

*Exploring Sites for Sustainable Development in Bang Khla, Thailand*

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore specific sites, which could be developed and linked to the Bang Khla District of Chachoengsao's floating market for sustainable tourism. The study consisted of a survey of important places in the Bang Khla District and nearby areas. Merchants and local people were interviewed on the impact of the floating market, and 400 tourists were interviewed with a set of 5 item-Liket's rating scale questionnaires concerning their satisfaction with the tours, attractions and available facilities. It was found that people in the community wanted to preserve the natural environment as well as canals and rivers (mean = 3.91), which was a result of a social perspective. From an economic perspective, we studied opinion on the promotion of new products and employment levels (mean = 4.01). According to tourists' opinion, 76% of the tourists interviewed wanted to restore King Taksin the Great's Stupa Memorial, 74% wanted to develop Wat Pho Bang Khla, and 49% agreed to renovate the landscape, and open Wat Chaeng's ordination hall as a linkable tourist attraction for the floating market. According to this study, it was recommended that the development of the floating market should be done by the addition of tourist attractions and by increasing the size has implications for the local society, culture, economics and environment. These implications should be studied further so as to create a method for their prevention.

Key words: Sustainable, Bang Khla, tourism, floating market

## Introduction

The statistics of tourist arrivals to Thailand have increased every year. In 2008, international inbound tourism was at approximately 14.83 million people. Tourism is an important element of the profit of the country and the operators of attractions who receive benefits. Improving the community through new products and development will lead to increased tourism.

Locations that could develop for supporting the tourism are places at the community such as nature, the market ancient, and the floating market. It is the ecotourism. The community should take part in promoting and developing all activities for tourism for instance the floating market at Amphawa, Samut Songkhram Province, where it has a peaceful waterway for cruise shipping to observe many activities including to observe a natural activity and habitat of an insect, a firefly, at night. There are several communities in Thailand seek to create tourist attractions for traveling in tourists (Office of Tourism Development, 2009).

The floating market at Bang Khla is one of four important locations in Chachoengsao province. It has been developed as a tourist spot to attract traveling in tourists in response to the policy of Local municipal authorities of Bang Khla since 2007, and it plays an important role to motivate local people boosting up the economics of Bang Khla District, resulting in an increasing in employment of the local people. The local government of Bang Khla has divided area for the development of floating market. The first site is on plaza in front of Bang Khla station and the second site is the floating style of floating market at Bang Pakong riverside. There are open areas for selling agriculture goods, seafood, beverage, and community products, where we can observe lifestyle of local people. The local made products are found to dominate in all locations, which they use natural materials for packaging such as banana leaf, lotus leaf, and pottery. The location at Bang Khla district is located adjacent to the Bang Pakong River, which is not a gateway for the communication. Therefore, tourists have less access to visit this site. However, local government authorities expect the establishment of floating market that it will attract traveling in tourists (local government authorities of Bang Khla district, 2009).

Once the traveling in tourists visit the floating market, it will create an impact on the economics of the community, where the social impacts that could change the lifestyle of local people, which the agricultural workers are the majority of the society. The local people are also performed their duties as traders. The economic impacts reveal that the local people have improved their quality of life. The benefit of local people is depended on the management of community. The environmental impacts are also affected the community, where the pollution derives from the traffic leading to the floating market and garbage that trash into Bang Pakong River.

The local government authorities have an idea that trader should sale their products on the floating services. The floating market has wide-open areas along the riverbank, which provide the opportunity for merchants to restore natural scenery for tourists. There are many activities for tourist to observe and participate in the floating market, such as walking along the path of riverbank. The visitors can dine on the boats, which serves as floating restaurants, while it cruises along the river to observe daily life's of local people in the community on Kao Rat Island. There are several tourist spots in Bang Khla municipalities, which can be developed tourist spots to attract tourists in conjunction with the floating markets.

