

## The night economy: a novel approach to illuminating city tourism in Vietnam

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### Abstract

Danang, a famous coastal city in Vietnam, is considered a global, attractive destination and a relatively safe place, with an annually increasing number of tourists. However, there has been a lack of leisure activities at night for visitors, which limits the city from exploiting its full potential to the degree it could. Policymakers have launched the 3-stages of Night-time economy (3-s NTE) development in 2021-2025 to stimulate tourism in Da Nang in the post pandemic period. Research introduced numerous features to assure the Danang 3-s NTE's smooth functioning from policymakers' perspectives and to understand citizens' viewpoints on how it affects their daily lives. This study applied an inductive qualitative research method through interviews, sentiment analysis, and text data analysis to understand policymakers' and citizens' positive and negative viewpoints to provide feedback on ensuring the NTE's smooth operation. Twelve experts and twelve citizens were invited to the discussion and answered several questions related to Night-time economy elements oriented by city leaders. The data gathered were examined and deeply analyzed to explore interviewees' reactions to the Night-time economy operation. In a post-pandemic world, issues related to fragility, sensitivity, and responsibility are interesting to Danang policymakers and citizens. The study outcomes explore the Da Nang government and citizens in relation to "landscapes" and "security," followed by the themes "development capability", "efficiency", "infrastructure" and "attractiveness". The results will contribute to managerial and practical implications for city leaders in considering how effective the Night-time economy is during the first phase of the operation process.

**Keywords:** Night-time economy, Night-time tourism, tourism industry, Danang city, Vietnam.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Night-time economy (NTE) and its issues

The term "Night-time economy" (NTE) refers to the economic activities that take place in cities during the night, encompassing nightlife and various forms of entertainment [1]. NTE is often used as a euphemism in research discussions about nebulous and potentially illegal transactions [2]. Darkness and night frequently evoke negative or ambiguous images [3], and NTE is also known as the "night urban economy"[4]. This concept is linked to the global economy's ability to promote urban nightlife as a form of cultural

production, particularly in relation to the UK's recovery during the early 1990s recession.

NTE includes both the leisure and tourism industries, such as discos, clubs, theatres, concerts, and cinemas, as well as the "social economy," which arises from social gatherings in pubs, cocktail bars, and restaurants and other similar businesses [5]; [6]. Evening or nocturnal activities are frequently associated with wide-ranging satellite activities such as "fast food or take-away services " and transportation [7].

Over the last decade, nocturnal economies have significantly expanded [8], contributing to local and national economic growth by creating jobs, generating revenue, and enhancing socialization opportunities [9]. Shain Shapiro, the founder and CEO of Sound Diplomacy, supports this view. He asserts

that vibrant nightlife and evening economies do not require a bar or music venue on every street corner. Instead, they need a well-regulated, thoughtfully planned strategic offer that caters to both solitary individuals and social groups. The focus is on developing towns and cities for people of all ages, cultures, creeds, and genders.

Cities like Beijing [10], and Guangzhou in China [11], along with many other Chinese cities, have made significant strides in improving economic conditions through NTE. Prominent European cities such as London, Berlin, San Francisco, Paris, Toulouse, Nantes, Geneva, and Amsterdam have also seen substantial successes due to their vibrant NTEs [12].

However, the rapid expansion of the Night-time economy has led to increased antisocial behaviour, unintentional injuries, emergency room visits, crime, and drug abuse, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations. In the UK, for instance, evidence shows that severe violence is more prevalent in the evening, with 52 percent of violent incidents occurring between 6:00 and 10:00 pm, and 83 percent between 10:00 pm and 12:00 am (Office for National Statistics, 2015). Therefore, while developing an NTE, governments must ensure social order [14].

Although Vietnam does not yet have a fully developed Night-time economy, some activities are available only at night, including entertainment venues, night markets, convenience stores, and pedestrian avenues, which typically close by midnight. Developing the night-time economy will significantly boost tourism, consumption, and investment, playing a crucial role in the nation's socio-economic recovery and development (Vietnam Ministry of Finance, 2023).

