

# Developing a Sustainable Competitiveness Model in The Spa Tourism Sector: An Empirical Study of Vietnam Destinations

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## ABSTRACT

Sustainable competitiveness has generated tourism researchers' interest in the spa tourism sector. There is, however, a lack of preceding studies identifying and revising significant determinants and attributes into competitiveness models of spa tourism enterprises. This research will fill this gap by developing a more comprehensive sustainable competitiveness model using Vietnam as an empirical study, considering resilience and innovation. A mixed-method approach is applied to test the conceptual model and establish the sustainable competitiveness model. The research will theoretically contribute to developing a holistic, sustainable spa tourism competitiveness model, including resilience and innovation factors. The empirical results will enable a better understanding of the impacts of resilience, innovation, and other attractive factors on enterprises' competitiveness in the spa tourism context. These will help spa-center management to develop effective policies and strategies.

**KEYWORDS:** Spa tourism, Sustainable Competitiveness, Resilience, Innovation.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism has become a growing industry in the world. According to [Kumar and Dhir \(2020\)](#), tourism development and the significant increase in real income have positively influenced travel and tourism destination spending. [Andrades and Dimanche \(2017\)](#) and [Goffi et al. \(2019\)](#) have highlighted that tourism has been one of the massive drivers of economic development, especially in emerging countries, due to its contributions to increasing foreign earnings and diversifying export goods and services.

Spa tourism is the primary form of health tourism and is provided by spa-centers via various forms in emerging countries. Due to the importance of contributing to economic development and improving health, spa tourism has recently received more attention from researchers. Research studies have focused on how using the natural resources provided to the spa sector is effective ([Košić et al., 2011](#), [Nistoreanu and Aluculesei, 2021](#), [Pessot et al., 2021](#), [Qiu et al., 2021](#)). In addition, some studies have proposed business models with more sustainability-oriented directions for spa centers ([Butler and Szromek, 2019](#), [Szromek, 2020](#), [Szromek and Naramski, 2019](#), [Szromek and Polok, 2022](#)). On the demand side, consumers' preferences are also analyzed in some specific aspects aiming to suggest policy proposals to change consumer behaviors and design business strategies to attract more tourists ([Araújo Vila et al., 2021](#), [Han et al., 2020](#), [Koskinen and Wilska, 2019](#), [Lakićević et al., 2021](#)). Furthermore, some recent studies have suggested sustainable competitiveness models. [Phuthong et al. \(2022\)](#) have established a satisfactory scale of spa enterprises aiming to assess and measure their competitiveness. Their model has proposed seven dimensions of wellness tourism and suggested

valuable strategies to enhance the competitiveness of spa centers in Thailand.

A limited number of studies have focused on developing sustainable competitiveness models for niche markets. Indeed, most research studies on tourism competitiveness have concentrated on three main directions. First, some studies have analyzed issues related to the competitiveness of particular destinations. For example, these studies include Australia ([Dwyer et al., 2003b](#)), Hongkong and South East Asia ([Enright and Newton, 2004](#), [Pearce, 1997](#)), cities in Europe ([Kozak and Rimmington, 1999](#), [Mazanec, 1995](#)), South Africa ([Kim et al., 2000](#)), and the US ([Ahmed and Krohn, 1990](#)). The second direction has focused on specific aspects of competitiveness, such as the price competitiveness ([Dwyer et al., 2002](#), [Stevens, 1992](#)), quality management ([Go and Govers, 2000](#)), strategic management ([Jamal and Getz, 1996](#), [Soteriou and Roberts, 1998](#)), management system ([Baker et al., 1996](#)), the environment ([Hassan, 2000](#), [Mihalič, 2000](#)) and destination marketing and positioning ([Buhalis, 2000](#), [Chacko, 1996](#)). The third research effort has attempted to develop conceptual models and theories of destination competitiveness, which are not related to a particular destination and a specific aspect. One of them is the model of ([Crouch and Ritchie, 1999](#)) and [Crouch \(2011\)](#), formed based on the theories of comparative and competitive advantages ([Mahmood, 1998](#), [Ricardo, 1821](#)). The second is the model of [Dwyer and Kim \(2003\)](#), built based on national and firm competitiveness theories. From there, it could be seen that developing competitiveness models for the spa tourism market should be paid more attention to further studies.

