Duong Vo/ Thesis

Adventure Tourism and its Future Potential in

Ha Tinh, Vietnam

KAMK • University of Applied Sciences

Abstract

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Due to the lack of information about adventure tourism, the client of the thesis, Thanh Sen Travel was not consider adventure tourism as the product of the company. With the belief that Ha Tinh was a potential city to develop adventure tourism, the purpose of the thesis was to investigate the possibility and potential of the city. Therefore, the thesis would provide the company with more information about adventure tourism, identified potential locations and customer segments. The author wanted to persuade the company to add adventure tourism as a new feature to attract new customers coming to the region.

In addition to secondary sources, primary sources were collected via individual qualitative interview of 9 travelers to find a potential target tourist group. Thanh Sen Travel helped the author in discussing the potential adventure tourism activities as well as giving local data to help with the completion of the thesis.

Table of Contents.

List of abbreviations

UNWTO: World Tourism Organization

ATTA: Adventure Travel Trade Association

Gen X: People who were born between 1965-1979

Millennials: People who were born between 1980-1996

Generation Z: People who were born between 1997-2015

MOCST: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

SUP: Stand-up paddling

1 Introduction

Adventure tourism is an interesting section of the tourism industry. Despite the fast growth of tourism in recent years, adventure tourism remains a relatively new phenomenon that attracts smaller tourist segments. Adventure tourism activities often take place in locations that offer excitement and stimulation in nature places such as mountains, lakes, oceans, and jungles (Hudson, Lientz, and Rea, 2002). It is also described as contrast to mass tourism (UNWTO, Global report on adventure tourism, 2014), and thus adventure tourism is becoming a new trend among travelers. A study in 2013 stated that almost half of travelers include some level of adventure activities in their trips, making adventure tourism become one of the most important subgroups in the tourism industry (Volume nine – Global Report on Adventure Tourism, 2014).

Vietnam has long been known as an interesting travel destination. In the 30 years since Vietnam first opened the country to tourists until 2019, the number of tourists has increased 72 times from 250000 arrivals to more than 18 million arrivals (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020). In 2019, Vietnam has been listed as one of the countries in South-east Asia that has witnessed a robust performance in tourism, ranked 3rd in international tourist arrivals (with Thailand and Malaysia ranked first and second) (UNWTO, 2021). On 22.01.2020, the Vietnamese government published the "Strategy on Vietnam's tourism development for 2020, vision for 2030", which highlights making the tourism industry a major driver of Vietnam's economic growth. Adventure tourism is listed as one of the top prior forms of tourism that will be focused on for development by the government in the strategy (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020).

Geographically, Vietnam has enough potential to develop adventure tourism by having spectacular and diverse landscapes (Hassard, 2017) (Vietnam Clean Energy Association, 2020). That developing adventure tourism also encourages sustainable practices such as natural environments. Meanwhile, meaningful cultural experiences are the competitive advantages for a region to develop this type of tourism (UNWTO, Global report on adventure tourism, 2014). Ha Tinh-Vietnam is the chosen destination for the thesis research based on the potential in geographical, culture and workforce.

The introduction of the thesis will define research problem by offering a brief information about the chosen destination, commissioner-Thanh Sen Travel, author's background and later pointing out the purpose and focus of the thesis.

1.1 Ha Tinh as a destination for adventure tourism

Ha Tinh is a city of 1 288 866 people (General Statistics Office of Ha Tinh, 2020) , located in Northern Central Vietnam, bordered by Nghe An province to the North, Quang Binh province to the South, Laos to the west and the Eastern Sea to the east (137km). The city is in the area which the government has indicated to be one of the prior destinations to develop adventure tourism. Firstly, the city has a good location to develop adventure tourism by having diverse landscapes: lakes and rivers, mountains, waterfalls, beaches, forests. There are many rivers in the city. The biggest rivers regarded as a signature of the city are the river La and the river Lam. The approximate length of the rivers is 400km. Many lakes with beautiful scenery can be listed such as: Kẻ Gỗ lake, Trại Tiểu lake. The terrain also includes mountains such as Hong Linh mountain, also regarded as a favorite destination of tourists. Other famous nature destinations for tourists include La river, Vũ Môn Falls, Vũ Quang Garden, Kẻ Gỗ lake, Sơn Kim hot springs, Đèo Ngang pas, Hương Tích pagoda.

Secondly, the city has an interesting culture. It has many craft villages, historical sites, and local cuisines. Based on the author's research, the core available tourism resources in Ha Tinh are illustrated in Table 1: "List of potential Adventure Tourism activities in Ha Tinh, Vietnam and their classification" in chapter 3.3

Ha Tinh also has a potential workforce for the tourism industry. The young generation of the city is active and strives for new opportunities. Ha Tinh people have long been known as one of the most hard-working people in Vietnam. Moreover, when looking at the statistics about tourism in the city, it can be easily seen that the tourism industry is developing very fast in the destination. According to the Vietnamese Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, in 2019, the number of tourists came to Ha Tinh in 2019 was 3 850 000 guests, increased 17% comparing to 2018. Overnight stays reach 1 750 000, increased 9.4% compares to the same period in 2018, international tourists: 30 000 arrivals, (increased 20% compares to 2018). The Tourism industry in Ha Tinh provides jobs for about 3 900 people in tourism sectors and for 13 200 people indirectly (Tuấn, 2020). It is visible that Ha Tinh is going to be a good investment in the future.

However, the difficulty of providing guidance for the development of tourism in Ha Tinh is that adventure tourism and tourism are still new to the city. According to people who work in the

tourism sectors in Ha Tinh, Ha tinh tourism is developing very fast, yet lacking the core products and guidance on how to attract new customers (Tran, 2020). To date there has not been any form of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh City. Based on the author's online research about the activities related to adventure tourism in the city, the data has been hard to find. Also, when discussing about tourism and adventure tourism with the client, Thanh Sen travel, the company also said that adventure tourism has not yet appeared in the city.

From the author point of view, there is a need to investigate in current situation of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh, to identify the possible future potential of adventure tourism in the city, invent new tourism products, attract more customers, and adopt the correct methods to develop this form of tourism from the start. It is also interesting to conduct research about adventure tourism in this city as the city has not yet adopt this kind of tourism. This can be a chance for creativity.

1.2   Problem statement

Due to the lack of information about adventure tourism section in Ha Tinh, the city has not yet adopted any forms of adventure activities in Tourism. The goal of the thesis is to gain a deeper understanding about adventure tourism, and to analyze the potentiality of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh city.

In addition, adventure tourism and its future potential is also the author's interested topic. Therefore, she wants to develop the idea of adventure tourism in non-touristic destinations in Vietnam. Recognizing the potential to develop adventure tourism of Ha Tinh city in the country, the author decided to choose Ha Tinh as a destination in which to conduct the research.

Together with Thanh Sen travel, a tour operator in the city which also shares the same interests and vision, a contract has been made with the purpose of conducting deeper research about adventure tourism in Ha Tinh, and thus, evaluate the possibility of developing adventure tourism in Ha Tinh city. This thesis will research about the current situation of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh and investigate potential products for adventure tourism in the city.

The thesis will answer the two questions: What are the potential products for adventure tourism in Ha Tinh? What customer segments would be interested in visiting the city for adventure tourism?

1.3 Commissioning party: Thanh Sen Travel

Thanh Sen travel is the commissioning party for the thesis. The tour operator is one of the first tourism businesses in the area. In discussion with the owner of the business, Nguyen Tien Trinh, who is an experienced and open-minded businessman, it was agreed that there is a need to see new ideas and adopt new products to develop the tourism industry in Ha Tinh. Based on the author's interest in adventure tourism and the knowledge adopted during studying adventure tourism at Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, the author has recommended that the company consider introducing adventure tourism as a new product.

The purpose of the thesis will not be to market or advertise the company, but it will be used as a resource to develop the products of the company (Thanh Sen Travel) as well as other travel agencies and people interested in HaTinh's Tourism.

1.4 Author's background

The author is a student studying International Tourism, majoring in Adventure Tourism at Kajaani University of Applied Sciences. By living abroad outside of Asia, the author recognized the potential future for adventure tourism in Asia in general and in Vietnam in particular. Adventure tourism is also the major subject of the author while writing the thesis, and therefore, the thesis is believed to be a good opportunity to learn about tourism in a practical way, using and bringing previous studies into the practical world. By the process of making this thesis, the author also wants to grow a new network in the Vietnam business world and in Finland, helping the destination and practicing needed skills in the field for the future.

2   The adventure tourism industry in Ha Tinh

The adventure tourism industry is the fastest growing tourism sector all over the world (Volume nine – Global Report on Adventure Tourism, 2014). In Vietnam, adventure tourism is not yet considered a strong sector in the tourism industry even when there have been many debates about the potential of Vietnam's geography and culture in this subgroup of tourism (Tuan N. A., 2007). However, the country is rising as an adventure tourism destination to travelers. According to Adventure Travel Index 2018, Vietnam ranked the first in New Zealand's favourite adventure travel destinations from 2016 to 2018 (Intrepid Travel, 2018, p. 20). Vietnam also ranked first as a destination for food experiences and cycling activity (Intrepid Travel, 2018, p. 21). The Vietnamese Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism highlighted the importance of adventure tourism in its "Strategy to develop Vietnam's tourism until 2030". Adventure tourism has been confirmed to be one of the prior sectors in developing tourism in Vietnam. North-central Vietnam, which is the location of Ha Tinh city, is one of the regions that has been mentioned (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020). Many businesses in Vietnam has worked together with the purpose of developing adventure tourism in certain areas such as Lào cai, Cao Bằng, Quảng Bình,.. However, most of the destinations mentioned are quite popular and visible to mass tourists meanwhile with a destination which has diverse geography and culture like Vietnam, new and untouched destination like Ha Tinh will be a better hidden place to adventure tourism, bringing new income and benefits to the region.

