

# AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE PERCEPTION OF CO-CREATION EXPERIENCE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY IN DANANG CITY, VIETNAM

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the perception of co-creation tourism experience from a tourism expert perspective in Danang city. By interviewing tourism experts who hold the management level in tourism organization of both government and business level are used to explore the perception of current tourism co-creation experience and the evaluation of the potential for development of co-creation tourism in the city. Findings show that tourism managements had perceived the co-creation tourism experience, however; the city's investigation into the development of co-creation products is still spontaneous and straightforward. The potential tourism products of the city developed from the advantage of natural resources such as sea, river, and mountain, which currently stressed on sea tourism only. Natural resources and location of Danang create the most robust capacity to develop co-creation tourism experiences. The results also reveal the lack in both development strategy and management from tourism destination management to co-creation tourism experiences of Danang city. The study also provides some future suggestion for Danang city tourism management.*

**Keywords:** Co-Creation, Tourism Experience, Exploratory Research, Danang City, Perception.

## INTRODUCTION

Recent studies on tourism experiences stress the role of tourists as co-creators of their own experience (Prebensen et al., 2013) and that tourism organizations and destinations need to deliver memorable experiences (Neuhofer et al., 2013). These trends are leading businesses (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010) and destinations (Prebensen & Foss, 2011) to involve customers in the design, production, and consumption of experiences. Experiences are considered desirable due to their contribution to the meaning of individual's lives (Pine et al., 1999) as they connect the affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions on a moment-to-moment basis (Scott et al., 2009).

The idea of co-creation experience tourism requires the corporation between the service provider and receiver to deliver a co-creation tourism product. On the customer side, it is their willingness to engage in the service delivery process; however, on the service provider side (both business and management level) they need to concerns about mechanisms, process, and systems of engaging customers in co-creation (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013; Chathoth et al., 2013)

In tourism, customer co-creation can happen before, during and after the travel (Neuhofer et al., 2012), thus it is affected by the mobilization of all tourism providers or destination management's networks and processes to encourage the participation of tourists in the generation

value (Ciasullo & Carrubbo, 2011; Eraqi, 2010). The tourism services providers and management need to recognize and understand that co-creation not only come from the tourist participation but also from the effort to create a co-creation-oriented environment from the tourist providers side. The interaction between customer and service provider systems is essential in co-creation tourism experience. Thus, tourism business management is urged to focus attention on the analysis of the process rather than only on the outcome of co-creation (Grisseemann & Stokburger, 2012). Similarly, the destination management is challenged to develop new thinking in tourism development strategy to create the system and policy support for creating co-creation experience.

Danang city is well-known as tourism city of Vietnam thus the city is expected to create a healthy tourism industry that concentrates on co-creation tourism experience. To achieve this goal, the city's business and management in tourism should comprehend about current and potential tourism of Danang before thinking about how to develop. However, in our knowledge, the co-creation tourism is still a new topic and unfamiliar in Vietnam tourism industry. The perception of tourist providers about co-creation tourism still needs to concern. Thus, we raise a question on how does tourist organization/destination business and management in Danang city recognize the co-creation tourism products, and their evaluation of current co-creation tourism experience in the city.

Hence, this study aims to investigate the perception and evaluation of tourism practices creating co-creation experiences of Danang city. The study begins with the brief of literature related with co-creation experience in tourism. The research method was discussed, and the findings were provided later. Conclusions and implications also were reported in this paper.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Tourism Experience and Co-Creation

Co-creation theory (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) emphasized the active role of customers in creating co-creation experience. Notably, the consumer is an active participant rather than a passive recipient (Morgan, 2006). The experiences were created through the interaction between visitors, organizers, performers, and local businesses. In tourism context, tourism co-creation was defined as a relationship between producer and consumer (Azevedo, 2009), or the contribution of consumers in the design of the experience to create value for themselves (Hahti, 2006). Thus, the co-creation of experience requires the involvement of tourist and tourism service provider in creating and delivering service. Andrades and Dimanche (2014) argued that tourist involves in the activities meeting their interests and capturing their attention. It is found to be very important for co-creation.