There is a manifest lack of research work related to the resilience of the spa tourism market. In effect, previous studies developed business models and competitiveness models

including various dimensions such as new technologies (AR) (Cranmer and Jung, 2017), marketing (distribution channels) (Buhalis, 2000, Miguéns et al., 2008), satisfaction and performance (Backman et al., 2022, Lakićević et al., 2021), qualification and price perception (Araújo Vila et al., 2021, Dwyer et al., 2002, Han et al., 2020, Kucukusta and Denizci Guillet, 2014, Stevens, 1992), the business and competitive environment (Hassan, 2000, Mihalič, 2000). Crisis management could be considered one of the considerable dimensions added to their models. Crucial issues related to resilience in the post-COVID-19 era, however, have not been mentioned clearly in these studies. According to Prayag (2018), although these two concepts have inherent links, there are differences between crisis management and resilience.

Few attempts have been made to investigate the full impacts of innovation on tourism enterprises' competition and development and unclear relationships between innovation and other determinants in sustainable competitiveness models. According to Lelo de Larrea et al. (2021) and Işık et al. (2022), most existing studies have considered innovation as a positive phenomenon. Despite its positive effects, innovation's negative impacts could be known as the 'dark side' in management. They, therefore, have suggested that further research should focus on evaluating both the negative and positive effects of innovation. On the other hand, according to Lelo de Larrea et al. (2021), employee characteristics and behaviors have been discussed in detail in preceding studies. Further research studies should, therefore, assess the impacts of different employee structures on innovation results (Storey et al., 2016, Wikhamn, 2019). Additionally, research on the competitiveness model should also consider innovation factors to assess its comprehensive impacts on the competition and development of spa tourism enterprises and enable an analysis of relationships between innovation and other determinants.

This review identifies several research gaps in the literature. First, a limited number of studies have focused on developing sustainable competitiveness models for the spa tourism market. Second, there has been limited research investigating issues relating to resilience following the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, few attempts have been made to investigate the full impacts of innovation on tourism enterprises' competition and development and unclear relationships between innovation and other determinants in sustainable competitiveness models. This research, therefore, will address these knowledge gaps by developing a sustainable competitiveness model for spa tourism enterprises using Vietnam as an empirical study, considering innovation and resilience dimensions. To achieve these research aims, the study will attempt to address the specific objectives as follows:

- (1) identify the main dimensions of the sustainable competitiveness model in spa tourism,
- (2) evaluate the impacts of resilience and innovation in the sustainable competitiveness model on spa tourism enterprises,
- (3) propose a spa tourism sustainable competitiveness model and assess the interrelationships among the dimensions within the proposed conceptual model,

(4) recommend future policies and strategies for enhancing the competitiveness of spa tourism enterprises in general and Vietnam in particular.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Tourism competitiveness

The performance of tourism enterprises is comprised of several elements, including their attractiveness, performance, efficiency, and ability to be competitively oriented in their specific tourism markets. The concept of tourism competitiveness could be widely acknowledged as a crucial component of success for tourism centers. Pearce (1997) and Lozato-Giotart et al. (2012) have highlighted that because the tourism sector has become increasingly competitive, there has been a growing concern for competitive destinations about their strengths and weaknesses and their sustainable development. In effect, this topic has been given special attention in the literature. According to Semrad et al. (2018), more than 150 articles released from 1997-2016 have focused on this concept.

