A Study on the Behavior of Tourists and Suggesting Appropriate Leisure Activities in the Ha Long Bay Bay – Vietnam

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ABSTRACT	Published Online: August 14, 2023
This study examines the factors influencing tourist destination selection in Ha Long Bay: accommodation, attractions, dining, and transportation. Regression analysis reveals that accommodation, attractions, dining, and transportation have a positive and significant impact on destination selection. Tourists prefer a range of accommodation options, including hotels and alternative choices like homestays. Engaging attractions and activities significantly influence destination attractiveness. Dining options, showcasing local cuisine, play a crucial role in shaping tourists' perception of the destination. Providing diverse transportation options is essential for attracting and retaining tourists. Policymakers and tourism businesses can leverage these findings to enhance the overall tourist experience and effectively promote Ha Long Bay.	**KEYWORDS:** Tourist behavior; Leisure activities; Tourist attractions; Travel recommendations; Ha Long Bay; Vietnam

INTRODUCTION

Ha Long is a coastal city in the Quang Ninh province of northern Vietnam. The city is known for its stunning natural beauty, particularly the iconic Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that features thousands of limestone islands and islets (Kiernan, 2017). As one of the most popular tourist destinations in Vietnam, Ha Long attracts millions of visitors every year (Hampton et al., 2018). In addition to its natural attractions, the city also offers a range of cultural and historical sites, as well as numerous leisure and entertainment activities (Bessière, 1998). The tourism industry is a major driver of the local economy, providing employment opportunities and contributing significantly to the region's GDP. Ha Long Bay is a popular tourism region located in northern Vietnam (Mark, 2009). It is known for its stunning natural beauty, featuring towering limestone karst formations, caves, and islands, which have made it a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Nguyen, 2020). The area attracts tourists who are interested in outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking, and swimming, as well as those who are interested in learning about the local culture and

history (Mai et al., 2014). Ha Long Bay is also home to several cultural attractions such as temples, pagodas, and traditional villages (Khuong & Uyen, 2016). Tourist satisfaction in the region can be influenced by factors such as the quality of service, accessibility, and price of accommodations, activities, and restaurants (Hong Pham, 2014).

Understanding consumer behavior and preferences is crucial for the success of any tourism industry (Xiang et al., 2015). Tourists' behavior and preferences are complex and diverse, and they can have a significant impact on the local economy, environment, and society (Slabá, 2019). By understanding what motivates tourists to visit a particular destination, how they choose their activities, and what factors influence their satisfaction levels, tourism providers can tailor their products and services to better meet the needs and expectations of their customers (Getz & Brown, 2006). This can help to attract more visitors, enhance their overall experience, and ultimately increase revenue and promote sustainable tourism development. Moreover, understanding tourist behavior and preferences can inform destination management policies, such as environmental conservation and cultural preservation, which can lead to long-term benefits for the local community and the environment (Budeanu, 2007).

The research objectives for this study are to survey the behavior and preferences of tourists in Ha Long and propose suitable entertainment activities that can enhance

their experience. To achieve these objectives, the study will use a mixed-methods approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Mertens, 2011). The quantitative research method will involve a survey questionnaire that will be administered to a representative sample of tourists visiting Ha Long. The survey will collect data on tourists' demographic characteristics, travel motivations, and entertainment preferences. It will also assess their satisfaction levels with existing entertainment activities and seek suggestions for new activities (Sukamolson, 2007). The qualitative research method will include focus group discussions and interviews with selected participants. The focus groups will provide an opportunity to explore in-depth the reasons behind tourists' behavior and preferences. Interviews will also be conducted with local tourism experts and operators to gather their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities related to entertainment activities in Ha Long. The data collected through both quantitative and qualitative research methods will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, content analysis, and thematic analysis (Lakshman et al., 2000). The findings will be used to identify the most popular entertainment activities, factors contributing to tourist satisfaction, and areas for improvement. Based on the results, suitable entertainment activities will be proposed to enhance the overall tourism experience in Ha Long.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Consumer behavior in tourism

Tourism consumer behavior refers to the decisions, actions, and underlying motivations of individuals or groups when selecting and consuming tourism products and services (Dimanche & Havitz, 1995). It is critical for tourism operators, policymakers, and marketers to understand tourism consumer behavior as it provides insights into what drives tourists to travel, the factors influencing their decision-making, and how they evaluate their experiences (Aydin & Karamehmet, 2017).

