FACTORS AFFECTING CAN THO RESIDENTS' INTENTION TO VISIT DALAT IN THE COVID-19 ERA

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Abstract

The paper examines the factors affecting the intentions of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat as the COVID-19 pandemic is gradually brought under control. The data were collected from a survey of 213 Can Tho residents and analyzed with Cronbach's alpha, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The results show that the intentions of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat depend on four factors: (1) attitude toward Dalat tourism, (2) subjective norms, (3) perceived behavioral controls, and (4) perceived health risk. In particular, the attitudinal factor significantly influences Dalat travel intentions. Based on the research results, the article proposes four recommendations for managers, corresponding to the four influencing factors, to increase the intentions of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat in the COVID-19 era.

Keywords: Can Tho; COVID-19; Dalat; Tourism intention.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Tourism is considered a leading economic sector in Vietnam because of its essential contribution to economic growth, employment, and national development (Chúc & Linh, 2022). In the past three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused heavy damage to the global tourism industry in general and Vietnam tourism in particular because most countries have restricted the movement of individuals and closed tourist attractions (Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020). Moreover, many businesses operating in the service and tourism sectors became insolvent because of inactivity due to travel restrictions and the significant decrease in tourism demand. As the number of new infections began to fall, governments initiated strategies to resume tourism and restore economic growth (Fakhruddin et al., 2020).

In Vietnam, the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, which lasted from April to December 2021, was the most severe and caused more deaths than the previous three waves. The COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on the Vietnamese economy in general and the tourism industry in particular. The hardest hit was in 2021, when the tourism industry had a negative growth rate of 59.9% because the number of international visitors to Vietnam fell to only 157.3 thousand. Tourism revenue in 2021 was only 6.5 trillion VND, down 60.12% compared to 2020 (Nguyễn, 2022). Both domestic and international tourists were advised to limit travel and keep a safe distance to reduce the spread of the disease. These developments affect tourist behavior because of the lack of safety now or in the future (Hồ & Trịnh, 2021).

After the fourth wave of the COVID-19, many countries worldwide formed strategies to assist the recovery of the tourism industry (Hassan & Soliman, 2021). At the seminar "Promoting the domestic tourist market in a new context - Challenges and solutions" of the Institute for Tourism Development Research in November 2022, it was affirmed that domestic tourism has a great position and role in the tourism development of Vietnam in the "new normal." Currently, there are many studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, most only focus on the impacts, consequences, and changes in the economy in general. More studies on the tourism demand-side approach must be conducted (Zenker & Kock, 2020). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism industry will need 10 to 35 months to return to normal (Astriecia & Dewi, 2021). Its recovery depends on the mindset of tourists, which will determine the future sustainability of the tourism industry. Consumers have changed their perceptions, preferences, and attitudes about travel because of the pandemic (Wachyuni & Kusumaningrum, 2020). Therefore, companies and organizations must consider changes in the behavior and intentions of tourists during the new normal (Ivanova et al., 2021).

Can Tho, located in the center of the Mekong Delta, is one of the five largest cities in Vietnam. Can Tho has had a relatively high economic growth rate in recent years, and living standards have also improved, leading to increased tourism demand. Most Can Tho residents travel for entertainment, relaxation, sightseeing, and business (Lê et al., 2014). Dalat is one of the domestic tourist destinations most-often chosen by Can Tho residents (Lê et al., 2014). Visitors from Can Tho can easily travel by passenger car or air to Dalat,

and travel companies also offer many attractive travel programs for visitors. In addition, Dalat is a beautiful and famous city on the Lam Vien Plateau in the Central Highlands and is always on the list of ideal destinations in Vietnam. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of tourists visiting Dalat in 2021 was less than 2 million, down 45.3% over the same period in 2020 (VietNamNet, 2021). The number of tourists coming to visit and relax in Dalat by November 2022 is estimated at nearly 5.2 million, an increase of almost 180% over the same period in 2021 (Báo Lâm Đồng, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to study the factors affecting the tourism intention of Can Tho residents regarding Dalat in the COVID-19 era. This article proposes recommendations for managers to influence the intention to travel to Dalat of people in Can Tho as the COVID-19 pandemic gradually becomes well-controlled. Unlike previous studies, this article combines two theories, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the health belief model (HBM), to explain the intention to travel to Dalat as a tourist destination. The research results contribute practical value for tourism industry planners in Dalat in attracting tourists after the COVID-19 pandemic. The article also serves as a reference material for future researchers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL MODEL

