

Original Article

Promoting Vietnam's Floating Market Culture to International Visitors

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Abstract: This study analyzes the current state of floating market culture in Vietnam and evaluates the factors that play a significant role in promoting this cultural heritage to international audiences. Based on a review of the literature on shopping, cuisine, social interaction, and artistic activities at floating markets, the study employs a qualitative approach to systematize key cultural characteristics and the current state of these activities. In addition, the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (Fuzzy-AHP) is applied to determine the priority levels of different groups of promotional factors. Evaluation data were collected from 11 experts with knowledge and experience in culture, tourism, communications, service infrastructure, and public administration related to floating markets. The findings identify five groups of factors ranked in descending order of priority: cultural distinctiveness and values (C01), with a weight of 0.2983; communication and promotional methods (C03), with a weight of 0.2073; service infrastructure and safety (C02), with a weight of 0.2031; environmental and landscape conservation (C04), with a weight of 0.1545; and policy support (C05), with a weight of 0.1367. Among these factors, cultural distinctiveness and values receive the highest priority, indicating that preserving and showcasing values associated with local livelihoods, everyday life, and river-based cultural spaces constitute a fundamental basis for promoting floating market culture. Based on these findings, the study proposes groups of solutions for enterprises and household businesses, government agencies, tourists and international visitors. The proposed solutions focus on preserving cultural values, improving the quality of communication and promotional activities, enhancing infrastructure and safety, protecting the environment, and strengthening the participation of local communities.

Keywords: Promotion, Floating Market Culture, Vietnam, International Visitors.

I. INTRODUCTION

The 1943 Outline on Vietnamese Culture laid the foundation for Vietnam's cultural revolution. The Outline identified three fundamental principles for the development of Vietnamese culture: "nationalization," "popularization," and "scientification." These principles remain relevant to Vietnam's external cultural affairs, contributing to the enhancement of the country's national soft power in the context of international integration and globalization (VietnamPlus, 2023).

In the process of international integration, traditional cultural values are among the factors that contribute to shaping Vietnam's national identity and creating opportunities for Vietnamese culture to be introduced to international audiences (VTV, 2024). Distinctive cultural characteristics across different regions of Vietnam also constitute an important factor attracting international tourists to the country. According to the results of a survey of international tourists in Vietnam, 90% of respondents expressed a preference for being guided by members of local ethnic minority communities; 71% wished to stay overnight and dine in ethnic minority villages; 81% wanted to participate in activities such as textile weaving, food preparation, and traditional herbal bath making with local residents; and 83% wished to purchase souvenirs directly from the households where they were produced. These findings indicate that local culture is one of the values that tourists are particularly interested in and seek to experience when visiting a new destination. Cultural differences, therefore, can contribute to stimulating tourists' desire to learn about and explore a destination (Minh Anh & My Hanh, 2024).

A Vietnamese proverb states, "First, live near a market; second, live near a river," reflecting the long-standing relationship between local livelihoods, markets, and waterways. Indeed, many communities situated along the rivers and canals in Vietnam have established their livelihoods based on trading through waterways and shipping goods by water (QDND 2020).

Floating market – a form of open space located in a water area, which serves as transport access and also commercial space. Floating markets are organised mainly in the Mekong Delta and have turned into a significant mark of the river life in Southern Vietnam. These markets mostly start in the early morning hours and are most active in the first half of the day. A special thing about the Vietnamese floating market is the cây bèo, which is a pole set up on a boat that vendors hang samples of their



products on to announce which goods they have for sale. This practice allows buyers to recognize goods from a distance, and is well adapted to commerce in an aqueous environment.

Among many floating markets in the Mekong Delta, there are some well-known ones like Cai Rang Floating Market (Can Tho), Nga Bay Floating Market (Hau Giang), Cai Be Floating Market (Tien Giang), Nga Nam Floating Market (Soc Trang), Tra On Floating Market (Vinh Long) and Long Xuyen. Some floating markets which are also known abroad include Damnoen Saduak Floating Market in Ratchaburi, Thailand; the floating market on Dal Lake in Srinagar, India; floating markets in the Solomon Islands; and the floating market on Inle Lake in Myanmar. In Vietnam, Cai Rang Floating Market was recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2016, and the annual Cai Rang Floating Market Cultural Tourism Festival has been organized to promote and preserve its cultural values. In addition, external cultural diplomacy initiatives, such as the "Vietnam Days Abroad" series of events, have created further opportunities to introduce Vietnamese culture to international audiences.

