

FACTORS AFFECTING REGIONAL LINKAGES IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, CASE STUDY OF AN GIANG PROVINCE AND ITS SURROUNDING AREA IN MEKONG DELTA REGION, VIETNAM

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Abstract: In recent years, regional linkage in tourism development has played a crucial role in exploiting resources, creating distinctive tourism products, and enhancing each region's competitiveness and locality. Due to the cumulative effect of numerous interrelated factors, determining the impact of regional linkage factors is always a top priority when developing tourism regional and local development policy structures. In this study, An Giang Province and the surrounding area in the Mekong Delta, which included Cantho City, Dong Thap Province, and Kien Giang Province, have been chosen as the study objects for evaluating the factors affecting tourism regional linkages. This study applied Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MLRA) to the questionnaires of 300 visitors who visited An Giang and the surrounding areas. The results indicate that policy, cultural tourism resources, and infrastructure are the most influential variables in developing regional links in An Giang. Geographic location and natural resources considerations influence the province's tourism development less than other variables.

Keywords: Factors, regional linkages, tourism development, An Giang province, Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

Introduction

Tourism is now widely acknowledged as one of the world's significant sectors and one of the most important drivers of employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2021, travel and tourism contributed around 5.8 billion U.S. dollars directly to the global GDP (Citaristi, 2022). Due to the sector's profit, many countries are incentivised to engage in travel and tourism development initiatives. Therefore, the significance of tourism to the economy and society has grown as it has spread over the territories of nations and regions worldwide (Murphy, 2012).

Regional linkage is gaining popularity in tourism development because of its benefits to the location and the related region (Telfer, 2014; Rogerson, 2015). Regional linkage in tourism refers to the cooperation and interchange between towns and tourist regions in utilising tourism and other related resources. It involves coordinating and managing tourism activities to maximise economic, social, and environmental

benefits for all parties involved (Dawkins, 2003). The region's connection enables tourist expansion to utilise the benefits of resources, location, infrastructure, and other resources (Moscardo *et al.*, 2017; Scheyvens, 2018). The regional linkage in tourism helps to increase competitiveness, attract investment, and attract tourists to the connected area (Nguyen, 2021; Nguyen Phu & Nguyen, 2022). Regional linkages in tourism will minimise duplicative products and preserve local standards for several regions with highly comparable resource profiles, maintaining long-term (Nguyen *et al.*, 2023) sustainable benefits from tourism development (Scheyvens, 2018). While regional linkages play a significant role and are increasingly popular in countries and regions worldwide, studies on regional linkages in tourism have yet to be given due attention. An Giang province is situated between the Tien and Hau rivers, west of the Mekong Delta, and shares a 100-km-long northern border with Cambodia. Additionally, it has boundaries with the provinces of Kien Giang

in the southwest, Dong Thap in the east, and Can Tho in the southeast (Figure 1). Midland areas and low mountains are the province's two most prominent topographical features. Numerous Oc Eo Civilisation artefacts have been discovered in the An Giang region. With the advantages above, An Giang has become an attractive travel destination, attracting both domestic and foreign tourists. The overall number of visitors exceeded 9.2 million in 2019, making An Giang one of the two leading locations in the entire Mekong Delta in terms of total visitors. 87% of visitors to An Giang were domestic travellers (AGSO, 2020; Nguyen *et al.*, 2023). However, regional linkages in tourism bring many incredible benefits to localities in the region such as increasing the contribution rate of total visitors and revenue. According to the Mekong Delta Tourism Association (MDTA, 2022), it is estimated that by the end of 2022, the total number of visitors to the Mekong Delta will be 37,504,427, representing an impressive increase of 238.45% compared to the same period in 2021. Among them, 526,100 international visitors are expected, marking a remarkable growth rate of 1,613.51% over the same period

last year. Additionally, Mekong Delta tourism revenue is projected to exceed 32,078 billion VND, an increase of 234,000 VND or 46% over the same period in 2021. However, while the region is experiencing growth, there are still challenges associated with tourism regional links, such as resource duplication, infrastructure and policy obstacles, and geographical location factors. To propose solutions for enhancing the efficacy of regional links, it has become imperative to conduct a detailed analysis of the effects of factors on regional linkages in tourism development between An Giang and the surrounding regions.

