

## **Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An – Unique Experience of Ancient Cultures**

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<p>The thesis' goal is creating a special and competitive tour package related to culture perspective, which promotes the image of Vietnamese tourism. The project mainly targets people who are from 20-40 years old, living in Finland and having an interest in Vietnam.</p> <p>The Central region of Vietnam is wealthy in heritage and history, which consists of four UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Famously known as the Cultural capital of Vietnam, Hue was a critical city of political impact during the Champa Empire. While Hoi An remained the most essential business center until the eighteenth century, Da Nang is a model city of modern time with an international connection to Asia and the Far East. Therefore, the area possesses a combination of past and present, which will create unique experiences for all visitors around the world.</p> <p>The project's theoretical framework consisted of two main parts of the literature review and product development process. Various theories were used to analyze tourism trends also customer behavior in Finland and Vietnam. Additionally, understanding the relationship between culture and tourism is a critical task. The three cities, Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An, were introduced as potential touristic cities with detail information and images.</p> <p>Qualitative research method, in particular, the interview was chosen as a tool to collect suggestions of destinations, gastronomy, and special activities. Subsequently, all the insights acted as a foundation for designing a unique tour package. There were seven participants responded to the interview and gave useful information for developing and improving the product. Besides, the disadvantages of tourism development were also recognized during the research.</p> <p>The itinerary and tour brochure were created and developed based on the outcome of the interview. The data revealed that culture experience is a trend in the tourism industry nowadays. As a result, an eight-day tour to three aforementioned destinations was created, which includes land transport, accommodation, meals, entrance tickets, verified-English speaking tour guide, and other listed activities.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Cultural tourism, Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An, unique experiences, tour package, Vietnam.	

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# 1 Introduction

As the destinations are becoming more commoditized when the demands increase, the authors target to operate a special full tour program relating cultural unique experience by doing research based on different literature foundation. As Vietnam's economy is growing stronger, it is necessary to raise awareness of culture for future investments, especially in the middle part of Vietnam. Therefore, the authors chose three popular cities: Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An because of their cultural value and development in the tourism industry. In order to achieve the task, interviews are made for generating suggestions from experienced travelers. Furthermore, a tour brochure – which can also be used for marketing purpose – is designed for international visitors to acknowledge information and expectation.

The authors were inspired by their internship in the operation department of a tourism agency in Finland, which is also the thesis' commissioner. The agency is aiming to open a new department of taking people living in Finland to Vietnam. The targeted customers are visitors who have want to know more about Vietnamese cultures and heritages.

The writers noticed that most of the Finns know Thailand while only a few acknowledge of what Vietnam has to offer. Hence, the objective of the thesis is to create an 8-day tour for a minimum group of ten travelers with a target group of 20-40 years old traveling without children. In particular, the main purpose of the trip is to bring a deep experience of culture, gastronomy, human when staying like a local. Through the trip, the image of Vietnam as a country will be improved and promoted.

The second chapter presents the commissioners of the project. Chapter 3 gives a clear insight into the Finnish trends in tourism, which supports the target group of the tour package. Additionally, chapter 4 describes carefully of Vietnamese tourism in general and the three chosen cities in particular as well as the best time to visit. The following chapter builds a literature base for the whole thesis, which discusses various aspects of cultural tourism, experience management, and travel motivation. Chapter 6 discusses the chosen research method as well as findings throughout the process. Subsequently, chapter 7 illustrates the main points of the full tour package, such as itinerary, price, and terms. The final chapter presents a further discussion, which concludes challenges, reflection from the authors and feedback of the commissioners.

## 2 Commissioners

The main purpose of this thesis is creating a new package tour to Vietnam for people living in Finland. Thus, the commissioner target also fell in the tourism and hospitality industry. Luckily, the thesis was accepted and supported by two companies, which one is a travel agency in Finland and the other is a hotel in Da Nang, Vietnam.

### 2.1 Sonnsons Finland Oy



Image 1. Sonnsons  
Finland Oy Logo  
(Facebook, 2017)

Opened since 1999, Sonnsons Finland proud to call itself as the only Vietnamese travel agency in Northern Europe with extensive experience of many years working in the travel industry. The company provides top services to Vietnamese tourists who wish to travel to Europe in general and to Nordic countries in particular.

Sonnsons Finland Oy CEO asserted that:

*“Through the promotion of image and cultural values, Sonnsons Finland promise to bring to customers memorable experiences with the unique tour services designed base on travelers’ demand.”*

Some of the main services provided by agency these recent years: (Sonnsons, 2018)

- Designing and counseling customer about original tours, Golf tour, VIP tour, intensive European tour (especially in Nordic countries and Turkey)
- Booking services related to Vietnamese restaurants, accommodation, transportation, cruise, and local specialties shop in Europe with high standards.
- Providing local guides and travel assistants in the Europe region, especially in Nordic markets.
- Providing camping tours (partner with Turku Universities) for secondary and high school Vietnamese students who want to experience Finnish education.
- Providing several entertainment services: Golf tour, Gala dinner, Karaoke, Pool party, Summer Cottage, Adventures, etc...
- Counseling about Finnish visas applying process for relatives or parents who wish to visit their children, relatives studying and living in Finland.

### 2.2 Legacy Riverside Hotel

Legacy Riverside Da Nang is a three stars hotel possessed 60 rooms (included Squad, Deluxe Twin, Superior Double, Suite, etc...), one big restaurant with seating capacity of 250 guests, four conference halls that can serve 50 to 250 guest per time. Besides, there are

an indoor swimming pool and spa area open for all hotel customer to relax after a stressful day. The hotel is decorated in an elegant and cozy style with full amenities equipped, which is illustrated in Image 2. (Legacy Riverside Hotel, 2018)



Image 2. J Suite Rooms of Legacy hotel (Agoda, 2018)

Situated by Han riverside, the hotel has a favorable location which takes only 10 minutes driving from the international airport and several minutes to reach other attractions such as Dragon Bridge, Han River's Sun Wheel, Love Bridge, My Khe beach, etc. Legacy Hotel is proud to be an ideal destination for travelers in Da Nang – Vietnam's liveliest city. (Legacy Riverside Hotel, 2018)

Free breakfast with a diversity buffet menu, which changed daily, is served at the hotel's luxurious restaurant. The customer can find the most favorite dishes of Da Nang and the middle region of Vietnam. Moreover, the customer can also enjoy relaxing moments with the beautiful view of Han River outside the window at the restaurant while having their coffee. Services is also an important element, which is graded as "very good" on Agoda - hotel booking service, raise the hotel's reputation. The hotel is well organized with a friendly staff team that always ready 24/24 to serve every guest with their smile and professionalism. (Agoda, 2018)

### 3 Tourism trends in Finland

There is a massive diversity in the tourism market. In particular, the Finns want to travel to warmer countries such as Spain, Greece, Italy, etc. in Central Europe, or Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam for escaping the cold and harsh winter. This target is called the “snowbird” market (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2007). Finnish travelers are considered to be in this type of market. This market has a characteristic that the trip's duration is from two to four week as their typical holiday period, mostly in July. Additionally, the amount of money they spend on food, local accommodation as well as unique experience during the holiday is higher than other European countries, due to the higher level of income and their adaptability rate in foreign countries is the best of the world. (Ruccio, 2011)

As indicated by Statistics Finland's survey, Finns made 8.5 million various types of trips abroad in 2017. Western and Eastern Europe, and besides Southern Europe rose their reputation among Finnish travelers. In contrast, trips to the American continent decrease in popularity. The number of domestic holiday trips was 26 million. Business trips in Finland persist at the same level as the earlier year. However, there is a fall in the abroad business trip statistic. (Statistics Finland, 2018)

**Finnish residents' travel in 2012 to 2017 (excl. domestic leisure trips with free accommodation)**

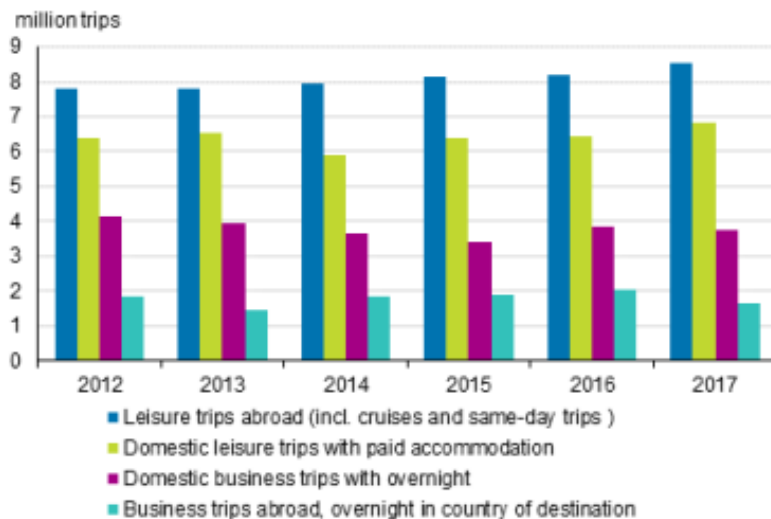


Figure 1. Finnish Travel Statistics Finland (2012-2017) (Statistics Finland, 2018)

Finland has long ago famous for its sustainable tourism industry. It means that Finns will continue traveling and tend to purchase unique experience rather than the traditional trips. It is believed that various experience trips will perform positively throughout the year such as cultural, digital detox, homestay, ancestry trips...



Finnish travelers are more usual than any of their Nordic friends to go online while arranging and purchasing trips, with 82% demonstrating that they use the web for this reason. Perhaps, as a result, Finns are additionally the most likely to respond to an online advertisement, with 46% of voyagers saying they have researched a destination, flight, accommodation or packages through an online ad. (Google, 2017) Therefore, various type of marketing should be developed to reach more Finns.

According to The Association of Finnish Travel Agents, there is a trend in tourism all over the world as the Finns are traveling more tremendously in 2017. The table shows a dramatic rise in numerous tours created from Finland to Vietnamese destination. In particular, 3892 different kinds of tours were created, which increased 38,6% compared to the previous year. On the other hand, there is a massive gap for tours created between Thailand and Vietnam. Known for its popularity to Finnish people, Thailand possessed 46 615 tours, which was 11,97% higher than Vietnam. However, as currently expressed in the proportional table, the annual change of Vietnam illustrated a 36,2% ratio gap over Thailand. Therefore, this shows the potential and positive sign of Vietnamese tourism industry.

Table 1. Air travel by country of destination according to various statistics in 2017 (Saarikivi, 2018)

Matkan kohde		Tilastokeskus; Lentäen tehtyt yöpymisen sisältäneet vapaa-ajanmatkat <sup>1)</sup>		SMAL; Lentäen tehtyt valmismatkat <sup>2)</sup>		Finavia; Tilausliikenteen lähteneet matkustajat	
		Yhteensä	Lentäen tehtyt valmismatkat	Matkaa	Vuosimuutos 2016/2017, %	Matkustajaa	Vuosimuutos 2016/2017, %
<b>Afrikka</b>	<b>Yhteensä</b>	..	..	..	..	<b>11 672</b>	<b>25,1</b>
	Gambia	..	..	3 270	7,0	3 105	10,7
	Kap Verde	..	..	6 641	43,1	5 325	20,3
	Mauritius	..	..	2 564	6,7	1 797	50,9
<b>Aasia ja Oseania</b>	<b>Yhteensä</b>	<b>330 000</b>	<b>100 000</b>	..	..	<b>28 215</b>	<b>0,2</b>
	Arabiemiirikunnat	..	..	14 213	9,1	..	..
	Intia	..	..	3 147	17,3	1 777	-16,3
	Kiina	..	..	701	-39,4	..	..
	Sri Lanka	..	..	2 787	391,5	1 466	..
	Thaimaa	100 000	..	46 615	2,4	21 937	15,0
	Vietnam	..	..	3 892	38,6	..	..
Lentopohjaiset risteilyt		..	..	11 259	4,1	..	..

Merkkien selitykset: [...] tietoa ei ole saatu, se on epävarma tai salassapitosäännön alainen. Pyöristysten takia taulukoiden summat eivät aina täsmää.

1) Sisältää lentopohjaiset risteilyt

2) Suomen matkatoimistoalan liitto (SMAL) - The Association of Finnish Travel Agents (AFTA)

As reported by AFTA, the Finns are looking for sunny and warm temperature places when the winter comes. Vietnam is listed 9<sup>th</sup> on the top ten list for winter destination. Therefore, it is also considered as an emerging tourist attraction and a potential trendy area. (AFTA,

2018) Moreover, *“the new adventure trend is the desire to experience new cultures, with a 20% rise in tourists opting for food adventure tours, including wine tasting, sampling local cuisine, and taking cookery classes.”* (The Resort Group Plc, 2018) Therefore, with a wide variety of cuisines, Vietnam is a suitable and potential destination for purposeful cultural tourist.

Package tour remains an extremely well-known choice among explorers, with over 50% of tourists taking one in the previous year, as indicated by ABTA. Nevertheless, the high standards of millennial travelers have made a paradox. Trends demonstrate that millennials are moving towards more genuine and cultural encounters; however, their demand is also for luxury interiors, adaptable local cuisine, and most importantly, Wi-Fi. (The Resort Group Plc, 2018) Therefore, the tour package aims to travelers from the age of 20-40 years old, who are interested in Vietnamese culture and unique experience.

## 4 Vietnam as a travel destination

Vietnam is a South East Asian country with strong geography advantages of both transportation and attraction. By the border with China in the north; Laos, Cambodia in the west; Thailand in the south and the Pacific Ocean in the east and south. These aspects make Vietnam become the central region, which is easy to reach by land, sea, and airways.

According to the UNWTO report, Vietnam had the fastest growth in the tourism industry among other Asian countries with a rate of 29% in 2017 while Thailand changed steadily, 8,6% (UNWTO, 2018). The ratio proved that Vietnam tourism is developing significantly and held a high potential for a touristic country in the future. In specific, the number of Finnish travelers increased 6% in 2016 compared to 2015 (VNAT, 2016) while in 2017 the statistic raised up to 17%, almost 3 times higher than 2016 (VNAT, 2018). The significant increase proved that more and more Finnish people are willing to choose Vietnam as their holiday destination.

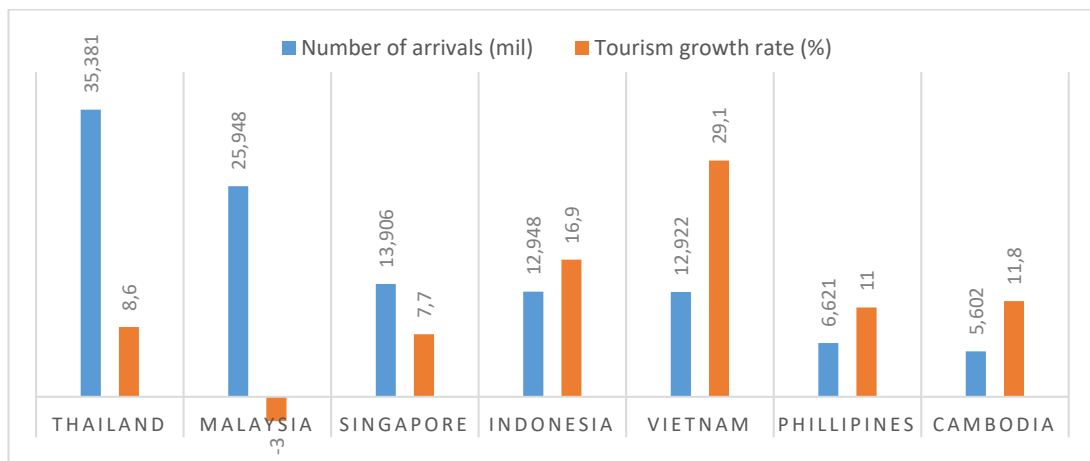


Figure 2. International arrivals in seven Southeast Asian Countries in 2017 (UNWTO, 2018)

Vietnam has an S shape with a long coastline stretching from north to south that diversifies the country's topography from lowlands, hills, highlands to dense forests. The climate also varies differently from place to place such as humid subtropical climate in the north, monsoon climate in the middle and tropical savanna in the south. The magnificent landscapes of Vietnam have been recognized by owning many World Heritage Site award, which attracted millions tourist every year, such as Ha Long Bay, Phong Nha Ke Bang national park, Hoi An Ancient Street, My Son sanctuary and Trang An landscape complex (The States Parties - Vietnam, 2018). Beside that there are still many landscapes are undiscovered such as Son Doong – the biggest cave in the world that attract many enthusiastic travelers, who looking for unique travel experiences, to come and explore.

Not only that, but Vietnam also owns several world-famous beaches, which attract many beach fans. For example, Bai Dai Beach in Phu Quoc Island - Vietnam is rank as 2<sup>nd</sup> out of top 20 best beaches in Asia for its beauty of white sand, clear water and safety (CNN travel, 2017). The visitors can safely swim and enjoy kite-running, windsurfing, ocean walk, diving, and other beach activities (The Crazy Tourist, 2018).

