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Original Article

Developing Green Tourism in the Hotel Industry in Vietnam

¹Nguyen Thi Hien, ²Dao Thi Thuong, ³Nguyen Duc Duong

^{1,2}Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment, Hanoi, Vietnam ³East Asia University of Technology, Vietnam.

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Abstract: According to UNWTO, Vietnam is ranked 6/10 countries with the highest tourist growth rate in the world and voted by WTA as Asia's leading tourist destination. However, accompanied by high growth rates are adverse effects on resource, environmental and cultural issues. This is a manifestation of unsustainable development. Therefore, promoting green tourism is positioned as a crucial necessity, requiring Vietnam's tourist sector in general and enterprises engaged in the industry, including hotels in particular, to continuously work towards achieving this objective. This article discusses the development of green tourism and its applications in the hotel business in Vietnam.

Keywords: Green Tourism, Green Tourism Development, Green Hotel.

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has grown enormously in the past few decades due to economic growth, global demand, and scientific and technological progress. However, this development is associated with environmental problems, negative impacts on local organisms and culture, and resource degradation. The consequences of tourism are a topic of public concern, and many tourists are ready to pay more for activities that promote sustainable tourism and help the neighbourhood (Cheng et al., 2018). According to a TripAdvisor survey, 34% of travellers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly lodging and eco-friendly excursions, and 50% more tourists spend money with businesses that support local economies and environmental protection. The necessity for modification and adaptation in the tourism sector is highlighted by climate change, environmental pollution, and the COVID-19 pandemic. After the Covid-19 pandemic, awareness of the value of the environment and a sense of sustainability has increased. According to research by Green Destination, over 60% of tourists are willing to pay more to experience green and responsible tourism. This poses an opportunity to develop green tourism in Vietnam and meet customers' travel needs in the new situation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) Green Tourism and Green Tourism Development

The rational and practical exploitation of natural resources, development linked to environmental protection, biodiversity preservation, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change adaptation are the foundations of green tourism, according to the Tourism Development Research Institute. The secret to responsible tourism growth and guaranteeing sustainable tourism development is to promote green tourism. Green tourism development is tourism development that ensures compliance with the principles of respecting and protecting natural resources, protecting the environment, developing friendly tourism, and not disrupting the environmental landscape; associated with the preservation and promotion of cultural and national values; ensuring national defense, security, social order, and safety, and create opportunities for exchange, learning, and mutual help among people of different regions, as well as countries and ethnic groups.

In the hotel business, green tourism development is understood as the efforts of hotels to become more environmentally friendly by saving energy and water resources and creating a "green" culture in service. While still providing quality service.

The "green" criteria in the hotel include:

- Management of energy, water, waste, and air: With this criterion, hotels have solutions to use renewable energy; have appropriate wastewater and waste treatment technology before discharging into the environment; minimize the use of cleaning chemicals that are harmful to the environment, but instead are biological products, ...
- Activities related to service delivery: Using environmentally friendly materials for disposable hotel items (such as combs, toothbrushes, razors,...).
- According to recent information, as part of an effort to reduce waste, the European Commission plans to ban small bottles of shampoo and shower gel in hotels that significantly impact the environment due to using a lot of plastic—and paper. Accordingly, the hotel will provide toiletries in large bottles, which can be used many times and cannot be returned by guests.



- > "Green" staff: Hotels must encourage employees' participation in green tourism development through training sessions and contests on maintaining awareness issues in the service culture.
- ➤ Developing green tourism in hotels brings many benefits to these accommodation establishments. Some of the prominent benefits can be listed here:
- > Enhance customer confidence: customers will feel more satisfied when staying at a green hotel and tend to return if the hotel meets environmental protection requirements.
- Reduce operating costs: By applying solutions to save energy, resources and reduce waste, hotels can reduce operating costs and save costs in the long run.
- ➤ Create a competitive difference: Customers are increasingly sensitive to environmental issues and will prioritize staying at green hotels. Recognizing a green hotel can help hotels increase their competitiveness and brand.
- Motivating employees: By participating in green tourism activities, hotels can also motivate employees by training and guiding employees to implement green activities. At that time, they will feel more satisfied with their work and will be more motivated to work, thereby improving service quality and increasing sales.
- ➤ Increase revenue: thanks to an increased number of customers, cost savings, creating competitive differences, and helping green hotels grow revenue.
- ➤ Contributing to environmental protection: green tourism activities have a positive impact on the environment, helping to reduce waste, save energy and resources, protect natural resources, and contribute to the sustainable development of the domain. Sustainable Development.

