

STRENGTHENING TOURISM PROMOTION TO DEVELOP TOURISM IN PHU THO PROVINCE

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the economic sectors that bring a great source of income to the economy in general. Over the past years, Phu Tho has synchronously deployed many solutions in order to develop its tourism. However, the number of tourists and tourism development is not commensurate with the potential of the province. Phu Tho has actively implemented many tourism promotion activities aiming to make tourism as a key economic sector. Besides the positive results, the tourism promotion activities of the province are not professional, the effectiveness has not been achieved as expected. On the basis of that situation, the article proposes 6 groups of solutions to promote tourism promotion of the province in the future including: To develop plans and programs to promote tourism for a period of development; To promote propaganda, raise awareness for all levels of authorities and people on issues related to tourism development; To create suitable promotion tools; To promote linkage and coordination between departments, branches inside and outside the locality; To step up the application of information technology and build databases for promotion; To improve the quality of the contingent in tourism promotion.

Keywords: *Tourism promotion, tourism, tourists, Phu Tho.*

1. Introduction

Today, tourism is considered one of the key economic sectors, making an important contribution to economic growth and development in the process of the economy of most countries in the world as well as in Vietnam. In such a context, tourism promotion is an effective tool to attract and persuade visitors to a tourist destination,

which is a very essential factor in promoting tourism development. The promotion of tourism is deliberated as one of the key tasks of Vietnam's tourism in general and tourism of provinces and cities in the country in particular.

As a province with a favorable geographical location, a land of origin with valuable humanitarian tourism resources,

and abundant natural tourism resources, Phu Tho is considered as the original land with great potentials for tourism development. Over the past years, Phu Tho has made great efforts to bring into play its advantages, synchronously deploy many solutions to continuously develop tourism. At the same time, tourism promotion activities are identified as one of the important factors in accelerating the development of the tourism industry, accordingly, tourism promotion activities have been actively implemented. Many cultural tourist sites and traditional craft villages have become ideal destinations for tourists. The number of visitors increased rapidly: in 2000 it was 1 million visitors; in 2010 it was 5.8 million; in 2019, it will reach 8.2 million times; Tourism revenue has increased continuously and reached a high speed; In 2000 it was 45.8 billion; in 2010 it was 652 billion; in 2019 reaching 3,450 billion VND [1]. However, tourism has not developed commensurate with the potentials and strengths of a locality, which is endowed with many historical and cultural relics, famous landscapes, and social expectations, but still has many unsustainable elements. One of the main reasons leading to the above situation is due to limited tourism promotion activities such as limited resources for tourism promotion, lack of high coordination between levels of sectors, professionalism, and efficiency are not high, etc. Therefore, researching and evaluating the current status of tourism promotion activities, thereby finding out suitable solutions to promote this activity in the coming time is necessary, especially in the context of the impact of the epidemic, COVID-19 has severely reduced the number of tourists and tourism revenue today.

This study was carried out with 3 main objectives: (1) Outline of the rationale for tourism promotion; (2) Analysis of the current status of tourism development and the current status of tourism promotion activities in Phu Tho province in the period of 2017-2019, in which mainly focuses on analysis from secondary data, primary data used to supplement analysis results from secondary data; (3) Based on the actual local situation and context to propose some solutions to promote tourism promotion of Phu Tho province in the future, contributing to the realization of the target of making tourism a key economic sector of the province.

2. Theoretical basis and research methods

2.1. The theoretical basis of tourism promotion

2.1.1. Tourism promotion concept

Promotion of tourism is derived from the English term “Tourism promotion”, which is understood as propaganda, promotion, or tourism promotion. The promotion of tourism is one of the four main strategies of marketing - mix. Currently, there are many different conceptions of tourism promotion.

Lawton & Weaver (2005) said that tourism promotion is trying to increase demand by conveying a positive image of a product to potential customers through the demands, the need for known tastes, values, and attitudes of a particular market or segment [2].

According to Simon Hudson (2008), tourism promotion is a component in mixed tourism marketing, it has the role of convincing potential customers about the

benefits of or using the products or services of a certain organization [3].

In the theory of marketing, tourism promotion is understood to attract paying customers by convincing them that the destination with existing services, attractive tourist destinations, and benefits correspond, exactly what they wanted compared to other spots [4].

The current tourism promotion concept is understood in two different ways:

In a broad sense, promoting tourism as an economic sector: Clause 17, Article 4 of the Law on Tourism of Vietnam (2005) launching the concept: Tourism promotion is propaganda, advertising, and advocacy to seek and promote opportunities for tourism development [5]. Clause 13, Article 3 of the Vietnam Tourism Law (2017) has expanded this concept further, accordingly, tourism promotion is a market research activity, propaganda, promotion, and advocacy to find, promote growth opportunities and attract tourists [6].

