Exogenous factors influencing decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination: A case study of domestic tourists

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Abstract: The study aims to identify exogenous factors affecting the decision to choose rural tourism destinations of domestic tourists. Through 431 survey samples along with quantitative analyses such as reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis and linear regression on SPSS 26 software with a statistical significance level of 5 percent. The results show that eight factors that have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destinations of domestic tourists are community involvement, featured products, resource value of the destination, infrastructure, tourism services, price, information source, and environmental management. Based on these findings, a number of governance implications are suggested to support local management agencies and tourism enterprises to develop effective and sustainable rural tourism development strategies, contributing to the implementation of the goal of rural tourism development associated with green economy, indigenous culture and sustainable livelihoods for people.

Keywords: Tourist destinations, rural tourism, domestic tourists.

1. Introduction

In Vietnam, rural tourism has become a trend of interest for domestic tourists, especially given the increasing demand for a return to nature, experiencing local culture, and embracing a slow lifestyle. It aligns not only with Vietnam's sustainable tourism development strategy but also serves as a solution to transform the rural economy towards services, thereby improving the lives of local residents. With more than 60 percent of its population living in rural areas, Vietnam boasts rich natural resources, unique folklore, and diverse traditional agricultural ecosystems, which provide a vital foundation for rural tourism. Various forms of rural tourism, including community tourism, agricultural experience tourism, and rural ecotourism, are now being prioritized by many regions. Additionally, the government is demonstrating its commitment to tourism development through policies that encourage integration with new rural construction, thereby opening up more opportunities for this sector. Several rural tourism models have been relatively successfully implemented, such as community tourism in Lac village, agricultural tourism in Tra Que vegetable village, ecotourism in Thoi Son islet, and agricultural tourism in Da Lat.

However, over time, efforts to attract tourists to this model still face many limitations. Most of the destinations rely primarily on the available natural tourism resources, which makes them monotonous, lacking uniqueness, and easy to replicate in areas with similar conditions. Most rural tourism activities serve only as supplementary attractions, offering limited appeal to tourists. Additionally, rural tourism services primarily meet the basic needs of travelers, with spending mostly covering sightseeing tickets, dining, and accommodation, while expenses for other ancillary services remain quite low. Many homestays operate spontaneously, with services that are not diverse, complete, and lacking a focus on community identity. Therefore, to attract tourists, especially domestic tourists, it is essential to develop a strategy for implementing creative tourism activities, effectively communicating, and leveraging the advantages of regional connectivity.

Studying the factors influencing tourists' decisions to choose a destination has garnered attention from many scholars. For instance, Pham and Trinh (2022) demonstrated that the choice of a rural tourism destination in the North Central region relies on six groups of factors: the motive for socializing and relaxing, the motivation for exploring, expenses at the rural tourism destination, access to information at the rural tourism destination, typical products of the rural tourism destination, and the management of the destination's environment. Recently, Nguyen and Vo (2022) identified nine factors impacting the decision of tourists to participate in homestay tourism in Ben Tre province, including accommodation and amenities, food and beverage, safety and security, hospitality from the homestay host and family members, homestay programs, natural resources and the environment, cultural heritage and livelihood, homestay operation and management, and marketing communication and promotion. Lately, Nguyen and Nguyen (2024) examined the factors affecting domestic tourists' decisions to select destinations in District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, including socio-demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, religion, occupation, location, income, and marital status), travel time, travel criteria, and travel type. Although studies have analyzed a wide range of factors influencing domestic tourists' choices of destinations, surprisingly, there are few studies that comprehensively explore the external factors affecting domestic tourists' decisions to choose a rural tourism destination in an emerging economy like Vietnam.

Therefore, the study aims to identify the factors influencing decision-making in choosing a rural tourism destination. This research helps localities understand tourist behavior and serves as a crucial foundation for developing a destination strategy that aligns with preferences and market trends, particularly amid the rising competition among different types of tourism to better attract and retain tourists in general and domestic tourists specifically.

