

LENGTH OF STAY AND EXPERIENCES OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM IN NINH BINH: CURRENT SITUATION AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The development of sustainable rural tourism in Ninh Binh is becoming a trend attracting tourists due to its appealing natural landscapes and rural culture. This paper analyzes the theoretical basis and the current situation regarding the length of stay and tourism experiences in rural tourism products in Ninh Binh. Data was collected through secondary data analysis. The research results show that the length of stay of rural tourists is relatively short, averaging 1.44 days/overnight tourist, and rural experience activities have not yet fully exploited the potential strengths of the locality. The study also proposes several solutions such as developing unique rural tourism products, planning investment in rural tourist destinations, training human resources, and enhancing promotion to extend the length of stay and improve the experiences of rural tourists in Ninh Binh.

Keywords: Length of stay, rural tourism, agricultural tourism, sustainable, tourism experience, Ninh Binh, Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the tourism industry moving towards sustainable development and authentic experiences, rural tourism has emerged as a trend exploited by many localities to diversify tourism products, spread local cultural values, and create livelihoods for the community. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) forecast, by 2030, the number of tourists participating in rural and ecotourism worldwide will account for 10%, with revenues of approximately 30 billion USD and an annual growth rate of 10-30% [1]. Recognizing the significant role of this type of tourism, the People's Committee of Ninh Binh province has issued the Plan for New Rural Development in the period 2021 - 2025, with the general objective being "To promote the development of rural tourism associated with the promotion of potential and advantages in agriculture, handicraft villages, culture, and ecological environment of localities to improve the material and spiritual living standards of rural people, contributing to the transformation of the rural economic structure towards multi-value integration, inclusiveness, and sustainable development." However, the current development of this type of tourism is limited in terms of attractiveness and the ability to attract tourists for long stays. Researching the relationship between length of stay and tourism experiences in the context of rural tourism is necessary, especially in destinations that are transforming like Ninh Binh.

When searching for relevant documents on the scientific database Scopus.com, there are quite a few studies related to length of stay and rural tourism. However, when searching with the keywords "length of stay" and "rural tourism," the result yielded only 09 relevant documents. Thus, there is a limited number of studies focusing on the relationship between length of stay and rural tourism experiences, especially in utilizing online review data (EWOM). This is an objective source of information that reflects the actual perceptions of tourists and can help identify prominent factors, both positive and negative.

The objectives of this study: Analyze the relationship between length of stay and sustainable rural tourism experiences; Analyze the current situation of length of stay; Identify rural tourism experience products in Ninh Binh and the level of tourist evaluation of these products (based on aggregated results from EWOM); Propose some solutions to extend the length of stay and enhance the rural tourism experience based on findings from real data analysis. The research results will provide a scientific and practical basis for policymakers, tourism businesses, and local communities in developing rural tourism in a sustainable direction.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Rural tourism experience

The concept of rural tourism emerged in the mid-1950s. There are various definitions across countries and regions due to the differences in rural characteristics in each location. Based on the specific characteristics in Vietnam, the concept of rural tourism can be understood as a type of tourism that takes place in rural areas based on the local community, where tourists experience the unique natural, historical, cultural, lifestyle, and village activities, thereby creating economic, cultural, social, and environmental benefits for the rural destination [2].

Rural tourism experience can be understood as the process by which tourists participate in, feel, and interact with the people and activities taking place in rural areas. Through this, personal impressions, emotions, and evaluations of the trip are formed. The main aspects constituting the rural tourism experience include: natural landscapes and the rural environment [3], interaction with the local community, participation in agricultural or traditional activities, enjoying local cuisine, and personal emotions during the experience.

2.2. Length of stay

The concept of length of stay has been mentioned by authors in numerous studies. Length of stay typically refers to the number of nights tourists stay at a destination [4]; It is a crucial variable in tourism demand [5]; It refers to the amount of time that tourists spend at a specific location [6]; It is one of the important parameters in destination management, determining the number of tourist nights compared to the number of arrivals. When the length of stay is short, the demand for transportation infrastructure increases, while the demand for accommodation infrastructure decreases [7].

