



Towards Solutions to Enhance the Quality of Water Puppetry Experience in Vietnam through TripAdvisor Tourists' Reviews

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Abstract

This research analyzed online reviews of international tourists on TripAdvisor to explore the development of cultural tourism, particularly in the case of The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater in Ho Chi Minh City. The study employed a qualitative research method, using content analysis to examine the reviews left by tourists on TripAdvisor. The aims were to identify the positive and negative aspects of the cultural tourism experience offered by the theater, and to develop strategies for maintaining and promoting this unique cultural destination. The research found that cultural tourism is a growing trend worldwide and that online reviews on platforms such as TripAdvisor are important factors for tourists when choosing destinations. The study revealed that The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater was ranked 16th out of 244 entertainment activities in Ho Chi Minh City on TripAdvisor, with an overall rating of 4.0 stars based on over 1600 reviews. The majority of reviews were positive, highlighting the historical and cultural significance of the water puppetry show. However, negative reviews pointed out issues related to ticket purchasing and language barriers for foreign tourists. The study demonstrates the importance of online reviews in cultural tourism and provides valuable insights into how cultural destinations can improve their services and offerings to attract more international tourists.

Keywords: Cultural tourism, TripAdvisor, Water puppetry, Customer reviews, Service improvement, Vietnam

Introduction

Heritage tourism in Ho Chi Minh City has attracted significant attention from both domestic and foreign tourists. Heritage tourism is one of the most popular types of tourism, attracting millions of visitors annually to destinations worldwide. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has noted that nearly 40% of all international trips are related to heritage and cultural tourism, with demand for these types of experiences increasing at a rate of 15% per year (McKercher, 2006). In Ho Chi Minh City, many heritage sites have been evaluated as “Top Tourist Attractions 2021” on the TripAdvisor platform, including the War Remnants Museum (32,683 reviews), Cu Chi Tunnels (25,434 reviews), Independence Palace (10,198 reviews), Thien Hau Temple (994 reviews), and Notre-Dame Cathedral (8,509 reviews), among others.

Tourism is an essential economic sector in Vietnam, accounting for nearly 10% of the country's GDP in 2018. In 2018, Vietnam welcomed 95.5 million visitors, generating total revenue of over USD 27 billion, an increase of about 11% compared to the previous year. Total tourism revenue has increased more than ten times since 2008. Ho Chi Minh City, in particular,

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contributed about 25% of the national tourism GDP in 2018 (General Statistics Office, 2019). The contribution rate of the tourism industry to the GRDP (gross regional domestic product) of the city ranged from 10% to 12% in the period of 2013-2019, twice as high as the average tourism contribution rate to Vietnam's GDP (General Statistics Office, 2020).

Given the significant contribution of tourism to the economy, it is essential to develop policies and strategies to maintain and improve the quality of tourism products and services, including heritage tourism. Understanding customer feedback on these destinations can provide valuable insights to improve their quality and attractiveness to tourists. One of the ways for tourists to share their experiences, emotions, and opinions when using tourism products and services is to leave reviews on social media platforms, business websites, email, and OTA channels (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Such user-generated content provides a platform for researchers to analyze and propose tourism development policies. Despite having their own websites and fan pages, tourism destinations, hotels, and entertainment parks have increasingly cooperated with OTA channels, which have become popular due to their brand awareness and ability to promote customer decision-making behavior (Sigala & Christou, 2020). OTA channels allow customers to compare prices, reviews, and services of different hotels or attractions, providing them with a more convenient and cost-effective way to make travel plans (Inversini & Masiero, 2014).

Water puppetry is a traditional form of Vietnamese art that has become increasingly popular in recent years. Originating in the Red River Delta region in North Vietnam, water puppetry has been performed for over a thousand years, depicting the daily life of farmers and folk tales in the form of puppet shows. In recent years, water puppetry has become an integral part of the tourism industry in Vietnam, attracting thousands of visitors every year. According to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, cultural tourism, including water puppetry, is a key driver of the country's tourism industry, generating significant revenue and creating job opportunities. As a result, the quality of water puppetry experiences has become increasingly important to meet the expectations of tourists and maintain the industry's growth.

In today's digital age, social media platforms such as TripAdvisor have become crucial sources of information for travelers to plan their trips. TripAdvisor is a platform where travelers can share their experiences, rate and review hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions. The platform has over 463 million users worldwide, with over 859 million reviews and opinions posted on the platform as of 2021 (TripAdvisor, 2021). The study of consumer experience has become increasingly important in recent years. Understanding consumer behavior through examining the level of consumption/experience can help researchers identify the preferences and likes/dislikes of consumers and tourists regarding services, especially in the tourism industry. Experience becomes an important measurement factor used to understand the behavior of tourists when visiting a destination, providing a platform to improve and develop the quality of the destination, as well as attract more tourists or repeat customers (Cox et al., 2009).

The use of TripAdvisor as a platform for travelers to provide feedback on their water puppetry experiences can provide valuable insights for the tourism industry. Understanding customer feedback can help to identify areas of improvement in the water puppetry experience, such as the performance, venue, and customer service, and subsequently enhance the quality of the experience. Moreover, research has shown that customer feedback on TripAdvisor significantly influences the decision-making process of potential travelers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Therefore, analyzing customer feedback on TripAdvisor can help to identify the



strengths and weaknesses of the water puppetry experience and provide useful recommendations for improving the quality of the experience.

This research article aims to explore the impact of customer feedback on TripAdvisor on the quality of water puppetry experiences in Vietnam. The study was analyzed customer feedback and ratings on TripAdvisor to identify areas of improvement in the water puppetry experience and provide recommendations to enhance the quality of the experience.

Literature reviews

TripAdvisor reviews

The use of alternative sources of information for research on visitors' experiences has become increasingly popular in recent years. These sources include museum visitor books, comment cards, feedback boards, visitors' photographs, geographical information systems, and social media (Brochado, 2019; Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2019). One of the most popular platforms for user-generated travel content is TripAdvisor, which has about 10 million travel reviews, 5 million registered members, and 25 million visitors per month (TripAdvisor, 2017).

