

WEEKEND TOURISM - A TOURISM PRODUCT AIMED AT CUSTOMERS LIVING AND WORKING IN BIG CITIES IN VIETNAM

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Abstract

To implement this article, we have chosen the research area of Binh Duong (bordering Ho Chi Minh City, with a history of over 300 years of development, with 11 years of operating the type of weekend tourism from 2008 to present); have used some research methods in social sciences, particularly ethnographic fieldwork such as strategic interview, comparing and analyzing data gathered from multiple sources. The article consists of three parts: The concept of "Weekend tourism" and specific products; Identify key factors affecting the exploitation of the "weekend tourism" type in Binh Duong, and finally, a number of measures to contribute to the development of "weekend tourism" in the context of international integration.

Keywords: Weekend Tourism, Tourism Product, Urban.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Vietnam has become increasingly aware of the importance of tourism in the country's economic development process. Actual data prove that with the implementation of the integration strategies, taking advantage of opportunities, overcoming many challenges, together with other economic sectors, the "Smokeless industry" has created a source of big income. In addition, tourism is also involved in solving employment problems for millions of workers.

In the context of regional integration with the formation of the ASEAN Community (Kuala Lumpur Declaration 2015), together with the impact of globalization, the promotion of "weekend tourism" in Vietnam has been receiving a lot of acknowledgement and attention from many agencies, especially from the Department of Tourism - Culture - Sports, including the Department of Tourism - Culture - Sports of Binh Duong Province (Xuan, 2016).

Facing the advantages and disadvantages of Vietnam tourism in the context of international integration, we are pleased to share the article: "Weekend tourism" - a tourism product aimed at customers living and working in big cities in Vietnam.

DISCUSSION

1. The concept of "Weekend tourism" and specific products:

Modern tourism activities are assessed to be very diverse and rich, including many different types. In order to classify travel categories, people often rely on criteria such as tourism purpose, means of transport, geographical location of the destination, time of travel, form of trip organization. In particular, if based on the length of the trip, it is divided into: short-term tourism, long-term tourism. The type of short-term tourism with tours usually held on weekends is called weekend tourism. Thus, "weekend tourism" is a form of short-term tourism.

This concept is mainly given by travel companies based on their actual business situation. "Weekend tourism" is understood as "the type of tourism organized on weekends - usually Saturday, Sunday - and the destination is usually not too far from the residence of the tourists to serve the purpose of visiting, relaxing, and entertainment for busy people who are not able to travel for days" (Chau, 2011). Targets of this tourism form, according to recent studies, are people living in large cities: "Weekend tourism is a form of activity of residents of cities on the weekends to the suburbs or adjacent areas, granting them an opportunity to easily integrate with nature, to rest, entertain, to restore health, and to consume economic, natural, and cultural values" (Hai, 1997).

Because the definition of weekend tourism is relatively wide, the products of this type are also quite diverse and flexible. In the opinion of Hai (1997), we have listed out some activities that tourists may be interested in: entertainment; ecology - relaxation; high-end sports; visiting cultural - historical sites; food, and shopping.

2. Identify key factors affecting the process of exploiting weekend tourism in Binh Duong province

Through analyzing research results in Binh Duong, we would like to point out some important factors that affect the exploitation of local weekend tourism types.

a. Human resources for tourism:

To ensure the rigorous requirements of modern tourism in the context of regional and global integration, especially when ASEAN workers in 8 industries with recognized similar skills (including tourism) are allowed to move and work within the region, it is thought that Binh Duong, as well as other provinces in Vietnam, should pay more attention to the quality training of human resources for tourism development.

b. Propagating and promoting tourism images:

The information is a bridge between tourist destinations and visitors, and an effective tool of propagation, promotion and execution to harmonize the benefits between businesses and tourists. However, propagating activities to promote the image of tourism in Binh Duong province are still inadequate. Through surveys, we noted that up to 36% of international visitors, 60% of domestic visitors complain that they have received advertising information that is not true to what they see in reality, or they are

not provided tourism products and services as advertised. This has negatively affected the beautiful image of provincial tourism, eroded the trust of visitors in the tourism activities here (Chau, 2011). Moreover, although Binh Duong is emerging as a place to attract foreign investors to invest in the province, tourism in Binh Duong province is still lacking books, newspapers, magazines and brochures introducing Provincial tourism in English as well as other international languages. Therefore, the discovery schedule of many potential tourists did not have two words “Binh Duong”.

