendental, surreal realm in the spiritual life of the human being; besides intellectuality, spirituality is considered as a normal activity [86,87]. The need for spiritual life makes people create worship facilities, etiquette and ceremonies to fulfill the need. The core of spiritual life is actually the communication with the divine and divine objects. Spiritual tourism in Vietnam often converge on spiritual destinations such as temples, pagodas, communal houses, shrines, memorials and sacred lands associated with landscapes, special features like traditional culture, local lifestyle of worship and praying for what they wish.

With this factor, our Hypotheses 13 and 14 are posited as:

Hypothesis 13 (H13). *Spirituality has a positive influence on the tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 14 (H14). *Spirituality has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

As mentioned in Section 2.2, the revisit intention of a tourist is usually affected by his/her satisfaction after visiting a destination. Hence, our Hypothesis 15 is posited as:

Hypothesis 15 (H15). *Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on the tourist revisit intention.*

Figure 2 briefly demonstrates our proposed model used in this study.

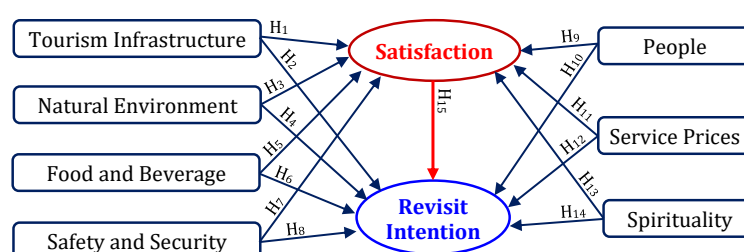


Figure 2. Proposed research model.

3. Research Method

This study was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, we created a list of possible factors gathered from the literature reviews as mentioned in Section 2.5. In order to validate the appropriateness of the factors and discover other potential ones in the case of An Giang province,

we conducted a qualitative research by interviewing 6 experts in the tourism industry and discussing with 37 tourists in 4 focus groups at 4 different destinations in An Giang. Besides agreeing that the listed factors are well fit in this study, they also suggested a new factor “spirituality” to be added to the list. Such findings helped us to design our primary survey questionnaire for a pilot test to assess the clarity of the meaning and word usage in each statement. The pilot test was conducted at 3 destinations in An Giang with 150 participants whose feedback was carefully checked to improve the questionnaire before it was used in our official survey, which was conducted in 6 months (March–November 2017). Hard copies of the refined questionnaires were directly delivered to on-site tourists during their break time. Completed questionnaires were directly collected from the surveyed tourists because it took them less than 10 min to finish the survey.

In the second phase, scale reliability with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were performed. The questionnaires collected from the official survey provided primary data, which were coded, screened and analyzed with SPSS and AMOS software. Literally, a scale was considered reliable if its observed variables had a corrected item-total correlation greater than 0.3 and a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 [88]. In addition, the criteria required in the EFA include: (1) Eigenvalue ≥ 1 ; (2) total variance explained $\geq 50\%$; (3) KMO ≥ 0.5 ; (4) Significance (Sig.) coefficient of the KMO test ≤ 0.05 ; (5) factor loadings of all observed variables are ≥ 0.5 ; and (6) weight difference between the loadings of two factors >0.3 [89].

In the third phase, this study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to further confirm the unidirectionality, scale reliability, convergence value and distinctive value; and tested the research model with structural equation modeling (SEM). According to Hair et al. [90] and Steenkamp and Trijp [91], a model is considered suitable for market data if the significance value (p -value) of the chi-square test is no more than 5%; CMIN/df ≤ 2 (in some cases, CMIN/df ≤ 3 is also acceptable) where CMIN and df stand for chi-square value and the degrees of freedom, respectively; the goodness of fit index (GFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI) ≥ 0.9 . Besides these criteria, recent researchers suggest that GFI should be greater than 0.8; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) ≤ 0.08 ; overall reliability should be greater than 0.6; and the extracted variance should be greater than 0.5 [90].

4. Empirical Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

In this study, there were 1015 questionnaires delivered and 578 questionnaires collected; among them, there were 71 invalid observations. Hence, 507 valid questionnaires were used in this study. Among the 507 observations, there were 247 females, accounting for 48.7%; and 260 males, accounting for 51.3%. There were 82 respondents under 18 years old (16.2%), 137 in the age range of 18–35 (27%), 179 in 36–50 (5.3%) and 109 over 50 years old.

