

THE EFFECTS OF PERSONAL VALUES, TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS, AND TOURISTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DESTINATION ON DECISION-MAKING ON CHOOSING A DESTINATION: A STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS TO LONG XUYEN QUADRANGLE OF MEKONG DELTA

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Abstract

Tourist activities when visiting a destination are significantly related to personal values. Through personal values, it is possible to predict activity participation during a tourist's trip or destination choice. This study is to examine the relationship between personal values, tourists' attitudes toward the destination and travel motivation and international tourists' decision-making on choosing a destination in the context of the Long Xuyen Quadrangle of the Mekong Delta. A quantitative study was conducted and data were collected from 220 international visitors using a convenience sampling method. Structural equation modeling with partial least squares approach (PLS-SEM) was used to test the research hypotheses. The findings show that personal values, tourists' attitudes toward the destination and travel motivations have a positive influence on international tourists' decision-making on choosing a destination. Besides, the findings revealed that tourist attitudes toward the destination and travel motivation are intermediate variables in the relationship between personal values and international tourists' decision-making on choosing a destination. The findings of this study provide useful insights for destination managers about the influence of personal values related to tourists' attitudes toward the destination and travel motivation, which increases the certainty in the international tourists' decision-making on choosing a destination.

Keywords: *personal values, decision-making choosing a destination, international tourist, Mekong Delta.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has significantly contributed to the development of countries by boosting economic growth, increasing per capita income, reducing unemployment rates, and generating foreign exchange earnings. Studies show that tourism plays a crucial role in promoting economic growth (Chioma, 2023), with its positive impact on government revenues through taxes and direct levies on tourists (Raja & Venkateswaran, 2022). Therefore, the tourism industry's multifaceted contributions make it a vital component of a country's economic development strategy.

Attracting international visitors to a destination holds significant economic and perceptual importance. International tourists contribute substantially to a country's economy through foreign exchange earnings, tax revenue, job creation, and business opportunities (Omo-Obas & Anning-Dorson, 2023). The perception of a destination by international visitors is crucial, as it influences their overall satisfaction, willingness to recommend the destination, and likelihood of returning (De Klerk & Haarhoff, 2019; Mwesiumo & Abdalla, 2023). Factors such as destination attractiveness, satisfaction, attachment, and trust play key roles in shaping visitors' loyalty and their decision to revisit a destination (Lv et al., 2023). Moreover, marketing efforts emphasizing epistemic value, overall satisfaction, and safety are essential in attracting international visitors post-pandemic (Din et al., 2017). Therefore, attracting international visitors not only boosts economic growth but also enhances the destination's image and appeal, leading to sustained tourism success.

It is crucial to consider the factors influencing international tourists' destination choices to attract them effectively. Understanding tourists' decision-making processes plays a vital role in tourism management (Noubari & Wörndl, 2023). Factors like pulling and pushing motivation significantly impact tourists' destination choices (Tran et al., 2021). By analyzing these factors, tourism stakeholders can tailor marketing strategies, infrastructure development, and destination offerings to meet tourists' preferences, enhance their

experience, and ultimately increase tourist influx, benefiting the economy and tourism sector of the destination country. Push factors significantly influence international tourists' destination choices. These factors, such as social norms, cultural values, and personal preferences, act as deterrents to domestic tourism, making international destinations more appealing (Rosli et al., 2022). Additionally, push factors like the need for rest, relaxation, safety, and high-quality service play a crucial role in motivating tourists to travel (Madkhali et al., 2023; Soldatenko et al., 2023; Tojib et al., 2022). Understanding and addressing these push factors are essential for destination marketers to effectively attract and retain international tourists.

The Long Xuyen Quadrangle (LXQ) of Mekong Delta is a diverse tourist destination with rich natural landscapes and cultural diversity. LXQ features a variety of terrains including alluvial soil, hills, brackish areas, and coastal zones, blending rivers, mountains, forests, seas, and untouched islands to create a unique and appealing landscape. Moreover, LXQ is a cultural melting pot of various ethnic groups with distinctive traditions such as the Kinh, Cham, and Chinese ethnic groups. However, LXQ faces numerous environmental and tourism development challenges, including similar tourism products and a lack of regional coordination, resulting in difficulties attracting international tourists. To address this issue, research is needed on the factors influencing international tourists' destination choices. Studies on factors driving destination selection behavior will provide essential insights into the determinants of tourist destination choices, thereby enhancing the attractiveness and sustainable development of tourism in LXQ.

