

## EVALUATION RESULTS ON FACTORS AFFECTING REGIONAL LINKAGE IN AN GIANG TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FROM A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** This study was conducted in An Giang province, Vietnam, aiming to examine the variables and explain the factors affecting the tourism development of An Giang province in regional linkages from a geographical perspective. This research employed a non-probability sampling method with 300 visitors by distributing a survey. The data gathered from the survey was encoded and processed using SPSS version 29.0. Pearson correlation was used in this study to investigate the relationship between factors of natural tourism resources, cultural tourism resources, infrastructure, safety in tourism, and tourism policy with the tourism development of An Giang province in regional linkages. The results showed that factors of cultural tourism resources and natural tourism resources have a high correlation with regional linkages in tourism development; factors of infrastructure and tourism safety with regional linkages in tourism development have a medium correlation; tourism development policy factors have a low correlation but are worth considering with regional linkages in tourism development.

**Keywords:** An Giang province, Mekong Delta, regional linkages, infrastructure, tourism resources, tourism policy, tourism safety

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is “the sum of phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents” (Gossling, 2002). At present, tourism is recognized as a crucial economic pillar that generates employment, boosts foreign currency revenues, enhances the quality of life for local communities, and fosters the development of various other sectors (Gabriel et al., 2017). Tourism is one of the essential industries in the world. It is highly appreciated as the “smokeless industry”, or tourism, which is also known as the “green economy” (Petrovic et al., 2018) and is prioritized as an essential economic driver. In 2021, travel and tourism directly contributed about 5.8 billion USD to global GDP (Citaristi, 2022).

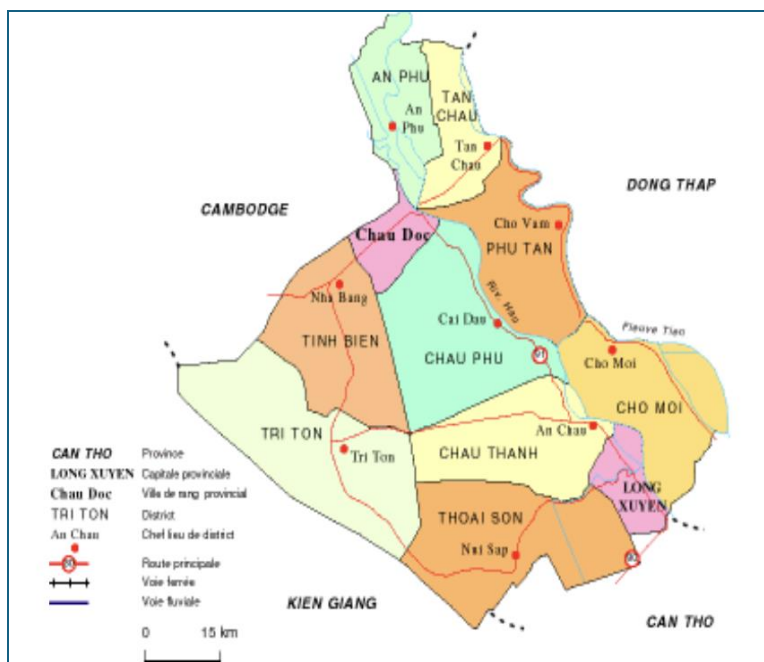


Figure 1. Administrative map of An Giang province, Vietnam (Source: Author, 2024)

