

DOCTORAL THESIS IN BRIEF

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The cultural heritage tourism business is not only attractive and appealing to businessmen, service providers, or experts in the tourism industry, but also one of the long-term strategies and goals for sustainable economic and social development of most countries worldwide. The abundance and diversity of cultural heritages, stable political system, dynamic economy, open foreign policy, a destination for business cooperation, and organization of international events give Vietnam great potential to exploit, trade, and develop cultural heritage tourism. However, the heritage tourism business in Vietnam has not been developed fully, synchronously, and appropriately with its potential and values. Therefore, the thesis on the cultural heritage tourism business in Vietnam has important scientific and practical significance.

Apart from the Introduction, Conclusion, and References, the thesis consists of 4 chapters as follows: 1- Literature review; 2- Scientific basis and research model on cultural heritage tourism business; 3- Potential and current situation of cultural heritage tourism business in Vietnam, a case study of Hoi An ancient town; 4- Solutions to promote cultural heritage tourism business in Vietnam.

The statistical results of the thesis show that many Vietnamese heritages are recognized by UNESCO, of which there

are two world natural heritages, namely, Ha Long Bay and Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park; five world cultural heritages including the Complex of Hue Monuments (1993), Hoi An Ancient Town (1999), My Son Sanctuary (1999), the Central Imperial Citadel of Thang Long (2010), the Ho Dynasty Citadel (2011) and the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long (2010) and the world cultural and natural heritage site of Trang An (2014). Besides, 12 Vietnamese cultural heritages are identified in the UNESCO's representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, including practices of Then by Tay, Nung, and Thai ethnic groups in Vietnam (2019), the art of Bai Choi in Central Vietnam (2017), Xoan singing of Phu Tho province (2011), the worship of Mother Goddesses of Three Realms (2016), the tug-of-war games and rituals (2015), Vi and Giam folk songs of Nghe Tinh province (2014), the art of *Đờn ca tài tử* music and song in Southern Vietnam (2013), the worship of Hung Kings in Phu Tho (2012), the Giong festival of Phu Dong and Soc temples (2010), Ca tru singing (2009), Quan ho folk singing (2009), Hue royal court music (2008), the cultural space of the gongs in the Central Highlands (2008). There are also 3,000 national heritage and 7,500 provincial heritages according to Vietnam's classification criteria, along with many cultural features, customs, practices, and scenic spots. Such advantages contribute to making Vietnam a country with great potential for heritage sites.

The thesis conducted interviews and surveys in typical heritage sites such as Hoi An ancient town, Temple of Literature, Ho Dynasty citadel, and the complex of Hue monuments and some surrounding areas of these heritage sites to assess the potential and current status of cultural heritage tourism business in Vietnam. In particular, Hoi An ancient town was selected as a case study because it has all the elements constituting a complete tourism system including tourism attractions, services of food, accommodation, entertainment, transportation, and high historical - cultural values, which are suitable for studying specific cultural heritage tourism business, characteristics, and similarities and differences of heritage tourism business therein compared to other places.

The thesis results revealed that there is a rapid increase in the number of domestic and international tourists to Vietnam, within 10 years, growing by 264.3% from 4,256,740 tourist arrivals in 2008 to 15,497,791 in 2018. In 2019, Vietnam's world cultural heritages welcomed nearly 21 million tourists, accounting for about 20.39% of the total number of international and domestic tourists to Vietnam, which brings significant revenue to the national economy. Notably, revenue from tourism in Trang An complex, Hue Monuments complex, Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park, My Son Sanctuary, the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, and Ho Citadel is estimated to reach 867.5 billion VND, 378 billion VND, 266 billion VND, 61 billion VND, 11.1 billion VND, and 2.1 billion VND, respectively.

Tourists' pleasure in the service quality is one of the most obvious, direct, and

specific factors to evaluate the current situation of the cultural heritage tourism business. The higher their satisfaction, the better the tourism business, which makes sure its high efficiency and the potential to achieve higher in the future. Accordingly, the results of a survey sample size of 750 people on tourists' satisfaction with the quality of cultural heritage tourism services (1 for the lowest rating, 5 for the highest rating) show that the satisfaction with the service quality of cuisine, accommodation, and heritage features is distinctive with average values of 4.1, 4.3 and 4.1 respectively, higher than that of other remaining services. Tourists' satisfaction with entertainment, transportation, and cultural heritage knowledge services is quite good with average values of 3.9, 3.8, and 4.0, respectively. However, the overall satisfaction with the service quality is also quite good with an average value of 3.8. Thus, the quality of services provided at heritage sites is generally fair and diverse in terms of cuisine, accommodation, transportation, entertainment, heritage information channels, diverse programs, and more creative and innovative events than before.

An assessment of the cultural heritage tourism business in Hoi An ancient town shows that its contribution to the national economy has increased continuously for 5 years from 2015-2019. Revenue from the tourism - trade - service industry in general in 2019 was VND 8,563 billion, up 19.26% compared to 2018. Besides, tourists' satisfaction with the quality of services in Hoi An ancient town is acceptable, in which, the most influential factor is the quality of food services,

then entertainment, transportation, accommodation, knowledge, and information about the cultural heritage and characteristics of Hoi An ancient town.

Assessing the quality of services at heritage sites, the thesis believes that services are almost separated from the concept of heritage characteristics or information/knowledge about heritage sites. Therefore, no matter how perfect the heritage site is in terms of historical and cultural value, or how well the service of providing information about cultural heritage is, it cannot improve the satisfaction of tourists if the food, accommodation, transportation, and entertainment services are of poor quality.

These basic services have a truly great and virtuous effect on tourists' satisfaction with the quality of services in general at the heritage sites.

Based on the analysis and assessment of potentials and business forms, the current situation of cultural heritage tourism business in Vietnam in general, the case study of Hoi An ancient town in particular, the thesis proposes some solutions to promote this business in Vietnam today.

The thesis was successfully defended at the Thesis Examination Council of the Graduate Academy of Social Sciences, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences in 2022.

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