

Community-Based Tourism and Sustainable Local Supply Chains: A Case Study of Resilient Development in Bangnamphueng, Thailand

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Abstract

This study examines the Bangnamphueng community in southern Bangkok as a case of community-based sustainable tourism. Conducted during the UN SDG Bootcamp Forum 2025, the research employs a qualitative case study design, using semi-structured interviews and field observation to explore local governance, sustainability practices, and stakeholder experiences. Findings indicate that the community's locally managed tourism model aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting inclusive economic development, environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and social inclusion. The study also identifies key challenges, including infrastructure constraints, tourism-related pressures, and economic vulnerability exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thematic analysis reveals that sustainable tourism in Bangnamphueng operates as a dynamic socio-ecological system shaped by participatory governance, local knowledge, and adaptive strategies. The research contributes to the literature by demonstrating how community-based tourism can support context-specific sustainability pathways while highlighting the importance of resilience and stakeholder collaboration in managing development trade-offs.

Keywords: Community-based tourism, Sustainable development, United Nations SDGs; Resilience,

Participatory governance; Thailand

Introduction

As part of the *UN SDG Bootcamp Forum 2025 Bangkok - Youth and Global Sustainable Actions*, national delegates conducted a field visit to the Bangnamphueng Floating Market and engaged directly with local community representatives. This immersive experience provided insights that extend beyond conventional

research approaches. While documentary analysis and quantitative surveys offer valuable background information, direct interaction enables a deeper understanding of the community's lived realities.

Through conversations with residents and community leaders, participants observed not only economic activities but also the adaptive strategies developed in response to increasing tourism. Local stakeholders described the challenges of balancing diverse interests in community decision-making, while visitors emphasized the distinctive cultural and environmental qualities that shape the area's identity and encourage repeat visitation. These firsthand perspectives revealed complex interconnections within the local ecosystem, challenging simplified assumptions about tourism development.

Tourism in Bangnamphueng can therefore be understood not merely as an economic activity, but as a multifaceted social phenomenon shaped by relationships, cultural values, and collective adaptation. The integration of tourism into the community reflects an ongoing negotiation between preservation and development, highlighting the importance of local agency in sustainable practices. This study adopts a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to analyze stakeholder experiences and examine the broader implications of community-based tourism.

This study aims to explore how community-based tourism contributes to sustainable development in Bangnamphueng. Specifically, the research seeks to:

- (1) examine the perspectives of key stakeholders regarding the impacts of tourism
- (2) identify strategies employed by the community to balance economic, social, and environmental objectives
- (3) evaluate the extent to which these practices align with sustainable development principles.

The study is guided by the following research questions

- (1) How do local stakeholders perceive the impacts of tourism on their community?
- (2) What strategies are implemented to manage tourism sustainably?
- (3) How does community-based tourism influence local resilience and identity?

The scope of this research is limited to the Bangnamphueng community in Bangkok, focusing on qualitative data collected through field visits and semi-structured interviews with residents, community leaders, and visitors. The findings aim to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism development and provide practical insights for policymakers and community development practitioners.

Literature Review

Sustainable Development and the SDGs Framework

The concept of sustainable development has become a central paradigm in addressing global environmental, economic, and social challenges. Defined by the United Nations as development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own, sustainability emphasizes the integration of three key dimensions: economic viability, social equity, and environmental protection (United Nations, 2015). This tripartite framework has been operationalized through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a comprehensive global agenda for development.

In the context of tourism, sustainable development requires balancing economic benefits with the

preservation of cultural heritage and ecological systems. Bramwell and Lane (2011) argue that sustainable tourism governance involves multi-stakeholder collaboration and adaptive policy frameworks to address complex and dynamic local conditions. Their work highlights that sustainability in tourism is not a fixed outcome but an ongoing process requiring negotiation among stakeholders. The World Tourism Organization further emphasizes that tourism plays a critical role in achieving the SDGs by promoting inclusive economic growth and sustainable resource management (World Tourism Organization, 2018). In addition, sustainable development in tourism is increasingly examined through a supply chain perspective, where the coordination of production, distribution, and consumption processes plays a critical role in achieving sustainability outcomes. Sustainable supply chain management emphasizes transparency, resource efficiency, and stakeholder collaboration across the entire value chain, making it highly relevant to community-based tourism contexts. The SDGs, particularly Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), are directly relevant to community-based tourism initiatives.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is widely recognized as an approach that prioritizes local participation, empowerment, and equitable benefit-sharing in tourism development. CBT shifts the focus from externally driven tourism models to locally managed initiatives, where communities have greater control over decision-making processes and resource allocation.