### 1.2. Danang and NTE phase 1 introduction

According to Vietnam discovery, Da Nang, a stunning city in central Vietnam, offers easy access to the UNESCO-listed Hoi An Ancient Town, superb beach resorts, delectable Banh Mi, and some of the country's most beautiful beaches. As per Da Nang Statistical Office information, international travellers spend an average of 1.84 days in Da Nang, while local visitors spend approximately 1.68 days—both percentages are lower than the previous year. One reason for this is the city's underdeveloped night-time economy, which fails to encourage tourists to extend their stay and spend more. Da Nang lacks the variety and brand recognition needed to attract more domestic and international visitors. Consequently, tourism revenues and foreign visitor spending in Vietnam lag behind other markets, where data indicates that tourists spend only 30% of their time during the day, with the remaining 70% dedicated to night-time activities (Danangfantasticity, 2020).

However, Da Nang is taking steps to transform itself into a vibrant, round-the-clock city to boost domestic consumption and tourism (Danangfantasticity, 2020). The city's night-time economy initiative is divided into three phases. Phase 1

involves piloting the process, investigating, selecting, and organizing the development and services for the night economy while maintaining beauty, order, environmental sanitation, and quality of life. Phase 2 focuses on promoting investments and implementation. Phase 3 aims to create a comprehensive nightlife entertainment complex to enhance the plan's effectiveness.

The "Da Nang by Night" programme includes several key features:

- Exploring nightlife at My An Beach and the An Thuong tourist district.
- Watching artistic illuminations themed from Thuan Phuoc Bridge to Tran Thi Ly Bridge along the Han River's banks.
- Organising night-time programmes and services at various attractions.
- Hosting cultural activities, events, festivals, and night art programmes on both sides of the Han River.
- Utilising Da Nang's culinary scene by organising "Happy Hours" and night tour programmes.
- Enhancing services and planning engaging night-time activities to encourage longer stays.

This research will help clarify issues such as "landscape" and "security," as well as factors like "development potential," "efficiency," "infrastructure," and "attractiveness."

## 2. Literature review

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the literature review and the history of the night-time economy (NTE), this research analyzed the titles of all related papers published between 1995 and 2023, totaling 328 articles from the Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus databases. The analysis revealed that the core concepts revolve around, as follows.

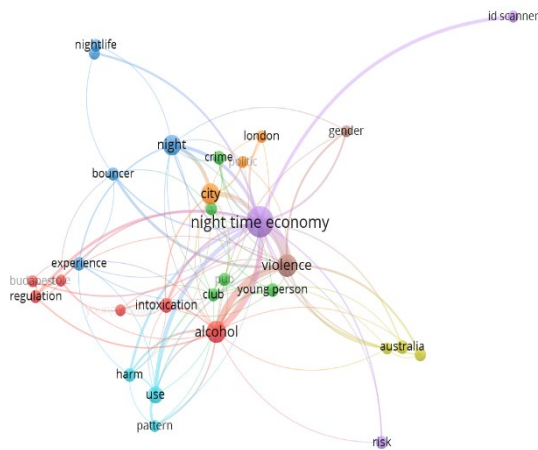
Table 1. Night-time economy concepts (1995 – 2023)

No	Concepts	Occurrences
1	Night-time economy	107
2	Violence	42
3	Alcohol	38
4	Night	28
5	City	29
6	Use	15
7	Intoxication	10
8	Pub, Risk, and Impact	7

The next section will delve into the literature related to the analysed themes.