In a narrow sense, tourism promotion is the promotion activity of a tourism business or organization. For marketing, the essence of promotion is the communication process to provide information about a product and the business to customers to persuade them to buy their products. Therefore, in many publications on marketing, this is called marketing communication activities, which means transmitting information or transmitting marketing information.

Thus, the connotation of tourism promotion is very broad, it includes not only propaganda and promotion to attract tourists, but also improving the conditions for welcoming and serving tourists, including completing infrastructure (roads, airports, ports, communications, electricity, and water, etc); technical facilities for tourists (restaurants, hotels, attractions, entertainment facilities, other service establishments, etc), to raise the awareness of society about tourism and research on the taste needs of tourists.

2.1.2. Means of tourism promotion

Tourism promotion means are all that can bring promotional messages to the public. Information, images of destinations, tourism products, and services are conveyed to the public through many means and forms. Along with the development of science and technology, more and more new forms and means of tourism promotion appear. Each form and means has its characteristics, oriented to its audience, and needs to invest in different funding levels.

With the characteristics of state management, planning and implementation of tourism development strategies by state management agencies in tourism at all levels are stated in the Law on Tourism, Decree, guiding documents, The provincial tourism promotion program focuses on the following basic tools: (1) Tourist information materials and publications; (2) Travel advertising; (3) Propaganda and public relations; (4) Selling promotion; (5) Participate in tourism fairs and exhibitions; (6) Internet marketing with integrated communications (Tu Anh Nguyet, 2015) [7].

2.2. *Research method*

The object of the study was the content of tourism promotion activities in Phu Tho province in the period of 2017-2019. The study used data collection and processing methods in close combination with the synthetic comparison method, specifically:

- Data collection and processing methods:

For secondary data sources: First, the data required to establish a data bank (form General Statistic Office, ...) for articles was determined. Data after being collected from many different sources was classified, compared, and selected to synthesize into valuable information for use in the article.

For primary data source: A random survey of 50 domestic tourists was applied to collect assessments of tourism promotion activities in Phu Tho province from 2017 to 2019. This method was carried out by handing out vouchers directly to the visitors. The questionnaire was designed according to the Likert 5-level scale: 5. Very good; 4. Good; 3. Medium; 2. Poor; 1. Very poor. After synthesizing the results of the tourist survey, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with 5 experts working in the tourism field. The purpose was to discuss primary investigation results and to gather valuable information for the current situation assessment and to propose solutions to the research problem.

- Synthetic comparison method: This method was used helps to orient the correlation between factors, thereby seeing the current status of tourism development and tourism promotion activities in Phu

Tho in the period of 2017-2019. Comparing collected information and data would help to scientifically systematic information as well as practical problems. This was a method to help realize the research objectives, propose orientations and solutions to promote tourism promotion to develop tourism for Phu Tho province in the coming time.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. *Current status of tourism development in Phu Tho province*

In recent years, Phu Tho tourism has been identified as one of the key economic sectors. The resolution of the 18th Provincial Party Congress for the term 2015-2020 has continued to define tourism development as one of the four breakthroughs of the province. In order to implement and concretize the spirit of the Resolution, Phu Tho has focused on planning, building an open policy mechanism to call and attract investment in key tourist areas. At the same time, the province has had many solutions to find the right direction for tourism development such as building specific tourism products, linking to form attractive tours, routes, suitable for local conditions. Thereby, tourism in Phu Tho province has made positive changes, the number of tourists coming to Phu Tho have been increasing, many destinations have become reliable addresses, attracting tourists during the holidays of the country.

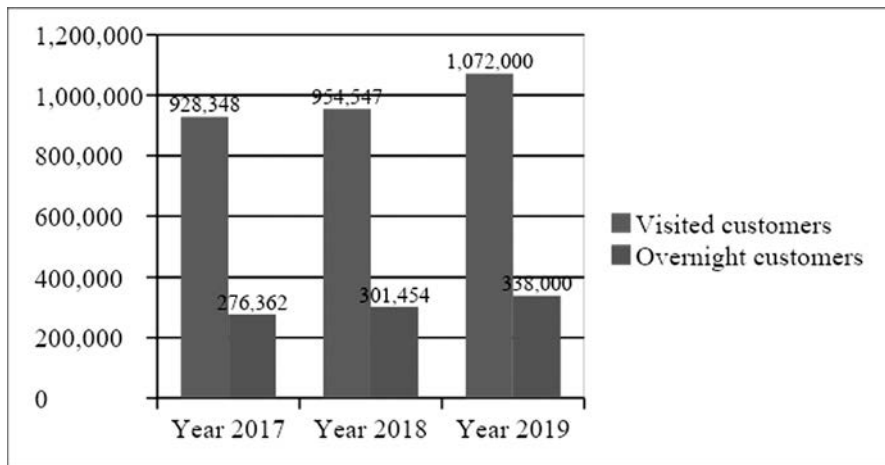


Figure 1. Number of tourists to Phu Tho province in the period of 2017-2019

(Source: Phu Tho Statistical Office) [8-10]

