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Strategic Recommendations for Enhancing the Development of Unique Tourism Products in Da Nang, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study examines the current status and development potential of unique tourism products in Da Nang City, one of the central tourism hubs of Vietnam. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative data collected from local authorities, tour operators, and tourists, the research identifies core strengths such as natural and cultural diversity, as well as weaknesses including limited regional linkages and lack of innovation in product development. Grounded in the analysis, the study proposes strategic recommendations to improve the development strategy for

unique tourism products in Da Nang. These recommendations focus on five key dimensions: (1) strategic orientation, (2) management policies, (3) product development, (4) marketing and promotion, and (5) human resource development. The proposed measures aim to enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of Da Nang's tourism sector while improving the overall visitor experience in the context of digital transformation and global integration.

Keywords: Da Nang, Unique Tourism Products, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Strategy, Digital Transformation, Destination Competitiveness

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Context

Located in the heart of Vietnam's South Central Coast, Da Nang City has long established itself as one of the country's and the region's leading tourism centers. With outstanding advantages in geographical location, a long and beautiful coastline, abundant natural and cultural tourism resources, and increasingly modern infrastructure—especially the seaport and international airport—Da Nang possesses significant potential and favorable conditions for tourism development.

The city also serves as a central connection point to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Central Vietnam, including the Imperial City of Hue, the Ancient Town of Hoi An, and the My Son Sanctuary, enhancing its appeal to both domestic and international visitors. As a result, Da Nang has consistently ranked among the top provinces in Vietnam in terms of tourism competitiveness and development indicators.

Prior to 2019, Da Nang's tourism industry experienced a remarkable growth period, reflected in the rapid increase in both tourist arrivals and revenue. However, the period from 2019 to 2024 has been marked by significant fluctuations, beginning with a peak in development, followed by a severe downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, which brought tourism activities to a near standstill. Since 2022, with the reopening of the economy, Da Nang's tourism sector has demonstrated strong recovery capabilities and entered a new phase of growth—surpassing even pre-pandemic records.

1.2 Research Problem and Objectives

Despite the evident recovery and growth of Da Nang's tourism sector in the post-pandemic period, and the existing strategic orientations for developing *unique tourism products* (UTPs), there remains a notable research gap in systematically and scientifically evaluating the current status of UTP development during the critical period from 2019 to 2024. This period encompasses the pre-pandemic peak, the subsequent disruption, and the strong recovery and growth phases. A thorough

analysis of this context will provide crucial evidence for assessing the effectiveness of implemented policies and for proposing appropriate future directions.

Accordingly, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To establish a clear theoretical framework regarding the concept, criteria, and classification of unique tourism products (UTPs) within the context of Vietnam's tourism industry.
- To analyze the current state of development—including initiatives, implementation activities, outcomes, and challenges—of key UTP groups in Da Nang during the study period.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of efforts made to develop UTPs in Da Nang.
- To propose evidence-based recommendations for improving Da Nang's development strategy for UTPs in the coming years.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Definition of Unique Tourism Products

According to a widely adopted academic definition in Vietnam, *unique tourism products* (UTPs) are described as “products that possess distinctive/one-of-a-kind, authentic characteristics and represent the natural and cultural tourism resources of a specific territory or destination. These

products not only meet the needs and expectations of tourists but also leave lasting impressions through their uniqueness and creativity.” This definition emphasizes several core elements:

- **Uniqueness and originality:** The product must be distinct, not easily replicated or found elsewhere, and rooted in the original and intrinsic value of local resources.
- **Representation of resources and local identity:** The product should reflect and celebrate the most characteristic natural, cultural, or historical features of the destination. This is a critical factor in establishing the product's “distinctiveness” and its deep connection to the locality.
- **Capacity to impress and satisfy tourist demand:** Beyond fulfilling basic needs, UTPs are expected to provide exceptional and memorable experiences through innovative and creative design and service delivery.

