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Exploring factors determining the choice of ecotourism: A case study of Hai Phong City.

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to identify factors influencing tourists' decision to choose ecotourism in Hai Phong city. Data were collected from 675 visitors and analyzed using multivariate regression. The results show that six factors have a positive and significant impact on ecotourism choices, including destination image, motivation for ecotourism, perceived value, environmental attitude, ecotourism knowledge, and social influence. Among these, motivation for ecotourism and destination image are the strongest predictors. The research contributes to the theory of sustainable tourism behavior and provides important implications for destination management, particularly in enhancing destination image, designing natural experiences, increasing perceived value, and promoting green communication to develop sustainable ecotourism in Hai Phong.
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Keywords: Ecotourism, Tourist behavior, Hai Phong City
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1. INTRODUCTION:

Amid pressures from climate change, environmental degradation, and rapid urbanization, ecotourism has become one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry, driven by the rising demand for nature-based experiences, wareness of environmental protection and sustainable development orientation (Weaver, 2001; Fennell & Cooper, 2020). Ecotourism is an environmentally friendly form of tourism that combines nature conservation and local community development (Tran & Nguyen, 2023). In Vietnam, with the significant increase in domestic tourism and the government's green tourism development initiative, the need to study the behavior of choosing ecotourism is becoming increasingly urgent.

Hai Phong city has a diverse ecosystem, including mangroves, national parks, coastal sandy beaches, islands, and bays, creating favorable conditions for developing marine ecotourism, island tourism, and community ecotourism. However, understanding which factors influence the decision to choose ecotourism in Hai Phong has not yet been clarified. Accurately identifying these factors is essential for management agencies, tourism businesses, and policymakers to enhance destination competitiveness and promote sustainable development.

Previous studies have examined many factors that influence ecotourism choices such as destination image (Chen & Tsai, 2007), environmental attitudes (Lee & Moscardo, 2005), perceived value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), ecotourism knowledge (Rahman et al., 2022), tourism motivation (Luo & Deng, 2008), and social influence (Lam & Hsu, 2006). Some studies in Vietnam have also discussed ecotourism in the Mekong Delta, the Central Highlands, or the Red River Delta (Nguyen, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022, Tran & Nguyen, 2023, Nguyen et al., 2024). However, the extent of application and the ability to generalize these models also depends on the ecological and social characteristics of each region.

Therefore, there is a significant gap because most current empirical evidence focuses on traditional ecological destinations (forests, mountains, countryside), while hybrid urban and coastal destinations such as Hai Phong have not been thoroughly studied. This raises questions about the relevance and applicability of ecotourism behavior patterns across different geographic, cultural, and socio-economic contexts. Moreover, no formal research has analyzed the factors influencing ecotourism choices in Hai Phong, despite the city's goal to strongly develop this form of tourism. The lack of empirical data creates many limitations for policy making, product development, and destination brand positioning.

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the factors that influence tourists' choice of ecotourism in Hai Phong city, thereby helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice. By applying the framework of tourist behavior analysis and utilizing empirical survey data, the research enhances the theoretical understanding of ecotourism selection behavior in a specific eco-urban context and provides scientific evidence to support stakeholders in developing effective, sustainable ecotourism strategies in Hai Phong.

the adaptation and local contextualization of global practices (LoPresto, Cassady, & Dove, 2024; Orbawati, 2025).

While much of the existing research examines nutritional

2. Literature Review

2.1. Underlying theories

The research model is built on theories such as the theory of planned behavior, perceived value theory, motivation theory, and destination image theory. First, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) offers a core conceptual framework for explaining how attitude es, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence tourism intentions. In the context of ecotourism, TPB helps justify the presence of environmental attitude variations, social influences, and ecotourism knowledge in the model, which have all been shown to impact sustainable tourism behavior (Lee & Moscardo, 2005; Han & Kim, 2010). Additionally, perceived value theory (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) explains that the decision to select a destination is based on the traveler's subjective assessment of the balance between the benefits and costs of the experience. This is especially important in ecotourism, where visitors often consider the quality of the nature experience, the value of environmental education, and their contribution to conservation. Next, motivation theory (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Luo & Deng, 2008) suggests that destination selection behavior arises from intrinsic needs such as seeking relaxation, exploring nature, and desiring to experience greenery. Therefore, ecotourism motivation becomes a key factor in predicting trends in choosing sustainable tourism products. Finally, destination image theory (Gallarza et al., 2002; Chen & Tsai, 2007) highlights the importance of visitors' perceptions, emotions, and impressions of the destination in influencing their choices, especially regarding natural and environmental features, which are central to ecotourism. The proposed study model is as shown in Figure 1 below:

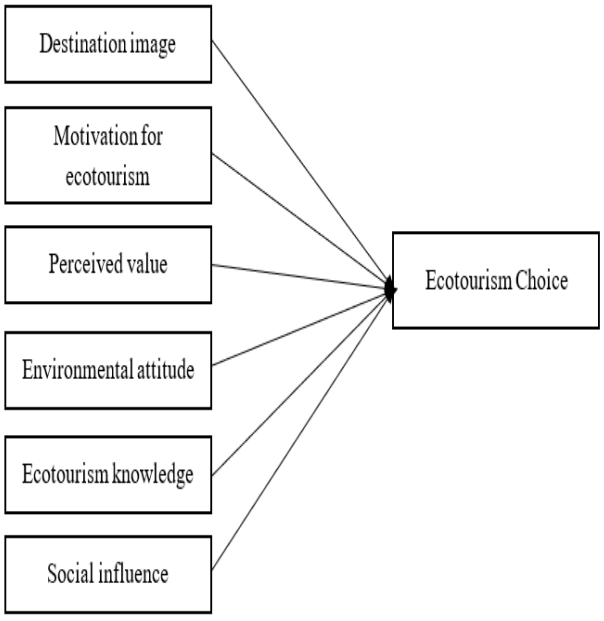

Figure 1: Research model

Source: Proposed by the author

2.2. Hypothesis development

A destination image encompasses visitors' perceptions, impressions, and feelings about a location, including both tangible elements (natural resources, infrastructure, services) and intangible aspects (atmosphere, friendliness, sustainability) (Gallarza et al., 2002; Chen & Tsai, 2007). In ecotourism, images of pristine natural environments, stunning landscapes, and a commitment to conservation are central to attracting visitors (Weaver, 2001; Fennell, 2020). Studies have shown that positive destination images boost travelers' intentions to return, recommend, and choose the destination (Chi & Qu, 2008; Stylos et al., 2016). For eco-destinations, the image associated with "green," "fresh," and "environmental responsibility" is increasingly viewed as a competitive edge, particularly as tourists become more conscious of environmental issues. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1: Destination image will be positively related to ecotourism choice.

Motivation for ecotourism reflects the inner needs and desires that drive individuals to participate in nature-based tourism activities, including the need to relax, experience the natural environment, learn about ecology and culture, as well as the desire to demonstrate personal values for environmental protection (Crompton, 1979; Luo & Deng, 2008). Motivation is an important foundation for shaping destination selection behavior, as tourists seek out destinations that are most likely to satisfy their system of needs (Dann, 1981). Many empirical studies show that motivations related to nature, learning about the environment, and escaping the city significantly influence the choice of ecotourism products and environmentally friendly activities (Mehmetoglu, 2007; Kim et al., 2015). In the context of Hai Phong, which has strengths in seascapes, islands, and coastal ecosystems, tourists with a strong motivation for ecological experiences are expected to prioritize selecting ecotourism products. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2: Motivation for ecotourism will be positively related to ecotourism choice.

Perceived value is a customer's overall judgment of how useful a product or service is, based on comparing the benefits they get to the costs they pay (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). In ecotourism, benefits include not only the quality of services and leisure activities but also the educational, emotional, and ethical value of supporting conservation and the local community (Weaver, 2001; Kim et al., 2015). Research shows that perceived value is one of the strongest predictors of satisfaction, loyalty, and choosing a destination (Petrick, 2004; Sánchez et al., 2006). For travelers interested in sustainability, when they see that the time, money, and effort they spend are equal to or less than the benefits they gain from the eco-experience, they are more likely to choose and stay committed to this type of experience. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H3: Perceived value will be positively related to ecotourism choice.