There are several active floating markets locate in various provinces in Thailand, which also

create the deprecation of the people into the communality for those disagree groups. The problems sent to a negative image of the floating markets regarding tourism. A certain floating market had a severe impact to the environment. Studies on Damnoen Saduak floating market by Pewnim (2002) found that the floating market had developed from an existing local market located in an agricultural community to become a market catering almost exclusively to foreign tourists over a period of 30 years. It has been shown that Talingchan floating market is a new market, which was established in 1987. Attempts had been made by entrepreneurs from outside that took the opportunities to set up tourist business on private land next to the canal in the market, and exploiting the existing market reputation. They control the operation of the market by changing its landscape and activities to suit mass tourism. The functions of the market at the present time are much different from the old one, being alienated from the local community. There are both negative and positive impacts on tourism in the communities. Tourism brings water and air pollution as well as an improvement in public utilities, roads and community landscape. Economically, tourism provides more income and job opportunity. At Damnoen Saduak, entrepreneurs who are outsiders retain the major impacts on market trading regarding the amount of tourist-generated incomes. Socially, tourism brings both co-operation and conflicts especially when profits are high as in Damnoen Saduak. Overpricing of goods and services is quite common. The issue of how to manage tourism in a sustainable fashion concerning the floating market is a challenge one. The objective of this research study was to explore appropriate specific sites, which could be developed and linked to the Bang Khla district of Chachoengsao's floating market to make a sustainable tourism.

## **Methodology**

The conceptual framework on the development of effective floating market in an appropriate specific site that could be linked to the floating market of Bang Khla district, Chachoengsao province was created and kept its activities in a sustainable fashion. The issues regarding economics and social impact, which might effect either positive or negative motivation, would be taken into consideration. The question of how to attract tourists to come to visit the floating market of Bang Khla, which open only on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays. The highest expectation for the number of tourists had been set up around 3,700 people per week.

The researcher team was consisted of two persons and one research assistant that supported works. The first step was dealing with the planning of research works, and conducted a survey of all locations in Bang Khla district and adjacent areas using a camera to take photos in order to select the interesting ones that would be used as sites for collecting data. The researchers also conducted a face-to-face interview by using a lecture style.

The instruments used in data collection were questionnaires by applied to those persons who were working at the floating market. The population samples were selected from local people who were staying at Bang Khla District and at the community nearby. The research had defined the objective according to problems and important information derived from reviewing of the community.

The questionnaires divided into two parts, i.e., Part one, which was dealing with the background information (checklist), and Part two that consisted of 15 questions regarding the effect to social and economics. A set of 5 item-Likert's rating scale was used in questionnaire as described by Siljaru (2005), where 5 = extremely affect, 4 = much affect, 3 = moderately affect, 2 = little affect, and 1 = seldom affect. The questionnaires were tried out to adjust the

instruments using a sample of 30 persons. The reliability of instrument was 0.82 following to Cronbach's alpha coefficient

The questionnaire were modified and developed as the instrument to be used in data collection by using checklist style with those people who were working at the floating market at Bang Khla district, where the issues of questionnaires were dealing with the effect created by the opening the floating market and exploring the appropriate sites to develop the floating market which would lead to be a sustainable development in Bang Khla district. Background information of the population sample was taken from everyone who worked at the floating market. A total population of 100 person consisted of 45 persons selling goods on the floats, while 41 persons were selling and 14 persons were staying in nearby areas. The sellers that worked at the floating market at Bang Khla consisted of 86 persons in total, where 56 persons were selling food, 22 persons selling souvenir, 2 persons selling some water, drinks, and Thai Massage (Nuat Phaen Thai).

The information and data were analyzed using the software of the SPSS program, where the values of Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) were used in conclusion and suggestion for further studies.

## Results

The results of analysis of all information concerning the impact on social and economics indicated that it reduced unemployment rate with alleviating the poverty in the community. Local people had good attitude to tourists, taken care of natural habitats and river, taken care of important locations regarding history of the community, learnt about the local people and tourists. There was a reduction in the number of people migrated to and from the local area. The community was very active in contributing to the development of the floating market at Bang Khla district. The Tourism Authorities assisted training of the professional personnel's to gain more knowledge regarding the management skill and business to pass it to local people. The total rating at 3.91 suggested the opinion was at much level. The best way to have impact on economics was putting efforts to create the new products commercially available in the floating market, which yielded a benefit to members of the community. The quality of life of the local people would be improved with less unemployment rate. The total rating of the employment growth in Bang Khla district and nearby communities was 4.01, which supported that the opinion was at much level.