2.2 Criteria for Identifying Unique Tourism Products

To effectively identify and evaluate unique tourism products (UTPs), it is essential to apply a specific set of criteria. As shown in Table 1, the identification of unique tourism products is based on eight key criteria proposed by table 1:

Table 1: Criteria for Identifying Unique Tourism Products (UTPs)

S. No	Criteria	Description
1	Specially Designed Experiences	Creates high-value tourism experiences with sustainability, educational focus, and stakeholder engagement (government, businesses, community).
2	Representation of Local Identity	Reflects and connects with the unique natural, cultural, and human resources of the locality.
3	Defining Attributes	Emphasizes originality, uniqueness, experience diversity, adaptability, clear functionality, and a sustainable product lifecycle.
4	Core Features	Ensures accessibility and offers activities and services tailored to the needs of the target market.
5	Market Responsiveness	Targets a sufficiently large market segment, aligns with tourism trends, and demonstrates business viability.
6	Sustainability Requirements	Balances economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability: Effectiveness, conservation, and community benefit.
7	Local Benefit Generation	Generates positive impacts not only economically but also socially, culturally, and environmentally for the local community.
8	Human Resource Capacity	Supported by skilled personnel and a strategy for human resource development to maintain quality and innovation.

This set of criteria serves as a valuable tool for assessing the level of “uniqueness” and overall quality of tourism products currently being developed in Da Nang.

2.3 Classification of Unique Tourism Products

Unique Tourism Products (UTPs) can be categorized in various ways. A widely accepted classification as shown in Table 2, UTPs can be classified into three territorial levels—national, regional, and local—each reflecting the product's uniqueness, representativeness, and geographical impact

Table 2: Classification of Unique Tourism Products by Territorial Scale

Level	Definition	Examples
National Level	Developed from resources that are highly unique and representative at the national scale; contribute to national branding and attract international markets.	Snow-hunting in Sa Pa; Floating markets in the Mekong Delta.
Regional	Built upon distinctive resources of a	Ethnic and nature-

Level	locality or sub-region within a larger tourism region; capable of drawing tourists from surrounding areas.	based tourism at Khau Pha Pass (Yen Bai).
Local Level	Based on resources unique to a specific city or province; primarily represent the local cultural or natural identity.	Dong Van Karst Plateau Global Geopark (Ha Giang).

This classification framework helps determine the level of importance and the geographical scope of influence of UTPs currently being developed in Da Nang.

2.4 The Role and Importance of Unique Tourism Products

As previously discussed, Unique Tourism Products (UTPs) play a pivotal role in the tourism development strategy of a destination. As detailed in Table 3, UTPs fulfill multiple strategic functions that go beyond economic benefits, supporting long-term brand equity, market resilience, and sustainability for destinations such as Da Nang

Table 3: Key Roles and Impacts of Unique Tourism Products (UTPs)

Key Role	Strategic Impact	Illustrative Example
Destination differentiation	Creates a distinct identity, reducing overlap with competing destinations.	Da Nang's international fireworks festival as a signature event.
Attractiveness enhancement	Increases appeal to both mass-market and niche tourists.	Adventure tourism at the Marble Mountains.
Brand positioning	Builds a recognizable and marketable tourism brand.	"Da Nang – A City of Bridges" branding strategy.
Competitiveness enhancement	Strengthens competitive advantage in domestic and international markets.	Night tourism innovations at the Han River area.
Product diversification	Expands the destination's tourism offering by anchoring new products.	Combination of beach, cultural, and culinary tourism products.
Sustainable development support	Encourages conservation, cultural preservation, and equitable community development.	Community-based tourism in Hoa Bac (Da Nang suburb).

Given these strategic roles, the development of UTPs is considered a policy priority in national and local tourism strategies, including those of Da Nang. However, as UTPs are inherently tied to finite resources, ongoing innovation is essential to prevent stagnation and maintain relevance across the product and destination life cycle.