Environmental attitudes refer to an individual's positive or negative feelings toward environmental issues, reflecting their level of care, responsibility, and willingness to act in order to protect the natural environment (Dunlap et al., 2000). According to TPB, attitude is a key component that shapes intentions and

behaviors, especially in contexts related to sustainable consumption choices (Ajzen, 1991). In tourism, many studies show that travelers with eco-friendly attitudes tend to prefer green tourism products, are willing to pay more for sustainable services, and prioritize destinations committed to conservation (Dolnicar et al., 2008; Lee & Moscardo, 2005). For ecotourism, a positive attitude toward nature protection is viewed as an intrinsic motivation for tourists to choose experiences that have minimal negative impacts on the environment and the community. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H4: Environmental attitude will be positively related to ecotourism choice.

Ecotourism knowledge reflects an individual's understanding of the concepts, principles, and benefits of ecotourism, including awareness of conservation, the environmental impact of tourism, and the role of local communities (Rahman et al., 2022). According to the behavioral approach, knowledge is a factor that helps individuals identify and accurately assess choices, leading to the formation of intentions and behaviors aligned with their values (Frick et al., 2004). Empirical evidence indicates that tourists with environmental knowledge and ecotourism understanding tend to demonstrate more environmentally friendly behaviors and actively participate in sustainable tourism practices (Ballantyne & Packer, 2011; Kim et al., 2018). In the context of Hai Phong, where ecotourism products are still being developed, knowledge assists tourists in differentiating ecotourism from traditional forms of tourism and understanding the conservation value and community benefits associated with the trip. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H5: Ecotourism knowledge will be positively related to ecotourism choice.

Social influence is the extent to which individuals perceive that important people in their lives, such as family, friends, colleagues, or reference groups, expect or encourage them to engage in a specific behavior, like choosing ecotourism (Ajzen, 1991; Lam & Hsu, 2006). In a travel context, destination decisions are often highly social, shaped by experiences, word-of-mouth recommendations, online reviews, and peer group trends (Litvin et al., 2008). Previous research indicates that social influence is a key factor in the intention to select new destinations, specific types of tourism, or products that are relatively new to the market (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Han & Kim, 2010). For ecotourism, especially given limited awareness among some tourists, positive recommendations from friends or online communities can serve as powerful motivators, encouraging individuals to explore and choose this form of tourism. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H6: Social influence will be positively related to ecotourism choice.

3. Methodology

Based on previous research papers and related articles, the author has inherited and established the scales for the elements in the proposed research model and has encoded them; details are presented in Table 1. The scales have been worded, and interviews were conducted with experts in the field of tourism to adjust the content of the scale to fit the context of research on ecotourism coice behavior in Hai Phong city.

Table 1: Measurement scales

Scale	Sign	Items	Source
Destination image	DI1	Attractive natural landscapes for ecotourism activities.	Chen and Tsai (2007)
	DI2	The natural environment in eco-tourism destinations is relatively fresh.	
	DI3	Ecotourism infrastructure and services meet tourists' needs well.	
	DI4	Hai Phong is an eco-friendly destination.	
Motivation for ecotourism	MO1	I want to participate in ecotourism to relax and relieve stress.	Luo and Deng (2008)
	MO2	I love experiencing and exploring nature.	
	MO3	I want to learn more about the natural environment and biodiversity.	
	MO4	I choose ecotourism because I want to contribute to environmental protection and the local community.	
Perceived value	PV1	The ecotourism programs are worth the money I have to pay.	Sweeney and Soutar (2001)
	PV2	I get more experiences and benefits than the cost of participating in ecotourism.	

Scale	Sign	Items	Source
	PV3	The quality of ecotourism services is commensurate with my expectations.	
	PV4	Overall, ecotourism offers high value to me.	
Environmental attitude	EA1	I am very interested in pollution and environmental degradation.	Lee and Moscardo (2005)
	EA2	I have a responsibility to protect the natural environment.	
	EA3	Tourism can harm the environment if not managed well.	
	EA4	I am willing to choose eco-friendly travel products, even if they cost more.	
Ecotourism knowledge	EK1	I understand the concept of "ecotourism" relatively well.	Rahman et al. (2022)
	EK2	I know that ecotourism emphasizes nature conservation and local community development.	
	EK3	I am aware of the negative environmental impacts of mass tourism.	
	EK4	I know of suitable destinations for ecotourism development in Hai Phong (e.g., forests, islands, protected areas, etc.).	
Social influence	SI1	My family and friends encourage me to opt for ecotourism.	Han and Kim (2010)
	SI2	The people who are important to me often have a favorable view of ecotourism.	
	SI3	I pay attention to the reviews of acquaintances when deciding to choose ecotourism.	
	SI4	Information on social media and online channels influenced my decision to choose ecotourism.	
Ecotourism choice	EC1	I intend to choose ecotourism in my trips to Hai Phong in the near future.	Han and Kim (2010)
	EC2	When traveling in Hai Phong, I prioritize ecotourism programs over other types of travel.	
	EC3	If I have the opportunity, I will continue to choose ecotourism in Hai Phong.	
	EC4	I am willing to recommend ecotourism programs in Hai Phong to others.	

