

Impact of the Covid-19 Passion on Vietnam Tourism

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ABSTRACT: _

Vietnam is considered the leading tourist destination in Asia with an average growth rate of 25% per year (in the period 2015-2018) and ranked 7th in the world (2019) in terms of fast growth rate. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic that occurred at the beginning of 2020, Vietnam's tourism industry faced many difficulties, the number of domestic and international arrivals dropped sharply, and revenue from the tourism industry decreased significantly. This is a common difficulty in the context of the epidemic occurring to the whole society. The research below aims to contribute to promoting the recovery of tourism growth in response to the epidemic that is still raging and getting worse.

Keywords: Tourism; Tourism growth ; Tourism in the time of COVID-19; Tourists.

I. INTRODUCTION

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time in the history of the world, the tourism industry was almost paralyzed. Countries, including Vietnam, have all made great efforts to tighten measures to prevent the disease from spreading. These include the temporary suspension of entry abroad and the implementation of social distancing measures. In Vietnam, the number of international visitors to tourism in the first three months of the year decreased unprecedentedly. After social distancing, many provinces and cities across the country are making efforts to promote domestic tourism. However, in order to recover this comeback, there are certainly many difficulties and challenges. Vietnam has taken steps to change the tourism industry in the context of the ongoing and increasingly complicated COVID-19 epidemic.

II. RESEARCH OVERVIEW, THEORETICAL BASIS AND RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Theoretical foundations of tourism

2.1.1. Tourism concept

According to the authors Nguyen Van Dinh and Tran Thi Minh Hoa (2006), Textbook of Tourism Economics, there are many different conceptions of tourism in the world depending on different research angles. On the basis of synthesizing theories and practices of tourism activities in the world and Vietnam in recent decades, the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality (National Economics University) has given the definition: "Tourism is a business that includes activities of organizing tour guides, production and exchange of goods and services of enterprises, in order to meet travel needs in terms of accommodation, meals, sightseeing, entertainment, learning and other needs of tourists. Such activities must bring practical economic, political and social benefits to the tourism country and to the enterprises themselves.

According to Article 10, the Ordinance on Tourism of Vietnam: "Tourism is an activity of a person outside his or her usual place of residence in order to satisfy the needs of sightseeing, entertainment and relaxation in a certain period of time."

Thus, tourism is an activity with many characteristics, including many participants, forming a very complex whole. Tourism activities have both the characteristics of the economic sector and the characteristics of the socio-cultural sector.

2.1.2. Tourist concept

In the Ordinance on Vietnam Tourism issued in 1999, there are the following regulations on tourists:

At point 2, Article 10, Chapter 1: "Tourist is a person who travels or combines tourism, except for the case of studying, working or practicing to receive income in the destination".

In Article 20, Chapter 4: "Tourists include domestic tourists and international tourists". "Domestic tourists are Vietnamese citizens and foreigners residing in Vietnam traveling within the territory of Vietnam".

"International tourists are foreigners, Vietnamese residing abroad entering Vietnam for tourism, and

Vietnamese citizens and foreigners residing in Vietnam traveling abroad for tourism”.

2.1.3. Tourism product concept

Tourism products are services and goods provided to tourists, created by the combination of exploitation of natural and social factors with the use of resources: material and technical facilities. and work in an establishment, a region or a certain country.

2.2. Research Methods

Within the framework of this research, the author uses the method of collecting secondary documents and a number of research methods such as: statistical method, method of synthesizing and analyzing statistical data on the Covid-19 situation in Vietnam. the world and Vietnam; The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on Vietnam's tourism recently, from data sources of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, the General Statistics Office of Vietnam.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Overview of Vietnam's tourism industry before 2020

