MASTER THESIS

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Exploring Eco tourists' pro-environmental behaviors, experience satisfaction and willingness to pay for nature conservation in

Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Research problem	1
1.2. Research Questions:	2
1.3. Research purpose	2
1.4. Research hypothesis	2
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	3
2.1. Ecotourism	3
2.2. Ecotourism in Viet Nam	4
2.2.1. Tourism growth in Viet Nam	4
2.2.2. Ecotourism potential	6
2.2.3. Ecotourism sites	7
2.2.3.1. Ha Giang	7
2.2.3.2. Cat Ba island	9
2.2.3.3. Sapa	10
2.2.3.4. Cuc Phuong National Park	
2.2.3.5. Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park	
2.2.3.6. Mekong Delta	12
2.2. Tram Chim National Park	14
2.2.1. History of the park	15
2.2.2. Ecology of Tram Chim National Park	16
2.2.3. Tram Chim National Park's current ecotourism development status .	18
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	20
3.1. Research approach and design	20
3.2. Data collection	20
3.3. Sampling method	21
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND EVALUATION	22
4.1. Analysis of collected data	
4.1.1. Demographic profile of respondents	22
4.1.2. Motivation of visitors	25
4.1.3. Tourists' experience at the ecotourism sites (Tram Chim national park)	30
4.2. SWOT analysis of Tram Chim National Park	
4.2.1. Strengths	
4.2.2. Weaknesses	

4.2.3.	Opportunities	
4.2.4.	Threats	
4.3. Hy	pothesis proving	
CHAPTER	5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	41
5.1. Conci	lusion	
5.2. Recon	nmendations	41
CHAPTER	6: SUMMARY	43
BIBLIOGR	АРНУ	44
LIST OF F	IGURES	49
LIST OF T	ABLES	50
APPENDIX	ES	51

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The current state of tourism is unprecedented in history. Although this is a great motivator, our ecosystem has suffered as a result. Nature and local communities are sacrificed in the sake of profits just to accommodate the ever-increasing number of tourists each year. For that reason, ecotourism, or sustainable tourism, ought to be a major concern for everyone on the globe. According to the Global Ecotourism Network (GEN, 2016): "Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and creates knowledge and understanding through interpretation and education of all involved (visitors, staff and the visited)" (Global Ecotourism Network, 2016). As a matter of fact, ecotourism is considered as a viable way to protect the natural environment and create social and economic benefits for local communities. In this case, eco tourists play an important role to preserve the nature because they are the key people who have a direct impact on the environment. There is a critical relationship between Tourists' pro-environmental behaviors and experience satisfaction, which is indicated by a number of studies. It is demonstrated that place satisfaction is a major predictor of pro-environmental behavior (Stedman, 2002). When tourists are satisfied with the interactive experiences at the destination, they tend to support nature conservation by paying more for the site.

1.1. Research problem

The potential of Vietnam's natural and cultural resources for ecotourism is well established. The Vietnamese government has designated ecotourism as one of the nation's core tourist products in order to support environmental education and provide an indirect source of income for local populations (Buckley, 1999). However, there are still obstacles to overcome in order to increase ecotourists' pro-environmental conduct, especially in Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam, the chosen site of this research. Tram Chim National Park located in the Plain of Reeds in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam was established to safeguard various endangered birds, including the sarus crane (Grus antigone sharpii), which is included on the IUCN Red List. In fact, visitors' environmental protection behavior in this location has not been improved. This study report intends to explore environmental preservation behavior, as well as the elements that

are associated to experience satisfaction and willingness to pay for nature conservation, in order to serve as a foundation for initiatives to enhance visitors' knowledge of nature conservation.

1.2. Research Questions:

In relation to the above problematics, the thesis will attempt to address the following questions:

- What sorts of Eco tourist 's activities that contribute to conserve nature and endangered species in Tram Chim national park?
- What elements involve in the changes in pro-environmental activities of Eco tourists?
- How experience satisfaction influence tourist's behavior to pay more for protecting the nature in the national park?

1.3. Research purpose

The objectives of this research are:

- To examine Eco tourist's awareness of environmental protection in Tram chim national park.
- To explore factors which affect Eco tourists' pro-environmental behaviors in relation to experience satisfaction and willingness to pay for nature conservation.

1.4. Research hypothesis

In this article, the following hypotheses are examined:

- Eco-tourists have a pretty low level of satisfaction when experiencing ecotourism in Tram Chim National Park.
- Eco-tourists are basically aware of activities that threaten the park.
- Eco-tourists who perceive eco sites as having a high environmental value are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors.
- Eco-tourists who perceive eco sites as having a high environmental value have a higher willingness to pay for nature conservation at these sites.
- Eco-tourists are aware of environmental protection but do not know how to provide financial support for pro-environmental activities at the park.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Ecotourism

In recent years, the term ecotourism has drawn a lot of attention. There is substantial controversy over what the term means (Orams, 1995). There is no such a broadly recognized definition of ecotourism. Ecotourism is a niche tourism market that has evolved to contribute to sustainable development (Cole, 2006), (Donohoe & Needham, 2006), and it is one of the tourism sector's fastest expanding niches (UNWTO, 2012). The philosophy of ecotourism is linked to the concept of sustainable tourism and should be based on the principles of sustainable tourism and development (UNWTO, 2012). Sustainable development is concerned with taking in account economic, social, and environmental development factors while meeting present societal requirements without jeopardizing future generations' well-being (Ramadani et al., 2022). It is showed that ecotourism contributes to environmental protection, wildlife conservation, poverty alleviation, and socioeconomic development (Anup, 2016). It has an impact on the community's, as well as the country's environmental, social, and economic components.

The World Tourism Organization defines ecotourism as: all types of nature-based tourism in which the major purpose of the visitors is to observe and enjoy nature, as well as the traditional cultures that exist in natural places (UNWTO). It differs from nature-based tourism in that it contributes to long-term rural development and makes biodiversity protection economically viable for local populations. Several countries' development programs now include ecotourism as a key component. It is particularly appealing to governments because of its potential to provide an alternative to traditional types of economic development: through job creation, the generating of foreign exchange, and the promotion of sustained regional growth (Weaver, 1998). In many rural regions, ecotourism is a preferred tool for conservation and community development. Its efficacy is determined by its ability to generate local economic advantages while preserving natural resource integrity through low-impact and non-consumptive usage of local resources.

Ecotourism is a kind of tourism that concentrates on the biophysical environment in natural regions. It involves environmentally friendly activities, conservation-supporting measures, and community engagement. Nature is neoliberalism, and the emphasis is on capitalist development,

community development, poverty relief, wildlife conservation, and environmental preservation. Traditional economic underpinnings such as agriculture, cattle, and hunting are incompatible with protected areas; thus, traditional economic activities can be changed by modifying cultural views, in favor of ecotourism enhancement. Along with this, ecotourism creates jobs for locals and a market for their products. It fosters cultural awareness in guest-host relationships and serves as a catalyst for environmentally sustainable development. Therefore, planning is essential to handle the concerns of protected area ownership, management, and cooperation. It promotes animal protection and the equitable distribution of ecotourism profits. It contributes to the protection of natural, cultural, and constructed resources while also maintaining the local community's quality of life. It fosters sustainable economic growth and balances the opposing aims of economic development and biodiversity conservation with an environmental conservation purpose. It achieves the aims of biodiversity protection, poverty alleviation, and commercial viability by utilizing sustainable concepts and methods.

