



Sustainable Development of Khlong Suan 100-Year Market Tourism: A Place-Based Policy Approach Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Nisanat Mangsiri

Faculty of Management Science, Suan Dusit University, Bangkok, Thailand

Corresponding author. E-mail address: nisanat_man@dusit.ac.th

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Abstract

This study aimed to: 1) examine the tourism situation and potential of Khlong Suan 100-Year Market in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, 2) assess the extent to which tourism development practices align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 11, 12, and 15, and 3) propose place-based policy recommendations for sustainable tourism development. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 230 tourists using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale (IOC = 0.86, Cronbach's α = 0.94), while qualitative data were obtained from 30 key informants, including community leaders, local entrepreneurs, and government representatives. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and one-sample t-tests, whereas qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis, SWOT analysis, and the TOWS Matrix.

The findings revealed that all three dimensions of SDGs alignment were perceived at a high level by stakeholders. The social dimension received the highest mean score ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.50$), followed by the economic dimension ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.51$) and the environmental dimension ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.50$). One-sample t-tests confirmed that all dimensions scored significantly above the established threshold for a high level of agreement ($p < .001$). These findings reflect stakeholder perceptions regarding the extent to which tourism development practices align with SDG principles rather than a direct evaluation of official SDG indicators. Qualitative findings highlighted the importance of cultural heritage, multicultural community identity, and community participation as key drivers of sustainable tourism development. SWOT-TOWS analysis informed place-based policy recommendations aimed at strengthening local economic development, cultural heritage conservation, environmental sustainability, and canal ecosystem protection. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how the SDGs framework can be integrated with place-based policy to guide sustainable tourism development in heritage communities and historic markets within the Thai context.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Place-Based Policy, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Cultural Heritage Tourism, Mixed Methods

Introduction

Cultural and community-based tourism is playing an increasingly important role in driving local economies, particularly in areas with cultural heritage. This generates income and promotes learning about the community's way of life, culture, and stories (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] & United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2017). In Thailand, culture is recognized as a key driver for economic development and soft power enhancement through cultural tourism (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2025). In 2024, Thailand recorded approximately 35.55 million international tourist arrivals, representing a 26.3% increase from the previous year, with community-based tourism promoted under the BCG Economy policy to distribute benefits to secondary cities and rural communities (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2025). The floating market is a cultural icon of the lifestyle of the riverbank settlements. Khlong Suan 100-Year Market is one of the marketplaces with cultural heritage. With old wooden structures along the Khlong Pravat Buri Ram Canal, located between Chachoengsao and Samut Prakan provinces. It accommodates Thai-Chinese, Thai Buddhists, and Thai



Muslims, among others, which are the traditions, cultures, and local foods that have been inherited and practiced for a long time (Srikaewmuang et al., 2017).

Currently, although the Khlong Suan 100-Year Market has successfully preserved its traditional way of life and cultural heritage, it continues to face several challenges, including the deterioration of historic wooden buildings, environmental management issues associated with the canal ecosystem, and limited community participation in tourism management and conservation activities (Petison & Kantabutra, 2023; Yaemsunthorn et al., 2022; Srikaewmuang et al., 2017). These challenges highlight the need for development approaches that balance economic, social, and environmental objectives in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 8, 11, 12, and 15 (UN General Assembly, 2015). In the context of Thai community and floating markets, tourism development is closely connected to local cultural heritage, canal-based livelihoods, traditional knowledge, and community identity. Therefore, applying a place-based policy approach is particularly relevant, as it emphasizes the use of local assets, stakeholder participation, and context-specific development strategies rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all model (Barca, 2009). Integrating place-based policy with the SDGs thus provides an important framework for addressing the unique development challenges and opportunities of Khlong Suan 100-Year Market.