Studies on destination competitiveness concentrate on their attractiveness based on comparative advantages (Semrad et al., 2018). These advantages may include mountains, beaches, thermal mineral waters, and cultural and historical resources. Barros et al. (2011) have claimed that these resources substantially contribute to the comparative advantages of tourism centers compared to other factors. Although these advantages could be helpful for attractiveness, tourist destinations also need other factors to make essential differences from their competition. Their outcomes will reckon on their capacity to encounter competition and effectively employ these advantages (Ricardo, 1821, Porter, 1990). Indeed, their competition ability could be substantially improved based on other factors such as management system (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003), quality and price (Dwyer et al., 2000), environment (Craocolici et al., 2008), as well as their ability to create new products and services (innovativeness). According to O.C.D.E (2006), these factors could be considered competitive advantages. Another crucial aspect of competitive advantages is that these advantages need to be built and maintained to operate over a long period. In other words, Dwyer et al. (2003a) and Ritchie and Crouch (2003) have agreed that a tourist center needs to improve its competitiveness to constantly catch up with its competitors.

Croes (2010) has highlighted that it is not easy to measure all factors associated with attractiveness of tourist destinations precisely. There have been, however, several research efforts in this field, such as the competitiveness index of the price proposed by projects of Dwyer et al. (2000) and Dwyer and Kim (2003), a synthetic indicator of travel and tourism competitiveness (Calderwood and Soshkin, 2019).

Ritchie and Crouch (2003) and Crouch and Ritchie (1999) have attempted to establish a conceptual model of competitiveness in this field based on the theories of comparative and competitive advantages. According to them, the best tourist destinations could provide the best lifestyles and societal prosperity. Moreover, they have indicated that the measurement of destination competitiveness is based not only on lifestyles and societal prosperity aspects but also on how resources are allocated. The structure of the competitiveness

model includes two layers. The external has comparative and competitive advantages or resource endowments and resource deployment. The interior consists of seven elements as follows: competitive (micro) environment, global (macro) environment, supporting factors and resources, core resources and attractors, destination management, destination policy, planning, and development, qualifying and amplifying determinants (Crouch, 2011). Their model, however, needs to be more detailed in the importance order of different factors, and variables may not be precisely measured. Another thing is that the proposed factors seem to be challenging to apply quantitative analyses (Hong, 2009).

Dwyer and Kim (2003) have developed an integrated model to assess destination competitiveness based on sustainable orientation and criteria of life quality and standard of living in the long term. Their model includes six primary attributes: resources (endowed resources, created resources, supporting resources), situational factors, demand factors, and destination management. Berdo (2015) has highlighted that this model helps analyze tourist destination competitiveness and assess the significance of determinant attributes due to the appearance of constructive factors in both the demand and supply sides. Their model, however, has several limitations, such as

- (1) difficulty in analyzing more than 85 sub-attributes;
- (2) applying a qualitative manner to measure some attributes;
- (3) finding data on some attributes are not easy or sometimes is not reliable.

According to Dwyer et al. (2012), these attributes can vary according to destinations, periods, and markets. A specific destination type should be chosen for analysis with relevant factors to avoid this issue in the competitiveness analyses. Furthermore, many authors have recently argued that sustainable competitiveness should consider resilience since tourist destinations and companies face various vulnerabilities (Cucculelli and Goffi, 2016). The recent covid-19 crisis could be a practical example supporting this argument.

## 2.2 Resilience and Tourism Competitiveness

Previous studies on developing competitiveness models have focused on the risk management concept. Prayag (2018), however, argues that risk and disaster management are insufficient to expand the existing knowledge of how tourist destinations and organizations cope with and recover from adverse events. His studies have proposed that instead of risk management, tourist destinations should give more attention to resilience. According to Hall et al. (2018), resilience relates to extraordinary or incremental and cumulative changes. In effect, tourist destinations and organizations have to face both incremental and sudden circumstances. Hence, Holling (1973) believes that resilience should include stability and response. From there, the resilience concept, in contrast to crisis management, promotes the idea that systems are capable of adapting, responding, and evolving as an outcome of extraordinary situations and gradual changes (Lew, 2014).

