International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Review

Volume: 09, Issue: 06 November - December 2026

ISSN 2582-0176

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN DOMESTIC TOURIST EXPENDITURE IN VIETNAM

HOANG VAN DUNG
Institute of Sociology and Psychology, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
176 Thai Ha, Dong Da, Hanoi, Vietnam

https://doi.org/10.37602/IJSSMR.2026.9611

ABSTRACT

Vietnam's tourism sector increasingly satisfies the recreational demands of domestic citizens while simultaneously attracting a substantial volume of international visitors. The Vietnamese populace maintains an optimistic outlook on travel, accompanied by a steady upward trend in domestic mobility. This paper describes and analyzes the growth of domestic tourism from 1986 to 2025, while identifying patterns of social stratification in domestic tourist expenditure between 2003 and 2013 using national survey data. The empirical findings indicate that workers and farmers exhibit the shortest average length of stay and the lowest expenditure levels, particularly concerning sightseeing and recreational activities. Elderly tourists record the longest duration of stay alongside relatively high expenditure levels. Meanwhile, public sector employees demonstrate stable, moderate expenditure patterns. Businessmans consistently register the highest expenditures across all categories except healthcare. Overall, while domestic tourist spending has increased over time, it remains heavily concentrated on accommodation, food, shopping, and transport, whereas expenditures directed toward recreation and sightseeing remain comparatively low.

Keywords: tourism; domestic tourists; expenditure; Vietnam; Doi Moi.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Boasting a coastline exceeding 3,000 kilometres and a rich diversity of natural and cultural heritage, Vietnam possesses strategic advantages to transform its tourism sector into a leading economic driver. The World Bank (2019) outlines three primary advantages in this regard. First, tourism serves as a crucial engine for economic growth, employment creation, and shared prosperity. Second, global travel and tourism demand is surging, particularly as Vietnam's expanding middle class unlocks substantial economic opportunities for the development of domestic tourism. Third, Vietnam exhibits diverse cultural and natural endowments, featuring numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites alongside attractive urban tourism destinations such as Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, and Hanoi.

Vietnam has achieved remarkable milestones in its tourism sector, characterised by a dramatic surge in both international and domestic visitor arrivals. International visitor arrivals to Vietnam surged 331-fold in 2019 (reaching 18,008,591 arrivals) compared to 54,353 in 1986. Notably, arrivals quadrupled within a single decade, climbing from 4.2 million in 2008 to 15.5 million in 2018, before peaking at 18 million in 2019. Following a contraction induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, visitor numbers have steadily recovered, reaching approximately 21.2 million in 2025 (Statistical Office, 2025). Domestic tourism has experienced parallel growth,

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

Volume: 09, Issue: 06 November - December 2026

ISSN 2582-0176

registering a 304-fold expansion in 2019 compared to 1986 (85,000,000 versus 280,000 visitors), with volume nearly quadrupling over a decade from 20.5 million trips in 2008 to 80 million in 2018[1]. Although similarly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic tourism rebounded rapidly, setting a record of nearly 137 million trips in 2025 (Statistical Office, 2025). Driven by the expansion of the middle class, estimated by the World Bank to comprise approximately 13 per cent of Vietnam's population, an estimated 70 per cent of Vietnamese citizens have engaged in tourism activities. In 2019, the tourism sector employed roughly 875,000 workers and contributed 9.2 per cent to Vietnam's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), equivalent to approximately USD 36 billion.

Similar to the pre - Doi Moi era, the State retains a regulatory role over tourism institutions to align their operations with political, economic, and socio-practical mandates. The State has established specialised tourism administration bodies under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, formulated legislative frameworks (such as the Tourism Laws of 2005 and 2017), executed spatial territorial planning (designating tourist axes and zones), developed infrastructure, and retained ownership over strategic tourism sites, transport providers, and accommodation facilities (e.g., the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, Vietnam Airlines, and the Trade Union hotel system) to regulate the sector. In recent years, the State has progressively withdrawn from certain segments through the privatisation and corporatisation of previously state-owned tourism facilities, while maintaining a monopoly or decisive control over key strategic entities.