Personal values play a significant role in predicting destination choices for tourists. Studies have shown that personal values influence the overall image of coastal tourism destinations, impacting tourists' decisions (de Lima Pereira et al., 2021). Additionally, research has explored how personal consumption values can predict responsible environmental behavior, ultimately influencing destination choices, particularly in ecotourism settings (Phan et al., 2022). Furthermore, investigations into stopover destinations during long-haul travel have highlighted the salience of personal values in consumer decision-making processes (Abdullah et al., 2019). These findings collectively suggest that personal values are indeed possible to predict destination choices, emphasizing the importance of understanding individuals' values and beliefs when analyzing tourist behavior and preferences. The research gap on the factors Personal Values influence on Destination selection decisions lies in the varying instruments used to predict travel preferences and destination choices. Plog's travel behavior inventory was initially proposed for this purpose (Kotsi & Pike, 2021), but subsequent studies found it to be U.S.-specific and not universally predictive (Artal-Tur et al., 2019).

Understanding the linkages between personal values and place identity impact tourist' perceptions of sustainability of destinations . This highlights the need for further research to establish more robust and universally applicable models for understanding how personal values influence destination selection decisions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Decision-making on choosing a destination

The decision to choose a tourist destination is to make the final decision of the tourist about the choice of destination among the set of destinations that suit the needs of available alternative tourists that have been explored for the vacation (Hwang & Kim, 2007). The decision-making on choosing a destination is considered an important, complex and contextual decision. Destination characteristics and destination image are important factors that influence the decision to choose a destination of international and domestic tourists (VG et al., 2021; Zeleke & Biwota, 2020). The main motivation that motivates them to decide to choose a destination is to escape, relax, rest, and seek novelty (Yousefi & Marzuki, 2015). Decoding the decision to choose a destination is a complex model (Wang & Chen, 2014). Travel motivation and destination attributes explain why tourists choose a travel destination for their trip (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004). There are some differences in the destination choice decisions of international and domestic tourists. For international tourists they are motivated by many cultural and historical attractions (Sangpikul, 2008) and cleanliness, safety, accessibility, outdoor tourism activities and sunny weather. They are the things international visitors care about when deciding on a destination (Jang & Cai, 2002). Factors influencing destination choice decisions are a popular research topic in the tourism literature. Many studies have

discussed the role of Push & Pull factors in destination choice decisions in different contexts (Hasan et al., 2021; Pawaskar & Goel, 2016; Trivedi & Roza, 2019; VG et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022; Xinh, 2023; Zeleke & Biwota, 2020). However, studies are scarce in examining the structural relationship of personal values with travel motivations, tourist attitudes, and destination choice decisions of international tourists. The research paper addresses the gap in understanding how personal values influence destination selection decisions through the mediating roles of travel motivations, and tourists' attitudes toward the destination.

2.2. Personal values

Personal values play a significant role in influencing destination choice decision-making (de Lima Pereira et al., 2021; Kotsi & Pike, 2021). Tourists tend to prioritize destinations that align with their personal values, which can impact their overall perception of a destination (Ye et al., 2020). The relationship between personal values and destination choice is crucial, as tourists seek experiences that resonate with their core beliefs and preferences (Permana Budi et al., 2022). Studies have highlighted the importance of understanding tourists' values in shaping marketing strategies for tourism destinations (Phan et al., 2022).

