

Tourism Promotion Guidance by Cultural History in Greater Mekong Subregion based on French Explorers Documents in 1858-1897

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study focuses on promoting tourism and exploring the cultural history of the Mekong Basin, with a specific emphasis on French explorers from 1858-1897. Using surveys, interviews, and focus groups, this study aims to identify strategies for enhancing cultural tourism promotion in Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The analysis incorporates functional structure theory, cultural diffusion theory, and cultural ecology theory. This research highlights the abundance of cultural and historical attractions in the region, reflecting local beliefs and historical periods through diverse artistic and architectural forms. However, there is a deficiency in tourist activities centered on exploring ancient archaeological sites, resulting in limited knowledge, inadequate budget allocation, and insufficient project evaluation. This study recommends implementing guidelines to engage the local community through campaigns and activities to promote tourism management, environmental awareness, and important tourist sites. Additionally, involving stakeholders in decision-making through collaborative workshops and meetings to develop strategic plans for tourism promotion and promoting the exploration of historical routes through guided tours and informative materials can enhance the overall tourism experience in the region.

Keywords: Tourism Promotion, Mekong Basin Cultural History, Mekong Basin Explorers, Mekong Basin Exploration 1858-1897.

Introduction

The Mekong Basin is rich in history and culture with diverse ethnic groups and traditions. The Mekong River flows through six countries in Southeast Asia: China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The region is known for its breathtaking, natural beauty, ancient temples, unique cuisine, and friendly people. However, the tourism industry in this region faces several challenges, including inadequate budget allocation, limited knowledge of the importance of public relations and conservation, and defective project planning. On the other hand, the tourism industry also presents opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and cultural exchange. By promoting sustainable tourism practices, preserving cultural heritage, and engaging local communities, the tourism industry in the Mekong Basin can thrive, while also benefiting the local population and preserving the region's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Tourism is an industry that generates foreign currency income in many countries, leading to investments in the tourism business to provide services to tourists and create job opportunities for the population. This contributes to job creation and income in the service sector, making the tourism industry play a strategic role in the country's economic growth, according to data from the World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 2011, there were 980 million tourists and 217.1 million visitors worldwide, the data specifically highlights travel in the Asia Pacific region. In terms of visitors to ASEAN countries, the data shows that there were 77.1 million people. Furthermore, the World Tourism

Organization predicts that by 2020, the number of tourists worldwide will increase to 1.6 billion, with 400 million of those tourists expected to travel to the Asia-Pacific region, divided among tourists in ASEAN countries. There were approximately 160-200 million people, particularly in 2015, when the ASEAN Community officially came together with a shared vision. The goal of this community is to build a highly competitive ASEAN with transparent rules and regulations that prioritize the needs of its people. In addition, the sense of unity also needs to strengthen connections in three dimensions: infrastructure, regulations, and connections between people, which consists of three main pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. In 2015, the World Tourism Organization predicted that there will be 120 million tourists in ASEAN, which is not a small amount and can generate a huge amount of income for the ASEAN community (World Tourism Organization, 2011)

At the 14th ASEAN SUMMIT, in which Thailand is hosted between February 27 and March 1, 2009, members of the ASEAN countries have agreed to give priority to promoting tourism in the region, also known as INTRA – ASEAN TRAVEL and TOURISM, to stimulate the economy of countries in the region. Guidelines for promoting ASEAN tourism, including youth tourism promotion and ASEAN tourism strategic plan preparation between B.E. 2554-2558.

Linking ASEAN tourist routes and creating incentive measures for ASEAN tourists to travel more in the region, establishing a network of tourism cooperation with China, Japan, Korea, India, and Russia, by focusing on stimulating tourism between ASEAN member countries and more network countries. Thailand will benefit from the ASEAN tourism market and create a selling point with ASEAN countries for tourists worldwide.

