

Dong Thap Muoi regional tourism development in the context of integration

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Goal and objectives of the dissertation

Goal

This dissertation has three main goals. Firstly, the thesis aims to establish a clear theoretical and practical framework for tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region within the context of integration. Secondly, it seeks to assess the current state of tourism development and explore key factors influencing Dong Thap Muoi regional tourism development in the context of integration. This assessment will involve a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats impacting tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region within the context of integration. Finally, the thesis proposes solutions for developing tourism in the Dong Thap Muoi region within the integration framework, aiming to leverage its benefits while mitigating potential drawbacks.

Objectives

To achieve these goals, the thesis sets out four objectives:

- ✓ To systematize and clarify the theoretical and practical foundations for regional tourism development in the context of integration;
- ✓ To assess the current state of tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region in the context of integration;
- ✓ To analyze the factors influencing the tourism development of Dong Thap Muoi region in the context of integration;
- ✓ To propose some solutions for developing tourism in Dong Thap Muoi region in the context of integration.

Methodology

The thesis employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis to assess the current status of tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region in the context of integration. Secondary data was collected from Viet Nam and international sources, while primary data was gathered through surveys of local communities, tourists, and businesses, using a sample size determined by Slovin's formula (1960) to ensure representativeness. Additionally, focus group discussions and interviews were conducted with 25 district-level officials and tourism experts, following the principle of expert sampling to capture key themes (Creswell, 2007; Francis et al., 2010; Guest et al., 2006; Trotter, 2012). Descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and exploratory factor analysis were used to analyze the data. The study adopted regional, participatory, and systemic approaches to understand the geographical, socio-economic, and influential factors for tourism development. Regression analysis determined the degree of influence of various factors based on business assessments.

Results

The analysis results show that all five factors - tourism resources, local community participation, tourism promotion and investment attraction, the development of linkages between localities, and policy institutions - have a positive impact on tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region in the context of integration, based on the assessment of local business households/enterprises. These findings align with prior research by Restrepo & Clavé (2019) on the positive impact of policy institutions, investment promotion, and advertising. Furthermore, the results confirm the findings of Rahman & Salahudin (2021), and Zhang et al., (2022) on the significance of tourism resources and policy mechanisms, as well as Aref *et al.*, (2010); Vieira et al., (2016) on the role of local communities. The thesis emphasizes that integration creates vital linkages between localities, destinations, businesses, and communities, presenting opportunities to attract investment, promote tourism, expand markets, and develop new products leveraging the region's advantages. Building on previous regional tourism

development studies, the thesis provides important contributions regarding theory, research methods, analysis results, and influencing factors.

Theoretical conclusions

The thesis comprehensively researches tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region in the context of integration. It proposes a novel concept of regional tourism development in the integration context as a process in which state agencies, local governments, tourism business organizations, and tourism education, training, and research units within the region link together to develop regional tourism products, planning, infrastructure, and human resources. This collaboration aims to enhance regional tourism development and contribute to the economic, cultural, and social development of the region. The research confirms several key factors affecting tourism development in the integration context, including tourism resources, institutional and policy support, tourism promotion and investment attraction, local community participation, and the development of linkages between localities.

Practical Applications of the Dissertation

The thesis presents new approaches to strengthen the practical contributions for future tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region. Its central original contribution is the emphasis on “development linkages” between localities within the region, in the context of integration. This novel approach provides deeper insights into how local areas can collaborate and leverage their unique strengths to create a competitive tourism destination. Specifically, these linkages and integrations enable the Dong Thap Muoi region to optimize the potential and strengths of each locality (including tourism resources, culture, history, and infrastructure) and foster investment attraction, market expansion, and the creation of diverse and attractive regional tourism products, ultimately drawing domestic and European tourists. Additionally, the thesis provides a rich resource of information and reference materials that can be used for research, teaching, and regional tourism development planning in the context of integration.

Content of the dissertation

Abstract of Chapter 1: Introduction

The introductory chapter provides background on the study of regional tourism development. It outlines the problem identification, and the research gap that the thesis aims to address. This chapter also stated the research questions, objectives, and scope of the study, along with the definition of key terms, research contributions, and the structure of the study.

Abstract of Chapter 2: Literature Review and Practical Basis for Regional Tourism Development in the Context of Integration

This chapter discussed previous literature on the concept of tourism, development, tourism development, regional tourism development, and regional tourism development in the context of integration. It provides support, arguments, and knowledge about regional tourism development in the integration context, including the content research of regional tourism development and the factors that influence it. The chapter also highlights lessons learned from prior research on regional tourism development in Viet Nam and other border regions.

Abstract of Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Characteristics of the Research Area

This chapter presents the current state of the Dong Thap Muoi region's tourism development by analyzing the economic and social aspects. It presents the research methodology, which includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. The chapter outlines the conceptual research framework, unit of

analysis, research approach methods, population and sampling, data collection and analysis techniques, and ethical considerations.

Abstract of Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussion

This chapter details the data analysis and results using qualitative and statistical methods to answer research questions and achieve the outlined objectives. The findings demonstrate the current state of Dong Thap Muoi regional tourism development in the context of integration and identify the key factors impacting it. The results are discussed, and some solutions are proposed for enhancing regional tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region within the integration context.

Abstract of Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter explained how this thesis has addressed the research gap in regional tourism development in the Dong Thap Muoi region in the context of integration. It integrates the three research goals and uses them to develop recommendations for improving regional tourism in the Dong Thap Muoi region. Additionally, this chapter acknowledges the study's limitations and suggests interesting future research topics to further expand knowledge in this area.

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