2.1   The shift in tourist behavior

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world (World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme, 2017, p. 4). 2018 was reported to have reached UNWTO's long term forecast in international tourist arrivals two years ahead of schedule which projected the 1.4 billion arrivals for the year 2020 (World Tourism Organization and Global Tourism Economy Research Centre , 2019, p. 5). Tourism also plays an important role in economic, social, and environmental aspects of the host destination. Tourism helps to provide jobs, creating wealth, reducing poverty, and protecting culture and environment (World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme, 2017, p. 4). However, 2020 witnessed the unprecedented epidemic of Covid-19 which has changed the scenarios of the Tourism industry (UNWTO, 2020, p. 4). Covid-19 made travelling difficult and caused people to

hesitate when travelling, changing the needs and wants of travelers when considering a destina-
tion. According to ATTA, travelers now prefer more rural areas, small towns/ villages/resort
communities and national parks (Kelly, 2020). They also care more about other elements such
as safety and sustainability of the destination (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020). Outdoor
activities are also on the rise (Kelly, 2020). The shift in tourist preference will open opportunities
for adventure tourism in future. It is said that adventure tourism has been increasing in popular-
ity due to the shift in demand of travelers looking for peaceful destinations and who want to
have a deeper connection with the destination (Kelly, 2020). Even though most adventure trav-
elers come from Europe and America, more Asian travelers have started participating in adven-
ture tourism (Puvaneswary, 2020) (THESTRAITSTIMES, 2019). Of all the nations, China is pre-
dicted to be the number one outbound market in the world (ATTA, 2015).

In a brief, adventure tourism will have high chances for becoming a trend in the future due to
the shifting of traveler's behavior. Also, promoting adventure tourism has been believed to be a
sustainable pathway to develop sustainable tourism in rural areas by "the ability to positively
transform people, environments and economies" (Joyce, 2018). With these two purposes, it is
reasonable to compile a plan for the city to develop this form of tourism.

2.2   The current situation of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh

In Vietnam, adventure tourism is not yet considered a strong sector in the tourism industry alt-
hough there have been so many debates about the potential of Vietnam's geography and
culture in this subgroup of tourism (Nguyen, 2007). Vietnam also lacks a professional workforce
for adventure tourism. Most adventure tourism-based businesses in Vietnam are operated by
foreign companies because of higher professional knowledge in the field as well as higher quali-
ty in the workforce based on better condition of health and skills (Diep, 2019). Compare with
other countries in the area, adventure tourism in Vietnam has not yet developed a competitive
advantage. However, the number of tour operators in Vietnam putting effort into adventure
tourism is increasing with different activities such as: trekking, hiking, canyoning, kayaking, mo-
torbiking, cycling, diving, canoeing, rafting, boat race, surfing, parachute jumps, (Tim, 2020).

According to the commissioner, Thanh Sen travel, in Ha Tinh,there is no adventure tourism.
However, the competitive advantage of the city is that the location is still remote, and it is suit-

able for nature-based activities and adventure travel. The difficulties include the lack of a professional workforce (Trinh, 2021).

3   Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework is the structure that introduces, describe, and supports the research problem and explains why the problem being investigated exists.

3.1   Defining adventure tourism

Until now, there is not yet any exact definition of adventure tourism. However, it is defined by the ATTA as a trip that must include at least two of three elements: physical activity, natural environment, and cultural immersion (World Tourism Organization, 2014, p. 10). Even though the definition only requires two elements, it mentioned that the fullest adventure travel experience will combine all three (World Tourism Organization, 2014, p. 10). As mentioned earlier in this thesis, adventure tourism can be regarded as one of the subgroups of tourism as a trip can include different elements such as historical site visits or adventure activities (Bui, 2020, p. 1). However, based on the main motivation for the journey that a trip can be considered to be an adventure tourism trip (Bui, 2020, p. 2) (Swarbrooke et al., 2003). Mostly adventure tourism is more visible when tourists participate in sports activities. However, adventure tourism is not only about doing sports but also includes for example natural and especially cultural.

3.2   Soft adventure tourism and hard adventure tourism

According to UNWTO, there are two core categories of adventure tourism: hard adventure and soft adventure. Based on the primary activities during the trip that adventure tourism is divided into the categories of soft and hard adventure tourism (Bui, 2020, p. 3). The author believes the action of distinguishes the two forms of adventure tourism will help the destinations and the tourism businesses to identify suitable activities for the region as well as the customer segment (UNWTO, Global Report on Adventure Tourism, 2014, p. 12).

Hard tourism is explained as activities that have high level of risk while soft adventure tourism includes activities with a perceived risk or little actual risk (David Newsome, Susan A. Moore and Ross K.Dowling, 2002). However, it is difficult to define hard tourism and soft tourism correctly as adventure tourism is very much based on one's individual experience. Adventure to one

traveler may seem non-adventurous to another (UNWTO, Global report on adventure tourism, 2014, p. 12). However, certain adventure activities have been classified into the two categories soft adventure or hard adventure by UNWTO in Figure 1. Figure 1 will be the base for the later table to evaluate adventure activities in Ha Tinh Vietnam.

ACTIVITY	TYPE
Archeological expedition	Soft
Attending local festival/fairs	Other
Backpacking	Soft
Birdwatching	Soft
Camping	Soft
Canoening	Soft
Caving	Hard
Climbing (mountain/rock/ice)	Hard
Cruise	Other
Cultural activities	Other
Eco-tourism	Soft
Educational programs	Soft
Environmentally sustainable activities	Soft
Fishing/fly-fishing	Soft
Getting to know the locals	Other
Hiking	Soft
Horseback riding	Soft
Hunting	Soft
Kayaking/sea/whitewater	Soft
Learning a new languaje	Other
Orienteering	Soft
Rafting	Soft
Research expeditions	Soft
Safaris	Soft
Sailing	Soft
Scuba Diving	Soft
Snorkeling	Soft
Skiing/snowboarding	Soft
Surfing	Soft
Trekking	Hard
Walking tours	Other
Visiting friends/family	Other
Visiting historical sites	Other
Volunteer Tourism	Soft

Source: ATTA (2013)

Figure 1: Activities and their classification (UNWTO, Global report on adventure tourism, 2014)

3.3   General resource inventory

The tourism resources inventory is an ordered collection of attractions and resources in a tourism destination which will help service providers make use of the available resources at the destination (Fennell, 2002). The General resource inventory includes the investigations of "Presence/ Availability", "quantity", "quality", and the "capacity to absorb" of the resources. The tourism resources inventory also combines subjective assessment of the future potential of the resource (Fennell, 2002).

Table 2: General resource inventory (Fennell, 2002)

Table 5.7: General resource inventory

Resource	Presence/ availability	Quantity (No.)	Present quality (Rank 1-10)	Capacity to absorb tour (low, med, high)	Future potential (low, med, high) and notes
Natural attractions					
Beaches	no	-			Nothing available, not appropriate.
Birding	yes	Many types	8	medium	Migratory and residents' species (high)
Temperature	etc				
Lakes					
Islands					
Mammals					
Mountains					
Rivers					
Plants					
Waterfalls					
Cultural/ historical attractions					
Ethnic culture					
Indigenous sites					
Interpretive centers					
Museums					
Festivals					
Traditional lifestyles					
Archaeological sites					
Special events					

3.4   Methods of analysis

By applying the two theories: "classification of adventure activities" and "tourism resources inventory", Table 1:" Activities in Ha Tinh, Vietnam and their classification" was designed with the purpose of assessing the potential of certain kinds of adventure activities available in Vietnam or in similar regions. Table 1 will explain different elements and the sources of "Activities in Ha Tinh, Vietnam and their classification."

Table 3: List of symbols
By author based on Fennell, (2002) and UNWTO, (2014)

Factors	Explanation	Adopted from
Activity	Name of the activities	
Type	Classification of the type of activities (soft adventure activity or hard adventure activity)	Classification of adventure activities (UNWTO)
Availability	The current situation of the activity in the region. Assessed by availability or unavailability.	General resources inventory by Fennell (2002)
Future potential	The potential and possibility of adopting activities in Ha Tinh's tourism. Assessed by scale "low", "medium'', "high"	General resources inventory by Fennell 2002
Reason	Reasons for the potential of the activity.	Will be discussed with the client.

Table 4: List of potential adventure tourism activities in Ha Tinh, Vietnam and their classification by author based on Fennell, (2002) and UNWTO (2014)

Activity	Type (soft/hard)	Availability in Vietnam(available/ not available) (Fennell 2002)	Availability in Ha Tinh(available/ not available) (Fennell 2002)	Future potential(low,med,high) and notes) (Fennell 2002)	Reason
Scuba-diving	Soft	Available	Not available	No	No coral or inter-esting ma-rine life to watch.
Stand-up paddle boarding (SUP)	Soft	Available	Not available	Yes	Water surfaces available (lakes, beaches, river and ponds). Also, calm water is better for the activi-ty.
Kayaking	soft	available	unavailable	Yes	Water surfaces available.
Hiking	soft	available	unavailable	Yes	Forest, national parks

Trekking	Hard	Available	unavailable	Yes	Forest, national parks
Horseback riding	Soft	Available	Unavailable	Yes	Farms, household horses
Fishing	Soft	Available	Unavailable	Yes	Water surfaces available
Canyoning	Hard	Available	Available	Yes	Vu Mon Waterfall
Cycling	Soft	Available	Unavailable	Yes	
Motorbike	Hard	Available	Unavailable	Yes	

In conclusion, the table describes and explains the availability and the potential to develop some forms of adventure tourism activities. Overall, adventure tourism activities have not yet developed in Ha Tinh , however, the destination has considerable potential because of its terrain. In Ha Tinh, soft adventure tourism activities are more suitable to develop due to the available in resources and geographic factors mentioned in the table 3.

According to a report from ATTA, adventure travelers are categorized into 3 different groups: adventure grazers, adventurers, and adventure enthusiasts (ATTA, 2014). Adventure grazers are travelers who participate in adventure activities for the first time, and they normally have a bucket list to complete. Adventurers are people at the intermediate level of adventure activities, seeking for opportunities to develop skills in a favorite activity. Adventure enthusiasts are advanced practitioners of an adventure activity. Adventure grazers and adventurers are looking for moderate-risk adventure activities while adventure enthusiasts seek high-risk activities (ATTA, 2014). Compared to non-adventure travelers, adventure travelers were more likely to use professional services such as guides, tour operators and boutique service providers. However, when examining only adventure travelers, 56% of them were still found to handle everything on their own (UNWTO, Global report on adventure tourism, 2014, p. 15). Among adventure travelers, the number of adventure travelers who are female has increased, from 43% to 53%. Males account for 47% of adventure travelers. 48% of adventure travelers have a higher education (UNWTO, Global Report on Adventure Tourism, 2014). Europe, North America, and South America account for more than half of international departures in adventure tourism. However, there is little research on other growing economies area, for example Asia.

In Vietnam, most tourists come from China, Korea, Japan, and Thailand. Travelers from other continents only accounts insignificant (Anh, 2020). However, in recent years there has been an increase in tourists from markets outside Asia in Vietnam, especially travelers from Europe. During the COVID-19 time, at the beginning of the year 2020, the number of European travelers increased by 8.8% compared to the same month in the previous year (the highlights are Russia, Germany, Britain and France).