When writing reviews on TripAdvisor, consumers are aware that this online content will be available to the rest of the world. Web reviews are perceived as accessible, reliable, credible, and readily available information by both consumers and researchers (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). Consumers often consider Web reviews more trustworthy than official destination websites. The reviews can have varying impacts and credibility depending on the reviewers' level of expertise, which is associated with the number of reviews they have posted that have been rated as popular or helpful. TripAdvisor reviews have been increasingly considered a valid source of data in travel research (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013; Lupu, Brochado, & Stoleriu, 2017; O'Connor, 2008). They are perceived as a reliable, accessible, and readily available source of travel information (Ayeh et al., 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) regarding visitors' experiences, opinions, preferences, behaviors, and satisfaction.

One of the advantages of using TripAdvisor reviews is their spontaneous, undirected nature, which provides insightful information difficult to obtain via traditional survey methods. The reviews represent “a natural setting” in which to study travelers' lived experiences and an alternative data source for service quality studies (e.g., Brochado, Oliveira, Rita, & Oliveira-Brochado, 2019). Recent studies have used TripAdvisor reviews to analyze the main dimensions of lodging for guests with disability challenges (Zhang & Cole, 2016), medical tourism (Rodrigues, Brochado, Troilo, & Mohsin, 2017), and surf camps (Lupu, Stoleriu, & Brochado, 2018).

Despite the advantages of TripAdvisor reviews, there are also potential limitations to consider. For example, it may be difficult to assess the credibility of individual reviewers, and the reviews may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the general population (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012). Additionally, the reviews may be biased towards certain demographics, such as younger, more tech-savvy consumers. Another potential limitation is the possibility of fake reviews, although TripAdvisor has taken measures to police the system and avoid false reviews (Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2019).

Despite these limitations, TripAdvisor reviews remain a valuable source of data for researchers and a popular resource for consumers. The website's large user base and extensive database of reviews provide researchers with a wealth of information to analyze, and consumers with a convenient means of accessing reviews and opinions from other travelers. As tourism continues to evolve, it is likely that TripAdvisor and similar review platforms will continue to

play an important role in shaping travelers' decisions and researchers' understanding of the tourism industry.

Overall, TripAdvisor reviews have emerged as an important source of information for researchers and consumers alike. With millions of reviews covering a wide range of travel-related products and services, TripAdvisor provides a wealth of information for researchers to analyze and understand the tourism industry. Reviews on TripAdvisor are perceived as a reliable, accessible, and readily available source of travel information by both consumers and researchers regarding visitors' experiences, opinions, preferences, behaviors, and satisfaction. Despite potential limitations such as the credibility of individual reviewers and the possibility of fake reviews, TripAdvisor remains a valuable resource for researchers and a popular tool for consumers to access reviews and opinions from other travelers. As tourism continues to evolve, it is likely that TripAdvisor and similar review platforms will continue to play a crucial role in shaping travelers' decisions and researchers' understanding of the tourism industry.

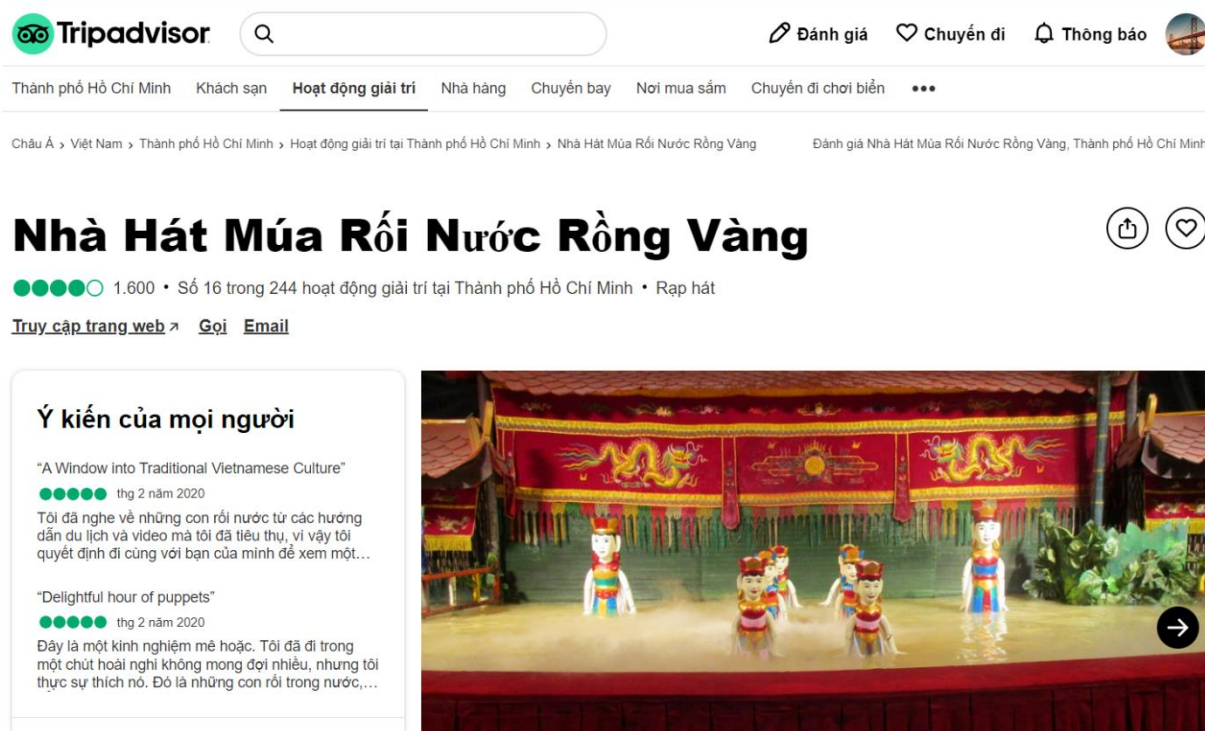


Figure 1. TripAdvisor page image of Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Online reviews in tourism

A review of recent relevant literature related to tourist destinations indicates that there is a growing academic interest in analyzing customer experiences and satisfaction on social media (Albarq, 2014; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). eWOM (electronic Word of Mouth) is a form of communication through the internet platform that enables consumers to engage in non-commercial advertising, sharing and discussing direct experiences about specific products and brands (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). In fact, websites and social media have expanded and changed the scope of word-of-mouth (WOM) communication. While it used to rely on people talking in pairs or small groups, the internet has extended and transformed WOM into a vast communication medium within predetermined groups, friends or thousands of strangers connected online communities (O'Connor, 2010).