Length of stay different from trip duration [5]. Trip duration relates to the distance between the origin and the destination at the place of residence and may include stops at multiple destinations within an itinerary. Length of stay applies only to a single destination. Undertaking longer trips may not always lead to longer stays at each destination. This can occur if there is a positive correlation between trip duration and the number of destinations visited. The length of stay is an important variable reflecting tourism demand. It is the total number of nights that tourists stay, at least one night at a destination [8]. Thus, it can be seen

that the concept of length of stay is understood quite similarly among researchers, representing a parameter that defines the number of nights a tourist stays at a destination during their travel.

2.3. Factors influencing the length of Stay of tourists

Through a literature review, identifying the factors influencing the length of stay will contribute to shaping solutions aimed at extending the length of stay.

According to Rodriguez, the factors affecting length of stay include three groups: personal characteristics, travel characteristics, and destination attributes [9]. Many factors within destination attributes have been shown to influence tourists' length of stay. Foreign tourists to the United States who visit cultural and natural attractions (museums and national parks) may spend more time and money than those participating in other forms of tourism [10]. Outdoor recreation and sightseeing are associated with longer lengths of stay [11]. Cheaper accommodations such as tourist apartments, campsites, rural houses, rentals, and the homes of family or friends can positively influence length of stay [12]. Tourists from distant locations tend to stay longer to optimize travel costs and time [7]. Research in Kebumen found that infrastructure, superstructure, accessibility, topography, destination management, service quality, and place attachment are the strongest attributes influencing length of stay. Conversely, there is still a need for strong and comprehensive development of activities/events, local culture, and place attachment attributes [13].

In addition, the interaction between tourists and the environment at the destination can create flow experiences. When tourists enter this state, they often feel deeply engaged with the experience, absorbed in the activity, and tend to lose their sense of time. Experiences at the destination have a positive impact on extending the length of stay of tourists, thereby contributing to sustainable tourism development [14].

Thus, theoretically, to extend the length of stay of tourists, in addition to identifying the personal and travel characteristics of tourists, local authorities need to focus on enhancing the attractiveness of destination attributes and the diversity and appeal of experience products at the destination.

2.4. The role of length of stay and tourism experience in sustainable rural tourism development

2.4.1. The role of tourism experience in sustainable rural tourism development

Rural tourism experiences promote the purchase of local products, stimulate the local economy, and form an essential part of experiential tourism [15]. Activities such as tour guiding, organizing experiences, and producing souvenirs help local people have stable jobs instead of relying solely on agriculture. When tourists participate in experiences such as homestays, farm stays, or agricultural activities, they will spend more, thereby generating additional income for local people.

Developing rural tourism is one of the solutions contributing to the preservation and promotion of local cultural values. When tourists participate in activities such as learning to cook, making pottery, embroidering, weaving mats, planting rice, herding buffaloes, etc., they will better understand the local culture, thereby contributing to the preservation and development of traditional values. Interesting experiences between locals and tourists help create deep connections and promote responsible tourism.

In-depth experiences of rural tourism, such as living with local people, learning handicrafts, participating in local agriculture, etc., contribute to creating personalized, unique, and highly competitive tourism products.

Participating in rural tourism experiences associated with ecosystems and agriculture will contribute to raising awareness of natural and environmental protection among stakeholders, especially tourists. Sustainable tourism models such as ecotourism and organic agricultural tourism help limit negative impacts on the environment. When participating in activities such as planting trees and harvesting organic vegetables, tourists will be more aware of protecting natural resources, reducing plastic waste, and promoting a sustainable lifestyle.

2.4.2. The role of length of stay in sustainable rural tourism development

When tourists have a long length of stay, it not only brings economic benefits but also contributes to promoting local cultural values and protecting the environment [16].

A long length of stay contributes to increased tourism expenditure [17-19]. Tourists will spend more on accommodation, food and beverages, transportation, tourism products and services, etc., thereby generating revenue and increasing sustainable employment opportunities for the local community.

A long length of stay also contributes to promoting the rural tourism experience. Tourists have the opportunity to participate in more agricultural experience activities, traditional crafts, etc., thereby gaining a better understanding of local life and culture [18]. This can contribute to creating destination loyalty, promoting repeat visits, and recommendations to relatives and friends.