Based on the requirements above, the study's objective is to identify the factors affecting regional linkages between An Giang and the surrounding area and measure and analyse the impact of the factors above, thus providing suggestions to enhance the regional linkage's effectiveness. The article is organised in the following way. The first section provides background information about the research model and a statement of the specific research topic. In section 2, we will go through how to apply the EFA and MLRA models for data

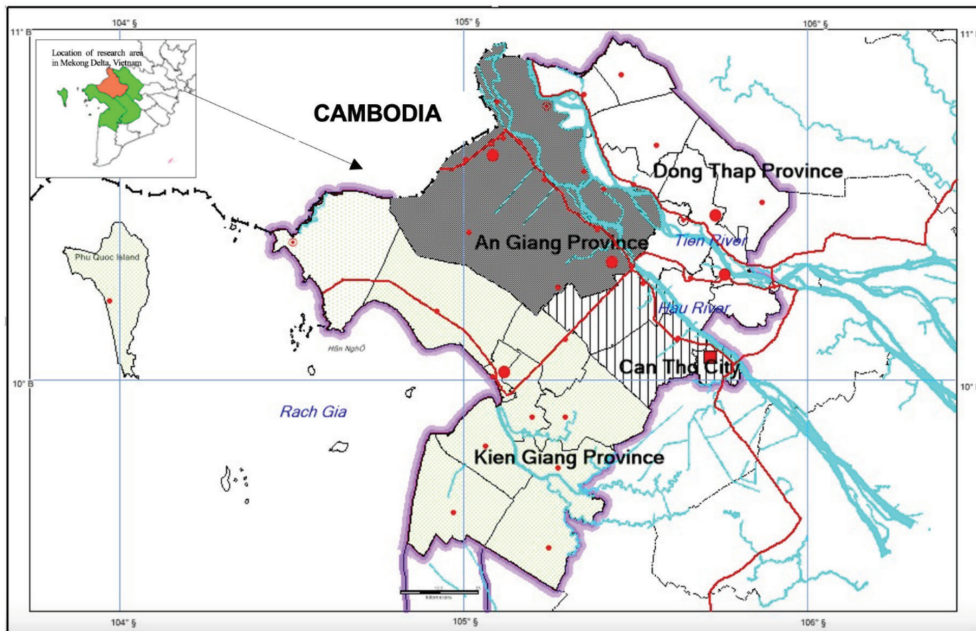


Figure 1: The position of the research area in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam

collection on questionnaire surveys and how to discuss them. Finally, there are conclusions for the regional linkages in tourism between An Giang province and the surrounding area.

Literature Review

Numerous connections exist between tourism and the socio-economic structure of the nation, region, and territory (Rogerson, 2015; Moscardo *et al.*, 2017; Hor, 2021). Forward and backward links exist within the tourism industry (Cai *et al.*, 2006). Numerous variables influence regional linkage growth. Prideaux (2005) identifies six broad categories of factors that may affect the overall size of tourism flows, including Demand, Government Responsibilities, Private Sector Factors, Intangible Factors, External Economic Factors, and External Political and Health Factors (Prideaux, 2005). Ruan and Zhang (2021) confirm that tourism information flow significantly affects regional tourism economic linkages and presents noticeable spillover effects (Ruan & Zhang, 2021). In Vietnam, Chi and Vien proposed three groups of factors influencing Vietnam's tourism: (1) External factors of tourism, including tourism infrastructure, social infrastructure, and technology economic insurance, (2) external influences include political environment, cultural environment, and competitive environment, and (3) tourism resources (Chi & Vien, 2012). The variables influencing tourism regional linkages development are complex and influenced by numerous perspectives and methods (Lafferty & Fossen, 2001; Dawkins, 2003; Chhetri *et al.*, 2013 Adnyana *et al.*, 2020).

Tourism development concerns the nature of tourism relations and cooperation between regions, countries, and municipalities. According to this study, tourism development is not confined to a particular region but extends beyond a municipality, country, or region (Telfer, 2014). The integration of the cultural tourism industry has a positive effect on rural revitalisation (Fang *et al.*, 2023). Tourism's growth in the direction of association and collaboration has been a prevalent trend in the

modern period. In globalisation and worldwide economic integration, tourism development in linkages and collaboration between nations, regions, and localities is of considerable interest and reinforces the significance of regional ties tourism (Song *et al.*, 2018). In this area of research, scientists and tourist managers seek to demonstrate the advantages of connecting tourism locations, particularly in the context of globalisation and international economic integration. In their regional tourism development strategy, Oliver and Jenkins (2003) emphasised the significance of tourism association and integration in achieving the objective of sustainable landscape protection (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003). The scenarios for cooperation of countries and regions under the developed orbitals were defined as effective in ensuring success and increasing the competitiveness of the tourism sector. The created orbitals allow one to analyse the country's position in the global tourism market, determine possible cooperation partners, and explore strategic development trajectories (Long & Qi, 2023). The trend of association is increasingly popular because of the benefits it offers to the growth of the country, area, and neighbourhood. Regional linkages now become a vital component in global and regional tourism growth.