After 1000 years of Chinese domination and 100 years of France domination, Vietnamese culture formed especially as a harmonious combination of Western and Eastern culture. The traditional customs are influenced by Chinese culture while the national alphabet is based on Latin script and French influence. Vietnam also has 54 ethnic groups living together, which build up a diversity of traditional and cultural Vietnam treasures (Vietnam Tourism, 2015). The special and diverse culture is also one of the reasons attracting many foreign tourists to Vietnam.



Figure 3. Number of international arrivals to Vietnam during 2010-2017 (Nguyen Trong Thuc, 2018)

Due to the low living cost in Vietnam, it becomes an ideal destination for budget travelers. In 2017, Sky scanner - a travel search website of UK also mentioned Vietnam as one of the world cheapest holiday destination (McGloin, 2017). A tourist has to spend only 12€ per day for an economical trip or 34€ per day for the mid-range trip and almost 100€ per day for a high-end experience (Vietnam Travel Budget, 2018). The price includes all accommodation, food, transportation, and some specific costs. It is hard to find a place where you can taste the exquisite cuisine, which is fresh and tasty with a reasonable price in Vietnam. How to say no with a cup of aromatic and creamy coffee that cost only 1 euro!

With all the advantages that can satisfy any kinds of visitors, Vietnam has high potential in tourism development, and this was commented by Nguyen Ngoc Thien, the Minister of

Culture, Sports, and Tourism, in Vietnam Tourism Awards ceremony 2018 (Hoang Oanh, 2018).

*“I believe that the tourism industry in Vietnam will continue developing and quickly realize the goal of becoming a major industry, contributing to making Vietnam a friendly and attractive destination, affirming the position of the tourism industry on the regional and world tourism map”.*

#### **4.1 Destination and attractions**

This subchapter describes the three main chosen destination, which represents Vietnamese culture and unique experience. Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An consist of a decent variety of attractions ranging from a UNESCO World Heritage town to archeological destinations and especially, Vietnam's previous imperial capital. One of the reasons for choosing these three cities is their characteristic differences. While Hue represents the book of ancient Vietnamese history, Da Nang possesses modern development in the experience economy. Additionally, Hoi An is described as “the town of lanterns” with friendly, polite and helpful locals. Not only can these three cities bring out the most of Vietnamese culture experience, but they also can potentially become top destinations in Asia.

##### **4.1.1 Hue**

Famous all through the nation for both the signification and the sophistication of its cuisine, Hue brings out the best of Vietnamese culture tradition to various visitors around the world. The former imperial city of Hue is one of the most important historical areas of Vietnam. Despite being damaged in 1968, it is a fascinating city where the beauty remains with the charming Perfume River flows through the center of the town, near the majestic Ngu Binh Mountain. (Thua Thien Hue Gov, 2015)

2017 was a successful year for Hue's tourism, as the numbers of guests increased 22.05 percent higher than the original plan. With a rise of 16 percent over 2016, this beautiful city accommodated around 3.8 million visitors, earning over 155 million USD (VNS, 2018). For example, only on Tet – the traditional holiday of Vietnam, also known as Lunar New Year – 31,000 tourists, of which 80 percent were foreigners were welcomed to the food capital. In particular, the most significant foreign market was South Korea that occupied 25.5 percent. This might due to the bilaterally economic ties influenced by the Free Trade Agreement between Vietnam and Korea; therefore, various Korean enterprises were investing in this potential country. (WTO, Vietnam Chamber Of Commerce And Industry, 2015) Moreover, other following essential segments of Hue's tourism are France (9.6 percent), the UK (6.2 percent), the US (5.9 percent); and Germany (4.1 percent). Most of the international visitors

traveled by air, as various direct flight routes have opened to Vietnam. (VNAT, 2018; Asia Highlights, 2018)

Nominated as “Kyoto of Vietnam,” the long-established historical and cultural traditions help to boost tourism of Hue magnificently. (VNS, 2018) As a small yet expeditiously growing city in the central of Vietnam, Hue has a lot to offer. The most popular attractions are Imperial City, Thien Mu Pagoda, The Thanh Toan Bridge, Royal Palace, and various kings’ tombs. In 2014, the city authority was working hard to promote garden houses with a goal to attract 20 to 40% more visitors. In particular, they introduced ‘Hue - A Homeland of Happiness’ plan that targets tourism sustainability, under its (2010–2020). The project promotes the unique core assets of Hue – the ancient infrastructure as well as cultural heritage – to contribute to the growth of the local economy. (CDKN, 2014) This year, the province aims “*4.2 million tourists, with foreign arrivals making up 40-45 percent, and earning VND4.2 to 4.3 trillion in tourism revenue.*” (VNS, 2018)

From 1558 to 1945, nine generations of the Nguyen Dynasty has chosen Hue to be the capital in the southern part of Vietnam (Dang Trong) during the separation of the country. In the current day, the city still preserves various tangible and intangible cultural heritage from the reigns of thirteen Nguyen kings. Not only is it famous for magnificent palaces, solemn royal mausoleums and unique styles of pagodas, Hue also represents the heart, mind, and soul of Vietnamese people. (Thua Thien Hue Gov, 2015)



Image 3. Violet sunrise of Hue, Vietnam (Nguyen, 2016)

The most typical cultural heritages that need to be mentioned are the Complex of Hue Monuments. (Hue World Heritage, 2013) This complex includes the Capital, the Imperial City, and the Forbidden Purple City grouped together, symmetrically set along the longitudinal axis and confronting south. (UNESCO, 1993) Each of the element has its own function. Firstly, the Capital is the most solid fortified star-shaped architectural work in the history of durable construction in Hue ancient time. The system of the walls is the harmonious combination of Eastern and Western architectural styles, with Natural surrounding elements such as Ngu Binh Mount, Perfume River, Gia Vien, and Boc Thanh islets. Secondly, the Imperial City has four entryways surrounded by a square wall about 600 meters length on each side. The south door (Ngo Mon) has the most typical ancient architectural style and is generally seen and perceived as the symbol of Hue Citadel. It served as the main entrance as well as the traditional and vital event venue. Lastly, inside the area of the Imperial City, the Forbidden Purple City was the area where various daily activities of the royal family took place. (Hue World Heritage, 2013; Thua Thien Hue Gov, 2015)

#### **4.1.2 Da Nang**

Da Nang is the fourth biggest city located in the middle of Vietnam, connecting with three UNESCO World Heritage sites: Hue Citadel, Hoi An ancient town, and My Son Sanctuary. Due to the favorable location, tourists can access Da Nang easily by air, land, and seaway. In specific, in 2017 DAD airport (Da Nang international airport) welcome more than 1.58 tourist (raise up to 74,4%) including domestic and international passengers. (VNA, 2017). Witnessing the significant increase of visitor by plane, Da Nang municipal Department of Tourism cooperated with different airlines and added more 29 direct flights to DAD airport. By December 2017, a new terminal was built and opened to serve the flow of international tourist (Luc Citrinot, 2017).

Since 2016, Da Nang has been noticed by international travelers as well as Vietnamese resident and become a popular destination over Asia. According to VNA statistic, there are around 6.6 million tourists, which increased 19% compared to previous years, visited Da Nang in 2017. Meanwhile, the number of foreigners possessed 2.3 million people; shoot up 36.8% in the growth rate (VNA, 2017).



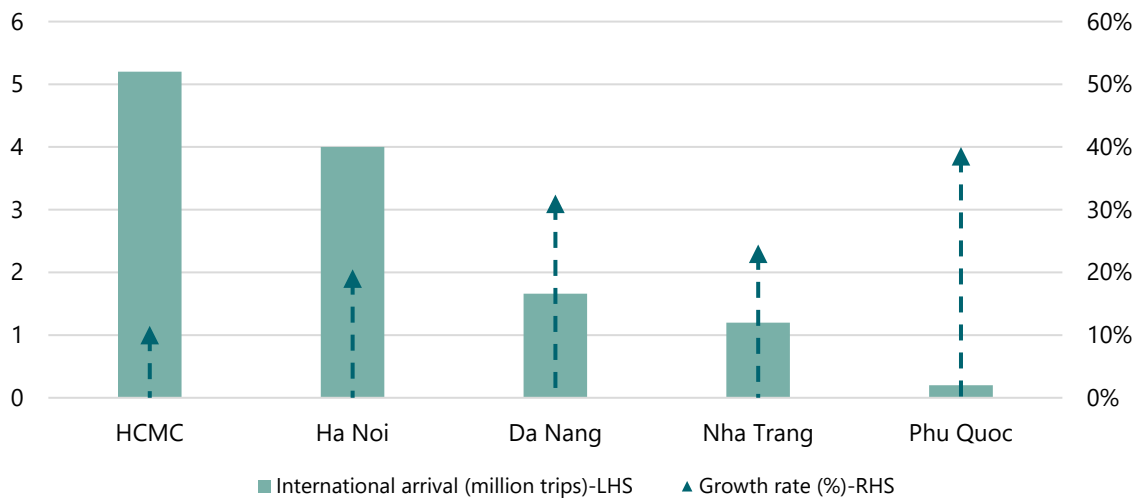


Figure 4. International arrivals in Da Nang 2017 (Savills Vietnam, 2017)

Because of the easy access, the average Length of Stay (LOS) of tourist in Da Nang is a bit low. Tourists often stay in the city around 2 to 2.8 days only when they travel to the nearby city such as Hue, Hoi An (Savills Vietnam, 2017).

While all the scenic beauties and gorgeous modern architectures, the city is well known as a peaceful and civilized destination with many unique cultural values, which attract many foreigners. The most prominent here is the religious value – Buddhism, the biggest religion in Vietnam (Religious in Vietnam, 2010). The city itself is popular as Buddhist sanctuaries with many religious attractions such as Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture – the first Buddhism museum in Vietnam. By owning more than 500 Buddhist antiquities, the museum got an investment of 45 billion VND (around 1.7 million Euro) for upgrading and renovation. Mr. Huynh Van Hung, Director of the city Department of Culture and Sports said: “Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture is one of unique cultural works to introduce to international friends attending the APEC High-Level Week” (Tourism, 2017)

Not only that Da Nang is also the location of The Marble Mountains where culture and religion are preserved. The symbol of the Marble Mountains is also used to design the logo of Da Nang city (Doan Hai Tu - Chi Giao, 2016). The mountains are a special landscape formed by five other mountains, which named after nature’s element: metal, water, wood, fire, and earth. The mountain open for tourists is biggest one named “Water”, where content a huge number of Buddhist Grottos and impressive pagoda such as Am Phu Cave – the biggest cave inside Water Mountain. The cave’s entrance is in the base of the mountain, local resident calls it as “Hell cave” because of all the creepy statues and engravings on the wall which illustrated the suffering and torture of the afterlife world. The ancients believed that the cave is the way to go to hell. There are also many other magnificent grottos like Hoa Nghiem, Huyen Khong, Linh Nham, Lang Hu, Van Thong, Thien Long, Ban Co, Tang



Chan, Chiem Thanh. Some of the classic and sacred pagodas located on the mountain are Tam Thai, Tam Ton, Linh Ung. Moreover, on the top of Water Mountain are Vong Hai Tower and Vong Giang tower where you can rest after hiking several hours and have an overview of the panoramic mountain and the immense sea (Vietnamitas en Madrid, 2018).

The highest Lady Buddhist status of Vietnam is also located at Linh Ung Bai But pagoda, in Son Tra Peninsula, Da Nang. There is no doubt that Da Nang is a Buddhist land in Vietnam. By the ancient beauty and the spiritual atmosphere there, the city demonstrates clearly Vietnamese religion and culture to foreigners. (Lady Buddha Da Nang, 2016)

In addition, Da Nang is known as Beach city for the beach lover. According to The American business magazine – Forbes, My Khe beach, Da Nang deserve to be named as “one of the most attractive beaches on the planet” (Do, 2015). The beach is most famous for its special topography, which facing beautiful beach on one side and fenced by mountains on the other side. At My Khe beach, tourists can swim in the purest water, walk on the fine white sand under a clear blue sky and participate in many water sports activities. (My Khe Beach Guide, 2016)

Not only that, but foreigner also recognize Da Nang as The City of Bridge. For example, the epic Dragon Bridge won a Diamond award for Engineering Excellence in 2014 by the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), (NewsDesk, 2016). In June 2018, Da Nang introduced to the world a new Golden Bridge (Image 4) that was designed as being held by two giant stone hands, located in Ba Na Hill. The bridge became famous instantly by its majestic beauty and was mentioned in Archdaily - a well-known architecture website of America (Niall Patrick Walsh, 2018).



Image 4. The Golden Bridge at Ba Na Hill - Da Nang, Vietnam (Ravenscroft, 2018)

The city's slogan - "FantastiCity!" promises visitor that they will be fulfilled and happy while discovery and experience Da Nang as in the fantastic city. (Doan Hai Tu - Chi Giao, 2016)

#### **4.1.3 Hoi An**

Not like Hue's people, who are always elegant and sweet, Hoi An is famous for their honest and friendly. One of the most famous travel guide magazines in UK – Rough Guides had mentioned Hoi An as one of top ten destinations worth to visit in Southeast Asia. (MacEacheran, 2018)

Hoi An Ancient Town is the only town in Vietnam that can retain 100% percent of its original charm and be admitted as a National Cultural Heritage Site in 1985. Then, it was classified as a Special National Cultural Heritage Site in 2009 under the Cultural Heritage Law. (CC-BY-SA IGO 3.0, 2018). Since 2012, The Prime Minister has boosted many efforts in preserving both tangible and intangible cultural values in order to turn Hoi An into a cultural travel destination (VEN, 2012) n. As a world legacy site with outstanding universal values of culture, the town mirrors perfectly a combination of Asian and Western culture, especially Chinese, Japanese and later European civilization. (CC-BY-SA IGO 3.0, 2018)

Tourist travel to Hoi An Ancient Town can easily find many buildings constructed by timber frame and block or wooden walls organized side by side tightly on two side of narrow streets. There are 1,107 in a total of historical buildings, architectural monuments, religious building in the town with well preserved, which bring the customer the feeling of losing in the ancient world. One other remarkable attraction here is the wooden Japanese pagoda - bridge, which still retains its original classic architecture of the 18th century cultural (CC-BY-SA IGO 3.0, 2018). The image of the bridge is printed on 20000 VND paper money as below.



Image 5. The Pagoda Bridge on Vietnam currency, Hoi An (Amity Smile Travel, 2018)

According to The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), in 2017, Hoi An facilitated numerous national and global social and tourism occasions, for example, light festival, Korean cultural days, Hoi An International Marathon, the 6<sup>th</sup> Quang Nam Heritage Festival. Therefore, the number of tourist surge moderately up to 3.22 million people, 21,66% increased compared to 2016. The figure is considered as the highest rate in the city's historical record until now. Surprisingly, international tourists draw more than half of the total number (1.78 million) while local visitor holds only 1.44 million (CPV, 2017).



Image 6. Night at Hoi An Old Town, Vietnam (Traveltheworld, 2018)

Getting a beautiful outfit that is totally fit and designed only for you is a special thing tourist cannot miss when visiting Hoi An. The tailoring business here is well known for its quality and agility. The talented tailors of Hoi An can replicate or fix your beloved items in only one night with an affordable price (Rajapaksha, 2018)



It is mentioned by Rough Guides magazine that Hoi An is one of the cheapest places to travel for street food (Bhatia, 2018). Hoi An gastronomy is considered as a standout amongst other cities' cuisine in Vietnam. It is influenced by Chinese culture, therefore dumpling, noodle, Yangzhou fried rice, wonton are also very popular and distinctive in Hoi An. However, the most notable dish in this ancient city is Cao Lau, which is a mix of noodle mixed with minced pork, fried pork fat, bean sprouts, and other vegetables, served dry. Tourists cannot enjoy this unique dish with the original recipe anywhere else in Vietnam, except Hoi An (CC-BY-SA IGO 3.0, 2018).

With the peaceful atmosphere of the moonlit nights (Image 6), the scenic of ancient times, Hoi An is a good choice for both domestic and foreign visitors, who are looking for a light and relaxing trip (VEN, 2012).