Long-stay tourists contribute to reducing the pressure on service costs, such as room management costs, cleaning, laundry, electricity, water, and waste disposal costs, thereby limiting environmental impacts. At the same time, the experience activities of sustainable rural tourism, if extended, will also have an impact on the awareness and responsibility of tourists in protecting nature and the environment.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To study the length of stay and sustainable rural tourism experiences in Ninh Binh, the author use a theoretical research method: collecting and synthesizing secondary data, including:

Collection of basic theoretical framework: on rural tourism experiences, factors influencing length of stay, and the role of length of stay and tourism experience in sustainable rural tourism development. These documents were collected and synthesized from the Scopus.com database and other scientific journals and state documents.

Collection of practical evaluations: objective evaluation information from tourists based on electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM). These websites provide information, reviews, and ratings of tourist destinations, restaurants, hotels, and recreational activities worldwide. Users can share personal experiences, upload photos, and leave comments to help others make better travel decisions. The keywords "rural tourism" and "tourism experience" were searched and selected on two websites: Tripadvisor.com and airbnb.com. As a result, 6,058 relevant reviews were obtained from tourists worldwide. The main rural tourism experience activities attracting tourists include: learning about Muong ethnic culture, rural village excursions, community-based tourism associated with agricultural product development, experiences at the Sinh Duoc Cooperative, and rural experience tours combined with cycling activities. The collected information will be used for analysis to serve the research objectives.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Rural tourism experience in Ninh Binh

Over the past years, Ninh Binh tourism has become an attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists, with numerous accolades. In 2020, Ninh Binh was listed among the 14 most attractive destinations in Asia by Trips to Discover (America). In 2022, Travel and Leisure magazine (America) ranked Ninh Binh among the 12 most beautiful filming locations in Asia. In 2023, Ninh Binh was the only representative of Vietnam to be in the top 10 friendliest destinations in the world. Forbes magazine (America) voted Ninh Binh as one of the 23 must-visit places in the world. In 2024, Ninh Binh ranked 4th in the top 10 world wonders for people who don't like crowds. On July 4, 2024, the TripAdvisor travel guidance platform (America) announced that Ninh Binh was in the top 10 most captivating experiences in the world for 2024 [20].

With favorable natural conditions, Ninh Binh has many advantages in building and developing rural tourism products. 70% of Ninh Binh's population lives in rural areas. With predominantly hilly terrain, it is suitable for developing agricultural products such as pineapples, corn, sweet potatoes, cassava, peanuts, passion fruit, green vegetables, and ornamental flowers and plants. The province also has many craft villages; thousands of farms and household farms, including 88 integrated farms with an average land area of 4.5 hectares per farm. Many livestock farming models are being expanded, such as raising cattle (buffaloes, cows, rabbits, deer), poultry (chickens, ducks), and aquaculture (shrimp, clams)... In addition, Ninh Binh has many fields implementing new cultivation models that attract the attention of domestic and international tourists for sightseeing and photography, such as the Dong Giao pineapple fields, Ninh Phuc flower fields, and Dong Son peach blossom village (Tam Diep)... From 2018 to date, the entire province has had 101 products rated as OCOP products, including 33 three-star products and 68 four-star products (of which 8 products achieved over 90 points). This is one of the advantages of developing rural tourism in Ninh Binh.

Besides, along with the development of tourism in general, many rural tourism products have been exploited to serve the diverse needs of tourists. Especially the homestay and farm stay models where tourists stay and experience the daily life of local people from their way of living (eating, staying, dressing) to their production methods (craft village activities, animal husbandry, cultivation). The rural tourism model is being implemented in many areas throughout the province. In Van Long Wetland Nature Reserve and Thien Ha Cave, tourists can relax, enjoy local cuisine, and participate in production activities with local people. So far, the model has spread to many localities throughout the province and is being implemented in the forms of homestay tourism, community-based tourism, experiential tourism, etc. Localities that strongly develop this tourism model include: Gia Van and Gia Hoa communes (Gia Vien district); Son Ha commune (Nho Quan district); Ninh Xuan, Ninh Hai, and Truong Yen communes (Hoa Lu district); Yen Mac and Yen Tu communes (Yen Mo district); Tam Diep city... The technical infrastructure serving rural tourism partly meets the accommodation and dining needs of tourists. Currently, the entire province has 846 accommodation establishments with a total of 10,735 rooms.