3. Research Overview

3.1 Current Development Status of Unique Tourism Products (UTPs) in Da Nang (2019–2024)

The period from 2019 to 2024 has marked significant efforts by Da Nang in diversifying and improving the quality of its tourism product system. Particular emphasis has been placed on developing UTPs that are capable of creating competitive differentiation and attracting specific target market segments. The following section presents an analysis of the current development status of several key categories of distinctive tourism products in the city.

3.1.1 High-End Coastal Resort Tourism

In the period from 2019 to 2024, Da Nang has made significant progress in positioning itself as a premier destination for high-end coastal resort tourism. The city continues to attract substantial investment from renowned international hotel and resort management brands. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, several new luxury accommodations have been launched, such as Radisson RED Da Nang, Fusion Resort & Villas Da Nang, Da Nang Marriott Resort & Spa (formerly Vinpearl Luxury), and Crowne Plaza Danang City Centre (Da Nang Department of Tourism, 2023). Established resorts, including InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort, Furama Resort Danang, and Premier Village Danang Resort, have continued to upgrade their service quality and expand offerings such as spas, pools, fine dining, watersports, and golf (Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2024). Additionally, the city has invested heavily in improving public infrastructure and landscaping along major coastal roads such as Hoang Sa – Vo Nguyen Giap – Truong Sa and Nguyen Tat Thanh, enhancing the overall tourist experience

and accessibility (Danang People's Committee, 2022).

Achievements and Challenges

The presence of globally recognized hospitality brands and consistently high service standards have elevated the destination's profile, attracting high-spending visitors and contributing to significant tourism revenue (VNAT, 2024). However, the rapid expansion of luxury accommodations prior to the pandemic has led to an oversupply risk, especially during off-peak seasons, negatively impacting room occupancy rates and business efficiency (UN Tourism, 2022). Environmental sustainability remains a critical concern, with increasing pressure on coastal ecosystems due to waste management, wastewater discharge, and shoreline erosion (Green Growth Vietnam, 2021). Maintaining consistent service quality across all establishments also presents an ongoing challenge in ensuring a premium and competitive visitor experience.

3.1.2 MICE Tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions)

Since 2020, Da Nang has issued and continuously updated its policy framework to attract MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourists. The 2024–2025 incentive program offers a wide range of support packages—such as welcome ceremonies, media coverage, souvenirs, consultation services, service discounts, group recognition, subsidized land tour inspections, and priority airport access—tailored to the size of each group (starting from 50 participants for international groups, and thresholds of 100+, 300+, and 700+ for domestic groups). These efforts are complemented by proactive promotion through participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions, as well as destination showcasing campaigns.

Achievements and Challenges

The number of MICE groups and visitors to Da Nang has grown significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2022, the city welcomed approximately 15,600 domestic MICE guests; by 2023, this figure had risen to 163 groups with around 46,000 participants (both domestic and international), and in 2024, it further increased to 200 groups with more than 70,000 guests. International MICE visitors came from a diverse range of markets, including India, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, and several European countries. MICE tourism has been recognized as a vital driver for the city's tourism recovery, helping attract high-spending visitors and enhancing the destination's brand image. However, sustaining this growth momentum requires continued investment in upgrading conference infrastructure, ensuring consistent service quality and professionalism, and addressing increasing competition from other regional MICE hubs.

3.1.3 Culinary Tourism

Da Nang has identified culinary tourism as a key distinctive tourism product and has implemented concrete development plans. In November 2024, the city launched the "Da Nang Food Tour" campaign under the slogan "Taste Da Nang – More Than Delicious." The highlight of this campaign was the introduction of the digital culinary map (foodtourdanang.vn), which features signature local dishes, reputable food establishments (including those selected by the Michelin Guide), and a "Food Passport" that offers discounts and special offers at participating venues. A significant milestone was reached when Da Nang was listed as a Michelin Guide destination in 2024, with one restaurant awarded a Michelin star (La Maison 1888), one

recognized with the Michelin Green Star, and 16 establishments receiving Bib Gourmand distinctions. Prior to this, Da Nang had hosted several culinary promotion events, such as the Danang International Food Festival 2019 (DNIFF 2019), and has regularly incorporated culinary showcases into other local festivals.