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Tourism destination

There are different approaches to the concept of tourism destination. Burkart and Medlik (1974, p. 46) defined "a tourism destination as a geographical unit visited by tourists being a self-contained center." According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a tourism destination is a geographical area where tourists stay for at least one night. Tourist destinations include tourism products, services, attractions, and resources. Tourist destinations have clear geographical boundaries for management and image identification that determine their competitiveness in the market (UNWTO, 2007). A tourist destination can be a city, town, or area that significantly depends on revenue from tourism activities (Beirman, 2020).

Berc and Mihelic (2006) stated that tourist destinations provide tourists with satisfaction in terms of natural values, cultural events, food, and entertainment services. Rossi et al. (2019) defined a tourism destination as a specific geographical area managed by an agency or organization. It can be a particularly scenic spot, a town, a region of a country, or even an entire nation. Deng et al. (2021) considered tourism destinations are non-residential areas. They stated that a tourism destination is where tourists visit and stay for a short time.

Rossi et al. (2019) identify six main factors that make up a tourist destination: (1) local cuisine, (2) housing or accommodation, (3) local traffic, (4) tourism, (5) shopping places for tourists, and (6) entertainment services. Thus, from a theoretical basis, the typical characteristics of a tourist destination are attractiveness, comfort, and accessibility. Moreover, a tourist destination must ensure that it has the resources,

facilities, and traffic conditions to attract tourists and support tourism activities (Deng et al., 2021; Rossi et al., 2019).

2.1.2. Tourist intention

Tourist intention has become an exciting topic of interest to many tourism scholars in recent years (Baptista et al., 2020). Various aspects contribute to understanding the behavioral intentions of tourists. Baker and Crompton (2000) defined tourist intention as the intention of visitors to return to the destination. This represents the evaluation of specific product and service features of a tourist destination by individuals. Tourist intention is also understood as the willingness to participate in one or more specific activities at tourist destinations (Sommer, 2011). Baker and Crompton (2000) also stated that tourist intentions are related to activities that spread positive information about the destination. Tourists who intend to visit a destination also tend to recommend it to other tourists. This shows the loyalty of the tourists who visit the destination often and even pay high prices for tourism services.

Many scholars have used the theory of planned behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991) to explain the behavioral intentions of consumers in general and tourists in particular. In the TPB, behavioral intentions depend on three essential factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a particular activity (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms refer to the influence of social factors that encourage or prevent an individual from performing a specific action. Based on the TPB, Hsu and Huang (2012) argued that human behavioral intention depends on perceived behavioral control. This is related to an individual's perception and belief in performing a particular action. The TPB is widely used in the fields of psychology, education, health, marketing, and tourism.

Many recent studies suggest that travel intention is changed by the influence of pandemic factors (Bae & Chang, 2021; Dai & Jia, 2021). This can be explained on the basis of the health belief model (HBM), first introduced in the 1950s by social psychologists at the United States Public Health Service (Rosenstock, 1974). Therefore, to increase the ability to predict the behavior of tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study supplements the TPB and HBM by including health risk perception.

2.2. Theoretical model and hypotheses

From the theory of planned behavior and the health belief model, it can be seen that the intention of tourists to travel can be influenced by four factors: attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and perceived health risks.