According to Brown et al. (2017), there has been increased attention to relationships between disasters and tourism in recent years. Most studies, however, have focused on developing the hotel sector Field (Brown et al. 2017) and

developing strategies specific to heritage sites (Chong and Balasingam, 2019). Few studies combine resilience, tourism, and development strategies. The literature review on resilience has covered a wide range of issues, such as socio-ecological aspects (Folke, 2016), the resilience of organizations (Annarelli and Nonino, 2016), the resilience of the hospitality sector (Brown et al., 2017), and the resilience of regions (Fröhlich and Hassink, 2018). In the post-Covid-19 context, part of the research assesses the pandemic's impact on the tourism industry's resilience (Gössling et al., 2021) and niche markets. In addition, several studies have proposed post-crisis strategies (Yang et al., 2020), strategies for sustainable tourism development (Gössling et al., 2021), and socialization of tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

The literature review for 2015–2020 rarely considers enterprises in the tourism industry in general and in spa tourism in particular. As a result, there has been little research to establish strategies and resilience frameworks for firms in the tourism industry during this period. Meanwhile, some frameworks cover some aspects of resilience, such as resilience of socio-ecological systems (Folke, 2016), development strategies, sustainable development for heritage centers (Chong and Balasingam, 2019), and community-based tourism analysis sites (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Steiner and Atterton (2015) have proposed an analytical framework that coherently balances economic, social, and environmental resilience based on in-depth interviews and systematic analysis. They believe that the convergence of the three dimensions could lead to greater strength and resilience of local communities. Their framework, however, has not given attention to the resilience of tourism enterprises and governance issues in gaining the resilience of communities.

Regarding studies on social and governance resilience, Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) have developed a community-centered tourist paradigm but focused less on tourism enterprises. Similar to their paradigm, Chong and Balasingam (2019) have also analyzed governance and economic issues based on reviewing documents written on the sustainability of heritage assets; however, tourist enterprises still have not been mentioned in their research. Pikkemaat et al. (2019) have looked into the foundations of research concerning tourism innovation using a systematic review of relevant literature. The framework promotes the notion that innovation and social capital are the best ways to boost the competitiveness of tourist enterprises. The other aspects of resilience have, however, received less attention.

Folke (2016) applied the framework by taking management and governance principles into account, aiming to improve resilience. Environmental, governance and social resilience were the three main elements mentioned in the framework. It, however, did not place as much emphasis on tourism enterprises and economic resilience.

## 2.3 Innovation and Tourism Competitiveness

Studies conducted on tourist innovation generally draw much interest. In the beginning, Hjalager launched her theoretical research (Hjalager, 2002, Hjalager, 2010, Hjalager, 2015). In academic research published in 2010, the authors analyzed the innovation research undertaken until that point and categorized the various types of tourist innovation in a document published in 2002. These analyses have indicated that a lack of empirical work has assessed and analyzed the effects

of innovation on the economies of different destinations. The author has provided a concise, organized, and comprehensive assessment of 100 innovations that significantly impacted tourism despite not being specifically designed for it in her study, which was released in 2015. The author has claimed that numerous tourism innovations have been adopted from other industries.

According to [Williams and Shaw \(2011\)](#), internationalization could be considered an innovation and its driver. Meanwhile, by reviewing 117 research projects from 2000 to 2011, [Medina-Muñoz et al. \(2013\)](#) pursued answers to the issues regarding how to considerably increase the performance of tourism innovation in China and Spain and how to achieve better tourism innovation research.

In another study, the combination of people, including climate and culture, with technology such as information technology and social media could be applied to the hospitality industry ([Kandampully et al., 2016](#)). Their project has provided a business model with a combination of the above factors and indicated that technology is one of the essential elements for innovation. Technology alone is, however, insufficient for enterprise innovation.

