

THE ATTRACTION OF CAN THO CITY, VIETNAM AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

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Abstract: This study aims to demonstrate the influencing factors on the destination attractiveness of Can Tho City, Vietnam. From October 2022 to November 2022, the study collected data using a convenient sampling method, with a sample size of 268 tourists. A mixed-method research approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed to validate the research hypotheses. For qualitative research, a focus group discussion method was conducted to identify appropriate scales for the research model. For quantitative research, the following analytical methods were utilized: testing the reliability of the scales using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM). The research results indicate that the attraction of Can Tho City as a tourism destination depends on 08 factors, including the natural environment, local culture, local cuisine, recreational activities, infrastructure, service price, tourism promotion, and local residents. Among these, tourism promotion is the most significant and influential factor affecting the attraction of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Key words: attraction, tourism destinations, Can Tho City

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INTRODUCTION

Destination attractiveness is an important factor for tourists (Funk et al., 2004). Attraction serves as a magnet for tourists to choose their destinations based on their preferences and travel purposes (Benckendorff and Pearce, 2003). The attractiveness of a destination forms a significant foundation for tourists' decisions in choosing travel destinations (Richards, 2002; Hou et al., 2005; Dolnicar and Leisch, 2008); the stronger the attraction, the higher the potential to draw tourists to the destination (Benur and Bramwell, 2015). However, the attractiveness of a destination depends on the tourist locations visitors are headed to (Krešić and Prebežac, 2011). Attraction contributes to fulfilling tourists' trip objectives such as entertainment, relaxation, and education (Leask, 2010). The attractiveness of a destination is a crucial element for the successful development of a tourist destination (Hu and Wall, 2005). Hence, a successful tourist destination must identify the factors that constitute its appeal to visitors (Formica, 2000).

Can Tho City is one of the five centrally-governed cities in Vietnam. It stands as a bustling and developed city in the Mekong Delta region, playing a role as the center of economics, culture, society, healthcare, education, and commerce for the entire region. In recent years, tourism in Can Tho City has undergone significant changes and strong development. The development of Can Tho's tourism industry is the result of the implementation of the Party and State's policies, especially Resolution No. 08-NQ/TW dated January 16, 2017, by the Party Central Committee on developing tourism into a key economic sector, and Resolution No. 03-NQ/TU of the Can Tho City Party Committee on promoting tourism development, setting the goal for 2020, Can Tho tourism industry has essentially become a key economic sector, providing impetus for socio-economic development. Can Tho City has an intricate network of rivers and canals, abundant seasonal greenery, numerous festivals, traditional craft villages, valuable historical cultural relics, and a diverse lodging system.

In Can Tho City, various types of tourism attract both domestic and international tourists, including ecotourism, river tourism, cultural tourism, community-based tourism, and MICE tourism. Some prominent tourist attractions widely recognized among visitors are community-based tourism in Son Islet, Cai Rang Floating Market, My Khanh Tourist Village, and Ninh Kieu Wharf. The literature review shows that, despite numerous studies demonstrating the factors influencing the attractiveness of tourist destinations, most studies have focused on developed countries, while few studies have been conducted in developing countries with a context similar to Vietnam. Therefore, identifying the factors that contribute to the attractiveness of the tourism destination in Can Tho City holds great significance. The research outcomes will suggest policy implications to enhance the appeal of Can Tho City as a tourism destination in the minds of travelers.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Destination attractiveness: Destination attractiveness is the spiritual image of a destination, created through the available attractions at a destination (Krešić and Prebežac, 2011). The attraction of a destination is a positive perception of the destination's image, reflected through an individual's understanding, impression, evaluation, and emotions toward a specific tourist location (Sun et al., 2013; Wu, 2016). The attractiveness of a destination is linked to its core attributes, notably the values of natural and cultural resources (Nadzirah et al., 2018), as well as supplementary attributes such as goods and services catering to the journey (Cheng et al., 2013; Hou et al., 2005). The attractiveness of a destination is a decisive factor in the development of the tourism economy (Sofield, 2006; Andersson and Getz, 2009). The attractiveness of a destination is evaluated through various dimensions and is seen as a multidimensional concept (Zhang et al., 2014). In this study, regarding the tourism destination of Can Tho City, the attractiveness of the destination is assessed through factors such as natural environment, socio-cultural aspects, local cuisine, recreational activities, infrastructure, service price, tourism promotion, and local residents.

