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Article

Comparative analysis of night tourism in coastal cities: An IPA model analysis of mature and emerging destinations in Vietnam

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Abstract: Night tourism, increasingly recognized as integral to the travel experience, has gained attention for its impact on overall tourist satisfaction. This article offers a comprehensive analysis of night tourism development in Vietnam's coastal cities, focusing on Nha Trang and Quang Ngai, as representative cases of mature and emerging destinations, respectively. Utilizing the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) tool, the study aims to provide practical insights for sustainable night tourism. Surveys with 524 domestic tourists were conducted to evaluate perceptions and satisfaction levels. Nha Trang emphasizes accessibility and vibrant nightlife, with a focus on the night market and outdoor shows. Conversely, Quang Ngai highlights its night landscape, dining options, and shopping areas. Recommendations for both destinations include enhancing entertainment offerings and reassessing priorities based on tourist preferences. The study underscores the need for tailored strategies to foster sustainable night tourism development that aligns with evolving tourist demands in coastal cities like Nha Trang and Quang Ngai.

Keywords: night tourism; nocturnal tourism; IPA; Vietnam

1. Introduction

Night tourism, as a distinct facet of the broader travel experience and has such important role in shaping tourist experience (Christou et al., 2022), has garnered increasing attention in recent years (Chevrier, 2019; Elshater and Abusaada, 2022). Despite the increasing academic focus on the night tourism economy, the emphasis appears to be primarily on urban nightlife. Many studies within this realm concentrate on topics like urban entertainment, nighttime cityscapes, the atmosphere of nightlife, urban transformations, and artificial lighting (Elshater and Abusaada, 2022). Existing literature lacks a thorough examination of factors shaping the nocturnal tourist experience, particularly within the context of mature and emerging destinations. Vietnam's extensive coastline, encompassing diverse tourism opportunities, highlights the significance of night tourism not only for economic contributions but also for enhancing the overall visitor experience. However, a notable gap exists in comprehensive studies comparing night tourism dynamics between mature and emerging destinations in the Vietnamese context. This paper contributes to understanding night tourism dynamics in these cities by utilizing an IPA model for a comparative analysis between mature and emerging destinations.

Numerous global studies have delved into night tourism, emphasizing its economic, cultural, and experiential aspects. Nighttime is often associated with entertainment and leisure (Chevrier, 2019). Research on nighttime tourism commonly

focuses on activities like dining, theater, night markets, and festivals (Eldridge, 2019; Eldridge and Smith, 2019). Christou et al. (2022) employed complexity theory to examine factors influencing tourists' nightlife experiences, encompassing safety, hygiene, marketing, pricing, quality, and socio-cultural dimensions. Challenges related to establishing a nighttime economy include pollution, security, violence, and anti-social behavior (Chevrier, 2019; Eldridge and Smith, 2019). Wu et al. (2023) used data analysis to quantify nighttime liveliness and its relation to urban spatial layout. However, these studies overlook nuanced differences in night tourism between mature and emerging destinations, revealing a gap in existing literature.

The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) method, introduced by Martilla and James in the 1970s, has found applications across diverse service industries. IPA offers a simple yet effective approach to assess quality attributes based on performance and importance dimensions (Lai and Hitchcock, 2015). In the hospitality and tourism sector, IPA studies cover a wide array of topics such as hotels, restaurants, destinations, parks, tour guides, and more (Lai and Hitchcock, 2015). However, there's a research gap concerning night tourism. Existing literature lacks a thorough investigation into night tourism, especially in differentiating between mature and emerging coastal destinations in Vietnam. This paper aims to address this gap by introducing an IPA model for meticulous night tourism analysis. The IPA model enables a systematic assessment of importance and performance aspects in night tourism, facilitating the identification of strengths and areas needing improvement in both mature and emerging destinations (Boley et al., 2017; Sever, 2015).

The core research problem revolves around understanding and comparing night tourism in Vietnam's coastal cities, specifically unveiling the distinctive features of mature and emerging destinations. The primary objectives of this study are:

1) To identify the importance of different components within the night tourism experience in mature and emerging coastal destinations.
2) To assess the performance of these components in mature and emerging coastal destinations.
3) To compare the Importance-Performance scores between mature and emerging coastal destinations, thereby identifying key areas where improvements or enhancements are crucial.

Through these objectives, the study aims to contribute empirical evidence and practical insights that can inform destination management strategies, fostering sustainable night tourism development in Vietnam's coastal cities.

2. Literature review

2.1. Night tourism

Understanding the concept of night tourism involves recognizing it as a set of tourism activities that either continue from or expand upon daytime tourism activities (Guo et al., 2011). However, researchers challenge the notion that night tourism is simply an extension of daytime tourism events, emphasizing that it represents a unique travel resource with its own distinct appeal, planning, management, and experiences during nighttime. The core attraction lies in the night itself, and nighttime energy

cannot be broadly generalized based on daytime experiences (El-Adly and Eid, 2016; Jiang and Hong, 2021; Wu et al., 2023).

A wide spectrum of night tourism activities is highlighted in the literature, encompassing dining, sightseeing, attending performances, various forms of entertainment, and participation in tourism programs akin to daytime tourism (El-Adly and Eid, 2016; Eldridge and Smith, 2019; Nguyen, 2023; Song et al., 2020; Tran, 2021; Tsai, 2013; Wu et al., 2023). Specific activities include night markets (Eldridge and Smith, 2019; Guo et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2008; Tsai, 2013), light shows (Guo et al., 2011; Tsai, 2013), music festivals and nocturnal ritual activities (Chevrier, 2019).

Scholars have also delved into the tourist nightlife experience, underscoring its significance in shaping both the tourist experience and the destination's image. Lee et al. (2008) emphasized the close connection between tourist experiences and the destination's image, with the impact contingent upon the temporary perceptions of tourists. (Christou et al., 2022), Pericleous et al., (2022) highlighted the dynamic interplay of socio-cultural factors in shaping the overall tourist experience within the night economy.

In summary, night tourism transcends a mere extension of daytime activities, presenting a distinct appeal and requiring thoughtful planning and management. The diverse range of nocturnal activities underscores the multifaceted nature of night tourism, offering a wealth of experiences to be explored and understood.

