



Attracting Tourists and Supporting Locals: Implementing Community-Based Tourism Strategies in the Amphawa Region

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Abstract

In recent years, the Amphawa region of Samut Songkhram, Thailand has experienced an overall decrease in tourism, especially in areas outside of the popular floating market. Additionally, the lack of communication of cultural information to visitors does not allow tourists to fully engage with and understand the qualities that make Amphawa a unique destination. To help address these issues, we were given the opportunity to work with the Municipality of Amphawa, which strives to support its community and enhance the struggling tourism industry throughout the region. Accordingly, this project aims to identify ways to promote tourism and local culture in Amphawa through community-based tourism practices. Through archival research, ethnography, surveys, and semi-structured interviews with primary stakeholders, we were able to develop recommendations and models of innovative solutions to achieve this goal.

Acknowledgments

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Firstly, we'd like to thank the Municipality of Amphawa and Vice Mayor Mr. Krit Meetawee for acting as a guiding voice and providing us with all the details and resources we needed to successfully complete our research.

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Background

The Amphawa district in the Samut Songkhram Province of Thailand presents a unique conglomeration of history and culture that emphasizes Thai heritage. The Mae Klong River that flows through the area promotes the usage of canal systems and the transportation of goods, promoting a river-based way of life for many of the locals (Phuong et al., 2023). This area, along with its notable floating market, draws in a variety of tourists, both domestic and international, seeking a blend of cultural heritage and authentic local experiences (Amphawa Municipality, 2023). Beyond the market, Amphawa hosts many other attractions, including culturally significant temples, conservation organizations, and historical sites. However, despite everything it has to offer, Amphawa faces several challenges that threaten the area's tourist industry.

Currently, there are gaps in communicating information about the many attractions outside of the floating market to tourists. Signages are used for particular landmarks, temples, and other sites, although they do not convey enough cultural and historical background about the area to engage tourists in a way that encourages them to appreciate the community's heritage. This leads to another issue, which involves the floating market commonly being portrayed as the main attraction of Amphawa, with little attention being given to numerous lesser-known destinations, such as temples, museums, orchards, and conservation centers, in the surrounding area, especially during weekdays. Through research and fieldwork, it has been made evident that these locations are largely underrepresented online and on social media, leading to tourists viewing the more popular floating market as being the only worthwhile attraction in the area. As a result, these locations have not received enough income to compensate for rising living costs and other social issues.

As the sponsor of this project, the Municipality of Amphawa has emphasized the need to modernize Amphawa without compromising its cultural integrity. While previous joint projects between Chulalongkorn University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute have focused on promoting more sustainable, environmentally-friendly tourism practices in the Amphawa region, this project aims to focus more on the community aspect of maintaining tourism resources by using community-based tourism practices that involve digital tools and storytelling to help locals convey what makes Amphawa special and provide visitors with a more engaging experience. To address this gap, we were presented the opportunity to work with the Municipality of Amphawa with the goal of identifying ways to promote tourism and local culture in Amphawa through community-based tourism practices.

To achieve this goal, we broke down our research process into the following objectives:

1. To identify cultural aspects that should be emphasized in tourism promotion
2. To identify current challenges in the local tourism industry
3. To develop a strategy that utilizes digital tools to improve interactions between locals and tourists

Methodology

The following list outlines the process used to achieve each of our objectives:

- 1) To identify cultural aspects that should be emphasized in tourism promotion, we conducted archival research and interviews with locals to familiarize ourselves with the Amphawa region's historical and cultural background. Ethnographic observations were used to supplement these methods.
- 2) To identify current challenges in the local tourism industry, we carried out a series of interviews and surveys with the Amphawa municipality, tourism experts from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), and tourists in Amphawa, the floating market, and other markets in the Samut Songkhram province. Ethnographic observations supported the data collected through these means, and research from tourism journals provided insight into tourist behaviors in Amphawa as well as other comparable heritage sites.
- 3) To develop a strategy that utilizes digital tools to improve interactions between locals and tourists, we conducted archival research on case studies that employed both successful and unsuccessful digital tools, interviewed community conservation groups in Amphawa, and analyzed information provided by the TAT to investigate the use of digital tools to address the promotion of community ideas.

Findings

From the data we gathered, we were able to form the following main findings:

1) Regional changes and modernization are altering local traditions and lifestyle.

Cars and modern infrastructure have changed the way locals deliver goods, marking a switch from boats to cars, with most vendors now selling their products on land. After a decline between the 1970s and early 2000s, the Amphawa Floating Market was reintroduced as a tourist destination rather than a local way of life, leading to a decrease in local expression and decision-making (Suntikul et al., 2017). Locals and the municipality claim that since the

Covid-19 epidemic, there have been fewer tourists and locals, as most traders in the area nowadays are from other places, with only approximately 20% of vendors at the floating market being from Amphawa.

2) Tourists lack awareness.

Survey data showed that most tourists were visiting Amphawa for the floating market without exploring surrounding locations. Due to this preference for visiting the market over other areas, tourists typically only visit the region for a short part of the day and only spend this time at the floating market. As for the accessibility of information about Amphawa, survey results showed that only 40% of foreign tourists stated that they heard about Amphawa through either the internet or travel agencies, and 28.6% were neutral, while 57.1% somewhat agreed that information about Amphawa is accessible to find online. This suggests that there may be relatively limited accessibility of information about Amphawa on online and social media platforms. Local perspectives also supported this finding, stating that the Amphawa Floating Market does not have a very strong online presence, leading other markets in the province to receive more attention from tourists.

3) Tourism in Amphawa is concentrated at the floating market on weekends.

Survey and interview data show that many visitors view the floating market as being too crowded with tourists, with open-ended survey responses such as “less people should come”, while others think there are not many tourists, with responses such as “there are less tourists here than I thought here would be.” This shows differences in visitor preferences and may suggest that temporary crowding influences visitor’s perspectives and opinions about the market. Ethnographic observations and tourist tracking data from the TAT also showed patterns of tourists crowding the market at later times of day on weekends, while it was quiet and mostly aimed for local sales during earlier times of day. These observations were supported by local interviews that explained how “there are no tourists coming to the temple and there is a lack of income [on] weekdays” and how “tourists seem to ignore [Amphawa] during the week.”

4) Generational gap between locals and tourists.

Data from tourist and local surveys showed that the majority of foreign tourists were from European countries and both foreign and domestic tourists fell under a variety of age groups. In comparison, the majority (65%) of locals were above the age of 45 years old. From this finding, we can infer that with this demographic gap comes differences in values and communication preferences, suggesting that this could be a contributing factor to the gaps in

communicating information about local businesses and attractions to visitors. To support this hypothesis, we asked many of the locals if they used online or social media platforms to promote their business, and several stated that they do not use internet resources.

5) The Amphawa Floating Market offers more authentic experiences.

Ethnographic observations of other markets in Samut Songkhram, including the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market and the Rom Hub Market along the Maeklong railway, showed overcrowding of tourists and a strong focus on the sales of souvenirs. The Damnoen Saduak market is the largest and most commercialized of the three, with high tourist traffic, expensive souvenirs, and boat tours confined to the canal. Rom Hub market, initially an authentic grocery market, has shifted towards tourist souvenirs, with a decline in local products. In contrast, the Amphawa Floating Market offers a variety of experiences and locally-sourced goods at more reasonable prices as well as more extensive boat tours with firefly watching at night. However, Amphawa has less online presence and no physical guidebooks to inform tourists and help them navigate the area like at Damnoen Saduak.

6) Digital community-based tourism educates tourists and supports locals.

Studies by Agustina et al. (2024) and Jamader et al. (2025) provide evidence that the use of community-based tourism practices such as local storytelling through social media and preservation-focused tourist promotion that incorporates community narratives and local stakeholder perspectives helps to increase and improve the quality of tourism by reaching a wider audience and highlighting unique qualities of destinations. Tourist mapping is another digital tool that has been found to effectively contribute to “promoting the identity of an area, as well as potentially increasing the local economic activity” (Yan & Lee, 2015). With a design that adapts to the preferences of the target audience, tourists can be encouraged to visit locations outside of the most popular attractions in a certain area. Input from locals in the creation of such maps can also help to enhance the accuracy of the map and promote underrepresented destinations in a way that allows tourists to engage more with the area’s community and culture.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From our findings, we can conclude that the Amphawa region’s unique history and culture is largely underrepresented in the information provided to tourists, thus tourists are not presented with sufficient reasons to visit the area. Furthermore, a demographic gap between the locals and tourists may be a contributing factor to the gaps in communicating information about local businesses and attractions to visitors.

In an effort to help the Municipality of Amphawa mitigate these issues, we provided three recommendations supplemented by two functional models:

- 1) Personalized storytelling through social media can be used to encourage deeper connections between tourists and locals by highlighting local stories and businesses. To create a model for this, we created an account on Lemon8 and TikTok, two interconnected social media platforms, to share content chosen by featured locals with a wide audience.
- 2) Interactive, community-based mapping can be used for tourist education and navigation. To demonstrate this, we created an ArcGIS model that illustrates the floating market layout and features underrepresented locations in the surrounding area. This mapping offers descriptions of these locations as well as stories and recommendations from the locals who manage them. Highlighting local businesses and perspectives outside of the market should encourage visitors to explore these lesser-known areas, providing a more sustainable and equitable distribution of tourism.
- 3) Lastly, to maintain these solutions, locals should be educated on the use of these digital tools to promote their businesses. Since locals commonly stated that they either did not have the time to utilize digital tools for business promotion or they did not know how to use these tools, we recommend that the Municipality of Amphawa organizes cooperation between locals, the TAT, and the Amphawa-Chaipattananurak Project; community engagement representatives from these tourism and conservation organizations can educate locals on the changing tourism trends and effective tourist engagement.

During the process of gathering data and developing potential solutions, we were able to listen to the stories of people who truly care about the Amphawa community, providing valuable perspectives that emphasize the many unique qualities and experiences the region as a whole has to offer. Making these narratives accessible to potential visitors through community-based strategies like local storytelling, detailed mapping, and cooperation among community members will hopefully help to further connect the community and bring a new layer of understanding to those who visit Amphawa. The concept of utilizing digital tools to achieve this goal brings an innovative aspect to this project that can set a precedent for communities facing similar challenges. Amidst constant change and development, preserving the identity of cultural places like Amphawa becomes more important than ever; innovative solutions like those proposed by our research will become increasingly relevant in a world where digital platforms strongly influence the competitive tourism landscape.

Authorship

Cole Cammarata is an Environmental Engineering major at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Cole was the primary author of the Methodology and Findings chapter. He also was a secondary editor of the Introduction, Background, and Conclusion chapters. During site visits, Cole contributed to the tourist interview process and ethnographic note-taking. His leadership skills helped the team stay on track over the duration of the project.