A review of the literature indicates that previous studies on floating market tourism in Thailand have primarily focused on well-known and commercially developed destinations, such as Amphawa and Damnoen Saduak, with particular attention to tourism management, community participation, cultural heritage conservation, and local economic impacts (Pongponrat, 2011; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014). However, most studies have examined tourism impacts from a single-dimensional perspective. Research integrating the SDGs framework to assess tourism potential across economic, social, and environmental dimensions remains limited, particularly in historic community markets that continue to preserve their cultural identity and traditional way of life. Furthermore, although several studies have proposed policy recommendations, many remain at a conceptual level and provide limited guidance on how research findings can be translated into practical implementation mechanisms and measurable local-level outcomes. This study addresses these gaps by integrating the SDGs framework with place-based policy to assess tourism development potential and formulate context-specific policy recommendations for the sustainable development of Khlong Suan 100-Year Market.

For this reason, this research aims to fill the aforementioned gap by studying the situation and tourism potential of the Khlong Suan 100-Year Market from the perspective of community stakeholders, covering economic, social, and environmental dimensions. It includes a SWOT-TOWS analysis and an assessment of alignment with SDGs 8, 11, 12, and 15 to develop clear and practical place-based policy proposals that are consistent with the cultural identity and the genuine development context of the local community.

Objectives

1. To study the situation and tourism potential of the 100-Year Khlong Suan Market in economic, social, and environmental dimensions.
2. To assess the alignment of the 100-year Khlong Suan Market's sustainable tourism development with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on economic, social, and environmental dimensions.
3. To formulate place-based policy recommendations for the sustainable development of Khlong Suan 100-Year Market in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Literature Review

1. The Concept of Sustainable Tourism

Several scholars, such as (Butler, 1999; Cohen, 1988; Richards, 2018; Tosun, 2000; United Nations, 1993; UNESCO, 2025), state that sustainable tourism focuses on balancing economic, social, and environmental factors, considering the area's carrying capacity for tourists to avoid long-term impacts.

2. Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Cultural tourism in the context of floating markets, particularly this research, focuses on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land) (UN General Assembly, 2015; World Tourism Organization, 2018; Scheyvens & Hughes, 2019; Saarinen, 2020).

3. Community Participation in Sustainable Tourism Management

Community participation is a crucial mechanism for sustainable tourism development and plays a significant role in preserving local lifestyles and cultural heritage. Successful examples in Thailand include Amphawa Floating Market and Damnoen Saduak Floating Market (Arnstein, 1969; Tosun, 2000; Phongpradist, 2024; Ramkissoon et al., 2025). Research findings indicate that strong communities are more likely to ensure long-term sustainability for the area.

4. Place-based Policy and Sustainable Tourism

Place policy emphasizes development that aligns with the specific context and potential of each area, with the aim of reducing problems caused by excessive development that impacts the environment. For cultural tourism destinations, place-based policy helps integrate cultural conservation with sustainable tourism management (Pike et al., 2017; Rodríguez-Pose, 2020; Dredge & Jenkins, 2011; Saarinen, 2020; Srikaewmuang et al., 2017; Barca, 2009).

5. Context of the 100-Year Khlong Suan Market Area

The Khlong Suan 100-Year Market is a cultural tourism destination located along the Prawet Burirom Canal, spanning two provinces Chachoengsao and Samut Prakan. The community is home to residents of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Thai, Chinese, and Muslim populations, and possesses distinctive cultural heritage assets, such as historic wooden buildings and local cuisine (Srikaewmuang et al., 2017).

6. Related Research

Relevant concepts and research show that sustainable tourism development using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework will help promote the local economy and efficient resource management, with community participation being a key factor in preserving cultural tourism sites (Scheyvens & Hughes, 2019; Harris et al., 2002; Pongponrat, 2011; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014; Srikaewmuang et al., 2017; Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration [DASTA], 2023).



