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## LOCAL MARKETING IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: CASE STUDY IN PHU THO PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze and evaluate the current situation of applying local marketing in tourism development in Phu Tho. The study uses primary and secondary data sources collected through a survey of 150 tourists to assess the local marketing factors that attract tourists in Phu Tho province. Research results have shown the destination image, attractiveness, tourism products, prices of tourism services, promotion, tourism infrastructure, social environment, quality of tourism human resources of Phu Tho province which are evaluated well by visitors. However, there are still aspects that need to be improved, such as the quality of promotion, the professionalism of the tourism human resources, etc. Therefore, the study has suggested seven groups of solutions perfect local marketing tools and strengthen the application of local marketing in tourism development in the coming time.

**Keywords:** Local marketing, Tourism development, Tourist destination, Phu Tho.

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world. For many countries, tourism is seen as a key tool for regional development because it stimulates new economic activities (Creaco & Querini, 2003) [5]. The development of tourism contributes to improving the socio-economic situation, raising incomes, creating job opportunities, promoting the development of other economic sectors, and accelerating economic restructuring. There has been an increase in the application of branding theories to the branding of tourism places. An increasing number of cities, countries, and regions have adopted marketing and branding practices during the past few decades (Gertner, 2011) [11].

Phu Tho is the gateway, the economic center of the Northern inter-province, located in the Hanoi urban area, Côn Minh - Hanoi - Hai Phong economic corridor. Phu Tho has a convenient transportation system and rich tourism resources; rich system of tangible and intangible cultural values such as 1,372 historical and cultural relics (Hung King Temple is one of the special national legacies) and a system of folk festivals which are typical art forms of the Ancestral Land (including Xoan singing, Ca Tru singing and Hung Vuong worshipping beliefs recognized by UNESCO as international cultural heritage). This is a great opportunity for Phu Tho to develop spiritual tourism, sightseeing tourism, ecotourism, and Tourist resorts. The development of tourism in Phu Tho province is essential to build a balanced and strong economy and a harmonious and rich cultural and social life. However, the number of tourists coming to Phu Tho province is still low. Specifically, in 2018, the total number of visitors to Phu Tho reached 8 million, including 7,200 international guests; In 2019, welcoming and serving 8.2 million visitors, 610,000 staying guests, of which 7,800 international guests stayed, the room occupancy rate reached 43% with an average stay of 1.1 days [14]. This increase is lower than the national average of 11.8% (for domestic visitors) and 10.2% (for international visitors). Therefore, the province needs to determine its position to build a local marketing strategy to attract tourists in the coming period.

This study was conducted with two main objectives: (1) Analyze the current situation of applying local marketing in tourism development in Phu Tho based on the assessment of tourists; (2) Proposing some local marketing solutions to attract tourists to contribute to tourism development for Phu Tho province soon.

### **THEORETICAL BASIS**

There have been many definitions of marketing local in the marketing literature.

Kotler et al (1999) define local marketing: "...a place planning procedure concerning the satisfaction of the needs of target markets. It could be successful when it satisfies two main parameters: The enterprises' and the residents' satisfaction from the purchase of goods and services that the place provides; The satisfaction of the expectations of potential target markets, as long as the goods and the services that the place provides to them are those that they wish to get" [18].

Local marketing is the design of a local image to meet the needs of the target market. For local marketing to be successful, residents and businesses must both be satisfied with their communities; the expectations of visitors and investors must be met. (Kotler & Getner, 2002) [19]. Local marketing is a process in which the activities of the territory are directed to meet the needs of the target customers based on ensuring social benefits and economic efficiency, which is consistent with the stated objective (Vu Tri Dung and Nguyen Duc Hai, 2011) [8].

From the above concepts, it can be seen that the essence of local marketing is the activities of local actors affecting local target customers. Those are the programs and marketing tools that each locality uses to actively create valuable local products to attract the attention and

consumption of customers. In general, local marketing is an overall marketing strategy based on the advantages of the locality, creating a local image and an attractive business environment to attract and satisfy the needs and desires for customers, it also develops the local economy through efficient use of local resources.