In this context, private enterprises and conglomerates have emerged as the primary agents in constructing, deploying, and expanding the tourism industry (e.g., Vingroup, Sun Group, and FLC), investing heavily in infrastructure, amusement parks, and resorts spanning mountainous regions to coastal islands (such as Sapa, Ba Na Hills, Ha Long, Cat Ba, Con Dao, and Phu Quoc). A third major stakeholder contributing to Vietnam's tourism development comprises joint ventures, predominantly formed through collaborations between international corporations and domestic firms (such as Sheraton and Hilton). The year 2007 marked a pivotal milestone in the sector's evolution, characterised by the ascendancy of the private sector, whose travel and tourism revenues (43.1 per cent) surpassed those of the State sector (38.5 per cent), while foreign-invested enterprises accounted for 18.4 per cent (General Statistics Office, 2008:477).

Tourism is an activity fundamentally contingent upon two primary prerequisites: time and financial resources. Examining how leisure budgets are allocated contributes to a deeper understanding of tourist consumption behaviour. Do travellers uniformly allocate identical durations of stay and expenditure levels, or do variations emerge regarding the timing, length, and financial outlay of trips? Such differentials shape the landscape of leisure and recreation. This study draws upon the theoretical frameworks of Thorstein Veblen and Pierre Bourdieu to analyse Vietnamese tourist consumption patterns. Veblen (1970), through observations of the leisure class (the aristocracy and upper strata), posited that elite groups maintain distinct recreational practices compared to other social strata. Concurrently, Bourdieu (1979), utilising statistical empirical analyses, demonstrated that distinct social groups exhibit heterogeneous tastes and recreational preferences in their engagement with art and culture.

[1] https://vietnamtourism.gov.vn

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

2.0 DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

This study relies primarily on secondary data obtained from the General Statistics Office (GSO) of Vietnam, encompassing annual domestic tourist arrival series since 1986 and datasets derived from six national tourist expenditure surveys conducted in 2003, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011, and 2013. In addition, the analysis incorporates empirical findings from existing literature on Vietnamese tourism alongside statistical reports compiled by independent researchers, organisations, and state agencies such as the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism (VNAT). Furthermore, the study employs documentary research methods to examine relevant legislative and policy frameworks, supplemented by international institutional publications from the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The analytical scope focuses on assessing the volume and growth trajectory of domestic tourists over the 1986-2025 period, with a particular emphasis on examining expenditure differentials across distinct socio-demographic tourist groups.

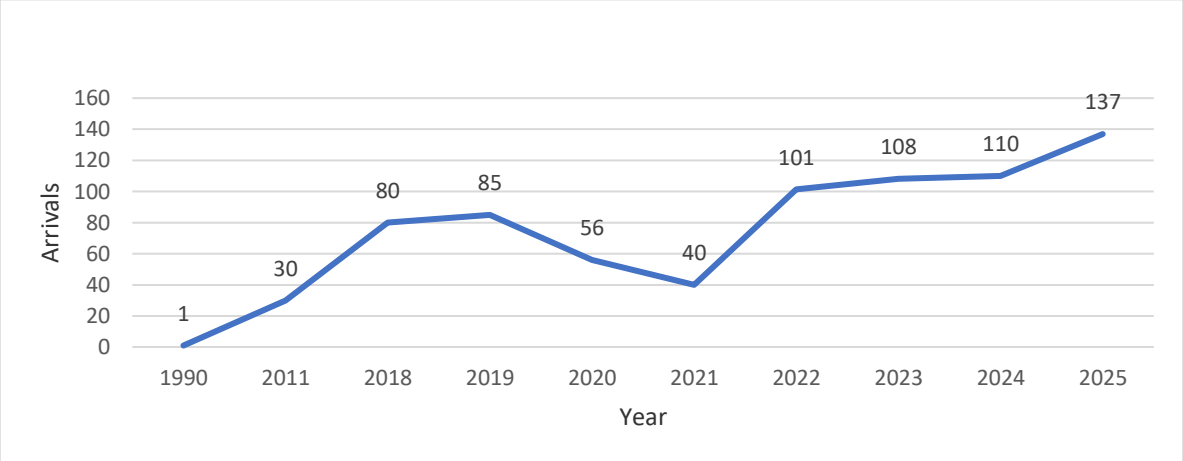
3.0 RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 Scale and Growth of Vietnam's Domestic Tourism Market

