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## Determinants of Gen Z tourists' intention to participate in local food tours: A case study of Hai Phong, Vietnam

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### Abstract

This study aims to identify and evaluate the factors influencing Gen Z tourists' intention to participate in food tour experiences in Hai Phong, Vietnam, thereby proposing solutions to enhance experience quality and promote sustainable culinary tourism development. The study is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the 4E model, and insights from previous studies to formulate hypotheses regarding factors affecting Gen Z tourists' intention to engage in food tours. Key factors identified include convenience, trust, price, food safety and hygiene, food quality, service quality, and social media influence. A survey was conducted with 328 Gen Z tourists in Hai Phong, and data were analyzed using statistical methods to examine the relationship between these factors and the intention to participate in food tours. The results reveal that price has the greatest impact on Gen Z's intention to participate in local food tours, while advertising exerts the least influence. Additionally, food safety and hygiene challenges, convenience, and service quality are identified as key barriers to developing culinary tourism in Hai Phong. The study contributes to understanding the determinants of Gen Z tourists' intention to participate in food tours and offers insights into the specific challenges facing culinary tourism development in Hai Phong. The findings provide useful recommendations for businesses, restaurants, and tourism managers to enhance the quality of food tour experiences. Strategies include improving food safety and hygiene practices, ensuring service quality, and offering affordable and convenient options. Additionally, leveraging social media to build trust and promote culinary tourism is essential for sustainable tourism development and economic growth in Hai Phong, Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Advertising, Convenience, Food Quality, Food Safety and Hygiene, Food Tour, Sustainable Culinary Tourism, Trust, Price.

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**Transparency:** The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of VNU University of Economics and Business (Ref. No. 2428/QD-DHKT).

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## **1. Introduction**

In the context of the rapidly growing tourism industry in recent years, an increasing number of novel and unique travel experiences have captured the attention of many tourists, particularly the younger Gen Z generation [1, 2]. One of the prominent trends is culinary tourism, commonly referred to as a "food tour." A food tour is about enjoying food and experiencing each destination's unique history and culture [3]. According to estimates by the World Food Tourism Association (WFTA), 81% of international tourists are eager to explore local cuisine during their trips, with many willing to allocate 25–35% of their travel budgets to food and beverage-related activities (Report of WFTA). These statistics highlight that cuisine has evolved beyond simply fulfilling dietary needs to become one of the main motivators for travel, significantly influencing destination choices and increasing tourist spending. In the field of tourism studies, numerous discussions have emphasized that culinary experiences enhance the value of tourism [4, 5].

Vietnam has consistently been recognized as one of the countries with the richest culinary traditions globally, offering a variety of unique and diverse dishes [6]. Notably, culinary tourism in Hai Phong has made remarkable progress in recent years, positioning the city as a promising destination for developing food tours [7]. The Hai Phong Department of Tourism has significantly enhanced tourism products, innovated promotional campaigns, and capitalized on the region's strengths in islands and marine tourism, particularly through the promotion of Hai Phong food tours. As a result, Hai Phong tourism has seen a strong recovery post-COVID-19. In 2022, the city welcomed over 7 million visitors, marking an 89% increase compared to 2021 and surpassing the 2022 target by 55%; revenue reached 6,300 billion VND, a 98% rise compared to 2021 [8]. By September 2023, Hai Phong had welcomed nearly 5.6 million visitors, the majority of whom were young travelers [8].

Research on culinary tourism has garnered significant interest from both domestic and international scholars, reflecting the increasing importance of cuisine in enhancing travel experiences. Chavarria and Phakdee-Auksorn [9] evaluated factors affecting international tourists' intentions and satisfaction with street food in Phuket, Thailand, emphasizing that food quality and price were positive factors, while food safety was a major concern. Rousta and Jamshidi [10] explored core values in culinary tourism, showing that emotional value, price, and health significantly influence tourists' attitudes toward local cuisine. Levitt, et al. [11] and Chavarria and Phakdee-Auksorn [9] identified anticipated emotions and personal preferences as the most critical factors influencing the desire to experience culinary tourism. Similarly, [12] highlighted the importance of cultural aspects in attracting Chinese tourists to culinary experiences in Hong Kong, emphasizing the role of the surrounding environment and positive experiences. Su, et al. [13] and Kim, et al. [14] analyzed motivators for culinary tourism, identifying taste and the core appeal of a destination as significant factors attracting tourists.

