

***CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY***

# **THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE INBOUND INTERNATIONAL VISITORS IN THEIR DESTINATION CHOICE TO VIETNAM**

by

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# ABSTRACT

There is no doubt of the development and growth of tourism in this modern age. Despite the bad effect of global economy downturn, tourism still signs to be well recovered and performed. This is not exaggerated according to what this industry has been obtaining so far. As reported by WTTC, in 2012, tourism contributed to world GDP of US\$2.1 trillion, grew by 3%, supporting 101 million jobs. This growth was faster than the growth of world economy as whole, than a number of other big industries such as financial and business services, retail and manufacturing. If taking account of all direct, indirect and induced impacts of tourism, the numbers were even much higher. In addition, its growth forecast for 2013 and next 10 years showed positive signs. At the same time Vietnam's tourism industry also showed a growth of 11% which was equivalent to 6.7 million international tourist arrivals to Vietnam. However, in spite of the pretty high speed growth, Vietnam tourism industry is considered to be unsustainable, unstable and not commensurate with its potential, especially its competitiveness is still low compared to many countries in the region. To find out the problems as well as the solutions for them, the research was made in order to explore the implicit reasons that make people decide to travel, as well as factors that influence international visitors' choice of destination to Vietnam. By conducting an online survey, which targets two groups of visitors who have come to Vietnam and who have not; and interviews carried on via phone and internet video chat, the results were analysed by using quantitative and quantitative analyses. The findings then identified six major factors that mostly affected visitors consisting of communication, attractions, services – amenities and facilities, accessibility, distinctive local features, psychological and physical environment. The relations between socio-demographic elements such as age, gender, income...and these factors were also defined, together with the effectiveness of internet use and word-of-mouth impacts mentioned. At the end, SWOT analysis was made to specify advantage and disadvantage of Vietnam tourism situation. With findings found, recommendations were made accordingly. The research can base a premise for coming researches in the future, which can be aimed in destination branding or service quality or customer satisfaction.

**Key words:** Tourism, Tourist, Visitor, Travel destination, Destination choice

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
IUOTO	International Union of Official Travel Organizations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VNAT	Vietnam National Administration of Tourism
WOM	Word of mouth
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council



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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter of introduction is to provide the background information of Vietnamese tourism and its circumstances with main purpose to bring insight of necessary information required for whole research. It also gives explanation for why the topic was chosen by researcher. Problem statement was made accordingly. Spontaneously, along with those, previous knowledge of destination choice will be mentioned. Based on this, further aims and objectives of the research are explained below. The different research questions are further framed based on the study which must be answered at the end of the research. At last but not the least the limitation found while doing research study will be highlighted.

### **2. Rationale of the topic**

Despite the gloomy scenario of global economy recession since 2008, tourism industry has been struggling well to get recovered and even keeps its track on moving forward. So does tourism industry in Vietnam. Stated by Secretary-General of UNWTO, Taleb Rifai, Vietnam has done quite well in targeting tourism as a key contribution to its general economy by implementing appropriate policies and strategies. The travel and industry accounted for 4.3% of Vietnam's GDP and generated 3.7% of jobs of all other sectors in 2011 (WTTC). It seems to be a remarkable number adding to the country's economic growth. It is, however, still not a really good sign as the number has been decreased from 9.3% of GDP of 2010. Moreover, the rivalry pressure comes up from regional countries such as Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Philippines, which have always been paying really strong attention to foster and promote their tourism sector. Meanwhile, other countries in Indochina sub-region (which include Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos), have started to speed up their growth in this sector, for instance, Cambodia targeted to reach 20% growth in tourism while the number of inbound visitor arrivals in Laos increased up to 14% in 2012 (appendix 1 and 2). In addition, the new tourism policies which have been becoming more open and friendly welcoming more visitors to discover, such as Bhutan, also enhanced the industry competitiveness in the region.

Realizing the potentials and crucial role of travel and tourism industry in the contribution to Vietnamese economy, together with high competitions from nearby tourism industries, the

researcher found that it is quite important and necessary to conduct a research to acquire a panorama of Vietnam tourism in general in terms of its strengths and weaknesses through the discovery of the factors affecting destination choices of international visitors to Vietnam. Based on the results of this evaluation process, the appropriate solutions and strategies would be proposed to provide a new direction for Vietnamese tourism development in the near future.

### **3. Problem statement**

Having been considered one of the most attractive and leading destinations in ASEAN region, Vietnam has probably falling asleep in its achievement without realising that, its success is just temporary. If it stops putting efforts, it will be very easy to be got over by other countries which are at same level, or even worse, weaker and less developed countries can be totally overcoming it one day. Moreover, unreasonable changes in policies, together with bureaucracy in tourism management have caused minus points to Vietnam tourism in the stage, and in the point of view of visitors, compared to neighbour countries. It is now time for Vietnam to get up, have a self-review and self-evaluation, based on appraisals of others, in order to learn of what it has been accomplished, what are its weaknesses, and what can be changed for improvements, so that it can remain and expand its position in the tourism industry, in the region and in the world stage.

### **4. Background**

Vietnam is situated in the east side of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, sharing the common borders with China and Laos in the north, Cambodia in the west. Stretching from the Tonkin Gulf to the Gulf of Thailand, Vietnam is endowed with about-3444-km coastline long, with many beautiful beaches and archipelagos. Moreover, apart from beaches its landscapes are also varied from forests and mountain areas to rivers and delta, for Vietnam is covered by hilly terrain and big rivers from the north and the south. This brings big contributions to landscape attractions of Vietnam. About culture and language, there consist 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam, in which Kinh people are majority group (84%), while the ethnic minorities scattered in the mountainous areas and highlands. The climate also varies between regions. These all factors have helped to create rich and diverse background to Vietnam tourism potentials.

Regarding potentials, in terms of cultural and historical heritage, Vietnam possesses a number of historical sites, architectural monuments and buildings constructed in French colonized period. The conquests, the colonials and the political intervention of different countries, like Chinese, French, American, etc. along Vietnamese history have made the diversity in culture expressed through architecture, art, handicrafts, music, dance, costumes, cuisine, religious customs and festivals. The advantage of natural beauty attractions combined with such cultural resources have founded a strong background for Vietnam to create and develop tourism by providing unique products and high quality of service at destinations.

Vietnamese economy in general, including tourism industry has been growing remarkably since the United States decided to remove the 20-year trade embargo against Vietnam in January 1994, which had paved the way for Vietnam's economic development in many aspects which the tourism industry was one of amongst (Page, 2009). Nonetheless, with such benefits, whether Vietnam can be able to take advantages and perform well in the region, or even further, in the world stage or not, it is a different article to discuss about.

Reflecting the practical circumstance of Vietnam compared to several countries in ASEAN, according to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) presenting at the conference "Vietnam tourism brand positioning", tourist arrivals and tourism revenue of Vietnam in 2012 were much lower than the three countries in the region, which are Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Specifically, the number of visitors, Vietnam reached 6,847,678 arrivals, which are three times lower than in Thailand, nearly 3.7 times lower than Malaysia and almost 1.6 times lower than Singapore. Regarding revenues, travel Vietnam reached 6,610 billion, while Thailand is 30,926 billion; Malaysia is 19,797 billion, and Singapore is 19.380 billion (based on the statistics of the World Bank). In addition, in the meantime, there comes up the considerably speedy growth from the two neighbour tourism industries, which are Laos and Cambodia. These two countries have been considered lagging behind Vietnam in many aspects. However, what they achieved in their tourism industries should be minded. In 2012, Cambodia welcomed 3.58 million international tourists, increasing by 24.4 percentage compared to the previous year (data from Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia), while Laos also proved its progression

by reaching 3.1 million arrivals in the same year, increasing up to 14 percentage compared to the year of 2011 (The Vientiane Times).

In such situation, there is necessity to have an awareness of considering strong and weak points of tourism in Vietnam, as well as deliberating the significance of destination choice awareness from visitors. Regarding the choice of destination, there are plenty of studies from many researchers who have noticed the role of choice sets of destination in decision-making process in tourism, some models have been sum up (Thompson and Cooper, 1979; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Um and Crompton, 1990; Moscardo, 1979). According to those, it is believed that travellers that build mind-set from choice sets helps them to arrange destination alternatives more efficiently with which they are aware, rather than processing lots of information from larger alternatives sources.

## **5. Aims and Objectives**

The research study is made with the aim of providing adequate background of knowledge, reliable information, and awareness which helps in opting Vietnam as choice of destination for visitors. It also aims to figure out what are the main factors that encourage inbound tourism and help International visitors who have come or intend to visit Vietnam in near future. Visitors are encouraged by making them aware of landscape attraction, safety, transportation, accommodation facilities at reasonable price, high quality of service, professional knowledgeable friendly team and tour guides. Thus it helps in estimating what are the main factors or reason which influences visitor destination choice. One of the important aims is to provide recommendation accordingly such as develop brand value through social engagements and use of domestic resources in national tourism development.

Based on those, the research objectives have been specified as following:

- To define the tourism, its categories and inbound international visitor
- To figure out implicit reasons of visitors' decision to travel
- To find out and evaluate the factors influencing their choice of destination
- To point out advantages and disadvantages of tourism in Vietnam
- To present the findings of the study
- To make useful and relevant recommendations for tour package maker and destination promoter

## **6. Research questions**

In order to reach the research aims and objectives, also for an orientation and target of the whole coursework, research questions as below must be answered once it comes to conclusion:

- What are the factors that influence inbound international tourists in their destination choice to Vietnam?
- How do these factors influence their final decisions?
- What are the solutions for Vietnam tourism in getting customers' attractions which enable them to choose Vietnam to be one of their favourite destinations?

## **7. Limitations of the research**

Limitations are unavoidable when a research is conducted although research work had been cautiously planned. Thus, there is no exception for this coursework. Limitations are valid due to various reasons. There appeared lacks of time, materials, tangible and intangible supports, such as money, data sources access... Also, survey has been conducted in a small group and hence participants are comparatively low in numbers with less diverse culture, origin, language, occupation and region. This is because timelines were strict and funding was limited. In addition to it, survey for already visited tourist and survey for potential tourist was conducted by the researcher only hence certain degree of subjectivity experience can be established.

## **8. Summary**

Vietnam has vast background potential in order to develop and sustain tourism but at the same time it faces a tough competition from its neighbouring countries. This is the reason why aims and objective has been formulated and research question has been developed in this chapter which need to be answered in the end of the research, with the aim of promoting Vietnam as tourism destination, by finding out factors that affect visitors' choice of destination, and Based on research made and problem factors, solution are suggested that will help visitor to influence their final decision in choosing Vietnam as their favourite destination.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter of literature review is structured and written with the aim of bringing appropriate and relevant theories which enable the readers to have a general knowledge or some concepts related to the research, in order to help them to get a clearer understanding of the coursework. Here there are several theoretical models by previous researchers will be described, based on which conceptual model is derived for visitor's destination choice which highlights visitors motives (extrinsic and intrinsic) and how destination image plays as a driving key in pull factor. Internal inputs, external inputs, role of media and social media as information sources are explained which helps in shaping visitor destination choice. These are all basic and architectural blocks which are keys to influence visitor opinions and help them in making choice. Situation influence is also explained which depending on various parameters impacts vacation decision making choice.

### **2. Tourism and the terms**

Since the limitation of time, words and main purpose of the research, the researcher is not concentrating on the long developing history of tourism or specifying any types of tourism but the general tourism.

#### **2.1. Definition**

Along with human evolution, tourism has been growing and changing in its concepts, purposes and types. It is nowadays no more a phenomenon but a booming industry all over the world. The development of tourism can be traced back to the ancient civilization of Greece, which based the concept of tourism through leisure activities, such as sporting events called Olympics Games. Tourism is nowadays simply understood as the activity“ encompassing all travel with the exception of commuting” (Gunn, 1994),or “a social phenomenon which involves the movement of people to various destinations and their (temporary) stay there” (Sharpley, 2002), while the term “travel” is not just simply a movement or journey from one place to another (Collinsdictionary.com). Travel in tourism refers to the activities of travellers, who move between different geographic locations, for any purpose and duration (Laimer, UNWTO, 2010).



However, tourism is not only limited within travelling but also consisting of “the activity that occurs when people travel”. There is a link, but also includes differences between travel, tourism, recreation and leisure. “All tourism involves travel, yet not all travel is tourism. All vacation travel involves recreation, yet not all tourism is recreation. All tourism occurs during leisure time, but not all leisure time is spent on tourism activities.”(Mill and Morrison, 2002:1). According to a definition provided by UN-WTO, 2010, tourism comprises “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.”

Nevertheless, to keep pace up with the constantly changing trend, along with the development of related industries, tourism now “encompasses everything from the planning of the trip, the travel to the destination area, the stay itself, the return and the reminiscences about it afterwards”, it also includes “the activities the traveller undertakes as part of the trip, the purchases made, and the interactions that occur between host and guest in the destination area”. In a far broader vision, tourism is now not only including temporary movement of people out of their resident area to outside destination but also summing of all activities and impacts that occur, in terms of interaction amongst relevant elements such as tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities (Mill and Morrison, 2002; Macintosh and Goeldner, 1986).

## **2.2. Tourists and visitors**

Normally, people usually misunderstand or even identify the terms “tourist” and “visitor” as same meaning which indicate people who do travelling. However, this is not true. The International Union of Official Travel Organizations (later the United Nations World Tourism Organization) had considered the recommendations and agreed to use the term “visitor” in United Nations’ Conference on International Travel and Tourism in 1963. “Visitor” has been since then defined as “any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited”. Also, according to UNWTO, visitor has been classed into two different types due to the staying duration of the visitor. The first type is known as “excursionist”, who is simply defined as “a person who goes for an excursion” (English Dictionary, n.d.). However, in travel tourism, it indicates “temporary visitor staying less than

24 hours". It also counts cruise traveller in, but excludes transit travellers. The second type is mentioned as "tourist". Tourist is basically defined as "one that makes a tour for pleasure or culture" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). It, however, identifies people who are classified as "temporary visitors staying at least 24 hours, whose purpose could be categorized as leisure (including all kinds of recreation, health, sport, holiday, study or religion) or business, family, mission or meeting."

To identify different types of visitors and travel and tourism pursued, WTO has classified them into five major different types, which are furnished below:

Domestic tourism refers to tourism taken by residents of that country within their own countries. People choose the tourist site within the country and travels around, or native of the country explore the places within the country of residence.

Inbound (international) tourism refers to international tourists who are non-residents travelling in a given country. The purpose of tourism can be business, pleasure or holiday. Here mode of transportation chosen is mostly by air and then few by sea, however, the movement between neighbour countries are preferably chosen such as coaches and trains.

Outbound (international) tourism: This refers to travel/visits made by the residents of one country to other countries. *In this type of tourism*, visitors travel from outside the financial territory of the country of reference to a non-resident country.

Internal tourism: is a combination of domestic and inbound tourism, refers to visits taken by residents and non-residents within the given country. In internal tourism, both actual resident and non-resident take trips within the economic zone of the country of reference. Internal tourism highlights total count of travellers within a county during course of time which ultimately reflects whether tourism inflow is going up or down.

National tourism: is a combination of domestic and outbound tourism. This tourism is taken by actual residents, within and outside the zone of country.

According to such concept, *inbound international visitors* mentioned within the research is aimed to group of people who are non-residents travelling to Vietnam, not regarding to less or more than 24 hours staying, for leisure purpose. Hence, in order to measure the growth of tourism industry in terms

of inbound tourism sector, the amounts of visitors would be counted based on arrivals of international visitors recorded by Customs at international airports or border gates.

### **3. Travel destination**

#### **3.1. Definition and relevant terms**

As indicated, tourism is inaccurately defined if there is lack of one of the two important elements, which are the journey to and the stay, including all activities at the destination of tourists (Cooper et al, 2008:12). Therefore, it is quite necessary to have a clearer awareness of destination, its used terms and role in tourism industry. According to Pike (2008), a destination is a geographical space in which a cluster of tourism resources exist, rather than a political boundary. It is also “a place at which visitors temporarily base themselves to participate in tourism related to interactions and activities” (Pike, 2008:26), where most of tourism activities take place at. It also forms a pillar in any modelling of the tourism system and has emerged as the fundamental unit of analysis in tourism (Pike, 2008, cited by Wang and Pizam, 2011:1)

#### **3.2. Destination category**

Destination category is mentioned with the aim of bringing more detailed information of different types of destination in tourism, which plays a vital part in visitor attractions would be introduced in coming part of the literature review. Categorized by ..., destination is sorted as followed:

Coastal tourism is a concept that refers to a wide variety of travel and entertainment industries taking place in coastal areas. Coastal tourism includes not only those entertainment activities such as sea boating, surfing, scuba diving, etc., but it also covers the development of infrastructure supporting this non-smoke business such as systems of motels, restaurants, recreational bars (Hall, 2005:258).

Rural tourism is a service industry which is related to the development and exploitation of tourism, recreational and leisure activities in rural areas, mostly those separated from urban cities. These areas can range from ordinary countryside to the national parks, big forests or even to the mountains where there are few people living (Hall, 2005:227).

Urban tourism is an industry which is known as available in most major cities in most countries. One advantage of urban tourism compared to some other sectors, such as coastal tourism or rural tourism

is that it can take advantage of the many benefits available from infrastructure in urban cities such as a relatively effective system of transportation, hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, amusement parks, etc. In addition, in urban cities visitors will generally find it fairly easy to access to other cities through the train and airport systems which are usually provided in metropolitan cities.

As the name implies, island tourism is the tourism developed in the islands. Unlike other types of tourism which are mostly present in the mainland, island tourism is a business that is cultivated in those islands isolated to the mainland, and this has brought it advantages and disadvantages. A special feature of the island that helps attract tourists is its isolation since tourists can come here to enjoy the tranquillity and peace it offers. However, it is the isolation that creates obstacles because when it is too remote from the mainland, it is also rather difficult to access. Additionally, a limited infrastructure available to islands also contributes to the island tourism.

#### **4. Destination choice**

Destination choice has been considered the core component among the complex and multifaceted travel decision making process, apart from other sub-decisions which comprises the final choice of the trip destination (Fesenmaier et al, 2006). That in order to understand what are the major reasons which make people decide to travel and the main factors which influence their choice of destination is quite uneasy but worthy to figure out as it has a critical significance in making and developing appropriate marketing strategies accordingly (Mc. Guiggan, Emerson and Glaser, 1995).

##### **4.1. Theoretical models of destination choice**

The decision to travel is a process of stages, in which it starts from the need arousal and ends with purchase-made and post-purchase behaviour (Chris et al, 2008:55). However, the end point of this process has to give out the answers for these following concerns to visitors:

- Why do they take the trip?
- When can they carry on the trip?
- How long do they want to spend for their trip?
- What is the budget?
- Who are they going with?
- Where do they want to go to?

- What are the activities they want to enjoy?
- How do they travel to the place?