The study focuses on examining the cultural characteristics of Vietnamese floating markets and the current state of activities at selected representative floating markets. On this basis, the study evaluates the factors that influence the promotion of floating market culture to international audiences and proposes a number of recommendations for businesses, household enterprises, government agencies, and tourists to support the preservation and promotion of these cultural values.

II. OVERVIEW OF VIETNAMESE FLOATING MARKET CULTURE

A) Shopping Culture at Vietnamese Floating Markets

Floating markets operate through a distinctive form of commercial exchange in which all buying and selling activities take place on the water, with both vendors and buyers primarily using boats and small sampans as their means of transportation. Market activities usually begin while the morning is still shrouded in mist and reach their peak between 5:00 and 8:00 a.m., gradually becoming less crowded as the sun rises. One of the most distinctive features of the shopping culture at floating markets is the use of the "cây bèo", a traditional visual advertising practice. It consists of a bamboo pole approximately three to five meters long, erected at the bow of a boat, from which samples of the goods for sale are displayed. The basic principle is "display what you sell", allowing buyers to identify the products available on a particular boat simply by observing it from a distance, without the need for vendors to call out their goods. This practice emerged in response to the characteristics of the water-based environment, where conventional signs can easily be affected by the wind, while vendors' voices can be drowned out by the sound of boat engines and waves. Thus, the cây bèo have shaped a new type of visual marketing, closely corresponding to the context of life and business behavior of communities in southwestern provinces (Canh Nhat, 2024; TST Tourist, 2023; Bao Vinh Long, 2025).

Goods are variously seasonal fruits and agricultural products, vegetables, ornamental flowers, handicraft items and food products, to daily-life necessities for the waterway community. The social context through which river traders interact to buy and sell creates a peer-to-peer trading environment, differing from the more impersonal commercial environment of today (Bao Van Hoa, 2024).

B) Culinary Culture at Vietnamese Floating Markets

Besides trading, this place also harbours daily life and food culture in big bustling markets where hundreds of small boats are used to cook and serve breakfast dishes directly on the river, such as hủ tiếu (dry rice noodle soup), bún riêu (crab noodle soup) and cà phê kho (Vietnamese-style coffee prepared on the boat). Those dishes, however, are usually cooked within the boat and pots of broth have to be kept boiling all day long they provide a form of culinary experience one hardly finds elsewhere (Tuoi Tre, 2015). Food presentation is also unique on these boats. Your average food boat is run by a wife-and-husband team—the cook working inside the boat and the other person at the helm of the boat, driving it near people in their boats, taking orders for food right there, and then serving their customers right on board. For many vendors, this vocation has been a part of their lives for decades now, with floating markets representing an inseparable component of the collective memory and cultural identity among locals and visitors (Kenh14, 2025). Culinary culture at floating markets therefore represents more than a form of commercial activity. It reflects livelihoods and ways of life that have been closely connected to waterways across generations, while also serving as one of the attractions for domestic and international tourists seeking to experience the river-based lifestyle of Vietnam's southwestern region (Kenh14, 2022).

C) Social Interaction and Performing Arts at Vietnamese Floating Markets

The water-based setting of floating markets also provides a cultural environment in which distinctive forms of folk performing arts from Southern Vietnam have been nurtured and preserved. Among these, "đờn ca tài tử" is particularly prominent. This traditional musical art form emerged and developed in the late nineteenth century, drawing on the foundations of ceremonial music, "Nhã nhạc", the royal court music of Hue, and folk music of Southern Vietnam. In 2013, "Đờn ca tài tử" music of Southern Vietnam was inscribed by UNESCO on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Bao Tin Tuc, 2023; VnExpress, 2013). In addition to "đờn ca tài tử", hò Cần Thơ, a traditional call-and-response singing style between men

and women featuring lyrical folk verses, is also sometimes performed on boats departing from the market. This form of folk singing reflects the optimism and strong sense of community among waterway-based communities (VOV, 2023). These artistic and cultural activities are often incorporated into tourism events held at floating markets, providing visitors with opportunities to listen to traditional performances and interact directly with local residents. Through such experiences, tourists can gain a deeper understanding of the rich spiritual and cultural life of communities in Southern Vietnam's Mekong Delta.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods to study the current status of floating market culture and its components in terms of attracting international audiences. For the qualitative part, the research group identified and reviewed all available press articles and mass media material related to floating markets, synthesized them and performed formal analysis. For the quantitative aspect, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was used, as suggested by Saaty (1980). Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a multi-criteria decision-making technique that allows a complex problem to be broken down into hierarchies of objectives and criteria, with the priority of each factor determined through pairwise comparisons. AHP applications span a broad range, from resource management /environmental and tourism/ to agriculture.