Currently, eWOM is becoming a popular choice for customers due to its ease of access, fast updates, large and diverse visual information, ease of access and evaluation, wide sharing and relevance to destinations. Therefore, many researchers have evaluated the impact of eWOM on customer decisions. Albarq's study (2014) identified the influence of eWOM on tourists' attitudes and perceptions towards a specific tourist destination. The study found that the trust of consumers in advertising and media organizations has decreased, making eWOM a more reliable source of information for most visitors in the tourism industry. Another study by Sotiriadis and Van Zyl (2013) revealed that eWOM affects the decisions of most tourists to various tourist destinations. Moreover, the study showed that most tourists trust social networking sites like Twitter to make decisions about specific travel destinations (Sotiriadis & Van Zyl, 2013). These findings indicate that eWOM has a clear impact on decisions, as well as attitudes, related to visiting specific tourist destinations.

Online reviews are the most visual, specific and authentic consumer experience provided by consumers, revealing the content that consumers care most about. In addition, online reviews are consumer feedback on advertised products or services to reduce customer hesitation and improve viewer perceptions of product features and services conveyed through media (Davis & Khazanchi, 2008). Their availability has been shown to have a positive impact on online sales volume (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). E-commerce platforms, OTA websites all have a product review section for buyers, a star rating filter mode for readers that the supplier does not have the right to edit, all review information is public.

Reports indicate that hundreds of millions of tourists consult such review websites every year. Of these tourists, 88% have their hotel choices influenced by what they see (Tripadvisor.com; European Tourism Commission, 2009). Gretzel (2007) found that tourists tend to consider online reviews of others to be more influential than any other tourism product in their decision-making process about hotel selection. According to Gretzel and Yoo (2008), three-quarters of tourists consider online consumer reviews as an information source when planning their trip. In other fields, studies have shown that user-generated online reviews can have a significant impact on the sale of products such as books, CDs, and films (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). These studies show that the influence of user reviews is particularly important for tourism products and services because their quality is often unknown before consumption.

These online reviews also create important and easily accessible eWOM sources (Brochado & Brochado, 2019; Schuckert et al., 2015; Barreda & Bilgihan, 2013). The information generated by users related to pre-trip, on-site, and post-trip experiences has formed highly valuable data for other potential travelers in planning and decision-making for destination choices. Furthermore, online reviews by travelers about their own experiences also contribute valuable feedback for local tourism stakeholders, helping them gain insights into the current situation and work towards improving the destination's image and service quality.

Destination service quality

Online reviews are crucial for understanding and exploring tourist experiences in the tourism industry (Brochado & Brochado, 2019; Schuckert et al., 2019). These reviews, which are easily accessible through social media platforms, provide valuable feedback for service providers to improve their service quality (Brochado & Brochado, 2019; Schuckert et al., 2019). According to Thanh Tan and Kirova (2018), analyzing online reviews is critical for comprehending and evaluating tourism experiences. Kim and Fesenmaier (2017) suggest that the information shared on social media platforms can shape post-travel experience evaluations.

Therefore, analyzing online reviews can help service providers understand the needs and preferences of tourists and identify areas for improvement.

Service quality is a vital motivator for future behavioral intentions such as introduction and revisitation (Chen and Tsai, 2007). Therefore, it is important to ensure that service providers are meeting the needs and expectations of tourists to enhance their overall experience. In evaluating destination service quality, researchers often use the concept of "destination quality" to indicate the attributes of services introduced by service providers in a locality.

As providing unique and positive customer experiences becomes increasingly important in the tourism industry, destinations must ensure that their services meet the specific needs and desires of tourists to enhance their overall experience. Traditional differentiation methods are becoming ineffective, and there is a growing demand for experience products that cater to specific desires and needs of tourists (Wong & Wan, 2013). Therefore, tourism destinations must provide holistic experiences that meet the demands of tourists and align with their perception of a destination.

Online reviews, which are easily accessible electronic word-of-mouth sources, provide valuable feedback for service providers to improve their service quality (Brochado & Brochado, 2019; Schuckert et al., 2019). Analyzing these reviews can help service providers understand the needs and preferences of tourists and identify areas for improvement. By improving service quality, destinations can enhance the overall experience of tourists and increase their satisfaction levels, ultimately leading to more revisits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

In sum, online reviews play a crucial role in evaluating and improving destination service quality in tourism. Analyzing these reviews helps service providers understand the needs and preferences of tourists and identify areas for improvement. As providing unique and positive customer experiences becomes increasingly important, destinations must ensure that their services meet the specific needs and desires of tourists to enhance their overall experience.

Research methods

Research context

The research context is about the traditional art form of water puppetry, which is considered to be one of the earliest forms of folk art in Vietnam, although it appeared later than other traditional arts such as tuong, cheo, cai luong, dan ca kich, kich noi, xiec, and ca mua. Unlike other performing arts where performers use their bodies, actions, speech, and emotions to perform, in water puppetry, only small and rudimentary wooden puppets are used. However, in the hands of skilled puppeteers, these rough wooden figures, when combined with the artistic backdrop of the stage with a water pavilion, become imbued with soul and emotion. What makes this art form unique is that the audience's appreciation and understanding of the art form occur naturally, easily, simply, and comfortably, like enjoying a light but profound form of entertainment.