Once these questions are answered, there will come up several options of place, which put them in situation of taking “selection of an option from two or more alternative choices” (Schiffman et al, 2008). These sorts of choices involved in attractions, accommodations, activities, namely tourism products and services which are displayed at the destinations. There are also many of other aspects related to the trip such as time availability, budget, season, etc. which lead travellers to consider, evaluate and eliminate all preferences and alternatives before making decision. Nonetheless, choosing an appropriate destination which meets all requirements seems to be uneasy and significant choice made when planning a trip. Based on those, destination choice can be simply defined as a process of choice making, taken by travellers, of selecting one destination amongst a number of alternatives, for the purpose of fulfilling the travel-related needs (Fesenmaier, 2006:17). Therefore, travellers’ choice of destination plays a vital role in the whole process of making plan for the trip. Amongst the subsequent decisions related to the trip-planning, it can be said that choice of destination is one of the first-decision made, and might cause affection to the others (Jeng and Fesenmaier, 2002).

#### **4.1.1. A model of destination choice by Woodside and Lysonski**

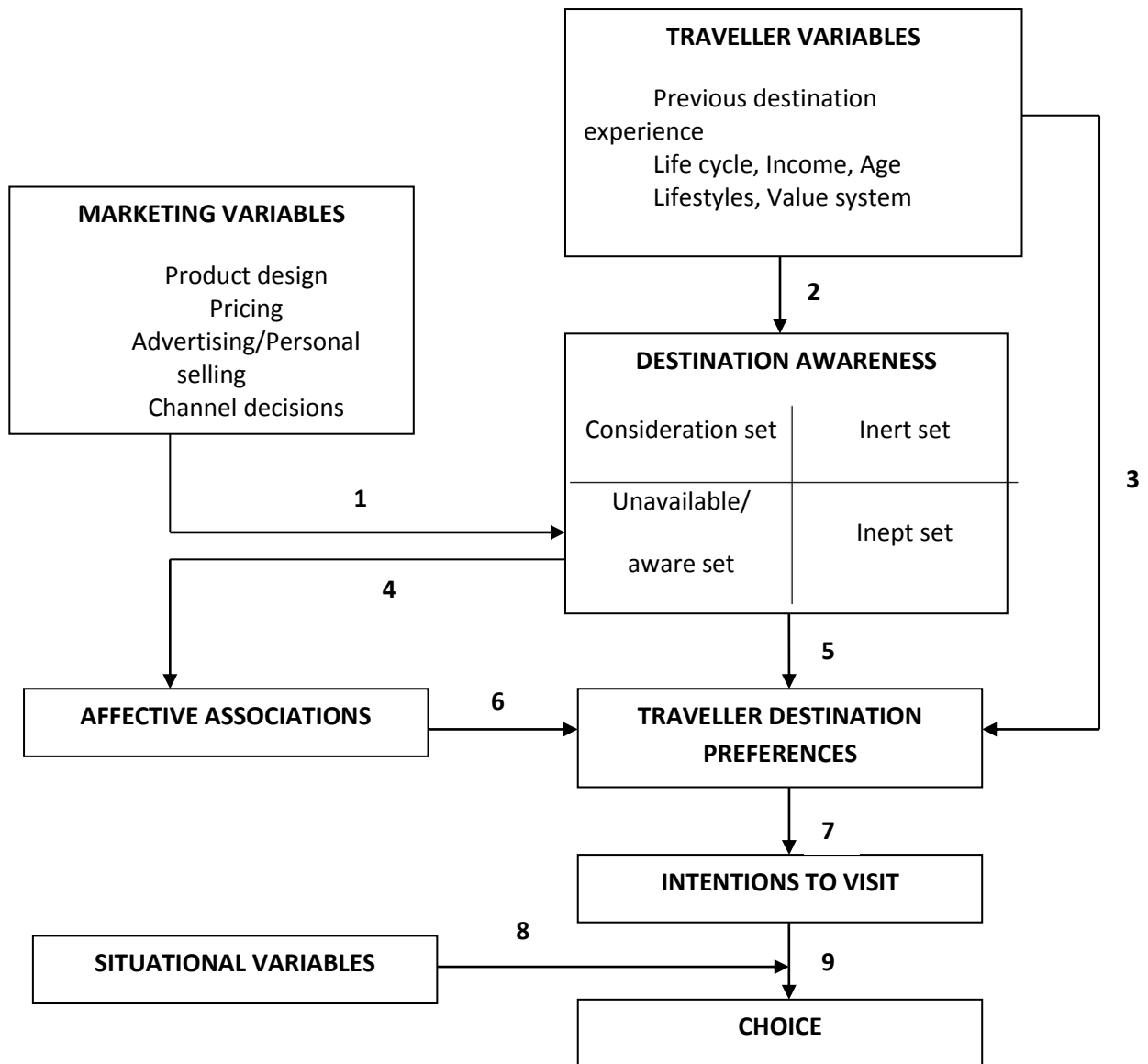
The existing literature defines in total destination choice making process by addressing important features of destination choice behaviour, for example- travel motivations and destination images.

A model developed by Woodside and Lysonski (1989) is treated as central role of perceptions and preferences for destination choice process. Model explains that final destination chosen for vacation is the result of number explicit and implicit decision made which moves forward from initial stage of destination awareness from which specific destination preference and travel intention is made. It also states destination choice actually visited on vacation may be different from travel intended due to any situation variables such as natural calamity or viral attack, etc. Along with this, it also depends on characteristics of tourist(s) such as their motivation, cultural belief, values and attitude. Characteristics of tourist s is also built on previous destination image, influence of marketing

strategies, own knowledge, experience and stimuli which comes out as negative, positive or neutral state for a given destination.

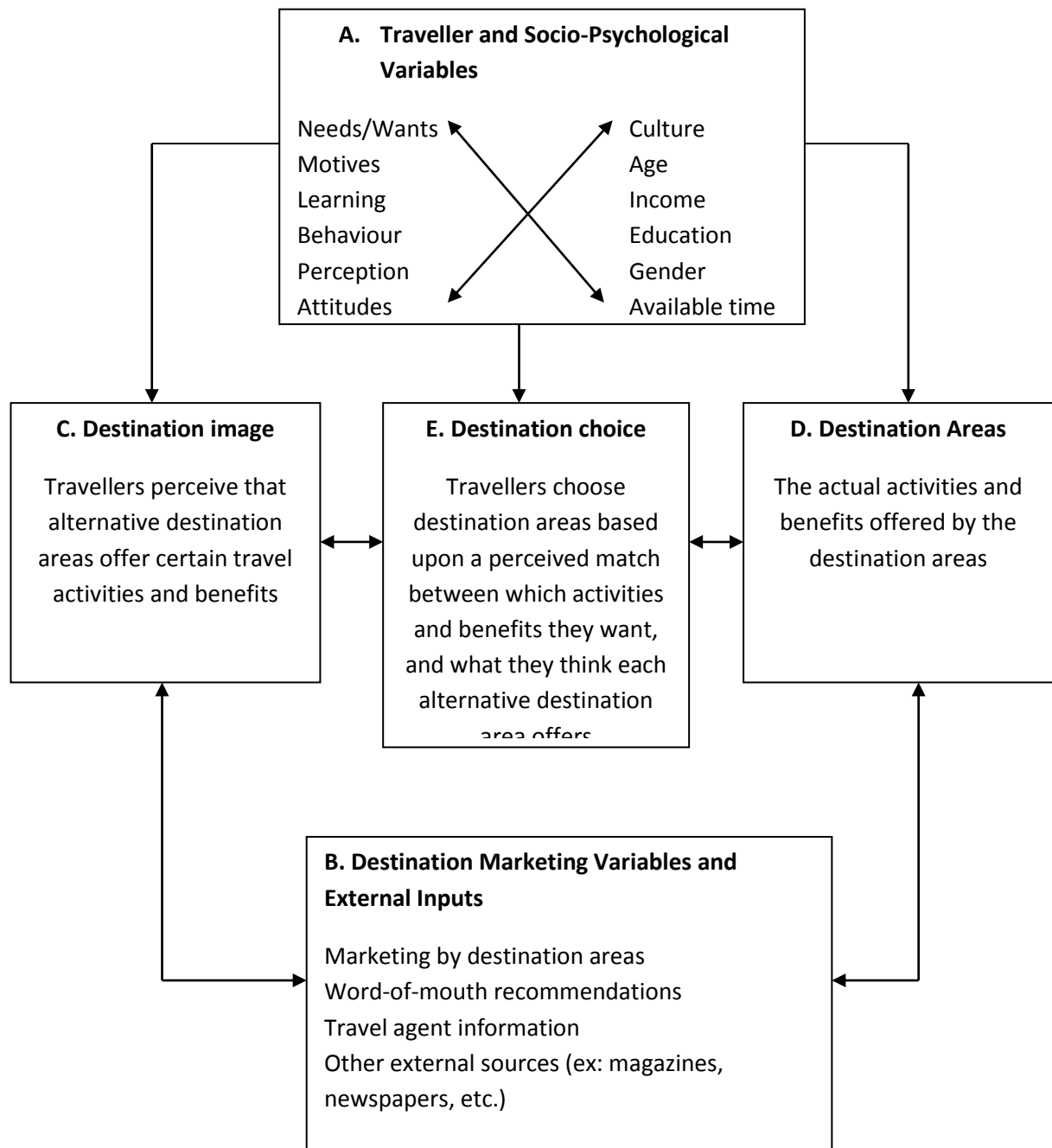
Woodside and Lysonski (1989) develop four such choice sets. The unavailable/known set of destination which tourists had information but they are out of consideration because of unavailability due one reason or another for ex-cost, visa, budget, restriction etc. The second set is inept set of destination choices for which Consumer/tourists has a negative mindset and is out of consideration during decision making process. Third set is inert destinations which are not linked with large positive and negative perception i.e neutral and hence neither attract nor deter. This leaves considering for forth choice set where tourist(s) consumer makes decision to consider in detail before making a final destination choice.

#### 4.1.2. A model of destination choice by Moscardo



**Figure 1: The Woodside and Lyonski model of destination choice**

Source: From Woodside, A. and Lyonski, S. (1989), 'A general model of traveler destination choice', Journal of Travel research,



**Figure 2: A Destination choice model based on activities and benefits**

Adapted from Moscardo, G., Morrison, A.M.s, Pearce, P.L., Lang, C.T., and O'Leary, J.T. (1996), Understanding vacation destination choice through travel motivation and activities, "Journals of Vacation Marketing", 2 (2), 109-122, cited in The Tourism system, Mill et al, 5<sup>th</sup>



This Figure provides a clear explanation on what are the important factors which helps in making a final destination choice of travellers. The model, provided by Moscardo (1996) is mainly focused on two major factors which lead people to their destination choice: destination image and destination area. If the destination image is the factor that reflects images perceived in the minds of travellers; the destination area, on the other hand, is the aspect reflecting the activities and the benefits that are provided by the actual destinations. But above all, both of these factors are impacted by internal and external inputs. In order to provide a better explanation, it has been further classified into five main views.

From common point of view, there are five main aspects mentioned, including traveller and socio-psychological variable, destination areas, images of destination areas, external inputs.

Variable A which is namely internal inputs standing for socio-psychological and personal variables of traveller. It contributes to tourist's mind building process by seeing and evaluating through pictures, images of destination areas offerings, presented in variable C. The practical details and benefits of a destination area in comparison to details enlisted, benefits of a certain destinations.

In regards to variable B, it is considered as external inputs and destination marketing variables. This variable helps travellers provide useful information and ideas about their upcoming destination by verbal ways, marketing, travel firms, and other public modes which in fact is a daily source of mass communication like magazines, newspapers, so on. This variable also in constructing destination images which contains activities and benefits, along with the actual activities as well as benefits. Travellers could rely on this external source for valuable information which finally helps in making an important decision of selecting a suitable and making a confident destination choice.

Finally, one of the important variables named as E, which is in fact a central aim of external and internal inputs. This destination choice described could finally help in choosing the best and ideal place in available options to explore.

So in bottom line, to conclude, that making a final destination choice goes through numerous aspects right from internal to external inputs which helps in constructing a destination image with its actual activities and benefits.

#### 4.2. Conceptual model of destination choice

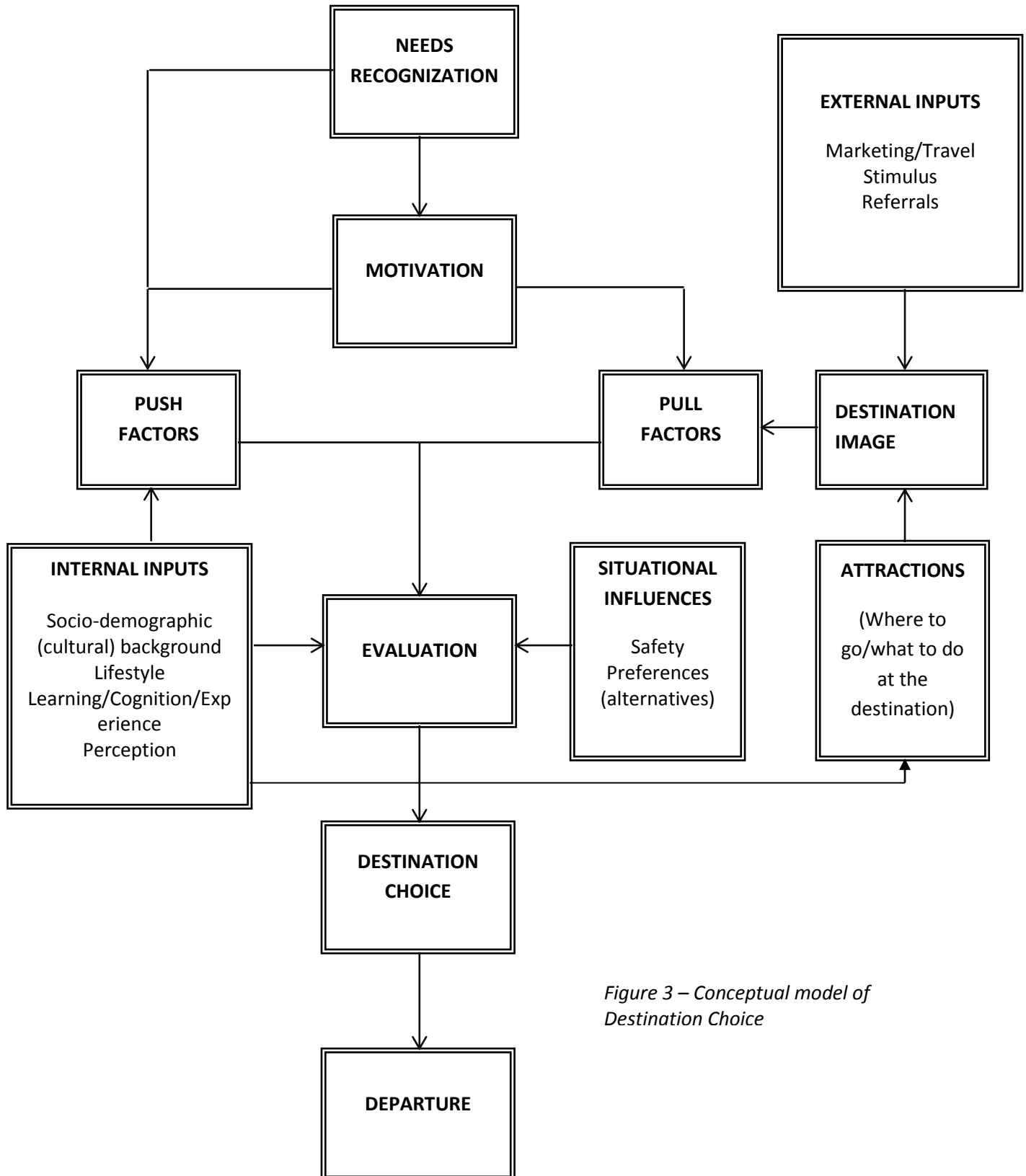


Figure 3 – Conceptual model of Destination Choice

Following the graph above it can be obviously seen that each final destination choice depends on a series of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects, with the two critical ones being external and internal inputs. Furthermore, the significance of the central points – motivation, push and pull factors, and evaluation – are reflected evidently as well. So, how to recognize ideal destination from tourist's initial travel demands?

According to the graph's description, the two factors – pull and push- emerge precisely as the alternative entries leading to indefectible target. In which, push factors, after being arisen from tourism interests, are influenced strongly by internal inputs, possibly considered as socio-demographic basis, lifestyle, real-life experiences, and perception, that then gear to evaluation step. Besides, recognizing needs for travelling influences directly to pull factors in some ways.

On the other way, the aspect of destination image, affected mainly by external inputs such as marketing or travel, stimulation or referrals would also be contributed by attractions of a place that present tourists where to go and what to do when they arrive at a certain destination, that are somehow determined by internal factors such as lifestyle, cognition, socio-demographic variables, etc. as well, before it turns into push factors. Owing to those factors tourist could be able to start evaluating their decision.

Plus, security level and another aspect in connection with safety matters, considered as situational factors, also influences straight to the way of how a tourist evaluate their upcoming destination basically. After examining such the above it is reasonable time for tourist to draw out destination choice as well as making a plan of departure at the end.

As a result, in order to choose an ideal and reasonable place for vacation it takes a numerous steps and factors that a tourist should consider carefully, otherwise the tourist may be upset about their decision eventually. Through the graph, it is clear that external and internal inputs are likely to be the spotlight for tourist's consideration.

#### 4.2.1. The visitors' motivations

In the general circumstance of gloomy global economy these recent years, despite the bankruptcy of giants in other either big or small industry such as banking, real estate, auto manufacturing, apparel, etc., tourism is still remains its track to expand and grow up. There comes a certain question that why people travel, what motivate them to make their trips to different and particular places. The answer can be varied of reasons; for instance, “It is summer time, I love to enjoy the beach”, or “My friend just had a trip there, it was awesome, I am thinking of trying it to see how it is”, etc. There are still plenty of such reasons to explain for why people are engaged in travel. However, whatever the reason is, it naturally comes from the so-called “needs” and “wants”. Nevertheless, to differentiate “needs” and “wants” is another story.

##### 4.2.1.1. Maslow's Needs hierarchy



Figure 4: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Source: From Evans, M. M., Foxall, G., & Jamal, A. (2009). *Consumer Behaviour* (2nd ed.).

“Needs” is firstly known as the necessity of some certain physiological things of human life which are evitable for people to survive. For example, they need food to eat, water to drink, clothes to keep warm, space to sleep or to stay, etc. Out of those essential needs, people also have psychological needs which are also very important to spiritual life, like friendship, neighbourhood, love, etc.

According to Dr. Abraham Maslow (Evans, Foxall, & Jamal, 2009), different needs of people can be categorized and sorted into five main levels: physiological needs, safety and security needs, social needs, egoistic needs, and the need for self-actualization. For the higher-order needs are to be met, there is a necessity that the below needs are satisfied in a relatively complete.