In Vietnam, studies have focused on the unique characteristics of specific regions. Stutter [15] analyzed factors influencing international tourists' perceptions of street food in Hanoi, emphasizing the role of pricing and food diversity while pointing out limitations in vending spaces and food safety. The research by Van Hoang, et al. [16] on Hue cuisine highlighted food quality and perceived value as critical factors influencing tourist satisfaction. The results show that three factors positively affect domestic tourists' satisfaction with Hue cuisine, including food quality, perceived price, and tourists' motivation, with food quality having the greatest impact. Other studies have examined cultural factors, demographics, and the media's role in promoting culinary tourism. For example, Quan and Wang [17] and Mak, et al. [18] explained that food consumption in tourism can be either the peak touristic experience or the supporting consumer experience, depending on specific circumstances, while Kim, et al. [19] demonstrated that promotional videos have a positive impact on culinary tourism intentions, particularly among Generation Y. Kim, et al. [14] and Hall and Sharples [20] developed a model for local food consumption behavior, identifying motivators like enjoyable experiences and escaping routine as positive influences, while the fear of unfamiliar foods was a deterrent.

These studies collectively show that multiple factors - including food quality, price, food safety, cultural elements, environment, and media - strongly influence culinary tourism intentions and tourist satisfaction [5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 16, 21]. These factors drive culinary tourism participation and foster satisfaction and repeat visits. However, a notable research gap remains. Most existing studies focus on general tourists, while Gen Z - a potential tourist group characterized by a love for technology, novel experiences, and significant social media influence - has not been extensively studied. A deeper analysis of the relationship between travel motivations, social media sharing behavior, and cultural travel experiences for this generation is needed. Therefore, focusing on Gen Z within the context of culinary tourism will address theoretical gaps and provide practical insights for developing marketing strategies and tourism products.

This study aims to identify and analyze factors influencing Gen Z tourists' intentions to experience food tours in Hai Phong, Vietnam. The research will explore the psychological, social, and cultural motivations of Gen Z tourists in choosing Hai Phong as a culinary tourism destination. Factors include convenience, trust, price, hygiene and safety, food quality, service quality, and social media. The study aims to propose solutions to enhance tourist experiences and promote economic development through culinary tourism in Hai Phong.

The structure of this study is as follows: Section 2 provides a literature review, research model, and hypotheses; Section 3 describes the research design; Section 4 presents results and discussion; and the final section concludes with policy recommendations.

## **2. Theoretical Framework and Research Hypotheses**

### *2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Consumer Behavior*

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), developed by Fishbein and Ajzen [22], explains human behavior through attitudes and intentions. TRA posits that behavioral intention is the key determinant of actual behavior, influenced by personal

attitudes and social norms [23]. When applied to the study of food tours among Gen Z tourists, this theory helps clarify how personal attitudes and social factors shape the intention to participate. With its tendency to seek novel experiences, Gen Z is likely to be influenced by positive attitudes and community influence, increasing the likelihood of actual participation. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), introduced by Ajzen [24] expands TRA by incorporating perceived behavioral control, which refers to an individual's perceived ability to perform a behavior. TPB asserts that behavior is driven by intention, which is formed through three components: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [25]. In the context of Gen Z food tours, TPB suggests that the stronger their intention to participate, the more likely they are to act, particularly if they feel confident and perceive few barriers in terms of time, cost, or access to information. These components collectively shape the intention to engage in food tours.

The 4E Model, developed by Pine and Gilmore [26] describes four customer experiences: entertainment, education, escapism, and aesthetics. This model emphasizes the shift from product consumption to experience consumption, creating memorable customer experiences through active or passive participation [26]. When applied to the study of food tours for Gen Z, the 4E Model explains how this demographic engages with food tours through various types of experiences, valuing personalized activities that enhance satisfaction and the intention to participate.

The SERVQUAL model was developed by Parasuraman, et al. [27] and further refined in 1988. This model evaluates service quality through five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles [28]. In the context of the food tours, these factors can be measured through the accuracy of advertising information, staff willingness to assist, price transparency, and food safety. In addition, tangible factors such as restaurant space and supporting equipment also greatly affect the experience of Gen Z, who are particularly sensitive to appearance and convenience. The application of SERVQUAL not only helps analyze service quality but also contributes to identifying improvement measures to promote young tourists' intention to participate in food tours.

## 2.2. Proposed Model and Research Hypotheses

### 2.2.1. Convenience

Convenience plays a crucial role in influencing customer decisions, as it encompasses not only easy access to services but also the arrangement of time, location, and supportive factors that create a seamless experience [29, 30]. In the context of culinary tourism, convenience covers various dimensions, including the proximity of dining locations, flexible scheduling, and user-friendly payment methods. For food tours, ensuring convenient access allows customers to enjoy the experience without logistical hurdles. Sparks and Pan [31] emphasize that customers are drawn to experiences that are not only enriching but also simple and hassle-free to participate in. Location convenience, for instance, reduces time and transportation costs, particularly for those with tight schedules, enabling them to prioritize quick and accessible options [32]. For Gen Z tourists, convenience is especially appealing, as this demographic values flexibility and efficiency.

*Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>: Convenience positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.*

### 2.2.2. Trust

Trust plays a pivotal role in influencing customers' decisions to engage with services or products, particularly in culinary tourism. As highlighted by Levitt, et al. [11] trust in brands and endorsements from other consumers significantly shape individuals' intention to try new food experiences. In the specific context of food tours, trust in the quality, safety, and reputation of the brand ensures that customers feel secure and confident when participating [33]. Restaurants' commitments to food safety and service quality are key trust-building measures. Additionally, positive reviews from past customers, particularly influential figures or social media influencers, further enhance trust and drive Gen Z tourists' interest. Trust also fosters long-term relationships between businesses and customers, creating a loyal customer base that contributes to sustainable tourism development. In the competitive landscape of culinary tourism, establishing trust through transparency, consistent quality, and authentic experiences is essential for attracting and retaining Gen Z tourists [34, 35].

*Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>: Trust positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.*

### 2.2.3. Price

Price plays a pivotal role in shaping customers' decisions to engage with services, acting as a measure of the trade-off between cost and perceived value [29, 36]. For food tours, customers evaluate the price not only in monetary terms but also concerning the unique value offered, such as the chance to experience diverse local cuisines, cultural stories, and social interactions. A fair and transparent pricing strategy enhances the perceived value of the experience, making customers feel their spending is justified. Moreover, reasonable pricing that aligns with the quality of service increases customer satisfaction and trust, which are key factors in influencing intention and participation [10]. For Gen Z tourists, who often value affordability while seeking authentic experiences, an appropriate pricing strategy can significantly drive their intention to explore food tours in Hai Phong.

*Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>: Price positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.*

### 2.2.4. Hygiene and Safety

Food hygiene is a critical determinant of tourists' decisions to participate in culinary tours, as it directly impacts their health and overall experience [4, 13, 37] emphasize that perceptions of food hygiene and safety strongly shape consumer behavior in the food and beverage industry. This is especially important in food tours, where participants often sample dishes from various vendors and locations, increasing exposure to potential hygiene risks. Poor food safety practices can deter tourists, while venues adhering to high hygiene standards foster trust and confidence among customers [38]. For Gen Z

tourists, who are particularly health-conscious and highly influenced by social reviews, visible commitments to cleanliness and safety serve as key motivators to participate.

*Hypothesis H4: Hygiene and safety positively affect the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.*

2.2.5. Food Quality

Food quality is a pivotal factor shaping tourists' intention to engage in food tours, as it directly influences satisfaction and the overall experience [39]. Tourists seek unique dining venues and dishes that meet their expectations in terms of taste, freshness, and visual appeal. High-quality food enhances customer satisfaction, fosters positive word-of-mouth, and increases the likelihood of repeat participation [39]. For food tours, the allure lies in region-specific flavors that highlight local culinary traditions, diverse menu offerings, and meticulous presentation, which together create a memorable experience [9, 10]. Particularly for Gen Z, who are drawn to novelty and authenticity in food experiences, ensuring high standards of quality is essential.

*Hypothesis H5: Food quality positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.*

2.2.6. Service Quality

Service quality is a key determinant of customers' intention to participate in food tours, as it directly impacts their satisfaction and overall experience [40, 41] highlights that high-quality service builds customer satisfaction and fosters loyalty, encouraging repeat participation. In the context of culinary tours, service quality encompasses aspects such as staff professionalism, responsiveness, friendliness, and the ability to meet customers' needs. Positive interactions with service providers enhance tourists' emotions and attitudes, creating memorable experiences and increasing their willingness to engage in future tours [11, 12]. For Gen Z tourists, who highly value efficiency and personalized experiences, exceptional service quality is a crucial factor in shaping their intention to participate.

*Hypothesis H6: Service quality positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.*

2.2.7. Social Media

Social media plays a crucial role in influencing customers' intention to participate in food tours by acting as a powerful tool for promotion and engagement [42]. For culinary destinations, social media platforms showcase not only the dishes but also the ambiance, services, and cultural narratives of the locations, sparking curiosity and interest among potential tourists [2]. By delivering visually appealing content and compelling stories, social media builds awareness and fosters trust in the quality of the food and services offered. Positive reviews, testimonials, and engaging experiences shared by previous customers, especially influencers, further enhance credibility. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are particularly effective in capturing the attention of Gen Z tourists, who are highly active on these networks [19, 43].