Current research projects on personal values in the context of tourism encompass various aspects. Studies delve into tourists' satisfaction and loyalty concerning cultural heritages like Confucius Temple, emphasizing the impact of individual values and motivations (Guan et al., 2023). Additionally, research explores how personal values influence female solo travel behavior, highlighting the significance of internal values in shaping travel intentions (Teng et al., 2023). Moreover, investigations focus on pro-environmental behaviors among tourists, revealing the influence of personal values on environmentally conscious actions, with spatial attachment theory playing a moderating role (Hoshyar et al., 2022). Furthermore, there is a conceptual exploration of the relationship between cultural value orientations, personal value systems, and pro-environmental behavior in the hospitality and tourism sector (Lee et al., 2022). Lastly, studies address the discrepancy between ethical concerns and behaviors in tourism, particularly among German consumers, by examining how personal values impact vacation motivations and choices (Sahm, 2022). Based on the discussion of the literatures, the author proposes the following research hypothesis is made:

H1a. Personal values positively influences Decision-making on choosing a destination

Personal values play a crucial role in shaping travel motivations and attitudes. Studies have shown that personal internal values significantly impact female solo travel motivation, influencing travel intentions positively (Teng et al., 2023). Additionally, values have been found to influence social media use during travel among Generation Z, with community and materialistic values playing a significant role in determining social media behavior (Chang et al., 2023). Furthermore, tourists' personal values have been linked to spiritual tourism, where personal value, internal motivation, transcendence, and behavioral intention show positive relationships with engaging in spiritual tourism experiences (Zheng et al., 2024). Moreover, values have been identified as key influencers in travel mode choice behavior, affecting attitudes towards different travel options and ultimately impacting modal choices (Zheng et al., 2024). These findings collectively highlight the profound impact of personal values on travel motivations and attitudes across various travel contexts. Based on the discussion of the literatures, the author proposes the following research hypothesis is made:

H1b. Personal values positively influence tourists' attitudes toward the destination.

H1c. Personal values positively influence travel motivation.

2.3. Tourists' attitudes toward the destination

Attitude plays a significant role in decision-making processes. Research indicates that consumers' attitudes influence their decisions by reflecting their feelings and confidence towards a product or service (Manggu & Beni, 2022). Moreover, attitudes are highlighted as crucial in human decision-making processes, intertwined with motives and influencing choices (Manggu & Beni, 2022). Recent research has delved into the complexities of tourist attitudes towards destination choices. Studies have highlighted that attitudes alone may not always effectively drive behavioral change (Dolnicar & Demeter, 2024; Manggu & Beni, 2022). The results of many studies show that destination image, travel motivation, and tourist attitude toward the destination are important factors and have a positive influence on international tourists' decision-

making on choosing a destination (Bayramov, 2022; Choirisa et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2019). Based on the discussion of the literatures, the author proposes the following research hypothesis is made:

H2. *Tourists' attitudes toward the destination positively influences Decision-making on choosing a destination*

2.4. Travel motivation

Travel motive refers to the reasons why individuals choose to travel to different destinations. These motives can be driven by different forces, including push motives like relaxation and escape, and pull motives like novelty-seeking and engaging (Galindo, 2014). Understanding and catering to travelers' motivations are essential for destination marketers to effectively attract and retain international tourists. Studies have shown that tourists' decisions are influenced by various factors and Travel motivations significantly impact international tourists' destination choices (Satar et al., 2023; Soldatenko et al., 2023). Additionally, the push-pull theory plays a crucial role in understanding tourists' pre-trip motivations, preferences for destination attributes, and evaluation of destination choice criteria (Azeez, 2022). Furthermore, the perceived fit between travel motivations and destination image, along with the support of the destination community, positively influences the intention to choose a new destination, highlighting the importance of aligning tourists' motivations with the destination's offerings and local support for tourism development. Based on the discussion of the literatures, the author proposes the following research hypothesis is made:

H3. *Travel motivation positively influences Decision-making on choosing a destination*

2.5 Conceptual framework

The behavioral research model of destination choice decision-making is difficult to fully represent the influencing factors due to its complexity and multidimensionality (Litvin & MacLaurin, 2001). Identifying factors that influence tourists' decisions to choose a tourist destination is one of the important pieces of information for management decision making and destination marketing activities (Hsu et al., 2009). In the conceptual framework, there are four variables: Personal values, Travel motivations, Tourists' attitudes toward the destination and Decision-making on choosing a destination. Travel motivation is formed under the influence of many different factors, and culture is considered one of the factors that has the strongest influence on many aspects of behavior and decision-making processes. Cultural characteristics play an important role in shaping tourists' preferences, interests, travel styles, as well as behavioral and consumption patterns (Soldatenko et al., 2023). Personal values play a crucial role in shaping travel attitudes, motivations, and destination choices. Therefore, research on destination choice decisions needs to pay attention to the cultural approach, specifically personal values, to be able to more fully analyze how tourists express destination choice behavior.