#### 4.2 Weather condition in Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An

As various other regions around Vietnam, the three specific cities acquire two seasons: dry and rain season. In this central area, summer is the best time to travel, as it rains most of the time during September – February and unpredictable typhoon lasts from August to November. Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An have relatively similar weather due to their geographic location. (Asia Highlights, 2018)

The period from February to July is the ideal time to experience the lives of anglers in the lagoon, enjoy local dishes and immerse into the sunset gorgeousness of the lagoon. As the temperature can get higher than 30°C (around 86°F) and full of sunshine, visitors can enjoy the brightest season of the whole year in this subtropical area. It depends on visitors' desire; the package can be operated at the beginning of the dry season for milder weather, or end of the dry season for more heat and sunshine. Figure 5 below describes the average temperature of Da Nang in general, which can also be related to Hue and Hoi An (World Weather & Climate Information, 2017):

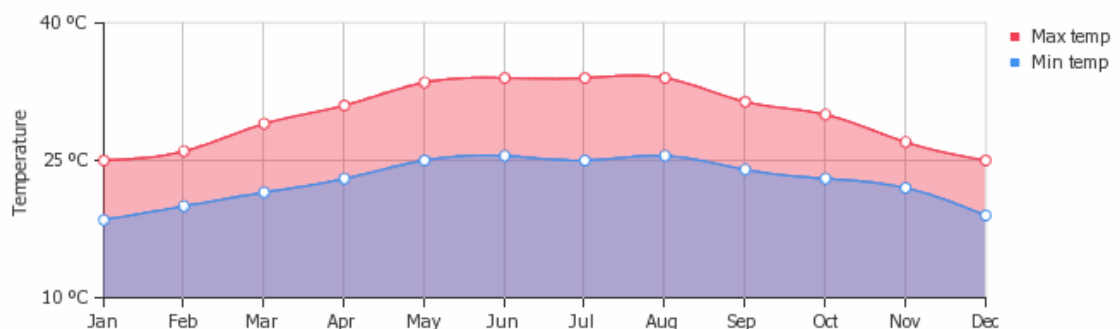


Figure 5. Da Nang's average temperature (World Weather & Climate Information, 2017)

Moreover, figure 6 demonstrates the average precipitation of Da Nang, representing for the central area of Vietnam (World Weather & Climate Information, 2017):

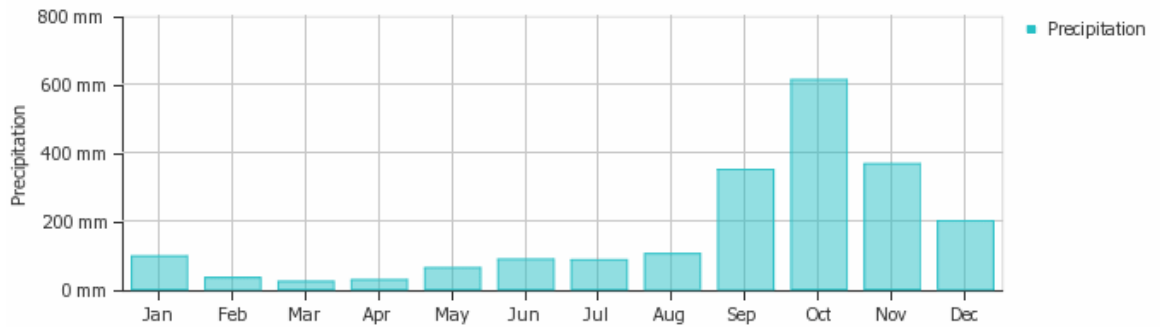


Figure 6. Da Nang's average precipitation (World Weather & Climate Information, 2017)

As mentioned, from September to November is the rainiest time in the central area. This might be a great barrier for visitors' activities due to local operating service. It is suggested to avoid these months, as visitors might only be able to stay in hotels or move short distances due to rain and flooding. Therefore, the price is less expensive in this season.

## 5 Culture Tourism Experience

The chapter explains the concept of cultural tourism and traveling motivation of tourist so that the reader can understand clearly how culture approach traveler through tourism trend. Besides, unique experience is also mentioned as an important element of creating a new attractive package.

### 5.1 Tourist's motivator

The motivation for travel has hitherto taken an essential role in evaluating the common achievement motivation research. There are mainly two types of motivation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. Intrinsic motivation happens when people who are motivated to travel for their relaxation and personal development. According to Mundt and Lohmann, the comprehension of the need for leisure trips is signaling physical or mental fatigue. Additionally, various other important reasons for individuals to travel are the need of recognition or inclusion; escaping the current condition and curiosity for new experiences that fulfill the current situations that do not afford. (Gnoth, Zins, Lengmueller & Boshoff, 2001, originally by Iso-Ahola, 1982). Therefore, push factors are socio-psychological urges that encourage individuals to travel. (Ateljevic, 2000)

On the other hand, pull factors are emerging due to the destination-generated forces for instance beaches, recreation infrastructure, and cultural highlights. (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994) Based on the destination knowledge of tourists, pull factors stimulate and attract potential customers to the tourism field. (Ateljevic, 2000) According to the push-pull model, "people travel because they are pushed into making travel decisions by internal, psychological forces, and pulled by external forces of the destination attributes". (Walker & Walker, 2011) In short, push factors create an aspiration inside an individual to travel, while pull factors enable that person to choose a proper destination. (Goossens, 2000)

By combining with Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking theory, Crompton and McKay have suggested clarifying push-pull conceptualization. Traditionally, push factors are viewed as critical in initiating travel aspiration, while pull factors are considered as more decisive in the choice of destination. (Ateljevic, 2000, originally by Crompton, 1979). Seeking-escaping theory is a theoretical way regarding inspiration. As indicated by Mannell and Iso-Ahola, individuals participate in traveling to simultaneous escape from parts of their personal and interpersonal conditions (for example fatigue or stress) and to look for special rewards. These benefits could be expressed regarding basic needs, in particular, to discover beneficial social encounters and for self-improvement. Therefore, according to tourism literature, escaping is usually viewed as "push factor", whereas seeking is known as "pull

factor". Similarly, Gnoth suggests that motives and motivations are the primary sources of influencing tourists' decisions and perceptions. (Ateljevic, 2000, originally by Gnoth, 1997) While motives describe the main emotional forces, motivations regard to subjective, situational parameters.

## 5.2 Cohen's Model of Typologies of Tourists

Tourist typologies are based on the research patterns of travelers. As indicated by the patterns, it is conceivable to divide travelers into various categories. Each category helps to facilitate the comprehension of what a particular tourist needs. Cohen's Model of Typologies of Tourists is the most common theory that extends a mere introduction into tourists' psychology. This enables the authors to comprehend the target audience for the newly created tour package.

Erik Cohen forms a theory on tourism on the mental needs of tourists – what travelers need to have during their trip compared to what is considered not necessary. The theory also provides the behavior of potential customers when traveling to a new destination. This theory influences in a various way for a newly created tour package that the author will demonstrate. As indicated by Cohen's classification, the motivation of the traveler is influenced by curiosity as well as the desire for new experience. Nevertheless, the feel of comfort combining with familiarity also plays an important part in tourist decisions. According to Goffman's research on human behavior in various circumstances, Cohen has characterized tourists into four fundamental categories: the organized and individual mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter. (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007)



Figure 7. Cohen's Classification of Tourists (Baku, 2013)

The initial two groups are individuals who book their trips through travel agencies. Firstly, organized voyagers have their tours completely organized in advance and expect to have a set of the program outlined by agencies – for instance, package tours are a decent illustration. As a tourist tends to isolate himself, Cohen suggested the term “environmental bubble” for this type of travelers. Familiarity is the prerequisite element; nonetheless, novelty is the least requirement. (Lee & Wilkins, 2017)

Individual travelers, on the other hand, they would like to design their itinerary by themselves, yet simultaneously reserve the activities through agencies. For instance, the travel agencies provide lodgings, restaurants as well as attraction bookings, subsequently, the travelers could adjust the itinerary and time during the trip. (Lee & Wilkins, 2017)

Cohen marked these two categories as institutionalized forms of tourism. (Prince, 2017)

Cohen’s theories following elements are explorers and drifters. Acknowledgment of the titles, they tend to travel freely and organize trips without the assistance of travel agencies. In contrast to the previous two groups, they dislike traveling in-group and design the itinerary by themselves. (Prince, 2017)

The next type in Cohen’s theory, the explorers keep a relevance to their regular circle of the day by keeping some of their particular cultures – for instance coming back to the hotel during their day-trip to relax. This type of traveler looks for different attractions than the mass visitors seek for, yet inclines toward moderate comfort for both housing and means of transport while on the trip. Explorers are additionally eager to interact with the local people as well as learning their local language to help themselves traveling. They are open-minded and willing to internalize new things. (Grzywacz & Żegleń, 2016)

Finally, the drifters have the most freedom and truly need to fit in with the local network to gain wealth and expand their horizon. They attempt to maintain a strategic distance from contact with different tourists. Additionally, they do not planned itinerary beforehand and live, interact and work with the host. In particular, it is common for drifters to accept a job to live and experience like the locals. In contrast to the organized mass tourist, for drifters novelty is the most significant prerequisite element, whereas familiarity is the least requirement. (Grzywacz & Żegleń, 2016)

Cohen labeled these two categories as noninstitutionalized forms of tourism. (Prince, 2017)

The subsequent subchapter analyses the motivation of travelers based on theories of various authors. This includes theories such as Motivation Factors of the Tourists, Push and Pull Factors, Escape-Seeking Theory and an overview of the Motivation Process.



### 5.3 Relationship of “Tourism” and “Culture”

This subchapter describes the definition of “Cultural Tourism” as well as the partnership between tourism and culture from different perspectives of various experts. However, it seems impossible to give a particular definition of cultural tourism because both “culture” and “tourism” themselves are complex and difficult to define as well. Therefore, it is important to have a fundamental comprehension of “What is culture?” and “What is tourism?”

As it is shown in the Cambridge dictionary, *“Tourism is the business of providing services such as transport, accommodation, or entertainment for people who are on holiday”* (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). This is the most perspicuous meaning that most of the people recognize. Besides, there are hundreds of explanation for Tourism with the professional academic point of views. For example, a group of researchers of the Institute of Tourism in Britain (1976) reported that the conceptual definition of tourism is

*“The temporary short-term period of people traveling to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and doing activities during their stay in these destinations, it includes movement for all purpose as well as day visits and excursions.”* (Holloway & Taylor, 2006)

Lately, the World Tourism Organization published a definition of tourism in 1993, which they called technical definition. In this term, tourism is considered as

*“The activities of persons during their travel and stay in a place outside their usual place of residence, for a continuous period of less than one year, for leisure, business or other purposes.”* (Holloway & Taylor, 2006)

Besides, the culture concept is even more complicated and wilder to explain than tourism because of its giant resources portrayed in Image 7. Therefore, Greg Richards (1996) decided to divide culture into two basic perception: “culture as process” and “culture as product”. Richard explained that culture is a process because:

*“From the view of anthropology and sociology, culture is codes of conduct implanted in a specific social group. Culture designates the social field of meaning production or the processes through which people make sense of themselves and their lives.”*

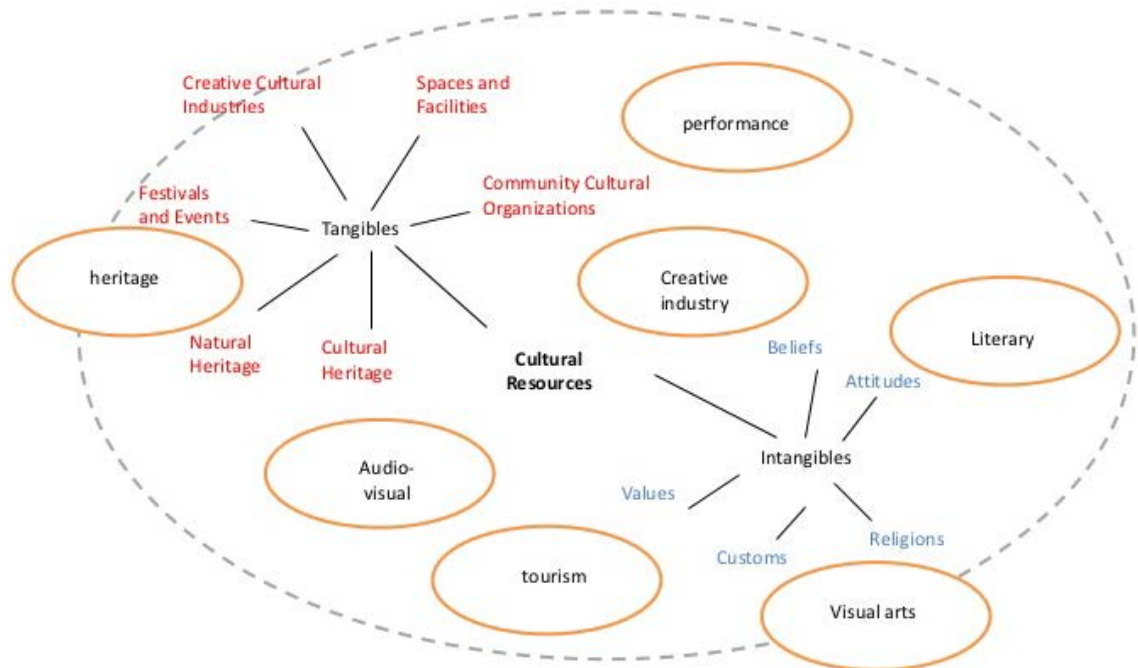


Image 7. Concept map shows the diversity of cultural resources (Alzarooni, 2012)

On the other hand, culture is viewed as “a product of individual or group activities to which certain meanings are attached” Some cultures are used to illustrate the invention of famous artists and become well known as a product. (Richards, 1996)

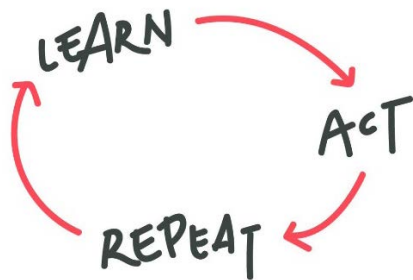


Image 8. The circle of Culture Process (Culture Amp, 2016)

Explaining in a simpler way, image 8 showed that Culture process is a loop of learning, acting, and repeating (Culture Amp, 2016). For example, folk music is only the unknown authorship songs that are learned and sung by villagers from generation to generation. After a long history, those songs were recognized as an important product – a cultural heritage. Applying this on tourism industry show that tourism is a catalyst, which transforms the culture process into a product. On the other hand, culture seems like an adjective to support the noun, tourism. In the end, the relationship between culture and tourism is hard to explain by any conception.

McKercher and DuCros mentioned in their book that Zeppel and Hall described cultural tourism as is a period of traveling (under a year), which traveler interest focuses mainly on culture such as folklore, people, languages, costumes, historical heritage sites, and local

gastronomy, etc. Besides, Silberberg agreed and believed that cultural tourists are usually motivated by going to museum or monument and participating in local event and festival, therefore, they can have deep experiences on the community's lifestyle, history, art, and cuisine. (McKercher & DuCros, 2002)

As a new emerging topic, cultural tourism does not have much valid research that examines its market. However, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) has evaluated that the cultural tourists, who seeking for cultural experiences such as heritage site, historical destination, etc, instead of the beach, amusement park, shopping mall, account for 37% of the tourism market. This ratio is increasing annually by 15% per year (MacKercher & DuCros, 2002; originated by Richards, 1996). The culture tourism market growth significantly these recent years because of the globalization that raises the cultural awareness and interest of the community. Mc Kercher and Du Cros believe that cultural tourism symbolized a new type of mass tourism that require unique cultural memory as a basic element for a trip. The two professors also classified travelers of this new type of tourism into different categories, which are described in the next chapter.

#### 5.4 Typology of cultural tourist

A traveler who seeking cultural experiences for their holiday is called cultural tourist. As Bob McKercher and Hilary Du Cros researched, there are five basic categories of cultural tourists which are demonstrated clearly in the figure below.