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Tourism is closely related to local life, culture, heritage (Everett and Aitchison, 2008), and natural attractions (Petrovic et al., 2017). As a result, tourism can enhance national identity and greatly benefit society (Lucchetti and Arcese, 2014). Furthermore, tourism is crucial in safeguarding and enhancing cultural heritage value, including tangible and intangible assets in various regions. The growth of this sector is also crucial in alleviating hunger and poverty while driving economic transformation (Giao et al., 2021). In tourism development, regional linkage is becoming popular because of its benefits to localities and linked regions (Rogerson, 2015; Telfer, 2014). The regional linkage allows the exploitation of advantages regarding resources, location, infrastructure and other resources for tourism development (Moscardo et al., 2017; Scheyvens, 2018). In the plan for Tourism development in the Mekong Delta region to 2030 Vietnam, regional tourism linkage is mentioned to enhance competitiveness, attract investment, and attract tourists to the linked areas. For some territories with high similarity in resources, regional linkage will effectively limit fragmentation and duplication, create typical tourism products of the region and locality, and maintain more sustainable and long-term benefits from tourism development. Recognizing the importance of tourism development in regional linkage, An Giang province has focused on developing tourism into a spearhead economic sector while focusing on strengthening regional linkages in tourism development to make An Giang one of the attractive tourist destinations in the Mekong Delta (Figure 1) (Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of An Giang, 2023). Therefore, to promote tourism development, it is essential to identify and assess the factors influencing regional linkages between An Giang and neighbouring areas. This approach will help leverage local strengths, create tailored tourism products, and enhance the effectiveness of tourism activities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Regional linkage in tourism development

The book “Tourism Geography” emphasized that the expansion of distribution space in the 1950s changed the nature of business tourism in some European countries, thereby turning tourism into an economic sector. Highly connected and accessible tourism relationships are not limited to a specific local area but are extended to a much larger area (Ashworth, 2001). Tourism growth in the direction of linkage and cooperation is a popular trend in the modern era. In the context of globalization and global economic integration, the practice of tourism development in linkage and cooperation between countries, regions, and localities is of considerable concern and reinforces the importance of regional relationships related to tourism (Song et al., 2018). In this area of research, tourism scientists and managers seek to demonstrate the advantages of connecting tourist destinations, especially in the context of globalization and international economic integration. Regional tourism development strategies have emphasized the importance of tourism connectivity and integration to achieve the goal of sustainable landscape protection (Oliver and Jenkins, 2003).

National governments have emphasized the importance of connecting tourist areas, and it has become an essential part of tourism development planning (Kauppila et al., 2009; Manhas et al., 2016). Linkage analysis is considered a supplement to traditional tourism impact analysis to examine the economic impact on the destination economy (Hor, 2021). There are many links between tourism and the socio-economic structure of countries, regions and territories (Hor, 2021; Moscardo et al., 2017; Rogerson, 2015). Tourism development concerns the nature of tourism relations and cooperation between regions, countries and cities (Calero and Turner, 2020; Czernek, 2013). According to this field of study, tourism development is not limited to a specific territory but goes beyond the borders of a city, country or region (Telfer, 2014).

### Factors affecting regional linkage in tourism development

Tourism resources play an essential role among the factors affecting regional linkage in tourism development. The uniqueness and diversity of tourism resources mainly determine tourist destinations. Therefore, tourism management must pay attention to maintaining the quality of tourism resources at tourist sites (Khuong et al., 2017). In the tourism industry, it is evident that all tourism activities are closely tied to natural resources, including landscapes, water bodies, topography, and plant and animal life (Fossgard and Fredman, 2019; Nonthapot, 2024). Cultural tourism resources include historical relics, customs, lifestyles, religions, festivals, historical landscapes, and the friendliness of local people (McKay, 2018). Moreover, the cultural setting highlights specific attributes like “historic structures, palaces, museums, theatres, galleries, and various festivals and events” (Martin et al., 2016).

Additionally, travelers seek to explore and understand the history, language, and everyday life of ethnic minorities. An Giang province is selected as a tourist destination by visitors from various regions because it is home to numerous ethnic groups with a rich diversity of languages, cultures, and environments (Hai et al., 2023). The emergence of many types of tourism based on the exploitation of specific tourism resources, such as the difference in the distribution of different tourism resources, is one of the factors that require tourism cooperation linkage between countries and regions to develop diverse tourism routes and provide tourism chains (Jesus and Franco, 2016; Mendonça et al., 2015).