## 2.1. The Night-time economy concepts

The night-time economy emerged in the early 1990s as a strategy for economic development [15]. It encompasses services and activities running from 6 pm to 6 am, including various recreational options that are only open at night [16]. This economy can stimulate customer curiosity and attract visitors to leisure destinations such as food and beverage areas, pubs, lounges, and other social spots [17]. The night-time economy is seen as an effective strategy for enhancing mental health and driving economic growth [18]. It plays a crucial role in the urban economy by increasing citizens' income [19]. Experiencing nightlife in a metropolis offers people the chance to create unforgettable memories through activities like visiting shopping districts and exploring diverse cultural areas [20]. Cities have increasingly focused on stimulating night-time economic growth by transforming less attractive city center destinations into popular recreational venues, thereby enhancing their vibrancy and livability [21].



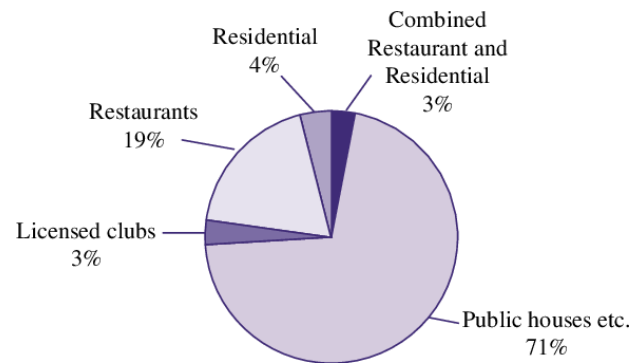
**Figure 1.** Night-time economy concepts (1995 – 2023)  
Notes: Authors' works, 2024

## 2.2. Night-time economy and its impacts

Research identified a strong correlation between the night-time economy (NTE) and terms such as "violence" and "alcohol," as depicted in Figure 1 above. This connection will be explored in greater detail in the following section.

### 2.2.1. Alcohol, drugs, and violence

Despite its brief period of renaissance, the night-time economy has numerous drawbacks, including safety concerns, alcohol and drug abuse, and violence. This situation has been exacerbated by the rapid proliferation of bars, pubs, and nightclubs, driven by the British trend of youthful binge drinking (see the chart below).



**Figure 2.** England and Wales, by type of on-licensed premises, June 2004.

Source: DCMS [27], p. 4

Notes: Public house is formal for pub in the UK

Over the past few decades, the UK has seen a significant shift in the landscape of its Night-time economy. Today, bars and clubs, traditionally late-night entertainment venues, have become more "feminized" [22]. In other words, drinking and drunkenness among women have become more frequent and even expected [23]. Research shows that young females, in their social life, often consider drinking as the social aspect [24]. Their feminine identities are demonstrated via particular drinking choices and practices containing drunkenness and heavy drinking. The Night-time economy will enhance alcohol consumption which may cause numerous problems such as social instability or alcoholism [25]; [26]; [27]. Abusing alcohol and illegal drugs may increase the risk of conflict and violence in young people [28]. Simultaneously, the growth of the Night-time economy encourages psychostimulants [29] and the emergence of illegal narcotics [30]. Using urban places for leisure and entertainment is rising rapidly, increasing the risk of violence and illicit drug abuse [31]. Most people often tend to drink alcohol before smoking drugs, which causes mental problems [32] associated with cultural, environmental, and community complexities, creating inevitable consequences, especially sexual violence [33]. The Night-time economy also causes violence against women [34]. Additionally, the subject of the third gender might be considered and a special area created and placed to attract those visitors for the night economy [35].

The cultural transformation when a night economy appears [36] impacts young people's awareness and lifestyle. The night economy helps the neighbourhood tackle the problem of employment (the proliferation of part-time, service-oriented labour). NTE politics also provide socio-economic benefits. Political factors facilitate the promotion and maintenance of drug consumption in tourist destinations [37].

### 2.2.2. Technology as a tool for stabilizing the Night-Time Economy

Using Technology to maintain the stability of the Night-time economy, such as ID scanners [38] and navigational systems is considered indispensable. The Night-time economy also causes violence against women [39]. Its emergence affects

young people's awareness and lifestyle and pushes the legalization of nightlife and alternative culture [40]. Using technology to maintain the Night-time economy's stability [41], such as ID scanners and navigational systems is considered indispensable. Breathalysers are used to tackle conflicts and violence between bouncers and drunken customers [42].

