



Research Article

FLOATING MARKET TOURISM IN CAN THO CITY: CURRENT STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to analyze the current status of floating market tourism in Can Tho city by the methods of documentary, quantitative and qualitative research. The findings reveal that floating market tourism has significant potential resources to attract tourists by floating markets' history and culture, unique products, trader's daily life, and connection with other tourist attractions. Nonetheless, there are some difficulties for the development of floating markets in Can Tho such as lack of synchronization in infrastructure and material basics development, lack diversity and attraction in tourism products and services, tourism development lacking participation from the local community, the weakness in tourism promotion and in the management of related authorities. Therefore, tourists' general satisfaction level to floating market tourism in Can Tho is evaluated at above average level. This paper also proposes some solutions to improve quality floating market tourism and increase tourists' satisfaction level to floating markets in Can Tho city.

Keywords: Can Tho; floating market; tourism; current status; development solutions

1. Introduction

Floating market tourism is acknowledged as a special and promising tourism form in the Mekong Delta. It combines eco-tourism, cultural tourism and community-based tourism to reach the ultimate goal is sustainable development (Nguyen, 2011). Floating markets were formed in the eighteenth century and have become one of the most interesting forms of tourism (Nguyen, & Le, 2016). In recent years, many studies about floating market tourism are carried out. Floating markets are recognized as a specialty of tourism that brings many benefits to the local community, such as in South Kalimantan

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(Ellyn et al., 2016) and in Banjarmasin City (Listyana et al., 2017) of Indonesia; in Damnoen Saduak (Piempitthakul, 1993; Lobphai, 2000), in Klonghae (Buakwan et al., 2013), in Talingchan (Padpadee, 2000; Putaratana, 2002; Chotiwan, 2006) of Thailand, and so on. The floating markets also significantly contribute to sustainable development (Srivongcharoen, 2001), and floating market tourism can become part of a tool of poverty alleviation (Huynh, 2011). Additionally, the floating market is playing an important role in the wholesale market for agricultural products in the Mekong Delta. The floating market also has contributed remarkably to the development of tourism and employment in the region (Do, 2009; Nguyen, 2010; Nguyen, 2017). The floating market is a valuable resource, a form of commercialized civilization, a cultural characteristic and a special form of tourism (Nham, 2009). Recently, the number of domestic and international tourists travelling to floating markets in the Mekong Delta is constantly increasing (Nguyen et al., 2013).

Floating markets in Can Tho city are known as the most famous floating market in Mekong Delta. It has played a major role in tourism development, as well as in trading and preservation of traditional culture in the region. According to Can Tho Department of Culture – Sport & Tourism, in 2018 Can Tho welcomed nearly 8.5 million tourists and tourism revenue reached about VND 3500 billion, of which most tourists visit floating markets (Can Tho Department of Culture – Sport and Tourism, 2019). Thus, floating market tourism has become an essential demand for those who wish to visit Can Tho city; nevertheless, the development of this type of sojourn is still limited. The aim of the research is to examine the current development of the floating market tourism in Can Tho city (including Cai Rang and Phong Dien floating market), and propose some solutions for sustainable development through documentary, quantitative and qualitative research.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Documentary research

The study partly relied on documentary research, including articles, official documents, reliable reports, books, research works and websites about floating markets and floating market tourism. In addition, the information from General Department of Tourism, Mekong Delta Tourism Association, Can Tho Department of Culture – Sport and Tourism, Can Tho Tourism Association, Can Tho Investment - Trade & Tourism Promotion Center, Tourism Promotion Center of Cai Rang district and Phong Dien district used in this study.

2.2. Qualitative research

The in-depth interviews were designed to gain a better understanding about the policy of the government on floating market tourism in Can Tho city; the limitations in the development of Cai Rang floating market; and propose some suggestions to improve this tourism type.

This study conducted the in-depth interviews with 50 informants (from October to December, 2017), including 5 local authorities (Can Tho Tourism Association, Can Tho Department of Culture - Sport and Tourism, Can Tho Investment - Trade & Tourism Promotion Center, Tourism Promotion Center of Cai Rang district and Phong Dien district), 5 tourist companies in Can Tho city, 20 stall-holders who trade at Cai Rang and Phong Dien floating market, 20 local people who live near Cai Rang and Phong Dien floating market.

Besides, this paper summarized the tourists' opinion through open-ended question in the questionnaire: "Please tell us what are the limitations of floating market tourism in Can Tho?".