2.2. Mature and emerging destinations comparison

The existing body of literature comparing mature and emerging tourism destinations is relatively limited, with only a few studies addressing this specific comparison. The available studies have explored various dimensions, shedding light on aspects such as competitiveness (Jose and Ana, 2013; Wilde et al., 2017), green practices in accommodation (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2017), hotel pricing (Arora and Mathur, 2020) and perceived well-being (Soldić Frleta, 2022).

Competitiveness has been a focal point in the examination of mature and emerging destinations. Ribes and Rodríguez (2013) conducted a study that delves into the influence of business cycles and economic crises on tourism destination competitiveness (Jose and Ana, 2013). Their findings indicate that in mature destinations, the negative effects of economic crises tend to be more persistent during highly intensive crises. In contrast, emerging destinations, characterized by a growing natural trend, experience softer and more limited effects of economic crises. This contrast reinforces the process of convergence between destinations, showcasing the resilience of emerging destinations in the face of economic challenges.

The dimension of sustainable tourism practices has also been explored, revealing disparities between mature and emerging destinations. Alonso-Almeida et al. (2017) observed that mature destinations exhibit a greater awareness of and commitment to sustainable tourism, with more extensive environmental practices compared to their emerging counterparts (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2017). Considering the socio-economic impact of tourism on local communities, Soldić Frleta (2022) investigated residents' perceptions of well-being in both mature and emerging destinations. The study explored residents' views on tourism-related benefits and costs, personal

economic benefits derived from tourism, and overall well-being. Furthermore, Arora and Mathur (2020) contributed to the literature by emphasizing the natural differences at the destination level, driven by needs-based segmentation. The study also highlighted the emergence of price differences influenced by both destination and market variations.

In summary, the literature reviewed indicates that mature and emerging destinations exhibit differences in terms of competitiveness, sustainability practices, resident perceptions, and market dynamics. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for destination managers and policymakers in crafting effective strategies to enhance the overall attractiveness, sustainability, and well-being of both mature and emerging tourism destinations.

2.3. Importance-performance analysis (IPA) in tourism

The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), initially developed for marketing purposes, has found widespread application in various fields, including tourism (Bi et al., 2019; Djeri et al., 2018; Dwyer, et al., 2016a). The utilization of IPA in tourism research is commonplace, covering diverse topics such as customer satisfaction (Deng, 2007), competitiveness (Djeri et al., 2018; Dwyer, et al., 2016a; Dwyer et al., 2016b; Mustafa et al., 2020; Sundram and Abdul Gani, 2022), management strategy (Sever, 2015; Simpson et al., 2020), and online reviews (Bi et al., 2019). Notably, competitiveness emerges as a dominant theme in IPA applications within tourism research, owing to its particular advantages in identifying improvement opportunities, guiding strategic planning, and promoting sustainable development (Dwyer et al., 2016a) and IPA is acknowledged as a well-documented tool for assessing management strategies and offering strategic options to enhance competitiveness (Dwyer et al., 2016b; Lai and Hitchcock, 2015).

In the realm of IPA applications, it serves as a diagnostic tool to evaluate tourism's ability to meet global challenges and trends (Dwyer et al., 2014). Despite its efficacy, the use of IPA necessitates expensive surveys and is influenced by various factors. Bi et al. (2019) proposed an alternative data source, online reviews, highlighting advantages such as accessibility, cost-effectiveness, responsiveness, and simplicity for firms to monitor and manage.

Despite the widespread use of IPA in tourism research, there is limited application in comparing mature and emerging destinations. One study, focused on competitiveness from the consumer's perspective on factors labeled Destination Management (Public and Private), Facilities and Activities, Nature, Augmented Benefits, and History, used the IPA model to compare two types of destinations.

Given these research gaps, it is evident that there is a notable lack of studies on night tourism in Vietnam. Furthermore, there is a distinct absence of research that compares mature and emerging destinations specifically in the context of night tourism. Additionally, there is a dearth of studies utilizing the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) model to make such comparisons. Consequently, this paper aims to fill these gaps by conducting a comprehensive investigation into night tourism in both mature and emerging destinations, employing the IPA model as a valuable analytical tool.

3. Method

3.1. IPA model

This study uses Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to assess traveler satisfaction. IPA integrates attribute importance and performance into a two-dimensional grid, aiding data interpretation and recommendations. Stakeholders can identify improvement areas and bridge gaps between importance and performance using the standard four-quadrant matrix (Dwyer et al., 2014; Dwyer et al., 2015), as shown in **Figure 1**.

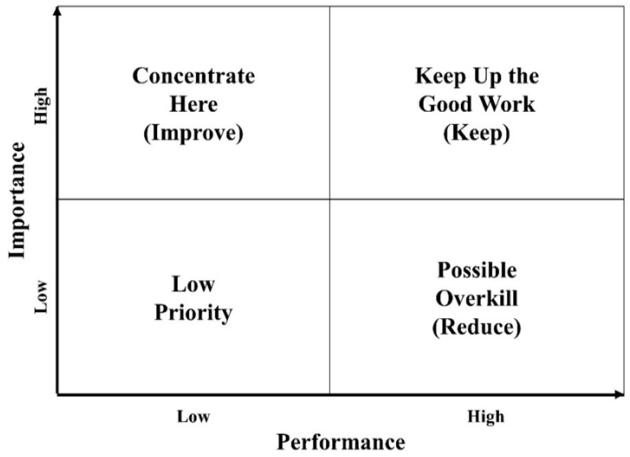

Figure 1. Importance–performance analysis grid.
Source: (Jou and Day, 2021; Martilla and James, 1977).

The IPA grid categorizes attributes into four quadrants, each suggesting a distinct managerial strategy. Quadrant I highlights the greatest weaknesses requiring immediate attention and efforts for enhancement. Quadrant II indicates areas where managers excel, warranting continued focus to maintain quality. Quadrant III denotes low-priority attributes, requiring no additional resources. Quadrant IV suggests potential overallocation of resources, prompting reallocation to more important factors. The IPA matrix offers a comprehensive tool to assess and compare the importance and performance of night tourism factors in Quang Ngai and Khanh Hoa provinces (Lai and Hitchcock, 2015), aiding in addressing research objectives effectively and understanding the tourist experience more intricately (Djeri et al., 2018).

3.2. Sites

Khanh Hoa, positioned in the South-Central Coast of Vietnam spanning 5199.62 km^2, features one of the country's deepest seas, connecting to international marine routes. Its tropical monsoon climate maintains an average temperature of 26.5 ℃, with a rainy season from September to December. Rich in cultural heritage, Khanh Hoa reflects the influence of the ancient Cham civilization, with remnants of the Champa Kingdom contributing to its historical sites. Its natural landscapes and sandy beaches enhance its appeal to tourists.