2.2.1. Attitude

Based on the TPB of Ajzen (1991), Han et al. (2011) argued that an individual's attitude toward a behavior represents an evaluation, either positive or negative, related to a particular activity. This means that the more positive the attitude of individuals, the stronger their intention to perform the behavior. This attitude expresses the predisposition

or feelings of tourists toward a tourist destination or service (Wachyunia & Kusumaningrum, 2020). Similar to Wachyuni and Kusumaningrum (2020), research by Dai and Jia (2021) further confirmed that the attitudes of tourists toward tourism activities are an essential factor influencing their intention to visit. Based on the theoretical basis and previous studies, this article will examine the influence of attitudes in Can Tho on the intention to visit Dalat as a tourist destination in the COVID-19 era. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is proposed, as follows:

H1: The attitude of Can Tho residents toward travel positively affects their intention to visit attractions in Dalat.

2.2.2. Subjective norms

According to the TPB, the behavioral intentions of an individual depend on subjective norms; their influence may encourage or prevent individuals from taking a particular action. The travel intentions of tourists are influenced by relatives, family, friends, and colleagues (Han et al., 2011; Wachyunia & Kusumaningrum, 2020; Dai & Jia, 2021). Wachyunia and Kusumaningrum (2020) found that subjective norms have positively and significantly affected travel plans during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, in this study, subjective norms are considered based on the perception of Can Tho residents about whether the people who are important to them think they should travel to Dalat in the COVID-19 era. Thus, hypothesis H2 is proposed, as follows:

H2: Subjective norms positively affect the intention of Can Tho residents to visit tourist attractions in Dalat.

2.2.3. Perceived behavioral control

In the TPB, perceived behavioral control is an assessment of the difficulty of performing an individual's intended behavior. A person's intention is based not only on attitude and subjective norms but also on the ability of individuals to control the perception of their behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control shows the confidence of tourists in their plan to visit a destination (Dai & Jia, 2021). The perceived behavior control of tourist activities includes financial ability, time, and travel opportunities (Han et al., 2011). The perception of behavioral control by Can Tho residents about the difficulties and advantages when planning to visit Dalat is considered in this article. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is proposed, as follows:

H3: Perceived behavioral control positively affects the intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat in the COVID-19 era.

2.2.4. Health risk perception

As discussed above, the factors affecting the intention to visit a tourist destination are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, according to the TPB of Ajzen (1991). This article also uses the health belief model to more fully explain the tourist intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat. Although the pandemic has been

well controlled, there are still potential risks for visitors. Bae and Chang (2021) argued that, among the dangers affecting the tourism industry, health risks have a significant impact on tourists' travel intentions because they can affect tourists' perception of insecurity now and in the future (Hồ & Trịnh, 2021). In this article, the element of risk perception is the assessment by people in Can Tho of the risk of infection when traveling in Dalat. From these arguments, hypothesis H4 is proposed, as follows:

H4: The perception of health risks in the COVID-19 era by people in Can Tho negatively affects their intention to travel to Dalat.

From the theory of planned behavior and the health belief model, as well as a review of the empirical studies, the article proposes a model of the Dalat tourism intention of Can Tho residents that consists of four elements: (1) attitude, (2) subjective norms, (3) perceived behavioral control, and (4) perceived health risks. The model is shown in Figure 1.
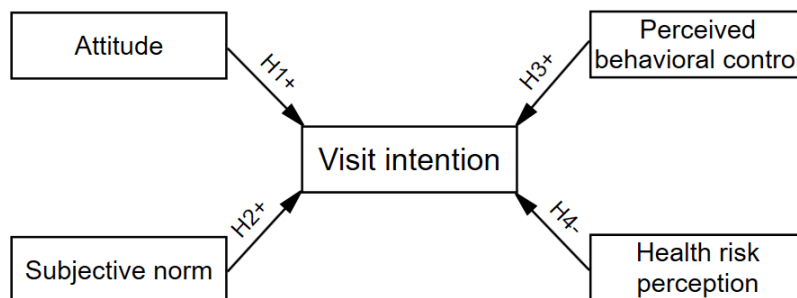

Figure 1. Proposed research model

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Data collection methods

The data were collected by means of interviews and an online survey of people in Can Tho using a convenience sampling method. The online survey was conducted on the Facebook and Zalo social networking platforms using the Google Forms tool. The sample size is based on the required minimum sample size of the analytical methods. For EFA analysis, the sample size should be at least five times the number of observed variables (Hair et al., 2019). This study has 21 observed variables, so the minimum sample size is 105. The study also uses CFA and SEM analyses, for which the sample size must be at least 200 (Tanaka, 1987). Therefore, the minimum sample size for this study is 200 observations. The survey was conducted from October to December 2021, and 213 observations were obtained, which is sufficient for the study.