From 2017 to 2019, the number of tourists to Phu Tho province increased with an average growth rate of 4.91% per year. In particular, the proportion of overnight guests also tended to increase with the average growth rate of 6.94% per year with the average number of stay days of 1.1 days. The proportion of overnight tourists increased from 29.77% (2017) to 31.53% (2019). Although the number and proportion of overnight guests have increased, however, the growth rate has not been commensurate with the tourism potential of a locality with national and world-historical sites. If calculating the daily visit, visitors to Phu Tho were relatively high, but stay very low compared to other provinces in the mountainous midland. One of the reasons was that there were no businesses and tourism investors with the potential to create complete entertainment spots, ecotourism sites, with attractive tourism products, prolonging the tourist’s stay to increase the average visitor’s expenditure in

Phu Tho province. Most tourists came to Phu Tho province with a type of spiritual cultural tourism, festival tourism with low spending.

Generally, the total number of tourists to Phu Tho province, in 2018, the total number of tourists reached 8 million, of which 7,200 international guests stayed, an increase of 10.7% of the year plan and an increase of 18% over the same period in 2017 [11]. In 2019, there were 8.2 million visitors, of which 7,800 international visitors stay [12]. This was a very positive number for the locality that was on the momentum of developing services and infrastructure and met the requirements of modern tourists.

The number of tourists to Phu Tho province in the period of 2017-2019 has increased, however, this number was still quite modest compared to some other localities in the region such as Lao Cai (2017 welcomed 3.5 million visitors, 2018 welcomed 4.3 million visitors, 2019 welcomed 5.1 million visitors; the average growth rate in the period reached

13,137%/year) [13-15] and Tuyen Quang (2017 welcomed 1.5 million visitors, 2018 welcomed over 1.7 million visitors in 2019, 1.9 million passengers; the average growth rate in the period is 9.06%/year) [16-18].

In the first 6 months of 2020, due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the number of tourists coming to Phu Tho has decreased significantly, reaching only 1 million tourists, while in the same period last year it was 8 million tourists, guests staying only 178,500 people, revenue reached about

530 billion (about 30% over the same period last year) [19].

Thanks to the synchronous implementation of solutions (such as mobilizing maximum resources, building a specific mechanism to attract investment in tourism, developing specific tourism products, promoting training and improving the quality of human resources, etc), Phu Tho province has made a breakthrough in tourism development. Tourism revenue is constantly growing, contributing to structural transformation and socio-economic development of the locality.

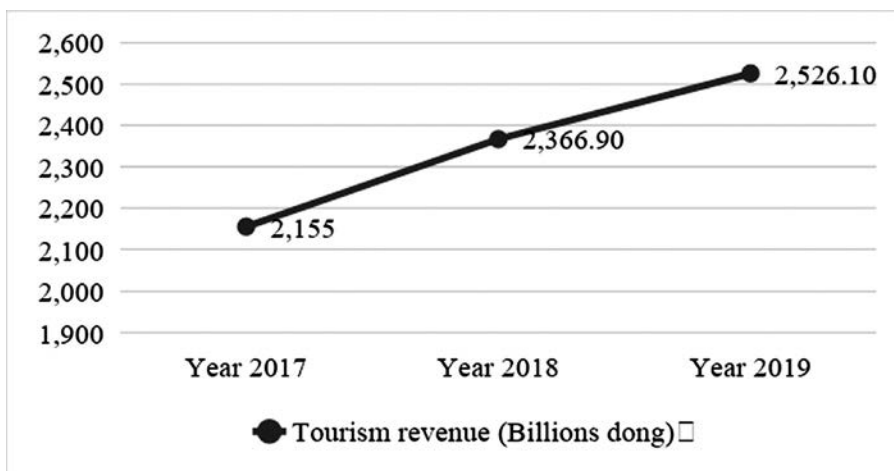


Figure 2. Revenue from the accommodation, catering services, travel, and tourism in Phu Tho province period 2017-2019

(Source: Phu Tho Statistical Office) [8-10]

From 2017 to 2019, Phu Tho tourism has made positive changes, revenue from accommodation services, food and beverage, and travel tourism has continuously increased over the years with an average growth rate of 5.44%/year. Compared with the tourism development target of Phu Tho province to 2020, the number of stays will reach 680,000, of which 8,000 stay is international;

total revenue from tourism reached 3,800 billion VND [20], in terms of the number of tourists that exceeded the target. However, the revenue achieved compared to the target is quite far. In particular, in the context of epidemics caused by COVID-19, it has been and is affecting directly the tourism business in the province. The number of tourists coming to Phu Tho has decreased sharply,

leading to a decrease in tourism revenue. That leaves the tourism industry coping with major challenges and challenges and may not reach its goals. Facing these difficulties, in parallel with the anti-epidemic task, the province needs to have solutions to promote to attract tourists to ensure the growth target of the tourism industry.

