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SMART TOURISM TECHNOLOGY AND REVISIT INTENTION: A PUSH–PULL MOTIVATION PERSPECTIVE WITH EVIDENCE FROM THE EASTERN COASTAL REGION OF THE MEKONG DELTA, VIETNAM

TECNOLOGIA DE TURISMO INTELIGENTE E INTENÇÃO DE RETORNO: UMA PERSPECTIVA DE MOTIVAÇÃO PUSH–PULL COM EVIDÊNCIAS DA REGIÃO COSTEIRA ORIENTAL DO DELTA DO MEKONG, VIETNÃ

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Abstract
This study examines the impact of smart tourism technologies (STTs) on tourists' revisit intention within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, where travel motivations (push and pull) and experience quality represent internal psychological states, and revisit intention reflects the behavioral response. Data were collected from 600 domestic tourists visiting coastal destinations in the eastern coastal region of the Mekong Delta and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The findings indicate that STTs have a positive and significant effect on both push and pull motivations, which in turn enhance perceived experience quality and subsequently lead to stronger revisit intention. Moreover, the results support a sequential mediation mechanism, suggesting that the influence of STTs on behavioral intention is largely transmitted through motivational and experiential processes. By integrating the push–pull motivation framework into the SOR model, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how technological factors shape tourist behavior. The findings also offer practical implications for destination managers and policymakers in designing smart tourism strategies that enhance visitor experiences and promote repeat visitation.

Resumo
Este estudo examina o impacto das tecnologias de turismo inteligente (TTIs) na intenção de revisita dos turistas, à luz do modelo Estímulo–Organismo–Resposta (EOR), no qual as motivações de viagem (push e pull) e a qualidade da experiência são concebidas como estados psicológicos internos, enquanto a intenção de revisita representa a resposta comportamental. Os dados foram coletados junto a 600 turistas domésticos que visitaram destinos costeiros na porção oriental do Delta do Mekong e analisados por meio de modelagem de equações estruturais. Os resultados indicam que as TTIs exercem efeitos positivos e estatisticamente significativos sobre as motivações push e pull, as quais, por sua vez, elevam a qualidade percebida da experiência e, consequentemente, a intenção de revisita. Ademais, os achados evidenciam um mecanismo de mediação sequencial, sugerindo que a influência das TTIs sobre a intenção comportamental é predominantemente mediada por processos motivacionais e experienciais. Ao integrar a abordagem de motivações push–pull ao modelo EOR, este estudo oferece uma compreensão mais abrangente de como fatores tecnológicos moldam o comportamento do turista, além de fornecer implicações práticas para gestores de destinos e formuladores de políticas na elaboração de estratégias de turismo

Keywords: Smart Tourism Technology. Travel Motivation. Experience Quality. Revisit Intention.

inteligente voltadas ao aprimoramento da experiência do visitante e ao estímulo à revisitação.

Palavras-chave: *Tecnologia de Turismo Inteligente. Motivação de Viagem. Qualidade da Experiência. Intenção de Retorno.*

1 INTRODUCTION

The Mekong Delta, also known as the Mekong River Delta, covers an area of 40,577.6 km² and has a population of approximately 17 million (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2024). The region has significant tourism potential, attracting millions of domestic and international visitors annually. The provinces of Tiền Giang, Bến Tre, Vĩnh Long, and Trà Vinh (formerly; now consolidated into Vĩnh Long Province and part of Đồng Tháp Province) in the eastern coastal region of the Mekong Delta offer diverse tourism products, including river-based tourism, fruit garden visits, traditional craft villages, historical sites, and homestay experiences. Despite these advantages, tourism development in the area has not fully realized its potential; local tourism products remain relatively homogeneous, lack innovation, and fail to provide unique experiences, resulting in short stays and low revisit rates (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2022). In this context, attracting repeat visitors is crucial, as this segment tends to stay longer, spend more, exhibit higher satisfaction, and help reduce destination marketing costs (Lehto *et al*., 2004; Zhang *et al*., 2018).

Revisit intention has been widely recognized as a central construct in tourism research (Li *et al*., 2018), with prior studies primarily seeking to identify its key antecedents. These antecedents vary across contexts but generally encompass perceived value (Chen & Lu, 2013; Bajs, 2013), travel motivation and satisfaction (He & Luo, 2020), experience quality (Suhartanto *et al*., 2020), and country image (Ayoub & Mohamed, 2024), as well as core destination attributes such as accommodation, gastronomy, and service quality (Barros & Assaf, 2012). In addition, contextual factors, including safety, accessibility, cultural differences, destination image, and perceived risk, have been shown to exert significant influence (Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Nguyen Viet *et al*., 2020). Beyond these factors, psychological and behavioral constructs, such as

attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, together with emerging technological applications, play an increasingly important role in shaping revisit intention (Meng & Cui, 2020; Chung *et al*., 2015). Nevertheless, existing research also highlights several constraints, such as time limitations, convenience, and destination attractiveness, that may hinder tourists' intention to return (Prentice & Hsiao, 2021).

