

MICE TOURISM MODEL FOR CAN THO CITY

● PHONG THI HUYNH MAI - NGUYEN HUYNH PHUOC THIEN
- THAI NGOC VU - TRINH BUU NAM

ABSTRACT:

Located in the heart of the Mekong Delta, Can Tho city is an attractive destination for tourists with a variety of tourist products, focusing on river tourism, eco-tourism, and especially MICE tourism. This study analyzed the necessary elements and advantages of MICE tourism and proposed the development model for Can Tho city's MICE tourism. The study also proposed some solutions to promote the sustainable development of MICE tourism and contribute to enhancing the position of Can Tho city on the domestic and international tourism map.

Keywords: MICE tourism, the Mekong Delta, Can Tho city.

1. Introduction

Can Tho City is an attractive destination for domestic and foreign tourists. With modern infrastructure, Can Tho has a lot of potential to develop tourism products, in which MICE tourism is considered a highlight. However, in order to effectively exploit this potential, Can Tho needs to face many challenges, especially building a MICE tourism development model. So, analyzing the elements and advantages of Can Tho city and proposing the development model of MICE tourism of Can Tho city are necessary.

2. Theoretical basis

2.1. Definition

MICE stands for Meeting, Incentive, Conferences and Exhibition, namely:

(1) Meeting is a meeting of a group of people to discuss or exchange information. Meetings can also be seen as small-scale conferences in some areas.

(2) Incentives are company-sponsored trips for employees, distributors or customers. Companies use MICE to reward performance, boost effort and build loyalty to the company.

(3) Conferences are events in which the main activity of the participant is to participate in educational and knowledge sessions, attend meetings/discussions, exchange or take part in other organized activities.

(4) Exhibition is a professionally organized event to showcase products and services, which is a cost-saving way for buyers and sellers to meet. Exhibitions are often organized by trade associations, industrial agencies, governmental organizations and professional exhibition organizations.

2.2. Characteristics of MICE

Some of the highlights of MICE travel:

(1) Large scale: MICE events often involve hundreds to thousands of people, requiring high-

end infrastructure and services such as 4-5 star hotels, modern conference centers.

(2) Long stays: MICE travelers usually stay longer than regular travelers, using a variety of premium services and amenities.

(3) Participants: Mostly entrepreneurs, people with high social status and affordability.

(4) Professional organization: Requires strict organization and management to ensure that events go smoothly. This includes detailed planning, efficient time, resource and budget management.

(5) Globality: MICE events often involve companies, organizations and individuals from many countries, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and expanding international cooperation.

3. Research methods

To carry out the research, the authors used descriptive statistics and qualitative methodologies from the secondary data of the specialized reports and related research works that have been published.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Analysis of related studies

Oppermann and Chon (1997), Severt and etc. (2006), and Zhang, Leung, and Qu (2007) provided a comprehensive summary of the factors that influence an individual's decision to attend a conference, dividing them into four categories:

- Personal/business factors,
- The link/conference elements,
- Position elements.
- Opportunities to intervene.

A number of studies have been conducted to identify factors that influence the location of the event organizer. Studies conducted in locations in North America and Asian countries of Chen (2006), Hankinson (2005), Oppermann (1996) and Ryan, Crotts, & Litvin (2007) show that although the exact criteria vary between each study, the criteria can generally be classified as related to:

- Facilities of the site,

- Destination resources,

- Accessibility,

- Additional services such as dining and entertainment.

According to Le Thai Son and Ha Nam Khanh Giao (2018) research in Vietnam also suggests that destination resources have an influence on the development of MICE tourism. Destination resources include support systems, donors, organizations, and buyers.

4.2. Evaluating the advantages of Can Tho on MICE tourism

(1) Geographic Location

Variables with averages ranging from 4.18 to 4.35/5.0, showing that Can Tho has a very important geographical location to serve as the core of the linking region.

(2) Infrastructure

The observed variables have a point around 4.0/5.0. The results show that the infrastructure in the city of Can Tho is highly valued.