### Infrastructure in tourism development

Numerous studies have explored the connection between infrastructure and tourism development in the context of regional connectivity. These investigations have analyzed how infrastructure relates to tourist spending, distance, pricing, and overall satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction at a destination is evaluated by assessing how well the provided facilities meet their needs and preferences (Chau et al., 2023). Many studies have highlighted the strong link between infrastructure and tourist satisfaction (Khuong et al., 2020). Infrastructure is considered transportation networks, including roads, railways, sea routes, airways, hotel systems, residential areas, and entertainment areas. Additionally, the satisfaction of tourists is shaped by the ease of access to locations, which encompasses infrastructure, operational factors, governmental policies, and

available amenities (Virkar and Mallya, 2018). Previous research has demonstrated that infrastructure and accessibility are crucial in expanding tourist destinations and developing new attractions. Additionally, creating sufficient public infrastructure is essential for ensuring high-quality amenities at tourist destinations (Jovanovia and Ilija, 2016). Enhancing tourism infrastructure is crucial for boosting the appeal of a destination and attracting visitors. A country's infrastructure significantly influences its potential as an attractive tourist destination (Seetanah and Khadaroo, 2011).

**Safety in tourism**

Safety in tourism is the protection of tourists from unwanted incidents and risks for the entire trip (Ngoc and Trinh, 2015). Safety and security are consistently among the most critical issues most tourists are concerned about before visiting a place (Rittichainuwat et al., 2012). When the safety and security of a destination are well-maintained, tourists are likely to have enjoyable experiences during their visit, feeling at ease and secure while exploring.

This not only enhances the image of the destination as more beautiful, welcoming, and safe but also encourages these tourists to share their positive experiences with others, thereby strengthening regional connections in tourism development (Burch, 2009). Tourism safety is a crucial factor influencing travelers' decisions when selecting a destination, as it directly impacts their health, well-being, and overall satisfaction throughout the journey (To, 2023).

**Tourism development policy**

Tourism development policy is critical to achieving success in tourism growth, fostering connections, and ensuring sustainability (Le et al., 2024). Effective tourism strategies and policies can advance or impede tourism development, depending on how well they align with practical needs. In the "An Giang Provincial Planning for the period 2021-2030, vision to 2050", policies are proposed to focus on strengthening regional connectivity in tourism development to vigorously develop An Giang tourism industry in the Mekong Delta region (Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of An Giang, 2023).

**Hypothesis**

In this study, the author uses the dependent variable "Regional linkages in tourism development", which is affected by five independent variables: "natural tourism resources, cultural tourism resources, infrastructure, tourism safety and tourism development policy" (Figure 2). Based on the literature review, the following five hypotheses have been developed for this study:

- H1:** Natural tourism resources have a positive relationship with regional linkages in tourism development.
- H2:** Cultural tourism resources have a positive relationship with regional linkages in tourism development.
- H3:** Infrastructure and regional linkages in tourism development have a significant relationship.
- H4:** Tourism safety and regional linkages in tourism development have a meaningful relationship.
- H5:** Tourism policy and regional linkages in tourism development have a significant relationship.

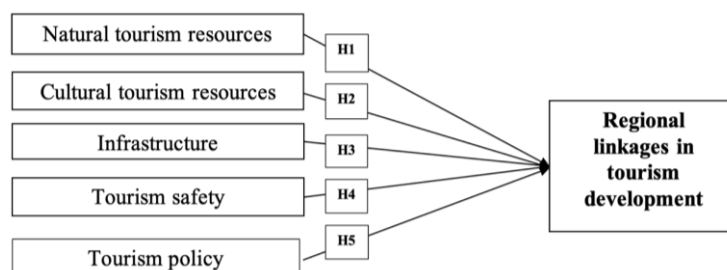


Figure 2. Research hypothesis



Figure 3. Location of the research area - Mekong Delta, Vietnam (Source: Author, 2024)

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research area

An Giang province is situated west of the Mekong Delta, nestled between the Tien and Hau rivers, and has a 100 km long northern boundary with Cambodia. Additionally, it is adjacent to Kien Giang Province to the southwest, Dong Thap Province to the east, and Can Tho City to the southeast (Figure 3). The terrain of An Giang province consists mainly of alluvial plains, low hills, and river islands. An Giang has many famous tourist attractions such as Sam Mountain National Tourist Area, Cam Mountain Tourist Area, Oc Eo Relic Site, and President Ton Duc Thang Memorial Site. With the above benefits, An Giang is becoming an attractive tourist destination, attracting both domestic and international visitors (Chau, 2023).

