

Enhancing Tourism In Can Tho City, Vietnam Within The Framework Of International Integration

La Thi Mong Linh

Abstract:

This study analyses the current status of tourism development in Can Tho City, a significant urban hub in the Mekong Delta area of Vietnam, and suggests solutions to improve its tourism opportunities in the context of international integration. Can Tho City has a variety of natural and cultural resources that are suitable for tourism development, such as its distinctive floating marketplaces, traditional craft villages, and historical landmarks. The city encounters issues like insufficient infrastructure, absence of unique tourism offerings, and inadequate human resources. This report suggests a comprehensive strategy for growing Can Tho into a regional tourism hub based on an examination of the city's strengths, limitations, possibilities, and threats. Recommendations involve investing in tourism infrastructure, promoting distinctive tourism products, improving human resource skills, encouraging inter-regional collaboration, and adopting sustainable environmental practices. Can Tho City can enhance its position as a dynamic and competitive tourism destination in the Mekong Delta area and beyond by utilising its unique resources and overcoming current challenges to take advantage of opportunities arising from international integration.

Keywords: *Can Tho City, tourism development, international integration, Mekong Delta, sustainable tourism.*

Introduction

Tourism has become a crucial economic industry for many countries and areas globally in the era of globalisation and international integration. Vietnam has experienced substantial growth in tourism in recent decades due to its rich cultural history and various natural environments. Can Tho City, the main metropolitan centre in the Mekong Delta region, has acknowledged the opportunity to establish a prosperous tourism industry to stimulate economic growth and encourage sustainable development.

Can Tho City, located in the centre of the Mekong Delta, has a distinctive mix of natural and cultural features that draw both local and foreign visitors. Visitors can immerse themselves in the region's unique way of life by exploring the city's floating marketplaces, traditional craft towns, historical sites, and lush landscape. Can Tho's strategic location at the crossroads of important transportation links makes it a potential hub for regional and international tourism [6].

Can Tho City's tourism sector encounters obstacles that prevent it from reaching its maximum potential, despite its plentiful resources and strategic benefits. The restrictions encompass infrastructure, lack of different tourism offerings, insufficient human resources, and environmental issues. It is essential for Can Tho to tackle these difficulties in the context of international integration to become a competitive and sustainable tourism destination.

This study intends to analyse the existing status of tourism development in Can Tho City and provide solutions to improve its tourist potential in the context of international integration. This research aims to analyse the city's strengths, flaws, opportunities, and

dangers to contribute to the discussion on sustainable tourism development and economic diversification in the Mekong Delta region.

Literature Review

Tourism is widely acknowledged as a major driver of economic growth, job creation, and cultural interaction. Tourism plays a crucial role in the development objectives of many countries by promoting cross-border movement, investment, and cultural interaction in the context of globalisation and international integration.

Vietnam's tourism sector has seen significant expansion in recent years, with over 18 million international visitors arriving in. The nation's varied natural and cultural assets, along with government initiatives supporting tourist expansion, have led to this increase. Challenges include infrastructure restrictions, human resource constraints, and environmental issues continue to exist, especially in developing areas such as the Mekong Delta region [3].

The Mekong Delta, famous for its complex system of rivers, canals, and floating marketplaces, is gaining more interest as a possible tourist spot. Can Tho City, located in the centre of this area, has been recognised as a crucial centre for the growth of tourism [4]. The city offers a variety of travel experiences with its distinctive combination of natural and cultural features, including as the renowned Cai Rang Floating Market, traditional craft villages, and historical sites [1].

Existing study has identified certain obstacles that Can Tho City encounters in fully utilising its tourism opportunities. The challenges consist of insufficient infrastructure, absence of unique tourism offerings, restricted human resources, and environmental issues like waste management and water contamination. The city's tourism industry has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the necessity for durable and sustainable growth plans [2].

In the context of international integration, Can Tho City has the opportunity to leverage its strategic location and unique cultural assets to position itself as a regional tourism hub [5]. However, to achieve this goal, a comprehensive approach is required, addressing infrastructure development, product diversification, human resource capacity building, and environmental sustainability.

Methodology

This study utilises a mixed-approaches approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis methods. The quantitative aspect includes analysing secondary data from official sources including the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, the Can Tho City Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, and industry publications. The data offers information on tourist patterns, visitor numbers, and economic effects in Can Tho City and the Mekong Delta region.