Currently, ASEAN has organized a framework agreement exemption from visa exemption for ASEAN tourists and is negotiating an agreement on Single Visa for tourists outside the region or from a third country, promoting the ASEAN Tourism Connectivity Corridors, in line with the policy preparation of tourist routes linking at the provincial level, provincial groups of Thailand and ASEAN member countries, each country in the ASEAN community has established a travel route connecting each other to promote tourism in Southeast Asia, to make it more convenient for tourists, which in the near future, when entering the ASEAN Community is successful, this region will observe businessmen and investors just like the European Union, with a population of more than 600 million people in the ASEAN Community, counting up to 1 in 10 of the world's population (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, B.E. 2558) Tourism plays a crucial role in driving and revitalizing Thailand's economy, and it is also a popular destination for travelers from all over the world. Thailand, located in the Southeast Asian Sub-Region (ASEAN), is considered a country with geographical advantages due to its borders with many neighboring ASEAN countries. The expansion of travel has been facilitated by various factors, including increased flight routes by low-cost airlines, private investments in the tourism industry, and changes in tourist behavior. Consequently, these factors have led to the emergence of new forms of tourism in Thailand. Therefore, it is essential to implement measures to prepare tourism resources. This includes studying and developing interesting tourism routes that connect Thailand with neighboring ASEAN countries, considering their shared history. By doing so, Thailand will be able to accommodate a growing number of tourists who tend to explore more destinations. Additionally, Thailand has a competitive advantage in terms of offering value-for-money services, as the service rates are relatively lower compared with other countries in the ASEAN Community. Tourism therefore plays a crucial role in driving and revitalizing Thailand's economy and attracting travelers from around the world. If the growth rate of the tourism industry aligns with the overall growth rate of trade in the ASEAN Community, there is a tendency for an increase in foreign investors, resulting in heightened competition. This, in turn, may have an impact on local entrepreneurs who lack the necessary skills and experience to compete effectively.

The Thai government must be aware of this problem and urgently formulate measures to address this emerging phenomenon. It is essential to prepare resources to support the growing trend of tourists. The challenge of tourism development lies in ensuring that Thai tourism products and services meet international standards, and can

accommodate an increasing number of tourists without depleting or harming existing natural resources. Enhancing the value and quality of tourism products and services involves preserving the identity of the arts, culture, traditions, and the way of life of the community. It also highlights the beauty of nature and the kindness of the Thai people, who possess a unique culture and an interesting history. Thai food is also popular worldwide. Furthermore, Thailand's Tourism Authority plays a crucial role in promoting and managing the tourism industry. Economic cooperation is prevalent in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and Ayeyarwady Economic Cooperation. A strategy for significant changes, known as the competitive capability-building strategy, has been set for the Chao Phraya and Mekong regions.

Tourism in the Mekong Basin is considered a crucial strategy for the region, as outlined by the Bureau of Trade and Investment Cooperation in B.E. 2553. The Mekong River has significant historical and cultural importance, as it is connected to the origins and development of multiple civilizations. The river originates in Mount Phu, which is part of the Himalayas on the Tibetan Plateau in Yusha City, Qinghai Province, China. The Jak and Aku rivers converge with the Mekong River. The river is named after the Tai Lue language, which is spoken by a dense population residing in the Xishuangbanna region. The Mekong River in this area is referred to as the Lancang River. In Chinese, the river's name is pronounced as "Lán Cāng". The Mekong River is a powerful and tumultuous river that traverses Yunnan Province in China, passing through multiple countries including Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Its journey concludes at the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, where it eventually empties into the South China Sea. At the end of its course, the Mekong River splits into nine streams before finally reaching the South China Sea. The Vietnamese refer to the Mekong River as the Nine Dragon River because of its division into nine streams in the Mekong Delta. The upper section of the Mekong River primarily receives water from melting snowy mountains, including the Meili Mountains in Shangri-La. In contrast, the lower part of the river receives water from various mountain ranges that contribute to its tributaries of the Mekong River.

For instance, in northern Thailand, there are tributaries such as the Kok River, Ing River in the Northeastern region, including the Moon, Chee, and Songkhram rivers. The Lao People's Democratic Republic contains tributaries of the Mekong River, such as the Chim, Theun, Sekong, and Tonle Sap rivers in Cambodia. Numerous cities in the Mekong subregion have gained recognition as world-class tourist destinations. Travelers from around the globe are eager to explore the enchanting allure of this river, which is often a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The Mekong River stands out among other rivers because of its remarkable length of 4,880 kilometers. Originating from the Himalayas and flowing through the Tibetan Plateau all the way to Vietnam. The Mekong River is the 10th longest river worldwide, yet it boasts the third highest diversity of fish species globally, surpassed only by the Amazon River in South America and the Congo River in Africa. The Mekong River region is home to several prominent tourist cities, such as Shangri-La, Lijiang, Dali, Kunming, Chiang Rung, Xishuangbanna, Kengtung, Luang Prabang, Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Vientiane, Suwanakhet, Nakhon Phanom, Ubon Ratchathani, Champasak, Stung Treng, Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, and Ho Chi Minh City. It is estimated that the combined population on both sides of the Mekong River exceeds 100 million. When including a broader population that is not far from this international river, it is at least 200 million people living in proximity, and the region's pluralistic nature becomes evident. The Mekong River region is known for its rich tapestry of ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language and cultural tradition (Khaosaad and Dore, 2007).