Water puppetry is a unique art form that originated in the Red River Delta region of Vietnam. It emerged from the people's efforts to manage and develop water resources, and is typically performed on days of leisure or during festivals. Through the stories told by water puppet artists, audiences can experience the mood of the village and the simple dreams of the people. Water puppetry combines natural elements such as land, water, trees, clouds, wind, fire, smoke, and communal houses to create a unique blend of art and nature. This art form originated as a hobby in folk festivals, nurtured by the passion of the people, and is now performed in professional theaters. The artists who create water puppetry have a deep

connection with water, such as rice growers, and convey their warmth and passion through their actions.



Figure 2: Performing water puppets in the stage



Figure 3. A water puppetry performer greeting the audience after the performance

To Sanh defined water puppetry as a unique form of puppetry stage art that is performed on water, such as a pond, lake, or large tank. The puppeteer operates the puppet from a house built in the middle of the water or near a small lake, using strings tied to the puppet and pole. The puppeteer is hidden behind a puppet screen made of wood or waterproof material, with all the sticks, strings, and machines immersed in the water. There are various types of water puppets, including pond puppets, tank puppets, and water puppets combined with land puppets.

The traditional stage for water puppetry is an ancient system of two-story, eight-roofed brick houses. This art form is unique to Vietnam (To Sanh, 1976, p.37)

It can be said that water puppetry, in general, and water puppetry at the Rong Vang Water Puppet Theater, in particular, are unique and attractive art forms that, if preserved and developed, could have a significant value in attracting tourists and contributing to the development of the tourism industry. Currently, the conservation of this art form is beginning to receive attention. However, this traditional art form is still not widely popular, and many people are unaware of it. It is in danger of being forgotten and neglected and not being utilized effectively for tourism development.

The water puppet show's popularity among other cultural performances can be attributed to its unique characteristics and cultural significance. According to Vu Tu Quynh (2006), the use of water as a stage and the skillful manipulation of puppets by the puppeteers create a mesmerizing and enchanting performance that is unlike any other. In addition, the water puppet show has a rich historical and cultural background dating back over a thousand years in Vietnam's Red River Delta region, as noted by To Sanh (1976). Furthermore, the water puppet show was introduced to HCM city in the mid-20th century when a group of water puppeteers from North Vietnam traveled to the city to perform (Vu Tu Quynh, 2006). As a result, the show's popularity quickly grew among locals and tourists alike, leading to the establishment of permanent water puppet theaters in the city. Today, the water puppet show is one of the most popular cultural tourism products in HCM city, attracting visitors from all over the world.

As a key place of case study in this paper, HCM city provides an ideal setting for exploring the role of cultural tourism in promoting and preserving cultural heritage in Vietnam. Specifically, the water puppet show in HCM city serves as an excellent example of how traditional cultural performances can be adapted and promoted in a contemporary tourism context while still maintaining their cultural authenticity.

Data collections and analysis

Due to its advantages over other platforms, TripAdvisor was chosen as the data source for this study. Previous research has extensively used TripAdvisor to facilitate easy comparison of results (Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2019; Xiang et al., 2017). TripAdvisor also demonstrates data reliability by maintaining its reputation through controlling the system to avoid false reviews (Taecharungroj & Mathayomchan, 2019). According to TripAdvisor, it is the most reliable platform for consumers to provide feedback and is used to rank hotels and tourist spots (Jeacle & Carter, 2011). These rankings and feedback provide valuable information to potential tourists about the best-performing destinations in the tourism sector. TripAdvisor is identified as one of the most effective consumer-generated content platforms used and mentioned in numerous qualitative studies (O'Connor, 2008). It is performing well in controlling its system, thus avoiding fake, baseless, distorted, or untrue comments about destinations or hotels (O'Connor, 2010; Lu & Stepchenkova, 2012).

Regarding the ethical aspect of research, Kozinets (2002) argued that caution should be taken with ethical considerations such as disclosure, privacy, and anonymity. However, according to Rageh et al. (2013), online reviews are inherently free and public, so ethical considerations in online discussions are not necessary. Therefore, agreeing to participate in the study is implied as not necessary. However, the identities of online reviewers have been anonymized in the analysis of the results of this study.

Online review data analysis is a valuable tool for measuring customer satisfaction, ranking ratings of destinations, measuring service quality, and more in the tourism industry.



Content analysis is a common research method used to evaluate the content of all forms of recorded communication. In tourism research, content analysis has been used to extract and examine text-based words and phrases from online reviews. By using content analysis, researchers can organize large amounts of text data and identify a concise summary of the main themes present in the data.

After completing the coding process, the authors classified each review into specific categories. They then narrowed down the list of categories by combining similar ones into broader categories (Krippendor, 2004). The purpose of this process was to reduce the number of categories by combining similar or dissimilar categories. The authors then discussed the categories further to identify six positive and seven negative themes.

Results

Online review analysis on TripAdvisor by tourists about the destination of Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater in Ho Chi Minh City.

According to TripAdvisor, the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater is ranked 16 out of 244 entertainment activities in Ho Chi Minh City based on traveler reviews. The theater has received a total of 1600 reviews with an overall rating of 4.0 stars (out of 5) on TripAdvisor. The reviews are categorized into five levels: "Excellent" with 668 reviews, "Good" with 632 reviews, "Average" with 221 reviews, "Poor" with 48 reviews, and "Terrible" with 31 reviews.