In the digital era, STTs play a pivotal role in shaping tourists' attitudes and behaviors by enabling functions such as destination information search, service location, online payment, and travel navigation (Jeong & Shin, 2019; Yoo *et al*., 2017). Tourists engage with STTs throughout the travel journey, from trip planning to on-site experiences, thereby reducing preparation time and alleviating pre-travel anxiety (Huang *et al*., 2017; Goo *et al*., 2022). In addition, STTs facilitate service booking and online transactions, contributing to higher satisfaction, enhanced experience quality, positive emotions, and more memorable travel experiences (Jeong & Shin, 2019; Zhang *et al*., 2022; Lee *et al*., 2018; Yoo *et al*., 2017; Yaghmour, 2024). Consequently, STTs foster favorable destination perceptions, strengthen revisit intention, and promote tourist loyalty, particularly through attributes such as accessibility, informativeness, interactivity, and personalization (Matyusupov *et al*., 2025; Torabi *et al*., 2023; Anjum & Ali, 2025; Azis *et al*., 2020; Balakrishnan *et al*., 2023). Collectively, these findings indicate that STTs are not merely functional tools but also serve as salient stimuli that shape tourists' cognitive and affective responses.

Despite the growing body of research, existing studies provide a fragmented understanding of how STTs influence tourist behavior, as prior work has largely examined their effects on satisfaction, experience, or behavioral intentions in isolation, with limited attention to the underlying mechanisms operating through internal psychological states, particularly travel motivation. Consequently, the combined role of motivational and experiential processes in shaping revisit intention remains insufficiently explored, especially in emerging tourism contexts such as the eastern coastal region of the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, where smart tourism is still at an early stage of development. To address these limitations, this study conceptualizes smart tourism technologies as a key stimulus influencing both travel motivation and experience quality, thereby offering a more comprehensive explanation of revisit intention in the digital tourism context. Building on this perspective, the study develops an integrated framework that explains

how smart tourism technologies shape revisit intention through both motivational and experiential pathways.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in an integrated theoretical framework that combines three major perspectives: the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). This integrative approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how smart tourism technologies (STTs) influence tourists' motivations, experience quality (QE), and behavioral intentions (RI).

Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model: The S-O-R model, originally proposed by Mehrabian & Russell (1974), explains how environmental stimuli influence individuals' internal states, which in turn drive behavioral responses. In tourism research, stimuli refer to external factors such as technological features or service attributes, the organism represents internal cognitive and affective states, and the response reflects behavioral outcomes such as revisit intention. In this study, STTs are conceptualized as primary stimuli, offering features such as interactivity, personalization, and digital experiences that shape tourists' internal evaluations (Xiong *et al*., 2023). The organism encompasses travel motivations (push and pull) and experience quality, which mediate the relationship between technological stimuli and behavioral outcomes (Muhamad *et al*., 2022; Chen *et al*., 2021). The response is defined as tourists' revisit intention. Thus, the S-O-R framework explains the pathway from STTs to tourists' internal states and subsequent behavioral responses (Moon & Han, 2018).

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM): ELM provides a theoretical basis for explaining how individuals process information and form evaluative judgments (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The model distinguishes between two information processing routes: a central route, which involves deliberate and effortful cognitive evaluation, and a peripheral route, which relies on heuristic cues and limited cognitive effort. In the tourism context, ELM explains how tourists process and evaluate technology-related cues

embedded in STTs. These evaluative processes influence internal psychological states, particularly travel motivation and perceived experience quality. Therefore, ELM offers a relevant framework for understanding how technology-driven stimuli affect tourist responses through cognitive mechanisms (Balakrishnan *et al*., 2023).

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA): TRA posits that behavioral intention is the most immediate antecedent of actual behavior and is determined by attitudes and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In tourism research, TRA has been widely employed to explain revisit intention and technology-related behaviors. In this study, revisit intention is conceptualized as a reasoned outcome of tourists' internal evaluations, particularly travel motivation and perceived experience quality. Accordingly, TRA provides a theoretical basis for explaining how these internal states are translated into behavioral intention (Moon & Han, 2018).

2.2 Relationships among key constructs

2.2.1 Smart tourism technology (STTs)

STTs encompass online tourism applications and databases, including online travel agencies, personal blogs, public and corporate websites, social media, smartphones, and mobile applications, which can be utilized at any stage of a trip (Huang *et al*., 2017). STTs possess four key attributes: information quality, accessibility, interactivity, and personalization (Azis *et al*., 2020; Torabi *et al*., 2023; Balakrishnan *et al*., 2023; Anjum & Ali, 2025). These attributes not only enhance the usability and perceived usefulness of STTs but also influence tourists' attitudes and behavioral intentions. Information quality reflects the accuracy, reliability, and overall quality of information at destinations, directly affecting tourists' evaluation of the technology (Huang *et al*., 2017). Accessibility indicates the ease with which tourists can obtain and use information, determining the availability of STTs at destinations (Pai *et al*., 2020). Interactivity refers to the capacity of STTs to provide real-time feedback and facilitate active communication, thereby encouraging engagement through behaviors such as bookings, comments, and reviews (Huang *et al*., 2017). Finally, personalization allows STTs to deliver information tailored to individual preferences, needs, and past behaviors, often based on big data or cloud

computing (Jeong & Shin, 2019). Collectively, these attributes support effective decision-making, enhance experience quality, and positively influence tourists' attitudes and behavioral intentions.