Timothy (1999) argues that community participation is a fundamental element of sustainable tourism, as it enhances local ownership and ensures that development aligns with community needs and values. Meaningful participation goes beyond consultation, requiring active involvement in planning, implementation, and management. CBT also contributes to cultural preservation and strengthens local identity by promoting indigenous knowledge and traditions. Scheyvens (1999) further emphasizes that tourism can empower local communities by increasing their control over resources and decision-making processes. However, challenges such as unequal power relations, limited capacity, and external market pressures may hinder its effectiveness. As noted by Bramwell and Lane (2011), successful CBT initiatives require strong governance structures and collaboration among stakeholders.

From a supply chain perspective, community-based tourism can be understood as a form of localized or short supply chain, where goods and services are produced, distributed, and consumed within a geographically bounded system. This structure enhances local value retention, reduces environmental impact, and strengthens community control over economic activities.

Resilience Theory

Resilience theory provides a useful framework for understanding how communities adapt to change and respond to external pressures such as tourism development. Originally developed in ecological studies by Holling (1973), resilience refers to the capacity of a system to absorb disturbances while maintaining its core functions and structure.

In social contexts, resilience encompasses the ability of communities to adapt, learn, and transform in response to changing conditions. Tourism can act as both an opportunity and a disruption, making resilience

a critical factor in sustainable development. Communities with higher resilience are better able to manage tourism impacts while preserving cultural and environmental integrity.

Synthesis of Theoretical Framework

The integration of sustainable development, community-based tourism, and resilience theory provides a comprehensive analytical framework for this study. Sustainable development offers the overarching goals and principles, CBT provides a practical model for implementation at the local level, and resilience theory explains the dynamic processes through which communities adapt to change.

Together, these frameworks enable a multidimensional analysis of tourism in Bangnamphueng, moving beyond purely economic considerations to include social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. This theoretical foundation supports the study's objective of examining tourism as a complex and evolving system shaped by stakeholder interactions and adaptive strategies.

Research Method

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore the multidimensional nature of sustainability initiatives in the Bangnamphueng community. A qualitative design is appropriate for capturing the complexity of social phenomena, particularly in understanding how local stakeholders perceive and engage with community-based tourism and sustainable development practices. The case study approach enables an in-depth examination of contextual dynamics, governance systems, and lived experiences within the community.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a combination of semi-structured interviews and field observation during the site visit. Semi-structured interviews allowed for guided yet flexible conversations, enabling participants to share their perspectives on governance structures, environmental management, economic activities, and social inclusion.

Field observation complemented the interviews by providing contextual insights into daily practices, community interactions, and the physical environment. This combination of methods enhanced the richness and reliability of the data by capturing both articulated experiences and observed behaviors.

Participants

Fieldwork was conducted with purposively selected participants to ensure diversity and representational inclusivity. Informants included traditional community leaders, women in emerging leadership roles, youth representatives, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. This sampling strategy aimed to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences, reflecting the social heterogeneity of the community.

By engaging participants from different social groups, the study was able to examine how sustainability practices and tourism development intersect with issues of governance, equity, and social inclusion in everyday life.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved coding interview transcripts, identifying recurring themes, and

organizing them into broader conceptual categories.

This approach enabled the study to systematically interpret stakeholder narratives and uncover underlying patterns related to sustainability, community participation, and resilience. Thematic analysis also facilitated the integration of multiple perspectives, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the community's tourism practices and adaptive strategies.

Results

Community and SDGs Alignment

The findings indicate that the Bangnamphueng community has developed a locally driven tourism model that aligns closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Interview data suggests that the community adopts a holistic approach that integrates economic development, environmental protection, and social responsibility. Local businesses are supported while cultural heritage and natural resources are preserved, reflecting a balanced and community-centered sustainability framework.

Environmental Practices

Interview data suggest that environmental stewardship is embedded in everyday community practices. One notable initiative involves the use of Effective Microorganism (EM) balls, which are introduced into local waterways to improve water quality by breaking down organic waste and reducing pollution. In addition, the findings indicate that the community has implemented a structured waste management system that begins at the household level. Residents separate waste into organic, recyclable, and non-recyclable categories. These materials are further sorted at a centralized facility. The study also finds that community members creatively repurpose waste into reusable products, such as bags, while non-recyclable waste is disposed of using environmentally conscious methods to minimize ecological impact. The findings also suggest that these practices reflect elements of reverse logistics within a sustainable supply chain framework, where waste materials are reintegrated into the production cycle through recycling and reuse. This circular approach contributes to resource efficiency and aligns with broader sustainability objectives.

Cultural and Natural Preservation

The findings indicate that environmental conservation and cultural preservation are central to the community's sustainability efforts. Interview data suggests that residents actively participate in reforestation initiatives and collectively maintain a 16-acre community forest. This green space is integrated into both daily life and tourism-related activities, serving as a shared resource that supports ecological balance and cultural identity.