TripAdvisor Rating	5 stars "Excellent"	4 stars "Good"	3 stars "Average"	2 stars "Poor"	1 star "Terrible"
Number of Reviews	668	632	221	48	31

Table 1. Summary of the number of traveler reviews on TripAdvisor for The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater (TripAdvisor, May 19, 2022)

Based on the positive **5-star** "Excellent" reviews of The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater among 668 reviews on TripAdvisor, it is evident that the water puppet show is a unique and enjoyable experience for many travelers. The show has a duration of 45 minutes, and the puppets are beautiful and well-controlled by their operators. The positive 5-star reviews about The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater, among the 668 reviews, show that visitors find the water puppet show a fascinating experience. According to Hanah from Manila, Philippines, it is a "fun experience" and the puppet show lasts for 45 minutes. The beautiful and skillful puppets are also appreciated, as noted by Seth L from Colorado Springs. The show provides a window into Vietnamese traditional culture, where the puppeteers control their puppets with the use of underwater poles. Although the show is in Vietnamese, Seth L found the storytelling easy to follow, the performances hilarious, and the traditional music enchanting. Moreover, JennieCV from Liverpool, with 31 contributions, was initially skeptical about the show, but found it to be a delightful experience. The water puppets, telling stories of the countryside, are humorous and skillful, accompanied by excellent musicians who seem to enjoy every moment. Additionally, T0232c from Armagh, United Kingdom, praised the show as "fantastic" and was surprised by how he enjoyed it, even though he did not understand a single word. The show was able to keep him entertained and captivated for the entire 45 minutes. Finally, Jainil's appreciated the theater staff for their excellent service in accommodating seating arrangements.

Many travelers praised the show's ability to showcase Vietnamese traditional culture, as well as its ability to tell engaging stories despite being performed entirely in Vietnamese. The use of traditional music during the performances also added to the overall experience.

Many reviewers also commented on the show's ability to keep them entertained and engaged throughout the duration. They described the puppetry as being skillful and humorous, with excellent musicians supporting the performances. The positive reviews also showed that travelers from different parts of the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines, found the show to be an immersive cultural experience that left them with a newfound appreciation for Vietnamese traditional culture.

Overall, the positive reviews of The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater on TripAdvisor indicate that the show is a must-see attraction in Ho Chi Minh City, offering travelers an immersive experience into Vietnam's traditional culture through skillful puppetry and traditional music.

Based on the positive **4-star** "Good" reviews of The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater among 632 reviews on TripAdvisor, it is evident that the water puppet show offers a unique and engaging cultural experience for visitors. According to Joel K from Vancouver, Canada, the water puppet show tells many stories, including those about farm life, rice harvest, and battles at sea, through skillful puppetry that has been a tradition in Vietnam for over 1200 years. The performers control the puppets with underwater poles, making the show a creative and fascinating experience.

Davethepubsinger from Tenerife, Spain, noted that the show presents genuine Vietnamese culture, and that he and his wife found it easy to understand despite being performed entirely in Vietnamese. The presence of a program with English translations helped them follow along, and the accompanying traditional music added to the overall experience. The theater was clean and well-organized, and the program lasted about an hour, featuring a variety of strange and wonderful creatures, animals, and insects dancing in water.

Henry Lixin Lin from Singapore, Singapore, remarked that the show has made improvements over the years in terms of its content and presentation, although he was disappointed that the theater and its surroundings remained in a dilapidated condition. He also expressed concern about dishonest taxi drivers who overcharged customers, tarnishing the experience of attending the water puppet show.

Utepil from Vuorela, Finland, highly recommended the show, noting the skillful synchronization of puppetry and music, and the challenging work of the performers who stand in water for 40 minutes. They also suggested that the water puppet show is a must-see attraction for couples interested in experiencing traditional Vietnamese culture.

Overall, the positive reviews of The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater on TripAdvisor indicate that the show is an excellent cultural experience that offers visitors a glimpse into traditional Vietnamese culture through skillful puppetry, music, and storytelling. However, some concerns were raised about dishonest taxi drivers and the condition of the theater and its surroundings. The findings refer to positive reviews with 4-star ratings ("Rất tốt" or "Good") of The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater on TripAdvisor, as provided by several reviewers from different countries. The reviews highlight the traditional Vietnamese water puppetry as a unique and fascinating cultural experience, with skillful puppetry and traditional music adding to the overall enjoyment. However, some reviewers also mention issues with the theater's infrastructure and experiences with unethical taxi drivers.

Feedback of 3 stars "Average" about The Water Puppet Theater among 221 reviews

Among 221 reviews, there were several positive three-star "Average" reviews for the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater. Preeti82 from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia said that the English language programs would be useful, and although the show was interesting, the lack of context and explanation made it difficult to understand. Loey1031 from Malaysia suggested calling ahead to purchase tickets and that a screen displaying English or Mandarin would be helpful. Amy C with 31 reviews said that the program was great, but some audience members using cellphones and arriving late made the experience unpleasant. Abhi_Gupta from Singapore with 40 reviews stated that the show was not as good as advertised and the seats were uncomfortable. Karen from Melbourne, Australia with 121 reviews liked the cultural aspects but found the narration too loud. Finally, Suci from Jakarta, Indonesia with 21 reviews found the venue small and outdated but enjoyed the show, even though it was hard to understand the language. Overall, opinions were mixed, and some found the experience enjoyable, while others were less impressed.

The findings are a collection of reviews and feedback about the Dragon Water Puppet Theater in Vietnam, posted on TripAdvisor by various individuals who attended the shows. The reviews provide different perspectives on the quality of the performances, the language barrier, the seating arrangements, and the overall experience. Some reviewers had positive experiences and enjoyed the cultural aspect of the performances, while others had negative experiences due to issues such as poor seating, language barriers, and noisy surroundings. The findings offer insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the theater, as well as the perspectives of those who attended its performances.

Overall, the reviews suggest mixed opinions about the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater. While some reviewers found the performances interesting and entertaining, others were disappointed by the language barrier, uncomfortable seating, and lack of explanation or context provided during the show.

The reviewers also noted that the theater's staff could be more helpful and accommodating, particularly in regards to ticketing and seating arrangements. Some reviewers expressed frustration with the lack of English language support or translation provided during the performances.