The tourism sector in An Giang province, Vietnam, has played a significant role in the country's socio-economic progress, notably in generating revenue and creating jobs for the local population. In 2023, An Giang saw over 9.2 million tourists, marking a 35% rise compared to 2022, with 9,000 international travellers, reflecting a 75% increase from the previous year. The total earnings from tourism activities exceeded 4,800 billion VND, up 24% from the same period in 2022. Domestic tourists accounted for 87% of the total visitors to An Giang (Chau et al., 2023).

### Data collection and research sample

For this study, the survey targeted domestic tourists in Vietnam, employing a convenience sampling method. Out of 350 questionnaires distributed, 342 were returned. However, after review, 42 were deemed invalid due to incomplete responses, choosing only one option, lack of seriousness in answering, or overly neutral responses. Consequently, 300 valid questionnaires with complete and satisfactory answers were used for the analysis, meeting the sampling criteria.

### Measurement scales and research design

The questionnaire comprised 25 variables evaluated using a five-point Likert scale (1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - Neutral; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly Agree). Data collected from the survey were analyzed using SPSS software to calculate Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient, which helped identify and remove variables with reliability coefficients below 0.6. This process ensured that the questions consistently reflected the intended content. The refined data were then used for Pearson correlation testing in the study. Quantitative research investigated factors associated with regional linkages in tourism development. Descriptive statistics were also utilized to identify the characteristics of the observed variables in the study. The steps of the study are shown in Figure 4.

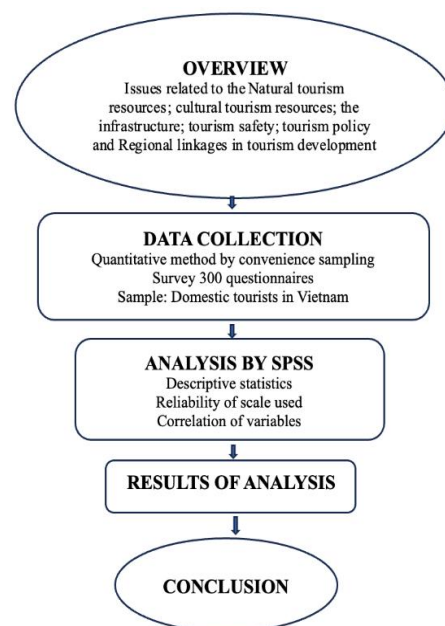


Figure 4. The steps of the study

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive statistics of the study sample

The characteristics of gender, employment, and the time for travelling of 300 survey samples for the study are descriptively summarized by the author in Table 1. **Cronbach's Alpha test results:** The values of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for five of the independent and dependent variables (Regional linkages in tourism development) in this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Characteristics of the survey sample (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

Factors	Component	Amount	Percent
Gender	Female	168	56.0 %
	Male	132	44.0 %
Employment	State employees	42	14.0 %
	Farmers, workers	62	20.6 %
	Business	128	42.7 %
	Other	68	22.7 %
The time for travelling	Summer vacation	170	56.7 %
	Tet holiday	80	26.7 %
	Leisure time	19	6.3 %
	Weekend	31	10.3 %

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha test results (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

Variables	Item	Value of Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	SD
Natural tourism resources	5	0.898	3.017	1.192
Cultural tourism resources	5	0.880	3.024	1.125
Infrastructure	5	0.899	3.120	1.119
Tourism safety	5	0.895	3.030	1.140
Tourism policy	5	0.882	3.109	1.116
Regional linkages in tourism development	3	0.937	3.114	1.142