The explosion of Vietnamese tourism since the Doi Moi (Renovation) period in 1986 is not only measured by impressive figures, such as its GDP contribution reaching 9.2 per cent in 2019 and maintaining a stable level around 8.8 per cent during the 2023-2025 period, but also serves as evidence of a profound structural shift. Leveraging strategic advantages of over 3,000 kilometers of coastline, a rich system of UNESCO-recognized natural and cultural heritage sites, and key integration milestones such as the lifting of the U.S. embargo (1995) and accession to the WTO (2007), Vietnam's "smokestack-free industry" has undergone a comprehensive transformation to become a spearhead economic driver, asserting strong endogenous capacity amidst global volatility.

Figure 1. Domestic Visitor Arrivals in Vietnam (1994-2025)

(Unit: in million)



Copyright © The Author, 2026

Source: Compiled from data of the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism, the General Statistics Office and the National Statistics Office (1990-2025).

This remarkable growth has been shaped and driven primarily by the internal strength of the domestic market, where the middle class- accounting for approximately 13 per cent of the population according to World Bank estimates (2019), has emerged as a pivotal factor expanding public access to tourism. Alongside the dramatic leap from 1 million arrivals in 1990 to 85 million in 2019 and peaking at 137 million in 2025 (GSO, 2020; NSO, 2026), despite shocks from economic crises (1998, 2009), health emergencies (2003), and particularly the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021), the entry of major private conglomerates, low-cost airline networks, and digital infrastructure has generated sustainable momentum, demonstrating national self-reliance, public optimism, and the dominant position of the domestic market within the national tourism landscape.

3.2 Trip Duration and Expenditure Patterns

3.2.1 Average Length of Stay per Trip

Examining variations across social groups in tourism participation is fundamental to the sociology of tourism (Cousin & Réau, 2009), as it illuminates the underlying social mechanisms governing leisure practices. Table 1 presents the average length of stay per trip across six socio-occupational categories: state civil servants, businessmans, workers, farmers, retirees, and others.

Substantial heterogeneity exists in average trip duration across occupational strata. Overall, the aggregate average length of stay exhibited a modest upward trajectory between 2003 and 2013. First, farmers recorded the shortest average length of stay per trip compared to all other occupational cohorts, consistently falling below the overall sample mean across all survey years (with the sole exception of 2003 relative to workers). This pattern may be attributed to shorter travel distances and tighter financial constraints.

Table 1. Average Length of Stay per Trip by Socio-Occupational Group

Unit: days

	2003	2005	2006	2009	2011	2013
Overall average	**3,5**	**3,5**	**3,6**	**3,8**	**3,7**	**3,7**
Civil servants	3,6	3,7[3]	3,7	3,6	3,4	3,6
Businessmans	3,9	2,9	3,9	4,2	4,1	3,7
Workers	2,9	3,6	3,2	3,6	3,3	3,2
Farmers	3,0	3,3	3,2	3,3	2,7	2,9
Retirees	3,9	3,6	4,4	4,2	4,3	4,3
Others	3,1	3,3	3,5	3,8	3,5	3,8

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

Source: Compiled from the Results of the Tourist Expenditure Surveys (2003, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011[2], and 2013).

Second, workers also demonstrated a comparatively short average duration per trip, remaining consistently below the overall occupational mean (except in 2005). Relative to other cohorts, workers' average trip length exceeded only that of farmers while trailing behind state civil servants, business owners, and retirees.

Third, civil servants exhibited an average length of stay closely aligned with the aggregate sample mean. Across comparative strata, their trip duration surpassed that of farmers and workers, yet remained shorter than that of retirees and businessmans (excluding 2005). Conversely, businessmans maintained an average trip duration consistently exceeding, or equal to, in 2013, the overall occupational average (with the exception of 2005).

Finally, retirees registered the longest average trip duration, rising from 3.9 days per trip in 2003 to 4.3 days in 2013. Across the entire observation window, retirees' length of stay consistently surpassed the aggregate mean. This finding can be explained by their greater discretionary time coupled with relatively secure financial resources derived from pensions, accumulated savings, or familial financial support.

In summary, regarding trip duration, farmers and workers occupy the lower bound, whereas retirees and businessmans occupy the upper bound, with state civil servants clustering near the national mean.