Table 1 Key points summarized from literature review and related research

Section	Key Points	Cited Author
1. The Concept of Sustainable Tourism	Sustainable tourism focuses on balancing economic, social, and environmental factors.	Butler (1999); Cohen (1988); Richards (2018); Tosun (2000); United Nations (1993)
2. Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	The UN's SDGs integrate sustainability across 17 goals; for floating markets, relevant goals include SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 12, and SDG 15.	UN General Assembly (2015); UNWTO and UNDP (2017); Scheyvens and Hughes (2019); Saarinen (2020)
3. Community Participation in Sustainable Tourism Management	Involving the community in planning and decision-making will benefit everyone fairly and help preserve the local identity and environment for a long time.	Arnstein (1969); Tosun (2000); Phongpradist (2024)
4. Place-Based Policy and Sustainable Tourism Management	Place-based policies align tourism with local needs, reduce unnecessary development, and protect degraded environments.	Pike et al. (2017); Dredge and Jenkins (2011); Saarinen (2020); Srikaewmuang et al. (2017)
5. Context of the 100-Year Khlong Suan Market Area	Khlong Suan 100-Year Market is located between two provinces Samut Prakan and Chachoengsao. The market is situated along the Praves Buriram Canal and features cultural heritage such as old wooden buildings and local cuisine.	KanyaBotan (2013)
6. Related Research	Research Integrating Sustainable Tourism with SDGs.	Scheyvens and Hughes (2019); Harris et al. (2002); Pongponrat (2011); Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014); Srikaewmuang et al. (2017); DASTA (2023)

7. Research Framework

This conceptual framework illustrates the connection between the situation and the potential of the 100-year-old Khlong Suan market in economic, social, and environmental dimensions, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 11, 12, and 15. It also proposes a community-based spatial development approach.



Figure 1 Research framework.

Methods and Materials

Population and Sample

Quantitative Research

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The quantitative aspect focuses on tourists visiting the Khlong Suan 100-Year Market. Due to the lack of official statistics on the exact number of visitors to this market, Cochran's formula (1977) for large or unknown populations was used, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 6.5%, resulting in a minimum sample size of 230 people. Although a 5% margin of error is generally preferred, a 6.5% margin was adopted due to fieldwork constraints, as data collection could only be conducted on weekends and public holidays when the market was fully operational. Israel (1992) noted that a margin of error between 5% and 7% is often acceptable in social science research with logistical constraints, especially when the primary goal is to identify general patterns rather than produce precise population estimates. Additionally, since this study used a convergent mixed-methods research design, where the quantitative component primarily serves to validate the qualitative research findings, a slightly higher margin of error is deemed acceptable (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Convenience sampling, along with quota sampling based on gender, age, and occupation, was employed to enhance the diversity of the respondents.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative data were collected from 30 key informants, comprising 10 local entrepreneurs, 10 community leaders or long-term residents, and 10 representatives from government agencies. Community leaders included individuals holding formal or informal leadership roles within the community. Long-term residents were defined as individuals who had continuously resided in the Khlong Suan community for at least 10 years and possessed substantial knowledge of the area's history, cultural heritage, and tourism development.



Research Instruments

Quantitative research used structured questionnaires to assess the situation, potential, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The questionnaire consisted of demographic questions and 20 measurement items rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The economic dimension was linked to SDG 8, the social dimension to SDG 11, and the environmental dimension to SDG 12 and 15. The measurement items were developed from the literature on sustainable tourism and cultural heritage tourism and were reviewed by experts prior to data collection.

Instrument Quality Control

The validity of the questionnaire was assessed by three experts with expertise in sustainable tourism development, community-based tourism and cultural heritage management, and research methodology, resulting in an Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index of 0.86 (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1976). The questionnaire was pilot tested with 30 respondents to assess its reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was enhanced through participant validation, whereby key informants reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the findings.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 28. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to explain tourists' perceptions in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scale, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, a one-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the average scores of each dimension were higher than 3.50, which is the lower boundary of the "high" level according to the 5-point Likert scale interpretation criteria. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis to support SWOT and TOWS analysis, leading to the development of place-based policy recommendations aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 11, 12, and 15.

Research Ethics

Received ethical clearance from Suan Dusit University (Approval No. SDU-RDI-SHS 2025-074).