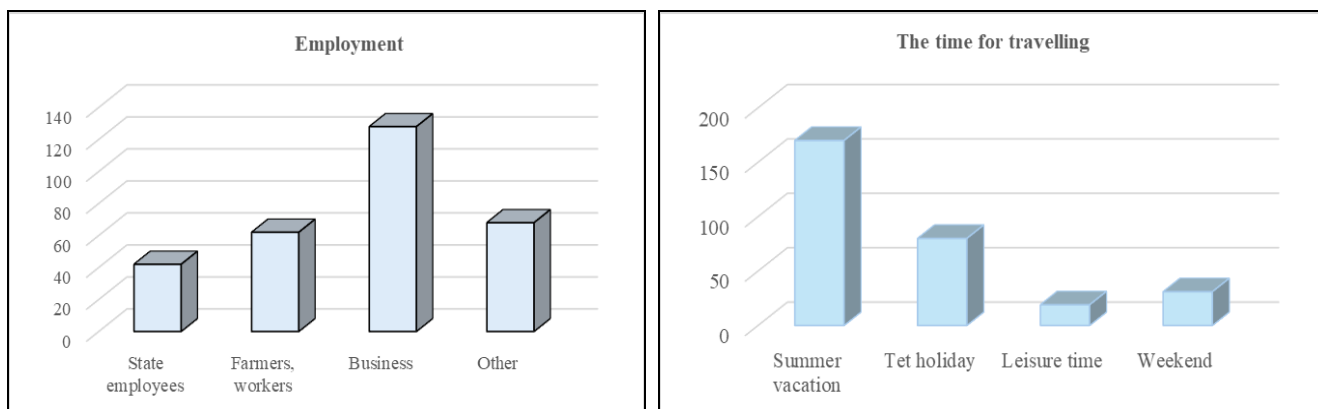


Figure 5. The chart shows the characteristics of the survey sample

The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient values for the five independent variables and the dependent variable (Satisfaction with tourist destinations) in this study are shown in Table 2. Regarding the reliability of the scale, Hoang Trong and Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc (2008) stated that Cronbach’s Alpha values ranging from 0.7 to nearly 0.8 are considered acceptable for a measurement scale, while values from 0.8 to nearly one are considered excellent. Based on the evaluation of the 28 variables, all had Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients above 0.7. This indicates that the questionnaire was highly reliable and suitable for further study. The reliability analysis of the questionnaire demonstrated that respondents comprehended the questions effectively, indicating that the instrument was suitable and accepted for use in this study. The mean and standard deviation of the five independent variables and the dependent variable are shown in Table 2. For the dependent variable (Regional linkages in tourism development), the mean score is 3.114, and the standard deviation is 1.142. For the five independent variables, the highest mean score is for the variable “infrastructure” at 3.120, followed by the variable “tourism policy” at 3.109; the variable “safety in tourism” at 3.030, the variable “cultural tourism resources” at 3.024 and the lowest mean score is for the variable “natural tourism resources” at 3.017.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of natural tourism resources (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

No	Item Description	Mean	SD
1	An Giang has a unique terrain with the Seven Mountains region having many famous tourist attractions	3.34	1.198
2	An Giang has a favorable climate for tourism development and a flood season that attracts tourists	3.01	1.014
3	An Giang has diverse rivers that are favorable for tourism development in regional linkages	2.82	1.124
4	An Giang has a diverse and typical ecosystem with many values for tourism development	3.11	1.139
5	Natural tourism resources are considered the main attraction for tourists in the surrounding areas	2.80	1.121

Table 3 and Figure 6 show the results of the analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the respondents for the independent variable “natural tourism resources”. Item number one has the highest mean value of 3.34. This shows that the respondents perceive that “An Giang has a unique terrain with the Seven Mountains region having many famous tourist attractions”. Item number five has the lowest mean value of 2.80. Only a few respondents agree that “Natural tourism resources are considered the main attraction for tourists in the surrounding areas”. From a dataset of 300 respondents with most standard deviations less than 1.5, the values are close to the mean and less scattered.