Quang Ngai, also in the South-Central Coast, covers 5137.6 km^2 and boasts diverse topography, including coastal plains, central plains, mountains, and hills.

Known for cultural vestiges, scenic landscapes, and beaches, Quang Ngai shares a tropical monsoon climate with an average temperature of 26 ºC and a rainy season from August to January. Despite its central coastal location, Quang Ngai is emerging compared to Khanh Hoa, which has a robust tourism history. In 2019, Quang Ngai welcomed 1.14 million visitors, while Khanh Hoa received over 7 million, showcasing their differing tourism statuses.

3.3. Participants

The study focused on tourists visiting attractions in Quang Ngai and Khanh Hoa provinces, Vietnam. A sample size calculation, based on a 95% confidence level, 0.5 standard deviation, and ±5% confidence interval, determined a minimum of 385 participants for statistical reliability. To enhance robustness, 524 participants were included, surpassing the minimum requirement. Convenience sampling was used, selecting participants based on accessibility and willingness. This method was chosen for practical reasons and the study's context. Insights from this diverse sample enrich the exploration of night tourism in the specified regions.

3.4. Materials

This study employed a dual-source approach, utilizing existing literature on night tourism and direct observations at research sites to shape a comprehensive questionnaire. The survey delved into nocturnal tourism offerings, encompassing night sceneries, culinary experiences, shopping areas, night markets, performances, tours, and vehicle rental services within the town (Chevrier, 2019; Christou et al., 2022b; Velikova and Dimitrova, 2019; Zmyslony and Pawlusiński, 2020). Additionally, urban amenities and services were addressed, covering factors like lighting, public transportation availability, accessibility to ATMs, security measures, proximity to convenience stores, shopping mall closing hours, and the closing hours of visited sites (Chen et al., 2020; Christou et al., 2022; Nofre et al., 2017; Velikova and Dimitrova, 2019; Zmyslony and Pawlusiński, 2020).

Various supplementary experiential services available for tourists to explore at night, such as beauty care services, sports activities, karaoke bars, and discos, were also considered, as they enhance tourists' memories of nighttime destinations (Chen et al., 2020; Eldridge and Smith, 2019; Guo et al., 2011; Jiang and Hong, 2021).

The comprehensive questionnaire, constructed with careful consideration of these supporting factors and night tourism attributes, served as the primary tool for data collection during on-site surveys conducted in Quang Ngai and Khanh Hoa provinces.

To assess importance-performance, the questionnaire included two instances of questioning for each attribute, with one corresponding to each scale.

3.5. Data collection and analysis

The investigator visited night tourist spots and accommodations, explaining the research purpose and inviting participation. Throughout, assistance was available. Data underwent Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) analysis, using descriptive stats to summarize and Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) techniques to

identify trends. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) uncovered underlying constructions. Paired-sample t-analyses compared observations, with results presented via an IPA matrix to meet research goals (Dash and Paul, 2021; Hair, 2009).

4. Research and discussion

4.1. Participant demographics

Nha Trang and Quang Ngai were selected to represent mature and emerging destinations respectively in the context of night tourism in Vietnam. This choice allows for a comparative analysis of established versus developing nocturnal tourism dynamics. Nha Trang, with its long-standing reputation as a tourism hub, provides a benchmark for mature destination features, including well-developed infrastructure and diverse nighttime activities. Conversely, Quang Ngai represents an emerging destination with potential for growth in night tourism, offering a contrast that highlights differences in tourist satisfaction, preferences, and performance of tourism attributes. The study's findings aim to inform tailored strategies for sustainable tourism in both contexts. Convenience sampling was employed due to logistical constraints and the practicalities of reaching tourists in real-world settings. To mitigate bias and approximate randomness, survey collection involved multiple locations within each city during varying times of the evening, ensuring a diverse participant pool. This approach aimed to capture a wide spectrum of tourist experiences and perspectives.

The participant demographics in Nha Trang, as revealed by a sample of 285 respondents, present a balanced representation in terms of gender, with 45.6% being male and 54.4% female. The occupational diversity is notable, with 23.9% identified as students, 30.5% in officer and professional occupations (such as teachers, engineers, and doctors), and 24.6% engaged in business. Additionally, 8.8% are workers or freelancers, 3.2% fall into categories like housewives, retired individuals, or the unemployed, and 9.1% belong to other unspecified occupations. Educationally, the majority, at 56.8%, have completed undergraduate studies, while 15.1% are graduates, 9.8% have attended college, 14.0% have finished high school, and 4.2% have completed secondary school. Age-wise, 38.2% are under 26 years old, 52.3% fall between 26 and 45 years old, and 9.5% are over 45 years old.

The participant demographics in Quang Ngai, gleaned from a survey of 233 respondents, unveil a diverse profile reflective of the city's night tourism landscape. Gender distribution indicates a slight majority of females at 56.7%, while 43.3% are male. Occupationally, participants represent a broad spectrum with 12.0% being students, 50.6% holding officer and professional positions (including teachers, engineers, and doctors), 16.3% engaged in business, and 17.2% involved in various worker or freelancer roles. A smaller percentage, 3.9%, encompasses categories such as housewives, retired individuals, or the unemployed. Educationally, a significant 67.8% are graduates, 5.6% undergraduates, 4.3% have completed college, and 1.3% concluded their education at the high school level. Regarding age, a diverse range is evident, with 17.2% completing secondary school, 68.7% falling below 26 years old, and 14.2% spanning from 26 to 45 years old. Intriguingly, the data suggests that the entire respondent pool is over 45 years old, offering a unique demographic snapshot

that contributes to a deeper understanding of the participants engaging in night tourism activities in Quang Ngai.

4.2. Reliability and validity of scale

4.2.1. Cronbach's alpha reliability

Cronbach's Alpha method refines research instruments by removing inappropriate variables. A reliable scale achieves a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.7 or higher (Hair, 2009; Hair et al., 2021). Variables with an Item-Total Correlation coefficient below 0.3 are excluded (Hair, 2009), ensuring internal consistency and research reliability. Both Nha Trang and Quang Ngai datasets show proposed scales with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.7 and Item-Total Correlation coefficients above 0.3, affirming reliability (Appendix).