Tourist behavior encompasses a wide range of activities and experiences, such as destination selection, transportation, accommodation, attractions and activities, dining, and shopping (Lau & McKercher, 2004). The factors that influence tourism consumer behavior are complex and multifaceted, including personal, social, cultural, and environmental factors (Nair & Little, 2016). Personal factors include age, gender, income, and personality traits, while social factors involve the influence of family, friends, and social networks on tourism behavior (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016). Cultural factors relate to how cultural values, beliefs, and customs impact tourist preferences and decision-making (Baker, 2014). Environmental factors consider the impact of physical surroundings, such as natural attractions and climate, on tourist behavior (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016).

Tourists' behavior and preferences can also be categorized based on their travel motivations, such as relaxation, adventure, cultural immersion, and social interaction (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016). Tourists' motivations can have a significant impact on their destination choices, activity selection, and the products and services they consume (Goossens, 2000). Comprehending tourism consumer behavior is essential for tourism providers to offer targeted and customized products and services that meet the expectations and needs of tourists (Ahmed & Krohn, 1993). By understanding the underlying motivations and factors influencing tourism behavior, tourism operators, policymakers, and marketers can enhance tourists' overall tourism experience (Tussyadiah & Sigala, 2018).

Destination selection

When selecting a destination, tourists may take into account various factors, including cultural attractions, natural scenery, accessibility, and cost (Seyidov & Adomaitienė, 2016). Many tourists are drawn to destinations that offer unique cultural experiences, such as historic landmarks, museums, festivals, and local cuisine, as these can provide a sense of authenticity and an opportunity to learn about local culture and history (Lee et al., 2010). Furthermore, breathtaking natural scenery such as mountains, beaches, waterfalls, and national parks are often a major attraction for tourists (Hudson, 2003). They provide an opportunity to explore the beauty of the natural environment and enjoy outdoor activities (Tal et al., 2014). The ease of travel and accessibility to a destination is also a crucial factor for many tourists (Oppermann, 1996). The distance, transportation options, and visa requirements can significantly influence a tourist's decision (Scott et al., 2011). Destinations that are easy to reach and have reliable transportation options are often preferred. In addition to accessibility, cost is also a vital factor for many tourists (Handy & Niemeier, 1997). The cost of traveling to a destination can include transportation, accommodation, food, and activities (Field, 1999). Therefore, tourists may choose to travel to destinations that offer affordable options or are within their budget (Hsu & Sung, 1997). Overall, tourists consider various factors when selecting a destination, and cultural attractions, natural scenery, accessibility, and cost are some of the significant ones that can influence their decision (Lee ey al, 2010).

Accommodation

Tourists have a variety of accommodation options to choose from based on their preferences and budget (Yang et al., 2017). Hotels are a popular choice for their range of amenities and services, such as room service, housekeeping, and a front desk for assistance (Kuo et al., 2016). They are available at different price points, from budget-friendly to luxurious with high-end amenities (Williamson, 2014). Younger or budget-conscious travelers may opt for hostels, which offer affordable dormitory-style rooms with shared

bathrooms and common areas, such as a kitchen or lounge (Martin, 1998). Private rooms are also available for couples or families (Fraenkel & Cho, 2020). Vacation rentals, including apartments, villas, or houses, are another option that offers more space and privacy, making them ideal for longer stays. They may be managed by a rental agency or rented directly from the owner (Heinemann et al., 2913). Camping sites are a popular choice for outdoor enthusiasts, and can be found in various locations, from national parks to private campgrounds, offering facilities such as tents, cabins, or RV sites, and amenities such as showers, restrooms, and fire pits (Brooker & Joppe, 2014). Alternative options such as homestays, couchsurfing, or house-sitting are also available, providing a more local and immersive experience (Seale & Hajovsky, 2010). These options involve staying with a host family or in a shared space, and can offer opportunities for cultural exchange and interaction with locals (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013).