Materials and Methods

Materials

Qualitative research methods have been employed in this research. First, the secondary data are collected. Based on analysing the collected data, the researchers figured out the main problems and built an interview list to discuss with the experts. After the discussion, the author conducted in-depth analyses and generated the main finding of the research. Secondary data was collected from the Statistical Year Book of the General Statistics Office (GSO), An Giang Province's People Committee (AGPC), and An Giang Department of the Culture, Sport, and Tourism of An Giang (AGDCST).

Methods

This study examined the factors impacting the regional linkages between An Giang and its surrounding area. As a questionnaire survey, EFA and MLRA are both utilised. Based on prior research and practical application in An Giang, this study suggests the following five sets of variables (factors) comprised of 22 observed variables outlined in Table 1.

In order to assess the factors that impact regional linkages, a convenience sampling approach was employed. The evaluation system employed a Likert five-point scale, which

includes the following categories: Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Each category is allocated a score, with a value of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 points, respectively. The survey was conducted from August 1-30, 2022, which is the time when most tourists visit An Giang and localities in the Mekong Delta. Three hundred visitors who visited An Giang and its surroundings were included in the group of participants. Finally, we received 300 questionnaires containing complete responses, fulfilling the research object criterion with a 96.7% yield rate. The demographic features of the respondents are displayed in Table 2.

Table 1: The outline of the factors affecting the regional linkages between An Giang province and the surrounding area

No.	Factors (Variables)	Coding	Explaining
1	Infrastructure and technology (F1)	V1	Electric and water system support
		V2	Transportation system supports
		V3	Technological communication system supports
2	The policy of the tourism business (F2)	V4	The policy for infrastructure
		V5	The policy for investment
		V6	The policy for tourism promotion
		V7	The policy for tourism service and product development
		V8	The policy for regional linkages in tourism
3	Natural resources (F3)	V9	The policy for cooperation in tourism development
		V10	Mountains in the Delta
		V11	Flooding in the wet season
		V12	Inland flooded habitat
		V13	Ecology system
		V14	Melaleuca forests
4	Cultural resources (F4)	V15	Spiritual festival
		V16	Traditional culinary
		V17	Traditional villages
		V18	Ethnic community and ethnographic values
		V19	Historical monuments
5	Geographic locations (F5)	V20	Distance to access attractions/areas
		V21	Location near regional and national tourism centre
		V22	Distance to the administrative province

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables		Sample size (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	168	56.0
	Female	132	44.0
Age	< 25	111	37.0
	26-35	81	27.0
	36-50	58	19.3
	> 50	50	16.7
Employment	State employees	64	21.3
	Business	63	21.0
	Farmers, workers	96	32.0
	Unemployed	77	25.7
Educational level	Secondary	37	12.3
	College	89	29.7
	Tertiary	174	58.0

(Source: Author, 2022; n = 300).

The research process is detailed in Figure 2. Specifically, based on the identification of 5 groups of factors with 22 variables affecting regional linkages in tourism development between An Giang and the surrounding area, the study performed EFA analysis with two

processes as the next step: (1) Cronbach Alpha test to determine which variables satisfy the criteria, and (2) KMO to determine the level of agreement of factor groups. On this basis, the study evaluates MLRA to determine the level of specific impact of the groups of factors included