Maslow's hierarchy begins with the first level which is the need that must be fulfilled before all others as is the need for physiological satisfaction. The physiological needs often refer to the demand for food, water, air, residence, and sex. These are basic needs human help to survive; therefore, before they are relatively fulfilled, people are not likely to care about other needs. One instance, the greatest concern of a hungry person would usually be how to get food rather than thinking about education. The next level of the hierarchy will be used to discuss about the need for safety and security. After a person has to meet the most basic needs for survival he or she will begin to think about issues such as physical safety. They may want a safe place to stay, a stable life and the need for health care, insurance, or a good education. Moving on to the next phase, people tend to care about the mental needs. The third Level that Maslow's theory would provide is needs called social needs which include love, affection, friendship, and belonging. When people have a sufficiency of physiological comfort, they will then begin to desire for the mental comfort through love or affection from relationships with those around them. They may want to build up a relationship of love, desire to have a family, or simply have a few friends. The fourth level mentioned in this theory is related to egoistic needs. Egoistic needs were described by Maslow as the needs that reflect the human's aspiration for self-acceptance, self-esteem, prestige, as well as status in the society. Last but not least, at the top of the hierarchy, although most people do not fully satisfy the egoistic needs to reach to the highest level of the demand; however, it's worth mentioning an explanation for it. This is the need of individuals to accomplish his or her potential. In other words, he or she would like to become whatever they wish to

become. For example, an ambitious staff would try to work hard with the desire to become the leader of the company in the near future.

#### 4.2.1.2. Visitors' motivations

The “need” in tourism is also all about the necessity once the lower levels of needs have been fulfilled. The need rises up related to emotion, affection, feeling which is necessarily satisfied, meanwhile the “want” comes up as the choice, or the purpose. For example, a person might take a trip home in his vacation to visit family which will result in affection for his family members can be a need satisfaction, however, his selection of transportation (train, flight, coach, etc.) or which airline, which coach...is another consideration. In other words, a need and a want are different from one another in one of awareness (Mill et al, 2006:279). A need will be transformed into a want once people are made to be aware of their need deficiencies. The want, however, just puts a person into options-taking. No action will be implemented till he gets motivated.

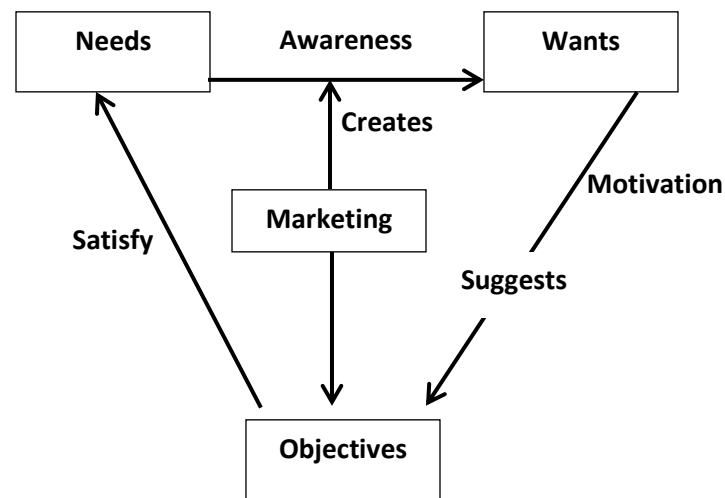


Figure5: Needs, Wants and Motives  
Source: Mill et al, the tourism system, 2006, p. 280

According to Mill et al (2006), a motivation implies action which occurs when an individual wants to satisfy a need. Mill also promoted a model (Figure 5) which showed the relations of Needs, Wants and Motives as described.

Motivation can be referred to an activated state within a person that leads to goal-directed behaviour, and is the driving force within individuals that impels them to action (Mowen and Minor, 2001; Schiffman et al, 2009).

There are various ways to approach motivation understanding. In travel decision, motivation is noted in two stages, which are push factors, or also called intrinsic motivation and pull factors, or extrinsic motivation (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Page, 2009). Push factors are understood as internal determinants of the individual, which set up (or create) a desire to take decision of travelling, and as well aim for the satisfaction of various psychological needs. About pull factors, they are external elements to the individual, such as festivals, cuisine, landscape attraction, etc., which point up the benefits of specific destination, that might cause a deep influence to the individual's choice in determining the time, the place and the means when he makes decision to travel. These two kinds of motivation have been divided into nine motives (Crompton, 1979), of which seven were classified as socio-psychological, consisting of: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. The rest two motives, which are novelty and education, formed the alternate cultural category. In brief words, to conclude, Lee et al (2002), supposed that push factors will enable a person to decide whether to take a trip or not, while pull factors helps him to determine where he should go.

#### **4.2.2. Destination image**

Destination image is considered an important factor that influences visitors by the image of destination which they perceived through the information collected. In this research, this factor is seen in two ways: landscape attractions and external inputs such as travel stimuli, media, social media, referrals from friends or family, etc. Landscape attractions are what tourists expect to see, to do; or in other words, they are all about the activities that they want to enjoy at the destination, mostly decided by their internal inputs, such as age, gender, hobby, lifestyle, experience...For instance, an old couple will tend to see quiet and peace places while a young ones will tend to try adventurous things. Also, a group of girls will tend to prefer shopping areas while a group of boys will tend to prefer sports activities. However, the image of destination is also affected by the information

provided from various sources such as advertising, which somehow bring an overview image of the destination, or recommendations/ratings from friends, family or highly-trusted websites, which somehow form a proper imagination of what is possessed by the destination. For more information, the below factors will clarify how they influence customers' choice.

#### **4.2.2.1. Visitor attraction**

When people make decisions for their trips, they often have to consider many factors and one of the motivations for this decision is the attractions. However, in order to fully understand this concept is not a simple thing because its scope is relatively broad. It can be said that, when visitor/tourist attractions are mentioned, it refers to "things to do" or "places to visit" at the destination, or in other words - the activities which tourists will be involved in as a core point of time spending during their trip. In travel and tourism industry, attractions play a vital part, as in most cases, they may be the *raison d'être* for the visit (Page, 2009:135). In some way, attractions are a part of pull factors in response to push factors, which motivate tourists to visit the destination.

To have a comprehensive understanding of attractions is not an easy work. Harris and Howard (1996) had defined visitor attraction as "a physical or cultural feature of a particular place that individual travellers or tourists perceive as capable of meeting one or more of their specific leisure-related needs. Such features may be ambient in nature (for example, climate, culture, vegetation or scenery), or they may be specific to a location, such as a theatre performance, a museum or a waterfall". In a far broader definition given by Metelka (1990), attractions are considered as positive or favourable attributes of an area for a given activity or set of activities as desired by a given customer or market, including climate, scenery, activities, culture. Based on elements of the physical or cultural features, and on set of activities, attractions fall into numerous categories and listings which are divided by many different researchers. Nonetheless, the conventional ways in which attractions should be viewed are natural and built (man-made) attractions (Page, 2009; Metelka, 1990).

Sometimes attractions may be the benefits that people can obtain from these natural sites which are not made by human hands for the purpose of serving tourists such as beaches in Cornwall in southern UK, Amazon forests in Brazil, or even Mount Everest in Nepal; or those sites built with the original intention was to reside, but because they have unique architectures so they should also help attract



tourists. On the other hand, the concept of "attractions" is also sometimes used to refer to the structure constructed primarily for the purpose of tourist attractions such as the Louvre in Paris the capital of France, or the Disneyland in Hong Kong.

#### **4.2.2.2. Internal inputs**

##### **a. Socio-demographic factors**

Socio-demographic factors refer to a set of variables such as age, race, sex, and economic status, level of education, income level and employment (Investopedia.com). Socio-demographic variables, parts of travellers' characteristics, have been widely studied in order to explain behaviours of consumers in terms of information search (Gitelson and Crompton, 1983; Capella and Greco, 1987; Vogt and Fesenmaier, 1998). Many models of destination choice process by Woodside and Lysonski (1989), Um & Crompton (1990), Moscardo (1996) also showed the influence caused by such elements to awareness of destination, which an affective assessment of the destination image (Beerli and Martin, 2004).

Such factors as age, income, marital status are said to cause a definite impact on destination choice, for they create common trends for such people who are in same range, which form a base for markets to implement segmentation more easily. For example, regarding age, in terms of information search, travellers at older age show a tendency of being more reliable on family recommendation and their own previous experience (Cappella and Greco, 1987). And the young age people, in terms of activities attractions, who range from 20 to 29 at lower income tend to incline to stimulating activities than the others and the people at higher income (Raybound, 1998), while travellers under 45 years old tend to opt for novelty seeking (Weaver et al., 1994). Apart from age, marital status is also pointed which influences attitude of tourists in stimulating dimension of activities (Backman et al., 1995).

Income and education are as well mentioned to be factors that affect destination choice in terms of choosing nearby and farther-away destinations, for instance, a better educated traveller with more disposable income usually has tendency of travelling farther from home (Zimmer et al., 1995)

Also, gender and ethnicity have been identified as important factors shaping tourist behaviour and consumption patterns (Page, 2009). Final decision of choosing destination can be absolutely influenced, or even determined by gender, for instance, females prefer shopping malls while male

definitely prefer recreational activities. Gender reflects personality, characters of visitors through their acting and their intentions to go towards attractions (Meng and Uysa, 2008). Gender is, as well, a controversial segment in terms of defining gay and lesbian market. Nonetheless, ethnicity is not less important than those. The result of the USA market research has shown the travel purpose tendency of Hispanic is mainly for leisure, especially to see friends, family and relatives (Page, 2009).

In brief, it is unable to deny the important affection of these socio-demographic elements on their final destination choice, which play a crucial part in determining push and pull factors, and also influence the way they perceive the information received from other external sources.

#### **b. Personal elements**

Personal elements in this research refer to individual background of visitor such as learning, beliefs, attitudes, perception and culture background, which are believed to have important roles that influence the choice of destination. Learning, beliefs, attitudes, and perception are important personal factors which influence motivation, therefore, indirectly influence choice of destination.

Learning is a mean which enables tourists perceive and interpret a variety of stimuli. An important way to gain experience is through taking vacation, by listening to others, and other numerous sources. Customer having such experiences will be able to make assumption and expectation about any given destination choice based on positive and negative vacation experience. This is called learning and is exercised in future for choosing place for holidays, which turns into cognition.

Another important factor is beliefs which are built through thought process one is having based on their view they carry in their life. Belief is the thought process people have created based on view they poses in their life. Consumers are having negative or positive beliefs about different companies, their products and service offering based on how they provide tour offers and destination choice.

Attitude is the strong feeling built based on different forms of experience in life. It is one of toughest thing to change as it is the feelings which is built through various experience in life. Hence different mechanism is planned during travel to help people in overcoming their weakness in one way or another. This enables taking things in positive spirit.

Perception is the broad view of world built by the knowledge people filter and keep with themselves. Thus, perception strictly bounds to the concepts of bias and distortion. People understand different stimuli in different ways. Some factors may be ignored and some others might be encouraged. This is called selective perception. Tourism products are treated as bunch of personal benefits to the consumer.

Culture is the mode, form of beliefs and rituals that are person characteristics dependent. It is the second key factor which impacts a consumer's behaviour. This greatly impacts on our way of living, communication, point of view. Culture shape how a person behaves in a particular situation. At the same time, shift in culture is required. For example, people will have different behaviour or habit when smoking in social places. In order to design international marketing plan and strategies, one should have thorough knowledge of origins, such as geography, history, political economy, technology, and social institutions; and elements, including cultural values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and ways of thinking (Cateora and Graham, 2005). Gert Hofstede (1980) has developed the most acceptable theory in cross-cultural and marketing research. According to him, culture is built based on people, their collective thinking when different number of individual undergoes under same atmosphere, education and living experience.

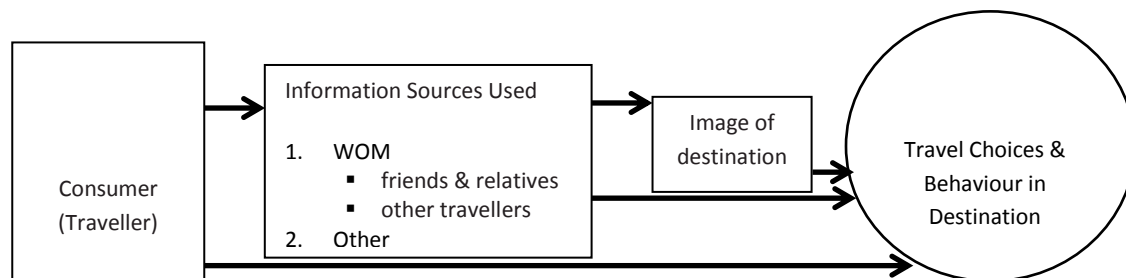
#### **4.2.2.3. Travel external inputs**

##### **a. Word-of-mouth**

Travel research has shown the significance of word-of-mouth (WOM) in destination choice making process with most relied sources like friends and relatives. WOM is treated as a common information source and no difference between friends, relatives and other travellers are considered. In words of Maser and Weiermair (1998:107), information is the key in shaping consumer decision for destination choice in tourism. According to Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) information search is the vital parameter in traditional choice set and latest theoretical qualitative research. This is in line with Prentice (2006) for decision making process.

WOM perception of destination choice is based on set of 20 characteristics adopted from Aaker's (1997) dimensions of brand personality. Along with this WOM (group) participants were asked to detail in 3 terms - image of the destination, the un-paralleled features of the destination, a typical

traveller and a typical resident. The last stage shows the differences between the four WOM groups for the destination behaviour parameter of activity participation, tourist site visits, accommodation choice and transportation. The friends/relatives might have used different medium while an individual may have different choice all together.



**Figure6:** Conceptual framework of the role of information sources on travel behaviour (WOM)

The figure explains how Consumer uses WOM and other information sources for processing destination image which in turn leads to destination selection.

Methodology used in WOM is by oral or written communication which passes information from one person to another. Another form is through storytelling and could be through social media marketing as well. To promote word-of-mouth communications, various methods like publicity techniques and viral marketing are used to get desired behavioural response. This helps in building destination image which finally result to visitors destination choice. In view of Vogt and Stewart's (1998) as the stages progress the different source of information are required for the purpose of travel decision-making process. It is significant to seek the advice of relative, contribution of friends and other travellers during travel planning stage as well as during travel. As per given framework, the end result advocate the notion of a link between consumer or traveller characteristics and WOM usage, but, the link between WOM usage and destination image was not observed to be strong. At the end, a connection between WOM and travel behaviour was clear seen. These finding suggest that further research in this area is essential.

Word of Mouth plays an important role as information source in travel decision making process. Friends, family, relatives and others travellers are integral part of WOM and are treated to be highly reliable source of information helping in making destination choice. It is equally significant on

consumer behaviour in tourism and attempt has been made to understand on how and what behaviour is influence by WOM.

#### **b. Media and social media**

Media and social media are mentioned as significant factor of external inputs for they are main sources of information provided to travellers, which form a basic imagination of the destination image in traveller's mind. Apart from initial image formation of destination, all the necessary information such as tour offers, where to go, what should be enjoyed, how to get there, tickets price, etc., will be fully provided through these two means.

The continual development of information technology has brought media closer to people's lives in almost every aspect. Besides traditional forms of promotions like press, advertising, radio, etc. The media today is also extended to enhance its influence and its coverage to the public. In the tourism sector, media has become a powerful device to assist the promotion. A typical example can be used as an evidence for this impact may be mentioned that the effects of movies to tourists' destination choices. It can be said of the success Harry Potter film series has brought a significant source of revenue for the UK travel industry with a 120-percent increase in turnover only after the movie ended (Holloway & Humphreys, 1900:225).

Social media is a wide term which refers to internet-based and mobile applications and acts as a multi-way channel of communication between individuals or organizations in the digital domain through the activities of sharing ideas, information, and news which could be user-generated or entirely creating a modern society by giving new broad outlook (in-text). Social media, "the collection of tools and online spaces available to help individuals and businesses to accelerate their information and communication needs"(Axel Schultze). This is used by an individual, business of any sort, government for fast paced knowledge sharing, interaction and response"(Axel Schultze). The application of social media networks has opened up a new door for the exchange of information which is not merely a process from makers to users, but it also allows more information to be transferred effectively from users to users. For example, Facebook, personal blogs, or Twitter, which have become very popular social web pages for individuals around the world with millions of accesses per day. Social media also plays a role of Word of Mouth and helps in information transfer.

### 4.2.3. Situational influences

Before and during the trip, there can be unexpected incidents that visitor might encounter. Such environmental elements could be such as time, money, health or marketing pressures, which can intervene as either inhibitors or facilitators on their final choice. The so-called “situation” refer to “all those factors particular to a time and place of observation, which do not follow from a knowledge of personal (intra-individual) and stimulus (object or choice alternative) attributes and which have a demonstrable and systematic effect on current behaviour” (Belk, 1975, cited by Decrop, 2006:14). Situational factors are un-predictable as it is caused due to sudden change. Some of the important one’s refer to tasks, physical surroundings, social surroundings and temporal reasons. These factors can totally help in changing decision at the last moment.

**Table 1 : Situational influences in vacation decision making**

**Source:** Decrop, A., 2006

Type of variable	Definition
Physical surrounding	- Includes the weather, geographical location, decor, sounds, lights, aromas, tangible signs and displays of merchandise and other materials
Social surrounding	Includes the other persons, their characteristics, roles and interactions
Temporal perspective	Includes the period (from time of the day to season of the year), time constraints, and elapsed or expected time
Task definition	Stands for the orientation, intent, role or frame of a person, through which certain aspects of the environment may become relevant
Antecedent states	Momentary moods or conditions, which ‘colour’ the perception, evaluation and acceptance of the present environment, that are stipulated to be immediately antecedent to the current situation

Decrop (2006) distinguishes five types of situational variables, which are described and illustrated by appropriate tourism examples in Table 1.

Physical surrounding, as defined, refers to elements which are more related to non-human things (either directly or indirectly) such as climate, geographical locale, etc. Destination choice gets

impacted by climatic condition in the home region outdoor advertisements on roads, mall, etc. and posters used in travel agency walls.

In contrast to physical surrounding, social surrounding refers to human interaction, for instance, peaceful and open places are the obvious destination choice of people living in crowded regions so that they can spend wonderful time without much human disturbances.

Temporal perspective denotes issues related to time constraints, such as seasonal festivals, or seasonal blooming flowers in Japan, which there are limits of time frame. Many vacations are time dependent. Time period is limited by the number of school holiday granted and official leave incurred.

Task definition, refers to the decision is made within a frame of personal individual in which environmental conditions can be relevant. For example, a person choosing for vacation is highly likely to use different parameter to choose a destination place for his own and as a gift for his/her parents.

The last situational factor, antecedent states, involved in moods and conditions, the decision still could be changed at last moment which is not expected. Giving an instance, tired couples due to hectic household activity may choose to go on a club vacation rather than their obvious choice of going on culturally active holidays.