2. Literature review

2.1. Related concepts

According to Cooper et al. (2004), a destination is a geographical region defined by tourists that has technical facilities and services meeting their needs. Nguyen (2007) defines a tourist destination as a specific place, characterized by geographical, political, or economic boundaries, with appealing tourism resources and the capacity to attract and serve tourists. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) describes a destination as a geographical space where

tourists stay for at least one night, encompassing tourism products, services, and resources that attract visitors, with clear administrative management boundaries and a distinct identity to compete in the market. Studies by Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) and Fyall and Leask (2006) emphasize that tourists perceive the destination not merely as a geographical location, but as a holistic entity that includes the ecosystem of services, providers, and elements of the experience at the destination. Thus, tourist destinations must not only fulfill needs but also create interest and allure for both domestic and foreign tourists (Nguyen et al., 2020).

The decision to select a tourist destination is one of the key stages in the tourists' decision-making process. According to Um and Crompton (1990), this decision involves choosing a destination from a set that meets the needs of tourists. This decision-making process reflects the interaction between the intrinsic needs of individuals and the objective factors associated with each destination. The study by Hwang (2006) emphasizes that this is the stage at which tourists make their final choice about a destination, meaning they select one from a set of available alternatives that have been considered in previous stages and become actual consumers in the field of tourism.

2.2. Analytical framework

In the world, several studies are related to tourists' decisions in choosing a destination. The study by Correia and Pimpao (2008) was based on the information sources, perceptions, and motivations of tourists that influence the behavioral intentions of Portuguese tourists when deciding to choose South America and Africa.

Mutinda and Mayaka (2012) identified the factors that motivate people in Nairobi to choose domestic tourism destinations, including knowledge and adventure, economic concerns, personal safety, destination information, travel arrangements, destination features, family and friends, leisure and relaxation, religious and cultural considerations, and the desire to show off travel experiences.

The study by Pham and Trinh (2022) shows that the decision to choose a rural tourism destination in the North Central region depends on six groups of factors, including: the motive for socializing and relaxing, the motivation for exploring, expenses at the rural tourism destination, access to information at the rural tourism destination, typical products of the rural tourism destination, and environmental management of the destination.

Tran and Nguyen (2023) pointed out that there are seven factors influencing tourists' decisions to choose ecotourism destinations in the Red River Delta and the Northeast coast of Vietnam, which include: destination image, customer approach, reference group, barriers to ecotourism, attitudes toward eco-destinations, ecotourism knowledge, and motivation for eco-destinations.

The study by Bui (2024), based on TPB theory, engine theory, and generation group theory, identifies five groups of factors influencing the choice of domestic tourism destinations

for the Millennial generation. These factors include the attractiveness of tourist destinations, the convenience of destinations, reference groups, costs at the destination, and the expansion of knowledge and experience.

Based on a comprehensive review of previous studies, the author selected and proposed the analytical framework described in Figure 1:



Figure 1. Analytical framework

Source: Recommended author

2.3. Research hypothesis

According to Correia and Pimpão (2008), the decision to select a destination is influenced by three groups of factors: the characteristics of the destination, personal attributes, and information sources. Specifically, natural resources are a significant factor within the characteristic group of destinations. Previous studies have demonstrated that resource value can be reflected in the diversity of flora (Perdue, 1986), natural features such as topography and climate (Adamowicz et al., 1998), or unique rural landscapes and preserved species (Muntinda & Mayaka, 2012). These factors help shape the image of the destination and directly impact tourists' decisions, especially given the growing demand for green tourism experiences close to nature. Based on these arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1: The resource value of the destination has a positive influence on the decisionmaking on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists According to Muntinda and Mayaka (2012), the diversity and availability of tourism products associated with local characteristics, such as architectural works, historical sites, or traditional handicrafts, contribute to enhancing the attractiveness of the destination. Localities that possess numerous indigenous cultural values expressed through typical products often have a considerable advantage in attracting tourists compared to destinations that lack this factor. This is particularly significant for rural tourism development, where local identity serves as a differentiating factor and provides a unique experience for tourists. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2: Featured products have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists

Tourism services encompass accommodation, entertainment (Correia and Pimpao, 2008), air, road, rail, and company/travel agency services (Ferencová, 2012), along with catering services, shopping, and travel and destination information services (Mlozi et al., 2013). According to Siderelis and Moore (1998), tourism services are a key factor within the characteristics of a destination that significantly influences tourists' choice of destination. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H3: Tourism service have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists

Studies by Crompton (1979), Hsu et al. (2009), and Xiang et al. (2008) confirm the significant influence of infrastructure on travelers' decisions to choose a destination. The convenience and development of transportation, accommodation, electricity, water, and telecommunications systems not only facilitate access to the destination but also enhance tourists' satisfaction levels. If a destination has complete infrastructure, it will improve competitiveness and the ability to retain guests on future trips. Based on these arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H4: Infrastructure have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists

Studies by Crompton (1979), Haider and Ewing (1990), Eymann and Ronning (1992, 1997), and Chen and Tsai (2007) indicate that price at the destination is a crucial factor in tourists' destination choices. Price is closely linked to the value it provides when evaluating both the selection of a destination and the satisfaction of tourists during their visit. If tourists perceive the cost to be commensurate with or less than the value received, the likelihood of choosing and returning to that destination increases. Based on these arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H5: Price have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists

Currently, the issue of environmental sanitation and safety remains a significant concern amid heavy pollution. Correia and Pimpão (2008) argue that the tourism environment encompasses a social aspect, relaxation, fresh air, and an overall sense of safety. Studies by Crompton (1979), Sangikul (2008), and Hsu et al. (2009) indicate that factors such as environmental sanitation, social safety, and destination security significantly influence tourists' choices. Attractive rural landscapes and pollution-free natural spaces are elements that enhance the appeal of rural destinations (Muntinda & Mayaka, 2012). Based on these arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H6: Environmental management have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists

According to Chen and Tsai (2007) and Mutinda and Mayaka (2012), the information travelers access before making a decision greatly influences their level of awareness, expectations, and destination choice. Jacobsen and Munar (2012) have classified information sources into two main groups: traditional and electronic. Popular channels include personal experiences, word of mouth from family and friends, social networks, hotel and restaurant websites, travel agency sites, as well as articles in print newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. In rural tourism, where many products are linked to experience and discovery, word of mouth and online content (such as blogs, reviews, and social media) play a particularly important role in promoting interest and guiding the choice behavior of domestic tourists. Based on the above arguments, the proposed research hypothesis is as follows:

H7: Information sources have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists

According to Mutinda & Mayaka (2012), the involvement of local communities in the tourism model is an intangible factor within the tourism environment that impacts the decision to choose a destination. Engaging with locals at tourist destinations enhances visitors' opportunities for discovery and enjoyment of tourism products. According to Correia and Pimpão (2008), this is reflected in lifestyles, traditional activities, national culture, uniqueness, and indigenous differences. Authentic and interactive experiences with the local community often lead to greater satisfaction, which in turn encourages travelers to choose and return to their destinations. Based on these arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H8: Community involvement have a positive influence on the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists

3. Methodology

The preliminary scale is inherited from domestic and foreign studies by Correia and Pimpao (2008), Mutinda and Mayaka (2012), Pham and Trinh (2022), Tran and Nguyen (2023), and Bui (2024). Additionally, to ensure its suitability for the object and purpose of the research before being included in the official survey, the author conducted group discussions with

several domestic tourists and consulted experts in the field of tourism. By the end of the discussion process, it was evident that the elements in the preliminary scale received high approval. However, to meet practical conditions and the context of the study regarding the terminology of some observed variables, adjustments were made to prevent duplication and to clearly convey the content of the questions to the survey subjects. The formal scale consists of 41 observed variables corresponding to eight independent factors and one dependent factor. The study utilized a 5-level Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