3.2. Analytical methods

The study uses the following analytical methods to process the survey data collected from 213 respondents: (1) Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the quality and reliability of the scales, (2) exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the groups of

factors affecting the tourist intention to visit Dalat of Can Tho residents, and (3) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to determine the appropriateness of the collected data for the theoretical model. CFA is a technique that allows the observed variables to be recalibrated for use in formal research and to be assessed for how well they represent the factors (Byrne, 2001). The study uses structural equation modeling (SEM), developed by Hoyle (1995), to test the model hypotheses. SEM is an extension of the general linear regression model. This study uses SEM to test the hypotheses, evaluate the relationships between measured and latent variables, and assess the relationships among the latent variables in the model. We use AMOS software (Malkanthie, 2015) to graphically analyze the modeled structural relationships and to gain insight into the theoretical model.

4.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Variable descriptions

Variable	Observed variable	Citation
1. Attitude (ATT)		
ATT1	I think the travel destination of Dalat will be fascinating.	Han et al. (2011)
ATT1	I think the travel destination of Dalat will be worth it.	
ATT3	I think the travel destination of Dalat will be as expected.	
ATT4	I think the travel destination of Dalat will be wonderful.	
ATT5	I think the travel destination of Dalat will be unforgettable.	
2. Subjective norm (SUB)		
SUB1	Relatives are very secure about my trip to Dalat.	Dai and Jia (2021); Han et al. (2011)
SUB2	Relatives always agree with my intention to travel to Dalat.	
SUB3	Relatives will choose the destination of Dalat for travel.	
SUB4	My relatives think that I should visit the destination in Dalat.	
3. Perceived behavioral control (PER)		
PER1	When I intend to travel, I can do it.	Dai and Jia (2021); Han et al. (2011)
PER2	I can completely decide on my travel.	
PER3	Whether I travel to Dalat or not is entirely up to me.	
PER4	I have enough money and time to travel to Dalat.	
4. Health risk perception (HEA)		
HEA1	I feel I have a higher chance of contracting COVID-19 than other illnesses.	Bae and Chang (2021)
HEA2	I think the possibility of dying from a COVID-19 infection is very high.	
HEA3	I'm worried that my family and I might get sick if I travel.	
HEA4	I am concerned about the pandemic still happening in Dalat.	
5. Tourism intention (TOU)		
TOU1	I will plan a trip to Dalat when the pandemic is under control.	Dai and Jia (2021)
TOU2	I will spend as much time and money as I can to travel to Dalat.	
TOU3	I will travel to Dalat as soon as the pandemic stabilizes.	
TOU4	I will visit Dalat as Vietnam gradually normalizes after the COVID-19 pandemic.	

Source: References from related studies.

4.1. General information about the survey respondents

Male respondents account for 43.7% and female respondents for 56.3%. The respondents are quite diverse in age. The largest group, aged 18 to 35, accounts for 46.0%, and the group aged 36 to 45 accounts for 28.6%. The respondents have various occupations: self-employed and office workers account for 27.2% and 21.6%, respectively, while homemakers account for only 8.5%. Respondents with monthly incomes of 5 to 10 million VND account for the highest percentage (47.9%). Those with monthly incomes below 5 million VND account for 23.0%. Respondents with monthly incomes of 10 to 20 million VND account for 21.1%, and those with monthly incomes over 20 million VND account for 8.0%.

The survey results show that 65.7% of the 213 respondents have visited Dalat at least once, and 34.3% have never visited Dalat. Thus tourist attractions in Dalat are familiar to most Can Tho residents. Among the respondents who have been to Dalat, 91.4% went for sightseeing and relaxation. Information about Dalat is available to people in Can Tho from many different sources. Relatives, friends, and colleagues account for 42.9% of the information sources for the respondents, and 38.2% learned about tourist attractions in Dalat from the Internet. This shows the influence of positive word of mouth on the views of Can Tho residents about tourism in Dalat. On the other hand, with the development of media, especially the Internet, finding information through search engines has become more common.