Moreover, the Mekong River is not only a significant source of water resources and transportation routes but also plays a crucial role in connecting countries within the Mekong Subregion. This serves as a vital link for political, economic, and sociocultural interactions. Changes in policies and trade patterns in the era of globalization have led to the expansion of economic cooperation, fostering increased international trade and investment. Amid the development and economic expansion of each country, the Mekong River Route remains crucial for facilitating international trade within the basin. This is evident from the value of transshipment exports passing through Chiang Saen customs. In B.E. 2556, the value was approximately 3,127.35 million baht, in B.E. 2557 it amounted to around 1,272.69 million baht, and in B.E. 2558 it reached roughly 269.58 million baht. The major trading partners are China,

Laos, and Myanmar. With the anticipated upward trend in trade, there is a need to develop international waterways along the Mekong River. In 2016, the cabinet approved a plan to enhance international navigation on the Lancang-Mekong River during the period to 2015-2025. This plan involves cooperation between the governments of four countries, namely, China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand, with the objective of being used as a framework for the development of international water transportation along the Lancang-Mekong River in accordance with agreements between member countries, according to the goal of improvement of the channel, to facilitate navigation, safety and reduce the risk of accidents. This international maritime development plan encompasses a stretch of the Mekong River between Simao in China and Luang Prabang in Laos.

The initial phase of the plan focused on improving the river channel through the Lancang-Mekong River. The Chinese government has supported this project by allocating a significant amount of US\$ 655 million through the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund. The International Maritime Development Plan on the Lancang-Mekong River, which involves improvement of the river channel, may lead to the excavation of 500 tons of islands for commercial shipping purposes. However, this development can have ecological consequences that may affect various aspects of Mekong River Basin communities. These consequences can impact food security, the economy, culture, occupations, and the overall life of communities reliant on the Mekong River.

The construction of dams in the Mekong River and the explosion of rapids have had a significant impact on villagers who work as fishermen in the area. These changes have led to alterations in the river ecosystem, resulting in a decrease in fish populations. As a result, the villagers had to adapt by taking up supplementary occupations, such as agriculture and cultivating crops such as corn, tobacco, green beans, and rice. Despite the increased price of Mekong fish due to declining numbers, it is still not sufficient to sustain the livelihoods of these villagers (Sittichart Somta et al., B.E. 2558). The International Maritime Development Plan on the Lancang-Mekong River can have an economic impact, with China being the primary beneficiary of the project. Analyzing the trade around the Chiang Khong checkpoint in Chiang Rai, it becomes evident that Thailand exports a substantial volume of goods to Laos, but imports only a small amount in return. This trade imbalance suggests that China, as a major trading partner, benefits more from the project in terms of economic gain. While observing trade through the Thai-Laos border, goods are mostly sent to southern China. It has been found that Thailand imports more from China than it exports. Therefore, when analyzing trade statistics, it becomes apparent that China is the primary beneficiary.

Additionally, there is a need to address the issues faced by those who are negatively affected. Historically, the government neglected this group to a significant extent. One of the factors contributing to social inequality is that the economic benefits of the International Maritime Development Plan on the Lancang-Mekong River are primarily limited to the transportation sector. Consequently, Thailand and other countries in the Mekong sub-region predominantly serve as gateways rather than being able to sell manufactured goods for broader economic gains. Including a plan to develop international navigation on the Lancang-Mekong River contradicts the GMS environmental plan, which aims to foster regional development through a balance between economic growth and environmental protection. The Environmental Work Plan Phase 2 (B.E. 2555-2559), guided by the GMS Strategic Framework B.E. 2555-2565, highlights key concerns such as biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction (Aphisom Intharalawan, B.E. 2558).