Achievements and Challenges

The Michelin Guide's recognition has significantly elevated Da Nang's culinary reputation on the global stage. The Food Tour campaign and accompanying digital tools—such as the interactive map and Food Passport—are concrete steps toward systematizing and promoting local gastronomy. Local dishes like *Mi Quang*, *Banh Xeo*, and various seafood specialties continue to appeal strongly to both domestic and international tourists. However, ensuring consistent food quality and hygiene across thousands of eateries remains a major challenge. Moreover, further efforts are needed to promote the effective use of the digital culinary map and passport. More importantly, the city must develop deeper, more immersive culinary experiences beyond simply eating—such as cooking classes, market discovery tours, and culinary activities that incorporate local culture and traditions.

3.1.4 Wedding Tourism

Da Nang has officially launched its Wedding Tourism Development Plan for the 2024–2025 period under the theme “Da Nang – Where Happiness Begins.” The focus is on a pilot program to attract wedding tourism, offering a variety of incentive packages over two years (2024–2025). These packages are categorized into three tiers, depending on the size of the wedding party (starting from 50 guests) and the number of room nights booked (from 25 nights and above). Incentives include welcome gifts, entrance tickets to local attractions, traditional art performances, flycam services, cyclo city tours, honeymoon nights at five-star hotels, and customs clearance consulting. The city has also been actively promoting this segment to targeted markets—especially India—and has hosted familiarization trips (famtrips) for international wedding planners and event organizers.

Achievements and Challenges

The wedding tourism segment has shown promising results. In 2023, the city hosted approximately 100 wedding events with a total of 24,000 guests. In the first nine months of 2024, 35 weddings were held, and the full-year figure is projected at around 45 weddings involving couples from India, Australia, Japan, Singapore, the United States, and Taiwan. The market potential is considered substantial, particularly from India, where weddings are typically large-scale with high spending. However, to ensure sustainable growth, Da Nang must develop a professional and well-coordinated wedding service ecosystem—including event organizers, decorators, photographers, catering services, etc.—capable of meeting international standards. The city also faces intense competition from other established regional wedding destinations such as Thailand and Bali. Additionally, improving logistics and streamlining complex procedures (e.g., visas, customs) for large wedding parties remains a key area for attention.

3.1.5 Golf Tourism

Da Nang has established itself as a prominent golf tourism destination in the region by hosting prestigious international tournaments. A notable example is the *BRG Open Golf Championship*, part of the Asian Development Tour, held

annually since 2022 at the BRG Da Nang Golf Resort. The event attracts numerous professional golfers from both Vietnam and abroad. In 2025, Da Nang will also host the *Asia Golf Tourism Convention (AGTC)*, a major event organized by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO). The city has strategically integrated golf tourism promotion into broader tourism campaigns and MICE attraction policies.

Achievements and Challenges

Successfully hosting international tournaments has significantly enhanced Da Nang's reputation and branding as a premier golf tourism destination. It has helped attract golf tourists and associated high-value services, contributing to the city's upscale tourism segment. However, the relatively high costs associated with golf and related services may limit the potential market size. Maintaining world-class course quality and service standards requires consistent investment. Furthermore, attention must be paid to potential environmental impacts from the construction and operation of golf courses.

3.1.6 Cultural and Historical Tourism

The city has made significant investments in preserving and promoting its historical and cultural heritage. In August 2024, *Hai Van Gate*, a national relic site, officially reopened to the public after a long restoration period, attracting widespread attention. The *Museum of Cham Sculpture* continues to be a popular attraction, showcasing a unique collection of Cham artifacts. Major investment plans for upgrading the *Da Nang Museum*, the *Ngu Hanh Son Cultural and Historical Park*, and the *Dien Hai Citadel*, as well as the construction of a second branch of the Cham Museum in Phong Le, have been approved and are being implemented in phases. The *Da Nang International Fireworks Festival (DIFF)*, held annually (except during the pandemic), has become a signature cultural-tourism event, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors. In addition, a tourism development project for the *K20 Revolutionary Base Area* is currently underway.