The tourism information system on tourism websites also does not have a unified database between the units. Most of the websites of management agencies and tourism businesses have relatively sketchy contents consisting mainly of information about businesses with independent operation methods and without the connection to internally share information. Activities of propagation and advertising of tourist information are still mainly aiming at tourists, but have not gone into propagation to raise the local people’s awareness of the province's tourist destination’s value. The sector still has no propagating channel specifically for local people to better understand the value of tourist attractions, the value of customs, religion, and beliefs, so their perception of those values is still limited, as well as their sense of preserving the local cultural qualities is not high.

c. Tourism products

Ms. Nguyen Thi Khanh - Vice Chairman of Ho Chi Minh City Tourism Association said that in order to attract tourists, Binh Duong needs to increase the number of tourism services and products at each destination. Tourism businesses in Ho Chi Minh City are eager to co-operate with destinations in Binh Duong to extend their visitors’ length of stay (Viet, 2019).

Take culinary as an example: although in recent time, Binh Duong has made a lot of efforts, creating new dishes to add to the weekend menu for visitors at restaurants and eating places such as mangos teen chicken salad, durian grilled chicken. However, we need to continue optimizing the value of local specialties and signatures. For example, mangos teen - in addition to salads, smoothies, ice cream, can be made into syrup or juice (maple leaves - the symbol of Canada), or mangos teen-shaped cakes or cakes with mangos teen scent and flavor? Thailand in 2019, as the ASEAN Chair, has announced and introduced the 2019 ASEAN Logo with a congratulatory purple flower - with the purple representing the color of mangos teen - king fruit in Thailand. Binh Duong needs to focus on increasing the value of local tourism products including food.

3. A number of measures to contribute to the development of weekend tourism in the context of international integration.

Currently, plans on tourism planning in Binh Duong province as well as localities in Vietnam are mostly short-term. There is no sustainable development strategy,

especially for weekend tourism. Although this type has existed and developed in Binh Duong over 10 years.

Lessons learned from developed countries in tourism always show that before making a plan, all stakeholders (authorities and tourism companies) must go through research processes thoroughly on the responsiveness of the tourism industry, the market, tourist tastes, and then continue to conduct information and data collection in all aspects to analyze, evaluate information scientifically and systematically. Only then, the tourism development plans devised may have a long-term vision towards sustainable development. In addition, when deciding on the establishment of tourist zones and areas, it is necessary to pay attention to other socio-economic factors, as well as natural and environmental conditions. Individuals who are mainly responsible for the projects should not only be highly specialized but also knowledgeable about cultural, ecological and life aspects of local communities. When implementing projects, it is necessary to ensure the economic life of the people and to help them avoid "culture shocks" due to strong contact with visitors - especially foreign tourists at the same time (Binh, 2016).

In the context of the ASEAN Community, with a vision to 2020, the reference to tourism success lessons of the countries in the region is thought to have certain theoretical and practical values that can help Binh Duong develop further the advantages and potential of exploiting the type of "weekend tourism" targeting inner-city tourists and neighboring cities and provinces like Ho Chi Minh City.

a. Take advantage of the province's advantages to diversify tourism products, bringing a new and exciting feeling to visitors:

Focus on souvenir products:

Souvenirs are both a significant source of revenue for the budget and an effective and low-cost means to promote the image of local tourism to a large number of domestic and foreign tourists. Compared to other provinces in Vietnam, Binh Duong has many typical trade villages representing the whole region, typically ceramics, lacquer, and glass paintings. However, when surveying the Tuong Binh Hiep lacquer painting village, we were told by some workshop owners that most of the paintings here were made on orders for export to foreign countries and there were not any leftovers for display or domestic retailing, even not for depositing to tourist areas and attractions. About visiting the production site, except for the survey groups of tour companies and some foreign delegations, those workshops do not regularly welcome domestic visitors. It is thought that it further limits the opportunity of tourists (especially domestic customers) to access this valuable gift item. Besides, some valuable traditional crafts are being lost (for example, glass paintings) or not developing (for example, wood sculptures). It is thought that in the flat world, it is these specific products that deeply engrave the image of Binh Duong tourism in particular and of Vietnam in general in the mind of customers.

