

DESTINATION IMAGE IMPACT ON THE INTENTION TO RETURN TO BAC LIEU CITY (VIETNAM) OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to determine the factors affecting the intention to return to Bac Lieu city of domestic tourists. The research method is qualitative to determine the model and quantitative to measure the influence of factors on the intention to return tourists. The research model includes Infrastructure for tourism; Accommodation establishments; Sightseeing means of transport; Catering and entertainment services; Security, order and safety; Perceived price; Cultural and natural environment. The results of data analysis of 390 tourists, carried out through descriptive statistics, aggregate reliability (CR), measurement model fit, and linear structural model evaluation (PLS-SEM) have identified five factors affecting the satisfaction and intention to return of tourists, including Cultural and natural environment; Sightseeing means of transport; Catering and entertainment services; Accommodation establishments; Security, order and safety. From the research results, the management implications are proposed to improve the return intention of tourists.

Keyword: -Bac Lieu, Satisfaction, Tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become an indispensable need in human life. To create success, please and attract tourists, maintaining visitors' intention to return is an indispensable task of planners (Chen & Tsai, 2007). The image of a tourist destination is one of the important factors affecting the choice of tourists (Beerli et al., 2004), and is also the foundation for building a tourist destination brand (Hailin et al., 2011). Bac Lieu is a destination with many diverse natural and humanistic tourism resources, where important conditions are met for tourism development; is an attractive tourist destination that visitors cannot ignore in the tour and travel route of the Mekong Delta. Bac Lieu is home to a beautiful coastline and lush mangrove forests; blessed with favourable rain and wind, a harmonious and rich combination of cultural identities of the three ethnic groups Kinh - Hoa - Khmer with many cultural-historical relics and scenic spots such as Memorial Park of Southern Don Ca Tai Tu and Musician Cao Van Lau, Nha Mat tourist area, Bac Lieu bird garden eco-tourism area, Bac Lieu bird garden tourist area, Quan Xian Buddha's garden tourist area, Quan Xian Buddhist temple, Nha Trang tourist area, Nha Trang tourism area Hunan ecology ... The investment in technical facilities and tourism infrastructure has also created many new, high-quality, diversified, branded tourism products bearing the identity of Bac Lieu. However, after the Covid-19 pandemic, the results of Bac Lieu's tourism business are still not commensurate with the inherent tourism potential. Bac Lieu tourism still has many limitations, rich tourism potential but a lack of investment to exploit effectively; The system of technical facilities has not been fully invested in and developed: from sightseeing programs, accommodation and food

services to activities at the destination; The number of visitors increased rapidly, but the length of stay was low, which affected economic efficiency. This is an important reason why the level of satisfaction, the intention to return as well as the willingness to introduce the tourist destination of Bac Lieu to friends and relatives remains low. Besides, the tourism market has also become more competitive, with more and more other tourist destinations, tourists have more experience as well as have more choices of tourist destinations and demand for tourism quality is increasing. Therefore, it is necessary to study the intention of returning domestic tourists to Bac Lieu City. On that basis, the management implications are proposed to improve the intention of domestic tourists to return to Bac Lieu tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical basis

Destination image: attractive attributes such as natural conditions, infrastructure, visitor amenities, culture, and government support; These attributes influence tourists' perception and behaviour (Markin, 1974; Cai, 2002). Destination brand represents a distinctive, separate part of the tourist destination image (Blain et al., 2005).

Destination: is a geographical area that contains a group of tourism resources and tourist attractions such as infrastructure, equipment, service providers, other support sectors, and management organizations with which they interact and coordinate activities to deliver the experiences that tourists expect at a chosen destination (Lynch & Tinsley, 2001). In the field of tourism, Briciu (2013), argues that destinations have values that are closely related to tourism activities performed in a certain geographical space.

Behavioural intention: Ajzen (1991) defines intention as including motivational factors that influence an individual's behaviour; These factors indicate the level of willingness or effort that an individual will put into performing the behaviour. Ajzen (1991) suggested that intention is directly affected by "attitude", "subjective norm" and "perceived behavioural control". In it, attitude is "an individual's assessment of the results obtained from performing a behaviour".