2.3. Quantitative research

2.3.1. Sample size

There are twenty-two observed variables included in the factor analysis and which in turn are divided into eight factors such as accommodation services, infrastructure, means of transportation, tour guides, natural environment, other services, security, and the price of services. Normally, the number of observations must be higher than the number of variables in the factor analysis by at least five times (Hoang, & Chu, 2008). Thus, the requirement for the smallest sample size is about five times of twenty-two, resulting in one-hundred and ten samples, so this study conducted one-hundred and fifteen samples.

The target group includes 150 tourists ages fifteen years old and above who visited floating markets in Can Tho city (Cai Rang and Phong Dien) and agreed to answer the questionnaire. The period for collecting data was from October to December, 2018.

2.3.2. Research model

Recently, some studies about tourists' satisfaction have been carried with various aspects. Tribe and Snaith (1988) applied and developed the model of SERVQUAL (service quality) of Parasuraman to assess holiday satisfaction (HOLISAT) of tourists in Varadero, Cuba. Valle (2006) and Coban (2012) studied about the linkage between tourists' satisfaction and loyalty on particular destinations. According to Chen *et al.* (2012), an increasing number of scholars when considering competition between tourist destinations have targeted tourism resources, products and tourism industries; and one of the aspects to evaluate the tourist destination is precisely the satisfaction of tourists.

Besides, many studies on tourists' satisfaction were carried out in Vietnam such as in Da Nang province (Vo et al., 2010), Kien Giang province (Dinh et al., 2011), Can Tho city and surroundings (Nguyen et al., 2014), and Soc Trang province (Luu et al., 2011).

The study applied the five-level Likert scale (Harry and Deborah, 2012) to measure tourists' satisfaction: 1_Strongly disagree, 2_Disagree, 3_Average, 4_Agree, 5_Strongly

agree. This research used eight criteria to measure tourists’ satisfaction: 1) Accommodation services; 2) Infrastructure; 3) Means of transportation; 4) Tour guides; 5) Natural environment; 6) Catering – sightseeing - shopping and entertainment services; 7) Security; and 8) The price of services (Fig.1). The aim of this method is to examine the tourists’ satisfaction on Cai Rang floating market.

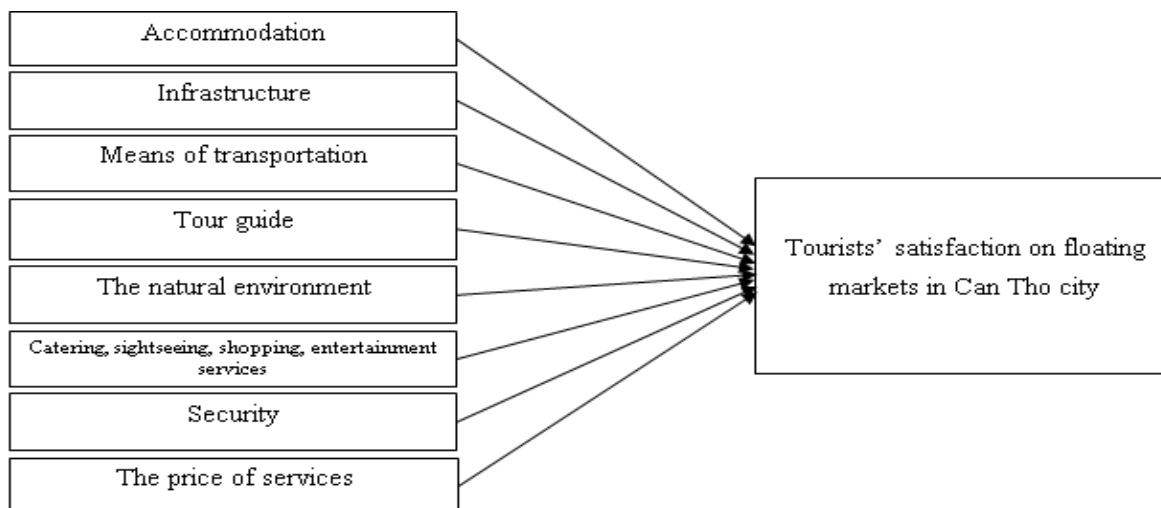


Fig.1. Research model for evaluating tourists’ satisfaction

(Source: Author, 2019)

