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Factors Affecting Tourists' Satisfaction with the Ecotourism Destination in Can Gio Commune, Ho Chi Minh City

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KEYWORDS

Can Gio Ecotourism Destination,
Ecotourism,
Destination quality,
Tourist resources,
Tourist Satisfaction.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to analyze the factors influencing tourist satisfaction at ecotourism destinations in Can Gio Commune, Ho Chi Minh City. A qualitative study was conducted to refine the measurement scales. The quantitative study employed a non-probability convenience sampling method with a survey sample of 200 tourists who have previously visited the ecotourism destinations in Can Gio Commune, Ho Chi Minh City. The results indicate that five factors positively affect tourist satisfaction, including: (1) Tourist expectations, (2) Technical facilities, (3) Service costs, (4) Environment and natural resources, and (5) Tourism landscape. The findings reveal that tourist expectations have the greatest positive impact on satisfaction. These results also provide managers with insights into the importance of these factors on tourist satisfaction, enabling them to develop appropriate business strategies. Based on the findings, the authors propose several managerial implications aimed at enhancing tourist satisfaction at these destinations, thereby contributing positively to the sustainable development of the local ecotourism industry.

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and the increasing emphasis on sustainable development, ecotourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing tourism models worldwide. This type of tourism not only meets tourists' needs for experiencing and exploring nature but also contributes to ecosystem conservation, cultural identity preservation, and local economic promotion (Fennell, 2021). Many countries have identified ecotourism as a strategic direction to create competitive advantages in the tourism sector while balancing economic growth and environmental protection.

In Vietnam, tourism is regarded as a "hidden gem" with vast untapped potential, making significant contributions to GDP and creating employment for millions of workers. In recent years, ecotourism has flourished in several localities with distinctive ecosystems, such as Ha Long Bay, Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park, Tram Chim Nature Reserve, and Can Gio Ecotourism Area. Particularly in Can Gio, a UNESCO-recognized biosphere reserve since 2000, which boasts a unique mangrove ecosystem and rich biodiversity, the area is considered a promising destination for sustainable ecotourism development. According to statistics, Can Gio's tourism sector has recorded impressive growth. In 2022, tourism revenue exceeded 8,000 billion VND, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 32.2% during the period 2011–2022. In 2023, the area welcomed over 2 million

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visitors, accounting for about 8.7% of total visitors to Ho Chi Minh City, and was ranked among the city's top 100 most favored tourist destinations (Xuan Nghi, 2024). These figures demonstrate strong development potential and affirm Can Gio's increasingly important role in Ho Chi Minh City's ecotourism strategy. However, rapid growth also poses numerous challenges. Infrastructure, tourism services, and destination management face considerable pressure; overexploitation risks threaten the environment and the quality of tourists' experiences. In this context, tourist satisfaction becomes a crucial metric to maintain and enhance the destination's image, encouraging revisit intentions and positive word-of-mouth (Hall & Gössling, 2006).

Customer satisfaction in general, and tourist satisfaction in particular, is understood as an overall evaluation of a product or service, simultaneously reflecting individual perceptions, emotional responses, and attitudes toward the consumption experience (McDonald & Rundle-Thiele, 2008; Leninkumar, 2017; Rane et al., 2023). This factor is directly influenced by perceived service quality (Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008; Habib et al., 2010) and is also affected by psychological elements such as perceptions of fairness during exchanges or trust in the brand (Chen et al., 2012; Desveaud et al., 2024). Therefore, satisfaction not only reflects the degree to which customer needs are met but also results from the interaction between service quality, actual experience, emotional factors, and trust toward the enterprise or destination. Although some studies have addressed the potential and development orientation of ecotourism in Can Gio, in-depth and systematic research on factors affecting tourist satisfaction remains limited. Most previous works have been qualitative or conducted on narrow scopes, failing to fully capture the relationships among service quality, destination experience, and psychological factors impacting satisfaction. This gap results in a lack of strong scientific evidence to support policy formulation, service quality improvement, and sustainable enhancement of tourist experiences.

Based on practical needs and the aforementioned research gap, this study aims not only to identify the key determinants of tourist satisfaction but also to measure the impact level of each factor. The findings will provide empirical evidence for managers, businesses, and local communities to develop strategies that enhance tourist experiences, increase revisit rates, and spread positive destination images. Consequently, the study contributes to the academic knowledge on ecotourism destination management in Vietnam and supports the realization of Can Gio's goal to become a leading sustainable ecotourism center in Ho Chi Minh City and the country.

2. Theoretical Background and Research Model

2.1. Literature Review on Tourist Satisfaction in Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that relies on natural resources and indigenous culture, with the participation of local communities, aimed at sustainable development (Vietnam Tourism Law, 2017). The international definition by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2015) also emphasizes that ecotourism is a responsible form of travel that respects the environment and host communities, both conserving natural resources and providing meaningful experiences for tourists. From this, three core elements of ecotourism can be identified: (1) dependence on natural resources and indigenous culture, (2) active involvement of local communities, and (3) orientation toward sustainable development.