4.2.2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) confirms construct validity, particularly through convergent EFA for refining new attributes (Watkins, 2018). In this study, convergent EFA enhances the precision of newly introduced attributes for construct validity assessment.

For Nha Trang, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.931 and Bartlett's Test significance level of 0.000 validate the suitability of EFA for the dataset. The Eigenvalue exceeds 1, identifying three distinct factor groups explaining 58.382% of the total variance, exceeding the recommended minimum of 50%. Top of Form Bottom of Form for Quang Ngai, the KMO measure of 0.926 and Bartlett's Test significance level of 0.000 validate EFA acceptance. The Eigenvalue surpasses 1, revealing three distinct factors explaining 72.856% of the total variance, exceeding the recommended threshold of 50%.

Both Nha Trang and Quang Ngai required adjustments for two indicators U6 and U7 transitioning them from urban amenities and services to supplementary experiential services. These adjustments align with literature suggesting their connection to services provided by shopping malls, stores, and attractions (Hsieh and Chang, 2006; Roberts and Eldridge, 2009). Therefore, the proposed scale is validated with three main components, including the adjustment of U6 and U7 to S1 and S2, respectively. This modification results in the supplementary experiential services component comprising five indicators for both locations.

4.3. Paired test samples t test for measuring the gaps between importance and performance

The Paired Samples T Test, a common statistical tool, helps identify significant gaps (Bi et al., 2019; Lai and Hitchcock, 2015). In this study, we use this approach to highlight differences in factors related to night tourism development between Nha Trang and Quang Ngai. The findings aim to uncover variations in night tourism development across different types of destinations, as shown in **Table 1**.

For Nha Trang, it is pertinent to highlight that the p-values associated with all attributes, except for S5: Bar, karaoke, discotheque, are below the significance threshold of 0.05. This outcome signifies the statistical significance of differences among these attributes.

Within this set of attributes, the variances between Importance and Performance range from 0.221 (N9: Rent a vehicle to get around bicycle, cyclo, electric car, ...) to 0.860 (U4: Safe security). Notably, all factors being evaluated at either an important or very important level and the corresponding levels of satisfaction are generally at a normal or satisfactory level. Importantly, no item falls below the satisfaction threshold for tourists, indicating a relatively positive assessment of the offerings in Nha Trang.

Table 1. Paired-samples *t* test for Nha Trang case.

	Attribute	**Importance**		**Performance**		**Difference**			
		Mean	**Std.**	**Mean**	**Std.**	**Mean**	**Mean**	**t**	**Sig.**
N1	Night landscape	4.25	0.911	3.81	0.923	0.442	1.117	6.682	0.000
N2	Restaurants	4.09	0.989	3.81	0.923	0.298	1.100	4.577	0.000
N3	Streets cuisine	4.26	0.909	3.76	0.966	0.495	1.171	7.134	0.000
N4	Shopping area, commercial center	4.00	0.944	3.51	0.941	0.495	1.203	6.941	0.000
N5	Night market	3.85	1.148	3.22	1.072	0.632	1.461	7.297	0.000
N6	Theater performances	3.53	1.232	2.97	1.086	0.565	1.389	6.865	0.000
N7	Outdoor shows and activities	3.84	1.048	3.29	1.033	0.551	1.364	6.817	0.000
N8	Night tour to tourist attractions	3.58	1.141	3.14	1.130	0.435	1.409	5.212	0.000
N9	Rent a vehicle to get around (bicycle, cyclo, electric car...)	3.74	1.047	3.52	0.970	0.221	1.197	3.117	0.002
U1	Street lights and lighting system	4.46	0.802	3.91	0.890	0.551	1.052	8.837	0.000
U2	Public transportation (including buses, taxis, technology motorbike taxi...)	4.21	0.913	3.70	0.904	0.509	1.070	8.026	0.000
U3	Banks, ATMs	4.11	0.962	3.52	0.940	0.589	1.170	8.503	0.000
U4	Safe security	4.56	0.814	3.70	0.956	0.860	1.126	12.883	0.000
U5	Convenience stores	4.00	0.970	3.44	0.957	0.558	1.184	7.953	0.000
S1	Closing hours of shopping malls. stores...	3.74	1.005	3.15	1.000	0.593	1.211	8.264	0.000
S2	Closing hours of tourist attractions	3.64	1.041	3.19	1.070	0.449	1.303	5.817	0.000
S3	Health care and beauty services	3.72	0.999	3.39	0.956	0.330	1.127	4.939	0.000
S4	Sports activities	3.66	0.974	3.33	1.006	0.330	1.121	4.966	0.000
S5	Bar, karaoke, discotheque	3.46	1.136	3.49	0.984	−0.035	0.974	−0.608	0.544

Source: Authors.

For Quang Ngai, it is noteworthy that the *p*-values associated with all attributes are below 0.05, indicating the statistical significance of differences. Consequently, all attributes are retained for the interpretation of Importance-Performance mapping, as shown in **Table 2**.

Within these attributes, the disparities between Importance and Performance range from 0.74 (N1: Night landscape) to 1.586 (N5: Night market). This substantial variance is observed across all items, underscoring tourists' discernment of the quality of night tourism services in Quang Ngai. Notably, a discernible gap exists between the perceived importance of these factors and the level of satisfaction derived from them. Despite all factors being assessed at either an important or very important level, the corresponding satisfaction levels are merely at a normal level or, in certain cases, not met (only 6 out of 19 factors are rated as meeting the needs of tourists including N1, N2, N3, U1, U2, U4.

Table 2. Paired-samples *t* test for Quang Ngai case.