Research hypotheses: In recent years, the topic of destination attractiveness has drawn the attention of many researchers. As a result, researchers have demonstrated various factors influencing the appeal of tourist destinations, including the natural environment, local culture, local cuisine, recreational activities, infrastructure, service prices, tourism promotion, and local residents. However, few studies have focused on the factors of tourism promotion and local residents. The impact level of these factors may vary for tourists depending on the characteristics and resources of the destination. Therefore, this study synthesizes the factors that influence destination attractiveness to formulate research hypotheses.

Natural Environment: Natural landscapes and the natural environment directly impact the capacity to attract tourists (Deng et al., 2002), influencing the existence and development of tourism activities (Kim and Richardson, 2003). Natural landscapes not only affect tourists' destination choices but also influence the flow of tourists on a national and global scale (Chau et al., 2016). The natural environment is a factor that contributes to the attractiveness level of a destination; the more beautiful and captivating the natural scenery, the greater the demand for exploration and experiences by tourists (Kozak, 2002; Beerli and Martín, 2004; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Ahmed et al., 2010; Seyidov and Adomaitienė, 2016; Vy, 2019; Tang et al., 2022). Therefore, this study suggests Hypothesis H1: The natural environment positively influences the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Local Culture: Local customs, festivals, traditional craft villages, and artistic performances are distinctive cultural aspects that interest tourists and encourage their participation (Formica and Murrmann, 1998; Yu and Littrell, 2003; Tien et al., 2021). Each type of tourism has its history of formation and unique local culture, which helps tourists gain a deeper understanding of the significance of different types of tourism in each region (Chau et al., 2016). Some researchers have argued and demonstrated that local culture is a factor that creates the appeal of a tourism destination (Kozak and Rimmington, 1998; Vengesai, 2003; Beerli and Martín, 2004; Zhou, 2005; Chau et al., 2016; Vy, 2019; Son et al., 2023). Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis H2: Local culture positively impacts the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Local Cuisine: Local cuisine is an important message that a destination needs to introduce to tourists to enhance the allure of the tourism destination (Quan and Wang, 2004; Blasco et al., 2014). The authenticity of local dishes is closely tied to traditional values, integrity, constancy, and the absence of distortion (Gupta and Duggal, 2021). Specialty dishes are a significant part of a destination's culinary culture (Thuy, 2023), contributing to the attractiveness of the tourism destination (Ahmed et al., 2010; Loan and Thanh, 2014; Hoang et al., 2016; Nghia et al., 2017; Quyen and Thao, 2017; Lien et al., 2021; Nghi et al., 2021; Giang, 2022). Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis H3: Local cuisine positively affects the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Recreational Activities: A variety of recreational activities at a destination includes options such as shopping, sports activities, nightlife, water shows, swimming, etc. (Chang and Gibson, 2011; Loureiro, 2015). Diverse recreational activities contribute to the attraction of a destination for tourists (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Chi and Qu, 2008; Lien et al., 2021). Some researchers have argued and demonstrated a positive correlation between recreational activities and the attraction of a tourism destination (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Ahmed et al., 2010; Loan and Thanh, 2014; Quyen and Thao, 2017; Thong, 2019). Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis H4: Recreational activities positively influence the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Infrastructure: Infrastructure comprises communication systems, public utilities, transportation, and services catering to tourists (Piewdang et al., 2013). Infrastructure forms the underlying system supporting both the activities of the local community and tourists (Thuy and Tuan, 2018). Good infrastructure creates favorable conditions for tourists to access the destination and engage in tourism activities (Duc and Kien, 2017). Within the realm of tourism, several studies have demonstrated that infrastructure is an important factor influencing the attractiveness of a destination (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Ahmed et al., 2010; Loan and Thanh, 2014; Seyidov and Adomaitienė, 2016; Quyen and Thao, 2017; Huong and Quan, 2019; Nghi et al., 2021; Thong and Phung, 2021). Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis H5: Infrastructure positively affects the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Service Price: In the realm of tourism, service prices encompass accommodation costs, prices of goods and tourist services, transportation costs, and dining expenses (Loan and Thanh, 2014). A destination with reasonable prices that correspond to the