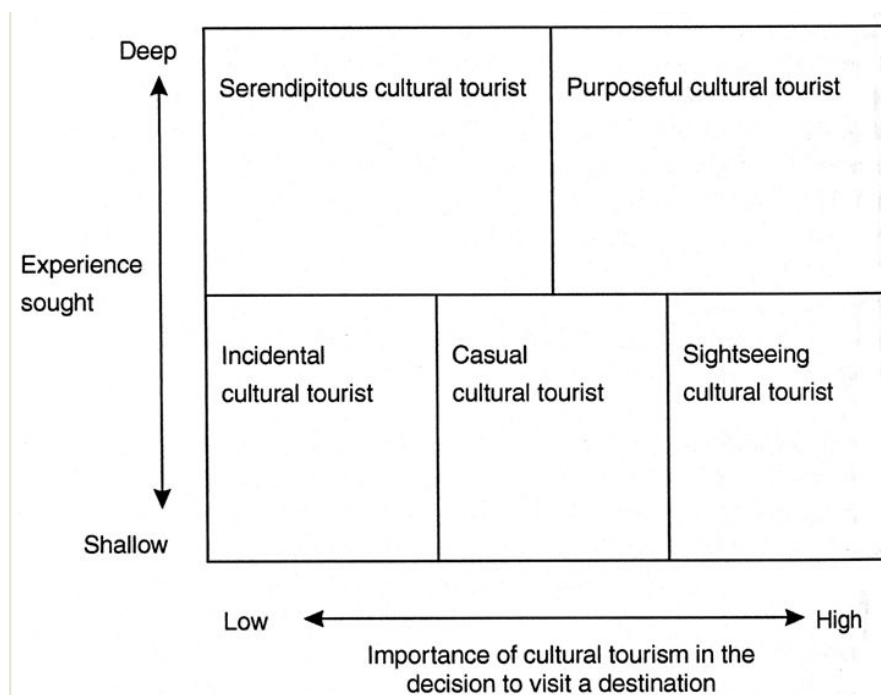


Figure 8. Cultural tourist's typology (MacKercher & DuCros, 2002)

The definition of five typologies can be easily understood through the Hong Kong case study in 1999. The case study was tested under 2066 visitors from China, Taiwan, Singapore, the United State, the United Kingdom, and Australia. 11,8% of traveler is considered as **“Purposeful cultural tourist”** because of their high motivation and tends to experience deeply in local culture and each activity there. They are more interested in visiting a heritage site, an art museum, and art gallery or pottery museum rather than shopping. They enjoy walking in a local small market and buying local stuff than visiting a modern shopping mall and paying for the high brand product. (MacKercher & DuCros, 2002)

On the other hand, the **“Incidental cultural tourist”** has no special interest in culture and just visits attraction listed on the guidebook because of its reputation. For example, they would love to go to the Space Museum to see the modern IMAX cinema instead of going to the art museum. They would spend their time playing in a heritage theme park than visit a historical temple. (MacKercher & DuCros, 2002)

**“Sightseeing cultural tourist”** acquired 30,7% (the largest number) of the visitor in this case study, which is the most popular type of cultural. Tourists of this typology also have extremely interest in culture and want to collect as much experience as possible during their travel. However, different from the first typology (Purposeful cultural tourist), their experiences are shallower because they pay more attention to the quantity matter than the quality of one experience. Sightseeing cultural tourist usually tries to visit all top attractions and travel around the city for photographing and sightseeing but do not stay too long at one destination. (MacKercher & DuCros, 2002)

The fourth type is **“Casual cultural tourist”** who have less enthusiasm in culture than a purposeful cultural tourist but still consider culture as a factor affecting their traveling decision. For instance, purposeful cultural tourist will walk around and take note to study deeply an ancient temple history while a casual cultural tourist just wants to have a picture of them at the temple for memory. This type of tourist is willing to visit cultural heritage sites yet do not want to participate so much in the activities there so they only have a shallow experience of the visiting places. (MacKercher & DuCros, 2002)

Finally is the **“Serendipitous cultural tourist”** type, which is hard to describe because they have deep experience and willing to participate in cultural activities but has no special interest in culture. Curiosity is the main reason for them to travel, serendipitous tourists are always seeking for new and unusual experiences at a destination such as participating in a Chinese calligraphic class because it is unique and totally new for them instead of concerning the cultural value of the activity. (MacKercher & DuCros, 2002)

## **5.5 Creating Unique Experiences**

This is the main base for creating the tour package.

Pine and Gilmore suggested the term “commoditized”, as an enemy of uniqueness. Not any business or entrepreneurs want that term implemented into their goods or services. Differentiation vanishes, margins take a steep fall, and customers purchase exclusively based on the price. (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) In a society that goods and services are no longer enough as demands are increasing, what customers need are experiences. In general, unique experiences are memorable events that create a bond between the retailers and customers in an inherently personal way. In this set of material, the authors bring up various arguments in order to find out the true meaning of unique experience in general and tourism in particular. (Pine & Gilmore, 2017)

According to Pine and Gilmore, one of the best way to analyze the term “unique experience” is to compare them with service. First, services are abstract and intangible, whereas experience is memorable. In particular, services are everywhere in this world. All they offer are friendliness, nice and helpful – as the obvious meaning of service described. Therefore, it does not contribute significantly to creating a memorable experience for the customers, as there is no distinction. This type of service nowadays is commoditized, as people regularly spend money on purchasing it. The following subchapters will emphasize the importance of experience and suggest various ways to create distinctive experiences.

### **5.5.1 The progression of economic value: in tourism’s point of view**

According to Pine and Gilmore, the progression of economic value describes the distinction of a product, regarding customer requirements to pricing. The more carefully and creatively a product is designed to meet the particular needs of a customer, the higher the production value could be charged. Figure 10 illustrates five stages of this progression as below:

## The Progression of Economic Value

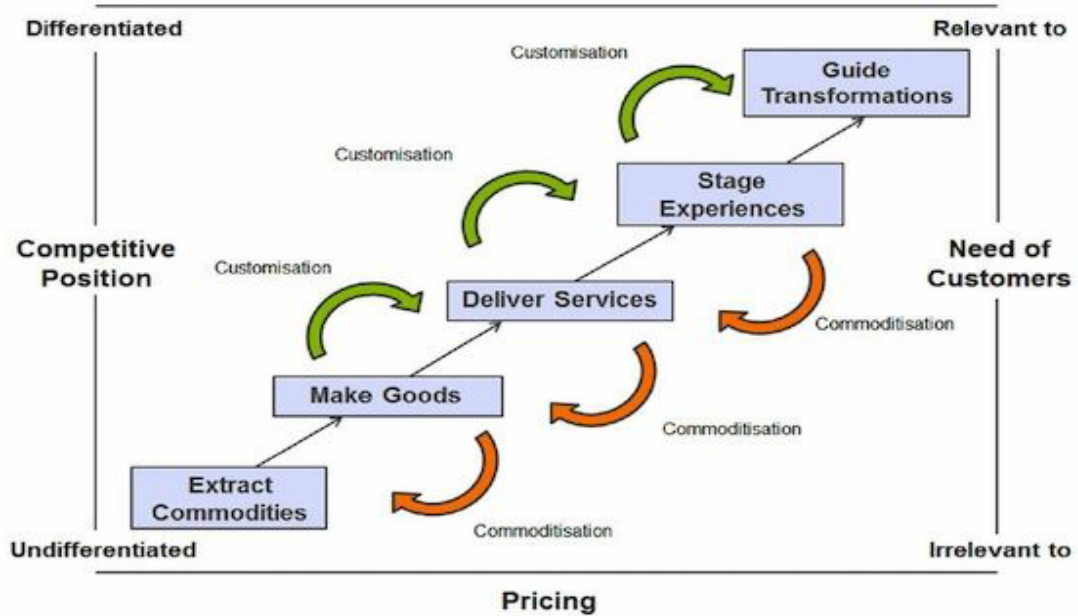


Figure 9. The progression of economic value (Pine & Gilmore, 2011)

Firstly, it is essential to describe each tourism term symbols to the stage in the figure. It starts with pure destinations to be discovered (commoditized), subsequently becomes attractions (goods), develops to regular tour packages by travel agencies (service) and finalizes creative trips (experience). As society is evolving, goods and services are becoming more retrograde. The customers' value for this generation demands positivity, engagement and memorable experiences. From the root of experience industry, figure 10 shows the influence of customization to each stage of product value. Customization can be described as an "antidote to commoditization". (Pine & Gilmore, 2013) As commodity is the lowest point, it is quite regular for the destinations to utilize their attractions to create a package and sell it for consumption. Because of the expansion of tourism demands, this could lead to the demolition of cultures as they become gradually more inauthentic. When commoditization limits their offering in tourism, customization enables them to differentiate themselves from others. For instance, instead of creating regular and similar packages to the same destinations, customers are further interested in tours such as budget trips, hiking holidays, millennial packages... The more variety of tours being created, the more does it attract the customers. As a result, the price could be charged differently to users and clients. Moreover, mass customization could be developed in engaging people on a trip. When customers are efficiently and uniquely being served, it can easily become a memorable experience as the fourth stage of progression. In short, Pine and Gilmore describe the progress below:

*"Experiences are commoditized into services, services into goods, and goods into commodities. On the other hand, goods are customized to*

*become services, services customized become experiences, and experiences customized become transformations. Because a transformation is inherently personal and the product is the changed individual, transformations cannot be commoditized.” (Create Advantage, 2018, original from The Experience Economy by Pine & Gilmore)*

This transition from selling services to selling experiences are compelled to be upgraded by the travel agencies in order to escape commoditized business. Additionally, to see how experience works in the hospitality world, three ways of creating customization will be presented in the next subchapter.

### **5.5.2 Creating distinctive experiences**

Pine and Gilmore suggested the first level of the five-experience arena is In-Name-Only Experience. It represents various marketing signs and services emblazoned on the name of the enterprise. However, they do not put much effort into maintaining their reputation. As customers demand on what they perceived, the company will likely be seen as inauthentic. It leads to the question, how unique experiences can be created.

Firstly, there should be strategies on interactions and engagement between two parties for customers to remember and spread the words. For instance, an amazing marketplace called Eataly combines everything of Italia into one engaging box: restaurants, food and beverage counters, cooking school and retail items. Customers often create their memories here by taking photos and upload on various social media as well as increase the sales for the company while spending time here. (Pine & Gilmore, 2017) The second example is HUONE – an event hotel business in Helsinki Finland. Well-known as “hotel without beds”, they cut back on goods to spend more money on service and make way for a more memorable and more highly valued experience. Instead of tedious methods of meeting, scores of HUONE turn mundane meeting rooms into experiential rooms such as Wine room, Playground Room, Canvas Room... and go beyond the ordinary to bring the best out of a meeting. Additionally, catering service and any activities are done deliberately to suit the people and purpose of the meeting. HUONE heralds the emerging Experience Economy. Surviving from two times at the verge of bankruptcy, HUONE agrees that the strongest marketing method is word of mouth, as the information goes viral around the world thanks to the great invention of the Internet. Regarding the tourism business, when creating a package, it is valuable to have the guests interact with local activities such as culture parties, community festivals, local food tours... as trips created particularly for a group of customers.

Secondly, services are noticeably customized while experiences are personal. (Pine & Gilmore, 2017) If a business cannot reach to the heart and soul of the customer, there will

be no memorable experience. Instead of being a normal service business, various brands treat customer individually to make them feel special. For example, Starbucks creates a personal interaction by letting customers choose their customized drink and write their names on the cup. The emphasis on the outline with the shop's rich warm colors, contemporary decorations, stylized illustrations, and trendy chosen music makes it out-stand from other coffeehouses and creates a unique experience for every visit. Some Starbucks have included Hear Music™ media bars where clients can select the music, get recommendations from a tremendous library of songs. This is the way in which Starbucks has innovated its exceptional experience to add stronger value for its visitors. (Jeong, Fiore, Oh & Niehm, 2009) This could also apply to the tourism business. Various applications such as Tour Buddy Apps, My Tours, or Google Trips allow users to design and customize their own itinerary as well as personal interactions. Moreover, the authors' main ideas are customizing a completely new tour package for the unique, local and cultural experience.

Thirdly, *“services are delivered on demand, while experiences are revealed over a duration of time.”* (Pine & Gilmore, 2017) If the service cannot unfold beyond customers' routine, there has not been any value regarding distinctive experience. They suggested that convenience commonly limits the time to spend with the customers, which reduces the interactions between two parties. Therefore, instead of creating a tight schedule for conveniently traveling, tour operators should design the itinerary that covers most of the attractions in a sufficient amount of time. By doing so, the tour guide could bring the travelers a more personal and memorable experience.

While five economic offerings have always been the key to successful experience business, *“recently the final two – experiences and transformations – comprised just a small portion of employment, GDP and the purchasing pie.”* (Pine & Gilmore, 2013) Although goods and services create potential benefits for the customers, interaction and memorable experiences shape the willing of using the service accordingly. Therefore, the experience is a marketing method. The best way to generate demand for a tourism company is creating tour packages with engaging experiences among the customers and retailers. From the tiniest detail being well designed, consumers will spend time, be attentive and purchase various packages as memorabilia due to the last experience.



## 6 Product development process

This chapter presents clearly the research method applied during the product's development progress. Besides, how the interview is used to collect data as well as the validity of the research are mentioned in these subchapters.

### 6.1 Qualitative Approach

The research on traveler's experience and expectation when traveling in Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An have been done through a quantitative approach. Since this research focuses on creating a tour package and understanding the concept of unique cultural experiences by comparing results gained in previous studies.

According to Bryman (2008), "*Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes word rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data*". Which means that in qualitative research, people tend to find more flexible answers from a different point of view by collecting individual experiences and beliefs in the form of demonstrative data. Some of the popular qualitative research methods are *Interview, Focus Groups, Observation, Document Analysis, and Case study*. Pertti Alasuutari believed that the more hints are provided to solve a riddle, the fewer answer will be found (Martyn Hammersley, 2013). For example, quantitative research focuses on using analytical data such as number and statistic to prove the frequency of outcomes. The answer to this method is limited in the view and experience of researchers due to close-ended questions, which are not really suitable to use in researching ideas for creating a new tour package.

Therefore, semi-structured interviews with a list of questions (Appendix 1) were used to collect data in this research. There are eleven open-ended questions, excluding personal information questions, which were created a base on four big theories:

- Cultural tourism's approach
- Tourism Motivation theories
- Cohen's theory
- Unique Experience theory

A semi-structured interview allows the questioner to participate in an informal conversation and bring a comfortable feeling to interviewees. Thus, respondents can relax and giving meaningful answers as well as willing to continue deep into the topic and bringing unexpected valuable ideas. While the interviewer can keep track and make sure that all the question are covered in a particular order in order to save time when categories this information later. (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006)

## **6.2 Reliability and validity**

The content of the interview question was created based on several theories. Each question was written and checked carefully by both writers before showing to the supervisor in order to avoid unnecessary inquiries.

According to the background information of the interviewees, there were seven respondents from different countries (5 Vietnamese travelers) and mostly belong to the targeted age group from 20-40 years old. Most of the interviewees had visited or lived in these three cities: Hue, Da Nang and Hoi An. Therefore, they have practical experiences in these cities' attractions, lifestyle, people as well as local specialties. As a result, the gathered data are reliable and valid as many suggestions were contributed, which have a huge impact on creating the special new package tour.

## **6.3 Interviews structure**

The purpose of these interviews is to understand the interest of the traveler in culture aspect as well as collecting suggestion for creating a tour package. Interviewees were chosen base on their knowledge and their experiences at Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An. Most of them had been visiting these cities at least once before and one of the interviewees are local residents of Da Nang city, who had been traveling to other two cities many times and possesses a deep understanding of tourism situation as well as local specialists of these cities. Furthermore, foreigners who visited these specific cities will give their viewpoints as travelers from different countries.

More than 10 experienced travelers from different countries and age targets were invited to the interview via Email and Social Media. Seven of them agreed to participate in the research. The majority of the interviewees value this as a fascinating subject and gave useful responses, which added to this tour package various comprehensive viewpoint. When asked about culture and unique experience, they all contemplate the potential growth of these three popular cities in the tourism industry.

The interviews were conducted via Skype, Hangout and face-to-face method with an agreement that the reliability and confidential must be kept during the whole process. Therefore, participants of the interviews remain anonymous; only basic information such as nationality, gender, and age was presented in the table below. The respondent codes are associated according to the genders.

Table 2. Respondent information

No.	Date of Interview	Nationalities	Age	Gender	Respondent Code
1	September 10	Vietnamese	23	Female	F1
2	September 10	Vietnamese	26	Female	F2
3	September 13	Vietnamese	27	Female	F3
4	September 13	Vietnamese	27	Male	M4
5	September 13	Vietnamese	54	Male	M5
6	September 18	American	28	Male	M6
7	September 23	Hong Kong	22	Female	F7

1. *Respondent 1: A Vietnamese student from Ho Chi Minh City, now living in Finland.*
2. *Respondent 2: A Vietnamese designer from Ho Chi Minh City, now living in Singapore.*
3. *Respondent 3: A Vietnamese event planner from Ho Chi Minh City, now living in Vietnam*
4. *Respondent 4: A Vietnamese student from Da Nang, now living in Macau.*
5. *Respondent 5: A Vietnamese businessperson from Ho Chi Minh City, who owns a hotel business in Da Nang (commissioner), now living in Vietnam.*
6. *Respondent 6: An American researcher in Ho Chi Minh City, now living in Vietnam.*
7. *Respondent 7: A Hong Kong student from Hong Kong, now living in Hong Kong*

The participants were first asked their basic information and then their expectation of traveling and their interest in cultural tourism. Then followed by sharing their experiences and satisfaction. The aim of the interviews is to find out more suggestions and tips as attractions, local cuisine, accommodation, etc..., to create a unique culture tour. The interview question list is all open-ended questions (Appendix 1).

All of the dialogues were recorded by cell phone in both English and Vietnamese, and transcript into paper data later, including translation work. Then, the information was categorized and analyzed into a table form for references used in finding the chapter.

#### **6.4 Findings of interviews**

The research focuses to give reliable insights of culture and unique experience in accordance with the subjects addressed in the literature review. The authors chose interview as empirical data collection method to obtain realistic information and results to develop the tour package. The subsequent subchapter presents the findings of the researched questions during the interviews. Appropriate responses were analyzed and compared with the theories, hence, in the same order as the main subjects.

### 6.4.1 Culture experience expectation

The main target of this research is cultural experiences in three cities Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An. Thus, all interviewees were asked if they were interested in culture? Obviously, all of their answers are “yes” but according to their explanations, the travelers are classified into four out of five cultural tourist’s typologies that mentioned in subchapter 5.4.