With such benefits, green tourism is becoming a new development trend in the tourism industry, and hotels and hotels can take advantage of it to improve business efficiency.

B) Principles of Tourism Development towards Green Growth

- Ensuring a stable growth rate, focusing on developing in-depth, quality, and efficiency; "greening" tourism business and consumption activities.
- Investment in tourism development must be in the direction of "green investment"; investment must be responsible, exploit, economically and efficiently use natural resources and resources for tourism development; respect the originality of tourism resources, ensure the harmony between conservation and development, do not trade resources for tourism development at all costs.
- > Create a system of technical infrastructure, human resources, and other components for the tourism industry to ensure compatibility with the industry's model for green growth.
- To attach importance to protecting natural resources, the environment, and the conservation of biodiversity; adapting to climate change, minimizing adverse impacts and damage caused by climate change.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce environmental pollution.
- ➤ Developing tourism based on a civilized, polite, friendly, and safe social environment; tourism development for people and people; ensuring the community and people enjoy the values of tourism; creating green and sustainable jobs, increasing incomes, and improving living standards for people; well solve social security and welfare issues; preserve and promote optimally national cultural values and identities.
- > Develop tourism on the principle of fairness and equality.

C) Impact factors

- Institutions and policies: Green tourism development must be oriented in the guidelines and guidelines of the Party, in the system of policies and laws of the State.
- Socio-economic conditions: tourism is an integrated, interdisciplinary economic sector, and many other economic sectors directly affect green tourism development.
- Socio-cultural factors: unique and rich cultural values are input resources and objects that must be preserved and promoted from green tourism development activities.
- Environmental factors and climate change: favorable environment and climate are conditions for tourism development; on the contrary, if climate change occurs, the environment is compromised, making it difficult for tourism development and requiring a lot of adjustment efforts to recover.
- > Science and technology factors: Modern science and technology are conditions for green tourism development. Advances in science and technology will help develop tourism without causing adverse environmental impacts with technologies such as waste treatment, wastewater, new energy production technologies, renewable energy, and more create....

III. CURRENT STATUS OF GREEN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM

With diversified and comprehensive benefits as analyzed, green tourism becomes an important development direction for Vietnam's tourism industry. As approved, Vietnam's tourism development strategy for 2030 sets specific orientations for tourism development toward green and sustainable growth. The solutions and directions mentioned in this strategy are to ensure environmental protection, conservation of cultural heritages and natural resources, and effective response to climate change. Here are some highlights of the process:

- ➤ Technology application: The strategy proposes using technology for resource management, pollution control, environmental incidents, advertising promotion, and tourism branding, as well as applying green technology. And clean in tourism activities.
- ➤ Environmental protection: The strategy's main objectives are to increase public awareness of the need to protect the environment and tourism resources, develop and carry out projects and tasks related to environmental protection in the tourism industry, and enhance the efficiency of state management with regard to ecological protection and the capacity to adapt to and lessen the effects of climate change.
- ➤ Use of renewable energy and clean technology: A plan to persuade businesses who provide tourism-related services to utilise clean energy, recycle and reuse their products, and use clean technologies to lessen environmental pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Such a sustainable tourism development strategy shows the Government of Vietnam's interest in protecting the environment and ensuring sustainability in tourism development. Implementing the solutions and directions outlined in the process will be essential in building a green and sustainable tourism industry. The activities of the tourism industry in the past also recorded positive signs when many localities, travel companies, and hotels in Vietnam focused on developing green tourism. The emphasis on specific types of tourism, such as island tourism, community tourism, and gardening tourism, demonstrates how each location's tourism potential may be used in a variety of innovative ways.

