| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

The Impact of Destination Attributes on Perceived Value of Tourists: The Case of Kien Luong District, Kien Giang Province

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| **ABSTRACT**

Destination attributes and perceived value are key concepts in tourism research and practice. Studying the relationship between these two constructs can provide valuable insights for both academics and tourism managers. However, there is still limited empirical evidence in this research area. To analyze the impact of destination attributes on perceived value, this study was conducted in Kien Luong District, Vietnam. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 120 respondents. Through reliability testing of the measurement scale, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that perceived value is influenced by various factors in decreasing order of intensity: attractions, people, environment, cost, facilities, and accessibility. This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between destination attributes and perceived value and provides practical implications for destination management.

| **KEYWORDS**

Tourists, Perceived value, Kien Giang, Kien Lương, Destination attributes

1. Introduction

Tourism is widely recognized as one of the world's leading industries and a major driver of growth for many economic sectors. For many regions and countries, tourism is the most important source of welfare, providing numerous economic and social benefits (Ghose & Johann, 2018). According to forecasts by the World Tourism Organization, the tourism industry will continue to grow over the next two decades, making significant contributions to economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. To facilitate this, one of the key measures is to enhance the competitiveness of destinations (UNWTO, 2011). High-quality destination attributes and positive perceived value among tourists are critical factors determining the competitiveness of a destination. When policymakers and managers understand the perceived value of tourists concerning destination attributes, long-term strategic actions can be implemented, potentially creating competitive advantages for these destinations (Caber et al., 2012). In the context of a competitive global market, tourism destinations need to recognize the attributes that constitute the tourism product and the factors influencing tourists' perceived value, to provide high-quality services and goods that meet the needs of local, regional, and international tourists (Al-Masroori, 2006; Caber et al., 2012). Efforts to improve the quality of destination attributes, if not based on empirical evidence, will only remain subjective assumptions. With the support of this study, policymakers and managers can better understand how destination attribute factors influence tourists' perceived value, allowing for the development of strategies to enhance them appropriately.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development
2.1. Destination Attributes

Destination attributes are one of the key perceptions studied by many scholars in the field of tourism. A combination of various factors that attract tourists to a destination is referred to as destination attributes (Lew, 1987). Each destination has distinct characteristics, and therefore, its attributes also vary. Destination attributes are sometimes listed in specific terms, such as

hospitality, local culture, infrastructure, superstructure, a combination of various activities, accessibility, environmental management, natural geography, attachment to place, and service quality (Singh & Singh, 2019). Conversely, destination attributes can also be classified into broader categories, such as inherited or gifted resources (climate, nature, heritage, and local cuisine), created resources (historic buildings, accommodations, transport, tourism information, tourist activities, shopping, and entertainment), supporting elements and resources (service quality, accessibility, hospitality, and communication), and situational conditions (price, security, and safety) (Jumanazarov et al., 2020). Each representation of destination attributes holds its significance. Detailed representations (listing individual attributes) help researchers carry out studies more easily (J.-H. Kim, 2014), while broader categorizations may provide more conclusive findings (Crouch, 2010; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). Destination attributes are of significant importance to both tourists and destinations. Tourists' destination choices and trip planning are influenced by destination attributes (Singh & Singh, 2019). The intention to revisit and future word-of-mouth recommendations by individuals towards a destination are also dependent on its attributes (Chi & Qu, 2009). Furthermore, destination attributes are a key factor in determining the competitiveness of a destination (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

2.2. Perceived Value
In the 1990s, the concept of perceived value emerged as a decisive issue in business. Recently, this concept has attracted significant attention from tourism researchers, hospitality and restaurant industries, and marketing professionals (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007; Yu et al., 2023). One of the most frequently cited definitions of perceived value is the one proposed by Zeithaml (1988). According to Zeithaml, perceived value is the overall evaluation by customers of the utility of a product or service based on their perceptions of what is received and what is sacrificed (Zeithaml, 1988). An alternative approach views perceived value as a trade-off between perceived benefits and perceived sacrifices made by customers. Perceived value is reflected through perceived benefits (economic, social, and relational) and the sacrifices made (price, time, effort, risk, and convenience) by customers (Cronin Jr et al., 2000). Other aspects of perceived value include emotional value and functional value; intrinsic value, extrinsic value, and systemic value; social value, emotional value, functional value, epistemic value, and conditional value; as well as monetary value and economic value (Kim & Park, 2017). Recent studies suggest that perceived value is an appropriate indicator for predicting tourists' behavioral intentions (Chen & Chen, 2010; Cronin Jr et al., 2000). Empirical evidence shows that tourists' satisfaction and loyalty to a destination have a positive relationship with perceived value (Wang et al., 2016). Perceived value can be measured using either unidimensional or multidimensional scales (Chen & Chen, 2010).