[Teixeira and Ferreira \(2018\)](#) analyzed "tourism innovation" and "regional competition" publications between 1900 and 2016. The findings revealed the degree to which tourism innovation, scholarly structures, and regional competitiveness have developed over the years. Main research directions, gaps, and recommendations for further research have been provided. In a similar effort, [Pikkemaat et al. \(2019\)](#) analyzed and presented literature on innovation in the tourism sector. Based on the [Hjalager \(2010\)](#) classification, the authors have studied and classified more than 190 articles in the field of tourism innovation into eight main groups. The authors

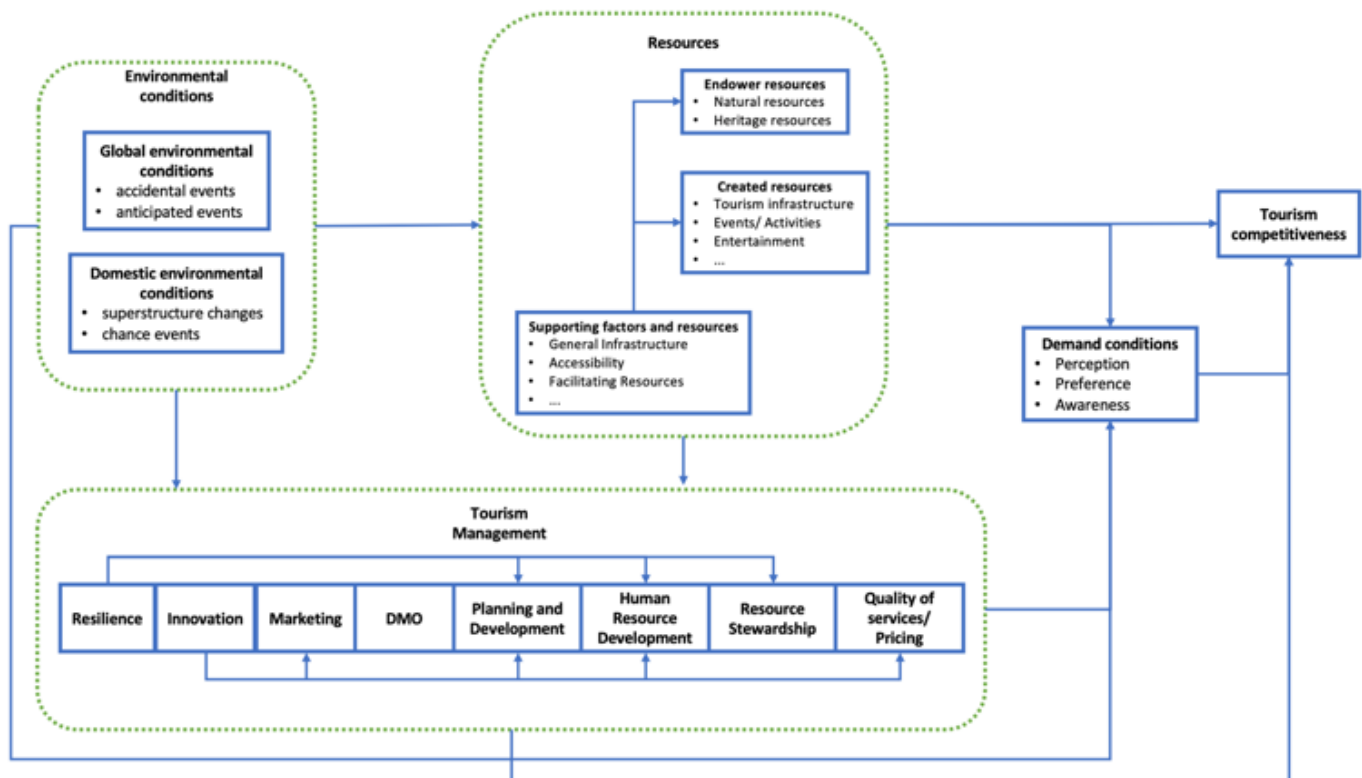
have argued that the research on tourism innovation has focused mainly on the organizational, social, environmental, and network-cooperative contexts. One of the valuable contributions of the study is to propose emerging issues of tourism innovation. The main areas of research will shortly be developing business innovation strategies and looking at tourism innovation from a holistic and sustainable point of view, including the adverse effects of innovation on tourism management.