quality of services is a matter of concern for tourists (Thong and Phung, 2021). The pricing and affordability of services impact the demand and choice of a destination (Nicolau and Mas, 2006; Chi and Qu, 2008). Some researchers have argued and demonstrated the positive influence of service prices on the attractiveness of a destination (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Zhou, 2005; Seyidov and Adomaitienė, 2016; Huong and Quan, 2019; Thong, 2019; Giang, 2022; Son et al., 2023). Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis H6: Service prices positively influence the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Tourism Promotion: Tourism promotion involves activities that boost and search for trading opportunities for goods and services in tourism, encompassing promotional endeavors, advertising, displays, showcasing, trade fairs, and travel exhibitions (Thong and Yen, 2022). According to Nguyen (2010), several marketing activities related to local tourism include image marketing, highlighting distinctive features, infrastructure marketing, and local marketing. Tourism promotion plays an essential role in driving tourism development, not only imparting information to tourists about the destination but also attracting and persuading them to choose the destination (Thong, 2019; Thong and Phung, 2021). Tourism promotion is a crucial factor positively influencing the attractiveness of a tourism destination, contributing to attracting tourists to the destination (Ahmed et al., 2010; Zidehsaraei and Zidehsaraei, 2015; Hoang et al., 2016; Quyen and Thao, 2017; Nghi et al., 2021). Thus, this study proposes Hypothesis H7: Tourism promotion positively impacts the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Table 1. Interpretation of observed variables in the research model

Factor	Observed variable	Scale
Natural Environment	NE1: Abundant natural resources	Likert 1-5
	NE2: Many attractive natural attractions	Likert 1-5
	NE3: Pleasant temperate and climate	Likert 1-5
	NE4: Fresh and peaceful environment	Likert 1-5
	References: Lin et al. (2007), Duc and Kien (2017)	
Local Culture	CUL1: Many handicraft villages	Likert 1-5
	CUL2: Many folk festivals	Likert 1-5
	CUL3: Many attractive historical and cultural relics	Likert 1-5
	CUL4: Interesting local people's lifestyle	Likert 1-5
	References: Yu and Littrell (2003), Huong and Quan (2019)	
Local Cuisine	CUS1: The cuisine is typical and attractive	Likert 1-5
	CUS2: The variety of dishes and drinks	Likert 1-5
	CUS3: Very unique culinary taste	Likert 1-5
	CUS4: Food quality is guaranteed	Likert 1-5
	References: Kim and Richardson (2003), Blasco et al. (2014).	
Recreational Activities	RA1: Many entertainment activities for visitors	Likert 1-5
	RA2: Enjoyable shopping experiences	Likert 1-5
	RA3: Various types of souvenirs and specialties	Likert 1-5
	RA4: Exciting night activities	Likert 1-5
	References: Loureiro (2015), Tien et al. (2021)	
Infrastructure	IN1: Good public transport system	Likert 1-5
	IN2: Full and diverse tourist information	Likert 1-5
	IN3: Diversity of food establishments	Likert 1-5
	IN4: The variety of accommodation facilities	Likert 1-5
	References: Lin et al. (2007), Huong and Hoan (2020)	
Service Price	SP1: Reasonable price for sightseeing services	Likert 1-5
	SP2: Affordable shopping prices	Likert 1-5
	SP3: Food service prices correspond to food quality	Likert 1-5
	SP4: Reasonable accommodation service price	Likert 1-5
	References: Loan and Thanh (2014), Thong (2019)	
Tourism Promotion	TP1: Impressive and attractive tourist destination advertisement	Likert 1-5
	TP2: Various forms of destination promotion	Likert 1-5
	TP3: Many attractive promotions	Likert 1-5
	TP4: Many travel programs	Likert 1-5
	References: Zidehsaraei and Zidehsaraei (2015), Quyen and Thao (2017)	
Local Resident	LR1: Local people are hospitable	Likert 1-5
	LR2: The friendliness and hospitality of the people	Likert 1-5
	LR3: Local people are always polite and courteous	Likert 1-5
	LR4: Local people are reliable	
	References: Palau-Saumell et al. (2016), Soonsan and Sukahbot (2019)	
Destination Attractiveness	DA1: Can Tho City is an attractive tourist destination	Likert 1-5
	DA2: Can Tho City brings many interesting experiences	Likert 1-5
	DA3: I am satisfied with the tourist destination of Can Tho City	Likert 1-5
	DA4: Can Tho City brings many good impressions	Likert 1-5
	References: Loan and Thanh (2014), Nghi et al. (2021)	