## **5. Summary**

This chapter helps in understanding basic concepts of initial reasons which affect travel decision and primary requirement based on models explained and how it helps in influences in making destination choice. The study has been categorised and analysed based on theoretical models and then based on understanding, a conceptual model is obtained from it and each factors leading to destination choice has been described in detail. Based on premises in chapter one, literature review is being made. Literature review helps in understanding basic keywords of tourism such as tourists and visitors, travel destination and destination choice. Study of destination choice has been made on the basis two theoretical models from which a conceptual model is being generated. Conceptual model describes about the visitors motivations in terms of push and pull factors, which form the initial step of travel decision. Destination image is also mentioned, perceived by visitor attraction, variables of internal inputs and external Inputs, media and social media. Variable of internal inputs includes Socio-

demographic factors and personal elements. Socio-demographic factors refer to a set of variables such as age, race, and sex, and economic status, level of education, income level and employment. Personal elements in this research refer to individual background of visitor such as learning, beliefs, attitudes, perception and culture background which are believed to have important roles that influence the choice of destination external input contains word-of-mouth (WOM) in destination choice making process with most relied sources like friends and relatives and media, social media. Finally, situational influences in vacation decision making play a vital part as they might affect the decision at the last moment. This chapter study further provides a source of input to the next chapter and helps in making research study forward.



## **CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter of methodology will bring the knowledge of how to conduct a research, by providing awareness of research philosophy and approach. It explains the so-called epistemology and approaches accordingly. Primary and secondary data are two information sources are used. Based on that, two important techniques used in this survey are Quantitative Questionnaire Survey and Qualitative Interviews to answer the research's questions and objectives. The method and technique of collecting samples and doing sampling as well as analysing data in the next chapter will be mentioned. Thereafter Reliability and Validity check of collected are made in order to provide chain of evidence based on obtained relation and consistency. Research ethics are too mentioned as the explanation of some issues and limitations indicated in chapter I.

### **2. Research and research methodology**

Research when it was mentioned, it was thought to be associated with experiments taken place in laboratories, by scientists, in order to create products served for human life. However, research in modern life is related to many activities, such as student's coursework, which aim for new findings based on pre-theoretical works that can be applied in reality; employees who are given tasks of doing customer segmentation, searching or categorizing their information; doctors or engineers who are dedicated to find out or to invent new "applications" which are meaningful to human life. Elias (1986) supposed that research is a tool of science which is used for "advance human knowledge". In social science, it is an investigation to find the solution, a search for knowledge, a discovery of hidden truth (Elias, 1986, cited in Research methods for leisure and tourism, Veal A J, 2006:2), which is carried on by collecting and analysing the information. It also can bring a contribution to existing knowledge.

Meanwhile, research methodology is all about the "perception of how the knowledge can be created and constructed in a rigorous and meaningful way in order to answer a research problem" (Altinay and Paraskevas, 2008: 69), or more simple, it is a way to systematically solve the research problem.

### 3. Research philosophy

Saunders et al (2008) promoted a model including phases in overall methodology process, namely “the research’s onion”, in which research philosophy is the first layer needs peeling off. It refers to the nature of the knowledge and the development of that knowledge in a particular field once it is embarked on by the researcher. It can be said that understanding research philosophy is an evitable part of doing research, as it reflects the way the world is viewed and how the things are perceived by the researcher (Saunders et al, 2009). It also reflects the way which the knowledge will be developed in the research through how the data is collected, analysed and used.

The beginning of philosophy can be traced back to the needs of human who want to find the answers for wonders, or puzzlements of, or to comprehend the world around (Aristotle, 384-322 BC). In doing research, commonly, there are three main ways in approaching philosophy, which are ontology, epistemology and axiology. In order to simplify and narrow the wide meaning of the three terms, they can be categorized as: ontology – a kind of theory which concerns about the entities created by God, or about the kinds of structures of things, events, processes and relations in reality (RIUWT; Smith, 2003); axiology – a kind of philosophy branch consisting of theories of value, or the nature of human value; finally, epistemology – a branch of philosophy dealing with that how a knowledge of an object is obtained, and how correct it can be, in brief description, it refers to the so-called nature of knowledge (RIUWT, Cline A.). In other words, ontology is about the existence of objects in the world, while axiology is concerned about their value, as each thing and its feature (in all aspects) is unique, is not same. Hence, epistemology seems to be the way they are perceived and converted into knowledge (Klein P. D., 2005).

The term “epistemology” is originated from the two words “*epistēmē*” (*which means knowledge*) and *logos* (*which means reason*) in Greek, which is now concerned with the study, the examination, or the investigation of the nature, origin and limits of human knowledge (Mannheim, 1952; Cline; Martinich et al). However, there are doubts about the necessity of understanding the knowledge and justification of its truth-ness and falsehood. Nonetheless, being a part of research methodology, understanding epistemology plays a quite important role as it helps to bring a coherent path, or a logical way to develop the concepts in mind and to acquire knowledge. Debates in modern

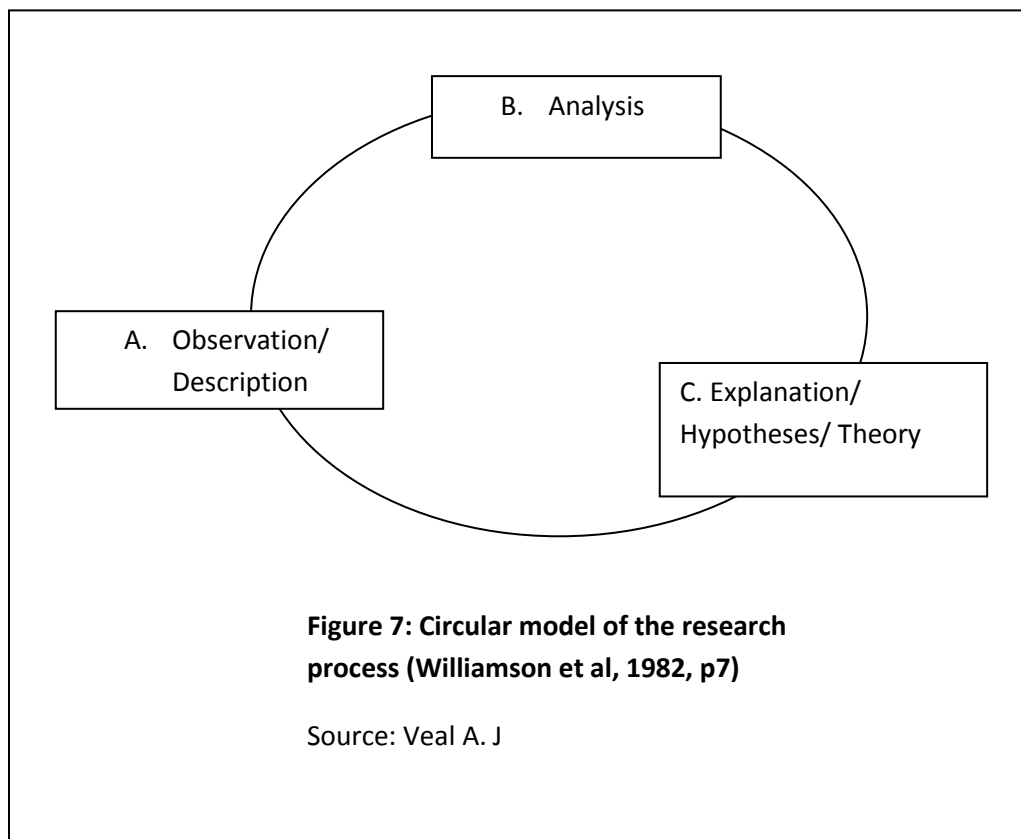
epistemology are involved in how knowledge is obtained. People who agree that knowledge can be acquired through experience follow the group of empiricism, while many others suppose that knowledge can be gained through the use of reason follow the group of rationalism (Cline A.)

#### **4. Research approach**

In leisure and tourism research, there are plenty of alternative approaches and dimensions which are mentioned and used (Veal A. J., Research methods for leisure and tourism, 2006:32). They are, sometimes, discussed in form of such dichotomies as: theoretical and applied, empirical and non-empirical, induction and deduction, positivism and interpretivism, etc.

However, due to purpose of the research as an explanatory study, inductive and deductive approaches, which refer to explanation, in terms of finding out and explaining the things (Saunders, 2008; Veal, 2006), will be mentioned.

Deduction seems to be more related to scientific research. It is still commonly used in social science research though. Williamson et al (1982) has built a circular model of research process (Figure 7) which help to reflect how inductive and deductive approach works. Deductive approach begins at deducing a hypothesis (C), generating and examining by gathering data to test the hypothesis (A), then the phase of analysis will test if the given hypothesis is proved or not (B). For its purpose and method used, deduction is considered a kind of testing theory research. Meanwhile, inductive approach is more referred to building the theory in research. It starts at things observed or described (A), and data will be collected to analyse (B), explanation finally will then be made accordingly (C).



## 5. Discussion and rationale of the research methodology choice

Research is a form of logical and systematic enquiry or search for new and useful information that contributes to knowledge, in different particular fields (Rajasekar et al, 2006; Altinay L. et al, 2008), which is implemented by collecting and analysing the information based on a specific strategy and method. The sources of information can be collected from various resources. However, they are divided into main types which are primary data and secondary data.

### 5.1. Primary data and secondary data

Within this research, two kinds of data, which are primary data and secondary data will both be used.

Secondary data refers to the data collected for the primary purpose of research which is used by someone other than the user. This data can exist in the form of qualitative or quantitative. Secondary data can be classified into three types which are documentary secondary data such as reports, books, articles, pictures, video recordings, etc.; survey-based secondary data such as government's census,

regular surveys, or ad hoc surveys, secondary data source and multiple-which is the combination of the above two sources (Mark Saunders, 258-262).

Meanwhile, primary data is defined as the data acquired by the researcher through the performance of the research. For example, data obtained from the questionnaires, interviews or observations which have not been analysed by any other researcher is the most common form of primary data. Like secondary data, primary data is classified into two forms of the qualitative data and quantitative data.

### **5.2. Mixed method – quantitative and qualitative analysis**

As mentioned above, there are two types of methods to analyse the primary data to support the result of the research, which consist of quantitative and qualitative method. In order to perform the study, researcher used both qualitative data and quantitative analysis, which is called mixed method combining quantitative and qualitative methods. This seems to be the best solution for both text and numeric data.

Qualitative research method was used by researcher because it is based on a flexible research strategy. This method allows detection of important topics that the researcher could not cover before. In qualitative research, a number of research questions and methods of gathering information are prepared in advance, but they can be adjusted to suit the new information appearing in the collection process. It is one of the fundamental differences between the qualitative and quantitative methods.

Quantitative method was also utilized by researcher in the study because it is suitable for a variety of subjects at the same time. This method allows statistical inference from the results obtained in a relatively small sample to a greater population. It is also for the measurement and evaluation of the relationship between the variables; quite easy to investigate and develop, and appropriate for comparing over time or between regions.

### **5.3. Data collection techniques : questionnaire, interview, samples and sampling**

In this paper, in order to study and analyze the data, two methods of qualitative and quantitative research were combined to answer the research's questions and objectives. However, before the analysis was performed, the data needed to be collected and stored. Knowing how much of data should be collected is often not an easy question to handle for the researchers. Nevertheless, due to

issues of time constraints, funding, and access, sampling methods would be used to gather a number of primary data. This is the process of assembling a certain amount of samples considered to represent for the full set of cases which is called the population. For the collection of quantitative data, quantitative survey questionnaires would be used to collect data while interviews would be the method for gathering qualitative data. In addition, an analysis of secondary data would also be added to support for the research process.

#### **5.3.1. Quantitative Questionnaire Surveys**

After the questionnaire was designed and structured, it was printed out to conduct a pilot study with 20 people from various backgrounds to ensure that its clarification and validity were sufficient because a face-to-face explanation might not be available in the real survey, as well as to obtain feedbacks and suggestions from those participants. Results of the trial test showed that three questions appear not to be clear enough. Changes were then made to the questionnaire's organization and to those three questions to enhance their clarification. And one question was added due to respondents' suggestions. The official questionnaire contained 40 questions and was made up by multiple-choice, Likert scale, checklist and open-ended questions.

The target audience group for this research was male and female ranging from under 18 to over 60 years old. For this research focused on the perspective of international visitors to Vietnamese tourism, the questionnaire would be structured entirely in English. The sample size needed for this study was targeted at 100 samples; therefore, the official questionnaires were then delivered to approximately 300 people through email and personal homepages such as Twitter or Facebook. After 2 weeks of acceptance, 173 samples were collected; however, among all samples obtained only 151 met the requirements for sample analysis while the remaining 22 were not valid.

#### **5.3.2. Qualitative Interviews:**

The form of interviewing was used to accumulate information and opinions of informants related to the tourism industry in Vietnam. A table consisting of six open-ended questions was designed and tested by an experimental interview with two participants to make sure the information is flawless and relevant. Next, the sample would then be chosen based on a set of requirements based on the background, expertise and experience to fit the study criteria. Accordingly, 20 samples that met the

criteria set out were later sent a mail detailing the purposes and objectives of the interview two weeks before the formal interview took place. After 10 days, the researcher received the approvals from 8 people. A second letter was sent to those 8 People to set the date and time of the interview. The real interview then took place in the form of one-by-one interview between researcher and interviewees via Google chat, Skype video calls, and Yahoo Messenger chat. The results of the interviews have revealed much of valuable information in the forms of answers, feedbacks, comments, and suggestions which enabled researcher to acquire a comprehensive understanding of different aspects of Vietnamese tourism.

Timetable

## **6. Reliability of data**

Reliability refers to the “degree of consistency with which instances are designed to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (Hammersley, 1992 :67), or to be more simple to understand, reliability stresses on the consistency of the findings results that at different occasions, if they will be responded same by respondents or interviewees, if they will be same observations reached by observers, or if there is transparency in how sense was made from the raw data (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008). In order to avoid such dilemmas, a pre-test survey and interview trial had been used before the real ones were launched, which were discussed in data collection techniques as above.

## **7. Validity of data**

Validity, according to Saunders (2009), is concerned with whether the findings are really what they appear to be about, or refers to “the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomenon to which it refers” (Hammersley, 1990). The research attempts made to enquire the validity of tourism growth for Vietnam is based on various parameters consider in survey and interview response collected from different age group, ethnicity, occupation, gender etc. This will forecast the economic growth and genuine tourism growth based on multiple source of evidence establishing relation and chain of evidence.

## **8. Research ethics**

Ethical issues in social science researches normally arise related to information giving and given. It is difficult to get a reasonable solution for this dilemma as the researchers do not want to contaminate their research “by informing subjects too specifically about the studied research questions” while respondents/interviewees who are involved in the research surveys/interviews either want a maybe “intimate engagement with the public and private lives of individuals”, or in a further broader meaning, it is related to the so-called privacy and confidentiality (Silverman, 2003; Mason, 1996). There is no exception for this research, which is proved by an amount of people refusing to join the survey and the interview. In order to avoid such issue, the research has followed the strategy provided by Mason (1996), which are including: decide the research purpose clearly, target the right groups or individuals (who might be interested or affected) and consider the impacts or implication for these parties that might be encountered during the time of doing research. However, another important suggestion by Punch (1994) indicated the significance of “informed consent” is also considered by researcher (guidelines shown in appendix 3 and 4).

## **9. Summary**

Here based on the inputs received from second chapter, research philosophy and research approach has been planned. Research philosophy provides the reflection the way the world is viewed and how the things are perceived by the researcher and research approach gives an explanation, in terms of finding out and explaining the things. Based on this research methodology and the strategies have been chosen. Research method is a logical explanation and systematic enquiry or search for new and useful information that contributes to knowledge, in different particular fields which in turn is based on collecting primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected through questionnaires, interviews while secondary data are collected for the primary purpose of research which consisting journals, books, news, etc. A mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analysis has been chosen. The detailed analyses and its results will be described more specific in the next chapter.



## **CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter of Data analysis is made based on data collected from survey and interviews by using quantitative and qualitative methods mentioned in previous chapter. Quantitative data analysis target two different groups of visitors. The first group called previous visitors, who had taken trips to Vietnam before and second group constitute potential visitor which might take Vietnam trip in future. In order to investigate and figure out what are the factors that affected them to choose Vietnam as a destination, a survey is conducted explained below considering various socio-demographic variables including age, gender, occupation, annual income, marital status, ethnicity and each of influencing factor variables. Meanwhile, factors that influence visitors' choice of destination in general will be declared. Qualitative data analysis is based on the interviews conducted with 6 interviewees who works in travel and tourism sector, varied from tour guide, tour operator, marketing, market research, travel consultancy and customer service. Effectiveness of various information sources such as internet, media, travel agencies, WOM(Friend/Family, Relatives) and others will be elucidated below.

### **2. Quantitative analysis**

As indicated in the chapter of methodology, the survey is divided into three sections in order to target two different groups of visitors. The first group which will be mentioned right below is named as previous visitors, who had taken trips to Vietnam before. The objective of investigating this group is to figure out what are the factors that affected them to choose Vietnam as a destination. It is also aimed to evaluate which factors of amongst were more important and preferable. In addition, it helps to find out the relations between each of socio-demographic variables including age, gender, occupation, annual income, marital status, ethnicity and each of influencing factor variables.

#### **2.1. Group of previous visitors**

##### **2.1.1. Respondents' profile**

The majority of respondents participated in this part of the survey, which are called group of previous visitors, who had experienced trips to Vietnam, were from age group 18-29(83.3%) followed by middle aged group ranging from 30-44. Out of which, female respondents had come largely and has accounted for 72.2% participation remaining followed by male participant's. In terms of occupation,

61.1 % well settled salaried people (employee) had taken part, students 27.8% and equal participation of self-employed and unemployed people had been registered. In the Income category , we saw an interesting trend 77.8% of respondents falls below 2000GBP mark while 5.6%,11.1% and another 5.6% lies in the range of 20000GBP – 29999GBP, 30000GBP - 39999GBP and 40000GBP - 49999GBP income range respectively. This showed the interest level of low income earning people playing active role in boosting tourism.

Talking about marital status, single and unmarried young participants were high in number (94.4%) followed by remaining of married class. This also showed the interest level varying in different age groups. Around 72.2% tourist seekers were from the biggest continent of the world called Asia, Europe coming to second position with 16.7% followed by equal participants from Africa, Australia/New Zealand. It was highly satisfying to see 100% positive Travel interest of participants in the survey which shows full zeal and enthusiasm.

### **2.1.2. Factors ranking**

In this paper, a number of methods of analysis will be used, so it is worth having a look to see what they are. Three methods are applied in this article are mean, standard deviation, and percentage.

Firstly, the standard deviation will be used to evaluate the homogeneity of responses. Standard deviation is a tool researchers utilize to measure the variability of the data. It is calculated by taking the average value of all the distance from the individual values to the mean value. The higher this value is the larger the variability of the data will be. In contrast, the smaller value show less fluctuations in the distribution, and the responses will bring the tendency of the mean value which is called the central Tendency (Hatch & Farhady, 1982:57).

Next, the mean value will be applied to determine the central tendency of the data. Mean is calculated by determining the average value of all scores. This is one of the methods that are highly appreciated by many researchers because it takes into account all the scores as all of them are added up and divided into the number of scores. However, there is a downside that should be considered which is in some cases, a number of extreme scores can cause disparities in the determination of central tendency. For example, an average of 1 and 10 will result in 5.5 which are different from the

tendency of those scores. Nevertheless, this problem is likely to be solved when the number of samples is relatively large (Hatch & Farhady, 1982:55).