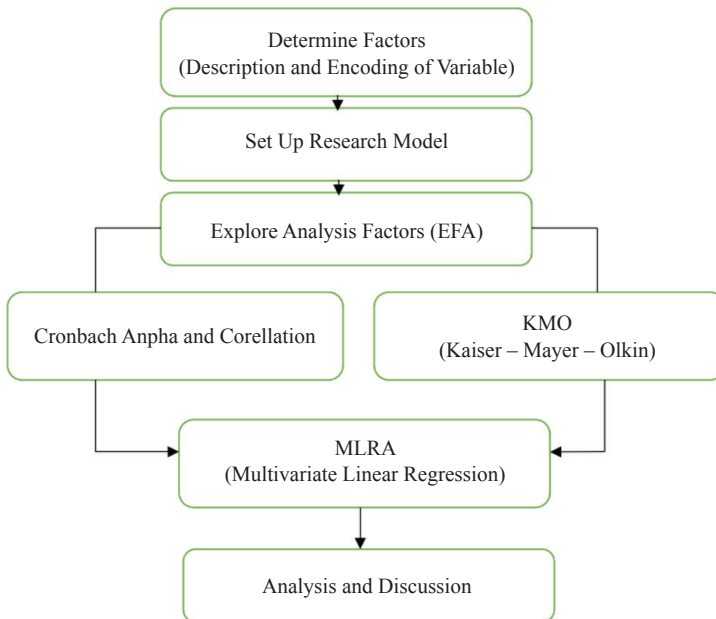


Figure 2: Research process

in the analytical model on regional connectivity. Thus, the study discusses and analyses the critical research findings, providing An Giang and other locales with policy recommendations.

Data Analysis

Evaluation of the Scale by Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient

In the research process, Cronbach's Alpha is utilised to exclude inappropriate and restrict junk variables. Exclude variables with a total

correlation coefficient (Item-Total Correlation) of less than 0.30. For novel study topics, scales with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.6 or higher may be utilised (Hair, 2009). Following the application of Cronbach's Alpha, the results are as follows.

The results of Table 3 indicate that the overall Cronbach's Alpha and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of each component are better than 0.6 and that the Item-Total Correlation is more significant than 0.3, satisfying the criterion for inclusion in the subsequent EFA.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all components

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	Corrected Item - Total Correlation
F1	0.806	
V1		0.597
V2		0.714
V3		0.654
F2	0.849	
V4		0.613
V5		0.606
V6		0.683
V7		0.631
V8		0.653
V9		0.606
F3	0.784	
V10		0.436
V11		0.573
V12		0.615
V13		0.646
V14		0.530
F4	0.867	
V15		0.598
V16		0.680
V17		0.720
V18		0.725
V19		0.726
F5	0.840	
V20		0.668
V21		0.832
V22		0.622

(Source: Result from analysis SPSS, 2022; n = 300).

Evaluation of the Scale by Exploratory Factor Analysis EFA

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test is a statistical measure used to determine whether or not data is suitable for factor analysis. The test assesses sampling adequacy for each model variable and the model as a whole. This statistic measures the proportion of Variance among variables that may represent common Variance. The higher the proportion, the higher the KMO value, and the greater the data’s suitability for factor analysis. The KMO criterion is calculated and returns values between 0 and 1 as the following calculator below.

$$KMO = \frac{\sum_{i \neq j} R_{i \neq j}^2}{\sum_{i \neq j} R_{i \neq j}^2 + \sum_{i \neq j} U_{i \neq j}^2} \quad (1)$$

where:

R_{ij} is the correlation matrix, and U_{ij} is the partial covariance matrix.

The KMO values between 0.8 and 1.0 indicate that the sampling is adequate. KMO values between 0.7 and 0.79 are middling, and values between 0.6 and 0.69 are mediocre. KMO values less than 0.6 indicate inadequate sampling and remedial action should be taken.

If the value is less than 0.5, the factor analysis results will be more suitable for the data analysis. If the sample size is < 300, the retained items’ average communality must be tested. An average value > 0.6 is acceptable for a sample size < 100, and an average value between 0.5 and 0.6 is acceptable for sample sizes between 100 and 200 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Based on the theoretical basis, the factor analysis process is presented below:

In the analysis, 22 observed variables were included; however, observable variables with a Factor Loading weight of less than 0.5 were excluded. The results (detailed in Table 4) indicate that $KMO = 0.796 < 1$ and > 0.5 , indicating that factor analysis can be applied to the research data set. Sig Barlett’s Test value is $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating adequate factor analysis. Eigenvalue = 1.314 > 1, and five components with the best information summary meaning were extracted (Table 5). Total Variance extracted = 63.871 > 50% demonstrates that the EFA model is appropriate. Thus, five factors were extracted to explain the 63.871% variation of observed variables (Table 5).

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett’s test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.796
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2938.569
	Df	231
	Sig.	.000

(Source: Result from analysis SPSS, 2022; n = 300).