	Attribute	Importance		Performance		Difference			
		Mean	**Std.**	**Mean**	**Std.**	**Mean**	**Std.**	***t***	**Sig.**
N1	Night landscape	4.22	0.813	3.48	0.814	0.741	0.948	12.076	0.000
N2	Restaurants	4.36	0.730	3.53	0.666	0.824	0.822	15.512	0.000
N3	Streets cuisine	4.46	0.726	3.59	0.793	0.866	0.965	13.873	0.000
N4	Shopping area, commercial center	4.15	0.879	3.26	0.820	0.887	1.025	13.381	0.000
N5	Night market	4.35	0.875	2.76	1.060	1.586	1.441	17.016	0.000
N6	Theater performances	3.86	0.968	2.58	1.021	1.280	1.267	15.619	0.000
N7	Outdoor shows and activities	4.05	0.826	2.73	1.052	1.318	1.315	15.490	0.000
N8	Night tour to tourist attractions	3.84	0.954	2.74	1.087	1.092	1.277	13.223	0.000
N9	Rent a vehicle to get around (bicycle, cyclo, electric car...)	3.99	0.886	2.93	0.987	1.059	1.194	13.709	0.000
U1	Street lights and lighting system	4.62	0.662	3.62	0.769	1.004	0.896	17.330	0.000
U2	Public transportation (including buses, taxis, technology motorbike taxi...)	4.49	0.783	3.42	0.836	1.075	1.022	16.264	0.000
U3	Banks, ATMs	4.26	0.809	3.37	0.874	0.887	1.100	12.467	0.000
U4	Safe security	4.65	0.680	3.75	0.774	0.900	0.934	14.891	0.000
U5	Convenience stores	4.16	0.801	3.22	0.906	0.941	1.132	12.853	0.000
S1	Closing hours of shopping malls. stores...	3.98	0.948	3.08	0.868	0.904	1.132	12.347	0.000
S2	Closing hours of tourist attractions	4.11	0.860	3.15	0.907	0.967	1.195	12.506	0.000
S3	Health care and beauty services	3.82	0.869	2.82	0.969	0.996	1.079	14.270	0.000
S4	Sports activities	3.73	0.863	2.73	1.015	1.000	1.138	13.590	0.000
S5	Bar, karaoke, discotheque	3.77	0.952	3.00	0.872	0.778	1.110	10.839	0.000

Source: Authors.

In contrast to Nha Trang, Quang Ngai, as an emerging nocturnal destination, exhibits a notable discrepancy, with numerous items falling below tourist satisfaction levels. This stark difference underscores the developmental contrast between Quang Ngai as an emerging destination and the more established status of Nha Trang.

A finding from the comparison shows that tourists rate factors related to night tourism development in Quang Ngai as more important than those in Nha Trang, except for N1: Night landscape. At the same time, tourists perceive Quang Ngai as less responsive compared to Nha Trang. This suggests that tourists have higher standards for destinations that are not well-established in night tourism. Essentially, tourists' expectations vary depending on how mature the destination is; in more developed places like Nha Trang, tourists tend to expect less compared to emerging destinations like Quang Ngai. These findings will be discussed in more detail in the discussion section.

4.4. Importance-performance analysis and discussion

In the context of night tourism, the IPA serves as a strategic tool to comprehensively assess the existing status of various factors. Through the IPA model, managers can strategically adjust their approach in alignment with the prevailing conditions of night tourism development.

4.4.1. Nha Trang case

Nha Trang, as a well-established and dynamic coastal tourism city in Vietnam (Le and Dong, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2022), currently boasts nearly comprehensive tourism facilities and services, possibly to the extent of over-exploitation.

The results of the IPA suggest that, on a general scale, Nha Trang should prioritize the preservation and enhancement of the quality of its nocturnal tourism offerings. Specifically, efforts should be directed towards maintaining the quality of food establishments, including restaurants and street cuisine, as well as shopping areas and commercial centers. Currently, the destination is advised to focus on sustaining the quality of its urban amenities and services, particularly emphasizing street lights and lighting systems, public transportation (encompassing buses, taxis, technology motorbike taxis), banks and ATM and security and safety measures. However, the incorporation of supplementary experiential services in Nha Trang is recommended to be approached with caution, potentially classifying them as of low priority or as having the potential for overkill, as shown in **Figure 2**.

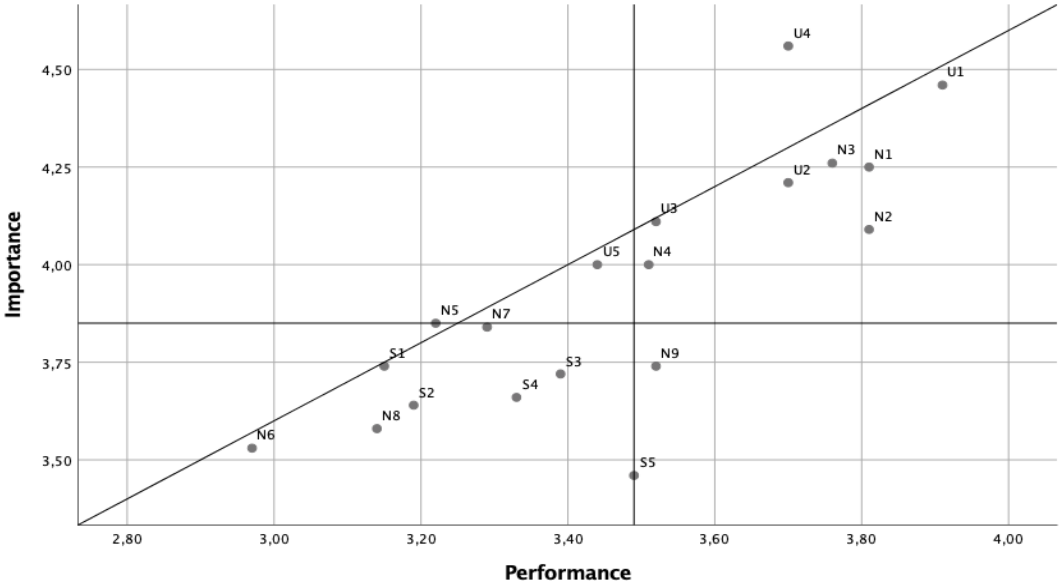

Figure 2. IPA result of Nha Trang.

Nha Trang excels in providing supplementary experiential services, particularly for international tourists (Nguyen et al., 2022; Tran and Ninh, 2019). The well-designed lighting system enhances the city's vibrancy during the night. Diverse transportation options, such as buses, taxis, technology taxis, cater to tourists' varied needs. Banking services, including widely accessible ATMs operating at night, facilitate seamless financial transactions. Crucially, the city ensures nighttime safety for tourists, fostering a secure environment for comfortable nocturnal travel (Tran, 2011). Furthermore, Nha Trang should allocate resources for advancements in developing its nocturnal tourism. This could include the establishment of convenience stores, the creation of a vibrant night market, and the implementation of outdoor shows and activities.