Additionally, some reviewers complained about the noise level during the performances, particularly in relation to the music and commentary. Finally, there were some comments about the theater being old, small, and uncomfortable with cramped seating that made it difficult to enjoy the performances.

Despite these criticisms, several reviewers also noted that the theater offered a unique cultural experience and was worth visiting if one was interested in traditional Vietnamese performance art. Overall, it seems that the quality of the experience at the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater may vary depending on individual preferences and expectations.

Negative Reviews and Complaints of 2-star "Poor" Ratings for the Water Puppet Theater with 48 Reviews

The findings consist of negative reviews and complaints about the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater, out of 48 reviews. One reviewer, Paul M from Oxford, UK, expressed dissatisfaction with the ticket purchase process, which required printing an email and going to a separate location to receive the tickets, which made attending the performance less convenient. Another reviewer, David from Los Angeles, CA, commented on the language barrier, as the performance was entirely in Vietnamese, making it difficult to follow the

storyline, and found the experience tiring. Gordon O from Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, praised the performance but criticized the behavior of audience members who were using their phones to record videos, limiting the view of the stage and impacting the artists' skills and work. Finally, a reviewer named dua9876 from Adelaide, Australia, expressed frustration with the lack of English translations and disruptive behavior of fellow audience members who were recording the performance with their phones, obstructing the view for others. They suggested that the staff should intervene to prevent such behavior in the future.

The reviews of the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater reveal that some customers have had negative experiences, with complaints about the ticket purchasing process, language barriers, and the behavior of other audience members. Among the 48 reviews analyzed, there were several instances of customers giving the theater a two-star rating, which is labeled as "poor" on TripAdvisor.

One reviewer from Oxford, UK, named Paul M, expressed dissatisfaction with the ticketing process, stating that they had to print out an email and go to a separate location to pick up their tickets, which was inconvenient and confusing. They also suggested that it would be better to purchase tickets directly at the theater. Another reviewer from Los Angeles, CA named David, found the performance interesting but difficult to understand because it was entirely in Vietnamese, which made it a "tiring" experience to sit through.

Another reviewer from Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, named GORDON O, was impressed by the puppets and the music but felt that the experience was ruined by other audience members using their phones to record videos, which restricted the view and was disrespectful to the performers. They suggested that the theater should consider banning phone use during performances to ensure that everyone can fully enjoy the show.

A reviewer named dua9876 from Adelaide, Australia, also complained about the behavior of other audience members, specifically those who were using their phones to record the performance and blocking their view. They also mentioned that the lack of English translations made it difficult to follow the story and suggested that the staff should do more to prevent disruptive behavior during the show.

Overall, the negative reviews and complaints are related to issues such as inconvenience during the ticket purchase process, language barriers, lack of translations, and disruptive behavior of other audience members during the performance. These reviews suggest that while the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater has some unique and interesting performances, there are areas where they could improve, such as simplifying the ticket purchasing process, providing translations for non-Vietnamese speakers, and implementing policies to prevent disruptive phone use during performances.

Reviews with negative feedback and 1-star complaints "Terrible" about the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater with 31 reviews.

The negative reviews and complaints about the Ròng Vàng Water Puppet Theater include issues with ticketing, pricing, customer service, performance quality, and language barriers.

The negative reviews and complaints about the Ròng Vàng Water Puppet Theater include issues with ticketing, language barriers, high prices, poor performance quality, and disruptive audience behavior. One reviewer, Kimberly, detailed her frustrating experience with ticketing. She stated that she had to pick up her tickets at a different location than the theater and that the location was not even correct. Furthermore, she was unable to contact anyone to get a refund.

Another reviewer, Pamela Peng, mentioned that the Rồng Vàng Water Puppet Theater charges a significantly higher price than other water puppet shows in Vietnam, and yet the performance quality is lower. She also noted that the performance space is much smaller than other shows she's seen and that there are no light effects. Pamela Peng called it the "worst water puppet show in Vietnam."

Another reviewer, Ana P, highlighted the lackluster performance quality and rude staff. She noted that some of the audience members even fell asleep during the show. Ana P described the show as "boring."

These reviews indicate that many visitors were disappointed with their experience at the Nhà hát múa rối Rồng Vàng. They suggest that the theater has issues with ticketing, pricing, performance quality, and audience behavior. Visitors may have a disappointing experience, causing them to avoid returning in the future.

Several reviewers mentioned that the ticket prices were much higher than other comparable performances they had seen in Vietnam, with Pamela Peng from London describing the price of 230,000 VND as a "rip off" compared to the 100,000 VND she paid for similar shows in Hanoi and Hoi An.

Other visitors had difficulty with ticketing, including difficulties finding the ticket pick-up location, unhelpful staff, and an inability to get a refund or contact TripAdvisor about their experience. Kimberly from Adelaide, for example, was frustrated that she had to pick up her tickets at a different location than the theater and that the location was not even correct.

Many reviewers also criticized the quality of the performances, citing issues such as small stage size, lack of lighting effects, and unintelligible storytelling due to the performances being entirely in Vietnamese. Pamela Peng called it the "worst water puppet show in Vietnam" and Ana P described the show as "boring."

Overall, the reviews suggest that visitors to the Rồng Vàng Water Puppet Theater should be prepared for high ticket prices, potential difficulties with ticketing and customer service, and potential disappointment with the quality of the performances.

Assessment of the current situation of the cultural art tourism type of Water Puppetry at the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater

Cultural tourism is a strong trend in the world (McKercher & colleagues, 2003; UNWTO, 2011; Verbeker, 2008; Boniface, 2003). The development of cultural tourism not only brings significant economic and social benefits but also serves as an effective tool to conserve and sustain the cultural heritage values that are increasingly deteriorating or being destroyed by time or the forgetfulness of the local community (Verbeker & colleagues, 2008).