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Chulalongkorn University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute team

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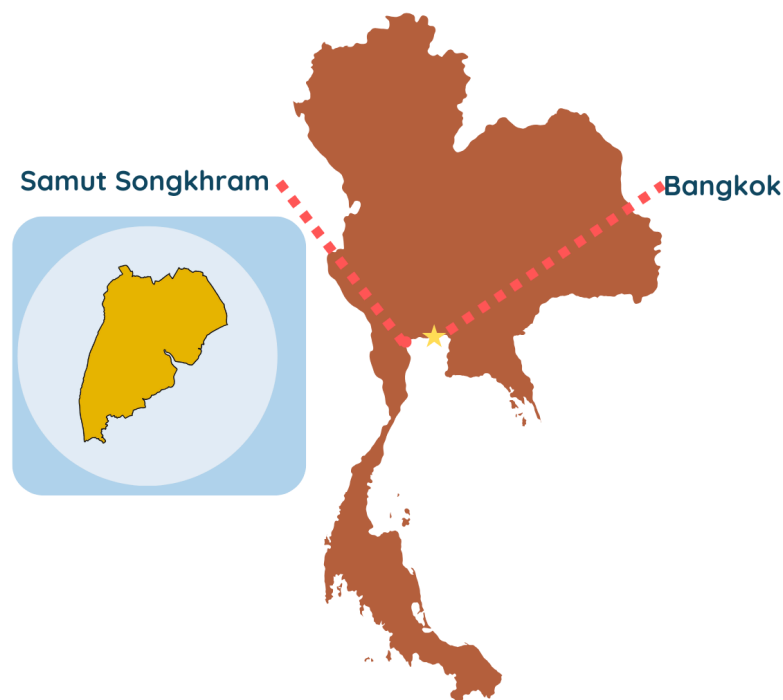
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Introduction

Thailand has increasingly become a tourist hub, showcasing its historical districts, cultural heritage, and locally focused communities that have played a significant role in the country's development. One area of interest is the Amphawa district in the Samut Songkhram Province as shown in Figure 1. This region presents a unique conglomeration of history and culture that emphasizes Thai heritage. The Mae Klong River that flows through the area promotes the usage of canal systems and transportation of goods, promoting a river-based way of life for many of the locals while simultaneously drawing in tourists looking for a scenic water-side meal and souvenirs at the notable Amphawa Floating Market (Phuong et al., 2023). This market is one of Thailand's most iconic cultural destinations, celebrated for its vibrant atmosphere, local vendors, and rich history that draws both domestic and international tourists seeking a blend of cultural heritage and authentic local experiences (Amphawa Municipality, 2023).

Figure 1. *Approximate location between Bangkok City and the Samut Songkhram, where Amphawa municipality stands.*



Beyond the market, Amphawa hosts other attractions, including culturally significant temples, conservation organizations, and historical sites. However, despite everything it has to

offer, this area faces several challenges that threaten the livelihoods of local workers, the engaging experience tourists should receive, and the sustainability of the area's tourist industry.

Currently, there are gaps in communicating information about the many attractions beyond the floating market to tourists. Signages are used for particular landmarks, temples, and other sites; however, they do not convey enough cultural and historical background about the area to engage tourists in a way that encourages them to appreciate the community's heritage. The community members who contribute to the municipality's decisions advocate for promoting sustainable and knowledge-based tourism throughout the district (Ackaradejruangsri & Rivera, 2017). This is increasingly important amidst an influx of foreigners who visit without acknowledging heritage, so the preservation of authentic experiences in the region is crucial. A large aspect of this process revolves around reimagining marketing, outreach, and education. Recently, these initiatives have been more about "collecting" a larger number of tourists rather than actually "connecting" with them (Ackaradejruangsri & Rivera, 2017).

This leads to another issue, which involves the floating market commonly being portrayed as the main attraction of Amphawa, with less attention being given to numerous lesser-known destinations in the area. Many temples, museums, conservation centers, and other locations with local influence have received very few visitors, especially on weekdays and in comparison to the floating market. Through research and fieldwork, it has been made evident that these locations are largely underrepresented online and on social media, leading to tourists viewing the floating market as being the only worthwhile attraction in the area. As a result, these locations have not received enough business to compensate for rising living costs and other social issues. Thus, there is a need to highlight what makes these lesser-known destinations special and increase their online and social media presence in order to draw tourists to them throughout the week and more evenly distribute visitors for more equitable and sustainable tourism.

The Municipality of Amphawa, the sponsor for this project, is responsible for the floating market's daily upkeep while simultaneously seeking ways to assist future developments throughout the region. This municipality primarily functions based on input from local groups, who recognize existing gaps in communicating information about the many attractions in the Amphawa district to tourists (Ackaradejruangsri & Rivera, 2017).

As the sponsor of this project, the municipality has emphasized the need to modernize Amphawa without compromising its cultural integrity. This dual focus aligns with national tourism strategies that prioritize sustainable development and cultural preservation. Specifically,

the municipality has proposed the use of technology, such as social media platforms, as a practical, cost-effective solution to enhance visitor accessibility and engagement (Amphawa Municipality, 2023). Furthermore, the municipality has highlighted the importance of storytelling in promoting the market's unique heritage. This includes documenting oral histories, traditional recipes, and artisanal crafts, which can be shared through digital platforms to enrich the visitor's experience. By combining the use of technology with storytelling, the sponsor envisions the project as a model for modern, sustainable tourism in Thailand.

To assist the municipality in supporting the Amphawa community through its struggles with tourism, this research strives to propose several possible solutions to combat the main issues at hand. Accordingly, the main goal of this project is to identify ways to promote tourism and local culture in Amphawa through community-based tourism practices.

To achieve this goal, we broke down our research process into the following objectives:

1. To identify cultural aspects that should be emphasized in tourism promotion
2. To identify current challenges in the local tourism industry
3. To develop a strategy that utilizes digital tools to improve interactions between locals and tourists

These objectives allowed us to determine ways to integrate digital tourism solutions into the context of the Amphawa region's background and current atmosphere. By integrating digital tools, we proposed ways to enhance Amphawa's appeal to tech-savvy tourists and address challenges such as overcrowding, inefficient navigation, and limited information availability while maintaining the area's traditional charm.

Additionally, this project fosters inclusivity by addressing language barriers and accessibility challenges, offering an approach that enhances visitor satisfaction and promotes cultural exchange and understanding. The project also supports the Amphawa Municipality's vision for sustainable development and cultural preservation as well as Thailand's broader goals for sustainable tourism. As the country recovers from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, cultural destinations must adapt to changing visitor preferences that value authentic experiences while contributing to long-term sustainability. With Thailand positioning itself as a leader in smart tourism, initiatives like this one demonstrate how traditional landmarks can embrace innovation and remain relevant in a competitive global tourism landscape without compromising their heritage (Amphawa Municipality, 2023).

Background

As tourism becomes increasingly competitive and modernized, the need for more sustainable tourism practices and the preservation of culture also rises. To address this need, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has aimed to promote “meaningful and sustainable tourism” throughout Thailand by encouraging destinations to adopt practices that follow the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which encourage sustainable and value-based tourism practices (TAT, 2025).

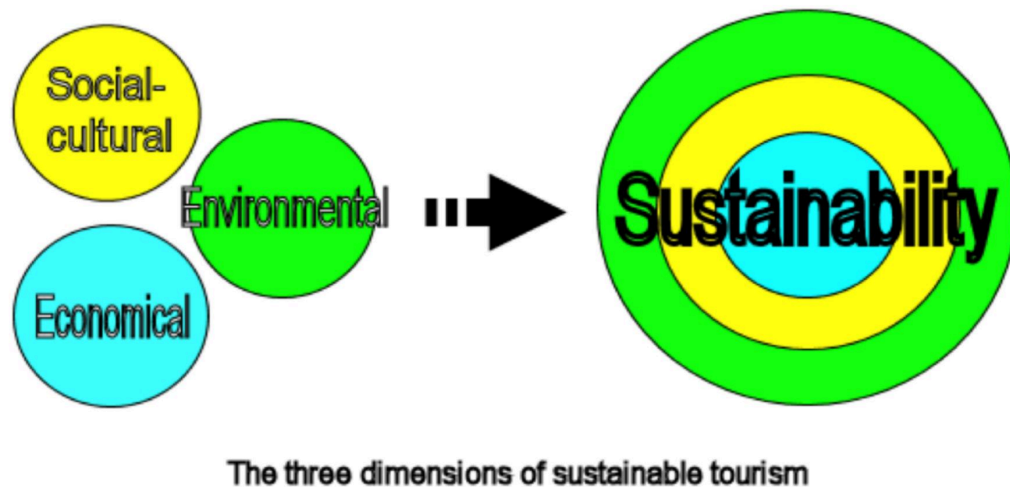
In the region of Amphawa, these sustainable practices have room to improve, as there are currently many gaps in communicating cultural information and promoting locations to tourists, leading to a decrease in tourism throughout this region, especially in areas outside the floating market and on weekdays. Community-based tourism practices follow the principles of the SDGs, as they allow for areas that strongly depend on tourism to optimize their resources and foster sustainability through direct community participation (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009).

While previous joint projects between Chulalongkorn University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute have focused on promoting more sustainable, environmentally friendly tourism practices in the Amphawa region, this project aims to focus more on the community aspect of maintaining tourism resources by using community-based tourism practices that involve digital tools and storytelling to help locals convey what makes Amphawa special and provide visitors with a more engaging experience. To address this gap, we were presented with an opportunity to work with the Municipality of Amphawa with the goal of encouraging local input in the development of possible solutions to tourism-related issues, thus enhancing community-based tourism practices throughout the Amphawa region.

2.1 Community-Based Tourism Through Digital Tools

To improve communication, the Municipality of Amphawa often uses community input in local decision-making, a practice that can be utilized to improve tourism promotion and sustainability. Community-based tourism uses local community participation to strengthen the community’s ability to manage tourism resources (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009), integrating the factors shown in Figure 2 below. This practice can help the community diversify the local economy, preserve culture and the environment, and provide educational opportunities.

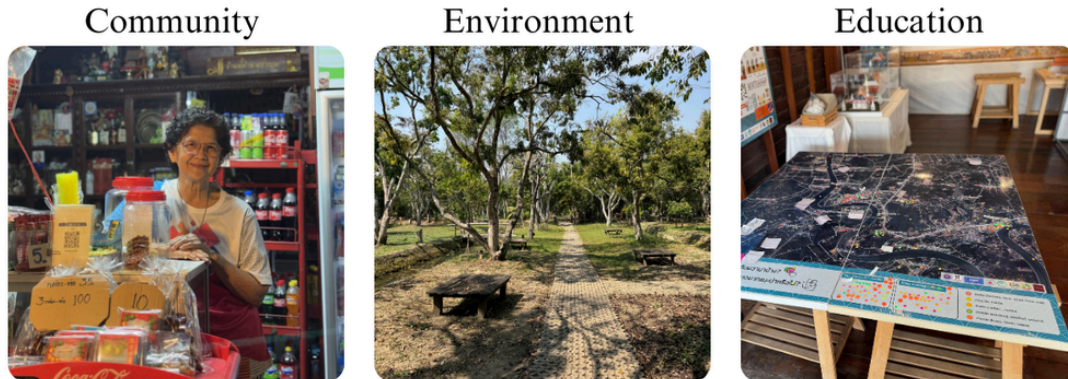
Figure 2. *Interaction of economic and societal concerns to support sustainable, community-based methods of managing tourism resources (Sukkasem, 2012).*



Community-based tourism can also act as a poverty reduction tool, as it can help to create alternative incomes and employment that generate a greater net income. This approach requires a long-term commitment to maximize benefits for the local community while minimizing tourism's negative impacts on society and the environment.