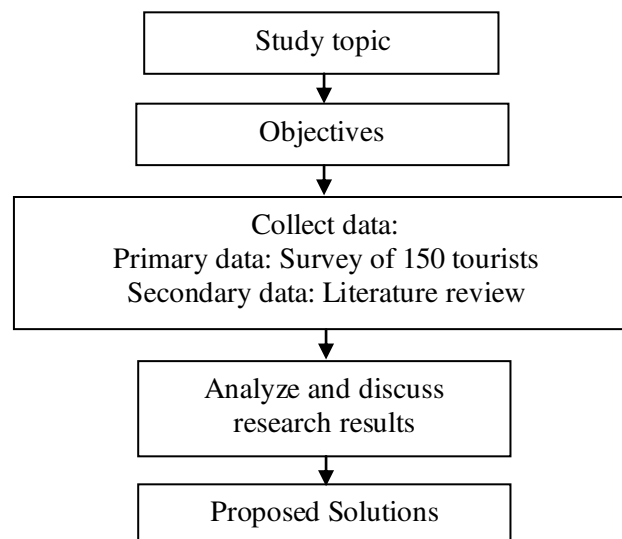
According to Kotler et al (1993), There are four groups of local marketing strategies in tourism development [17]: (1) *Local image marketing strategy*: to create an attractive local image or local brand that is valuable; at the same time, creating trust, attraction, and difference with the image of competing localities and attracting customers. (2) *Strategies for marketing local features*: Highlights are the most valuable local features in attracting tourists. These highlights may be favored by nature, history, or outstanding features of constructions. (3) *Infrastructure marketing strategy*: This strategy is based on the advantages of local infrastructure and geographical location. The development of a good and convenient infrastructure will attract target customers to invest and attract tourists. (4) *Human marketing strategy*: This strategy focuses on improving the quality of tourism human resources to create professionalism in serving tourists and investors.

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### *Description and data sources of variables*

#### *Research framework*

Based on the theory of local marketing in tourism development and some related research works such as the work of Buhalis (2000) [2], Stankovic & Petrovic (2007) [25], Özer (2012) [24], Crouch (2007) [7], Nguyen Thi Thong Nhat (2010) [23], Hoang Xuan Trong (2016) [30], Nguyen Minh Thanh (2016) [29], Dang Thanh Liem (2018) [12], etc, The authors develop a research framework on local marketing in tourism development, which is shown in the following diagram:



**Diagram 1. The research framework of the article**

To assess the current status of applying local marketing in tourism development, the study uses a 5-level Likert scale (table 1). The difference between the levels is 0.8 points.

**Table 1. Meaning of Likert Scale**

Mean	Level
From 1,0 to 1,8	Not Important (Very Poor)
From 1,81 to 2,60	Less important (Poor)
From 2,61 to 3,40	Average (not good/not bad)
From 3,41 to 4,20	Important (Good)
From 4,21 to 5,0	Very important (Very good)

#### *Survey sample statistics*

The overall sample size obtained was 150 tourists. In which, mainly in the age group 26 - 45 years old (accounting for 40%); the number of female tourists is higher than that of men (female tourists are 58%, male tourists are 42%); 45% of tourists in the province and 55% of tourists outside the province. In terms of behavior: groups of tourists come to Phu Tho province for the first time (58%), 2-3 times (32%), 4-5 times (10%).

#### **Methodology**

##### *Research instrument*

The survey tool is a questionnaire consisting of two main parts. Part 1 consists of 07 questions, in which there are 04 closed questions to choose an answer and 03 open questions to collect basic information about respondents such as name, where they come from, and the purpose of the trip. Part 2 includes 53 items related to 8 factors reflecting local marketing activities in the tourism attraction of Phu Tho province. These scales are inherited from previous studies and are adjusted and developed through in-depth interviews, group discussions with experts in the field of local marketing to suit the research context. These statements are measured using a 5-point Likert Scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was pre-tested through interviews with 30 tourists and 5 experts in the field of local marketing. During pre-testing, respondents rated the clarity, intelligibility, and appropriateness of words. Respondents during the pre-testing will not participate in the formal study.