**Table 1: Factors ranking based on mean and standard deviation**

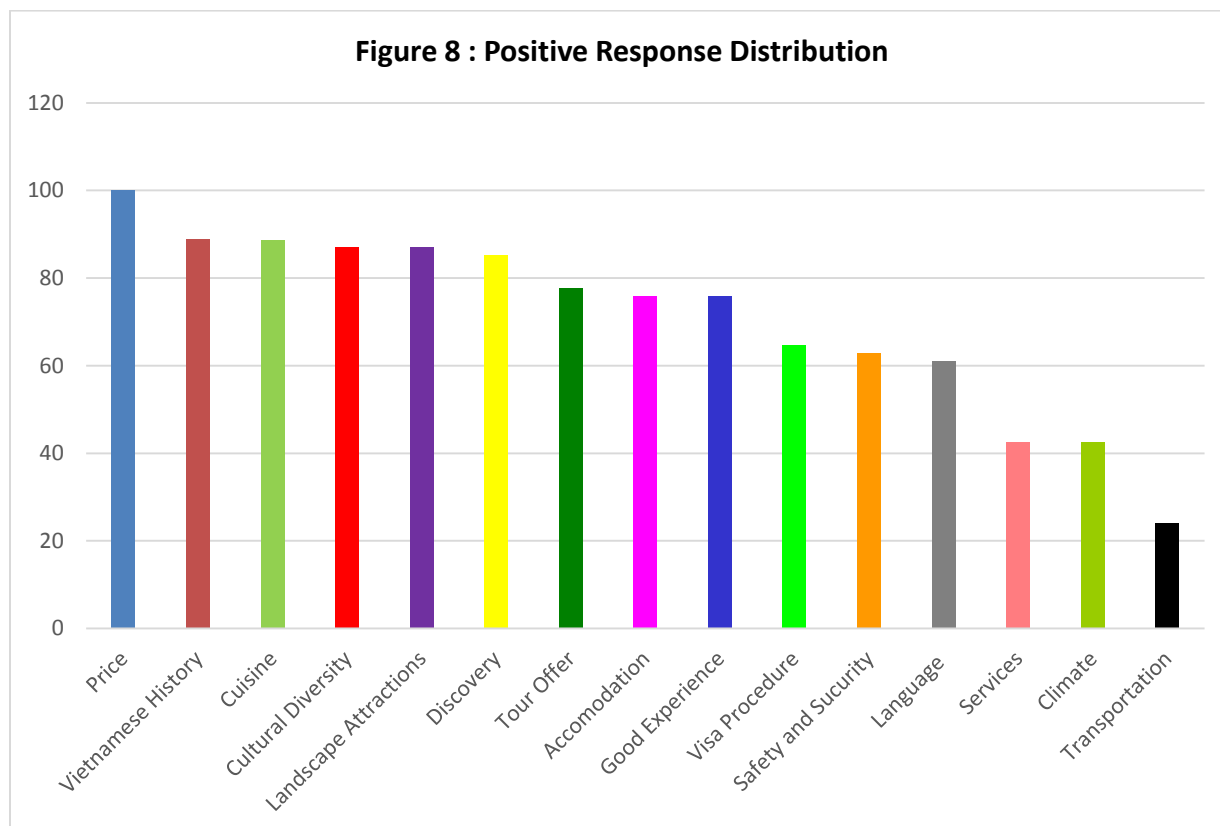
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
1. Price	1.7593	0.43155
2. Vietnamese History	1.7593	0.64238
3. Culture Diversity	1.7593	0.67111
4. Cuisine	1.6667	0.67293
5. Landscape Attraction	1.6852	0.69565
6. Discovery	1.6852	0.72226
7. Visa Procedure	2.3704	0.75975
8. Safety	2.4259	0.76730
9. Tour Offer	1.7778	0.79305
10. Accommodation	1.8148	0.80269
11. Language	2.1296	0.89118
12. Services	2.6296	1.01491
13. Transportations	3.3889	1.08882
14. Climate	2.6481	1.10158
15. Good Experience	1.8333	0.79503

Looking at the table, it can be seen that the factors are evaluated differently by respondents. Based on the two indicators of mean and standard deviation, all 15 variables are arranged in the order of the strongest factors to those having the least impact on the process of reviewing and making decisions of the group of tourists who had been traveling to Vietnam. Based on the position of the variables

arranged in the table, it is obvious that the factor of price can be determined as the factor that has the greatest influence on the decision of the visitors with the mean of 1.7593 which is very close to 2 indicating that the agree Vietnam is an affordable site agree to travel to. In addition, the chart has shown that 100 percent of these interviewed people also agree with above statements. In contrast, with the mean value of 3.3889 and the percentage of 24.1, transportations and traffic conditions are seen by tourists as the least attractive elements attracting them to Vietnam.

<b>Table 2: Positive Responses Distribution</b>				
<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
1	Price	23.5	76.5	100
2	Vietnamese History	35.2	53.7	88.9
3	Cuisine	44.4	44.4	88.8
4	Cultural Diversity	37	50	87
5	Landscape Attractions	44.4	42.6	87
6	Discovery	46.3	38.9	85.2
7	Tour Offer	44.4	33.3	77.8
8	Accommodation	42.6	33.3	75.9
9	Good Experience	40.7	35.2	75.9
10	Visa Procedure	7.4	57.4	64.8
11	Safety and Security	5.6	57.4	63
12	Language	29.6	31.5	61.1
13	Services	16.7	25.9	42.6
14	Climate	20.4	22.2	42.6
15	Transportation	5.6	18.5	24.1

In order to support the data analysis, percentage is also inserted to identify the frequency of positive responses, by checking the options of “strongly agree” and “agree” ticked by respondents. By dividing the number of instrumental responses by the total number of responses and then multiplied by 100, percentages of positive responses corresponding to the total number of scores will be compared to enhance the accuracy of the central tendency mentioned which is determined by the mean value.



### 2.1.3. The relations between socio-demographic background of respondents and factors variables

Cross tabulation or crosstabs is known as a statistical approach which was created to serve for the categorical statistical data to generate a contingency table. Crosstabs is a widely used device and is fairly common in research in many different sciences because it provides a general picture of the correlation between two variables which helps researchers to explore the interactive relationship between these factors (Hatch & Farhady, 1982). In this research, crosstabs is used to figure out the

relations between socio-demographic elements of visitors with groups of factors that influence their choice, and to find out how their final choice is influenced by these elements.

#### **2.1.3.1. The relation between age and groups of factors**

This study was carried out on five groups of age which range from below 18 to over 60 years old. However, based on the results obtained, only two main age groups participated in this study were the group of from 18 to 29 and 30 to 44 years old. Therefore, this section will be devoted to discuss about the effects of these groups of factors above two groups of samples. It can be seen from the table that group aged 30 to 44 is the group that was much more concerned with more factors. In particular, those items that received much attention of these tourists were motives and attraction with 89% of participants agreed. Like the other, the interest of travellers aged 18 to 29 were also quite similar. The only difference between these ages was that the younger visitors seemed to have less attention to the factors of purpose of the trip.

Table 3: The relation between age and groups of factors					
	Age	Percent		Age	Percent
AMENITIES AND FACILITIES			ATTRACTION		
<b>Accommodation</b>	18-29	0.73	<b>Culture diversity</b>	18-29	0.87
	30-44	0.89		30-44	0.89
<b>Transportation</b>	18-29	0.27	<b>Landscape attraction</b>	18-29	0.87
	30-44	0.11		30-44	0.89
PURPOSE			PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
<b>Discovery</b>	18-29	0.84	<b>Safety</b>	18-29	0.67
	30-44	0.89		30-44	0.44
<b>Good experience</b>	18-29	0.73	<b>Climate</b>	18-29	0.40
	30-44	0.89		30-44	0.56
SERVICES			DISTINCTIVE FEATURES		
<b>Services</b>	18-29	0.33	<b>Cuisine</b>	18-29	0.89
	30-44	0.89		30-44	0.89
<b>Price</b>	18-29	1.00	<b>Language</b>	18-29	0.58
	30-44	1.00		30-44	0.78
<b>Tour offers</b>	18-29	0.73	<b>Vietnamese history</b>	18-29	0.89
	30-44	0.89		30-44	0.89
<b>Visa procedure</b>	18-29	0.69			
	30-44	0.44			

Note: Percentage is calculated by dividing the sum of responses of strongly agree and agree by the total number of responses.

### 2.1.3.2. The relation between gender and groups of factors

In order to study the impact of gender on the selection of factors, participants were sorted into two different gender groups which were male and female. The table has shown that attraction is the factor female tourists found most appealing when they travelled while this is completely different from the male visitors. For example, 90 percent of female travelers said that they came to Vietnam because of its attractions while the same percentage of men say that it was the motives that inspired them to make a decision.

Table 4: The relation between gender and groups of factors					
	Gender	Percent		Gender	Percent
AMENITIES AND FACILITIES			ATTRACTION		
Accommodation	Male	0.60	Culture diversity	Male	0.80
	Female	0.82		Female	0.90
Transportation	Male	0.20	Landscape attraction	Male	0.80
	Female	0.26		Female	0.90
PURPOSE			PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
Discovery	Male	0.87	Safety	Male	0.40
	Female	0.85		Female	0.72
Good experience	Male	1.00	Climate	Male	0.60
	Female	0.67		Female	0.36
SERVICES			DISTINCTIVE FEATURES		
Services	Male	0.60	Cuisine	Male	0.80
	Female	0.36		Female	0.92
Price	Male	1.00	Language	Male	0.73
	Female	1.00		Female	0.56
Tour offers	Male	1.00	Vietnamese history	Male	0.80
	Female	0.69		Female	0.92
Visa procedure	Male	0.47			
	Female	0.72			
Note: Percentage is calculated by dividing the sum of responses of strongly agree and agree by the total number of responses.					



### 2.1.3.3. The relation between occupation and groups of factors

One of the criteria which is used to segment customer groups mentioned tourism in this part is the occupation. There are 4 groups of tourists are analyzed in this category: students, employed workers, unemployed people, and self-employed people. Like the client groups in the above sections, for tourists attraction is still a factor that attract the most attention from all four groups when asked about travel choices in Vietnam. In addition, the purpose of the journey and services are the two factors that are taken into consideration when selecting the destination of self-employed people and only motive is the case for employed group.

<b>Table 5: The relation between occupation and groups of factors</b>					
	Occupation	Percentage		Occupation	Percentage
<b>AMENITIES AND FACILITIES</b>			<b>ATTRACTION</b>		
<b>Accommodation</b>	Student	0.60	<b>Culture diversity</b>	Student	0.80
	Employed	0.79		Employed	0.88
	Unemployed	1.00		Unemployed	1.00
	Self-employed	1.00		Self-employed	1.00
<b>Transportation</b>	Student	0.00	<b>Landscape attraction</b>	Student	0.80
	Employed	0.33		Employed	0.88
	Unemployed	0.00		Unemployed	1.00
	Self-employed	0.00		Self-employed	1.00
<b>PURPOSE</b>			<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>		
<b>Discovery</b>	Student	0.80	<b>Safety</b>	Student	0.40
	Employed	0.88		Employed	0.67
	Unemployed	0.67		Unemployed	1.00
	Self-employed	1.00		Self-employed	1.00

Good experience	Student	0.60	Climate	Student	0.20
	Employed	0.88		Employed	0.67
	Unemployed	0.00		Unemployed	0.00
	Self-employed	1.00		Self-employed	0.00
SERVICES			DISTINCTIVE FEATURES		
Services	Student	0.00	Cuisine	Student	0.87
	Employed	0.61		Employed	0.88
	Unemployed	0.00		Unemployed	1.00
	Self-employed	1.00		Self-employed	1.00
Price	Student	1.00	Language	Student	0.40
	Employed	1.00		Employed	0.76
	Unemployed	1.00		Unemployed	0.33
	Self-employed	1.00		Self-employed	0.33
Tour offers	Student	0.67	Vietnamese history	Student	0.87
	Employed	0.88		Employed	0.88
	Unemployed	0.00		Unemployed	1.00
	Self-employed	1.00		Self-employed	1.00
Visa procedure	Student	0.40			
	Employed	0.70			
	Unemployed	0.00			
	Self-employed	1.00			
Note: Percentage is calculated by dividing the sum of responses of strongly agree and agree by the total number of responses.					

#### 2.1.3.4. *The relation between annual income and groups of factors*

So as to identify whether or not the relationship between annual income factors and destination choices exists, cross tabulation was applied to make comparisons between groups of factors and five annual-income groups, but because those previous visitors fell between the range of the income of from less than 20,000 to 49,999GBP; therefore, there would be only four groups discussed in this section. They are the groups of below 20,000GBP; from 20,000 to 29,999GBP; from 30,000 to 39,999GBP; and from 40,000 to 49,999GBP. The analytical results indicated that tourist groups with incomes below 20,000GBP tend to select attraction as a priority when choosing where to travel. About 90 percent of these insisted that the cultural diversity and landscape attraction were what they desired to explore in a tourist destination like Vietnam. This trend is also shared by 20,000-to-29999GBP income group. However, apart from the attraction, purpose of the trip is also an important issue for this group as well as those in next income level. In addition, customers at this level have a considerable concern with amenities and facilities. It can be seen from the table that, when income levels rise also leads to a higher demand on other tourism aspects from the sites. For example, the group of the income from 30,000 to 39,999GBP is interested in five out of six factors except distinctive features, while the remaining group has a consideration for all of them.

<b>Table 6: The relation between annual income and groups of factors</b>					
	Annual income	Percentage		Annual income	Percentage
AMENITIES AND FACILITIES			ATTRACTION		
<b>Accommodation</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.69	<b>Culture diversity</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.90
	20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00		20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00
	30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00		30000GBP-39999GBP	0.50
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00		40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00

<b>Transportation</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.24	<b>Landscape attraction</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.83
	20000GBP-29999GBP	0.67		20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00
	30000GBP-39999GBP	0.67		30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00		40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00
<b>PURPOSE</b>			<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>		
<b>Discovery</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.86	<b>Safety</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.60
	20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00		20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00
	30000GBP-39999GBP	0.67		30000GBP-39999GBP	0.50
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00		40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00
<b>Good experience</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.69	<b>Climate</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.33
	20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00		20000GBP-29999GBP	0.00
	30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00		30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00		40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00
<b>SERVICES</b>			<b>DISTINCTIVE FEATURES</b>		
<b>Services</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.26	<b>Cuisine</b> (Evans, Foxall, & Jamal, 2009)	Below 20000GBP	0.86
	20000GBP-	1.00		20000GBP-	1.00

	29999GBP			29999GBP	
	30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00		30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00		40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00
<b>Price</b>	Below 20000GBP	1.00	<b>Language</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.55
	20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00		20000GBP-29999GBP	0.33
	30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00		30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00		40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00
<b>Tour offers</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.71	<b>Vietnamese history</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.93
	20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00		20000GBP-29999GBP	1.00
	30000GBP-39999GBP	1.00		30000GBP-39999GBP	0.50
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00		40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00
<b>Visa procedure</b>	Below 20000GBP	0.62			
	20000GBP-29999GBP	0.67			
	30000GBP-39999GBP	0.50			
	40000GBP-49999GBP	1.00			

Note: Percentage is calculated by dividing the sum of responses of strongly agree and agree by the total number of responses.

#### 2.1.3.5. The relation between marital status and groups of factors

One of the demographic criteria used to group the respondents was marital status. Different marital status also resulted in various variances in travel behavior of customer groups. In this study, customers were divided into five categories; nevertheless, in this part there are only two relevant groups which are single, never married and married travelers are involved. In accordance with the table, two factors married travelers considered to have significant effects on their decisions about destination are the factors of attraction and purpose of the tours while only attraction is the most important consideration for those who are single. Indeed, 88 percent of polled singles said that they cared about the culture diversity and landscape attraction rather than other factors.

**Table 7: The relation between marital status and groups of factors**

	Marital status	Percentage		Marital status	Percentage
AMENITIES AND FACILITIES			ATTRACTION		
<b>Accommodation</b>	Single, never married	0.76	<b>Culture diversity</b>	Single, never married	0.88
	Married	0.67		Married	0.67
<b>Transportation</b>	Single, never married	0.24	<b>Landscape attraction</b>	Single, never married	0.88
	Married	0.33		Married	0.67
PURPOSE			PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
<b>Discovery</b>	Single, never married	0.86	<b>Safety</b>	Single, never married	0.65
	Married	0.67		Married	0.33

Good experience	Single, never married	0.76	Climate	Single, never married	0.41
	Married	0.67		Married	0.67
SERVICES			DISTINCTIVE FEATURES		
Services	Single, never married	0.41	Cuisine	Single, never married	0.90
	Married	0.67		Married	0.67
Price	Single, never married	1.00	Language	Single, never married	0.59
	Married	1.00		Married	1.00
Tour offers	Single, never married	0.78	Vietnamese history	Single, never married	0.67
	Married	0.67		Married	0.33
Visa procedure	Single, never married	0.84			
	Married	0.33			
Note: Percentage is calculated by dividing the sum of responses of strongly agree and agree by the total number of responses.					

#### 2.1.3.6. The relation between annual income and groups of factors

Among the demographic factors, ethnicity also plays a significant role in creating differences in the decisions of different groups of tourists. There were five groups of tourists set; however, only four groups joined in this survey, so there are only four ethnicity groups will be mentioned in this section. They are those from Asia, Europe, Africa, and Australia or New Zealand. Based on statistical indicators from the table, the aspect that Asian tourists considered to be the most important when they travel is the attraction of the destination which is the same for the European group. However, there is one

more aspect also received the same attention by European travelers is the motive. In fact, all the European tourists used to go to Vietnam have confirmed that it is the motive of the journey that led them to decide to choose Vietnam as the destination. This is true for the Australian or New Zealander groups. In other ways, according to the African visitors, distinctive features were the key items they found attractive in Vietnam tourism.

<b>Table 8: The relation between ethnicity and groups of factors</b>					
	Ethnicity	Percentage		Ethnicity	Percentage
AMENITIES AND FACILITIES			ATTRACTION		
<b>Accommodation</b>	Asian	0.69	<b>Culture diversity</b>	Asian	0.85
	European	1.00		European	1.00
	African	0.67		African	0.67
	Australian/New Zealander	1.00		Australian/New Zealander	1.00
<b>Transportation</b>	Asian	0.23	<b>Landscape attraction</b>	Asian	0.85
	European	0.33		European	1.00
	African	0.33		African	0.67
	Australian/New Zealander	0.00		Australian/New Zealander	1.00
PURPOSE			PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
<b>Discovery</b>	Asian	0.82	<b>Safety</b>	Asian	0.77
	European	1.00		European	0.33
	African	0.67		African	0.33
	Australian/New Zealander	1.00		Australian/New Zealander	0.00
<b>Good</b>	Asian	0.69	<b>Climate</b>	Asian	0.38



<b>experience</b>	European	1.00		European	0.67
	African	0.67		African	0.67
	Australian/New Zealander	1.00		Australian/New Zealander	0.00
<b>SERVICES</b>			<b>DISTINCTIVE FEATURES</b>		
<b>Services</b>	Asian	0.31	<b>Cuisine</b>	Asian	0.87
	European	1.00		European	1.00
	African	0.67		African	0.67
	Australian/New Zealander	0.00		Australian/New Zealander	1.00
<b>Price</b>	Asian	1.00	<b>Language</b>	Asian	0.56
	European	1.00		European	0.78
	African	1.00		African	1.00
	Australian/New Zealander	1.00		Australian/New Zealander	0.33
<b>Tour offers</b>	Asian	0.72	<b>Vietnamese history</b>	Asian	0.87
	European	1.00		European	1.00
	African	0.67		African	0.67
	Australian/New Zealander	1.00		Australian/New Zealander	1.00
<b>Visa procedure</b>	Asian	0.77			
	European	0.44			
	African	0.33			
	Australian/New Zealander	0.00			

Note: Percentage is calculated by dividing the sum of responses of strongly agree and agree by the total number of responses.