This study referred to the book “*Analyzing research data with SPSS, Part 1 and Part 2*” (Hoang, & Chu, 2008) to evaluate the satisfaction of tourists on Cai Rang floating market from questionnaires. The surveyed data from questionnaires is conducted and analyzed using SPSS software (22.0) to assess the satisfaction of tourists.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Tourism potential of floating markets in Can Tho city

Mekong Delta includes twelve provinces and one city. Can Tho plays a significant role in the economy, society and the whole development of the region (CIPD, 2011). There are approximately eleven floating markets in Mekong Delta, but the two floating markets (Cai Rang and Phong Dien) in Can Tho city attract more tourists than the others. The reason for this probably is that the floating markets in Can Tho have more advantages including geographical location, the scale of floating markets, the material - technical basis for tourism, tourist services, and the connection with the other tourist attractions (Nguyen, 2017).

Departing from Ninh Kieu wharf, visitors will take twenty minutes to Cai Rang floating market (6km). From this market, it is takes about an hour to Phong Dien floating market (17km), which is located in Can Tho canal. Cai Rang is known as the most famous

floating market in the Mekong Delta. It has played a key role in tourism development, trading and the preservation of traditional culture in the region as well. Besides, the unique cultural and beautiful features of Phong Dien floating market gives inspiration to tourists (Nham, 2009, p.114).

Floating markets in Can Tho city are open all day, but they are busiest since the early morning and until 8 o'clock; except during the Festivals and near the time of the Lunar New Year when activities start earlier and last longer than usual. The main products at floating markets are farming products like seasonal fruits, vegetables, and other products (handicraft products, household appliances, and so on). Currently, there are also new services at this market like petrol stations, machine repair shops, and sewing machine stands. To meet the demands of customers, some kinds of ready-made food (noodles, sticky rice, porridge, bread), soft drinks, beer, miscellaneous goods, lottery tickets are sold on boats.

Like other floating markets in the Mekong Delta, in these floating markets, the stall-holders also use a unique advertising form "Cây bèo"¹ to show what they want to sell. However, household handicrafts, ready-made food, and daily essential household appliances are not advertised this way. They are kept inside the boats or the heads of boats. When customers see a boat's pole from where roof-making leaves are hanging, it means they want to sell the boat itself.

The daily life of traders in the floating market is also a factor that generates curiosity for tourists since they are mainly gathering places for large and small vessels from the neighboring provinces, as well as local residents. Most big boats act as a "mobile house" for stall-holders who do all their daily activities on board, and even keep pets. The floating market is a place to trade and meet people from different areas with different life styles and careers, such as farmers, traders and gardeners. Nevertheless, they have similar characteristics, they have solidarity and willingness to help each other; this is one of the precious characteristics of the Mekong Delta floating market traders - they treat each other as neighbors. Thus, the friendliness and hospitality of local traders also creates the beauty of the floating market culture (Nham, 2009).

After visiting these floating markets, tourists can go sightseeing or enjoy food and drink at the Floating Market Rest Stop. Moreover, the floating market tours are also linked with other interesting places to meet tourists' demand. For example, people can visit the traditional craft villages of Con Au orchard, Ba Cong eco-tourist site or My Khanh tourist village, to enjoy fresh fruits; they can enjoy local food among others; they can partake in

¹"Cây bèo" is a long upright pole at boat's bow on which the stall-holders hang samples of their products.

activities like fishing, rowing, listening to “Đòn ca tài tử”², etc. Nonetheless, if visitors are interested in other destinations in the city they can drive themselves to the sites, namely to Truc Lam Zen-Monastery of Southern, Binh Thuy Communal House, Binh Thuy Ancient House, Can Tho Museum and Pitu Khosa Rangsay Pagoda, Can Tho Ancient Market, and Ong Pagoda.

In short, when referring to tourism in Can Tho, people often think of the floating market tour because it shows not only a typical cultural characteristic of the local residents, but also a unique river civilization of the Southern region. For a long time, floating markets have become the brand of Can Tho tourism that attracted more and more tourists. Remarkably, Mekong Delta Tourism Association selected Cai Rang floating market as the most typical tourist site of the region. The Asia Travel Journal also voted Cai Rang floating market as one of the five most beautiful and exciting floating markets in Asia (Youramazingplaces, 2014)³. Recently, apart from contributing to the socio-economic development of the region, floating market tourism also has created diversification in tourism products in the region. The development of floating market tourism is more or less beneficial to the community. Local people probably take part in providing transport for tourists, working as the boat drivers and tour guides as well. Hence, they might have benefited from tourism.