As predicted, “*Sightseeing cultural tourist*” is the most crowded group with three people (F1, F2, and M4). The main purposes of these travelers are eating local food, taking a photo of historical sites and famous destinations. However, they did not mention that they expect for practical experiences such as participating in local activities or interacting with inhabitants. Moreover, the respondents seem not willing to live with a local host because of hygiene and privacy matters.

Respondent 2 (F2)

*“Yes, whenever I visit one country or city, I would expect to experience the cultures in that place. My priority is local food because I like to eat. Secondary agenda comes to historical sites and famous attractions.”*

*“Hygiene and privacy are important! Living in a stranger house is not suitable for me.”*

Respondent 4 (M4)

*“I love to experience the atmosphere of the places that I am not familiar with. The more places I visit, the more cultures I could learn. Besides, I can taste the local foods and take beautiful photos. For example: visiting historical sites with instruction and eating street food would amaze me.”*

*“Well, I would prefer a hotel rather than living with a local host.”*

Surprisingly, there are two “Purposeful cultural tourists” among the participants. One of them is a businessman who regularly cooperates with foreigners. In order to introduce and raise the awareness of Vietnamese culture in foreigners' eyes, he seeks local customs, history, as well as indigenous cuisines whenever he travels to a new city.

Respondent 5 (M5)

*“I love visiting historic relics and eating indigenous cuisines. As a businessman, I work sometimes with foreigners. Therefore, getting to know about cultures, etiquettes is mandatory so that I can tell them about our country when they are curious.”*

The other respondent is an American researcher with huge passion and interests in Vietnamese customs and cuisine. Therefore, he moves to Vietnam for working and traveling. As a “Purposeful cultural tourist”, the traveler always attempt for opportunities of living with local people, eating mediocre foods, visiting historical sites to experience and understand totally a destination lifestyle.

Respondent 6 (M6)

*“Absolutely! I want to know more about Vietnamese culture. Therefore, when I traveling around Vietnam, historical sites always place first in my wish list. For accommodation, I usually stay in a house with local families during my trip in order to see their daily life routine. Moreover, I can taste local food made by my host, which is not famous but popular and typical in the region you visit. Street food is my favorite as well, especially those recommended by Vietnamese friends.”*

The third typology found in the research is “Serendipitous cultural tourist”, F3. The traveler had deep experiences and always willing to participate in different activities organized at the places visited, no matter it's culture-related or not.

Respondent 3 (F3)

*“Staying at local host would definitely not my thing. Depend on the place I visit, I'd love to participate in different kind of activities. Such as when I'm in Da Lat, visiting natural attractions and enjoying good food is my best choice, but when I'm in La Gi, staying at the beachside hotel, taking photo and swimming would be better.”*

Last but not least, the “Incidental cultural tourist”, the main traveling purpose of the visitor (F7) is attending cousin's wedding. The tourist went to other attractions in Da Nang and Hoi An to spend free time after the wedding without planning in advance. The interviewee did not know anything about the visited destinations and just followed recommendations of the hotel staff.

Respondent 7 (F7)

*“I visited Hoi An after my cousin wedding, but I don't know is it a historical site. Haha...I went there because the receptionist at the hotel I stayed said that it is a tourist famous place.”*

In the end, even though the researchers do not found all categories of cultural tourist, the information accumulated also help to identify the demand and expectation of traveler in culture, in order to create a package tour that can satisfy all tourists.

## 6.4.2 Unique experiences in Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An

Unique experiences are the main topic of the whole interview, which add to the idea of creating the tour package. Most of them were familiar with Da Nang and Hoi An, while Hue remains theoretical knowledge. Nevertheless, they all were willing to travel to Hue if there was a chance. This set of material describes the most memorable experience of the interviewees while traveling to these three specific cities, which can be related to subchapter 5.5 as the main theory.

### 6.4.2.1 Hue

Two of the interviewees have not visited Hue, however, they have some basic views on Hue by following news and internet. The left five interviewees suggested various places to visit in Hue that contributed a great amount of information for the tour package. Hue has long ago developed into a place famous for its ancient and colorful culture. The history book of Hue told different stories to visitors about thirteen Emperors of Nguyen Dynasty. The most memorable experiences of three respondents are the historical sites and culture, as they illustrated, for instance, the following:

Respondent 5 (M5)

*“I went on a business trip and visited the historical relics of the reign of the king of Vietnam from 17th to 19th century. It was magnificent and informative in many ways. I would suggest the youths to learn more about the history, as it is the pride of a nation. By traveling, it is a more practical way to obtain knowledge, rather just study the books.”*

Respondent 6 (M6)

*“I would recommend seeing Hue royal court music, which is an art form recognized as the world heritage. I went on the boat ride on the Perfume River to listen to Ca Huế - a form of classical Vietnamese music – the symbol of national tribe existed centuries ago. As an American living in Vietnam, this is by far a very new experience for me, as the types of music we perform are very different.”*

As mentioned in the subchapter above, services are based on demand, however, experiences are personal. It needs to reach the heart of customers by increasing interactions in each event. Respondent one affirmed that:

Respondent 6 (M6)

*“Not only visiting from place to place, but my Korean friend and I also joined a cooking class on my second time in Hue. We went to the market, bought ingredients and bargained the price. We got the chance to spend time with locals and other participants, where we learned to make food together as friends.”*

To sum up, although Hue is a pure historical destination, there are various activities could be done. Respondent one recommended having bike and food tours in Hue, as the cuisines possess variety. Moreover, authors also gave their own ideas into developing the tour package based on their experience.

#### **6.4.2.2 Da Nang**

Da Nang is a fast-growing, sustainable urban area with modern space. This result is a process from the planning and embellishment of urban areas to the determination of the city leaders and the support of the people. (Tung & Lan, 2018) Due to its gifted nature, Da Nang is famous for blue sea destination and beautiful sunshine. However, it has more than that to offer on cultural and unique experience aspect. All seven interviewees have been to Da Nang, as they gave valuable insights based on their trip. Some agreed that Da Nang has had its tourism peak for years, however, according to respondent 4, it has been more commoditized:

*Respondent 4 (M4)*

*“Da Nang possesses the long beautiful, clean and free entrance beaches, tasty authentic and cheap local food, fresh seafood and the peaceful atmosphere even at the touristic spots in the central of the city. However, in my opinion, Da Nang received too many tourists this year; therefore, the overloaded service leads to a long queue and decreases the quality of customer experience. There should be a plan in advance to avoid these situations.”*

As discussed in the theory, the expansion of tourism demand could lead to the demolition of cultures. The more customized the package is, the more unique experience can be offered to customers. In addition to that, a destination handbook will be included in the package. While the Vietnamese designer shared a similar idea that experience is made based on the intangible value of people, another interviewee argues unique experiences are produced by tangible substance:

*Respondent 6 (M6)*

*“One of the most interesting things, in my opinion, includes how Da Nang is relatively unknown to other tourists, despite the natural beauty of the beaches and the waterfalls nearby. I went on many amazing hikes in this area, and think a lot of tourists that come miss out on this.”*

In conclusion, Da Nang has a huge potential to grow as a tourism destination. By combining its beautiful pearl of nature and convenient services, it is strongly believed that the city will take a leap of transformations of experience. However, the environment should be protected to keep a genuine look, therefore, avoids commoditization.

#### **6.4.2.3 Hoi An**

According to all interviewees, Hoi An is a must to visit if they have been to Da Nang. Most of them agreed that Hoi An local people are the greatest element for them to return to this town. Respondent four states that Hoi An locals are rich in tradition which formed a unique culture, as they are willing to share it to the world. The American researcher shared the same opinion, as he stated:

Respondent 6 (M6)

*“Coming to Hoi An local homes, they will treat you like a member of the family. They are hospitable, generous, and they raise their kids well. They always aim for a happy and peaceful life.”*

Besides the element of people, the town is an intersection of cultures over the world, which is brought into Vietnam from the 16th century to the present. There are also remain ancient bridges houses preserved for centuries. Regardless of the development of society, Hoi An has been maintaining cultural festivals traditionally. For instance, on every 14<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar calendar every month, all lights will be switched off and traffics are minimized for this festival.

Respondent 7 (F7)

*“I was lucky to go on the same time the festival happened. I was amazed by colorful lanterns, candles, and moonlight, which transformed the old town magnificently at night. I joined the locals to celebrate in activities such as lion dance, ancient poetry show, folk dance party... That was the most Vietnamese experience I have had on my trip!”*

Hoi An has been developing their tourism business for a long time. Regarding tourism and culture relationship, the town possesses the most basic tangibles such as cultural heritage, natural heritage, festivals, communities and intangibles such as customs, values, and attitude. As a combination, it becomes unique experiences.



The authors acknowledged that there are many ways to create unique experiences, as one of the most important elements are people. People make culture, and culture differentiates experience. Additionally, Vietnamese history can be told throughout the trip as a suggestion, as the main objective is for visitors to bring something home after the trip.

### 6.4.3 Recommendation for creating package tour

This subchapter analyzes the expectation data of the trip organizers, which is gathering advice from experienced travelers. All the insights such as sightseeing destinations, activities, and specialties mentioned are used to design the package tour.

#### 6.4.3.1 Hue

The suggestions for traveling in Hue city were collected from five travelers among seven interviewees because two of them did not visit Hue yet. The data were analyzed and summarized in the table below for easier checking while creating the package tour.

Table 3. Suggestion for traveling in Hue

	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Recommended by</b>
<b>Attractions</b>	<b>Imperial city</b>	<b>5 people</b>
	<b>Mausoleums of the Nguyen Kings</b>	<b>2 people</b>
	<b>Perfume River</b>	<b>5 people</b>
	<b>Dong Ba Market</b>	<b>3 people</b>
	<b>Thien Mu Pagoda</b>	<b>5 people</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>Hue Beef Rice Noodle</b>	<b>7 people</b>
	<b>Baby claim rice</b>	<b>4 people</b>
	<b>Hue Lemongrass Skewer</b>	<b>4 people</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Listen to Hue royal court music on Perfume River by boat</b>	<b>5 people</b>
	<b>Cooking class</b>	<b>1 people</b>

As predicted, Imperial city, Perfume River and Thien Mu Pagoda having the most recommendation (5/5) from visitors. The first obvious reason is they are famous and having a long existed period with a tremendous amount of advertising on mass media. Secondly, it is because of traveling purpose. Most of the interviewees are Sightseeing Cultural tourist with high demand on culture experience so they would choose historical sites to visit instead of Entertainment Park (McKecher & DuCros theory – subchapter 5.4)

Respondent 1 (F1)

*“I would recommend you to visit the Imperial city of Hue, Thien Mu Pagoda and Huong River. I just know that from this year they will open for night visit. I saw the picture they advertise on the website and it is marvelous.”*

There are two recommendations for Nguyen King’s mausoleum by Purposeful cultural tourists. The mausoleums also have a long history and fabulous architecture, which present the country culture as well as customs during Nguyen dynasty. These attractions are really suitable for travelers who have a great passion for learning thoroughly Vietnamese history. Nevertheless, mausoleums are considered boring compared to other historical sites because they contain so much philosophy of history that sightseeing tourists do not expect.

Respondent 5 (M5)

*“You should visit the mausoleum of the Nguyen Kings and Imperial city if you are interested in history. Then, at night, you can enjoy music on the Perfume River by boat while watching the moon. Ca Hue is one of the Intangible culture heritage that should not miss when visiting Hue. If you have time you can also go to Dong Ba Market to buy typical Hue souvenirs such as hats, silk scarves, etc.”*

Surprisingly, Hue Beef Rice-noodle got seven votes with two more votes from interviewees who have not been to Hue yet. Nowadays, Hue beef noodle is a popular dish that can be found everywhere in Vietnam, thanks to its unique tasted.

Respondent 2 (F2)

*“I haven’t been to Hue yet but I know their specialties is Hue Beef Rice-noodle. It is very famous and delicious. I taste it at a Hue restaurant in Ho Chi Minh city and I love it! I definitely will try its original version when I go there.”*

Respondent 7 (F7)

*“I tried Hue Beef Rice-noodle in a Vietnamese restaurant in Hong Kong but my Vietnamese friend said it taste better in Hue so I would try it next time when I go there. I would also recommend it for my Hong Kong friends if they travel to Hue city”*

Cooking class is a new idea recommended by a foreign friend which very interesting and valuable for our tour package. By participating in the class, the traveler can experience a variety of Vietnamese cuisine and learn the traditional cooking techniques.

Respondent 6 (M6)

*“As a foreigner, I heard from many Vietnamese friends that Hue cuisine is very unique and elegant because it was used to serve the King in the past. Therefore, I took one cooking class when I was there and it was wonderful. The food is super delicious. You know, the vegetable used for decorating is sculpted meticulously and delicately that you do not want to destroy it when you eat. So I think it is very worthy to try!”*

#### **6.4.3.2 Da Nang**

On the opposite hand of Hue and Hoi An, Da Nang is famous for its modernity instead of classic beauty. Because of this reasons, all the travelers advised Ba Na Hill resort (table 4), the biggest entertainment park in Da Nang, as a must visit destination. Moreover, the new famous Golden Bridge is also located in Ba Na Hill, which attracts more tourist for the resort.

Respondent 3 (F3)

*“Ba Na Hill would be on the top of my list. The weather is fresher and cooler, much nicer than any other place in the Middle of Vietnam. Other than that, Ba Na Hill was built for tourists, so it has many Instagram spot; some restaurants were so good that you are going to miss them later. There was an underground bar with a stone edge pool. With me, no scene would be more epic than witnessing the moment that Ba Na Hill is swallowed by fog. It is a rare scene in a tropical country.*

Respondent 2 (F2)

*“If my friends would like to seek for something modern and bustling, I would recommend visiting Ba Na Hill in Da Nang”*

According to respondents, the cable car is the unique and interesting way to reach the top of Ba Na Hill that traveler cannot miss.

Respondent 7 (F7)

*“Definitely, Ba Na Hill. All Chinese come to Da Nang to visit this hill. You are not in Da Nang yet if you do not go there. Additionally, I really like the cable car used for transport tourist. Its floor is made of glass so you can see clearly the view under your feet. I think it is a bit scary but very impressive”*

Besides, the Dragon Bridge – the simple of Da Nang, also got the max vote of seven recommendations for its monumental and extraordinary architecture.

Respondent 5 (M5)

*“You can watch the Dragon Bridge blowing fire show across the Han River on Saturday night every week, which takes about 30 minutes.”*

Table 4. Suggestion for traveling in Da Nang

	<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Recommended by</b>
<b>Attractions</b>	<b>Ba Na Hill</b>	<b>7 people</b>
	<b>Linh Ung Pagoda</b>	<b>3 people</b>
	<b>Dragon Bridge</b>	<b>7 people</b>
	<b>Golden Bridge</b>	<b>5 people</b>
	<b>Son Tra Peninsula</b>	<b>5 people</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>Sea Food</b>	<b>7 people</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Cable Car</b>	<b>7 people</b>
	<b>Mud bathing</b>	<b>1 people</b>

The city does not possess many historical sites such as Imperial Palace in Hue or Old town in Hoi An but it is well known as a religious city. In Vietnam, Da Nang is the city that acquires the biggest amount of pagodas, the highest Lady Buddha statue, and the first Buddhism museum. As a result, many tourists come to Da Nang to visit those ancient and sacred pagodas.

Respondent 5 (M5)

*“You should visit Son Tra peninsula, there are a lot of pagodas in that areas. Especially, Linh Ung Pagoda, you can make a wish to the sacred Guanyin Buddha there. From Son Tra Peninsula, you can see the whole city of Da Nang along the sea shimmering in the light or quietness in the morning breeze.”*

As the local citizen who originated from Da Nang, respondent 4 (M4) mentioned that mud bathing is a popular and interesting activity preferred by both resident and tourist. The mud bathing in Da Nang is different from other cities in Vietnam and worth to try because of its affordable price and high-quality services accompanied.

Respondent 4 (M4)

*“If my foreigner friends want to experience something extraordinary and funny, I would recommend them to bath in the mud. Of course, I do not mean that they will bath in dirty mud on the street. The mud I said here is mineral mud with many good nutrients for your skin. I bet they will addict it after they try.”*

Fresh and cheap seafood is what comes up to all interviewees' mind when being asked about Da Nang's cuisine. They all agree that tourists should eat seafood when they travel to Da Nang because all of the seafood is caught during the day and still alive when you pick them. Moreover, the price is very affordable compared to the quality of the meals.

Famous as the city of bridge and beach, there are several recommendations for beach visiting during the interviews. However, those suggestions were not considered when designing the package because this is a culture related trip.

Respondent 1 (F1)

*“Da Nang has plenty of beaches, seafood, resorts and attraction which share both modern and historical feeling. Life is pretty calmer, fewer traffic jams, and foods are great. The city is worth visiting for sea lovers.”*

### 6.4.3.3 Hoi An

Hoi An is not as big as Hue and Da Nang but it has a classical and peaceful landscape that nowhere else has. The recommendations of attractions, activities and local cuisine in Hoi An were summed up in table 5.