3.2.2 Domestic Tourist Expenditure by Gender and Socio-Occupational Group

Investigating tourist expenditure patterns serves as a valuable indicator for assessing population living standards alongside the development level of transport, accommodation, food, and recreational services within the tourism sector. Table 2 indicates that between 2003 and 2013, average tourist expenditure on travel and out-of-home leisure activities among all socio-occupational groups experienced continuous growth (with the sole exception of farmers in 2006). Overall average spending roughly tripled on both a per-trip and per-day basis, increasing from VND 1.52 million to VND 4.23 million per trip and from VND 0.44 million to VND 1.15 million per day.

Table 2. Average Domestic Tourist Expenditure per Trip and per Day by Gender and Socio-Occupational Group (Independent Travellers)

Unit: Million VND

Category	2003	2005	2006	2009	2011	2013
Average expenditure per trip						
Overall average	**1,52**	**1,77**	**2,00**	**2,64**	**3,53**	**4,23**
Male	1,52	1,76	1,92	2,62	3,46	4,10

[2] In 2005, state civil servants recorded an average stay of 3.6 days per trip and public employees 3.8 days per trip; the combined mean of 3.7 days is reported in the table.

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

Female	1,54	1,79	2,18	2,67	3,64	4,43
Civil servants	1,55	1,75	1,95	2,55	3,37	4,18
Businessmans	2,23	1,35	2,70	3,50	4,57	5,19
Workers	1,04	1,15	1,46	1,93	2,58	3,19
Farmers	0,85	1,32	0,96	1,51	1,81	2,60
Retirees	1,53	1,83	2,33	2,72	3,85	4,93
Others	1,42	1,70	1,90	2,52	3,30	4,14
Average expenditure per day						
Overall average	**0,44**	**0,51**	**0,55**	**0,70**	**0,98**	**1,15**
Male	0,44	0,50	0,54	0,70	0,99	1,14
Female	0,45	0,51	0,59	0,72	0,96	1,16
Civil servants	0,42	0,48	0,53	0,71	0,98	1,15
Businessmans	0,59	0,47	0,69	0,83	1,12	1,39
Workers	0,37	0,32	0,45	0,54	0,79	0,98
Farmers	0,28	0,41	0,30	0,46	0,66	0,88
Retirees	0,39	0,52	0,53	0,64	0,90	1,14
Others	0,48	0,52	0,55	0,67	0,93	1,09

Source: Compiled from General Statistics Office, 2017:106-107.

Regarding gender dynamics, sociological research frequently highlights systemic disadvantages experienced by women relative to men within both domestic and public spheres, particularly concerning unpaid household labour. However, within the domain of out-of-home leisure and tourism, a different pattern emerges. Table 2 demonstrates a high degree of expenditure parity between male and female travellers across the ten-year observation window, with female tourists consistently recording slightly higher average expenditures than males on both a per-trip and per-day basis (except in 2011). Notably, women exhibited wider expenditure margins exceeding those of men in 2011 and 2013. This finding indicates a high level of financial autonomy among female travellers, regardless of whether they travel independently or in groups.

From an occupational perspective, tourist expenditure exhibits substantial stratification. Workers and, most notably, farmers consistently recorded the lowest expenditure levels across all survey years, on both per-trip and per-day bases. Farmers registered the most modest expenditures, typically hovering between 50 and 60 per cent of the overall sample mean, dropping to a low of 48.1 per cent of the per-trip mean in 2006. Although maintaining higher spending than farmers, workers likewise exhibited consistently low expenditure levels, fluctuating between 65 and 86 per cent of the sample mean, though clustering predominantly around 70 per cent. Civil servants, public employees, and individuals in other occupations reported expenditures slightly below the aggregate mean while remaining relatively stable close to the national average.

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

Conversely, retirees and businessmans registered the highest average expenditures on both per-trip and per-day bases. Retirees consistently recorded above-average trip expenditures across all survey years, yet registered lower daily expenditure averages. This outcome is explained by their longer average length of stay, which elevates total trip expenditure while moderating daily averages. Meanwhile, businessmans maintained the highest average expenditures both per trip and per day, with figures reaching nearly 1.5 times the sample mean in certain years and remaining consistently above 1.15 times the average (except in 2005 for both metrics).