To assess the attractiveness of rural tourism products to tourists, the author synthesized electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) reviews from Tripadvisor.com and Airbnb.com, with thousands of reviews from tourists worldwide. The number of reviews may not accurately reflect the number of service users, but it partly shows the level of interest and attraction of each rural tourism experience activity in Ninh Binh.

Table 1. Tourists' evaluations of rural tourism experience products in Ninh Binh

| No. | Experiential activities | Reviews on EWOM |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| 1 | Exploring the nature and culture of the Muong people in Khanh village: Trekking through Cuc Phuong National Park, learning about the ecology, agriculture, and daily life of the Muong people in Khanh village. Staying in a Muong stilt house. Enjoying local specialties. Participating in traditional ethnic music and dance performances. | No reviews found |
| 2 | Rural Exploration at Van Long/Thien Ha Cave (1 day): Cycling through villages and the Muong (Tho Ha) ethnic minority village. Participating in agricultural production in Dong Tam village (Son Ha commune)/Van Long: catching crabs, transplanting rice, water bailing. Participating in cooking with a local family: sweet potato cakes, fried spring rolls, grilled fish. Visiting tourist attractions along the route: ecological and cultural tourism. | No reviews found |
| 3 | Community-based tourism at Quen Tho of the Tam Diep Agricultural Product and Tourism Cooperative: Sightseeing, experiencing livestock and crop farming models, enjoying local specialties, learning about the daily life of the locals | No reviews found |
| 4 | Experiences at the Sinh Duoc Cooperative (Gia Sinh, Gia Vien): Visiting the space and production process of soap and herbal products. Experiencing soap making. Experiencing Bodhi leaf painting. Experiencing pottery making. Herbal bath soaking. Experiencing herb harvesting. Highly rated for natural herbal products, experiences at the production workshop, and relaxation with herbal baths | 4.9 stars/ 213 reviews |
| 5 | Some experience tours rated on TripAdvisor and Airbnb: Companies in Ninh Binh/Hanoi operate Ninh Binh experience tours. Main activities in Ninh Binh: cycling/motorbiking/Jeep riding/buffalo cart riding/boat riding to admire the natural and rural landscapes and learn about the lives of the locals. Enjoying local specialties. Highly rated for the beautiful natural rural scenery. Delicious local food. | |
| | Ninh Binh Jeep Tours - Ninh Binh Vespa Tours | 5 stars/ 2824 reviews |
| | Amazing Ninh Binh | 5 stars/1216 reviews |
| | Authentic Ninh Binh | 5 stars/1080 reviews |
| | Ninh Binh Getaway | 5 stars/635 reviews |
| 6 | Tam Coc Cycling Tour | 4.97 stars/39 reviews |
| 7 | Ninh Binh Bike Tour and Rental | 5 stars/ 18 reviews |
| 8 | Buffalo Cave Tour Participating in local people's life experiences: buffalo riding, rice planting, fishing, cooking local dishes. | 5 stars/60 reviews |

Source: Compiled from TripAdvisor.com and Airbnb.com websites updated to March 30, 2025

Based on the summary table above, it can be observed that the majority of rural tourism experience tours in Ninh Binh have received very high ratings of 5 stars/5 stars. Tourists highly appreciate the cycling and boat riding experiences, rural landscapes, delicious food, and some appealing agricultural experiences such as herbal medicine production, buffalo riding, and rice planting. These tours are effectively operated by travel companies within the province as well as in Hanoi. However, the average duration of these tours is only one day. Some other experience tours, such as exploring the culture of the Muong people (Khanh village), rural exploration at Van Long and Thien Ha Cave, and community-based tourism at Quen Tho, are promoted and introduced on destination websites but have not yet garnered significant attention, reviews, or recommendations from tourists on Tripadvisor.com and Airbnb.com. This necessitates solutions related to enhancing the quality of experiences and product marketing activities.