##### *Sampling procedure*

The study used the sampling rule of Comrey and Lee (1992) [4], with a sample size of 150. This sample size also satisfies the sampling principle of Hoang Trong and Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc (2008) [31] and the sampling rule of Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) [27]. To select the research sample, the authors used a convenient non-random sampling method to survey by questionnaire.

##### *Data collection*

Data were collected through two forms: Face-to-face interviews at tourist sites of Phu Tho province. Thereby, surveyors can better explain the survey objectives and questions, the high

response rate, the data can be checked on the spot, and also controlled the respondents. Thereby, this can avoid the case that the respondents to the survey are not the right target respondents.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Criteria for evaluating local marketing in tourism development of Phu Tho province*

#### *Destination brand through the image of tourist destination Phu Tho*

Destination image is the totality of beliefs, impressions, and thoughts that a person has about a destination (Crumpton, 1979) [6]; is a visitor's general impression of a destination (Rynes, 1991) [25]; is the perception of destination-specific attributes and the overall impression of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) [10]; is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visual images and intentions toward a destination (Tasci et al., 2007) [28]. It can be seen as anything that associates in the visitor's mind the attributes of a particular city (Yuwo et al., 2013) [32] or as a whole set of impressions, beliefs, thoughts, Expectations, and feelings accumulate towards a place over time (Kim & Richardson, 2003) [16].

Recognizing that destination image plays an important role for a tourist destination, a good destination image helps attract tourists and increase spending (Chi & Qu, 2008) [3]. Therefore, Phu Tho has soon implemented the construction and marketing of the local destination image. The province has built a logo for the province's tourism industry based on the value of the province's tourism resources to impress and attract tourists and experience tourism in the province (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Logo of Phu Tho tourism industry**

The logo of Phu Tho tourism brand identity is named "Phu Tho returns to the origin of the nation". The image of the logo is the image of the Hung Temple Gate, which is stylized in a minimalist, direct style. Under the image of the Hung Temple gate is an arc symbol intersecting a point symbolizing the miraculous interference of 3 large rivers converging on this land: Red River, Da River, and Lo River. Logo colors are inspired by natural, familiar colors in the sacred Ancestral Land. In which, the red color is similar to the color of the Hung Temple gate, accounting for 90%; the rest is golden bronze symbolizing mystery, luxury, and green symbolizing the majestic nature. However, this logo and slogan are still little known, even by the Phu Tho residents. The reason is that the promotion of Phu Tho tourism images has not been highly effective, these images have not been widely promoted in the media.

The results of the survey of visitors about the image of Phu Tho tourism, tourists rated it as good as 3.80 points. This result is achieved thanks to the efforts in marketing tourism in Phu

Tho, which has brought the tourism image of the province to tourists. However, to attract more tourists, the province needs to continue to improve the local image with attractive destinations, thereby helping to build the tourism brand. At the same time, it is necessary to have stronger and more effective marketing solutions for Phu Tho to truly become an impressive and ideal tourist destination in the hearts of tourists.

**Table 2. Tourists' assessment of the local image of Phu Tho province**

	Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
1	Memorable impression	1	5	3.69	Good
2	Ideal travel destination	1	5	3.73	Good
3	Interesting experience	2	5	3.93	Good
	General assessment	1	5	3.80	Good

(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)

#### *The attraction of Phu Tho tourism*

According to Buhalis (2000), the attractiveness of a tourist destination is reflected in the following factors: natural environment, man-made environment, man-made works, architectural works, cultural relics, and special traditional activities [2]. In the study, the attractiveness was measured by: Weather; Topographic; Scenic; The natural environment; Flora and Fauna; Cultural and historical monuments; Traditional art; Traditional festival; Cuisine.