2.3. The Relationship Between Destination Attributes and Perceived Value
A tourist destination is composed of multiple attributes, and the combination of these attributes creates tourism activities. To date, there have been few studies that test the direct relationship between destination attributes and perceived value. Reviewing relevant literature is one of the most effective ways to form research hypotheses. A study by Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015) shows that the tourism environment, attractions, events, infrastructure, and sports influence perceived value. Destination attributes such as infrastructure, environment, accessibility, and attractions have been found to positively influence perceived value (Wang et al., 2016). In the study "The Impact of Destination Images on Tourists' Perceived Value, Expectations, and Loyalty," perceived value was influenced by accommodation and food/beverages, cost, hospitality and customer service, environment and cleanliness, transportation, facilities and activities, and accessibility (Ozturk & Qu, 2008). Based on the above evidence, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H$_1$): Attractions in Kien Luong positively contribute to perceived value.
Hypothesis 2 (H$_2$): Accessibility in Kien Luong positively contributes to perceived value.
Hypothesis 3 (H$_3$): Facilities in Kien Luong positively contribute to perceived value.
Hypothesis 4 (H$_4$): People in Kien Luong positively contribute to perceived value.
Hypothesis 5 (H$_5$): Cost in Kien Luong positively contributes to perceived value.
Hypothesis 6 (H$_6$): The environment in Kien Luong positively contributes to perceived value.
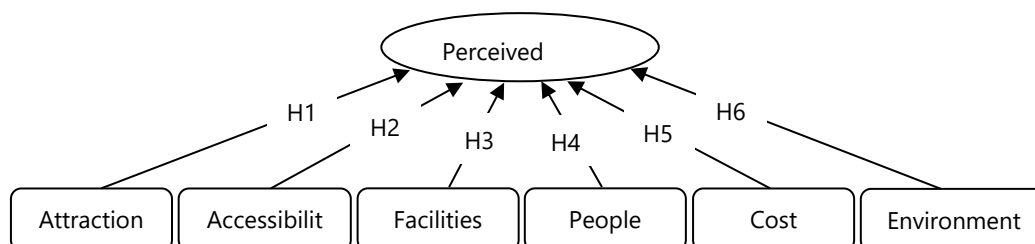

Figure 1: Research model

3. Research Methodology
3.1 Study Area
This study was conducted in Kien Luong District, located in the northwest of Kien Giang Province, Vietnam. It is one of the areas within the Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve. Along with Kien Hai, Phu Quoc, and Ha Tien, Kien Luong forms the tourism development

triangle for marine tourism in Kien Giang Province. With a total area of 473.336 km², the district is divided into eight administrative units, six of which are on the mainland (Kien Luong, Kien Binh, Hoa Dien, Duong Hoa, Binh An, and Binh Tri) and two are islands (Son Hai, Hon Nghe). Established in 1999, Kien Luong District currently has a population of approximately 78,976 people. Due to its diverse land and topography, the district has developed a diverse economy. In terms of industry, Kien Luong has leveraged its natural resources, such as limestone, clay, and aquatic products, to develop a building materials industry and seafood processing sector. The majority of the land in the district is alluvial (saline and alkaline), making rice farming and aquaculture the primary agricultural activities. Kien Luong is one of the key tourism areas in Kien Giang Province, thanks to the development of various types of landscapes, including islands (Ba Lua Archipelago, Hon Nghe, and Hon Phu Tu), beaches (Duong Beach, Dau Beach, and Ot Beach), mountains (Mo So), caves (Ca Sau Cave, Lo Coc Cave, Son Tra Cave, Tien Cave), and temples (Hang Pagoda). In 2023, the revenue from the tourism industry in Kien Luong reached 767.163 billion VND.