Key aspects of community-based tourism that should be prioritized for its success include: involving education, interpretation, and an appreciation of nature and local culture as part of the tourist offer; minimizing negative impacts by supporting the protection of natural and cultural areas, generating economic benefits from it, and increasing awareness of conservation; incorporating a variety of specialized, locally-owned small businesses; and providing alternative employment and income opportunities (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009). Nevertheless, as local tourism improves with these efforts, development can easily get out of local control, as community-based tourism faces challenges similar to those of mainstream tourism. In both cases, economic interests are ultimately prioritized over environmental and social concerns as community participation fades over time (Vajirakachorn & Nepal, 2014).

Figure 3. *Key points of community-based tourism shown by a store owner at the Amphawa Market, the environment illustrated by the Chaipattananurak Park, and a map maintained by the Amphawa-Chaipattananurak Project.*



(Jose Rolando Campos Duncan, 2025)

Overall, the key purpose of community-based methods of maintaining tourism is to make the community's voice heard over economic interests. Using this concept, the public and private sectors can form a partnership to empower the community, putting local needs first so that designs for plans that impact the community will reflect these needs (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009).

One example of this collaboration between stakeholders for successful and efficient community-based tourism is the Chulabhorn Pattana 9 community neighboring the Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary of Yala province in Southern Thailand. An intergenerational community-based tourism management team sought to increase the number of visitors to the area for economic benefit while still maintaining a balance that allows for environmental conservation by taking the area's carrying capacity into account when admitting visitors (Rungchavalnont, 2022). In addition to this, the management team also sought to advance the local community and visitor experience by taking both local and tourist perspectives into consideration through their efforts to improve waste management, incentivize conservation, and highlight the importance of biodiversity.

Similar efforts were made by the Nong Han community of Sakon Nakhon province in Northeast Thailand, which relies heavily on the sales of indigo dye handicrafts (Figures 4 and 5). Over time, local micro-entrepreneurs formed a loose network to provide tour packages for visitors, preserving the traditional knowledge of indigo dye and distributing the benefits of community-based tourism among the local people. Efforts were also made to convert textile

waste into paper or recycled fabrics that could be used as raw materials for new products (Rungchavalnont, 2022).

Figures 4 and 5. *Cumulative impact of the community-based tourism efforts in the Chulabhorn Pattana 9 community of Yala province in Southern Thailand (Figure 4) and the Nong Han community of Sakon Nakhon province in Northeast Thailand (Figure 5) (Rungchavalnont, 2022).*

Figure 4



Figure 5



These examples of community-based tourism demonstrate this concept's potential to create both economic and environmental benefits while preserving the community's culture. Additionally, these cases emphasize the importance of communication and cooperation among stakeholders, which Hamzah and Khalifah (2009) state as being a key component of successful community-based tourism.

As tourism becomes more modernized, however, the demand for online resources and modern accommodations to support visitors increases, thereby making basic computer skills, marketing strategies, and visitor management key aspects for tourism communities to be

proficient in (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009). To assess the efficiency and impact of integrating online and social media resources into tourism practices, we researched several studies that involved the use of technology in cultural and community-based tourism.

One of these studies (Solima & Izzo, 2017) used QR code technology in a joint project between the Royal Palace of Naples and the Wilanow Palace in Warsaw. An information system based on QR codes experimented with new tour routes, and a questionnaire was carried out to evaluate visitors' satisfaction with the use of this new technology at these two sites by asking whether visitors would like to use similar technology again during a future visit.

Figures 6 & 7. *QR code usage in the Solima & Izzo (2017) study for tourist interaction and navigation.*

Figure 6



Figure 7



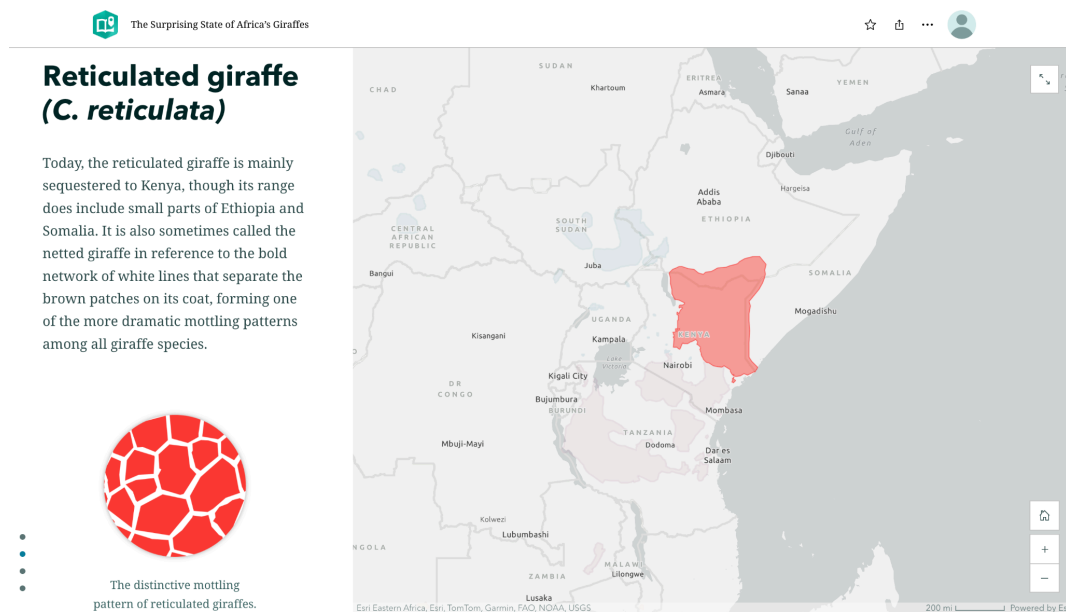
The questionnaire revealed conflicting opinions on the use of this technology to guide tourists' visits between the two locations, as the Warsaw destination yielded a 90% satisfaction rate, while the Naples destination yielded a 65.2% satisfaction rate. The authors hypothesize that this was likely due to differences in the popularity of QR code technology between Poland and Italy as well as the demographics of visitors, such as age. Although this study's results are limited by the small number of surveys collected and cannot be used statistically to form generalizations, this discrepancy in visitor satisfaction presents a valid concern. Researching tourist demographics and local technology is important for mitigating this issue, as it allows for meeting the needs and desires of the tourists and local community.

In addition to informing tourists of the area's cultural and historical background through digital means, providing a digital guidance system would likely help tourists navigate areas and discover destinations that they may not have previously been aware of. A type of technology that would be especially useful for this aspect is digital mapping, which is "the process by which a collection of data is compiled and formatted into a virtual image ... to produce maps that give accurate representations of a particular area" (Dartmouth Libraries, 2024).

To integrate community involvement in digital mapping to produce a digital guide, methods similar to those used in public participation geographic information systems (PPGIS) can be used. This allows for direct input from stakeholders through methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups to create a digital map that includes not only physical features, but also key cultural aspects and local perspectives. According to Yan & Lee et al. (2015), tourist mapping has been found to effectively contribute to "promoting the identity of an area, as well as

potentially increasing the local economic activity.” Input from locals in the creation of such maps can also help to enhance the accuracy of the map and promote underrepresented destinations in a way that allows tourists to engage more with the area’s community and culture (Yan & Lee et al., 2015). This collected data can be referenced with paper maps to record spatial details and then analyzed by GIS software to present the results as a computer-drawn map (De Souza & Clarke, 2018). Simpler and more readily available technological methods, such as ArcGIS (Dartmouth Libraries, 2024), can be paired with participatory mapping data collection methods.

Figure 8. *Example of an ArcGIS digital map showing the Surprising State of Africa Giraffes ArcGIS; the images show locations of the multiple species of giraffes in Africa (Esri. 2023).*



When creating a digital map, however, certain factors, such as the demographics and preferences of the target users, must be taken into account. A study by Li et al. (2020) analyzed how Japanese and Taiwanese digital map users perceive and interact with their environment, and how demographics such as nationality, age, and address system preferences influenced user satisfaction with various wayfinding digital map formats. For example, younger users generally preferred digital maps, while older users preferred paper maps and expressed a need for larger font sizes.

Another mode of promoting underrepresented tourism locations involves increasing their online and social media presence. Digital marketing, such as through social media, sponsored advertising, graphic content, and search engine optimization, has been found to help improve the image of destinations to tourists through user comments and reviews, influencer involvement,

and appealing content, as well as increase the exposure and reach of the content to its intended audiences (Hendrajana et al., 2024).

According to studies, strategic social media promotion of tourism locations should take several key factors into consideration, including information accessibility, providing appealing visuals and content, and recognizing travel preparation information (Chaisak Klaidaeng et al., 2024). However, the overtourism experienced by many popular destinations suggests that more sustainable and mindful tourism practices should be implemented to avoid any negative effects.

To address this issue, a study by Jamader et al. (2025) chose to focus on preservation-driven marketing frameworks rather than promotion-centric campaigns to inspire more responsible tourism practices by incorporating community narratives, incentivizing off-season travel, and collaborating with local stakeholders to create an ideal experience for visitors. In similar cases, social media platforms such as Instagram have been used to highlight the unique qualities of destinations through storytelling. This allows for the spread of cultural information to global audiences, promotes community involvement, and attracts visitors through visual narratives (Agustina et al., 2024). In addition, this approach follows the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) 11, which strives to make cities more resilient and sustainable. On the other hand, some limitations of using online and social media platforms for promoting underrepresented tourism locations should be taken into consideration, including a target audience that largely excludes older generations and lack of access to the internet and technology in certain areas.

2.2 The Amphawa Floating Market

Located in the Samut Songkhram province of Thailand and divided by the Mae Klong River, the Amphawa Floating Market is attributed to local settlements and communities dating back to the beginning of the Rattanakosin period in the late 17th century (Luekveerawattana, 2012). Initially, raw goods were the main items for sale in the market. The abundance of canals, fertile soil, and orchards made harvest and transport of coconut produce, raw materials, and seafood straightforward. Currently, the way the community reflects these past traditions draws tourists to the market. (Phuong et al., 2023). Silapacharanan (2007) furthers this point, describing the community's use of and reliance on the canal as a "way of life." Despite periods of economic troubles where the market was left empty at the turn of the century, efforts to rebuild and further promote tourism were made in 2003 (Suntikul, 2017). The current economic structure of the market is characterized by a division of labor among its native residents, reflecting a traditional riverside lifestyle in which communities rely on canals for transportation,

trade, and sustenance (Luekveerawattana, 2012).

Figure 9. *The Baan Karn (House of Karn), a local business that sells Thai fish puffs along the Mae Klong River in Amphawa*



(Jose Rolando Campos Duncan, 2025)

The locals and vendors within the market, many of whom have lived along the Mae Klong for generations, strongly value this cultural preservation and strong portrayal of culture, which plays an essential role in maintaining the destination's appealing charm (Phuong et al., 2023). These individuals are deeply involved in the market's operations, engaging in activities such as selling agricultural produce, artisanal crafts, and traditional Thai delicacies. (Luekveerawattana, 2012). This allows visitors to immerse themselves in cultural experiences such as enjoying traditional Thai music and art, tasting authentic local cuisine, and participating in boat tours.

Figure 10. *Historical architecture of the Amphawa Floating Market.*



Some of these key community members include various types of vendors and boat operators. Vendors operate mainly from riverside stalls, offering a variety of goods, including food and handmade crafts. Food vendors typically offer a variety of fresh seafood, fruits, desserts, and beverages, often sourcing their products locally to support the regional economy. Artisans create and sell items such as woven baskets, pottery, paintings, and textiles, preserving and promoting Thai cultural heritage. Their work not only serves as a source of income, but also as a means of cultural expression. Skilled boat operators provide transportation and guided tours via motor boats, enhancing the market's accessibility and appeal to visitors. Their knowledge of the waterways is crucial for navigating the canal systems.