Research Results

1. To Study the Situation and Tourism Potential of the 100-Year Khlong Suan Market in Economic, Social, and Environmental Dimensions

1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Data were collected from 230 respondents, of whom 53.5% were female, 35.2% were male, and 11.3% chose not to disclose their gender. The proportion of respondents with unspecified gender reflects participants who preferred not to provide personal demographic information, as this question was voluntary. Respondents were primarily aged 31–40 years (41.7%), followed by 21–30 years (29.1%), 41–50 years (15.7%), 50 years and older (7.8%), and under 20 years (5.7%).

The most common occupation was private company employee (50.0%), followed by government employee/state enterprise employee (20.9%), business owner (12.2%), student (10.9%), and unspecified (6.0%). Most respondents had a monthly income of 10,001–20,000 baht (48.3%), followed by 20,001–30,000 baht (29.6%), less than 10,000 baht (14.3%), and more than 30,000 baht (7.8%). During the past



five years, 45.2% of tourists had visited Khlong Suan Market two to three times, 37.4% were first-time visitors, and 17.4% had visited more than three times.

1.2 Situation and Potential of Tourism at Khlong Suan 100-Year Market

1.2.1 Quantitative Analysis Results

The survey results on the situation and potential show that the economic dimension received the highest score ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.53$), followed by the social dimension ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.54$), and the environmental dimension with an average score of ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.52$). This indicates that in the economic dimension, the market has the potential to generate income from local products and food, and in the social dimension, tourists are warmly and friendly welcomed and participate in cultural activities organized. In the environmental dimension, tourists are satisfied with the market's environment and cleanliness but still want further development of public spaces and continued care for the canal. Details are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Situation and potential of tourism at Khlong Suan's 100-year market

Dimension	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Economic	4.05	0.53	High
Social	4.02	0.54	High
Environmental	3.92	0.52	High

Note: Interpretation of mean scores was based on a five-point Likert scale as follows:

4.51–5.00 = Very High; 3.51–4.50 = High; 2.51–3.50 = Moderate; 1.51–2.50 = Low; and 1.00–1.50 = Very Low.

All three dimensions were rated at a high level, with the economic dimension receiving the highest mean score ($M = 4.05$), followed by the social dimension ($M = 4.02$) and the environmental dimension ($M = 3.92$). However, these differences should be interpreted with caution, as no statistical test was conducted to determine whether they were significantly different. Item-level analysis revealed that the lowest-rated aspects were product diversity in the economic dimension ($M = 3.97$), cultural learning and community activities in the social dimension ($M = 3.94$ – 3.95), and public space maintenance in the environmental dimension ($M = 3.86$). These findings indicate priority areas for improvement and provide useful directions for future place-based policy interventions aimed at enhancing sustainable tourism development.

1.2.2 Qualitative Analysis Results

The results of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were consistent with the quantitative analysis findings. In the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, the community, entrepreneurs, and government agencies emphasized cultural heritage, old wooden buildings, local products, and food as strengths that attract tourists and generate income for local residents. In the social dimension, communication with tourists was prioritized, especially the development of digital media skills. In the environmental dimension, environmental conservation was emphasized, particularly the preservation of deteriorating wooden buildings and canals. The SWOT and TOWS Matrix analysis details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Integrated SWOT–TOWS matrix for the 100–year Khlong Suan market