*Hypothesis H7: Social media positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.*

Based on the models and studies from domestic and international research, the proposed research model is as follows (Figure 1):

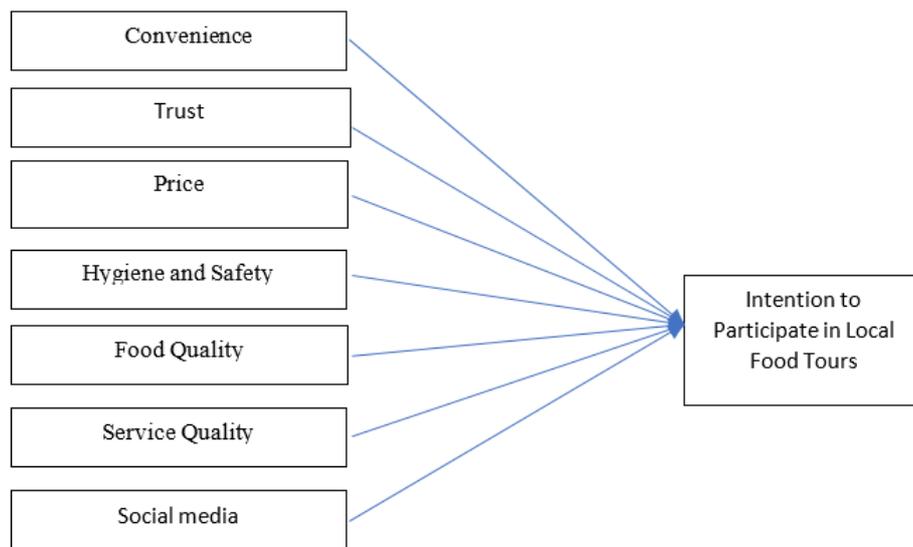


Figure 1. Proposed research model.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Scale development

This study uses measurement scales inherited from theoretical models of consumer behavior, along with previously published research models both domestically and internationally. The scales were referenced from international studies, then

translated into Vietnamese and discussed with a group of six lecturers at the Vietnam National University, Hanoi. To ensure clarity and appropriateness, the scales were refined after a pilot interview with five consumers. The result was that the number of proposed scales remained unchanged, with only some adjustments made to the Vietnamese language to ensure better understanding. Table 1 presents the official measurement scales of the study in detail (Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
Scale Table.

Items	Variable	References
<b>Convenience</b>		
TT1	I find traveling to Hai Phong simple, quick, and convenient.	Sparks and Pan [31] and Reimers and Clulow [32]
TT2	I find traveling between restaurants simple, quick, and convenient	
TT3	I can easily find information about delicious and famous restaurants in Hai Phong	
TT4	I can easily book a table, order food, and pay via mobile devices.	
<b>Trust</b>		
NT1	I trust the advertising information about Hai Phong cuisine.	Shafieizadeh, et al. [34] and Liu, et al. [35]
NT2	I trust the reviews of other travellers who have participated in the Hai Phong food tour experience.	
NT3	I trust the transparency of prices and service quality of restaurants in Hai Phong.	
NT4	I trust that restaurants are safe and hygienic.	
<b>Price</b>		
GC1	I find the food prices cheap, suitable for the quality.	Kaura, et al. [29]; Kumar, et al. [36], and Rousta and Jamshidi [10]
GC2	I find the food prices cheaper than in other provinces.	
GC3	I find the cost of culinary tourism cheap.	
GC4	I find the stores have many incentives and promotions.	
<b>Hygiene and safety</b>		
VS1	I see clean restaurant spaces.	Gössling and Hall [4] and Mumu [38]
VS2	I see clean food processing procedures.	
VS3	I see ingredients for food processing have clear origins.	
VS4	I see clean kitchen equipment and utensils.	
VS5	I see food processors and servers wearing gloves, neat uniforms, and hair.	
<b>Food quality</b>		
CLDA1	I find the food in Hai Phong delicious.	Chavarria and Phakdee-Auksorn [9]
CLDA2	I find the food in Hai Phong visually appealing.	
CLDA3	I find Hai Phong has a wide variety of dishes.	
CLDA4	I find there are many dishes that suit my taste.	
<b>Service Quality</b>		
CLDV1	Sales and service staff are enthusiastic, polite, and professional.	Zeithaml [41] and Levitt, et al. [11]
CLDV2	Sales and service staff are willing to listen to tourists' suggestions and answer their questions.	
CLDV3	Sales and service staff are able to communicate in foreign languages and act with international tourists.	
<b>Social media</b>		
QC1	There are many advertisements about Hai Phong culinary tourism on social networking sites.	Kannan and Li [43] and Kim, et al. [19]
QC2	Many famous people participate in Hai Phong food tour experience.	
QC3	Many positive reviews from people who have experienced food tour in Hai Phong.	
<b>Intention to experience</b>		
YD1	I intend to join a food tour in Hai Phong in the near future.	Rastegar, et al. [44]
YD2	I will consider Hai Phong as the next destination to join a food tour.	
YD3	I intend to experience a food tour in Hai Phong when I have the opportunity to travel here.	