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			
	Total	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.314	5.599	25.448	25.448
2		2.646	12.026	37.474
3		2.586	11.755	49.229
4		1.907	8.668	57.897
5		1.314	5.974	63.871

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 (Source: Result from analysis SPSS, 2022; n = 300).

Table 6 shows the outcome of executing the Rotated Component Matrix^a.

Table 6 reveals that in the first group of factors (V4-V9), factor V8 (regional linkages policy) has the most significant impact on the group with a coefficient of influence of 0.772; V19 (Historical sites) has the highest influence index (0.798) among the second group of factors (V15-V19); In the third group of components (V10-V14), V13 (Ecology system) has the most significant impact with a value of 0.783%. In the fourth group of factors (V20-V22), factor V21 (Location near regional and national tourism

centres) has the most considerable influence (0.934). In contrast, in the final group of factors (V1-V3), factor V2 (Transportation system supports for regional linkages) has the most significant influence (0.870). In comparison with the suggested model, the factors that were obtained through Table 6 demonstrate consistency (as shown in Table 7). This indicates a significant convergence of the factors, which in turn substantiates the uniform influence on the regional linkages in An Giang Province and its adjacent areas.

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix^a

Variables	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
V8	.772				
V6	.764				
V7	.756				
V5	.705				
V9	.680				
V4	.662				
V19		.798			
V17		.792			
V16		.786			
V18		.784			
V15		.740			
V13			.783		
V12			.769		
V11			.718		
V14			.689		
V10			.607		
V21				.934	
V20				.845	
V22				.802	
V2					.870
V3					.799
V1					.767

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.
 (Source: Result from analysis SPSS, 2022; n = 300).

Table 7: Factors affecting regional linkages in tourism development of An Giang province and the surrounding area

No.	Group	Variables	Type
1	Geography locations	V20, V21, V22	Independent variable
2	Natural tourism resources	V10, V11, V12, V13, V14	Independent variable
3	Cultural tourism resources	V15, V16, V17, V18, V19	Independent variable
4	Policy for Tourism Development	V4, V5, V6, V7, V8, V9	Independent variable
5	Infrastructure and technology	V1, V2, V3	Independent variable
Total number of Independent observed variables: 22 variables			
Total number of Dependent variables: 3 variables			
6	Regional linkages in tourism contribute to high growth within the surrounding area	Y1	Dependent variable
7	Regional linkages in tourism contribute to change in regional and province tourism economic structure	Y2	Dependent variable
8	The tourism sector promotes the cooperation of An Giang and the surrounding area	Y3	Dependent variable

(Source: Author, 2022; n = 300).

Table 6 shows that five factors have a load multiplier larger than 0.5. The conditions allow us to run the Multivariate Regression Approach (MRLA) in the next phase.

Regression Analysis

To determine, measure, and analyse the impact of five sets of influential factors on regional links in An Giang tourism development with the surrounding area, the multivariate regression approach MRLA has utilised benefits from EFA. The equation for multivariate regression is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + e \quad (2)$$

(Hair, 2009)

where:

Y : Dependent variable

X1,X2,X3,X4,X5 : Independent variables

β_i : Regression weights

e : Error

The Model Summary of Regression Analysis are detailed in Table 8.

The table shows that the independent variable included in the regression accounted for 35.4% of the change in the dependent variable, as measured by the adjusted R2 value of 0.354. The Durbin – Watson coefficient = 1.780 falls between 1.5 and 2.5, so there is no first-order series correlation. Using the ANOVA (Table 9), the Sig value of the F test equals 0.00-0.05, indicating that the multiple linear regression model may be used for the data set. The Multiple Linear Regression model continues to show in the Coefficients results (Table 10).

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.604 ^a	.364	.354	.39876	1.780

a. Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F3, F4, F5
b. Dependent Variable: Y

(Source: Result from analysis SPSS, 2022; n = 300).

Table 9: ANOVA

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.794	5	5.359	33.702	.000 ^a
	Residual	46.748	294	.159		
	Total	73.542	299			

a. Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F3, F4, F5
b. Dependent Variable: Y

(Source: Result from analysis SPSS, 2022; n = 300).

Table 10: Coefficients ^a

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.902	.257		3.514	.001		
	F2	.253	.049	.288	5.158	.000	.696	1.437
	F4	.231	.046	.264	5.073	.000	.800	1.251
	F3	.129	.048	.135	2.691	.004	.857	1.166
	F1	.124	.042	.156	2.979	.003	.794	1.260
	F5	.062	.030	.099	2.042	.002	.928	1.077

a. Dependent Variable: Y

(Source: Result from analysis SPSS, 2022; n=300).