SWOT Factors		Strategic Directions (TOWS–Based)	
Strengths (S)		SO Strategies – Use strengths to capture opportunities	
• Strategic location near Bangkok • Historic cultural value (100+ years) • Unique food/products • Strong community networks		• Promote cultural & culinary assets via eco–tourism and youth–focused activities. • Develop homestays and cultural routes with municipal cooperation. • Build “Living Cultural Market” branding aligned with secondary–city tourism.	
Weaknesses (W)		WO Strategies – Reduce weaknesses by leveraging opportunities	
• Limited infrastructure • Unequal income distribution • Poor environmental management • Low digital marketing capacity		• Improve infrastructure through PPP collaborations. • Provide digital marketing training for local vendors. • Promote a “Green Market” identity to address waste issues and attract eco–tourists.	
Opportunities (O)		ST Strategies – Use strengths to mitigate threats	
• Secondary city & eco–tourism growth • Municipal/provincial cooperation • Cultural tourism & homestay trends • Youth engagement		• Preserve cultural identity through community networks and quality control. • Differentiate market heritage to reduce competition. • Collaborate with municipalities on environmental measures (waste, canal care).	
Threats (T)		WT Strategies – Minimize weaknesses to avoid threats	
• Competition from nearby markets and Coffee shops • Cultural identity loss • Environmental problems such as waste and pollution • Economic fluctuation & natural disasters		• Establish an environmental risk management system for issues such as waste and flooding. • Use PPP governance to address limitations of private–owned market areas. • Implement community rules to preserve wooden architecture and cultural authenticity.	

The SWOT–TOWS analysis results show that the 100–year Khlong Suan market has strong points in terms of identity and community cooperation, which can be developed to support its role as a secondary city tourist destination. However, the market still needs to focus on improving digital communication skills, developing infrastructure, and managing the environment to support long–term competition.

2. To Assess the Alignment of the 100–Year Khlong Suan Market’s Sustainable Tourism Development with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Focusing on Economic, Social, and Environmental Dimensions

2.1 Quantitative Analysis Results

The SDGs assessment presented in this study reflects stakeholder perceptions regarding the extent to which tourism development practices are aligned with selected SDG principles, namely SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 12, and SDG 15, rather than a direct evaluation of official SDG indicators established by the United Nations. A one–sample t–test conducted against a threshold of 3.50 confirmed that the mean scores of all three dimensions were significantly higher than this benchmark ($p < .001$), indicating that respondents consistently perceived tourism development at Khlong Suan 100–Year Market as strongly aligned with the selected SDGs principles. Among the three dimensions, the social dimension received the highest mean score ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.50$), followed by the economic dimension ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.51$) and the environmental dimension ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.50$), as presented in Table 4. These results are not merely statistical rankings but reflect the structural character of heritage tourism in Thailand’s rural–urban fringe.

**Table 4** Quantitative assessment of SDGs alignment for sustainable tourism development at Khlong Suan 100-year market

Dimension	Relevant SDGs	Representative Focus	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation	Cronbach's α	One-sample t-test (vs. 3.50)
Economic	SDG 8	Income, employment, and local enterprises	3.97	0.51	High	0.88	t(229) = 14.15, p < .001
Social	SDG 11	Cultural heritage, local identity, and community participation	4.01	0.50	High	0.87	t(229) = 15.82, p < .001
Environmental	SDG 12, 15	Waste management, ecosystem conservation, and resource sustainability	3.92	0.50	High	0.89	t(229) = 12.87, p < .001

Note: One-sample t-tests were conducted to examine whether mean scores were significantly greater than 3.50 (threshold for “High” level). All dimensions showed statistically significant results at p < .001.

2.2 Qualitative Analysis Results

The results of the consistency assessment from in-depth interviews and focus groups are consistent with the quantitative research and can be grouped into 4 main themes 1) Income generation and local economy (SDG 8), 2) Cultural heritage conservation and community participation (SDG 11), 3) Environmental management and responsibility (SDG 12), and 4) Ecosystem restoration (SDG 15). Therefore, these themes are important data for developing place-based policy proposals to make the 100-year-old Khlong Suan Market a model for sustainable cultural tourism in Thailand, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Qualitative mapping of SDGs alignment and strategic insights for sustainable tourism development at the Khlong Suan 100-year market