In Vietnam, the development of cultural tourism is a goal that aims to create unique, attractive, and sustainable tourism products. Compared to other traditional art forms such as chèo, tuồng, and cải lương, which are currently lacking in audience, water puppetry is increasingly attracting a large number of viewers. Water puppetry performances have increased significantly, developing in various forms, both professional and traditional, affirming the attractiveness of Vietnamese water puppetry.

The current situation of the water puppetry cultural tourism at the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater is a mix of positive and negative aspects. While the number of tourists visiting water puppetry shows has been increasing steadily over the years, and the theater has been introducing new performances, there are still several fundamental limitations that need to be addressed.

Firstly, despite the significant growth of the tourism industry, especially in terms of attracting international visitors to experience the unique cultural art form of water puppetry, there are only a few water puppetry performance venues in Ho Chi Minh City. The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater has established itself as the leading destination for water puppetry shows in the city, but the number of foreign tourists visiting the theater has been decreasing in recent years. Additionally, the few existing water puppetry venues in the city are small and have not been invested in as thoroughly as those in Hanoi and Hai Phong.

Another issue is the improper arrangement of the seating at the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater, which results in obstructed views for those seated in the back rows. Furthermore, the shows are often disrupted by the sound of ringing cellphones and other patrons recording the performance. Additionally, the seating arrangement is not conducive to an enjoyable viewing experience, as foreign visitors have complained about being disturbed by the noise of other guests and their inability to concentrate on the performance. Moreover, the lack of diversity in the repertoire of traditional water puppetry performances is another issue. Most water puppetry groups in Hanoi, Hai Phong, and Ho Chi Minh City only perform 16 or so traditional water puppetry acts, which have been replicated and rehashed without much creativity or innovation. This monotony has led to a decline in the appeal of water puppetry shows, especially among younger audiences who are drawn to more contemporary and diverse forms of art and entertainment.

The absence of English language interpretation is also a significant drawback, as many foreign visitors find the shows difficult to comprehend. This lack of interpretation reduces the potential audience for water puppetry shows and makes them less accessible to international tourists. Moreover, despite the popularity of water puppetry shows among both local and foreign tourists, there has been little progress in securing financial support or linking up with the tourism industry to promote and sustain the art form. This is a missed opportunity for the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater to attract more visitors and promote cultural tourism.

The inadequate management of the theater, including the poor arrangement of seating and the lack of cleanliness, is also a problem. The staff's mismanagement and lack of attention to detail have negatively affected visitors' experience at the theater. Additionally, the number of tour guides and their competence is not sufficient, especially when it comes to explaining the intricacies of water puppetry to foreign visitors.

Finally, the scarcity of skilled water puppetry artists is a significant concern. The older generation of water puppetry artists are retiring, and there are not enough skilled artists to pass on the tradition to the next generation. This lack of new talent and innovation is a threat to the sustainability of the art form.

Discussion and solutions

Ho Chi Minh City is regarded as the most dynamic tourist destination and market in the country. To ensure the sustainable development of the city's tourism industry, it is essential to enhance the quality of tourist services and destinations in addition to promoting tourism, developing infrastructure, and nurturing human resources.

Solutions to improve the quality of the destination and upgrade the physical facilities to serve water puppetry performances:

One of the solutions to improving the quality of tourist destinations is upgrading the physical facilities that serve water puppet performances at the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater. Water puppetry is a unique and traditional art form of Vietnam that has survived for



centuries, but it is in danger of losing its essence due to the aging of the remaining artisans and the lack of preservation and restoration of some outstanding performances.

To develop water puppetry in Vietnam in the present era, it is necessary to focus on restoring unexploited performances and promoting them in all water puppet theaters. The state needs to establish a comprehensive strategy to conserve, restore, and develop the traditional art form. This can be achieved through stabilizing the organization and operation of water puppet theaters, providing resources and funding, creating favorable operating mechanisms, and soliciting sponsorships in various forms. Moreover, applying modern stage technology, sound systems, and LED screens behind the stage can enhance the attractiveness of water puppet performances. Adding foreign language translations for non-native speakers can also help them understand the soul and essence of the art form.

In addition to upgrading the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater, creating more water puppet performance venues can help push cultural tourism development. Diversifying the experience of water puppetry can provide tourists with the opportunity to interact with folk artists, learn how to control water puppets, and perform on a smaller water puppet stage.

It is also important to create an authentic environment that reflects the traditional roots of water puppetry. Perfecting the performance space of the Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater should ensure that it aligns with the natural landscape of the village, such as ponds, communal houses, fields, and cattle. This creates a sense of community and cultural values between the artists and their way of life.

Finally, promoting communication and collaboration between water puppet theaters within Ho Chi Minh City is necessary. This can create a favorable environment for nurturing the creativity of artists, honing their knowledge, experience, and responsibility for the preservation and development of water puppetry. Studying water puppetry systematically can help generate theories, creative methods, and evaluate the role of water puppetry in modern life.

Solutions to train human resources, performance artists, and theater management, and to engage with real audiences

To enhance the workforce in water puppetry, several solutions can be implemented. Firstly, a systematic and well-structured training program should be developed for actors, theoreticians, and directors. The program can be offered through universities and apprenticeships with experienced puppetry artists and theater professionals. This approach will allow young artists to learn the essence of this ancient art form and inherit its spirit. Currently, most training in water puppetry relies on informal methods and apprenticeships, which do not provide deep professional knowledge in this field.

Secondly, a special policy should be implemented to support and honor the puppetry artists as living treasures, providing them with a sense of stability and support to pass down their skills to future generations.

Thirdly, theater management plays a vital role in the development of water puppetry in Vietnam. They should establish clear strategies for creating, directing, funding, and supporting professional theater productions. This includes offering competitive salaries and benefits to artists, funding productions, and investing in infrastructure, equipment, and technology. Additionally, the theater management must also develop a pool of skilled professionals to ensure the continuity and growth of water puppetry. By doing so, it will create a legal framework to safeguard the creation and performance of water puppetry, control harmful cultural trends, and review and approve works.