Results and Discussion

In the Coefficients Table 10, the variables with Sig < 0.05 are significant for the dependent variable and are therefore not removed from the model. There is no multicollinearity because the VIF coefficients of the independent variables are all less than 2.

Based on the magnitude of the normalised regression coefficient Beta (Table 10) and formula (2), the following is the normalised regression equation:

It can be observed from the coefficients of the preceding equation that policy considerations, cultural tourism resources, and technological infrastructure have the most significant influence on regional linkage between An Giang and the surrounding area. Geographical location and the group of natural resources have a lesser impact than other aspects. Positive values of the normalised regression coefficient Beta indicate a positive relationship between the original hypotheses and the determinants for the degree

of regional connection in the growth of An Giang province and surrounding localities.

Policy Factors (F2)

The coefficient of regression associated with the variable above indicates a positive impact on the development of tourism in the An Giang neighbourhood. This impact is estimated to be around 0.288%, assuming all other variables remain constant. The observed effect highlights the significance of policy structure in promoting provincial tourism growth through regional connectivity. The findings are consistent with prior research on the subject of tourism policy and planning, which confirms the importance of regional linking strategies for the growth of tourism in different countries and territories (Edgell & Swanson, 2013; Mendonça *et al.*, 2015; Zhang, 2017). The component with the most significant impact on tourism development is the attention of the entire management system, departments, and agencies to tourism development in conjunction with adjacent regions. Numerous tourism development policies from the macro- and micro-management levels have received significant attention and have been implemented broadly and successfully (Jeyacheya & Hampton, 2020). Regional linkage in tourism development begins with the formation and execution of linkage policies, which serve as a legal foundation for the implementation of linking contents between regions and territories (Czernek, 2013). Adopting policies to aid entities participating in tourist links, particularly businesses, will eliminate some obstacles and assist businesses in implementing according to their actual conditions (Adnyana *et al.*, 2020). In An Giang Province, numerous policies to encourage tourism development in regional linkages have been promulgated, such as the policy of joining the cluster in the western Mekong Delta, the signing of cooperation agreements in 3 provinces of Can Tho - An Giang - Kien Giang in many fields, the policy of consulting and developing tourism links funded by the EU for the western provinces, and the policy of

consulting and developing tourism links for the central provinces. The system of policies and the attention of agencies and sectors are essential factors in fostering the growth of An Giang's tourism industry and strengthening regional linkages.

Tourism Resources (Cultural Resources -F4 and Natural Resources-F3)

Equation (3) regression coefficient demonstrates the significant impact of tourism resources on regional tourism development in An Giang. This group of elements provides An Giang a significant competitive advantage over nearby communities, especially cultural tourism resources. This further demonstrates that the various components of tourist resources are the foundation for linking tourism activities in different locations. Tourism cooperation networks are critical to (1) improve the design and promotion of tourist projects and (2) build a tourism product or service that satisfies consumer expectations and boosts demand (Petrou *et al.*, 2016). Based on this, tourism resources are a significant aspect of serving the needs of tourists while simultaneously creating diverse and appealing products. The rise of cultural tourism resources is the driving force behind the attraction of tourism ties between locations with minimal resources (Jesus & Franco, 2016). In An Giang province, due to the settlement history of the Kinh, Khmer, Cham, and Chinese ethnic groups, An Giang has developed a system of diverse and appealing cultural tourist resources that serve as the foundation for the development of unique tourism goods. An Giang is recognised as a sacred country with numerous religious sites, including Tay An Pagoda, Giong Thanh Pagoda, Xvayton Pagoda, and Mubarak Cathedral. In addition, there are notable Khmer holidays, such as New Year's celebrations. Chol Chnam Thmay), the moon worship ceremony (Ok Om Bok), and the Tam Hop opening ceremony (Makhabucha). Unique and alluring is the cluster of cultural tourism attractions in the Nui Sam tourist area, including the Ba Chua Xu Temple of Nui Sam and its festival. Tourists to

Ba Chua Xu Temple on Sam Mountain and the Via Ba festival accounted for almost 70% of total visitors and 60% of tourism earnings (AGDCST, 2016). Many different sorts of cultural tourism resources exist. Numerous festivals, including the Seven Mountain Cow Racing Festival and the An Giang Cham Festival, attract increasing tourists with unique hues. This is reflected in both the national and Mekong Delta plans when determining that An Giang has a significant comparative advantage in terms of the value of its cultural tourism resources.