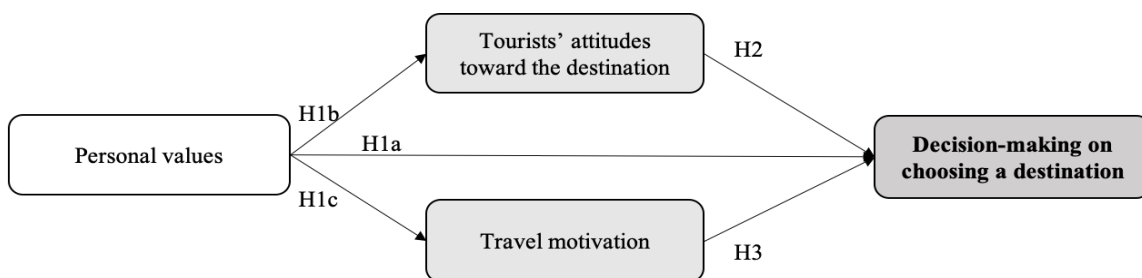


Fig. 1 – Conceptual Framework of Measuring Perceptions of International tourists of Personal values, Travel motivations and Tourists' attitudes toward the destination with Decision-making on choosing a destination. Source: Developed by the authors, 2024.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research process: Primary data collection methods will be used. This research uses a questionnaire survey, which is mainly divided into three stages: (1) Design a scale and conduct a survey; (2) Conduct a formal study on 220 tourists; (3) Process the data and draw conclusions. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert design ranging from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to completely agree).

Measurement scales: The research model includes 4 factors and 18 observed variables: (1) Personal values (PV) items is inherited and developed from the scale from (Fernandes & Lages, 2002; Fritzsche & Oz, 2007; Li et al., 2016); (2) Tourists' attitudes toward the destination (ATT) items it is inherited and developed from the scale from (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; VG et al., 2021); (3) Travel motivations (MOT) items is inherited and developed from the scale from (Correia & Pimpão, 2008; Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012; Pawaskar & Goel, 2016). (4) Decision-making on choosing a destination (DCD) items is inherited and developed from the scale from (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Lam & Hsu, 2004; Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012). Measurement scales: The research model includes 4 factors and 18 observed variables. Items are adopted and some are adapted on the basis of literature. It is adapted accordingly in the Long Xuyen Quadrangle of the Mekong Delta context. Which has been subject to expert consultation. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument, the process of pilot testing was initiated with 26 respondents to reduce measurement errors by editing questionnaire content, questionnaire design and format, and respondent.

The sample size: Researchers typically do not factor analyze a sample with fewer than 50 observations. The best sample size is that the sample size must be 100 or larger and if the number of observed variables increases, the number of observations also increases (Hair et al., 2019). The minimum sample size will ensure that in cases where it is too difficult to collect data, this minimum will be able to give us a statistically satisfactory result for evaluation. However, the larger the sample size, the more valuable the research, and the better the statistical estimates will represent the population. But to have the best research quality, the author decided to choose a sample size of 250 and selected the sample using a non-probability, convenience sampling method.

Data analysis: A quantitative research method was conducted. Primary data were collected through direct interviews with 250 international tourists starting in February 2024 with the support of international tour guides from travel agencies (Vietravel, TransViet Travel, Viet My Travel, TST Tourism). It was conducted using a pre-designed Google Forms questionnaire and convenience sampling method. The questionnaire was filled by international tourists who have already visited the Long Xuyen Quadrangle of Mekong Delta. The author received 220 valid questionnaires and 30 questionnaires that did not meet the requirements. The author then analyzed the SmartPLS 4 linear structure model with a sample size of 220.