These studies have contributed significantly to the expansion of tourism innovation knowledge. No research has, however, attempted to discover convergence among aspects. [Camisón and Monfort-Mir \(2012\)](#) conducted the above direction, but they placed more emphasis on measurement problems. In addition, no systematic attempt has been made to incorporate research results to provide a more comprehensive view of innovation.

### 3. Methodology and conceptual framework

#### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

The preceding destination competitiveness models have suggested some main dimensions, such as global (macro) environmental conditions, domestic (micro) environmental conditions, destination management, demand conditions, situational conditions, endowed resources, created resources, supporting factors and resources, and resource allocations ([Hong, 2009](#), [Dwyer and Kim, 2003](#), [Crouch and Ritchie, 1999](#)). The study will attempt to develop a sustainable competitiveness model for the spa sector taking resilience and innovation into account. The main dimensions will be described in detail as follows (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The main elements of the proposed competitiveness model for spa tourism

### 3.1.1 Environmental conditions

*Environmental conditions* include global (macro) environmental conditions and domestic (micro) environmental conditions. Regarding macro-environmental conditions, anticipated and accidental events cause discontinuities that damage competing companies to underperform (principally beyond their ability to affect) and provide chances for new tourist centers to achieve more competitive advantages under unique circumstances. The term "accidental events" refers to unforeseen occurrences such as the spread of global epidemic diseases (e.g., SARS in 2003, bird flu, COVID-19 since 2020, etc.), significant events in financial markets (e.g., The United States debt-ceiling crisis of 2011, etc.), and terrorist attacks (e.g., September 11, 2001, etc.). On the other hand, economic sanctions and wars are predictable (e.g., the Iraq war from 2003 to 2011, the Ukraine war since 2022, etc.). In contrast, micro-environmental conditions may also relate to situations that can be altered through decision-making, strategy development, and policy changes, such as changes to the superstructure. Concerning tourism competition, these conditions are primarily comprised of shifts in the political climate, ethnic and cultural issues, and changes in the legal environment.

### 3.1.2 Core resources and attractors

*Endowed resources* - these attributes identify the fundamental components of the location's appeal and measure the attraction potential of a spa destination or enterprise. Specifically, the fundamental determinants influencing tourists' decisions to choose one destination rather than another are elements of these attributes (Hong, 2009). They could be thermal-mineral water sites, beach and mountain destinations, etc.

*Created resources* - this attribute is the basis for the success of a journey to the chosen destination (Berdo, 2015). It is complementary to endowed resources and is essential in enhancing the destination's competitiveness (Porter, 1990). According to Dwyer and Kim (2003), they could include tourism infrastructure, events, activities, entertainment, etc.

*Supporting factors and resources* - is also crucial dimension in the competitive model. For spa businesses, associating with partners who provide specific skills that are not easily imitated will be an essential source of sustainable competitive advantage. Some aspects of these dimensions may include telecommunications systems, behaviors of customs and supporters, medical service facilities, local transport systems, destination accessibility, market relations at origin and destination, etc. (Dwyer and Kim, 2003).