According to Hair et al. (2010), the sample size was selected based on the optimal ratio of 10:1 to ensure appropriate conditions for the exploratory factor analysis. Therefore, with a total of 41 observed variables in the study, the required sample size is 410. To avoid the influence of invalid collected votes on the analysis results, the actual number of distributed questionnaires is 450. The information was gathered by distributing vouchers directly to domestic tourists visiting and utilizing services at agricultural tourism destinations in the Northern region of Vietnam, using a convenient non-probability sampling method. The survey period spans from January 2025 to March 2025. The results yielded 431 valid responses. Out of the total 431 respondents, 174 were male (40.4%) and 257 were female (59.6%). In terms of age, the group aged 26-35 accounted for the highest proportion, with 163 respondents (37.8%), followed by the 18-25 age group, which comprised 109 respondents (25.3%). The 36-45 age group had 84 respondents (19.5%), and those over 45 years old accounted for 75 respondents (17.4%). Regarding education, 248 respondents (57.5%) held a university degree, 96 respondents (22.3%) had a postgraduate degree, 65 respondents (15.1%) possessed a college or intermediate degree, and 22 respondents(5.1%) had a high school diploma. Concerning average monthly income, 186 respondents (43.2%) earned between 10-15 million VND/month, 123 respondents (28.5%) made less than 10 million, 76 respondents (17.6%) earned between 15-20 million, and 46 respondents (10.7%) had an income exceeding 20 million VND per month. For the times of trips to the countryside in the last two years, 134 respondents (31.1%) reported traveling to the countryside once, 179 individuals (41.5%) went 2-3 times, 69 respondents (16%) traveled more than 3 times, and 49 respondents (11.4%) had never traveled but expressed interest and intent.

The formal data is analyzed using SPSS26 software through descriptive statistics, reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlation analysis, and linear regression. The regression model equation is written in generalized form as follows:

 $Dec = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * RV + \beta_2 * FP + \beta_3 * TS + \beta_4 * Inf + \beta_5 * Pri + \beta_6 * EM + \beta_7 * IS + \beta_8 * CI + \epsilon$

In which:

Dec (Dependent variable): Decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination

Independent variables (X_i): Resource value of the destination (RV), Featured products (FP), Travel services (TS), Infrastructure (Inf), Price (Pri), Environmental management (EM), Information sources (IS), Community involvement (CI).

 β_k : Hệ số hồi quy (k = 0, 1, 2,...,8).

4. Research results

The results of the independent factor scale analysis showed that all scales had a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient greater than 0.7, ranging from 0.786 to 0.833. It indicates a high degree of internal consistency among the observed variables within the same scale. Furthermore, the Corrected Item-Total Correlation of the observed variables is above 0.3, which meets the criterion for excluding weak variables that are not correlated with the overall scale. Consequently, the scale of independent factors achieved sufficient reliability, and no observed variables were eliminated, thus satisfying the requirements set by Hair et al. (2010).

Itoms	Cronbach's	Corrected Item-Total	Cronbach's Alpha if	Factor				
Items	Alpha	loadings						
Resource value of the destination								
RV2		0.532	0.804	0.829				
RV1		0.501	0.785	0.815				
RV4	0.912	0.545 0.756		0.792				
RV6	0.015	0.419	0.740	0.767				
RV3		0.526	0.733	0.754				
RV5		0.553	0.728	0.733				
Feature	ed products							
FP1		0.612	0.819	0.810				
FP4		0.639	0.805	0.796				
FP2	0.806	0.573	0.793	0.791				
FP5	0.800	0.564	0.771	0.783				
FP3		0.551	0.760	0.775				
FP6		0.548	0.758	0.743				
Travel	services							
TS1		0.524	0.811	0.835				
TS3		0.568 0.837		0.826				
TS5	0.795	95 0.537 0.809		0.819				
TS2		0.522 0.742		0.803				
TS4		0.510	0.730	0.788				
Infrasti	ructure							
Inf1		0.536	0.784	0.801				
Inf4	0.821	0.592	0.775	0.794				
Inf2	0.021	0.535	0.761	0.776				
Inf3		0.519	0.744	0.753				
Price								