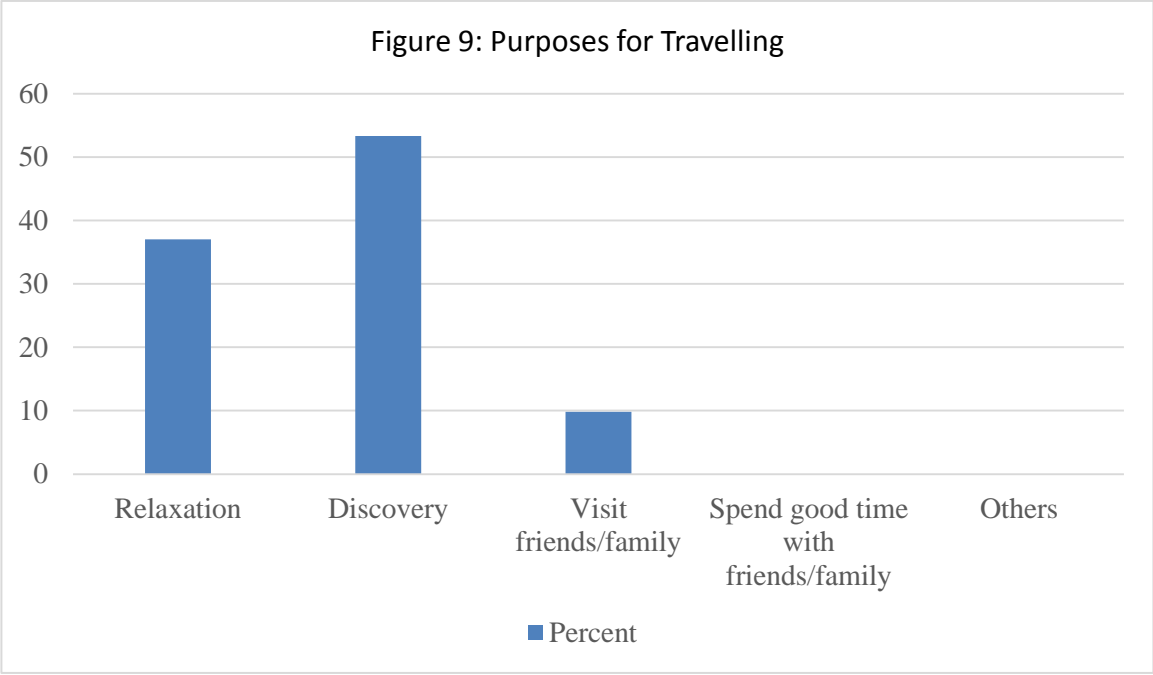
## **2.2. Group of potential visitors**

### **2.2.1. Respondents' profile**

The large number of respondent's belonging to group of potential visitors (who might visit Vietnam in the future) in this survey, are young people in age group of 18-29 with 61% followed by middle age group 30-44 (32%), age group 45-60 (6%) and 60+ (.7%). This is healthy indicator for upcoming Vietnam Tourism and countries growth. Male respondents are leading with 61% in this survey with remaining female participants. Keeping occupation as parameter, employed people i.e consistent income earning group with 61% followed by students (29%) and lastly the self-employed people (4%). Annual income plays an important role in destination choice but here the results are surprising. People falling under category of annual income less than 20000 GBP(39%) with income range 20000 GBP- 29999 GBP(23%) , 30000-39999 GBP(19%), 40000-49999 GBP(25%) who might take the chance to try tourism service in Vietnam. Out of which 61% are unmarried ones, 32% married and 6% belong to separated category.

Most of the participants in the survey belong to Asia(55%) followed by American/Latino(23%), Europe(13%) and Africa, Australia/New Zealander with equal 3% survey takers. Wonderful and motivating observation is positive travel interest as potential visitors to Vietnam as 96%. This shows high interest and inclination in Vietnam as tourist destination and future traveller spot.

2.2.2. Effects of factors on potential visitors



It can be observed from the chart that the passion to explore and experience new things is the most powerful driving force behind the decision of performing a trip with the highest proportion of 53.3 percent agreed that they would like to travel to learn new things, while this percentage is only 37 percent for a relaxation.

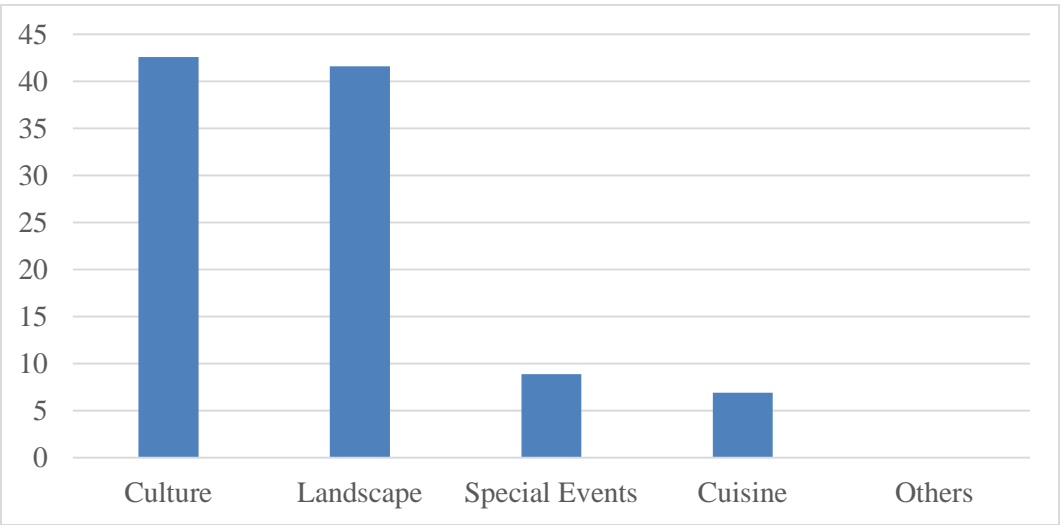
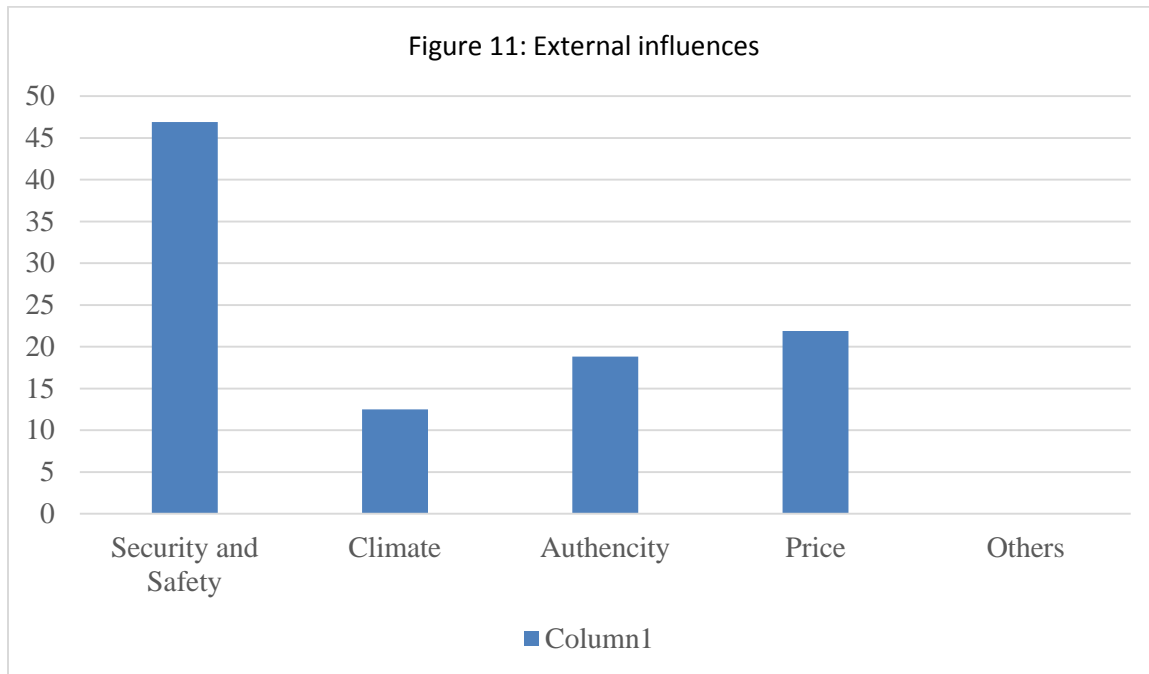
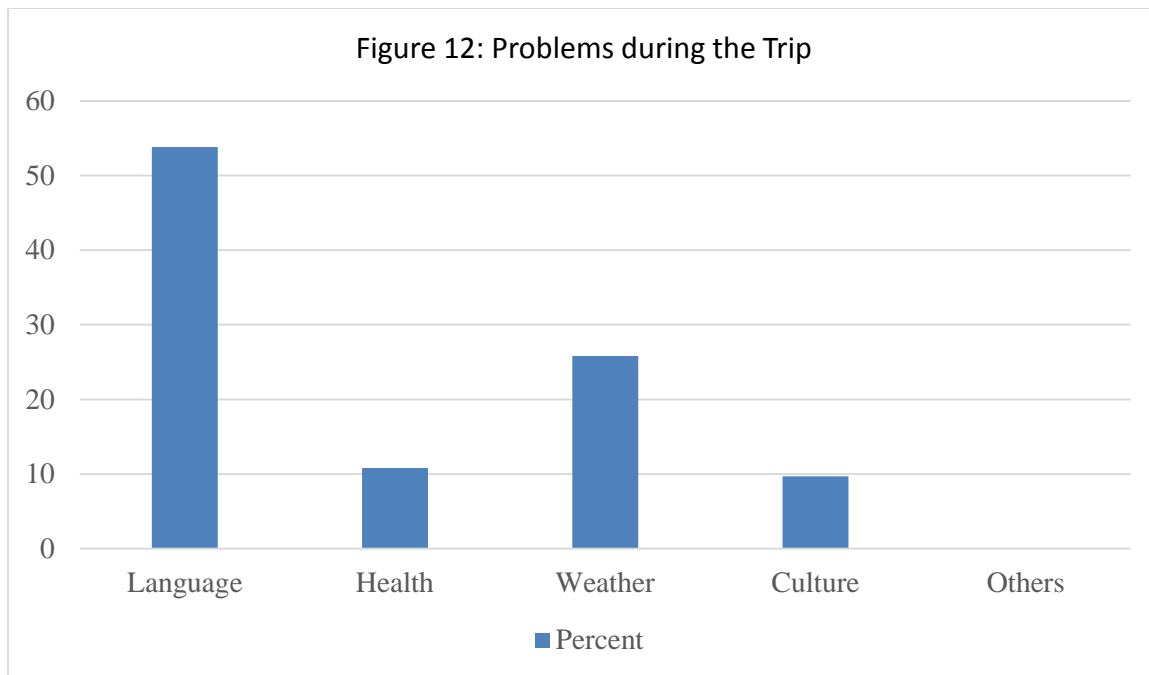


Figure 10: Tourism attractions

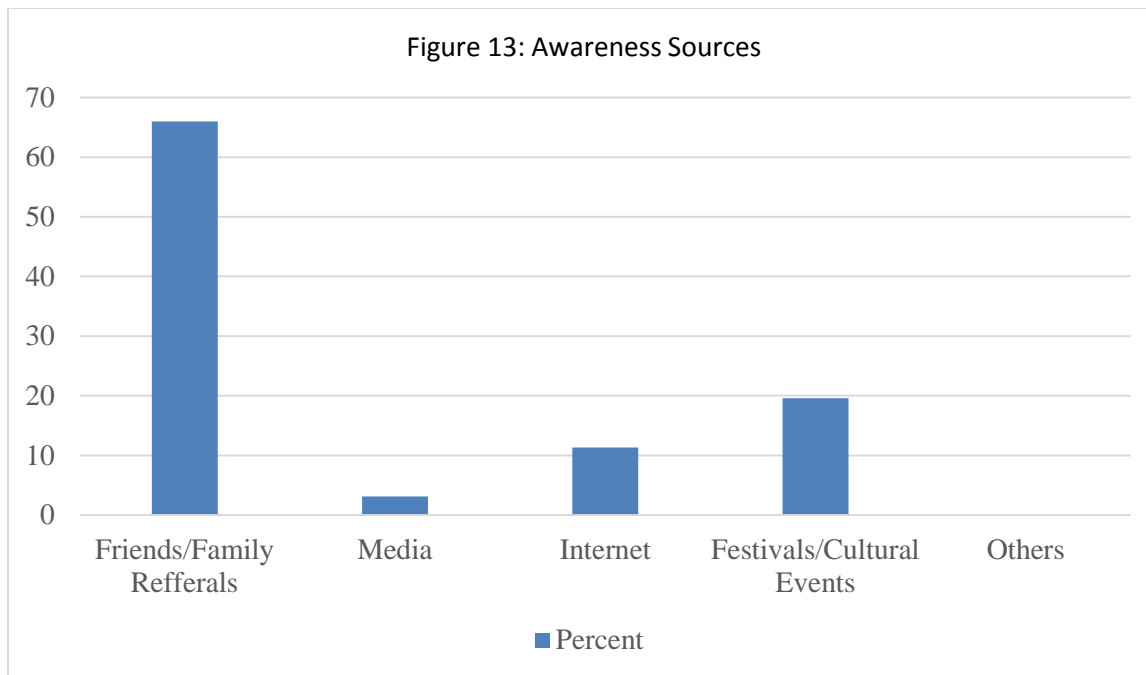
Based on the data presented in the chart, it can be concluded that the culture and landscape are two aspects were most appreciated by respondents at a location with about 42 percent of agreement whereas only 7.5 percent of the same group thought they would travel for food.



According to the graph, security and safety elements were rated by the attendees as the most essential factor affecting their final decision in choosing a location for tourism. Nearly half of people agreed with the idea while only a minority care for the others.



It is evident that people are likely to see the difference in languages is a big obstacle when coming to another country which discourages them to choose it as a destination. In fact, 53.8 percent of potential travelers to be studied in this article claimed that dissimilarity over language might become an obstacle that they would have to encounter in their travels. Conversely, the majority of people do not consider the cultural differences a matter to them with only 9 percent agreed with the idea.



By looking at the bar chart, it can be said that there is homogeneity in the distribution of respondents' answers about their awareness of information sources. About two thirds of unprecedented visitors to Vietnam have said that the major information channel that helps them know about the country of Vietnam is from their relatives and friends, while this number accounts for only 3.1 percent over communication channels.

### 3. Qualitative analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to collect valuable information from those who have experience and expertise in this travel and tourism industry. Open-ended questions were chosen with the aim of enabling interviewees to “respond freely within their own frame of reference” (Hankinson, 2009, p. 104).

#### 3.1. Potentials for Vietnam tourism

In the context of the current economic downturn of the global economy in general and Vietnam in particular, along with the world economy productions in most of manufacturing and service sectors in Vietnam also witnessed a continuous decline. However, at the same time Vietnam's tourism industry has shown a positive growth in terms of contribution to nation GDP as well as the increasing of

international tourist arrivals to Vietnam. Provided by an informant, (Truong B., market research manager, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2013), potentials for Vietnam tourism are reflected:

*“...In my opinion, Vietnam is a nation that has many advantages of natural ecological conditions, historical and cultural monuments, and especially a lot of tangible and intangible heritage recognized by UNESCO. Besides, there are more than 3,000km of coastline stretching from North to South...”*

Though Vietnam has seen high growth in tourism industry from 2010 to early 2013 but still it didn't match to the proportion of potential Vietnam possession. Vietnam faces tough competition with its neighbour nations such as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore but still Vietnam is low with its competitors. Vietnam has huge advantage in terms of tourism assess such as beautiful natural ecological condition, culture, monuments, history and various tangible and intangible heritage recognized by global organization UNESCO.

It is the natural advantages that Vietnam has attracted foreign visitors. Besides, the diversity of regional culture and culinary has also contributed to create the distinctions drawing tourists to this country. The second informant (Dang D., customer service manager, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2013) has shown an agreement with this opinion when asked:

*“...I think Vietnamese cuisine has a strength that has a great attraction with international tourists. Many dishes like pho, spring rolls, etc. are frequently among the top of the most attractive dishes in the world...”*

### **3.2. Criteria in travel decision making**

They are all amongst the strengths that Vietnam tourism should enhance. However, it is necessary to see whether those advantages are what are actually enable visitors to consider or take into account when making their decision of travel or their choice of destination to Vietnam or not.

When planning their trips, travelers must weigh many criteria to choose a final destination. Different people would have different priorities in the selection of appropriate criteria for what they will rely on to make a final decision. According to a market researcher (Truong B., 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2013), when questioned she supposed "excitement, cost, procedure to that place, and safety are the things which

clients usually care about in their trips". But this does not seem to be the same for everyone because another informant claimed that, "I think the purpose of the trip is the most important criterion, as it gives travelers the ideas of where, what, when and how to make the trip" (Nguyen H., tour operator, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2013) to pick up among alternatives. The last option would come after the criteria were set and evaluated based on the needs and desires of the travelers.

Nonetheless, according to another informant, who is working in tourism marketing for more than 5 years (Nguyen T., marketing manager, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2013), he supposed that travel decision making is a complex process which involves a lot of factors, which according to those, the final selection should be the best idealistic option that is able to meet all necessary requirements.

