

Tourism Development and Visitor Demand in Hanoi: Implications for Designing Experiential Tourism Products

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ABSTRACT: This study analyzes the current situation and needs of tourists visiting Hanoi during the period from 2021 to 2025. Data were collected from annual summary reports relevant to the research field and from surveys of 100 tourists visiting Hanoi. Based on the findings, the study proposes diversifying tourism products to attract more visitors to Hanoi in the future.

KEYWORDS: Visitor demand, Experience, Tourism products

1. INTRODUCTION

Amid globalization and the rapid expansion of the tourism industry, countries and localities worldwide are increasingly prioritizing sustainable tourism development. This approach not only contributes to economic growth but also addresses various social challenges. The visitor experience has emerged as a critical factor in determining the competitiveness of tourist destinations. Unlike in previous decades, when tourism primarily focused on sightseeing and relaxation, contemporary trends indicate that tourists now seek more personalized, interactive, and culturally immersive experiences. Enhancing the quality of the tourism experience not only increases tourist satisfaction but also promotes the sustainable development of the tourism sector at both local and national levels (Iorio, 2010; Sofia, Puntita, & Clemens, 2022; Cherise et al., 2017).

As the socio-economic center of Vietnam, Hanoi is no exception to this trend. Tourism has become a key economic sector, contributing significantly to the city's socio-economic development. According to statistics from the Hanoi Department of Culture and Sports, in 2024, the tourism industry employed approximately 298,000 workers, accounting for about 7% of the city's total workforce (Nguyen Van Dung, 2025). Hanoi is widely recognized as a cultural and tourism hub, featuring numerous renowned destinations that harmoniously blend historical and traditional cultural values with modern urban life, such as the Hoan Kiem Lake area, the Hanoi Old Quarter, the Temple of Literature, the Thang Long Imperial Citadel, and traditional craft villages such as Bat Trang and Van Phuc. These destinations not only offer sightseeing opportunities but also provide diverse experiential activities, including cultural exploration, culinary experiences, participation in handicraft production, and interaction with the local community.

During the period of 2020-2022, Hanoi capital, like other localities in Vietnam, was significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of international tourists decreased drastically, impacting both the overall tourism revenue and the overall tourism income of Hanoi. After March 2022, following the lifting of social distancing measures and the transition to a "new normal," tourism activities recovered, and programs were implemented to promote tourism development and attract tourists to Hanoi.

To further enhance tourism attraction and development in Hanoi, analyzing and proposing solutions to diversify tourism products plays a crucial role in creating competitiveness for Hanoi's tourism development.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Data for this study were collected from annual tourism summary reports issued by the Hanoi Department of Culture and Sports, as well as published documents from the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, local statistical agencies, and specialized academic journals.

In addition, a random survey of 100 tourists visiting Hanoi was conducted between January and February 2026 to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of visitors' needs and expectations regarding tourism products in the city. This broader

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perspective on tourist demand provides a basis for proposing more attractive tour programs and diversified tourism products for visitors to Hanoi.

Based on the collected data, descriptive statistical analysis was employed to achieve the research objectives.

3. THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

During the period from 2021 to 2025, the number of tourists visiting Hanoi increased steadily for both international and domestic segments. The specific figures are presented below:

Table 1: Scale of Tourist Arrivals in Hanoi, 2021–2025

Unit: Million visitors

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Domestic tourists	4	17.2	20	21.51	25.88
International tourists	-	1.5	4	6.35	7.82
Total number of tourists	4	18.7	24	27.86	33.7

Source: Compiled from reports of the Hanoi Department of Culture and Sports

Table 1 indicates that the number of tourists visiting Hanoi during the period 2021–2025 experienced noticeable fluctuations but exhibited an overall upward trend, reflecting the recovery and development of the tourism industry in the post-COVID-19 period.

In 2021, the total number of visitors to Hanoi reached approximately 4 million due to the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions. In 2022, the figure rose sharply to 18.7 million—more than 4.6 times higher than the previous year—indicating a strong recovery of domestic tourism as socio-economic activities gradually resumed. By 2023, total visitor arrivals reached 24 million, continuing to increase but at a more moderate pace, suggesting a transition from rapid recovery to stabilization. This upward trend is projected to persist in 2024 and 2025, with total arrivals expected to reach 27.86 million and 33.7 million, respectively, highlighting the sustained growth of Hanoi's tourism industry.