(3) State policy factors

The average score ranges from 4.61 to 4.64/5.0 shows that state policy factors have a positive impact on regional linking.

(4) Service provider factors:

MICE service providers are event organizers, specifically large-scale hotels and exhibition and convention centers. Can Tho City has nearly 70 hotels of 3 stars or more. Compared to other localities in the Mekong Delta, this is also a great advantage of Can Tho City. Kien Giang has about 40 hotels of 3 stars or more, including 20 5-star hotels, however these hotels are concentrated mainly on Phu Quoc island where is high cost. In addition, Can Tho City has a convention and exhibition center that can accommodate domestic and international conference, trade fair and exhibition activities.

Besides, human resource of Can Tho is also the advantages compared to other localities in the region. There are many universities and colleges that train human resources in the region, including

Table 1. Average result variable geographical location

Factors	Mean
1. It has a geographical location associated with favorable natural and land conditions that create economic and social values in the economic development of the Mekong Delta	4.33
2. It has a geographical location linked to the conditions of health, education, the system of cultural, sports, transportation, and communications facilities to serve as the cultural, scientific-technical, service and tourism center of the area	4.35
3. Can Tho is located at the center of the Mekong Delta, is an important transport link, the strategic defense-security site of the area and the country's influence on the development of the Mekong Delta regional link center of Can Tho	4.36
4. It has a reasonable geographical position in exchange with other localities in the Mekong Delta, both domestically and internationally; it forms a link between the regions, contributing to promoting the city's development to become a hub for connecting the region	4.34
5. There is a great potential for high-tech industrial development to meet the demands of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 impact on development of Can Tho city the Mekong Delta regional link center	4.12
6. It has favorable conditions to develop traditional services sectors and expand new services with great potential and added value, becoming the center of services and tourism of the Mekong Delta	4.12

Source: Survey 2024

Table 2. Infrastructure - faccilities

Factors	Mean
1. Can Tho has a system of restaurants, hotels, accommodation facilities... fulfilling the role of a tourism development link in the Mekong Delta	4.03
2. There are many major commercial, service and credit centers that meet the requirements of being the financial center in the Mekong Delta	4,00
3. It has an infrastructure that fulfills the role of the economic center of the Mekong delta	4,00
4. It has deep water port infrastructure, airport and transportation infrastructure that serves as a logistical hub in the Mekong	4,01

Source: Survey 2024

the tourism industry. The results of the survey show that the average score of these variables converges around 4.5/5.0. This result shows that Can Tho plays an important role in training and providing human resources for the Mekong Delta, including the tourism industry.

(5) Accessibility:

Ho Le Thu Trang (2019) conducted a survey of

150 visitors on the image of the destination of Can Tho, Table 6 noted that the overall perception of visitors about accessibility is quite satisfactory (3,64/5,0).

(6) Support services:

Support services of Can Tho are not as many and diverse as some other localities in the Mekong delta. Therefore, in order to retain

Table 3. State policy factors

Factors	Mean
1. Guidelines and methodologies issued by the State affecting the development of Can Tho city	4.64
2. Procedures and regulations issued by the state affect the development of Can Tho city	4.61
4. Support policies issued by the state have an impact on the development of Can Tho city regional link center	4.61
5. The State's policy-making and enterprise support has an impact on the development of Can Tho city 's the Mekong delta regional linking center	4.62

Source: Survey 2024

Table 4. Accommodation

No	Localities	*****	****	***	**	*	Others	Total
1	Long An			1	3	17	363	384
2	Tien Giang				11	52	159	222
3	Đông Thap			3	4	28	53	88
4	Ben Tre	1	1	3		8	11	24
5	Vinh Long			1	5	19	22	47
6	Tra Vinh			2	6	14	13	35
7	An Giang		1	8	8	39	23	79
8	Can Tho	4	14	46	37	9	149	259
9	Hau Giang			1	2	6	28	37
10	Soc Trang			1	11	20	22	54
11	Kien Giang	20	7	11	32	54	107	231
12	Bac Lieu			3	8	20	27	58
13	Ca Mau	1	1	7	17	22	7	55
Total		26	24	87	144	308	984	1.573

Source: Department of Tourism

tourists, Can Tho needs to cooperate, link with the localities in the region to diversify the types of services, increase attractiveness to tourists.