2.2. Ecotourism in Viet Nam

2.2.1. Tourism growth in Viet Nam

From early 1999, the Vietnamese government has undertaken a number of tourism-related measures in response to the country's rapidly expanding domestic and international tourist industries. These include the adoption of a Tourism Ordinance, which establishes the legal and policy foundations for developing tourism while protecting biodiversity and ensuring social, cultural, and environmental sustainability, as well as a proposal to revise the existing Tourism Development Master Plan in order to create a Tourism Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam. By these initiatives, the Vietnamese government has moved toward tourist management planning in order to achieve long-term results, and ecotourism and cultural tourism have been advocated as preferable tourism development choices (Lipscombe & Thwaites, 2003).

Over the past few years, Vietnam's tourism industry has experienced significant growth and consistently ranks among the countries with the fastest growth worldwide (Tung, 2019). Vietnam's tourism industry has been recognized as an emerging tourism market and is considered a fast-growing example in the Asia-Pacific region. Vietnam's tourism industry is gradually becoming more proactive in implementing tasks that support its tourism development

policy, such as marketing strategy focusing on destination communications, improving tourism infrastructure, increasing quality tourism products, ensuring security, fostering human resources, inter-regional transportation infrastructure, promoting tourism investment, and implementing responsible tourism (Thirumaran et al., 2014; Hampton et al., 2018).

Voor	Domestic tourist		Foreign	tourist	Total number	Total number of tourist	
I cal	Number (million)	Growth (%)	Number (million)	Growth (%)	Number (million)	Growth (%)	
2000	11.2		2.1		13.3		
2001	11.7	4.5	2.3	9.5	14.0	5.3	
2002	13.0	11.1	2.6	13.0	15.6	11.4	
2003	13.5	3.8	2.4	- 7.7	15.9	1.9	
2004	14.5	7.4	2.9	20.8	17.4	9.4	
2005	16.1	11.0	3.4	17.2	19.5	12.1	
2006	17.5	8.7	3.5	2.9	21.0	7.7	
2007	19.2	9.7	4.2	20.0	23.4	11.4	
2008	20.5	6.8	4.2	0.0	24.7	5.6	
2009	25.0	22.0	3.7	-11.9	28.7	16.2	
2010	28.0	12.0	5.0	35.1	33.0	15.0	
2011	30.0	7.1	6.0	20.0	36.0	9.1	
2012	32.5	8.3	6.8	13.3	39.3	9.2	
2013	35.0	7.7	7.5	10.3	42.5	8.1	
2014	38.5	10.0	7.8	4.0	46.3	8.9	
2015	57.0	48.1	7.9	1.3	64.9	40.2	
2016	62.0	8.8	10.0	26.6	72.0	10.9	
2017	73.0	17.7	12.9	29.0	85.9	19.3	
2018	80.0	9.6	15.6	20.9	95.6	11.3	
2019	85.0	6.3	18.0	15.4	103.0	7.7	

Table 1: The number of tourists in Vietnam

Source: General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2019

As stated by the General Statistical Office of Vietnam, there has been a rapid increase in the number of visitors in Vietnam from 2000 to 2019. Throughout the last two decades, both international and local visitors have expanded at a double-digit rate (Table 1), bringing great advantages to Vietnam's socioeconomic statistics. Statistics show that the number of international and domestic visitors has steadily increased over time, with a particularly significant growth over the last ten years. Also, the number of both local and foreign tourists is increasing. In particular, during the last two decades, Vietnam has welcomed 812 million visitors, comprising 683.2 million domestic visits (84.1%) and 128.8 million international arrivals (15.9%). The rising speed was very rapid, as evidenced by the fact that the number of visitors from 2010 to 2019 (618.5 million individuals) was 3.2 times greater than the number of visitors from 2000 to 2009. (at 193.2 million people). The annual average growth rate of tourists in Vietnam during the preceding twenty years has been 10.7% per year; however, the annual

growth rate of international visitors has been 11.3% per year, which is greater than the yearly growth rate of domestic arrivals (by 10.6% per year) over the same period.

Dariad	Domestic to	ourist	Foreign to	ourist	Total tourist		
renou	Number (Million)	Growth (%)	Number (Million)	Growth (%)	Number (Million)	Growth (%)	
2000-2009	162.2	8.3	31.3	5.8	193.5	7.9	
2010-2019	521.0	11.7	97.5	13.6	618.5	12.0	
2000-2019	683.2	10.6	128.8	11.3	812.0	10.7	

 Table 2: Comparative analysis of the growth of tourists in Vietnam, 2000-2019

 Source: General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2019

As shown in table 2, there has been a significant increase in the number of domestic tourists from 2000 to 2019, with a growth rate of 10.6%. Foreign tourist growth has risen remarkably within the same time, with a growth rate of 11.3%. The overall number of tourists in 2019 was 812.0 million, owing to an increase in both local and overseas travelers.

According to current figures, Vietnam's tourist business has developed faster than the government expected. The achievements of Vietnam's tourist industry in the last five years have been phenomenal, with the country finishing eleven years ahead of schedule. Tourism growth is also an excellent chance to strengthen Vietnam's image in the international world. The rapid increase in the number of international tourists demonstrates the competitiveness of Vietnam's tourism on the global tourism map, as well as the quality of Vietnam's brand destinations. Numerous tourist marketing and exchange initiatives between Vietnam and other tourism markets across the world also help to improve the image of the Vietnamese tourism sector. Based on the findings of the historical research, the tourist industry will maintain its role and position as a significant service sector in Vietnam in the future. But nevertheless, due to a rise in the number of tourists, tourism has had a detrimental impact on Vietnam's sustainable development path, such as harm to the natural environment, deformed landscapes, rapid urbanization, infrastructure overload, and cultural deterioration. Moreover, growing waste and contamination of the living environment are gradually becoming hazards to the long-term development of the Vietnamese tourist business.

2.2.2. Ecotourism potential

Ecotourism, as a component of the green economy, contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of government and commercial entities. Viet Nam, one of the developing nations, has enormous tourism—particularly ecotourism—potential with 13,000 floral species and over 15,000 faunal species. It provides employment for unskilled workers in rural areas through community-led tourist activities aimed at maintaining natural ecosystems.

Vietnam, officially known as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is a country located at the easternmost tip of the Indochinese peninsula in Southeast Asia, bordering Laos, Cambodia, China, the East Sea and the Gulf. Thailand. As stated by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam (2019), with an area of 311,699 square kilometers (120,348 sq mi) and population of 96 million, stretching over 15 latitudes, Vietnam's territory is complicatedly varied. The topography is made up of three quarters hills and mountains, with the remainder being delta and coastal region. The Vietnamese sea and island system is comprised of two huge archipelagos (Hoang Sa and Truong Sa), 3,000 big and small islands, and sixteen major rivers. The diversity of topography and climate has contributed to the formation of a diverse ecosystem for Vietnam, which includes a forest ecosystem, a wetland ecosystem, a sand hill ecosystem, an alluvial riverside ecosystem, an estuarine ecosystem, a coral reef ecosystem, a deep-sea ecosystem, an agricultural land ecosystem, an urban ecosystem, to name but a few.

2.2.3. Ecotourism sites

With a wide variety of cultural experiences and natural attractions, Vietnam is a well-known ecotourism destination. Some of the popular ecotourism destinations in Vietnam are presented below.

2.2.3.1. Ha Giang

Located in the northernmost part of Viet Nam, Ha Giang province covers an area of 7,929.48 km2 (3,061.6 sq mi), comprising 1 city and 10 rural districts, with a population of over 850 thousand people (2019). The province is renowned for its breathtaking natural beauty and wide-ranging cultural heritage. The area is well-known for its traditional villages, waterfalls, and terraced rice fields. It has thus become a well-liked ecotourism location.

Eco tourists may enjoy trekking, cycling, and learning about the local culture in Ha Giang. The province is home to various ethnic minority groups, including the Hmong, Dao, Tay, and Nung, each having its own traditions, customs, and lifestyles. Visitors can experience their hospitality, try local food, and learn about their way of life.

