

VIETNAM AS A NEW DESTINATION FOR DIGITAL NOMADS

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Abstract:

Digital nomadism has become increasingly prominent worldwide. With its natural landscapes, cultural diversity, and relatively affordable living costs, Vietnam has emerged as an attractive destination for digital nomads. However, despite growing scholarship on digital nomadism, research focusing on Vietnam remains limited. This exploratory study examines emerging trends and perceptions among digital nomads in Vietnam. Data were collected from Reddit posts and comments concerning digital nomad experiences in the country. The findings suggest that Vietnam holds a competitive position in the global digital nomad landscape. Nevertheless, improvements in regulatory frameworks and infrastructure could further strengthen its appeal as a long-term destination for remote workers.

Keywords: digital nomads, Vietnam, tourism, destination management, new destination.

Việt Nam - Điểm đến mới cho dân du mục kỹ thuật số

Tóm tắt:

Chủ nghĩa du mục số ngày càng phổ biến trên thế giới. Nhờ cảnh quan hấp dẫn, văn hóa phong phú và chi phí sinh hoạt hợp lý, Việt Nam đang nổi lên như một điểm đến của người du mục số. Tuy nhiên, các nghiên cứu về hiện tượng này tại Việt Nam còn hạn chế. Nghiên cứu khảo sát xu hướng và quan điểm của người du mục số thông qua các bài đăng, bình luận trên Reddit. Kết quả cho thấy Việt Nam có vị thế cạnh tranh trong nhóm điểm đến dành cho người du mục số trên thế giới. Tuy nhiên, việc hoàn thiện khung pháp lý và cơ sở hạ tầng là cần thiết để nâng cao sức hấp dẫn của Việt Nam như một điểm đến dài hạn cho người làm việc từ xa.

Từ khóa: du mục kỹ thuật số, Việt Nam, du lịch, quản lý điểm đến, điểm đến.

1. Introduction

In over the last two decades, the world has seen a rapid shift from work office to home office as an idea to geographically independent lifestyle (Müller, 2016). This phenomenon was created as a result of technological advancement especially in communication and interaction method, making face-to-face contact inessential (Müller, 2016; Jiwasiddi et al., 2024). If before COVID-19, remote workers were considered odd and negative, this trend has become widespread and positively accepted by both workers and employers (Müller, 2016; Wang et al., 2020). In fact, according to the statistical results of 2023 State of Remote Work (2023) on 3000 remote workers worldwide, this lifestyle is getting more well received with 98% of respondents saying they want to work remotely at least partially throughout their career. Sixty-four percent of the participants work remotely full time, and they wish to stay the same.

Southeast Asian countries have been well-known to international tourists for their tropical climate, beautiful beaches, as well as rich cultural heritage. Recently, Viet Nam, specifically Danang has been listed by several travel sites as one of the best destinations for digital nomads. For example, Sears (2025) reported on Travel Off Path that Danang was recognized as the top 1 destination for digital nomads based on Agoda experts' selection. The city of Vietnam was selected for its beautiful beaches, strong coffee cultures, and reasonable living costs. Cora Travels (2025) also reveals on their blog Best countries for digital nomads: Top picks for 2025, (2025) the top 10 digital nomad hubs with Vietnam (including Hanoi, Danang and Ho Chi Minh city) listed in number 6. The country is described as offering high value-for-money and exquisite street food cuisine.

Although several studies have conducted to investigate the impact of digital nomadism on the local communities, many of them utilize a case study approach, which focus on a specific area, especially in Thailand (de Loryn, 2022; Lhakard, 2022; Jiwasiddi et al., 2024; Grimley et al., 2025; Hanafi, Putri and Cangara, 2025). With the existence of new hotspots for digital nomads, it is also important to understand this market to see how digital nomads living in Vietnam perceive the country, what trends are leading in this social context, and what their concerns are. As a result, the findings of this research are expected to contribute insights to scholars and pave ways for further studies on digital nomads in Vietnam as well as related subjects.