2.2.3. NTE and Government management

Night economy management must be unified and methodical to maintain stable and safe operation [43]. Governments need to establish policing interventions through cooperative partnerships, exhibiting synergistic interests in crime prevention through community collaboration, encouraging communities to take ownership of problems, and develop specific countermeasures against alcohol-related violence [44]. The government assists in connecting [45] and closely linking enterprises of the night economy [46]. In London, governments boost night-time mobility by implementing infrastructure, facilitating movement for citizens in night-time hours to promote Night-time economy development [47]. Cumulative impact zones are also a policy tool to diversify the Night-time economy by supporting licensing targets for alcohol outlets and restricting alcohol availability areas [48]. In Wales, an existing Health Impact Assessment method framework was re-developed as a national policy to control the Night-time economy regardless of health impact [49]. The night mayor in Amsterdam developed an initial collaboration between public and commercial sectors and has various advanced projects. The municipality, night mayor, local communities and night industry entrepreneurs can all promote peripheral Night-time economy clusters (Fig 3).

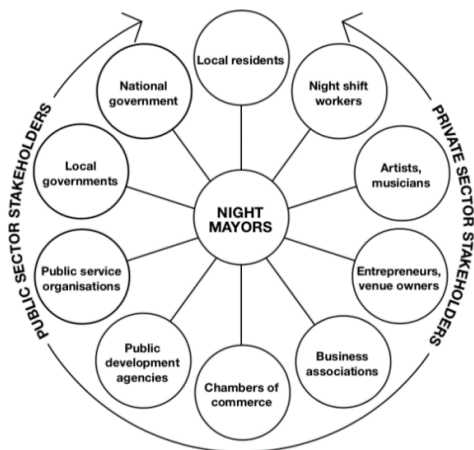


Figure 3. The level of public space maintenance compared to the city's average (OIS, 2021)

2.3. Cities, Countries, and Notable Events Highlighted in the Night-Time Economy Study

London (England) is an example of how the development of the night economy aids in restoring the economy [50], just as strategies and initiatives alter the economy [51]. However,

when it comes to implementing the night economy, London still has numerous issues to deal with, such as violence caused by alcohol and drugs [52]. Today, Britain's night economy is struggling to recreate the evening economy 'on the cheap,' leading to the dominance of 'mainstream nightlife' at the expense of the traditional working-class underculture [53]. In addition to London, other countries or towns, such as Australia, Wales, and others, have enhanced their economies by expanding the night economy. Australia adjusted its strategy and made the night economy a priority development [54]. Wales amended its hourly policy and many other regulations to offer the ideal conditions for an unrestrained night economy [55]. An inner-city of Bucharest metropolis in the south-eastern European, which used to be abandoned by its residents for a long time, witnessed a massive flourish in the Night-time economy thanks to its recent urban politics and the local economy [56]. New Zealand has a very developed national culture that is drunk to the point of drunkenness; even young women are encouraged to participate in this Night-time economic activity [57].

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collections

3.1.1. Interview Question Themes

The purpose of this paper is to identify and investigate elements that contribute to the development ability and efficiency of the NTE's initiation phase (the first or pilot phase of the NTE process). Some themes for interview questions are prepared based on the literature (Table 2).

Table 2: Literature review themes and keywords

Citizens and positive impact
Citizens and negative impact
Technology
Government management (positive and negative impacts)
Maintaining stable and safe operation
Encouraging communities to take ownership of their problems
Developing specific countermeasures against alcohol-related violence
Assisting in connecting and closely linking enterprises' work
Cumulative impact zones
Restricting alcohol availability areas
The initial collaboration between the public and commercial sectors
Economy clusters
Mechanism
Violence
Alcohol
Drugs

Based on these topics, numerous questions were devised to better understand the perspectives of both residents and the government. These questions seek to elicit their positive and negative perspectives on Phase 1 of preparing the Danang Night-time Economy, as well as their hopes for its future growth.