Tourists rated the attractiveness of Phu Tho tourism at a good level of 3.92, in which historical and cultural relics and traditional festivals were appreciated the most, which is consistent with the characteristics of the province. Phu Tho is not a locality that has the advantage of a landscape like Ha Long Bay or Trang An scenic spot, but it is a tourist attraction because this is considered the source and the "ancestral land" of culture Vietnamese traditions. In which, the most prominent are 3 intangible cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO, which are: Belief in worshipping Hung Vuong, Xoan singing, and Ca Tru singing. There are 1,372 historical and cultural relics in the province, including 1 special national relic, 73 national relics, 219 provincial relics, and hundreds of special folk festivals such as Hung King Temple Festival, Mau Au Co Temple Festival, Tro Tram Festival, Princess Bride Procession Festival, Hung Lo palanquin procession, Phet Hien Quan Festival, etc; also Xoan and Gheo folk songs [13].

However, Phu Tho's cuisine is still not appreciated because there are not many unique and attractive dishes for tourists.

**Table 3. Tourists' assessment of the attractiveness of tourism in Phu Tho province**

Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
Favorable weather for travel	2	5	3.95	Good
Diverse topographic	2	5	3.93	Good
Beautiful natural scenery	2	5	3.85	Good
Attractive natural environment	2	5	3.88	Good

Rich flora and fauna	1	5	3.75	Good
Cultural and historical monuments	2	5	4.09	Good
Rich traditional art	2	5	3.92	Good
Various traditional festivals	1	5	4.02	Good
Various cuisine	1	5	3.69	Good
General assessment	1	5	3.90	Good

(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)

#### *Phu Tho tourism products*

The variety and quality of products/services is an effective way to bring about a pleasant tourist experience and it will influence the return of tourists (Murphy et al., 2000) [22]. This study considers tourism products in two aspects, namely the diversity of tourism products/services and the quality of tourism products/services.

The variety and quality of Phu Tho tourism products/services are rated as good by tourists (3.70 and 3.85 points, respectively). With the favorable natural conditions and appropriate tourism development policies, Phu Tho has built tours and tourism products/services with local characteristics, especially, the origin tourism activity was rated the highest (4.21 points). This is also the advantage of the province compared to other localities across the country.

**Table 4. Tourists' assessment of Phu Tho's tourism products and service quality**

Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
<b>Tourism products/services</b>				
Various attractions	1	5	3.75	Good
Various fun/entertainment activities	1	5	3.39	Average
Diverse origin tourism activities	3	5	4.21	Very important
Various tour packages	2	5	3.93	Good
Attractive type of tourism	2	5	3.76	Good
Rich shopping activities	1	5	3.21	Average
General assessment	1	5	3.71	Good
<b>Quality of tourism products/services</b>				
Quality assurance products/services	1	5	3.83	Good
Products/services provided with local characteristics	2	5	3.99	Good
Service is always innovating	1	5	3.79	Good
Customer service as promised	2	5	3.81	Good
Fast service delivery time	2	5	3.84	Good
General assessment	1	5	3.85	Good

(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)

The entertainment activities and shopping areas of Phu Tho are not highly rated by tourists. Although the province has paid attention to attracting investment to build commercial



centers and entertainment products to serve the needs of tourists, these products are not only poor and monotonous but also not met the demand and attractive enough to retain tourists. Therefore, tourists to Phu Tho have low spending. With its position as a regional center, Phu Tho needs to have large-scale shopping and entertainment centers, especially nightlife spots to create more unique tourism products, which increases the length of stay and stimulates visitor spending. Currently, no enterprises are investing in shopping centers for souvenirs, gifts, and typical products of the province. On the Noi Bai - Lao Cai highway and National Highway 2 through Phu Tho province, which are resting places for tourists. However, the number of typical products of Phu Tho province introduced is limited; tourist areas have tourism shops and self-employed small business households. Therefore, the products on display are mainly imported from other localities and China [15].