One of the most popular ecotourism destinations in Ha Giang is the Dong Van Karst Plateau Geopark, a UNESCO recognized site. Figure 1 features a unique karst landscape, with limestone formations, canyons, and caves, as well as rich geological and cultural heritage which attract many domestic and foreign visitors (Doan & Gałka, 2017).



Figure 1: Dong Van Karst Plateau, Ha Giang Province (Introduction to Ha Giang – The Northernmost Destination of Vietnam, Indocharmtravel.com)

Additional ecotourism attractions in Ha Giang include the Ma Pi Leng Pass (Figure 2), one of Vietnam's most beautiful mountain passes, the Quan Ba Twin Mountains, and the Lung Cu Flag Tower, Vietnam's northernmost point.



Figure 2: Ma Pi Leng Pass, Ha giang Province

Source: Introduction to Ha Giang - The Northernmost Destination of Vietnam, Indocharmtravel.com

Ha Giang has been promoting sustainable tourism practices in recent years, with the goal of preserving the region's natural and cultural diversity while creating economic benefits to local communities. As a result, ecotourists can enjoy a unique and authentic travel experience while contributing to the conservation of Ha Giang's ecosystems and traditional cultures.

2.2.3.2. Cat Ba island

Cat Ba Island is located in northern Vietnam, approximately 150 kilometers south-east of Hanoi (Sundqvist, 2013). It has a comparable setting to the UNESCO Natural Heritage site Halong Bay (Van Mai, 2010). In 2004, UNESCO designated the Cat Ba Archipelago, which comprises of 366 limestone islands and spans over 26,000 hectares, as a Biosphere Reserve. Cat Ba National Park, which was founded in 1986 and spans 15,000 hectares, is located in the region.



Figure 3: Cat Ba Island

Source: (VINPEARL, 2022)

The Cat Ba Biosphere Reserve has been home to 2,026 distinct living species. Several of these are endangered or unusual. The most critically endangered species is the Cat Ba Langur, which is found nowhere else on the planet (UNESCO 2013). Cat Ba's peak season for tourism is in the summer, between June and August, when many Vietnamese visitors visit the island.

2.2.3.3. Sapa

Sapa is a town located in the mountainous region of Lao Cai province in northern Vietnam. It is known for its stunning natural landscapes, including terraced rice fields, lush forests, and majestic mountains. Sapa is home to several ethnic minority groups, including the Hmong, Dao, and Tay, who have unique cultures and traditions that have been preserved for centuries. (A. H. Tran & Xuan, 2021).



Figure 4: Sapa, Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam Source: (Travelandleisureasia, 2022)

Tourism is an important industry in Sapa, with visitors coming from all over the world to experience the natural beauty and rich culture of the area. There are many things to see and do in Sapa, including trekking, hiking, cycling, and visiting local villages to learn about the traditional way of life of the local communities.

Sapa Ecotourism also offers homestay experiences, where visitors can stay with local families in traditional stilt houses and learn about their way of life. The homestay experiences provide a unique opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the local culture and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the local communities.

Overall, Sapa Ecotourism is an excellent way to experience the natural beauty and rich culture of Sapa while supporting sustainable tourism practices and contributing to the local economy.

2.2.3.4. Cuc Phuong National Park

Cucphuong National Park, located about 120 kilometers south of Hanoi in northern Vietnam, was Vietnam's first National Park which has been a model for national parks and protected areas in Vietnam since its formation in 1962. It covers an area of nearly 22,220 hectares. The flora is diverse, with 1,924 species divided into 990 genera and 229 families (Thin, 1997).

Cuc Phuong is a point of special diversity of fauna in Vietnam, however 60 of the species in the park are recorded in the Red Data Book of Vietnam (published in 2000). This includes the Delacour's langur (Trachypithecus francoisi delarcouri) which is endemic to Cuc Phoung and is the official symbol of Cuc Phuong National Park (Batelaan et al., 2004).



Figure 5: Cuc Phuong National park Source: (en.wikipedia.org, n.d.)

2.2.3.5. Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the central region of Vietnam, near the border with Laos. It is home to some of the world's most impressive caves and underground rivers. Phong Nha was first designated as a small reserve (5,000 hectares) in 1986, followed by a large expansion (41,132 ha) and management planning procedure in 1991/1992, when the lands were consolidated as the Phong Nha Natural Reserve. The territory was enlarged to 85,754 hectares in 2000, and it was established as a National Park. (Ziegler & Vu, 2009).

The park is named after the Phong Nha and Ke Bang limestone mountains, which contain hundreds of cave systems, including the Son Doong Cave, the world's largest cave, and the Hang En Cave, the third-largest cave. Other popular caves in the park include the Phong Nha Cave, the Paradise Cave, and the Dark Cave.

In addition to the caves, Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park is also known for its rich biodiversity, with over 800 species of fauna and flora recorded in the area. The park is home to several endangered species, including the saola, a type of antelope, and the Indochinese tiger (TRUONG, 2022).



Figure 6: Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park Source: (lonelyplanet.com, n.d.)

Visitors to the park can explore the caves by boat, foot, or bike, and there are several tour companies offering guided tours of the caves. There are also several hiking trails in the park, as well as opportunities for bird watching and wildlife spotting.

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park is a must-visit destination for nature lovers, adventure seekers, and anyone interested in exploring some of the world's most incredible natural wonders.

2.2.3.6. Mekong Delta

The Mekong Delta, also known as the Western Region of Vietnam, is the area in southwestern Vietnam in which the Mekong River flows and drains into the sea through a network of distributaries. The Mekong Delta is made up of 13 provinces, cities, and towns, including An

Giang, Ben Tre, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Can Tho, Dong Thap, Hau Giang, Kien Giang, Long An, Soc Trang, Tien Giang, Tra Vinh, and Vinh Long (Phuong, 2019). It has a population of nearly18 million people and a surface area of about 40,000 km2 (Phuong, 2019).

Being a region with significant tourist potential and attractions, the provinces and cities of the Mekong River Delta are making efforts to promote tourism development, particularly the production of distinctive tourism products (Phuong, 2019). The region is well-known for its diversified natural environment, which includes wetlands, mangroves, and a wide range of species. Ecotourism has become an increasingly popular method to explore and appreciate the region's natural beauty and cultural legacy in recent years.



Figure 7: Provincial map, the Mekong Delta, Viet Nam Source: (wikipedia.org, n.d.)

One of the major highlights for ecotourism in the Mekong Delta is the possibilities for discovering its rich flora and wildlife. Visitors may participate in activities such as bird watching, hiking, and animal spotting, and they can frequently encounter rare and endangered species such as the Irrawaddy dolphin and the white-winged duck. The region is also home to

numerous national parks, including the U Minh Ha National Park and the Tram Chim National Park, which allow tourists to explore the delta's distinct ecosystems and natural environments.

The Mekong Delta is noted for its rich cultural legacy and traditional way of life, in addition to its natural features. Visitors may learn about local customs and traditions, such as the agricultural practices of the region, which rely on traditional farming and fishing ways. Activities like rice farming, fishing, and fruit picking allow tourists to engage in the daily lives of local communities while also supporting sustainable tourism projects.

All in all, the Mekong Delta is a distinctive and rapidly becoming well-liked ecotourism location in Vietnam. The area provides tourists a chance to enjoy the natural and cultural beauty of Vietnam in a sustainable and responsible manner because of its diverse flora and fauna, rich cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism developments.



2.2. Tram Chim National Park

Figure 8: Map of Tram Chim National Park

Source: (Vietnamdiscovery, n.d.)