From the past to the present, there has been consistent interest in researching the Mekong River. This includes evidence from both Eastern and Western travelers who have explored the region. It is important to note that relying solely on the accounts of natives may not fully capture the entire multicultural nature of an area in all its dimensions. It is essential to incorporate the perspectives and evidence of Westerners, who can be considered outsiders, to provide a more comprehensive and captivating depiction of multiculturalism in the local area. The narrative of Asia initially surfaced in Western accounts, such as *Le Livre des Merveilles du Monde*, Marco Polo's Travel Journal, and *Le Divisament du Monde*. Or description of the world when they were visited Yunnan Province

of China at the end of the 13th century, in addition to the tourist attractions that can attract tourists from all over the world, such as Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom in Cambodia, Dali, Lijiang, Shangri-La in China. Luang Prabang, Laos Later, it became known that when Westerners came in and wrote notes to tell the story, they were excited to have the opportunity to meet according to hearsay.

Evidence from documented recordings reflects life, livelihoods, and diverse cultures; Western journals are not just text messages. Many Westerners painted portraits and maps. Able to study and analyze different places that have important locations in many cities in different countries where the Mekong River flows through, and what are the special features? What are the similarities and differences in the geography of a city? Several groups of surveyors surveyed the Mekong River Basin. In neighboring countries such as Laos, Cambodia covers the northeastern part of Thailand and some areas in the eastern and central regions of Luang Prabang, Laos, where the expedition has recorded a variety of detailed information covering many events and stories that the expedition found, resulting in more knowledge about society and culture in this region, especially the French expedition headed by Aegéan Amonier. The survey began in September 1882 with the purpose of exploring stone inscriptions in Laos, which fell under the rule of the Khmer before. The survey ended in 1883 and then in 1895. Therefore, two books have been translated and published: "VOYAGE DANS LE LAOS, TOME PREMIER 1895" and "VOYAGE DANS LE LAOS, TOME PREMIER 1897". If considering the title of the book that appears, one may understand that it is about traveling in the land of Laos, but according to the actual journey of the explorer, most of them (85 %) are traveling in the Northeast of Thailand. There was also French explorer Henri Mouot, who documented his travels to Siam, Cambodia, Laos, and Indochina. His reputation is well known among Westerners, as he opened Indochina to the world. Make Angkor Wat Angkor Thom known to people around the world and turn their attention to the land in this region even more. Muot's record projected pictures of the country in Siam, Cambodia, and Laos over a hundred years ago, allowing us to see ancient trade routes.

Important resources and goods of different city stories of different ethnic groups and the important thing is the idea of Europeans at the beginning of colonization itself (Kannika Chansaeng, B.E. 2558). To promote Thailand as a tourism hub in the ASEAN region using the strategy of the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan, involved parties from both the public and private sectors must begin to realize the importance of culture-based management. Appropriate cultural resources can be used to link together as a network of historical and cultural tourism in each community area, especially in countries with close borders and lifestyles that are similar to those in Thailand and Laos. If a travel route can be set in the Mekong River Basin for tourists to travel comfortably. Promoting tourism along the Mekong Basin Cultural History Route following the footsteps of French explorers will help stimulate awareness of conservation and appreciate the importance of natural resources, ancient sites, historical stories, and the way of life of communities in the Mekong River Basin.

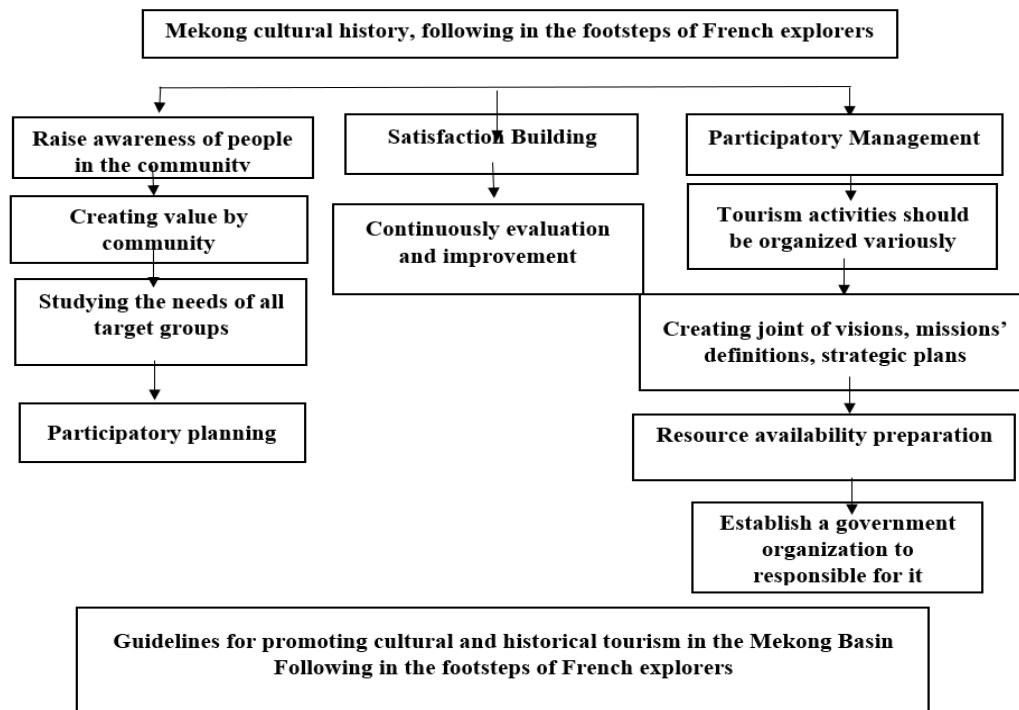
Promoting tourism in important areas of the community will create an opportunity to add value to the economy, society, culture, and knowledge, and promote good relations and understanding with each other. Civilization in the Mekong River Basin has played a crucial role in the society and culture of the territory of neighboring ASEAN countries for a long time. The value of traditions in these arts and cultures should help preserve it as a common heritage of humanity and world heritage for the next generation to learn and continue to take care of it. Cultural tourism management using the strengths of the common past glory of the three countries in the Mekong Sub-region by tracing the historical path of the French explorer during 1858-1897 in search of traces that the explorers recorded important places or the identity of the community in two ASEAN countries as a cultural and historical tourist attraction, promoting economic linkages between Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which will ultimately make the economies of the two ASEAN countries grow together in a balanced way. Having to compete in the export of the same type of agricultural products to cooperate in cultural and historical tourism.