According to the development planning and project of Cai Rang district, the local government will build a large agricultural product market near Cai Rang floating market. A number of tourist facilities such as restaurants, hotels associated with this region will be built. Besides, in the plan of Can Tho city, Phong Dien district will become an urban of eco-tourism and green tourism. There will be investment in infrastructure and calls for investment in this project (Can Tho Department of Culture – Sport and Tourism, 2019).

3.2. Limitations of floating market tourism in Can Tho city

3.2.1. Lack of synchronization in infrastructure and material basics development

According to the local authorities, the transportation system in Can Tho has become a big problem for tourism development. Tourists traveling by roadway normally start from Ho Chi Minh city and since the road’s surface quality is not good, and sometimes they meet heavy traffic, tourists feel tired after a long journey (around 3.5 hours). It is said that some means of public transport are of low quality and seem to be degraded, especially for buses. Many tourists complained that floating markets lack of public toilets. Can Tho also

² “Đòn ca tài tử” (traditional amateur music in Southern) is an ethnic music of Vietnam that has been recognized by UNESCO as cultural heritage intangible.

³ The four remaining markets: Damnoen Saduak, Taling Chan (Thailand), the floating market on Dal-Srinagarlake (India), Pan Nam floating market (Myanmar).

lacks attractive entertainment sites and souvenir shops so tourists do not prolong their length of stay.

3.2.2. Lack of diversity and attraction in tourism products and services

According to tourists, they come to the floating market and mainly focus on sightseeing, enjoying some fruits or food. They do not have opportunities to join in activities with local residents. The products found in Can Tho such as orchards, river based tours, traditional craft villages, etc, are not unique; they often duplicate those of the neighboring provinces. Some local people see their neighbors earning extra income from tourists, and then they copy the way so the quality of products and services is possibly similar; also, the government does not invest much in the design of souvenirs unique to Can Tho.

As for the tourist companies, although floating market attracts a growing number of tourists, their length of sightseeing is just from one to two hours. Also, the tourism revenue from the floating market is not significant to the local economy.

3.2.3. Tourism development lacking participation from local community

The majority of traders in the floating market were somewhat unsure of their answers when asked about the policy of the State on tourism development in Can Tho city. Most stall-holders do not seem to recognize that tourism is currently vital for their benefit, so they do not have any strategies to attract foreign tourists to buy their products. Moreover, some people lack awareness in ensuring the environmental hygiene, waterway-traffic safety, and price stability necessary to make a good impression on visitors.

The study shows that local inhabitants and traders are too busy to pay attention to the State's policy. In addition, they do not have enough knowledge to participate in tourism development strategies. Local people seem to have not any input in tourism development strategies in Can Tho city; it is the government who designs and makes decisions, without their consultation. Furthermore, some stall-holders stated that the officers do not have any specific strategy to exploit floating market tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation. Some officers even ask for extra money as a trading tax. As for people living near the floating markets, they added that the Bank of Social Policies has considered some poorest households in the area for business loans, but in reality they do not want to borrow money from the Bank. If they were to borrow the State' capital under their current income, they would not be able to pay the debt. As a result, the local authority only encourages local residents to provide some products and services for visitors to earn extra income.

Additionally, the tourist companies do not have a business relationship with the stall-holders on the floating market. They do not even have a budget to support poor people. Some traders explained: "The tourist companies only organize tours for travelers to visit to

the destinations. In other words, the tourism companies just exploit tourism resources for their benefits. They rarely help to reduce poverty at the tourist sites". It is clear that the benefit from tourism mainly belongs to tourist companies, hotels, restaurants and some souvenir shops; yet for the local people, the benefits they receive from tourism activities are insignificant.

3.2.4. The weakness in the management of related authorities

According to local people, the organization and management towards trading and tourism activities are now limited. It can be said that some tourist companies tend to run sales without compromise on the quality of the service. Since there are many small companies in Can Tho, the price competition often occurs to attract more tourists. Also, some companies copy each other's tourism programs leading to less attractive and less attractive tours.