Also, the number of tourists coming from Scandinavian countries such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland is increasing (Quy, 2019). Of all the 18 million people that travelled to Vietnam in 2019, there were 142 264 Scandinavians (Flittner, 2020). The number of tourists from Scandinavia is not significant, however, it was increasing before Covid time. In addition, learning from the neighbor country, Thailand, Nordic travelers are said to normally become repeat travelers, who prefer exploring new places and have a sustainable development mindset (Moller, 2019). According to a tourism survey in 2019, Finnish travelers are interested in visiting lesser-known places that are not popular to tourists, and they want to experience local culture and the

everyday life of the destination. They also care about being sustainable when travelling, respecting the culture and using services and products from local businesses (Tore, 2019).
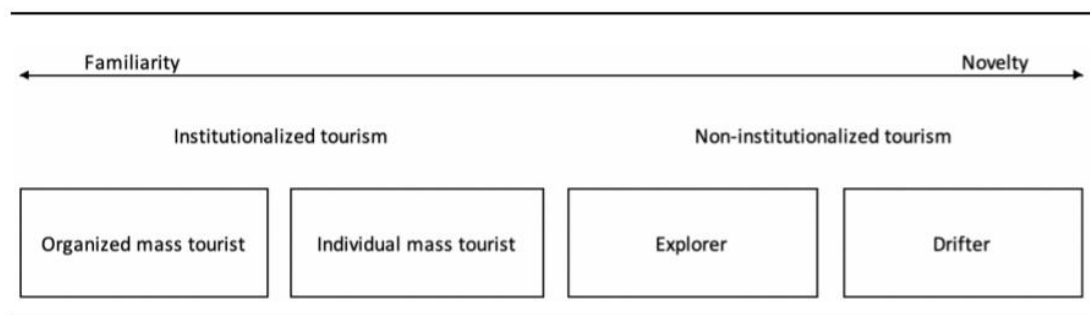
Source: Adapted from Fletcher et al., 2018

Figure 2: The tourist classification/ Cohen's phenomenology of tourism experience (Cohen, 1972)

Erik Cohen 1972 has devised a famous tourism typology: "The tourist classification". According to him, tourists are divided into four categories: organized mass tourists, individual mass tourist, explorer, and drifter. Mass tourists are illustrated as "institutionalized" while more individualistic tourists are regarded as non-institutionalized (Sharma, 2005). Cohen explained the extremes with the words "security, familiarity, and intimacy" and the opposite as "curiosity, new experiences, and novelty" (Fletcher, Fyall, Gillbert, Wanhill, 2005, p.49).

The organized mass tourist is the least adventurous group. This type of tourists asks for familiarity and feel comfortable staying in the "environmental bubble" when travelling (Salokangas, 2020, p. 18) (Vuoristo, 2002). They prefer tour package so that everything is planned. Individual mass tourists also prefer tour packages, however, their itinerary is more flexible than organized mass tourists. Both organized mass tourist and individual mass tourist are listed within institutionalized tourism (Fletcher, Fyall, Gillbert, Wanhill, 2005, p.49).

Explorers and drifters are in contrast to organized and individual mass tourists. Both are identified within non-institutionalized tourism. Explorers are interested in discovering the local culture other than travelling to mass tourism destinations. However, they still demand a certain level of safety, comfortable accommodation, and transportation. Drifters are the most adventure tourist group. They want a deeper understanding of the destination and want to live like a local. Their schedules are flexible (Fletcher, Fyall, Gillbert, Wanhill, 2005; Salokangas, 2020).

By using "The tourist classification" by Eric Cohen, the author will identify and classify the potential targeted groups for adventure tourism in Ha Tinh in chapter 7.

5   Research methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology of the research method used in the the thesis as well as the choosing of the targeted group for the research is explained.

5.1   Research method and design: Qualitative methodology

Research methodologies can be classified into three types: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Brannen, 1992; Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). The quantitative method is normally used to deal with numbers and statistics while qualitative method is often used to gather in-depth insights of the topic (Streefkerk, 2021). While the use of both techniques in tourism has been increasing in the last decades (Dwyer, 2012), the chosen method used in this thesis is qualitative as the author wants to have a deeper look into people thoughts. The qualitative method is said to be used "when there is an inability to understand the problem using quantitative approaches and when it is important to understand the process variables" (Achterberg and Arendt, 2008; Sharma and Altinay, 2012). By using qualitative method, a deeper understanding of travelers' actions, preferences and opinions will be gained. The qualitative method is believed to be able to gather deeper insights of the travelers and topic in this situation.

5.2   Qualitative interviewing in tourism research

Interviews play an important role as a research method in the field of tourism. Much research in the field of tourism involves interviews of some kind (Picken, 2017). As qualitative research is not about the numbers nor size of the sample, it is used to understand the depth and the real meaning of the topic (Sharma and Altinay, 2012). Therefore, interviews maintain their position as one of the most favored methods within the field of social sciences and tourism (Jennings,2005; Merriam., Sharan and Elizabeth, 2015).

There are many types of Interviews based on different elements such as the context that the interview occurs, structure of the interview, the number of people involved in the interview, and the purpose or the methodology that occurs during the research process (Jennings, 2005).

Based on the main methodology of the thesis, the author selected qualitative interview as the research method for the thesis. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are recommended to be used within a qualitative methodology (Jennings, 2005). However, the author wants to have a flexible conversation with the interviewees yet still needed a structure to facilitate data analysis and take into account limitations in time and the author's skill as an interviewer. Therefore, semi-structured qualitative interviews were chosen as the method of the study. A semi-structured interview is an interview guided by a set of questions and issues. However, the wordings and order of the questions can be changed.

5.3   Market segmentation

Market segmentation is important when analyzing demand as it helps the company to tailor their products to meet the needs and desires of the potential customers (Yankelovich and Meer, 2006). There are four significant factors when segmenting a market: geography, demography, psychography and behavior characteristics (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Middleton, 2002; Salokangas, 2020). Each factor will be discussed further.

However, the questions of the survey will be made by the author based on these four important elements when segmenting a market. There is a need to investigate in the correct customer segmentation for adventure tourism in Ha Tinh. In this thesis, eight small-scale interviews will be conducted to identify the potential targeted adventure tourism tourists and their characteristics when travelling. Due to the Corona pandemic during the time when the author writes the thesis, online interview with video will be operated. Conducting a survey will of survey also help the company to identify potential customers and investigate their image about Ha Tinh.

5.4   Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are vital when conducting a research as they ensure the effectiveness of the process (Rivera, M. and Rivera R., 2007). Reliability and validity in qualitative research are about showing the readers a detailed depiction so that it proves the author's conclusions are meaningful (Merriam, Sharan, and Elizabeth, 2015). Reliability is defined as "the state of being reliable" (Webster Dictionary, 1980) and it is referred to the repeatability of the study (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D, 2018). The

reliability of the research can be witnessed by a strong correlation between the results (McLeod, 2013). However, qualitative research is conducted based on assumptions about reality, therefore, the standards for rigor in qualitative research is different from those of quantitative research (Sharan and Elizabeth, 2015).

In qualitative, the term "reliability" is not suitable anymore as it creates misunderstandings and if reliability is considered a standard for qualitative research then many qualitative studies will be considered unreliable (Stenbacka, 2001). In qualitative research, the term reliability is substituted by other terms such as: credibility, neutrality, confirmability, consistency, dependability, applicability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) However, it is difficult to guarantee the reliability of this research as there has not been any studies of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh before. Therefore, there is a lack of previous studies to compare the repeatability of the result. Also, due to Covid-19, the tourism sector is changing rapidly and, customer behavioral characteristics are shifting (Zambito, 2020).

Chase, and Mandle (2001) based on the previous research of Lincoln and Guba (1985) came up with the four key validation criteria which are: credibility, authenticity, criticality and integrity.

The credibility of the study depends on the quality of the research questions that the author formed. The study questions must be credible, accurately interpret the meaning of the data and be able to portray the experiences of the participants (Griffith University, n.d.). In this study, the data from the interviewees is analyzed based on different sources to check consistency and repeatability using other studies. For example: in chapter 6.2.1, the data about Asian tourists' preferences have been taken from the interviews, then compared with real statistics from different sources to check consistency. The author will repeat and explain the questions to avoid misunderstandings between participants and the purpose of the questions. The interpretations of the author will be double checked by the participants by questions such as "Is this what you mean?" or "Do you mean this way?". Interviewees will be asked in what way they understood the question, and whether they are comfortable answering it or not to protect the correct meaning of the answers and have the best results. Questions from the interview will receive feedback from the participants to access and improve the quality. Credibility protects the correct meaning of the data and study.

Authenticity in qualitative interview is about receiving the confirmation genuinely from the participants. In this study, the author will guarantee that she understands the answers of the participants correctly and precisely, without judgements. By recording the interview, the author

will avoid the mistake of assuming the meaning of the answers. The author will also repeat certain important questions during the interviews to see if the participants are consistent with their thinking. After the interview, the questions will be transcript, requested the confirmation and agreement from the participants.

Criticality in the thesis is often assured by the logical design of the thesis, evidence, critical analysis, and reflexivity (Griffith University). The thesis has been designed to express a logical way to answer the two questions of the topic: What are the potential products for adventure tourism in Ha Tinh? What customer segments would be interested? Answering question number 1: What are the potential products for adventure tourism in Ha Tinh, the author has studied more about the potential and available adventure tourism products in the city, classify into soft and hard tourism, and in the end, analyze what the suitable form in the case of Ha Tinh city is. Answering question 2, the author has investigated in the shift in tourist behavior (chapter 2.1), analyze the potential tourist group based on statistics and discuss in further their preferences and travel habits during the interview.

Integrity is assured in the thesis by transcribing the interviews as integrity evident in the process of data analysis.

6   Research Process

This chapter explains the research process of the study in two processes: Selecting the partici-
pants and identify the potential adventure tourism tourists for Ha Tinh.

6.1   Participant's background

Chapter 6.1 explains the participant's background for the research. The participant's back-
ground is selected based on the four important factors when segmenting a market mentioned in
section 5.3: geography, demography, psychography and behavior characteristics.

6.1.1   Geographic and Demographic Information

As the main purpose of the research is to find the potential target group for adventure tourism
in Ha Tinh, the chosen target research group is selected based on the current volume of tourists
geographically which are: China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Russia, Germany, Britain, France, and
Finland (chapter 4).