Source: Author's summary

After completing the scale, the study distributed online questionnaires to 1,000 tourists, both those who had and had not experienced ecotourism in Hai Phong city, collecting 675 satisfactory responses. According to Hair et al. (2010), the minimum sample size for reliable exploratory factor analysis is 5 times the number of observed variables, or 140 questionnaires. Therefore, the data from 675 respondents exceeds this minimum. The sample was selected using simple random sampling to

ensure representation and reduce bias. Based on the collected data, 520 tourists chose ecotourism, accounting for 83.2% of the total respondents. Of these, 48.6% are male, and 51.4% are female, showing a reasonably balanced gender distribution. The 25-34 age group accounted for the most significant proportion at 32.3%, followed by the 35-44 age group at 24.7%, indicating that most tourists are young and middle-aged workers. Regarding occupation, office workers represented the largest group at 37.9%, followed by students at 19.9% and self-employed individuals at 17.3%. In terms of income, nearly half of the tourists earn between 10 and 20 million VND per month (41.9%), while those earning less than 10 million VND per month comprise 30.4%. This data suggests that most tourists come from stable socio-economic backgrounds and have the capacity to afford eco-tourism products.

Table 2: Sample characteristics

Characteristics	Items	Sample	Ratio
Gender	Male	328	48.6
	Female	347	54.1
Age	< 25 years old	145	21.5
	25 - 34 years old	228	33.8
	35 - 44 years old	172	25.5
	45 - 54 years old	92	13.6
	< 55 years old	38	5.6
Occupation	Student	102	15.1
	Office worker	241	35.7
	Freelance business	118	17.5
	Civil servants/public employees	97	14.4
	Others	117	17.3
Income	< 10 million VND	156	23.1
	10 - 14 million VND	238	35.3
	15 - 20 million VND	167	24.7
	> 20 million VND	114	16.9

Source: Analysis results from survey data (2025)

Finally, the data is examined, coded, and analyzed using SPSS 26 software with tests such as descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha testing, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Cronbach's Alpha and EFA

The factors influencing the decision to choose ecotourism in Hai Phong city include six independent variables and one dependent variable with 28 observed variables. After conducting the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, all values are above 0.7, and no observed variables have a Corrected Item - Total Correlation below 0.3. Therefore, all scales meeting the Cronbach's Alpha requirements are included in the EFA analysis, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010) (see Table 3 and Table 4).

The 2nd EFA of the independent variable resulted in a KMO of 0.865 (greater than 0.5), a significance level of 0.000 (less than 0.05), an Eigenvalue greater than 1, and factor loadings for the 24 observed variables greater than 0.5. These variables were extracted into 6 factors as originally proposed by the model. Additionally, the total variance explained reached 67,392%, which is greater than 50%, indicating that these 6 factors accounted for 67,392% of the variation in the data of the 24 observed variables participating in the EFA (see Table 3).

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha and EFA of independent variables

Items	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Environmental attitude: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.836						
EA4	0.898					
EA2	0.882					
EA1	0.870					
EA3	0.865					
Motivation for ecotourism: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.827						
MO1		0.894				
MO3		0.883				
MO2		0.871				
MO4		0.860				
Destination image: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.822						
DI1			0.890			
DI2			0.885			
DI3			0.877			
DI4			0.866			
Perceived value: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.809						
PV3				0.899		
PV1				0.880		
PV2				0.872		
Social influence: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.833						
SI1					0.893	
SI3					0.884	
SI4					0.864	
SI2					0.855	
Ecotourism knowledge: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.818						

Items	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
EK1						0.897
EK2						0.888
EK3						0.873
KMO = 0.865, Sig. = 0.000, Eigenvalue = 1.783, % of Variance = 67.392%						

Source: Analysis results from survey data (2025)

The EFA results for the dependent variable show that the KMO value of 0.845 is above 0.5, and the significance of Bartlett's Test is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the factor analysis is appropriate. One factor was extracted with an Eigenvalue of 2.027, which is greater than 1, and the cumulative explained variance is 65,482%, exceeding 50%. This factor accounts for 65.482% of the variance in the four observed variables involved in the EFA (see Table 4).