The qualitative aspect involves conducting semi-structured interviews with important stakeholders such as government officials, tourism sector professionals, and local community members. The interviews seek to collect detailed information on the difficulties and possibilities encountered by Can Tho City's tourism industry, together with viewpoints on alternative approaches for sustainable tourism growth.

Field observations and site visits were carried out to acquire direct insight into the city's tourism attractions, infrastructure, and environmental conditions. The observations enhance the interview data and offer a thorough insight of the current status of tourism development in Can Tho City.

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, content analysis, and thematic coding methodologies. The numeric data was analysed using statistical software to detect trends and patterns, and the qualitative data was coded and examined to discover reoccurring themes and insights.

The study's conclusions and recommendations were validated and made reliable by cross-referencing the results of both quantitative and qualitative studies. This mixed-methods approach offers a thorough comprehension of the obstacles and possibilities

encountered by Can Tho City's tourism industry in the framework of international integration.

Results and Discussion

This study's results highlight notable potential and obstacles for the growth of Can Tho City's tourism industry within the framework of international integration.

Opportunities

Can Tho City offers a diverse range of cultural and natural features that are highly appealing to tourists from both local and foreign origins. Visitors can immerse themselves in the unique way of life of the Mekong Delta region by exploring the city's floating markets, traditional artisan villages, historical landmarks, and lush landscape. These distinctive characteristics could set Can Tho City apart from other locations and offer a captivating vacation experience for tourists looking for genuine cultural and natural experiences.

Can Tho City's advantageous location at the crossroads of important transportation links makes it a potential hub for regional and international tourism. The city's international airport and river ports offer quick access for travellers, and its close proximity to neighbouring countries like Cambodia and Thailand allows for potential in cross-border tourism cooperation. This advantageous position can support the creation of multi-destination travel routes and enhance regional cooperation in the tourism industry.

The global tourism market is experiencing an increase in demand for sustainable and experiential tourism, as travellers are looking for genuine cultural encounters and environmentally friendly destinations. The rich cultural heritage of Can Tho City, which includes floating marketplaces, traditional crafts, and rural lifestyles, complements this developing trend. The city's natural features, including the Mekong River and nearby wetlands, provide prospects for ecotourism and sustainable tourist development. Can Tho City can establish itself as a destination for conscientious travellers looking for purposeful and sustainable travel experiences by taking advantage of this trend.

The Vietnamese government acknowledges the significance of tourism development and has enforced multiple laws and efforts to boost the industry. These consist of infrastructure development, destination promotion, and incentives to encourage private investment in the tourism industry. Can Tho City can utilise these favourable policies and activities to draw investments, improve infrastructure, and promote itself as an appealing tourism spot. Public-private sector collaboration can enhance the creation of sustainable and innovative tourism offerings.

Regional and international cooperation opportunities: The close proximity of Can Tho City to neighbouring countries and its location within the Mekong Delta region offer prospects for regional and international collaboration in tourism development. Can Tho City may access wider markets, utilise combined resources, and establish integrated tourism circuits and experiences by creating strategic relationships and collaborating with other locations. This collaboration can facilitate cultural interchange, sharing of knowledge, and the advancement of sustainable tourism practices throughout the area.

Can Tho City's numerous attractions, such as culinary traditions, agricultural techniques, and natural landscapes, have the potential to support the growth of specialty tourism segments. Niche niches such as agritourism, food tourism, wellness tourism, and adventure tourism cater to the special interests and preferences of travellers. Can Tho City may attract certain market segments and set itself apart from competition by creating and marketing these particular tourism goods, leveraging its own assets and resources.

Can Tho City has substantial potential for tourist growth due to its cultural and natural resources, strategic position, alignment with global tourism trends, government backing, and prospects for regional and worldwide collaboration. Can Tho City can establish itself as a top destination in the Mekong Delta region and help boost Vietnam's tourist industry by taking use of these prospects and using a strategic approach to tourism planning and development.

Challenges

Can Tho City lacks appropriate tourism infrastructure to support a significant increase of visitors despite its potential. The city requires substantial investment in enhancing tourist infrastructure, including as lodging, transportation, and recreational facilities, to meet the varied demands of both local and foreign visitors. Can Tho City must enhance its current infrastructure and build new facilities specifically designed for the tourism industry to become a leading tourism destination.