On other matters, means of transportation and other services at the floating market such as food, drink and farm products are pushed with insistence and overcharge, especially during peak season. Along with this, there are no specific rules and penalties when it comes to environmental pollution; self-awareness of stall-holders, local residents and visitors is low, and they litter and dispose of waste water into the river - over the years, the water has been seriously polluted. There are also some traffic accidents and congestion of the traffic during business time. Furthermore, most of the sellers in the floating market come from neighboring provinces. They come and go without temporary registration, so it causes difficulties in management, and generates social problems in the floating market like stolen cases at night, drunk-gambling situations on some traders' boats in their free time, etc.

It is clear to see that one key reason why floating market tourism is still undeveloped, is the weak linkages between government and other stakeholders, especially with local communities. For instance, Can Tho Department of Culture - Sport and Tourism works independently from Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Planning and Investment, and so on. It is noted that each Department has their own responsibilities and it is a rare opportunity for them to meet and discuss how to develop floating market tourism better. The relationship between government organizations, tourism companies and the local community seems to be unclear.

Noticeably, many informants said that there are many organizations managing the floating market such as the Economic Chamber, the Cultural Chamber, the Tourism Center, the District People's Committee, and the Waterway and Roadway Police, so it is difficult to reach an agreement. For example, the waterway police want to disperse the floating market, while the cultural and tourism agencies prefer to maintain and develop it.

3.2.5. *The weakness in tourism promotion*

The local authorities shared that the activities for tourism promotion are still limited. Many ideas to promote the tourism image of Can Tho have been given, but there were few projects implemented due to lack of budget from the Central government. Training classes for the staff working in the tourism companies are not really effective; most of small tourism companies lack tour guides who are professional and able to fluently use foreign languages; and the serving style of laborers in tourism sites is neither professional nor enthusiastic. Moreover, the promotional activities for tourism products and destinations in conferences, exhibitions, international fairs or on websites are still neither attractive nor effective.

Furthermore, the local officers shared that city leaders do not have capital investment for conservation of the floating market and doing research on tourism development. Although the government has formed the Tourism Association, its activity is still limited; notwithstanding, this data might be different from the actual information because hotel and restaurant owners want to pay less tax. This makes it difficult to evaluate the current situation and to make specific plans to develop local tourism. Currently, there are fewer traders because with the development of roadways and the birth of many land-based markets; hence, if there is no financial support for the local residents, the floating market might gradually disappear.

3.2.6. *Not high general satisfaction of tourists on floating market tourism in Can Tho city*

Based on the collected data from 150 questionnaires answered by tourists, investigating the satisfaction of tourists on two floating markets in Can Tho city includes eight factors (accommodation service, infrastructure, means of transportation, tour guide, the natural environment, catering – sightseeing – shopping and entertainment services, security, and the price of services). The number of domestic tourists who responded to the questionnaires make up 80% of the total; while that of international tourists is about 20%. The majority of tourists visiting this floating market are domestic tourists.

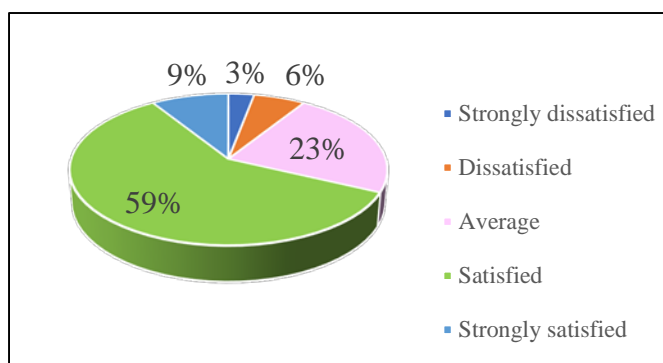


Fig. 2. *General satisfaction on floating market tourism in Can Tho city*
 (Source: Processing result from 150 questionnaires, 2018)

The pie chart shows that floating market tourism has not really attracted tourists. There are more than half the tourists are satisfied (68%); however, 23% feel average, and 9% feel dissatisfied with floating market tourism. Specifically, tourists are satisfied with accommodation services, roads to the floating market, means of transportation, tour guide, fresh air, linkage with close tourist sites, security at the floating market and accommodation prices. In contrast, they feel unsatisfied with the parking lots and boat stations, first-aid kits on board of the boats, trees along the river, river water, catering service and shopping prices. The remaining criteria are evaluated at an average level.