3.2. The current situation of tourism promotion in Phu Tho province

Determining the urgency of tourism promotion activities, between 2017 and 2019, Phu Tho issued the tourism promotion framework program in 2018 [21] and 2020 [22] to orient and implement promotional activities to contribute to the tourism development of the province. Accordingly, Phu Tho has always paid special attention and determined that tourism promotion is the top priority in the tourism development strategy of the province. Tourism promotion activities, attracting tourism investment are implemented, increasingly going in-depth, focusing on the potentials and strengths of key tourist areas and destinations of the province. That, creating favorable conditions for tours to serve guests like Viet Tri city (Hung King temple historical site, Hung King museum, Hung Lo temple), Xuan Son National Park - Thanh Thuy district (Thanh Thuy hot springs resort, Lang Suong temple, Tu Vu victory statue, traditional craft villages, etc.); Viet Tri city - Ha Hoa district (Au Co mother temple, Ao Chau lagoon resort, etc.); Viet Tri city - Xuan Son National Park; Viet Tri city - Ha Hoa district - Thanh Thuy district; Viet Tri city - Thanh Son district - Thanh Thuy district; Viet Tri

city - Doan Hung district (Song Lo victory statue, grapefruit garden, traditional craft villages), etc. The inter-provincial routes are along the road of 8 Northwest provinces; the spiritual tour along Red River in 3 provinces of Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Phu Tho; and other provinces across the country.

From 2017 to 2019, Phu Tho has focused on implementing the following tourism promotion activities:

(1) About providing market information and promoting information.

The Internet is an effective travel promotion tool with low cost, regardless of space and time. The tourism industry has exploited this advantage through maintaining and developing the tourism website (dulichphutho.com.vn) and the website Tourism Information of 8 Northwest provinces (dulichtaybac.vn) with many languages. In addition, the website, fanpage, Facebook, banner, and Phu Tho tourism site are also placed on news agencies, the media inside and outside the province to promote information connection with tourists and tourism businesses more convenient. In particular, in 2019, Phu Tho started to put into use the smart tourism portal <http://phuthotourism.vn> to form a tourism ecosystem, creating a relationship between the three types of tourists, the government, and the business. The province also launched Dat To Youtube channel, which is a unique form of tourism promotion for the first time deployed nationwide by Phu Tho, an effective tool to promote culture, people, tourism in Phu Tho province to tourists and investors, bringing high efficiency in tourism promotion. Up to

now, Dat To Youtube channel has produced 25 videos, attracting over 256,000 views, 3,500 subscribers to the channel, creating a great resonance, and being known by many people in the province as well as the country [23]. The videos on the channel have English subtitles to help foreign visitors to explore and promote the image of the Ancestral land - Đát To.

Propaganda work on central and local newspapers and television stations has always been paid attention to. The tourism industry has proactively invited and coordinated with the Central Television, Phu Tho Newspaper, and Provincial Radio and Television to build and broadcast programs promoting cultural-historical relics, landscapes, products, and tourism services of Phu Tho. Phu Tho e-newspaper has created its column "Tourism - Festival", fully updated with cultural tourism events, historical sites, scenic spots, traditional festivals, cuisine – restaurants, etc. This column is linked to the source in the "localities" section by the website www.dulichvn.org.vn. Accordingly, visitors not on the Phu Tho newspaper website but other pages can still get the necessary information. Thereby, the image of the ancestral land with attractive tourist potentials was continuously introduced and broadcast on national television, creating a good impression. Promotional content is built appropriately, promoting the advantages of typical local products, making an important contribution to the tourism development of the province.

Building and publishing a rich and diversified tourism publication system serving the propaganda and advertising of Phu Tho tourism such as leaflets for ancient

village Xoan singing, pamphlets for a student tour, intra-provincial tours; folding practice, map, map of Phu Tho tourist destination; postcards, travel newsletters, guidebooks - tourist notes, etc. The publications are designed quite detailed, diverse in form, suitable for content, meeting the needs of quickly looking up information of visitors, of which, some of the publications are bilingual in Vietnamese and English to provide information to foreign visitors.

(2) Join the fair.