The development of home garden tourism in Hue and island tourism in Nha Trang can be taken as typical examples of the creative and sustainable exploitation of the local tourism potential. Tourism activities in Hue and Nha Trang are designed and operated responsibly to protect natural landscapes and minimize negative environmental and resource impacts. Regulations and guidelines on green tourism management are in place to ensure that tourism exploitation is carried out sustainably, does not harm the environment, and does not degrade critical natural resources. In addition to protecting the environment and resources, developing home-grown tourism in Hue and island tourism in Nha Trang also creates opportunities for economic development and improves living standards for local people. Localities can participate in the tourism industry, act as guides, and provide services for local culture and traditions, contributing to income enhancement and job creation. This also helps create momentum for related local industries, including agriculture, food processing, and handicrafts. Developing home garden tourism in Hue and island tourism in Nha Trang not only brings economic benefits but also helps to increase awareness and awareness of environmental protection in general and marine resources in particular. Visitors participating in these tourism activities will experience and better understand the value of unique natural landscapes and the importance of protecting them. Visitors can discover excellent cultural, natural, and biosphere heritage while enjoying a fresh and peaceful environment. Through this experience, visitors will realize the importance of environmental conservation and protection, thereby forming environmental protection attitudes and behaviors in daily life. Green tourism activities like these also help create a sense of the need to balance economic development and environmental protection, thereby working towards a sustainable future for the whole local community. and travel.

The transition to green tourism of many businesses in the tourism industry is also an important step. Establishing green tours and hotel certification ensures that tourism activities are carried out responsibly and respecting sustainability principles. Green tours are designed to make the most of renewable resources, minimizing waste and negative impact on the environment. At the same time, achieving a green certificate for hotels ensures that tourist accommodation facilities comply with standards and regulations on energy saving, waste management, sustainable use of water, and food practices. Take measures to protect the environment. Green certificates create trust and confidence from customers and are a powerful advertising tool to help attract visitors interested in the business. Here are a few examples of good practices, such as Buffalo Tours, a leading travel company in Vietnam, which has built green tours to explore and protect critical natural areas. They create travel itineraries that have a negligible impact on the environment, provide opportunities to meet and interact with the local community, and promote awareness of environmental conservation. Hay An Lam Retreats, a luxury resort service provider, has committed to green tourism and creating sustainable travel experiences. A Lam Retreats resorts are located in beautiful natural areas and have applied environmental protection measures such as renewable energy, waste management, and biodiversity protection. In short, businesses' transformation to green tourism models helps reduce negative impacts on the environment and, at the same time, increases tourists' awareness and responsibility for environmental protection and maintaining the destination's sustainability.

These developments are an important and encouraging step in promoting green tourism in Vietnam. However, applying sustainable tourism measures and regulations should be ensured and strictly controlled to ensure fairness, safety, and sustainability in tourism development.

IV. POTENTIAL FOR GREEN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

There are 125 beaches throughout Vietnam's 3,260 kilometres of coastline, the majority of which are stunning and ideal for tourists. In addition, eight of Vietnam's physical landmarks and landscapes have been designated as World Heritage Sites.

With 191 heritages from all seven types of intangible cultural heritage of ethnic groups living in all regions of the country included in the List of cultural heritages, Vietnam is also home to a wealth of intangible cultural heritage.

It is clear that Vietnam has abundant and diverse natural and cultural-humanistic tourism resources, which is ideal for the growth of green tourism. On the other hand, climate change and sea level rise have a significant impact on Vietnam. In order to have a sustainable green economy, green tourism must be developed.

Aware of the potential and significance of green tourism, the Politburo issued Resolution No. 08-NQ/TW on January 16, 2017, affirming that tourism development will become a leading economic sector that has sustainable tourism development, protects the environment and nature, well-solves problems with labour, employment, and social security, and ensures the country's defence, security, and social order.

The National Action Plan on Green Growth for 2021–2030 was announced in Decision No. 882/QD–TTg by the Prime Minister on July 22, 2022. The Prime Minister accordingly gave the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism the responsibility of overseeing two groups of tasks in the area of tourism: "Improving institutions and policies to manage tourism development towards green growth" and sustainability" and "Prioritise the development of tourism types in the direction of green growth" (ecotourism, community tourism, agricultural and rural tourism, sea and island resort tourism associated with economic development). Blue sea economy...

Two of them, specifically, fall under the purview of the task group "Improving institutions and policies to manage tourism development in the direction of green and sustainable growth": "Effective formulation and implementation of the system planning, tourism in the 2021-2030 period, with a vision to 2045 associated with the green economy, blue sea economy" and "Improving institutions and policies prioritising the development of eco-tourism, agricultural and rural tourism, community tourism." Create a set of evaluation standards and put into place a ranking system for Vietnam's tourist attractions and tourism-related businesses. These two tasks are top priorities for group A.