Develop some new products based on the province's comparative advantage:

Natural terrain: Binh Duong Province has extremely favorable natural terrain characteristics to develop a variety of tourism products. Based on the comparative advantages of the province, in this article, we would like to propose investing in the strong development of two products: resort tourism based on natural resources (eco-tourism) and adventure tourism.

Type of adventure tourism. With attractive, unique and fascinating properties, adventure tours in Vietnam nowadays are gradually becoming a favorite type of tourism. This form is increasingly popular among young people. The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism once said that domestic travel agencies will be encouraged to organize adventure tours to attract foreign tourists. According to him, with complex terrain, majestic mountains, Vietnam has great potential for adventure tourism, which needs to be exploited. "We are planning to support travel businesses to improve their professionalism to develop this type of attractive tourism" - he said. According to many foreign travel managers, Vietnam is a new and attractive tourist destination, especially with a terrain suitable for adventure sports activities combined with tourism. However, the number of adventure travel services is still very small and scattered. "Adventure tourism requires a high level of professionalism in organizing tours, as it directly affects the safety of travelers," said the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. According to him, the most important thing is to have professional terrain reconnaissance teams, thoughtful logistics team, and always maintain good communication in all terrains (Tam, 2016). Tour operators also need to coordinate closely with the state management agencies in charge of tourism and local authorities when organizing tours to receive the necessary support. It is thought that with diverse and abundant natural resources like high mountains, forests and caves, and rapids, suitable for exploiting mountain climbing, forest crossing and rapids tours. Binh Duong will definitely be a tourist destination with fascinating adventures, attracting a large number of domestic and international tourists.

Eco-tourism. With the system of mountains, forests, and lakes, Binh Duong province has a remarkable potential in developing various types of eco-tourism. But unfortunately, in fact, resorts and tourist destinations currently focus too much on artificial landscapes but neglect the exploitation of natural landscapes. Travel companies should take advantage of natural landscapes to design eco-tourism products such as high-class relaxation, convalescence, and family relaxation. In busy life with less free time and more pressure, it is certain that immersing in the natural setting will attract many tourists not only in the province but also from the surrounding areas. The ecological project of Dau Tieng lake - Nui Cau in Binh Duong needs to be invested more to make this project work effectively.

Historical sites:

Binh Duong province has a system of historical and cultural relics that are long-standing, diverse, and regionally characterized. The historical sites in the province have been largely recognized at the provincial and national levels. According to the statistics in recent years, the number of tourists coming to Binh Duong with the purpose of visiting the relics is increasing.

However, in reality, Binh Duong tourism is not really paying enough attention to investing in these historical sites. The promotions are quite general, not yet highlighting the meaning of each monument. The monuments - especially religious facilities - have not been arranged with professional speakers with full knowledge and passion to assist visitors in the learning process. There are some really valuable monuments that are being forgotten over time, not restored as well as not recognized at any level. This has more or less influenced the choice of visiting destinations for the company as well as free travelers.

It will not be too difficult to design a tour to connect historical sites within each convenient geographical area and transportation. If so, Binh Duong tourism will have more new tourism products; tourists are also satisfied with the desire to learn about the historical sites in a more systematic and professional way.

System of old houses. Binh Duong province owns many ancient houses with characteristics of each development period of the Southeast region. These houses have significant cultural and historical significance, and have great value in architectural and decorative arts. However, to this day, Binh Duong tourism does not seem to have gained any significant benefit from exploiting this valuable resource. The concept of ancient Binh Duong houses actually only exists in the understanding of historical researchers. For tourism companies, the knowledge is quite vague. For visitors, it is even less. Therefore, this resource is becoming more and more neglected and no exploiting means no repair and protection. Looking back at some other provinces in the Southern region, we can see that the tourism industry knows how to make good use of this resource. Bac Lieu has the Duke Bac Lieu's house, Dong Thap has the ancient house Huynh Thuy Le, Can Tho has the ancient house of Binh Thuy. Although there are many things to continue to improve, these places have been being made known to domestic and foreign tourists. The provincial leaders, as well as the travel companies have skillfully used the fascinating stories involving the houses, taken them as a springboard to introduce tourists to a large number of other cultural, architectural, and historical values. Compared to old houses in other provinces, those in Binh Duong have the advantage that the heirs - the owners - are still living and preserving the house. They serve as a living witness to the entire history of foundation and development. architectural style of the house. It is certainly more interesting to hear the stories from those owners themselves than from the normal guides.