4.2. Factors affecting the intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat

4.2.1. Analysis of scale reliability

The Cronbach's alpha values in Table 2 are greater than 0.60, and the total correlation coefficient of the variables is greater than 0.3, showing that the model scales achieve good reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Therefore, the scale of the model is suitable for performing exploratory factor analysis.

Table 2. Reliability analysis of the scales

Variable name	Number of items	Variable code	Cronbach's alpha
1. Attitude	5	ATT1, ATT2, ATT3, ATT4, ATT5	0.821
2. Subject norm	4	SUB1, SUB2, SUB3, SUB4	0.798
3. Perceived behavioral control	4	PER1, PER2, PER3, PER4	0.809
4. Health risk perception	4	HEA1, HEA2, HEA3, HEA4	0.755
5. Tourism intention	4	TOU1, TOU2, TOU3, TOU4	0.836

4.2.2. Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis of the factors affecting the intention to visit Dalat as a tourist destination (Table 3) shows that the measurement scales for this concept meet the

standards. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) coefficient is 0.785 (meeting the condition $0.50 < \text{KMO} < 1$), and the Barlett test has a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.005). The eigenvalue of $1.706 > 1$ shows that the scales of factors affecting the intention to travel to Dalat by Can Tho residents can be grouped into four factors, similar to the theoretical model.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis of the factors affecting tourism intention

Attitude	Perceived behavioral control	Subject norm	Health risk perception
Factor loadings (Variable)			
0.816 (ATT2)	0.760 (PER2)	0.754 (SUB2)	0.790 (HEA3)
0.732 (ATT1)	0.747 (PER3)	0.739 (SUB3)	0.708 (HEA2)
0.685 (ATT5)	0.689 (PER4)	0.712 (SUB1)	0.631 (HEA4)
0.649 (ATT4)	0.686 (PER1)	0.617 (SUB4)	0.514 (HEA1)
0.619 (ATT3)			
KMO = 0.785; p-value = 0.000; Eigenvalue = 1.706; Total Variance Explained = 50.32%			

Similarly, the study uses EFA for the scale of intention to visit Dalat by Can Tho residents. The EFA results show that the scale has a KMO coefficient of 0.804 (meeting the condition $0.50 < \text{KMO} < 1$). The total variance extracted from the concept of the intention to visit explained 67.5% of the total variation, and the Barlett test has a p-value of 0.000. The eigenvalue is $2.700 > 1$, which shows that the scale is a single factor with a load ranging from 0.792 to 0.871. Therefore, the data collected from 213 observations are consistent with the model scale.

4.2.3. Confirmatory factor analysis

Hair et al. (2019) defined a model as appropriate when the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the comparative fit index (CFI) are 0.9 or more, CMIN/df (Chi-square/df) ≤ 2, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is less than 0.08. The results of the CFA saturation model (Figure 2) show that the chi-square test value is P = 0.000. The model indices are CMIN/df = $1.589 \leq 2$, TLI = 0.921, CFI = $0.933 \geq 0.9$, and RMSEA = $0.053 \leq 0.08$. The results show that the model fits the survey data.