Adapting the experience economy literature in the tourism context, co-creation of experience by visitors coming from the co-production, personalization, and engagement with tourism destination or providers (Minkiewicz et al., 2014). Tourist can create their unique and personal experience by co-creating with services providers before, during and after the service delivery process (Neuhofer et al., 2012). Developing from psychology-based, Campos et al. (2018) proposed the definition of co-creation tourism experience:

*“A co-creation tourism experience is the sum of the psychological events a tourist goes through when contributing actively through physical and/or mental participation in activities and interacting with other subjects in the experience environment.”*

The other subjects in experience environment involve the participation of other tourists, destination (both servicescape and policy), tourism provider (both hospitality and travel providers). The effect of experiencescape (e.g. physical, social and organizational) on co-creation tourism experiences can lead to creating experience memorability of tourist (Campos et al., 2016). Thus, co-creation is not just come from the tourist side only; it has been the corporation between tourist provider, consumer, and the most important is tourism environment that can build from both tourist organization and destination management.

### **Previous Research in Co-Creation Tourism Experience**

The theoretical and empirical studies of co-creation in the context of tourism have increasingly examined in recent years. The previous studies in the tourism literature concentrated to co-creation in both theoretical (Scott et al., 2009) and applied perspective (Bertella, 2014; Mathisen, 2013). The scope varies from specific tourism experiences contexts (Bertella, 2014) to wide industry or destinations analyses (Iraqi, 2010). Co-creation in tourism studies has been used to explain the changes in tourism supply chain (Räikkönen & Honkanen, 2013), analyses destination experience (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008), customer satisfaction with destination, memorable tourism experiences and new approaches to marketing (Lichrou et al., 2008).

Previous studies in tourism co-creation can divide into two main perspectives. The first is tourism supplier perspective that includes tourism business organization and destinations. In tourism destination and organization points of view, they share the vision of co-creation as a business orientation and strategy towards competitiveness to be dealt with management and marketing principles and thinking (Campos et al., 2018). In both, the concern includes mechanisms, processes, and systems of engaging tourists in co-creation (Ciasullo & Carrubbo, 2011) so that they can live a memorable consumption experience. With this thinking, co-creation can be thought of as occurring before, during and after the travel (Neuhofer et al., 2013) and its affected by the mobilization of all organization's or destination's networks and processes to encourage tourist participation and interaction to generate the total value and well-being (Ciasullo & Carrubbo, 2011; Iraqi, 2010). However, tourists need to uses their resources (i.e. knowledge, time and creativity) in contextual, personalized, and interactive experiences to gain value of co-creation.

As a business orientation, co-creation involves willing to participate in the design, production, and consumption of experience with tourism provider (Iraqi, 2010; Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008) or to collaborate with the tourism provide in creating new products or services (Santos & Rodriguez, 2013). To apply the co-creation tourism mindset, the management operation is required changes to management and staff behaviors and competencies (Haahti, 2006; Lugosi & Walls, 2013). For example, the frontline staff is essential to facilitate co-creation activities due to their interaction with the customer. However, internal marketing activities are needed to help foster their willing to co-creation and build a co-creation culture in the company that encourages their participation in service design and improvement (Santos & Rodriguez, 2013).

The second perspective is the consumer or tourist perspective. In the relationship between producers (tourism organization and destination) and consumers (tourists), consumers are described as co-creators of value (Li & Petrick, 2008) through their engage in design, produce, and consume the products or services (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008) in their consumption experiences. In another word, the tourist perspective analyses the co-creation in tourist sphere,

encompassing the psychology and behavior involved in experiences, before, during and after the travel (Campos et al., 2018).

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Setting

This research was conducted at Danang city, a tourism city in the middle of Vietnam; the city was given the title “*the best city for living*” in Vietnam. Danang city was known as an attractive destination for both international and domestic tourists in the country, with famous and beautiful beaches, abundant natural resource (i.e. river, mountain, sea), well-developed tourism infrastructure, and stable social and political environment (Wang et al., 2017). Danang has developed a diversity of tourism products including sea tourism, river tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, business tourism, and travel to visit relatives. Moreover, Danang provides different types of services with various products with the aim of meeting the diverse needs of tourists, such as excursion services, food service, accommodation services, shopping service and services for leisure and entertainment. In addition to that, after successful host for APEC 2017, Danang rise as a right place for MICE tourism in Vietnam.