#### *Prices of tourism services of Phu Tho*

Price competition in tourism depends on the corresponding value of goods and services serving tourists' needs (Dwyer et al., 2000) [9]. The price must match the quality of the product or service. The price depends on the location of the destination, the level of safety, the quality of service, the perception of the customer. In this study, the price factor of tourism services in Phu Tho is considered through the following factors: Right price; Competitive product/service prices; Room rates; Incentives; Travel expenses.

**Table 5. Tourists' evaluation of the prices of all kinds of tourism services in Phu Tho**

Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
Price is correct as listed	1	5	3.63	Good
Competitive product/service prices	1	5	3.70	Good
Reasonable room rates	2	5	4.02	Good
Preferential price policy (customers, large groups, etc)	2	5	4.00	Good
Acceptable travel expenses	2	5	4.09	Good
General assessment	1	5	3.89	Good

*(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)*

Tourists rated the price of Phu Tho tourism services as good, with an average of 3.89 points. In general, the cost of tourism in Phu Tho is quite attractive to tourists (4.09 points), with reasonable room rates (4.02 points), suitable preferential price policy (4.00 points). This is due to the rich tourism resources, abundant human resources with low labor costs, etc, these are the advantages of Phu Tho tourism compared to other localities in the region and Vietnamese's country. However, to compete in attracting tourists, along with the price issue, Phu Tho needs to continue to pay attention to invest in improving service quality to attract and retain tourists.

#### *Tourism promotion*

Tourism promotion is an attempt to increase demand by conveying a positive image of a product to potential customers through the known needs, needs, tastes, values, and attitudes of



the market or a market segment (Lawton & Weaver, 2005) [21]. Tourism promotion can be measured through the following factors: Complete and clear tourist information; Manual document; Organizing many events about tourism; Information provided through multiple channels; Linking with localities at home and abroad (Kotler et al., 2006) [20].

Tourists rated the province's tourism promotion as good (3.74 points). Over the years, Phu Tho has always paid special attention and identified tourism promotion as a top priority in the province's tourism development strategy. The province has maintained and developed a tourism website with an access domain name: [dulichphutho.com.vn](http://dulichphutho.com.vn) and Tourism Information Page 8 Northwest provinces: [dulichtaybac.vn](http://dulichtaybac.vn). Combining many forms and means to convey information about tourism to objects such as potential tourists, travel agencies, press agencies, etc, contributing to the introduction of tourism images, people of Phu Tho, which attracts tourists to the locality. Although the evaluation of the tourism promotion criteria of the province is good, the scores are still not high (3/5 criteria and the overall evaluation score is lower than the median score of good). This is one of the limitations in the province's tourism promotion activities as tourism information not only has not been updated regularly but also not attractive to tourists; Promotional information products lack many foreign languages...

**Table 6. Tourists' assessment of tourism promotion in Phu Tho province**

Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
Tourist information on the web is complete and clear	1	5	3.59	Good
Clear travel guide material	1	5	3.58	Good
Organize many travel events	1	5	3.97	Good
Attractive advertising information	1	5	3.71	Good
Information provided through many channels	2	5	3.82	Good
General assessment	1	5	3.74	Good

(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)

#### *Infrastructure for tourism*

Tourism infrastructure affects tourism experience, and physical facilities are a predictor of destination quality and perceived travel value (Murphy et al., 2000) [22]. Phu Tho is a locality with a developed road traffic system compared to other provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountains and this system is reasonably distributed, quite convenient to access tourist resource points. Phu Tho has 5 national highways (2; 32; 32B; 32C; 70), a 32 national railway line (Hanoi - Lao Cai route), and a waterway network that is very convenient for business exchanges and economic development. In addition, the province has built and upgraded many restaurants and hotels, which, according to solid, multi-story architecture, specialized types of equipment, facilities, and furniture to provide accommodation services, catering services organize

conferences, seminars, entertainment, and other services. This is also a strong point to attract tourists to Phu Tho province.