Attractions and activities

Tourists have a wide range of options for activities and attractions to engage in during their travels, such as sightseeing, cultural events, adventure activities, and shopping (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2018). Sightseeing is a popular pastime for many tourists, as it allows them to immerse themselves in the local culture and history of a destination (O'Leary et al., 1998). Cultural events, including festivals, concerts, and theatrical performances, are also highly sought-after by tourists, as they provide a unique and memorable experience that highlights the customs and traditions of the local community (Quinn, 2006). For travelers seeking an adrenaline rush and outdoor adventure, adventure activities like hiking, mountain biking, surfing, and zip-lining are a popular choice (McKay, 2013). These thrilling activities can be found in natural settings such as mountains, forests, or oceans, in destinations around the world (Giddy & Webb, 2016). Finally, shopping is a common activity for tourists looking to take home a piece of their travel experience (Littrell et al., 1993). Travelers may visit local markets, boutiques, or shopping malls to purchase items such as handicrafts, clothing, or local food products (Litirell et al., 1994).

Dining

Tourists have the option to dine in local restaurants or choose familiar food options based on their personal preferences (Chang et al., 2010). Many tourists consider trying local cuisine as an integral part of their travel experience (Renko et al., 2010). Local restaurants can provide a glimpse of the unique flavors and ingredients of the region and offer an opportunity to immerse in the local culture (Williams et al., 2014). However, some tourists may prefer sticking to familiar food options like fast-food chains or international restaurants, based on their dietary restrictions, personal preferences, or a desire for familiarity (Lin et al.,

2022). Additionally, the cost of dining out can also influence a tourist's decision, with some opting for budget-friendly options like street food or fast-casual restaurants while others splurge on fine dining experiences (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). The ambiance of a restaurant can also play a role in a tourist's dining choice, with some preferring casual and relaxed settings, while others may prefer more formal and upscale establishments (Mathur & Gupta, 2019). Finally, convenience can be a decisive factor for some tourists, with some preferring restaurants that are located near their accommodation or tourist attractions.

Transportation

Tourists have several transportation options to choose from, including planes, trains, buses, and rental cars, depending on their destination and travel needs (Kelly et al., 2007). Air travel is a preferred choice for long-distance trips, especially to international destinations (Le-Klaehn et al., 2015). Airlines offer various seating options such as economy, business, and first-class, with amenities like meals, entertainment, and Wi-Fi (Chatzopoulou et al., 2022). Trains are a popular and comfortable option for regional or in-country travel between cities and towns, with varying classes and amenities (Bhatia, 2006). Buses are affordable and convenient for getting around within a city or region, with local, regional, and long-distance services (Burgdorf et al., 2018). Rental cars provide tourists with the flexibility to explore a destination at their own pace, and with different vehicle options, rates, and services like insurance and GPS (Levofsky et al., 2001). Other modes of transportation available to tourists include taxis, ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft, bicycles, and boats, depending on their preference for a unique and memorable travel experience (Nadler, 2014).

Ha Long is renowned for its awe-inspiring natural beauty, featuring unique limestone karst formations, caves, and islands that draw tourists to the area (Bundschuh et al., 2007). Many visitors partake in activities such as hiking, kayaking, and swimming to experience this beauty up close (Palmer et al., 1999). The impact of the natural surroundings on tourist behavior and satisfaction can be significant, as it creates a sense of wonder and admiration that enriches the overall travel experience (Gordon, 2018). Ha Long is also rich in cultural attractions, such as temples, pagodas, and traditional villages, which may interest tourists seeking a deeper understanding of the local culture and history (Sofield et al., 1998). Activities like cooking classes and visiting museums can contribute to a diverse and fulfilling travel experience (Agyeiwaah et al.,2019). Tourists' satisfaction with their trip can also be influenced by the quality of service they receive, including the friendliness of staff, cleanliness of accommodations, and quality of food and beverages (Choi & Chu, 2000). Good service can enhance the overall experience, while poor service can detract from it (Sulek & Hensley,

2004). Access to Ha Long can also affect tourist behavior and satisfaction, such as transportation options, infrastructure, and ease of navigation (Kong et al., 2018). Difficulties in getting to and around Ha Long can have a negative impact on the travel experience (Mai et al., 2014). Price is also a crucial factor that can shape tourist behavior and satisfaction in Ha Long, with visitors more likely to choose accommodations, activities, and restaurants based on their budget, and feeling satisfied if they believe they received good value for their money (Park et al., 2019).