The total number of tourists who travel for the first time to floating markets accounts for over 82% of the full sum; meanwhile, the percent of the second, third or more visits constitutes only 10%, 6% and 2% respectively. Besides, approximate 50% respondents say that they do not plan to come back to the floating markets and introduce to their friends and relatives. Since they probably visit out of curiosity, they tend to visit one time only. Another reason not to return is due to bad impressions - overcharging, and poor products and services. It is so necessary to satisfy tourists because this will contribute to promote floating market tourism's positive image to potential visitors.

3.3. Proposals to sustainably develop floating market tourism in Can Tho city

3.3.1. Development of the infrastructure – material basics

The government should pay more attention to establishing high standard restaurants and hotels that meet the demand of high class tourists. Besides, it is necessary to invest in building recreation areas and shopping centers at the local level to prolong visitors' length of stay. In tourist destinations, the material facilities need more investment, human resources have to be regularly trained, the price of services must be controlled, and the natural environment has to be protected to make a good impression on visitors. Besides, the local authorities should build and upgrade the boat stations and parking lots near the floating markets.

The local authority should invest to upgrade the road in order to facilitate the tour of Cai Rang floating market – Phong Dien floating market – Phong Dien orchards and cultural - historical – architectural sites in Binh Thuy district. The local government should focus more on the parking lots and boat stations. To prolong visitors' length of stay, the government should construct recreation and shopping complexes along the floating market.

3.3.2. Development of tourism products – services and marketing

It is necessary to create more excitement and prolong the length of sightseeing for visitors. For example, creating favorable conditions for tourists to talk and engage in daily activities with stall-holders, taking photos, enjoying the food by the river, and so on. Especially, the local government should cooperate with tourist companies in designing

more interesting activities, such as boat racing or the competition for tourists who have to row the boats and buy the products in the floating market in a limited budget. Moreover, Can Tho city should link with other destinations in surrounding provinces as well as neighboring countries like Cambodia, Thailand and Laos.

Additionally, Can Tho leaders should facilitate for investors to build floating restaurants serving food and drinks for travelers. We need to build impressive souvenir shops near the floating market to sell unique and typical handmade products like the models of floating market, Can Tho ancient market, Ninh Kieu quay, Can Tho bridge, “đòn ca tài tử” boat, etc. These souvenirs not only remind tourists about a destination they visited, but they are also a good way to promote Can Tho tourism.

To introduce a widely floating market to potential customers, we have to provide the products and services with high quality because word-of-mouth marketing is the most powerful kind”. Apart from diversifying tourism products, ensuring traffic safety, protecting the environment and providing good services, we should regularly use survey questionnaires to gather visitors’ comments. The government should have more incentives for investors in tourism. Moreover, the Tourism Promotion Center should promote images of the floating market on mass media, tourism websites, conferences, exhibitions, international fairs, and so on.

The State should establish a fund for the promotion activities and research on tourism in each locality. To generate financial sources for investment in floating market tourism development, Can Tho Department of Culture - Sports and Tourism should have specific regulations about annual fees towards organizations and private tourism companies. This fee will be spent on improving the environment and developing the local community.

3.3.2. Development of community – based tourism

Currently, floating market tourism does not bring much economic benefit to the city as well as the local people. To improve this situation, the local community needs to be engaged in planning and development strategies for the city. The local residents play a significant role in the success of any tourist sites, as a/the promoter. It is very important to create favorable conditions for them to be involved in tourism activities. This is a good way to promote the development of the economy – society in the locality; when local people realize their benefits from tourism activities, they will volunteer to protect the natural environment and tourism resources like their assets.

The local government needs to have specific ways to attract more local people’s participation in tourism development such as providing means of transportation, food, drinks, souvenirs, products for tourists, etc.

The local community needs to be trained and widen their knowledge about natural environmental protection, the importance of ensuring food safety and reasonable prices, as well as on how to become local guides. Besides, the government should support the financial source for the community to maintain trading activities at the floating market. As a result, local residents can market themselves to tourists and take part in tourism development strategies.

3.3.3. The implementation of the government policy on tourism

It is said that the implementation of government policies is likely a key component in the development process of tourism. It is necessary to have stricter regulations about establishing tourism companies, tourist sites, restaurants, and so on. Businessmen have to pay more attention to product quality and avoid discounting to compete unfairly. In the tourism companies, it is necessary to consider copyright towards the tourism programs. Can Tho Department of Culture - Sport and Tourism should coordinate with the Schools of Tourism in Can Tho and relevant agencies in order to continue the training courses for business owners, staff and employees in tourist attractions, means of transportation, hotels, restaurants, etc. These activities will create conditions for tourism businesses to improve service quality, and probably ensure a regulated from the State.