Can Tho City lacks a variety of unique and diverse tourism items to accommodate the many interests and preferences of visitors, although having certain distinguishing attractions like the floating markets. This constraint could result in reduced duration of visits and decreased spending by visitors. Can Tho City could enhance visitor engagement and prolong their visits by expanding its tourism options, including cultural experiences, eco-tourism activities, and themed tours that highlight the city's legacy and natural beauty.

Human Resource Constraints: Can Tho City's tourism business encounters obstacles in human resource development. A lack of competent and proficient tourism workers, such as tour guides, hotel staff, and management personnel, might affect the quality of service and visitor experience. Investing in thorough training programmes, partnering with educational institutions, and executing skill development projects are crucial to cultivate a skilled and knowledgeable workforce capable of providing outstanding tourism services.

Environmental Concerns: Uncontrolled tourism growth in Can Tho City can worsen current environmental issues if not effectively regulated. Challenges including waste management, water contamination, and habitat deterioration threaten the city's natural resources, which are crucial for its tourism attractiveness. It is essential to adopt sustainable tourist practices, enforce stringent environmental rules, and promote eco-friendly initiatives to protect the city's natural resources and guarantee the sustainability of its tourism sector in the long run.

Can Tho City has an international airport, although there are few direct international aircraft connections available. This could impede the city's capacity to recruit and enable the smooth flow of international visitors, potentially restricting its incorporation into global tourism networks. Forming partnerships with airlines and tourism agencies to create additional direct aircraft routes, especially to key tourism hubs, will improve will Tho City's accessibility and attractiveness to foreign tourists.

Can Tho City can realise its potential as a successful tourism destination by overcoming problems with specific plans and investments, providing distinctive experiences, promoting sustainability, and welcoming visitors globally.

Tourism Improvements for Can Tho City in the Context of International Integration

Invest in Tourism Infrastructure Development: To meet the increasing needs of tourism, Can Tho City should focus on investing in enhancing its tourism infrastructure. This involves creating new and improving current tourist attractions, lodging facilities, transit systems, and additional services. The city should prioritise developing extensive, combined tourism facilities and eco-tourism resorts on its natural islands and riverbanks to provide distinctive experiences and appeal to affluent tourists.

Enhancing lodging offerings by building more five-star hotels and upscale resorts to cater to the needs of corporate travellers and high-end tourists.

Improving transport infrastructure by enhancing road networks to major tourist destinations, building water transport systems along rivers and canals, and renovating the international airport to allow direct flights from key source markets.

Developing contemporary conference and exposition facilities to establish Can Tho City as a top choice for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism.

Creating additional infrastructure like shopping centres, entertainment venues, and recreational amenities to improve the visitor experience and promote extended visits. Can Tho City should prioritise the development of unique and diversified tourism products that

highlight its distinctive cultural and natural resources. Promoting and improving the city's distinctive "floating market" experience to provide tourists with an immersive chance to discover the lively local culture and lifestyle along the riverbanks.

Creating specialised tours and packages focusing on the area's agricultural history, culinary customs, and traditional crafts, including fruit-picking activities, cooking workshops, and trips to artisan communities. Utilising the natural settings around the city, like the Mekong Delta's extensive waterways and dense forests, to develop eco-tourism activities such as kayaking, birding, and hiking trips. Organising festivals, concerts, and exhibitions to celebrate the city's cultural diversity through showcasing its music, dance, and art forms. Investigating the possibility of developing specialist tourism sectors including medical tourism, educational tourism, and sports tourism by utilising the city's current healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and sports venues.

Improve Human Resource Capabilities: Investing in human resource development is essential for delivering top-notch tourism services and guaranteeing a favourable guest experience. Can Tho City should partner with local universities and vocational institutes to provide specialised training programmes for tourism and hospitality, guaranteeing a consistent flow of competent personnel in different tourism sectors.

Offer continuous professional development opportunities, including language competence training, customer service workshops, and cultural awareness programmes, to current personnel in the tourism business.