### 3.1.2. Interview data collection

This research collects data about the Danang Night-time Economy (NTE) through open-ended interviews [58]. The study focuses on residents who live in NTE locations, as well as government personnel involved in the phase.

A team of collaborators received approximately two weeks of training in conducting unstructured interviews with local key informants [59]. They were instructed to encourage informants to express their views freely. These collaborators interviewed people in the target area throughout a two-month period.

Collaborators approached houses at random, beginning with a brief talk that included an introduction to the research, its objectives, and permission to perform the interview. Once authorization was given, the interviews were done, and the responses were recorded by collaborators. Each participant received a modest gift as a mark of thanks for their participation. Following the interviews, the information gathered was filtered and ready for analysis.

## 3.2. Data analysis techniques

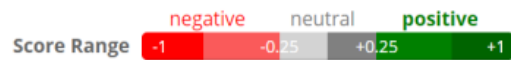
One of the analytical techniques utilized in this study was Text2data's real-time Sentiment Analysis API, which allows researchers to analyse the sentiment of any text-based content via a scalable and secure RESTful API service. VOS Viewer was also utilized to understand text data and do sentiment analysis across the complete collection of interviews.

### 3.2.1. Sentiment analysis and Text2data

The subject topic was also comprehensively investigated using a natural language processing (NLP) technique [60]. This method extracts and identifies the interviewees' emotional states or subjective opinions. Classifying the polarity of a given speech is an important task in sentiment analysis (SA), since it determines whether the communicated emotion in the text or audio is positive, negative, or neutral, representing the citizens' emotional intent [61]. Various classification techniques, widely employed in machine learning and deep learning, help to advance sentiment analysis.

Text2data is a web-based text analytics platform that also includes an Excel plugin. It can be utilized for a variety of tasks, including analysing internal documents, emails, CRM data, and verbatim comments. It tracks customer happiness, analyses sentiment in social media and survey data, using online survey data. Sentiment analysis, summarization, classification, entity extraction, topic discovery, and keyword

analysis are some of the platform's capabilities. The sentiment analysis scores for interviews are displayed in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4.** Sentiment analysis scores  
Source: Text2data interface setting

## 4. Findings and discussions

### 4.1. Citizens comments on Danang NTE Phase 1

#### 4.1.1. Citizens' thoughts on how the NTE launch impacts their lives.

Citizens provide feedback on how the NTE introduction has affected their life. The results reflect favourable feelings, with the word themes emphasising the most commonly uttered words and phrases.

**Table 3:** NTE launching's impact thematic on Citizens

No	Thematic Analysis (all occurrences)	Sentiment analysis scores
1	living habits	positive 0.871
2	vital consideration	positive 0.75
3	entertainment options	positive 0.748
4	strangers' safety	positive 0.744
5	significant contribution	positive 0.738
6	strong incentive	positive 0.732
7	increasing labour income	positive 0.687
8	creating more jobs	positive 0.667
9	selling snacks	positive 0.563
10	economic prosperity	positive 0.54
11	social development	positive 0.518
12	resources and labour force	positive 0.517

Night-Time Economy (NTE) has a considerable impact on many elements of urban life, according to the study. "Living habits" appeared as the most influential element, demonstrating the NTE's extensive impact on people's daily activities. Other important elements are "entertainment options," "stranger safety [62, 63]" and "increasing labour income," which indicate the NTE's involvement in improving leisure options, assuring safety, and expanding economic opportunities [64]. Additionally, aspects such as "selling snacks," "economic prosperity," and "social development" highlight the NTE's interrelated socioeconomic characteristics. These findings emphasize the importance of extensive planning and stakeholder participation in maximising the NTE's benefits while addressing potential obstacles.