2.2.2 Travel motivation (TM)

Motivation is a fundamental concept in human behavior and plays a critical role in tourists' decision-making when selecting travel destinations (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Lee *et al*., 2004). It not only shapes tourists' preferences and expectations but also explains why individuals engage in specific tourism activities (Gnoth, 1997). Given the diversity and complexity of travel motivations, scholars have developed multiple theoretical frameworks to classify and explain these driving factors. Among them, the push–pull model is widely accepted, distinguishing between internal forces that drive individuals to travel **(**push motivation**)** and destination-specific attributes that attract tourists (pull motivation). Dann (1972) first introduced this framework, while Crompton (1979) expanded it by categorizing tourist motivations into nine main groups: escape from a mundane environment, self-exploration and evaluation, relaxation, prestige, regression, strengthening familial ties, facilitating social interaction, and two cultural substitute factors: novelty and education. This framework provides a clear understanding of how internal motives and destination attributes shape tourist behavior and destination choice.

Within the push–pull framework, push motivation refers to internal forces, often conceptualized as socio-psychological needs or intrinsic factors, reflecting the desire to escape familiar environments and daily routines while seeking relaxation and psychological rejuvenation. In contrast, pull motivation includes destination-specific attributes that attract tourists, such as accessibility, natural resources, cultural and historical heritage, amenities, and recreational opportunities (Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Mohammad & Som, 2010). Both push and pull motivations play a critical role in guiding tourist behavior, from activating internal needs to enhancing the attractiveness of destinations, ultimately influencing destination choice and travel experiences (Jang *et al*., 2009).

Destination information plays a fundamental role in shaping tourists' travel motivation (Llodra-Riera, *et al*., 2015). In the context of digitalization, STTs enable

tourists to access, process, and share information more effectively through enhanced connectivity, interactivity, and personalization (Huang *et al*., 2017). These capabilities not only provide reliable information but also stimulate positive emotions and increase the desire to travel, thereby strengthening tourists' push motivation (Stiff & Mongeau, 2016). In addition, digital content such as social media videos allows tourists to mentally simulate destination experiences, contributing to the formation of both cognitive and affective destination images and influencing future behavioral intentions (Ghorbanzadeh *et al*., 2024). Furthermore, STTs enhance tourists' perceptions of destination attributes, including resources, services, and experiential offerings, which in turn foster a favorable destination image and reinforce trust (Tavitiyaman *et al*., 2021; Xia *et al*., 2017; Ghorbanzadeh *et al*., 2024; Matyusupov *et al*. 2025). These factors increase the overall attractiveness of the destination and contribute to the development of tourists' pull motivation.Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: STTs positively affect tourists' push motivation

H1b: STTs positively affect tourists' pull motivation

2.2.3 Experence quality (QE)

QE is rooted in service quality (Zeithaml, 1988) and is shaped by individuals' emotional responses during interactions with service providers (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). While service quality primarily reflects technical and functional aspects of service delivery, QE emphasizes subjective perceptions, emotional reactions, and the personal value derived from engaging with the service (Chang & Horng, 2010). The concept of experience is broader than the specific nature of benefits and is more symbolic than functional, with psychological and emotional responses not necessarily grounded in cognition or attitudes (Chen & Chen, 2010). In tourism, QE represents tourists' affective responses to the psychological and social benefits they seek, formed through personal interactions with events or experiences at the destination (Chen & Chen, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Importantly, QE extends beyond mere satisfaction, constituting a deep psychological reaction to the consumption process and reflecting individuals' subjective evaluation of multiple service dimensions (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

The relationship between STTs and tourists' QE has been widely supported by empirical research. STTs enhance tourist experiences by providing reliable information, enabling interaction, and improving access to services at destinations, thereby reducing uncertainty and encouraging greater engagement in tourism activities (Azis *et al*., 2020; Sustacha *et al*., 2023; Torabi *et al*., 2023). These technological attributes have been shown to significantly influence how tourists perceive and evaluate their experiences across different contexts (Zheng & Wu, 2023). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_2: STTs positively affects QE

The relationship between push and pull motivations and tourists' QE has been widely supported by empirical studies. For instance, Mutanga *et al*. (2017), in their study of wildlife tourism in Zimbabwe, found that both push and pull motivations significantly influence QE. Similarly, Moon & Han (2018) highlighted that push and pull motivations play a crucial role in enhancing tourists' QE. Based on these theoretical and empirical foundations, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{3a}: Push motivation positively affects QE