Identifying the participation in the tourism fair is an opportunity to promote and introduce the tourism strengths and unique tourism products of Phu Tho to key markets, at the same time, creating opportunities for Phu Tho tourism businesses to expand the market for business cooperation with domestic and foreign partners. In the period of 2017 - 2019, Phu Tho always actively participates in promotion conferences, typical tourism exhibitions, and fairs organized by the General Department of Tourism and provinces and cities such as The Tenth Northeast Festival of Culture, Sports and Tourism in the Northeast in Vinh Phuc; Vietnam International Travel Fair - VITM Hanoi, 2018; Seminar on Promotion of Phu Tho Tourism Market in Ho Chi Minh City in 2018; Hoa Ban Festival 2018, Vietnamese New Year Program 2018 in Hanoi; 2019 Northwest Travel and Food Fair in Yen Bai; Ho Chi Minh City International Travel Fair (ITE - HCMC) 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020. These practical activities have brought about encouraging results in promoting the tourism image of the province and attract tourists to the area.

(3) Market survey.

One of the efforts of the tourism industry over the past time is to survey and evaluate the construction of tours and tourism routes based on connecting unique cultural values to create attractive tourism products. In 2018, the province conducted a survey, researched experiences in developing spiritual tourism, and preserve the world's cultural heritage to build a new countryside in Japan to promote the Japanese tourist market in particular and international tourists in general. In addition to organizing survey trips inside and outside the province, Phu Tho also focuses on on-site promotion by inviting fam trip groups of international and domestic travel agencies to experience and capture the province's tourism information and then spread it back to other markets. The industry organized a Fam trip delegation to survey tourist destinations in Viet Tri city, Thanh Thuy district, etc, with more than 200 tour operators participating. Within the framework of the development cooperation program for the 8 expanded Northwest provinces, Phu Tho has organized a survey program and exchanged experiences on tourism development cooperation between the 8 expanded Northwest provinces and the provinces of Phong Sa Ly, U Dom Xay, Luong Pha Bang (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and organizing tourism promotion activities calendar between parties. Most recently, in 2020, Phu Tho welcomed the Fam trip delegation "Back to the To Land - Ethnic Origin" to survey and build new tourism products, connecting Ho Chi Minh City tourism with the Northwest and organizing the Presstrip delegation "Xuan Son Ky interesting" with the participation of central

and local news agencies to experience, film, and examine breaking unique and attractive tourist culture in Xuan Son National Park.

These activities helped to evaluate the potential for tourism development, promote promotion, bring Phu Tho's tourism products to domestic and foreign tourists, introduces domestic tours to the potential market of Phu Tho tourism shows the wishes and expectations of Phu Tho province in promoting local tourism development.

(4) Meet and exchange with tourism investors.

In order to attract investment and tourism business, the province also offers many preferential mechanisms and open policies for investors and supports tourism businesses, developing tourist sites and destinations of the province; Community based tourism development, accordingly, in the past years, the province has attracted more than 30 times of enterprises to survey, research, evaluate and seek commercial and tourism investment opportunities in the province. Many potential investors, with experience in the tourism sector such as Muong Thanh Group, Saigontourist Corporation, have invested in some key projects that are meaningful to spread and promote tourism development such as Vincom Viet Tri Trade Center, Big C, Hung Vuong Square, Van Lang Park, works in Hung Temple Historical Relic Area, Ngoc Xanh Island Tourist Area, Garden King Ecotourism Area (district Thanh Thuy), etc. Up to now, the province has nearly 300 accommodation establishments with more than 3,700 rooms, of which 33 hotels (5 hotels from 3 to 5 stars) the accommodation system meets the needs of tourists [24].

In addition, the province also invites many famous businesses and travel agencies in countries such as Korea, India, and Indonesia to survey and build tours and routes in Phu Tho; Signed a cooperation program with the Tourism Promotion Information Center of many provinces and cities with developed tourism activities such as Nghe An, Hung Yen (in 2018), in order to promote the promotion of the tourism image, cooperate in attracting resources to promote the development and diversification of tourism products as well as connect destinations in Phu Tho with localities in the country.

(5) Organizing seminars, contests, training.

To serve the province's tourism promotion, attract tourists to Phu Tho, thereby contributing to the development of the tourism industry of the province according to the Resolution of the Congress of the Party Committee of Phu Tho province, term XVIII (term 2015-2020), from 2017 to 2019, the province organized many seminars, competitions and training courses related to tourism, specifically:

Conferences such as local marketing seminars on PCI index improvement and tourism development in Phu Tho province in 2018; Phu Tho Tourism Product Promotion Conference in 2019; Scientific seminar on tourism development in Phu Tho province to 2020 and the following years.