Consequently, comparative evaluation reveals stark disparities: business owners, state civil servants, public employees, and retirees outspend farmers by factors of roughly 3 to 2, respectively. These empirical patterns delineate a clear bifurcation into two distinct strata: an upper-tier grouping comprising business owners, state civil servants, public employees, and retirees, contrasted against a lower-tier grouping consisting of farmers and workers.

3.2.3 Domestic Tourist Expenditure by Age Group

Age serves as a critical determinant in shaping expenditure budgets. Table 3 illustrates the lifecycle effect of age on tourist spending levels across diverse cohorts. Average expenditure, measured on both a per-trip and per-day basis, generally scales upward with age. The youngest cohort (15-24 years), representing youth travellers, consistently records the lowest spending, whereas older cohorts (aged 55 and above) occupy the upper tier, with spending capacity increasing progressively with age (spanning from 15 to 64 years).

Table 3. Average Domestic Tourist Expenditure per Trip and per Day by Age Group

Unit: Million VND

	2003	2005	2006	2009	2011	2013
Average expenditure per trip						
Overall average	**1,52**	**1,77**	**2,00**	**2,64**	**3,53**	**3,84**
15-24 years	1,28	1,52	1,38	1,95	3,03	3,84
25-34 years	1,47	1,68	1,80	2,54	3,38	4,15
35-44 years	1,54	1,78	2,18	2,77	3,52	4,33
45-54 years	1,59	1,92	2,10	2,78	3,78	4,12
55-64 years	1,83	2,07	2,60	2,89	3,98	4,66
65 years and above	1,77	1,91	2,33	2,38	4,13	4,73
Average expenditure per trip						
Overall average	**0,44**	**0,51**	**0,55**	**0,70**	**0,98**	**1,15**
15-24 years	0,39	0,47	0,41	0,59	0,87	0,96
25-34 years	0,41	0,51	0,51	0,69	0,98	1,15
35-44 years	0,45	0,50	0,60	0,73	1,00	1,22
45-54 years	0,46	0,52	0,56	0,71	0,99	1,12

Copyright © The Author, 2026

55-64 years	0,45	0,55	0,64	0,69	0,94	1,15
65 years and above	0,48	0,47	0,51	0,63	0,98	1,10

Source: Compiled from General Statistics Office, 2017:106-107.

Expenditure patterns can be categorized into three distinct tiers. The first tier encompasses low-spending groups aged 15-24 and 25-34, whose expenditures range between 68.8 and 96 per cent of the sample mean per trip (with the exception of 2013, when spending converged near or slightly exceeded the national average). The second tier comprises individuals aged 35-54, whose baseline expenditures align closely with the sample mean. The third tier includes cohorts aged 55 and above; this group records the highest per-trip expenditures, yet their daily spending levels remain comparable to those of the 35-54 age bracket. This implies that older travellers maintain significantly longer average lengths of stay than middle-aged cohorts. This phenomenon is readily explicable, as retirees and older adults typically possess greater discretionary time and tend to maintain a more moderate, unhurried pace of travel, avoiding abrupt or rushed itineraries.

3.2.4 Domestic Tourist Expenditure by Expense Category

Analyzing expenditure categories during a trip also reflects distinctive behavioral characteristics of tourists. Overall, across the ten years, domestic tourists, regardless of age, occupation, or gender, exhibited stable allocation patterns across expense categories without abrupt structural shifts.

Table 4. Average Domestic Tourist Expenditure per Trip and per Day by Expense Category (Independent Travellers)

Unit: Thousand VND

	2003	2005	2006	2009	2011	2013
Average expenditure per trip:						
Total	*1522*	*1772*	*2003*	*2639*	*3529*	*4228*
Accommodation	361	386	501	642	820	1049
Food	237	310	356	623	833	1027
Transport	433	567	636	645	780	942
Sightseeing	72	69	73	145	188	282
Shopping	231	265	258	366	480	573
Recreation and entertainment	53	53	42	72	97	86
Healthcare	8	16	14	23	56	57
Others	127	106	124	124	275	212
Trung bình một ngày:						

Copyright © The Author, 2026

Volume: 09, Issue: 06 November - December 2026

ISSN 2582-0176

Total	*440*	*506*	*551*	*704*	*978*	*1149*
Accommodation	104	110	138	171	227	285
Food	69	89	98	166	231	279
Transport	125	162	175	172	216	256
Sightseeing	21	20	20	39	52	77
Shopping	67	76	71	98	133	156
Recreation and entertainment	15	15	11	19	27	23
Health	2	5	4	6	16	15
Others	37	30	34	33	76	58

Source: Compiled from General Statistics Office (2017:105).