The CFA results in Figure 2 show that the standardized weights of all observed variables in the saturation model are significantly greater than 0.5 (the smallest is 0.524 for the HEA1 variable). This confirms that the scales ensure unidimensional constructs and convergent validity. Next, the article performs a discriminant validity test between concepts in the saturation model. The first discriminant validity test showed that the attitude (ATT) and health risk perception (HEA) scales were unsatisfactory because the average variance extracted (AVE) was less than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). The AMOS software indicated that two variables, ATT4 and HEA1, should be removed from the proposed model. The results of the second discriminant validity test are shown in Table 4.
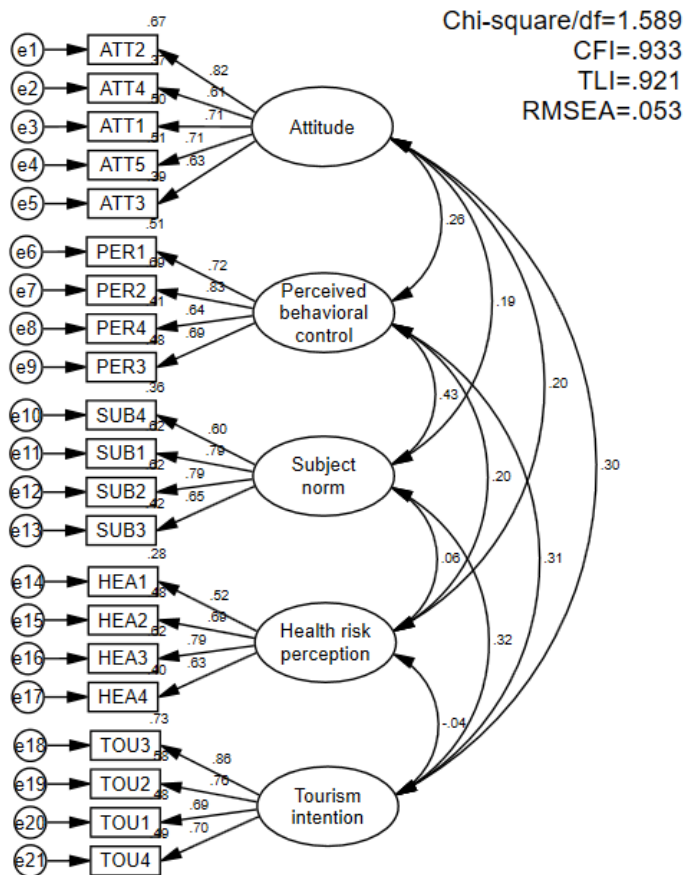
Figure 2. Saturation model

Table 4. Results of the discriminant validity test

	CR	AVE	MSV	ATT	TOU	PER	SUB	HEA
ATT	0.808	0.514	0.133	0.717				
TOU	0.840	0.570	0.133	0.365	0.755			
PER	0.813	0.523	0.186	0.281	0.313	0.723		
SUB	0.802	0.506	0.186	0.198	0.321	0.432	0.711	
HEA	0.750	0.504	0.041	0.161	-0.073	0.201	0.053	0.710

The difference test results in Table 4 show that all concepts in the model have discriminant value because the square root of the average extracted variance (AVE) is larger than the correlation coefficient between concepts (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The analysis results in Table 4 also show that the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted are more significant than 0.5. In addition, according to Hair et al. (2014), discriminant validity is achieved when the average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than the maximum shared squared variance (MSV). Therefore, all concepts in the model meet the requirements of high value and reliability (Hair et al., 2014). Thus, the scale is suitable for SEM analysis to test the proposed model.