#### 4.1.2. Citizens' expectations on Danang's NTE

The findings identify various positive keywords that reflect citizens' expectations.

**Table 4. Citizens' expectations on Danang's NTE**

No	Thematic Analysis (all occurrences)	Sentiment analysis scores
1	Increase resident's	positive 0.744
2	Development benefits	positive 0.728
3	Economic benefits	positive 0.702
4	Inherent potential	positive 0.687
5	Being created	positive 0.652
6	Great expectation	positive 0.64
7	Being developed	positive 0.526
8	Increase resident's	positive 0.744

Citizens' expectations of NTE for their benefit include "job creation and income increasing." They suppose that the city's inherent potential is being developed with NTE and its policies will allow tourism development in the post-pandemic era and benefit the city and its residents. Revenue growth is expected in the citizens' businesses [65].

Citizens reported that the government's regulatory mechanism has loosened, enabling individuals to transition into entrepreneurship and initiate their own businesses. From citizens' perspectives, NTE can be both an immediate and long-term solution for creating new jobs for workers. Besides maintaining social stability, rich and diverse economic services available at night with a hope of security and noise-reducing policy for citizens living around the NTE areas [67]. Citizens specific discussion, such as allocating An Thuong Street for nighttime activities with strict food safety inspections, indicate citizens' concern about both economic and public health issues in NTE development.

#### 4.1.3. Citizens' suggestions for NTE operation

Citizens who have positive thoughts about the Danang NTE operation hope that it is carried out safely, avoids the influence of many locals, and creates the best way to attract visitors, as most visitors are active at night [68]. They hope to ensure environmental sanitation and regional security and order by implementing the Night-time economy. Post pandemic, the strategies for epidemic prevention and control require everyone's collaborative efforts, which could benefit their health and the health of others [69], and the highest level of security possible for citizens is also prioritized.

**Table 5. Citizens' suggestions of Danang NTE**

No	Thematic Analysis (all occurrences)	Sentiment analysis scores
1	successful as well	positive 0.681
2	night economy	positive 0.677
3	security possible	positive 0.591
4	best project	positive 0.588
5	comes highly	positive 0.519

## 4.2. Policymakers' Comments on Phase 1 of Danang's Night-time Economy

#### 4.2.1. Positive Effects of Phase 1 of Danang NTE

Some respondents emphasized the advantages of Phase 1 of the Danang Night-time Economy (NTE). They underlined the availability of numerous products and stressed the significance of being ready for the night economy's diverse offerings. They also advised that tourism associations and travel corporations collaborate on building product chains [70]. Another point raised was the importance of assuring conditions, specifically in terms of infrastructure and the legislative framework that supports the night economy [71, 72].

**Table 6. Thematic analysis of policymakers' feedback**

No	Thematic Analysis (all occurrences)	Sentiment analysis scores
1	guarantee conditions	positive 0.709
2	night economy	positive 0.677
3	hidden value	positive 0.585
4	least one new product	positive 0.542

#### 4.2.2. Negative Effects of Phase 1 of Danang NTE

Some interviewees mentioned "fragmented planning, household waste, Covid-19 epidemic, pollution garbage, night-time economic development, stop and fail, additional issues" as keywords that reflect negative aspects of NTE.

*Fragmented Planning:* Interviewees raised concerns about fragmented planning during project implementation, urging collaboration to develop effective and sustainable night-time economic models tailored to each locality's development orientation, while ensuring harmony with destinations and other services.

*Household Waste:* Interviewees emphasized the importance of addressing infrastructure development and ensuring environmental hygiene conditions, notably in terms of handling household waste, in order to reduce pollution and its impact on people's lives.

*Pollution Garbage:* Interviewees highlighted the risks and issues associated with security, infrastructure demand, noise pollution, and waste. They emphasized the necessity for a legal and political framework to encourage nighttime economic development.