H_{3b}: Pull motivation positively affects QE

2.2.4 Revisit intention (RI)

RI has been widely recognized as a central construct in tourism research (Li *et al*., 2018). Prior studies indicate that repeat visitors tend to exhibit more favorable behavioral and economic outcomes, including longer stays, higher levels of consumption, greater satisfaction, and stronger positive word-of-mouth, while incurring lower marketing costs compared to first-time visitors (Lehto *et al*., 2004; Zhang *et al*., 2018). Grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1991), behavioral intention is generally regarded as the most immediate antecedent of actual behavior. From a consumer behavior perspective, RI can be conceptualized as a post-consumption behavioral response (Cole & Scott, 2004), reflecting tourists' propensity to revisit or repeat their experiences over time ((Baker & Crompton, 2000). Moreover, this construct encompasses not only behavioral intention but also affective evaluations and willingness to recommend the destination, thereby

serving as a reliable proxy for tourist loyalty in destination marketing research (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Khasawneh & Alfandi, 2019).

The relationship between QE and RI has been well established in prior research (Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Ghorbanzadeh, *et al*., 2020; Wang & Li, 2023). For example, Chen & Chen (2010) found that QE positively influenced RI at heritage tourism sites in Taiwan, and Maulina *et al*. (2023) reported a similar positive effect at heritage destinations in Indonesia. Based on these theoretical and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_4: QE has a positive effect on RI

The relationship between push–pull motivations and RI has been widely documented. Yoon & Uysal (2005) examined tourist motivations in Northern Cyprus and found that both push and pull motivations positively influenced tourists' RI. Similarly, He & Luo (2020) reported positive effects of push and pull motivations on RI among skiers in Urumqi, China. Likewise, Bayih & Singh (2020) confirmed the positive influence of both push and pull motivations on tourists' RI. Based on these theoretical and empirical findings, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H_{5a}: Push motivation positively affects RI

H_{5b}: Pull motivation positively affects RI

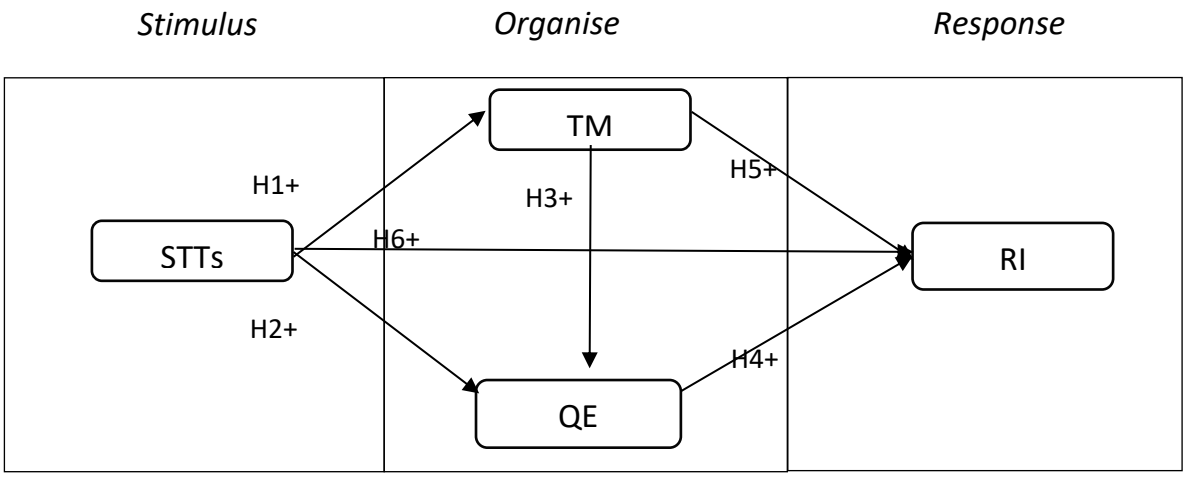
STTs are increasingly recognized as a critical factor in shaping tourists' behavior at destinations (Jeong & Shin, 2019; Um & Chung, 2019). The convenience, accessibility, and interactivity provided by STTs not only enhance the overall tourist experience but also encourage participation in on-site activities, thereby influencing tourists' RI. Previous studies have shown that attributes of STTs, such as informativeness, accessibility, and experience personalization, positively affect tourists' RI. Specifically, Zhang *et al*. (2022) found that STTs increased satisfaction and RI at the Liangzhu Museum in China. Similarly, Ng *et al*. (2023) reported that the informativeness of STTs strongly influenced tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty. Moreover, Mitala *et al*. (2022) observed that convenience, interactivity, and personalization provided by STTs significantly enhanced RI among Millennials in Greece. Based on these theoretical and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_6: STTs positively affects RI

2.3 Research model

This study adopts a conceptual framework grounded in the S-O-R model, integrating insights from information processing and behavioral theories to examine revisit intention in the context of smart tourism. Specifically, STTs function as the stimulus (S), influencing tourists' internal states (O), including TM and EQ. These internal states subsequently shape the behavioral response (R), reflected in revisit intention. In addition, the ELM explains the cognitive processes through which tourists evaluate and interpret STTs, while TRA describes how such evaluations are translated into behavioral intentions. By integrating these perspectives, the proposed model offers a comprehensive understanding of the key drivers of decision-making in smart tourism environments.