This study uses the scale of Murphy et al (2000) to assess the infrastructure for tourism. The survey results show that the general infrastructure and tourism infrastructure in Phu Tho are rated at a good level by tourists (3.95 points and 3.86 points). In addition, Phu Tho province is highly appreciated for its convenient transportation system and clean water supply system (reaching over 4 points). The postal and telecommunications systems and the restaurant system have been upgraded and improved. However, it still does not fully meet the needs of visitors and there are still limitations that need to be improved (shown by the rating points of 3.78 and 3.75 points, respectively).

**Table 7. Tourists' assessment of tourism infrastructure in Phu Tho province**

Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
<b>General infrastructure</b>				
Many financial institutions and money changers	2	5	3.99	Good
Modern post and telecommunications system	1	5	3.78	Good
Convenient transportation system	3	5	4.12	Good
Hệ thống cung cấp nước sạch đảm bảo	2	5	4.04	Good
The public toilet system is adequate	1	5	3.85	Good
General assessment	1	5	3.95	Good
<b>Tourism infrastructure</b>				
The system of hotels/motels is sufficient	1	5	3.87	Good
Diverse restaurant system	1	5	3.75	Good
Many travel agencies/agents/tourists	1	5	3.81	Good
Modern means of transport	1	5	3.82	Good
Meeting/exhibition center is sufficient	2	5	3.93	Good
General assessment	1	5	3.84	Good

(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)

Through the analysis results, managers and tourism businesses in the province need a long-term investment strategy to further improve the general infrastructure, especially the post and telecommunications system, and restaurant system to best serve the needs of visitors.

#### *The social environment of the province*

According to Bowen (1953), corporate social responsibility is the responsibility of business owners not to harm the rights and interests of others; Business owners must be charitable and compensate for the damage caused by the business when harming society [1]. In the process of participating in tourism, tourists also affect the social environment of the place they visit. Thus, the social environment includes the interaction of the supply side and the demand side, which will promote the development of society and a safe tourism environment.

Research using Bowen's scale (1953) to measure visitors' assessment of the social environment based on the following factors: People participate in tourism activities; People's lives; Environmental Protection; The safety of tourists; Social Security/Safety. The survey results show that the social environment of the province is highly appreciated by tourists, expressed in a good rating with an average score of 3.91. In which, three factors are evaluated on 4 points, showing that the security situation of the province in general and tourist attractions, in particular, has received the attention and response of residents, which creates a safe and secure environment. For tourism, local citizens also actively participate in tourism activities to build community-based tourism products to meet the needs of visitors. However, the people's awareness of environmental protection has not been appreciated by tourists.

**Table 8. Tourists' assessment of the social environment of Phu Tho province**

Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
Citizens participate in tourism activities	3	5	4.01	Good
Citizens are conscious of environmental protection	1	5	3.59	Good
Good social security/safety	2	5	4.00	Good
Less crime with tourists	2	5	4.03	Good
General assessment	1	5	3.91	Good

(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)

#### *Quality of human resources in tourism*

People are an important component of every business, without people the organization cannot exist (Wayne & Cascio, 2010) [33]. Especially for the service industry such as tourism, the tourism workforce is the person directly in contact with tourists and is a component of service quality. Therefore, their skills, attitudes, and behaviors have a great influence on tourists' perception of service quality. In this study, measuring the quality of tourism human resources is based on 05 factors: Professional staff; Staff is always willing to help guests; Staff is always polite to guests; Staff is knowledgeable enough to answer guest inquiries; Professional service staff.