In addition, two contents are included in the task group "Prioritise the development of different types of tourism towards green growth, develop green tourism products": "Development of infrastructure, technical facilities for service types of tourism in the direction of green growth focusing on connectivity of infrastructure" and "Encouraging tourism investors to focus on investing in a system of collection, classification, and recycling to reuse wastewater, waste for different purposes."

In addition, Vietnam's tourism development strategy for 2020 and 2030 states that it must "sustainably develop tourism in association with ensuring national defence, security, social order, and safety; preserve and promote the values of cultural and historical heritage and natural resources optimally, pay special attention to environmental protection and biodiversity, and effectively respond to climate change." The strategy stated that one of the supporting solutions is: "Promoting the application of technology in resource management; control and warning of environmental pollution and incidents at tourist sites and spots and implement tourism plannings; Application of e-commerce model in tourism business; Promoting the application of information technology in advertising promotion and tourism branding...

The Strategy specifically mentions what must be done in the contents relating to "Strengthening environmental protection": "Strengthening propaganda to raise capacity, awareness, and awareness about resource protection." Tourism resources and environment; Strengthen the formulation and implementation of environmental protection projects and tasks in the field of tourism; Improve the effectiveness of state management of environmental protection in the field of tourism; enhance resilience and mitigate the impacts of climate change; Improve capacity to control ecological pollution; implementing strategic ecological assessment, environmental impact assessment, environmental protection plan for tourism development projects and projects according to current regulations...

The development of green tourism is positioned as an essential strategic content of Vietnam's tourism to increase the competitiveness of Vietnam's tourism industry, as can be observed from the Party and State's tourism development strategies and policies. Tourism. The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism has published policies and undertaken numerous actions linked to green tourism, such as: Promulgating the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, in order to concretize guidelines,

guidelines, policies of the Party, and laws of the State. Criteria "Sustainable tourism label Green Lotus"; organized "Green Heritage Tourism Culture Week - A place to meet people and nature"...

Thanks to that, some localities have pioneered the development of green tourism over the past time. In which the provinces: Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Quang Binh, Nghe An... develop community tourism; Hue develops home garden tourism; Nha Trang develops sea and island tourism; Some southern provinces develop garden tourism... Besides, many businesses have implemented responsible tourism, guiding tourists to protect the environment when participating in forest and mountain climbing tours such as tours of cave exploration in Phong Nha - Ke Bang (Quang Binh); building eco-friendly tourism products such as garbage collection tours in Hoi An (Quang Nam), Son Tra (Da Nang)...

A survey by the Vietnam Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) shows that the trend of Vietnamese tourists paying a lot of attention to beach resort tourism, nature discovery tourism ranks second and tends to increase much higher than the previous survey (from 48% to 56%).

V. APPLYING GREEN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS IN VIETNAM TODAY

Faced with the harmful effects caused by climate change, people have become increasingly aware of environmental protection and gradually formed the consciousness and actions of "green consumption." As a result, companies in the Vietnamese hospitality industry have consistently revised and implemented policies to promote ecotourism. The three crucial fundamental aspects of energy, water, and trash must be the focus of an accommodation establishment if it wants to employ sustainable efforts in the system. The environmental impact of the hotel will be greatly reduced, customer trust will increase, and a competitive edge in the market will be produced via careful management and effective handling of the aforementioned elements.

The managers of the present Vietnamese hotels are aware of two developments in green development, including green operation and green building. However, when staying in many hotels in Vietnam today, hotel management is still unsure whether or not to develop a sustainable facility; this construction must be acceptable with other measures. from the beginning, friendly. As a result, many hotels are choosing to follow the trend of operating in a green manner.

Although hotels in Vietnam are changing their awareness and being more proactive in environmental protection and green development, in fact, in the implementation process, they have encountered difficulties affecting their results. Implementation results, such as insufficient initial investment costs (capital), unfavorable hotel location (location), and lack of official green standards from competent management agencies (regulations and directions). Implementation), depending on the level of customer satisfaction (customer opinions) and large personnel fluctuations (employee participation). Specifically:

- The price of developing a "green hotel" will be more than the cost of developing a hotel in accordance with conventional standards in terms of conceptualization, construction, and facility investment. As a result, investors must endure a lengthy waiting period before receiving their money returned.
- > Construction of hotels in urban areas faces many difficulties in building green buildings.
- ➤ Vietnam needs an official standard on green tourism, making it impossible for hotels to develop and apply it most systematically and effectively.
- ➤ In addition, not all guests have the correct perception of green tourism; some tourists who choose 3-5 star hotels will have certain expectations corresponding to the amount of money they spend and what they do. This is often the opposite of green practices.
- Finally, the problem of personnel in the hotel. A high rate of "job hopping" makes it difficult and expensive to train new employees in environmental awareness and habits.