Demographic segmentation is one of the most common ways to create customer segments.
Demographic segmentation creates segments by differentiating people by age, gender, income,
education, religion, and life-cycle stage (Gunter and Furnham, 1992). In this research, the main
targeted customers the research group are young people aged 18-30 who have higher educa-
tion. The targeted research group also includes both males and females. The decision for the
demographic characteristics of the interviewees was made based on the profile of adventure
travelers in research. It has been studied that adventure travelers average age is 35. The num-
ber of female adventure travelers and male adventure travelers is equal. Even between hard
adventure and soft adventure, the number of females is higher than males (62.3%) but not too
many compared to other types of travelers (The George Washington University School of
Business, The adventure Travel Trade Association, and Xola Consulting, 2010). The age of the
target research group from 18-30 also includes two generations: millennials and gen z, which
are also the main demographic group in this research. Millennials have been said to be the most

socially conscious travel demographic according to a research while gen Z will be the next (Taylor, 2018).

6.1.2 Traveler's psychographic and behavior

Psychographic segmentation focuses on personality, opinions, interests, and lifestyles of individuals (Gunter and Furnham, 1992). In the case of this research, the psychographic elements are mainly about the lifestyle and interests of the people participating in the research. Meanwhile, behavioral segmentation focuses on the actions and activities of the customers by looking at the products bought and the pattern of the purchase (Felix, 1998). In this case, behavior segmentation will appear in the interview questions related to previous decisions made during the previous trips and the services interviewees used. The interviewees will be asked questions related to their preferences and interests when travelling. The questions to identify psychographic and behavioral characteristics include:

1. Have you ever been to Vietnam?

2. Have you ever been to other Asian countries?

3. What are your goals when traveling?

4. What kind of activities do you do when traveling?

5. Do you normally use professional services such as tour guides, activity guides, etc.?

6. Do you prefer rural destinations or city destinations?

7. Do you prefer touristic destinations or non-touristic destination?

8. What kind of accommodation would you prefer?

9. Who do you normally travel with?

10. Do you consider yourself a sustainable tourist?

6.2 Identify potential adventure tourists for Ha Tinh

Based on the data gained from the interviews with 9 participants, the author gathered and analyzed the data to identify the potential adventure tourism tourists for Ha Tinh. The data is divided into two groups: the Asian tourists and the European tourists. The chapter will process the information gained from the interview, point out the difference in thinking of different tourist groups, identify psychographic and behavioral characteristics, get an insight of what are the preferences of different tourists when traveling.

6.2.1 The Asian tourists

As the research mentioned before, tourists from Asian countries still account for a large number of all the nationalities coming to Vietnam. The five countries representing the highest number of tourists coming to Vietnam are China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand respectively (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019). In this thesis, the author interviewed four interviewees from four of these countries: China, Korea, Japan, and Thailand. All the interviewees' ages are between 18-30 and they have at least a higher education degree. They had also visited at least one Asian country. None of them have ever traveled to Vietnam. However, all of them answered that they would like to visit Vietnam for several different reasons including visiting friends, many interesting places to visit, cheap (Appendix A); authentic culture (Appendix A), beautiful beaches, scenery, different and authentic culture (Appendix B), delicious food and interesting history (Appendix D).

Among the Asian interview group, Vietnam is assumed to be quite famous to very famous as a travel destination in their countries based on the interviewees' assumptions and observations. However, one of the interviewees who comes from Japan said that even though it is famous, the interviewee felt like Vietnam was not as famous as other destinations for example: Thailand and Indonesia (full interview transcripts are presented in Appendix A). This assumption might be correct because according to the statistics, outbound Japanese tourists' favorite destinations in Asia are: Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore (Japanese Travel Trade News, 2019; Nippon.com, 2019). The list has not yet included Vietnam as a popular travel destination for Japanese. In another research, Japanese tourists are also found to be interested in destinations in Europe more than other continents (Statista Research Department, 2020). Meanwhile with other countries like China and Korea, Vietnam is one of the most favorite desti-

nations for outbound tourists. In 2018, Vietnam ranked third in Chinese's top outbound destination (Chinese travel market, 2019) while Danang, Vietnam is one of the most famous cities to visit for Koreans based on flights and hotel bookings in 2019 (JK, 2019). In 2019, Vietnam also witnessed a significant increase in the number of Thai tourists coming to the country (increase 45.9% compare to 2018) due to cheap direct flights and cheap "zero-cost" tours (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2020). In general, it can be said that Vietnam is a famous destination to the Asian tourist group because of its location, cheap flights, beautiful nature as well as interesting culture and history. One of these interviewees also revealed that they felt Vietnam has a more authentic culture than the neighbor countries such as Thailand (Appendix A, B and C) while the Chinese interviewee assumed that most Chinese people cannot see the differences in culture between Thailand, Vietnam, and the Southeast Asian countries. The Chinese interviewee said the cultures of these countries are very alike (appendix D).

As regards lifestyles and preferences when traveling, the author focused on questions such as: "what activities do you do when traveling?", "Do you prefer rural destinations or city destinations?", "Do you prefer touristic or non-touristic destination?" and "What kind of accommodation would you prefer?" to know more about the character and mindset of the interviewees. The Chinese interviewee enjoys shopping and soft activities such as: visiting friends, going to the beach, visiting museums, and learning about cultures, and trying out local food. The Chinese interviewees prefer more relaxed travel and are not so interested in doing physical activities. The interviewee also preferred city destinations more than rural destinations because of the need to seek for safety, familiarity, convenience and the needs for more information and preparation before travelling. The interviewee also preferred more crowded places, and famous destinations. Chinese interviewees also trust recommendations from friends and acquaintances when traveling rather than guides (full interview in appendix D). The Japanese, Korean and Thai tourists seem to be more interested in doing activities when traveling. The Japanese, Korean and Thai tourists agreed that the number of tourists can affect their experience. All these three interviewees answered that they would like to include some sports activities during their trip and prefer active traveling. They had also experienced doing different activities when traveling such as: hiking (soft), kayaking (soft), canoeing (soft), cycling (unknown), motorbiking (unknown), snorkeling (soft), scuba diving (soft), visiting historical sites (other), cultural activities (other), getting to know the locals (other), learning a new language (other), trying new food (soft). Most of the activities mentioned by the Asian tourists are considered soft adventure activities and cultural activities (read more in chapter 4). Of all the activities mentioned, hiking is the most favored activity among Asian tourists. Other soft activities such as: trying local food,

cultural activities, getting to know the locals, are also popular among the Asian travelers. Most of the interviewees from the Asian group do not use professional services when traveling except for the Thai interviewee (Full interview available in Appendix A, B, C, D). The Asian tourists prefer more relaxed travel trips.

The question "Do you consider yourself a sustainable tourist?" was asked to perceive the interviewees' knowledge of the term sustainable and their behavior towards sustainability. Overall, all of the interviewees have knowledge about the term and definition of sustainable tourism and sustainability in general. However, all the interviewees and the author agree that the level of knowledge varies among people based on their education, characteristics, family. The interviewee from Thailand expressed an opinion that: "Even though developing adventure tourism in rural areas in a sustainable way is a good idea, not so many Thai people would be interested in it because for Thai people, Vietnam is a destination that is only famous for its cheap travel and interesting culture only. Thai people are not really interested in active travelling. It is possible they prefer more relaxed and easy travel. Mass traveling" (full interview available in appendix C). The interviewee from China also expressed her opinion on developing adventure tourism in rural areas by saying that only if the destination has better infrastructure, information, and accessibility will it attract Chinese tourists (full interview available in appendix D). The preferred type of accommodation among Asian interviewees are hotels, hostels, and Airbnb. Price was mentioned by different interviewees, and they prefer a cheaper type of accommodation as the interviewee from Thailand expressed: "I don't want to enjoy the accommodation I want to enjoy the destination, and learn the culture from local people so I don't mind staying in any type of accommodation" (Full interview in appendix C)

6.2.2   The European tourists

The largest number of European tourists come from countries like Russia, England, France, Germany (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019). All the interviewees' age are between 18-30 and each has at least a higher education degree. Even though the number of Finnish tourists coming to Vietnam is not significant, the author still decided to include Finnish tourists in potential target tourists for Ha Tinh city based on different factors mentioned in chapter 4. All the interviewees' age are between 18-30 with at least a higher education degree. They had also visited at least one Asian country before. In contrast to to the Asian interviewees, some of the European interviewees had traveled to Vietnam.

Among the European interviewees, it seems as if Vietnam is quite a famous destination. Two people answered that they had been to Vietnam while three others said that they had never been to Vietnam. All the interviewees that had not yet been there agreed that Vietnam is on their list of countries to visit. However, in answer to the question whether Vietnam is a well-known destination in their country, the British interviewee, French interviewee, and Finnish interviewee all agreed that it is not well-known as Thailand as a tourism destination (Appendix F, G, I). The Finnish interviewee expressed the opinion that among Finnish tourists, Vietnam is becoming increasingly well-known compared to Thailand (Appendix I) (this also matches the assumption about the popularity of Vietnam among Scandinavian tourists since the number of tourists is increasing as mentioned in the previous chapter 4). The cause for this might be because Thailand has always been one of the top destinations in Asia to visit. However, as more and more people coming to Thailand, the Finnish tourists starts looking for new destination, more authentic and adventure. Finnish tourists are also interested in visiting lesser-known places that are not popular to tourists, and they want to experience local culture and the everyday life of the destination. They also care about being sustainable when travelling, respecting the destination (Tore, 2019). For this reason, it is true that Vietnam is suitable and popular to Finnish travelers. According to the German interviewee, Vietnam is a rather new destination compared to Thailand and Indonesia (Appendix E). Vietnam was also said to be a new destination by the Russian interviewee (appendix H).

When being asked about the reasons that make Vietnam attractive, the respondents provided many different answers. However, there were similarities in the answers such as: friendliness, interesting and authentic culture and history, authentic experience, and not yet mass tourism destination. Many of them also answered they pick Asian destinations/ Vietnam because of the different atmosphere and nature that their country does not have (appendix E, G). Comparing the answers of the Western tourists to the Asian tourists, it seems as if the European tourists consider factors such as nature more important than the Asian group. They also care about having an authentic experience and enjoying authentic culture. The European travelers want to include at least some activities when traveling and prefer active travel to relaxed travel, in contrast to the Asian respondents. Their knowledge about sustainable tourism is fairly good (were able to define it, describe the activities that they have been doing and how to become responsible tourists). They also consider themselves as sustainable tourists and try to be as sustainable as possible in their actions: protect nature, respect the culture and people (appendix E, F, G, H, I).