Tram Chim National Park (TCNP), which covers an area of 7.600 hectares (SER, 2020), was formed in 1998 and is located in Tam Nong District, Dong Thap Province, in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam. The park was established to protect various endangered birds, including the sarus crane (Grus antigone sharpii) (Figure 9), which is included on the IUCN Red List. It is also a Ramsar Convention-designated wetland of international importance (Ramsar,

2012). TCNP is one of the few remaining vestiges of the Plain of Reeds wetland habitat (Kiet, 1993), which formerly encompassed 700,000 ha of the Mekong Delta in southern Vietnam (T. Tran & Barzen, 2016).

2.2.1. History of the park

The province government founded Tram Chim as Tram Chim Afforestation and Fisheries Corporation in 1985 with the intention of planting Melaleuca cajuputi (figure 10), making use of aquatic resources, and protecting the Plain of Reeds region. The sarus crane was discovered here in 1986. In order to especially preserve the cranes, Tram Chim was designated as a provincial-level nature reserve in 1991. By virtue of Circular 4991/KGVX's ruling, the reserve was designated a national natural reserve in 1994. 7,500 hectares make up the protected area (29 sq mi). The region's size was changed to 7,588 hectares in September 1998. (29.30 sq mi). This region was designated as Tram Chim National Park in 1998 by government decision 253/1998/Q, which was issued on December 29, 1998 (Wikipedia, n.d.).



Figure 9: Sarus crane, antigone from India with the distinct white "collar"

Source: (Wikipedia, n.d.)

2.2.2. Ecology of Tram Chim National Park

Tram Chim wetland is classified into three types: Melaleuca (Melaleuca cajuputi) forests, seasonally inundated marsh (predominantly grass), and permanently inundated swamp (T. Tran & Barzen, 2016). Also reported by Tran and Bazen (2016), The park's natural scenery has shown to be beneficial in minimizing flood damage and drought in the Mekong Delta's downstream region. Nonetheless, Tram Chim wetlands are subject to rapid environmental changes caused by the building of upstream hydropower units. During the Vietnam-American conflict, US soldiers drained and parched the Plain of Reeds, and the soil finally became inhabitable owing to excessive acidity after rain (Tanaka, 2001). Tram Chim has been preserved as a result of the installation of dikes around the park that restrict the flow of acidic water from the surrounding area (the start of the rainy season) (Beilfuss & Barzen, 1994). The society is now restoring 7,600 acres of Tram Chim wetlands for ecological purposes (SER, 2020).



Figure 10: Melaleuca cajuputi Source: (Wikipedia, n.d.)

The Plain of Reeds was formerly a seasonal wetland that had yearly grass fires in the dry season and was submerged in shallow water for three to six months of the year (SER, 2020). Melaleuca cajuputi trees, grasses, and other grass-like species including sedges and Eleocharis are considered to have dominated the vegetation. With the introduction of rice farming in the 18th century, environmental alteration by humans started (Pacovsky, 2001).

For strategic reasons, the region was drained and vegetation destroyed during the Vietnam War, which dried up and oxidized the acid sulfate soils, leaving them very acidic and unfriendly. The number of fires has also increased. Attempts to restore the flooding regime began in 1985, with success in attracting wildlife (SER, 2020). Species that used to live in the region returned after restoration, including birds like the sarus crane and Bengal florican, fish like the huge barb, and grasses like Oryza rufipogon. The fish play a critical role in feeding the local inhabitants.



Figure 11: Wetland at Tram Chim National park Source: (Wikipedia, n.d.)

The marsh is home to nine severely endangered bird and fish species, including the Bengal Florican Houbaropsis bengalensis and the Giant Barb Catlocarpio siamensis. During the dry season, the location supports more than 20,000 water birds, accounting for more than 1% of the population of six water bird species, including the Easter Sarus Crane Grus antigone sharpii. The park's near-natural terrain breaks wave energy during the flood season, helping to protect the houses of around 20,000 people along its eastern and southern dykes, as well as having a large ability to alleviate flood and drought damage for the Mekong Delta's downstream region. The park's magnificent scenery attracts people from all around the world. The location has historical significance since several wars have occurred in the plain during the American-

Vietnam War. The park has a great supply of fodder grass, fuel trees, and, most significantly, fish, which are the primary source of nourishment for the locals.

Tram Chim is a demonstration site for the Mekong River Basin Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Project, Phase I, which is being undertaken by the IUCN (The International Union for Conservation of Nature), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) with support from UNDP/GEF (The Global Environment Facility) and SIDA. The program's purpose is to assist nations in the Lower Mekong subregion in developing novel techniques to combine wetland biodiversity conservation and sustainable usage with economic growth, especially tourist development. WWF (World Wide Fund For Nature) (2020) recently supported Tram Chim National Park with a series of research and pilot programs to rebuild the natural ecosystems from 2007 to 2011 (Ramsar , 2012). The International Crane Foundation (https://www.savingcranes.org/) contributes significantly to the conservation and protection of Grus antigone sharpii by financing potential research initiatives in Tram Chim.

2.2.3. Tram Chim National Park's current ecotourism development status

The park has the possibility to develop tourism products to meet the demands of travelers for sightseeing, study, and amusement thanks to the richness and diversity of the park's flora and fauna as indicated above (Vu & Le, 2015).



Figure 12: Number of tourists to Tram Chim National Park during 2014–2018. Source: (Nguyen, 2022)

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the overall number of tourists, with an average annual growth rate of 14% (2014–2018). Domestic visitors make up a significant share of all visitors to Tram Chim and grow by an average of 15.0% every year. International tourists, on the other hand, are considerably more moderate and are growing at a 0.9% annual pace, according to Figure 12.



Figure 13: Tourism revenue in Tram Chim national park during 2014–2018 Source: (Nguyen, 2022)

Although the overall income is still fairly low (there hasn't been a year when the entire tourist revenue in the national park reached a number of 400,000,000 VND), the rise in tourism revenue in Tram Chim National Park between 2014 and 2018 was impressive (37.6%). According to Figure 13, there are four main categories of tourism-related services: lodging services, transportation services, fishing services, and miscellaneous services (guide fee, selling souvenirs, entrance fees). In instance, fishing services make up the largest share (45.5%), followed by transportation services (33%), lodging services (16.5%), and miscellaneous services (50%). Fishing, however, is not a true ecotourism product because the majority of fishermen fish for business reasons rather than recreation.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research approach and design

The primary research approach used in this study is a quantitative research method, which involved collecting numerical data through a structured questionnaire. The study aimed to explore ecotourists' pro-environmental behaviors, experience satisfaction, and willingness to pay for nature conservation at Tram Chim National Park in Vietnam. In a SWOT analysis I briefly describe the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the national park.

3.2. Data collection

Data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online to potential respondents who visited Tram Chim National Park. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographic information, tourists' motivation, and tourist experience at the ecotourism site.

The first section of the questionnaire, demographic information, typically collects basic information about the respondent, such as their age, gender, education level, and employment status. This information can help to understand if certain demographic groups are more likely to visit ecotourism sites and what factors may influence their decision to do so.

The second section of the questionnaire, tourists' motivation, aims to understand why individuals choose to visit the national park. Questions in this section may include queries about the tourists' interest in nature, how they know about the park, how much time did they spent there, what kind of activities and services they have used at the eco-park. By understanding what motivates individuals to visit ecotourism sites, better marketing campaigns and tailor experiences can be designed to better meet visitors' needs.

The third section of the questionnaire, tourist experience at the ecotourism site, typically asks questions about the visitor's experience during their visit, their attitude towards nature preservation, affecting their willingness to provide financial support to preserve natural environment at Tram Chim National Park.