### 3.1.3 Tourism management

*Tourist management* consists of a group of attributes concerning effective resource management. Effective management will increase the business's attractiveness and assist in improving the quality and effectiveness of other factors. As a result, they will create a mechanism directly affecting enterprises' competitiveness and sustainable development. Some sub-factors are marketing management, planning, and development, destination management organization (DMO), human resource development, resource stewardship, quality of services, resilience, and innovation (Omerzel, 2006, Ritchie and Crouch, 2010, Crouch, 2011, Goffi, 2013).

*Resilience* may be considered the ability of individuals, communities, societies, organizations, or a social-ecological system to withstand unintended events' negative consequences and adapt to changing environments (Birkmann et al., 2013). Folke et al. (2002) and Birkmann et al. (2013) have presented the main differences between vulnerability and resilience. The latter will provide them with a chance for transformation and innovation. Some determinants should include maintaining diversity and redundancy; managing connectivity; encouraging learning; promoting polycentric governance (Cundill et al., 2015, Dakos et al., 2015, Kotschy et al., 2015, Schoon et al., 2015).

*Innovation* refers to creating and providing distinctive, innovative goods and services to attract tourists. Recent studies have pointed to several indicators of innovation, such as the exploitation of knowledge for rapid and high-end healthcare services (Font et al., 2021, Junio et al., 2017), the ability to create and develop new products and services or value-added services (Dias et al., 2022, Ganguli and Ebrahim, 2017). Moreover, these indicators also include openness to service innovation, seizing market opportunities, using technology to enhance the customer experience (Junio et al., 2017, Rucci et al., 2022), and improving and developing new workflows to improve the management capabilities of spa tourism facilities and organizations. Innovation, however, also needs to be considered in terms of the dark side, as mentioned in the previous sections. Some of the negative aspects of innovation include uncertainty of value output values (Bekkers, 2011), essential requirements for learning new technologies (Larsson and Brandsen, 2016), unforeseen security risks (Meijer and Thaens, 2021), and requirements for significant investment finance for innovation (Osborne and Brown, 2012).

### 3.1.4 Demand Conditions

*Demand conditions* - is also one of the critical determinants in the model. This dimension involves three main elements of customers, including demand awareness, preferences, and perception. Some characteristics of this dimension include the compatibility level of spa services with customer preferences, the public image of a spa business, customer perception of the spa services of the business, etc. (Dwyer et al., 2004, Omerzel, 2006).

## 3.2 Methodology

### 3.2.1 Methodological Stance

The mixed-methods design is an approach relating to collecting qualitative and quantitative information simultaneously and integrating both types of data into the research. This approach's critical assumption is to combine qualitative and quantitative data into a project for more detailed insight than typically using the information provided by qualitative or quantitative data (Creswell and Creswell, 2017).

Concerning reasons for selecting a mixed-methods design, researchers can use the strength of combining qualitative and quantitative data in their analysis. In addition, this method also reduces limitations compared to typically applying qualitative or quantitative research.

### 3.2.2 Stage 1- The Qualitative Method

A semi-structured interview will be conducted with 12 experts in the spa tourism sector (researchers, spa managers,

CEOs, tourism organization representatives, DMO, etc.) to collect their views, opinions, and suggestions about the development of spa enterprises. These experts will be required to consider the dimensions and characteristics of each dimension in the proposed sustainable competitiveness model. The target respondents will then give their detailed answers to open-ended questions aiming to identify any new essential components of the questionnaire. Their suggestions will be considered to structure a more accurate model. The study will have completed the collection and analysis of qualitative data at the end of this phase. A qualitative approach was adopted at this stage because detailed insights into experts' thoughts and opinions could not be clearly expressed through a quantitative approach (Queirós et al., 2017). Interviews with these experts will be digitally recorded and transferred to documents. NVivo software will be used to analyze and manually code the obtained data.

### 3.2.3 Stage 2- The Quantitative Method

At this stage, quantitative data will be collected through a survey in Vietnam. This method was chosen because it helps to determine the fit of the theoretical model proposed earlier. Specifically, Structural equation modelling (SEM) can be considered a technique to analyze structural relationships between latent and observed variables statistically. This technique could be implemented to represent, estimate, and validate relationships among structures in a conceptual network (Rigdon, 1998). SPSS and AMOS software will be used to analyze the quantitative data.