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): Ajzen's (1991) was developed from the theory of rational action of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). Accordingly, the theory of intended behaviour holds that intention is assumed to include motivational factors and is defined as the degree of individual effort to perform the behaviour; Intention is the closest antecedent of behaviour and is predicted by attitude (Attitude Toward Behavior (AB), subjective norm (SN) and perceived behavioural control (PBC), respectively). The theory of intended behaviour further assumes that the components are in turn determined by the most prominent expectation and estimates the expectations for each of them: behavioural expectations about attitudes toward a given behaviour, or specific expectations about the outcome of performing the behaviour.

2.2 Relevant research

Yoon and Uysal (2005), providing an integrated approach to explain the influence of motivation, have shown that push and pull both directly affect satisfaction, through which satisfaction positively affects tourist loyalty. Traction motives are extrinsic factors related to natural and historical attractions, cuisine, people, recreational facilities, and destination image. While thrusts are the factors that motivate or create the inner desires of tourists. Research evaluating the attractiveness of destinations that Hu and Ritchie (1993) have identified include 05 groups of factors affecting tourist attraction: Natural factors; Social factors; Historical factors; Leisure and shopping conditions; Infrastructure, cuisine, and accommodation. According to Nguyen Trong Nhan (2013), the satisfaction level of domestic tourists for garden tourism in the Mekong Delta includes Infrastructure for tourism; Accommodation establishments; Sightseeing means of transport; Catering, shopping and entertainment services; Security, order and safety; Tour guide; Prices of services. On the other hand, Mai Ngoc Khuong and Nguyen Thao Trinh (2015) said that the factors affecting tourists' satisfaction and intention to return include: Destination image; Cultural and Natural Environment; Safety and security; infrastructure; Perceived price. However, the New Search factors; Relaxation and entertainment; Local food; Accessibility had no impact on visitor satisfaction and intention to return. According to Ho Huy Tuu and Tran Thi Ai Cam (2012), the intention to return and positive word of mouth of tourists: Visitors' satisfaction is affected by factors (Environment; Facilities; Socio-cultural; Entertainment; Cuisine; Difference); The higher the satisfaction, the greater the impact on visitors' intention to return and positive word-of-mouth about the destination. According to Mai Ngoc Khuong and Nguyen Pham Anh (2017), the factors affecting tourists' destinations are satisfaction and the degree of influence of these factors on tourists' intention to return:

Tourist destination; Fun and entertainment; Natural Environment and Cultural and Historical Attractions. According to Ho Le Thu Trang, Pham Thi Kim Loan (2012), the willingness to return of domestic tourists is influenced by satisfaction; environmental sanitation in tourist destinations; the professionalism of the staff; information about tourist attractions; the variety of activities to participate in and local souvenirs.

2.3 Research hypothesis

Infrastructure for tourism: the infrastructure system serving tourism activities and visitors. Including the road system, and all the existing physical foundations in the tourist area. Bac Lieu continuously invests in material and technical facilities and tourism infrastructure has also created many new, high quality and unique tourism products with high tourist attraction. Tourism infrastructure influences destination quality and tourists' perceived value of travel (Murphy et al., 2000). Infrastructure is the basic system that meets the needs of tourists, creating favourable conditions for accessing and experiencing tourism activities (Nguyen Trong Nhan, 2013; Phan Minh Duc & Dao Trung Kien, 2017). Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H1: Infrastructure tourism has an impact on visitor satisfaction.

Accommodation establishments: a system of diverse and high-quality accommodation facilities to serve tourists well and also bring about high investment efficiency because this is a special need when travelling, affecting visitor satisfaction (Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Nguyen Trong Nhan, 2013). Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H2: Accommodation establishments have an impact on visitor satisfaction.

Catering and entertainment services: Food and beverage services are a factor that tourists are particularly interested in. When travelling, any visitor wants to enjoy delicious food, which is a local speciality, prepared to suit the taste, to rest in a luxurious and comfortable place. At the same time, there are various amusement and entertainment areas, to meet the needs of visitors (Ho Huy Tuu & Tran Thi Ai Cam, 2012). Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H3: Catering and entertainment services have an impact on visitor satisfaction.

Security, order and safety: safety is a factor that makes visitors feel secure, there are no dangers, risks, or incidents for visitors (ensuring the safety of both life and property), the resort cares about measures to ensure absolute safety for visitors and that reputation is shown over time. Narayan et al. (2008) said that the safety outcome is the factor affecting the satisfaction of tourists because safety is the most important factor to ensure a happy trip. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H4: Security, order and safety have an impact on visitor satisfaction.