Achievements and Challenges

The restoration and opening of heritage sites have enriched the city's cultural tourism offerings. Major festivals such as DIFF create strong promotional effects and help position Da Nang as a “city of festivals.” However, developing cultural and historical tourism requires a delicate balance between preservation and commercial use, in order to avoid compromising the authenticity and integrity of the heritage. Greater investment is needed in interpretation services, storytelling, and the creation of engaging and in-depth visitor experiences. Furthermore, Da Nang faces strong competition from nearby cultural heritage centers such as Hue and Hoi An, and must therefore establish distinctive cultural tourism products of its own.

3.1.7 Ecotourism and Community-Based Tourism

Da Nang has placed significant emphasis on developing community-based and ecotourism models in areas with high potential. Hoa Vang District is a key area with its Community-Based Tourism Development Plan for 2021–2025 and orientation to 2030, along with a pilot project combining tourism with agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture. By 2024, eight agricultural and community tourism models had been established in Hoa Vang, featuring Co Tu ethnic culture, farming experiences, and eco-lodging. In Lien Chieu District, a development plan for community

tourism in Nam O is being implemented. On Son Tra Peninsula, tours for observing the endangered red-shanked douc langurs have been introduced, and the city has issued official guidelines for ecotourism in line with the Forestry Law. The "One Commune One Product" (OCOP) program has also been promoted in connection with tourism, by supporting the development of local products as souvenirs and specialties for tourists.

Achievements and Challenges

Initial community-based and ecotourism models have been established and are operational, helping to diversify tourism products, create livelihoods for locals, and raise awareness of conservation. Linking OCOP products with tourism has enhanced the value of local agricultural goods and generated additional income. However, this is a sensitive type of tourism that requires strict management to avoid negative impacts on the environment and local cultures. Striking a balance between development and conservation—especially in biodiversity-rich areas like Son Tra—is a major challenge and a source of potential conflict. It is crucial to ensure genuine community participation and equitable benefit-sharing, while avoiding the over-commercialization of cultural heritage. Investment in infrastructure and capacity-building for local communities also requires appropriate attention.

3.1.8 Night-Time Tourism Products

Da Nang has planned and developed various zones and products to promote night-time tourism. Night markets and pedestrian areas such as the An Thuong Tourist Street, Son Tra Night Market, and Helio Night Market have been operational or upgraded. The My An Night Beach pilot program has been maintained. The Bach Dang pedestrian street (from Dragon Bridge to Tran Thi Ly Bridge) was piloted in 2024, featuring kiosks, performance stages, check-in spots, and street art activities. Nguyen Van Troi Bridge and the eastern park area at the bridge's foot are also being piloted for nighttime tourism services.

The APEC Park has been utilized for cultural and artistic events at night. The Dragon Bridge continues to offer fire and water shows on weekends. Cultural performances such as the Tien Sa Show (featuring Cham dance, Ao Dai fashion, etc.) further enrich evening entertainment options for tourists. The city also plans to implement the "River of Light" project.

Achievements and Challenges

The emergence of night markets, pedestrian zones, and cultural shows has created a vibrant nightlife atmosphere in Da Nang, offering visitors additional options for entertainment, dining, and shopping. The newly launched Bach Dang pedestrian street has attracted significant attention.

However, the development of the night-time economy poses challenges in maintaining public order, environmental sanitation, and noise control. It is essential to ensure product and service diversity and quality, avoiding repetition and monotony. Effective connectivity between night-time activity zones and convenient transportation are also important factors that must be addressed.