To perform the statistical analysis and test the theoretical model, the authors used structural equation modeling (SEM). It has become a reliable technology in many sectors and the tourism industry (Rezaei et al., 2017). The PLS path modeling technique is called variance-based SEM. This provides evidence of the quality of the measurement and, if the constructed measurement is satisfactory, provides an assessment of validity (Sarstedt et al., 2014). PLS-SEM is a powerful statistical tool because it can be applied to data of any size (Hair et al., 2013). Therefore, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha of 0,70 and average variance extracted (AVE) of greater than 0,50 were used to measure the reliability of PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2013). Therefore, this study adopted PLS-SEM and used SmartPLS 4 software for analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive statistic

Tab. 1 – Demographic Profile (n = 220). Source: Derived from the statistical analysis of this study, 2024

Characteristics of the study sample		Quantity	Percentage (%)
Respondents' gender	Female	128	58,2
	Male	92	41,8
Respondents' age	Under 20 years	68	31,6
	20–35 years	61	28,4
	36–45 years	52	24,2
Number of visits to Long Xuyen Quadrangle of Mekong Delta	Over 46 years	34	15,8
	First time	130	59,1
	Second time or more	90	40,9
Education	Undergraduate	55	25,0
	Graduate	94	42,7
	Post Graduate	71	32,3

4.2. Construct validity and reliability

Tab. 2 – Construct measurement. Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024)

Items	PV	Outer loading			CA	CR	AVE
		MOT	ATT	DCD			
PV1. I make an impact on others.	0,808						
PV2. I always respect other people's opinions.	0,809						
PV3. I make my own decisions independently.	0,885				0,890	0,894	0,696
PV4. Destinations bring joy and increase quality of life.	0,900						
PV5. Destinations help me strengthen good relationships with people.	0,763						
MOT 1. Learn new things.		0,746					
MOT2. Experience different cultural identities.		0,846					
MOT3. Escape from busy work.		0,896			0,893	0,899	0,702
MOT4. Explore destinations.		0,879					
MOT6. Relax and reduce stress.		0,814					
ATT1. As a tourism destination, I think that it is very good.			0,842				
ATT2. As a tourism destination, I think that it is very valuable.			0,832		0,781	0,781	0,695
ATT3. I think visiting tourism destination is a positive behaviour.			0,827				
DCD1. I decided to choose this destination for my upcoming trip.				0,932			
DCD2. I decided to choose this destination as the final destination on my upcoming trip.				0,938	0,913	0,916	0,853
DCD3. I need more information to decide on visiting.				0,899			

The results of data analysis 2nd (after removing the variable: PV6 – “Sense of belonging”, MOT5 – “Looking for new emotions” because they have outer loading <0,4) in Table 2 have been determined that the research data meet the consistency requirements of the measurement scales of the proposed research model. The factor loading coefficient (outer loading) of this scale is greater than 0,4, Cronbach's alpha coefficient (CA) > 0,6, and composite reliability (CR) > 0,7 (Peterson & Kim, 2013). All constructs value is greater than 0,7 it shows constructs are reliable. The minimum accepted value of AVE is 0,5 (Hair et al., 2014). All constructs value is greater than 0,5 it shows constructs are valid (Table 2).

4.3. Discriminant validity

The HTMT index is used to measure the degree of separation between hidden variables in the model and measure the reasonableness of the model. When the value of the HTMT index for a pair of hidden variables is low, that is, the value of the HTMT index is less than or equal to 0.9, then we can conclude that the discrimination between hidden variables in the model is good (Henseler et al., 2015). All HTMT indexes are ≤ 0,9, so it can be concluded that the variables ensure discrimination from each other

Tab. 3 – Discriminant Validity. Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024)

	ATT	DCD	MOT	PV
ATT				
DCD	0.654			
MOT	0.587	0.621		
PV	0.695	0.705	0.562	

4.4. Explanation of Variance

The coefficient of determination R^2 is used to evaluate the suitability of the model. The R^2 or R^2 adjusted value ranges from 0 to 1. The closer it gets to 1, the more the independent variables explain the dependent variable, the more meaningful the model is. The analysis results show (Table 4) that the R^2 value of the value model is as follows: Decision-making on choosing a destination (0.507), Tourist attitude toward the destination (0.337) and travel motivation (0.252). Thus, the model makes sense.

