

# Model of Factors Influencing Rural Tourism Development in Vietnam

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## Abstract

Vietnam is widely recognized as a country with an economy largely dependent on agriculture. In this context, rural tourism plays a crucial role in driving economic restructuring toward the service sector, thereby enhancing the livelihoods of local communities. Beyond its economic benefits, rural tourism also contributes to the preservation of cultural identity, encourages the consumption of local products and services, fosters cultural development, upholds traditional values, and raises public awareness about the importance of protecting community-based cultural heritage. Moreover, it helps mitigate the adverse effects of foreign cultural influences. To support strategic planning in rural tourism development—and ultimately promote the sustainable transformation of rural areas—this study proposes a conceptual model identifying the key factors that influence rural tourism development.

**Key words:** Rural Tourism, Model, Vietnam, tourism, factors

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## I. Introduction

Globally, tourism trends are shifting away from traditional, enclosed-space travel toward emerging forms such as green tourism, agritourism, and rural tourism. These trends emphasize proximity to home, domestic travel experiences, and safe, nature-oriented destinations characterized by open and spacious environments.

In Vietnam, the government has identified the development of agricultural and rural tourism as a strategic priority and a key tourism product in many localities for the coming years. The growth of agricultural and rural tourism not only contributes to transforming rural landscapes, preserving and promoting traditional cultural values, and enhancing both the material and spiritual well-being of rural residents, but also plays a vital role in generating employment and increasing farmers' incomes.

Notably, during off-peak seasons or non-harvest periods, tourist arrivals can help supplement local income, sustain rural livelihoods, raise awareness of local customs and traditions, and support the preservation of traditional farming practices and craft villages—thereby helping to narrow the development gap between rural and urban areas.

In recent years, the trend of traveling to peaceful and scenic countryside destinations for healing and relaxation has gained unprecedented popularity. Agricultural and rural tourism has increasingly attracted attention and investment from tourism businesses seeking to attract both domestic and international tourists to explore rural cultures and lifestyles. To provide a solid foundation for strategic planning in rural tourism development in Vietnam, this study examines a model of the key factors influencing the growth of rural tourism.

## II. Theoretical Framework of Rural Tourism

Agricultural and rural tourism is a form of tourism that has existed and developed in various regions worldwide. The definitions of agricultural and rural tourism are diverse and vary depending on the socio-cultural context of each region. According to the European Community (1986), any tourism activity organized in rural areas is considered rural tourism.

In their study *Rural Tourism: A Conceptual Approach*, Gökhan Ayazlar & Reyhan Ayazlar (2015) reviewed and synthesized several key definitions of rural tourism from various scholars: **MacDonald & Jolliffe (2003)**: Rural tourism refers to a rural community characterized by unique traditions, heritage, arts, lifestyles, locations, and values that are preserved across generations. **Sharpley & Roberts (2004)**: Rural tourism may serve as a supplement to mass tourism in most warm-climate countries and as an innovative initiative in regions with low levels of tourism. **Keane (2000)**: Rural tourism is broadly understood as a range of activities, services, and amenities offered by farmers to attract visitors to rural areas (cited by Bernard Lane, 1994).

In the context of Vietnam, common forms of rural tourism include agricultural tourism, ecotourism, community-based tourism, heritage tourism, and craft village tourism (Dung, 2023).

Currently, research in Vietnam has primarily focused on agricultural tourism, a subset of rural tourism, as reflected in the studies by Anh et al. (2023), Cuong (2020), Canh (2020), and Thong et al. (2024). Therefore, investigating the factors influencing the development of rural tourism in Vietnam is both timely and necessary.

### **III. Research Hypotheses**

#### **3.1. Rural Tourism Resources**

Tourism resources refer to the natural landscapes, natural elements, and cultural values that form the basis for creating tourism products, tourist areas, and destinations to meet the needs of travelers. Tourism resources include both natural and cultural tourism resources. Natural tourism resources are specifically represented by four main components: rural communities at the center; rural areas represented by natural characteristics and resources; rural heritage and culture, such as architecture, houses, and villages; rural activities, including sports, festivals, and customs; and rural life, including occupations, clothing, and folk arts (World Tourism Organization, 2004). Tourism resources significantly influence the development of agricultural tourism (Nhan, 2022; Thong, 2024). Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H1: Rural tourism resources positively influence the development of rural tourism.***

#### **3.2. Infrastructure**

Infrastructure refers to the physical and technical conditions existing within society, including transportation systems, communication networks, and utilities such as electricity and water supply. Research by Malkanthi et al. (2015) has shown that transportation infrastructure within the broader concept of infrastructure positively impacts agricultural tourism development. Similarly, research by Thong et al. (2024) also indicates that infrastructure positively influences agricultural tourism development. Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H2: Infrastructure positively influences the development of rural tourism.***