3.1.9 River Tourism

Night-time river cruises on the Han River—featuring sightseeing, dining, and traditional performances (such as Cham dances)—have become a relatively popular and familiar experience for visitors. Currently, about 16 licensed tourist boats operate along the Han River route, from the

city center to Tran Thi Ly Bridge. Additionally, daytime boat tours using speedboats or yachts have been launched from pier CT15 to scenic beaches on the Son Tra Peninsula (Hon Sup, Bai Nam, Bai Da). The city has approved the planning of various other inland waterway routes (such as Cu De River, Cam Le River, Tuy Loan River, and Co Co River) and has announced plans to dredge and reopen the Co Co River to connect Da Nang with Hoi An. Investment plans for upgrading river piers (K20, CT15, Tuy Loan, Thai Lai) and building new standardized boats have also been set out. Efforts are being made to improve human resource training and standardize onboard services.

Achievements and Challenges

Night cruises on the Han River and boat tours to Son Tra Peninsula have attracted a significant number of tourists—estimated at 939,675 visitors in 2024. However, Da Nang's potential for river tourism remains largely untapped. Current offerings are still rather limited and mostly centered around night cruises on the Han River. The development of new routes and riverbank destinations (such as K20, La Huong Vegetable Village, Tuy Loan, etc.) has been slow due to a lack of investment in piers and services. Existing port infrastructure (e.g., Han River and old Thu River piers) remains temporary and lacks essential amenities. Administrative procedures for licensing new routes and dredging the Co Co River continue to face difficulties, which in turn affects tourism businesses' ability to expand their product offerings.

3.1.10 Sports and Adventure Tourism

Da Nang has established itself as a regular host of major international sporting events, such as the annual Da Nang International Marathon and Ironman 70.3 Vietnam—which attracts thousands of international athletes each year. The city has also hosted regional events, including the Southeast Asian Student Sports Games. In addition to these events, various sports and adventure activities have been developed and offered to tourists. Motorized and non-motorized paragliding is available at several beaches and on the Son Tra Peninsula (a non-motorized paragliding route from Ban Co Peak to Man Thai Beach was piloted in 2024). Water sports such as surfing, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), kayaking, jet skiing, and scuba diving are popular at My Khe Beach and Son Tra. Other activities include trekking on mountainous trails like the route to Gieng Troi (Hoa Vang District), rock climbing at Marble Mountains and Son Tra, and waterfall sliding at eco-tourism sites such as Hoa Phu Thanh.

Achievements and Challenges

Major international sporting events have significantly contributed to promoting Da Nang's image as a vibrant and dynamic destination, attracting large numbers of athletes and spectators. Adventure activities such as paragliding and water sports are increasingly popular among youth and adventure-seeking tourists. However, the development of sports and adventure tourism requires strict adherence to safety standards, proper equipment, and qualified instructors or pilots.

There is a need for well-planned regulation and management to minimize risks and environmental impacts—especially in ecologically sensitive natural areas. Seasonality also affects certain sports, particularly those dependent on weather conditions like water and air sports. Investment in specialized infrastructure for specific sports is also

necessary to support sustainable development in this segment.

4. Evaluation and Discussion

4.1 Effectiveness of the Development Strategy

Overall, the strategy for developing Da Nang's UTPs during the 2019–2024 period has demonstrated dynamism and alignment with both national and municipal orientations, while also incorporating flexible adjustments in response to changing contexts—most notably, the COVID-19 pandemic. The identification of priority product groups such as MICE, wedding tourism, golf, gastronomy, night tourism, and eco-community tourism reflects efforts to diversify the tourism offering, targeting high-value-added market segments and enhancing destination differentiation. This aligns with the theoretical role of UTPs in individualizing tourism experiences, increasing attractiveness, and improving competitiveness.¹¹

The recent emphasis on a "breakthrough" product development strategy has yielded initial positive results, as evidenced by the introduction of a wide range of new tourism products, services, and events across various sectors. The impressive recovery and growth in visitor numbers—and more significantly, in tourism revenue—after the pandemic serves as tangible proof that these strategies are on the right track, successfully responding to market demands and generating economic value.