From the above concept, the researcher became interested in studying the socio-cultural conditions of important tourist attractions in the Mekong sub-region. Broad and in-depth by processing data according to the surveyor's documentary, documents to analyze the condition of tourist attractions, synthesis of cultural identities,

and important historical routes to formulate guidelines for promoting historical and cultural tourism in the Mekong Basin following the footsteps of French explorers from 1858-1897. Using a study to decipher the records of the two explorers, Aegean Emoniye and Henri Muot, to link the tourism routes of Thailand and Laos, respond to policies and strategies to build coherence between countries around the region for economic stability and society according to the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E. 2555-2559).

Connecting the Mekong River Basin with culturally diverse attractions, landmarks, and historical events that the explorers have traveled to, will increase cognition of interest in the historical route that leads to cooperation in the Mekong Sub-region and development as a tourist attraction that attracts Thai and foreign tourists to travel in Thailand, which could be a connecting point for ASEAN tourism of neighboring countries in the Mekong sub-region in the future. Guidelines for promoting cultural history tourism in the Mekong Basin Following the footsteps of French explorers are building awareness by joining a campaign to raise awareness of people in the community to be responsible, participate in the maintenance and promotion of tourism management through knowledge-sharing activities, creating satisfaction, environmental consciousness, and cultural history tourism from local leaders, community leaders, and villagers in the area; and finding more members in environmental preservation, creating awareness for everyone to feel ownership, maintain, and cherish the community together to maintain cleanliness, taking care of safety for tourists. The creation of value by the community involves collective research and exploration to identify valuable and beneficial elements. This was done to enhance community tourism activities and showcase the wisdom of local experts as a unique selling point for tourists to experience and learn from. The generosity and warm-hearted nature of community members are attractive features for tourists. Studying the needs of all target groups by jointly exploring the needs of tourists, wanting to visit, or wanting to receive convenience to accurately meet the needs of each group of tourists. Participatory planning, that is, the community, must come together to plan for the implementation of tourism management with the sense that such activities are owned by everyone because everyone has a common idea and shared responsibility for both benefits and mistakes that may occur.

Satisfaction is created to satisfy tourists in terms of safety, accommodation, food, and community services, while people in the community are satisfied that they have participated in the management and benefit from tourism. Assessment and continuous improvement for all parties to participate in evaluating community tourism management, to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses that all parties have jointly managed community tourism management. Once the information is obtained, it is jointly improved and corrected in line with the needs of the community and tourists. Participatory management includes joint planning, joint doing, and joint checks. Jointly improve and correct by operating in the form of a committee responsible for managing tourism, history, and culture of the community by operating in the form of a committee. Tourism activities should be organized in various ways, focusing on studying the history of art and culture that are linked to the way of life and meeting the needs of tourists. Create a joint vision, set missions, strategic plans, and action plans to promote tourism in each area along the Mekong River Basin Historical Exploration Route.