4.2. Scale Reliability Tests

Table 1 briefly shows that results of scale reliability tests where Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the scales are all greater than 0.7, and the corrected item-total correlations are greater than 0.3. Thus, these scales are accepted and included in the EFA.

Table 1. Scale reliability test.

| Observed Variables | Scale Mean If Item Deleted | Scale Variance If Item Deleted | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Cronbach's Alpha If Item Deleted |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Tourism infrastructure (VCKT): Cronbach's alpha = 0.872</i> | | | | |
| VCKT ₁ | 14.49 | 10.559 | 0.676 | 0.851 |
| VCKT ₂ | 14.57 | 10.428 | 0.690 | 0.847 |
| VCKT ₃ | 14.49 | 10.567 | 0.682 | 0.849 |
| VCKT ₄ | 14.46 | 10.565 | 0.715 | 0.841 |
| VCKT ₅ | 14.44 | 10.421 | 0.730 | 0.838 |
| <i>Natural environment (MTTN): Cronbach's alpha = 0.853</i> | | | | |
| MTTN ₁ | 10.84 | 8.364 | 0.686 | 0.816 |
| MTTN ₂ | 11.01 | 8.648 | 0.666 | 0.824 |
| MTTN ₃ | 10.95 | 8.023 | 0.744 | 0.791 |
| MTTN ₄ | 10.87 | 8.247 | 0.680 | 0.819 |
| <i>Food and beverage (AT): Cronbach's alpha = 0.867</i> | | | | |
| AT ₁ | 11.54 | 5.079 | 0.669 | 0.851 |
| AT ₂ | 11.61 | 4.637 | 0.795 | 0.797 |
| AT ₃ | 11.50 | 5.030 | 0.732 | 0.825 |
| AT ₄ | 11.52 | 5.381 | 0.681 | 0.845 |
| <i>Safety and security (ANAT): Cronbach's alpha = 0.895</i> | | | | |
| ANAT ₁ | 14.84 | 10.204 | 0.751 | 0.870 |
| ANAT ₂ | 14.86 | 10.102 | 0.739 | 0.873 |
| ANAT ₃ | 14.82 | 10.296 | 0.717 | 0.878 |
| ANAT ₄ | 14.82 | 10.528 | 0.739 | 0.873 |
| ANAT ₅ | 14.83 | 10.304 | 0.767 | 0.867 |
| <i>People (CN): Cronbach's alpha = 0.858</i> | | | | |
| CN ₁ | 14.58 | 10.592 | 0.708 | 0.820 |
| CN ₂ | 14.62 | 10.576 | 0.692 | 0.824 |
| CN ₃ | 14.63 | 10.515 | 0.695 | 0.823 |
| CN ₄ | 14.56 | 10.789 | 0.717 | 0.818 |
| CN ₅ | 14.68 | 11.142 | 0.565 | 0.857 |
| <i>Service Prices (GCDV): Cronbach's Alpha = 0.814</i> | | | | |
| GCDV ₁ | 10.74 | 6.540 | 0.609 | 0.779 |
| GCDV ₂ | 10.79 | 6.660 | 0.679 | 0.745 |
| GCDV ₃ | 10.80 | 6.716 | 0.665 | 0.752 |
| GCDV ₄ | 10.84 | 6.687 | 0.586 | 0.789 |
| <i>Spirituality (TL): Cronbach's alpha = 0.893</i> | | | | |
| TL ₁ | 11.18 | 7.565 | 0.773 | 0.860 |
| TL ₂ | 11.20 | 7.931 | 0.785 | 0.856 |
| TL ₃ | 11.13 | 7.794 | 0.744 | 0.870 |
| TL ₄ | 11.20 | 7.811 | 0.758 | 0.865 |
| <i>Satisfaction (SHL): Cronbach's alpha = 0.896</i> | | | | |
| SHL ₁ | 11.34 | 5.961 | 0.742 | 0.876 |
| SHL ₂ | 11.42 | 5.857 | 0.773 | 0.865 |
| SHL ₃ | 11.36 | 5.887 | 0.795 | 0.856 |
| SHL ₄ | 11.38 | 5.968 | 0.767 | 0.867 |
| <i>Revisit Intention (YDQL): Cronbach's alpha = 0.889</i> | | | | |
| YDQL ₁ | 11.32 | 6.028 | 0.766 | 0.855 |
| YDQL ₂ | 11.37 | 6.449 | 0.791 | 0.845 |
| YDQL ₃ | 11.30 | 6.325 | 0.775 | 0.850 |
| YDQL ₄ | 11.41 | 6.676 | 0.700 | 0.878 |