A night market holds significant importance for any nocturnal destination as it serves as a focal point for both culinary delights and cultural experiences (Kuo et al.,

2012; Lee et al., 2008). This venue provides tourists with the opportunity to immerse themselves in various aspects of the destination, including interactions with local residents, sampling diverse cuisines, acquiring souvenirs, and gaining insights into the local culture and lifestyle (Chuang et al., 2014). Besides, the implementation of outdoor performances in Nha Trang is essential to offer tourists a broader array of nightlife options. These performances may encompass traditional and modern music, festivals, local events, parades, displays, folk games, and more.

Last but not least, the availability of convenience stores operating throughout the night should be expanded in Nha Trang. Essential items must be readily accessible to serve tourists during nighttime travels. Presently, the options are somewhat limited, primarily consisting of a few chains such as WinMart and some local stores.

This research finding is substantiated by studies evaluating the quality of tourism services in Nha Trang (Le and Dong, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2022; Tran, 2011). The research indicates that tourism facilities and services in Nha Trang effectively fulfill the needs of tourists, thereby attracting them, and these factors contribute significantly to tourists' intentions to revisit the destination.

In a study conducted by Chen et al. (2020), it was suggested that to ensure the sustainable development of the night-time economy and night tourism, local authorities and destination managers should focus on providing night tourism brands (products) that deliver optimal experiential effects and encompass both emotional and functional attributes. This recommendation stems from a survey involving 487 tourists participating in "Cultural Heritage Night," a night tourism brand in South Korea. Moreover, Li et al. (2022) highlight that innovation and cultural engagement positively moderate the impact of the night tourism atmosphere on creating memorable tourism experiences. This underscores the importance for Nha Trang to prioritize innovation in its night tourism products, grounded in local culture and responsive to the evolving needs of tourists.

Certain aspects may be considered of lower priority in Nha Trang's tourism development. These may include theater performances, night tours to tourist attractions, closing hours of shopping malls and stores, closing hours of tourist attractions as well as health care and beauty services and sports activities.

As of now, Nha Trang predominantly features indoor music performance activities, with limited outdoor options (Le and Dong, 2017). Furthermore, the extensive variety of health care and beauty services, along with sports activities, suggests a need for future limitations, given the relatively constrained demand from tourists. There may be an excess in the availability of transportation options for getting around, including bicycles, cyclos, and electric cars. Additionally, the abundance of entertainment venues such as bars, karaoke establishments, and discotheques suggests a potential overkill in this aspect. It is essential for Nha Trang to assess the sustainability and necessity of these services to avoid saturation and maintain a balanced and enjoyable tourism environment.

4.4.2. Quang Ngai case

Quang Ngai, emerging as a central Vietnam nocturnal hotspot, prioritizes sustaining and enhancing key elements such as its captivating night landscape, diverse culinary experiences, and vibrant shopping areas. The city focuses on efficient street

lighting, reliable public transportation, and ensuring safety to be a cultural night tourism city, as shown in **Figure 3**.

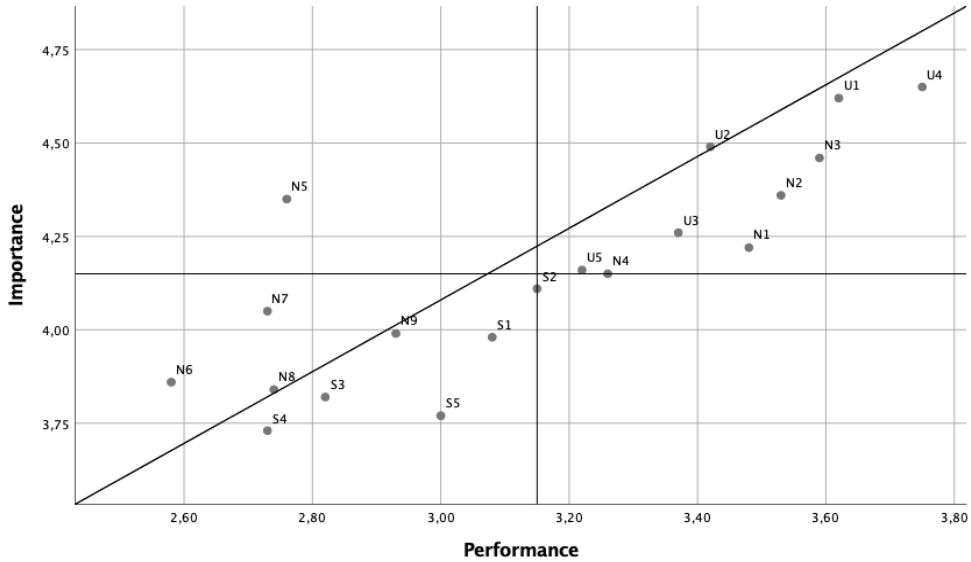

Figure 3. IPA result of Quang Ngai.

First, as an emerging city in the realm of nocturnal tourism, Quang Ngai offers fundamental services to cater to nightlife enthusiasts, encompassing diverse options such as restaurants, street cuisine, and shopping areas within commercial centers (Cong and Chi, 2021; Tien et al., 2021). The city's nighttime ambiance is characterized by the tranquility of a growing coastal destination, providing a contrast to the dynamic atmosphere of established tourist spots like Nha Trang. Noteworthy attractions near the beach, such as My Khe beach, Sa Huynh beach, and Ly Son beach, boast natural landscapes that appeal to visitors.

Despite being a developing city, Quang Ngai possesses a well-established infrastructure system catering to tourists. This includes efficient lighting systems, a reliable public transportation network, and the availability of banking services and ATMs. Additionally, prioritizing the safety of visitors during nighttime is a focal point of concern in the city.

Quang Ngai should prioritize the future development of night markets, integrating them with local culture. These markets offer visitors diverse experiences, including culinary delights, street performances, shopping for souvenirs, community interaction, and health care services (Kuo et al., 2012; Li et al., 2022). Besides, street food activities in Quang Ngai are limited, and there is a lack of designated places for tourists to gather during the night. The establishment of a night market is anticipated to encourage tourists to extend their stay in Quang Ngai, spending at least one night before proceeding to destinations such as Ly Son Island or nearby locations.