### 3.2. Data Collection Method

From the results of a focus group interview with seven participants, including one staff member from the Department of Industry and Trade, two lecturers working at Hai Phong University, and three Gen Z consumers in Hai Phong, Vietnam, the research team obtained a list of 26 restaurants in Le Chan District, Hai Phong. The restaurants are located on Cat Dai, Nguyen Duc Canh, and Lach Tray streets. The research team randomly selected 10 restaurants by drawing lots, then assigned five students, each responsible for randomly selecting two restaurants from the list. Direct interviews were conducted at the tables in the restaurants. The survey's purpose, concepts, and content of the questionnaire were introduced to the participants beforehand. When they agreed to participate, the survey was conducted. The survey was carried out from August 3, 2024, to August 12, 2024. A total of 334 surveys were collected, and after review, some surveys with missing information were discarded, leaving 328 valid surveys for analysis.

The study used both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and regression analysis. According to Hair, et al. [45], the minimum sample size for EFA is 50, with a preferred sample size of 100 or more. The ratio of observations to variables analyzed is 5:1, although some researchers suggest that this ratio should be 10:1. The author's survey includes seven independent variables, with 30 questions using a 5-point Likert scale. Applying the 5:1 ratio, the minimum sample size should be  $30 \times 5 = 150$ , and if using the 10:1 ratio, the minimum sample size would be  $30 \times 10 = 300$ . The sample size in this study is  $n = 328$  observations, meeting the requirements for the research model.

**3.3. Data Analysis Method**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, providing insights into the characteristics of the survey sample, such as gender, income, occupation, and place of residence, through measures such as mean, frequency, and percentage. Cronbach's Alpha test assessed the reliability of the measurement scales and determined the validity of the observed variables measuring the factors. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to reduce the group of variables, clarify the scale structure, and identify the main factors influencing Gen Z's intention to experience food tours. Pearson correlation analysis assessed the linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables, while multicollinearity was checked using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Regression analysis determined the impact of independent variables, such as service quality, advertising, price, and trust, on the intention to participate in a food tour, using KMO and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> to assess model fit. T-tests and ANOVA were used to test for differences in food tour intentions across demographic groups (gender, occupation, income). The results provided recommendations for tailored solutions for each group.

**4. Research Results and Discussion**

**4.1. Sample Characteristics**

Table 2 presents the demographic analysis collected and processed from the questionnaire, including information about the relationships. These analyses will provide a comprehensive overview of the survey participants and examine the differences in the correlation between the groups and their intention to experience a food tour.

**Table 2.**  
Characteristics of the survey sample.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	155	47.3%
Female	173	52.7%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	68	20.7%
Student	82	25%
Freelancer	74	22.6%
Business	17	5.2%
Office worker	24	7.3%
Doctor	20	6.1%
Engineer	20	6.1%
Teacher/Lecturer	23	7%
<b>Income</b>		
Under 1 million VND	58	17.7%
From 1 to 5 million VND	66	20.1%
From 5 to 10 million VND	77	23.5%
From 10 to 20 million VND	70	21.3%
Over 20 million VND	57	17.4%
<b>Place of residence</b>		
Hanoi	49	14.9%
Hai Duong	63	19.2%
Thai Binh	54	16.5%
Quang Ninh	50	15.2%
Da Nang	26	7.9%
Ho Chi Minh City	23	7%
Other	63	19.2%

**4.2. Evaluation of the Reliability of Variables**

After conducting Cronbach's Alpha coefficient analysis for all the measurement scales in the research model, the study obtained eight reliable scale groups corresponding to 30 observed variables. The scales and the observed variables proposed by the author met all reliability criteria after Cronbach's Alpha analysis, and no factors or variables were excluded. The details are as follows:

**Table 3.**

Results of scale reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha.

Scale	Mean of scale if variable is removed	Variance of scale if variable is removed	Item-total correlation coefficient	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient if variable is removed
"Convenience" (TT); Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.764				
TT1	10.77	5.423	0.572	0.704
TT2	10.82	5.451	0.531	0.727
TT3	10.76	5.277	0.598	0.690
TT4	10.80	5.576	0.554	0.714
"Trust" (NT); Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.868				
NT1	11.70	6.345	0.721	0.831
NT2	11.64	6.482	0.731	0.826
NT3	11.56	6.688	0.716	0.833
NT4	11.67	6.532	0.708	0.836
"Price" (GC); Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.813				
GC1	10.53	3.779	0.637	0.763
GC2	10.53	3.736	0.635	0.765
GC3	10.47	3.962	0.621	0.771
GC4	10.53	3.871	0.636	0.764
"Hygiene and Safety" (VS); Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.844				
VS1	13.05	10.851	0.652	0.812
VS2	13.12	10.733	0.655	0.811
VS3	13.09	10.831	0.658	0.810
VS4	13.06	10.987	0.619	0.820
VS5	13.05	10.625	0.664	0.808
"Food Quality" (CLDA); Cronbach's Alpha = 0.848				
CLDA1	12.13	5.548	0.709	0.797
CLDA2	12.09	5.748	0.668	0.815
CLDA3	12.07	5.695	0.680	0.810
CLDA4	12.08	5.837	0.687	0.807
"Service Quality" (CLDV); Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.851				
CLDV1	7.27	3.239	0.734	0.781
CLDV2	7.26	3.521	0.698	0.814
CLDV3	7.27	3.432	0.734	0.781
"Social media" (QC); Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.688				
QC1	7.32	3.167	0.488	0.613
QC2	7.33	3.072	0.473	0.635
QC3	7.39	3.022	0.549	0.536
"Intention to Experience" (YD); Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.869				
YD1	7.74	4.555	0.754	0.813
YD2	7.50	4.630	0.736	0.828
YD3	7.49	4.471	0.760	0.807