Organized tourism resources from information centers, guide signs, accommodation along the road, tour services, viewpoints, services, food, beverages, utilities, communications, restrooms, first aid, supplies, equipment, and tourism activities. This includes pioneering, improving, rehabilitating, and developing tourist attractions and expanding ideas and public relations to people in the public using information technology. Establishing a government organization to take care of and support clearly and continuously in terms of budget, academic work, training, research, and development. From the information mentioned above, the researcher can summarize the conceptual framework as follows:

From the study on approaches to promote tourism, the cultural history of the Mekong River Basin follows in the footsteps of French explorers from 1558-1897. The findings were discussed according to the objectives of the research in each issue as follows: Raising awareness through joint campaigns, raising awareness of people in the community to be responsible, and participating in maintenance is important for promoting sustainable cultural and historical tourism management. Encourage everyone to feel a sense of belonging and maintain and cherish the community to maintain cleanliness. Considering the safety of tourists, the community engages in joint study and exploration to identify valuable elements within the community. This process aims to create value for organizing community tourism activities and the use of local wisdom as a selling point, studying the needs of every target group, allowing everyone to think together, act together, and share responsibility for both the benefits and mistakes that may occur. Satisfaction is achieved by prioritizing the needs of both parties, encompassing aspects such as safety, accommodation, food, and community services. Community members receive satisfaction through co-management, and benefit from travel-related activities.

Assessment and continuous improvement allow all parties to participate in evaluating and jointly improving in line with the needs of the community and tourists. Participatory management in which all parties can plan, do, check, and improve. By operating in the form of a committee responsible for managing local cultural and historical tourism, the organization of historical and cultural tourism activities should be organized in a variety of ways, focusing on cultural studies along with the natural conditions that are linked to the way of life and meeting the needs of tourists. Creating joint visions, missions, strategic plans, and action plans, arranging tourism resources from information centers, guide signs, accommodation along the road, tour services, viewpoint, services for food and beverages, public utilities, communications, restrooms, first aid, materials equipment, and tourism activities,

including pioneering, improving, rehabilitating, and developing more tourist attractions than today, expanding ideas and publicizing to people in the general public by using information technology media to help and provide government organizations that are responsible for and clearly and continuously support both in terms of budget, academic work, training, research, and development to make tourism sustainable.

The results of this research are in line with Supattra Wichaiprasertkul's research (B.E. 2545) about the guidelines for sustainable tourism development of Koh Kred, Nonthaburi Province found that, the tourism development of armored should have some guidelines for the development of tourist attractions, either existing or newly built and guidelines for infrastructure development include: road, port, cleaning including the development of tourism facilities to accommodate the increasing number of tourists in the future, guidelines for promoting tourism marketing, public relations, management of product and service price standards, guidelines to create participation of the people to cooperate and develop tourism, guidelines for organizing tourism management organizations, proposing to form a group for Koh Kred to directly manage the tourism of Koh Kred and proposed to come out as a new travel route for the distribution of tourists including, distribution of income thoroughly and continuously, while still maintaining the uniqueness and value of the armor according to sustainable tourism development principles.

Guidelines for ponds in the Mekong River Basin Cultural History Tourism Following in the Footsteps of French Explorers 1558-1897, it is consistent with the research of Amka Saengngam (B.E. 2553), which summarizes the management and promotion guidelines for tourism in resource management, and should be developed by excavating, restoring Ku cemetery, ditches, canals, ponds, and roads, adjusting the landscape to be in harmony with the context of an ancient community identity, accelerating the restoration and upgrading of local traditions as a cultural identity in a sufficient way, and maintaining the cultural dimension of the forest development community as a learning center for organic rice production and processing of silk rice to meet management standards. Appoint community tourism officials to create a paradigm to develop community tourism, encourage villagers to participate and strengthen tourism management, and create tourism networks in both public and private sectors. Personnel development through training, field trips, local learning, public relations, and creating a master plan for tourism development. In addition, it is in line with the research of Thitaya Hiranyahat (B.E. 2544) that studied on education to promote wood handicraft and carving villages to be a sustainable tourist destination, a case study of Ban Kew Lae Noi, Pan Mae Sub-district, San Pa Tong District, Chiang Mai Province. It was found that the Kiew Lae Noi villagers' main occupation was carving, while the secondary occupation was agriculture.