Based on literature reviews, the following research model (Figure 1) is proposed.
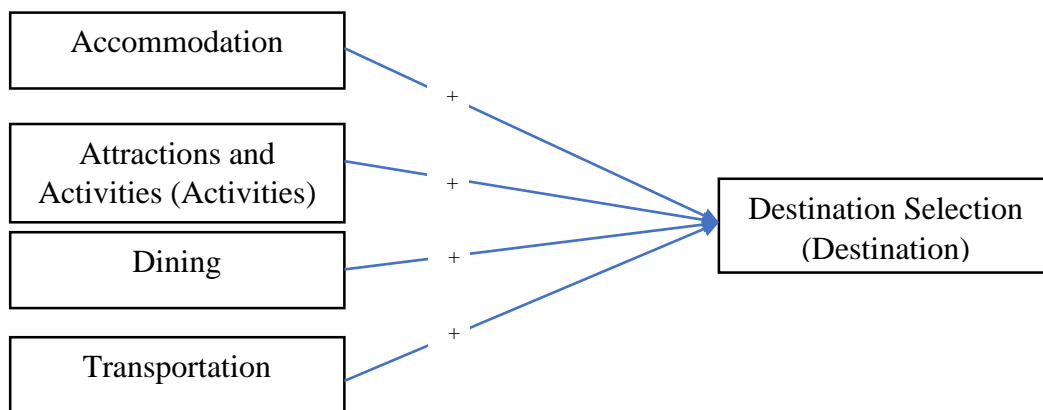
On the basis of the research model, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). The Accommodation factor has a positive and meaningful impact on the Destination Selection of tourists.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). The Attractions and Activities factor has a positive and meaningful impact on the Destination Selection of tourists..

Hypothesis 3 (H3). The Dining factor has a positive and meaningful impact on the Destination Selection of tourists..

Hypothesis 4 (H4). The Transportation factor has a positive and meaningful impact on Destination Selection of tourists.

METHODOLOGY

Instrument and participant

This study was conducted during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year in February 2023, specifically focusing on tourists visiting Vinh Ha Long. The study utilized an purposeful sampling method, whereby participants were purposefully selected. The questionnaire used in the study was developed based on input from two psychology professors and three tourism professors, as supported by relevant literature (Chien & Thanh, 2022; Thanh et al., 2022). The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part 1 gathered demographic information, while Part 2 collected research-specific data (Nghi et al., 2022). A pilot test involving 40 individuals was conducted, and slight modifications were made to the questionnaire based on the test results. To ensure cultural relevance, two linguists further refined the questionnaire, which was then pre-tested on 40 individuals representing the demographic profile of the research population (Thanh et al., 2023). Minor adjustments were made to enhance the structure and comprehensibility of the questionnaire based on the pre-test findings, resulting in the final version in Vietnamese (DeVellis, 2017; Appendix). The study took place in May 2022, with the participation of 200 students from universities in Hanoi city. Each participant received the questionnaire via mail and used a pencil to mark their responses (Dornei & Taguchi, 2010). The response rate was 100%, yielding 200 completed surveys (Fowler, 2013). Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' demographic information.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of survey participants

		Education					
		High school		*Postgraduate*		*Undergraduate*	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Gender	Female	18	20.7%	36	41.4%	33	37.9%
	Male	28	24.8%	43	38.1%	42	37.2%
Age	15 20 years old	5	22.7%	11	50.0%	6	27.3%
	21 25 years old	8	29.6%	12	44.4%	7	25.9%

	26 30 years old	14	26.4%	17	32.1%	22	41.5%
	31 35 years old	10	22.7%	17	38.6%	17	38.6%
	36 40 years old	5	14.7%	13	38.2%	16	47.1%
	over 40	4	20.0%	9	45.0%	7	35.0%
Occupation	Accountant	12	27.9%	17	39.5%	14	32.6%
	Doctor	9	19.6%	18	39.1%	19	41.3%
	Engineer	5	14.3%	19	54.3%	11	31.4%
	Teacher	20	26.3%	25	32.9%	31	40.8%