4.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Firstly, 31 observed variables in seven factors are used to identify their impacts on the satisfaction and revisit intention of the tourists after visiting tourist sites in An Giang. As shown in Table 2,

the variables are categorized into seven groups, with the total variance explained being 60.25%; KMO = 0.902 with the significance value of 0.000; as a consequence, using EFA in this study is considered appropriate. All factor loadings are greater than 0.5, and the weight differences among the loadings are greater than 0.3, indicating that these factors can be used for further analysis.

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis of independent variables.

| Observed Variables | Factor | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| ANAT ₁ | 0.869 | | | | | | |
| ANAT ₅ | 0.814 | | | | | | |
| ANAT ₄ | 0.805 | | | | | | |
| ANAT ₃ | 0.755 | | | | | | |
| ANAT ₂ | 0.681 | | | | | | |
| VCKT ₅ | | 0.797 | | | | | |
| VCKT ₄ | | 0.779 | | | | | |
| VCKT ₂ | | 0.750 | | | | | |
| VCKT ₁ | | 0.745 | | | | | |
| VCKT ₃ | | 0.731 | | | | | |
| CN ₄ | | | 0.804 | | | | |
| CN ₁ | | | 0.789 | | | | |
| CN ₃ | | | 0.755 | | | | |
| CN ₂ | | | 0.724 | | | | |
| CN ₅ | | | 0.632 | | | | |
| AT ₂ | | | | 0.891 | | | |
| AT ₃ | | | | 0.828 | | | |
| AT ₄ | | | | 0.727 | | | |
| AT ₁ | | | | 0.706 | | | |
| TL ₂ | | | | | 0.844 | | |
| TL ₁ | | | | | 0.825 | | |
| TL ₄ | | | | | 0.818 | | |
| TL ₃ | | | | | 0.785 | | |
| MTTN ₃ | | | | | | 0.833 | |
| MTTN ₁ | | | | | | 0.757 | |
| MTTN ₄ | | | | | | 0.753 | |
| MTTN ₂ | | | | | | 0.733 | |
| GCDV ₂ | | | | | | | 0.776 |
| GCDV ₃ | | | | | | | 0.763 |
| GCDV ₁ | | | | | | | 0.710 |
| GCDV ₄ | | | | | | | 0.664 |
| Eigenvalue | 8.232 | 2.962 | 2.544 | 2.404 | 1.980 | 1.794 | 1.501 |
| % of Variance | 26.555 | 36.112 | 44.318 | 52.072 | 58.458 | 64.247 | 69.089 |
| KMO | | | | | | | 0.902 |
| Bartlett's Test | | | | Chi-Square | | | 8088.815 |
| | | | | df | | | 465 |
| | | | | Sig. | | | 0.000 |

Secondly, the results of EFA for the scale “satisfaction” with four observation variables and those for the scale “revisit intention” are respectively shown in Tables 3 and 4. With the same token as above, the results in these two tables clearly show that using EFA in these scales is also appropriate and valid.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis of “satisfaction”.

| Observed Variables | Factor 1 |
|--------------------|---|
| SHL ₃ | 0.860 |
| SHL ₂ | 0.830 |
| SHL ₄ | 0.825 |
| SHL ₁ | 0.792 |
| Eigenvalue | 3.050 |
| % of Variance | 76.260 |
| KMO | 0.830 |
| Bartlett's Test | Chi-Square 1203.947 df 6 Sig. 0.000 |

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis of “revisit intention”.

| Observed Variables | Factor 1 |
|--------------------|---|
| YDQL ₂ | 0.859 |
| YDQL ₃ | 0.839 |
| YDQL ₁ | 0.827 |
| YDQL ₄ | 0.747 |
| Eigenvalue | 3.008 |
| % of Variance | 75.193 |
| KMO | 0.841 |
| Bartlett's Test | Chi-Square 1140.489 df 6 Sig. 0.000 |

4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 5 briefly presents the test results of composite reliability and extracted variance of the factors affecting the satisfaction and revisit intention of tourists after visiting the tourist sites in An Giang.