Figure 11. *Khan Pa Kae, the owner of noodle shop Tiew Lobb Moom, in the canals of the Amphawa Floating Market.*



(Jose Rolando Campos Duncan, 2025)

2.3 Beyond the Market

Amphawa is much more than just a floating market; the region as a whole, including both the floating market and surrounding areas, actively demonstrates conserved traditions and lifestyles. To acknowledge these valuable aspects, in 2002, the Association of Siamese Architects awarded the Amphawa community as “the best conserved community” (Peerapun et al., 2006) particularly for its traditional Thai wooden architecture, which originates from Chinese influences and exhibits cultural importance of King Rama II of the Chakri Dynasty (Luekveerawattana, 2012).

Figure 12. *King Rama II Memorial Park featuring traditional housing, open museums, and multiple cultural experiences.*



(Jose Rolando Campos Duncan, 2025)

Other traditional aspects that have been conserved throughout the region include classic Thai music, orchard cultivation, coconut sugar production, and locally sourced delicacies. Since the 18th century, this region has been recognized as the largest traditional water-based community along the Mae Klong River, preserving both tangible and intangible aspects of its cultural past through its architecture, monuments, murals, handicrafts, trades, culinary arts, rituals, and lifestyle (Silapacharanan, 2010).

Without surrounding aspects, the floating market simply would not have the values that make it such a popular destination. Ichikawa and Denpaiboon (2017) bring about market comparison in a paper about the sustainability of the floating market system. In an analysis of market economies, they classify Amphawa as a market that contributes to and strengthens the self-sustaining local economy, as shown in Figure 13 (Ichikawa and Denpaiboon, 2017). Although the Floating market is primarily based on tourism, the areas beyond preserve the tradition of Amphawa and can offer new experiences to interested visitors.

Figure 13. *Types of goods sold at various floating markets in Thailand (Ichikawa and Denpaiboon, 2017).*

	TYPE A Sell local articles	TYPE B Sell articles made in some other village	TYPE C Sell anything
other country			
other village			
local village	articles		
market			
market	"Wat Saphan" "Khlong Latmayom" "Taling Chan" "Lam Phaya" "Boran Nakhon Nueang Khet" "Amphawa"	"Khlong Phadung Krungkasem" "Pattaya" "Ayothaya"	"Dam Nouen Saduak"

2.4 Challenges in Amphawa's Tourism Industry

As the Amphawa region has evolved into a tourist destination over time, the influx of visitors has introduced new dynamics to the market's social structure. While tourism has boosted the local economy, it has also led to challenges such as commercialization and environmental

concerns. Efforts have been made to balance economic benefits with the preservation of the market's traditional character, ensuring that the community's social fabric remains intact (Silapacharanan, 2010).

According to a study by Rodjam et al. (2022), the interactions between tourists and the Samut Songkhram region are complex, involving cultural, social, and economic factors. This research highlights the connections between locals and tourists, examining their economic impact and identifying areas where the region can improve to maximize these benefits.

Two key points that seemed to present major issues in the region were the “lack of support and integration of the public, private security and tourism”, and weaknesses, such as “the lack of integrated and participatory community tourism management from the public sector, private, and community province” (Rodjam et al., 2022). From these findings, it is evident that the conflict surrounding tourism in the region is not directly due to the marketing or a specific problem related to the public sector (locals and government) or private sector (tourists), but the combination of these three factors, that are not communicating. The following table from the study provides an overview of these variables through a SWOT analysis, as shown in Table 1. While these findings from the literature address issues experienced broadly throughout the Samut Songkhram province, this project focuses on the challenges faced specifically by the region of Amphawa.

Table 1: *Community tourism networks in Samut Songkhram and their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Rodjam et al., 2022).*

Table 1: shows analysis of the conditions and problems of community tourism networks by linking local products and cultural capital by SWOT tools

S: Strengths S1. Natural resources and environment A natural attraction that maintains its abundance S2. There are customs. Unique traditions of fine arts and culture, such as local wisdom and culture. S3. There are physical advantages and geographical characteristics in country tourism links.	W: Weaknesses W1. Lack of participatory tourist attraction development, lack of public relations development and marketing promotion W2. Lack of development of marketing learning management of tourism community in Samut Songkhram province W3. Lack of integrated and participatory community tourism management from the public sector Private and community sectors together W4. Lack of development of community knowledge transfer of people from generation to generation in the community.
O: Opportunities O1. The government values community tourism. By developing people in the community for community tourism. O2. Government agencies have community tourism development policies in Samut Songkhram province, such as OTOP Tourism Community, Nawatwithi and Cultural Tourism Villages.	T: Threats T1. Lack of support and integration of the public, private sector and tourism development communities T2. Lack of budget support for the development of people in the community for systematic and ongoing tourism T3. There are policy constraints. Laws, regulations on the development of

O3. Samut Songkhram Province There are among community attractions that are unique to the concept of the Sam Thammasat City. Nature, Dharma and Culture	community tourism
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Source: Information on conditions and management issues learned from the Focus group meeting.

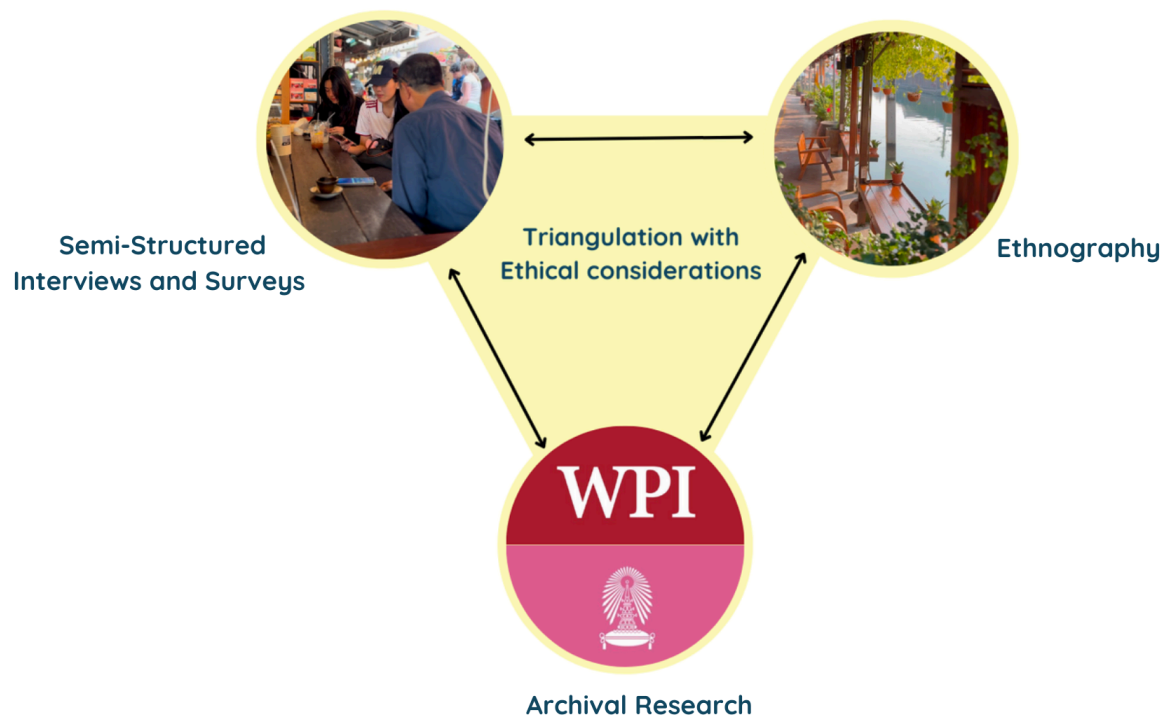
In recent years, data from the TAT has shown that tourism in Samut Songkhram has reached a plateau, with fewer tourists visiting this province in comparison to the dramatic increase after the Covid-19 pandemic (TAT public relations specialist, personal communication, 2025). This decline in tourism has been evident due to fewer visitors in Amphawa, especially during weekdays. Upon investigation of tourist perspectives on the Amphawa region, we found that most visitors were only aware of the floating market and did not stay in the region long enough to explore other locations or learn more about the area's rich culture and history. Maps of the area were outdated, and the historical and cultural background of the region was not commonly showcased. These findings, along with evidence from the previously mentioned studies that examine the interactions between stakeholders, suggest that poor communication between the local community and tourists regarding the region's valuable qualities is likely a key factor contributing to the challenges Amphawa's tourism industry has faced.

To combat the lack of tourist engagement and poor distribution of visitors that Amphawa has experienced in recent years, we have been given the opportunity to work with the Municipality of Amphawa through Vice Mayor Mr. Krit Meetawee, who aims to promote local culture and support sustainable, community-based tourism. The municipality's mission focuses on developing and providing public services, improving facilities, and keeping the history of Amphawa alive. The municipality believes it is important for the community to take part in making decisions and hopes to make the Amphawa Floating Market an exciting place that highlights the area's unique traditions and culture. The following chapter describes the process of working toward these goals.

Methodology

To provide evidence for our claims, we employed a qualitative and quantitative multi-method research design to meet our project goal of identifying ways to promote tourism and local culture in Amphawa through community-based tourism practices. Triangulation from multiple methods, including archival research, ethnography, semi-structured interviews, and surveys was utilized to increase the credibility and strength of our analysis and solution.

Figure 14. *Visualization of our research process*



This multi-method approach allowed us to gather necessary information directly from the primary stakeholders, whom we identified to be locals, tourists, and the Municipality of Amphawa, and understand how to structure our recommendations around the specific context of the Amphawa community (survey and interview examples can be found in Appendices B-E). These methods offered several advantages, including a deterministic approach that sorted factors, identified driving elements, provided historical context, and explored explanations for outliers. However, this qualitative approach offered weak generalizability and could be subject to bias (Berg & Lune, 2017).

The methods described above were used to achieve the following objectives, which act as the guiding structure for this chapter:

1. To identify cultural aspects that should be emphasized in tourism promotion
2. To identify current challenges in the local tourism industry
3. To develop a strategy that utilizes digital tools to improve interactions between locals and tourists

3.1 Identifying cultural aspects that should be emphasized in tourism promotion

We, as researchers, must be familiar with the Amphawa region's cultural background to identify historical and cultural aspects that should be promoted in tourism to convey what makes the region special and accurately inform visitors of this information. To gain a deeper understanding of this subject, we interviewed and surveyed locals (Appendix C and E) who have lived in the area for several years and collected ethnographic data. This on-site information was supplemented by archival research focused on the area's cultural development over time and factors that make heritage sites engaging to tourists.