Reliability analysis

In assessing the quality and precision of survey data, reliability analysis is an important step. The purpose of reliability analysis is to determine the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument or survey questionnaire across time and situations. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the degree of internal consistency dependability. The criteria for evaluating Cronbach's alpha analysis findings are subjective and dependent on the particular study environment and questionnaire or test variables being evaluated (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2015). In general, a number of 0.7 or above is seen as indicating a high degree of internal consistency and dependability and is regarded as an acceptable criterion for the majority of surveys (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2015). A number between 0.6 and 0.7 may be acceptable for certain surveys, but may suggest that some questionnaire questions are not contributing to the assessment of the underlying concept and may need to be altered or eliminated (Cortina, 1993; Kline, 2015). A number below 0.6 is often regarded as poor, suggesting that the questionnaire questions may not be assessing the same concept and may need revision (Kline, 2015).

Table 2. Summary of Reliability

Scales	*Number of variables observed*	*Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha)*	*The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable*
Destination Selection	4	0.723	0.435
Accommodation	4	0.710	0.466
Attractions and Activities	4	0.768	0.500
Dining	4	0.814	0.580
Transportation	4	0.773	0.537

Table 2 presents the results of testing the reliability and validity of the research questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all items were more significant than 0.710, indicating the internally consistent reliability of the questionnaire (Hair et al., 2019). The validity of the questionnaire was also confirmed through construct validity testing, including exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (Hair et al., 2019). All items in the questionnaire were found to have good convergent validity, indicating that they are measuring the same construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was also established, as each item was more strongly correlated with its respective construct than with other constructs in the questionnaire (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). The study thus demonstrated a high level of reliability and validity in the questionnaire used to measure behavior of tourists and suggesting appropriate leisure activities in the Ha Long Bay tourism region- Vietnam.

Factor analysis

Factor analysis is a widely used statistical tool in the social sciences that can help researchers identify underlying factors or dimensions in a set of variables. The process involves reducing the number of variables in a dataset by identifying patterns of inter-correlation among them and grouping them into a smaller set of underlying factors (Gorsuch, 1983). The number of factors to be extracted is often determined through the examination of scree plots and eigenvalues (Fabrigar et al., 1999). The results of a factor analysis can inform the development of more refined research questions, hypotheses, and models (Hair et al., 2019) and provide insights into the key factors that explain the relationships among variables in a dataset.

Table 3. Result of factor analysis

Rotated Component Matrix[a]	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Dining1	.777				
Dining2	.729				
Dining3	.705				
Dining4	.672				
Transportation4		.760			
Transportation1		.726			
Transportation2		.642			
Transportation3		.622			
Destination2			.741		
Destination3			.681		
Destination1			.610		
Destination4			.608		
Attractions3				.780	
Attractions2				.773	
Attractions1				.546	
Accommodation4					.691
Accommodation3					.628
Accommodation2					.612

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 7 iterations.
Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings = 63.203
Initial Eigenvalues = 1.003
KMO = 0.901; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square = 1313.38; df = 153; sig.=0.000)

Table 3 presents the results of the factor analysis conducted to validate the research questionnaire. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient (KMO) = 0.901 (>0.5), indicating that the observed variables are correlated in the population and are, therefore, suitable for factor analysis. The factor loading coefficients for all variables >= 0.5, indicating the validity of the factor analysis. The criterion for practical significance of factor loading is a minimum level = 0.3, an essential level = 0.4, and a practical level = 0.5. Table 3 shows that all variables have factor loading coefficients >= 0.5, demonstrating the validity of the factor analysis. The total of the load squared extraction for the five factors = 63.203% (>50%), indicating that the extracted factors can explain a significant amount of variance in the data. The initial eigenvalue of the six factors = 1.003 (> 1.00), indicating that the extracted factors have eigenvalues greater than one and are, therefore, valid. These results demonstrate the suitability and validity of exploratory factor analysis for the proposed research model (Hair et al., 2019; Kim & Mueller, 1978). The items Attractions3 and Accommodation2 were excluded from the regression model because their factor loadings were <= 0.50, indicating a weak association with the proposed model.

Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Bryman & Bell, 2015). According to Tabachnick et al. (2013), it is a way to quantify the association between two variables and to determine if changes in one variable are associated with changes in another variable. The correlation coefficient, also known as Pearson's correlation coefficient, is a measure of the strength of the linear relationship between two variables and ranges from -1 to 1 (Field, 2013). According to Hairet al.(2019), -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation. Correlation analysis can provide valuable insights into the

relationships between variables and can be used to make predictions about one variable based on the values of another variable (Gronlund & Linn, 2014). However, it is important to note that correlation does not imply causality and that other factors may be contributing to the relationship between the

variables (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). The results of the correlation analysis (Table 4) show that, with a 95% significance level, the correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.050).

Table 4. Correlation analysis results

Correlations		Destination	Accommodation	Attractions	Dining	Transportation
Destination	Pearson Correlation	1	.512[**]	.533[**]	.508[**]	.498[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Accommodation	Pearson Correlation	.512[**]	1	.558[**]	.572[**]	.613[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Attractions	Pearson Correlation	.533[**]	.558[**]	1	.523[**]	.501[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Dining	Pearson Correlation	.508[**]	.572[**]	.523[**]	1	.541[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200
Transportation	Pearson Correlation	.498[**]	.613[**]	.501[**]	.541[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200	200	200

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Multivariate linear regression analysis

Multivariate linear regression analysis is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable (Osborne, 2000). In this type of regression analysis, a linear equation is used to model the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Hair, 1998). The goal of multivariate linear regression is to determine the coefficients for each independent variable, which represent

the strength and direction of their relationship with the dependent variable (Greene & Hensher, 2003; Tung et al., 2023). These coefficients can then be used to make predictions about the dependent variable based on the values of the independent variables (Hair et al., 1998). Multivariate linear regression is commonly used in the social sciences, economics, and other fields to understand the relationships between variables and to make predictions based on those relationships (Kalaian & Raudenbush, 1996).

Table 5. The results of the multivariable linear regression analysis

Coefficients[a]							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.917	.201		4.565	.000		
Accommodation	.150	.078	.151	1.928	.055	.501	1.996
Attractions	.245	.066	.264	3.712	.000	.609	1.643
Dining	.167	.063	.192	2.636	.009	.578	1.732

Transportation	.153	.068	.169	2.263	.025	.554	1.806

Dependent Variable: Destination

R Square = 0.400; Adjusted R Square = 0.388; Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.57307

F=32.488; df=4; sig.=0.000

The results of the multivariable linear regression analysis (Table 4) indicate that the regression model is valid to explain the results, as evidenced by the statistical significance of the F-test (sig. = 0.000, df = 4) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019). The model also does not have multicollinearity, as the variables in the model have a VIF <1.996 (Kutner, Nachtsheim, Neter, & Li, 2005). This suggests that the variables are not highly correlated with each other, and the regression coefficients can be estimated with high precision.

RESULTS

Firstly. The regression analysis results presented in Table 5 indicate that the Accommodation variable has a positive and significant impact on the Destination variable. This is supported by the regression coefficient β = 0.150 and a 95% significance level (p.value = 0.055), which leads to the acceptance of H1. The result suggests a positive association between accommodation in Ha Long and tourist destination selection. These findings corroborate previous research that shows tourists have a range of accommodation options based on their preferences and budget (Yang et al., 2017). Hotels are a popular choice due to their wide range of amenities and services, such as room service, housekeeping, and front desk assistance (Kuo et al., 2016). These accommodations are available at varying price points, from budget-friendly to luxurious with high-end amenities (Williamson, 2014). Additionally, alternative options such as homestays, couchsurfing, and house-sitting offer a more immersive and local experience (Seale & Hajovsky, 2010), enabling cultural exchange and interaction with locals (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013).