Table 7. Thematic Analysis negative impacts from Government perspectives

No	Thematic Analysis (all occurrences)	Sentiment analysis scores
1	fragmented planning	negative -0.44
2	household waste	negative -0.492
3	Covid-19 epidemic	negative -0.565
4	pollution garbage	negative -0.573
5	time economic development	negative -0.609
6	stop and fail	negative -0.648
7	addition issues	negative -0.703

4.2.3. Suggestions

Interviewees emphasized the following keywords to validate the significance of the Night-time Economy (NTE) to Da Nang city, as in Table 8 which follows.

**Strategic Planning:** They proposed that local governance must consider local economic factors, demand, and resource allocation for effective management and support.

**Empowerment and Collaboration:** Interviewees advocated for empowering localities with proactive rights, particularly in developing tourism products and enhancing infrastructure and legal frameworks. Collaborations with major corporations, like Sun Group, were seen as pivotal for the NTE's success.

**Impactful Initiatives and Coordinated Programs:** Suggestions changes to night business regulations, like extending operating hours for certain establishments, were seen as crucial for initiatives like "Danang By Night" to significantly boost tourism and economic growth.

4.2.4. Expectations of implementing NTE

According to the interviewees, Da Nang lacks an effective mechanism for growing its night economy, which reduces its attraction when compared to other locations. Interviewees also expected that the Ministry of Public Security construct a pilot model of tourist police in certain regions with night economic development potential to answer tourists' security and safety concerns.

Table 8. Suggestions for Danang NTE

No	Thematic Analysis (all occurrences)	Sentiment analysis scores
1	Manage it as well	positive 0.906
2	Proactive rights	positive 0.75
3	Significant impact	positive 0.738
4	Interesting program	positive 0.726
5	Night-time economy	positive 0.702
6	Thorough consideration	positive 0.701
7	Local economy	positive 0.684
8	More initiative	positive 0.681
9	Night economy	positive 0.677
10	Still modest	positive 0.631
11	Specific support policies	positive 0.596
12	Best place	positive 0.573
13	Must be proactive	positive 0.567
14	Spent by guests	positive 0.561
15	Huge businesses	positive 0.559

Table 9. Expectations of implementing NTE

No	Thematic Analysis (all occurrences)	Sentiment analysis scores
1	Management's perspective	positive 0.728
2	Night economy	positive 0.677
3	Tourist police	positive 0.671

5. Conclusions

Upon analysing interview data and synthesising ideas from the literature analysis, this study identified important themes and keywords to provide a complete knowledge of Night-time Economy (NTE) challenges and construct a framework specific to the Danang setting. The framework includes several aspects:

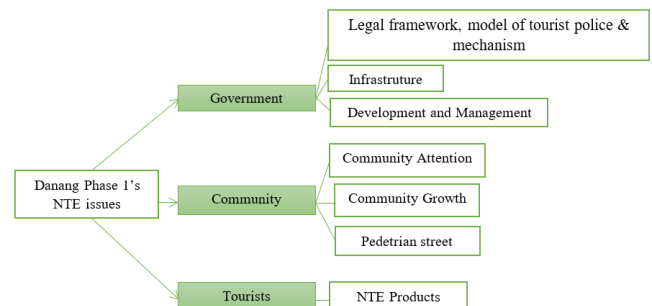


Figure 5. Overall Framework

Danang governance and citizens are particularly concerned about addresses of fragility, sensitivity, and responsibility. This study emphasizes the importance of "landscapes" and "security" as key areas, while "development capability," "efficiency," "infrastructure," "pedestrian street," and "attractiveness" are recognized. These findings have significant managerial and practical implications for city leaders as they navigate the implementation of the NTE during Phase 1 of the project.

## 6. Limitation and future research

The current article highlights citizens' and government perspectives on phase 1 of NTE in Danang, using only an interview method with NLP and data map visualization. Others could use other methodologies and big data for more prominent models in different phases of NTE in Danang or other tourism cities.

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