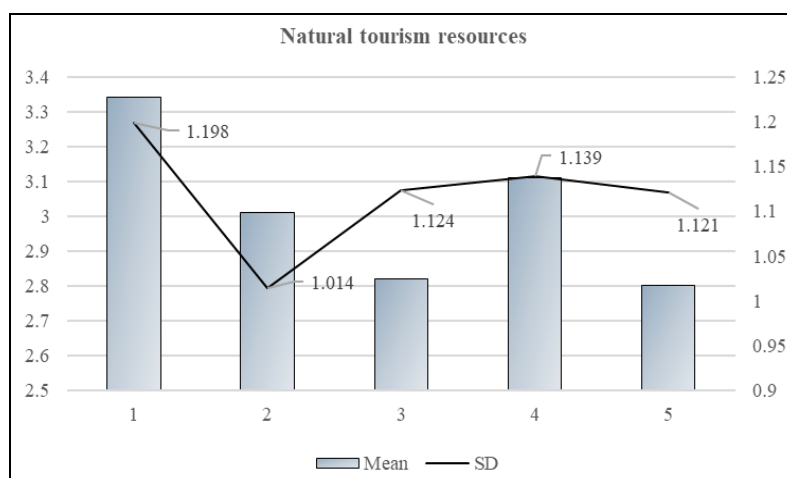


Figure 6. The chart displays descriptive statistics of the mean (Mean) and standard deviation (SD) of natural tourism resources

Table 4 shows the analysis of the mean and standard deviation on the independent variable “cultural tourism resources”. The highest mean value is item number two, which is 3.18. Most respondents agree that “An Giang has many cultural and

historical relics that are valuable in tourism development”. The lowest mean value is item number one, which is 2.84. Only a few respondents agree that “An Giang has many long-standing craft villages with unique products that attract tourists”.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of cultural tourism resources (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

No	Item Description	Mean	SD
1	An Giang has many unique festivals	2.92	1.091
2	An Giang has many valuable cultural and historical relics in tourism development	3.18	1.290
3	An Giang has many long-standing craft villages with unique products, attracting tourists	2.84	1.034
4	An Giang has many types of typical and attractive cuisine	3.15	1.085
5	There are many sports, cultural and social events held in An Giang that attract a large number of tourists	3.11	1.191

For the data set of 300 respondents, most of the standard deviation values are more significant than 1, which indicates that the values are less dispersed. Table 5 shows the analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the independent variable “Infrastructure”. Item number two has the highest mean value of 3.31. Among them, the majority of the respondents agree that “High-quality tourism services will attract tourists to destinations”. The lowest mean value is item number one, with a mean value 2.96. A few respondents found that “Enhanced infrastructure at tourist destinations will ensure the delivery of high-quality tourism services”. From the data set of 300 respondents, most of the standard deviation values are less than 1.5, indicating that the values are close to the mean value and less dispersed.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of infrastructure (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

No	Item Description	Mean	SD
1	Enhanced infrastructure at tourist destinations will ensure the delivery of high-quality tourism services	2.96	1.072
2	High-quality tourism services will attract tourists to destinations	3.31	1.272
3	Comprehensive infrastructure will influence the attraction and presence of tourists at destinations	3.00	1.047
4	Offering appealing and convenient facilities is a key factor in drawing tourists	3.03	1.103
5	Infrastructure can facilitate a variety of tourism activities and serves as a major draw for visitors from nearby areas	3.30	1.222

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of tourism safety (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

No	Item Description	Mean	SD
1	The destination is secure	3.11	1.035
2	The destination consistently implements safety measures to protect tourists	3.03	1.275
3	You feel at ease using public services at the destination	3.07	1.190
4	The staff and customer care system at the tourist destination have ensured tourists' safety	2.78	1.009
5	Tourism safety at the destination is a key factor influencing tourists' decision to return	3.17	1.254