On the other hand, conventional AHP presumes that expert judgement can be quantified by exact numerical values. Since expert assessments are fraught with uncertainties, the simplifications are never complete and do not lend themselves to precise numbers in practice. This limitation has been mitigated by integrating the AHP with Fuzzy Set Theory proposed by Zadeh (1965), which allows one to deal with vagueness in the evaluation process. On this basis, the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (Fuzzy-AHP) was developed to combine the advantages of AHP with those of fuzzy set theory. Buckley (1985) proposed the use of Triangular Fuzzy Numbers (TFNs) in AHP to represent uncertainty in expert judgments. Subsequently, Chang (1996) developed the Extent Analysis Method, which further expanded the applicability of Fuzzy-AHP to multi-criteria decision-making problems. This method is particularly suitable for studies involving expert judgment and criteria that are difficult to quantify using purely quantitative data.

In this study, Fuzzy-AHP is employed to evaluate the relative priority of five groups of factors associated with the promotion of floating market culture. Based on expert judgments, five groups of factors are identified: (i) cultural distinctiveness and values; (ii) communication and promotional methods; (iii) service infrastructure and safety; (iv) environmental and landscape conservation; and (v) the supporting role of policies. The evaluation results enable the relative weight of each factor group to be determined, thereby providing a quantitative basis for analyzing and proposing solutions to promote floating market culture.

The Fuzzy-AHP procedure adopted in this study consists of four steps. First, a hierarchical structure is developed, comprising the overall evaluation objective and the groups of criteria based on the analytical framework of the study. Second, an expert survey is conducted using a pairwise comparison questionnaire to assess the relative importance of the criteria. Third, experts' linguistic judgments are converted into Triangular Fuzzy Numbers (TFNs) to construct a fuzzy pairwise comparison matrix. Fourth, expert judgments are aggregated, and the weights of the criteria are calculated using Chang's (1996) Extent Analysis Method.

In this study, experts assessed the relative importance of five groups of factors associated with the promotion of floating market culture, namely: cultural distinctiveness and values; communication and promotional methods; service infrastructure and safety; environmental and landscape conservation; and policy support. The Fuzzy-AHP results were used to determine the priority ranking of these factor groups, thereby clarifying the relative role of each group in promoting floating market culture.

To account for uncertainty in expert judgments, the study employs a linguistic scale combined with Triangular Fuzzy Numbers (TFNs). The linguistic assessments were converted into fuzzy numerical values based on the approach proposed by Buckley (1985) and subsequently used in constructing the pairwise comparison matrix.

Table 1: Linguistic Scale and Triangular Fuzzy Numbers Used in the Study

Linguistic scale	Symbol	Triangular Fuzzy Number (l, m, u)	Reciprocal Fuzzy Number (1/u, 1/m, 1/l)
Equally Important	E (Equal)	(1, 1, 1)	(1, 1, 1)
Slightly More Important	(SL) Slightly More Important	(2, 3, 4)	(1/4, 1/3, 1/2)
More Important	(M) More Important	(4, 5, 6)	(1/6, 1/5, 1/4)
Much More Important	(VM) Much More Important	(6, 7, 8)	(1/8, 1/7, 1/6)
Outstandingly More Important	(O) Outstandingly More Important	(8, 9, 10)	(1/10, 1/9, 1/8)

Source: Developed based on Saaty (1980), Buckley (1985), and Chang (1996).

During the evaluation process, when criterion i is assessed as more important than criterion j according to a specific linguistic term, the pairwise comparison value a_{ij} is assigned the corresponding Triangular Fuzzy Number (TFN) presented in Table 1. Conversely, the value of a_{ji} is determined as the reciprocal fuzzy number of a_{ij} . The use of Triangular Fuzzy Numbers enables the model to capture uncertainty and variations in expert judgments when assessing the relative value-creation importance of the criteria.