Cultural and natural environment: the natural landscape, natural elements, historical and cultural relics, creative human works and other human values that can be used to meet tourism needs, is the basic element to form tourist resorts, tourist attractions, tourist routes, tourist cities. The better the impressions of the landscape and tourist environment that the destination brings to visitors, the more satisfied visitors will be (Ho Huy Tuu & Tran Thi Ai Cam, 2012; Mai Ngoc Khuong & Nguyen Thao Trinh, 2015). Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H5: Cultural and natural environments have an impact on visitor satisfaction.

Perceived Price: Price is also one of the important factors used by researchers to measure customer satisfaction. Several researchers have demonstrated a significant relationship between price and customer satisfaction (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). Prices of services in tourism usually include food, travel, accommodation, shopping, sightseeing, entertainment and other local services (Nicolau & Mas, 2006). The types of services, tourist attractions serving sightseeing and entertainment to sell to tourists to enjoy the service, with suitable prices, they feel satisfied and will choose to go to that tourist area more. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H6: The perceived price has an impact on visitor satisfaction.

Sightseeing means of transport: means a means of transport guaranteed to serve tourists according to the tour program. Must be issued with a registration number plate, and posted freight rates; A team of professional service drivers ensures safety so that they can advise visitors on reasonable schedules, introduce the city's attractive monuments and attractions, and help find local places to rest and shop (Nguyen Trong Nhan, 2013). Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H7: Means of transportation for sightseeing have an impact on visitor satisfaction.

Visitor satisfaction: depends on the expectations and experiences at the tourist destination of tourists (Oliver, 1980). According to Pizam et al. (1978), visitor satisfaction is the result of the interaction between the perceived value and the visitor's expectations about the destination. Oliver (1980) argues that the difference between the expected value

and the perceived value of how the tourism product affects the emotions of tourists will determine the level of tourist satisfaction with that product. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H8: Visitor satisfaction has an impact on the intention to return to tourism.

Visitors' intention to return: According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), behavioural intention is defined as the extent to which individual plans to perform or not to perform certain behaviours in the future. According to Chi and Qu (2008), tourists' intention to return to a destination includes the intention to return and the willingness to recommend the destination to other potential visitors. Visitors' intention to return to a destination is understood as the preference/intention behaviour to return to a destination that tourists experience as well as the intention to recommend the destination to others (Chaudhuri, 1999).

The relationship between visitor satisfaction and intention to return: Tourist intention to return is a behaviour influenced by many factors such as destination image, perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008). Visitor satisfaction plays an important role in the success of destination marketing strategy as it influences destination choice, consumption of products and services during travel and tourists' decision to return (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Mai Ngoc Khuong & Nguyen Thao Trinh, 2015; Dinh Phi Ho & Dang Trang Vien Ngoc, 2020). Many tourists intend to return to a destination if they are satisfied with the destination on their first visit (Mazurski, 1989; Court & Lupton, 1997).

2.4 Proposed research model

From the theoretical basis of customer satisfaction, domestic and foreign empirical studies on the satisfaction and intention to return to tourism of tourists (Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Nguyen Trong Nhan, 2013; Mai Ngoc Khuong & Nguyen Thao Trinh, 2015; Dinh Phi Ho & Dang Trang Vien Ngoc, 2020). Besides, through consultation with experts, a research model has been proposed with 07 factors as follows: Infrastructure for tourism; Accommodation establishments; Sightseeing means of transport; Catering and entertainment services; Security, order and safety; Perceived price; Cultural and natural environment affects visitor satisfaction; From satisfaction affects the intention to return to Bac Lieu of tourists.