Figure 1



3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study adopts an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative phase was conducted to refine the research model and measurement scales, while the subsequent quantitative phase was employed to test the proposed hypotheses using survey data.

3.2 Qualitative phase

Preliminary qualitative and quantitative procedures were undertaken to ensure the content validity and contextual appropriateness of the measurement scales. In the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with tourism experts and managers from tourism-related service firms, complemented by focus group discussions with tourists to capture diverse perspectives. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Insights from the qualitative analysis informed the refinement and adaptation of measurement items, which subsequently served as the basis for preliminary quantitative assessment.

Building on these results, travel motivation was conceptualized as comprising push and pull dimensions. These constructs were operationalized using measurement items adapted from prior studies to ensure content validity and contextual relevance. In addition, STTs, QE, and RI were measured using established scales. The initial measurement pool consisted of 51 items, which were administered in the main survey and subsequently subjected to further validation and refinement.

3.3 Measurement instrument

The survey instrument was designed for domestic tourists aged 18 and above and comprised sections capturing travel characteristics, key study constructs, and demographic information. Measurement items for all constructs were adapted from established scales in prior studies and refined through preliminary analysis. All items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Detailed measurement items and sources are reported in the Appendix.

3.4 Quantitative phase and data collection

The quantitative phase employed a cross-sectional survey design and Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) to test the proposed model. Following Hair *et al*. (2019), the minimum sample size for CB-SEM is recommended to be at least five to ten times the number of observed variables. With 51 observed variables, the required sample size ranged from 255 to 510 responses.

Data were collected from domestic tourists at key destinations in the coastal region of the Mekong Delta using a quota sampling approach to ensure representation across major tourist segments. The data collection period spanned from October 2024 to May 2025, covering the peak tourism season to capture variations in tourist behavior. Of the 795 questionnaires distributed, 600 valid responses were retained for analysis.

3.5 Data analysis techniques

Data analysis followed a multi-step approach. First, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Next, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the measurement items and to eliminate items with low factor loadings or cross-loadings (Hair *et al*., 2019).

Subsequently, the measurement model was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess construct reliability and validity. Composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to evaluate convergent validity, while discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Finally, the structural model was examined to test the hypothesized relationships. Path coefficients and their statistical significance were assessed using bootstrapping with 1,000 resamples. Model fit was evaluated using indices such as Chi-square/df, CFI, GFI, TLI, and RMSEA (Hair *et al*., 2019).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive analysis

A total of 600 domestic tourists from the eastern coastal region of the Mekong Delta were surveyed. The sample comprised 52.5% females and 47.5% males. Regarding marital status, 238 respondents (39.7%) were single, while 362 (60.3%) were married. In terms of age, 148 participants (24.7%) were between 18 and 29 years old, 179 (29.8%) were 30–39, 107 (17.8%) were 40–49, and 166 (27.7%) were 50 or older. With respect to educational attainment, the majority had a university degree or higher (321 respondents, 53.5%), while 279 (46.5%) had not completed university. Regarding occupation, 299 respondents (49.8%) worked in office-based or business roles, whereas 301 (50.2%) were employed in manual labor or other occupations.

4.2 Reliability analysis

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient test results

Concepts	**Symbol**	**Items**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Smart tourism technology	STTs	8	.889
Push motivation			
Novelty seeking	NS	3	.758
Prestige seeking	PS	3	.755
Social and family relationships	SFR	3	.808
Knowledge enhancement	KE	4	.801
Relax	RE	3	.831
Pull motivation			
Accessibility	ACC	4	.817
Service quality	SQ	4	.827
Culture	CUL	4	.825
Attraction diversity	AD	5	.844
Experence quality	QE	4	.842
Revisit intention	RI	5	.871

As shown in Table 1, the reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Among the 51 observed variables, most items met the recommended criteria, with item–total correlations above 0.30 and alpha values exceeding 0.60 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). However, Pull16 (availability of outdoor activities)

showed a relatively low item–total correlation (0.408), and its removal increased the alpha from 0.799 to 0.810, indicating limited contribution to internal consistency. Therefore, this item was excluded, resulting in an improved alpha of 0.844 for the "diversity of attractions" construct. The remaining items were retained for subsequent exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results in Table 2, clarified using Promax rotation, extracted 12 factors with eigenvalues ≥ 1.071, explaining 66.70% of the variance, and all factor loadings ranged from 0.540 to 0.878, exceeding the 0.50 threshold. The data were suitable for factor analysis, as indicated by a KMO of 0.91 and a significant Bartlett's test (Chi-square = 14,701.20, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2