IV. CURRENT STATE OF FLOATING MARKET ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAM

A) *Current Status of Shopping, Culinary, Social Interaction, and Performing Arts Activities at Vietnamese Floating Markets*

There is, however, certain empirical evidence that commercial activities at Vietnamese floating markets have shrunk in size recently. Local authorities said Cai Rang Floating Market, which is located outside Can Tho city, now has some 210 river-trade households regularly operating fine, down sharply compared to a decade ago (PLO, 2025). This decrease is due to the faster construction of road transport infrastructure that has progressively diminished the use of floating markets as important transshipment centres for merchandise. In parallel, the youth generation has become indifferent to taking up trading life on rivers, being paid low wages and facing the real hardship of living on waterways (VOV Giao Thong, 2023).

In addition to the reduced scale, there are many other environmental and safety problems, such as pollution of rivers and canals, garbage in waterways and boats and vessels that do not fully satisfy registration conditions and guarantees. Inspection or bring unfair competition from some service providers. These problems can adversely influence tourists' experience, e.g., international visitors who have high expectations when it comes to safety and service quality (PLO, 2025). To address these issues, some local governments have initiated efforts to help maintain and build floating markets. A significant example is in Can Tho City, which focuses on preserving and developing Cai Rang Floating Market by (1) building boat piers and areas for visitors to rest, (2) improving living standards for families that live by commerce on the river, and (3) augmenting the management of traffic safety levels for inland waterways (VOV Giao Thong, 2014; Bao Can Tho, 2023).

B) *Approaches to Promoting Vietnamese Floating Market Culture to International Audiences*

One of the effective approaches to promoting floating market culture today is the organization of annual tourism events associated with floating market activities. For instance, the Cai Rang Floating Market Cultural Tourism Festival was organized for the first time in 2016, which also marked the official historic recognition of the floating market as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage. Activities included boat and vessel parades, stalls of agricultural products and local goods, "đờn ca tài tử" performances on the river and an espousal of traditional "áo bà ba" costume contests. They help to bring the cultural image and values of floating markets to domestic and international visitors [62–64]. I want to highlight that in addition to domestic events, Vietnamese floating markets are also known internationally through international media agencies. British travel magazine Rough Guides mentioned Cai Rang Floating Market in its top 10 coolest markets in the world to stop at, which increases international awareness of Vietnamese floating markets via international travel information channels (Klook 2025). In addition, using images and cultural symbols of floating markets in external activities, especially the Vietnam Days Abroad, together with digital communication channels or social networking sites is also a good idea that needs to be promoted in order to bring the river-based culture of the South-Western region to the world (Minh Thu, 2023).

C) *Evaluation of Factors Promoting Floating Market Culture Using the Fuzzy-AHP Method*

a. *Consistency Test of the Pairwise Comparison Matrix*

To determine the relative priority of the factors influencing the promotion of floating market culture, this study applies the Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (Fuzzy-AHP) based on the assessments of 11 experts with knowledge and expertise in local culture, community-based tourism, service infrastructure, communication and promotion, and public administration in floating market areas. The experts conducted pairwise comparisons of the five groups of factors using the fuzzy linguistic scale established in this study.

Prior to aggregating the criterion weights, the consistency of the pairwise comparison matrix was assessed to ensure that the judgments achieved an acceptable level of consistency. The calculated measures were $\lambda_{\max} = 5.2998$, with a Consistency Index (CI) of 0.0750 and a Random Index (RI) of 1.12 ($n=5$), respectively, leading to an acceptable Consistency Ratio (CR) of 0.0669.

Saaty (1980) describes that the consistency of the pairwise comparison matrix is acceptable if $CR < 0.10$; In this paper, the CR of 0.0669 is below the acceptable level, and the consistency requirement is met to continue with the better computation framework of Fuzzy-AHP methods in subsequent analysis.

The consistency test results indicate that the assessments of the relative importance of the five groups of factors achieved an acceptable level of consistency. This provides a sound basis for proceeding with the aggregation and calculation of the weights of the factor groups associated with the promotion of floating market culture using the Fuzzy-AHP method.

These results confirm that the weights assigned to the factor groups in this study provide a scientifically grounded basis and offer a relatively objective representation of the experts' judgments regarding the importance of each factor in promoting floating market culture.

Results of Determining the Weights of Factor Groups for Promoting Floating Market Culture Using the Fuzzy-AHP Method.

After the pairwise comparison matrix was confirmed to satisfy the consistency requirement, the Fuzzy-AHP calculations were conducted in three steps: (i) determining the Fuzzy Synthetic Extent value (r); (ii) normalizing the fuzzy numbers to determine the Fuzzy Weight (w); and (iii) defuzzification to obtain the Best Non-Fuzzy Performance (BNP) value.