Numerous studies on night markets in tourism consistently support this conclusion. The experiences gained at night markets significantly impact visitors' impressions of the destination. For instance, a study conducted by Li et al. (2021) involving 399 tourists at Hong Kong Night Market revealed that perceived food and atmosphere authenticity can evoke nostalgic emotions, positively influencing attitudes toward local food and gastronomy destination image, thereby enticing tourists to

revisit (Li et al., 2021). Another study underscores that factors such as novelty-seeking, engaging in physical activities, and experiencing local culture and customs are key motivators for tourists to shop in Tourist Night Markets (Hsieh and Chang, 2006).

In a different context, Quang Ngai should be deemed a low priority across various aspects. These aspects encompass health care and beauty services, sports activities, entertainment venues like bars, karaoke, and discotheques, as well as cultural offerings such as theater performances, outdoor shows, and activities. Additionally, tourists have shown a lower inclination towards night tours exploring tourist attractions, as well as renting vehicles for transportation. Besides, the current closing hours of shopping malls, stores and tourist attractions are deemed appropriate and do not necessitate adjustments unless they contribute to the enhancement of quality night tourism services.

In this budding destination, it is urgent to limit the development of certain elements, such as shopping areas, commercial centers, and convenience stores, which tourists deem to surpass actual demand. While shopping and utility services are essential, meeting the necessary requirements without succumbing to overdevelopment is vital (Chen et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). Striking this balance is crucial to maintain the destination's overall service equilibrium (Hu and Hou, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022).

In light of these findings, it is recommended that Quang Ngai strategically allocate its resources to cultivate itself as a sustainable nocturnal destination, emphasizing cultural night tourism services over merely aiming for a vibrant night city atmosphere.

4.5. Compare the results of the IPA and recommendations

The IPA results for Nha Trang and Quang Ngai highlight distinct priorities and recommendations for enhancing their nocturnal tourism offerings.

In Nha Trang, attention should focus on convenience stores (U5) for round-the-clock accessibility, along with the night market (N5) and outdoor shows and activities (N7) to shape a vibrant nightlife experience. Certain factors like theater performances (N6) and night tours (N8) are of lower priority and may require reassessment to align with tourist preferences.

Similarly, Quang Ngai's IPA emphasizes key elements such as night landscapes (N1), food establishments (N2, N3), and shopping areas (N4), alongside infrastructure components like street lights and public transportation (U1, U2, U4). However, the low priority assigned to the night market (N5) and entertainment options (N6, N7) suggests room for strategic improvements to better align with tourist expectations.

While both destinations prioritize night landscapes, food offerings, and safety, the analysis provides nuanced insights into specific elements each location should emphasize or reassess to optimize their nocturnal tourism appeal.

For Nha Trang, it is recommended to foster dynamic coastal tourism by introducing outdoor art events and a mix of traditional and modern festivals. This approach capitalizes on the city's coastal charm, providing tourists with distinctive cultural experiences. Additionally, the development of cultural night markets, intricately linked with night tours, can contribute to the city's nocturnal allure. These

markets can showcase local traditions, crafts, and cuisine, creating an immersive and authentic experience. To preserve the cultural identity, a strategic limitation on certain entertainment services is advised, ensuring that the city's nightlife remains rooted in its unique heritage.

In the case of Quang Ngai, the emphasis should be on cultivating night cultural destination that celebrate the richness of local culture, showcasing traditional crafts, indigenous products, and authentic cuisine. The preservation of peace and the natural landscape is paramount, requiring the implementation of sustainable development practices and conservation efforts. Simultaneously, the region should focus on providing convenient and entertaining services to enhance the overall visitor experience. This includes efficient transportation options, easy access to amenities, and a diverse range of recreational activities. Striking a harmonious balance between convenience and the preservation of the natural landscape is essential for sustainable tourism development in Quang Ngai.

This study has methodological limitations, including the subjectivity and assumption violations in Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), which may affect factor reliability and generalizability. Cronbach's Alpha is limited by its reliance on unidimensionality and potential exclusion of valuable items, while traditional reliability thresholds may not suit all contexts. Additionally, the Paired Samples T-Test is sensitive to normality violations and outliers, restricted to two groups, and lacks insight into practical significance or effect size.

5. Conclusion

This article presents a novel analysis of night tourism development in Vietnam's coastal cities, with a particular focus on the mature case of Nha Trang and the emerging case of Quang Ngai. The study aims to contribute empirical evidence and practical insights to inform destination management strategies that foster sustainable night tourism development. Utilizing the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) as a robust tool, the research involved 524 actively participating domestic tourists, offering valuable insights into their perceptions and satisfaction levels.

In Nha Trang, the study emphasizes the importance of round-the-clock convenience stores, indicating a strong demand for continuous accessibility. The night market and outdoor shows are pivotal for a vibrant nightlife, while factors like theater performances and night tours are deemed low priority and may require reassessment. Quang Ngai places importance on night landscape, food establishments, and shopping areas, along with crucial infrastructure components. However, the low priority assigned to the night market and certain entertainment options suggests room for improvements.

In light of the study's findings, recommendations have been proposed for destinations to cultivate sustainable night tourism aligned with tourist needs. However, it is crucial to acknowledge certain limitations inherent in the study, such as the limited factors considered due to scale constraints. The exclusion of various factors may impact the robustness of the IPA model evaluation. Future research endeavors should explore new integrated models to comprehensively understand factors influencing

night tourism development and their respective roles. In-depth discussions are imperative to uncover potential factors not addressed in the current study.

To enrich the field, future studies should conduct cross-country comparisons, juxtaposing a Vietnamese destination with a similar one in another country. This comparative approach can provide valuable insights and offer international context-specific suggestions for destination development. Despite the acknowledged limitations, this study carries significant theoretical and practical implications, notably in pioneering the use of the IPA model to compare night tourism development in two Vietnamese tourist destinations.

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Appendix

Table A1. Participant demographics of Nha Trang.

		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	130	45.6
	Female	155	54.4
Occupation	Student	68	23.9
	Officer and professional occupations (teachers, engineers, doctors...)	87	30.5
	Businessman	70	24.6
	Worker, freelancer	25	8.8
	Housewife, retired, unemployed	9	3.2
	Others	26	9.1
Educational degree	Graduate	43	15.1
	Undergraduate	162	56.8
	College	28	9.8
	High school	40	14.0
	Secondary school	12	4.2
Age	Under 26 years old	109	38.2
	From 26 years old to 45 years old	149	52.3
	Over 45 years old	27	9.5
	Total	285	100.0

Source: Authors.

Table A2. Participant demographics of Quang Ngai.