Furthermore, rural experience activities in Ninh Binh are not yet truly diverse in proportion to their potential. Rural production experience activities such as rice planting, water bailing, and crab catching are not significantly different from those in other provinces and cities. The production methods in Ninh Binh have not fully leveraged their value, such as growing crops (Gia Vien, Nho Quan), pineapples, and passion fruit (Tam Diep). Livestock farms and herbal medicine production facilities have not been effectively utilized. The unique culinary values of the region, such as Gia Vien shrimp paste, Kim Son raw fish salad, crispy rice crust, and Kim Son rice wine, have not been integrated into tours as activities to experience the production process and enjoy local specialties. Experiential activities in craft villages have also not been given due attention. The values inherent in the daily life of the people, such as festivals, weddings, death anniversaries, folk games, and folk art, have not been showcased and highlighted in rural tourism tours in Ninh Binh.

Thus, it can be seen that the current rural tourism experience activities in Ninh Binh are highly rated by tourists, mainly including cycling tours, countryside sightseeing, enjoying local cuisine, and most of them take place within a day. Many other agricultural and rural resources of Ninh Binh have not been exploited effectively and adequately.

4.2. Length of stay of tourists in Ninh Binh

In 2024, Ninh Binh tourism achieved significant breakthroughs, recovering and developing beyond the pre-Covid period of 2019. Tourism revenue in the entire province in 2024 is estimated to reach over 9,172.3 billion VND, an increase of 40.15% compared to the same period last year. The number of tourists to Ninh Binh province reached 4,154,547. The number of tourists using accommodation establishments is estimated at over 2,028,437, an increase of 45.33%; the length of stay nearly 2,339,828 days, increase of 28.27% [21].

Table 2. Number of tourists and length of stay in Ninh Binh in 2024 [21]

| Indicator | Tourist Arrivals (visits) | Tourist Nights (nights) | Average length of stay/tourist |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Total tourists arrival | 4,154,547 | 2,339,828 | 0.56 days/tourist arrival |
| 2. Tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments | 2,028,437 | | 1.15 days/tourist at accommodation |
| Day Tourists | 409,585 | | |
| Overnight Tourists | 1,618,852 | | 1.44 days/overnight tourist |
| 3. Tourist arrivals not staying at accommodation establishments | 2,126,110 | | |

Based on the table, the proportion of overnight tourists in Ninh Binh accounts for 39% of the total tourist arrivals. The average length of stay is 1.44 days for overnight tourists, 1.15 days for tourists staying at accommodation establishments, and 0.56 days for tourists to Ninh Binh in general. Compared to the potential and advantages for tourism development in Ninh Binh, the occupancy rate and length of stay of tourists in Ninh Binh in general and rural tourists in particular are still quite limited.

Based on research on factors influencing the length of stay of tourists and the actual situation in Ninh Binh, several reasons can be identified: tourists mainly visit attractions such as Trang An, Tam Coc, Hang Mua, and Bai Dinh for a short period (mostly one day with combined tours from Hanoi); many boat riding experiences for ecological sightseeing are relatively similar in Trang An, Tam Coc, Thung Chim, Van Long, Thung Nang, and Thien Ha Cave, so tourists tend to choose one location and skip others; supporting activities such as rural experiences, craft villages, and local culture have not yet fully exploited their potential values and are not attractive enough to retain tourists for multiple days; on the other hand, the convenience of the transportation system, shortening the time and distance between Ninh Binh and other tourist centers such as Hanoi, Quang Ninh, and Hai Phong, makes it easy for tourists to return to their starting point or visit other tourist destinations.

4.3. Some proposals to extend the length of stay and enhance the rural tourism experience in Ninh Binh

4.3.1. Developing unique rural tourism experience products

Flow experience at the destination positively influences tourists' length of stay [14]. Based on the practical experiences of currently exploited rural tourism products, it is necessary to conduct research to organize new experience tours and multi-day experience activities, instead of the current one-day experiences. It is crucial to promote the exploitation of potential advantages to develop unique Ninh Binh rural products.

For agricultural activities, diversify the "A Day as a Farmer" programs with unique experiences such as: planting, caring for, and harvesting pineapples and passion fruit in Tam Diep; planting, caring for, and harvesting agricultural products such as corn, sweet potatoes, cassava, and various tubers in the Gia Vien and Nho Quan areas; visiting agricultural livestock farms such as VAC farms, deer farms, and medicinal herb gardens of herbal medicine production facilities like the Sinh Duoc Cooperative and Riti farm.