Table 2: Results of Weight Calculation for Factor Groups Promoting Floating Market Culture Using the Fuzzy-AHP Method

Factor	r (l, m, u)	w (l, m, u)	Normalized BNP	Rank
Cultural Distinctiveness and Values (C01)	(1.354; 1.565; 1.751)	(0.230; 0.301; 0.382)	0.2983	1
Service Infrastructure and Safety (C02)	(0.932; 1.054; 1.194)	(0.159; 0.203; 0.261)	0.2031	3
Communication and Promotional Methods (C03)	(0.954; 1.077; 1.216)	(0.162; 0.207; 0.266)	0.2073	2
Environmental and Landscape Conservation (C04)	(0.721; 0.801; 0.899)	(0.123; 0.154; 0.196)	0.1545	4
Policy Support (C05)	(0.619; 0.703; 0.815)	(0.105; 0.135; 0.178)	0.1367	5

Source: Authors' calculations.

The results show that, following the aggregation and defuzzification processes, Cultural Distinctiveness and Values obtained the highest BNP value, at 0.2983, accounting for approximately 29.83% of the total weight. This finding indicates that cultural identity, everyday cultural values, trading practices, and customs associated with the river-based way of life constitute important elements that distinguish floating markets and provide a fundamental basis for their promotion.

Second highest was communication and promotional methods (BNP = 0.2073) at around 20.73% of total weight. The level of these priorities implies that experts highly emphasize the subject of communication content, digital platforms, press, social media and promotion by floating markets to present it as cultural values internationally. Cultural values provide the substance, while communication and promotions are the vehicles through which they will be mass disseminated.

Coming in at No.3 was Service Infrastructure and Safety, which had a BNP value of 0.2031 or 20.31% of the total weight and differed by only 0.0042 from Communication and Promotional Methods. This result reveals that infrastructure condition, safety for inland waterway transport and service quality are critical in affecting tourists' experiences. Although a destination may have important cultural value, if conditions for access and service are not satisfactory, in practice the cultural resources will be difficult to effectively exploit as marketing assets.

Environmental and Landscape Conservation was ranked in the Fourth place, with a BNP value equal to 0.1545, which represented about 15.45 of the total weight. This weight indicates how relevant the characteristics of the riverine landscape and environmental quality are in ensuring the long-lasting attractiveness of floating markets, but this dimension is less prioritized than cultural values, communication & promotion, and service infrastructure.

With the lowest BNP score, Policy Support received 0.1367, which is around 13.67% of the weightage. This agrees with our understanding that generally policies and government authority support are perceived primarily as enabling conditions that create institutional environments, allow coordination and promote efforts, rather than an immediate source for cultural attractiveness. Nevertheless, policy support remains essential for integrating, coordinating, and sustaining the other factor groups.

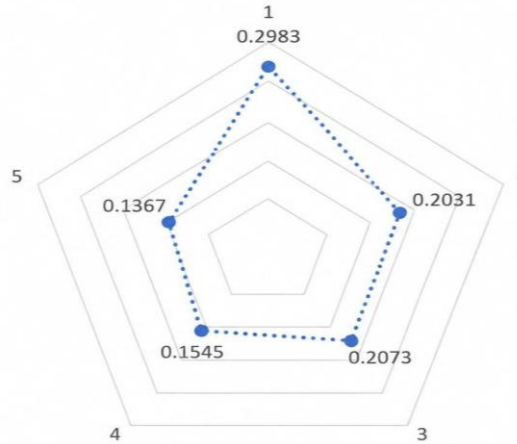


Figure 3. Multidimensional Weights of Factor Groups for Promoting Floating Market Culture Based on the Fuzzy-AHP Method

Source: Authors' compilation based on the Fuzzy-AHP calculation results.

Overall, the Fuzzy-AHP results indicate that Cultural Distinctiveness and Values and Communication and Promotional Methods play the most prominent roles, with a combined weight of approximately 50.56%. The result implies that promotional actions should be implemented exclusively based on the preservation of differentiated cultural values and on matching communication and promotional strategies. The other three elements are subservient to the first four: Service Infrastructure and Safety, Conservation of Environment and Landscape and Policy Support these create enabling conditions within which promotions can be maintained and advanced.

b. Discussion of the Fuzzy-AHP Results

Cultural Distinctiveness and Values (C01). The calculated Fuzzy -AHP results show that C01 Cultural Distinctiveness and Values was ranked first with normalized BNP weight of 0.2983, Rank:1. Specifically, the fuzzy synthetic extent was $r = (1.354; 1.565; 1.751)$, and the corresponding weight fuzzy $w = (0.230; 0.301; 0.382)$. The fundamental value of the fuzzy weight centered is 0.301, which is very close to the normalized BNP value, 0.2983. This result illustrates that exploring and providing unique cultural values forms the cornerstone of floating market culture for foreign audiences.