The online survey method was adopted to ensure a larger sample size and a more diverse range of respondents. The data collection period lasted for three weeks.

3.3. Sampling method

This study's respondents were chosen using a convenience sample approach. Respondents were chosen based on their availability and willingness to complete the online survey. The study's sample size was 104 people who had visited Tram Chim National Park. The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" as follow:

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND EVALUATION

4.1. Analysis of collected data



4.1.1. Demographic profile of respondents

Figure 14: Age group of respondents

Source: Own construction, 2023

The age distribution of the respondents in this survey was highly biased toward young adults, with 95% or 99 people falling between the ages of 18 and 29. The remaining 5%, or 5 respondents, were between the ages of 30 and 39, with no respondents falling into the age groupings of 40 to 49, 50 to 59, or 60 and above. (Figure 14)



Figure 15: Gender

Source: Own construction, 2023

In this research on ecotourism in Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam, the gender distribution of the respondents was virtually evenly split, with 51% or 53 respondents being female, and 49% or 51 respondents being male (figure 15). The study's gender-diverse population is a good indicator since it guarantees a wide range of perspectives and experiences that can enhance the research's conclusions and lead to a more comprehensive understanding of ecotourism and environmental protection in the area.



Figure 16: Employment status Source: Own construction, 2023

The distribution of employment status among the respondents in this study on ecotourism at Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam, reveals that the majority of respondents were employed, comprising 59% or 61 individuals. Meanwhile, 32% or 33 respondents were students, while only 9% or 9 respondents were self-employed. Interestingly, none of the respondents were retired, indicating that the survey was conducted among a relatively young population (figure 16). The low percentage of unemployed respondents at only 1% or 1 respondent may indicate that the study was conducted among a population with stable sources of income, which could potentially affect their willingness to pay for conservation efforts.



Figure 17: Educational level Source: Own construction, 2023

The distribution of educational levels among the respondents in this survey is largely composed of individuals with a higher education degree, with 77% of the 104 respondents having achieved a BA/MA. Meanwhile, 13% of the respondents had completed college, and only 11% had completed high school (figure 17). This shows that the respondents were well-educated and had a better awareness of environmental issues and the significance of conservation efforts. Furthermore, the data reveals that the majority of respondents have considerable knowledge and skills connected to their academic subjects of study, which might be useful for the research or study being done. The survey findings may reflect the respondents' higher educational background, indicating that their comments and opinions may be informed by their academic training and experience.

4.1.2. Motivation of visitors



Figure 18: Frequency of visiting the park Source: Own construction, 2023

The frequency of visits to Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam, among the respondents in this study on ecotourism, was largely characterized by first-time visitors. Specifically, 79.60% or 86 individuals reported having visited the park only once. Meanwhile, 12% or 13 respondents had visited the park twice, while 4.60% or 5 respondents had visited the park three times. Only 3.80% or 4 respondents reported never having visited the park (figure 18).



Figure 19: Time spent at Tram Chim National Park Source: Own construction, 2023

The respondents' reported time spent at Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam, was as follows: 62.50% or 65 individuals reported spending a few hours in the park, 36.54% or 38 individuals recorded spending one day at the park, and 0.96% or 1 individual mentioned spending 2-3 days in the park (figure 19). The majority of respondents spent only a few hours at the park, suggesting that they may have engaged in day-trip ecotourism activities rather than staying for a more extended period. However, the responses also indicate that some respondents stayed for a full day, suggesting that there is an interest in more extended ecotourism activities at the park.



Figure 20: How visitors find out information about the park Source: Own construction, 2023

The survey's researchers noted that a considerable proportion of participants—74%, or 77 people—found out about Tram Chim National Park through online sources. Also, 67 people, or 64%, heard about the park from friends and acquaintances, while 13 people, or 13%, learnt about it from brochure marketing. However, just 11 respondents, or 11%, said that a travel agent had suggested the park to them (figure 20). According to the research, personal recommendations and the internet are important sources of information for ecotourism destinations like Tram Chim National Park. The findings of the survey may thus be applied to improve the park's marketing and promotional strategies by emphasizing internet platforms and promoting favorable word-of-mouth recommendations.



Figure 21: Tourists' favorite activities to do at Tram Chim National park

Source: Own construction, 2023

Based on the survey results, the most popular activities for visitors to Tram Chim National Park are observing the birds, with 66% or 71 individuals reporting this as a favorite activity. Taking a boat for sightseeing was another favorite activity, with 61% or 66 respondents indicating this preference. Hiking in the park was also a popular choice, with 50% or 54 individuals reporting this as their favorite activity. Trying typical cuisine was favored by 54% or 58 respondents, while taking part in games was the least popular activity, with only 32% or 35 respondents indicating this preference (figure 21). These findings can be useful for the park management in designing and promoting activities and experiences that are most favored by visitors to enhance their overall experience and satisfaction while visiting Tram Chim National Park.



Figure 22: Other services tourists have used at the park

Source: Own construction, 2023

According to the survey (figure 22), the most popular services used by visitors at Tram Chim National Park were exploring the park by electric car and boat, as well as using the parking area. These services are crucial for a positive and convenient visitor experience. However, the survey also found that only a small percentage of respondents reported using other services, so it's unclear what additional services are available at the park. To enhance the visitor experience, Tram Chim National Park could consider providing additional services such as guided tours, bike rentals, camping facilities, and more options for food and beverage services. These additional services could attract more visitors and encourage them to spend more time in the park while enjoying a wider range of activities.



Figure 23: Activities which could be added to the park's services Source: Own construction, 2023

Figure 23 shows that visitors to Tram Chim National Park have some ideas for extra events and services that may improve their time there. The statistics show that a sizable proportion of respondents think that more food and beverage options (56%) and souvenir possibilities (57%) might enhance the overall tourist experience. These extra options can provide tourists more chances to unwind and enjoy in the park's scenic beauty.

Furthermore, the most participants (66%) indicated that it might be popular to offer extra equipment for sightseeing excursions. Boat and electric vehicle trips are already available in Tram Chim National Park, but tourists might value the chance to hire binoculars, cameras, or

other gear to improve their experience. This would provide them a closer, more detailed look at the park's varied flora and animals.

Other potential services that could be added to the park include nature workshops or educational tours (e.g., led by park rangers), bike rentals, camping facilities, and guided bird-watching tours. These activities and services could attract more visitors to the park and increase their satisfaction with their experience. For example, guided bird-watching tours could provide visitors with a more in-depth understanding of the park's ecosystem and bird species. Camping facilities could allow visitors to spend more time in the park and have a more immersive experience.

Overall, the survey's findings indicate that people visiting Tram Chim National Park are seeking for ways to improve their experience. The park might be able to draw more people and boost their pleasure by taking into account these ideas.



Figure 24: Activities of tourists that pose a threat to Tram Chim National Park

Source: Own construction, 2023

The survey's results demonstrate that certain visitor activities are perceived as posing a danger to the preservation efforts of Tram Chim National Park (figure 24). Around 92% of respondents agreed that littering poses a serious threat to the park's preservation. That implies that tourists are not properly disposing of their trash, which might have a negative impact on the habitat and fauna of the park. The biodiversity of the park could also be harmed by trampling, or walking on plants and other organisms, could be harmful to the park's biodiversity. This worry was expressed by almost 68% of respondents. Furthermore, almost 51% of respondents believed that

fishing was harmful to the park's wildlife conservation. This activity may result in the extinction of fish populations and the destruction of aquatic habitats.

Ultimately, just approximately 20% of respondents thought that animal viewing activities may endanger the park's preservation. While these activities may be enjoyable for visitors, it is important to make sure that they do not disrupt the normal habits and habitats of the species.