Regarding the structure of tourist arrivals, domestic visitors consistently accounted for the largest share throughout the study period. In 2021, domestic tourists represented 100% of total arrivals due to the complete absence of international visitors amid travel restrictions. From 2022 onward, the number of domestic tourists increased sharply from 4 million to 17.2 million and is projected to reach 25.88 million by 2025. This trend underscores the pivotal role of the domestic market in driving recovery and sustaining tourism growth, particularly in the post-pandemic context in Hanoi.

Meanwhile, international visitors began returning in 2022, with 1.5 million arrivals, and have increased rapidly in subsequent years, reaching 7.82 million in 2025. The growth rate of international arrivals has exceeded that of domestic visitors, particularly during the 2022–2024 period, reflecting the effectiveness of policies aimed at reopening international tourism as well as the recovery of the global travel market. However, despite this rapid growth, the share of international visitors remains lower than that of domestic tourists, suggesting considerable potential for further expansion in this segment in Hanoi.

Regarding tourism revenue in Hanoi during the period 2021–2025, the figures are presented as follows:

Table 2: Tourism Revenue in Hanoi City, 2021–2025

Unit: Billion VND

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Revenue	11280	60000	87650	100000	134460

Source: Compiled from reports of the Hanoi Department of Culture and Sports

Table 2 illustrates a strong recovery and remarkable growth in tourism revenue over the 2021–2025 period, highlighting the tourism sector's increasingly significant contribution to the local economy.

In 2021, tourism revenue amounted to only VND 11280 billion, primarily due to the severe disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in 2022, revenue increased sharply to VND 60000 billion, representing a more than 5.3 times increase compared to the previous year. This substantial growth reflects the effectiveness of tourism reopening policies and the rapid rebound in tourism demand, particularly from the domestic market.

For the 2023–2025 period, tourism revenue is projected to maintain its upward trajectory, albeit at a more moderate and stable growth rate. In 2023, revenue reached VND 87650 billion, corresponding to an approximate 46.1% increase compared to 2022. It is forecast to rise to VND 100000 billion in 2024 and further to VND 134460 billion by 2025. This sustained growth trend

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indicates not only quantitative expansion but also signals the gradual stabilization and sustainable development of the tourism industry in the post-pandemic context.

The survey results regarding tourists' needs when visiting Hanoi are presented below:

Table 3: Survey Results on Tourists' Needs in Hanoi capital

No.	Tourist demand	Number (People)	Percentage (%)
1	Heritage site visitation	85	85%
2	Local culinary experiences	90	90%
3	Exploration of local life and culture	78	78%
4	Purchase of local specialties and souvenirs	65	65%
5	Participation in experiential craft activities (pottery making, traditional craft villages, etc.)	72	72%
6	Leisure and relaxation activities	60	60%
7	Photography at iconic landmarks	88	88%
8	Recreational and entertainment activities	55	55%

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

The survey results indicate that tourists' demands when visiting Hanoi are highly diverse, with the most prominent motivations being the desire to experience local cuisine (90%) and to visit famous landmarks in combination with photography activities (88%). This finding reflects contemporary tourism trends, in which experiential consumption and "check-in" practices play a significant role in shaping tourist behavior.

Additionally, culturally oriented activities—such as visiting historical sites (85%) and exploring local lifestyles (78%)—also attract considerable interest. This highlights the enduring appeal of Hanoi's traditional cultural values and heritage assets. Moreover, the relatively high proportion of tourists expressing interest in hands-on experiences, such as pottery-making in traditional craft villages (72%), suggests a growing preference for interactive, immersive, and personalized tourism experiences.

In contrast, motivations related to relaxation (60%) and participation in recreational activities (55%) record comparatively lower proportions. This pattern reflects the distinctive characteristics of Hanoi's tourism, which is predominantly centered on cultural exploration and experiential engagement rather than conventional leisure-oriented tourism.