The content, the elements such as river-based trading practices, the *cây bèo*, local agricultural products, the river-based lifestyle of traders, culinary culture with unique dishes of floating market and forms of cultural interaction are reflected to identify highlights for visitors when coming here. Hence, marketing practices must respect cultural authenticity and not resort to either vacuous representations or producing variances of culture that are distinct from the lived experiences of communities.

Communication and Promotional Methods (C03). This criterion ranked second, with a normalized BNP weight of 0.2073. The fuzzy synthetic extent value was $r = (0.954; 1.077; 1.216)$, while the corresponding fuzzy weight was $w = (0.162; 0.207; 0.266)$. The central value of the fuzzy weight was 0.207, which closely corresponds to the normalized BNP value of 0.2073. The results indicate that cultural values can only reach a broader audience when they are communicated through approaches that are appropriate for different target groups. To open the floating market culture to international audiences, foreign-language content and visual materials, short-form videos, social media platforms and tourism communication channels can be used. On the other hand, communication content is supposed to be more reflective than prescriptive, in that too much advertisement-driven content leads to oversimplifying cultural values and meaningful experiences. C03 is only 0.0042, which exceeds C02 as well, and communication and infrastructure are the two factor groups with closer priority.

Service Infrastructure and Safety (C02). This criterion achieved a normalized BNP weight of 0.2031, ranking third. The fuzzy synthetic extent value was $r = (0.932; 1.054; 1.194)$, while the corresponding fuzzy weight was $w = (0.159; 0.203; 0.261)$. The central value of the fuzzy weight was 0.203, which closely corresponds to the normalized BNP value. The results indicate that infrastructure conditions and safety levels play an important role in determining tourists' accessibility to and experiences at floating markets. Factors such as boat piers, transportation facilities, directional signage, sanitation, inland waterway traffic safety, and information on service prices can directly affect the quality of the visitor experience. For international visitors, providing basic information in foreign languages may also help reduce barriers during the process of accessing and using tourism services.

Environmental and Landscape Conservation (C04). This criterion had a normalized BNP weight of 0.1545, ranking fourth. The fuzzy synthetic extent value was $r = (0.721; 0.801; 0.899)$, while the corresponding fuzzy weight was $w = (0.123; 0.154; 0.196)$. The average value of the fuzzy weight was 0.154, which approximates the normalized BNP value (0.1545 very closely). Compared with C01, C03, and C02 (the motivations responsible for promotion), a smaller weight was given to C04, which refers to conservation of the environment and landscapes; thus, its importance works more in support than as a direct driver of promotional activities. However, the quality of water, riverine landscapes and unique habitats form the context in which visitors come to regard cultural values. Thus, environmental and landscape conservation can be considered as an integral part of maintaining the originality and beauty of floating markets.

Policy Support (C05). The normalized BNP weight for this criterion (ranked fifth) was 0.1367. The fuzzy synthetic extent refers to $r = (0.619; 0.703; 0.815)$, and the corresponding fuzzy weight was $w = (0.105; 0.135; 0.178)$. The fuzzy weight central value was 0.135, which is much closer to the normalized BNP value of 0.1367. Policy support is less important than other evidential factors but still essential to create regulatory frameworks, support local communities, invest in infrastructure provision and safety and co-ordinate promotional efforts. The findings indicate that policy measures alone are, however, unlikely to be successful unless they are accompanied by appropriate cultural content and communication strategies and service delivery arrangements that meet the needs of visitors. Thus, we should recognize the role of policy as merely a coordinating and supporting element that creates an environment in which the other factors could perform their roles well.

Based on the total Fuzzy-AHP results, the rank of criteria is C01 (0.2983) > C03 (0.2073) > C02 (0.2031) > C04 (0.1545) > C05 (0.1367). The weight structure suggests that the most dominant factor is Cultural Distinctiveness and Values (C01), accounting for 30 percent of the total. Next in order of importance are C03 and C02, each with weights of around 20%, while the remaining classes (C04 and C05) have lower individual weights but continue to fulfil complementary roles.