In recent years, research in Vietnam has increasingly focused on analyzing factors influencing tourist satisfaction at ecotourism destinations, especially in the post-COVID-19 context. Studies conducted in biosphere reserves and protected areas such as Phong Nha – Ke Bang, Ca Mau, and coastal mangrove forests have identified key groups of factors including: (1) destination attractiveness in terms of landscape and biodiversity, (2) service quality and tourism experience, (3) technical infrastructure and amenities, (4) reasonable pricing policies, and (5) local staff service capabilities (Nguyen et al., 2025; Le et al., 2025). The post-COVID-19 context has brought about notable changes in tourist behavior and expectations, characterized by growth in domestic tourism, higher demands for health safety, preferences for less crowded experiences, and expectations for authentic experiential value (Nguyen Hoang Tien et al., 2021; Nguyen Anh Viet, 2023). Research also highlights the growing importance of digital transformation in marketing and destination management, contributing to enhanced tourist experiences and satisfaction (Nguyen Anh Viet, 2023). Particularly, the participation and awareness of local communities in environmental conservation and providing friendly services have been identified as key factors positively impacting tourist experience and the sustainable development of destinations (Nguyen et al., 2025; Le et al., 2025).

Building upon previous studies, this research focuses on assessing tourist satisfaction at the "Can Gio Ecotourism Destination," a distinctive area characterized by rich mangrove ecosystems and active local community involvement.

Can Gio is located in the Southeast of Ho Chi Minh City, approximately 50 kilometers from the city center. It is the city's only island district, featuring a mangrove ecosystem recognized by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve since 2000. Beyond its natural values, Can

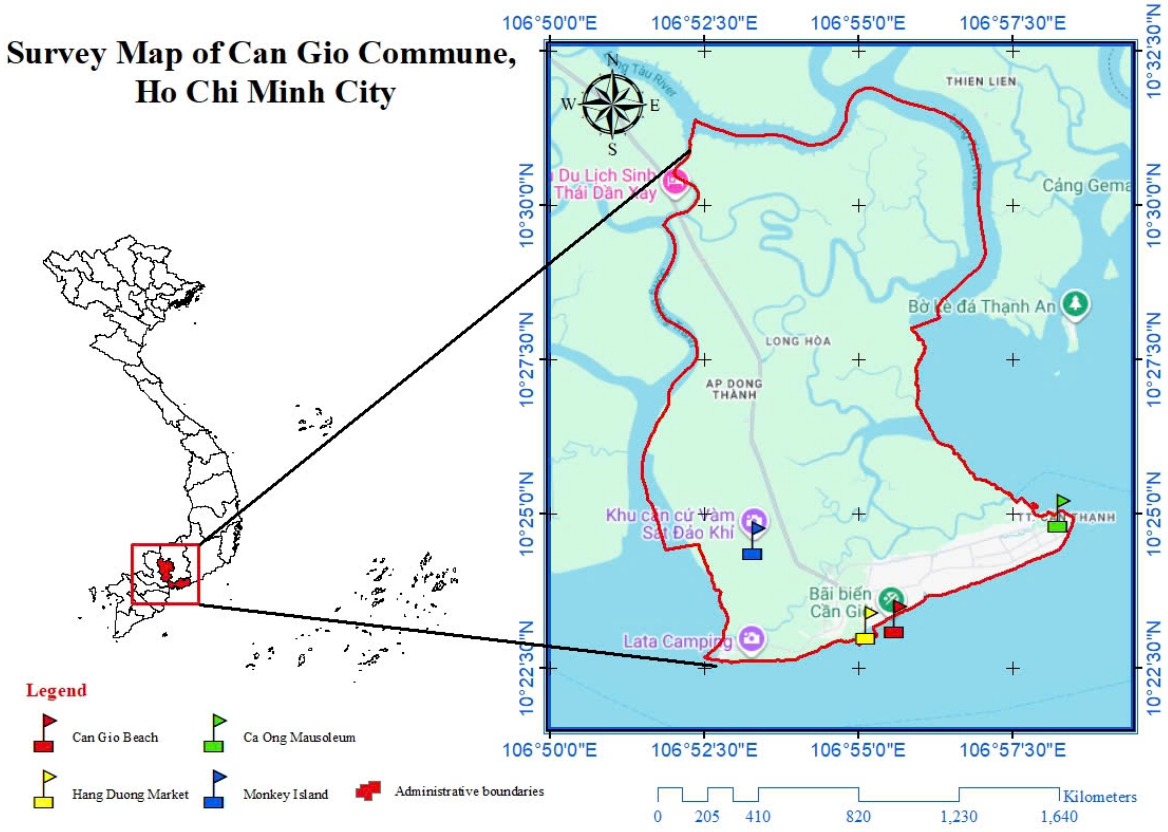


Figure 1. Location of the Study Area

Gio preserves the distinctive cultural heritage of local fishing communities and traditional occupations such as seafood harvesting and salt production. The tourism products offered here are diverse, including mangrove forest tours, coastal tourism, community-based experiences, and local culinary enjoyment. The harmonious combination of nature and culture creates a unique attraction, providing strong potential for sustainable development.