Festival system. Every year, Binh Duong province has many festivals taking place, from religious festivals to historical festivals. All of them combine into a system of festivals, reflecting the developed and diverse spiritual life of the people of

this land. There are many festivals in Binh Duong province that not only attract indigenous people but also those from other provinces in the region as well as other localities throughout the country. Thus, if there is a rational exploitation, festivals will become an indispensable resource of the tourism industry. If you want to exploit festivals as a specific tourism product, Binh Duong province needs to have a plan to introduce the meaningful contents of the festivals to the public, and run timely promotion. Besides, there are special promotional programs to encourage visitors to participate. Each region in the province also has its own unique festivals which require proper program arrangement to avoid duplication boring the visitors. In organizational work, it is also necessary to preserve the traditional cultural traits. Particularly for festivals of a large scale and historical nature, the organization of the work should have a specific plan based on the perspective of Tourism Anthropology and the theory of sustainable development.

Trade villages. The trade villages in Binh Duong are both diverse and long-standing. However, the sad truth is that most of the villages are being eroded. Here, we think that Binh Duong province can completely refer to the OTOP project (Project of exploiting traditional handicraft villages to serve tourism) of Thailand tourism: To exploit the skills of traditional craft villages, to create more income, and to solve local labor resources, in 2001, the Government of Thailand launched the OTOP project (One Tambon One Product - One village for one village product). This is a strategic program from the Export Promotion Bureau (DEP)'s initiative, affiliated with the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand. The problem here does not mean that each village has only one product, but each village has its own unique skills, culture, traditions, experiences, etc. that have been crystallized in the product. The Government takes on the task of connecting localities with the world through supporting product standardization, packaging, marketing, and overseas distribution channels. Thailand's Ministry of Commerce's permanent secretary, Karrun Kittysataporn, said: "Sales of OTOP products in 2003 reached 30.8 billion baht, an increase of 13% compared to 2002 and it is expected to reach 40 billion baht in 2004". In order to realize the target, the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand organized a fair in and outside Thailand to market images. The first fair took place in September 2004 with 16 countries attending. At that time, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra attended and delivered a smooth speech in English without any paper, showing the Government's deep interest in the spirit of "Connecting Thai localities to the globe." The main principle of OTOP is to stop at the local level, to be creative and autonomous, to develop human resources. If so, apart from creating outputs for traditional handicrafts, creating jobs for artisans, collecting tourism benefits, it also serves as a basis for preserving the products as well as the meaning for the villages.

Cuisine:

There is a travel expert who said, "One of the important reasons for tourists to return to a land is food." The fact that Vietnam food tourism in recent years has proven that saying is very true.

In the past, Fiditourist organized tours that combine culinary exploration in provinces in Vietnam for foreign visitors on the Lunar New Year. Joining this tour, guests can participate in preparing meals with families and enjoy the food they have prepared. Seizing the increasing demand for tourists to learn how to cook, most recently, Saigon tourist travel agency has officially put into operation a tour across Vietnam combining Vietnamese cuisine exploration. Besides visiting the beautiful sights, relaxing, tourists can learn to cook typical dishes of the three regions of Vietnam. Mr. Truong Hoang Phuong, Deputy Head of Planning - Research and Development of Saigon tourist, who is also the tour designer, said: "When designing tours combining cooking lessons, we must pay attention to learning the specific characteristics of each dish. This is also a very effective way to promote the Vietnamese culinary arts, visitors should be immersed in the living environment of Vietnamese people, living with Vietnamese families, going to the market to choose food and cooked in the traditional Vietnamese style, you can feel the Vietnamese culture through each cooking method and flavor of the food. The program is not only aimed at meeting the needs of visitors, creating opportunities for diversification of tourism products but also extending the length of stay and spending of guests in Vietnam".