The public–private partnership (PPP) model continues to play a central role in UTP development. Municipal incentive policies—such as those for MICE and wedding tourism—have proven effective in attracting business participation and shaping the market. However, the effectiveness of these partnerships warrants deeper evaluation, particularly in terms of interest harmonization, sustainability, and the capacity of the public sector to guide long-term development in line with the city's strategic goals.

4.2 Achievements and Contributions

The development of UTPs has made significant contributions to the overall success of Da Nang's tourism industry during the 2019–2024 period:

- **Promoting recovery and growth:** The continuous renewal and enrichment of tourism products and attractive events (DIFF, Ironman, food festivals, walking streets, etc.) have created a vibrant atmosphere, encouraged tourists to return, and led to remarkable post-pandemic growth—particularly in terms of revenue—reflecting increased visitor spending and enhanced experiential value.
- **Successful market diversification:** UTPs such as wedding tourism, MICE, and golf have helped attract new and potential markets such as India, Taiwan, Australia, and Europe, reducing dependence on traditional markets and enhancing the sector's resilience.
- **Enhancing destination branding and positioning:** Hosting international events (DIFF, Ironman, AGTC, MICE), receiving recognition from prestigious institutions (e.g., Michelin Guide), and launching unique products (e.g., paragliding in Son Tra, Bach Dang walking street) have contributed to strengthening Da Nang's image as a dynamic, attractive, and world-class destination.

4.3 Challenges and Limitations

Despite these achievements, the development of UTPs in Da Nang still faces numerous challenges and constraints that must be addressed:

- **Sustainability issues:** The rapid growth of tourism has exerted increasing pressure on natural environments (beaches, rivers, mountains) and cultural resources. Conflicts between development and conservation—especially in areas like Son Tra—remain unresolved. The enforcement of environmental regulations, waste management, and biodiversity conservation must be strengthened and more closely monitored. Additionally, socio-cultural impacts from community-based and nighttime tourism require careful management.
- **Infrastructure and planning:** Although tourism infrastructure is relatively well-developed, issues remain, including the potential oversupply of high-end accommodations, delays in supporting infrastructure projects (such as inland waterway ports and certain roads), and the need for better integration of tourism planning into broader urban planning frameworks.
- **Human resource quality:** Despite significant training efforts, the quality of tourism human resources remains uneven and at times lacks professionalism—particularly in specialized skill areas required for UTPs such as high-end services, MICE, golf, and niche tour guiding.
- **Product quality and depth:** Some products remain superficial, failing to fully exploit cultural and historical depth or to offer truly unique and differentiated experiences. There is an ongoing risk of product overlap with other destinations. Seasonal factors also continue to affect certain types of tourism.
- **Intense competition:** Da Nang faces increasing competition not only from other domestic destinations but also from major tourism hubs in the Southeast Asian region.

4.4 Alignment with Market Trends

In general, Da Nang's strategic orientation in developing (UTPs) has demonstrated an effort to keep pace with contemporary tourism trends. The emphasis on experiential products—such as gastronomy, culture, sports, adventure, and community-based tourism—as well as high-end market segments including luxury resorts, MICE, golf, and wedding tourism, reflects a responsive approach to the evolving demands of travelers. Additionally, the application of digital technologies—such as interactive food maps, VR360 experiences, and online payment systems—further illustrates the city's attempt to modernize its tourism offerings (Danang Tourism Department, 2024).