4.2.4. Hypothesis tests of the model

Testing the model of factors affecting the intention to travel to Dalat of people in Can Tho shows that the model has a chi-squared value of 198.886 with $P = 0.001$, CMIN/df (Chi-square/df) $= 1.401 < 2$, RMSEA $= 0.043 < 0.8$, TLI $= 0.951$, and CFI $= 0.959$, thereby meeting the requirements (Hair et al., 2019). This confirms that the research model fits the survey data very well. This study has shown that 24.1% of the four factors are included in the model affecting tourist intention at destinations in Dalat in the COVID-19 era (explanation level $R^2 = 0.241$). The factors include (1) attitude, (2) subjective norms, (3) perceived behavioral control, and (4) perceived health risks. The results of the model testing are shown in Figure 3 and Table 5.
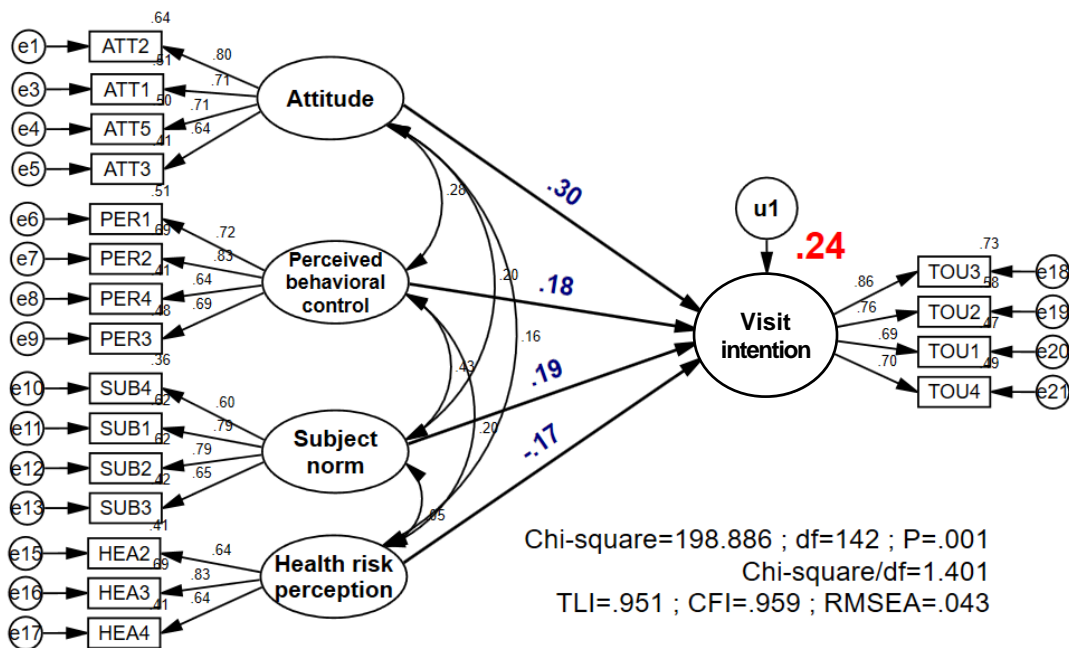

Figure 3. Structural equation model results

Table 5. Model tests of factors affecting the intention to visit Dalat

Relationship			Estimate	SE	CR	P	Result
Attitude	→	Tourism intention	0.304	0.110	3.673	0.000	Supported
Subject norms	→	Tourism intention	0.193	0.109	2.170	0.030	Supported
Perceived behavioral control	→	Tourism intention	0.178	0.100	1.957	0.050	Supported
Health risk perception	→	Tourism intention	-0.168	0.147	-2.067	0.039	Supported

This article has discussed the factors affecting the intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat. First, the test results in Table 5 confirm that tourism attitude positively influences the choice of Can Tho residents to visit tourist attractions in Dalat. (Hypothesis H1 has a statistical significance of 1%.) The results of this study are similar to the previous

studies of Wachyuni and Kusumaningrum (2020) and Dai and Jia (2021). This affirms that Can Tho residents have a positive attitude toward visiting destinations in Dalat when the COVID-19 pandemic is under control because Dalat is considered an ideal and attractive destination by Can Tho residents. Therefore, although the pandemic has not ended, Can Tho residents have a positive attitude toward Dalat as a destination.

Second, results in Table 5 also show that subjective norms positively influence the intention of Can Tho residents to visit Dalat tourist attractions. (Hypothesis H2 has a statistical significance of 5%.) The intention of Can Tho residents to visit Dalat is partly influenced by the opinions of relatives, family, friends, and colleagues. This influence is even more critical for young tourists, who are more influenced by reference groups (Wu & Chen, 2018). This result also shows the appropriateness of the survey data because many respondents (46.0%) are 18 to 35 years old. The study results are similar to those of Han et al. (2011), Wachyunia and Kusumaningrum (2020), and Dai and Jia (2021).