4.3. Proposal for a MICE development model

From the above research, the team proposes the following MICE tourism development model:

5. Solution to develop the type of MICE tourism in Can Tho, attached to the role of the linking center of the Mekong Delta

(1) *Taking advantage of the geographical location to organize a MICE tour.*

With the advantage of being a central city, Can Tho is oriented as a tourist center and guest coordinator for the region. This is also a favorable condition for travelers to move to Can Tho and choose to organize MICE.

In the future, Can Tho should focus on the system of roads and waterways to increase the

Table 5. Average result for human resources

Factors	Mean
1. It is the human resource training center of the Mekong delta	4.59
2. Can Tho is the high-quality human resource training linkage center of the Mekong Delta	4.56
3. Can Tho is the center of quality human resources for the Mekong delta	4.57
4. Can Tho has concentrated many prestigious, quality human resources training centers in the area	4.54

Source: Survey 2024

Table 6. The visitor's perception of accessibility to the destination.

Factors	Mean
1. It's a destination with a quality transportation system of	3.4
2. Can Tho is the destination, convenient stops to other tourist attractions	3.8
3. Can Tho is a convenient destination for sightseeing, shopping, and entertainment.	3.5
4. Can Tho is the destination of available parking in the city, tourist attractions, markets, trade centers	3.7
5. Can Tho is a destination that provides good travel information, full	3.8

Source: Survey 2024

recognition of the type of western water river tourism... expanded many domestic and international flights, to attract more visitors choosing Can Tho organized MICE.

it is advisable to set up a map to locate MICE travel destinations, so that MICE organizers can conveniently refer to the capacity, service utilities, organizational experience and other relevant standards.

(2) Investing and upgrading in facilities and infrastructure.

Can Tho needs to invest in more conference centers to host large-scale events up to a few thousand people, focusing on outdoors. Increase the synchronization and professionalization of services, from conference rooms, hotels, exhibition centers, modes of transportation... In addition, the local Government should invest in the area of tourism services (restaurants, bars, tourist offices, recreational cafes...) and urban infrastructure renovation, upgrading and

improvement of the urban environment... Besides, it is necessary to ensure full modern equipment so that visitors feel comfortable. Pay attention to developing training and medical facilities to exploit the type of educational and medical tourism to take advantage of the city's central area.

(3) Obeying with the state's policies, there is flexibility in the process.

There is a need for good coordination between the three parties: the organizing units of MICE (travel, travel, event companies), the state agencies (activity licensors) and the service units (destination, accommodation, transportation). Accordingly, there needs to be an incentive mechanism for MICE passengers.

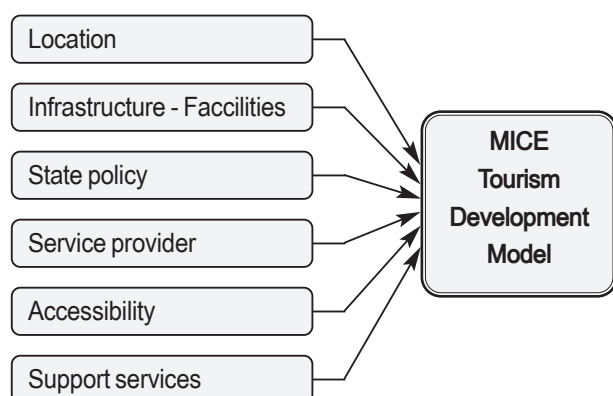
We need long-term planning with infrastructure, products, services, and human resources. Besides, there should be a coordinating committee on MICE tourism. The fact that when organizing MICE events, organizing units have to

Table 7. Destinations, restaurants and trade centers

No	Localities	Destinations	Restaurants	Trade centers
1	Long An	8	47	9
2	Tien Giang	5	11	13
3	Đông Thap	12	39	14
4	Ben Tre	12	40	10
5	Vinh Long	7	31	11
6	Tra Vinh	5	19	18
7	An Giang	20	90	9
8	Can Tho	9	36	24
9	Hau Giang	11	9	5
10	Soc Trang	8	7	11
11	Kien Giang	15	54	14
12	Bac Lieu	8	29	7
13	Ca Mau	5	36	9
Total		125	448	154

Source: Department of Tourism

Figure 1. MICE Tourism Development Model of Can Tho.



ask for permission in many places for many activities, so it will be time-consuming and difficult to organize for other visitors.