Local Residents: Tourism relies on the goodwill of local residents; thus, their participation is crucial for success and sustainable development (Ritchie, 1988; Jurowski, 1994). The attitude of local residents towards tourism development is of utmost importance, particularly positive support from them as a significant factor for successful tourism development (Nunkoo and So, 2016; Erul et al., 2020). The presence of local residents in tourism activities plays a vital role that determining the

quality of tourism services and enhancing the image of the tourism destination (Thong, 2019; Nguyen and Mai, 2021). Some researchers have argued and demonstrated the positive impact of local residents on the attractiveness of a tourism destination (Zhou, 2005; Quyen and Thao, 2017; Thong and Phung, 2021; Giang, 2022). Thus, this study proposes Hypothesis H8: Local residents positively affect the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination.

Based on the research hypotheses, the research model of factors influencing the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourism destination is established as Figure 1 and Table 1.



Figure 1. Proposed research model, (Source: compiled by the authors)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Analytical method

A mixed-method research combining qualitative and quantitative research was employed to validate the research hypotheses. For qualitative research, a focus group discussion method was conducted to identify appropriate scales for the research model. Two group discussions (each consisting of 5 tourists) were organized, involving a total of 10 tourists. The participants in the group discussions were identified as experienced travelers, especially those who had used tourism services at least twice at tourist destinations of Can Tho City. For quantitative research, the following analytical methods were utilized: testing the reliability of the scales using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM). Research methodology diagram is presented in Figure 2.

Data collection method

Researchers believe that SEM requires a large sample size as it relies on the theory of large sample distributions (Raykov and Widaman, 1995), and the minimum sample size should be 200 (Hoelter, 1983). A formal survey was conducted during the period from October 2022 to November 2022. The survey participants were selected from tourists who had visited and experienced tourism services in Can Tho City. The study utilized a convenience sampling method to collect data. Due to the lack of a comprehensive list and difficulty in accessing the survey subjects, the study used a convenient sampling to collect data. The drawback of this sampling method is that it cannot determine the sampling error and has limited generalizability of research results. After excluding surveys that were not reliable, a total of 268 valid surveys were used to test the research hypotheses. Some demographic characteristics of the respondents are as Table 2. Domestic tourists accounted for 68.66%, while international tourists accounted for 31.34%. The gender distribution of the respondents was relatively balanced, with males accounting for 52.24% and females accounting for 47.76%. The age group of the respondents was concentrated in the 30 to 45 age group (44.03%), followed by the age group above 45 (29.10%), and finally the age group under 30 (26.87%). The majority of respondents had completed high school (44.78%), followed by those with a university degree (46.64%), and postgraduate education (8.58%). In terms of occupation, office workers constituted the highest proportion of respondents (37.31%), followed by respondents working in the public sector (23.13%), self-employed individuals (25.37%), and managers/operators (14.18%).

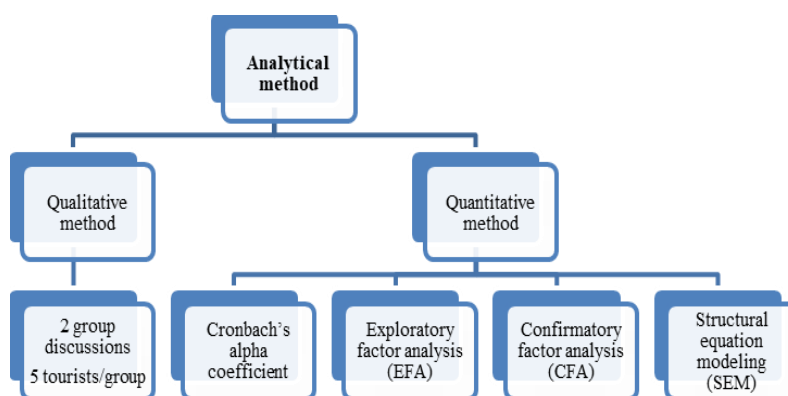


Figure 2. Research methodology flowchart, (Source: compiled by the authors)

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents (Source: authors)