These findings indicate that the promotion of floating market culture should be implemented through a relatively integrated framework: cultural values constitute the core content; communication and promotion enhance accessibility and dissemination; infrastructure and safety ensure favorable conditions for visitor experiences; environmental and landscape conservation maintains the cultural context; and policy support establishes the institutional framework and mechanisms necessary to support related activities.

V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of the factors influencing the promotion of floating market culture, the proposed measures should be considered from the perspective of clearly distinguishing, to the extent possible, the roles of the different stakeholders involved. Businesses and household enterprises operating at floating markets are the actors directly responsible for creating and maintaining the visitor experience; relevant government authorities play roles in providing strategic direction, coordination, and support; while tourists, particularly international visitors, are both recipients of cultural information and potential participants in disseminating the image and cultural values of floating markets. From this perspective, the research team proposes several recommendations for the following stakeholder groups:

A) For Businesses and Household Enterprises Operating at Floating Markets

First, businesses and household enterprises should prioritize the preservation and effective representation of distinctive cultural characteristics associated with commercial activities at floating markets. The analysis indicates that Cultural Distinctiveness and Values is the highest-priority factor. Therefore, business activities should not focus solely on the function of goods exchange but should also preserve the elements that constitute the distinctive identity of the floating market environment. Things such as traditional practices of trading and selling this material, types and ways to showcase or introduce particular goods, the associated communications in the form of stories behind river-based livelihoods, and even local agricultural products may contribute towards a great episodic experience. These pieces of local culture should be embedded within real business operations and not become ritualized cultural shells or practices detached from the daily lives of communities.

Second, businesses and household enterprises need to fill in the gap between operational business linkages and direct digital communication channels. In favor of proper communication channels, household businesses can positively introduce their products and trading activities, as well as specific traits of floating markets. Not promotional content, but local livelihoods through authentic representations and special products, as well as cultural spaces in the vicinity of the locals, should be highlighted. For businesses with a more robust investment capacity, online presentation and promotional initiatives can either be created in-house or developed collaboratively with tourism operators to create targeted messaging. This methodology's approach is aligned with the study, as one of the factor groups having weight in the first extension of this study (what proportions have their communications and promotional methods).

Third, business establishments and household service providers should pay more attention to service quality and safety in the tourist serving process. Service Infrastructure and Safety is a medium-priority criterion, suggesting that the cultural

experience can only be delivered in a destination perceived as convenient and safe for the participants. Therefore, facilities improvement in terms of transportation, safety during travel on waterways, transparency regarding service price formulations and effective communication skills with tourists should be regarded as practical priorities. Foreign visitors could more easily gain access to and understanding of cultural activities at floating markets if information were provided in such basic languages.

Fourth, the household enterprises have promotional options in the form of relevant experiential activities for undecided customers as an appropriate way to introduce floating market culture. Besides purchasing and trading activities, tourists could become familiar with the sources of local products, how to prepare some specific local food or learn stories attached to the river-based lifestyle of traders. These need not come in separately organized tourism programs but may well be embedded directly into vendor and visitor interactions. Such an approach can enrich the experience of visiting, while keeping local communities at its centre as custodians and transmitters of culture.

B) For Relevant Government Authorities

First, relevant government authorities should develop a relatively coherent strategic orientation for the preservation and utilization of the cultural values of floating markets. The findings indicate that Cultural Distinctiveness and Values is the highest-priority factor. Therefore, tourism development and the promotion of the image of floating markets should be grounded in the identification of distinctive cultural values that need to be preserved. The management process should seek to balance the objectives of economic development, tourism utilization, and the preservation of traditional living spaces. This requires the formulation of long-term orientations while clearly identifying the core cultural elements that need to be protected from changes resulting from commercial and tourism activities.

Second, investment in and improvement of infrastructure conditions supporting activities at floating markets should be strengthened. The Fuzzy-AHP results show that Service Infrastructure and Safety has a weight of 0.2031, reflecting the significant role of technical conditions and service quality in the effectiveness of cultural promotion. Relevant authorities could focus on improving boat piers and docking facilities, environmental sanitation conditions, directional signage, facilities supporting tourists, and measures to ensure inland waterway traffic safety. Investment should be compatible with the spatial characteristics of floating markets and should avoid forms of redevelopment that substantially alter the existing structure and distinctive characteristics of these areas.