However, Table 4 highlights several prominent features regarding tourist spending composition. First, travellers predominantly allocate their expenditure toward accommodation, food, transport, and shopping (accounting for over 83 per cent of spending on both a per-trip and per-day basis), while dedicating minimal proportions to sightseeing and recreation (merely 6 to 8 per cent per trip and per day). Furthermore, the data indicate that spending on recreation actually declined in 2013 compared to preceding years. This reflects underlying structural limitations, such as a shortage of well-developed recreational and sightseeing attractions at destinations, or a general lack of appeal to visitors. Additionally, domestic tourists may not yet have cultivated established habits of engaging extensively in sightseeing and leisure activities. Viewed more broadly, travellers continue to concentrate their time and financial budgets primarily on dining and retail shopping. Second, regarding budgetary allocation over time, Vietnamese tourists have devoted an increasing proportion of their spending to food. This trend indicates that Vietnamese travellers place growing emphasis on culinary experiences, savouring local specialties or regional delicacies unavailable in their everyday lives.

Thus, while socio-occupational status shapes overall tourism expenditure budgets, how does occupation influence the specific breakdown of tourist spending across various categories? The subsequent section examines expenditure allocations disaggregated by occupational status for the year 2013.

Table 5 indicates that workers and, most notably, farmers operate with highly constrained travel budgets per trip. Farmers spend less than 60 per cent of the aggregate average across all other occupational cohorts on accommodation, food, transport, and sightseeing, trailing substantially behind business owners, state civil servants, public employees, and retirees. Focusing specifically on recreation and entertainment, farmers register exceptionally modest outlays, equivalent to just 39.5 per cent of the overall sample average and less than one-third (28.3 per cent) of the recreational expenditure recorded by business owners. Older travellers likewise exhibit relatively low spending on recreational activities, which may be attributed to a preference against physically strenuous or high-intensity exertion.

Table 5. Average Domestic Tourist Expenditure per Trip in 2013 by Socio-Occupational Group and Expense Category (Independent Travellers)

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

Volume: 09, Issue: 06 November - December 2026

ISSN 2582-0176

Unit: Thousand VND

Expense category	Civil servants	Businessmans	Workers	Farmers	Retirees	Other occupations	Overall average
Accommodation	1107	1236	741	578	1220	975	1049
Food	1027	1225	838	619	1256	967	1027
Transport	918	1268	619	513	1111	915	942
Sightseeing	261	329	235	169	279	319	282
Shopping	570	679	469	374	593	571	573
Recreation and entertainment	78	120	74	34	56	96	86
Health	27	46	47	131	202	71	57
Others	187	285	168	179	218	226	212
Total	4176	5187	3190	2597	4935	4140	4228

Source: Compiled from the Results of the 2013 Tourist Expenditure Survey, 2014:143.

Another noteworthy finding is that shopping expenditures remain consistently substantial across all socio-occupational strata, even though farmers and workers continue to record the lowest absolute figures. Conversely, both farmers and retirees exhibit disproportionately high outlays on healthcare compared to other groups. Older adults naturally experience greater health vulnerabilities and exercise heightened medical precaution. Meanwhile, farmers frequently utilise long-distance travel as an opportunity to simultaneously engage in sightseeing and procure medication or seek medical treatment. This pattern suggests that rural travellers often combine leisure travel with utilitarian secondary objectives, particularly healthcare access.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Transitioning from the pre-Doi Moi notion of nghi mat (leisure vacationing), a luxury concept deeply ingrained in public consciousness as a privilege reserved for a narrow elite and an unattainable aspiration for the majority during the centrally planned subsidy era, Vietnam witnessed the emergence of mass tourism (democratisation of tourism) beginning in the 2010s, as travel became accessible to the broader populace. Despite various external disruptions, domestic tourist arrivals have expanded continuously since the launch of Doi Moi, demonstrating rapid post-crisis recovery trajectories. This resilience reflects the growing professionalism of the tourism workforce alongside the substantial latent potential of Vietnam's tourism industry. Vietnamese citizens increasingly engage in travel with heightened autonomy, progressively cultivating distinct cultural norms regarding trip timing and destination selection. Consequently, domestic tourism has evolved into both a crucial buffer against external shocks and a foundational pillar of the national tourism sector. Nevertheless, per-capita domestic tourist expenditure remains relatively modest and exhibits pronounced