Fourthly, the success of water puppetry depends on the talents of the artists. Thus, selecting, training, and nurturing their talent is of utmost importance. Artists must possess a combination of intellectual knowledge, creativity, technical skills, and expressiveness to create meaningful and high-quality productions. The selection process must be rigorous, with a focus on aptitude and potential.

Finally, audience is the key factor that determines the survival of water puppetry. Therefore, a balance between tradition and modernity must be achieved to attract and retain audiences. The rise of modernity and market mechanisms has led to harmful cultural trends that have negatively impacted the traditional culture of water puppetry. It is essential to restore the balance by integrating the traditional culture of water puppetry with modern forms of expression and technology to attract and engage audiences.

Solutions to promote, advertise, educate about the art of water puppetry at the cultural tourism destination:

One of the necessary solutions to preserve and promote the art of water puppetry in Vietnam is to equip the public with knowledge and understanding of the country's traditional culture. Nguyen The Nghi, Head of the Water Puppetry Department in Dao Thuc Ward, highlighted the paradoxical situation where 90% of the Vietnamese population are farmers who have daily contact with water environments, but over 90% of them have never had the opportunity to see water puppetry performances. Therefore, it is essential to educate and promote water puppetry to the audience through various long-term measures.

Firstly, there should be an emphasis on promoting international cultural exchange activities, such as building specific international cooperation programs each year with priority given to developing friendly relations with countries in Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and the world. It is important to receive and actively introduce the promotion of Vietnam's water puppetry art while simultaneously learning from the cultural heritage of other countries. Enhancing cultural exchange through organizing water puppetry performances abroad, which not only involve artistic performances but also workshops and knowledge sharing between management agencies and art units.

Secondly, it is necessary to increase the broadcast time of traditional stage art performances, including water puppetry, on television and other media platforms. Updating and promoting knowledge about water puppetry art and introducing images and activities related to the art, such as outstanding water puppet artists, folk water puppetry clubs, water puppetry theaters, and traditional performance stories, is also essential. Building a regular program or section that highlights various traditional cultural art forms, including water puppetry, is critical. These programs should be engaging, informative, and invest in meticulous planning to capture the attention of the public.

Lastly, the integration of water puppetry art knowledge into the school curriculum at the primary and secondary levels is crucial. This should be implemented through interactive teaching methods, such as inviting water puppetry artists to introduce the art form and demonstrate techniques, watching performances, and experiencing the creation of water puppets. These activities will cultivate a love and passion for traditional art among students and develop their awareness of cultural heritage preservation. Coordination with folk water puppetry clubs, professional water puppetry theaters, and experienced artists and artisans should be done to provide effective teaching.



Solutions to improve positive reviews and minimize negative reviews on TripAdvisor:

In order to receive positive reviews and achieve a higher rating on TripAdvisor, the Rong Vang Water Puppet Theater needs to focus on improving the actual service to provide a great experience for customers. The quality of the service, the level of enthusiasm in customer service, and the utility of the service will determine the experience and subsequent reviews of customers.

By doing this well, Rong Vang on TripAdvisor can receive more positive reviews while also receiving feedback from customers to improve and upgrade their services. In addition, receiving positive feedback from customers will push the destination's information to the top of the competition with other destinations. Therefore, being honest and decisive will undoubtedly bring high effectiveness not only on TripAdvisor but also as a successful formula for retaining customers.

Being enthusiastic in receiving and responding to negative reviews from tourists helps to identify issues and solutions for improvement. The management of the Rong Vang Water Puppet Theater needs to consider and record positive reviews and face negative reviews on TripAdvisor from customers. Positive reviews need to be maximized while negative reviews from customers are necessary for service improvement. At the same time, it is necessary to respond to both negative and positive reviews from customers.

Changing and adjusting based on customer feedback helps to improve the reputation ranking on TripAdvisor. From time to time, tourist destinations and service providers often make mistakes that leave customers dissatisfied with existing issues. Tourists often share negative experiences through online reviews, and many potential tourists consider these before making their choices. Therefore, even small mistakes can have long-lasting negative impacts on the reputation of a tourist destination and decrease its level of competitiveness.

Conclusion

Cultural tourism is becoming a strong trend worldwide. The development of cultural tourism not only brings great economic and social benefits, but also serves as an effective tool to conserve and sustain the cultural heritage that is increasingly deteriorating over time. This research analyzed the online reviews of international tourists on TripAdvisor about The Golden Dragon Water Puppet Theater, a cultural tourist attraction in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The results showed that the majority of tourists had positive experiences with the water puppet shows, but there were also some negative reviews regarding ticket purchase issues and the lack of English translations. Through this analysis, strategies and solutions were proposed to preserve, promote and expand the cultural and historical values of the attraction to a wider range of international tourists.

The study highlights the importance of online reviews and feedback from tourists in the tourism industry, particularly on platforms such as TripAdvisor. Online reviews play a crucial role in tourists' decision-making process when choosing destinations to visit. Moreover, the volume of reviews on a particular platform and the lack of bias are important factors that influence tourists' trust in the reviews. Therefore, destination managers need to be aware of the significance of online reviews and incorporate feedback from tourists to improve the quality of their services.

In addition to the information provided by tourism destinations, tourists have access to various external sources of information, such as online reviews. These sources significantly impact tourists' decisions, making it necessary to conduct further research on the application of online channels in the context of each attraction, product or service. The findings of this

study suggest the need for an ongoing effort to improve the quality of tourism services in Ho Chi Minh City and to capitalize on its cultural and historical assets to promote cultural tourism.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the knowledge of cultural tourism, the importance of online reviews, and the need to incorporate feedback from tourists to improve the quality of tourism services. By applying the findings and recommendations of this study, tourism destinations can attract more international visitors and enhance their reputation on online platforms.

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