Table 1: Reliability and EFA of independent variables

Thomas	Cronbach's	Corrected Item-Total	Cronbach's Alpha if	Factor	
Items	Alpha	Correlation	Item Deleted	loadings	
Pri1		0.542	0.823	0.818	
Pri3	0.786	0.486	0.814	0.786	
Pri2		0.470	0.804	0.767	
Enviro	nmental managem	ent			
EM1		0.571	0.837	0.826	
EM3	0.833	0.563	0.820	0.815	
EM4	0.033	0.559	0.819	0.807	
EM2		0.534	0.804	0.791	
Inform	ation sources				
IS3		0.526	0.789	0.819	
IS4	0 201	0.519	0.771	0.794	
IS1	0.801	0.480	0.764	0.786	
IS2		0.472	0.732	0.753	
Comm	unity involvement	·			
CI3		0.643	0.791	0.802	
CI1		0.628	0.785	0.793	
CI2	0.817	0.609	0.767	0.778	
CI5		0.582	0.753	0.764	
CI4		0.579	0.741	0.731	
KMO =	= 0.821				
		Approx. Chi-Square	109	10957.243	
Bartlett	t's Test	df	517		
		Sig.	0.00	0.000	
% of Variance 79.815					

Source: Data analysis from SPSS 26

The results of the EFA indicate that the KMO coefficient is 0.821 (> 0.5) and Bartlett's test shows a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05), demonstrating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. At an Eigenvalue greater than 1, eight factors were extracted, accounting for a total variance of 79.815%. It indicates that the extracted factors explained most of the variation in the data, thereby ensuring the generality of the components in the model. Moreover, the factor loadings of observed variables exceed 0.5, indicating that the variables are closely related to their respective factor groups, thereby ensuring high representativeness for each measurement construct, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010).

Table 2: Reliability	and EFA of the	dependent variable
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Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Factor loading			
Decisio	Decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination						
Dec	0.816	0.621	0.812	0.824			

Dec	0.597		7	0.804	0.810	
Dec 0.51 Dec 0.53		8	0.796	0.795		
		0.532		0.773	0.783	
KMO = 0.808						
Bartlett's Test			Approx. Chi-Square		311.264	
		df		4		
		Sig.		0.000		
% of Variance					77.852	

Source: Data analysis from SPSS 26

The results of the analysis of the dependent variable show that the scale meets the requirements of reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.816 indicates that the scale has high reliability, exceeding the threshold of 0.7 recommended by Hair et al. (2010), demonstrating that the observed variables in the scale have a good level of intrinsic consistency. The Corrected Item-Total Correlation of the items ranges from 0.518 to 0.621, surpassing the threshold of 0.3, ensuring that the variables contribute positively to the overall scale.

The EFA results indicate that the KMO coefficient is 0.808, demonstrating that the sample is adequate for conducting factor analysis. Bartlett's test has a significance level of 0.000, which indicates that the correlation matrix between variables is statistically significant and the data is suitable for factor extraction. In the matrix table, with an Eigenvalue greater than 1, the four observed variables clustered into a single group of factors, with a total variance of 77.852 percent, signifying that the extracted factor explains most of the dataset's variation, far exceeding the minimum threshold of 50 percent. Furthermore, the factor loadings of the observed variables range from 0.783 to 0.824, indicating that the variables are closely related to the common factor, and no variables need to be removed. Thus, the results of the analysis meet the conditions established by Hair et al. (2010).

Table	3:	Correlation	ana	lvsis
Labic	υ.	Correlation	ana	19 313

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
(1)	1								
(2)	0.748**	1							
(3)	0.711**	0.224**	1						
(4)	0.739**	0.195**	0.199**	1					
(5)	0.652**	0.208**	0.187**	0.172**	1				
(6)	0.728**	0.251**	0.213**	0.203**	0.215**	1			
(7)	0.693**	0.277**	0.183**	0.255**	0.186**	0.241**	1		
(8)	0.707**	0.183*	0.261*	0.219*	0.239*	0.195**	0.239**	1	
(9)	0.752**	0.212**	0.175**	0.347**	0.173*	0.217**	0.175**	0.212**	1
**Ca	**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.								
*Cor	relation is	significan	t at the 0.0	05 level.					

Notes: (1) = Decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination, (2) = Resource value of the destination, (3) = Featured products, (4) = Travel services, (5) = Infrastructure, (6) = Price, (7) = Environmental management, (8) = Information sources, (9) = Community involvement.