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

stratification across occupational and age cohorts. In particular, domestic travellers continue to allocate minimal budgets toward sightseeing and recreational activities, pointing to both a structural deficit in recreational infrastructure and nascent leisure consumption habits.

Drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of leisure consumption advanced by Veblen (1970) and Bourdieu (1979), this study demonstrates that distinct socio-occupational strata differ markedly in their trip durations, overall expenditure levels, and recreational preferences. Specifically, workers and farmers record the shortest average lengths of stay per trip and the lowest expenditure outlays, most notably in sightseeing and recreation, whereas businessmans consistently register the highest spending levels. While aggregate domestic tourist expenditure has risen steadily over time, outlays remain heavily concentrated on core services such as accommodation, food, shopping, and transport, leaving expenditures on recreation and sightseeing comparatively low. Furthermore, the empirical findings indicate that although rising material and spiritual living standards have broadened overall tourism participation in Vietnam, substantial disparities in travel budgets across social strata persist consistently over time. Conversely, male and female travellers exhibit high expenditure parity on both a per-day and per-trip basis. Taken together, age, occupational status, and household composition function as primary determinants governing seasonal travel timing.

Notwithstanding these achievements, Vietnam's tourism industry faces pressing developmental challenges amid intensifying regional competition from neighbouring destinations. While visitor volume remains an important metric, expenditure quality and value generation are equally critical, as exemplified by the United States, which generates the highest global tourism receipts despite not ranking first in international arrival volume. Regarding the domestic market, policymakers and industry stakeholders must address key structural questions: how to stimulate broader tourism participation among rural farmers and industrial workers, how to incentivise longer average lengths of stay per trip, and how to diversify spending toward higher-value experiential and recreational activities. Ultimately, both international and domestic visitors contribute integrally to the advancement of Vietnam's tourism sector, enabling the nation to cultivate a sustainable tourism model that satisfies evolving market demands while preserving and promoting traditional cultural heritage.

REFERENCES

1. Bourdieu Pierre. 1979. La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement, Paris, Ed. de Minuit.
2. Cousin Saskia, Réau Bertrand. 2009. Sociologie du tourisme. La Découverte, France.
3. General Statistics Office. (2004). Results of the 2003 tourist expenditure survey. Statistical Publishing House.
4. General Statistics Office. (2006). Results of the 2005 tourist expenditure survey. Statistical Publishing House.
5. General Statistics Office. (2007). Results of the 2006 tourist expenditure survey. Statistical Publishing House.
6. General Statistics Office. (2008). Statistical yearbook of Vietnam 2007. Statistical Publishing House.
7. General Statistics Office. (2010). Results of the 2009 tourist expenditure survey. Statistical Publishing House.

 Copyright © The Author, 2026

Volume: 09, Issue: 06 November - December 2026

ISSN 2582-0176

8. General Statistics Office. (2012). Results of the 2011 tourist expenditure survey. Statistical Publishing House.
9. General Statistics Office. (2014). Results of the 2013 tourist expenditure survey. Statistical Publishing House.
10. General Statistics Office. (2017). Results of the tourist expenditure surveys, 2003-2015. Statistical Publishing House.
11. National Statistics Office. (2026). Statistical Yearbook of Viet Nam, Economics - Finance Publishing House.
12. Vietnam National Authority of Tourism. (2021). Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. https://www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn
13. Veblen Thorstein. (1970) [1899]. Théorie de la classe de loisir (traduit de l'anglais), Gallimard, Paris.
14. World Bank. (2019). Tanking Stock. Recent economic developments of Vietnam. Special Focus: Vietnam's Topurism Developments: Stepping back from the tipping point-Vietnam's Tourism trend, challenges, and policy priorit.

 Copyright © The Author, 2026