HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS
ACADEMY OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Independence – Freedom – Happiness

NEW CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Dissertation title: The impact of tourism destination communication on Vietnam's national image today

Major: Public Relations

Code: 9320108

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NEW CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Academic and theoretical contributions

– **Mechanism of impact.** The dissertation proposes an explanation of the relationship between tourism destination communication and national image through three components - cognition, affect and conation (C-A-C) - rather than through an assumed linear chain. Most prior research takes for granted that destination image carries over to national image, even though the foundations needed to explain this process already exist, scattered across separate fields. The dissertation connects these foundations, the halo and summary construct models of country image in consumer psychology (Han, 1989), the multi-level brand architecture model in place branding research (Dinnie, 2008; Herstein, 2012) and reciprocal spillover effects in marketing (Balachander & Ghose, 2003) to explain the transfer from the destination level to the national level. This is a contribution of theoretical synthesis.

– **Theoretical confirmation.** The study provides evidence from the Vietnamese context for the C-A-C framework (Gartner, 1994; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Agapito et al., 2013) and for the role of autonomous and organic agents in image formation (Gartner, 1994).

2. New findings drawn from the research results

– Survey data from 411 respondents support all five hypotheses: tourism destination communication is positively associated with the cognitive, affective and conative images of Vietnam. Because each relationship was tested separately rather than as an assumed linear chain, the analysis shows that associations within the sample are uneven: the affect-conation association is weaker than the cognition-affect

association. Read alongside the interview data, this suggests that turning goodwill into intention and action also depends on service quality, support and the ease of the experience at the destination.

– The interview data reveal two routes to national image formation, depending on the level of experience. Interviewees who had not visited Vietnam formed an image mainly by inference from an overall impression, whereas those who had visited built it up from concrete experiences – a pattern consistent with Han's (1989) halo and summary construct models.
– The study identifies sources of information beyond the control of domestic communicators. Alongside tourism destination communication, Vietnam's national image is also shaped by foreign governments' travel advisories, comparisons with other countries in the region, experiences at on-site touchpoints, social media and the international press. National image therefore needs to be placed within an information ecosystem wider than destination communication. This finding marks the limits of what destination communication can achieve and provides the basis for solutions that go beyond communication alone.
– The dissertation compares the national image projected in Vietnam's policy documents with the image perceived by the public, using the same three-dimensional frame: political- security, economic and socio-cultural. To the best of the author's knowledge, these two types of data have not previously been examined side by side in research on Vietnam's national image. The differences between the projected and the perceived image provide a basis for adjusting content, message priorities and communication strategy for each dimension.

Hanoi, ……..