Mean, Reliability Test, and Exploratory factor analysis

	Component											
	STTs	RI	AD	SQ	KE	ACC	CUL	RE	SFR	QE	PS	NS
STT5	.760											
STT4	.749											
STT3	.720											
STT8	.716											
STT7	.706											
STT2	.687											
STT6	.663											
STT1	.652											
RI4		.821										
RI5		.807										
RI3		.771										
RI2		.706										
RI1		.540										
Pull14			.786									
Pull13			.732									
Pull15			.723									
Pull17			.703									
Pull18			.629									
Pull6				.741								
Pull8				.737								
Pull7				.726								
Pull5				.660								
Push12					.761							
Push11					.719							
Push10					.645							
Push13					.633							
Pull3						.783						
Pull2						.722						
Pull1						.707						
Pull4						.680						

Pull11							.878					
Pull10							.657					
Pull9							.656					
Pull12							.655					
Push16								.808				
Push14								.802				
Push15								.699				
Push8									.787			
Push9									.780			
Push7									.704			
EQ1										.809		
EQ2										.804		
EQ3										.656		
EQ4										.564		
Push5											.704	
Push6											.687	
Push4											.614	
Push2												.756
Push3												.658
Push1												.630
Eigenvalue	13.242	3.254	2.663	2.187	2.093	1.870	1.708	1.557	1.401	1.180	1.126	1.071
% of variance	25.629	5.600	4.467	3.505	3.356	2.861	2.549	2.314	1.927	1.529	1.427	1.278
Cumulative %	25.629	31.229	35.696	39.201	42.557	45.967	47.967	50.281	52.208	53.737	55.146	56.442
KMO		.920										
Bartlett's Test	Chi^2	14701.200										
	df	1225										
	Sig	.000										

4.3 Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted for all constructs in the research model. The results indicate that the measurement model achieved an acceptable fit, with a Chi-square value of 2114.566 (df = 1,109, $p < 0.001$). The normed Chi-square (CMIN/df = 1.907) was below the recommended threshold of 3 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980), while the RMSEA value of 0.039 indicated a good model fit (Steiger, 1980). In addition, the incremental fit indices, including TLI = 0.920, GFI = 0.878, and CFI = 0.928, further confirm the adequacy of the measurement model.

CFA was also employed to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs, including unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. As shown in Table 3, all constructs demonstrate satisfactory reliability, with composite reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.70 and average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. These results confirm adequate internal consistency and convergent validity in accordance with established criteria (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Evidence of

discriminant validity is also supported by the comparison between the square root of AVE and inter-construct correlations, as well as MSV values being lower than AVE values.

Table 3:

Construct Validity

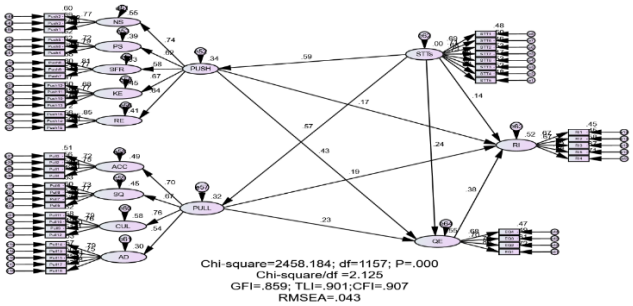
	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR (H)	STTs	RI	AD	SQ	KE	ACC	CUL	RE	SFR	QE	PS	NS
STTs	0.889	0.501	0.353	0.890	**0.708**											
RI	0.872	0.579	0.463	0.885	0.555***	**0.761**										
AD	0.845	0.522	0.204	0.850	0.300***	0.354***	**0.723**									
SQ	0.829	0.548	0.282	0.830	0.354***	0.444***	0.322***	**0.740**								
KE	0.801	0.503	0.271	0.804	0.372***	0.420***	0.385***	0.409***	**0.709**							
ACC	0.817	0.527	0.283	0.818	0.326***	0.419***	0.364***	0.510***	0.436***	**0.726**						
CUL	0.829	0.549	0.283	0.833	0.436***	0.439***	0.433***	0.499***	0.339***	0.532***	**0.741**					
RE	0.835	0.628	0.290	0.839	0.356***	0.333***	0.198***	0.350***	0.368***	0.380***	0.397***	**0.793**				
SFR	0.810	0.587	0.271	0.815	0.280***	0.411***	0.452***	0.266***	0.521***	0.379***	0.403***	0.294***	**0.766**			
QE	0.846	0.581	0.463	0.863	0.594***	0.681***	0.418***	0.394***	0.485***	0.467***	0.456***	0.442***	0.429***	**0.762**		
PS	0.757	0.511	0.252	0.768	0.354***	0.408***	0.348***	0.362***	0.338***	0.352***	0.377***	0.502***	0.451***	0.353***	**0.715**	
NS	0.760	0.516	0.327	0.772	0.421***	0.496***	0.280***	0.531***	0.501***	0.476***	0.401***	0.539***	0.314***	0.572***	0.432***	**0.718**

4.4 Structural model results

Results in Figure 2 indicate that the model yields Chi-square = 2458.184 with df = 1157, resulting in Chi-square/df = 2.125 and $p < 0.05$. Given the relatively large sample size (n = 600), the chi-square statistic is likely to be significant even when model fit is acceptable. Therefore, additional fit indices were considered. The values of TLI = 0.901, GFI = 0.869, CFI = 0.907, and RMSEA = 0.043 all meet the recommended thresholds, indicating that the model exhibits a good fit to the data.