Particularly, Binh Duong province has been famous for a long time throughout the region with a variety of specialties such as fruits of Lai Thieu garden, bánh bèo bì (rice cake with pork skin), bún riêu lưỡi (rice noodles with pork tongue), fried sticky rice with roasted chicken. Recently, there has been mangos teen chicken salad, and durian grilled chicken. There are some tourists from Ho Chi Minh City driving all the way to Binh Duong just for a plate of rice cake with pork skin or a bowl of shrimp rice noodles. There some busy businessman going to Binh Duong for work but still manage some time to drop by Bung market for a bowl of crab meat rice noodles or a plate of rice cakes; On the way back to Ho Chi Minh City, they may stop at Lai Thieu garden to buy some special fruits for family members. That is enough to see the special attraction of this region's cuisine. A special feature is that only people in Binh Duong can cook well Binh Duong specialties. Those made at other provinces are not as satisfying. It is this that opens up a good opportunity for designing tours combined with enjoying food or learning how to prepare food as mentioned above.

b. Tourism Promotion

Promotion via national and international travel mart.

Travel marts are one of the best and the most dangerous opportunities for localities to promote their images. If there are careful plans and preparations, the local tourism image will make a good impression on the visitors. On the other hand, if the master plan is not prepared well, serious problems related to the local tourism image may

happen after the event. Currently, not only Binh Duong province but many other provinces in Vietnam still do not really appreciate this opportunity. In order to make great attraction when promoting through travel marts, enterprises need to have good performance in all three stages: the learning and preparation stage; the participation stage; and the after-event stage.

Promotion via mass media:

Broadcasting through the mass media (including television, radio, newspapers ...) is the most traditional means of promotion and this is also one of the most popular methods in marketing. Up to now, Binh Duong tourism industry has not yet been able to effectively make use of these advertising channels both nationally and internationally. Although it is known that it still has limits (especially in terms of cost), it is highly effective. Therefore, we hope that in the coming time, the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism, as well as all tourism units will consider the advantages and disadvantages of advertising via mass media. This is the basic for breakthrough to bring Binh Duong tourism information further.

Promotion via Internet:

Currently, the Internet advertising has gradually prevailed and affirmed the importance in many fields. However, the tourism industry of Vietnam in general and Binh Duong province in particular probably has not made full use of the functions and effectiveness of this type of promotion. There have been plenty of documents and proof for the success of Internet promotion both in Vietnam and all around the world. Not so long ago, Cummins Nitro - an advertising company in Melbourne, Australia started to promote tourism by finding candidates for the position "World's Best Jobs". This creative idea was honored in the 34th One Show in New York - the most prestigious award of the global advertising industry. At a cost of just US \$1 million, its global advertising effectiveness is evaluated at US \$150 million. This highly successful online promotion program has become a valuable lesson for many countries and aroused the thinking of Vietnam's tourism industry (Chau, 2011).

At the seminar "Google - New experience with Vietnamese tourism", many experts realized that online advertising is "the enormous potential of Vietnam tourism". In recent years, Vietnam tourism industry has introduction programs on many traditional media. However, the marketing of Vietnam tourism on the Internet has huge limits and do not optimally exploit the potential of this effective method.

Mr. Chandler Nguyen - CEO of IDM Vietnam, with over 10 years of working experience in the online advertising industry for large corporations like Google, Yahoo, and Baidu, said that "The fact that Vietnam tourism is not familiar with developing online advertising is clearly a weakness. All enterprises will lose a remarkable number of potential customers if they do not make any changes, and

Vietnam's digital marketing industry will also lose opportunities to grow at the same time." He also said that the online survey of IDM company revealed that the market and information demand about the tourism industry via the Internet in Vietnam is considerably large. He cited, the statistical results show that: In the past five years, the amount of demand on searching for online information concerning tourism in Vietnam has increased by more than 32 times. Monthly, there are more than 5 million search queries in Vietnamese about tourism products such as domestic tourism, international tours, hotel reservations, types of travel... and this number can jump up to 8 million in peak months.

Apart from the strength of advertising and the quick spreading, it is obvious that with online tourism advertising plans, enterprises can calculate almost accurately the number of potential customers (with traditional advertising, this number is just an estimation with large errors). Thanks to the personalization and the ability to help viewers interact with the advertising message in a close and sympathetic way, online advertising is clearly the way to save costs for the enterprises. Strictly speaking for tourism, in Vietnam market today, several 3-star hotels or higher standard hotels have invested in the online booking system. This has brought over 40% amount of room booked per month for the enterprises. Many enterprises and organizations in other countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia or Taiwan are effectively exploiting online advertising channels in Vietnam market to get access to Vietnamese customers. Therefore, why do local enterprises which have many favorable conditions not know how to take advantage to boost the value of their services, thereby raising the value of Vietnamese tourism brand?