Coordinating with related industries and units to organize more than 20 training courses and retraining tourism profession for nearly 2,000 trainees who are labor force in the tourism sector to attend, contributing to increasing the rate of labor Directly trained in the tourism industry from 45% to 55%

[25] such as the Training Course on Tourism Promotion Information in Phu Tho province in 2018; Training on receptionist skills, homestay room service in 2018; training and fostering professional knowledge about culture, sports, tourism and family in 2018; training homestay profession in Xuan Son, Phu Tho in 2019; training on "Skills for developing community tourism and sustainable tourism" in 2020; Skills training with the theme "Women living green and developing sustainable tourism" in 2020.

Contests such as "Phu Tho Tourism Beauty Photo" in 2016 aim to initially build a Phu Tho tourist photo data bank to serve the province's tourism propaganda, promotion and promotion; The first Phu Tho Tourism Skills Contest 2017 with 5 tourism occupations; join the Vietnam Tourism Skills Contest - Northern Region 2017 in Hanoi; Design contest for souvenir products, tourism gifts in Phu Tho province in 2019; Tour guide competition at Phu Tho province in 2019.

The above activities have created a positive effect in the awareness of all levels and sectors to the tourism promotion and promotion of the province. At the same time, provided businesses with much new information about the market, find solutions to boost production and business activities, equip businesses with some basic knowledge about business and tourism business.

Some tourist reviews of the province's tourism promotion activities: To have an objective and comprehensive view of the current status of tourism promotion in Phu Tho province, this study surveyed 50 domestic tourists, with a sample of diverse ages, genders, and regions (Figure 3).

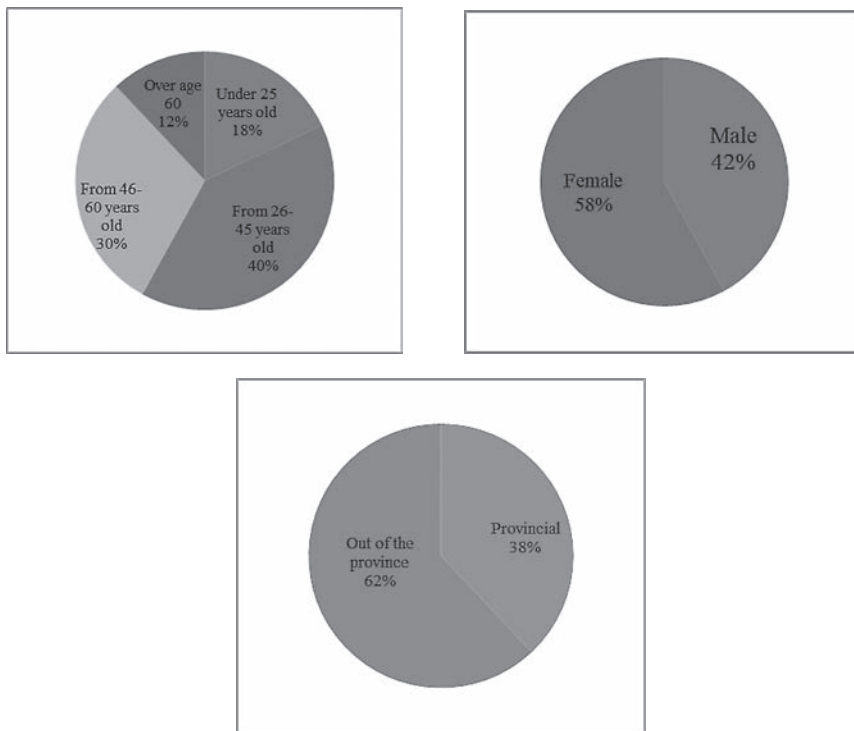


Figure 3. Describe the sample by age, sex and region

(Source: Results of the author's data processing)

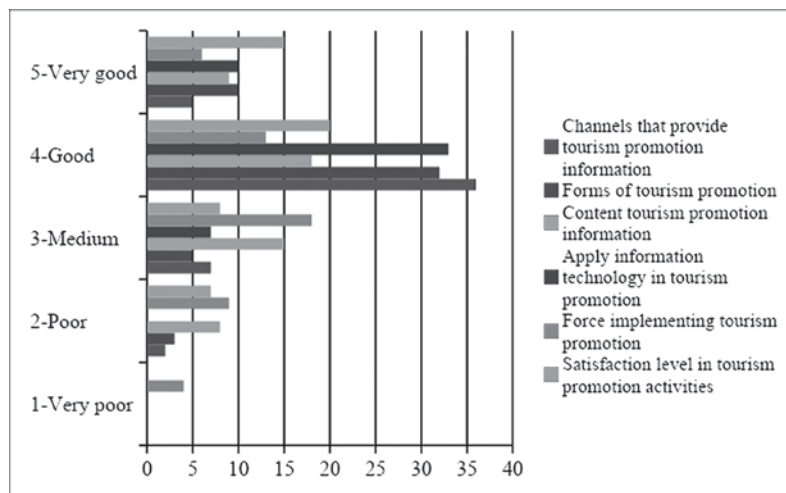


Figure 4. Tourists' assessment of tourism promotion activities in Phu Tho province in the period of 2017-2019