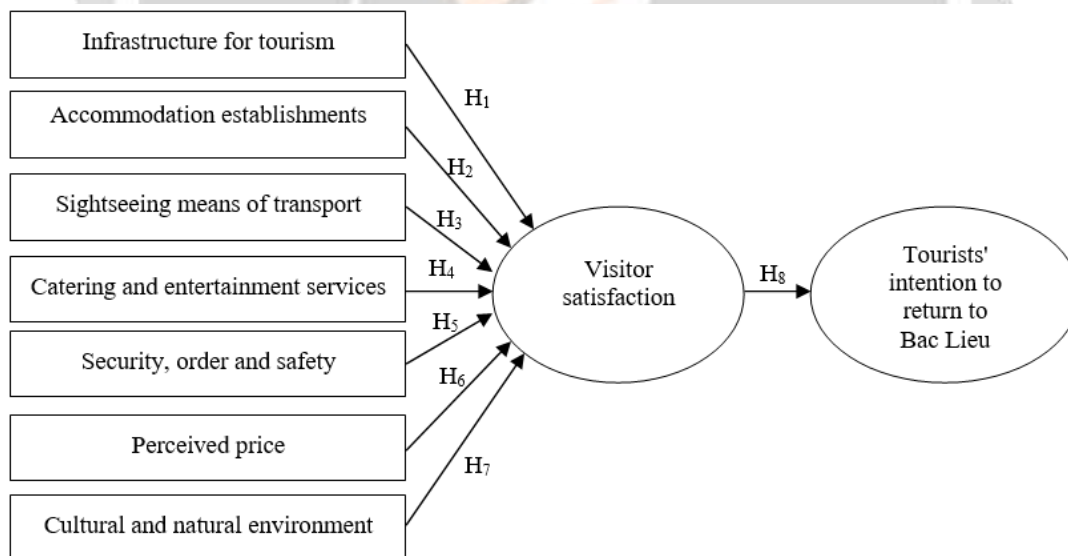


Fig-1: Research model

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study used qualitative research methods combined with quantitative research. Qualitative research to synthesize, analyze and determine the factors affecting the satisfaction and intention to return of domestic tourists; identify models, and build scales in research. It is carried out based on the theory and previous research models on the factors affecting the satisfaction and intention of tourists to return to a tourist destination. Then, consult experts who are managers and businesses knowledgeable in the tourism field of Bac Lieu province to determine the research model and calibrate the research scale. The results of the theoretical model are evaluated to be consistent with practice and research context in Bac Lieu. Next, the preliminary study was conducted in the form of quick

interviews with 30 tourists in a convenient sampling way to check and calibrate the scale. Through this step, the scales are calibrated to build the official scale, serving the official survey.

The formal research was carried out by quantitative research, using the 5-level Likert scale, conducted through the form of sending survey questionnaires directly to tourists, then data processing using SPSS 26.0 and SmartPLS 4.0 tools performed through the following steps: descriptive statistics; The reliability of the scale is checked by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, the composite reliability test (CR), measurement model evaluation and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results of the survey data analysis will be the basis for making management implications to improve the return intention of tourists.

Determination of sample size: according to Hair (2009), to use exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the sample size is good when the ratio of observations/measured variables is 5:1, that is, 1 measurement variable needs at least 5 observations. The study has 07 independent variables, with 33 observed variables, so the number of observations should be larger than the minimum sample size of $33 \times 5 = 165$; according to Schumacker and Lomax (2004), a sample size of 10 or 20 observations is required for each variable; The suitable sample size to use structural modelling (SEM) is from 300 - 500, so the study determines the sample size to be 400, ensuring the reliability of the research data. The primary data used in the study were collected by convenience non-probability sampling method. Based on ease of contact, convenient opportunity to reach out to respondents, to reach a diverse range of respondents in terms of age and gender. For the case of group guests, the Interviewer only approached and surveyed one tourist to contribute to ensuring the representativeness of the survey sample (except for the elderly and children, guests staying overnight).

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive statistics

With 400 survey questionnaires issued, after collecting, entering and cleaning data, 390 valid votes were obtained and used for data analysis. The results of a survey of 390 visitors showed that 42% were male and 58% female. The majority of tourists are single people (accounting for 62.6%); Married tourists accounted for 37.4%.

The most concentrated age group is under 35 years old (accounting for 68%), followed by middle-aged from 35 to 50 years old (accounting for 19%), and the rest are over 50 years old (accounting for 13%).

The occupation with the highest concentration is the group of workers and public employees with the rate of 40.4%; Students, Students accounted for 10.6%; business and trading group accounted for 28.5%; housewives and pensioners account for 20.5%.

Income below 5 million/month accounts for 20.5%; income from 5 to 10 million/month accounted for 54.4%, income level from over 10 million dong was 25.1%.

4.2 Measurement model analysis results

The data were analyzed using linear least squares structural analysis (PLS-SEM). External loading factor: coefficients reaching values from 0.787 - 0.925 are all greater than 0.708 quality observed variables (Hair et al., 2017).

Testing the reliability and convergence of the scale: all factors have reliability with Cronbach's coefficient Alpha greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017), specifically ranging from 0.803 - 0.922.

Composite reliability (CR): all factors meet the requirements with coefficients greater than 0.7 and values from 0.884 - 0.942 (Hair et al., 2017).