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha and EFA of the dependent variable

Items	Factor
	1
Ecotourism choice: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.833	
EC1	0.883
EC3	0.879
EC4	0.867
EC2	0.853
KMO = 0.845, Sig. = 0.000, Eigenvalue = 2.027, % of Variance = 65.482%	

Source: Analysis results from survey data (2025)

4.2. Correlation and regression analysis

The results of the correlation analysis showed that the significance of the t-test for the correlation between the independent and dependent variables was less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Among these, motivation for ecotourism has the highest correlation (0.483), while social influence has the lowest correlation (0.434). Additionally, there is also a linear correlation between variables that are independent of each other, so a multicollinearity phenomenon will be tested in regression analysis (see Table 5).

Table 5: Correlation analysis

	EC	DI	MO	PV	EA	EK	SI
EC	1	0.456	0.483	0.467	0.478	0.460	0.434
DI	0.456	1	0.464	0.503	0.482	0.470	0.482
MO	0.483	0.464	1	0.411	0.428	0.420	0.416
PV	0.467	0.503	0.411	1	0.405	0.473	0.462
EA	0.478	0.482	0.428	0.405	1	0.400	0.434
EK	0.460	0.470	0.420	0.473	0.400	1	0.455
SI	0.434	0.482	0.416	0.462	0.434	0.455	1

Source: Analysis results from survey data (2025)

The results of the regression analysis showed that the adjusted R2 reached 0.685, indicating that 68.5% of the variability in ecotourism choice is explained by the independent variables in the model. The remaining 31.5% is attributed to other factors and error. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson coefficient was 1,738, which is within the range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating that the first-order serial correlation assumption was not violated (see Table 6).

Table 6: Summary model

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.712	0.698	0.685	0.461	1.738

Source: Analysis results from survey data (2025)

The results of the ANOVA analysis show that the Sig value of the F test is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the regression model is appropriate

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Table 7: Multiple linear regression

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	Constant	1.027	0.089		2.478	0.003		
	DI	0.390	0.086	0.473	3.042	0.004	0.758	1.823
	MO	0.400	0.087	0.482	3.283	0.001	0.736	1.838
	PV	0.308	0.083	0.390	3.271	0.005	0.738	1.826
	EA	0.388	0.085	0.432	2.391	0.010	0.763	1.923
	EK	0.376	0.082	0.420	2.372	0.002	0.766	1.880
	SI	0.299	0.080	0.367	2.46	0.03	0.732	1.82

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
					8	0		8

Notes: *DI = Destination image, MO = Motivation for ecotourism, PV = Perceived value, EA = Environmental attitude, EK = Ecotourism knowledge, SI = Social influence, EC = Ecotourism choice*

Source: Analysis results from survey data (2025)

The analysis results in Table 7 show that VIF is less than 5, indicating no multi-collinearity issue. Additionally, the Sig test t for the six independent variables is below 0.05, making them statistically significant and impactful on the dependent variable. Moreover, the regression coefficients for these variables are positive, suggesting a positive effect on the dependent variable. Therefore, the proposed research hypotheses are accepted. The regression equation is written as follows:

EC = 0.482MO + 0.473DI + 0.432EA + 0.420EK + 0.390PV + 0.367SI

4.3. Discussion

Based on the research findings, the author identified six factors that influence the choice of ecotourism in Hai Phong city, including: motivation for ecotourism, destination image, environmental attitude, ecotourism knowledge, perceived value, and social influence. Compared to previous studies, these results are similar to those of Fennell (2020), Kim et al. (2015), Sánchez et al. (2006), Dolnicar et al. (2008), Kim et al. (2018), and Han et al. (2010).

First of all, the destination image (DI) has a strong influence on the intention to choose ecotourism (β = 0.473, p = 0.004). This aligns with Fennell's (2020) view, which highlights the importance of perceptions and impressions of destinations in shaping visitor behavior. The result indicates that, in the context of Hai Phong, characteristics related to the natural landscape, fresh environment, and overall attractiveness of the destination play a key role in attracting tourists to ecotourism. Establishing a consistent and positive destination image, especially the image of a "green destination," can help increase Hai Phong's competitiveness in the tourism market..