Through all of the above evidence, it can be concluded that it is the time for the tourism enterprises of Binh Duong, as well as other localities in Vietnam to change their minds and decision on allocating the budget for online advertising such as "pay per click" ads on Google, "search engine optimization" (SEO), social networks, and online banners, to take advantage of the strengths of online marketing, to find new directions for the online tourism industry.

Promotion via oral communication:

There is no advertising method which is as fast, productive, and cost-effective as word of mouth advertising. However, the users have to know how to use it cleverly to achieve that effectiveness. If the false or negative information is transmitted, the consequences will be unpredictable. So (1) Borrowing from other people to "use less energy, achieve more efficiency" is the lesson of Philippine tourism promotion in recent years with the slogan "It's more fun in the Philippines"; (2) Focusing on personal interests: The contents of word of mouth advertising is to take the interests of consumers as the core, then directly or indirectly refer to marketing objectives. An American cookie manufacturer used to offer the "give free cookies to consumers" strategy. It attracted a lot of attention of the customers because free cookies targeted consumers' interest. Since then, the reputation and brand of this bakery company has

increased significantly and the amount of sales has doubled; (3) New and attractive: Any advertising requires new and fascinating contents to attract the consumers' attention. In conclusion, to achieve success in advertising with word of mouth, enterprises should have a careful preparation with all relevant information including the advertising contents, the form of advertising, the target customers, the beginning time, the extended time, the desired advertising goal. At the same time, it is vital to predict the results as well as unexpected situations for setting out the solutions to control as quickly as possible. And the most important thing before starting all of those is that the enterprises have to ensure the quality of their tourism products as promised. Otherwise, it is inevitable to face crises due to the spreading frustration of travelers.

c. Human resource development

Human resource is always considered as the most important factor in any industries or economies. If the service team is not professional, the guides are not enthusiastic and ill-informed, or the community is not friendly and hospitable, it will easily make international travelers put Vietnam into the blacklist of the places where they will not come to or will not return the next time (Khang, 2016). Here, we would like to present some experience in developing human resources of countries with reputation in tourism industry such as Singapore and Thailand.

Thailand:

According to the Thailand Tourism Council's plan, the Thai tourism industry have had a "specialized nursing home" that will serve as a center for human resources, technical assistance and advice for tourism operators since 2004. The aim of this plan was to increase the uniformity and quality of the Thai tourism industry. This "nursing home" will also cooperate with the "Brain Bank" - a unit proposed by the Queen of Thailand which includes experts with the goal of creating a guideline for tourism officials. At the same time, the key officials were collected for training tourism business units. The people who are sent for training are not only public and private managers but also members of non-profit organizations, as well as heads of localities. The highlight of Thailand tourism workforce is the high professionalism, the attentive service attitude, and the attention of business leaders to employees. Officials in tourism industry are also fluent in English. Besides, vocational and foreign language skills are focused to meet the rapid development of the tourism industry at tourism human resources training units such as international tourism colleges. In addition, the promotion of international cooperation activities, learning foreign experience in training human resources is very concerned. The Thailand Tourism Development Strategy to 2021 focuses on developing tourism resources through training and quality promotion to meet international standards. Human resource development efforts should ensure the cooperation of all parties in the public and private sectors to meet the appropriate quality and skills as market demands. This strategy also arouses

Thailand's hospitality through its people's awareness and active cooperation with local communities (Nhung, 2019).