The coefficient of total variance extracted (AVE): of all factors greater than 0.5 met the test requirements, ranging from 0.681 - 0.804 (Chin, 1988; Hock & Riengle, 2010).

Table 1: Checking the reliability of the scale

The scale	Outer loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Infrastructure for tourism (HT)	0.769 - 0.945	0.932	0.731
Accommodation establishments (LT)	0.840 - 0.852	0.909	0.732
Catering and entertainment services (DV)	0.792 - 0.875	0.888	0.690
Security, order and safety (AN)	0.805 - 0.845	0.942	0.804
Cultural and natural environment (MT)	0.854 - 0.886	0.890	0.753

Perceived price (GC)	0.658 - 0.793	0.885	0.681
Sightseeing means of transport (PT)	0.758 - 0.888	0.873	0.719
Visitor satisfaction (HL)	0.830 - 0.861	0.872	0.722
Tourists' intention to return (YD)	0.810 - 0.886	0.882	0.736

Source: data analysis results of 390 visitors

Discriminant value: helps to ensure the difference, there is no correlation between factors using the measure of factors (Hair et al., 2017), by squaring the sum of variance extracted AVE. The cross-load coefficient of these factors is (0.896; 0.831; 0.825; 0.850; 0.855; 0.855; 0.868; 0.848, 0.858) which is larger than the load factor of the parts below, showing the assurance of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT): all coefficients from (0.056 – 0.343) are less than 0.85 to achieve discriminant validity (Kline, 2015).

Table 2. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

	AN	DV	GC	HL	HT	LT	MT	PT	YD
AN									
DV	0.064								
GC	0.043	0.162							
HL	0.102	0.375	0.284						
HT	0.514	0.039	0.061	0.056					
LT	0.067	0.322	0.243	0.339	0.057				
MT	0.051	0.415	0.405	0.525	0.063	0.343			
PT	0.052	0.166	0.289	0.235	0.065	0.133	0.202		
YD	0.120	0.323	0.119	0.358	0.073	0.164	0.472	0.096	

Source: data analysis results of 390 visitors

4.3 Analysis results of linear structural model

Apply a non-parametric bootstrap procedure (Hair et al., 2019). to test the significance level. In this study, the Bootstrapping technique was carried out 5000 times to ensure the requirements of testing the linear structural model. Variance magnification factor (VIF): coefficients with values from (1.000 – 1.357) less than 5 should be accepted as not violating multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019). To measure the relevance of the model to the research reality. The SRMR (standardized root mean square residual) of the model is $0.048 < 0.08$, so the model is considered appropriate (Hair et al., 2017).

The fit of the model: analysis results show. The adjusted R² value of the HL model is 0.592, which means that the independent variables explain 59.2% of the HL variables, the model is said to be strongly explanatory (Hock & Riengle, 2010; Hair et al., 2019) and the adjusted R² value of the YD model is 0.406; variable HL explained 40.6% of variable YD meets the model fit criteria.

Coefficients (P-Values): the coefficients are all less than 0.05, so the relationships are statistically significant. However, GC and HT factors have $P > 0.05$; So hypothesis H1, and H6 is not accepted shows that Perceived Price and Sightseeing Transportation do not affect satisfaction at a 5% significance level (95% confidence level), variables LT, PT, DV, MT, AN, and HL have $P < 0.05$; confirm hypothesis H2, H3, H4, H5, H7, H8 is accepted at the 5% significance level (95% confidence level).

The level of impact of the factors (estimated coefficients) on the satisfaction and intention to return tourists is positive diminishing effects include Satisfaction; Cultural and natural environment; Sightseeing means of transport; Catering and entertainment services; Accommodation establishments; Security and safety.

Standardized regression coefficient: shows the relationship between the impact variables of the independent variables and the dependent variable. The direct effects (TT) of the variable HL (0.326), AN (0.106), DV (0.148), LT (0.127), MT (0.326); PT (0.320) indirect effects (GT) of the independent variable ANS (0.034), DV (0.048), LT (0.041), MT (0.106), PT (0.034).