Figure 2

Results of test for model



Notes: Chi-square/df < 3 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004); TLI ≥ 0.90 and CFI ≥ 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999); RMSEA ≤ 0.08 (Hair *et al*., 2019)

Results of testing hypotheses of model

Table 4

Results of hypotheses testing

			Estimate (Unstandardized)	Estimate (Standardized)	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
PUSH	<---	STTs	.463	.586	.049	9.465	***	Accepted H1a
PULL	<---	STTs	.352	.569	.040	8.833	***	Accepted H1b
QE	<---	PULL	.454	.230	.111	4.107	***	Accepted H3b
QE	<---	PUSH	.662	.429	.096	6.894	***	Accepted H3a
QE	<---	STTs	.293	.240	.075	3.879	***	Accepted H2
RI	<---	PUSH	.279	.166	.107	2.602	.009	Accepted H5a
RI	<---	PULL	.407	.189	.122	3.329	***	Accepted H5b
RI	<---	STTs	.186	.140	.079	2.366	.018	Accepted H6
RI	<---	QE	.413	.378	.070	5.927	***	Accepted H4

The results in Table 4 show that all proposed hypotheses are statistically supported at the 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

4.5 Mediation analysis

Mediation analysis using bootstrapping shows that STTs influence RI indirectly through TM and experiential mechanisms. The indirect effect via push motivation was marginally significant in the full model ($\beta = 0.097$, $p = 0.056$) but reached significance when analyzed separately, confirming that push motivation partially mediates the STTs to RI relationship. Pull motivation also mediates this relationship ($\beta = 0.107$, $p < 0.01$), while QE significantly mediates the effects of both motivational constructs on RI ($\beta = 0.091$, $p < 0.01$). Sequential mediation is observed through push motivation and QE ($\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.01$) and through pull motivation and QE ($\beta = 0.131$, $p < 0.01$). These results support partial and sequential mediation, highlighting that in complex multi-mediator models, shared variance among paths can reduce the apparent significance of individual indirect effects, a common feature of structural models with multiple mediators.

Table 5

Standardized indirect and direct effects

Relationship	Standardized estimate (β)	P-Value	Significance
STTs --> PUSH --> QE	0.252***	0.001	**
STTs --> PUSH --> QE --> RI	0.252***	0.001	**
STTs --> PUSH --> RI	0.097†	0.056	† marginal
STTs --> PULL --> QE	0.131**	0.004	**
STTs --> PULL --> QE --> RI	0.131**	0.004	**
STTs --> PULL --> RI	0.107**	0.006	**
STTs --> QE --> RI	0.091**	0.009	**
PULL --> QE --> RI	0.087**	0.004	**
PUSH --> QE --> RI	0.162***	0.001	**

Notes:† marginally significant ($p < 0.1$); ** significant ($p < 0.01$); *** significant ($p < 0.001$)

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Discussion

Grounded in the S-O-R framework, the findings indicate that smart tourism technologies serve as key stimuli, significantly enhancing push ($\beta = 0.586$, $p < 0.001$) and pull motivations ($\beta = 0.569$, $p < 0.001$) as well as RI ($\beta = 0.240$, $p < 0.001$). STTs also exert a direct positive effect on RI ($\beta = 0.140$, $p = 0.018$). Both motivational constructs and QE positively influence RI ($\beta = 0.166–0.378$, $p \leq 0.009$). These results confirm that STTs act not only as functional tools but also as stimuli that drive internal motivational and experiential processes, ultimately promoting tourists' RI.

Mediation analysis further confirms that STTs affect RI indirectly through sequential pathways. Push motivation mediates the impact of STTs on RI ($\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn enhances RI. Pull motivation similarly influences QE ($\beta = 0.131$, $p = 0.004$) and indirectly affects RI ($\beta = 0.107$, $p = 0.006$). QE alone also mediates the

effects of both motivational constructs on RI ($\beta = 0.087–0.162$, $p \leq 0.004$), supporting partial and sequential mediation consistent with the S-O-R framework.

5.2 Theoretical implications

This study extends the S–O–R framework by demonstrating that STTs influence tourists' internal motivational states and experiential processes, which in turn shape RI. Specifically, push and pull motivations function as mediators, providing a more nuanced understanding of technology-driven tourist behavior. The findings also highlight the sequential role of QE, thereby enriching the explanatory power of the S–O–R model in the context of smart tourism.

5.3 Managerial implications

From a practical perspective, destination managers should strategically design and implement STTs to stimulate both intrinsic (push) and extrinsic (pull) travel motivations. Specifically, STTs should be developed to support tourists' psychological needs, such as escape, relaxation, and self-exploration, through personalized recommendations, immersive digital content, and real-time assistance. At the same time, these technologies should effectively highlight destination-specific attributes, including accessibility, natural and cultural resources, and recreational opportunities, thereby strengthening pull motivations. By aligning technological features with both motivational dimensions, destinations can enhance QE and RI.