Secondly. The results presented in Table 5 from the regression analysis reveal that the Attractions factor has a positive and significant impact on the Destination variable. This is supported by the regression coefficient β = 0.245 and a 95% significance level (p.value = 0.000), leading to the acceptance of H2. These findings demonstrate a positive relationship between attractions and activities and the destination selection of tourists in Ha Long. Furthermore, the results confirm that tourists have a wide array of options when it comes to engaging in activities and exploring attractions during their travels in Ha Long. These options include sightseeing, cultural events, adventure activities, and shopping. Similar to the findings of O'Leary et al. (1998) in other countries, sightseeing is a popular pastime for many tourists as it allows them to immerse themselves in the local culture and history of the destination. Entertainment activities have been identified as key factors in determining destination attractiveness and significantly influencing tourists' satisfaction levels (Chen & Tsai, 2013; Yuksel et al., 2010; Guo & Xiao, 2017). Cultural activities, nature-based activities, and recreational activities are among the top three leisure activities that significantly impact tourist satisfaction levels (Kim et al., 2012)..

Thirdly. According to the results of the regression analysis presented in Table 5, the Dining factor has a significant and positive impact on the Destination variable. The regression coefficient β = 0.167, and the significance level is 95% (p.value = 0.009), which supports H3. This finding reinforces earlier research indicating that dining plays a critical role in the travel experience. Tourists have a wide range of dining options to choose from, including local restaurants and familiar food options that cater to their personal preferences. For many travelers, trying local cuisine is an essential part of their journey, as it provides a window into the unique flavors and ingredients of the region, and an opportunity to immerse themselves in the local culture. The cost of dining out can also be a crucial factor in a tourist's decision-making process, with some seeking budget-friendly options like street food or fast-casual restaurants, while others opt for high-end dining experiences. Williams et al. (2014) suggest that local food options play a crucial role in shaping the overall perception of a destination, highlighting the importance of dining in the travel experience.

Finally. Based on the regression analysis results presented in Table 5, it is evident that the Transportation variable has a positive and significant impact on the Destination variable. The regression coefficient β = 0.153, and the significance level is 95% (p.value = 0.025), supporting the acceptance of H4. This finding indicates a positive and significant relationship between transportation and the destination selection of tourists in Ha Long Bay. These results align with previous studies conducted in various countries, further reinforcing the importance of transportation in influencing tourists' destination choices. When it comes to transportation options, tourists have a variety of choices available to them based on their specific travel needs and the desired destination. These options may include planes, trains, buses, and rental cars (Kelly et al., 2007). By offering diverse transportation alternatives, tourists have the flexibility to select the most suitable mode of transportation that aligns with their preferences, convenience, and travel requirements.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research shows that accommodation, attractions, dining, and transportation significantly influence

tourists' destination choices in Ha Long Bay (Hampton et al., 2018) . This has implications for tourism businesses, policymakers, and stakeholders. Firstly, offering diverse accommodations is important to cater to tourists' preferences and budgets. Secondly, developing a variety of attractions is crucial to attract tourists to Ha Long Bay (Mark, 2009). Thirdly, promoting local cuisine is essential to enhance the travel experience (Nguyen, 2020). Finally, providing convenient transportation options is vital to attract tourists. Overall, businesses and policymakers should focus on developing and promoting a range of offerings to attract and retain tourists in Ha Long Bay (Khuong & Uyen, 2016). Overall, the research results suggest that tourism businesses and policymakers should focus on developing and promoting a range of offerings, including accommodations, attractions, dining, and transportation, to attract and retain tourists in Ha Long Bay.

To improve the tourist experience in Ha Long Bay, it's essential to introduce diverse night markets that allow tourists to indulge in local food and drinks while purchasing authentic souvenirs (Nguyen, 2020). Additionally, offering an array of water sports activities like jet skiing, paragliding, and windsurfing can enhance the excitement and exclusivity of the destination. The availability of cultural performances, such as traditional music and dance, should be increased to give visitors a unique and genuine insight into the local culture. Exploratory tours to unique Ha Long Bay destinations, such as unvisited islands or caves, should also be recommended (Mai et al., 2014). Ecotourism activities that focus on sustainability and conservation, like nature walks, bird watching, or beach clean-up initiatives, should be created to cater to responsible tourists. Developing food and wine tours showcasing local cuisine and wines can give visitors an authentic and exclusive experience while highlighting the area's culinary offerings (Nguyen, 2020). Finally, wellness activities such as yoga or meditation classes, spa treatments, or wellness retreats can attract tourists looking for relaxation and rejuvenation during their stay. While designing these recreational activities, cultural and environmental factors should be considered to ensure sustainability and minimal impact on local communities and the environment (Thanh et al, 2021).