VI. SOME SOLUTIONS TO IMPLEMENT GREEN DEVELOPMENT IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS IN VIETNAM

Based on being aware of the necessity of green development in the hotel business, as well as recognizing the remaining difficulties in the implementation process, the author would like to propose some solutions such as: after:

First, put your attention on improving the institutions, methods, policies, and rules for managing tourism development towards green growth; enact particular legal documents and provide direction for the implementation of tourism development that is focused on green growth at both the local and national levels.

To soon study, develop and promulgate models, regulations, standards, and criteria for tourism development in this direction, which must be applied at the sectoral, regional, and local levels and for each tourist area and destination. specifically...

Second, educate and disseminate green tourism development policies. Specifically: (i) All parties participating in the tourism industry, including managers at all levels, business administrators, community tourism coworkers, and tourists, should

be made aware of green tourism. Concurrently, promote green growth, green economies, green development in the creation of physical infrastructure, green tourism practises, and green tourism services utilising green energy, green transportation, and green consumption among managers in the tourism, business, and community sectors; (ii) Raising awareness about environmental protection in tourism; (iii) Linking with professional media agencies in the field of tourism to diversify forms of propaganda on ecological protection and green tourism development for the tourism community and visitors.

Through tangible measures, beginning with little ones, local authorities at all levels, the business community, and every citizen work together to build a green environment for the sustainable development of the tourism industry. However, it is the individual citizen who bears the greatest duty to the community and society.

Third, continue to expand and develop ideas and actively participate in activities of the International Convention on environmental protection, climate change response, and building a green economy. Coordinate with UNESCO to better preserve, promote and promote Vietnamese culture worldwide. Gain quick access to the green expertise and technology of the international scientific community and nations with established green tourism, and use it to advance green tourism in Vietnam. Using the achievements of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 to the management of green tourism development, could you pay attention?

Fourth, improve the quality of tourism products and services.

In order to meet visitor needs, create green tourism products, and respect the environment and local culture, a system of high-quality, distinctive, diverse, and synchronous products should be established. A system of tourist zones, routes, and attractions for the nation, localities, and tourist cities is gradually being formed by planning and investing in the development of tourism products based on the exceptional and alluring strengths of tourism resources. To promote strengths and strengthen linkages between regions, regions, and localities towards forming specific tourism products according to tourist regions suitable to natural conditions and local resources.

National overall on tourism development towards green growth; develop environmentally friendly transport infrastructure and technical facilities; inter-sectoral coordination in tourism development towards green growth. In addition, there should be policies to encourage "green" in tourism development; have clear regulations on "green" criteria and guide the implementation in an organized and uniform manner; have policies to support enterprises to develop in a green direction; At the same time, there are specific and clear sanctions to deal with businesses whose business activities go against the green development criteria.

On the side of hotel businesses: It is necessary to have a long-term investment plan for green development. Currently, many hotels have implemented and succeeded in investing in green energy - solar energy, wind energy, ...; using a magnetic key card with integrated electrical activation; using motion sensor faucets to save water;... These basic applications need to be replicated for many other hotels. Besides, hotels can take additional measures, such as investing in rainwater storage works for daily activities or investing in environmentally friendly alternative products depending on the location. Its conditions and capital, such as: using organic products such as bamboo bed sheets, natural room cleaners, and infrared saunas; avoiding the use of plastic utensils; using alternative materials such as using cotton or sedge bags instead of polythene or terracotta containers instead of plastic containers; limit the use of paper and use technology to store and manage information; strengthen awareness and attitude training for employees on green development, creating a green culture in the enterprise; encourage customers to consume green by taking actions to limit laundry for reusable fabrics, etc.

VII. CONCLUSION

Green development is a trend and an inevitable requirement in economic development on a global scale. This is also a general development trend in the tourism business and the hotel business in Vietnam. Although there are still many difficulties in the implementation process, Vietnam's tourism and hotel industry is gradually changing to meet this trend. To achieve the desired results, it is necessary to have close guidance from state management agencies regarding guidelines and policies, resource support, coordination of relevant levels and sectors, and from the efforts of the hotel businesses themselves, the local community, and tourists.

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