(4) Making MICE tourism demand actively.

It is important to strengthen the linkages between the tourism industry and the local authorities in order to build a brand that matches a wide range of factors, from order security, environmental hygiene, landscape to tourism

programs that attract visitors in and out of the country. Collaborate with travel companies to create financial packages to make use of attractive MICE services, including conference activities, seminars, exhibitions combined with sightseeing, cultural experiences and local cuisine.

(5) Enhancing accessibility.

We need to use digital technology in tourism management and promotion, create mobile apps and smart websites to help visitors know about MICE tourism in Can Tho. Take advantage of modern media channels such as social networks, travel websites and online platforms to promote MIC services and events. Organizing promotional events such as tourism fairs, MICE tourism introduction workshops in Can Tho. Invite enterprises and international organizations to participate so that they have the opportunity to experience the services and infrastructure in the city. Promotion at roadshow, tradeshow, exhibitions and fairs, seminars and workshops

abroad; advertising publications; establishment of the MICE Poetry Club to exchange, exchange organizational experiences and be the messenger of this type of tourism to the public.

(6) diversification of subsidiary services.

It's a good idea to combine MICE events with local sightseeing, cultural and culinary experiences. Can Tho has many historical and cultural monuments such as the King of the Heroes temple, the ancient house of Binh Thuy... organizing tours that combine learning about local history and culture will help visitors to have a better insight into the land. At the same time, traditional villages and coastal communities are attractive destinations, organizing community

tours, where visitors can participate in the daily activities of the local people, will create memorable and unique experiences and will be an opportunity for visitors to combine MICE tourism with quite tourist products.

6. Conclusion

Can Tho has the full potential to develop the type of MICE tourism. To sustainably develop the type of tourism MICE requires close coordination between the functional regulators to formulate a reasonable investment plan, technical infrastructure planning, developing development strategies, while raising financial resources, human resources... to develop the synchronous, long-term MICE tourism ■

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Received date: July 12, 2024

Reviewed date: July 20, 2024

Accepted date: August 1, 2024

Author Information:

1. PHONG THI HUYNH MAI¹

2. NGUYEN HUYNH PHUOC THIEN¹

3. THAI NGOC VU¹

4. TRINH BUU NAM¹

¹Tay Do University

MÔ HÌNH PHÁT TRIỂN DU LỊCH MICE TẠI CẦN THƠ

● PHÒNG THỊ HUỲNH MAI¹

● NGUYỄN HUỲNH PHƯỚC THIÊN¹

● THÁI NGỌC VŨ¹

● TRỊNH BỬU NAM¹

¹Trường Đại học Tây Đô

TÓM TẮT:

Nằm ở trung tâm Đồng bằng sông Cửu Long, thành phố Cần Thơ là điểm đến hấp dẫn đối với du khách với nhiều sản phẩm du lịch đa dạng, tập trung vào du lịch sông nước, du lịch sinh thái, và đặc biệt là du lịch MICE (du lịch kết hợp giữa nghỉ dưỡng với tổ chức sự kiện, hội nghị, hội thảo). Nghiên cứu này phân tích các yếu tố cần thiết và lợi thế của du lịch MICE và đề xuất mô hình phát triển cho du lịch MICE của thành phố Cần Thơ. Nghiên cứu cũng đề xuất một số giải pháp thúc đẩy phát triển du lịch MICE bền vững và góp phần nâng cao vị thế của Cần Thơ trên bản đồ du lịch trong nước và quốc tế.

Từ khoá: du lịch MICE, Đồng bằng Sông Cửu Long, Cần Thơ.