Table 3. The results of testing the relationship between variables

Hypothesis	Relationship	Impact	Original sample (O)	Total	P - Values	Hypothesis evaluation
H8	HL -> YD	TT	0.326	0.326	0.000	Accept
H5	AN -> HL	TT	0.106	0.140	0.045	Accept
	AN -> HL -> YD	GT	0.034		0.050	
H4	DV -> HL	TT	0.148	0.196	0.001	Accept
	DV -> HL -> YD	GT	0.048		0,000	
H6	GC -> HL	TT	0.068	0.090	0.108	Does not accept
	GC -> HL -> YD	GT	0.022		0.122	
H1	HT -> HL	TT	0.006	0.008	0.929	Does not accept
	HT -> HL -> YD	GT	0.002		0.930	
H2	LT -> HL	TT	0.127	0.168	0.005	Accept
	LT -> HL -> YD	GT	0.041		0.017	
H7	MT -> HL	TT	0.326	0.432	0.000	Accept
	MT -> HL -> YD	GT	0.106		0.000	
H3	PT -> HL	TT	0.320	0.354	0.011	Accept
	PT -> HL -> YD	GT	0.034		0.012	

Source: data analysis results of 390 visitors

From the above analysis results, we can conclude that the theoretical model fits the research data and there are 5 accepted research hypotheses, including 6 direct relationships and 5 indirect relationships.

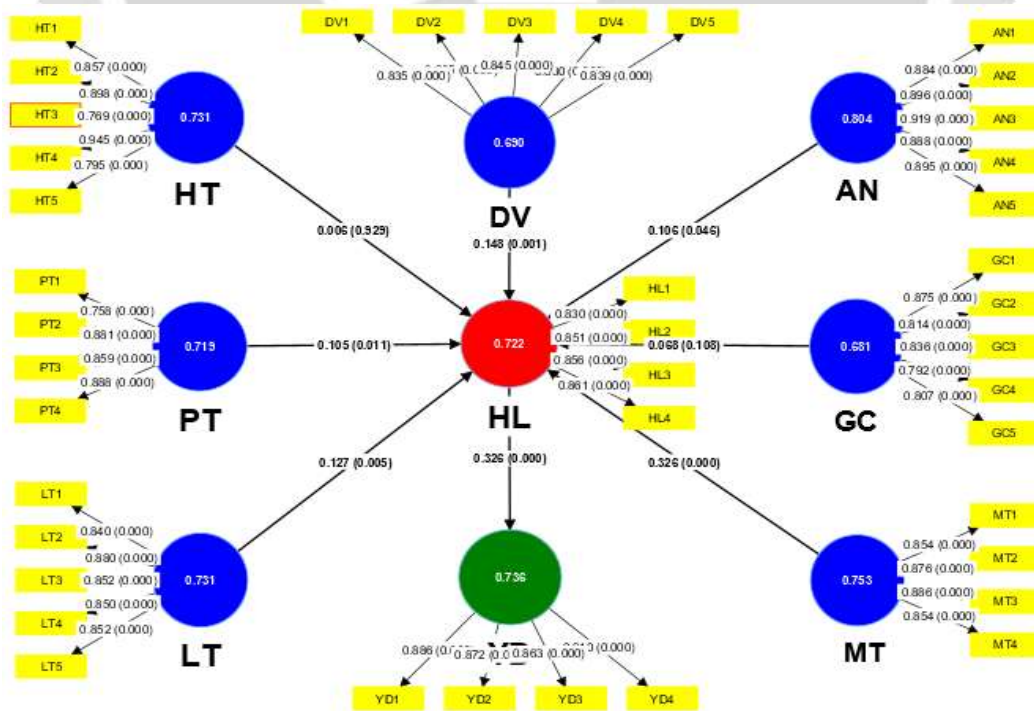


Fig-2: Linear structural model

Source: data analysis results of 390 visitors

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study has built and tested the model of factors affecting the satisfaction and intention to return to the tourist destination in Bac Lieu city of tourists with the factors representing the decreasing influence level including Cultural and natural environment; Sightseeing means of transport; Catering and entertainment services; Accommodation establishments; Security order and safety. However, the study also identified the infrastructure for tourism; Perceived price has no impact on tourists' intention to return to Bac Lieu tourism.

Based on the results of data analysis, the main findings, the authors give some implications for city leaders to increase the factors that have the strongest impact on the intention to return to Bac Lieu tourism of domestic tourists: Cultural and natural environment; Sightseeing means of transport; Catering and entertainment services; Accommodation establishments; Security and safety.

Limitations and directions for further research: The study uses a convenient non-probability sampling method, the sample size is still relatively small and only 07 factors affect the satisfaction and intention to return of tourists. From the above limitations, the authors propose several research directions for future topics such as expanding the research scope, increasing the sample size and considering adding new factors to the research model.

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