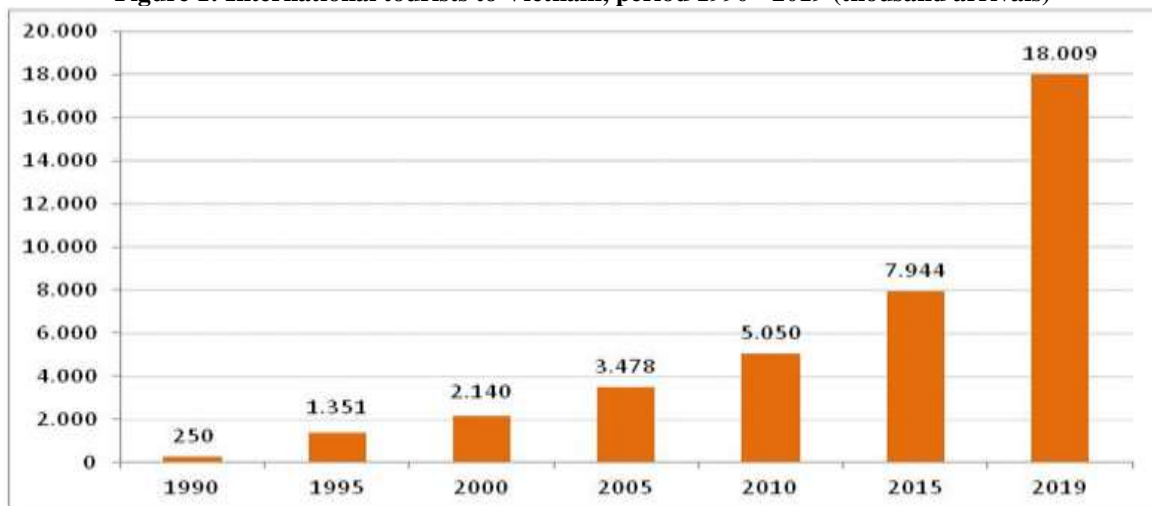
At the Vietnam Tourism Summit held on September 12, 2019, Deputy Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism said: Vietnam is at a stage of rapid and strong development with an increasing number of international tourists. high growth. In the period 2016 - 2018, the average growth rate of international tourists reached 12.8%/year. Vietnam

was voted as Asia's leading tourist destination; Asia's leading cultural destination; Asia's leading culinary destination; Hoi An was voted as Asia's leading cultural city destination and many other prestigious awards at the 2019 World Travel Awards ceremony. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has just announced it. announced the list of the fastest growing tourism countries in the world in 2019, in which Vietnam ranks 7th.

In the period of 2015 - 2018, international tourist arrivals to Vietnam experienced a breakthrough growth, from 7.9 million arrivals in 2005 to 15.5 million arrivals in 2018, an increase of 1.95 times, achieving an average growth rate of 25%. /five. In 2016, Vietnam welcomed 10 million international visitors, up 26% compared to 2015, directly contributing 6.96% to GDP. Two years later, it welcomed 15.5 million international visitors, an increase of 19.9% compared to 2017, directly contributing an estimated 8.5% to GDP. By 2019, the number of international visitors to Vietnam is more than 18,000 arrivals, an increase of 1.16 times compared to 2018.

The competitiveness of Vietnam's tourism has also continuously improved on the rankings of the World Economic Forum (WEF), from 75/141 in 2015 to 67/136 in 2017, 63 in 2019. /140 economies. In which the index groups increased the most: International openness (+15); price competitiveness (+13); aviation infrastructure (+11) compared to 2017.

Figure 1: International tourists to Vietnam, period 1990 - 2019 (thousand arrivals)



(Source: General Statistics Office in 2020)

Vietnam is considered an attractive destination for international tourists with quality and reasonable prices. In recent years, international

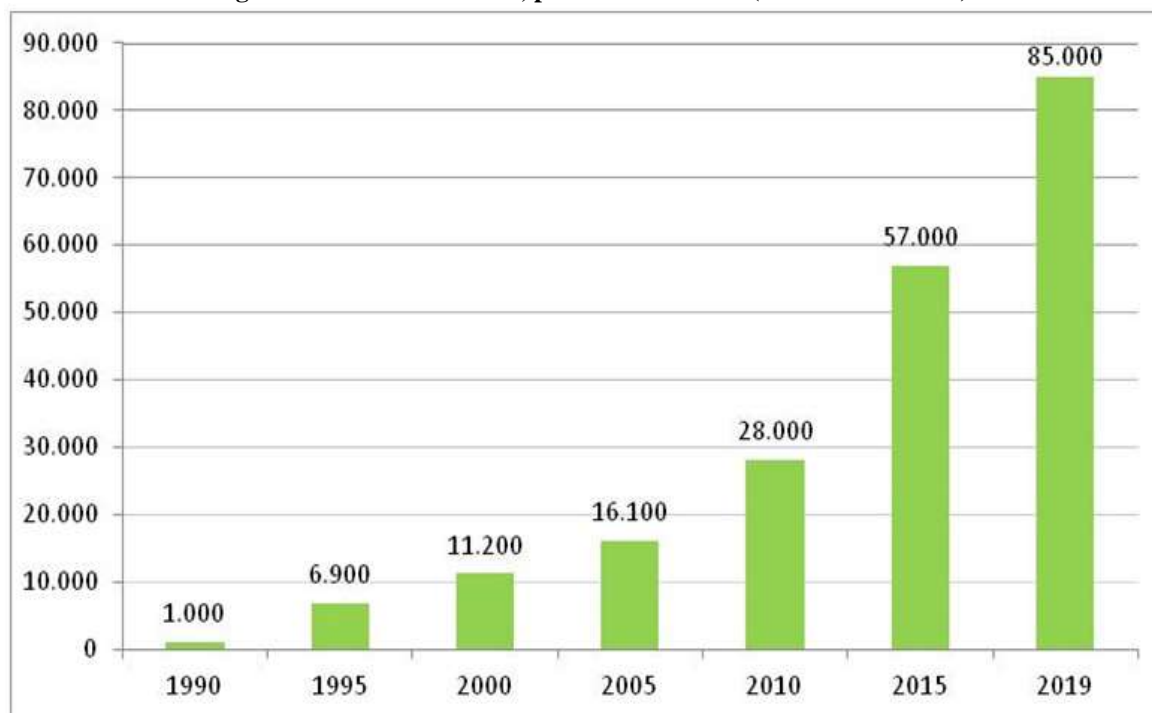
integration has brought Vietnam tourism with new trends but still imbued with national identity. Therefore, it has attracted an increasing number of