Tab. 4 – Explanation of Variance. Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024)

Variabel	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q Square
Tourists' attitudes toward the destination	0.337	0.334	0.330
Travel motivations	0.252	0.249	0.244
Decision-making on choosing a destination	0.507	0.500	0.398

To evaluate the predictive relevance of the path model, a blindfolding procedure was applied to calculate the Q^2 coefficient. According to Tenenhaus et al. (2005), the Q^2 coefficient is used to evaluate the overall quality of the component model. If all component models have Q^2 greater than 0, the overall structural model of the study also meets overall quality. The research results in table 3 show that the Q^2 values of DCD (0,398), ATT(0, 330), MOT (0.244) are all greater than 0 and range from 0 to 0.5. Therefore, exogenous variables predict endogenous variables in the model and the level of prediction accuracy ranges from low to medium level (Hair et al., 2017).

4.5. Model Fit

In PLS-SEM, Henseler et al. (2016) proposed the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals) index to check the applicability of the model, although these indexes are considered to be of little value (Hair et al., 2016) . An SRMR coefficient < 0.082 indicates that the model is appropriate. In addition, other indicators must also meet the requirements, such as: B. d_ ULS coefficient $< 95\%$; coefficient d_G $< 95\%$. (Henseler et al., 2016).

Tab. 5 – Model Fit. Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024)

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0,054	0,072
d_ ULS	0,400	0,702
d_ G	0,299	0,302
Chi-square	380,044	374,924
NFI	0.846	0.848

The results of testing the model's suitability using PLS-SEM are as follows: SRMR = 0.054 < 0.082 , d_ ULS = 0,4 $< 95\%$, d_ G = 0,299 $< 95\%$ (Table 5) . All criteria meet the requirements for model suitability when analyzed by PLS-SEM. Thus, it can be concluded that the measurement model is suitable for the collected data set.

Tab. 6 – Assessment of Structural Model. Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024)

Mediation Paths	Beta Values	P Values	Conclusion
PV → DCD	0,635	0,000	Accepted
PV → ATT	0,581	0,000	Accepted
PV → MOT	0,502	0,000	Accepted
ATT → DCD	0,198	0,000	Accepted
MOT → DCD	0,274	0,000	Accepted

4.6. Assessment of mediation analysis

Table 7 shows the separate indirect relationship results, specifically in this result are the separate indirect relationships PV → MOT → DCD, PV → ATT → DCD. The results show that the intermediate relationship has P value < 0,05. Thus, Travel motivation and Tourist attitude play a mediating role in the relationship between Personal values and International tourists' Decision-making on choosing a destination. Mediating variable helps to strengthen the relationship between the independent variable that is Personal values and the dependent variable which is Decision-making on choosing a destination by 25, 3% (0,138 + 0,115 = 0,253).

Tab. 7 – Assessment of Mediation Analysis. Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024)

Mediation Paths	Beta Values	P Values	Conclusion
PV → MOT → DCD	0,138	0,000	Accepted
PV → ATT → DCD	0,115	0,000	Accepted

Cohen (1988), proposed the f Square index to evaluate the importance of independent variables as follows: (1) f Square < 0,02: the impact level is extremely small or has no impact. (2) 0,02 ≤ f Square < 0,15: small impact level. (3) 0,15 ≤ f Square < 0,35: average impact level. (4) f Square ≥ 0,35: high impact level. It has been found that all values are significant and the level of influence ranging from small to high (Table 8).

Tab. 8 – Value f². Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024)

Relationships among variables	Value f ²	Impact level
ATT → DCD	0,049	small
MOT → DCD	0,105	small
PV → DCD	0,178	average
DI → ATT	0,508	high
DI → MOT	0,337	average

4.7. Assessment of model

It has been found that all values are significant and all hypotheses are accepted.