Attract and keep skilled workers by providing competitive remuneration packages and opportunity for career growth in the tourist industry. Establish collaborations with prestigious worldwide hospitality institutions to promote knowledge exchange, implement best practices, and cultivate tourism professionals with global competitiveness. Can Tho City should actively seek partnerships and cooperation with neighbouring provinces, regions, and nations to promote cooperative tourist projects and integrated travel packages. Create regional tourism corridors and circuits by collaborating with neighbouring Mekong Delta provinces to develop multi-destination itineraries that highlight the different attractions of the region. Working with prominent cities in Vietnam, such Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, to create shared marketing strategies and improve travel links for foreign tourists. Investigating cross-border tourism prospects with neighbouring nations like Cambodia and Thailand through the creation of multi-country travel packages and streamlining border crossings for tourists. Attending regional and international tourist forums and trade exhibitions to market Can Tho City as a destination and establish strategic collaborations with tour operators and travel agencies globally.

Adopt Sustainable Tourism Practices: Can Tho City should implement and encourage sustainable tourism methods to protect its natural and cultural assets. This involves creating and implementing environmental policies and standards for tourism development to protect natural ecosystems and reduce the adverse effects of tourism operations.

Promoting the implementation of sustainable practices in tourism firms, including energy and water saving, waste reduction, and the use of renewable energy sources. Promoting community-based tourism programmes that empower local communities, conserve traditional practices, and equally distribute the economic benefits of tourism. Increasing awareness among tourists and residents about the significance of sustainable tourism practices through educational initiatives and interpretative signs at tourist destinations.

Working with environmental organisations and specialists to create and execute enduring conservation plans for the city's natural and cultural assets. Improve global connectivity: Can Tho City should seek ways to create direct international flight routes to key tourism destinations to increase the number of foreign visitors.

This may include: Collaborating with global airlines and providing convincing business justifications to establish non-stop flights to Can Tho City from primary markets

like Europe, North America, and Asia. Enhancing and enlarging the current international airport infrastructure to handle higher air traffic and offer a smooth travel experience for foreign travellers.

Working with nearby airports and regional tourist authorities to create shared marketing plans and enhance the Mekong Delta region's reputation as a diverse travel destination.

Supporting the development of infrastructure, including high-quality hotels and transport systems, to meet the requirements of international tourists.

Enhance Can Tho City should create a thorough tourism marketing and promotion plan to increase recognition of its distinctive attractions in both local and global markets. This may include creating a unique brand identity and marketing strategies that emphasise the city's distinctive selling points, such as its cultural legacy, natural scenery, and gastronomic offerings.

Utilising digital marketing tools such as social media platforms, travel blogs, and online travel agencies to connect with and interest potential guests globally. Participating in prominent global tourism trade events and exhibitions to display Can Tho City's attractions and establish collaborations with tour operators and travel agencies. Working with influencers, travel journalists, and content creators to create engaging material and genuine narratives about the city's tourism offerings.

Developing a robust online presence through a user-friendly website and mobile apps to offer detailed information and streamline trip planning for tourists. Implementing these proposals can boost Can Tho City's tourist potential, attract more domestic and foreign visitors, and establish itself as a top destination in the global tourism landscape.

Conclusion

In the age of globalisation and international integration, it is essential for Can Tho City to establish a strong and sustainable tourism industry in order to diversify and expand its economy. Although the city has distinctive cultural and natural attractions, as well as strategic benefits, it encounters obstacles that impede the complete fulfilment of its tourism potential.

This study has identified crucial prospects and obstacles for the growth of tourism in Can Tho City and has put out a thorough array of suggestions to tackle these concerns. Can Tho City can establish itself as a dynamic and competitive tourism destination in the Mekong Delta region and beyond by investing in tourism infrastructure, creating unique and varied tourism offerings, improving the skills of its workforce, promoting collaboration between different regions and countries, adopting sustainable tourism practices, improving international transportation links, and enhancing tourism marketing and promotion efforts.

Moreover, this study adds to the wider discussion on sustainable tourist development, emphasising the significance of maintaining a balance between economic expansion, cultural conservation, and environmental safeguarding. Can Tho City can capitalise on the advantages of global integration and protect its distinct cultural heritage and natural resources for future generations by implementing a comprehensive and sustainable strategy.

In order to achieve success in the development of Can Tho City's tourist sector, it is essential for government agencies, private sector stakeholders, local communities, and foreign partners to work together in a collaborative manner. Can Tho City has the potential to develop a prosperous and sustainable tourism ecosystem in the Mekong Delta region by promoting collaboration and utilising the combined strengths of many stakeholders. This would not only boost the economic growth but also enhance the cultural heritage and protect the environment.

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