3.2 Measurement Scales

The destination attributes and perceived value are concepts that need to be measured in this study. The destination attributes are represented by six independent measurement scales, including attractions, accessibility, facilities, people, cost, and environment. Attractions and the environment are derived from the studies of Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015) and Wang et al. (2016). Accessibility is a combination of the research by Ozturk & Qu (2008) and Wang et al. (2016). Facilities, people, and cost are referenced from the study by Ozturk & Qu (2008). The perceived value scale is the dependent scale used from the research of Bajs (2011) and Wang et al. (2016). The measurement scales and observed variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Measurement Scales and Observed Variables

Measurement Scale	Observed Variable	Symbol	Source
Attractions	Beautiful beaches with abundant sand	At1	Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015); Wang et al., (2016)
	Breathtaking landscapes	At2	
	Unique local culture	At3	
	Numerous beautiful mountains/islands	At4	
	Numerous tourist sites and historical landmarks	At5	
Accessibility	Easy access to destinations	Ac1	Ozturk & Qu (2008); Wang et al. (2016)
	Adequate local transportation services	Ac2	
	Clear road signs and directions	Ac3	
Facilities	Adequate accommodation facilities	Fa1	Ozturk & Qu (2008)
	Adequate dining facilities	Fa2	
	Adequate entertainment facilities	Fa3	
	Adequate shopping facilities	Fa4	
People	Friendly local people	Pe1	Ozturk & Qu (2008); Authors' own development
	Kind local people	Pe2	
	Competent staff	Pe3	
	Staff that are open and willing to assist	Pe4	
Cost	Reasonable cost for visiting	Co1	Ozturk & Qu (2008); Authors' own development
	Reasonable cost for accommodation	Co2	
	Reasonable cost for dining	Co3	
	Reasonable cost for shopping	Co4	
Environment	Non-polluted and clean environment	En1	Ozturk & Qu (2008); Wang et al. (2016)
	Safe and secure environment	En2	
	Well-managed orderliness	En3	
Perceived value	I have a positive impression of this destination	Pv1	Bajs (2011); Wang et al. (2016)
	I do not feel that I wasted time when experiencing this destination	Pv2	
	I do not feel that I wasted money when experiencing this destination	Pv3	

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were collected using a survey questionnaire method. The structure of the questionnaire consists of three sections. Section 1 covers the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section 2 evaluates the tourists' perceptions of the destination attributes. Section 3 assesses the tourists' perceived value of the destination. Section 1 was measured using nominal and ordinal scales. A 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree) was used to measure the content in Sections 2 and 3. The sample size for the study was determined based on the 5:1 rule (five samples per observed variable) (Hair

et al., 2010). This study used 23 independent observed variables, thus the minimum sample size required was 115. The actual sample size was 120, which met the requirement. The sample elements were selected using a convenience sampling technique, meaning that only respondents who agreed to participate in the survey were included. The survey was conducted at several popular local tourist destinations, including Hon Phu Tu, Ba Hon Dam, and Mo So Historical Site and Scenic Area. The survey was carried out in December 2024 and January 2025. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, scale reliability, exploratory factor analysis, and multiple linear regression.

4. Results

4.1 Description of the Sample

For this study, the observed variables used to measure the demographic characteristics of the respondents included gender, age, education level, and occupation. Regarding gender, 64 males and 56 females participated in the survey, representing 53.3% and 46.7%, respectively. The respondents had diverse age groups, with the lowest number and percentage found in the group aged over 50 (17 individuals, 14.2%), followed by the group aged 35-50 (47 individuals, 39.2%), and the largest group was aged 19-34 (56 individuals, 46.6%). The tourists who participated in the survey had varying levels of education. The group with a high school education or below consisted of 41 individuals (34.2%), the vocational training group included 23 individuals (19.2%), the group with college and university education numbered 46 (38.3%), and those with postgraduate education accounted for 10 individuals (8.3%). The respondents' occupations were ranked in descending order as follows: students (36 individuals, 30%), farmers and workers (35 individuals, 29.2%), small business owners and traders (29 individuals, 24.2%), and civil servants and state employees (20 individuals, 16.6%).