Table 5. Suggestion for traveling in Hoi An

	Suggestion	Recommended by
Attractions	Old Town	7 people
	My Son Sanctuary	3 people
Food	Cao Lau	7 people
	My Quang	7 people
	White rose of Hoi An	5 people
	Hoi An's Mot Herbal Tea	7 people
Activities	Guffa class	5 people
	Pottery class	1 people

As predicted, Old town is on the first place of the suggestion list due to its reputation over years. Hoi An old town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site possesses an architectural combination of Chinese, Japanese and European styles. When walking in the town, visitors can feel like they leap through the time backed to the ancient world.

Respondent 2 (F2)

*“Apparently, I would recommend Hoi An Ancient Town when you travel to Hoi An. I have had the best memorable times there with my friends.”*

Respondent 4 (M4)

*"I recommend people to visit Hoi An as a priority, it is special with ancient streets and rivers situated around. The town could give you an emotional feeling in the afternoon. For me, it is a very unique site in Vietnam."*

My Son Sanctuary is also another UNESCO World Heritage Site in Hoi An with a long history and cultural values of Champa Dynasty. However, there are only three suggestions for visiting here because most of the interviewees are not "Purposeful cultural tourist". A Sanctuary is quite boring with heavy historical philosophy.

Respondent 5 (M5)

*"I would recommend My Son Sanctuary for those who interested in historical sites but I think it is quite boring for young generation because I know they do not want to spend several hours standing and looking at hundred old stone towers"*

Suggested by seven travelers, Cao Lau, and My Quang symbolizes for Hoi An cuisine, especially Cao Lau, which is served exclusively in Hoi An and nowhere else in Vietnam. While the white rose bun is advised by five people as street food worth to try. Hoi An also famous for its Mot herbal tea which is very healthy and cheap. Tourist can purchase a cup of tea at any vendor with only 40 cents.

Respondent 3 (F3)

*"I'd recommend Hoi An for its amazing culture and unique cuisine that you cannot find at any other city in Vietnam. For example of local authentic foods are Cao Lau, My Quang, Mot herbal tea"*

In these recent years, sailing Guffa become a popular activity that attracts many tourists in Hoi An. Even the former President of Finland, Mrs. Tarja Halonen, had traveled over thousands of miles to Hoi An to experience Guffa rowing and fishing with nets (Trung, 2015).

Respondent 6 (M6)

*"I think my friend can try Guffa sailing, it is not easy to control as you think when you see the other sail it. I try it and it is super fun and unforgettable."*

Respondent 3 (F3)

*"You know that I like to try new thing so I took the pottery making class when I was in Hoi An. Believe me, it requires really high concentration and patient to finish your inventory. It took me the whole afternoon to make a*

*tiny cup. Nevertheless, it still worth to try, I would recommend for my friends if they visit Hoi An.”*

Last but not least, the event planner (F3) contributed an interesting idea for the package tour, the pottery class. By attending in this workshop, tourist can learn more about Vietnamese’s handicraft industry.

#### **6.4.4 Other tips**

During the trip, a safety plan will be demonstrated. The Vietnamese student from Da Nang, who had spent his childhood there, stated during the interview:

Respondent 4 (M4)

*“Actually, life and expenditure in Da Nang and Hue are very safe and reasonable. People are nice and always willing to help you. Speaking of the price level, in Hoi An, you should bargain a little bit for dealing a good price. However now, Hoi An is also trying to change like Da Nang so it is a great sign.”*

The event planner also shared her thoughts regarding purchasing souvenirs:

Respondent 3 (F3)

*“Do not believe in love in the first sign with any souvenir. Go around and check for other shops because the price would be surprisingly different.”*

According to interviewees indicated in the results of the survey, there are other various tips for foreigners with a desire to travel to Vietnam. Firstly, it is suggested to bring sunglasses, hats, sun cream and moisturizers to cope with hot and humid weather. Secondly, they also advised carrying a bottle of water, which will be given on the trip, to cope with dehydration. Although tour guides are required to possess a verified-first-aids certificate, it is recommended to prepare medicines for personal reasons. Comfortable transportation is included in the tour, however, during free time, if visitors would like to visit a specific location, taking a taxi is a reasonable option. Moreover, the three-wheel cycle is also a must-experience element for foreigners.

#### **6.4.5 Budget - Length of stay**

Possessing beautiful landscapes and tropical climate over the year, Vietnam is an ideal country for traveling. Moreover, Vietnam also one of the cheapest traveling destination in Asia, which ranked at a fifth place by Junkee Chanel – Youth Australian Media (CAM

HASSARD, 2018). Therefore, the friendly budget for traveling also one of the targets of this research.

Respondent 5 (M5)

*“Depending on the experience you want, visitors only need about 500 dollars for a memorable trip.”*

Most interviewees first travel to Da Nang by plane and using car or bus to visit Hue and Hoi An. The budgets provided including accommodation, food and activities spent domestic flights from Ho Chi Minh city and one optional flight from Hong Kong. There are travelers choose to live in a cheap hostel (around 9€/night) to reduce cost and spend more on transportation, food, and activities.

Respondent 6 (M6)

*“I was able to travel on a budget of around \$500/week. This is enough money to stay in cheap hotels (average \$10/night), and I do not have to worry about eating because the food there is cheap. I eat out and go drinking all the time. The flight ticket is one of the largest expenses.”*

While others choose to stay comfortably in a better hotel, however, they have street food and take public transport to balance the budget.

Respondent 4 (M4)

*“I travel with my girlfriend and most of the money we spent on hotels. Others for transportation. And a minor for eating because street food is very cheap and delicious.”*

After these interviews, the authors decided to let the customer live in three stars hotel (or four stars hotel only when there is no other choice) because the main purpose of the trip is culture experiences instead of luxury holiday. However, we also do not want our group lives so restrictive; thus, the lower level of accommodation does not take into consideration. Besides, all the meals during the trip will be organized in a local restaurant because of food hygiene issues so the price is a bit higher than vendor food. As a result, street food tasting is allowed and depending on the wiliness of travelers.

The length of stay is not so long; around four to seven days per trip depend on each personal situation. Therefore, the budgets are also lower than expected which cause difficulty in calculating package price. The most common reason for short trip related to work issues.

Respondent 2 (F2)



*“Usually, I take a short-trip around 3 to 4 days because I still have to go to work after that”*

Respondent 3 (F3)

*“My trip normally is around 2 to 5 days and rarely more than 6 days. It’s hard to be longer because of my company’s policy.”*

Respondent 7 (F7)

*“Well, I stay in Da Nang for 3 days and use the fourth day to visit Hoi An. I do not have time to go to Hue because I have to attend my cousin wedding in Da Nang and it cost me 2 days already. Then I went back to Hong Kong to go work.”*

The interview data of budget and length of stay were summarized and demonstrated briefly as the table below.

Table 6. Demonstration of individual budget

	Type of travel	Cities	Budget	Days	Average
<b>F1</b>	Agency	Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An	10 million VND ≈ 378 €	7 days	54€/day
<b>F2</b>	Self-planning	Da Nang – Hoi An	5 million VND ≈ 200€	4 days	50€/day
<b>F3</b>	Self-planning	Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An	7 million VND ≈ 265€	5 days	53€/day
<b>M4</b>	Self-planning	Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An	500\$ ≈ 450€	5 days	90€/day
<b>M5</b>	Self-planning	Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An	500\$ ≈ 450€	5 days	90€/day
<b>M6</b>	Self-planning	Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An	500\$ ≈ 450€	7 days	64€/day
<b>F7</b>	Self-planning	Da Nang – Hoi An	6000 HKD ≈ 680€	5 days	136€/day

*\*The currency exchanged by google*

By using the statistics from the research, the average money spent per day is calculated as below:

$$\frac{54 + 50 + 53 + 90 + 90 + 64 + 136}{7} = 77€/day$$

The new package tour of the research has 8 days traveling in total, excluding international transportation. Base on the budget calculating above (77€/day), the theoretical price for this tour will be 616€ (= 77€ \* 8 days).

However, according to the interviewees, financial issue is one of the most important factors affect their traveling decision.

*Respondent 3 (F3)*

*"I'm young and working for a start-up right now so financial issues would be common. I love to travel and can't help but doing it 2-4 times a year, so I prefer affordable ones."*

*Respondent 4 (M4)*

*"The first thing is financial problem, recently I am just traveling to the nearby countries or provinces. I am saving up to travel further on."*

Therefore, it is important to consider the price carefully. The more competitive the price is, the more chance that customers will purchase the tour. As a result, the fare shown in table 9 will be marked lower than 616€ due to the marketing purpose.

#### **6.4.6 Re-visit Intention**

Re-visit intention of tourists support the authors in discovering factors that attract travelers. Subsequently, the authors can wisely implement this information for developing the package.

In fact, visitors' satisfaction in different aspects such as unique experiences, costumes, services, and facilities of a destination would affect the intention to revisit a place (Han;Back;& Barrett, 2009). IY Mao and HQ Zhang (2012) believe that revisit intention is important in tourism management, which leads to the growth of old and new travelers. Existing tourists can spread a destination's reputation in the community and bring potential revenues of the industry.

*Respondent 5 (M5)*

*"With the characteristics of cuisine, culture, and nature, I believe that many visitors want to return to these cities, including me."*

It showed in the research's result that all travelers satisfied with his or her trip to Hue, Da Nang and Hoi An in the perspective of cultural experiences. All respondents agreed that they satisfied with their previous visit to Hue, Da Nang and Hoi An and they would revisit these cities in the next few years, to discover other attractions as well as new constructions.

*Respondent 3 (F3)*

*"Surely, but not this year because I am saving for a longer trip which you know may cost me more money. Hue had so many historical sites that cost*

*more time to visit. I think five days is not enough to explore all Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An attractions so I will stay longer in the next trip”*

Respondent 4 (M4)

*“Sure, but not now because I just went there this year. I will come back a few years later, there are many places, which has just been built that I definitely want to go. For example the newly created bridge: Golden Bridge on Ba Na Hills.”*

## 7 Product presentation

The product is designed for people living in Finland who intend to visit Vietnam on holidays. The tour focus on unique social experiences such as local customs, cuisine as well as the history of the three cities HUE – DA NANG – HOI AN in one week (excluded international transportation time between Finland and Vietnam).

### 7.1 Package tour development process

According to Kenneth (2011), there are two philosophies of product development, which are market-pull and technology-push. The market-pull product development was chosen to create the travel package tour of this thesis because it meets the requirements of focusing on customers' needs and sticking to organizer' strategy. While technology-push put the designer's ideas in the first place of the progress and sometimes the product is generated without examining the market potential. Therefore, this type of development seems not suitable for this study case.

A product development process can start with either a personal idea or a company objective (Kahn, 2011). During the internship period at Santa clause resort in Lapland, Finland, many tourists had shown their interests in Vietnam's tourism and asked for travel tips from the authors. Hence, the idea of designing a new traveling package related to Vietnamese culture had been formed since then. However, the product development process was truly carried out when the researchers found their commissioner, Sonnsos Finland Oy. The travel agency has aimed to develop Vietnamese tourism in Finnish market a long time ago but they lack the manpower to implement the project until they got the offer from the authors.

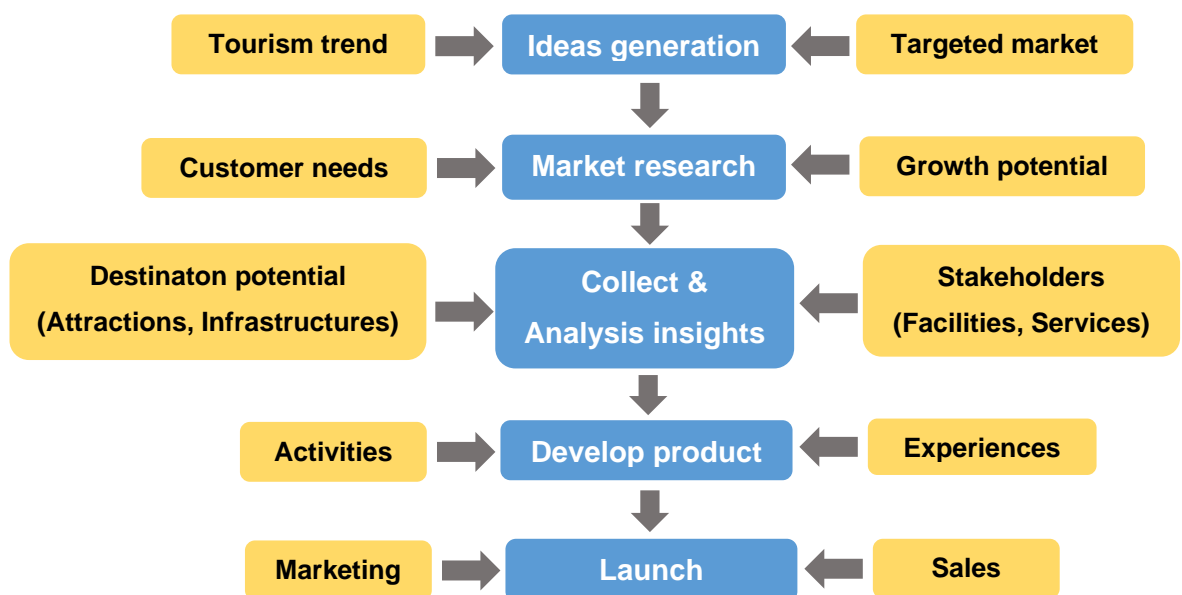


Figure 10. Summary of Tourism Product Development Process

After generating the idea, the authors start doing research on the Finnish market to identify traveling trends as well as customer needs. The Vietnamese tourism industry was also analyzed to classify its development opportunities. Then, these touristic advantages were matched with traveler's demands to design a different and special trip.

Gathering and analyzing research information is the third step in the product development process. Instead of visiting the particular destinations because of the limited budget condition, a qualitative research method was conducted among experienced tourists, who have been to the three cities - Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An. Many recommendations such as impressive sights, accommodations, transportation, services, and interesting activities were collected through the interviews.

Then, the tour package was build base on the needs of tourist and the advice of interviewees as well as internet sources. Many historical sites were selected as visiting attractions during the development phase because the concept of this trip is culture. Moreover, some local activities, which are not famous but interesting and meaningful, were included in the package to make it unique. The authors had contacted many stakeholders in the private and public sectors asking for supplies and corporations while planning the trip itinerary and pricing the package as presented in Table 10.

Finally, a trip brochure (Appendix 2) was designed carefully for advertising purpose by the authors. The brochure was attached with the detail trip itinerary and send to the commissioner for evaluating before launching on their social media.

## **7.2 Project Schedule**

The thesis process lasted from the end of May 2018 to December 2018. As the author aimed to finish at the end of November, this was quite accurate time. During the process, the authors worked both independently and as a team in order to solve various problems by meeting once per two weeks to fix the parts. Additionally, the monthly schedule is described in the following table:

Table 7. Thesis-making process

Month	Date	Activities
May		Generating idea and commissioners proposal
	30.5.2018	Subject analysis submission and accepted Attending the first thesis seminar
June		Literature research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding and writing theories</li> <li>• Researching information about Vietnam</li> </ul> Commissioner proposing
July		Developing and adjusting necessary theories Researching methodology
August	24.8.2018	Attending the second thesis seminar
		Developing interview questions Searching and choosing interviewees
September		Conducting interviews Collecting and analyzing data Initiating product Acceptance of the new commissioner
October		Creating a package tour Calculating fares Developing a tour brochure and itinerary
November	10.11.2018	Maturity test and meeting thesis supervisor
	10.11.2018	Sending the tour package to commissioners for feedback
	18.11.2018	Finalizing thesis report according to given comments
	20.11.2018	Sending the thesis to the supervisor and making the final adjustment
	03.12.2018	Ready to submit the thesis

The authors started their internship in the middle of March in a tourism company. Familiarized themselves with planning and executing tours, they comprehensively started their subject analysis at the beginning of May. The assignment included the commissioner's name, aim, and goals of the thesis, research problem, literature review, and data collection method. The process followed by the acceptance of the thesis supervisor. Subsequently, the authors prepared a draft plan for the first seminar, as well as designed commissioner proposal to send to hospitality enterprises. After the first seminar, the authors had a better picture on how to proceed their project also decide the structure.

The next step was doing research for the whole thesis. This is one of the most challenging parts, as theories need to be decided accordingly. As a result, the writers chose tourism,

culture and unique experience as the main base, and motivation, as a subsidiary foundation for creating the package. Additionally, destination management information was also written Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An. The authors met on August to finalize the interview questions, which later got acceptance from the supervisor.

The second seminar occurred in August, where the writers were given advice of adjusting the miscellaneous reference and citing, as well as proceeding with the interview. It is suggested to do a qualitative research instead of a quantitative method, as the main targets are Vietnamese or foreigners who have experienced culture in Vietnam. The interviews were successful in various ways when participants are more than willing to express their feelings on their memories, which valuably contributed to creating the product. In particular, the authors discovered a various local destination, recommended by people who have lived there for their life. The analysis procedure started as soon as they get the result, which consisted of collecting, transferring chosen data and presenting in a clearer document. In parallel with this activity, the writers began to create the tour package, brochure, and itinerary.