Results of searching for the historical important locations, which would be used as tourist attractions in Bang Khla district and nearby areas are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. The description of four important sites and the distance between the interesting site and the floating market at Bang Khla district.

item	location	The distance of important location from the floating Bang Khla (KM.)
1	Wat Chaeng Bang Khla temple	0.10 KM.
2	Wat Pho Bang Khla temple	1.80 KM.
3	The King Taksin pagoda	1.20 KM.
4	The King Taksin monument	0.80 KM.

Results of analysis of the participants' opinion showed that they agreed with the idea of the development of landscape as the first priority, where the intendance of Wat Pho was agreed to open the monastery and temple for public to visit and pay homage. It was found that 75 percent of participants supported the improvement of King Taksin Pagoda with passable access to the floating market. It was shown that 74 percent of participants agreed to improve Wat Pho at Bang Khla district as a second choice, where the visitors could observe the flying foxes and Ancient temple. The flying foxes are the fruit bats that are inhabitants of Wat Pho at Bang Khla. Visitors can visit Wat Pho at Bang Khla by car or by boat. The last choice for the development of landscape was Wat Jaeng at Bang Khla district, which supported by 49 percent of participants.

Result of searching for the interested locations in Bang Khla district and nearby areas revealed that Wat Pak Nam and Ganesha Park, which could link to the floating market at Bang Khla. Wat Pak Nam had the golden church and located 2.1 kilometers from the floating market. The Ganesha Park had a huge standing sculpture of Ganesha, which located not far from Bang Pakong riverside where it could also travel via the waterway to Prachinburi province. The Ganesha Park is located 8.3 kilometers from the floating market. The improvement of landscape around the Ganesha Park was underway since 2012. Tourists could travel to Wat Pak Nam from the floating market at Bang Khla by boat or by car, which was about 2.1 kilometers away from the floating market. Another tourist attractive spot was the sugar palm village, where tourists could observe various activities of producing edible products of sugar palm and souvenirs. This tourist attractive spot was located 3.4 kilometers from the floating market at Bang Khla. The Suanpalm Farmnok (Bird Park) was one of other interesting spot, which was agreed by the participants to develop as a tourist spot to attract visitors after visiting the floating market at Bang Khla, where it located about 8 kilometers from the floating market. If tourists kept traveling on the same road for about 16.5 kilometers from the floating market at Bang Khla and turn right, they would find the Koom Wimarnadin, where the earthenware was produced. This was the place where visitors could observe the processing of earthenware production. If the visitors kept driving pass Suanpalm Farmnok and turned left, they would see Kon Kaw temple, which located about 12.5 kilometers from the floating market at Bang Khla. The Kon Kaw temple had set up a poster in front of the temple, which was mentioned the temple as a diamond of the eastern Thailand. There were other three temples located along the 304 road running from the floating market at Bang Khla, where Kon kaw temple was located, i.e., Saman temple that was located 13 kilometers from the floating market, where there was a pink color Ganesha stand in front of the temple; Wat Samet Nuea, which had an ancient church of 130 years old located at the distance of 9.6 kilometers from the floating market, and Wat Haosuan, where the church was built using stainless steels located adjacent to Wat Saman with located about 21.3 kilometers from the floating market.

It was found that 44 percent of participants came in as a group of family to visit the floating market at Bang Khla, where 9 percent was stayed overnight with 61.1 percent stayed for one night and 38.9 percent stayed for 2 nights. It was also shown that 42.5 percent of visitor come directly to the floating market at Bang Khla, while 66.96 percent of them come to the floating market as the second stop where they visited Wat Sothorn Wararam Woraviharn Temple as the first stop, 60 percent of them visited Baan Mai, which was constructed 100 years old, located 25 kilometers from the floating market. It was found that only 38 percent of the target population of visitors received tourist information provided by public relation authorities, while 67.9 percent received it from friend. Several other sources of tourist information had been delivered information to publics regarding the tourist attraction spots, i.e., 19 percent from radio / television, 12.5 percent from the Internet, and 0.6 percent from other media. It

was found that 71.5 percent of visitors kept on going continuously to other tourist attraction spots after visiting the floating market at Bang Khla, 28.5 percent went to Wat Pho, 42 percent went to Suanpalm Farmnok, and 11 percent went to Wat Pak Nam. Results of an analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The complacency to travel the floating market.

item		mean
1	The complacency arriver to the floating market have convenience / security / there are signs	4.19
2	Interpretation such as sign / symbol, knowledge, information	3.93
3	Food shop and drinks shop are available for money / suitable / value / quality.	3.86
4	The toilet has clean / adequate / convenient to use.	3.77
5	The car park has lager, adequate and safety.	3.75

All issues of questionnaire about to travel had average of complacency at 3.88 level wherewith it had meaning much complacency.