4.2 Analysis of Scale Reliability

The scales and concepts in this study are abstract, and as such, they are measured using multiple observed variables. The use of several variables within a scale is intended to reflect multiple aspects of the research content. However, not all observed variables used to measure a factor necessarily reflect the true nature of that factor. Therefore, it is essential to test the appropriateness of the observed variables in each scale, and Cronbach's alpha is one of the most commonly used tools for this purpose. Based on Cronbach's alpha, one can assess the level of correlation between the observed variables within the same factor. Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with a higher value indicating a higher correlation among the observed variables of a factor, and vice versa. The minimum threshold for a reliable scale is a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or higher, and a reliable variable should have a corrected item-total correlation of 0.3 or higher (Hair et al., 2010). The results of the data analysis show that the scales and observed variables are reliable, as their Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.7 and the corrected item-total correlations are above 0.3. The attractions scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.37 to 0.57. The accessibility scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, with item-total correlations between 0.70 and 0.80. The facilities scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.40 to 0.52. The people scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.48 to 0.74. The cost scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.51 to 0.77. The environment scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75, with item-total correlations between 0.54 and 0.68. The perceived value scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.76, with item-total correlations ranging from 0.57 to 0.65.

4.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is one of the key methods in quantitative data analysis. The purpose of this method is to group variables that correlate with each other into general and meaningful factors. Two important criteria for assessing the suitability of data for factor analysis are the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the p-value from Bartlett's test of sphericity. The minimum thresholds for these criteria are ≥ 0.5 and < 0.05, respectively (Hahs-Vaughn, 2017). The data is suitable for factor analysis, as the KMO value is 0.74 and the p-value from Bartlett's test is 0.00 for the independent scales; for the dependent scale, the KMO is 0.69 and the p-value is 0.00. With eigenvalues greater than 1, a cumulative percentage of total variance explained $\geq 50\%$, and factor loadings ≥ 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). the destination attributes were grouped into 6 factors such as cost, people, accessibility, attractions, environment, and facilities. Based on these criteria, the perceived value scale retained its attributes.

Table 2: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Observed Variable	Factor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Co1	0.67						
Co2	0.71						
Co3	0.84						
Co4	0.77						
Pe1		0.67					
Pe2		0.65					
Pe3		0.71					

Pe4		0.81					
Ac1			0.82				
Ac2			0.79				
Ac3			0.64				
At1				0.55			
At2				0.59			
At3				0.69			
At4				0.71			
At5				0.69			
En1					0.51		
En2					0.83		
En3					0.74		
Fa1						0.67	
Fa2						0.62	
Fa3						0.71	
Fa4						0.72	
Pv1							0.81
Pv2							0.86
PV3							0.82
Kaiser-Meyor-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy						0.74	0.69
Bartlett's test of sphericity (Sig.)						0.00	0.00
Eigenvalues						1.14	2.05
% of cumulative (total variance explained)						65.8	68.3

4.4 Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression is used to predict the value of a dependent variable based on the values of multiple independent variables. It allows researchers to determine the degree of influence each independent factor has on the dependent variable. Several criteria must be considered when performing multivariate regression analysis. First, the adjusted R^2 value of 0.61 indicates that 61% of the variance in perceived value is explained by the destination attributes. Second, the Durbin-Watson value of 2.3 (1 < D < 3) suggests that no first-order autocorrelation is present. Third, the p-value of the F-test is 0.00 (< 0.05), indicating that the regression model fits the market data and is generalizable to the population. Finally, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values are all 1 (< 2), suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern. Based on the p-values in the coefficients table, all destination attributes have a positive effect on perceived value (p < 0.001).