According to the analysis results from SPSS 23.0 software (Table 3), all the measurement scales met the reliability criteria for further analysis, as the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were all greater than 0.6, and the correlation coefficients of the total variables for the observed variables were all greater than 0.3. Among the scales, Convenience achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.764, while Trust scored 0.868, demonstrating strong reliability. The Price and Hygiene and Safety scales showed reliability with coefficients of 0.813 and 0.844, respectively. Similarly, Food Quality and Service Quality had high reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.848 and 0.851. The Social Media scale, though slightly lower, remained acceptable, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.688. Finally, the Intention to Experience scale achieved the highest reliability at 0.869. These results indicate that all the scales are reliable and suitable for the next steps of analysis.

After the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, the scales were further assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The Principal Components extraction method with Varimax rotation was applied to ensure the smallest number of extracted factors. For this study, factor analysis was conducted separately for the independent variables and the dependent variable. The analysis criteria were: factor loading greater than 0.5, eigenvalue greater than or equal to 1, and the minimum extracted variance greater than 50% [44]. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) coefficient was greater than 0.5, and Bartlett's test showed a p-value (sig) < 0.05.

4.2.1. EFA Factor Analysis for Independent Variables

**Table 4.**

Results of KMO and Bartlett coefficient test.

KMO coefficient		0.889
Barlett test	Approximate Chi-square value	3783.723
	Degrees of freedom	351
	Significance level	0

According to Table 4, The KMO value ranges from 0 to 1.0. A higher value (closer to 1.0) indicates that the author's data is highly suitable for factor analysis. In this case, the KMO value is 0.889, which indicates that the data is quite appropriate for factor analysis.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is used to test the hypothesis that the covariance matrix is an identity matrix (unit matrix). If the p-value (Sig.) of this test is smaller than a selected significance level (usually 0.05), the hypothesis of homogeneity will be rejected, and factor analysis can proceed. In this case, the p-value (Sig.) is 0.000, which is very small, indicating that the null hypothesis is rejected and that the data are suitable for factor analysis.

The total variance explained (rotation sums of squared loadings) is 66.824%, which means that approximately 66.824% of the variance in the data is explained by the seven new factor groups created after the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The eigenvalue representing the variance explained by each factor is 1.023, which is greater than 1, meeting the data requirements.

**Table 5.**

EFA analysis results.

	Items						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
VS1	0.770						
VS3	0.758						
VS5	0.747						
VS2	0.741						
VS4	0.687						
CLDA1		0.810					
CLDA3		0.760					
CLDA2		0.753					
CLDA4		0.751					
NT4			0.745				
NT2			0.734				
NT1			0.734				
NT3			0.727				
GC3				0.806			
GC1				0.769			
GC4				0.726			
GC2				0.722			
TT3					0.785		
TT1					0.744		
TT4					0.707		
TT2					0.647		
CLDV3						0.856	
CLDV1						0.855	
CLDV2						0.843	
QC3							0.800
QC1							0.730
QC2							0.676

Based on the analysis results (Table 5), it can be seen that the factor loadings of all observed variables exceed the threshold of 0.5. Specifically, a total of 27 observed variables were grouped into 7 factors, with no new factors formed.

**Table 6.**  
Testing regression coefficients and multicollinearity of the model.

		<b>B Coefficient</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta Coefficient</b>	<b>t-test</b>	<b>Significance level</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>Variance Magnification Factor</b>
1	Constant	-2.741	0.223		-12.314	0.000		
	TT	0.257	0.044	0.186	5.766	0.000	0.706	1.416
	NT	0.267	0.047	0.215	5.651	0.000	0.505	1.980
	GC	0.486	0.053	0.298	9.135	0.000	0.687	1.455
	VS	0.354	0.043	0.276	8.275	0.000	0.657	1.522
	CLDA	0.340	0.046	0.255	7.423	0.000	0.618	1.617
	CLDV	-0.044	0.035	-0.038	-1.256	0.210	0.821	1.218
	QC	0.123	0.040	0.097	3.053	0.002	0.722	1.386

**4.3. Research Model Results**

Based on the results of Table 6, it can be observed that the variables Convenience (TT), Trust (NT), Price (GC), Hygiene and Safety (VS), Food Quality (CLDA), and Social Media (QC) all have a Sig value < 0.05, indicating that these variables are statistically significant. However, the variable Service Quality (CLDV) has a Sig value > 0.05, which is not statistically significant in this case. Therefore, the author will exclude the variable Service Quality (CLDV) and rerun the regression model (Table 7).