SDGs	Evidence of Alignment	Strengths Supporting Alignment	Challenges/Limitations	Indicators /Key SDG	Recommendations	Level of Alignment
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	High economic potential (Mean = 4.05) from local products; SWOT highlights income generation (S); Interviews confirm job creation via tourism.	Local products, awards, and strategic location boost trade; Entrepreneurs benefit from food/souvenir sales with municipal training and online marketing.	Income inequality and seasonal tourist reliance limit equity.	Job creation, skill development, and economic value enhancement.	Increase training and diversify income sources.	High
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Strong social dimension (Mean = 4.01); SWOT notes cultural heritage and community cohesion (S); Interviews support preservation efforts.	Multi-ethnic harmony and cultural heritage strengthen community; Market features old wooden houses, Thai-Chinese-Muslim lifestyles, and cultural/religious activities.	Limited participation and social conflicts pose risks.	Preservation of cultural heritage and identity.	Promote cultural activities and community planning.	High

**Table 5** (Cont.)

SDGs	Evidence of Alignment	Strengths Supporting Alignment	Challenges/ Limitations	Indicators /Key SDG	Recommendations	Level of Alignment
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	High environmental alignment (Mean = 3.92); SWOT identifies waste management opportunities (O); Interviews suggest eco-friendly packaging.	Opportunities to reduce plastic use and leverage local resources; Some entrepreneurs use biodegradable packaging with plastic reduction campaigns, though not market-wide.	Poor waste systems and pollution hinder sustainability.	Waste reduction and sustainable packaging practices	Manage waste with sorting and biodegradable packaging.	High
SDG 15: Life on Land	High resource conservation score (Mean = 3.98); SWOT values canal location (S); Community suggests clean-up projects (O).	Care for old wooden structures and conservation activities; Canal maintenance and natural resources support eco-tourism.	Pollution and flooding threaten ecosystem health.	Conservation of natural resources and old structures.	Restore canals and monitor biodiversity.	High

Table 5 summarizes the qualitative research findings and themes aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reflecting strengths, limitations, indicators, and recommendations. This information will be used as a guideline for sustainable cultural tourism development policy-making for the 100-Year Khlong Suan Market, as stated in objective 3.

3. To Formulate Place-based Policy Recommendations for the Sustainable Development of Khlong Suan 100-Year Market in Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, together with SWOT-TOWS analysis and stakeholder perspectives, place-based policy recommendations for sustainable tourism development at Khlong Suan 100-Year Market were formulated, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Place-based policy recommendations for sustainable tourism development derived from SWOT-TOWS analysis

SDG	Strategic Direction	Recommended Actions	Expected Contribution
SDG 8	Strengthen local economic opportunities	Product development, digital marketing, entrepreneur training	Increased income and employment opportunities
SDG 11	Preserve cultural heritage and local identity	Cultural interpretation, youth engagement, heritage activities	Enhanced cultural preservation and community participation
SDG 12	Enhance environmental management	Waste sorting, biodegradable packaging	Reduced waste and improved environmental sustainability
SDG 15	Conserve canal ecosystem	Canal restoration, biodiversity monitoring	Improved ecosystem conservation and biodiversity protection

The quantitative and qualitative findings, together with SWOT-TOWS analysis and stakeholder perspectives, were synthesized to formulate place-based policy recommendations for sustainable tourism development at Khlong Suan 100-Year Market, as presented in Table 6. These recommendations were further



organized according to SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 12, and SDG 15 and are illustrated in Figure 2 to highlight the strategic directions and actions supporting sustainable tourism development.



Figure 2 Oriented strategy for the Khlong Suan 100-year market.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the Khlong Suan 100-Year Market has significant potential for developing sustainable cultural tourism. This is because it can transform the community's cultural heritage and identity into economic value. Its geographical location near Bangkok, traditional wooden architecture, and diverse culinary cultural heritage create competitive advantages. From Barca's (2009) perspective, these factors are considered unique geographical or local resources that are difficult to replicate elsewhere, resulting in a sustainable competitive advantage. The market's informal economy, driven by local entrepreneurs and small food vendors directly involved in tourism activities, allows the community to generate value from tourism while maintaining its cultural uniqueness. This creates opportunities for income generation within the community, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The results also emphasize the importance of the local context in determining tourism sustainability, consistent with the studies of Pongponrat (2011) and Brooks et al. (2023) which states that heritage tourism can create sustainable economic benefits when cultural assets are effectively integrated into community-based tourism development. The case of Khlong Suan Market also demonstrates that diverse heritage architecture and cultural identity can serve as economic resources that support the livelihoods of the local community and long-term sustainability. In addition to cultural assets, the long-standing coexistence of Thai-Buddhist, Chinese-Taoist, and Thai-Muslim communities exemplifies a living multicultural model that promotes social cohesion and supports SDG 11 in the social aspect. This study aligns with Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) and UNESCO (2025) which state that the sustainability of tourism depends on authenticity that commercial tourism cannot create. Moreover, culture is not only an outcome of sustainable development but also a crucial mechanism for strengthening economic resilience, social cohesion, and community adaptability. These findings align with Ramkissoon et al. (2025) who propose that the sustainability