### Data Collection

Qualitative interviews are a data collection tool adequate to qualitative research design (Finn et al., 2000; Jennings, 2005). This method is based on the assumption that human subjects (respondents) can account for their own experience and meanings, shape situations and events, and are not mere passive respondents to external stimuli (Finn et al., 2000).

Qualitative interviews are considered suitable for developing knowledge, understanding, and learning because they use an exploratory approach to find the phenomena (Jennings, 2005). The information gained from the interview process of respondents is valuable information for the development of a subsequent quantitative data collection instrument (Dong & Siu, 2013).

In this study, the primary data were obtained from semi-structured questionnaire through in-depth interviews conducted to how tourism experts (the person who hold the management position in tourism-related organizations and companies) expressed and reflected their thinking, perceptions, and thoughts about the co-creation tourism experiences in the tourism strategy of Danang city.

The sampling procedure adopted the snowball sampling method, which is relevant to the research objectives or who is expertise about the research topic (Jennings, 2005; Ritchie et al., 2013). With the snowball sampling, the previous respondents were asked to introduce another one that they think suitable for the research topic. Because this research targeted the experts, who have extensive knowledge and experience in running the tourism business or state management.

In this case, there are ten respondents involving in this research reflect the diversity in many aspects of tourism (e.g. travel agent, hospitality, restaurants, state and non-state management level, and professional association). Respondents were chosen to represent a mix of gender, age, and working areas. As seen in Table 1, respondents were approximately equal numbers of male and female (six male and four female) and from 31 to 63 years old who has a management position. Name of respondents was changed to the Latin alphabet for a private purpose.

The interview was conducted between December 10 and December 20, 2017 (Raining Season) at respondent's office. This time is suitable for an interview with the managers of the tourism companies due to the lower visiting rate period; the respondents have more time to spend on the interview process.

### Respondent's Profile

| <b>Table 1</b>                    |               |            |  |                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>THE RESPONDENT INFORMATION</b> |               |            |  |                 |
| <b>Respondents</b>                | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Genre</b>   | <b>Position</b> |
| A                                 | Male          | 51         | Travel Agency, Hospitality and Restaurant                              | Vice President  |
| B                                 | Male          | 41         | Travel Agency, Hospitality and Restaurant                              | Vice President  |
| C                                 | Male          | 64         | Hospitality (five-star beach resort)                                   | CEO             |
| D                                 | Male          | 61         | Hospitality (three-star hotel in the central city)                     | CEO             |
| E                                 | Female        | 44         | Destination Management (state level)                                   | Vice President  |
| F                                 | Male          | 59         | Tourism Association, Destination Management (non-state level)          | Chair           |
| G                                 | Female        | 35         | Destination Management (state level)                                   | Department Head |
| H                                 | Female        | 35         | Destination Management (state level)                                   | Vice Director   |
| I                                 | Female        | 51         | Hospitality (five-star hotel in the central city), Tourism Association | CEO             |
| J                                 | Male          | 45         | Tourism, Training and Tourism Association                              | CEO             |

### Interview Process

The interviewing process followed the Jennings (2005) guidelines to qualitative interviewing. Preparation for the interviews involved several procedures and decisions. Firstly, the researchers directly contacted respondents and arranged the time for the meeting. Secondly, the researchers informed about the purpose of the study and asked for recording all the discussion before the interviewing process begins. During the interviews, researchers applied active, interpretive, and process listening, as recommended by Jennings (2005). All the interviewing was recorded, all communication materials were composed of transcriptions of oral communication, and some notes were taken regarding paralinguistic communication captured during recording (voice pitch, volume, pauses, laughter). The duration of the conversations, ranging from 45 to 80 min, depending on the responses from the participants, was found sufficient to allow all relevant information to emerge and achieve data saturation. Interviews were in Vietnamese, and the main questions were showed in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**THEMES, QUESTIONS, AND FOCUS USED IN THE INTERVIEWS**