When designing entertainment activities, it's crucial to take into account cultural and environmental factors to ensure that they are both respectful and sustainable. To achieve this, consider the following:

Take the time to understand the local customs and traditions and design entertainment activities that align with them. This will ensure that tourists are respectful and have an authentic experience of the local culture (Hong Pham, 2014).Incorporating local talent into the entertainment activities is an excellent way to support the local community and preserve cultural practices and traditions (Chien &

Thanh, 2022). Be mindful of the cultural significance of certain practices or traditions and avoid appropriating them for entertainment purposes (Thanh et al, 2923). Instead, find ways to respectfully showcase them that honor their meaning and significance.

Consider the environmental impact of entertainment activities and design them in a way that minimizes harm to the environment. Avoid activities that contribute to pollution or damage natural habitats. Instead, incorporate sustainable practices into entertainment activities, such as using renewable energy sources, recycling, or promoting eco-tourism activities (Mai et al., 2014). Use entertainment activities as an opportunity to educate tourists about environmental issues and encourage them to practice sustainable behaviors during their visit and beyond. By considering both cultural and environmental factors in entertainment activity design, we can create experiences that are respectful, sustainable, and enriching for both tourists and the local community.

LIMITATION

This study has a few limitations that should be acknowledged (Tung et al., 2023). Firstly, the use of an intentional sampling method may introduce bias and limit the generalizability of the findings. The sample size of 200 participants may also be considered relatively small, potentially affecting the statistical power and representativeness of the results. Additionally, the R-squared value of 0.400 indicates that the regression model explains 40% of the variance in the dependent variable, suggesting that there are other factors not accounted for in the analysis. These limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the findings and applying them to broader populations or contexts. Future research with larger and more diverse samples using random sampling methods could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships examined in this study.

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

Your profile**:** *Please select ONE answer from each statement that best describes you.*

Gender**:** ☐ *female* ☐ *male*

Age**:** ………*years old*

Education level: …………………………………………………….

Occupation:…………………………………………………..

On this scale, there is no right or incorrect response. Instead, mark the number that best represents your viewpoint on each survey topic on a scale of 1 to 5, as shown.

Destination	**Destination Selection**					
Destination1	How much do you consider the reputation of a destination when deciding where to travel?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Destination2	To what extent do you consider the cultural diversity of a destination when planning a trip?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Destination3	How much do you consider the natural beauty of a destination when selecting a vacation spot?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Destination4	How important is the availability of different types of accommodations when deciding on a destination?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accommodation	**Accommodation**					
Accommodation1	How important is comfortable bedding and linens to you when choosing an accommodation?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accommodation2	How much do you prioritize amenities such as a swimming pool or fitness center when selecting an accommodation?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accommodation3	To what extent do you value the location of an accommodation in relation to nearby attractions or activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accommodation4	How important is the price of an accommodation when deciding where to stay?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractions	**Attractions and Activities**					
Attractions1	To what extent do you enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking or water sports when traveling?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractions2	How much do you prioritize visiting historical or cultural sites when traveling?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Attractions3	How important is the availability of nightlife and entertainment options when selecting a destination?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractions4	To what extent do you value the opportunity for relaxation and downtime when traveling?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dining	**Dining**					
Dining1	How much do you value the availability of local cuisine when selecting a destination?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dining2	How important is the variety of dining options when choosing a vacation spot?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dining3	To what extent do you prioritize the quality of food when selecting a restaurant?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dining4	How important is the price of dining options when traveling?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transportation	**Transportation**					
Transportation1	To what extent do you value the convenience of transportation options when traveling?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transportation2	How important is the safety of transportation options when selecting a vacation spot?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transportation3	How much do you prioritize the environmental impact of transportation when traveling?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transportation4	How important is the cost of transportation options when deciding on a destination?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your participation.