Table 5. Confirmatory factor analysis.

| Term | Scale | No. of Observed Variables | Reliability Test | | Average Variance Extracted |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| | | | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite | |
| Determinants of the satisfaction and revisit intention of tourists in the case of An Giang province | Tourism infrastructure (VCKT) | 5 | 0.872 | 0.873 | 0.579 |
| | Natural environment (MTTN) | 4 | 0.853 | 0.854 | 0.594 |
| | Food and beverage (AT) | 4 | 0.867 | 0.869 | 0.626 |
| | Safety and security (ANAT) | 5 | 0.895 | 0.896 | 0.632 |
| | People (CN) | 5 | 0.858 | 0.861 | 0.555 |
| | Service prices (GCDV) | 4 | 0.814 | 0.817 | 0.529 |
| | Spirituality (TL) | 4 | 0.893 | 0.894 | 0.679 |
| Satisfaction (SHL) | | 4 | 0.896 | 0.896 | 0.684 |
| Revisit intention (YDQL) | | 4 | 0.889 | 0.891 | 0.671 |

Figure 3 shows the results of the saturated model in CFA, which confirms that the research model is consistent with the actual data; specifically, all parameters including chi-squared = 894.786, df = 666, p -value = 0.000, CMIN/df = 1344 < 3, GFI = 0.916, TLI = 0.979, CFI = 0.981 and RMSEA = 0.026 are satisfactory for the required criteria.

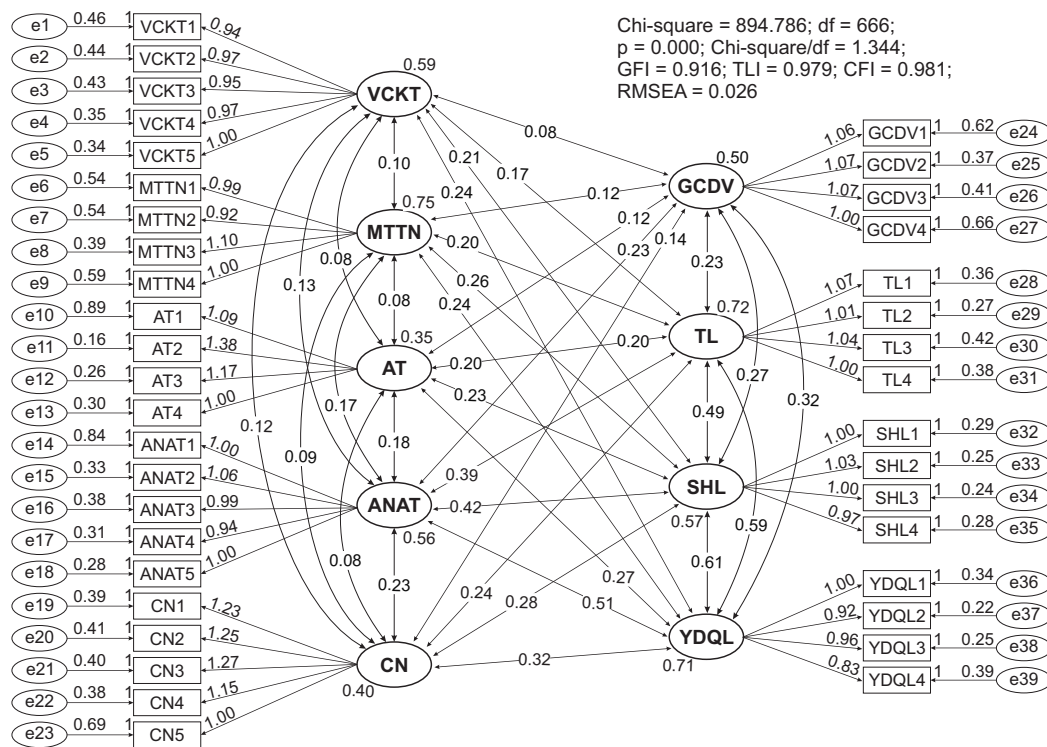


Figure 3. CFA results of the saturated model. Remarks: e1, . . . , e39 represent measurement errors.

These results also indicate that the elements in the research model are unidirectional, ensuring convergence values, ensuring reliability and distinct values. The model is consistent with market data.

4.5. Structural Equation Modeling

4.5.1. Tests for Model Fitness and Hypotheses

With the SEM analysis, Figure 4 shows the estimation results, which help us to further validate the consistency of the model to the actual data; specifically, all parameters like chi-squared = 1472.918, df = 687, p -value = 0.000, CMIN/df = 2.144 < 3, GFI = 0.850, TLI = 0.928, CFI = 0.934 and RMSEA = 0.048 all satisfy the required criteria. Besides, with the bootstrap technique performed 500 times, the bias of the model is insignificant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the estimates in the model are reliable.