| <b>Theme</b>  | <b>Questions</b>  | <b>Focus</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Perception about current co-creation tourism experience</b>    | <p><b>How does tourist organization/destination recognize the co-creation tourism products?</b></p> <p>(1)What is the tourism product of Danang city? Which one are the most interesting and attracting with a tourist?</p> <p>(2)How do you understand about tourist experiences? Give some example of the experiences that tourist can get in Danang city.</p> <p>(3)Which one are memorable experiences?</p> <p>(4)Does Danang have co-creation tourism products? Does it create memorable experiences?</p> <p>(5) What are programs or products in both state level and company level allowing tourist to engage with tourism providers to develop memorable experiences in co-creation value chain?</p>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of respondents about co-creation in tourism experiences.</li> <li>• List current tourism products in Danang city that contains co-creation experiences.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Evaluating the potential of co-creation tourism experience</b> | <p><b>How you evaluate the current tourism products of Danang city creating co-creation experiences?</b></p> <p>(1) Which experiences you think is the most memorable with tourist in Danang?</p> <p>Which products in your company create a co-creation tourism experiences? (for business respondents)</p> <p>(2) Which actions or strategies you create to promote the co-creation tourism experiences for Danang city? (for authority respondents)</p> <p>(3) Do you think the government care and support local business to provide the co-creation tourism products for tourist in Danang city?</p> <p>(4) What is a government strategy to promote the development of co-creation tourism in tourist providers in Danang city?</p> | Evaluation of Danang city tourism products that concentrated on building co-creation experiences.   |

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results confirmed the questions that stated at the beginning of the study. The perception of strong tourism products of Danang city concentrating in co-creation experience showed the majority supporting for sea and the combination of sea, mountain, and river in eco-tourism. The advantage and drawback of each tourism products were revealed *via* analyzing the respondent's data.

### **Perception about Tourism Practices That is Potential to Develop Co-Creation Experience in Danang City**

Researchers scan more than 50 pages of text data to count the keywords and build the central themes of the results. There are five central themes were revealed, and the findings were presented in Table 3, follow these themes.

| <b>Themes</b>   | <b>Keywords</b>  |
|---|--|
| The combination of sea, mountain, a river in ecotourism | Sea and related to the sea (e.g. sand, seafood, beach) |
|   | Leisure  |
|   | Sea sport activities                                   |
|   | Diving   |
|   | Seacoast   |
|   | Seafood  |
|   | River  |
| Great location for tourism experience                   | Mountain   |
|   | Near Hue and Hoi An                                    |
|   | Good transportation                                    |
|   | Well infrastructure                                    |
| Cultural and spiritual tourism                          | Diversity tourism places                               |
|   | Value  |
|   | Local culture  |
|   | Heritage   |
|   | History/ historical monument                           |
|   | Pagoda/church  |
|   | Living style   |
| Cham/ Cham culture                                      |  |
| MICE tourism  | Museum   |
|   | High-quality infrastructure                            |
| River tourism   | Good service quality                                   |
|   | Han River  |
|   | Co-Co river  |
|   | Waterway transportation                                |

The combination of sea, mountain, river in ecotourism-current the most developed product

As a tourism and hospitality city, Danang has potential to develop ecotourism because the advantaged of natural condition that includes sea, mountain, and river in the city. Currently, the city investigates more in sea tourism. However, the river and mountain also show their potential.

According to the data analysis, all respondents mentioned the sea as a most robust tourism product of Da Nang city, with the word “sea” repeatedly appears in text data. G (female, 35 years, and destination management) mentioned sea as the strength of Danang tourism

*“On marine tourism products can be said is not only characteristic of Da Nang tourism. However, tourism products related to sea receive large investment from local businesses. I think Da Nang has a beautiful sea, compared with other places. I think the sea is a unique product and attractive to visitors when coming to Da Nang.”*

Continuing with this line, other respondents also expressed their support about considering “sea” as the most potent product of Danang tourism industry.

I (female, 51 years old, CEO of the five-star hotel) also expressed her opinion that:

*“Especially we have the sea. Everyone that talks to Danang are like going to the sea only. However, to stand on the concept of her, to save the guests back to the only sea, the people come and return so many times because they like the sea. They come back not because Ba Na, they turn Not because*

*of delicious food or not because of Ba Na Hill or Linh Ung Pagoda or something else that just because of the only sea.”*

In our data, the other products that develop base on “sea” were mentioned. The respondents also highlight that the ecosystem related to the sea is also important point of Danang tourism. J (male, 45 years old, CEO of travel agency) addressed “*the most prominent of Danang’s sea is the marine ecology and infrastructure relating with beach, i.e., coast, beach resort. Also, C (male, 64 years old, CEO of five-star beach resort)*” said that:

*“The sea of Da Nang has a particular attraction regarding peaceful, beautiful beach, great sand, clean, more specifically management marine environment of the Da Nang government”.*

A (male, 51 years old, Vice President of travel agency) thinks it will be a mistake if we do not count seafood as a feature tourism advantage of Danang comparing with other destinations. With the natural advantage and the developed fisheries, Danang city has potential to build tourism products based on the “*gift from the sea*” (D, male, 61 years old, central-city hotel CEO).