Singapore:

With the view that "Singapore - the world's leading tourist destination needs a world's leading tourism workforce", Tourism Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) - the national qualification program was created to ensure that the people operating in the Singapore tourism industry has always met the criteria. This program focuses more on employee's assessment for practical skills than on academic achievement and qualifications. The program is an attempt by the Singapore tourism industry to help change people's minds about the tourism industry. In addition, the program contributes to strengthening and enhancing the professionalism and clearly outlining the career paths of tourism industry for participants. Funded up to 90% of the tuition fee from the Workforce Development Agency (WDA), the WSQ program is even more feasible. The modules are briefly designed, with about 8 - 16 hours for each one. Depending on individual conditions, workers can study one or several modules, or the entire courses. This is the basic for assessment to get certificates. Experienced workers may be exempt from training but must still go through assessment round to obtain a certificate. Qualified professionals must also be WDA certified. Back to the case of Binh Duong province, as well as the localities in Vietnam, in order to exploit the existing resources as well as its great tourism potential, the tourism industry needs to develop human resources from management to employees with professional, enthusiastic attitude, in-depth knowledge about the expertise as well as the strengths of the local tourism. That would leave a very good impression on the visitors' mind and encourage them to come back for many times. To achieve all of things listed above, Binh Duong and Vietnam tourism industry needs to build a strategy to not only attract external talents but also train and retain local human resources, because they will be the ones who understand and love their hometown the best. Regarding specialization, it is thought that the province should open more tourism professional training schools or associate with prestigious universities in the region where the tourism issues need handling. For example, tourism business management and serving room skills, interior decoration, foreign language (including English and some other common foreign languages). In addition, the quality assessment programs for employees need to be regularly implemented to reward and disciplines. This encourages them to constantly strive to improve their professional skills and ethics.

d. Connection with other cities to introduce new destinations for travelers (Ha, 2019)
To reduce tourism pressure in mega cities, Thailand developed a national strategy called ABC. A (Additional) is a plan to connect the key cities with new places. For an example, visitors can take an-hour car from Chiang Mai to Lamphun and Lampang in the North. Pattaya can connect with Chanthaburi and Trat provinces in the East. In particular, Chanthaburi is considered to be a rich tourist potential province by the

officials, but little known among tourists. There are immense durian and langsat gardens, 110-year-old European-style churches and locally exploited and crafted gems. B (Brand New) is a plan to promote tourism in emerging provinces and cities, such as Buriram in Northeast Thailand, which is rich in Khmer cultural heritage. The last motto in Thailand tourism development strategy is C (Combined), which aims to create a closed connection among the newly exploited localities in tourism. For example, Sukhothai City can be combined with Phitsanulok (both in the North) and the Kamphaeng Phet (in the Northwest). These towns also have the ancient culture, which is suitable to create an inter-tour for those who love to explore historic lands. "We want to promote cultural identity, local history, create jobs, allocate the balance of income from the tourism industry among regions, instead of letting the international tourist flow to famous cities like Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Phuket,..." In addition, if there is no strategy to expand the number of tourists pouring into 22 key tourist cities, Thailand will also have to face overload, which is the cause of many problems such as congestion and environmental pollution,... (speech of Tanes Petsuwan - Deputy Director General of Thailand Tourism - TAT) (Ha, 2019).

The ABC Strategy of Thailand shows that the Department of Tourism of Binh Duong and the Department of Tourism of Ho Chi Minh City as well as Dong Nai and Binh Phuoc should devise strategies to cooperate, exploit and develop sustainable tourism. This will contribute to the increase of the multifaceted value for the localities, including where tourists depart for weekend trips in Binh Duong. In addition to the well-known tourist destinations in the past 10 years, Binh Duong should invest and exploit new products and new locations according to the criteria of weekend tourism, proactively welcome foreign visitors working or living in Ho Chi Minh City.

CONCLUSION

The tourism industry in Vietnam has increasingly proven its important position in the national economy. Tourism is also a strategic element of the national poverty reduction program. It can be seen that tourism also has many other important socio-cultural meanings beside the development in economics. Therefore, the development of tourism industry is also promoting the development of many other sectors at the same time.

From the pros and cons that Vietnam tourism is facing in the context of ASEAN Community, from the status of "weekend tourism" in Binh Duong province, from the references to tourism development strategies and lessons learned from ASEAN countries, we have proposed a number of specific solutions to contribute to making Binh Duong and Vietnam tourism develop in order to welcome many national and international visitors in 2020. Many activities and events will certainly be organized in big cities when Vietnam works as a rotating chair role of ASEAN this year. The solutions focus on the planning of sustainable tourism development; improving

quality of existing products, creating new competitive products based on local strengths and characteristics; developing human resources for tourism, promote tourism products.

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