The tourists that prefer more rural destinations are tourists who come from Britain, France, Germany, and Finland while the participant from Russia preferred city destinations more. However, all of them at some point answered that they are interested in both destinations and would like to switch from one to another. The European tourists agree that the number of tourists affects their experience. The European tourists normally avoid crowded places because they want to enjoy the location at its most authenticity (appendix E, F, G). Most of them also prefer destinations that are not touristic so that they can have a more relaxed time. Therefore, European tourists feel uncomfortable in a place filled with other tourists. These completely contrast preferences of tourists are interesting as some other tourists such as Chinese preferred certain amount of people around to feel safe (appendix D).

The European tourists also seem to be more active and interested in active activities more than the Asian group. All of them would like to include and participate in some kinds of activities when traveling and they have always done so in their previous trips (Appendix E, F, G, H, I). The types of sports that have been mentioned are stand up paddle (unknown), kayaking (soft), hiking (soft), trekking (hard), horseback riding (soft), fishing (soft), canyoning (hard), canoeing (soft), mountain biking (hard), cycling (soft), climbing(hard), motorbiking (unknown), mountain ski (unknown), visiting culture sites (soft), going to the beach (soft), etc. Comparing to the Asian traveler group, the European travelers are more active during their trip. The types of the trip are also variety. The types of the activities are broader, combining both soft adventure activities and hard adventure activities. With people who have been to Vietnam, driving motorbike seems to be a popular activity, especially when traveling in the North. Hiking is also famous as an activity for travelers who have been to Vietnam (appendix F, I). Many of them said they did not use any professional services when traveling however, they feel like professional services such as a guide could improve the quality of the trip and the knowledge about the destination(appendix E, F, G, H, I).

All of them would like to interact with the locals and learn about the local activities. When mentioning about the form of accommodation "Living with the local", the 5 participants have the positive opinions about the idea. However, many said that they felt like there is a need to develop the information, and the distribution channels from which they can find the places that have these kinds of services. They felt there is a lack of information in this form of accommodation. Also, other problems such as safety, and languages barrier are also mentioned. Hotels, hostels, Airbnb and private Airbnb are still the forms of accommodation that most of the interviewees prefer. Most of the participants prefer traveling with friends or partner but not family.

All of the interviewees think that the idea of supporting adventure tourism fit the context of Ha Tinh city, and they would like to experience the city.

Overall, it seems to be that Vietnam is rising as a popular destination among travelers from both groups. However, Vietnam's tourism still remains a new destination in the Southeast Asia area to travelers. This also makes the country has a hidden charm and have more of a mysterious destination to travel.

When categorize the potential travelers for Ha Tinh, based on the tourist classification by Erik Cohen 1972, the author decides to divide the interviewees into three groups: individual mass tourists, the explorer, and the drifter. The model by Erik Cohen has been explained in detailed in chapter 4

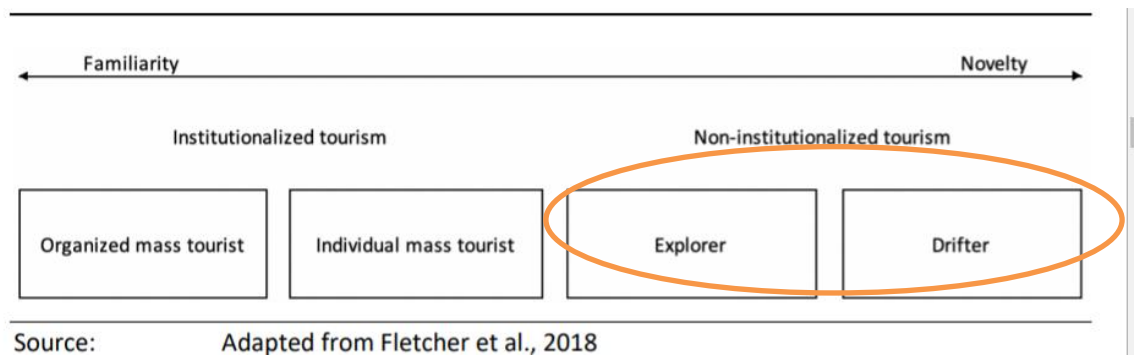Source: Adapted from Fletcher et al., 2018

Figure 2.1: Tourist classification by Erik Cohen 1972

The potential targeted travelers for Ha Tinh include the explorer and the drifter. Among the interviewees in the Asian tourist group, Japanese and Korean travelers seem to be in the list of explorers to drifter while the interviewees from Thailand and China have been categorized to be in the group of individual mass tourists. The interviewees from Japan, Thailand and Korea have good knowledge about sustainability and are considered responsible tourists. The interviewee from China did not answer good the questions of definition about sustainability and her actions to be a responsible tourist yet. However, in case of the Thai tourists, the interviewee herself is an explorer, yet based on the assumption and observations about Thai people, Thai tourists are more suited in the group of individual tourists. The world is changing fast, creating new trends and new behavior. Tourism industry is not exceptional. Therefore, the behavior of tourists can change regularly and the shift in tourist behavior can be fast. In the case of the Chinese tourist, the interviewee mentioned that the behavior and preferences of travelers in China also depends a lot on where they live geographically, family background, education (what they have been

taught during schools, not necessarily levels of education), politics point of view and their beliefs (full transcript in appendix D). This point of view can be adapted to other interviewees as well and it is impossible to stereotype people at certain level. This is also a limitation of the study.

With the European group, the interviewees from countries: Germany, Britain, France, and Finland are considered to be the explorer group. The Russian tourist is somewhere in between the individual mass tourists and the explorer. The European tourists seem to have better knowledge about sustainability and are considered more of responsible tourists. Sustainability is a very important factor that should be put on top of every plan in developing tourism. Therefore, attracting correct types of tourists plays an important role in the development of the city.

Hiking (soft), traveling with motorbike (soft), visiting historical sites (other), cultural activities (other), getting to know the locals (other) are among the top adventure tourism activities chosen by the interviewees. From the author perspective and observations, soft adventure activities are more suitable for Ha Tinh in the beginning of the developing adventure tourism. Therefore, from the list of activities in Ha Tinh in chapter 3.4, the author recommended to develop these forms of adventure activities in Ha Tinh: SUP, kayaking, hiking, trekking, horseback riding, fishing, canyoning, cycling, motorbiking. The decision was made based on the interests of the tourists, the characteristics of the location, the nature resources as well as infrastructure resources and human resources in Ha Tinh.

8   Conclusion

In conclusion, the main purpose of this thesis is to provide the client with a perception of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh, its potential resources and potential demands. Therefore, the company can consider bringing in adventure tourism products or adventure tourism aspects to their operation and attracting new customers. The thesis hopes to encourage the company to cooperate with other businesses to enhance tourism in Ha Tinh and persuade the authority to develop the infrastructure of the city. The author wants to encourage Thanh Sen Travel being one of the leading companies to pursue more authentic experience tours.

The thesis has answered the two questions that the author brought into discussion in the beginning of the thesis: What are the potential products for adventure tourism in Ha Tinh? What customer segments would be interested? (Section 1.5). Via the author's research, Ha Tinh is advised to develop soft adventure tourism, focusing on nine types of activities listed: SUP, kayaking, hiking, trekking, horseback riding, fishing, canyoning, cycling, motorbiking. Among the types of activities, canyoning and trekking are hard tourism activities. However, after the discussion with the client, for different reasons, these two types of activities are still confirmed to be one of the focus adventure tourism activities to develop in Ha Tinh.

People who are interested in adventure tourism, prefer active travel, authentic experiences and rural tourism have been chosen for the characteristic of the potential tourist group. The explorer and the drifters (Cohen, 1972) are the potential targeted groups. Travelers with good knowledge about sustainability and prefer sustainable travel are also suitable for the destinations. The targeted potential customers for adventure tourism in Ha Tinh has been made based on the popularity of Vietnam destinations to the interviewees, their travel habits, interests, and preferences. The list of potential travelers' nationalities includes Japan, Korea, Germany, Britain, France, and Finland. Based on the potential targeted group identified and their interests, the region should have correct form of marketing and development to match the needs and wants of the customers to the products and services.

Despite the effort of the author, this research is subject to several limitations. The limitation of the research includes: the nature of the thesis topic, lack of information, lacking a chance to visit the city, and the limitation in the methodology of the research.

"Adventure tourism and its future potential" is the first research made to study the potential of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh, Vietnam. Therefore, there have been difficulties and limitations in finding the authorized published data, guidelines, and statistics from the information channels of the Vietnam's and Ha Tinh's tourism organizations. Thus, there is a lack of previous studies to compare the repeatability of the result. It is hard to measure the reliability and validity of the research. In addition, there had not been any form of adventure tourism in Ha Tinh City by the time the author conducted the research (read more in section 1.1). The availability of data about adventure tourism in Ha Tinh was limited. Thanh Sen travel was only able to provide information about the city, city attractions, trends, and domestic customers' data as the main clients of the company are Vietnamese tourists. The author did not have the chance to visit the city as planned due to the delays caused by the Covid pandemic, making it more difficult to observe the changes as well as the potentiality of the city (more information about Covid pandemic in abstract).

Secondly, because the research utilized a qualitative methodology, the data is difficult to represent statistically (Radu, 2019). In qualitative research, four factors to measure the trustiness of a study are: credibility authenticity, criticality, and integrity (Chase and Mandle, 2001) (read more in section 5.4). In this thesis, the scale of the research was small, so the result of the interviews cannot represent a larger sample. Despite this, the author is prepared to guarantee the credibility of the study (section 5.4), the thesis's credibility is limited. While processing data, there were conflicts between the answers of the participants. The participants of the interviews claim that it was hard to answer the interview questions because people behavior, opinions, knowledge, and preferences vary among different people according to their own characters, where they live, family background, education (what they have been taught at school, not necessarily levels of education), political point of view and their beliefs (full transcript in appendix D). In addition, there were also conflicts in the answers from Thai respondents. Although the Thai interviewee said that Thai peoples' travel habits were closer to mass tourism, the interviewee herself was interested in exploring the destinations, doing activities and staying closer to the locals when

traveling. Thus, it can be said that tourist preferences are only minimally dependent on cultural differences. Even though people with the from the geographical location and of the same demographic can have similar preferences, it is hard for one person to represent the views of other people living in the same country. This point of view can be adapted to other interviewees as well. This was also a limitation of the study.

In the future, more research about adventure tourism in Ha Tinh should be carried out because the city has high potential to develop this form of tourism. The future research should review new potential customers for Ha Tinh as people behaviors, preferences, opinions, and lifestyles shift constantly. To avoid the author's limitations in this research caused by using only qualitative methodology, both quantitative and qualitative research should be involved in the data analyzing process to achieve a better result. Future research should update potential products and describe new adventure tourism trends. More research about adventure tourism in Vietnam should be conducted by the authorities so that people have better guidelines in developing Vietnam's tourism.