Source: Data analysis from SPSS 26

The results of the correlation analysis show a strong correlation between the dependent and independent factors, as the correlation coefficient exceeds 0.4 and the Significance is lower than 0.05. value is below 0.05. Furthermore, the correlation matrix indicates the absence of multicollinearity among the independent factors, making them suitable for performing regression analysis (Hair et al., 2010).

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized			Collinearity		
		Coefficients		Coefficients	+	Sig	Statistics		
		В	Std. Error	Beta	l	51g.	Tolerance	VIF	
	Constant	0.197	0.021		0.591	0.000			
	RV	0.293	0.035	0.304	0.478	0.000	0.712	1.713	
	FP	0.319	0.018	0.332	0.623	0.002	0.586	1.802	
	TS	0.248	0.021	0.261	0.577	0.000	0.735	1.839	
1	Inf	0.275	0.019	0.286	0.780	0.000	0.677	1.738	
	Pri	0.220	0.023	0.249	0.512	0.001	0.513	1.724	
	EM	0.203	0.011	0.235	0.694	0.000	0.757	1.856	
	IS	0.367	0.020	0.388	0.516	0.003	0.610	1.788	
	CI	0.341	0.017	0.352	0.497	0.000	0.544	1.731	
F = 115.879; Sig. = 0.000									
R	$= 0.837, R^2$	= 0.828,	Adjusted R ²	= 0.809, Durbin	-Watson	= 1.826			
De	ependent var	iable: De	ec						

Table 4: Multiple linear regression analysis results

Source: Data analysis from SPSS 26

The analysis results show that R = 0.837, which indicates that the relationship between the variables in the model is relatively strong. The $R^2 = 0.828$ shows that the model's suitability reaches 82.8%. Simultaneously, the adjusted R^2 reflects the model's fit more accurately, with the overall adjusted R^2 value reaching 0.809. This indicates that the independent factors included in the regression analysis account for 80.9 percent of the variation in the dependent factor, while the remainder is due to extra-model variables and random errors. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.826 satisfies the condition in the domain that allows for the hypothesis that the residuals do not exhibit significant order correlation with each other. Additionally, the results of the ANOVA analysis showed that the significance coefficient of the F statistic was less than 0.05, confirming the overall suitability of the research model. The Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) of the independent variables are less than 2, indicating no multicollinearity among them. Additionally, the histogram analysis results show that the normalized residual has a mean value of 1.07E-16 (close to 0) and a standard deviation of 0.989, which is very close to 1. It demonstrates that the residuals tend to follow a standard distribution, meeting the critical condition of the linear regression model. The distribution curve on the histogram is also quite close to the standard line, reinforcing the reliability of this conclusion. Furthermore, the analysis of the Scatter Plot chart reveals that the data points are randomly distributed and concentrated around the zero throw line, showing no obvious pattern or trend. It suggests that the linear assumption between the dependent variable and the independent variables is not violated, and there are no signs of heteroscedasticity.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Results				
	The resource value of the destination has a positive influence on					
H1	the decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of					
	domestic tourists					
	Featured products have a positive influence on the decision-					
H2	making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic	Supported				
	tourists					
НЗ	Tourism service have a positive influence on the decision-making	Supported				
115	on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists					
Н4	Infrastructure have a positive influence on the decision-making					
11-7	on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists	Supported				
Н5	Price have a positive influence on the decision-making on					
115	choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic tourists	Bupponteu				
	Environmental management have a positive influence on the					
H6	decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of					
	domestic tourists					
	Information sources have a positive influence on the decision-					
H7	making on choosing a rural tourism destination of domestic	Supported				
	tourists					
	Community involvement have a positive influence on the					
H8	decision-making on choosing a rural tourism destination of	Supported				
	domestic tourists					

Table 5: Hypothesis testing

Source: Summary of the author

The equation of the normalized linear regression model is defined as follows:

 $QD = 0.388*IS + 0.352*CI + 0.332*FP + 0.304*RV + 0.286*Inf + 0.261*TS + 0.249*Pri + 0.235*EM + \epsilon$

The analysis results indicate that the decision-making process for domestic tourists choosing a rural tourism destination is directly influenced by eight factors in descending order:

information sources, community involvement, featured products, resource value of the destination, infrastructure, tourism services, prices, and environmental management.