4.5.2. Hypotheses Tests Using the SEM Model

The results of the model estimation and bootstrapping in the SEM shown in Table 6 clearly indicate that 13 out of 15 proposed hypotheses (H1; H3; H5; H6–H15) are statistically supported as the p -values of related coefficients are less than 0.05; only H2 and H4 should be further investigated before being validated.

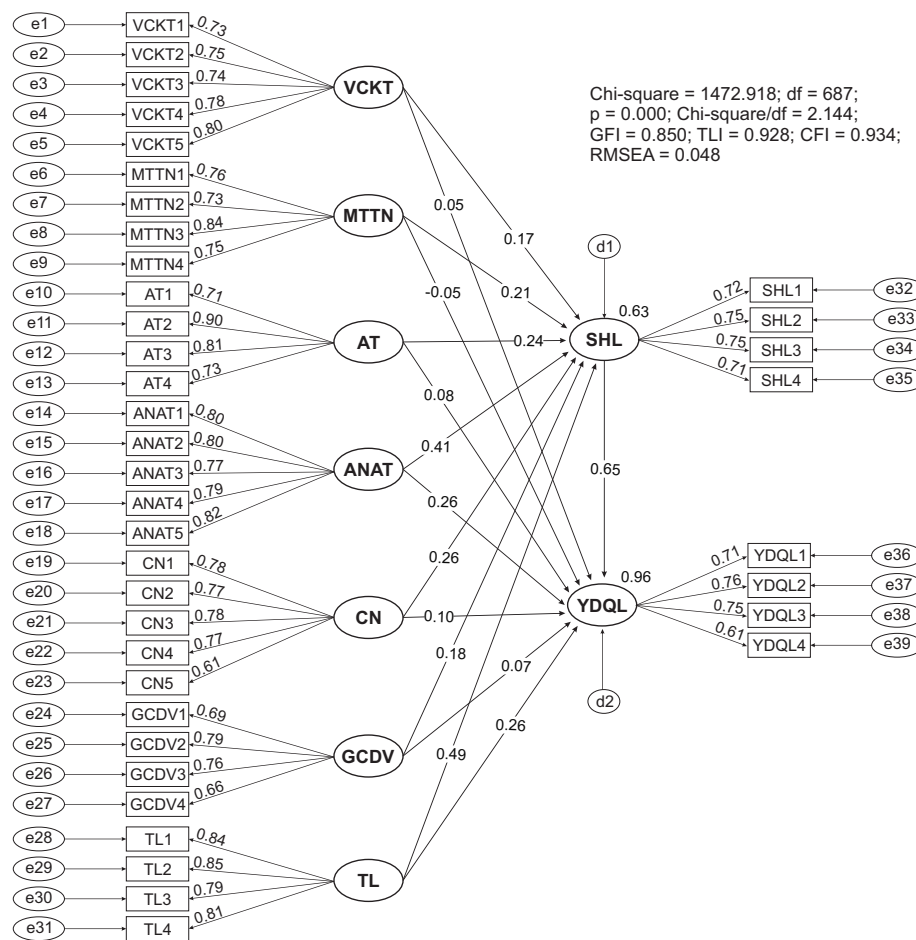


Figure 4. Standardized SEM model. Remarks: d1 and d2 represent structural errors; e1, ..., e39 represent measurement errors.

Table 6. Coefficients from the SEM model.