2. Digital nomads as a new way of traveling

Remote workers and digital nomads have been distinguished as people who work remotely due to the support of information technology, but instead of making their office at home, they pursuit a nomadic lifestyle, making their office away overseas (Jiwasiddi et al., 2024). As of 2026, in 2026 State of Digital Nomads, Nomads.com has characterized digital nomads with several features, such as being single, having a higher education, Caucasian, and staying at a destination for about 4 months. Their occupations are mainly project-based or freelance, leading to a need for convenient but low-cost destination (Zhou et al., 2024).

For digital nomads, it is important that work and travel are harmoniously balanced (Wang et al., 2019; Jiwasiddi et al., 2024). They consciously design their work around their travelling plans so that they can have diverse cultural experiences, and vice versa (Müller, 2016; Wang et al., 2020). According to Zhou et al. (2024), digital nomads are attracted by “culture and history, nature and climate, infrastructure, work facilities, service amenities, economic and financial aspects, and social/political aspects”. They

prefer destinations rich in cultural resources, with multiple events and traditional cuisines; attractions surrounded by many historic sites and architectures. For nature and climate, digital nomads are highly drawn to beach climate, or unique natural landscapes. Digital nomad hubs are also found to be urban areas where public transport, infrastructures and technology are well developed. Although high quality of life is considered a common factor of consideration, the cost of living in these hubs are usually low to help the digital remote workers afford their expenses.

3. Impacts of digital nomads on the local community of destination countries

Table 1: Length of stay in one city or country of digital nomads

How long do nomads stay in 1 city?		How long do nomads stay in 1 country?	
Duration	%	Duration	
< 7 days	47%	< 7 days	0%
7 - 30 days	33%	7 - 30 days	60%
30 - 90 days	14%	30 - 90 days	27%
90+ days	6%	90+ days	13%
Average	63 days (2 months)	Average	126 days (4 months)
	n= 407,694		n= 407,694

(Source: 2026 State of Digital Nomads, 2026)

As digital nomads combine their work and travel harmoniously, the destination and length of stay for each trip is usually predetermined according to the deadlines, and job processes. 2026 State of Digital Nomads (2026) reported that the amount of time modern nomads stay in one city on average could mount to 63 days, and they could also stay in 1 country for about 126 days. The long period of stay by digital nomads suggests that their traveling activities can lengthen the seasonality of tourist destinations (Lazarević - Moravčević, Mosurović Ružičić and Paunović, 2024).

Digital nomadism has been found to make several impacts to the local community. In terms of economic impacts, they contribute directly to the development of the local economy by spending on their accommodations and other services. This generates tax and raises the need for labor, creating more jobs for the local community (Jiwasiddi, 2023; Lazarević – Moravčević, Mosurović Ružičić and Paunović, 2024). However, there is also a negative effect arising from this trend. As digital nomads reside in countries with lower living costs, the prices for housing, services and goods may be escalated to an extent where they are no longer affordable for the majority locals. In other words, digital nomads exacerbate inflations in the destination economy. (Business Advisory Group on Migration, 2024).

Beyond economic impacts, digital nomadism also affects the local society. Lazarević – Moravčević, Mosurović Ružičić and Paunović (2024) stated that digital nomads' regular contact with members of local communities can create opportunities for cross-cultural learning, helping all parties gain deeper insight into unfamiliar ways of life and belief systems. However, other studies point out that digital nomadism in certain areas receiving high influx may undergo gentrification and changes in social structure (Krivtsova, Martynova and Valko, 2019; Business Advisory Group on Migration, 2024).

Table 2: Fastest growing digital hotspots in 2026

	Cities	2026 growth Based on 6mo of data	2025 growth	2024 growth	2023 growth	2022 growth (COVID)	2021 growth (COVID)	5-Year growth 2021 to 2026
#1	Da Nang	+108%	+45%	+42%	+135%	+600%	-137%	#3
#2	Hoi An	+108%	+3%	0%	+193%	+1,700%	-144%	#253
#3	Shenzhen	+102%	+47%	+125%	+636%	-125%	-18%	#146
#4	Uluwatu, Bali	+98%	+17%	-2%	+29%	+490%	-61%	#2

(Source: Nomads.com, 2026)

Regarding the context of Vietnam, little research has been done to study about this modern nomad market or its impact to the communities of the destination. However, in the recent years, Vietnam has been listed as one of the famous destinations for digital nomads. Nomads.com has recently announced Da Nang topped the list of Fastest growing digital nomad hotspots of 2026, with 108% increase based on 6 months of data, followed by Hoi An.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the current trends of digital nomads in Vietnam as an effort to unfold some insights about this market.