*"...Working in travel and tourism field for more than ten years, as an experienced person in this field and is also a travel lover, I think to carry out a vacation, travelers at the beginning must specify necessary basic elements such as time available (when do they expect to make the trip), trip purpose, go with whom, expected duration is how long, how much of budget is expected, what activities they want to participate in, is the season appropriate (because they cannot ski in the summer, or go swimming in the cold winter in the UK, for example) ... Based on these criteria, there will be a number of options of places, and competitive packages, which can be related to air tickets, and accommodations accordingly..."*

### **3.3. Factors that influence choice of destination**

According to the opinion of a tour operator, there are five factors affecting the decision of foreign tourists when choosing Vietnam as a place for travelling. First, the "security and stable government" is factor he thinks Vietnam is a destination that can meet the requirements of tourists. This opinion is also shared by others such as a tour guide (Tran V., 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2013), who currently works in one of the most prestige travel and tourism service in terms of inbound sector. He supposed that:

*"...I often work with foreign tourists from Russia...I believe that one of the biggest factors attracting them to Vietnam, apart from landscape discovery matters, it is good price...Beside that, it is quite easy for them to get to Laos, Cambodia and Thailand from Vietnam, where they provide quite same affordable cheap service as well...."*



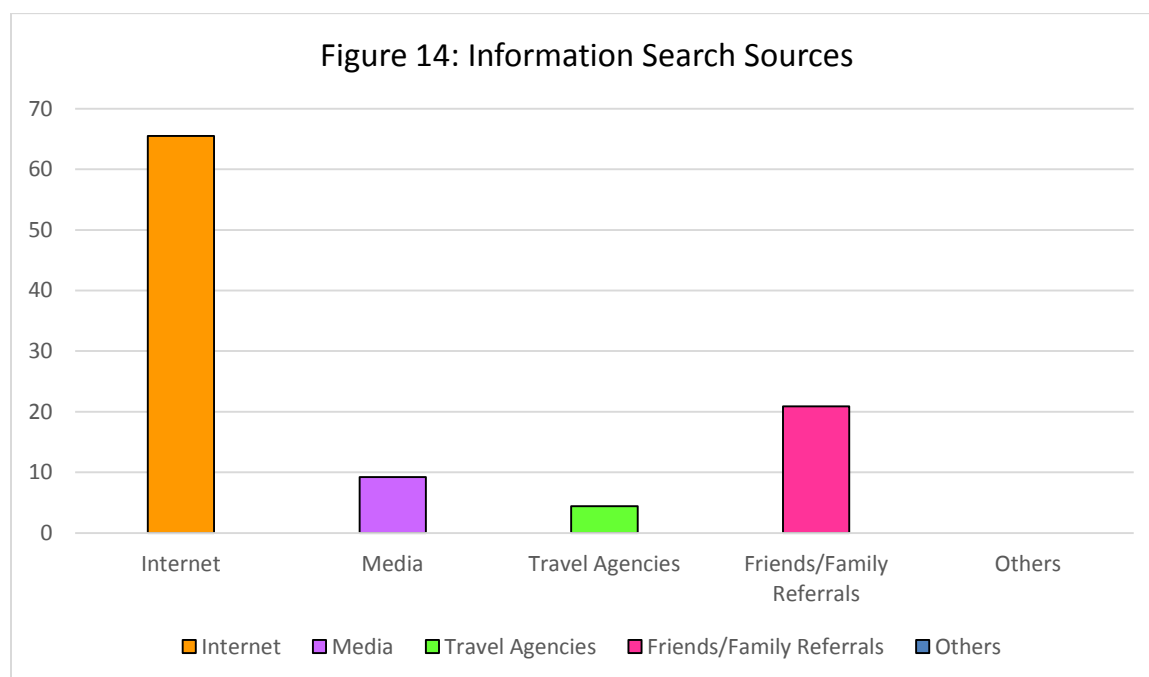
Vietnam apart from natural rich heritage like landscape, one of the biggest attraction factors is its good price. Vietnam is so well located, surrounded by nature and provides an easy passage for tourists to get into Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. Along with this it also provides same affordable and cheap and best service to its price.

Besides that, there are various important factors like safety, security, political stability which influences inbound tourist choose Vietnam as their tourist destination. These factors are top priority and are of important concern in this modern day. Rebel group of Middle East or Africa countries, has led to tourism collapse in these areas. Gang rape cases in India or Egypt, cases of terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan has huge impact on tourism. These are shared by a travel consultancy executive (Pham C., 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2013):

*“...Regarding factors that influence inbound tourists to choose Vietnam as a destination...I think security and safety, as well as political stability are quite important these days... Incidents reported all over the world these days, such as gang-raped in India or in Egypt happened to some European female travelers, or strikes from the opponents or rebel groups in some of the Middle East countries and Africa ... has caused tourism these country to shut down. As one simple reason, people go for vacation for leisure...they don't expect to go there to die, or get injured, or get harmed...Also, some other factors such as what Vietnam can provide them are also important, like good food, services, accommodation, transportation, etc...though we can't deny the importance of price...”*

Safety and security are the key ingredients of tourism. Visitors going for vacation choose a place for leisure and don't expect to undergo any kind of unfortunate scenarios like injury, or get harmed, or get killed. Vietnam has positive remarks on this part, along with this Vietnam provides good food, accommodation, transportation and other services with affordable price being most important helps in attracting tourist towards its end.

#### 4. Effectiveness of information sources



This graph shows the inclination towards various source of information used these days when people make decision to travel. Internet, a social media platform is most demanding by consumer and accounts for 65.5% followed by WOM which includes friends or family referrals (20.9%). Media such as news, movie, television programs...and Travel agencies as information source contribute 9.2% and 4.4% respectively. This reflects the effectiveness of technology development has contributed to tourism industry by expanding their image through these means. In modern world, people mostly use and rely on various internet services which help in getting reviews, details, insight, choice, practical experience, etc. about a given destination for convenient and cost effective matters. The biggest reason of internet growing as popular information source is reliability, trust, belief of people due to its open and public nature. Vast numbers of people are connected across the world and freely exercise their opinions and interact freely without any limitation. This number is going to grow in near future and undoubtedly consumers will be able to utilize the benefits. This would provide a positive impact on tourism as well; people will get more ideas, options and will be helpful in making destination choice. Meanwhile, referral is second important information source where information passes from one another through oral or written medium. Via referrals, friends/relatives being its component add credibility and reliability to piece of information, thus acts as strong marketing element and helps in

making an easy destination choice. Media and Travel agencies are little weaker information source but plays a vital role in making destination choice based on condition, region, options, comfort, support needed, etc.

## **5. Summary**

Data has been analysed in this chapter collected from survey conducted in questionnaires and interviews, by using two methods called as quantitative and qualitative. Survey is conducted on group of previous visitors and group of potential visitors. Data is collected in survey done based on various socio-demographic variables including age, gender, occupation, annual income, marital status, ethnicity along with each of influencing factor variables. Qualitative analysis is further based on interview conducted as explained above. Also effectiveness of various information sources such as Internet, media, travel agencies, WOM (Friend/Family, Relatives) have been narrated on how it has impacted destination choice based on data's collected. This result of data analysis done will reflect the findings and outcome in next chapter.

## **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION**

### **1. Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to state the outcome/conclusion and findings summing up from combination of literature review and data analysing result. This conclusion is based on analysis and research done in previous chapters. Findings are including six major factors, the impacts of socio-demographic elements on final choice, internet as effective information source, impact of Word of Mouth described below. Six factors are Communication, Attractions, Services - Amenities and facilities, Accessibility, Distinctive local features and Psychological and physical environment. Conclusion is based on SWOT model which consists of four parameters: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and Conceptual process of understanding customer satisfaction. Conceptual process of understanding customer satisfaction states how destination branding and Service quality earns loyalty from consumers and provide them into useful return and referrals.

### **2. Findings**

#### **2.1. Six major factors**

Based on knowledge reviewed and results from data analysis, the research have figured out and ... all factors into six major factors that influence the majority of visitors who have been and might be to Vietnam as following:

##### **Factor 1: Communication**

The first factor presented in this part of finding is the factor that has its own name of communication since discusses about the way information about the destination is accessed, transferred or provided. In this part, communication includes aspects of media: advertisements, movies, magazines, newspaper, etc.; social media; friends or family referrals; and ratings via social websites. Hence, it can be concluded that communication about the places (including word of mouth) is one of the most crucial factor considered by the tourists because it is the first stage on which later consideration would be based. It provides people with all necessary information through about the destination, the package that they receive or other necessary details such as accommodation, flight tickets, etc.

##### **Factor 2: Attractions**

This factor was named as attractions because it included elements such as site attractions, event attractions, and activities. According to results from the data analysis, the attractions were rated as the most important among the six factors because it is the main motivation that pulls travelers to the destination. Visitors can find appealing with the site attractions of permanent objects that cannot be moved or changed such as natural landscapes like mountains, beaches, or caves, etc.; or ancient architects that have existed for a long time. They sometimes show interest in exciting events taking place at a temporary time such as any art exhibition, festivals of fireworks, or cuisine festivals held at travel sites. Not only are occasional festivals, but annual events are also a kind of attractions that attract the attention of visitors because of its bearing on the cultural distinctions. In fact, Vietnamese traditional Tet holiday (Lunar New Year) is often seen as the occasion drawing the biggest amount of tourists during the year due to the interesting features it offers. The third aspect listed in this factor is activities. This is the most flexible item of the three types of attractions because it can easily be tailored to meet the expectation of visitors. Activities are defined as the offers provided at the destination to satisfy the demands of entertaining and relaxing of visitors. For instance, guests would have the opportunity to participate in scuba diving activities if they came to Nha Trang, take the cable car to see the whole city if they came to Da Nang, or enjoy the imperial atmosphere as visiting the ancient capital of Hue.

### **Factor 3: Services - Amenities and facilities**

After the attraction factor has been evaluated thoroughly to fulfill the purpose of the tour, the third factor to be taken into the process of consideration is the services and amenities and facilities. It consists of two items: price and tour offers at the destination. Indeed, the study results showed that price was the matter receiving a great attention from all those surveyed. Whether locations selected meets requirements of their budget is always a question that travelers must answer before determining where to go. It can be said that this is a factor that has an equally important influence on making choices to reach the optimal option because it satisfies the basic needs of tourists in their trips which comprise accommodation, food, local transport, information center, and other supporting services. Moreover, services are crucial to the satisfaction of the visitors since it may affect their future return or positive referrals.

#### **Factor 4: Accessibility**

After all essential components have been agreed, at this point the question would be how to get there, if it is easy to get there, whether the visa process is complicated and time-consuming or not, and what means should be used to reach that place. Accessibility involves the fact that how easy it can be to access the destination which also includes visa procedure. This feature is likely to make an impact on the destination selection since if accessibility to a place is complex, it might reduce the attractiveness of a destination as visitors may prefer to twist to another alternative which has similar offers but is more accessible.

#### **Factor 5: Distinctive local features**

Distinctive local feature is a form of attractions, but it is separated from attractions because it refers to unique points making up the own characteristics of a place which differentiate it from the others. To illustrate, it may be the physical value of Ha Long Bay in Quang Ninh that inspires tourists or it can be spiritual values generated by Ruou Can, a kind of wine that is quite popular for ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, people wish to experience. Therefore, it is distinctive local features that would pull visitors to a site and make it distinct from other places.

#### **Factor 6: Psychological and physical environment**

The final factor to be discussed in this division was described as psychological and physical environment. It covers two main points: safety and security, and hospitality experience. In terms of security and safety, people travel primarily for the purpose of having a good time, so good security and safety is certainly would be something that most travellers expect in place they would come. The unexpected Incidents might occur during the trip are the things no one wish to have. Hence, the uncertainty of safety and security is likely to reduce the interest of visitors in the destination.

### **2.2. Socio-demographic elements make the differences in destination choice**

From the analysis results, it can be concluded that socio-demographic factors have certain impacts on the process of reviewing and selecting the destination of the group being studied. Groups which carry different demographic characteristics tend to make different considerations between the elements. For example, older people tend to pay more attention to relaxation while younger-age groups are

more in favour of discovery. Or those in the higher income groups seem to consider all factors before deciding on the destination, while the low-income groups (such as students) only consider a number of relevant factors such as price, accommodation, etc. This allows the market researchers in planning specific strategies to each customer group more easily and efficiently.

### **2.3. Internet is the mostly used and most effective searching source**

Before generating decisions, it is necessary that travelers study about where they plan to come. In this era, access to information is relatively easy. There are many sources of information that people can consult such as from advertising available on the media like TV, newspapers, magazines, etc., from the internet, from the suggestions of friends or relatives, or they even can take information directly from the travel agencies. In the variety of information sources, the internet still remains a tool that a majority of people prefer due to the benefits it brings. Users can find information about the geography, scenery and culture on many websites promoting tourism. In addition, internet also gives visitors a convenient method to get an overview of the destination through the exchange of information through personal social sites where users can share information with each other, write reviews, and even do ranking.

### **2.4. Referrals from friends/family (word-of-mouth) have a relative impact on travellers' choice of destination**

Although the internet seems to be the most extensive and most convenient source of information, but in terms of reliability of the information provided, referrals appear to be the best option. Under the perspective of potential travelers who have never been to the destination, this is even more important because they will tend to believe those who have had experience in that place. Referrals in this case are expressed by recommendation from friends, folks, or ratings and appraisals from previous visitors who have known about the place or services relevant. Therefore, referrals can become an extremely effective means of promoting when their experiences are positive. Conversely, it would be very detrimental if the information provided by those previous tourists is negative.

### **3. Conclusion**

#### **3.1. SWOT analysis**

This section will be devoted to talk about conclusions found from the study and the findings will be presented in the form of a SWOT model which consists of four items: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The first aspect covered in this model is strengths. From the analyzed results, it can be drawn from tourist perspective; Vietnam tourism has been having advantages which help attract international visitors. Despite being a relatively small country, but Vietnam is the home of attractions. Visitors come to Vietnam because of the natural beauty and cultural diversity existing in different regions of the country of Vietnam. Many visitors said they thought about this country since they liked to find something new underlying in the cultural diversity because it gives them different and exciting experiences. Moreover, history is also a feature that Vietnam received good points from the international travellers. With a long history which lasted through many different phases, Vietnam is idealistic destination for those who want to deeper explore changes in many different historical periods. The last strength given should be discussed in this section is a young and plentiful workforce of tourism that Vietnam owns. This is an advantage that supports the long-term development of Vietnam tourism in particular and the country of Vietnam in general.

On the other hands, Vietnam tourism remains many weaknesses which slow down its growth. The first issue is the transportation. Actually, according to the previous visitors to Vietnam, the transportations are still not convenient, not efficient and time consuming. The airport and rail system has not met the growing demand of tourists. For example, many flights are often delayed especially in the case of low-priced airlines. Besides, the issue of service is also a matter that needs a great concern. Some interviewed tourists said they saw that a number of services including flight services in Vietnam are not good compared to some other countries in the region such as Thailand. This is partly due to the low tourism infrastructure which has not met the growth and traffic still is an unsolved problem especially in big cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.



**Table 9 : SWOT ANALYSIS**

**STRENGTHS**

- Beautiful nature landscape
- Interesting cultural diversity
- Historical heritage
- Young and plentiful human resources for tourism

**WEAKNESSES**

- Transportation
- Services
- Traffic
- Safety
- Infrastructure

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- New target customer sources
- Increasing trend of regional cooperation
- Awareness of visitors of Vietnam and its tourism destinations
- Development of technology

**THREATS**

- Rivalries from developed markets
- Competitions from emerging markets
- Competition from the open-policy markets
- Downturn of global economy

However, looking at the overall trend, there are still many opportunities for Vietnam's tourism to grow because of the increasing number of tourists pouring into the region. According to the results of the survey, more than 90 percent of those who have come to Vietnam said that they would return if they had a chance while around 70 percent of previous visitors said they would return to Vietnam in the future and introduce to their friends and relatives. This indicated that there are the potential and opportunities for Vietnam tourism. In addition, the trend of increasing regional cooperation also created many chances for tourism development.

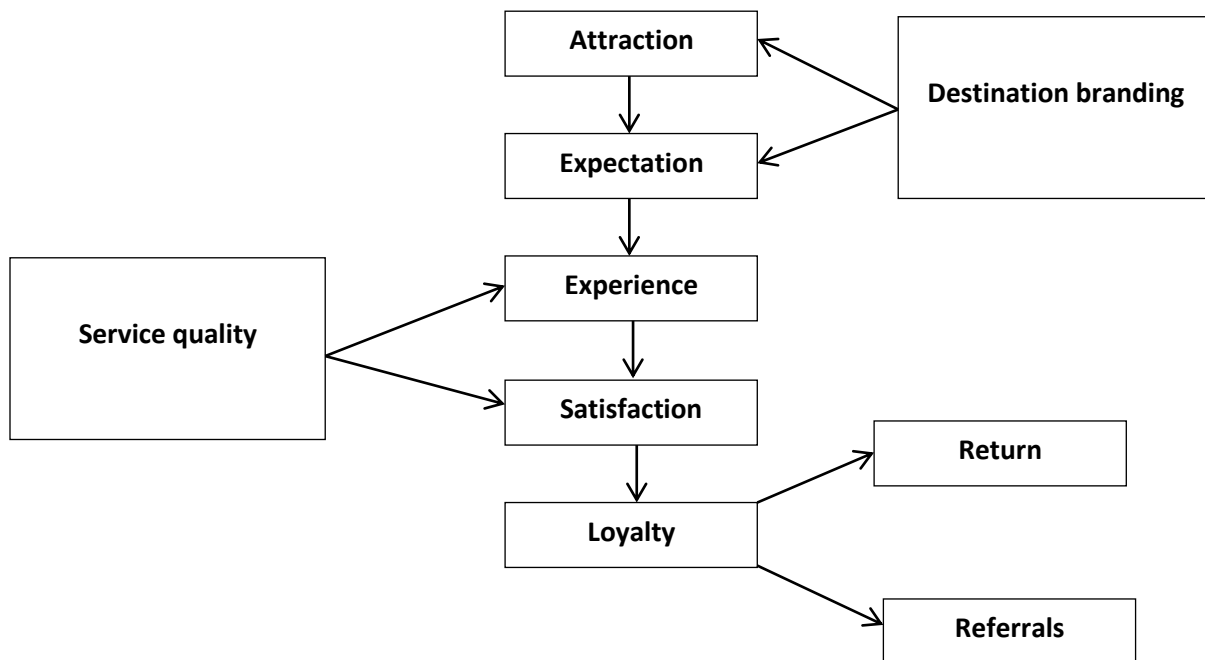
Finally, it is obvious that opportunities tend to come along with threats. The increase of the number of tourists also leads to increased competitions from tourist nations. First, there is competition from countries with powerful tourism industries such as U.S., European countries, Japan and Australia.

These are countries with good reputation of infrastructure and services which can help to provide tourists comfortable experiences during their trip. Additionally, they often pay a great attention to the work of promoting and preserving the national images to the world which assist them to maintain a stable level of visitors each year. The second competition Vietnam has to face is the competition from countries with emerging tourism industries such as China, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand. These are countries that tend to have powerful investment strategies for tourism. Moreover, Vietnam may encounter difficulties since the cost of travelling to these places are quite similar to Vietnam's, but the benefits they offer are quite more attractive compared to Vietnam which may attract foreign visitors. The final competition mentioned in this section is coming from nations that have open policies like Bhutan. For example, Bhutan has offered an easy policy of visa for tourists which may make it appealing to foreign travelers (Anon., 2012).