**Table 7.**  
New regression coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized regression coefficients		Standardized regression coefficients	t-test	Significance level	Multicollinearity test		
	B Coefficient	Standard Error	Beta Coefficient			Tolerance	Variance Magnification Factor	
1	Constant	-2.801	0.218		-12.863	0.000		
	TT	0.256	0.045	0.185	5.740	0.000	0.707	1.415
	NT	0.253	0.046	0.204	5.506	0.000	0.535	1.868
	GC	0.469	0.052	0.288	9.106	0.000	0.735	1.361
	VS	0.359	0.043	0.280	8.431	0.000	0.664	1.507
	CLDA	0.337	0.046	0.254	7.368	0.000	0.620	1.614
	QC	0.126	0.040	0.100	3.138	0.002	0.725	1.380

Performing regression analysis helps examine and filter the factors influencing Gen Z tourists' intention to experience a food tour in Hai Phong. The linear regression method is applied as follows:

$$\text{Intention to experience a food tour in Hai Phong} = 0.256 * \text{Convenience} + 0.253 * \text{Trust} + 0.469 * \text{Price} + 0.359 * \text{Hygiene and Safety} + 0.337 * \text{Food Quality} + 0.126 * \text{Social Media}.$$

**Table 8.**  
Testing the suitability of the regression model.

Model		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Degrees of Freedom</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F Test</b>	<b>Significance Level</b>
1	Regression	267.062	6	44.510	173.702	0.000b
	Residuals	82.255	321	0.256		
	Total	349.317	327			

According to the analysis results from SPSS 23.0, the ANOVA analysis shows that the F-statistic has a Sig. value of  $0.000 \leq 0.05$  (99% confidence). This proves that the theoretical model fits the actual data and the independent variables (Table 8).

Table 9 shows the results of hypothesis testing. Hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H7 are all accepted as the Beta coefficients are positive and Sig < 0.05. Specifically, if the factors Convenience, Trust, Price, Hygiene and Safety, Food Quality, and Social Media each increase by 1 unit, the Intention to Experience factor will increase by 0.256, 0.253, 0.469, 0.359, 0.337, and 0.126 units, respectively.

**Table 9.**

Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Content	Significance	Result
H1	Convenience positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.	0.000	Accept
H2	Trust positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.	0.000	Accept
H3	Price positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.	0.000	Accept
H4	Hygiene and safety positively affect the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.	0.000	Accept
H5	Food quality positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.	0.000	Accept
H6	Service quality positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.	0.210	Not Accept
H7	Social media positively affects the intention to experience food tours in Hai Phong among Gen Z tourists.	0.002	Accept

#### 4.4. Discussion Of Research Results and Policy Recommendations

The data analysis results indicate that convenience, trust, price, hygiene and safety, food quality, and advertising all positively impact Gen Z's intention to experience food tour in Hai Phong, Vietnam. Among these factors, price has the greatest influence. This aligns with studies such as Roustafard and Jamshidi [10] and Kaura, et al. [29] which emphasize that price is a critical determinant when consumers evaluate services, particularly for younger demographics with limited or unstable incomes. Price is a crucial factor when consumers evaluate services, and Gen Z, being a younger customer segment, tends to compare prices before making decisions. Offering reasonably priced experiences or dishes that suit their budget will attract them more easily, especially given their lower or unstable income.

Hygiene and safety also have a significant impact, with a coefficient of 0.359. With growing health and food safety concerns, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, customers have become more focused on safety and hygiene in their dining experiences. This finding is consistent with the work of Shafieizadeh, et al. [34]; Mumu [38] and Chavarria and Phakdee-Auksorn [9] which underscores the increasing importance of hygiene standards for younger consumers. Gen Z, in particular, is very concerned about health risks related to food. They want to ensure the food they consume is not only tasty but also hygienic and safe. They often care about the origin of ingredients, the preparation process, and the service quality, especially in Hai Phong, known for its vibrant street food scene, where maintaining high hygiene standards is essential.