(Source: Results of the author's data processing)

According to tourists' assessment of some criteria for tourism promotion activities, Phu Tho has taken advantage of various forms of tourism promotion. Information supply channels are used quite well to promote the image of the province's tourism to investors and tourists and apply information technology well in tourism promotion. However, the information provided and the force implementing tourism promotion are not highly appreciated because the information is not regularly updated, not diverse, and lacking many foreign languages, including serving some key markets of the province's tourism. The force implementing tourism promotion is still thin and not very professional.

After synthesizing and analyzing the results of the primary survey, the research team conducted in-depth interviews with 5 experts working in the tourism field. In-depth interviews also confirmed that tourism promotion activities of Phu Tho province are increasingly expanding in scope and scope of activities. The quality of the operation is improved and enhanced. However, the organizational apparatus and forces involved in tourism promotion and promotion are still limited, the force directly implementing tourism promotion activities is thin and part-time, so the deployment is passive, lacks professionalism, and low efficiency. These will be the points that Phu Tho province needs to improve to further promote, enhance the professionalism, quality, and efficiency of tourism promotion in the province in the coming time.

3.3. Assess the current status of tourism promotion in Phu Tho province

3.3.1. Results

Firstly, the tourism promotion in Phu Tho province has had certain successes, the scale and scope of the promotion have been expanded; apply information technology in the promotion. Combining many forms and means to transmit tourism information to such subjects as potential tourists, travel agencies, news agencies, etc, contribute to raising awareness of all levels, sectors, and the whole society about tourism. At the same time, introduce the image of Phu Tho tourism and people and attract tourists to the locality, accordingly, visitors and tourism revenue increase each year.

Secondly, there is a linkage between sectors and localities, especially localities in the Greater Northwest. In tourism promotion activities, creating new strength, increasing the attractiveness of tourism products, and promoting the participation of tourism activities for tourists, is the basis that can prolong the travel time, increase spending by guests.

Thirdly, the quality of tourism promotion activities is improved and increasingly enhanced. Promotion is no longer at the level of propaganda and general promotion of the local image, but step by step research the market, positioning key markets and market segments; locate the main tourism product lines of the province, etc.

3.3.2. Limitations and causes

In addition to these achievements, tourism promotion activities still have some shortcomings:

Firstly, tourism promotion activities are not professional and ineffective: Promotion promotion is still “seasonal”, not regular, continuous, mainly emerging on the occasion of the festival at the beginning of the year, focusing on the Hung Temple Festival. Therefore, tourism information is not regularly updated.

Secondly, promotion tools are limited; promotional information products lack many foreign languages, focusing on Vietnamese and English; Tourist information is not very diverse and detailed, especially there is no detailed information on tourist maps. Tourism programs and categories are still monotonous, lacking analytical and discoverable properties. The counter providing tourist information is very few.

Thirdly, market research has been initially implemented, but has not been proactive, has not received adequate investment attention; Tourism promotion activities do not have a long-term strategy, specific to each tourist market. The forces implementing tourism promotion activities are still thin, working part-time, so the implementation is passive, not professional and the efficiency is not high.

Fourth, mobilization of resources to participate in tourism promotion is still limited: The coordination among stakeholders is not tight, resources for promotion are limited, not enough to create a breakthrough driving force to fundamentally change tourism promotion activities; The attraction of investors and investment resources in the tourism and service sector is not commensurate with the province’s potential;

There has not yet been a mechanism to exchange information for the exchange and sharing of cooperation between the central, local levels, associations, and enterprises.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

Tourism promotion is a necessary and important activity to attract potential tourists, increase the number of tourists returning to a destination, stimulate tourist spending, contribute to attracting tourism investment. In order to promote tourism development on a national scale and in localities, including Phu Tho province, tourism promotion activities need to be paid attention to and create favorable conditions to form a unified force and bring efficiency to the tourism industry. Resolution of the Party Congress of Phu Tho province for the XVIII tenure 2015-2020 continues to define tourism development as one of the four breakthroughs of the province. To implement and concretize the spirit of the Resolution, the promotion, renewal, and quality improvement of tourism promotion activities are really necessary. Based on the collection of primary and secondary data, the study has assessed the current status of tourism promotion activities in Phu Tho province from 2017 to 2019. The research results show that the province has deployed a variety of forms and means of promotion, tourism promotion activities are increasingly deep, the number of tourists and tourism revenue increase each year. Tourists rated quite positively on channels of information provision and application of information technology in tourism promotion. However,

the content of the information provided and the forces implementing tourism promotion need to be improved and further improved. This will be the basis for researching and proposing 6 groups of specific solutions to promote tourism promotion of the province in the coming time. However, the limitation of the study is that the sample size is not large, mainly focuses on analyzing the current state of the research problem based on secondary data, secondary data is used to supplement the situation analysis from primary data without going into the assessment of primary data. The next research direction will expand the sample size and respondents to focus on analyzing tourism promotion status on the primary database.