Beside beach, some respondents addressed the most durable products of Danang tourism is the combination of diversity products related with leisure, activities, visiting, food and festival (B, 41 years old, Vice-President Tourism agency). This diversity came from the “*great position*” of Danang that located in the middle of Vietnam World Heritage and had an international airport. He also added:

*“The tourist highly recognize Danang city is the unique combination of sea, mountain, and river, all perfectly natural condition combine in one place, that make this city is unique.”*

After the interviewing analyze, the data showed that the majority of respondents considered “sea” as the primary product of Danang tourism. Also, another products and activities related to the sea also an advance (i.e. sea leisure, festivals, beach resorts and so on). Due to the unique natural resources containing sea, river, and mountain in one place, Danang has the advantage to combine these resources to develop diversified tourism products. This is the main reason allowing the city creates multiple tourism products, such as leisure, discovering nature, experiencing the culture, playing activities and so on.

### **Great location for tourism experience**

As a transportation hub for central Vietnam, DaNang located near several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Imperial City of Hue, the Old Town of Hoi An, and the My Son (former Champa kingdom capital and religious central) ruins much of its tourist activity. Tourist come to Danang not only want to visit this city but also want to visit other tourism places then this city becomes a center of “*The Road of Heritage Sites in Central Vietnam.*” The road links World Heritage Sites in the Middle of Vietnam, namely: Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (Quang Binh province), the ancient capital of Hue, ancient trade port city (old town) of Hoi An (Quang Nam province) and My Son Champa ancient capital.

### **Cultural and spiritual tourism**

Receiving the benefit from its location, Danang city also contains the diversity and fascinating culture. C (male, 64 years old, five-star beach resort) emphasized that:



*“Besides the value of natural resources, Danang is the place of two rich cultural flows. The first flow came from the North affecting Chinese culture, and the West flow contained an Indian cultural value. Danang city naturally has Champa cultural that dominated the central of Vietnam in the past. Danang has a mixed and diversified culture that can be good for attracting tourists who want to find about culture and local history”.*

In addition to that in the North of the city has Katu people-a minority community of local ethnic people with specific cultural and living condition can be great for developing the combination between cultural and natural discovery (B, 41 years old, Vice-President Tourism agency). It is noticed that Danang city is a small city but a center for transportation, that why tourist usually came to Danang before going to other tourist places. J (male, 45 years old, tourism agency) argued that the tourist might not recognize the difference in borderline among tourism sides in several cities in the middle of Vietnam near Danang.

### **River tourism**

Danang’s river systems are potential to become tourism products. The most famous river in Danang is Han River located in the central of the city. The river divided the city into two parts that create the advantaged in developing a landscape both side of the river. It is noticed that one of the characteristics of Danang city is *“the city of bridges”* because of the original of these bridge’s architectures. For example, the Dragon Bridge attracted many visitors come to see and enjoy the ejection of fire and water from the dragon’s head-the unique activity of this bridge in the weekend. The river is also a host and stage for the performances in International Firework Festival celebrated every year.

J (male, 41, CEO of tourism agency) thought the city is still lack in the number of tourism activates on the river. He suggested that the authority need to allow more develop tourism activates instead of just allowing some floating restaurant and tourism boat are exploiting the river. In addition to, the walking stress along two sides of the river demanded more activities to gain the attraction from tourists (G, female, 35 years old, state management for tourism).