international tourists in many countries around the world.

Not only international tourists, domestic tourists are also increasing, tourism brings an increasingly large source of income to the economy. Tourism activities attract the

participation of all economic sectors and people from all walks of life, bringing income not only to those directly engaged in tourism business but also indirectly to related industries and exports. locally and generate income for local communities.

Figure 2: Domestic tourists, period 1990 - 2019 (thousand arrivals)



(Source: General Statistics Office in 2020)

According to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the growth rate of Vietnam's tourism in the period 2015 - 2018 increased by about 25% per year and is one of the 10 countries with the highest tourism growth rate in the world. The number of domestic visitors increased 14 times, from 57 million arrivals in 2015 to 80 million arrivals in 2018. In 2019, the number of domestic visitors reached 85 million arrivals, an increase of 49% compared to 2015. Notably, the total revenue from tourists in 2019 also increased to 726 trillion VND, up 17.1% compared to 2018.

3.2. The current situation of Vietnam's tourism industry from the beginning of 2020 until now

Vietnam recorded the first case of Wuhan pneumonia at the end of January 2020 (on the 29th of Tet). The COVID-19 epidemic broke out and spread strongly across the globe, deeply affecting all areas of activities and life of the whole society.

The epidemic has seriously affected the global economy in general and Vietnam in particular. All economic activities were halted by the strong spread of the disease threatening the health of workers. In particular, the epidemic made the global tourism industry almost paralyzed. Tourism in Vietnam is also heavily affected. According to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, the number of foreign visitors to Vietnam decreased sharply, from about 1.9 million arrivals in January 2020 to more than 400 thousand arrivals in March 2020. The number of international visitors to Vietnam The South in March 2020 was estimated at 449,923 arrivals, down 63.8% compared to February 2020 and down 68.1% over the same period in 2019. Generally in the first 3 months of 2020 it was estimated at 3,686,779 arrivals, down 18.1% over the same period in 2019.

Table 1: Number of international visitors to Vietnam in the first 3 months of 2020

Targets	Estimated March 2020 (passengers)	First 3 months of 2020 (passengers)	March 2020 vs. March 2019 (%)	The first 3 months of 2020 compared to the same period last year (%)
total	449,923	3,686.779	31.9	81.9
Sort by means				
Road no	375.137	2,991.585	34.3	85.1
Seaway	9.024	144.109	44.8	192.1
Road	65,762	551.085	22.1	60.6
Segment by market				
Asia	243.028	2,674,367	22.8	78.9
Americas	27,210	234.050	32.1	79.8
Europe	162.165	664,251	72.5	96.9
Australia	15,455	102.181	50.1	85.6
Africa	2.065	11,930	62.2	102.0

(Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism in 2020)

Due to the complicated situation of epidemics in the country as well as in the world, following the Prime Minister's direction on suspending the issuance of visas to foreigners entering Vietnam for a period of 30 days from 0 As of March 18, 2020, the number of foreign visitors to Vietnam has continuously decreased.

In Vietnam, the number of tourists in April only reached 26,200 people, in May reached 2,700 arrivals, the lowest level in many years. This number of visitors decreased by 13.6% compared to the previous month, and decreased by 98.3% over the same period last year. That is because Vietnam continues to implement measures to prevent and control the COVID-19 epidemic, and has not yet opened its doors to international tourism. The number of visitors to Vietnam at this time are mainly foreign experts and technical workers working on projects in Vietnam. Generally, in the first five months of the year, international visitors to our country reached 3.7 million, down 48.8% over the same period last year.

April 30 is also the time when Vietnam stops the social distancing order, all activities are gradually returned to normal, the products of the tourism industry begin to be launched into the market and are well received by tourists. In recent months, many State regulations have been more open, such as no distance on public transport, opening tourist attractions. Travel companies and

service providers all negotiate, jointly build, and offer products to tourists. Since June 2020, many customers, from individual customers to institutional customers, have all contacted travel agencies to prepare for upcoming trips.