The following research questions guided our data-gathering process:

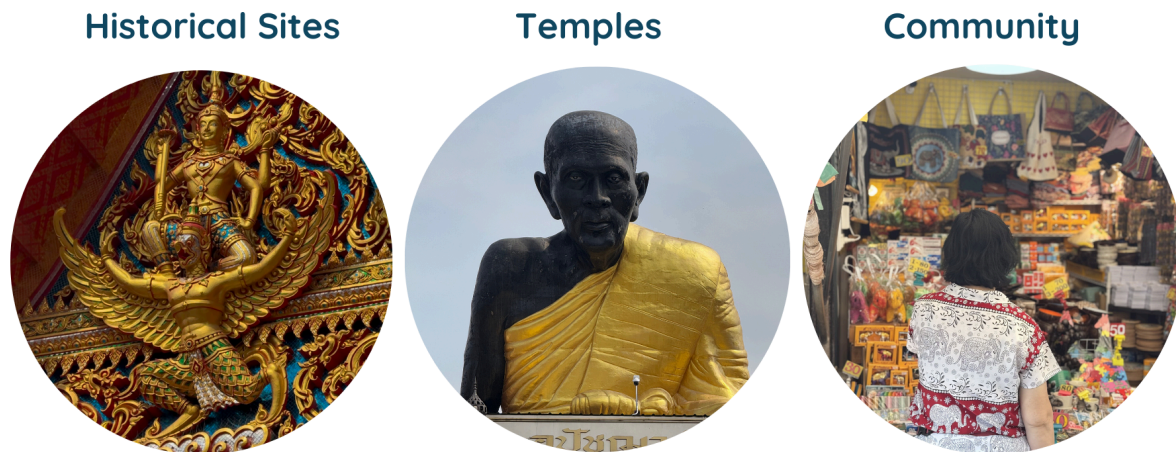
1. What makes the Amphawa region historically and culturally significant?
2. What aspects of Amphawa's culture should be highlighted in tourism promotion?
3. How can this information provide a more engaging tourist experience?

To answer these questions, we interviewed approximately 33 local people in the Amphawa area, including stall vendors, general service workers, temple volunteers, and other residents, to identify their awareness and definition of Amphawa's cultural background. These interviews were directed toward people who have lived in the Amphawa area for more than 10 years, allowing us to discover more about Amphawa's culture and past that isn't easily available through online research. These groups were identified based on preliminary demographic questions before interviewing.

Additionally, we digitally documented the temples, markets, shops, and museums we visited by taking pictures and notes on interactions between people, the age and origin of structures, and observations of traditions and customs. This ethnographic investigation allows us to incorporate current events into our understanding of the region's identity and background. To provide us with a broader, more objective understanding of the region's development, archival research was also compiled from credible online sources such as the Journal of Community

Development Research that discussed key historical and cultural aspects of the Amphawa region as well as the importance of cultural preservation.

Figure 15. *Areas of focus for ethnographic observations.*



(Pictures taken by Jose Rolando Campos Duncan, 2025)

Interview responses were recorded as notes and audio recordings at the interviewees' discretion. These were grouped based on common themes and notable statements about Amphawa's history. Identifying whether or not community members see the location as historically significant provided insight into whether or not tourists were engaged in the history that defines the locations.

Some limitations are evident in historical data collection. Archival research can be biased and discard crucial aspects of development due to inconsistency or political reasons. As for interview data, information is subjective, and many community members may not be able to recount historical developments. However, interviewees can describe general thoughts on the history. Ethnographic data changes very often and is mainly used as a supporting feature to put other forms of evidence into context.

3.2 Identifying current challenges in the local tourism industry

We focused part of our research on understanding the current tourism situation in the Amphawa region. This allowed us to determine the best way to educate visitors, attract more tourists on weekdays, and draw them to areas that need business. This process encompassed a series of interviews and surveys created using qualtrics with the Amphawa municipality, tourism experts, and tourists at other markets in the Samut Songkhram province. Research from tourism

journals provided insight into tourist behaviors in Amphawa as well as other comparable heritage sites.

The following research questions were developed to help us understand how the floating market and surrounding areas contribute to tourism in Amphawa, how current cultural preservation efforts are being implemented, and the impact of tourism on local businesses and community life:

1. How many tourists are visiting the market?
2. Why do tourists visit the market?
3. What tools are currently in place to assist tourists?
4. How do tourists feel about the market's cultural presence?

We first interviewed the Vice Mayor of the Municipality of Amphawa to become more familiar with the municipality's perspective on community challenges that this project should address. His perspectives were mainly focused on the lack of information accessibility and how local traditions have originated and developed. His responses provided first-hand descriptions about current challenges and how he imagined the market could benefit from tools that will leave an impression on tourists. Additionally, we interviewed TAT representatives from both the Bangkok and Samut Songkhram offices to acquire data on how tourists respond to their marketing strategies, tourist awareness through social media analytics, tourist consideration based on click-thru rates, purchase and event participation rates, and tourist retention and advocacy.

When it came to on-site fieldwork, we interviewed 12 international and 5 domestic tourists and surveyed 13 international and 8 domestic tourists to learn about visitor perspectives at temples, museums, and street vendors within the Amphawa region as well as the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market and the Mae Klong Railway (Rom Hub) Market.

Survey questionnaires gauged general tourist preferences through logistical, demographic, Likert scale, and preference rating scale questions. The interview questions were mostly open-ended and gave tourists the chance to explain their motivations for visiting, how they feel about the region's cultural presence, and if they would consider exploring other areas of the region. Subjects were able to fill out surveys on provided devices so that they did not have to open any links on their personal devices. Similarly, locals were also interviewed and given surveys that were structured to gather data on the community's perspectives on tourism and how it could be improved.

Figure 16. *Semi-structured interviews at the Amphawa Floating Market with Holger from Germany.*



(Jose Rolando Campos Duncan, 2025)

Responses from Damneon Saduak and Rom Hub markets were compared with data from Amphawa. This juxtaposition of tourist destinations allowed us to identify the different tools tourists use to find information, their motivations for visiting, and how locals feel about the larger number of tourists. We were careful to avoid questions that revealed any bias toward any one of these market areas to prevent any skewed results.

We chose interviews as our main research method for this objective as they provide qualitative insight that allows us to understand the community's perspectives and gain deeper knowledge of the issues at hand. Interviews also offer the flexibility to explore areas that may not be covered by methods like surveys, which have fixed structures, or archival research, which is objective and inflexible. Surveys mainly quantified tourist behavior to assess ways to draw more tourists, while interviews give tourists the chance to express their thoughts and preferences. Survey data was tabulated in a recognizable format for a simple and accessible means of displaying data to identify trends more effectively. To analyze and interpret the responses from the qualitative data collection, similarities and differences between responses were noted and used to formulate themes.

Addressing tourists was a very broad task. Many of those visiting the region were from outside of Thailand and had diverse backgrounds, causing tourist preferences to vary greatly and making it challenging to identify trends. Additionally, tourism is dynamic and can change rapidly

based on variables such as weather, politics, travel regulations, and time of year, so the current tourism situation may not be long-lasting. However, when taking past trends into consideration, we can identify the variability and account for changes in the course of identifying ways to attract more tourists.

3.3 Developing a strategy that utilizes digital tools to improve interactions between locals and tourists

To identify ways to digitally promote tourism in the Amphawa region, we conducted archival research on case studies that employed both successful and unsuccessful digital tools, interviewed community conservation groups in Amphawa, and analyzed information provided by the TAT to investigate the use of digital tools to address the promotion of community ideas. This general research was then triangulated with our ethnographic observations and surveys to apply it to the specific context of the Amphawa community.

We developed the following questions to guide our research for this objective:

1. What digital tools can be used to improve tourism in underrepresented locations?
2. How can these tools be adapted to meet the needs of the community and appeal to user preferences?
3. How will the use of these tools for tourism promotion impact tourism in Amphawa?

Studies of similar cases were investigated through archival research to determine how technology could be integrated into community-based tourism practices. We carried out archival research via reliable online sources, such as peer-reviewed articles from social science and humanities journals relating to the use of digital tools in tourism promotion and guidance services. These sources were commonly found through the WPI Gordon Library, Chulalongkorn Library, or Google Scholar database searches. Additionally, looking at locations recognized in the TAT awards that have “excellent quality tourism products and services and aim for sustainability” as models, added a layer of reliability and proof of concept to our deliverable formation (TAT, 2025).

We then coupled this research with stakeholder perspectives acquired from preference and awareness questions that gauged tourist, local, and municipality opinions to tailor a solution that is both beneficial to the local community and appealing to visitors. Interviews with the Amphawa-Chaipattananurak Project (a community conservation center) and the TAT were also conducted to assess methods of community engagement and tourist education.

With the cultural aspects we identified with our first objective and the specified understanding of tourist behavior obtained in the process of completing our second objective, we were then able to incorporate data collected from our third objective for a well-rounded approach to recommendation and deliverable creation. Although Amphawa is its own individually unique site, this multi-layered approach was effective for assessing the complexity of different scenarios.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Professional guidelines and ethical practice play an essential role when safeguarding the integrity of individuals' and communities' well-being during research processes. As researchers, it is important to dedicate time and resources to prioritizing the safety, rights, and respect of the individuals on whom we are basing our research (Berg & Lune, 2017). This section outlines the ethical considerations and limitations of our research, particularly in the context of conducting our research while being mindful of any possible harm and maintaining informed consent, privacy, and securing data. In the context of Amphawa, our methods were designed to maintain the safety of all individuals by ensuring that sensitive information was kept undisclosed, protecting the privacy and reliability of the information.

To maintain integrity standards while exploring topics related to archival research, we had to disregard our personal beliefs, expectations, observations, and interpretations of the information (Berg & Lune, 2017). Some of the ethical conservation protocols to protect archival research were to preserve the sources' information by acknowledging the author to protect intellectual property and not manipulating or misrepresenting data. These measures ensured that the information was kept truthful and maintained the original context of creation.

A key ethical conservation protocol to protect interviewees' information during semi-structured interview processes included informed verbal consent (see Appendix B), in which we explicitly stated the purpose, terms, and conditions of the interview to ensure that participants fully understood the process and felt safe while expressing their perspectives (Berg & Lune, 2017). In addition, the personal data collected from participants was kept confidential and responses were anonymized when requested to minimize the risk of any political or cultural repercussions.

To protect the information we gathered and the people who participated in our study, data was stored in password-protected devices to which only specific individuals had access; this helped us to minimize the risk of data outbreak. Finally, we made sure to be mindful of cultural, social, or personal differences that may have influenced the way people responded to the

interview, reminding the participants that interviews were entirely voluntary and that individuals could withdraw or not respond to the questions without any negative outcomes. Additionally, Thai speakers on our team were able to communicate with interviewees who speak only Thai, allowing them to speak freely and comfortably.

To uphold integrity while exploring topics related to ethnographic research, we needed to protect and respect the cultural interactions between the community, so that we were able to describe and explain the social impacts without deferring to observer bias. When visiting sacred temples we honored traditions by offering donations and prayers before quietly observing as well as respectfully visiting shop owners without intruding on their business. Some of the ethical mitigations needed to succeed in this area were to have constant self-reflection and avoid letting cultural background or personal beliefs affect the judgment of our observations (Berg & Lune, 2017). Long-term immersion was essential to understand group behaviors and gain deeper insight to avoid misconceptions. Overall, understanding these ethical considerations allowed us to conduct our research in a respectful and reliable manner.

3.5 Overall Research Limitations

One of the major limitations that was present in this research process was time; our team only had seven weeks to work together in person and gather information directly from the project site. This limited the scope of our project, as some of our findings, such as the socio political and economic issues discovered through interviews with locals, posed broader issues that were outside of our capabilities to solve. Given more time, our group ideally would have delved further into these issues to provide more well-rounded recommendations and conclusions that addressed more of the causal factors surrounding the region's struggles with managing tourism resources and preserving their culture.