Wood carving is popular among both Thai and foreign tourists. There is also other local wisdom, such as traditional massage and herbal medicine, with various conveniences, such as roads, electricity, water supply, and telephone. In addition, there are folk media such as folk songs, archaeological sites, museums, Bai Sri Su Kwan ceremony, local food, smell of flowers at night, tourists can practice handicrafts, arrange accommodation for tourists at a cheaper price than staying in a hotel, as well as being taken care of by the owner of the house. Guidelines for managing cultural and historical tourism with the participation of people in the community will lead tourism toward sustainable development. This requires preparation from both places and personnel. There must be surveys to improve the environment to be suitable, have safe passages, have hygienic and comfortable accommodation, have a working group of people in the community, clearly divide duties, and coordinate with local organizations, which is consistent with the research of Sunanta Chantwara (B.E. 2545), which researched public participation in the development of Ku Dua beach tourist attraction. Muang District, Ubon Ratchathani Province found that cultural tourism management of ancient Khmer communities in ASEAN countries, there are appropriate management guidelines, including: 1) tourism management along community historical routes. 2) Management of policies and operational plans. 3) Economic Management. 4) Service Management, and 5) Educational Management. This is consistent with the research by Panyapong et al. (B.E. 2560), who studied the development of cultural tourism villages through community participation: a case study of Ban Kut Ngong, Muang District, Chaiyaphum Province. Appropriate approaches for the development of cultural tourism villages were found: cultural tourism villages should be organized to be more ready, namely, distribution areas for products in the community, developing appropriate building

arrangements for learning areas and tourist centers, and adding travel routes for both land and water. Organizing tourism activities is a means of exploring and appreciating the historical significance of ancient sites, artifacts, the arts, culture, natural resources, and the environment. These elements hold great economic value and align with the research conducted by Moonmuang et al. (B.E. 2547), who studied the eco-tourism management approach that benefits the Ban Pamiang community, Chae Son District, Lampang Province, and found that the Ban Pamiang community has a complete ecosystem with customs and traditions suitable for tourism and the community participates in administration.

Efficient travel management and community leaders play a crucial role in supporting various organizations to make communities stronger, self-reliant, and lead to sustainable development. The results demonstrate the importance of natural resources and the environment for human well-being. This has served as an incentive for developed countries to exercise control over and exploit various mineral resources to amass wealth and political power. This aligns with the concept of colonialism pursued by Western nations, which involved the exploration of resources and culture in the Mekong River Basin area. This concept corresponds to the theory of Cultural Ecology proposed by Smith (1994), with the idea that the environment influences the evolution of culture. The existence of human culture is known as the adaptation or relationship of culture to the natural environment, it is an analysis of ecology and society, to discover the characteristics of each culture which will lead to planning to promote tourism, history and culture of the Mekong Basin, which will following in the footsteps of French explorers appropriately in the way of promoting tourism, history and culture of the Mekong River Basin following in the footsteps of French explorers.

Therefore, a systematic management process has been established, including vision, mission, activities strategy, cultural tourism management, management, and success conditions. Managing appropriate tourism has set a suitable tourism management activity program by applying creative tourism concepts to the management of cultural history tourism that is learned, appreciated, and gained experience from geographical surroundings, history, traditions, way of life, and local wisdom of general tourists, students, academics, and researchers. Because it is a community rich in natural and cultural resources, it is valuable cultural capital. If it is developed and managed properly, it will increase the value of resources and community members. Community members must have knowledge and principles of tourism management that will develop the community to prosper in terms of the foundation economy that truly benefits from community tourism and promotes sustainable tourism trends. Creative tourism focuses on tourists traveling with quality and has an awareness of preserving cultural, local wisdom, and community environmental resources. This is consistent with the theory of cultural diffusion (Diffusionism) of Kroeber (Markstein, L. & Hirasawa, L. 1977) who proposed the idea that culture spreads from the center to go as far as possible in the same geographical region and similar era. From this concept, we can see the picture of cultural zones as clusters that spread to wherever there are no geographical barriers to the topography that humans can travel to. Therefore, the spread of culture depends mainly on geographical factors, economic factors, social factors, and good transportation, it is a factor conducive to cultural diffusion as good roads, vehicles, and travel not too far distances are all good accelerations of diffusion that lead to the development of a widespread community. This cultural history tourism activity is also in line with the research of Damkerng Thothong and Wasanchai Kakkaew (B.E. 2550), who studied the Khmer civilization tourism routes in Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos and found that there should be four variations: The Khmer Civilization Travel Route, World Heritage Triangle Tourist Route, and Khmer Castle Route are family friendly and eco-tourism routes that showcase the rich cultural heritage of the region.