5. Conclusion and implications

The study used a survey sample from 431 domestic tourists in rural tourist destinations in the Northern region of Vietnam in 2025, using the OLS regression method, the study estimated exogenous factors affecting the decision to choose rural tourism destinations of domestic tourists in an emerging economy such as Vietnam. The results of the study allow to suggest a number of policies to attract domestic tourists to the rural tourism model in Vietnam as follows:

First, local governments and tourism businesses must strengthen their communication strategies and diversify information sources. Local authorities and tourism agencies should methodically invest in digital media, leveraging social networking platforms, travel blogs, YouTube channels, TikTok, and more. At the same time, they should collaborate with KOLs and travel bloggers to share positive information and authentic experiences about rural destinations. Additionally, local authorities need to develop websites and mobile applications that intuitively and comprehensively provide tourists with essential information, such as maps, sample itineraries, prices, and notable activities in the area.

Second, local authorities should encourage the participation of local communities by establishing mechanisms that promote homestay services, local guides, and the organization of cultural experience activities, such as cooking, farming, and traditional crafts. Training in community tourism skills, along with the preservation of indigenous culture, will enhance visitor interaction and satisfaction, thereby improving tourist retention and creating sustainable income for local people.

Thirdly, the local tourism industry should focus on developing distinctive products associated with the area, such as traditional crafts, local specialties, folk festivals, and ancient architecture, which highlight the unique appeal of the destination. Authorities and businesses need to prioritize tours centered around local endemic products while also investing in product displays, introductions, and testing at destinations. Additionally, it is essential to develop souvenirs and enhance the quality, design, and market accessibility of OCOP products in tourism.

Fourth, localities need to protect and sustainably manage the values of landscapes, ecosystems, rivers and lakes, terraced fields, and ancient villages. The combination of conservation and the creation of tourism activities associated with nature (trekking, boating, seasonal experiences) will enhance the experience, particularly for tourists who appreciate green tourism. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen efforts to raise community awareness about the protection of local resources.

Fifth, invest in upgrading tourism infrastructure, enhancing the connected transport system, parking lots, signboards, public restrooms, stable electricity, water, and internet networks. In particular, it's essential to improve the quality of accommodation facilities based on the criteria of green, clean, and comfortable, aligning with the trend toward environmentally friendly tourism.

Sixth, enterprises need to enhance service levels, ensuring professionalism, safety, and friendliness. It is vital to establish policies that encourage connections between local service providers to create a closed value chain, while simultaneously improving the capacity to serve groups and long-term guests.

Seventh, local authorities should establish reasonable prices that align with the value of the experience. Destinations need to be transparent about price information, avoid "slashing," and ensure that prices reflect service quality and customer expectations. Additionally, tourism businesses should create comprehensive and flexible travel packages tailored to the needs of different groups (students, families, middle-aged).

Eighth, local authorities must enhance environmental management and ensure safety. A clean and safe environment is essential for sustainable tourism development. Localities should implement measures to manage waste, maintain the hygiene of tourist areas, inspect food safety, prevent fires, and more. Additionally, local authorities need to create a peaceful, quiet, and nature-friendly atmosphere that will boost visitors' positive experiences, particularly in the current trend of seeking resort experiences and health recovery post-epidemic.

Although the study has produced practical results, there are still limitations due to the survey's focus on rural tourist destinations in the North, which does not guarantee that it represents all domestic tourists nationwide. The study also employs a convenience sampling method and a legacy model. Furthermore, the research predominantly addresses external factors without a thorough analysis of internal factors, such as personal motivations or the psycho-social characteristics of tourists. These aspects also serve as suggestions for future studies to broaden the scope, validate the model in different contexts, and incorporate additional factors to enhance the theoretical model in a more comprehensive manner.

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