#### Questionnaire Design

A pilot test will be conducted with a sample size of 50 respondents to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. After that, the questionnaire will be revised to be used for the official survey in Vietnam. Accordingly, the questionnaire will consist of four parts. Part 1 will include questions about the demographics of the respondents. Part 2 will be questions about the holistic impact of resilience on the competitiveness of spa tourism enterprises and other factors. The third part will be questioned to assess the comprehensive effect of innovation on the competitiveness of spa tourism enterprises and other factors. The final part will include questions to obtain information on the importance of other factors in the sustainable competitiveness model. Besides, the questionnaire will be developed first in English. After that, it will be translated into Vietnamese and continue to be translated into English to ensure the content's consistency. There will be Vietnamese and English versions of the questionnaire used in Vietnam (if necessary, the English version will be used for foreigners).

#### Sample Size

The survey will need the participation of 400 people in Vietnam, including customers, employees, and managers at spa tourism enterprises. The suggestion is based on the recommendation of Hinkin (1995) for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (the item-to-response ratios between 1:4 and 1:10). Furthermore, another critical point is that Structural equation modelling (SEM) needs to be provided with a relatively large sample size due to the lack of stability in small samples (Hair et al., 2010). Meanwhile, Schumacker and Lomax (2004) have proposed that the sample size should be between 50 and 5000. Based on

these estimations, the research suggests that the number of participants should be 400.

The purposeful convenience sampling technique will be applied in this study. Besides, the sample frame will include respondents aged 18 and older staying in Vietnam. Respondents will be interviewed face-to-face or online (based on participants' preferences).

#### Measurement Scales

Nominal and interval scales will be the primary measurement scales in the study. Namely, respondents' demographic information and constructs will be measured by nominal and interval scales, respectively. Besides, Alwin and Krosnick (1991) have argued that a scale with more points will be more reliable. There are, however, no significant differences between the 5 and 7-point Likert scales. Therefore, it is more convenient for respondents when the study uses a 5-point Likert scale.

#### Methods of Analysis

The descriptive statistics will be completed to describe the data set's essential features. For this research, this method will be used to analyze demographic data.

Factor analysis (FA) will be used to find the structure of factors in each construct in the conceptual framework. The data collected from the survey will be evaluated based on The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) to check whether they suit FA. From there, CFA will be applied to examine the suitability of measures of a construct for a proposed measurement model. Researchers could simultaneously assess relationships among factors, analysis, and error terms using SEM. Therefore, if the results of the validity and reliability tests comply with the required criteria, SEM will be applied to check the hypotheses mentioned in the previous section.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review lacks previous studies identifying the impacts of resilience and innovation on the competitiveness of spa tourism enterprises and developing a holistic and sustainable competitiveness model. This research essay has proposed a more comprehensive sustainable competitiveness model using Vietnam as an empirical study, considering resilience and innovation. The specific objectives of this study are (1) to identify the main dimensions of the sustainable competitiveness model in spa tourism, (2) to evaluate the impacts of resilience and innovation in the sustainable competitiveness model on spa tourism enterprises (3) to propose a spa tourism sustainable competitiveness model and assess the interrelationships among the dimensions within the proposed conceptual model (4) to recommend future policies and strategies for enhancing spa enterprise competitiveness. A mixed-method approach is applied to test the conceptual model and establish the sustainable competitiveness model to achieve these objectives. The research will have theoretical contributions to the tourism literature by developing a holistic, sustainable spa tourism competitiveness model that considers resilience and innovation. The empirical results will provide a better understanding of the impacts of resilience, innovation, and other factors on spa enterprises' competitiveness. These will help policymakers and industry practitioners to establish effective policies and strategies.

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