Food quality is undeniably one of the most important factors in any culinary experience. When participating in a food tour, the main goal is to enjoy delicious and unique dishes, so food quality plays a significant role in their experience. This reflects the idea that quality is a cornerstone of any culinary experience, as highlighted in Namkung and Jang [39] and Chavarria and Phakdee-Auksorn [9]. With a coefficient of 0.337, food quality ranks third in influencing Gen Z's intention to participate in a food tour in Hai Phong. For them, a food tour is not just about enjoying great food, but also an opportunity to explore the local culinary culture. Gen Z tourists, who often have high expectations for variety and flavor, will be more attracted if the food quality meets their expectations. High-quality food not only helps retain tourists but also encourages them to return and promote the local cuisine. Convenience and trust have similar impact coefficients, with values of 0.256 and 0.253, respectively. Gen Z tourists prefer convenience and quickness in planning and participating in travel activities. Therefore, when they find it easy to book accommodations, move between dining spots, or have flexible time and location options, they are more likely to engage. Trust also plays a role in deciding to participate in a food tour. Customers need to feel confident about the service quality and the reliability of the service provider. When their expectations for service quality and trustworthiness are met, they feel more comfortable participating and continuing to use the service. Similar findings of [31] and Liu, et al. [35] emphasize the importance of trust in customer retention.

Finally, social media has the least impact on their intention to experience food tour, with the smallest coefficient in the study model. While social media advertising can create initial awareness, Gen Z is particularly discerning, as noted by Magdy and Hassan [42]; Yamagishi, et al. [2] and Ibrahim, et al. [46]. This can be explained by the fact that while Gen Z is frequently exposed to advertising on social media, they are less likely to be influenced by it. Gen Z is particularly sensitive and capable of distinguishing between authentic ads and excessive promotional tactics. They tend to trust real experiences and community reviews more than traditional advertising campaigns. For Gen Z, advertising may create initial awareness of a service, but it is not enough to retain them or drive their behavior. Factors such as service quality, user reviews, and transparency are much more important. Therefore, advertising serves as a support tool in the marketing process, while focusing on quality and real experiences is the key to attracting customers. Interestingly, in the proposed model, service quality is included as a variable. However, after data processing, the author could not confirm whether service quality affects the intention to experience a food tour. This may suggest that Gen Z prioritizes specific factors like price, food quality, and hygiene over the general perception of service quality. Based on the research results analyzed above, the following policy recommendations are proposed. Firstly, local authorities and businesses should design reasonably priced food tour packages targeting Gen Z, a segment with limited or unstable income. This can include student discounts or budget-friendly combo offers to attract young customers. Secondly, authorities should increase food safety inspections at street food stalls and ensure transparency in ingredient sourcing and food preparation. Training programs on food hygiene for vendors should also be prioritized to build

customer trust. Thirdly, businesses should invest in creating high-quality, locally inspired dishes that cater to the diverse tastes of Gen Z. This not only enhances the culinary experience but also strengthens Hai Phong's reputation as a food tourism destination. Fourthly, user-friendly booking platforms and guide apps for food tour participants should be developed. Providing clear and reliable information on locations, schedules, and options will improve the overall experience and encourage participation. Fifthly, social media campaigns should focus on authentic content, such as customer testimonials and real-life reviews, rather than traditional promotional strategies. This approach will resonate better with Gen Z, who value transparency and community-driven feedback. By implementing these recommendations, Hai Phong can not only attract more Gen Z tourists but also establish itself as a sustainable and vibrant culinary destination.

## 5. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This research aims to elevate the food tour experience for the general public, particularly Gen Z, while offering actionable solutions to foster sustainable culinary tourism. By leveraging behavioral models such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the 4E Model, and the SERVQUAL framework, the study identifies key factors shaping Gen Z's intention to participate in food tours in Hai Phong. These factors include convenience, trust, price, hygiene and safety, food quality, and social media influence. Among them, price emerged as the most influential factor, whereas social media exerted the least impact. Using robust analytical methods, the author has delineated how each factor contributes to shaping Gen Z's decision-making processes. The findings highlight Hai Phong's immense potential as a culinary tourism hub, given its vibrant food culture and evolving tourism infrastructure. However, challenges persist, notably in food hygiene and safety, convenience, and service quality. To address these issues, targeted solutions are proposed, encompassing strategic interventions for businesses, improvements in restaurant operations, and an enhanced focus on Gen Z's expectations. By bridging theoretical insights with practical implications, this study makes a significant contribution to enhancing the Gen Z culinary tourism experience in Hai Phong, Vietnam. It also offers invaluable guidance for stakeholders in the food and tourism sectors, equipping them with a deeper understanding of young consumers' preferences and behaviors. Such insights pave the way for developing innovative business and marketing strategies that integrate local culture and cuisine. Ultimately, the study advocates for a sustainable tourism model that enriches customer experiences and bolsters Hai Phong's tourism growth and economic development.

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