According to a report by the General Statistics Office published on June 29, 2020, although domestic tourism activities have begun to be vibrant again, tourism revenue in the first 6 months of 2020 is estimated at 10.3 trillion dong, down 53.2% over the same period last year. According to experts, such a decrease in revenue is largely due to the fact that the international tourism market has not yet reopened. Specifically, international visitors to our country in June were estimated at 8.8 thousand arrivals, down 61.3% over the previous month and 99.3% over the same period last year. Generally, in the first 6 months of the year, international visitors to our country were estimated at 3,744.5 thousand arrivals, down 55.8% over the same period last year.

With the situation of the COVID-19 epidemic still occurring, international flights to Vietnam and vice versa are very limited. It is very important for Vietnam to change forms of tourism. And currently, the forms of tourism that are being crowned include:

Firstly, domestic tourism products are being deployed strongly by changing tourist's trip habits, from short trips to simple trips - resort tourism products, Points near the resort have

relatively complete entertainment points, which will then expand to other products.

Secondly, the flight tourism product will go to amusement parks across the country, especially to coastal destinations from June to August 2020.

Third, products with stimulus programs, discounts of airlines, hotels, motels and other services are also offered. Units such as agencies and organizations have programs to encourage employee morale after going through the epidemic season.

In the context that all people and families are experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, many families tighten their spending. But the tourism industry still has the potential to boom for the following reasons:

- The peculiarity of Vietnamese people is that they do not spend credit money but save money. Despite the epidemic, people's savings are still there. Therefore, when there is tourism stimulus, people take advantage of travel and entertainment when they have the opportunity to use high-class services at affordable prices. In particular, the services were previously only available to foreigners.

- Extensive international economic integration, access to a lot of information, images stimulate many needs of domestic as well as international tourists.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Health concerns that can last for months make people psychologically discouraged from traveling unless absolutely necessary. Therefore, it is necessary to have specific solutions to gradually recover the tourism industry. Based on the above studies, the author would like to make some recommendations as follows:

Firstly, it is necessary to take measures to reassure tourists through strengthening health measures such as allocating resources to ensure hygiene for transport services, providing medical certificates, etc. stimulate domestic tourism, then international tourism. At the same time, ensure enough hygienic accommodation facilities at an appropriate cost, tour operators and travel service providers to meet the expected increase in demand, albeit at an increased rate. slow, in the near future.

After a long time of implementing epidemic prevention and control measures, people's psychology is very secret, they want to travel to relieve themselves. However, concerns about the risk of infection make many people give up this

idea. Therefore, if the destination is safe and suitable, it will greatly affect their decision.

Second, improve the quality of tourism products and destinations. Accordingly, it is necessary to combine solutions to reduce service prices in parallel with improving service quality. Regarding prices, in the short term, it is possible to use standard tools such as reducing taxes, fees, charges, etc., although this may lead to a decrease in revenue. Therefore, to be more effective, it is necessary to focus on improving the quality of tourism services.

During the epidemic, many businesses in all fields faced difficulties, resulting in workers losing their jobs. That results in them having no income or decreasing income. The lives of many people are threatened, they have to tighten their spending as much as possible. Traveling is a luxury these days. However, tourism products with low prices and reasonable quality will attract more customers.

Third, focus on building brand strategy and product promotion, ensuring service businesses can afford to provide services in the new development environment. The forms of promotion can be: advertising by leaflets, brochures, catalogs, instructions to introduce the management board, tourist resorts, some main attractions, restaurants and hotels in the tourist area. calendar.

Another form of advertising that is quite effective is Internet advertising. This is a form that can be used universally at all times. Support tools for this form to be most effective include beautiful images, attractive and quality videos. In addition, promoting tourism products through tourism forums or national and international tourism organizations also needs to be further promoted. Because these are the official channels that tourists trust when learning about tourism products. Not only during the epidemic period, but at any time, building a brand strategy for businesses in general and travel agencies in particular is extremely necessary and must be done in a timely manner. edition, regularly. That is the next path that every business chooses.

The bad impact from the COVID-19 pandemic has made the operation of Vietnam's tourism industry difficult, even leading to the bankruptcy of many travel businesses and organizations. However, after the pandemic, it is a breakthrough opportunity for pioneering and innovative businesses. Many innovative measures have been applied to help Vietnam's tourism gradually recover and prosper. In order to return to the growth rate as in the past period, it is necessary to have synchronous measures from the central

government to businesses and social organizations inside and outside the tourism industry, including strategic and strategic measures. specific measures to improve the quality of tourism services, and at the same time, focus on measures to ensure the health and safety of tourists.

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