Besides, the local officers should establish the market-management team to regularly check and promptly deal with any violation, overcharging situations, and other social problems. In the future, it is very important to enhance the relationship among stakeholders to responsibly develop tourism, including the Departments, tourism companies, local community and other service providers. To ensure traffic safety, the waterway managers need to control the means of transportation such as the operating license, quality of means, life jackets, the first aid kits, the staff, and so on. In addition, conducting the waterway traffic management will enhance inspection to ensure order in the operation of boats on the river, thereby preventing unfortunate incidents from occurring.

The local authority should have an observatory to help manage the floating market, and allow tourists to enjoy the panoramic view. The City People's Committee needs to have specific policies in order to support the working capital for poor traders and local people. All interview groups showed considerable attention to the natural environment. They agreed that tourism development must go hand in hand with the preservation of natural resources and protection of the natural environment.

To solve the problem of water pollution, the government has to have specific measures. For example, Department and District People Committees should open classes to propagate or educate the local people and stall-holders on how to protect the natural environment. Besides, the local authority should verify the staff's to regularly check and promptly solve any problem. Moreover, all government agencies in Can Tho city should

enhance linkage and co-operation among stakeholders to develop tourism in a responsible way. It may be necessary to raise awareness of tourist companies in sharing the profit with the local community at destinations, contributing the fund for the conservation of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

It is very important to establish a team who is responsible for sanitation of the market surroundings. The Tourism Promotion Center will propose to the City People's Committee to set up an area for garbage disposal. As for the means of transportation, vehicle and boat owners have to remind visitors to protect the environment while sightseeing. All local residents and traders commented that the local government needs to build public toilets near the floating markets. Besides, the market management board should allocate more wastebaskets near the floating market.

4. Conclusion

Can Tho has favorable conditions for floating market tourism development such as floating markets' history and culture, unique products, trader's daily life, and connection with other tourist attractions. It can be seen floating markets have contributed to introducing the country, the people of Vietnam in general and Can Tho in particular to international friends. However, there are some problems in the development process of this tourism type, namely lack of synchronization in infrastructure and material basics development, lack diversity and attraction in tourism products and services, tourism development lacking participation from the local community, the weakness in tourism promotion and in the management of related authorities.

Therefore, the government needs to urgently deal with the problems to develop floating market tourism which is always the typical culture of the Delta. In order to develop floating market tourism effectively, the government should propose subtle policies in infrastructure – material basics, development of tourism products - services and marketing, development of community – based tourists and so on. It might contribute to economic growth and the stable development of society while preserving indigenous cultural activities.

❖ **Conflict of Interest:** Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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**DU LỊCH CHỢ NỘI TẠI THÀNH PHỐ CẦN THƠ:
HIỆN TRẠNG VÀ GIẢI PHÁP PHÁT TRIỂN**
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TÓM TẮT

Bài viết này dựa trên nghiên cứu tài liệu, nghiên cứu định lượng và định tính, nhằm mục đích đánh giá hiện trạng phát triển du lịch chợ nổi ở thành phố Cần Thơ. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy du lịch chợ nổi có tiềm năng nổi bật để thu hút khách du lịch như: lịch sử và văn hóa chợ nổi, sản phẩm độc đáo, đời sống của cư dân thương hồ và sự kết nối với các điểm du lịch lân cận. Tuy nhiên, có một số khó khăn trong quá trình phát triển du lịch chợ nổi như cơ sở hạ tầng – vật chất kỹ thuật thiếu đồng bộ, sản phẩm du lịch chưa đa dạng, thiếu sự tham gia của cộng đồng địa phương, sự yếu kém trong quảng bá du lịch và quản lý của chính quyền có liên quan. Do đó, mức độ hài lòng chung của khách du lịch đối với du lịch chợ nổi ở Cần Thơ chỉ được đánh giá ở mức trên trung bình. Bài viết cũng đề xuất một số giải pháp để cải thiện chất lượng du lịch chợ nổi và nâng cao mức độ hài lòng của khách du lịch đối với chợ nổi ở thành phố Cần Thơ.

Từ khóa: Cần Thơ; chợ nổi; du lịch; hiện trạng; giải pháp phát triển