Third, communication and promotional activities should be carried out in a coordinated way involving government institutions, tourism companies, and local communities. Instead of doing promotional campaigns in isolation, stakeholders may create uniform communication materials covering the past and new scenario based on commodity trade, traditional floating markets culture, economic activities around tourist pathways and how tourists would benefit from these local economies. Digital platforms would be the medium to provide visitors with information before, during and after they visit. Specifically, multilingual content (when appropriate) may be of benefit for international guests. Nonetheless, the content of communication should be based on the real cultural values and practices among local communities to guarantee fidelity in both representation and interpretation of culture.

Fourth, authorities may be able to support enhancing the local capacity of communities in promotional and tourism-development activities. That could help them to be more responsive to the changing tourism demand, as well as through courses on customer service skills, communication and digital technology applications, in addition to the essential safety practices for household enterprises. Such support should seek to empower local communities rather than take their place. When local residents participate directly in promotional activities and receive appropriate benefits from them, their capacity to maintain cultural values over the long term can be enhanced.

Fifth, management activities should integrate floating market development with requirements for environmental and landscape protection. Although Environmental and Landscape Conservation has a lower weight than the other factor groups, it remains an important component of the cultural setting of floating markets. Measures to control waste, maintain water quality, regulate vessel activities, and protect the surrounding landscape should be implemented on a regular basis. Environmental conservation is important not only for maintaining the living conditions of local communities but also for preserving the spatial context necessary for visitors to fully experience and appreciate the cultural values of floating markets.

C) For Tourists and International Visitors

First, tourists and international visitors should be encouraged to approach floating markets as opportunities for cultural exploration and experiential learning, rather than viewing them merely as tourist attractions or shopping spaces. The findings indicate that Cultural Distinctiveness and Values are the most important factors; therefore, the effectiveness of promotional activities depends partly on visitors' ability to recognize and engage with these cultural values. During their visits, learning about river-based trading practices, the river-based lifestyle of traders, the origins of local products, and local customs can contribute

to a more meaningful and in-depth tourism experience. This can also transform a visit from a purely observational activity into a process of engaging with and interacting with local culture.

Second, visitors can contribute to disseminating the image of floating markets by sharing their authentic experiences through digital media platforms. With the development of the online environment, user-generated content can help expand the destination's reach to different audience groups. However, information sharing should emphasize accuracy and respect for local communities. Images, stories, and reviews should reflect visitors' actual experiences with reasonable authenticity and avoid misrepresenting or oversimplifying the cultural values of floating markets.

Third, tourists should be encouraged to respect the livelihoods and living spaces of local communities. For household enterprises operating at floating markets, trading is first and foremost a means of livelihood and only secondarily a component of the tourism experience. Therefore, visiting and taking photographs should be undertaken with due respect for local residents' privacy and everyday activities. Appropriate interactions between visitors and local communities can not only enhance the visitor experience but also contribute to maintaining a harmonious relationship between tourism development and local life.

Fourth, international visitors should be provided with greater opportunities to participate in cultural experiences through appropriate forms of informational support. Some succinct foreign-language information on the history of the floating market, local products and trading practices, and some general tourism etiquette tips could alleviate barriers to engagement with this segment of Thai culture. With a deeper insight into the cultural background, those who go on tours and voyages can enjoy their experiences rather than concentrating entirely on more aesthetic aspects. This is also consistent with the view that tourists should not be treated simply as passive consumers of information but rather active agents in cultural interaction and dissemination.

Fifth, visitors are encouraged to act in protection of the environment and landscape of floating markets. Banning littering, responsible use of single-use products such as food containers, and complying with environmental protection regulations are the actions that directly contribute to maintaining the quality of the tourism environment. Visitor participation in these efforts complements management measures and the activities of local communities, thereby contributing to the preservation of the spatial conditions that underpin the cultural values of floating markets.

Overall, the recommendations for the three stakeholder groups indicate that the promotion of floating market culture should be implemented through coordinated efforts among local business communities, government authorities, and tourists. Businesses and household enterprises are the actors directly responsible for maintaining and showcasing cultural values; government authorities establish the regulatory framework, provide infrastructure conditions, and develop supporting mechanisms; while tourists participate in the processes of receiving, experiencing, and disseminating these cultural values. Coordination among these stakeholders can create favorable conditions for cultural promotion activities to go beyond increasing the visibility of floating markets and, at the same time, address the need to preserve cultural values and ensure appropriate conditions for long-term development.

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