The objective of this study is to analyze the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in Can Gio and to propose appropriate management solutions to promote the sustainable development of ecotourism in the area.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), is one of the most widely used tools for measuring service quality. It is based on the gap between customer expectations and their actual perceptions following service experience. In the context of examining tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune, the SERVQUAL model has been adapted to fit the specific characteristics of local tourism. Here, factors such as tourism facilities and infrastructure, environment and natural resources, service cost, and tourism landscape are considered concrete dimensions of service quality. Applying this model helps clarify the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction with ecotourism destinations.

The Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), developed by Oliver (1980), explains the formation of customer satisfaction through a comparison between initial expectations and actual perceptions after experiencing a product or service. According to ECT, satisfaction depends on the value tourists expect to receive from various factors such as cost, landscape, environment, and infrastructure. When these expectations are met or exceeded, perceived value increases, thereby enhancing satisfaction.

2.3. Proposed research model and hypothesis

Expectations refer to customers' beliefs or predictions regarding the extent to which a product or service will meet their needs and desires prior to the experience (Oliver, 1980). According to expectation confirmation theory, when actual experience meets or exceeds expectations, customers perceive higher quality and increased satisfaction (Fornell et al., 1996; Tian et al., 2025). In tourism, expectations are often associated with service quality, facilities, environment, and overall experience. Numerous studies have

demonstrated a positive relationship between expectations and satisfaction (Rao et al., 2025), particularly at ecotourism destinations where visitors anticipate pristine environments, friendly services, and distinctive experiences. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Tourist expectation has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune.

Technical facilities in tourism encompass the entire infrastructure and amenities that support visitors' activities such as sightseeing, accommodation, and transportation. These include transportation systems, lodging establishments, and public utilities such as restrooms, signage, and rest areas. When tourism infrastructure is adequately invested in, well connected, and harmoniously designed with the natural environment, tourists can easily access attractions, move conveniently, and feel secure, thereby enhancing their overall experience and satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2022). Research by Blazeska et al. (2018) indicates that infrastructure is one of the factors that positively and significantly influences tourist satisfaction at destinations. In Can Gio, empirical studies have shown that infrastructure limitations such as inconvenient transportation, unclear signage, and lack of public amenities have reduced tourists' positive evaluations. This evidence suggests that improving technical facilities not only enhances the experience but also directly increases tourist satisfaction.

H2. Tourism facilities and infrastructure have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune.

Tourism service costs reflect the expenses tourists pay for services such as food and beverage, accommodation, sightseeing, transportation, and shopping. When prices are perceived as reasonable and commensurate with the quality received, tourists tend to perceive greater value and exhibit higher satisfaction (Hoang, 2015; Dang, 2015). Research by Rasoolimanesh et al. (2016) indicates that perceived value, including reasonable pricing, is a crucial factor driving tourist satisfaction. Similarly, Carvache-Franco et al. (2022) found that economic value and functional value are the most important predictors of satisfaction. In Can Gio District, tourists are often urban residents seeking nature-based experiences at affordable prices. Therefore, controlling the prices of services such as sightseeing, dining, accommodation, and souvenirs plays an important role in enhancing overall satisfaction. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. Service cost has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune.

The natural environment is a critical factor that creates the appeal of ecotourism. Fennell (2021) emphasizes that immersion in pristine nature, enjoyment of biodiversity, and fresh air form the foundation of this tourism type. When tourists experience attractive natural landscapes, rich ecosystems, and clean environments, they feel more excited and satisfied. Research by Tribe and Snaith (1998) also indicates that positive perceptions of the natural environment significantly affect tourist satisfaction in ecotourism. More recent studies conducted in the Sundarbans mangrove forest confirm that environmental values positively influence both satisfaction and loyalty among visitors to the mangrove ecosystem (Sahabuddin et al., 2024). In Can Gio Commune, a UNESCO biosphere reserve, the pristine mangrove ecosystem and distinctive natural beauty represent major advantages for creating satisfying experiences for tourists. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. Environment and natural resources have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune.

Tourism landscape is one of the first factors to create impressions and shape tourists' emotions upon arriving at a destination, especially in ecotourism. This concept includes not only natural beauty such as rivers, mangrove forests, and beaches but also the harmony between humans and nature, the aesthetics of the environment, and the level of area primitiveness. Empirical studies show that attributes such as scenery, harmony, and authenticity of the landscape significantly influence tourists' satisfaction and loyalty (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018; Chen & Cheung, 2025). Additionally, other research confirms that tourists often highly value destinations with attractive, nature-friendly, and well-preserved landscapes, thereby enhancing satisfaction and revisit intentions (Bui & Nguyen, 2021; Kim & Perdue, 2011). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. Tourism landscape has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune.