#### **3.3. Tourism Technical Facilities**

Tourism technical facilities refer to the physical technical means created by tourism organizations to exploit tourism potential, develop products, and services to meet the needs of tourists. These include hotel systems, restaurants, entertainment areas, transportation means, etc. Research by Đua et al. (2022) used technical facility criteria to assess tourist satisfaction with rural tourism in Bac Lieu Province. Research by Thông et al. (2024) showed that tourism technical facilities positively influence the development of agricultural tourism. Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H3: Tourism technical facilities positively influence the development of rural tourism.***

#### **3.4. Human Resources**

Tourism human resources refer to the workforce, including individuals working or seeking employment in the tourism industry. Human resources involved in rural tourism development include local rural populations. Some empirical studies have shown that human resources positively impact the development of rural tourist destinations, especially those related to agritourism (Nhan, 2015; Thong, 2021). Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H4: Human resources positively influence the development of rural tourism.***

#### **3.5. Safety and Security**

Safety and security refer to ensuring order and safety at tourist destinations (e.g., preventing theft, harassment, overcharging, begging, terrorism) and ensuring the health and safety of tourists (e.g., food hygiene, protective equipment, safety barriers). According to Lago (2017), safety and security are among the priority factors when tourists select a destination. Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H5: Safety and security positively influence the development of rural tourism.***

#### **3.6. Price**

Price is a significant factor that influences tourist decisions, especially regarding their loyalty. Tourists are often attracted to destinations with reasonable service prices, where the cost is commensurate with the quality of services provided during their trip (Thông, 2019). The influence of price on tourism development is affirmed by studies (Nhan et al., 2015; Thong et al., 2023). Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H6: Price positively influences the development of rural tourism.***

#### **3.7. Environmental Hygiene**

Environmental hygiene at tourist destinations refers to the cleanliness and sanitation of the area, including the absence of litter, unpleasant odors, and clean public restrooms. Several empirical studies have shown the positive impact of environmental hygiene on tourist destinations (Thong, 2021; Nhan, 2023). Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H7: Environmental hygiene positively influences the development of rural tourism.***

### **3.8. Government Attention**

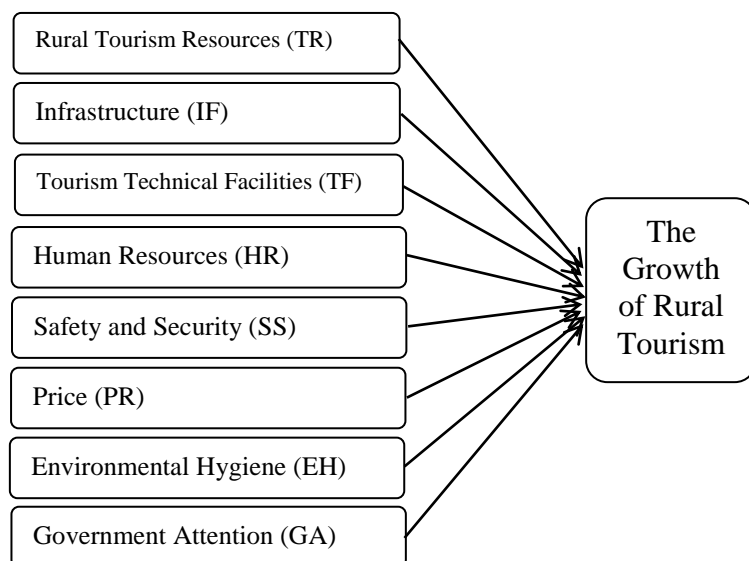
Government attention refers to local government support for households and individuals involved in rural tourism activities. Local policies play a vital role in facilitating the collaboration and participation of tourism stakeholders (Thammajinda, 2013). A study by Hoang (2022) indicates that government support positively affects the development of eco-tourism experiences, a form of rural tourism. Therefore, the study proposes the hypothesis:

***H8: Government attention positively influences the development of rural tourism.***

## **IV. Research Model**

Based on the hypotheses above, the study develops a model of the factors influencing the development of rural tourism as follows:

Figure 1: Model of Factors Influencing the Development of Rural Tourism



## **V. Conclusion**

The development of green and sustainable tourism is a global trend. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) adopted the theme for World Tourism Day 2020 as "Tourism and Rural Development," with the aim that tourism development will have a ripple effect on other economic sectors, contributing to the restructuring of the economy and improving the livelihoods of rural populations. The development of rural tourism will diversify and enrich tourism products, promote Green Tourism, increase tourism revenue, boost tourism's contribution to GDP, expand the tourism labor force, and strengthen the relationship between the tourism industry and agriculture, as well as rural areas (Dung, 2023). Therefore, researching and proposing a model of the factors influencing the development of rural tourism is highly significant, especially as Vietnam is currently pursuing sustainable rural development.

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