Another inherent limitation of this project was addressing the language barrier. Although half of our group members were fluent in Thai and were able to bridge the language barrier during field research with native Thai speakers, translating this information into English when reporting our findings posed the risk of diluting the meaning behind key information. This limitation was minimized by transcribing interviews into Thai then carefully translating them into English in order to conserve as much original content as possible. Interviews with foreign tourists who were not native English or Thai speakers also posed a slight limitation when communicating and interpreting information during field research. Asking follow-up questions to clarify the meaning behind questions and answers helped to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation while gathering data from these people.

Observer bias was another limitation present while conducting research in an unfamiliar environment. With the assistance of our Thai group members, who are familiar with Thai traditions and lifestyles, and learning to keep an open mind when making ethnographic observations, this limitation could be minimized. However, our on-site fieldwork was limited, as our work was based in Bangkok, which is approximately ninety minutes away from Amphawa. With more exposure to the Amphawa region, our project could have gathered a larger quantity of interview and survey data and gone further into depth when directly researching the many details that make Amphawa unique.

Findings

Interviews and surveys were conducted alongside one another to contextualize the behaviors of our main stakeholders – locals and tourists. After two visits to Amphawa, we interviewed 12 international tourists, 5 domestic tourists, and 14 locals. As for surveys, we gathered responses from 13 international tourists, 8 domestic tourists, and 33 locals. This data was cleaned and organized based on common themes to be refined to tangible statistics and identifiable trends.

Ethnographic observations contextualized our archival research, interviews, and surveys and allowed us to identify any prominent aspects that may interfere with drawing conclusions. Many of the photos and videos we collected in this process were also used to develop social media posts as part of a potential model for digital tourism promotion.

4.1 Regional changes and modernization are altering local traditions and lifestyles.

This finding contributes to the fulfillment of objective 1. Archival research from Suntikul et al. (2017) demonstrates how cars and modern infrastructure have changed the way locals deliver goods, introducing a switch from boats to motor vehicles. The increased presence of roadways gave locals more opportunities to more efficiently sell goods and move to other cities, causing the floating market to slowly decline between the 1970s and early 2000s. In 2003, the Thailand Cultural Environment Project was established, reintroducing the floating market as a tourist destination rather than a local way of life (Suntikul 2017). Since this initiative, the Amphawa region experienced a rebirth and many areas were restored for tourism until 2010. However, as tourism increased, local expression and decision-making decreased, leaving the community fragile to abrupt changes like the Covid-19 pandemic.

Interviews with local business owners demonstrated that the Covid-19 pandemic contributed to a decrease in tourism and economic development. Although data from the TAT show a dramatic 54% increase in tourism in the Samut Songkhram region between 2022 and 2023, there was only a 5% increase between 2023 and 2024, showing a recent plateau in tourism in this province (TAT public relations specialist, personal communication, 2025). This lull in tourism combined with the shift in focus on mainly the floating market has been detrimental to lesser-known local businesses in Amphawa, suggesting a need for promotion of these areas in a way that reaches a wider audience.

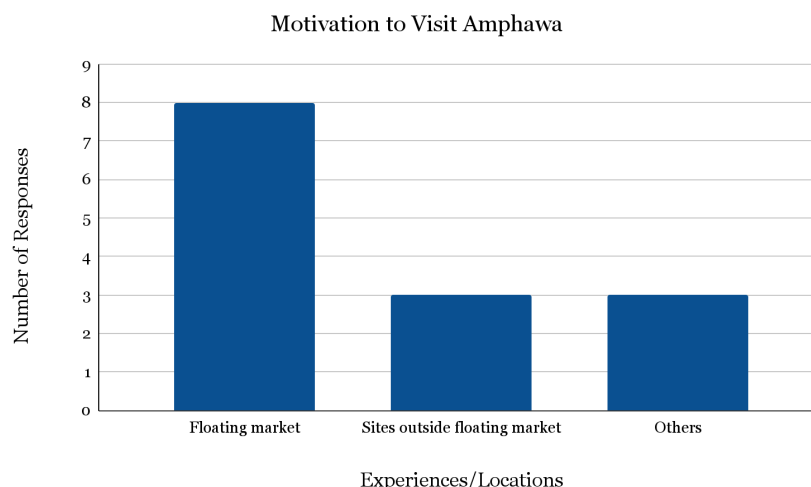
Additionally, interview responses mentioned how “most of the traders who come here are from other places” and how “after Covid there are fewer boat [vendors] and less income so most people go ashore to sell on land.” Other statements were about older generations leaving the region as they no longer have reasons to stay. A market vendor who has lived in Amphawa for more than 10 years explained how there are “less tourists and locals since Covid [and it] doesn’t really feel like home when people move out and take all their family members with them.” Other responses supported this sentiment describing economic challenges due to a combination of less business from the decrease in tourism and sociopolitical and economic challenges such as increasing rent prices. This has led to the majority of vendors in the floating market being from other areas; they only come to Amphawa during the weekends to sell their products at the market then leave, with only approximately 20% of vendors being locals, according to the municipality’s estimates. Such a shift in vendor demographics demonstrates a decrease in local revenue due to fewer locally-owned stands and shops in the market as well as weakening values of close community ties and culture.

Although it is important to recognize the increase in rent and lack of governmental support as a large detriment to community longevity, the Vice Mayor of the Municipality of Amphawa revealed that this challenge is out of the scope of the project and what we would be able to solve given our time and resources. However, when asked about what would make the community ideal, locals responded how they want “more tourists” and “PR to promote Amphawa’s identity.” Even though we couldn’t provide a complete solution to every challenge, we could provide recommendations for using tourism to keep locals in the community while supporting them with more sustainable tourism.

4.2 Tourists lack awareness.

This finding contributes to both objective 2 and 3. Tourists generally demonstrate a lack of awareness of locations outside of the floating market and the qualities that make these places worth visiting. Data from tourist surveys and interviews showed that visitors had little knowledge of locations outside of the floating market, and that tourists viewed the floating market as being the main attraction. Survey data collected from tourists in Amphawa showed that the majority of tourists were visiting the floating market rather than other locations outside the floating market, as shown in Figure 17. Other responses included interest in relaxation and enjoying the peace of Amphawa.

Figure 17. *Tourist survey responses for desired location of visit in Amphawa.*



Due to this preference for visiting the market over other locations, tourists typically only visit the region for a short part of the day and only spend this time at the floating market. This common mindset is detrimental to locations outside of the market and the local hotel industry. Thus, providing visitors with accurate information should enhance their connection to Amphawa, fostering a deeper engagement with the destination.

However, the accessibility of this information should also be prioritized. Survey results showed that only 40% of foreign tourists stated that they heard about Amphawa through either the internet or travel agencies, and 28.6% were neutral, while 57.1% somewhat agreed that information about Amphawa is accessible to find online, suggesting that there may be relatively limited accessibility of information about Amphawa on online and social media platforms. Nevertheless, it is difficult to gauge the current level of accessibility of information on Amphawa and its many destinations through tourists' perspectives, as tourists have different preferences and judgements as to what they consider to be "easily accessible" information. Presenting visitors with reasons to visit is also highly subjective due to differing preferences in what people look for in destinations.

Additionally, responses explaining how "more communication on temples and other attractions [are needed] because it can be a long trip to only see a floating market" clarify a lack of knowledge about the area from tourists. This problem isn't only about tourists. Several locals also stated that the Amphawa Floating Market did not have a very strong online presence, explaining how they "don't understand or have time to post [and would] love the chance to be

promoted [online]” (Nok, Personal Interview, January 24, 2025). This leads to other markets in the province to receive more attention from tourists.

4.3 Tourism in Amphawa is concentrated at the floating market on weekends.

This finding contributes to the fulfillment of objective 2. Survey and interview data show that many visitors view the floating market as being too crowded with tourists, with open-ended survey responses such as “less people should come”, while others think there are not many tourists, with responses such as “there are less tourists here than I thought here would be.” This shows differences in visitor preferences and may suggest that temporary crowding influences visitor’s perspectives and opinions about the market. Ethnographic observations also showed patterns of tourists crowding the market at later times of day on weekends, while it was quiet and mostly aimed for local sales during earlier times of day. These observations were supported by local interviews that explained how “there are no tourists coming to the temple and there is a lack of income [on] weekdays” and how “tourists seem to ignore [Amphawa] during the week.”

Many tourists stated that they were only briefly visiting the market during these times before moving on to other locations outside of Amphawa. In contrast to the crowding that occurs in the market on weekends, during weekdays, most shops end up closing due to the lack of customers, making it not worth opening. Additionally, information from the TAT explained how most bus tours from travel agencies only bring tourists on weekends. In our first site visit we noticed this phenomenon as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18. *Bus tour leaving the floating market on a Friday evening.*

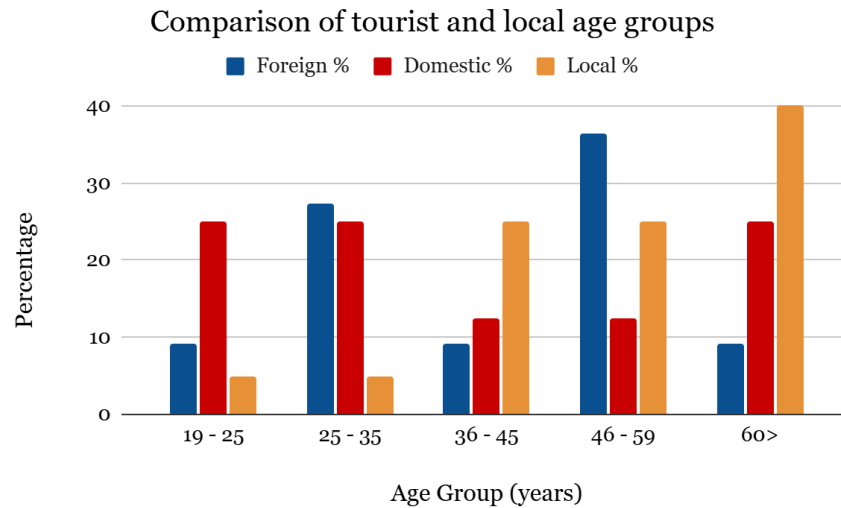


This demonstrates an uneven distribution of tourists over time and spatially throughout the region and a lack of intention to explore other parts of the Amphawa region. Distributing tourists to locations outside the market would likely increase tourism at locations that do not receive as much business and expose visitors to more authentic, locally-owned businesses, improving cultural engagement. Dispensing tourists to these areas during busy times of day and on weekdays will also prevent overcrowding in the market and create a more enjoyable experience, especially for visitors that value authenticity and prefer places with fewer tourists.

Although dispersing tourists according to time and location would be an optimal solution to this issue, there are many interfering factors. For example, conversations with tourists revealed that they typically only know about the floating market when many explained how they “didn’t even know there was anything else to do [outside the market]” and how they “only found out about the temples after [they] got to the market and don’t have time to see them.” This being said, transportation as well as knowledge of different landmarks and locations in the Amphawa region are likely key areas of focus for tourism promotion and distribution as mentioned by one tourist who had trouble with transportation and mentioned “Getting more transportation to make it more accessible from other places.”

4.4 Generational gap between locals and tourists.

This finding contributes to the fulfillment of objective 3. Tourist surveys recorded a variety of visitors and age groups (Figure 19), while the majority of interviewed locals and vendors fell under older age groups. The data showed that the majority of foreign tourists were from European countries and both foreign and domestic tourists fell under a variety of age groups. In comparison, 65% of locals were above the age of 45 years old. The average age of tourists was 42 and the average age of locals was 59, a noticeable difference and may be responsible for some of the issues involved with communication between these two groups.