**Table 9. Tourists' assessment of the quality of tourism human resources in Phu Tho province**

Criteria	Min	Max	Mean	Rating level
Professional staff	1	5	3.56	Good
Staff are always willing to help customers	1	5	3.63	Good
Staff are always polite to guests	1	5	3.49	Good
Staff are knowledgeable enough to answer guests' questions	1	5	3.62	Good
Professional service staff	1	5	3.31	Average
General assessment	1	5	3.52	Good

(Source: Author's analysis, 2020)

The assessment results of visitors show that the quality of tourism human resources is assessed at a good level with an average score of 3.52. Although it is in a good rating, the scores of the criteria are still not high. The factor Staff is always willing to help guests is rated the highest is 3.63 points. However, the professionalism in service of the staff was rated the lowest (3.31 points, corresponding to the average). Besides, the staff factor that is always polite to guests is also not highly appreciated, only reaching 3.49 points. This is a common problem of travel staff today, possibly due to their personality or busywork leading to discomfort in contact. Since tourism is a service industry, employee engagement has a huge impact on tourists' evaluations. Therefore, unprofessionalism, disrespectful attitudes, and behaviors can make the entire low tourism service quality. To improve service quality, Phu Tho needs to further improve the quality of tourism human resources, which not only trains professional qualifications but also focuses on raising awareness, responsibility, attitude, and professionalism in customer service.

### ***Assessing the situation of local marketing in tourism development in Phu Tho province***

#### ***Strength***

*Firstly*, Phu Tho has built a local brand image with the province's logo and tourism slogan. Diversified tourism products with many cultural and historical relics and traditional festivals, tourism activities are highly appreciated. The cost of travel in Phu Tho is quite attractive to tourists.

*Secondly*, with diverse and rich tourism resources, the province has built several famous tourist brands and products that attract tourists. At the same time, the province has effectively implemented activities associated with local characteristics to attract tourists to visit and experience tourism in the province.

*Thirdly*, the general infrastructure system and tourism infrastructure are invested by Phu Tho province and have increasingly positive improvements, which are rated at a good level by tourists.

*Fourthly*, the security of the province in general and the security of tourism activities of the province have been significantly improved: no begging phenomenon during the tourist season; limiting the phenomenon of pulling, stalking guests; tourist accommodation does not raise prices; the sales counters carry out price listings; tourist sites such as Hung Temple, Mau Au Co Temple have paid attention to environmental sanitation.

*Fifthly*, the quality of tourism human resources has also improved significantly, which is rated as good by tourists.

*Sixthly*, promotion activities have been expanded about scale and scope. Applying information technology in promotion; The quality of tourism promotion activities has been improved and increasingly enhanced.

#### ***limitation***

*Firstly*, the logo and slogan are not known by citizens, even by Phu Tho people. The reason is that the promotion of Phu Tho tourism images are not effective, these images have not been widely promoted in the media.

*Secondly*, there is a lack of new tourism products, which are different from the expanded Northwest provinces. The quality of tourism products is not high such as there are no entertainment places to attract tourists; The cuisine is not diverse and unique for tourists. The routes and tourist attractions developed spontaneously and overlapped without being attached to a general plan, so the length of stay of tourists was low and mainly focused on holidays and the Lunar New year.

*Thirdly*, the industry's infrastructure and technical facilities are still weak. Tourist attractions have low capacity, the province's hotel, and restaurant system is still lacking, and there are not many high-class hotels to serve the accommodation needs of tourists. The post and telecommunications system and the restaurant system have not fully met the needs of tourists.

*Fourthly*, due to lack of intensive training, tourism human resources are still lacking and weak, which leads to a lack of professional and high-quality labor force, especially in terms of guides, voiceovers, etc. Besides, the quality of travel agencies and tour guides is still limited. There is a lack of linkage between businesses and residents in tourism activities.

*Fifthly*, tourism promotion and advertising have not been properly invested; lack of professionalism; not continuously, mainly on the occasion of the first festival of the year, the Hung Temple Festival. Promotion tools are limited; advertising information lacks many foreign languages, focusing on Vietnamese and English; Tourist information is not very diverse and detailed, especially there is no detailed information about tourist maps. The programs and categories introducing tourism are still monotonous, lacking in analysis and discovery. There are very few tourist information counters.