### **MICE tourism**

*“Danang was chosen to host APEC 2017 is the strongest evidence to confirm for the MICE tourism of the city”* said by G (female, 35 years old, state management). Danang has many five-star hotel and resort that can offer extensive accommodation including indoor and outdoor venues with world-class service. For example, the infrastructure was built to serve for an APEC meeting will be used to developing MICE tourism in the city. J (male, 41, CEO of tourism agency) believed that Danang city has enough condition to host world-class level meeting or conference. The success of the celebration of APEC proved the capacity and the forte to host events and festivals. The evidence is the city was named as the city of exhibitions and events in Travel World Magazine in both 2015 and 2016 (C, male, 64 years old, CEO of five-star beach resort). In addition to, with the good position that is near other tourist attractions, Danang can develop MICE and connect with other types of tourism to support for the diversity of the city tourism products.

## Evaluation Tourism Products Creating Co-Creation Experiences in Danang City

The majorities of respondents know and understand about co-creation tourism creating experiences that require the participation of tourists in the service delivery process. The respondents showed their perception of co-creation tourism products in Danang city. J (male, 45, CEO tourism agency) said:

*“We have a beautiful beach and a fisherman village; we can develop a co-creation tourism, I guess, for example, tourist can go to the sea in basket or ship with fisherman, try to use fishing-net”.*

Also, tourist can learn how to make a dish with seafood and local vegetables. E (female, 44 years old and destination management) mentioned about some events celebrating recent years, namely International Marathon completion, Triathlon (Ironman 70), Asia Golf tourism convention 2017 that attracted the tourist to participate and gain experiences. In the business level, several co-creation experience activations like mountaineering in Marble Mountain, tracking Bach Ma National Park and Son Tra Mountain received the positive signs in tourism development. C (male, 64 years old, five-star beach resort) gave an example of how his company creates a memorable tourism experience through co-creation activities of tourist. He proved in this resort has a garden that tourist can grow their tree or plant and give the name for it. This plant is the local or protected plants in Vietnam that were encouraged to cultivate for protection and environment. He optimized that guested like this activity and will return in the future to watch their plant growing.

However, the respondents agreed that the development of co-creation tourism products in Danang city is spontaneous, occasional, small, undiversified and disconnected. Although several co-creation tourism already had in the city, it is just an effort of an individual business or single activities from the destination management. J (male, 41, CEO of tourism agency) thought in the city level (destination management) co-creation tourism happened in significant events (e.g. color me run, international marathon or street musical festival), thus they are not able to celebrate more or in another activity, then it leads to the interrupt in co-creation tourism activities of the city. The respondents showed their concern about the big event might attract the massive people at the time, however, do not keep they visit at other time of the year. In the business level, co-creation may occasionally happen in a big organization (e.g. five-star resort/hotel) for their guest only, activities that encourage the engagement of community is not favorite in Danang tourism product (Chi, female, 51 years old, CEO of the five-star hotel).

About the size and frequency of co-creation tourism activities, the respondents also mentioned that the co-creation tourism products of Danang city are small and simple in both ideas and size, comparing with Hoi An (the old town-the most tourist attraction place in middle of Vietnam), We (Danang) still have a far distance (Lan, female, 35 years old, state tourism management). The tourism activities without the support and management of authority will be spontaneous and less professional. Agreeing with the destination management organization (DMO) need to take a role to establish, support and manage the development of co-creation tourism activities. J (male, 41, CEO of tourism agency) believed that DMO might know the form of co-creation however, not recognize its essential role in creating a co-creation tourism products entirely. He added:

*“DMO need to have real research about co-creation tourism and provide a strategy, policy and a professional team to lead this transformation.”*

The co-creation tourism required the change in the mindset of tourism management about the role of customers in the service delivery process, the role of the business organization in running the service and the role of DMO in managed and supported the co-creation tourism delivery.

The final drawback of co-creation tourism in Danang city was mentioned in the data is about the lack of community orientation of co-creation tourism products. The co-creation tourism is not just tourist viewing the history and culture in the beautiful museum (e.g. Champa Museum), it requires the real experiences that gain from engagement with the life, activities of local culture. C (male, 64 years old, five-star beach resort) suggested that the city authority not be only investigated to build a beautiful museum, hotel, resort, the tourist do not just look at these things, they look the aboriginal of sea, the peaceful and skilled of fisherman in Tho Quang fishing village, making a personal handicraft from baked clay in Hon Lan, etc.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The study has contributed to the research of tourism management by studying perception and evaluation of co-creation tourism experience of Danang city. The results were achieved by conducting a literature review of the relevant theories and researches related to co-creation tourism and customer experience. Based on this, several tourism products in Danang city was revealed as strong and potential to develop co-creation tourism including sea, mountain, and river tourism play as main areas. It is believed that the city has a strong potential to develop a tourism industry impressing on co-creation experiences. However, the findings show that the perception of both business and destination level is weak and straightforward in long-term strategy. Additionally, the evaluation of co-creation tourism practice in Danang reveals that this type is still new and in the beginning stage of the development cycle (e.g. the form of co-creation in tourism excites but based on the simple effort of some actors). The development of co-creation tourism requires the changing in the thinking of both destination management organization and tourism business.