| Relationships | Coefficient | Standardized Coefficient β | S.E. | C.R. | p | Conclusion |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|---------------|
| SHL \leftarrow VCKT | 0.118 | 0.165 | 0.028 | 4.193 | *** | H1 Supported |
| SHL \leftarrow MTTN | 0.133 | 0.209 | 0.026 | 5.145 | *** | H3 Supported |
| SHL \leftarrow AT | 0.225 | 0.239 | 0.038 | 5.894 | *** | H5 Supported |
| SHL \leftarrow ANAT | 0.297 | 0.405 | 0.032 | 9.355 | *** | H7 Supported |
| SHL \leftarrow CN | 0.225 | 0.260 | 0.037 | 6.036 | *** | H9 Supported |
| SHL \leftarrow GCDV | 0.142 | 0.183 | 0.032 | 4.407 | *** | H11 Supported |
| SHL \leftarrow TL | 0.319 | 0.491 | 0.030 | 10.731 | *** | H13 Supported |
| YDQL \leftarrow VCKT | 0.042 | 0.055 | 0.024 | 1.740 | 0.082 | H2 Rejected |
| YDQL \leftarrow MTTN | −0.033 | −0.048 | 0.023 | −1.446 | 0.148 | H4 Rejected |
| YDQL \leftarrow AT | 0.081 | 0.081 | 0.034 | 2.397 | 0.017 | H6 Supported |
| YDQL \leftarrow ANAT | 0.206 | 0.260 | 0.033 | 6.250 | *** | H8 Supported |
| YDQL \leftarrow CN | 0.094 | 0.101 | 0.033 | 2.876 | 0.004 | H10 Supported |
| YDQL \leftarrow GCDV | 0.059 | 0.071 | 0.028 | 2.129 | 0.033 | H12 Supported |
| YDQL \leftarrow TL | 0.182 | 0.261 | 0.032 | 5.686 | *** | H14 Supported |
| YDQL \leftarrow SHL | 0.693 | 0.647 | 0.079 | 8.727 | *** | H15 Supported |

*** Significance level is less than 0.001.

5. Conclusions and Managerial Implications

5.1. Conclusions

This study found that the satisfaction of tourists after visiting tourist sites in An Giang Province is significantly affected by seven factors, including: (1) spirituality ($\beta = 0.491$); (2) safety and security ($\beta = 0.405$); (3) people ($\beta = 0.260$); (4) food and beverage ($\beta = 0.239$); (5) natural environment ($\beta = 0.209$); (6) service prices ($\beta = 0.183$); and (7) tourism infrastructure ($\beta = 0.165$). These figures indicate that the newly-proposed factor, spirituality, has the strongest impact on the satisfaction of the tourists in An Giang. Other determinants are similar to those of Khuong and Nguyen [3], Ngoc and Trinh [4] and Som et al. [61].

Furthermore, we found that the revisit intention of the tourists to An Giang Province is significantly affected by six factors, including: (1) satisfaction ($\beta = 0.693$); (2) spirituality ($\beta = 0.261$); (3) safety and security ($\beta = 0.260$); (4) people ($\beta = 0.101$); (5) food and beverage ($\beta = 0.081$); (6) service prices ($\beta = 0.071$). These figures indicate that satisfaction and spirituality have the strongest impacts on the revisit intention of the tourists to An Giang, while natural environment and tourism infrastructure fail to have significant influence on the revisit intention. The insignificant impact of tourism infrastructure on the revisit intention can be explained by the fact that the traditional rural buildings are not available for visitor's accommodation and are not considered in the infrastructure as already mentioned in Section 2.5.1; thus, tourists fail to have the practical experience of lodging in the rural buildings, and they consequently fail to have such emotions or feelings to stimulate them to pay a revisit [52].

5.2. Managerial Implications

This study points out that the satisfaction of tourists after visiting a destination in An Giang Province and spirituality are the two most important determinants of their revisit intention. Because An Giang has many special characteristics as mentioned in Section 1, proper policies and solutions should be created for the sustainable development of its rural tourism. Based on the findings in Section 4, we propose the following managerial implications.

Firstly, spirituality is a special area to be considered in the policies/solutions because An Giang has several age-old historic monuments and famous geographical names. Most of the investigated tourists agree that Ba Chua Xu Temple is a must-visit place in An Giang because they internally believe that Ba Chua Xu can protect them from danger and give them good luck as they wish. Ba Chua Xu has become a strong symbol of common belief and spiritual trust among Vietnamese people. Hence, attending the annual Festival of Ba Chua Xu makes visitors not only feel psychologically satisfied, but also, they perceive the cultural values of the local people in An Giang. A pilgrimage to the sacred Ba Chua Xu Temple and exploring the primitive beautiful landscapes in the region help visitors forget their daily worries and anxieties existing in their modern, hasty and hurried lives. Therefore, the provincial authority should have proper actions to preserve these special values for the sustainable development of the tourism industry of the province. Besides, keeping the temple clean and solemn is also critical to make tourists more satisfied and to revisit them in the future, as well as attract new visitors. To effectively deal with this issue, some educational activities should take place. For example, some groups of volunteers (charity workers, pupils/students, etc.) wearing certain uniforms with a printed "volunteer" sign quietly collect all litter around the temple; some banderols call for environment protection; and solemnity should be put in some easy-to-read positions, etc. Hawkers and motorbike taxi drivers should follow rules and regulations set by the local authority to make a comfortable atmosphere around the temple. Similar actions should be implemented at other religious temples, such as Huynh Dao Temple, Phuoc Dien Temple, Van Linh Temple, Tay An Old Temple, etc., because these are also very famous in An Giang. Especially, tour organizers should demonstrate their social responsibility in protecting nature and the living environment. If these issues are well managed, An Giang can sustainably develop its rural tourism, especially its spiritual tourism.