Enhance the cooking class experience with local specialties in local people's homes, creating "farm-to-table" meals. Instead of teaching tourists to cook common dishes found everywhere like fried spring rolls, fresh spring rolls, and pho, tourists can experience the harvesting and processing of Ninh Binh specialties such as shrimp paste processing, making Gia Vien shrimp paste, making raw fish salad in Kim Son, Yen Mac fermented pork roll, making traditional crispy rice crust, learning to brew and tasting traditional wines such as Kim Son rice wine and Can wine in Nho Quan. Develop rural market tours where tourists can choose and bargain for products and learn about rural culture. In addition, consider organizing events related to agricultural activities such as harvest festivals, food festivals, and agricultural fairs combined with traditional art performances, allowing tourists to participate in real life.

Strongly promote the strengths of traditional craft villages such as Van Lam embroidery village, Thanh Thuy pottery village, Kim Son sedge mat weaving village, and Ninh Van stone carving village. Experiences in craft villages should not only involve sightseeing and taking photos but also create space and time for tourists to create their own souvenirs under the guidance of artisans. This will enhance emotional experiences, understanding of local culture, and promote shopping activities.

In addition to the popular means of transportation in Ninh Binh today such as cars, motorbikes, and bicycles, other forms of transportation can be diversified, such as trekking through rice fields, pineapple hills, and crop fields; kayaking on rivers and natural lakes. Better exploit paragliding experiences and sightseeing by buffalo and ox carts in rural areas.

Link rural experience activities related to craft villages, cuisine, and agricultural production with other ecological, cultural, and spiritual destinations in Ninh Binh such as exploring Trang An Scenic Landscape Complex, Van Long Wetland Nature Reserve, Cuc Phuong National Park, Kenh Ga hot spring, Hoa Lu Ancient Capital, Bai Dinh Pagoda, and Phat Diem Cathedral.

Develop tourism products that allow experiencing the daily life of local people, such as participating in local feasts and weddings, or even allowing tourists to experience organizing a wedding in the traditional style in rural Ninh Binh. Revive folk games in rural villages, develop attractive traditional folk game experiences such as pole climbing, tug-of-war, wrestling, earth firecracker making, and walking on stilts. Tourism businesses should skillfully combine sightseeing, experiences, and entertainment, organizing personal and team challenge programs to create excitement and competition in agricultural experiences, thereby increasing attractiveness. In addition, link rural tourism experiences with attractive nighttime entertainment activities to attract overnight stays and limit day trips returning to other tourist centers such as Hanoi and Quang Ninh.

4.3.2. Planning and investment for rural tourist destinations

Plan suitable spaces for the focused development of rural tourism, while ensuring route connectivity between key tourist areas and attractions in Ninh Binh province.

Review and build points, showrooms, and shops to introduce and sell agricultural products, traditional craft village products, souvenirs, etc., that meet the quality standards for serving tourists. Focus on displaying and showcasing typical village products such as Kim Son sedge handicrafts, Gia Thuy pottery, Ninh Phuc flower village, and Van Lam embroidery.

Develop creative accommodation models: Accommodation establishments in Ninh Binh are quite diverse and highly rated. However, for rural tourism, further investment in the quantity and quality of environmentally friendly accommodation models that are suitable for the architecture of local culture is needed. Expand traditional homestay models with stilt houses, traditional Northern houses, with gardens, fish ponds, and wood-burning stoves; farm stays combining resort experiences and participation in organic agricultural production; and Glamping models amidst nature, by mountain lakes and fields.

4.3.3. Developing quality rural human resources

In the development of rural tourism, local people play an important role, both as service providers and as creators of local cultural and living values. Therefore, community tourism human resources need to be trained in-depth, focusing on knowledge and skills in communication, hospitality, and cultural storytelling to directly serve tourists. The goal is for every local involved in tourism to become a Ninh Binh tourism ambassador.

Implement policies to encourage young people to start businesses with creative rural tourism products, creating wealth from the local values. Strengthen cooperation between businesses, local people, and the government to develop sustainable tourism and share benefits and responsibilities among stakeholders. Organize a network of tourism, agriculture, and other industry experts to support households in exploiting and developing rural products for tourism activities.