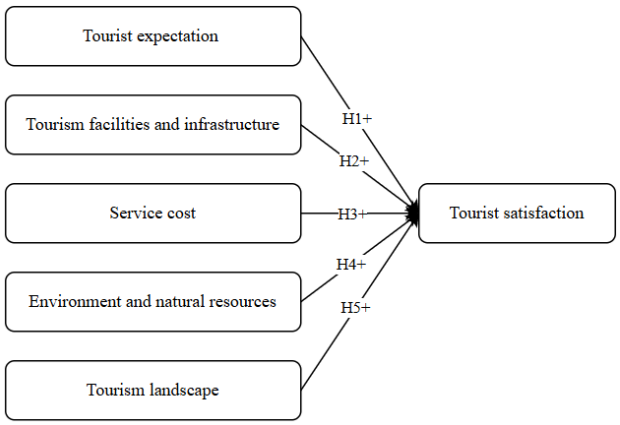
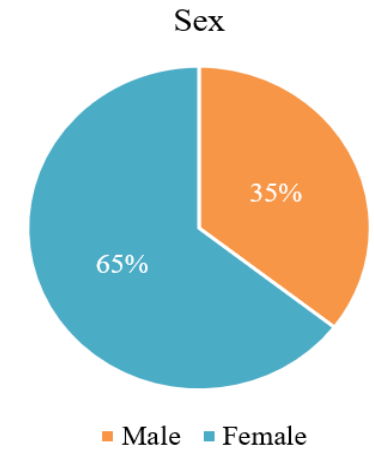


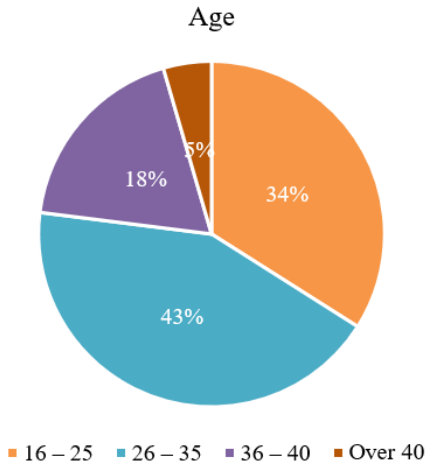
Figure 2. Proposed Research Model

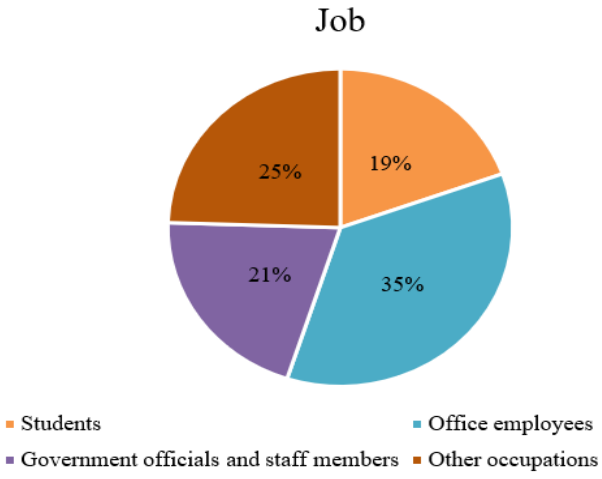
3. Methodology

3.1. Sample Size and Sampling Method

The target population of this study comprises tourists who have previously visited the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune. A non-probability, convenience sampling method was employed. The minimum sample size was determined based on the requirements of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). According to the recommendation by Hair et al. (1998), to conduct EFA, the sample size should be at least five times the number of observed variables. With 23 observed variables, the minimum required sample size is 115. To mitigate potential errors and ensure reliability, the study was conducted with a sample of 200 respondents.