The authors took maturity exam on November after having a meeting with the thesis supervisor. They received advice accordingly on the thesis and finalized all the missing parts, subsequently resent to the supervisor. The last thesis seminar was held in Pasila Campus, where the final adjustment was made afterward.

### **7.3 Package tour itinerary**

The tour program comprises of seven nights living in 3-4 star hotel and three courses per day for a minimum of ten people. Represent for the ancient capital of Vietnam, various historical sites will be visited during three days in Hue while two days in Da Nang consists of religious destinations and entertainment activities. The last two days in Hoi An are for relaxing and learning local handicraft. A detail itinerary and tour brochure can be found in *Appendix 2 and 3*.

The activities and attractions in the package are researched and collected from interviewees' suggestions and internet sources. After the first operation, the commissioner may change and develop the package tour program in the future.

### **7.4 Pricing**

During the planning process, M&M's (Mark up and Markdown strategy) is considered for calculating the price of the package tour.

Table 8. Markup and Mark-down strategy by (Dekker, 2015)

	Markup strategy	Markdown strategy
<b>Formula</b>	Sale price = $(1 + 0,xx) * \text{Net cost}$ <i>xx is mark-up rate</i>	Sale price = $(1 - 0,yy) * \text{Net cost}$ <i>yy is mark-down rate</i>
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase net profit per sale</li> <li>• Earn extra budget to improve tour value and customer experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a competitive pricing level</li> <li>• Attract more potential customers</li> </ul>

In this tour situation, both strategies are used to calculate different part of the fare. Mark up strategy is used in the end to increase the budget for unexpected cost. For example, others the unexpected cost is also included in basic price as 5% of net cost due to the risk of the first launch. In fact, many unexpected situations may occur during the first trip, therefore, a risk budget is necessary. Currency charge, which is also included, is set as 3% because of the constant change of currency exchange rate. The gross profit (markup rate) when calculating this package is marked as 0% so that the travel agency can set the profit percent as their own rate.

This package is a new release product with low competitive level, therefore we try to low the price as much as possible by using markdown strategy for calculating the cost of accommodation and food.

#### 7.4.1 Tour package fare

The authors searched on the third party official websites and contacted relevant local suppliers in order to obtain the price of activities and facilities. Then, the price in table 9 is calculated for a group of minimum 10 people and based on the fare found for May 2019. The calculation does not include an air-transport fee.

Table 9. Tour package fare

Price	Over 12	From 2 to 12
<b>Basic Fare</b>	550€	415€ (No extra bed) 495€ (Have Extra bed)
<b>Visa fee (if required)</b>	31€	
<b>Single room surcharge</b>	35€	

- Price for children from 2 to 12 without extra bed is 75% of the normal fare
- Price for children from 2 to 12 with extra bed is 90% of the normal fare



**INCLUDED:**

- Land transport vehicle (16/18/24/40 seater van with air conditioner)
- Accommodation (Hotel 3/4 stars - depending on the season situation) - 2 people/room (2 single bedroom type)
- 3 meals/day (Breakfast – Lunch – Dinner; except for the first and last day)
- Entrance tickets for:
  - Board ride on Perfume River
  - Hue Museum of Royal Antiquities
  - Hue Imperial city (Day and night time)
  - Tu Duc Tomb, Khai Dinh Tomb, Minh Mang Tomb
  - Marble Mountain; Hell Cave
  - Ba Na Hill entrance ticket + cable car
  - My Son Sanctuary
- Activities: Cooking class; Hue Royal dinner; Mud Bathing, Ao dai renting; Sailing Guffa; Pottery making class.
- English speaking tour guide
- Water (1 bottle/person/day)
- **Souvenir** “Vietnam’s conical leaf hat”

**NOT INCLUDED:**

- Visa Fee
- Traveling insurance
- Extra fee for single room request.
- Alcohol drink (during meals), sim card, laundry, overweight luggage according to airline’s provision.
- Personal expenses outside of the program.
- Expenses of date changing, route changing or upgrading the air ticket.
- Tour guide and driver tips 6 euro/customer/day.
- Other expenses which are not mentioned in “Included section”.

**7.4.2 Payment method**

**Step 1:** Paying a deposit of 40% of the basic fare to reserve one place.

**Step 2:** Paying the remaining amount in 7 days after booking.

*\*In case visa requirement, customers paying the remaining amount after receiving entrance visa.*

### 7.4.3 Term and condition

Please read all program, price, term, and condition of package tour before booking.

- If customer's entrance visa is refused, the deposit will be refunded, minus the visa fee. Visa fee is not refundable in any situation.
- Tour cancellation period is counted only on working days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. The cancellation fee is calculated as in table 11.

Table 10. The percent of charge base on cancelation condition

	<b>Charged</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>Condition</b>
1	0%	Deposit	Cancelation before departing <b>30</b> days
2	50%	Deposit	Cancelation before departing <b>24 to 29</b> days
3	100%	Deposit	Cancelation before departing <b>20 to 24</b> days
4	100%	Deposit	Cancelation after received entrance visa
<hr/>			
5	50%	Package fare	Cancelation before departing <b>14 to 19</b> days
6	70%	Package fare	Cancelation before departing <b>10 to 13</b> days
7	90%	Package fare	Cancelation before departing <b>02 to 09</b> days
8	100%	Package fare	Cancelation before departing <b>01</b> day

- For safety, a medical examination report with doctor signature and Health contract with customer signature are required for elderly over 70 years old and pregnant women to confirm that they are in good condition to travel abroad.
- Customers over 80 years old and women pregnant over 5 months are unacceptable for traveling.
- According to the real situation, the order of attractions visiting in the program may change but remain enough attractions as indicated in the itinerary.
- The operator does not responsible for program changing due to:
  - Natural disasters occur floods, droughts, earthquakes ...
  - Security incident: terrorism, demonstration
  - Aviation incidents: technical malfunction, security, flight delay, and cancellation.

If any of the situations above occur, the company will consider refunding an amount of money after deducting the services fee and has no liability for any additional costs.

## 7.5 Visa exemption and declaration at the airport

In order to visit Vietnam, all travelers must acquire a Vietnamese visa. Before arriving, all visitors can apply for entrance permission from Vietnam Immigration Department through a travel agency, with an approximate fee of 35€.

However, Finnish citizens are not required to apply for the visa if the stay is less than 15 days. The application has to be sent to the embassy if the stay is more than 15 days. After the arrival in Vietnam, Finnish visitors can directly come to the Immigration Check-in counter to finalize the process with *“no cost and no other documents are required”*. According to Vietnamese Immigration law, in order to be qualified for visa exemption, the passport must be valid within six months. (Vietnamese Immigration, 2018) Other citizenships depend on the law of each country on the decision of acquiring a visa to Vietnam, which is presented on the table below:

Table 11. Vietnam visa exemption list 2018 (Vietnamese Immigration, 2018)

No	Days of Free Visa	Citizenships
1	14 days	Brunei, Myanmar
2	15 days	United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Belarus, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland
3	21 days	Philippines
4	30 days	Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Laos
5	90 days	Chile

There are no restrictions on the amount of money, gold, valuable metals and gemstones. However, it requires to declare on specific items stated below:

- Foreign currency: in excess of US\$ 5,000
- Vietnam Dong: in excess of VND15.000.000
- Gold: in excess of 300gr
- Gold and jewelry not for personal use
- Videotapes, CDs: CDs and tapes are often kept for screening and returned to the owner after a few days (Vietnam Online, 2018)

## **8 Conclusion**

With an aim to raise awareness of Vietnamese culture and experience, this product-based project progressed to design a full tour package of three chooses cities – Hue, Da Nang, and Hoi An. In order to contribute deeply to commissioners, a qualitative research and tour brochure were conducted.

The knowledge from this research as well as the tour package can be applied in real life. It is a valuable contribution for the commissioners to develop their experience service. Although the main targets are Finnish travellers, different cultural backgrounds are welcomed to sign up for the tour as the main communication is English. Moreover, not only can this be suitable for organized-mass tourists, but the program could also be adjusted accordingly to individual mass tourists. The main targeted age group is from 20 to 40 years old.

The tour program includes accommodations and cultural activities of eight days. An English speaking guide will support throughout each trip to guarantee the quality of the tour.

This final chapter summarizes the whole process of the project, as well as the findings of it. Two subchapters – own evaluation and challenges as well as improvement suggestions for these three specific cities – will carefully be presented.

### **8.1 Reflection of own learning development**

This project was a useful learning experience and a great opportunity for the authors to contribute a special tour package to the commissioner. Since the three cities possess a potential growth, a large number of business investors are moving there. The tourism industry is not an exception. Although plenty of tour packages are created every year, the authors have made the difference of striking on culture and experience segment. It highlighted all features to market Vietnam tourism's image, yet possessing a competitive price.

Although the thesis process was the most challenging task, the authors obtained a lot of interpersonal skills. Beneficial project management skills for instance planning, time management, and organization as well as communication skills were the main elements for further development. In particular, since the writers had different schedules, communications were improved by setting up the meeting two weeks in advance in order to progress. In addition, conducting seven qualitative interviews for suggestions were an enjoyable and rewarding process. During the pricing process, the authors did a careful research on the third party's official website in order to get the newest updated price.

As there was a large amount of information, one of the most challenging parts was to decide which theory to choose and analyze the result based on. Secondly, since the package aims to culture and unique experience, it was a huge struggle for the authors to innovate exclusive ideas and find places where there were not many people know about, and contact local providers on special activities. However, the customer service was helpful and informative, who answered the requests spontaneously. Furthermore, the pricing process was also one of the difficulties, as the authors would like to create a competitive pricing base, nevertheless, receive profits from the tour.

The authors are satisfied with their thesis result and project. However, there were things that could have been done better. For instance, strict adherence to the schedule should be worked out better for time management. Moreover, lack of knowledge in the research process led the authors to fix the thesis plenty of time. The depth of qualitative method could have been deeper and more informative questions, although the authors aim to simplify the research problem as much as possible. Lastly, the writers could have written this thesis in a more academic and formal way.

## **8.2 Feedback from commissioner**

The commissioner was delighted to see the final itinerary and tour brochure. The tour brochure was carefully and impressively designed with detail information. However, there is not enough information of the commissioner to whom the customers can contact. This can be adjusted when the first tour is sold.

Regarding itinerary, the commissioner also evaluates highly the timeline. Nevertheless, there were plenty of attractions presented in the tour in one day, which leads to fatigue of tourists. Travelers will only have shallow experience as other commoditized trips. The commissioner stated:

*“In Vietnam, organized trips are usually designed for seniors, which begins so early at 5-6 am, then finishes around 7 pm. The time-frame does not seem ideal for the young generation. Secondly, some trips just have too many attractions to visit; therefore, people only have a very limit of time to take photos at each checkpoint. It would be better to drop some unnecessary attractions.”*

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview Question



## Interview Questions

This is example questions designed by Tran Tran and Hien Nguyen, which is used to interviewing people who have traveling to Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An (Viet Nam). The answers are used for supporting thesis research and it is non-commercial use.

Name of respondent: .....

Age: .....

Nationality: .....

1. Have you ever traveled to Viet Nam? Or any Asian country and with who?
2. Which cities and attractions have you visited in VietNam?
3. Would you expect to have cultural experiences? For example,
  - Visiting historical sites
  - Staying at local host/ hotel
  - Eating local food
4. What is the most memorable experience/ most impressive attraction when you traveled to Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An? Why?
5. Where will you recommend for your friends if they go there? Why?
6. Do you have any tips (transportation, currency, etc) for foreigner who may travel to VietNam, especially in Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An?
7. How much did you spend on your trip to Viet Nam? And how long did you stay at one city?
8. Did you travel with travel agency or individually? Which one do you prefer?
9. What is the most important factor affect your traveling decision? For example financial issues, culture attractiveness, visa, distance, accommodation...?
10. To which extends that Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An tourism should improve to develop their industry?
11. Will you re-visit Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An?



**HUE – DA NANG – HOI AN  
TOUR PACKAGE BROCHURE**  
Designed by Tran Ngoc Tran  
Nguyen Thu Hien

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 **LEGACY**  
HOTEL

 **Haaga-Helia**  
University of Applied Sciences

  
YOUR TRAVELLING PARTNER  
SON & SONS SERVICES - FINLAND

## THIEN MU PAGODA

Built on 1601 by the order of the first Nguyễn lords, the pagoda is an unofficial symbol of Hue as the Citadel. Based on the legend and Han characters written on the material, it is asserted that the word "Thien" means "Celestial".

During the tour of Lord Hoang in the vicinity, he has been told a legend of an old Lady dressed in red foretelling that a Lord would come and establish a pagoda on the hill to wish for the country's prosperity. After that, he ordered to build up a pagoda on the hill facing to Perfume River, naming it "Thien Mu", literally means "Celestial Lady".

## HUONG RIVER

Huong River, also known as Perfume River, locates in the central province of Hue. During autumn, blossoms of orchards on upstream from Hue fall into the water, giving the river an aromatic scent that leads to this special sobriquet.

### \*Ca Huế

Famously performed in Hue, Ca Huế is a traditional music in the central of Vietnam, which made from folk and royal court music.



**HUE**  
THE ANCIENT  
CAPITAL OF  
VIETNAM



HIEN – TRAN



## TOMBS

### TU DUC

Tu Duc was the fourth emperor with the longest reign. His tombs has an architecturally sophisticated decoration. The landscape is charming and considered as one of the most beautiful royal tombs of the Nguyen Dynasty.



### MINH MANG

On Cam Khe Mountain, ten thousands workers had built a tomb for this second emperor. It possesses a sublime forest setting and the majestic appearance cannot be denied.



### KHAI DINH

The tomb was built for Khai Dinh – the twelfth emperor of the Nguyen Dynasty. Located on Chau Chu Mountain, it took 11 years to complete by famous artisans in Hue with a mixture of architectural styles.

HIEN – TRAN

### The Imperial Academy of Hue

Famously known as Quoc Tu Giam, it was built during the Nguyen Dynasty of Annam to replace Le's Dynasty's Temple of Literature. After the enlargement during the reign of Emperor Tu Duc, they rebuilt and moved it to the Imperial City of Hue.



### Hue Museum of Royal Antiquities

With more than 6000m<sup>2</sup>, Hue Museum of Royal Antiquities is an informative place for imperial era of Vietnam. With uniquely architectural styles, travellers from all around the world can live in a magnificently exquisite experience and discover more about the past of this majestic place.



### Nine Holy Canons

Casted in the reign of Emperor Gia Long, Nine Holy Canons are the most dedicatedly and beautifully decorated. They are named based on four seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter as well as five elements: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth.

### Flag Tower

Emperor Gia Long ordered to build the Flag Tower on 1807. With a height of 37 metres, it received international recognition as the yellow flag of royalty in the turbulent Vietnamese history. It is a suitable destination for shooting and taking photos.





## IMPERIAL CITY

Imperial City of Hue was recognized as a UNESCO site in 1993 for its uniqueness of cultural infrastructure. Constructed in 19<sup>th</sup> century, many monuments surrounding the area were modeled after Beijing Forbidden City. It is famous for its magnificent landscapes and poetic architecture.

## Meridian Gate

Known as Ngo Mon Gate, it is the main gate to the Imperial City of Hue. Not only does it represent the symbol of the Citadel, but also Hue itself. It was constructed in 1833 with a fortress-style base and a more palace structure on the upper level. During special events and ceremonies, Emperor Gia Long and his descendants sat at the top looking down at his people.



## Thái Hoà Palace

The name of this palace means the harmony of human and nature. Described as one of the most crucial constructions of Hue Imperial City, it was used for official receptions and important ceremonies in the ancient time.



## Opulent Palace

Opulent Palace was built on April, 1804 as a living place of Empress Dowager Ý Tĩnh – Emperor Gia Long’s Mother. It went through various times of renovation and decoration for different time of reigns. After the collapse of Nguyen Dynasty in 1945, the war cause irreplaceable damage. However, the entire campus of Opulent Palace remained intact nowadays.



## The To Temple

On 1822, Emperor Minh Mang ordered to build an ancestral temple to worship the Nguyen Emperors. The special elements of the temple are nine dynastic urns, which were casted to appreciate the dedication of the first nine emperors. Additionally, Taimiao in Forbidden City of China inspired the construction modally, where visitors can travel back in time to experience life of royalty.

## Duyet Thi Duong Theater

Located within the area of Forbidden Purple City, the theater is used to represent theatrical arts that were mainly performed (tuong) to serve the king, royal family, courtesans and foreign guests who have relations with the court.

The most famous type of performance in the theater is Bat Tien Hien Tho – which means eight fairies perform to bring best wishes to audience watching the show.



HIEN – TRAN

## Dong Ba Market and Specialties

Coming to Hue, what travelers cannot miss is the famous local market where they offer various types of household appliances, handicrafts, clothing and fresh products. Street food is one of the most common culture in Vietnam, as various type of cuisines can be found in this area.