Table 6 shows the analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the independent variable “tourism safety”. Item number five has the highest mean value of 3.17. Most respondents agree that “Tourism safety at the destination is a key factor influencing tourists' decision to return”. Item number four has the lowest mean value of 2.78. A few respondents found, “The staff and customer care system at the tourist destination have ensured tourists' safety”. From the data set of 300 respondents, most of the standard deviation values are more significant than 1, indicating that the values are close to the mean value and have very little dispersion.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of tourism policy (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

No	Item Description	Mean	SD
1	Strengthening local tourism promotion	3.31	1.198
2	Developing diversified tourism products	3.05	1.175
3	Improving infrastructure in regional linkages	2.96	1.027
4	Taking into account the policy of regional tourism linkages	3.25	1.162
5	Enhancing investment attraction in tourism linkages with localities	2.98	1.061

Table 7 shows the analysis of the mean and standard deviation of the respondents for the independent variable “tourism policy”. Item number one has the highest mean value of 3.31. Most respondents agree that “Strengthening the promotion of local tourism” will help develop tourism in regional linkage. The lowest mean score is item number three, with a mean value of 2.96. Among them, a few respondents find that “Improving infrastructure in regional linkage” is needed. From the data set of 300 respondents, most of the standard deviation values are more significant than 1, indicating that the values are less dispersed. Table 8 shows the respondents’ mean and standard deviation analysis for the dependent variable “regional linkages in tourism development”. Item number three has the highest mean value of 3.17. Most respondents agree that “Tourism promotes cooperation between An Giang province and neighboring localities”.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of regional linkages in tourism development (n = 300) (Source: Author, 2024)

No	Item Description	Mean	SD
1	An Giang province's tourism develops rapidly in regional linkages	3.06	1.120
2	An Giang province's tourism industry has made important contributions to socio-economic development	2.78	1.018
3	Tourism promotes cooperation between An Giang province and neighboring localities	3.17	1.157

The lowest mean score is item number 2, with a mean value of 2.78. The respondents perceive that “The tourism industry of An Giang province has an important contribution to socio-economic development”.

From the data set of 300 respondents, most of the standard deviation values are more significant than 1, indicating that the values are close to the mean value and have very little dispersion.

Table 9. Correlation analysis between factors and regional linkages in tourism development (Source: Author, 2024)

		<b>Regional linkages in tourism development</b>	Cultural tourism resources	Natural tourism resources	Infrastructure	Tourism safety	Tourism policy
<b>Regional linkages in tourism development</b>	Pearson correlation	1	<b>0.709**</b>	<b>0.498**</b>	<b>0.379**</b>	<b>0.330**</b>	<b>0.260**</b>
	Sig. (2- sides)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Pearson Correlation Test**

Table 9 analyzes the correlation between the five factors and regional linkages in tourism development, showing that all Sig values are equal to 0.000. The Pearson correlation coefficient between cultural tourism resources and regional linkages in tourism development is 0.709. This shows a robust and positive correlation. The coefficient between natural tourism resources and regional linkages in tourism development is 0.498, indicating a relatively strong positive correlation. The correlation coefficient between the two factors, infrastructure, tourism safety and regional linkages in tourism development, is 0.379 and 0.330, respectively, indicating a moderate positive correlation. Finally, the correlation coefficient between Tourism policy and regional linkages in tourism development is weakly positive, with a correlation coefficient of only 0.260.

**DISCUSSION**

The conducted analysis shows that the correlation between cultural tourism resources and regional linkages in the tourism development of tourists is robust ( $r = 0.709$ ,  $N = 300$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The findings show the highest relationship between cultural tourism resources and regional linkages in tourism development. This aligns with reality, as An Giang province boasts numerous renowned temples, pagodas, and festivals. These elements have generated tourism resources characterized by distinctive architectural styles and profound historical and cultural significance. Such attributes provide An Giang with a significant opportunity to leverage cultural tourism, thereby advancing the development of the province's tourism sector (To, 2023). Tourism resources are essential to serve the needs of tourists while creating diversity and attractiveness of products. The increase in cultural tourism resources drives tourism attraction and relationships between places with minimal resources (Jesus and Franco, 2016). Cultural and historical tourism resources play an essential role in building a favorable reputation of a place for tourists and making them satisfied when returning (Haneef, 2017).