4.3.4. Promoting rural tourism in Ninh Binh

It is evident that many rural tourism experience tours in Ninh Binh are not yet well-known to many tourists. With the current development of technology, it is necessary to effectively use social media and online platforms. Build TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube channels to share vivid videos and images of rural tourism experiences. Create promotional campaigns with unique hashtags such as #RuralTourismNinhBinh, #GreenNinhBinh, #NinhBinhCountryside. Collaborate with celebrities and influencers to spread the image of Ninh Binh rural tourism. In addition, build a Ninh Binh rural tourism website with complete information about destinations, suggested itineraries, tour prices, integrated with a QR code-based tourist guide map. Develop a mobile application to help tourists book rooms and tours easily. Create 360° videos of the beautiful countryside, rice fields, and craft villages to attract distant tourists. Research the application of VR technology so that tourists can experience the rural tourism space before deciding to book a tour.

Promote rural tourism through domestic and international tourism events and fairs such as VITM Hanoi and ITE Ho Chi Minh City. Cooperate with international travel companies to include Ninh Binh rural tourism in Vietnam tour listings. Closely collaborate with media and newspapers to produce reports and articles about Ninh Binh rural tourism. Organize creative content competitions about Ninh Binh rural tourism.

Develop attractive combo deals and promotions for groups staying 3 nights or more. Collaborate between travel companies and rural accommodation establishments such as homestays, farm stays, and local restaurants to create discount programs and souvenir gifts.

5. CONCLUSION

Research on the length of stay and rural tourism experience activities in Ninh Binh has significant practical implications. The research results help identify the current state of rural tourism development, the occupancy rate is still not high (39%), the average length of stay is low (1.4 days), and the number of rural service products is limited. Extending the length of stay of tourists as well as enhancing rural tourism experience activities makes positive contributions to sustainable tourism development due to the related economic, cultural, and environmental benefits. Several solutions need to be considered for implementation, such as developing unique rural tourism products, planning investment for rural tourism development areas, training human resources, and strengthening promotion.

As this study only collected data from secondary sources and tourist reviews based on (Tripadvisor.com, Airbnb.com). Analyzing tourist reviews on EWOM platforms also has certain limitations regarding the risk of fake reviews, the subjective nature of reviews often influenced by personal emotions, and incomplete or ambiguous information. Thus, future research could collect information from tourist questionnaires. Some additional theories that could be explored include the relationship between length of stay and sustainable tourism development, and the factors influencing the satisfaction of rural tourists.

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TÓM TẮT

THỜI GIAN LƯU TRÚ VÀ TRẢI NGHIỆM DU LỊCH NÔNG THÔN BỀN VỮNG TẠI NINH BÌNH: THỰC TRẠNG VÀ GIẢI PHÁP

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Phát triển du lịch nông thôn bền vững tại Ninh Bình đang trở thành xu hướng thu hút khách du lịch nhờ vào cảnh quan thiên nhiên, văn hóa nông thôn hấp dẫn. Bài báo này phân tích cơ sở lý thuyết và thực trạng về thời gian lưu trú và trải nghiệm du lịch trong các sản phẩm du lịch nông thôn tại Ninh Bình. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua phân tích thông tin thứ cấp. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy, thời gian lưu trú của khách du lịch nông thôn còn tương đối ngắn, trung bình 1,44 ngày/khách lưu trú qua đêm, các hoạt động trải nghiệm nông thôn còn chưa phát huy hết thế mạnh tiềm năng của địa phương. Nghiên cứu cũng đề xuất một số giải pháp như phát triển sản phẩm du lịch nông thôn đặc thù, quy hoạch đầu tư các điểm du lịch nông thôn, đào tạo nguồn nhân lực và tăng cường quảng bá nhằm kéo dài thời gian lưu trú và nâng cao trải nghiệm của khách du lịch nông thôn tại Ninh Bình.

Từ khóa: Thời gian lưu trú, du lịch nông thôn, du lịch nông nghiệp, bền vững, trải nghiệm du lịch, Ninh Bình, Việt Nam.