### Baby Clam Rice

“Com Hen”, a specialty of Hue that consists of rice, clams, pork fat, peanuts, shallots, fruits and other healthy herbs.

### Hue Beef Rice-Noodle

The main ingredient for this cuisine are rice vermicelli and beef. The soup is the soul of this dish, which only in Hue you can taste the most authentic meal.



### Hue lemongrass skewers

Also known as Nem Lui, consists of grilled minced pork rolling on a bamboo stick. With a special marinating recipe, it is served with rice papers and fresh vegetables.



HIEN – TRAN





### Banh Nam

Serving on top of banana leaves, Banh Nam are flat dumplings with minced pork, mushrooms, green onions and peppers.

### Banh Beo

Also known as water fern cake, this is one of the most famous street food in Hue. Vietnamese people combine rice flours and tapioca flour to make the base as well as shrimps, pork skin and scallions on top of the cake.



### Conical Hat

Conical Hat is famous in Southeast Asia generally and in Vietnam particularly. In Hue, Poem Conical Hat is the most famous type, which contains poetic verses as special decorations. It is used to block sun and rain, in which condition can be associated with farmers in Vietnam. Nowadays, it is a part of Vietnamese traditional fashion.



### Banh Bot Loc

Originally from Hue, Banh Bot Loc are small, transparent and chewy tapioca dumplings. They are commonly filled with shrimps and pork belly serving with chili fish sauce.

## \*Cooking Class

Vietnamese cuisine has a long history featuring the mixture of five fundamental tastes. Each Vietnamese food presents distinctive flavors consisting of one or more of these elements. Coming to the cooking class, customers will have a hand-on experience on making the most sensational dishes in Vietnam.



## \*Royal Dinner



The ancient atmosphere will be re-created vividly to take the travelers back in time to the Nguyen Dynasty era. Visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy authentic Hue royal dishes, dress in royal costumes in the role of emperors, empresses, mandarins, immerse in royal music performance while having

Royal dishes. The meal will be prepared sumptuously to express the true meaning of a royal banquet.

HIEN – TRAN





## DA NANG

### The City Of Marvelous Brigdes

#### The Dragon Bridge

With a 666m length and six lines of traffic, Dragon Bridge is a symbol of Vietnamese culture representing power, prosperity, and growth. On Saturday and Sunday nights at 9 pm, Dragon Bridge brings a surprise for travelers by displaying a fiery show and later spraying water over the excited crowd.



#### Lady Buddha Statue

Famously known as the tallest Buddha statue in Vietnam, Lady Buddha statue possesses kind eyes with one hand exorcizes while other hand spreads love and peace to offshore anglers.



#### Linh Ung Bai But Pagoda

This is the largest pagoda in Da Nang in size and the beauty of architecture. It is the combination of modern and traditional construction of Vietnamese pagoda.

## Marble Mountain

8km to the Southeast of the city, Marble Mountain is a masterpiece of natural gifts to Da Nang. Behind its myth, Emperor Minh Mang came here to name the mountain by himself. In the heart of this man, the Marble Mountain scenery occupies an important part as a pride of a beautiful land. The five mountains are named after five fundamental elements: metal, water, wood, fire, and earth.



### Non Nuoc Stone Carving Village

To the South of the city, Non Nuoc Stone Carving Village is a unique 200-year-history village located under the foot of Marble Mountain. Visitors will have the chance to observe skillful sculpture carvers while discovering vivid souvenirs that took a long time to finish.



### Tam Thai Pagoda

Located on the Water Mountain in Marble Mountain area, this is one of the oldest remaining pagodas in Da Nang city. After the first construction in 1630, it was badly damaged under Tay Son Dynasty. On the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Minh Mang's reign (1825), it was renovated to be a place for developing Buddhism.



HIEN – TRAN



## Non Nuoc Pagoda

Few-hundred-meter walk from Tam Thai pagoda, Non Nuoc Pagoda has a mystical and spiritual beauty. It is also one of the most sacred pagodas in Da Nang city. Particularly, it is believed that Linh Ung Non Nuoc Pagoda made the lives around the area become more peaceful and prosperous, also natural disasters rarely infiltrated.



## Huyen Khong Cave

Known as one of the biggest caves on the top of Water Mountain, Huyen Khong Cave possesses a sacred value of mysterious spirits. Additionally, this place used to be a secret hideout for communist leaders during the war. Going into Huyen Khong Cave, “no more dust of life is in your mind.” (a sentence in a poem by Tan Da)

## Hell Cave

The Cave is 302 meters long consists two sets of stairs: to heaven and to hell. According to Buddhism philosophy, those who did good deeds in their life will head straight to Heaven, whilst anyone committing cruels and wrongs will be convicted to 10 circles of hell to the deepest point. The Cave has an educational point for human beings to do good things in life, or to make a change in their characteristics.



## Ba Na Hill

To the west of Da Nang is a hill station and resort that attracts various visitors around the world. The temperature there are relatively cooler than near the coast due to the change of heights. The easiest way to access there is by cable car, where the most beautiful natural scenery can be seen from up high.



### \*Cable car

Opened in March 2013, Ba Na Cable car system had been awarded as the world's *longest non-stop single track cable car* with 5801 meters according to Guinness World Record. Tourist can take cable car to go to the top of Ba Na Hill

## Golden Bridge

With 150-metre length, Golden Bridge provides aesthetic scene from the height. The design is special with two giant stone hands supporting the weight. Despite a simple aim to connect the cable car station and magnificent gardens, it received attention from international press and media.





## French Village

Designed by highly skilled French architects, French Village possesses a European style vividly in all four seasons. Located approximately 1,487 meters from the sea level, visitors can experience the subtle and poetic living space of one of the oldest countries in the world.



## Fantasy Park

Inspired by two adventurous novels of Jules Verne, Fantasy Park was launched to satisfy the joy of entertainment for all ages. Various types of games will surely bring exciting experience to visitors all around the world.



## \*\*Mercure Hotel



A four stars hotel which has all the rooms are decorated with a classic European style from the 19th century. Visitors can enjoy the atmosphere, fresh Vietnamese and Western cuisines also other additional services.

HIEN – TRAN



## LEGACY HOTEL

### \*\*Legacy Hotel

Located near the romantic Han River, Legacy Riverside Hotel is an ideal destination for Da Nang travelers. The buffet breakfast will be provided during the stay, visitors can enjoy the most authentic cuisines of Central Vietnam.

### \*Mud Bathing

Minerals in mud are well known for their excellent health and beauty benefits. It is considered to be a cure for various diseases of the joints and promoting blood circulation. Other benefits are purifying and detoxifying pores, removing blackheads, contributing to anti-aging, leaving the skin fresh and healthy.



### Grilled Fish Rice noodle

A normal portion of this Da Nang's specialty consists of a plate of raw vegetables mixed with sprouts as a side dish, serves with delicious rice noodles, grilled fish, onions, pickled carrots, etc..



### Sea Food

With its convenient location near the beach, Da Nang possesses a huge potential for fresh seafood. There are various street stalls where visitors can purchase in kilograms and serve themselves at the coast, or just simply having them in local restaurants.



HIEN – TRAN



## My Son Sanctuary

In 1999, UNESCO inscribed My Son as a world heritage site. It had been built between 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries as a unique destination of culture. It was the cultural and religious center of the Champa dynasties and burial place of the powerful monarchs and monks.



## HOI AN

### City of the Lanterns

Known as the most charming city of Vietnam, Hoi An has a lot to offer. Hundreds of intriguing history, hand-made shops, delicious cuisines, and hospitable local residents will match various visitors' ideal expectations of Vietnam.

## Old Town

The Old Town of Hoi An is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where can take visitors to go back in time. It is suggested to walk along the street, enjoy local food in small stalls while contemplate an architectural combination of Chinese, Japanese and European styles.



## \*Ao Dai

Each visitor will be taken to a local Ao Dai store to try on this Vietnamese traditional costume. It will be a unique experience to dress Ao Dai while embarking on a walking tour.

HIEN – TRAN

## \*Sailing Guffa Boat

Visitors will go on and experience the feeling of floating in this special Guffa: to learn how to sail properly, immerse in the green the coconut water forest and let the soul flow to the romantic scene. Additionally, Former President of Finland Tarja Halonen had traveled over thousands of miles to Hoi An to experience Guffa rowing and fishing with nets.



## \*Pottery Class

Hoi An is famous for traditional pottery for centuries. Thanh Ha village is a special spot for tourists to learn how to make a ceramic bowl or vase, which later can be brought home as an amazing souvenir.

## \*Shopping at the Night Market

Night market plays an important role in Vietnamese culture. In Hoi An, traders and families operate foodstalls to serve both locals and tourists alike. It is a place for a taste of Hoi An's specialties, activities, custom-fit clothes and shoes, etc. Lanterns are lit up, contributing to a more charming look to this town.



HIEN – TRAN





### White Rose Bun

White Rose Bun is also commonly known as Banh Vac Banh Bao. Local chef designs and presents the buns as blooming white roses, from which formed this special name. This type of bun consists of two kinds. Although both are made from rice flour, there are different fillings and suggested to be served with separate sauces, which will bring specific tastes for each.

### Vietnamese crispy Pancake

Local people call it Banh Xeo. The Vietnamese name for this dish is special, as it is named after the sizzling sound when the chef pours the batter into a hot pan. There are two types of pancake in Vietnam: Chewy and Crunchy Banh Xeo. It is usually served with shrimps, spouts, meats, seafood depending on the customers' desire.



### Cao Lau

Cao Lau is a unique dish with noodles, pork, and local greens associate only with the ancient town of Hoi An. The reason why people do not acknowledge Cao Lau because this delicious dish is served humbly – like the local Hoi An people. Visitors cannot find any Cao Lau in other cities as authentic as in Hoi An.



HIEN – TRAN

## Quang Noodle

Quang noodle is made from the best rice flour slicing into 2mm thick. Raw vegetables are served under the noodles, with pork, shrimp, and chicken on top. The broth is usually stewed from the bones which makes the soup more tasty and healthy.



## Mot Herbal Tea

Tra Mot holds the visitors from all around the world with firstly beautiful decoration of the lotus leaf. It is made from a traditional recipe with ginger, citronella, and lemon, which detoxify and maintain good health.

**Thank you for traveling us!**

**Hope to see you again in the future!**

### NOTE

\*Activities

\*\*Accommodation

HIEN – TRAN

### Appendix 3. Tour package itinerary

Date	Activities
<b>Day 1 Hue</b>	13:00 Airport picking up at HUI – Hue International airport then moving to the hotel. 14:00 Checking in at a local hotel. 15:30 Visiting Thien Mu Pagoda. 17:30 Having dinner at local restaurant with “Hue’s style-beef rice noodle”. 19:00 Experiencing boat ride on Perfume River and enjoy Ca Hue performance 21:00 Going back to hotel and rest
<b>Day 2 Hue</b>	7:00 Having breakfast at Hotel 8:30 Visiting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hue Imperial Academy</li> <li>• Hue Museum of Royal Antiquities</li> </ul> 11:00 Shopping and enjoying street food at Dong Ba Market. 12:00 Having lunch at a local restaurant <i>*Tour guide will give to the guests Vietnamese conical hat as a souvenir*</i> 13:00 Visiting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine Holy Canons</li> <li>• Flag tower</li> <li>• Hue Imperial city (Citadel Gate, Hall of Mandarins, Thai Hoa Palace, Opulent Palace, Duyet Thi Duong Theater, Nine Dynastic Urns, Imperial temples)</li> </ul> 17:30 Having dinner at local restaurant (Baby claim rice) 18:30 Coming back to the Imperial city and enjoying “Bat Tien Hien Tho” performance at Duyet Thi Duong Theater. 21:30 Going back to the hotel.
<b>Day 3 Hue</b>	7:00 Having breakfast at the hotel 8:00 Departing to the cooking class 12:00 Having lunch – enjoying your DIY food 13:00 Visiting : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tu Duc Tomb.</li> <li>• Khai Dinh Tomb</li> <li>• Minh Mang Tomb</li> </ul> 17:00 Meeting up and joining Hue royal dinner style while dressing as Emperor and Empress (Royal Package) 21:00 Going back to Hotel
<b>Day 4 Da Nang</b>	7:00 Having Breakfast at the hotel 8:00 Traveling to Da Nang. 10:00 Visiting Son Tra Peninsula to see

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Tallest Buddha Statue</li> <li>• Dragon Bridge</li> </ul> <p>12:00 Having lunch at Son Tra (seafood specialty)</p> <p>13:30 Checking in Legacy Riverside Da Nang Hotel</p> <p>14:30 Visiting Marble Mountain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hell Cave</li> <li>• Non Nuoc stone carving village</li> <li>• Tam Thai and Linh Ung Pagodas</li> </ul> <p>17:30 Trying Mud Bathing at Galina</p> <p>19:00 Having dinner at local restaurant (Grilled Fish Rice Noodle)</p> <p>20:00 Having free time activities</p>
<b>Day 5 Da Nang</b>	<p>7:00 Having breakfast at Hotel</p> <p>8:30 Traveling to Ba Na Hill by cable car. Visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden Bridge</li> <li>• French Village</li> </ul> <p>11:30 Having lunch at a local restaurant</p> <p>13:00 Playing game at Fantasy park</p> <p>18:00 Having dinner at a local restaurant</p> <p>19:00 Having free time activities</p> <p>*Staying overnight at Ba Na Hill - Mercure Hotel</p>
<b>Day 6 Hoi An</b>	<p>7:00 Having breakfast at the hotel</p> <p>8:00 Visiting My Son Sanctuary</p> <p>12:00 Having lunch at a local restaurant</p> <p>13:30 Traveling to Hoi An</p> <p>14:30 Choosing Ao Dai at a local tailor. Visit Old town while wearing Ao dai</p> <p>17:30 Returning Ao Dai</p> <p>18:30 Having dinner at local restaurant (Cao Lau, Hoi An's Mot herbal tea)</p> <p>20:00 Checking-in hotel - Free time</p>
<b>Day 7 Hoi An</b>	<p>7:00 Having breakfast at the hotel</p> <p>8:30 Sailing Vietnamese Guffa boat in coconut forest canal</p> <p>12:00 Having lunch at local restaurant (Hoi An White rose bun, Vietnamese crispy pancake)</p> <p>13:30 Traveling to Thanh Ha village. Participate in pottery making class.</p> <p>17:30 Having dinner (My Quang)</p> <p>19:00 Discovering night market – Free time shopping (If it is on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar calendar, there will be a lantern festival at this hour).</p> <p>21:00 Going back to hotel and rest.</p>
<b>Day 8 Da Nang to Finland</b>	<p>7:00 Having breakfast at the hotel</p> <p>8:30 Departing to Da Nang International airport for the next flight.</p>

*The tour schedule might be changed due to time issues and specific dilemma situation.*



#### Appendix 4. Letter sent to commissioner

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are final year tourism students from Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland. We are writing to your company as we know that your service and expertise can help us as an "External Expert" for our tour-design thesis. By this mean, we would like to express our willing to contribute our values and efforts by creating a tour package to your company.

#### Value of the project

Experiences are a fourth economic offering, however has gone largely unrecognized. Therefore, our main goal is creating a bridge to connect Finnish and Vietnamese culture by travelling. The aim of the thesis is to create a tour package for Finnish or international customers to visit Hue, Da Nang and Hoi An, focusing on experience management. Hence, tourists can raise their awareness of culture, society and attraction of Vietnam in general and the three specified cities in particular.

#### Brief of the schedule version 1

Name of tasks	Duration	Start	Finish
<b>Creating interview guideline</b>	42 days	Mon 4.6.18	Tue 31.7.18
<b>Literature review</b>	42 days	Mon 4.6.18	Tue 31.7.18
<b>Conducting Interview</b>	13 days	Wed 15.8.18	Sat 1.9.18
<b>Analysing Interview</b>	12 days	Sat 1.9.18	Sat 15.9.18
<b>Creating Tour Package and Pricing</b>	17 days	Sat 15.9.18	Mon 8.10.18
<b>Submitting the tour package to the commissioner and supervisor</b>		Wed 10.10.18	
<b>Final edition of tour package</b>		Mon 22.10.18	
<b>Reporting</b>	24 days	Tue 23.10.18	Fri 23.11.18
<b>Final Presentation</b>		Mon 26.11.18	
<b>Finishing project and submission</b>		Wed 28.11.18	

#### Benefits to commissioners

We would like to create a completely new unique tour package for our commissioner, based on cultural experience. Additionally, depends on customers' willing, the company's name will be appear on our public thesis for marketing purpose. The authors will also do a deeper

stage of research in experience innovation of tourism industry for company's development. A practical tour will be arranged for a real experience in the summer of Vietnam. We believe that your knowledge, insights and experience would be particularly valuable and would greatly enrich our thesis as well as your service development in the future. We are grateful for your time and consideration and very much hope that we will have a chance to cooperate.