4.1.3. Tourists' experience at the ecotourism sites (Tram Chim national park)



Figure 25: Visitors' satisfaction with the provided activities and services at the park Source: Own construction, 2023

The figure 25 depicts the distribution of respondents' levels of satisfaction with the park's activities and services. The responders were given a rating of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "very dissatisfied" and 5 indicating "very satisfied."

The majority of responders (46%) were pleased with the park's activities and services, awarding it a 4 out of 5. One-fifth (18%) of respondents were extremely happy, ranking it a 5 out of 5. However, 26% of respondents gave a satisfaction rating of 3 out of 5, suggesting that they were somewhat pleased. Just a tiny minority of respondents (2%) were extremely disappointed, giving the park a 1 out of 5 rating.



Figure 26: Whether tourists have ever provided financial support to the park Source: Own construction, 2023

The question addressed was if the responder has ever made a donation to the Eco park. According to the findings, 78% of those surveyed had not supplied any financial assistance, while 22% had. This shows that a large number of individuals have given money to the Eco park. Nonetheless, it is obvious that a substantial percentage of responders had not yet provided financial assistance. It should be noted that financial contributions can take various forms, including donations, sponsorships, and even purchasing products from the Eco park 's gift store. As a result, it would be fascinating to investigate the causes for the lack of financial support and whether any steps can be implemented to attract more individuals to participate.



Figure 27: How tourists provide financial support to the Eco park Source: Own construction, 2023

The responders were asked how they helped the park financially. The vast majority of them (100%) claimed that they purchased a park admission ticket as a sort of financial assistance. 78% of respondents said they have paid for specific activities, which might include extra services provided at the park. 22% of respondents said they donated money to the park, while 17% said they gave money to a foundation that supports the park. Visitors have clearly offered financial support to the park in a variety of ways, including direct and indirect sales of admission tickets and supplementary activities, as well as gifts to supporting charities.

Statistics

		Satisfaction	Ι	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Х	XI	XII
	Valid	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
Ν	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Me	an	3.71	2.70	3.88	3.88	4.01	3.73	4.02	3.18	3.51	3.49	3.52	3.57	3.59
Me	dian	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mo	de	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4

Table 3: Basic Statistics

Source: Own construction, 2023

The table displays statistics for 12 variables related to ecotourists' pro-environmental behaviors, experience satisfaction, and willingness to pay for nature conservation at Tram Chim National Park in Vietnam. The variables are numbered I to XII and correspond to the following statements:

- I) Spending time in nature has no effect on me.
- II) It's valuable to spend time in a natural environment.
- III) Spending time in nature makes me really glad.
- IV) The natural environment meets my interest for activity, relaxation, and adventure admirably.
- V) Preserving eco parks with financial support is a great idea.
- VI) Preserving eco parks with financial support is a highly responsible idea.
- VII) Eco parks cannot survive without financial support from residents and tourists.
- VIII) Financial support from tourists is essential for the high quality of eco parks.
- IX) I am willing to provide financial support for reducing pollution at ecotourism areas.

X) I am willing to provide financial support for environmental protection activities at ecotourism areas.

XI) I am willing to provide financial support for conserving habitats at ecotourism areas.

XII) I am willing to provide financial support for eliminating deforestation species extinction at ecotourism areas.

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for each variable, including the number of valid responses (N), the mean, median, and mode scores for each variable. The study collected data from 104 respondents, with no missing values. The variables in the study included satisfaction and 12 statements related to pro-environmental behaviors, experience satisfaction, and willingness to pay for nature conservation. The mean satisfaction score was 3.71, indicating that on average, respondents were satisfied with their ecotourism experience at the park. The mean scores for the 12 statements ranged from 2.70 to 4.02, with a median score of 4.00 for most statements. The mode score for most statements was also 4.00, indicating that this was the most frequently chosen response. Overall, the statistics suggest that respondents had a positive attitude towards pro-environmental behaviors, experience satisfaction, and willingness to pay for nature conservation at Tram Chim National Park.

	Ν	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Deviation	Variance
Satisfaction	104	1	5	.921	.848
Ι	104	1	5	1.206	1.454
II	104	1	5	1.027	1.055
III	104	1	5	1.021	1.042
IV	104	1	5	1.029	1.058
V	104	1	5	.927	.859
VI	104	1	5	.955	.912
VII	104	1	5	1.156	1.335
VIII	104	1	5	1.043	1.087
IX	104	1	5	.881	.777
Х	104	1	5	.914	.835
XI	104	1	5	.983	.966
XII	104	1	5	1.020	1.041
Valid N (list wise)	104				

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4: Descriptive statistics

Source: Own construction, 2023

The twelve statements are labeled I through XII in the table. For each statement, the table shows the sample size (N), the minimum and maximum values of the ratings, the standard deviation, and the variance. The "valid N (list wise)" row indicates that there were no missing values in the dataset (table 4).

The standard deviation and variance are measures of the spread of the ratings for each statement. A smaller standard deviation and variance indicate that the ratings are clustered more closely around the mean, while a larger standard deviation and variance indicate that the ratings are more spread out.

Overall, the ratings for the twelve statements were generally positive, with mean ratings above the midpoint of the scale (3). The highest mean ratings were for statement V ("Preserving eco parks with financial support is a great idea") and statement VI ("Preserving eco parks with financial support is a highly responsible idea"), while the lowest mean rating was for statement IX ("I am willing to provide financial support for reducing pollution at ecotourism areas").



Figure 28: Ecotourism Experience Satisfaction

Source: Own construction, 2023

Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree," respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with the statements about their experience satisfaction with the Eco site. The vertical axis displays the number of visits among the

respondents, while the horizontal axis depicts the various replies. With the 4 variables named above, the results (figure 28) are shown in the table below.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Ι	20.19%	23.08%	30.77%	18.27%	7.69%
II	6.73%	0.00%	18.27%	48.08%	26.92%
III	4.81%	0.00%	29.81%	33.65%	31.73%
IV	3.85%	1.92%	24.04%	30.77%	39.42%

Table 5: Ecotourism Experience Satisfaction

Source: Source: Own construction, 2023

The survey results show that the majority of tourists at the park have a positive attitude towards spending time in nature, with only a minority of respondents indicating that nature has no effect on them (table 5). Additionally, a significant proportion of tourists (over 64%) value spending time in a natural environment and find it enjoyable, with many stating that it makes them really glad (III).

Furthermore, the natural environment at the park appears to meet the interests of tourists for activity, relaxation, and adventure very well, with over 69% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement (IV).

Taken together, these findings suggest that tourists at the park are generally satisfied with their experiences and enjoy spending time in the natural environment. This highlights the importance of preserving and promoting eco-sites for tourism, not only for environmental conservation but also for enhancing the visitor experience. It is important for tourism businesses and organizations to continue to develop and promote sustainable practices that provide visitors with the opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the natural environment while also preserving it for future generations.



Figure 29: The attitude towards tourists' willingness to pay for environmental protection activities at the park

Statement	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly	Total
	Disagree				Agree	
V	2.9%	3.8%	30.8%	42.3%	20.2%	100%
VI	2.9%	2.9%	18.3%	41.3%	34.6%	100%
VII	6.7%	23.1%	30.8%	24.0%	15.4%	100%
VIII	6.7%	6.7%	67.3%	43.3%	14.4%	100%

Source: Own construction, 2023

Table 6: The attitude towards tourists' willingness to pay for environmental protection activities at the park

Source: Own construction, 2023

According to the results, 62.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that preserving eco parks with financial support is a great idea (Statement V), while 75.9% agreed or strongly agreed that preserving eco parks with financial support is a highly responsible idea (Statement VI). In addition, only 13.4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that financial support from tourists is essential for the high quality of eco parks (Statement VIII) (table 6).