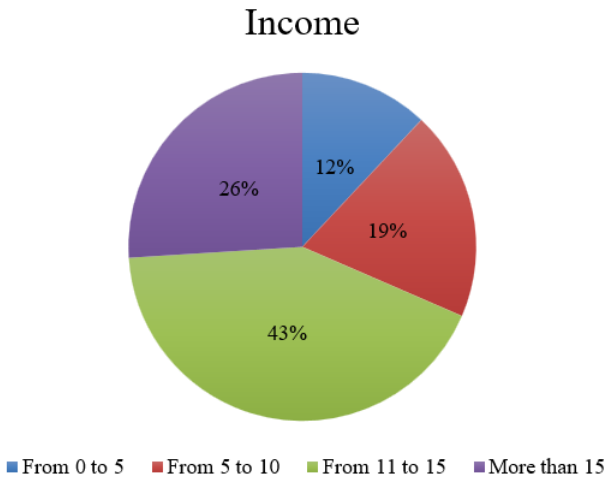


Figure 3. Characteristics of the Survey Sample

3.2. Questionnaire Design

In this study, measurement scales for the factors were adopted from previous research and refined through a qualitative phase. The authors conducted focus group discussions with five experts in the tourism field, including destination managers, academic lecturers, and officials from government management agencies. The experts were selected based on criteria of having at least five years of experience and a thorough understanding of ecotourism activities in Can Gio. During the discussions, each questionnaire item was reviewed for clarity, relevance to the local context, and the ability to accurately measure the research constructs. Some terms were modified for better comprehension by respondents, and overlapping or difficult-to-apply observed variables were removed. As a result, the final scale comprised 23 observed variables, measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 1. Measurement Scales

Code	Measurement	Source
	Tourist expectation	
TE1	I expect the overall quality of the destination to meet my needs for relaxation and exploration	Fornell et al. (1996); Nguyen Van Anh and Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao (2019)
TE2	I expect the destination to provide types of services that suit my personal preferences and needs	
TE3	I expect the service system at the destination to operate stably and reliably	
	Tourism facilities and infrastructure	
TFI1	The dining facilities at the destination are well-equipped, clean, and convenient	Phan et al. (2022)
TFI2	The accommodation facilities at the destination provide good amenities and comfort for tourists	
TFI3	The destination has many easily accessible souvenir shops with local specialties	
TFI4	Tourists can easily access information about the destination (guides, signboards, support centers, etc.)	
	Service cost	
SC1	Transportation costs to and within the destination are reasonable	Nguyen et al. (2022)
SC2	Accommodation costs at the destination are appropriate for the quality of services provided	
SC3	Food and beverage costs at the destination are reasonable and reflect the quality of the dishes	
SC4	Prices of souvenirs and local specialties at the destination are reasonable and reflect their actual value	
SC5	Prices of essential goods at the destination are suitable for tourists' spending capacity	
	Environment and natural resources	
ENR1	Natural resources at the destination remain relatively untouched and have not been overexploited	Bui and Nguyen (2021); Nguyen et al. (2022)
ENR2	The air at the destination is fresh, pleasant, and suitable for leisure tourism	
ENR3	Freshwater sources at the destination adequately meet the needs of daily use and tourist services	
ENR4	The destination offers a variety of unique local specialties that are easy to find and worth trying	
	Tourism landscape	
TL1	The beaches at the destination have beautiful landscapes and are suitable for leisure tourism	Nguyen et al. (2022)
TL2	The mangrove forest ecosystem at the destination is diverse, attractive, and worth experiencing	
TL3	The destination has religious and spiritual sites with cultural significance that attract visitors	
TL4	The destination features unique cultural and historical landmarks with educational value	
	Tourist satisfaction	
TS1	I am satisfied with the overall quality of services at the destination	Fornell et al. (1996); Nguyen Van Anh and Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao (2019)
TS2	I feel comfortable and satisfied with my tourism experience at the destination	
TS3	Choosing this destination was the right decision for me	

3.3. Data Analysis

The data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 27. The analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and multiple linear regression analysis.

The multiple linear regression equation of the research model is expressed as follows:

$$TS = B_0 + B_1TE + B_2TFI + B_3SC + B_4ENR + B_5TL + Ɛ \quad (1)$$

Where:

- TS: Dependent variable, measured by tourist satisfaction with the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune.
- B_0: Constant term.
- B_i (i = 1…5): Regression coefficients of the corresponding independent variables.
- TE, TFI, SC, ENR, TL: Sets of independent variables representing Tourist Expectations, Tourism Facilities and Infrastructure, Service Cost, Environment and Natural Resources, and Tourism Landscape, respectively.
- Ɛ: Error term.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1. Reliability Testing of Measurement Scales

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. As shown in Table 2, all Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.7, and all item-total correlations exceed 0.5. These results indicate that the measurement scales for the observed variables meet the required standards for internal consistency and reliability.

Table 2. Results of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis

No.	Code	Corrected Item – Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
		Tourist expectation		
1	TE1	0.717	0.819	
2	TE2	0.750	0.787	0.859
3	TE3	0.736	0.800	
		Tourism facilities and infrastructure		
4	TFI1	0.821	0.912	
5	TFI2	0.823	0.911	0.929
6	TFI3	0.846	0.904	
7	TFI4	0.847	0.903	
		Service cost		
8	SC1	0.796	0.899	
9	SC2	0.789	0.901	
10	SC3	0.774	0.904	0.919
11	SC4	0.810	0.896	
12	SC5	0.781	0.902	
		Environment and natural resources		
13	ENR1	0.721	0.856	
14	ENR2	0.761	0.839	0.881
15	ENR3	0.728	0.853	
16	ENR4	0.761	0.840	
		Tourism landscape		
17	TL1	0.755	0.878	
18	TL2	0.789	0.866	0.900
19	TL3	0.779	0.869	
20	TL4	0.782	0.869	
		Tourist satisfaction		
21	TS1	0.640	0.781	
22	TS2	0.675	0.745	0.818
23	TS3	0.698	0.722	

4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The EFA results for the independent variables are as follows: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is 0.850, which is greater than the minimum threshold of 0.5, indicating that the data are suitable for factor analysis. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.01), suggesting that the variables are correlated and appropriate for factor extraction. The total variance explained is 77.645%, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 50%, meaning that 77.645% of the variation in the factors is explained by the observed variables.