*Sixthly*, the people's sense of environmental protection has not been appreciated by tourists, there is still a situation where people cause environmental pollution, especially plastic waste pollution, which has greatly reduced the attractiveness of the destination.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study analyzes the current situation of local marketing in tourism development by examining the status of using local marketing tools in tourism development and evaluating domestic tourists for local marketing in tourism development in Phu Tho province. Research results show that, in the period 2015 - 2019, Phu Tho province has paid attention and invested in local marketing activities to develop tourism, thereby achieving remarkable results. However, this activity still has limitations that need to be overcome soon, the application of local marketing in tourism development has not met the needs and expectations of the industry, specifically: The quality of tourism products is not high; logos and slogans are still little known; infrastructure and

technical facilities still do not meet the development needs of the industry; tourism human resources are lacking and weak; Tourism promotion and advertising have not been properly invested, etc. Therefore, in the coming time, to perfect local marketing tools and strengthen the application of local marketing in tourism development, the province needs to focus on some solutions as follows:

*Firstly*, develop a mechanism to attract investors in tourism services to meet the diverse needs of tourist market segments; improve the tourism environment, develop green tourism and protect the ecological environment, harmonize the interests of the State, businesses, and residents involved in tourism development.

*Secondly*, the province needs to continue to build and develop Phu Tho tourism brand, enhance the image of Phu Tho people's homeland to create a competitive position for the province's tourism in key markets and create strong attractiveness for visitors. Focus on building the image of tourist destination, pay more attention to environmental issues (waste, beggars, rowing, etc) to create peace of mind for tourists. Ensure to maintain the brand reputation of local specific tourism products, create impression and trust of tourists about the product at the destination.

*Thirdly*, focus on developing in-depth tourism, developing specific tourism products, and forming new highly competitive tourism products associated with exploiting and promoting the value of 03 intangible cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO as Xoan singing, Ca Tru, and Hung King worship. The province needs to improve the quality of products and services professionally, ensuring a safe, clean, beautiful, friendly, and sustainable tourism environment; Create a difference, unique and attractive for Phu Tho tourism products based on service quality and image building; Encourage the development of many services with revenue to exploit the source of tourists who have come to Phu Tho province, helping to grow quickly and sustainably for the tourism industry such as food street - night tourism, cultural and artistic performances featuring the land of the Ancestors, the center for product introduction - gifts of Phu Tho Tourism at the Hung King Temple and Xuan Son National Park.

*Fourthly*, guide tourist accommodation establishments to ensure facilities, human resources, attentive and dedicated service to visitors. The province needs to encourage, guide, and support citizens to participate in tourism services; Mobilize tourism and service businesses in the province to apply 4.0 technology to promote and advertise tourism products and other convenient services through the internet.

*Fifthly*, strengthen training, fostering capacity building for officials, civil servants, state management officials in tourism, and the staff directly engaged in tourism promotion; Focusing on skills, professional news writing, filming, marketing practice, 4.0 technology application in destination promotion, market research...



*Sixthly*, the province needs to actively organize and participate in tourism promotion events inside and outside the province; Organize annual conferences on provincial tourism promotion; Attracting and organizing cultural, sports, tourism events, regional conferences, and seminars in Viet Tri city in the following months; Organize tourism events at the end of the year... to stimulate tourism demand, create a vibrant atmosphere, motivate and mobilize many resources for tourism development.

*Seventhly*, designing and publishing electronic publications with content promoting Phu Tho tourism on social networking sites and tourism search engines. To step up the application of information technology in tourism promotion; effectively use the media in combination with multimedia advertising forms such as television and movies to promote the province's scenic spots and historical relics; Exploiting more effectively websites [dulichphutho.com](http://dulichphutho.com), [dulichtaybac.vn](http://dulichtaybac.vn), [phuthotourism.vn](http://phuthotourism.vn) in tourism promotion; Promoting and improving publications introducing Phu Tho tourism in many languages such as Vietnamese, English, Japanese and Chinese.

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