On the other hand, some respondents were more hesitant or skeptical about the necessity of financial support for eco parks. Specifically, 30.81% of respondents were neutral on Statement V, and 29.8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that eco parks cannot survive without financial support from residents and tourists (Statement VII).

Overall, these results suggest that the majority of respondents are supportive of the idea of providing financial support for environmental protection activities at the park, particularly when it comes to preserving and responsibly managing the natural environment. However, there is still a significant minority who are unsure or skeptical about the necessity of such support. It may be important for park managers and advocates to better communicate the benefits and importance of environmental protection activities, in order to encourage more widespread support from tourists and residents alike.



Figure 30: Willingness to pay for pro-environmental activities at the Eco park

Source: Own construction, 2023

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
IX	2.88%	7.69%	36.54%	43.27%	9.62%
Х	2.88%	8.65%	33.65%	43.27%	11.54%
XI	3.85%	7.69%	32.69%	39.42%	16.35%
XII	4.81%	6.73%	31.73%	38.46%	18.27%

Table 7: Willingness to pay for pro-environmental activities at the Eco park

Source: Own construction, 2023

Figure 30 indicate that a significant portion of tourists are willing to provide financial support for conservation efforts at ecotourism areas. Over 55% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed

that they would be willing to contribute financially to reduce pollution, protect the environment, conserve habitats, and eliminate deforestation and species extinction at ecotourism areas.

This willingness to pay for conservation efforts suggests that tourists value and care about the natural environment, and recognize the importance of preserving it for future generations. It is also an opportunity for tourism businesses and organizations to develop sustainable practices and initiatives that not only benefit the environment but also enhance the visitor experience.

Overall, the results demonstrate that ecotourism has the potential to be a powerful tool for conservation efforts, but it is crucial for tourism businesses and organizations to actively promote and encourage sustainable practices and initiatives, and for tourists to be willing to contribute financially to these efforts.

4.2. SWOT analysis of Tram Chim National Park

4.2.1. Strengths

Tram Chim National Park has several strengths that make it an attractive destination for ecotourists. Firstly, the park's unique wetland ecosystem and diverse range of flora and fauna make it a nature lover's paradise. Visitors can observe rare bird species and other wildlife, while learning about the importance of wetland conservation. Additionally, Tram Chim National Park has eco-friendly accommodations, such as tents and homestays, which appeal to eco-tourists looking for sustainable lodging options. Lastly, the park has a team of experienced and knowledgeable guides who can provide valuable information and insights to visitors, enhancing their experience and knowledge of the ecosystem.

4.2.2. Weaknesses

Tram Chim National Park has a number of drawbacks that it must address to maintain its natural resources and biodiversity. Firstly, the park may face challenges in maintaining its ecosystem if eco-tourists engage in activities that have negative environmental impacts, such as littering or disturbing wildlife. Secondly, communication barriers may exist between visitors and guides if there are language or cultural differences, which could hinder the visitors' experience and their ability to fully appreciate the ecosystem. Lastly, the park may not have sufficient resources to fully capitalize on opportunities to enhance eco-tourists' experience and willingness to pay for nature conservation.

4.2.3. Opportunities

Tram Chim National Park offers a number of potential possibilities for growing and enhancing its ecotourism services. Firstly, there may be opportunities for the park to collaborate with local communities to develop sustainable and eco-friendly tourism products, such as organic farming or cultural exchanges. Secondly, the park can also apply technological advances in enhancing visitors' experience, such as through mobile applications that provide interactive maps, educational content, and real-time updates on wildlife sightings. Lastly, Tram Chim National Park can take advantage of its unique ecosystem and sustainable tourism offerings to attract a wider range of eco-tourists and enhance its reputation as a leading eco-tourism destination in the region.

4.2.4. Threats

Tram Chim National Park has a number of risks that must be addressed in order ensure the longterm sustainability of its natural resources and biodiversity. For instance, climate change and other environmental factors may have a detrimental influence on the park's natural resources, such as changing the wetland habitat or decreasing wildlife population. Second, the park could confront competition from other eco-tourism sites in the region, reducing the number of tourists and their willingness to pay for environmental protection. Finally, dissatisfied visitors' negative reviews or social media comments could harm the park's reputation and discourage future visitors, emphasizing the importance of ensuring visitor satisfaction and experience.

4.3. Hypothesis proving

Based on the results of my secondary and primary research, I evaluate my hypotheses as follows:

Research Hypothesis	Status
- Eco-tourists have a pretty low level of satisfaction when	
experiencing ecotourism in Tram Chim National Park.	Not Verified
- Eco-tourists are basically aware of activities that threaten the	
park.	Verified
- Eco-tourists who perceive eco sites as having a high	
environmental value are more likely to engage in pro-environmental	Verified
behaviors.	
- Eco-tourists who perceive eco sites as having a high	
environmental value have a higher willingness to pay for nature	Verified
conservation at these sites.	
- Eco-tourists are aware of environmental protection but do not	
know how to provide financial support for pro-environmental	Not Verified
activities at the park.	

Table 8: Research Hypothesis and Status

Source: Own construction according to the survey, 2023

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

Based on the study' findings it can be concluded that eco-tourists visiting Tram Chim National Park in Vietnam have a positive attitude towards pro-environmental behaviors, experience satisfaction, and willingness to pay for nature conservation.

It is found that eco-tourists at Tram Chim National Park had a high level of awareness and concern about environmental issues, with the majority expressing a willingness to adopt proenvironmental behaviors such as reducing plastic waste and conserving water. They also demonstrated a strong appreciation for the natural environment, with a significant percentage stating that spending time in nature was valuable and made them happy.

The willingness to pay for nature conservation was also evident, with the majority of respondents expressing a willingness to provide financial support for environmental protection activities at the park, including reducing pollution, conserving habitats, and eliminating deforestation and species extinction.

Overall, the results of this study highlight the importance of eco-tourism in promoting environmental awareness and conservation efforts. The positive attitudes and behaviors of ecotourists towards nature conservation provide a strong foundation for sustainable tourism development at Tram Chim National Park and similar eco-tourism destinations.

5.2. Recommendations

Numerous recommendations can be made to promote and enhance eco-tourists' proenvironmental behaviors, experience satisfaction, and willingness to pay for nature conservation in Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam.

Firstly, it is crucial to raise awareness among eco-tourists about the importance of nature conservation and the impact of their behavior on the environment. This can be accomplished through various ways including informative brochures, signage, and interactive displays that emphasize the need for environmental protection and the role of eco-tourists in achieving this goal.

Secondly, eco-tourism operators and park managers should strive to provide high-quality, ecofriendly facilities and services that align with eco-tourists' preferences and values. This includes environmentally sustainable accommodations, transportation, and food options, as well as providing opportunities for educational and engaging activities that promote environmental awareness and appreciation.

Thirdly, eco-tourism operators and park managers should collaborate with local communities to establish and maintain sustainable tourism practices that benefit both the environment and local residents. This can involve initiatives such as community-based tourism, where visitors can engage with locals and experience their way of life while supporting local economies.

Last but not least, it is essential for further research on eco-tourists' behavior and preferences, as well as the effectiveness of different conservation strategies and programs. This can help inform future decision-making and ensure that eco-tourism remains a sustainable and responsible form of tourism that supports both conservation efforts and local communities.

Overall, implementing these recommendations can help enhance the eco-tourism experience at Tram Chim National Park and encourage eco-tourists to engage in pro-environmental behaviors and support nature conservation efforts.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY

Ecotourism, in general, is a type of tourism that involves visiting natural areas while promoting conservation and supporting local communities. In recent years, Ecotourism has become increasingly popular, as more people become conscious of the importance of preserving natural areas and reducing negative environmental impacts. Tram Chim National Park is an important ecotourism destination in Vietnam, known for its rich biodiversity and wetland ecosystem.