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Transcript A: Interview with a Japanese traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself? (Nationality, age, gender, job, education level)
Interviewee: I come from Japan, 23 years old, male and a student.
Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?
Interviewee: I have never been to Vietnam.
Interviewer: Have you ever been to any other Asian countries?
Interviewee: Yes, I have been to Thailand, Myanmar, Singapore.
Interviewer: Is Vietnam in the list of your next country to visit?
Interviewee: Yes
Interviewer: Do you have any favorite destinations in Vietnam yet?
Interviewee: I would like to go to Hanoi.
Interviewer: Where in Vietnam you would like to go?
Interviewee: I would say I prefer the North part. I like visiting the Ha Long Bay,
Interviewer: What elements affect your preference?
Interviewee: The traditional Vietnam is in the north I think, in Hanoi. Better than Ho Chi Minh city. I feel Hanoi is more traditional, more Vietnam.
Interviewer: Do you think visiting Vietnam will be very similar to visiting other South East Asian countries: (Thailand, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Timor-Leste)
Interviewee: No. I think Vietnam is more traditional country.
Interviewer: Do you think Vietnam is a famous destination for Japanese to travel?
Interviewee: It is famous but not so famous like Thailand.
Interviewer: Are you interested in doing adventure tourism activities when traveling like for example: kayaking, stand-up paddling?
Interviewee: Yes
Interviewer: Did you do these activities often?
Interviewee: Yes, I normally do it in my country
Interviewer: What kind of activities have you been trying out?
Interviewee: Hiking.
Interviewer: Did you use professional services such as tour guides or travel guides when you travel?
Interviewee: Not really.
Interviewer: Do you prefer touristic places or not so touristic places?
Interviewee: I would like to travel known places first and then later on smaller places.
Interviewer: Do you know the term sustainable tourism?
Interviewee: Yes.
Interviewer: When you travel, what type of accommodation you prefer?
Interviewee: Hotel
Interviewer: What about hostels or Airbnb?
Interviewee: I have never.
Interviewer: Do you mind if the destination only has local food? (no western, Japanese food)
Interviewee: It is no problem as long as it's not spicy
Interviewer: Who do you prefer traveling with?
Interviewee: I prefer going with friends.
Interviewer: Have you ever traveled alone? Do you like the idea of traveling alone?
Interviewee: I do not like traveling alone because I want to share what I feel with someone.

Interviewer: What do you think about the idea of sustainable tourism in rural areas?
Interviewee: I think it is a good idea.
Interviewer: Do you think a safe-covid destination will attract you more?
Interviewee: Hm. I actually do not care that much. But I do not want to go to rural areas because I don't want to spread the virus.
Interviewer: That is all my questions. Thank you for your participation.
Transcript B: Interview with a Korean traveller

Explanation for the research:
Question 1: Can you introduce yourself? (name, age, gender, job, education level)
Hi, I'm Korean, 24 years old (international age), and female. I am an undergraduate student in Sungkyunkwan University.

Question 2: Have you ever been to Vietnam?

No, I have not. But I want to!

Question 3: Is Vietnam in the list as one of your upcoming countries to visit? And for what reasons?
Yes. It is on my list. Vietnam is famous for good hotels which have ocean view, delicious foods, and interesting marketplaces. And I think South-East Asia has pretty different culture with East Asia, so I want to have experiences how different it is.

Question 4: Do you have any knowledge about Vietnam destinations?
Yes, I know Da Nang, Hoi An, Hanoi and Nha Trang

Question 5: Do you think Vietnam is famous as a travel destination to Koreans?
Yes, I think Vietnam is one of the most famous travel destinations. (and popular)

Question 6: Who do you prefer traveling with?
If I go an active travel, I prefer my friends, but If I go relaxed travel, I prefer my family.

Question 7: What do you think is adventure tourism? (please do not use google search, just answer as you think
I think adventure tourism is like something making me feel little nervous. Like touring by jeep car in the grasslands of Africa, walking the streets on the tourism spot without knowing their language and where I am going, doing something that I haven't (like snorkeling) Question 8: What kind of activities you do when traveling? (shopping, sports, and activities, visit museums, etc.)
 I visit every famous place in that area. And I like trying new food that I have not eaten. I like shopping but I do not like to buy just clothes and some boring things. I like to buy that country's specialties. (Like Kimchi in Korean, Pineapple cake in Taiwan) I sometimes like to do activities but prefer just watching good nature view.

Question 9: Do you prefer an active travel or more relaxed travel?

I like both! When I have enough energy and want to have something interesting experiences, I go an active travel. When I just got out of a semester, I'm so exhausted so I go a relaxed travel.

Question 10: Do you use professional service such as travel guides or tour operators when travelling?
No, I do not. I like getting information by myself. That is a part of my travel.

Question 11 How would you describe Vietnam tourism destinations now? (touristic? Non-touristic? Beautiful? Famous? Authentic culture? Etc.)
Non-touristic, Chill, Good beaches, Authentic culture, Delicious food (Pho, Banh Mi, Bun Cha, Cong Caphe)

Interviewer: You think visiting Vietnam will be very similar to visiting other South East Asian countries: (Thailand, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Timor-Leste)
Interviewee: Yes.

Question 12: Do you prefer city destinations or rural destinations?
I prefer rural areas. Whenever I went to city areas in other countries, I felt like I was in Seoul.

Question 13: Does the number of tourists affects on your experience?
I do not understand the question. Other tourists that I don't know? Or Tourists who I go with?
If the question was about other tourists that I don't know, yes it affects. When I went to Boracay in Philippines, there was so many Korean tourists, so I did not feel that I was in Philippines and it was boring.
If the question was about tourists who I go with, it does't affects.

Question 14: Do you prefer visiting destinations that are more famous or not famous?
I like both. When I go to famous places, it feels good to see places I have only seen on the Internet with my own eyes. When I go to places which is not famous, I feel like I found the New world like Columbus.

Question 15: Would you call yourself a responsible tourist?
I think so. I follow the rules.

Question 16: What kind of accommodation you would prefer when travel? (hotel? Hostel? Airbnb? Living with local?)
My favorite accommodation is hotel, but if I have a strict budget, I go to Airbnb.

Question 17: Do you like Vietnamese food? Are you interested in experiencing local food in Vietnam?
Yes! I like Vietnamese food. I want to experience local food in Vietnam so badly. I do not like Koreanized Vietnamese food. I want to eat authentic Vietnamese food.

Question 18: What do you think about the idea of supporting sustainable tourism in rural areas?
I think the government should support sustainable tourism. Local residents want to make money as much as they can, and tourists want to have experiences as much as they can. So, I think the government may make some rules and give local residents and tourists like sustainable tour-

ism stamps if they follow the rule. And if they get enough stamps, they can exchange stamps with subsidies or gifts.

Question: Do you have any recommendations for the kind of activities that the city should consider developing? (for example: volunteer tourism, community-based tourism, hiking related activities, water related activities.)
I have no ideas. Sorry :(
Transcript C: Interview with a Thai traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself? (nationality, age, gender, job, education level)
Interviewee: I come from Thailand, 21 years old, female, student.
Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?
Interviewee: I have not yet been to Vietnam
Interviewer: Is Vietnam in the list as one of your upcoming countries to visit? And for what reasons?
Interviewee: yes. I want to visit Vietnam to visit my friends there. Before covid, I also planned to go to HCM city because it is so close to Thailand, many places to visit, interesting and not expensive.
Interviewer: Do you think Vietnam is a famous destination to visit for Thai?
Interviewee: Yes, because for me, most of my friends they went there and said it was a good place to visit. It is very famous.
Interviewer: which part of Vietnam you feel interested in the most that you would travel there?
Interviewee: HCM, Dalat, and the North
Interviewer: Who would you travel with?
Interviewee: Friends and boyfriend/
Interviewer: If you hear about the term adventure tourism, what you think of?
Interviewee: I do not know so much. For me, its like getting to know new people from the local
Interviewer: What kind of activities you do when traveling?
Interviewee: drive motorbike to discover the country, trying new food,
Interviewer: are you interested in water-related activities?
Interviewee: snorkelling, I did when I was in Bali. I would like to try scuba diving as well.
Interviewer: Do you prefer city destination or rural?
Interviewee: I think rural. Big cities have more people, but I like to meet local people more and try local activities, so I like rural more.
Interviewer: Do you think other Thai people have the same mindset with you or it depends?
Interviewee: I think it depends on the purpose of the trip. For example, if they want to enjoy the holiday they would go to famous places, taking picture or something. But for me I want to get the feeling of the destination. It depends on people.
Interviewer: How would you describe Vietnam tourism in your opinion?
Interviewee: I think it's touristic because in Vietnam there are many things to discover. I really like Dalat, there are flowers to see. Especially food. I think quite different from Thailand.
Interviewer: Do you mind if the destination has many tourists?
Interviewee: Yes. Touristic places have too many tourists. I do not like being in a crowded place.
Interviewer: How you understand the term sustainable tourism?
Interviewee: I have never heard about this term. But I think it's about economic, social and environmental impacts or something. I tried to read it on internet, but I have never heard about it before. And the communication between locals and tourists.
Interviewer: What kind of accommodation you prefer when traveling?

Interviewee: I would go for the cheapest options. Hostels? I don't want to enjoy the accommodation I want to enjoy the destination and learn the culture from local people, so I don't mind.

Interviewer: How do you think about the idea of supporting sustainable destination? DO you think it will attract many Thai people?

Interviewee: I think not too many Thai people cares.

Interviewer: How do you feel about the idea of developing adventure tourism in rural areas?

Interviewee: Even though developing Adventure Tourism in rural areas in a sustainable way is a good idea, not so many Thai people would be interested in it because Vietnam is a destination famous for cheap travel and interesting culture only. Thai people really interested in an active travelling. I think they prefer more of relaxed and easy travel. Mass travelling.

Interviewer: Questions about Corona. Would you consider a safe-covid destination more than non-safe covid destination?

Interviewee: I do not mind.

Transcript D: Interview with a Chinese traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself? (name, age, gender, job, education level)

Interviewee: China, 24 Girl, student.

Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Is Vietnam in the list as one of your upcoming countries to travel?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Have you ever been to any Asian countries?

Interviewee: Thailand

Interviewer: Do you have much knowledge about the destinations in Vietnam?

Interviewee: I know about the history of Vietnam and watch some traveling videos about Vietnam on YouTube.

Interviewer: Which part of Vietnam you feel interested in the most?

Interviewee: I think it will be the South, Ho Chi Minh city, because I have watched many videos before, the night view, the clubs in Ho Chi Minh city. Also, I have heard about Phu Quoc Island.

Interviewer: Do you like traveling?