Statistical Results of Selected Prominent Tourist Destinations in Hanoi:

Table 4. Characteristics of Experiential Activities at Selected Prominent Tourist Destinations in Hanoi

Tourist Destination	Description of Experiential Offerings
Hoan Kiem Lake	Sightseeing, walking tours, photography, participation in weekend pedestrian street activities, and attending street art performances
Hanoi Old Quarter	Experiencing local specialties, traditional culinary activities, and exploring craft streets
Temple of Literature	Learning about Vietnam's Confucian examination system, visiting the Doctors' Steles, and taking graduation photographs
Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum	Paying tribute at the Mausoleum, visiting Ba Dinh Square, the Presidential Palace, and Ho Chi Minh's Stilt House
Thang Long Imperial Citadel	Visiting archaeological sites and exploring the history of the Thang Long Imperial Citadel through different dynasties
One Pillar Pagoda	Exploring unique architectural works and engaging in spiritual practices for peace and blessings
Hanoi Cathedral	Visiting Gothic-style architecture, taking photographs, and enjoying coffee in the surrounding areas

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West Lake	Cycling, sightseeing, visiting Tran Quoc Pagoda, and enjoying lakeside cuisine
Tran Quoc Pagoda	Visiting ancient pagodas, praying for good fortune, and learning about Buddhism
Hoa Lo Prison	Visiting exhibitions of historical artifacts and learning about Vietnam's wars of resistance for national independence
Vietnam Museum of Ethnology	Exploring the cultural heritage of Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups and visiting traditional outdoor housing spaces
Bat Trang Pottery Village	Experiencing pottery-making, visiting ceramic markets, and purchasing handicraft products.
Van Phuc Silk Village	Learning about traditional silk weaving and shopping for silk products
Bao Son Paradise Park	Participating in entertainment activities, visiting aquariums, and enjoying water parks
Ba Vi National Park	Mountain climbing, visiting national forests, and engaging in weekend resort activities

Source: Author's compilation

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings suggest a growing diversification in tourist demand, accompanied by notable shifts in expectations toward tourism products and services. To address these evolving consumption patterns, the study proposes several tourism product development orientations aimed at aligning supply with emerging market needs, as presented below:

Firstly, it is recommended to develop tourism products that emphasize historical and cultural values. Based on the research findings, several tour packages can be designed to enhance the attractiveness of Hanoi's heritage resources. A proposed one-day cultural tour is outlined as follows:

Morning:

- Visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum
- Visit Ba Dinh Square and One Pillar Pagoda
- Lunch: Enjoy traditional Hanoi cuisine
- Afternoon:
 - Visit the Temple of Literature
 - Visit the Thang Long Imperial Citadel
 - Visit Hoa Lo Prison

Key highlights:

- Learn about Vietnamese history and culture
- Particularly suitable for international tourists and culture-oriented travelers

Secondly, developing experiential tourism products focusing on traditional craft villages and local culture

Proposed Tourism Tours:

- Morning:
 - Visit Bat Trang Pottery Village
 - Participate in pottery-making experiences
- Lunch: Lunch at a local restaurant
- Afternoon:
 - Visit Van Phuc Silk Village
 - Shopping for traditional handicrafts

Key highlights:

- Direct interaction with artisans
- Experiencing local culture

Thirdly, ecotourism products combined with relaxation

Proposed Tourism Tours:

- Day 1:

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- West Lake – Tran Quoc Pagoda
- Travel to Ba Vi – relaxation
- Day 2:
 - Hiking and exploring nature
 - Return to Hanoi

Key highlights:

- Relaxation combined with ecotourism
- Avoiding overcrowding in the city center

Hanoi offers a broad spectrum of tourist destinations; however, "the bottleneck" to advancing the capital's tourism lies in strategically combining its assets to craft original and distinctive experiences. The proposed tour concepts reflect the potential for integrating multiple immersive elements, such as cultural discovery, local cuisine, traditional craftsmanship, and ecotourism. Designing tours tailored to the preferences of different visitor segments elevates the overall travel experience, helps redirect tourist flows, reduces congestion in central districts, and maximizes the appeal of satellite sites. This approach builds a strong basis for developing distinctive and sustainable tourism offerings in Hanoi.

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