These routes also highlight agriculture and nature, making them a perfect choice for tourists interested in these aspects. This aligns with the research of Wansad Srisuwan (B.E. 2553), who studied a cultural tourism management model that involved the participation of the Tapi Basin community. The cultural tourism management model with participation of the Tapi Basin community is managed in the form of a sub-district committee jointly developed by elected members of local tourism clubs, consistent with Udon Wongthaptim et al. (B.E. 2545) have studied the community and the management of ecotourism and cultural tourism in Mae Hi Subdistrict, Pai District,

Mae Hong Son Province, found that, communities from all sectors participate and have a role in management, the community museum has been established, earning from tourism, considered as an additional income from the main occupation which is agriculture and is consistent with research by Thanom Kaewphakdi (B.E. 2554) who studied the development of cultural tourism potential of local administrative organizations in the central of Tha Chin River Basin. The community in the central Tha Chin Basin has a long history, with the Tha Chin River as the main factor in establishing and living in the community until it is a river basin consisting of tribes in all of local Thai, Khmer, Thai Yuan, Thai Puan, Thai Wiang, Thai Dam, Thai Mon and Thai Chinese, most of the people in the community are Buddhist. There are a variety of cultural tourist attractions, including tourist attractions that are ancient sites, ways of life, lifestyle, and cultural tourism development of local administrative organizations in the central Chinese Basin, which should be a holistic development that requires local administrative organizations to be led by public participation.

Discussion

This study focuses on the Mekong Basin region, specifically Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as well as the historical and cultural sites documented by French explorers between 1858 and 1897. These sites include ancient archaeological sites, artifacts, and inscriptions in the Khmer, Southern Laos, and Northeast regions. These sites showcase a region's cultural heritage and reflect local beliefs and historical periods through diverse artistic and architectural forms. Examples of historical and cultural sites in the region include the following.

- Wat Phou in Champasak, Laos, is a Khmer Hindu temple complex dating back to the 11th century.
- The Plain of Jars in Xieng Khouang, Laos, which features hundreds of stone jars scattered across a plateau, is believed to have been used for funerary practices during the Iron Age.
- Sukhothai Historical Park in Thailand is a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring the ruins of the ancient city of Sukhothai, the first capital of the Kingdom of Siam.
- Ayutthaya Historical Park in Thailand is another UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring the ruins of the ancient city of Ayutthaya, the second capital of the Kingdom of Siam.
- Luang Prabang in Laos is a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring a well-preserved traditional urban landscape and architecture, including Buddhist temples, French colonial buildings, and traditional Lao wooden houses.

The Mekong Basin, which is rich in cultural and historical attractions, has enormous potential for tourism. However, the current state of tourism in the region is affected by issues such as inadequate budget allocation, insufficient project evaluation, and lack of public relations and conservation knowledge. Moreover, regional administrative organizations prioritize infrastructure development over tourism, leading to defective project planning and waste management, which negatively impact cleanliness and tourism operations.

To address these issues, this study recommends the implementation of guidelines for effective tourism promotion in the region. The guidelines include engaging local communities, involving stakeholders in decision-making, promoting the exploration of historical routes, and organizing tourism activities that focus on the history of art and culture. These guidelines can help raise awareness, facilitate the development and preservation of cultural and historical attractions, and ensure sustainable tourism practices.

In addition, strengthening connections between ASEAN countries can lead to better infrastructure and regulations, which can further promote tourism in the region. This can be achieved through the ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. This study highlights the importance of promoting cultural and historical tourism in the Mekong Basin and provides recommendations for effective tourism development in the region. It is crucial to prioritize the development and preservation of cultural and historical attractions, as this can lead to sustainable practices and enhance the overall tourism experience.

Conclusion

Based on this study, it is evident that cultural and historical tourism promotion in the Mekong Basin has a great potential for growth. The study highlights the importance of engaging local communities, involving stakeholders in decision-making, promoting the exploration of historical routes, and organizing tourism activities that focus on the history of art and culture. It is important to prioritize the development and preservation of cultural and historical attractions, as this can lead to sustainable practices and enhance the overall tourism experience. Furthermore, strengthening connections between ASEAN countries can lead to better infrastructure and regulations, which can further promote tourism in the region. This study recommends the implementation of the guidelines discussed in this paper for effective tourism promotion in the Mekong Basin.

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