		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	101	43.3
	Female	132	56.7
Occupation	Student	28	12.0
	Officer and professional occupations (teachers, engineers, doctors...)	118	50.6
	Businessman	38	16.3
	Worker, freelancer	40	17.2
	Housewife, retired, unemployed	9	3.9
Educational degree	Graduate	49	21.0
	Undergraduate	158	67.8
	College	13	5.6
	High school	10	4.3
	Secondary school	3	1.3
Age	Under 26 years old	40	17.2
	From 26 years old to 45 years old	160	68.7
	Over 45 years old	33	14.2
	Total	233	100.0

Source: Authors.

Table A3. Cronbach's alpha reliability of scale in Nha Trang.

Scale	Symbols	Items	Importance			Performance		
			Cronbach's Alpha	**Corrected Item-Total Correlation**	**Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted**	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Corrected Item-Total Correlation**	**Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted**
Nocturnal Tourism Offerings	N1	Night landscape	0.805	0.544	0.780	0.908	0.702	0.897
	N2	Restaurants		0.558	0.780		0.648	0.900
	N3	Streets cuisine		0.577	0.776		0.684	0.898
	N4	Shopping area. commercial center		0.643	0.768		0.680	0.898
	N5	Night market		0.653	0.764		0.738	0.894
	N6	Theater performances		0.598	0.772		0.723	0.896
	N7	Outdoor shows and activities		0.557	0.778		0.751	0.893
	N8	Night tour to tourist attractions		0.457	0.820		0.630	0.902
	N9	Rent a vehicle to get around (bicycle, cyclo, electric car...)		0.495	0.824		0.651	0.900
Urban Amenities and Services	U1	Street lights and lighting system	0.818	0.571	0.794	0.799	0.572	0.764
	U2	Public transportation (including buses, taxis, technology motorbike taxi...)		0.617	0.780		0.613	0.751
	U3	Banks, ATMs		0.618	0.781		0.625	0.747
	U4	Safe security		0.637	0.776		0.550	0.771
	U5	Convenience stores		0.616	0.781		0.549	0.772
	U6	Closing hours of shopping malls, stores...		0.545	0.783		0.625	0.761
	U7	Closing hours of tourist attractions		0.534	0.787		0.567	0.782
Supplementary Experiential Services	S1	Health care and beauty services	0.755	0.582	0.690	0.748	0.693	0.637
	S2	Sports activities		0.494	0.721		0.515	0.702
	S3	Bar, karaoke, discotheque		0.462	0.736		0.505	0.805

Source: Authors.

Table A4. Cronbach's alpha reliability of scale in Quang Ngai.

Scale	Symbols	Items	Importance			Performance		
			Cronbach's Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Nocturnal Tourism Offerings	N1	Night landscape	0.93	0.773	0.920	0.913	0.607	0.910
	N2	Restaurants		0.806	0.919		0.577	0.912
	N3	Streets cuisine		0.742	0.923		0.564	0.912
	N4	Shopping area, commercial center		0.722	0.923		0.657	0.907
	N5	Night market		0.785	0.919		0.785	0.897
	N6	Theater performances		0.768	0.921		0.808	0.895
	N7	Outdoor shows and activities		0.762	0.921		0.808	0.895
	N8	Night tour to tourist attractions		0.704	0.925		0.806	0,896
	N9	Rent a vehicle to get around (bicycle, cyclo, electric car...)		0.659	0.927		0.682	0.905
Urban Amenities and Services	U1	Street lights and lighting system	0.883	0.794	0.848	0.885	0.738	0.858
	U2	Public transportation (including buses, taxis, technology motorbike taxi...)		0.775	0.845		0.750	0.854
	U3	Banks, ATMs		0.649	0.875		0.741	0.856
	U4	Safe security		0.705	0.861		0.680	0.870
	U5	Convenience stores		0.709	0.861		0.720	0.863
	U6	Closing hours of shopping malls, stores...		0.606	0.809		0.710	0.870
	U7	Closing hours of tourist attractions		0.556	0.812		0.621	0.859
Supplementary Experiential Services	S1	Health care and beauty services	0.828	0.756	0.754	0.889	0.805	0.847
	S2	Sports activities		0.614	0.797		0.829	0.841
	S3	Bar, karaoke, discotheque		0.596	0.802		0.693	0.874

Source: Authors.

Table A5. Rotated component matrix of Nha Trang case.

Symbols	Attribute	Component		
		1	2	3
N1	Night landscape	0.653		
N2	Restaurants	0.625		
N3	Streets cuisine	0.633		
N4	Shopping area, commercial center	0.568		

Table A5. (*Continued*).

Symbols	Attribute	Component		
		1	2	3
N5	Night market	0.776		
N6	Theater performances	0.783		
N7	Outdoor shows and activities	0.736		
N8	Night tour to tourist attractions	0.607		
N9	Rent a vehicle to get around (bicycle, cyclo, electric car...)	0.540		
U1	Street lights and lighting system		0.686	
U2	Public transportation (including buses, taxis, technology motorbike taxi...)		0.658	
U3	Banks, ATMs		0.681	
U4	Safe security		0.759	
U5	Convenience stores		0.675	
S1	Closing hours of shopping malls, stores...			0.586
S2	Closing hours of tourist attractions			0.578
S3	Health care and beauty services			0.733
S4	Sports activities			0.695
S5	Bar, karaoke, discotheque			0.602

Source: Authors.

Table A6. Rotated component matrix of Quang Ngai case.

Symbols	Attribute	Attribute		
		1	2	3
N1	Night landscape	0.774		
N2	Restaurants	0.828		
N3	Streets cuisine	0.791		
N4	Shopping area, commercial center	0.592		
N5	Night market	0.774		
N6	Theater performances	0.834		
N7	Outdoor shows and activities	0.877		
N8	Night tour to tourist attractions	0.849		
N9	Rent a vehicle to get around (bicycle, cyclo, electric car...)	0.748		
U1	Street lights and lighting system		0.795	
U2	Public transportation (including buses, taxis, technology motorbike taxi...)		0.724	
U3	Banks, ATMs		0.787	
U4	Safe security		0.721	
U5	Convenience stores		0.727	
S1	Closing hours of shopping malls, stores...			0.622
S2	Closing hours of tourist attractions			0.568
S3	Health care and beauty services			0.827
S4	Sports activities			0.894
S5	Bar, karaoke, discotheque			0.708

Source: Authors.