Table 3. EFA Results for Independent Variables

Code	1	2	3	4	5
SC4	0.865				
SC1	0.865				
SC2	0.861				
SC5	0.830				
SC3	0.814				
TFI3		0.913			
TFI4		0.912			
TFI1		0.893			
TFI2		0.888			
TL4			0.884		
TL2			0.874		
TL3			0.868		
TL1			0.853		
ENR4				0.835	
ENR2				0.826	
ENR1				0.825	
ENR3				0.809	
TE1					0.857
TE2					0.849
TE3					0.839
KMO	0.850				
Sig.	0.000				
Eigenvalue	1.315				
Total variance explained	77.645				

The EFA results for the "Tourist Satisfaction" factor show that the KMO coefficient is 0.737 (greater than 0.5), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000), indicating the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The explained variance is 78.702%, and all factor loadings are greater than 0.5, confirming the convergent validity of the observed variables. Thus, the measurement scale for the "Tourist Satisfaction" factor demonstrates the characteristics of a unidimensional construct.

Table 4. EFA Results for the Dependent Variable

Code	Factor Loading
TS3	0.894
TS2	0.888
TS1	0.880

4.3. Pearson Correlation Analysis

To determine whether variables are correlated, the Sig. value is examined. If Sig. < 0.05, it indicates a statistically significant correlation between the variables. Based on the correlation matrix, the dependent variable TS is found to be correlated with all five independent variables.

4.4. Regression Analysis Results

The regression analysis (Table 6) yielded an adjusted R^2 of 0.585, indicating that the five independent variables included in the regression explain 58.5% of the variance in the dependent variable, while the remaining 41.5% is attributed to variables outside the model and random error. The ANOVA analysis and F-test results show a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, meeting the required threshold. This confirms that the linear regression model fits the collected research data well. All variance inflation factor (VIF) values are below 2, indicating that multicollinearity among the independent variables is not severe. Based on the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.308, which is close to 2, there is no evidence of first-order autocorrelation.

Table 5. Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis

(N= 200)

		TS	SC	TFI	ENR	TL	CE
TS	Pearson Correlation	1	0.555**	0.285**	0.525**	0.180*	0.569**
	Sig.		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.000
SC	Pearson Correlation	0.555**	1	0.201**	0.335**	0.217**	0.175*
	Sig	0.000		0.004	0.000	0.002	0.013
TFI	Pearson Correlation	0.285**	0.201**	1	0.081	0.008	0.154*
	Sig.	0.000	0.004		0.253	0.912	0.030
ENR	Pearson Correlation	0.525**	0.335**	0.081	1	-0.064	0.458**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.253		0.366	0.000
TL	Pearson Correlation	0.180*	0.217**	0.008	-0.064	1	-0.004
	Sig.	0.011	0.002	0.912	0.366		0.960
CE	Pearson Correlation	0.569**	0.175*	0.154*	0.458**	-0.004	1
	Sig.	0.000	0.013	0.030	0.000	0.960	

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6. Results of Regression Analysis for the Research Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	VIF
Constant	-0.313		-1.062	0.290		
SC	0.348	0.360	7.056	0.000	0.802	1.247
TFI	0.111	0.135	2.866	0.005	0.942	1.062
ENR	0.232	0.226	4.160	0.000	0.707	1.415
TL	0.118	0.116	2.458	0.015	0.930	1.075
TE	0.381	0.382	7.365	0.000	0.776	1.289
Additional Regression Statistics						
R^2	0.595					
Adjusted R^2	0.585					
F-statistic (Sig.)	0.000					
Durbin-Watson	1.308					