Interviewee: not a lot. Once, 2 times per year

Interviewer: How long are your trips?

Interviewee: About a week.

Interviewer: Who you prefer traveling with?

Interviewee: My friend or boyfriend.

Interviewer: Are you interested in traveling alone?

Interviewee: I prefer traveling with my friends

Interviewer: When did you come to Thailand?

Interviewee: 3 years ago

Interviewer: How was your experience in Thailand? What kind of activities you did?

Interviewee: I visited my friends, Went to Bangkok, ChiangMai, KonKet, Pattaya. I went shopping a lot and visit universities. Other places: only visit friends, nothing much, went to the beach, try out food.

Interviewer: Did you do sports when you traveling?

Interviewee: No. I have not tried those.

Interviewer: What about hiking?

Interviewee: To be honest I am not good at sports so I didn't do any activities when travel

Interviewer: Do you familiar with the term adventure tourism?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: when you travel, did you use professional services?

Interviewee: I will do it by myself and ask my friends there. They can be my guide.

Interviewer: How would you describe Vietnam's tourism destination now in your opinion?

Interviewee: In my opinion, Vietnam is a beautiful country for tourism. The food is the most attractive thing for me.

Interviewer: Do you think Vietnam is a touristic destination other than other places that you have visited?

Interviewee: I don't know how to say

Interviewer: Do you think visiting Vietnam will be very similar to visiting other South East Asian countries: (Thailand, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Timor-Leste)

Interviewee: In my opinion, I think Vietnam is very similar to Thailand. I think for most Chinese, they cannot distinguish between the countries in South East Asia. For Chinese people I think both Thailand and Vietnam are the same. However, it also depends a lot on where people live in China because China is very big country and that which city or province, they live in can affect their knowledge about Vietnam, affect their belief, behaviour, and interests. It is very hard to say.

Interviewer: Is Vietnam a famous destination for Chinese?

Interviewee: I think it's famous. I think most of Chinese know the country, it's close to China.

Interviewer: Do you prefer famous or not famous places?

Interviewee: I think more famous because there is more information available, safer and convenient. I am afraid of going to places that unfamiliar.

Interviewer: Do you mind if the destination only has limited types of food (only local food)?

Interviewee: I think in my opinion if I travel to some place, I will try the local food. It's one of the important reasons why I want to travel.

Interviewer: What kind of accommodation you would prefer when traveling?

Interviewee: I prefer living in hostel because of the price. I have my own room but cheap.

Interviewer: What do you think about the idea of supporting sustainable tourism in rural areas

Interviewee: I think good idea, help the local develop economy

Interviewer: Do you think that this idea is attracted to the Chinese tourists coming to Vietnam?

Interviewee: I think it's a good idea, but you have to build up the infrastructure. Actually, people don't care about the big cities or not they care about the infrastructure in the destination.

Interviewer: Do you know the term sustainable tourism? How would you describe it?

Interviewee: I do not know much.

Interviewer: What transportation you normally use to travel?

Interviewee: Railway, Flight.

Interviewer: Would you prefer famous destination or non famous destination?

Interviewee: I would prefer travel to famous cities

Interviewer: Do you like places that have more tourists or less tourists?

Interviewee: I prefer travel to a city that have a lot of travellers, but I try my best to live like a local. I will avoid traveling by group.

Interviewer: Do you think the young generation in China have the same mind set as you?

Interviewee: I think it depends on where they come from a lot because I grow up in big city in China.

Interviewer: Do you prefer a covid-safe destination more?

Interviewee: I think I want to travel to safe place.

Interviewer: ok thank you!

Transcript E: Interview with a German traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself? (name, age, gender, job, education level)?
Interviewee: I'm German, 24, student bachelor's degree.
Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?
Interviewee: No.
Interviewer: Are you interested in adventure tourism?
Interviewee: Yes, of course I am interested in adventure tourism
Interviewer: Do you participated in any activities when travelling?
Interviewee: Well, when I'm traveling, I do activities like hiking, canoeing, mountain biking
Interviewer: What is your favorite activity when travelling among these?
Interviewee: Hiking or trekking
Interviewer: When doing hiking, would you prefer non-touristic or touristic destination?
Interviewee: Non-touristic for sure. I want to get away from all the other tourists
Interviewer: What elements of the destination you feel interested in when going for hike?
Interviewee: beautiful nature, scenery, and things I cannot see here. There not so many nature attractions in Germany. Culture is also interesting. So, if there is a destination that can combine those elements then I think I would be interested in it.
Interviewer: Do you think it would be better if the destination offers you more activities to do when hiking? For example: Kayaking, stand up paddling...
Interviewee: oh yes. For sure. I do not necessarily go hiking only but a combination of activities.
Interviewer: When you travel, do you normally use professional services such as tour guides, tour operators?
Interviewee: I think it depends on the destination. In Europe, I think I will go alone and look for independent businesses but if I go to Vietnam, I think I will use these services to book in advance.
Interviewer: What images do you have about Vietnam as a travel destination?
Interviewee: *I would say it's new for me*. Especially when you compared to Thailand or Indonesia, Vietnam is definitely not touristic I would say.
Interviewer: Do you think the number of tourists at a destination will affect your experience?
Interviewee: Definitely, I think I would prefer if it's away from any tourists massive and not surrounded by the tourists. I think as soon as you are surrounded by the tourists you cannot enjoy the destination much anymore. Or I at least.
Interviewer: Do you prefer visiting destination that are famous or not-so famous?
Interviewee: I like both actually. I would like to have a mix of both. Like maybe 2 days in the famous destination and then the rest would be in a less famous destination. If I really have to choose, I will go to non-touristic destination.
Interviewer: Do you know the term sustainable tourism?
Interviewee: Yes
Interviewer: Would you call yourself a responsible tourist?
Interviewee: Oh.hm. I don't know. I would like to but... I try to be responsible as much as possible like using local products and stuffs, but I still sometimes cannot do everything. But I always try my best to be responsible.
Interviewer: Some questions regarding the Covid situation. If you have a chance to travel now, would you consider more a covid-safe destination?
Interviewee: Yes, for sure.
Interviewer: What kind of accommodation you prefer when travelling?
Interviewee: I would like to stay with locals to learn more about their way of living. Or otherwise, I would prefer something not a hotel but more of an accommodation, cottages, apartment... but not Airbnb.
Interviewer: Do you like the idea of supporting tourism in rural areas?
Interviewee: Yes, I think it helps them financially sustainable but also help tourists get to know the countryside.

Interviewer: What form of tourism do you think is suitable for the rural destinations to develop?

Interviewee: I would say adventure tourism is good for these. I don't know so much about volunteer tourism and I wouldn't do it. But I would say adventure tourism or nature tourism, culture tourism kind of thing.

Interviewer: That is all the question. Thank you so much for your participation.

Transcript F: Interview with a British traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself in a brief (name, age, gender, job, education level)

Interviewee: I come from England, I'm 28, I'm a teacher

Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?

Interviewee: Yes, until last year I was living in Hanoi, I lived there for four years working as a teacher there as well.

Interviewer: Is Vietnam in the list as one of your favorite countries? And for what reasons? Maybe tell the reason why you moved to Vietnam.

Interviewee: I just decided to move there because I had a friend there. After living there, it was definitely my favorite place for holiday and live. As soon as I can I want to come back there at least for my holiday.

Interviewer: What are those places that you travelled in Vietnam?

Interviewee: I have been in a motorbike trip around the country. I went to the North and then down to the South. I have been to Ha Tinh actually. And then Da Nang, and Dalat, Ho Chi Minh. And then after that short holiday to Vung Tau, Ha Long Bay, Places outside of Hanoi: Mai Chau, Moc Chau.

Interviewer: What about the middle part of Vietnam? Have you ever been there?

Interviewee: I have been to Phong Nha, quite close to Ha Tinh. I have been always travelling, only few days in the centre.

Interviewer: Did you go by Motorbike?

Interviewee: Yes, I have been to everywhere by motorbike.

Interviewer: What part of Vietnam you interested in when you were traveling there? (mountainous area in the North or beaches and bigger cities in the South for example)

Interviewee: I think everything has positive and negative parts. After the trip, me and my friends were telling that the North part was the most beautiful, especially driving in the North was the best part. But I also enjoy going back to the center as well because it is not so cold there, better weather. The South not so much because it's too hot in the South. It's fun in Ho Chi Minh and Mui Ne. But I think it's too hot for me and I'm not a fan of beaches.

Interviewer: Have you ever been to any other Asian countries other than Vietnam?

Interviewee: Thailand, Cambodia, India.

Interviewer: Do you think Vietnam is a famous destination to British people? How you compare the popularity as a travel destination to other countries in Asia?

Interviewee: I think Vietnam is a famous destination to British people. However, I think Thailand is more famous as a tourism destination because it is more accessible, more tourists.

Interviewer: Who did you travel with?

Interviewee: Mostly with friends. 2,3,4 people. Or other times large group of friends get a flight to Danang.

Interviewer: What is the normal length of the trips?

Interviewee: Normally would be during my holiday, 1 month normally because of my job

Interviewer: Did you own a motorbike or rent a motorbike for the trips?

Interviewee: Both. Sometimes I rent so that I have better quality motorbike. For example: Hue-Hoi An

Interviewer: What kind of activities you normally do when you travel in Vietnam?
Interviewee: Some kind of hiking, motorbiking, trying different food in places.
Interviewer: Do you mind trying out new different food in Vietnam?
Interviewee: Yes, for sure. Good restaurants with friends are good.
Interviewer: Would you prefer travel to famous places or less-known places?
Interviewee: I would say.
Interviewer: Are you interested in doing water-related activities?
Interviewee: Swimming, Yes. But I don't spend much time on the beach. SUP and Kayaking I like these as well.
Interviewer: Do you use professional services when you travelled?
Interviewee: I never did no. But maybe a tour guide would help me to find a better place for hike.
Interviewer: How would you describe the Vietnam's tourism now in your opinion?
Interviewee:
Interviewer: Do you mind if the destinations are touristic?
Interviewee: I would prefer less touristic places. And if the destination if very touristic then I would say that I'm not the biggest fan. I think one place that I will say I didn't enjoy because of tourism is Ho Chi Minh because there were so many people and not so many things to see in Ho Chi Minh.
Interviewer: Do you feel Ho Chi Minh city has a similar vibe to Thailand?
Interviewee: Yes. Bui Vien Street.
Interviewer: Do you know the term sustainable tourism?
Interviewee: I think yes.
Interviewer: Would you describe yourself as a responsible tourist?
Interviewee: I think yes. It is hard to say but I always try to communicate with locals, and I like doing so. I also respect the environment. So, I think in general yes.
Interviewer: What kind of accommodation you prefer when travelling?
Interviewee: Homestay so that I can get to know more about the locals.
Interviewer: What about hostels?
Interviewee: I do not enjoy it that much.
Interviewer: Do you think a safe-covid destination would attract you more or not?
Interviewee: I do not think about that much. I live in England so there are quite many places to go to get a test, so I do not worry.
Interviewer: OK thank you so much I think that is all of my questions. Thank you!
Transcript G: Interview with a French traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself? (name, age, gender, job, education level)
Interviewee: I'm 22 years old. East of France. Master's degree in business school, female.
Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?
Interviewee: No
Interviewer: Is Vietnam in the list as one of your next countries to travel?
Interviewee: Yes of course because when I came to Thailand, I have planned to come and visit Vietnam but because of the Corona that my plan was cancelled. But I wanted to.
Interviewer: Where have you been travelling in Asia?
Interviewee: Only Thailand. 2 times.
Interviewer: Do you have a lot of knowledge about the destinations in Vietnam?
Interviewee: Can you explain the questions more?
Interviewer: Do you know where are the locations that you would like to visit?

