

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Dissertation title: Promoting Community Participation in Tourism Development towards Green Growth in the Core Zone of the Trang An Landscape Complex, Ninh Binh

Major: Cultural Management **Code:** 9229042

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ABSTRACT

1. Research purpose and object of the study.

Grounded in the theory of community-based heritage management, the dissertation aims to enhance the effectiveness of community participation in tourism development towards green growth in the core zone of the Trang An Landscape Complex. The research object is local community participation and the promotion of such participation. The study focuses on three localities in the core zone—Ninh Hai, Ninh Xuan, and Truong Yen—and covers the period from 2014 to the end of December 2025.

2. Research methods.

The dissertation adopts an interdisciplinary approach centred on community-based cultural management and integrates systems, empowerment, green-growth, and stakeholder perspectives. A mixed-methods design was employed, comprising the synthesis and analysis of secondary data; semi-structured in-depth interviews with 46 participants and thematic analysis using NVivo 15 and Excel; a questionnaire survey yielding 395 valid responses; and descriptive statistics, scale-reliability testing, common method bias testing, exploratory factor analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression using SPSS. The study also compares the three localities, assesses empirical participation against Pretty's (1995) seven-level typology, and examines the relative positions of the State, businesses, and local communities.

3. Major findings and conclusions.

The dissertation develops an integrated analytical framework combining green growth, empowerment theory, stakeholder theory, Pretty’s seven-level participation typology, and the public–private partnership model. Local communities participate across three pillars—green economy, cultural conservation and social cohesion, and green environment—thereby contributing to livelihood transformation, the continuity of living cultural spaces, and heritage protection. Nevertheless, 53.7% of community participation remains at the information-provision/passive levels (Levels 1–2), while 33.2% is materially incentivised participation (Level 4); community roles in consultation, joint decision-making, and co-management remain limited. The overall regression model explains 64.5% of the variance in participation. All six factor groups have positive effects, ranked in descending order as environment, economy, green-growth awareness, socio-cultural factors, barriers, and mechanisms and policies. Their effects vary across Ninh Hai, Truong Yen, and Ninh Xuan, reflecting differences in geo-cultural contexts and governance structures.

The dissertation therefore recommends shifting community participation from implementation to proactive engagement, co-creation, and co-management; strengthening public–private partnership arrangements, dialogue, and benefit-sharing; and developing smart heritage governance, a Heritage Conservation and Green Livelihoods Fund, and the “Trang An Green Community” Criteria linked to the “Trang An Green Community Convention.” Substantive participation, empowerment, and equitable benefit-sharing constitute the foundation for green growth at heritage sites.

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