In addition, the findings underscore the critical role of QE as a mediating mechanism. Therefore, destination managers should prioritize the design of seamless, user-friendly, and engaging digital experiences across the entire tourist journey, from pre-visit planning to on-site interaction and post-visit engagement. For instance, integrating mobile applications, interactive platforms, and smart information systems can improve convenience, reduce uncertainty, and foster emotional engagement, all of which contribute to higher perceived experience quality.

Furthermore, stakeholders are encouraged to adopt advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR),

and the Internet of Things (IoT), to enhance personalization, interactivity, and system responsiveness. These technologies enable real-time data collection and analysis, allowing service providers to deliver tailored recommendations and adaptive services that better match tourists' preferences and behaviors.

Finally, to effectively leverage STTs, it is essential for destinations to invest in technological infrastructure, skilled human resources, and data-driven management capabilities. Training programs should be implemented to enhance staff competencies in digital systems and customer engagement. Such investments are particularly important for emerging destinations, such as the eastern coastal provinces of the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, where the adoption of STTs can serve as a key driver of competitiveness and sustainable tourism development.

5.4 Limitations and future research

This study focuses on domestic tourists and relies on self-reported measures, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should include international tourists, examine more advanced applications of STTs, incorporate objective behavioral metrics, and explore potential moderating factors such as cultural, economic, and individual differences to enhance robustness and external validity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix1

Summary of the final measurement scales

Component	Notation	Observed variable	Source
Smart tourism technology (STTs)	STT1	Travel websites and applications provide useful information about destinations and trips	Um & Chung (2019)
	STT2	Travel websites and applications provide accurate information that helps me complete my trip	
	STT3	I can use travel websites and applications anytime and anywhere	
	STT4	Travel websites and applications are easy to access and operate reliably on my device	
	STT5	I can easily share content (e.g., travel information) on travel websites and applications	
	STT6	I can find many questions and answers from other users on travel websites and applications	
	STT7	I can interact with travel websites and applications to receive personalized information	
	STT8	The personalized information provided by travel websites and applications meets my need	
Push motivation (PUSH)			
Novelty seeking (NS)	Push1	Traveling to seek novel experiences	
	Push2	Traveling to feel excitement and thrill	
	Push3	Traveling to experience something different from daily liffe	
Prestige seeking (PS)	Push4	Traveling to places I have always dreamed of visiting	
	Push5	Traveling to destinations that are highly rated	
	Push6	Traveling to impress friends and relatives	
	Push7	Traveling to strengthen family bonds	

Social and family relationships (SFR)	Push8	Traveling to meet people with similar interests	
	Push9	Traveling to share experiences with others	
Knowledge enhancement (KE)	Push10	Traveling to experience the local cultural life of residents	
	Push11	Traveling to learn about regional culinary specialties	
	Push12	Traveling to visit historical and cultural sites	
	Push13	Traveling to explore the unique identity of each region	
Relaxation (RE)	Push14	Traveling to escape from daily routines	
	Push15	Traveling to release work pressure	
	Push16	Traveling to rest and relax mentally and physically	
Pull motivation (PULL)			
Accessibility (ACC)	Pull1	The destination has a convenient transportation system	Hanqin & Lam (1999); Yoon & Uysal (2005); Mohammad & Som (2010) in-depth interview
	Pull2	The trip to the destination is easy to organize and arrange	
	Pull3	The destination has a favorable geographic location	
	Pull4	The destination is easily accessible	
Service quality (SQ)	Pull5	Staff at the destination are courteous and friendly	
	Pull6	The quality of accommodation at the destination is good	
	Pull7	The quality of tourism services at the destination is good	
	Pull8	The destination is safe and secure for tourists	
Culture (CUL)	Pull9	The destination features many historical sites and cultural heritage	
	Pull10	The destination organizes numerous traditional folk festivals	
	Pull11	The destination provides diverse and rich local cuisine	
	Pull12	The destination showcases an attractive riverine cultural lifestyle	
Attraction diversity (AD)	Pull13	The destination offers a variety of attractive attractions	
	Pull14	The rural scenery and fruit orchards are appealing	
	Pull15	River-based tourism experiences attract tourists	
	Pull16	There are various outdoor activities (e.g., fishing, swimming, sightseeing)	
	Pull17	Traditional craft villages and handicraft products are unique	
	Pull18	There are numerous engaging recreational and entertainment activities	
Experience quality (QE)	EQ1	I had a positive experience during this trip	Otto & Ritchie (1996)
	EQ2	The experiences from this trip were truly memorable	
	EQ3	I found this trip very enjoyable	
	EQ4	I am satisfied with the overall experience of this trip	
Revisit intention (RI)	RI1	I will share positive things about this destination with others	Zeithaml *et al*. (1996)
	RI2	I will recommend this destination to others	
	RI3	I will encourage others to visit this destination	
	RI4	I will prioritize this destination for my next trip	
	RI5	I will revisit this destination in the future	

Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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