Additionally, the motivation for ecotourism (MO) was the most influential factor in the first group of the model (β = 0.482, p = 0.001). This aligns with the theory of travel engines (Dann, 1981; Luo & Deng, 2008), and the findings of a study by Kim et al. (2015) indicate that visitors are driven by the need for relaxation, exposure to nature, and a desire for sustainable experiences. The results reveal that travelers with strong motivations related to nature exploration and seeking peace will favor ecotourism over other types of tourism. This is especially significant for destinations like Hai Phong, where the values of the sea-island landscape and coastal ecosystem still hold substantial potential for development.

Next, perceived value (PV) also exhibits a significant impact (β = 0.390, p = 0.005), indicating tourists' positive evaluation of the balance between costs and benefits when selecting ecotourism. This result aligns with previous studies that identify perceived value as a key predictor of service choice and ongoing engagement (Sánchez et al., 2006). It suggests that enhancing the quality of the experience, boosting educational value, and managing costs can make the destination more appealing.

Environmental attitude (EA) also have a positive and meaningful impact (β = 0.432, p = 0.010). This aligns with TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and research by Dolnicar et al. (2008), which suggest that people with a positive view of environmental protection often display sustainable tourism behaviors. The results show that tourists in Hai Phong tend to make choices reflecting their personal environmental values, indicating the potential for media campaigns that highlight ecological responsibility.

Ecotourism knowledge (EK) was found to have a positive and significant relationship (β = 0.420, p = 0.020). This supports the findings of previous studies by Kim et al. (2018), Rahman et al. (2022), that a proper understanding of ecotourism encourages environmentally friendly behaviors. This indicates that education and awareness campaigns can be effective tools for promoting ecotourism behaviors.

Finally, social influence (SI) also has a significant impact (β = 0.367, p = 0.030), which aligns with TPB and the findings by Han and Kim (2010), confirming the importance of family, friends, and social media in shaping travel choices. This is especially relevant in the digital age, where online communication, travel reviews, and sharing experiences can strongly influence behavior.

5. Conclusion

This study identified factors that influence the decision to choose ecotourism in Hai Phong city, an emerging destination with great potential for natural landscapes and coastal ecosystems. These factors include destination image, motivation for ecotourism, perceived value, environmental attitude, ecotourism knowledge, and social influence. Among these, motivation for ecotourism and destination image are the two factors that have the greatest impact on ecotourism choices.

Theoretically, this study significantly advances the field of ecotourism behavior by simultaneously examining six factors influencing the decision to choose ecotourism in a coastal-urban destination like Hai Phong city. First, the results support TPB's framework (Ajzen, 1991), showing that environmental attitudes, social influences, and ecotourism knowledge are all crucial in predicting sustainable destination choices. Second, the study broadens our understanding of perceived value and destination image in ecotourism, which are typically studied within mass tourism, by highlighting their strong impact in the context of ecotourism in Vietnam. Third, it emphasizes the important role of ecotourism motivation, aligning with previous research on the motivation to engage with nature as a key factor in sustainable tourism behavior (Luo & Deng, 2008). Overall, this research enriches the visitor behavior model by confirming the relevance of six factors within an integrated framework and provides empirical evidence for the changing

destination landscape in Southeast Asia.

Practically, the results of the study offer important implications for destination managers and tourism businesses in Hai Phong. First, enhancing the destination's image should be a top priority through investment in landscape conservation, upgrading ecotourism infrastructure, and consistent communication emphasizing the 'green destination' identity. Second, since ecotourism is the most influential factor, businesses need to develop products that focus on experiencing nature, relaxing, and learning, as well as creating activities that explore and educate about the environment. Third, perceived value plays a key role; therefore, balancing cost and quality, ensuring transparent pricing, and enhancing the actual experience will help increase tourists' decision-making ability. Fourth, the findings show that environmental attitudes and ecological knowledge shape behavior, so authorities should strengthen awareness campaigns, along with instructional programs, signage, and educational publications at the destination. Lastly, social influence is crucial, highlighting the importance of social media, online reviews, and viral marketing campaigns. Encouraging tourists to share their experiences and collaborating with ecotourism influencers or green tourism communities can generate a positive spillover effect and promote selective behavior.

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