Table 3. The complacency to travel the floating market at location.

item		mean
1	The location of the market has suitability.	4.02
2	The grounds are beautiful and clean place to visit in harmony with the surrounding landscape.	3.85
3	The float had beauty, safety and appropriate number.	3.85
4	The set plan and categories of products in market.	3.78
5	The activity in the floating market (the tourism water way)	3.76
6	The identity of the floating market	3.67

All issues regarding the locations had an average of complacency at 3.82 level whereas it had an average value as much complacency.

Results of an analysis regarding attempts to find the complacency for services of operators at the floating market are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. The complacency for services to travel to and from the floating market.

item		mean
1	The service mind	3.79
2	The suggestion and answer questions clearly.	3.72
3	The dealer had eloquence polite and friendly.	3.70
4	Services with convenience.	3.70
5	Enthusiasm and willingness to take care.	3.66

All issues in questionnaire regarding services for visitors had an average value of complacency at 3.71 level, where it had the average value as much complacency.

## Conclusions/and Discussions

The floating market at Bang Khla is a new tourist attraction spot, which has been established at Bang Pakong riverside, Chachoengsao province. It has been taken care by Bang Khla government authorities the same as the floating market at Talingchun as described by Pewnim (2002). The floating market has been established on a landscape of the government as a site for buying food and products provided by local people to support local economics. Results of survey and data analysis suggested that the appropriate locations to be considered to develop as a tourist attraction site that is linkable to the existing tourist attraction site of the floating market at Bang Khla district, Chachoengsao province. The first recommended tourist location site should locate near or under the domination of Thumbol Bang Khla, in which there are several interesting tourist attractions, i.e., the King Taksin pagoda, Wat Chaeng Temple at Bang Khla, and Wat Pho temple at Bang Khla. It was shown that 42 percent of participants indicated that they preferred to travel to Wat Pho at Bang Khla using waterway and by car, where they could observe the flying foxes that inhabited at Wat Pho at Bang Khla. The crowd of flying foxes hanging their heads on the branches of tree during the daytime at Wat Pho at Bang Khla is extremely interesting to see. Visitors can observe a flock of flying foxes flying in the sky that look like a smoke blowing by the wind. The main propose of visitors is to pay homage to a Buddha image and observe the gathering of a crowd of flying foxes. The dominance of this given location can be linkable to the nighttime viewing the aforementioned phenomena, which draw the attention of tourists to stay at Bang Khla district. The second choice of location to be developed as a tourist attraction spot that can be linkable to the floating market at Bang Khla is Wat Chaeng at Bang Khla. It was told by old people who lived during the reign of King Phra Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke that the King Rama I had sent the troop to attack the Cambodia. The troops were traveled past that location at a dayspring. The King gave a permission to build the temple and coiled as Wat Chaeng, where the word "Chaeng" was meant as a dawn in Thai. The current interior decoration in front of the church shows figure of the reign 8 with the signature of Ananda Mahidol Siamin. The architects were 10 technicians whom were massacred later. There was a large sculpture of giant at Wat Luang, where the sculpture was made in a Thai art style mixed with Chinese art. Wat Chaeng temple is approximately 100 meters away from the floating market but it is currently difficult to access from the floating market. According to the study of Tang Tung (2003), Wat Chaeng temple was closed without any attempt to renovate it. It is very interesting to note that tourists from European countries want to study the history and culture of the people around this historic site. The motivation was stimulated from lifestyle of people who live along the riverbank and its environment of the floating market at Bang Khla district as described by Jutamanee et al. (2003), whereas the tourist was motivated by the ancient culture of the floating market. These kinds of environment and culture arouse the happiness of tourists. The study of Lapluechai (2003) revealed that tourists wanted to maintain the lifestyle of local people more than other things.