Tab. 8 – Hypothesized Assessment. Source: Authors

Hypothesis		
H1a	Personal values positively influences Decision-making on choosing a destination	Accepted
H1b	Personal values positively influence tourists' attitudes toward the destination.	Accepted
H1c	Personal values positively influence travel motivation.	Accepted
H2	Tourists' attitudes toward the destination positively influences Decision-making on choosing a destination	Accepted
H3	Travel motivation positively influences Decision-making on choosing a destination	Accepted

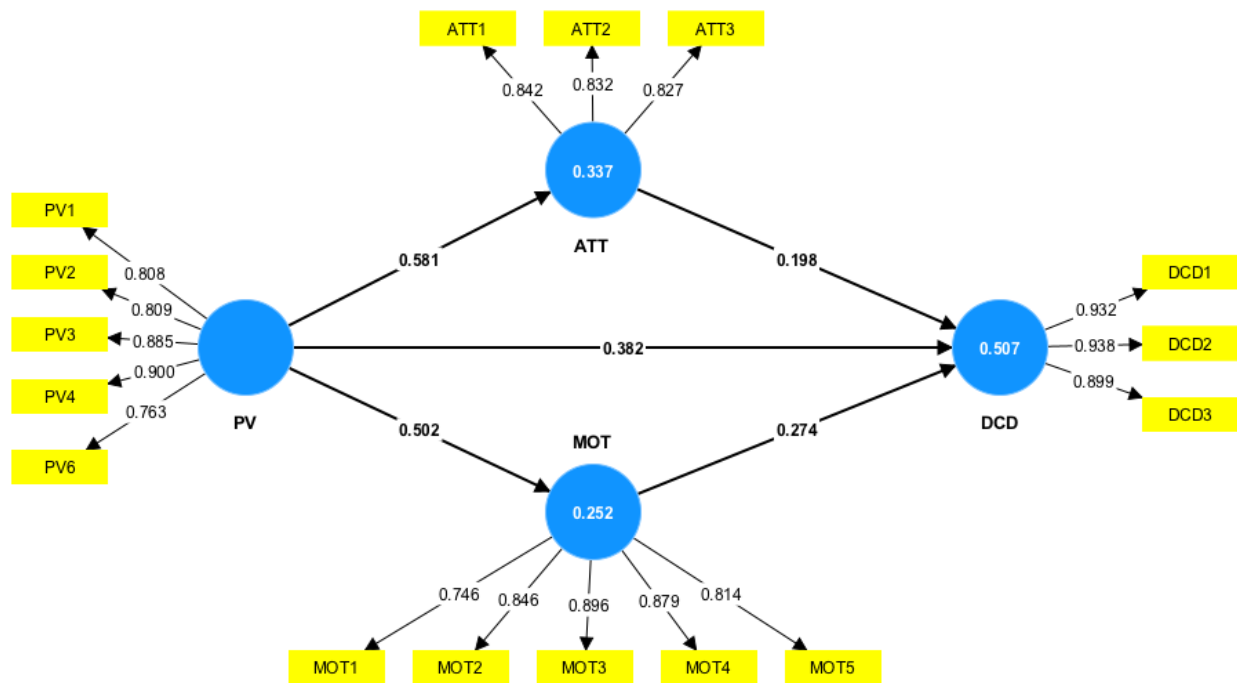


Fig. 2 – Assessment Model. Source: As analyzed using SmartPLS 4, (2024).

5. DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal a significant impact of personal values (PV), tourists' attitudes (ATT), and travel motivation (MOT) on Decision-making on choosing a destination (DCD) among international tourists. Notably, PV not only directly influences DCD but also affects ATT and MOT positively. Moreover, ATT and MOT act as intermediary variables in the relationship between PV and DCD.