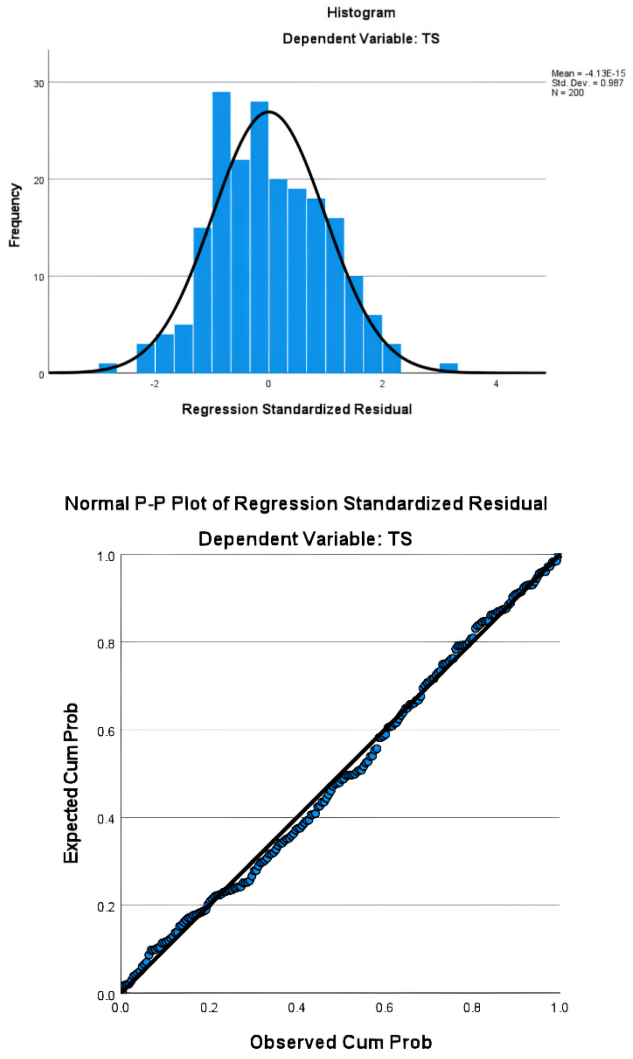


Figure 4. Histogram and P-P Plot for Testing the Normality Assumption of Regression Residuals

The histogram and P-P plot of the standardized residuals indicate that the residuals of the regression model tend to follow a normal distribution. Specifically, the histogram shows the residuals are approximately symmetrically distributed around the mean, resembling a normal distribution. Meanwhile, the P-P plot demonstrates that the data points lie closely along the ideal diagonal line, especially in the central region. Although there are a few slight deviations at both ends, these are negligible and do not significantly affect the assumption. Therefore, it can be concluded that the normality assumption of the residuals in the regression model is satisfied.

The standardized regression equation using Beta coefficients at the 5% significance level (95% confidence level) is presented as follows:

$$TS = 0.382*TE + 0.135*TFI + 0.360*SC + 0.226*ENR + 0.116*TL \quad (2)$$

Based on the results of the regression analysis, the hypothesis testing outcomes of the research model are presented in Table 7.

4.5. Discussion

Hypothesis H1 is accepted, indicating that tourists' expectations have a positive impact on satisfaction at the ecotourism destination in Can Gio Commune. This result aligns with Fornell et al. (1996) and Tian et al. (2025), reinforcing the argument that when actual experiences meet or exceed initial expectations, satisfaction increases. However, compared to previous studies that focused mainly on urban or high-end resort tourism contexts, this study shows that the role of expectations remains prominent even in ecotourism environments, where products are primarily characterized by natural elements and exploratory experiences. This suggests that managing expectations through destination communication is a key factor, not only for Can Gio tourism but also for ecotourism more broadly.

Similarly, hypothesis H2 is also accepted at the 5% significance level. This confirms the important role of factors such as accommodation facilities, restaurants, shops, and information and guidance systems in enhancing tourists' experiences. When infrastructure is invested in a coordinated manner, equipped with adequate amenities, and easily accessible, tourists feel more comfortable and secure throughout their journey, thereby increasing overall satisfaction.

The research findings indicate that service cost has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction at the

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Results of the Research Model

Hypothesis		Expectation	Regression Sign	Beta Coefficient	Sig.	Accept
H1	TE →TS	Positive	+	0.382	0.000	Yes
H2	TFI →TS	Positive	+	0.135	0.005	Yes
H3	SC →TS	Positive	+	0.360	0.000	Yes
H4	ENR →TS	Positive	+	0.226	0.000	Yes
H5	TL →TS	Positive	+	0.116	0.015	Yes

eco-tourism destination in Can Gio Commune (H3). This suggests that when tourists perceive the prices of services as reasonable and commensurate with the quality of their experience, they are more likely to evaluate the destination positively. Reasonable costs not only create a sense of "value for money" but also help strengthen tourists' trust and overall satisfaction. This result is consistent with previous studies (Hoang, 2015; Dang, 2015), which emphasize the role of perceived value in shaping tourist satisfaction.

Finally, the results show that the natural environment and resources (H4) as well as the tourism landscape (H5) both have positive impacts on tourist satisfaction. This clarifies the core role of natural factors in creating positive experiences for visitors (Bui & Nguyen, 2021; Tribe & Snaith, 1998; Kim & Perdue, 2011), especially in the context of ecotourism, where the beauty of landscapes, mangrove ecosystems, fresh air, and the pristine nature are the key attractions. When the environment is well conserved, the landscape is harmoniously preserved and reasonably utilized, tourists not only perceive aesthetic value but also recognize the commitment to sustainable development of the destination. Consequently, satisfaction levels increase, contributing to higher revisit intentions and the promotion of a positive image of Can Gio tourism.