Third, this study also shows the positive impact of cognitive factors in controlling the intention of people in Can Tho to travel to Dalat when the pandemic stabilizes. (Hypothesis H3 is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.) The results of this study are similar to those of Dai and Jia (2021) and Han et al. (2011). This can explain why Can Tho residents intend to visit destinations in Dalat. Because localities implemented social distancing during the prolonged pandemic period, people wanted the pandemic to end and life to return to normal. Therefore, their travel intentions increased when the pandemic became well controlled. In addition, with policies and guidelines to restore the tourism industry, many localities and travel companies have implemented activities and programs to attract tourists to return. Thus, Can Tho residents now perceive that traveling will be easier, and this influences their tourism intention.

Finally, besides using the TPB to explain how the intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat is affected by factors such as attitude, subject norms, and perceived behavioral control, the article also incorporates the health belief model to explain the influence of perceived health risk factors on travel. The results show that the perception of health risks negatively affects the intention to travel to Dalat. (Hypothesis H4 is significant at the statistical level of 5%.) This result is similar to the findings of Bae and Chang (2021) and Hồ and Trịnh (2021). Because the pandemic has not entirely ended, people are still worried and perceive health dangers. This view will affect perceptions of insecurity in the new normal and the future (Hồ & Trịnh, 2021). Therefore, although the COVID-19 pandemic is under control, the risks of the disease are still present, and people in Can Tho are aware of these risks when they intend to travel to Dalat.

5.   CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously reduced the number of visitors and the revenue of the tourism industry in Vietnam, including Dalat. However, people intend to visit destinations after a long period of social distancing when the pandemic is well controlled. Dalat is no longer an unknown tourist destination for most people of Can Tho; 65.7% of the interviewees have visited it. The study has identified

and investigated factors affecting the intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat. Accordingly, this study uses the theory of planned behavior and the health belief model to explain the tourism intention of Can Tho residents regarding Dalat. The results show that the intention to visit Dalat depends on four main factors: (1) the attitude toward Dalat tourism, (2) subjective norms, (3) perceived behavioral control, and (4) perceived health risk in the COVID-19 era. The results in Table 5 show that attitude significantly affects the intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat because the standardized weight of the attitude factor is higher than other factors. The research results show that the attitude factor has the most substantial positive impact on the tourist intention of people in Can Tho. Based on the observed variables of the visible attitudinal scale, a trip to Dalat is considered worthwhile, enjoyable, unforgettable, and is expected to bring satisfaction and meet visitors' needs.

For tourists from Can Tho to have a more positive attitude toward Dalat as a tourist destination, it is necessary to promote the image of safe and hospitable Dalat tourism and to promote events and festivals to attract visitors. Travel companies need to research and design attractive travel programs to meet the tastes of tourists. Accommodation, catering, and travel businesses must pay attention to training employees to make a good impression on tourists. As for the subjective norm factor, it is necessary to focus on and exploit other target tourist groups to increase the intention to travel to Dalat. Organize tours with a variety of attractive prices to attract many groups of tourists because the tourism intention of Can Tho residents toward Dalat is positively influenced by opinions from relatives, friends, and colleagues. In addition, perceived behavioral control is a group of factors related to the perception of people finding it difficult or easy to travel to Dalat during the COVID-19 era. The survey results show that there are many target groups with different intentions. Therefore, tours to Dalat need greater variety in scheduling and preferential pricing policies so that tourists have more opportunities to travel on weekends, holidays, Tet, and various other occasions. Finally, the research results also show that the intention of Can Tho residents to travel to Dalat depends on their perception of health risks. Although the current pandemic has temporarily stabilized, there are still potential risks for visitors. Therefore, tourist organizations and the government must implement measures to ensure health and safety so that visitors do not feel anxious during travel. In addition, it is necessary to promote communication and marketing activities to enhance the image of Dalat as a safe and reliable destination in the hearts of tourists. This will create trust and peace of mind for the people of Can Tho when they visit Dalat during the COVID-19 era.

Although the study has shown that the four factors in the research model affect the intention to travel to Dalat after the COVID-19 pandemic, the explanatory level of the model is relatively low (R^2 is only 0.241). Therefore, further studies can rely on the research results of this study along with a review of many new related studies. Then it will be possible to identify more fully the factors affecting tourism intention toward Dalat and elsewhere.

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