Secondly, the tourism safety and security is one of the key factors affecting tourist's decision in choosing a destination because it directly relates to their health and safety during their trips and their overall satisfaction. In the case of the rural tourism in An Giang, tourism safety and security is the second important factor affecting the satisfaction of the tourists and the third key determinant of the revisit intention. Due to its very special importance, the local authority must do its best to provide a safe and secure living environment by eliminating robbery, insistent invitations, being ripped off, scrambling for tourists among street vendors, motorbike taxi drivers, etc. Guidance maps and hotline telephone numbers of the local police stations should be posted at several different locations so that tourists can get through for any assistance needed.

Thirdly, most tourists agree that during their trips, they want to explore not only the beauty of nature, but also the local people and local culture. Therefore, among several factors investigated, "people" is ranked as the third important factor affecting the satisfaction and the fourth affecting the revisit intention of the tourists. Particularly, the hospitality of the local people, the enthusiasm and professionalism of the tour guides, the specialties of the traditional cultures and the cultural events organized at the destination will create a special impression in the mind of the tourists who will share such wonderful experiences with others, encouraging them to pay a visit to the destination. Thus, making the tourists satisfied is one of the best and least expensive marketing approaches for the tourist sites. Consequently, the provincial authority in the tourism department should create proper training strategies to provide high quality human resources serving in the tourism industry and enhance the appreciation of the local people towards their cultures, good ethics and standard living styles. In addition, the cultural identity and other intangible heritage must be properly preserved.

Fourthly, food and beverage is also an important factor affecting the satisfaction and revisit intention of the tourists. As there are several different ethnic communities in An Giang, the variety of local foods and beverages is an attractive highlight for tourists to try new tastes. However, it is critical for the provincial authority to set suitable standards and regulations to manage the hygiene and safety of food and beverage offered by the local restaurants, inns, pubs, refreshment shops, etc., well. Regular checks of their compliance are necessary to avoid any problems of food poisoning or indigestion happening to tourists.

In addition, ripping tourists off is unacceptable in the development of the tourism industry. The price of services is found as a significant determinant of the satisfaction and revisit intention of tourists. Hence, the tourism department of An Giang province should strictly control the prices set by service providers to make sure that their prices match with the quality of service offered well. To protect the tourists from being ripped off, the providers must officially register and proclaim their service price list. Any changes in the prices must be notified and approved by the authority. Additionally, tourists are publicly informed to pay according to the official price list; otherwise, they should report any unfair payment to the local authority. Once a service provider is found to have done any ripping off, the provider must compensate ten-times higher for what the tourist was charged. Additionally, in order to increase the competitiveness for the sustainable development of the rural tourism in An Giang, it is encouraged to avoid monopolies by having diverse tourism products and services from different providers.

Lastly, we strongly recommend the local authority develop a range of rural buildings for visitor's accommodation because lodging in such buildings results in interesting experiences, emotions and feelings that not only urge the tourists to pay a revisit, but also stimulate the tourists to happily share these with their friends. Consequently, this is considered as a good and efficient marketing approach to authentically promote the destinations for their sustainable development.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| ANAT | Safety and security in tourism |
| AT | Food and beverage |
| CFA | Confirmatory factor analysis |
| CFI | Comparative fit index |
| CMIN | Chi-square |
| CN | People |
| df | Degrees of freedom |
| EFA | Exploratory factor analysis |
| GCDV | Service price |
| GFI | Goodness of fit index |
| KMO | Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy |
| MTTN | Natural environment |
| <i>p</i> -value | Significance level |
| RMSEA | Root mean square error of approximation |
| SHL | Satisfaction |
| TL | Spirituality |
| TLI | Tucker–Lewis index |
| VCKT | Tourism infrastructure |
| YDQL | Revisit intention |

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