Personal values play a pivotal role in shaping international tourists' decisions regarding destination selection, as evidenced by their positive influence on DCD ($\beta = 0.635$, $p = 0.000 < 5\%$), consistent with prior studies (Guan et al., 2023; Teng et al., 2023). Furthermore, PV positively impacts tourists' attitudes towards the destination and travel motivation ($\beta = 0.581$ and $\beta = 0.502$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). These findings underscore the mediating role of ATT, MOT in the association between personal values and intention to engage in community service activities ($\beta = 0.138$ and $\beta = 0.115$, $p = 0.000 < 5\%$), thus highlighting its significance in shaping international tourists' perceptions and decision-making processes.

Similarly, travel motivation significantly influences international tourists' decision-making on destination choice ($\beta = 0.274$, $p = 0.000 < 5\%$), consistent with previous research (Satar et al., 2023; Soldatenko et al., 2023). This underscores the importance of travel motivation in driving destination selection among international tourists. Additionally, tourists' attitudes towards the destination positively impact decision-making on destination choice ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), as supported by previous studies (Bayramov, 2022; Choirisa et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2019). This highlights the role of tourists' attitudes in influencing destination choices among international tourists.

While the study confirms the positive influence of personal values, tourist attitudes, and travel motivations on destination choice decisions, it is important to acknowledge that other factors may also play a crucial role. Destination characteristics, country Image, and destination information could potentially influence tourists' decision-making processes. Additionally, the influence of personal values, tourist attitudes, and travel motivations may vary across different demographic groups or market segments. Future research should explore these additional factors and consider more diverse samples to gain a more comprehensive understanding of destination choice decisions among international tourists in the Long Xuyen Quadrangle of the Mekong Delta.

The Long Xuyen Quadrangle, also known as the "Four Corners of Prosperity," is a unique and dynamic region in the Mekong Delta, encompassing parts of An Giang, Kien Giang, and Can Tho provinces. The region is renowned for its agricultural productivity, rich cultural heritage, and diverse ecosystems, including wetlands, forests, and rivers. In recent years, the Long Xuyen Quadrangle has emerged as a promising tourism destination, attracting visitors with its natural beauty, authentic cultural experiences, and vibrant local communities.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for tourism development in the Long Xuyen Quadrangle region. By understanding the role of personal values, tourist attitudes, and travel motivations, destination managers can tailor their offerings and strategies to effectively attract and retain international tourists. Implications for Tourism Development in Long Xuyen Quadrangle:

(i) Align tourism products with personal values: Identify and understand the key personal values that drive tourists' decision-making processes. Align tourism products and experiences with these values to resonate with target markets.

(ii) Enhance destination perceptions: Positive attitudes towards the destination are a strong predictor of destination choice. Enhance these perceptions by improving infrastructure, promoting cultural heritage, ensuring safety and security, and providing authentic and welcoming hospitality.

(iii) Cater to diverse travel motivations: Tourists visit the Long Xuyen Quadrangle for a variety of reasons, including relaxation, adventure, cultural immersion, and culinary exploration. Develop specialized itineraries, organize unique events or festivals, and promote niche experiences to cater to these diverse motivations.

Besides, to ensure the long-term appeal as a tourist destination, the Long Xuyen Quadrangle must balance growth with sustainability. Preserving cultural heritage (arts, crafts, cuisine, festivals) strengthens authenticity and community pride. Sustainable practices minimize environmental impact and benefit locals, ensuring long-term tourism viability.

In essence, the study underscores the crucial roles of personal values, travel motivations, and tourists' attitudes towards the destination in shaping decision-making processes among international tourists. Moreover, it emphasizes the indirect influence of personal values through mediating factors. These research findings offer valuable insights for destination management, particularly for the Mekong Delta region.

6. CONCLUSION

This study bridges a theoretical gap by examining how personal values, travel motivations, and tourist attitudes influence destination choice. We reveal a strong positive influence of these factors, particularly personal values, on international tourists' decision-making in the Mekong Delta. This knowledge empowers destination managers to tailor offerings, enhance perceptions, and cater to diverse motivations, ultimately attracting and retaining international tourists more effectively.

Limitation and future recommendations: While our study confirms the significant impact of personal values, travel motivations, and tourists' attitudes on decision-making on choosing a destination, limitations exist. Future research should explore new variables and utilize broader sampling methods for a more comprehensive understanding into international tourists' destination decision-making processes.

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