Table 3: Results of Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Constant	-6.244E-016	0.04		0.00	1.000		
Cost	0.36	0.04	0.36	8.82	0.000	1.000	1.000
People	0.39	0.04	0.38	9.50	0.000	1.000	1.000
Accessibility	0.23	0.04	0.23	5.63	0.000	1.000	1.000
Attractions	0.49	0.04	0.49	12.08	0.000	1.000	1.000
Environment	0.38	0.04	0.38	9.32	0.000	1.000	1.000
Facilities	0.33	0.04	0.33	8.22	0.000	1.000	1.000

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

This study proposes six hypotheses regarding the relationship between destination attributes and perceived value, all of which are accepted with a p-value < 0.001 and a positive B coefficient. Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted (p = 0.000, β = 0.49), indicating that attractions have a positive impact on perceived value. Accessibility is found to have a positive relationship with perceived value (p = 0.000, β = 0.23), so Hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted. With p = 0.000 and β = 0.33, the infrastructure positively influences perceived value, and Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted. A positive relationship between the people factor and perceived value exists (p = 0.000, β = 0.38), so Hypothesis 4 (H4) is accepted. Perceived value is positively affected by cost (p = 0.000, β = 0.36), so Hypothesis 5 (H5) is accepted. Finally, there is a positive relationship between the environment and perceived value (p = 0.000, β = 0.38), thus Hypothesis 6 (H6) is accepted.

5. Discussion and Implications

The main objective of this study is to analyze the influence of destination attributes on perceived value. The proposed model consists of 6 independent scales with 23 observed variables and 1 dependent scale with 3 observed variables. Through Cronbach's alpha analysis and item-total correlation, all the scales and observed variables are found to be reliable. The data meet the standards for factor analysis. The destination attributes consist of 6 factors including cost, people, accessibility, attractions, environment, and infrastructure. The proposed model is suitable for market data and can be applied to the broader population. All 6 destination attributes positively contribute to perceived value. In terms of impact, attractions have the strongest influence, followed by people, and then the environment. Factors such as cost, infrastructure, and accessibility contribute less and are lower compared to the aforementioned factors in terms of perceived value. Therefore, a destination with diverse and unique tourist attractions; friendly, kind, and professional people; a clean, secure, safe, and orderly environment; reasonable pricing for services such as tours, accommodation, food, and shopping; comprehensive facilities for accommodation, dining, entertainment, and shopping; and easy accessibility (roads, transport, signage) will result in higher perceived value for tourists and vice versa.

Several related studies in different contexts also provide similar findings. Attractions and the environment were found to have a positive impact on perceived value in studies by Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015) and Wang et al. (2016). The study by Ozturk & Qu (2008) and Wang et al. (2016) showed that accessibility has a positive relationship with perceived value. Furthermore, perceived value is also influenced by factors such as people, cost, and infrastructure (Ozturk & Qu, 2008). These factors are indispensable in any tourist destination and have a close relationship with tourists. Therefore, how tourists perceive a destination depends entirely on the quality of the attributes that make up the destination.

There are several practical implications for destination managers in the studied area. For attractions, local authorities should actively protect the limestone landscapes on the mainland and the evergreen tropical forest vegetation on the islands. In terms of the people factor, attitudes of friendliness and kindness should be cultivated, and the service capacity of residents and staff should be improved. To enhance the quality of the tourism environment, environmental sanitation and maintaining order at tourist sites are essential. The cost of tourism services is also an area that local authorities must pay great attention to. Tourists will have a better perception of the destination when service prices are more reasonable, and they are not required to pay for excessive small fees (such as parking, sanitation, or freshwater showers). To encourage tourists to stay longer and diversify tourism products, the locality should develop entertainment facilities catering to various audiences. To facilitate tourists in their travel and sightseeing, it is necessary to strengthen the establishment of directional signs leading to tourist spots.

6. Conclusion

Destination attributes and perceived value are crucial constructs in both academic and practical tourism studies. Numerous studies have shown that these two constructs influence tourists' choices, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Destination attributes are diverse and create distinctions between different destinations. In relation to perceived value, the level of their influence varies in descending order such as attractions, people, environment, cost, infrastructure, and accessibility. Tourists directly interact with, use, and pay for these factors, so they impact their perceived value of the destination. This study has demonstrated the relationship between destination attributes and perceived value, thus fulfilling the research objective. Compared to previous studies, this research contributes by introducing additional observed variables, and a new research model, and is conducted within the context of Vietnam.

6.1 Study Limitations and Future Research

In addition to its contributions, this study has limitations, as it overlooks certain factors and only uses a quantitative approach. Furthermore, the research model is simple. To contribute more to science and management, some other dependent constructs such as experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions can be included in the model and advanced testing methods such as CB-SEM (Covariance-Based SEM) or PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares SEM) can be used. Future research may address these gaps.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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