The usual route of traveling to the floating market at Bang Khla district is very convenience, where they spend less time at the floating market. The tourist will subsequently take a boat cruise to Wat Pak Nam to observe the golden Buddhist temple, cruising further to the Ganesha Park at Bangtarat village, and return to Wat Pho at Bang Khla to observe the flying foxes. The boat is cruising to and around Kao Rat island, where the management of waterway system is taken place. The most important point of tourism is that local people should set up the committee for the management of the tourism activity.

The home stay tourism activity at the floating market attracts low number of tourists because

the location is not suitable for the promotion and received less support from the government. This is quite relevant to the finding that tourists receive information concerns the floating market and its activity at 38 percent, which is done through radio and television, while most of information is transferred through friends and acquainted people. This finding is agreed with the findings of Asavapromtada (2007), which suggest that the expectation for tourism management at Ampawa floating market is preferred to receive male tourists than female tourists. The information concerns the travel to Ampawa floating market released by the Tourist Authority of Thailand could reached tourists less than by friends according to the study of Putdadee (2000). His findings showed that the tourist information concern the floating market at Talingchan reached the tourists at a low level at 56 percent.

The opinion of tourists concern the requirement for complacency to travel to the floating market at Bang Khla district, which extracted from the questionnaire and interviewing suggested that the convenience, comfortable, safety, clear label, brochure, restaurant, drink at stall shop, reasonable price, cleanliness and good quality, the available of clean toilet, parking space available for customers, with the sum of estimation was at the level of 3.88, which was equivalent to the much level of complacency. The studies of TangTung (2003) recommend that there was a need to develop all facilities at the floating market site, including the identity of the products. The walking street along the riverbank should be provided. The government authorities of Bang Khla village should manage to open the floating market on Saturday, Sunday, and holiday. It was found that most of traders were local people that comprised 81.4 percent, where 18.6 percent were those people whom staying nearby in Chachoengsao province. The local people own the lovely residential areas and want to take care of natural environment according to the studies of Pewnim (2002). The studies revealed that the effect of tourist to the floating market were the same as that of the Talingchan Floating Market, resulting in the joint efforts of local people and the government authorities in supporting the development of sustainable tourism. The self-care security management should be complied by the community, which will create jobs for local people. The joint committee of the floating market should put efforts to promote local products and tourism activities in various ways. The people in the community should participate in the promotion activities. The conditions of floating market at the time of the study was under the control of the government authorities since it situated in front of the district buildings. But there is a need to develop toilets in a nearby location not far from the floating market, where 7 percent of participants suggested for this complacency with the little level of complacency, while 5 percent suggested little level of the complacency concern parking space for cars. There were 54 restaurants, 22 souvenir shops, and 7 drink stalls.

The opinion concerns the management of tourist site of the floating market at Bang Khla district should be aware of the beautiful scenery, cleanliness, natural harmony of landscape, the floating shops should have safety precautions, and it should have disposal bin for the garbage. It was shown that 3.82 level was at much mean related to the competency of the management the floating market. Since the location of floating market at Bang Khla is situated near Bang Pakong River, which is a natural resource for life and it is used as waterway for traveling of people in the community, where it is suitable for fishery. The floating market is situated on the island, where visitors can have boat cruising around the floating market and observe the lifestyles of local people. The competency of total services of officers, such as the service minds, service suggestion, to answer question, enthusiastic and willing to take care, eloquence polite and friendly, was at 3.71 level at much mean. Most of the officers were the local people who volunteer to work in the service sections.



The Bang Khla Subdistrict municipality had enlarged the marketing scope and allowed vendors to sell at the new built pontoons. Being compared the effects from other floating markets in Thailand; the enlargement of the market was considered and guided for better solutions on environmental effects and local people's lifestyle in the foreseeable future in order to prevent any kind of problems.

### **Benefits**

The results of this finding will lead to the development of the floating market at Bang Khla and make it to be a sustainable floating market. All information concerning tourist information should be planned for the management of distribution to reach tourists or visitors as much as possible.

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