### **RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

For researchers in tourism, our research offers other contributions. First, previous research in this area concentrates more in customer side. We investigate the perception of co-creation tourism in service provider's perspective that provides empirical evidence for research in tourism co-creation. Second, our study uses in-depth interview method in collecting the data. Thus it provided valuable information about the tourism management perception in the management and development policy about co-creation in tourism. This information is hard can conduct with other data collection method. Third, co-creation tourism experience is relatively new in Vietnam; our study is the first to find and explain.

For tourism practices, our study offers some suggestions for local tourism provider; Table 4 showed some examples of areas that the respondents and researchers suggested the development of co-creation tourism experience products. This study provides the current evaluation of tourism management about the co-creation tourism of Danang city. Also, some ideas were presented to help Danang city tourism business, and management develop their co-creation tourism products

| <b>Table 4</b><br><b>EVALUATION OF CURRENT CO-CREATION TOURISM EXPERIENCES IN DANANG CITY AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS</b>  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Some Example of Co-creation Experience Tourism Products</b>  | <b>Current Evaluation</b>  | <b>Some Suggestions in the Future</b>  |
| <p><b>Sea tourism</b><br/>Activities on the beach and under the sea, such as diving, rowing, water-skiing, sailing, fishing, canoeing.</p>  | Already had, however, happen occasionally in small size.   | Need to update to daily activities and give for business to invest and run.  |
| <p><b>Mountain tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking in Bach Ma National Park or Son Tra Mountain.</li> <li>• Mountaineering in Marble Mountain.</li> <li>• Camping in mountains Wildlife viewing tourism (e.g., restricted animals like birds).</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual and freelance hosted a tour only.</li> <li>• Recent years, attract tourists and local people, however, marketing activities and the size still small.</li> <li>• Don't have in tourism area and activities are personal without management.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authority should have a guideline for these types of activities.</li> <li>• Need to promote and connect with visiting Marble Mountain in a tour.</li> <li>• Potentially and need to invest in infrastructure to support a group of tourist, diversity activities connect with protecting the environment.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>River tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riverboat tour only in a part of Han River (e.g., viewing the landscape, eating on the boat).</li> </ul> <p>Connecting with another river in the system, using the boat as transportation and develop the tourist places along both sides of the river. The historical places, traditional handicraft villages, local food villages and another tourism place near the river can be connected to develop new ways of visiting.</p> | Fewer activities on the boat, simple viewing tour, less attractive with tourists.<br>Not yet develop.  | Develop river tourism that uses the boat as main transportation method to tourism places. For example:<br>+Han-Co River tour visiting local handicraft villages, Marble Mountain, "Quan The Am" pagoda, K20 cultural village.<br>+Cu De-Truong Dinh River tour visiting Nam O culture area: Historical well, fish sauce village, Temple of Lady Bo Bo, Tomb ò Tien Hien.<br>+Han-Tuy Loan River tour visiting Cam Ne Sedge village, Tuy Loan Temple. |

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Finally, there are some limitations associated with this study. The qualitative interview has its drawback. The interpretation depends considerably on a researcher's skills and background. Therefore, there is no one truth or right result. Another limitation is that the study was conducted by researching only tourist experts who keep a management position in tourism organization both business level and authority level. As it was mentioned in the literature review, the tourist perspective of co-creation tourism should be studied to confirm that the perception and evaluation about co-creation tourism experiences in Danang city are the same with expert's view. It would be a benefit for local tourism in making the strategy that meets the expectation from all dimensions. Future research may use a quantitative method to re-examine in the large sample to confirm this study's results.

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