The results of the subsequent analysis show a strong correlation between natural tourism resources and regional linkages in tourism development ( $r = 0.498$ ,  $N = 300$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The study has found a positive and significant relationship between natural tourism resources and regional linkages in tourism development. The study's findings will assist local authorities and tourism operators in identifying effective strategies for enhancing and preserving An Giang province's natural tourism resources. These results align with Jarvis (2016), who emphasized that the quality of natural tourism resources significantly influences tourist satisfaction and the attractiveness of a destination. Thus, natural tourism resources play a crucial role in shaping the overall satisfaction with a tourist destination (Jarvis, 2016).

The results also showed that the correlation between infrastructure and regional linkages in tourism development was at a moderate level ( $r = 0.379$ ,  $N = 300$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The findings revealed a positive and significant connection between infrastructure and regional linkages in tourism development. Infrastructure plays a crucial role in tourism, as a well-equipped service environment is necessary to attract visitors to a destination. Tourism is a diverse industry encompassing a range of components such as attractions, activities, services, and infrastructure, all contributing to the overall appeal of a location's natural and artificial features. Cooper et al. (2005) highlighted that the physical facilities at a destination are crucial for tourism. A destination must offer exciting sites and provide comprehensive amenities, including accommodation, activities, and transportation, to fulfil tourists' needs and ensure their satisfaction (Cooper et al., 2005).

The correlation between tourism safety and regional linkages in tourism development is moderate ( $r = 0.330$ ,  $N = 300$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The findings show a positive and significant relationship between tourism safety and satisfaction with the destination. This also suggests that tourism managers in An Giang province need to strengthen the monitoring and handling of security violations such as soliciting tourists to buy tourism products in tourist areas, homeless people begging, and theft in tourist areas. Authorities should re-plan specific areas for trading and parking lots to increase tourist destinations' beauty while ensuring tourist safety.

Moreover, finally, the correlation between Tourism policy and regional linkages in tourism development is weak ( $r = 0.260$ ,  $N = 300$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The results show a positive and significant relationship between tourism policy and regional linkages in tourism development. In An Giang province, the policy system and the attention of agencies and units are necessary to promote the growth of the An Giang tourism industry and strengthen regional connectivity.

This result is consistent with studies on tourism policy and planning, affirming the importance of regional linkage strategies for tourism development in countries and territories (Mendonça et al., 2015; Zhang, 2017). Regional linkage in tourism development begins with the formation and implementation of linkage policies, which serve as a legal basis

for implementing linkage contents between regions and territories (Czernek, 2013). Policies supporting units participating in tourism linkage, especially enterprises, will remove some obstacles and support enterprises in implementing them by their actual conditions (Adnyana et al., 2020).

The limitation of this study is that it only focuses on examining the correlation between tourism resources, infrastructure, safety in tourism and tourism policies with regional linkages in tourism development. Therefore, future studies can be conducted to examine other factors such as service quality, specific tourism products of An Giang province or multivariate regression analysis to find effective tourism development models.

## CONCLUSION

This research has made a substantial contribution to broadening the understanding of the factors affecting tourism development in An Giang province, particularly within the framework of regional integration. By conducting an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of these influencing factors, the study establishes a robust theoretical basis for evaluating the significance and impact of each factor on the sustainable growth of the local tourism sector.

The findings serve as valuable guidance for policymakers and tourism managers in crafting targeted strategies to maximize the province's tourism potential. Moreover, they assist businesses, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders in gaining a clearer understanding of their roles within the interconnected regional framework.

This allows for more informed decision-making, fostering greater collaborative efficiency, capitalizing on competitive advantages, and addressing existing challenges. While the insights from this research focus on An Giang, their applicability extends to other regions pursuing tourism development through regional partnerships.

These findings offer a valuable reference model for future studies, furthering sustainable tourism development and contributing to the region's overall economic growth.

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