4. How digital nomads view Vietnam as a destination

Table 3: Theme analysis on digital nomads' point of view about Vietnam

Theme 1: Economic Attractiveness	- o Cost of living (Ex: more cost saving than other countries, rising rental costs...) - o Tax and financial considerations (Ex: no tax responsibility)
Theme 2: Destination Livability	- o Healthcare (Ex: access to good healthcare, high health maintenance expenses) - o Food and amenities (Ex: vegan buffet, bad food safety, shopping mall...) - o Internet and infrastructure (Ex: slow internet speed, less developed, low-quality infrastructure...) - o Work-life balance (Ex: personal rewards, free workout...)
Theme 3: Destination Environment	- o Tourist attractions (Ex: beach/ island tours, diving, fewer options for destinations...) - o Climate (Ex: unfavorable rainy season) - o Pollution and urban issues (Ex: Pollution, noise, crazy traffic...) - o Transportation (Ex: Convenient transportation, road safety...)
Theme 4: Socio-Cultural Experience	- o Local hospitality (Ex: welcoming/ unwelcoming locals, exciting experiences, tasty/ not tasty cuisines...) - o Cultural immersion (Ex: limited things to explore, hard to adopt to the environment, difficult language...) - o Dating and social life (Ex: low opportunities for dating, parties) - o Cultural authenticity (Ex: not touristy, not widely marketed)

Theme 5: Institutional and Structural Constraints	- o Visa policies (Ex: low visa fee, harder visa process, short-term visa only...) - o Legal environment (Ex: politics, strict law) - o Safety and scams (Ex: scams, fraudulent scheme at migration, safe country in terms of theft) - o Bureaucratic challenges (Ex: bribery, unfriendly manner of local enforcement...)
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In order to understand better about the perception of digital nomads, an online search was conducted on Reddit.com, a social media channel where people all over the world can freely share their opinions. A search for key words “digital nomads” and “Vietnam” showed a total of 4 discussions with 51 valid comments regarding digital nomads’ opinions about Vietnam. The time posted of the comments collected was from October 2025 to March 2026. All comments with unclear messages (incomplete sentence, lack of subjects and/or verbs) or irrelevant to the topics were not recorded. A total of 139 entries related to characteristics of Vietnam were detected and grouped into 5 main themes and 18 sub-themes as in the Table 3.

The results show that theme 1 (Economic Attractiveness) consists of mainly positive comments due to the low cost of living and no tax obligations for digital nomads in Vietnam. On the contrary, theme 5 (Institutional and Structural Constrains) received the most negative comments about visa policy, legal environment, scams, and bureaucratic challenges. Although the country is mentioned to be safe in terms of theft. Theme 2 (Destination Environment), 3 (Destination Environment) and 4 (Socio-Cultural Experience) receive conflicting ideas, suggesting that future research can dive more into tourists’ preferences in terms of the specific dimensions.

5. Conclusion

Digital nomadism has become a trend in tourism especially after COVID-19, and Vietnam has also become one of the fastest growing hotpots for digital nomads in the last few years. With several potential impacts that this modern nomad group may pose on the local communities of the destinations, it is important to study further the behaviors of digital nomads in the social, economic and political context of Vietnam.

The thematic analysis reveals that digital nomads' perceptions of Vietnam are shaped by multiple interconnected factors, including economic attractiveness, destination livability, socio-cultural experiences, environmental conditions, and institutional frameworks. While the relatively low cost of living, busy urban atmosphere and cultural richness emerge as key pull factors, there are several concerns related to visa policies, infrastructure quality, pollution, and urban congestion.

Some limitations of this study should be mentioned. First of all, the data collection method was bounded to only Reddit forums. This way of collecting data is convenient and timely, however, the respondents cannot be contacted easily to clarify their comments. Therefore, a large number of comments were omitted due to ambiguity. Furthermore, theme analysis depends on researcher’s interpretation, so the coding and categorizing process may be biased. Future studies should adopt data collecting methods that can collect demographic information of respondents, and quantitative data can also be used to measure the importance of each attribute to tourists’ behaviors and satisfaction ■

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