Figure 19. *Graph of tourist and local age groups.*

From this finding, we can infer that with this demographic gap comes differences in values and communication preferences, suggesting that this could be a contributing factor to the gaps in communicating information about local businesses and attractions to visitors. To support this hypothesis, we asked many of the locals if they used online or social media platforms to promote their business. Several stated that they do not use internet resources due to either not having the time to commit to using these tools or not knowing how to use them.

4.5 The Amphawa Floating Market offers more authentic experiences.

This objective contributes to objective 2. Other markets in Samut Songkhram attracted tourists with similar motivations, but were more overcrowded and focused on souvenir sales, while the Amphawa Floating Market offered more authentic experiences. Ethnographic observations of other markets in Samut Songkhram, including the Damnoen Saduak Floating Market and the Rom Hub Market along the Maeklong railway, showed overcrowding of tourists and a strong focus on the sales of souvenirs. The Damnoen Saduak market is the largest and most commercialized of the three, with high tourist traffic, expensive souvenirs, and boat tours confined to the canal. Rom Hub market, initially an authentic grocery market, has shifted towards tourist souvenirs, with a decline in local products. In contrast, the Amphawa Floating Market offers a variety of experiences at more reasonable prices, but has less online presence and no physical guidebooks. Amphawa simply had a less busy and local based environment. Figure 20 shows how locals also come to the area for the calm serenity of the area.

Figure 20. *Local musician practicing the fiddle.*



The presence of guidebooks at Damnoen Saduak helps tourists navigate the market, which is not the case for Rom Hub and Amphawa. Most shops and services at Damnoen Saduak had very high prices, which was revealed to be a countermeasure for heavy bargaining through interviews. Damnoen Saduak offered boat rides similar to the Amphawa Floating Market. However, they were mainly confined to the canal and were offered at much higher prices, while boat tours in Amphawa allowed for passage through the canal and the main river, in addition to firefly viewing at night.

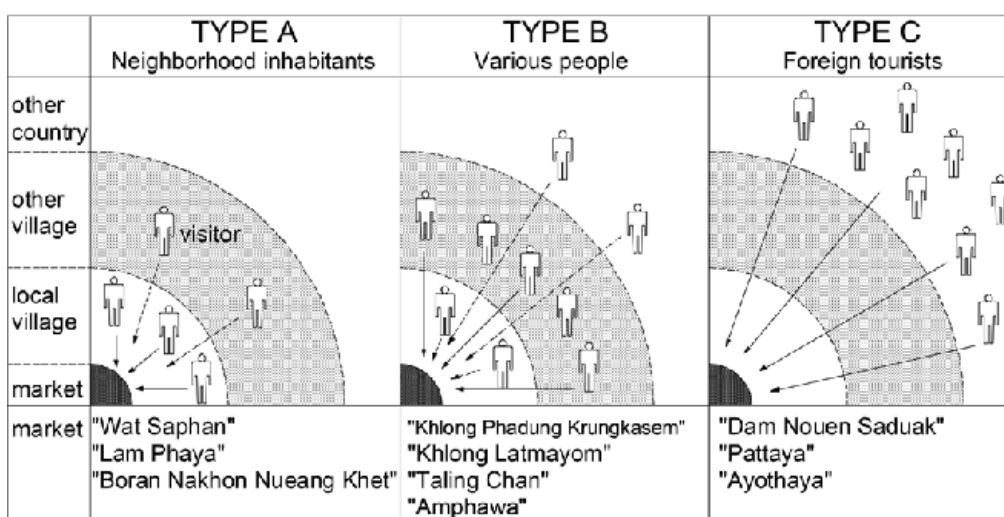
An interview with a produce vendor at the Rom Hub Market revealed that the original culture of the market was being overshadowed by overtourism; the market used to be an authentic grocery market, which over time evolved into a market centered around selling souvenirs to tourists who came to see the train pass through. Due to this, vendors of authentic products have received less business over the years due to a decrease in appreciation for authentic experiences and interactions with locals. The Amphawa Floating Market, on the other hand, offers a variety of experiences, including local food, handmade crafts, and more engaging boat tours at more reasonable prices. However, Amphawa is reported to have less online and social media presence, as most tourists stated that they heard about the market through word of mouth. In contrast, tourists at the other markets claimed to have learned about the locations through online and social media platforms. The Damnoen Saduak Floating Market also offered physical guidebooks, unlike Amphawa, likely providing tourists with more straightforward navigation and more detailed information about locations to visit.

Figure 21. *The Damnoen Saduak Floating Market crowded with tourists on boat tours (left) and a WPI student connecting with a local artisan at the Amphawa Floating Market (right).*



Additionally, Ichikawa and Denpaiboon (2017) provide the following graphic for comparing the types of visitors different markets attract as shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22. *Comparison of types of visitors to different markets (Ichikawa and Denpaiboon 2017).*



They explain how markets like Amphawa attract all types of visitors, not just foreign tourists like the Damnoen Saduak Market. They explain that despite Amphawa's distance from Bangkok, it still attracts crowds while maintaining a balance between locals and tourists with its

“larger area, availability of local homemade articles, traditional culture, and also a public space for inhabitants” (Ichikawa & Denpaiboon 2017). Meanwhile, Damnoen Saduak is described as an “amusement park” with the “considerations” of its former inhabitants but has been renovated for sightseeing in 1967 only for tourists.

4.6 Digital community-based tourism educates tourists and supports locals.

This finding contributes to both objectives 2 and 3. Studies by Agustina et al. (2024) and Jamader et al. (2025) provide evidence that the use of community-based tourism practices such as local storytelling through social media and preservation-focused tourist promotion that incorporates community narratives and local stakeholder perspectives helps to increase and improve the quality of tourism by reaching a wider audience and highlighting unique qualities of destinations. However, many of the locals who would ideally participate in these practices belong to older generations and may not have access to online resources or do not know how to use them, as stated in Finding 4. It would also cost a significant amount of time and money to ensure that this content reaches a wide audience, and personnel would have to be assigned to continue the maintenance of these resources.

Tourist mapping is another digital tool that has been found to effectively contribute to “promoting the identity of an area, as well as potentially increasing the local economic activity” (Yan & Lee, 2015). With a design that adapts to the preferences of the target audience, tourists can be encouraged to visit locations outside of the most popular attractions in a certain area. Input from locals in the creation of such maps can also help to enhance the accuracy of the map and promote underrepresented destinations in a way that allows tourists to engage more with the area’s community and culture.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, we discuss the conclusions we have drawn from our findings as well as the recommendations we have formulated to address our goal of identifying ways to increase tourism and preserve local culture in Amphawa through community-based tourism practices. Our conclusions mainly state that the Amphawa region's unique history and culture is underrepresented in the information provided to tourists, thus tourists are not presented with sufficient reasons to visit the area. Furthermore, a demographic gap between the locals and tourists may be a contributing factor to the gaps in communicating information about local businesses and attractions to visitors.

In an effort to help the Municipality of Amphawa mitigate these issues, we provided three recommendations, which included using personalized storytelling through social media to highlight certain local businesses and perspectives, digital mapping for tourist education and navigation through the market and surrounding areas, and educating locals on how to utilize these tools to promote their businesses. To support these recommendations and demonstrate how they can be put into action, we developed two deliverables. The first model consisted of social media accounts on two interconnected platforms to target a wide audience for promoting Amphawa locals and their unique way of life. The second model consisted of ArcGIS mapping that depicted the layout of the market and its lesser-known surrounding locations, along with descriptions of these places and detailed stories collected directly from the locals associated with each location. With these recommendations and functional models, the municipality should be able to gain a better understanding of how to improve Amphawa's tourism industry and support the local community through digital community-based tourism tools.

5.1 Social media can be used to highlight local businesses and their stories through personalized storytelling.

Our results showed that the culture and history of the Amphawa region as a whole is not fully conveyed in the information provided to visitors. A large part of this regional culture and history lies with the locals that contribute to the area's tourism industry. This information highlights what makes Amphawa special and worth visiting, so a lack of communication of these aspects to tourists gives them little motivation to visit the region or explore areas outside of the popular floating market. To provide tourists with more of this information and motivate them to visit the Amphawa region, we recommend the use of social media for personalized local storytelling.

To demonstrate this recommendation, we created a social media account on the platforms of Lemon8 and TikTok. Lemon8 is a social media platform focused on sharing lifestyle content, combining both Pinterest and Instagram, where users can discover and create visually engaging posts related to travel, food, and daily experiences. TikTok, on the other hand, is a short form video platform widely used across different age groups, featuring an algorithm “For You Page” (FYP) that promotes engaging content to a broad audience. Using both of these platforms will allow us to reach a wider audience, as Lemon8 has been shown to be more popular with younger audiences in Thailand, and TikTok with a variety of age groups, including older generations (TAT, 2025). The content posted on the accounts was based on material we gathered from direct interviews with locals, including photos, videos, and information that each featured local wanted us to showcase about their business and personal story. After discussing with the Municipality of Amphawa, it was decided that Vice Mayor Mr. Krit Meetawee would be responsible for determining how to employ and maintain the model according to the methods we used for creating its content.

5.2 Community-based digital mapping can be used for tourist education and navigation.

Similar to our first recommendation, we aim to highlight the stories and perspectives of locals to emphasize Amphawa’s unique qualities and motivate tourists to visit many locations throughout the region. This model, however, provides a navigational aspect that storytelling does not.

With the use of ArcGIS, we created a series of interactive maps highlighting several different aspects of the region to encourage longer visits and exploration beyond the floating market. This ArcGIS model (located in the supplemental material) includes maps of the Amphawa Floating Market, a regional map showcasing locations outside of the market, and detailed stories provided by locals along with information about their businesses. Users are able to zoom in and out, and clicking on a marked location would allow the user to view the name and description of the location, and quotes and recommendations from the owner of the location or business. Highlighting locals’ stories and contributions to the community through this resource allows the user to gain a deeper sense of connection to the area, and including a map with these features of places outside of the floating market will encourage visitors to explore lesser-known destinations.

To maintain this potential tourism resource, the municipality should work with organizations such as the Amphawa-Chaipattananurak Project and Better Living: Samut

Songkhram, who have previously been involved with mapping and community conservation projects for Amphawa as shown in their work in Figure 23.

Figure 23. *Amphawa community mapping done in a joint project between Amphawa-Chaipattananurak and Better Living: Samut Songkhram*



For ease of accessibility, the maps should be provided in both Thai and English to serve the two primary languages of tourists, and they should be made accessible to a wide audience through both digital and physical versions, as some users may prefer one of these options over the other.

5.3 Accommodations should be made to educate locals on how to use digital tools for tourism promotion.

In addition to the lack of communication about the unique aspects of Amphawa to tourists, findings also showed a demographic gap between locals and tourists. With this demographic gap likely comes differences in values and communication preferences, suggesting that this could be a contributing factor to the poor communication of information to visitors. From interview data, we found that many local business owners in Amphawa do not use internet resources either due to not having enough time or not knowing how to use them. Moreover, several of these sources stated that the Amphawa Floating Market did not have a very strong online presence, leading other markets in the province to receive more attention from tourists.