Nonetheless, emerging global trends such as sustainable tourism, responsible travel, wellness tourism, and personalized experiences warrant deeper consideration. These elements should be more systematically integrated into product development and service delivery processes to enhance the city's competitiveness and long-term destination appeal (UNWTO, 2023).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study examined the current development of Unique Tourism Products (UTPs) in Da Nang during the 2019–2024 period—a time of significant challenges but also of

remarkable recovery and breakthrough for the city's tourism industry. Da Nang has clearly demonstrated a strategic focus on diversifying and enhancing the quality of tourism products, shifting from an overreliance on coastal tourism toward tapping into potential sectors such as MICE, gastronomy, weddings, golf, cultural-historical tourism, eco-community tourism, night tourism, and adventure sports.

These efforts, bolstered by incentive policies and the active involvement of the private sector, have delivered notable achievements. The city not only recovered rapidly from the pandemic but also recorded impressive growth in revenue—exceeding pre-COVID-19 peak levels—indicating a rise in value creation. Success in diversifying source markets, particularly the rise of new markets like India and Taiwan, has improved the resilience and sustainability of the sector. Additionally, Da Nang's destination brand has been enhanced through hosting international events and receiving recognition from reputable organizations.

Nevertheless, the development of UTPs continues to face considerable challenges. Environmental and socio-cultural sustainability must be prioritized. Tourism infrastructure remains in need of enhancement, and planning should adopt a longer-term strategic vision. Human resource quality should be strengthened both broadly and in-depth. Certain products still lack uniqueness and depth, requiring further investment. Moreover, rising competitive pressures call for continuous innovation and adaptability.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study proposes several recommendations to promote more effective and sustainable development of Unique Tourism Products in Da Nang in the coming period:

- **Strategic Orientation:**
 - ✓ Continue the diversification strategy of UTPs, but place greater emphasis on depth and quality of experience rather than merely expanding the number of products. Priority should be given to upgrading and refreshing existing offerings and developing products with strong interconnectivity.
 - ✓ Make sustainable development a core principle and mandatory criterion in all planning, strategies, and UTP-related projects. Strengthen the integration of environmental protection, cultural preservation, and community benefit-sharing elements.
- **Policies and Governance:**
 - ✓ Review, streamline, and simplify regulations and administrative procedures related to the licensing and implementation of new types of UTPs, especially in areas such as adventure tourism, waterway tourism, and community-based tourism.
 - ✓ Develop more effective and transparent public-private partnership (PPP) mechanisms that ensure a balance of interests and reinforce the government's leading role in guiding sustainable development. Increase support for small and medium enterprises participating in the UTP supply chain.
 - ✓ Enhance inspection and supervision of compliance with environmental, safety, and service quality regulations at tourism businesses and destinations. Implement strong and transparent solutions to address long-standing issues—e.g., development planning in the Son Tra area.

- **Product Development:**

- ✓ Invest in enhancing the content and presentation quality at cultural-historical sites; promote the use of technology to create more engaging visitor experiences.
- ✓ Develop in-depth culinary tours combining cooking experiences, visits to ingredient sources, and exploration of culinary culture.
- ✓ Standardize and replicate successful community-based tourism models with clear benefit-sharing mechanisms and genuine local participation.
- ✓ Create stronger connectivity and integration among nighttime tourism zones and products to form a vibrant and convenient night-time service ecosystem.
- ✓ Accelerate investment in piers and wharves and unblock potential inland waterways, especially the Co Co River route connecting Da Nang and Hoi An.

- **Marketing and Promotion:**

- ✓ Continue targeted promotion and marketing campaigns to attract high-quality visitor markets and specific niche segments (MICE, weddings, golf, wellness tourism, etc.).
- ✓ Make better use of digital platforms (e.g., culinary maps, travel apps, VR360) to support marketing and provide visitor information.
- ✓ Strongly communicate Da Nang's efforts and commitments to sustainable tourism as a competitive advantage and a highlight to attract responsible travelers.

- **Human Resources:**

- ✓ Develop and implement specialized training programs tailored to the skill requirements of specific DTP types (e.g., MICE management, wedding planning, golf services, eco-guiding, culinary arts).
- ✓ Promote partnerships between educational institutions and tourism businesses.

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