This study not only reinforces conclusions previously validated in the international context but also clarifies the differences in the impact levels of each factor within the specific conditions of Can Gio. This contributes to expanding the theoretical foundation of tourist satisfaction in ecotourism, particularly in peri-urban areas where conservation pressures and economic development coexist.

5. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to analyze the factors influencing tourist satisfaction at the eco-tourism destination in Can Gio Commune. The research findings reveal that five key factors affect tourist satisfaction, including: (1) Tourist expectations, (2) Tourism facilities and infrastructure, (3) Service cost, (4) Environment and natural resources, and (5) Tourism landscape. All of these factors were found to have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction. Among them, tourist expectations had the strongest influence on overall satisfaction with the eco-tourism destination in Can Gio.

Based on the findings, the study proposes several managerial and policy implications as follows:

First, the results reveal that tourist expectations have the strongest positive influence on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.382$) at the eco-tourism destination in Can Gio Commune. Therefore, local tourism authorities and service providers should prioritize transparent, clear, and consistent communication across official platforms to ensure alignment between tourist expectations and actual experiences. In addition, it is essential to design and develop tourism products that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of tourists to enhance satisfaction. A regular feedback mechanism should be implemented to monitor changes in tourist expectations. In addition, frontline staff should be trained to enhance their responsiveness and problem-solving skills. These efforts will help create a more positive and satisfying tourism experience.

Second, service cost was found to be the second most influential factor affecting tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.360$) in eco-tourism in Can Gio. To improve satisfaction, managers should establish reasonable, transparent, and value-aligned pricing strategies based on tourists' needs and payment capabilities, especially among the budget-conscious segment. Conducting market research and benchmarking against similar destinations can help set competitive pricing that offers good perceived value. Additionally, clearly displaying service prices is crucial to building trust and supporting tourists with limited budgets. It is also recommended to implement discount programs for large groups, students, children, and visitors during holidays to attract more tourists and enhance the destination's reputation.

Third, environment and natural resources were the third most influential factor affecting tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.226$) in eco-tourism in Can Gio. With the district's advantages in mangrove ecosystems, beaches, and river networks, preserving and enhancing these natural assets is a prerequisite for maintaining the destination's appeal. Destination managers should implement effective environmental protection measures while expanding eco-friendly spaces for tourism activities. Additionally, leveraging local cultural values can help integrate natural and human elements, creating unique, authentic tourism products that offer richer and more meaningful experiences for visitors.

Fourth, tourism facilities and infrastructure have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction. Therefore, local authorities and tourism businesses should focus on improving key components such as: clean and well-equipped dining facilities, comfortable accommodations, distinctive souvenir shops, and clear information provision through signage systems and visitor support services. Consistent investment and effective maintenance of these elements will help enhance the overall visitor experience, increase satisfaction, and encourage repeat visits.

Finally, the research findings indicate that tourism landscape has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction at the eco-tourism destination in Can Gio Commune. This implies that local authorities and tourism businesses should place greater emphasis on preserving and enhancing the natural landscape values of the area, including mangrove forests, waterways, beaches, and other distinctive ecosystems. Maintaining a green,

clean, and visually appealing environment, minimizing environmentally disruptive construction, and ensuring a harmonious balance between infrastructure development and landscape conservation will enhance both the visual experience and emotional connection of tourists. Moreover, it is important to promote nature-based tourism activities such as boat tours, birdwatching, and mangrove forest exploration to fully utilize the existing landscape potential and further improve tourist satisfaction.

Although this study has achieved some positive results, several limitations should be noted: (1) Due to the relatively short duration of the research, the sample size collected was limited, resulting in a representativeness level that is not sufficiently high. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling in this study may lead to bias in the results and limit the generalizability to other tourist groups in the research area. (2) Although the statistical analyses met reliability and validity requirements, this study focused only on certain specific factors affecting tourist satisfaction, while in reality, many other factors outside the research model may also play important roles. (3) The study did not consider control variables such as age, income, or visit frequency, which could significantly impact satisfaction levels. (4) The study did not apply structural equation modeling (SEM) to simultaneously test complex relationships among latent variables, mediators, and observed variables, limiting the ability to explore deeper mechanisms of factor interactions. Based on these limitations, future research could expand the sample size, apply stratified or cluster random sampling methods to increase representativeness, integrate important control variables, and include other factors such as word-of-mouth, risk perception, pre-trip expectations, or perceived value. Moreover, employing SEM would allow for a more comprehensive model test, thereby providing deeper and more generalized insights into the factors influencing tourist satisfaction at ecotourism destinations.

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