of community-based tourism does not solely rely on the strength of community relationships but also requires institutional mechanisms that facilitate participation and support long-term development.

Environmental sustainability remains the most significant challenge for Khlong Suan 100-Year Market. Although local stakeholders have promoted waste reduction and environmental awareness, structural constraints, including fragmented governance across two provincial jurisdictions and limited environmental infrastructure, continue to hinder progress toward SDGs 12 and 15. This finding supports Harris et al. (2002), who argued that tourism growth in developing countries often outpaces investment in environmental management systems. The four policy directions derived from the TOWS Matrix reflect the application of place-based policy principles by utilizing local strengths and resources to support economic development, cultural heritage conservation, environmental management, and canal ecosystem protection (Pike et al., 2017; Dredge & Jenkins, 2011). Consistent with Saarinen (2020), the findings demonstrate how the SDGs framework can be translated into locally relevant development strategies. Unlike previous studies that largely proposed generic tourism development measures, this study integrates the SDGs framework with a place-based policy approach tailored to the cultural and geographical context of Khlong Suan 100-Year Market, thereby providing more actionable policy guidance. Nevertheless, effective implementation will require addressing challenges related to cross-provincial governance, infrastructure investment, and long-term community participation through collaboration among local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

Limitations of Study

This study has several limitations. First, the use of convenience and quota sampling may limit sample representativeness and introduce potential sampling bias. Second, data were collected primarily during weekends and public holidays; therefore, visitors surveyed may differ from weekday visitors in terms of characteristics, travel behavior, and perceptions, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Third, the cross-sectional design reflects stakeholder perceptions at a specific point in time and may not capture changes in tourism conditions over time. Future research should employ probability-based sampling, include data collection across different periods, and adopt longitudinal designs to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The research findings indicate that developing Khlong Suan 100-Year Market into a sustainable cultural tourism destination requires a place-based policy that balances economic, social, and environmental dimensions. This study fills an academic gap by demonstrating that integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with place-based policy approaches can serve as a framework for developing floating markets and cultural heritage communities in Thailand. The findings suggest that the sustainability of cultural tourism destinations depends not only on economic potential but also on social cohesion, community participation, and environmental management. Although the market has the potential to generate income and preserve the community's cultural identity, limitations remain in infrastructure and environmental management, particularly in waste management and canal ecosystem conservation. Therefore, relevant agencies should promote cultural heritage tourism activities while strengthening digital marketing and branding strategies to engage younger generations. This may include developing short-form content on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Facebook to showcase local culture, traditional foods, and community stories, as well as installing QR-code storytelling stations at key heritage sites to enhance visitor learning and cultural awareness. In addition, mechanisms for collaboration among community members, local authorities, and other stakeholders should be strengthened to support tourism development aligned with SDGs 8,



11, 12, and 15. However, as this study focuses solely on Khlong Suan 100-Year Market, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to other contexts. Future research should compare different floating markets or community-based tourism destinations, examine long-term changes, and incorporate SDG indicators alongside objective environmental measures to provide a more comprehensive assessment of tourism sustainability.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT version 5.2 to structure the content and QuillBot as an auxiliary tool for language editing. The author has reviewed and edited the generated results and takes full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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