Infrastructure and Technology (F1)

Regional and provincial infrastructure investment projects have significantly contributed to quality modernisation. The term “infrastructure” refers to the supply of electricity, water, and drainage systems, as well as the networks and modes of transportation, communication (such as telephone, internet, television, and so forth), and electricity. The technical infrastructure comprises lodging options (hotels, resorts, and homestays), entertainment services, and other tourism-related services (shopping, dining, and transportation). Infrastructure and facilities allow resources to be converted into goods and support the continuing functioning of tourist attractions and transit routes. Facilities and infrastructure of tourism influence the high level of tourists visiting a region (Q. H. Nguyen, 2021). Investment in tourism infrastructure and facility development to make destinations and services increasingly attractive is crucial in developing a country’s tourist destinations. In An Giang, the Vam Cong and Cao Lanh bridge system reduces the distance to tourist destinations. In order to boost circulation and attract more tourists, major tourist destinations have implemented cutting-edge infrastructure, such as the cable car system on Cam Mountain. Highway 91 has been upgraded and expanded with a 100% participation rate, while the National Highway 80B system connecting Dong Thap province has been completely paved and completed. The communication system is becoming more advanced. Regarding technology, the outcomes

of applying technological advances in the 4.0 era will initially boost the effectiveness of tourism management and promote the image of a lovely and lyrical An Giang.

Geographic Location (F5)

The findings of the EFA and MLRA analyses indicate that the impact of geographic location factors on tourist development in An Giang province concerning nearby places reaches 0.99 points (Table 10). This result indicates that geographical location significantly affects the interconnectivity of tourism activities. According to Akdağ and Oter (2011), geographical qualities are necessary for a tourism destination to expand its tourism market and become an international tourist destination. Geographical location can aid and facilitate the growth and development of a tourism destination, with the advantage of offering a competitive edge over competing locations. By matching the geographical characteristics of a region with the appropriate tourism type, it is possible to establish the region as an international tourist destination rapidly. As components of geography, distance and accessibility also play a significant role in determining tourists’ cost structure and preferences. Although geographical locations have a negligible effect on the linear equation for An Giang province, they must be considered when establishing regional links in An Giang. Despite the available benefits, connectivity based on geographic location has not been encouraged due to infrastructure restrictions. The continued improvement of infrastructure, particularly traffic, will enhance locational advantages and create favourable conditions for promoting ties between An Giang and the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

The results of examining the influence of factors on tourism development in An Giang province indicate that policy considerations continue to play a significant role in fostering regional linkages in An Giang province and tourism growth in the surrounding area. Policies

and infrastructural systems still need to be expanded and have had little impact on tourism development, particularly in light of the Mekong Delta's broad tourism links. These findings provide an essential foundation for agencies and sectors to consult and accurately estimate the influence of each group of elements, which can be utilised in strategic policy planning to enhance the efficacy of tourism efforts. Moreover, it further enhances regional connectivity in the tourism industry. Based on these findings, the study suggests that policymakers implement the following recommendations to enhance further the effectiveness of regional linkages in the province of An Giang and its subregions' tourism development. More specifically, the government should build and improve policies and regulations on the linkage of An Giang and its surrounding area in the direction of convenience and transparency, creating conditions for many stakeholders to participate in the linkage process and implement linkage policies. Also, tourism managers in An Giang and the surrounding should cooperate and link local governments and tourism business associations to create a network of investment and business enterprises based on connection, attachment, and support in creating and consuming products. An Giang government should encourage localities in the region to link product development policies, connect tourism programs, promote tourism promotion, promote tourism investment, and create tourism brands.

Limitation

This investigation has certain limitations. Although a scale with five groups of factors has been established, a few factors related to score assessment have yet to be incorporated into the scale, such as regional management centres and regional association operating organisations and the socio-economic impact of tourist destinations. In terms of research methodology, only domestic visitors are surveyed for this study. In addition, the results will be more reliable if the research results are combined with surveys of numerous tourism participants, such

as travel agencies, local managers, or residents of An Giang and other locales-neighbouring territory. The experiment must be conducted in multiple locations to verify the accuracy of the scale more exhaustively.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declared that they have no conflict of interest.

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