Characteristics of the respondents	Number of respondents	Percentage
Respondents	268	100%
Domestic tourists	184	68.66
International tourists	84	31.34
Gender	268	100%
Male	140	52.24
Female	128	47.76
Age (years)	268	100%
< 30	72	26.87
30 - 45	118	44.03
> 45	78	29.10
Education	268	100%
High school	120	44.78
University	125	46.44
Postgraduate	23	8.58
Occupation	268	100%
Office workers	100	37.31
Public sector workers	62	23.13
Self-employed	68	25.37
Managers/operators	38	14.18

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluate scale reliability

To identify the factors influencing the attractiveness of Can Tho City as a tourist destination, the study employed SPSS 24 and AMOS 24 software for analysis. The estimation results were carried out step by step as follows:

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Based on the result in Table 3, Cronbach's alpha values of all measurement scales met the requirements, ranging from 0.834 to 0.916 (Nunnally, 1978; Peterson, 1994; Slater, 1995). Simultaneously, the results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were ensured according to the statistical criteria as follows: (1) Reliability of observed variables (Factor loading > 0.5); (2) Suitability of the model ($0.5 < KMO = 0.930 < 1$); (3) Bartlett's test of correlation among observed variables (Sig. = $0.000 < 0.05$). The cumulative variance test yielded 76.16%, surpassing the threshold of 50% (Hair et al., 1998). As a result, 09 factors were formed from 36 observed variables, and there was no disturbance among observed variables. Therefore, the names of factors remained consistent.

The CFA result shows the following indices: Chi-square/df ratio = $1.325 < 2$ with a P-value = $0.00 \leq 0.05$; The TLI and CFI indices have values of 0.969 and 0.972, respectively, both > 0.9; the RMSEA coefficient = $0.035 < 0.08$. This indicates that the model fits the market data (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Based on Table 4, the computed results for Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) both satisfy the conditions. The values of CR (minimum 0.838) and AVE (minimum 0.566) meet the requirements (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The test results show that the correlations between the conceptual structures achieve discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Therefore, the research data aligns with market data, displaying convergent validity, unidimensionality, discriminant validity, and reliability.

Test research model and hypotheses

Based on the results of SEM presented in Table 5, all model values meet the requirements, including $\chi^2/df = 1.299$, P-value = 0.00, TLI = 0.971, CFI = 0.975, and RMSEA = 0.033 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). This indicates that the research model aligns with market data. The test result shown in Table 5 confirms that all research hypotheses are accepted with a 95% confidence level. Based on the examination result in Table 5, the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City is influenced by 08 factors, including the natural environment, local culture, local cuisine, entertainment activities, infrastructure, service price, tourism promotion, and local residents. Among these factors, the tourism promotion factor has the most impact on the destination attractiveness of Can Tho City, while the natural environment factor has the least impact on the destination attractiveness of Can Tho City.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis H1, H2, H3: According to the test results, there is a positive correlation between the natural environment and the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. Indeed, the natural environment is a crucial factor, creating allure for tourists (Deng et al., 2002; Loan and Thanh, 2014), shaping an appealing destination image in the minds of travelers (San Martín and Del Bosque, 2008; Ahmed et al., 2010). Furthermore, the research findings have demonstrated that local culture and local cuisine are factors positively affecting the destination image of Can Tho City. The city possesses numerous captivating historical relics, along with traditional handicraft villages and various folk festivals, all of which constitute cultural characteristics that attract both domestic and international visitors. Furthermore, visitors to Can Tho City can enjoy distinctive Southern dishes, renowned for their unique flavors and high culinary quality. The research outcomes affirm that local culture and local cuisine are positive influencing factors on the destination image of tourism (Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Quyen and Thao, 2017). Hypothesis H4, H5: The research results have demonstrated that entertainment activities positively contribute to the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. When visiting Can Tho City, tourists will experience engaging shopping activities, and take part in captivating nighttime events, especially when they can choose from a variety of souvenirs and local specialties. The reality shows that the demands for shopping, dining, and entertainment of tourists are limitless and continually increasing (Loan and Thanh,

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha testing result (Source: authors)

Scale	Number of observed variables	Cronbach's alpha	Factor loading
NE	4	0.889	0.705 – 0.878
CUL	4	0.888	0.699 – 0.887
CUS	4	0.916	0.811 – 0.860
RA	4	0.903	0.780 – 0.867
IN	4	0.912	0.789 – 0.894
SP	4	0.843	0.738 – 0.778
TP	4	0.834	0.534 – 0.819
LR	4	0.884	0.744 – 0.811
DA	4	0.912	0.663 – 0.841