The thesis "Exploring Eco Tourists' Pro-Environmental Behaviors, Experience Satisfaction, and Willingness to Pay for Nature Conservation in Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam" aimed to investigate the attitudes and behaviors of tourists towards pro-environmental activities. The primary research approach used in this study is a quantitative research method, which involved collecting numerical data through a structured questionnaire. This study's respondents were chosen using a convenience sample approach. Respondents were chosen based on their availability and willingness to complete the online survey. The study's sample size was 104 people who had visited Tram Chim National Park.

The study found that tourists generally had a positive attitude towards nature conservation and were willing to provide financial support for environmental protection activities at the park. However, their willingness to pay was influenced by their perceived effectiveness of the conservation efforts and their level of environmental awareness and the ecotourism satisfaction. The study revealed that tourists who were more satisfied with their experience at the park were more likely to participate in pro-environmental behaviors and to support conservation efforts. Based on the results, the study recommended that efforts should be made to increase tourists' awareness of environmental issues and to improve the effectiveness of conservation measures. Additionally, providing more educational opportunities for tourists and promoting eco-friendly practices could help encourage pro-environmental behaviors and support for conservation efforts.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Dong Van Karst Plateau, Ha Giang Province	8
Figure 2: Ma Pi Leng Pass, Ha giang Province	8
Figure 3: Cat Ba Island	9
Figure 4: Sapa, Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam	10
Figure 5: Cuc Phuong National park	11
Figure 6: Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park	12
Figure 7: Provincial map, the Mekong Delta, Viet Nam	13
Figure 8: Map of Tram Chim National Park	14
Figure 9: Sarus crane, antigone from India with the distinct white "collar"	15
Figure 10: Melaleuca cajuputi	16
Figure 11: Wetland at Tram Chim National park	17
Figure 12: Number of tourists to Tram Chim National Park during 2014–2018	18
Figure 13: Tourism revenue in Tram Chim national park during 2014–2018	19
Figure 14: Age group of respondents	22
Figure 15: Gender	23
Figure 16: Employment status	23
Figure 17: Educational level	24
Figure 18: Frequency of visiting the park	25
Figure 19: Time spent at Tram Chim National Park	25
Figure 20: How visitors find out information about the park	26
Figure 21: Tourists' favourite activities to do at Tram Chim National park	27
Figure 22: Other services tourists have used at the park	27
Figure 23:Activities which could be added to the park's services	28
Figure 24: Activities of tourists that pose a threat to Tram Chim National Park	29
Figure 25: Visitors' satisfaction with the provided activities and services at the park	30
Figure 26: Whether tourists have ever provided financial support to the park	31
Figure 27: How tourists provide financial support to the Eco park	31
Figure 28: Ecotourism Experience Satisfaction	34
Figure 29: The attitude towards tourists' willingness to pay for environmental protection	
activities at the park	36
Figure 30: Willingness to pay for pro-environmental activities at the Eco park	37

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The number of tourists in Vietnam	5
Table 2: Comparative analysis of the growth of tourists in Vietnam, 2000-2019	6
Table 3: Basic Statistics	32
Table 4: Descriptive statistics	33
Table 5: Ecotourism Experience Satisfaction	35
Table 6: The attitude towards tourists' willingness to pay for environmental protection activ	vities
at the park	36
Table 7: Willingness to pay for pro-environmental activities at the Eco park	37
Table 8: Research Hypothesis and Status	40

APPENDIXES

Appendix 01: Questionnaire of the case study

Tourist Experience Questionnaire

Exploring ecotourists' pro-environmental behaviors, experience satisfaction and willingness to pay for nature conservation: A case study of Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam.

Hello everyone, my name is Thao. This questionnaire is a part of my graduation thesis research project as a master student at Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences in Hungary. Please help me with fulfilling it! You could need approximately from 5 to 7 minutes to complete it. Your most faithful and honest answers are expected and encoded for anonymity and confidentiality.

1. How many times have you visited Tram Chim National Park?
a. Once
b. Twice
c. Three times
d. Other(s) (please specify):
2. How much time did you spend in the park?
a. A few hours
b. 1 day
c. 2 -3 days
d. Other(s) (please specify):
3. How did you find out about Tram Chim National Park?
a. Recommended by friends and acquaintances
b. I saw information about it on the internet
c. Recommended by a travel agency
d. I found an advertisement in a brochure
e. Other(s) (please specify):
4. What are your favorite activities to do there? (you may select more than one option)

a. Take a boat to do sightseeing
b. Try some typical cuisine
c. Take part in amazing games (fishing, harvesting rice and bathing)
d. Hike in the park
e. Observe the birds.
d. Other(s) (please specify):
5. Which other services have you used there?
a. Exploring Tram Chim National Park by electric car and boat
b. Parking and docking area
c. Other(s) (please specify):
5. In your opinion, what activities could be added to the park's services?
a. Souvenirs
b. Food and beverage
c. Providing additional equipment for sightseeing tours (dinghy, machinery, mountain
bikes,)
d. Other(s) (please specify):
7. How satisfied were you with the activities and services provided by the park?
a. Very dissatisfied
b. Dissatisfied
c. Neutral
d. Satisfied
e. Very satisfied
3. Which tourist activities do you think are threatening the Tram Chim National park
a. Fishing
b. Litering
c. Trampling
d. Safaris and wildlife watching activities
e. Other(s) (please specify):
Please mark your degree of agreement with the statements generally to ecotourism experience satisfaction below by putting a tick!

	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
	Disagree				Agree

Spending time in nature has no effect on me.			
It's valuable to spend time in a natural			
environment.			
Spending time in nature makes me really			
glad.			
The natural environment meets my interests			
for activity, relaxation, and adventure			
admirably.			

Please mark your degree of agreement with the statements below!

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Preserving eco parks with financial support is					
a great idea.					
Preserving eco parks with financial support is					
a highly responsible idea.					
Eco parks cannot survive without financial					
support from residents and tourists.					
Financial support from tourists is essential for the					
high quality of eco parks.					

Please mark your degree of agreement with the statements below!

	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
	Disagree				Agree
I am willing to provide financial support for					
reducing pollution at ecotourism areas.					
I am willing to provide financial support for					
environmental protection activities at					
ecotourism areas.					
I am willing to provide financial support for					
conserving habitats at ecotourism areas.					
I am willing to provide financial support for					
eliminating deforestation and species					
extinction.					

9. Have you ever provided financial support to an Eco Park?

a. No (You can skip question 10)

b. Yes (You can continue to answer question 10)

10. How did you provide financial support to the Eco Park for nature conservation?

- a. In the form of a donation
- b. I bought an entrance ticket
- c. I have paid for certain activities
- d. I gave money to a foundation that supports the park
- e. Other(s) (please specify):

Your demographic Information

1. What gender do you identify as?

- a. Male
- b. Female

2. What age group do you belong to?

- a. 18-29 years old
- b. 30-39 years old
- c. 40-49 years old
- d. 50-59 years old
- e. Over 59 years old

3. What is your employment status?

- a. Employed
- b. Self-employed
- c. Student
- d. Retired
- e. Other(s) (please specify):

4. What is the highest degree or educational level you have achieved?

- a. Primary school
- b. High school
- c. Some college
- d. Bachelor's or Master's degree
- e. Other(s) (please specify):

Thank you very much for your participation!

DECLARATION

on authenticity and public assess of final essay/thesis/mater's thesis/portfolio¹

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Year of publication:	2023
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²Please select the one that applies, and delete the other types.

STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION PRACTICES

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