Interviewee: Ah no. I only prepare before I go. But I know about the rice field, nature, waterfall. Very different from Europe.

Interviewer: Which part of Vietnam you feel interested in the most? (North,)

Interviewee: I will prefer the mountain and the North. But most of the people would have chosen the beaches.

Interviewer: Do you think Vietnam is a famous destination to French?

Interviewee: I think people do not know a lot about Asia in general but it's very special trip because not everyone dares to travel so far because of economic background and everything but it is very special destination

Interviewer: Do you think that as a French, among Asian countries, Vietnam's tourism is doing good or not?

Interviewee: Yes, I think so. French people when thinking about countries to visit in Asia would think about Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Bali- Indonesia

Interviewer: Who do you normally travel with?

Interviewee: Friends.

Interviewer: Do you like travelling alone

Interviewee: it's not my favorite because I want to have security and I want to share my experience with people who I love

Interviewer: What kind of activities do you normally do when you travel?

Interviewee: I visit of culture old things like museums, temples, but I'm also fond of sports: doing paddle, hiking, climbing, kayaking...

Interviewer: Do you use professional services such as tour guides or travel guides when you travel?

Interviewee: I like being on my own. Booking by myself. But using a tour guide could benefit me more as the guides know more about the destination than me.

Interviewer: Do you prefer online booking or contact directly to the accommodation?

Interviewee: I like to contact directly with the person because I do not trust you online. I also feel more comfortable living in a place more similar to Europe.

Interviewer: Did you use these services recently when you travel in Thailand?

Interviewee: Yes. We booked and had everything listed in it. And we see destination and improvise and ask local people for our trip. I think it's amazing.

Interviewer: How would you describe Vietnam's tourism destination now from your thoughts?

Interviewee: For me it is not the same as Thailand. For me Thailand is mass tourism. That's why I want to come to Vietnam, less developed in term of tourism, more nature, less shallow experience. I have seen photos of Thailand in normal times, all the people on the beaches. This is not the tourism that I like. I don't like to share the view with thousand of people.

Interviewer: How do you feel about the tourism in Thailand

Interviewee: I think we are having a good time traveling because there are not so many tourists. But it's also bad that the services do not open. But I do not like that the activities are so limited: drinking, partying... and the nature is affected a lot for example all the corals. I prefer friendly tourism.

Interviewer: Do you know the term sustainable tourism.

Interviewee: yes.

Interviewer: would you call yourself a responsible tourist?

Interviewee: I think I am not the best but I'm doing things in my best: respect culture, environment.

Interviewer: What kind of accommodation you prefer when traveling?

Interviewee: depends on the mood. For ex: camping in France. In Thailand we have done a lot of Airbnb

Interviewer: would you like to experience living with locals.

Interviewee: Yes, I think it would be very interesting. I have planned to try it in Thailand, but I do not know how to and also, I was busy with other things.

Interviewer: What do you think about the idea of supporting adventure tourism in rural destination?

Interviewee: I think this is going to be a trend in the future when people care about the eco things. And help developing and supporting the area

Interviewer: Do you think a safe-covid destination will attract you more than non-safe-covid destination?

Interviewee: I don't care that much.

Interviewer: ok. That is all questions. Thank you for participating.

Transcript H: Interview with a Russian traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself? (name, age, gender, job, education level)

Interviewee: I come from Russia, 20, Student

Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?

Interviewee: No, but I would love to

Interviewer: Do you have much knowledge about the destinations in Vietnam?

Interviewee: Well not many I know many because of you. I saw many photos about Vietnam and things like the railway in Hanoi, the traditional clothes, But not so much.

Interviewer: Have you ever travelled to any other Asian countries yet?

Interviewee: Korea and India

Interviewer: Who prefer travelling with?

Interviewee: Friends

Interviewer: What do you think about adventure tourism?

Interviewee: Yes, I like it. I enjoy but probably not the whole time of the traveling. But I would like to talk about the Russian perspective as well. Russian people would like to stay more in a tourist place, prefer softer activities like laying down on the beach. But in my case, I need something half and half: snowboarding, hiking, more active, and then after that spend night in a spa or relaxed place. I would not enjoy staying in a tent somewhere in the forest. I would still prefer hotel and having my own place. Half and half: I like adventure but not full time of your vacation.

Interviewer: What kind of activities did you do when you were traveling?

Interviewee: mountain ski, in summer I would prefer more relaxed: going to the beach or hiking. Or going to see a nice view of the city. But for me adventure activities come more from winter destinations. Kayaking, diving, surfing is those I would like to try.

Interviewer: Do you use professional services such as tour guides or travel guides when you travel?

Interviewee: I am personally not. I prefer asking from friends. But most Russians do that yes. They prefer going for a tour operator.

Interviewer: How would you describe Vietnam tourism now? Is it famous destination to Russians?

Interviewee: I think not so much because Russians don't know much about the place.

Interviewer: Do you think Vietnam is a touristic destination?

Interviewee: yes. I think tourism there is quite developed.

Interviewer: Do you prefer famous destination or non famous destination?

Interviewee: I think famous, but in a way that I can easily find the information of the destination. And I also care about safety and other factors.

Interviewer: Do you prefer big cities more or rural areas?

Interviewee: I think big cities more because there are more things to see and do. But I don't mind going to small cities. But I would prefer more visiting big cities first and then go to rural areas. Not the other way.

Interviewer: Would you call yourself a responsible tourist?

Interviewee: I would say yes. I respect the countries that I visit. Try to learn their behaviour and not acting crazy. I try to do the activities that the locals do.

Interviewer: what type of accommodation you prefer when travelling

Interviewee: Airbnb- cheap, hotels. Hostels sometimes maybe. Living with the local is a good idea but I think its hard to find, safety also a problem.

Interviewer: Would you consider a safe-covid destination more when traveling?

Interviewee: I do not mind.

Interviewer: thank you for participating.

Transcript I: Interview 8: Interview with a Finnish traveller

Interviewer: Can you introduce yourself? (nationality, age, gender, job, education level)

Interviewee: Finnish, 26, Male, student, master's degree

Interviewer: Have you ever been to Vietnam?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: How was your experience in Vietnam?

Interviewee: Positive, interesting, varieties in nature and cities in Vietnam.

Interviewer: Where have you been in Vietnam?

Interviewee:Hanoi, Halong bay, Hochiminh, Nha Trang, Dalat, Hoi An.

Interviewer: Do you think Vietnam is famous as a travel destination to Finnish when coming to Asia?

Interviewee: Yes. I think Thailand is more famous but that is changing.

Interviewer: Who do you prefer traveling with?

Interviewee: Friends and girlfriend.

Interviewer: What do you think is adventure tourism? (please don't use google search, just answer as you think

IntervieweeL I think AT has meanings it can be adventures like activities, extreme sports or also means that you don't plan your trip much but just go and see what you find.

Interviewer: What kind of activities you do when traveling? (shopping, sports and activities, visit museums.)

Interviewee: Museums, visit famous location, drive around to see the landscape and nature. I don't like shopping that much.

Interviewer: Do you prefer an active travel or more relaxed travel?

Interviewee: Currently active travel because I want to see more things than stay in hotel rooms and that requires you to go and see various places.

Interviewer: Do you use professional service such as travel guides or tour operators when travelling?

Interviewee: No. Usually not but if there is a history trip or special trips then I use those but normally I do not use these services.

Interviewer: How would you describe Vietnam tourism destinations now? (touristic? Non-touristic? Beautiful? Famous? Authentic culture? Etc.)

Interviewee: Authentic culture yes, some touristic areas like cities but if you go out from the cities you find many non touristic places as well which I enjoy more.

Interviewer: Do you prefer city destinations or rural destinations?

Interviewee: Rural.

Interviewer: Does the number of tourists affects on your experience?

Interviewee: Depends on the place I'm visiting.
Interviewer: Do you prefer visiting destinations that are more famous or not famous?
Interviewee: Both.
Interviewer: Would you call yourself a responsible tourist?
Interviewee: Yes. I care the environment I don't harm the nature or the people living there I don't affect their lives with my actions.
Interviewer: What kind of accommodation you would prefer when travel? (hotel? Hostel? Airbnb? Living with local?)
Interviewee: Depends. Bigger group: hostels. Chill: hotels.
Interviewer: Do you like Vietnamese food? Are you interested in experiencing local food in Vietnam?
Interviewee: Yes, at some level. I am not huge foodie.
Interviewer: What do you think about the idea of supporting sustainable tourism in rural areas?
Interviewee: Sounds good.
Interviewer: Do you have any recommendations for the kind of activities that the city should consider developing? (for example: volunteer tourism, community-based tourism, hiking related activities, water related activities...)
Interviewee: I think they should embrace the tourists with activities that benefits the environment.
Interviewer: Do you think the Corona epidemic will affect your travel behaviour later on? (For example: prefer more rural destinations instead of big cities...)
Interviewee: I do not think so.
Interviewer: Do you prefer a safe-covid destination more than a non-safe-covid destination?
Interviewee: Yes
Interviewer: How important it is for you to have a deeper connection with the locals and the destination where you travel to? (rate from 1-5)
Interviewees: 3

Corona pandemic

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus. People got infected by the virus experience mild to moderate illness (World Health Organization, 2020). During 2020 and 2021, most countries in the world decided to close the borders to prevent the spreading of Corona virus. Vietnam was one of the countries that closed the borders to commercial flights and non-Vietnamese citizens to the country. For this reason, the author could not visit Ha Tinh city.