Table 4. Correlation matrix between factors (Source: authors)

	CR	AVE	IN	RA	CUL	CUS	SP	TR	LR	NE	DA
IN	0.912	0.722	0.850								
RA	0.903	0.700	0.501	0.837							
CUL	0.891	0.671	0.369	0.431	0.819						
CUS	0.916	0.731	0.297	0.480	0.523	0.855					
SP	0.843	0.574	0.416	0.443	0.390	0.396	0.758				
TP	0.838	0.566	0.363	0.522	0.554	0.669	0.413	0.752			
LR	0.885	0.658	0.341	0.479	0.530	0.660	0.408	0.712	0.811		
NE	0.889	0.668	0.492	0.425	0.553	0.357	0.363	0.498	0.479	0.817	
DA	0.913	0.724	0.544	0.612	0.629	0.641	0.554	0.700	0.680	0.593	0.851

Table 5. Estimation result in SEM model (Source: authors)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Estimate	P-value	Result
H1	NE → DA	0.122	0.038	accepted
H2	CUL → DA	0.137	0.022	accepted
H3	CUS → DA	0.139	0.033	accepted
H4	RA → DA	0.126	0.027	accepted
H5	IN → DA	0.149	0.005	accepted
H6	SP → DA	0.144	0.007	accepted
H7	TP → DA	0.178	0.025	accepted
H8	LR → DA	0.161	0.025	accepted

2014). Therefore, it is evident that entertainment activities are an important factor in shaping a positive destination image in the minds of tourists (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Chi and Qu, 2008; Lien et al., 2021). The research results also indicate that infrastructure makes a positive contribution to the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. This research outcome reaffirms the significant role of infrastructure in the appeal of a tourism destination, aligning with several studies proposed by Loan and Thanh (2014), Quyen and Thao (2017), Huong and Quan (2019), Thong and Phung (2021).

Hypothesis H6, H7, H8: The examination results have demonstrated a positive correlation between service price and the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. The research continues to affirm that service price is an important factor influencing the destination's attractiveness (Swarbrooke and Page, 2012; Loan and Thanh, 2014; Giang, 2022; Son et al., 2023). Additionally, the research has proven that tourism promotion has a positive and the strongest influence on the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. Indeed, if tourism promotion activities are invested and supported, it will enhance the appeal of the tourism destination (Zidehsaraei and Zidehsaraei, 2015; Hoang et al., 2016; Quyen and Thao, 2017). Finally, the research has indicated that local residents are a positive influencing factor on the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. The local residents of Can Tho City uphold traditional values of "Intellect - Dynamism - Benevolence - Heroism – Elegance", forming the foundational values of the city's inhabitants. Hence, the local residents of Can Tho City are highly regarded by tourists for their cheerfulness, politeness, hospitality, and reliability. In the field of tourism, the role of local residents is always crucial in shaping the destination image (Zhou, 2005; Quyen and Thao, 2017; Thong and Phung, 2021; Giang, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The attractiveness of a destination is a crucial factor that generates appeal for tourists. Therefore, identifying the influencing factors on destination attractiveness can help managers develop appropriate action plans, contributing to enhancing the quality of the destination image in the minds of tourists. The research results have demonstrated the positive influence of 08 factors on the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City, including the natural environment, local culture, local cuisine, recreational activities, infrastructure, service price, tourism promotion, and local residents. Among these, tourism promotion is the most significant and strongly impacts the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. The research results contribute to suggesting policy implications to enhance the attractiveness of Can Tho City. The two most essential solutions are concentrating on promotional programs and improving tourism image. Alongside the achieved results, the research still has some limitations as follows: Firstly, the sample size of the study is limited, especially for international tourists who are restricted to English-speaking proficiency, which may lead to less generalizability of the research findings. Secondly, the study has not examined the role of moderating variables (gender, education level, occupation, type of tourists) that may influence the attractiveness of the tourism destination of Can Tho City. Subsequent studies should expand the scale of the research sample and examine the role of moderating variables to enhance the explanatory power of the destination attractiveness of Can Tho City.

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