### **3.2. Conceptual process of understanding customer satisfaction**

Last but not least, it is extremely necessary to understand the core role of service and its quality. There is no doubt that the final target of service quality is customer satisfaction. Thus, there is a need of understanding the whole process of customer satisfaction. It starts when a visit gets attracted by a destination image, since then an initial imagination of the destination will be formed in his/her mind. That is why, at this phase, destination image and branding play quite crucial role as if they are not good, visitor will not even think of the opportunity of getting there. Once the image is good enough to pull him/her to the place, it is time that service plays its part. Service quality is highly appreciated in this phase as it directly affects satisfaction of visitor through what they experience in real, since then this is leading to their choice if they might be back or not. Once tourists' needs are satisfied by what the destination offer, they tend to demonstrate their loyalty to the destination in terms of coming back to visit or, giving recommendation to others, such as friends, colleagues or family (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). However, the true lesson from here is, it is not really all about marketing and branding, as it is just a tool to introduce appearance of the destination to others, but if its quality is not as good as introduced, they will never come back, or even worse, their trust on that destination are lost. The consequence is, either they will never come back, or never refer to their folks. According to Russell T. (2013), he supposed that "You can market a tourism destination all you like, but if people go there and

have a negative experience, they simply won't go back", and this is not an abundant lesson for



Vietnam.

**Figure 25: Conceptual process of understanding customer satisfaction**

#### 4. Summary

Based on knowledge reviewed and results from data analysis understanding literature review, the research have figured out all six major factors that influence the majority of visitors who had been in Vietnam and those treated as to be potential Vietnam visitors in near future. First factor is Communication which includes aspects of media: advertisements, movies, magazines, newspaper, etc.; social media; friends or family referrals; and ratings via social websites. This is the way information about the destination is accessed, transferred or provided. Second factor Attractions is the main motivation that pulls travelers to the destination which includes site attractions, event attractions, and activities. Third factor Services - Amenities and facilities which consist of two items - price and tour offerings at the destination. Fourth factor is Accessibility which involves the fact that how easy it can be to access the destination which also includes visa procedure. Fifth factor is Distinctive local features is a form of attractions, but it is separated from attractions because it refers

to unique points making up the own characteristics of a place unique from others. The last and very important is sixth factor - Psychological and physical environment which talks about two main points: safety and security, and hospitality experience. Other key findings are Socio-demographic elements which make significant differences in destination choice that shape the basement for market segmentation; Internet being the mostly used and most effective active searching source and word-of-mouth ingredients, for example, referrals from friends/family which have relatively high impact on travelers destination choice. Further Conclusion is derived based on SWOT model considering four important aspects including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and by understanding Conceptual process of customer satisfaction. Based on Findings and conclusion drawn in this chapter, recommendation is being suggested in next chapter.

## CHAPTER VI: RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last chapter of the paper, the factors that influence decisions about the destination of tourists and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been presented in form of the SWOT model. Based on the finding that, six solutions which will be presented below will be come up in order to reinforce and promote strengths and overcome weaknesses, thereby capture and take advantage of opportunities and minimize threats.

1. Enhance the quality of services: To support tourism development, it is necessary furniture government increase investment of infrastructure development such as roads, airports, railway stations along with upgrade and improve the system of transportation public to facilitate convenience to travel for tourists. In addition, the state should also take steps eliminate evils and crimes by developing a proper management framework. Regarding the tourism enterprises, they should take measures to improve the overall quality of services in parallel with the diversification of tourism products offered and at the same time improve the quality of transport services to ensure safety of the lives and property of tourists participating in the tour and travel programs.
2. Simplify administrative procedures: One of the factors receives much attention from visitors when they are traveling is the accessibility of the destination and in this aspect Vietnam is not like to be appreciated by tourists. One of the reasons may be mentioned is that the administrative procedures of Vietnam which include the visa procedure are still not effective. Therefore, so as to make Vietnam more appealing to foreign visitors, one of the strategies that Vietnam should conduct is to simplify the paperwork for tourists because as the entry procedures become easier and effective, the visitors may tend to find more interesting in that nation.
3. Enhance the role of tourism development: It is essential that tourism sector should be seen as a core industry that need developing in the long term and one of the issues that must be considered is to emphasize on the development of human resources for the tourism industry in both quantity and quality because when there is an abundant and high quality human resources, the quality of the whole industry will also be enhanced which create the foundation for long-term sustainable development. Moreover, in order to cultivate the tourism industry in general, the state should also increase investment, especially in the stages of tourism promotion, building and conservation of the

country's image, and promoting overseas. In addition, funds should also be allocated rationally so that potential areas can be exploited for tourism development in an effective way.

4. Focus on building national brands: One of the factors that need to be considered when creating an image of the country is the uniqueness in comparison with other countries; thus, Vietnam should fully exploit the advantages of the country to build its own image. However, the country's image must be always associated to the reality of the country because if the image created is in the contrary with the reality, it will actually make visitors lose confidence in the country and it is likely that they will not return to that country anymore. Vietnam is known as a fascinating destination with spectacular natural scenery, many natural heritage and unique culture, friendly people hospitality, and culinary diversity; therefore, the national brand Vietnam should be built based on these features to create a distinctive character which differentiates from other Asian countries.

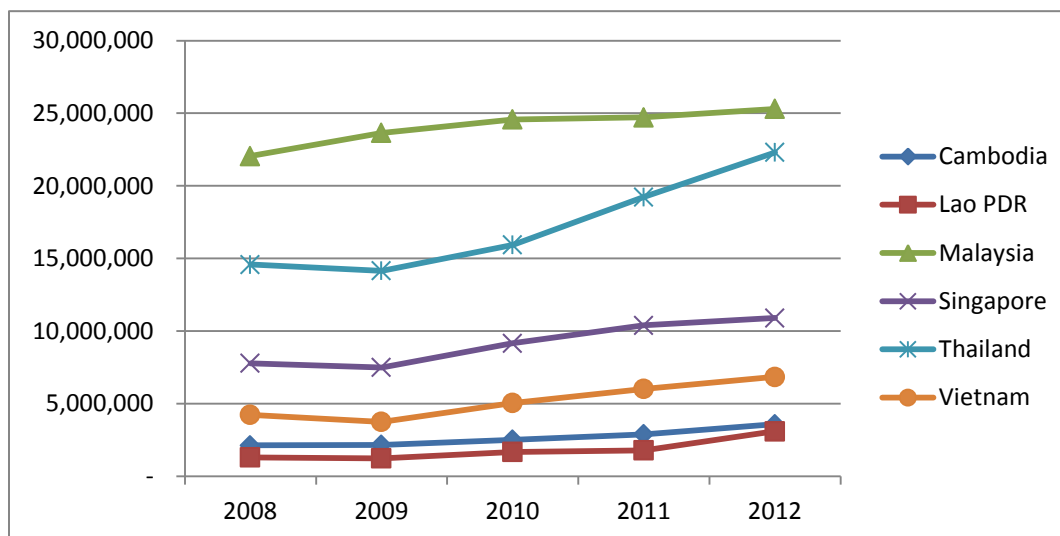
5. Manage sustainable development: Growth is good, but in the long term it is essential that Vietnam should have a strategy for sustainable development of tourism which is cultivating tourism in parallel with protecting the environment. It is advisable that Vietnam develops a partnership model in which the travel agencies maintain a close cooperation with the community to both expand and preserve these values for the future.

6. Promote trends of cooperative development: The tendency to promote cooperation should be carried out on both national and international scales. In terms of national, the state should create an association and cooperation between the provinces and in order to create a specific tourism brand for each region which helps create a variety of attractions for visitors in choosing tour packages. On a larger scale, Vietnam can choose cooperation instead of competition with neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, Lao, and Thailand. This can not only help reduce competitions from nearby countries, but also contribute to create an interesting point which attracts more tourists to travel to Vietnam.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 - Tourist arrivals to ASEAN countries from 2008 to 2012

Source : World Bank



### Appendix 2 - Tourism arrivals to ASEAN countries from 2008 to 2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Cambodia</b>	2,125,000	2,162,000	2,508,000	2,882,000	3,584,000
<b>Lao PDR</b>	1,295,000	1,239,000	1,670,000	1,786,000	3,100,000
<b>Malaysia</b>	22,052,000	23,646,000	24,577,000	24,714,000	25,300,000
<b>Singapore</b>	7,778,000	7,489,000	9,161,000	10,390,000	10,900,000
<b>Thailand</b>	14,584,000	14,150,000	15,936,000	19,230,000	22,300,000
<b>Vietnam</b>	4,236,000	3,747,000	5,050,000	6,014,000	6,840,000

Source : World Bank

### **Appendix 3 - What is informed consent?**

- Giving information about the research which is relevant to subjects' decisions about whether to participate
- Making sure that subjects understand that information (e.g. by providing information sheets written in the subjects' language)
- Ensuring that participation is voluntary (e.g. by requiring written consent)
- Where subjects are not competent to agree (e.g. small children), obtaining consent by proxy (e.g. from their parents)

Source: adapted from Kent, 1996: 19-20

### **Appendix 4 - A sample consent form for studies of language use**

As part of this project, we have made a photographic, audio and/or video recording of you. We would like you to indicate (with ticks in the appropriate places) below what uses of these records you are willing to consent to. This is completely up to you. We will only use the records in ways that you agree to. In any use of these records, names will not be identified.

The records can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.

The records can be used for scientific publications and/or meeting.

The written transcript and/or records can be used by other researchers.

The records can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups.

The records can be used on television or radio.

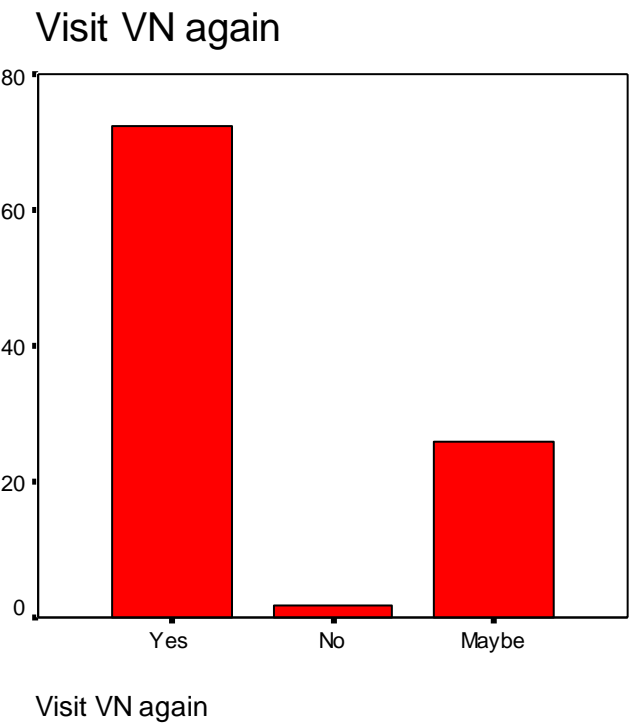
Source: adapted from ten Have, 1998: Appendix C, based on a form developed by Susan Ervin-Tripp, Psychology Department, University of Carolina at Berkeley.



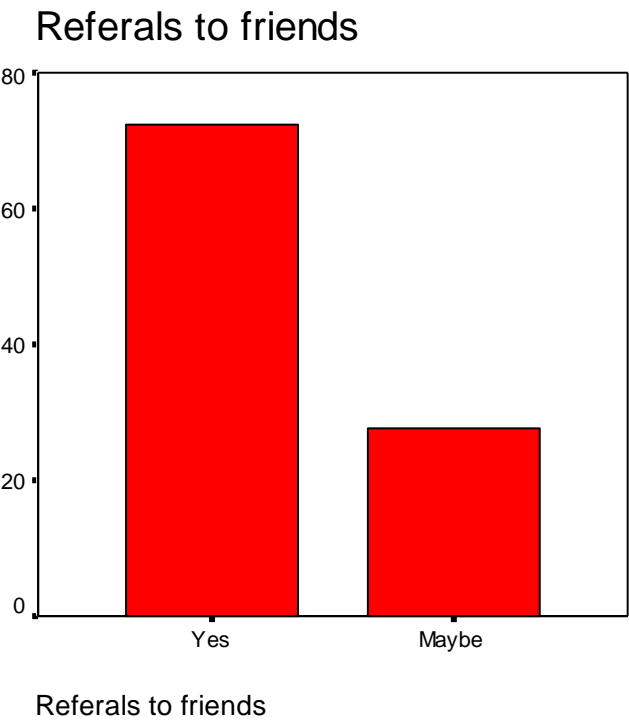
**Appendix 5 - Interview respondents profile**

<b>Sq No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Interview conduct duration</b>	<b>Interview conduct methods</b>
1	Tuong Nguyen	Marketing director	Viettravel	2nd August, 2013	10minutes	via skype
2	Vu Tran	Tour Guide	Thien Nien Ky	4th August, 2013	12minutes 54 seconds	via skype
3	Huy Nguyen	Tour Operator	SaigonTourist	5th August, 2013	8 minutes 12 seconds	via phone
4	Buoi Thi Truong	Market Research Manager	Ben Thanh Tour	9th August, 2013	13 minutes 29 seconds	via google video chat
5	Dung Quoc Dang	Customer Service Manager	Fiditour	11th August, 2013	12 minutes 15 seconds	via google video chat
6	Cong Van Pham	Travel Consultancy Executive	SIS	11th August, 2013	15 minutes	via phone

**Appendix 6: Visitors loyalty**



**Appendix 7: Visitors loyalty**



## Appendix 8 - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Dear interviewees, I am currently doing a research paper on Vietnam tourism and the factors affecting the destination choices of inbound tourists on Vietnamese travel; therefore, with the valuable knowledge and experience which you have obtained from your work in the tourism industry, can you please answer a few questions followed. I sincerely thank you for your valuable support for my study.

1. In the difficult economic situation and the competition from neighbour countries in the Mekong sub-region and other Asian countries, could you please tell an overview of the state of Vietnamese tourism industry nowadays?
2. In your opinion, in such a situation, what are the advantages of Vietnam which can attract foreign/inbound tourists?
3. Do you think what are the criteria that they usually take account into when they make a decision to travel?
4. According to you, what are the main factors that affect their choice of destination to Vietnam?
5. Do you think that Vietnam has done well in promoting the country's image to the world?
6. If Vietnam tourism needs a change for improvement, do you think which should be done?

***Thank you for your time and consideration. Have a great day!***

## Appendix 9: Quantitative online survey

### Factors that influence tourists' destination choice in travel

Dear respondents,

This survey is aimed to explore and to understand factors affecting tourists' destination choice in their travel decision, and their previous experience in choosing to visit Vietnam. Therefore, your ideas and experiences will be a very valuable contribution to us in our study which may help us to understand and come up with proposals to improve the Vietnam's tourism industry. We sincerely thank you for your contribution.

---

#### Personal information

##### 1. Age

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Below 18
- ☐ b. 18 – 29
- ☐ c. 30 – 44
- ☐ d. 44 – 60
- ☐ e. Above 60

**2. Gender**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**3. Occupation**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Student
- ☐ b. Employed
- ☐ c. Unemployed
- ☐ d. Self-employed
- ☐ Other:

**4. Annual income range**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Below 20.000USD
- ☐ b. 20000-29999USD
- ☐ c. 30000-39999USD
- ☐ d. 40000-49999USD
- ☐ e. Above 50000USD

**5. Marital status**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Single, never married
- ☐ b. Married
- ☐ c. Separated

- ☐ d. Divorced
- ☐ e. Widowed

**6. Ethnicity**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Asian
- ☐ b. European
- ☐ c. American/Latino
- ☐ d. African
- ☐ e. Australian/New Zealand
- ☐ Other:

**Travel preferences**

**7. Are you a travel lover?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**8. How often do you make vacation travel?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Less than once a year
- ☐ b. Once a year
- ☐ c. Twice a year
- ☐ d. More than twice

**9. Who do you usually travel with?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Alone
- ☐ b. With partner
- ☐ c. With friends
- ☐ d. With family

**10. How long do you usually spend on your trip?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. 1-7 days

- ☐ b. 7-14 days
- ☐ c. 14-21 days
- ☐ d. More than 21days

**11. Normally, how do you search for the travel information?**

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ a. Internet
- ☐ b. Television (advertising, documentary films, etc.)
- ☐ c. Newspapers
- ☐ d. Referrals
- ☐ Other:

**12. Have you ever taken a trip to any of the South East Asian countries?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**13. Have you ever travelled to Vietnam?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes *Skip to question 22.*
- ☐ No *Skip to question 14.*

**For potential visitors (for respondents who choose No in question number 13)**

**14. Why do you travel?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Relaxation
- ☐ b. Discovery
- ☐ c. Visiting friends or family
- ☐ Other:

**15. What mostly motivates you to choose the destination?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Culture
- ☐ b. Landscape
- ☐ c. Special events

- ☐ d. Cuisine
- ☐ Other:

**16. What is the most important factor that influences your final choice?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Security and safety
- ☐ b. Climate
- ☐ c. Authenticity
- ☐ d. Price
- ☐ Other:

**17. What are the problems you usually get during your trip?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ a. Language
- ☐ b. Health
- ☐ c. Weather
- ☐ d. Culture
- ☐ Other:

**18. What is the main obstacle that you usually encounter before taking a trip?**

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ a. Visa procedure
- ☐ b. Lack of necessary information
- ☐ Other:

**19. Have you ever heard about Vietnam?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes *Skip to question 20.*
- ☐ No *Skip to question 21.*

**20. How did you hear about Vietnam?**

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Friends/Family referrals
- ☐ Advertisement
- ☐ News

- ☐ Movies/Tv programs
- ☐ Other:

**21. If you get a chance to travel to Vietnam, will you take it?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

**For previous Vietnam visitors (for respondents who choose Yes in question number 13)**

**22. What motivated you to take a trip to Vietnam?**

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ I went to Vietnam for its culture
- ☐ I went to Vietnam because I liked to try something new
- ☐ I went to Vietnam to try its cuisine
- ☐ I went to Vietnam to visit several historical places
- ☐ I went to Vietnam because of its landscapes
- ☐ I went to Vietnam to relax with my friends/family
- ☐ I went to Vietnam to change my routine for some time
- ☐ My friends/family referred me to go
- ☐ Other:

**Do you think**

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22. I went to Vietnam because I liked to try something new					
23 .Accommodation in Vietnam is good and cheap	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
24. Transportation and traffic condition in Vietnam is efficient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Tourism services in Vietnam are good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Vietnam is a safe place to travel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Travelling in Vietnam is affordable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. I like the diversity in Vietnamese culture with its various festivals, events and cuisine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. There are many destinations to explore in Vietnam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. It was an amazing and different experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
31. The climate in Vietnam is nice and pleasant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Visa procedure was quick and simple					
33. I went to Vietnam to visit my friends/family					
34. Vietnam is popular for its history and historical places					
35. I liked the cuisine in Vietnam					
36. I got a good tour offer					
37. Vietnamese language is very interesting					

**38. Did you also go to the neighbour countries such as Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, etc.?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**39. Would you like to visit Vietnam again?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- ☐ Maybe

**40. Would you like to invite or refer your friends, family to Vietnam?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

It is perfectly done. Thank you for your time and kind help!

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