4.2. Recommendations

In order to increasingly attract domestic and foreign tourists for Phu Tho tourism, it is necessary to have more attention from all levels and branches, as well as the corporate responsibility of tourism businesses with managers. Particularly, it is necessary to promote and more effectively promote tourism activities, contribute to attracting tourists, making an impression on tourists coming to Phu Tho. This is one of the essential factors for Phu Tho tourism to become a safe, friendly, and attractive destination for the region as well as the country. To do that, Phu Tho needs to focus on some of the following solutions:

Firstly, the province needs to proactively build tourism promotion plans and programs for a stage of development (the period 2020-2025, with an orientation to 2030), and annually based on following closely

with socio-economic development reality. Especially the local tourism development plan, and there is a consistent link with tourism promotion activities of the country.

Secondly, promoting propaganda, raising awareness for authorities and people at all levels about protecting the tourism environment, and behaving civilized and polite to build a good image of the destination and people of the “Dat To”. Actively promote the heritages recognized by UNESCO and the country to the public, tourism businesses, and the press. Especially in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic, there has not been an epidemic in the province at present, the province can choose the propaganda theme for Phu Tho tourism as “Phu Tho - an attractive safe destination” to attract tourists to experience.

Thirdly, perfect tools to promote and develop electronic marketing for tourism promotion. Invest in building and completing websites, printed publications, and electronic tourism publications, with special attention being paid to internet channels, websites, and participating in social networking sites. Information products need to be diversified, have suitable languages for the market, ensure that the information content is complete and appropriate.

Fourthly, promote linkage and coordination between departments, branches, local tourism associations, travel businesses inside and outside the province. Cooperating with units directly under the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (Tourism Market Department, Tourism Information Center, etc), and other

local tourism promotion centers in tourism promotion. Promote effective public-private coordination, creating breakthroughs in the mode of mobilizing resources for promotion. Enhancing the role of businesses in tourism promotion.

Fifthly, step up the application of information technology and build databases for promotion. Building a database will serve to store, exploit and use information in a convenient way for the promotion staff, business entities, investors, tourists. At the same time, for local management and convenient for the provision of tourism advice information.

Sixthly, improve the quality of the team implementing tourism promotion. It is necessary to select and train the appropriate human resources to improve knowledge, skills, and professionalism in the job. Fostering tourism promotion skills, and foreign languages, especially the languages corresponding to the target local tourism market.

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ĐẨY MẠNH XÚC TIẾN DU LỊCH NHẪM PHÁT TRIỂN DU LỊCH TỈNH PHÚ THỌ

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Tóm tắt

Du lịch là một trong những ngành kinh tế đem lại nguồn thu nhập lớn cho nền kinh tế. Những năm qua, Phú Thọ đã triển khai đồng bộ nhiều giải pháp để không ngừng phát triển du lịch. Tuy nhiên, lượng khách du lịch đến Phú Thọ và sự phát triển du lịch còn chưa tương xứng với tiềm năng của tỉnh. Để thu hút du khách, góp phần đưa du lịch trở thành ngành kinh tế mũi nhọn, Phú Thọ đã tích cực thực hiện nhiều hoạt động xúc tiến du lịch. Bên cạnh những kết quả tích cực, hoạt động xúc tiến du lịch của tỉnh còn chưa thực sự chuyên nghiệp, hiệu quả chưa đạt được như mong đợi. Trên cơ sở phân tích đầy đủ thực trạng, bài viết đề xuất 6 nhóm giải pháp nhằm đẩy mạnh xúc tiến du lịch của tỉnh trong thời gian tới, cụ thể: Xây dựng các kế hoạch, chương trình xúc tiến du lịch cho một giai đoạn phát triển; Đẩy mạnh tuyên truyền, nâng cao nhận thức cho các cấp chính quyền và nhân dân về các vấn đề liên quan đến phát triển du lịch; Hoàn thiện các công cụ xúc tiến; Đẩy mạnh liên kết, phối hợp giữa các ban, ngành trong và ngoài địa phương; Đẩy mạnh ứng dụng công nghệ thông tin, xây dựng cơ sở dữ liệu phục vụ xúc tiến; Nâng cao chất lượng đội ngũ thực hiện xúc tiến du lịch.

Từ khóa: Xúc tiến du lịch, du lịch, khách du lịch, Phú Thọ.