Social Inclusion

The results highlight a strong emphasis on social inclusion within the community. Interview data suggests that women and LGBTQ+ individuals are actively encouraged to assume leadership roles. This inclusive approach reflects a broader commitment to social equity and empowerment. As one participant stated, "Even Lady, Ladyboy, like me, we can be leaders if we can show things that others haven't seen before," illustrating the community's openness to diverse forms of leadership and participation.

Governance System

The findings indicate that participatory governance is a key factor in the community's sustainability. Interview data suggests that decision-making processes are highly inclusive, with community members actively involved in discussions prior to the implementation of new policies. Education and consensus-building are prioritized to ensure understanding and cooperation. This participatory approach enables the community to balance tourism development with environmental protection and economic needs, resulting in policies that are widely accepted and effectively implemented. From a supply chain perspective, this participatory governance model functions as a form of localized supply chain governance, where stakeholders collaboratively regulate production standards, pricing, and resource use. This enhances transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability across the local value chain.

Challenges and Resilience

Despite its strengths, the findings indicate that the community faces several challenges. Interview data suggests that weekend tourism surges place significant pressure on local infrastructure, particularly waste management systems. Instances of overflow during peak periods highlight the limitations of current capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the community's economic vulnerability. The temporary closure of the Bangnamphueng Floating Market in 2020 resulted in a sudden loss of income for many vendors. Although some attempted to transition to online sales, limited digital skills and the inability to replicate the in-person market experience reduced the effectiveness of these efforts. Agricultural producers were also affected by declining demand. The findings suggest that this crisis prompted increased awareness of the risks associated with economic dependence on tourism, leading to discussions on income diversification as a strategy for enhancing resilience.

In addition, interview data indicates that government support mechanisms, while present, are not always effectively implemented. For example, delays in a provincial tourism development grant resulted in construction activities coinciding with peak tourist seasons, temporarily disrupting local businesses.

Conflict Resolution

The findings indicate that the community has established mechanisms for addressing internal conflicts. Monthly meetings organized by the Subdistrict Administrative Organization serve as platforms for discussion and problem-solving. Interview data suggests that governance enforcement plays an important role in maintaining standards. For instance, complaints from tourists regarding inconsistent pricing led to the implementation of standardized price display requirements for all vendors. Vendors who repeatedly violated these rules faced temporary suspension from market participation. These measures, applied on multiple occasions, demonstrate the community's commitment to maintaining fairness, transparency, and its overall reputation.

Conclusion and Implication

Findings

The findings of this study indicate that the Bangnamphueng community demonstrates several key strengths aligned with sustainable development principles. First, the community-based tourism model has proven effective in generating local economic opportunities while maintaining community control, contributing

to sustainable livelihoods. Second, environmental conservation efforts—such as waste management practices and ecosystem protection—reflect a strong integration of ecological awareness into daily practices. Third, the preservation of cultural heritage highlights the community's ability to maintain its identity while adapting to contemporary challenges. At the same time, the findings reveal areas that require further development. Interview data suggests that youth engagement remains a concern, as younger generations are not yet fully integrated into community leadership or cultural preservation efforts. In addition, infrastructure limitations present challenges for both residents and the growing tourism sector. Addressing these issues will be essential for strengthening the community's long-term resilience and sustainability.

Implications

The findings offer several implications for policy and practice. From a policy perspective, there is a need for more responsive and context-sensitive government support mechanisms that align with local conditions and timelines. Improved coordination between public agencies and community stakeholders could enhance the effectiveness of development initiatives. From a practical standpoint, strategies to enhance youth participation should be prioritized, such as capacity-building programs, digital skills training, and opportunities for innovation in tourism-related activities. Furthermore, investment in infrastructure—particularly in waste management, transportation, and public facilities—would support sustainable tourism growth while improving residents' quality of life.

These implications highlight the importance of integrating community voices into decision-making processes and ensuring that development initiatives remain inclusive, adaptive, and locally grounded. These findings also suggest that integrating supply chain thinking into community-based tourism can enhance sustainability outcomes. Policymakers and practitioners should consider strengthening local supply chain structures, promoting circular resource flows, and supporting community-led governance mechanisms to improve resilience and long-term development.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size of participants was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the research was conducted during a short-term field visit, which may not fully capture long-term dynamics or seasonal variations in tourism and community practices. Additionally, the reliance on qualitative data means that the findings are context-specific and may be influenced by participants' subjective perspectives. Future studies could benefit from incorporating mixed methods to enhance robustness.

Future Research

Future research could expand on this study in several ways. Comparative studies across different community-based tourism sites would provide broader insights into best practices and contextual differences. In addition, longitudinal research is recommended to examine how community dynamics, sustainability practices, and resilience strategies evolve over time. Such approaches would contribute to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism development and its long-term impacts.

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