To address this issue, we recommend that the Municipality of Amphawa should set up a program to educate these locals on how to use digital tools, such as those proposed in Recommendations 1 and 2, to promote their businesses. The municipality can organize cooperation between locals, the TAT, and the Amphawa-Chaipattananurak Project; community engagement representatives from these tourism and conservation organizations can educate locals on the changing tourism trends and effective tourist engagement.

Although many locals expressed interest in being trained in these areas, they may not commit to this process and could choose to continue how they have always worked. This reluctance can be reduced with an incentivized training plan that provides locals with manageable steps and tangible results.

5.4 Concluding Thoughts and Implications

Over the duration of this project, we were able to experience a place rich in history, culture, and resilience and listen to the stories of people who truly care about the Amphawa community, providing valuable perspectives that emphasize the many unique qualities the region as a whole has to offer. Generations have shaped this community, and their stories are woven into every temple, orchard, and marketplace. Making these narratives accessible to potential visitors through community-based strategies like local storytelling, detailed mapping, and cooperation among community members will hopefully help to further connect the community and bring a new layer of understanding to those who visit Amphawa. The concept of utilizing digital tools to achieve this goal brings an innovative aspect to this project that can set a precedent for communities facing similar challenges.

Amidst constant change and development, preserving the identity of cultural places like Amphawa becomes more important than ever; innovative solutions like those proposed by our research will become increasingly relevant in a world where digital platforms strongly influence the competitive tourism landscape. By applying community-based tourism to these solutions, the preservation of tradition should come naturally—not as an obligation, but as a shared commitment to honoring local ways of life. We hope our efforts will allow visitors to engage with the beauty of Amphawa, enriching their understanding of the area’s culture to foster a deeper connection with the community.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

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Contact Information: amphawaiqpissp6@gmail.com

Sponsor: Krit Meetawee, Municipality of Amphawa

Purpose of the Study

We are conducting this research by the municipality Amphawa to assess the cultural and historical background and the physical environment of Amphawa, to develop a solution that benefits tourists, vendors, and the local community. Your participation will provide significant information for the project, but before your participation, this form describes the procedures involved and what the survey and interview will entail.

Your Participation involves:

The interview will be conducted on-site with our team. It will be a semi-structured interview lasting a maximum of 15 minutes, though the duration may vary depending on the feedback provided. Questions will relate to your personal experiences, demographics, race, family, work, lifestyle, socio-economic status, and suggestions regarding the Amphawa community and market.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to participating in this research.

Confidentiality:

No personal information will be shared or included in published reports unless you explicitly provide consent. Although the interview poses no apparent risks due to the nature of the questions, all responses will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any external sources or groups. Responses will be documented, but access to the collected information will be limited to the research team, project sponsors, and the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Institutional Review Board. Your identity will remain confidential and will not be included in final reports or presentations.

Your Rights:

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Consent Statement:

By providing verbal consent, you confirm that:

1. You have read and understood the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study as outlined above.
2. You understand that your participation is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
3. You agree to participate in this study and consent to the recording of your interview, with the understanding that your identity will remain confidential unless you explicitly state otherwise.
4. By Providing verbal consent, do you agree that you understand all conditions to this interview. Do you wish to start the interview

Appendix B: Tourist Survey

Q1 Name ชื่อ

Q2 (Open ended) Where are you visiting us from? คุณมาจากที่ไหน?

Q3 What is your age group? ช่วงอายุของคุณ

- ☐ <18ปี
- ☐ 19-25ปี
- ☐ 25-35ปี
- ☐ 36-45ปี
- ☐ 46-59ปี
- ☐ 60ปี>

Q4 Is this your first time visiting Samut SongKhrum, which markets have you visited? (Amphawa, Talad Rom Hub, Damnoen Saduak Floating Market) นี่เป็นครั้งแรกที่คุณมาที่สมุทรสงครามหรือไม่? คุณเคยไปตลาดไหนบ้าง? (อัมพวา, ตลาดร่มหุบ, ตลาดน้ำดำเนินสะดวก)

- ☐ Yes, Amphawa ใช่, อัมพวา
- ☐ Yes, Damnoen Saduak Floating Market ใช่, ตลาดน้ำดำเนินสะดวก
- ☐ Yes, Rom Hub Market ใช่, ตลาดร่มหุบ
- ☐ Yes, others ใช่, อื่นๆ
- ☐ No, This is not my first time ไม่, นี่ไม่ใช่ครั้งแรกที่ฉันมาที่นี่

Q5 How did you hear about Samut Songkhram (Amphawa, Talad Rom Hub, Damnoen Saduak Floating Market)? คุณรู้จักสมุทรสงคราม (อัมพวา, ตลาดร่มหุบ, ตลาดน้ำดำเนินสะดวก) ผ่านช่องทางใด?

- ☐ Social Media(โซเชียลมีเดีย)
- ☐ Friends/Family(เพื่อน/ครอบครัว)
- ☐ Guidebook(หนังสือแนะนำ)

- ☐ Travel agency(ทัวร์ท่องเที่ยว)
- ☐ Internet(อินเทอร์เน็ต)
- ☐ Other(อื่นๆ)

Q6 Are you visiting Samut Songkhram (Amphawa, Talad Rom Hub, Damnoen Saduak Floating Market) as part of a group, alone, or other? คุณมาที่สมุทรสงคราม (อัมพวา, ตลาดร่มหุบ, ตลาดน้ำดำเนินสะดวก) ในลักษณะใด?

- ☐ Family กับครอบครัว
- ☐ Tour/Travel agency ทัวร์/บริษัททัวร์
- ☐ Alone คนเดียว
- ☐ Others อื่นๆ

Q7 What motivated you to come to Samut Songkhram? อะไรคือแรงบันดาลใจให้คุณมาเที่ยวที่สมุทรสงคราม

- ☐ Floating market(ตลาดน้ำ)
- ☐ Local food(อาหารท้องถิ่น)
- ☐ Cultural experiences(ประสบการณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม)
- ☐ Temples/religious sites(วัด/สถานที่ทางศาสนา)
- ☐ Recommendations from friends/family(ครอบครัว)
- ☐ Social media(โซเชียลมีเดีย)
- ☐ Others (please specify)อื่นๆโปรดระบุ

Q8 What was the main purpose of your visit? จุดประสงค์หลักของการมาเที่ยวสมุทรสงคราม (เลือกหลายข้อที่เกี่ยวข้อง)

- ☐ Relaxation(พักผ่อน)
- ☐ Cultural exploration(ประสบการณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม)

- ☐ Shopping(ช้อปปิ้ง)
- ☐ Photography(ถ่ายภาพ)
- ☐ Visiting family/friends(เยี่ยมครอบครัว/เพื่อน)
- ☐ Other (please specify)(อื่นๆโปรดระบุ)

Q9 Did you have specific expectations before coming here about certain places or experiences? คุณมีความคาดหวังก่อนมาที่นี่เกี่ยวกับสถานที่หรือประสบการณ์ใดๆ หรือไม่อย่างไร?

Q10 What were the main factors influencing your decision to visit this market over others? อะไรคือปัจจัยหลักที่ทำให้คุณตัดสินใจมาเยี่ยมชมตลาดนี้มากกว่าที่อื่นๆ?

- ☐ Recommendations from friends/family คำแนะนำจากเพื่อน/ครอบครัว
- ☐ Online reviews รีวิวออนไลน์ (Google, TripAdvisor ฯลฯ)
- ☐ Social media โซเชียลมีเดีย (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube)
- ☐ Proximity/convenience ความสะดวก
- ☐ Unique cultural experience ประสบการณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมที่ไม่เหมือนใคร
- ☐ Food and local cuisine
- ☐ อาหารและอาหารท้องถิ่น
- ☐ Other (please specify) อื่นๆ(โปรดระบุ)

Q11 Did you experience any challenges in finding information about this market before visiting? (Single choice) คุณพบความยากลำบากในการหาข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับตลาดนี้ก่อนที่จะมาไหม?

- ☐ No, everything was easy to find ไม่, ทุกอย่างหาง่าย
- ☐ Somewhat, but I managed to get the information I needed บางส่วน, แต่ก็สามารถหาข้อมูลที่ต้องการได้
- ☐ Yes, it was difficult to find reliable information ใช่, หาข้อมูลที่เชื่อถือได้ยาก

Q12 Have you visited any temples or religious sites in Samut Songkhram? คุณได้เยี่ยมชมวัดหรือสถานที่ทางศาสนาในสมุทรสงครามหรือไม่?

☐ Yes (เคย)

☐ No (ไม่เคย)

Q13 Experiences and Feed How would you rate your overall experience in the market so far?? (1 being not satisfied, and 10 being excellent) คุณจะให้คะแนนประสบการณ์โดยรวมของคุณในตลาดนี้ อย่างไร? (1 = ไม่พอใจ, 10 = พอใจมาก)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

overall experience (ประสบการณ์โดยรวม)	
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Q14 (Open ended) What do you like most about Samut Songkhram? (i.e, floating market, peaceful environment, delicious food, cultural experiences, religious experience, or other) คุณชอบอะไรที่สุดเกี่ยวกับสมุทรสงคราม? (เช่น ตลาดน้ำ, บรรยากาศสงบ, อาหารอร่อย, ประสบการณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม, ประสบการณ์ทางศาสนา หรืออื่นๆ)

Q15 Did you find it easy to interact with local vendors and residents? (Single choice) คุณพบว่ามันง่ายที่จะสื่อสารกับพ่อค้าแม่ค้าและคนท้องถิ่นหรือไม่?

☐ Yes, it was easy and enjoyable ใช่, มันง่ายและสนุก

☐ Somewhat, but there were language barriers บางส่วน, แต่มีอุปสรรคทางภาษา

☐ No, communication was difficult ไม่, การสื่อสารยาก

Q16 How easy was it to navigate the market? (Scale: 1-10, where 1 is difficult and 10 is very easy) การเดินทางในตลาดนี้ง่ายแค่ไหน? (1-10, โดย 1 คือยากมากและ 10 คือง่ายมาก)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

การเดินทางในตลาดนี้ง่ายแค่ไหน	
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Q17 What online or offline resources did you use before choosing this market? คุณใช้แหล่งข้อมูลออนไลน์หรือออฟไลน์อะไรบ้างก่อนเลือกตลาดนี้?

☐ Google search

☐ การค้นหาจาก Google

- ☐ Travel websites (TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet, etc.)
- ☐ เว็บไซต์การท่องเที่ยว (TripAdvisor, Lonely Planet ฯลฯ)
- ☐ Social media influencers/blogs
- ☐ อินฟลูเอนเซอร์/บล็อกในโซเชียลมีเดีย
- ☐ Word of mouth from friends/family
- ☐ คำบอกเล่าจากเพื่อน/ครอบครัว
- ☐ Hotel or tour agency recommendations
- ☐ คำแนะนำจากโรงแรมหรือบริษัททัวร์

Q18 Did you use any digital tools (Google Maps, QR codes, online guides) to explore the market? (Yes / No – If yes, which ones? If no, why not?) คุณใช้เครื่องมือดิจิทัล (Google Maps, QR codes, คู่มือออนไลน์) ในการเยี่ยมชมตลาดนี้หรือไม่? (ใช่/ไม่ใช่ ถ้าใช่ ใช้เครื่องมืออะไรบ้าง? ถ้าไม่, ทำไมถึงไม่ใช้?)

☐ Yes ใช่ _____

☐ No ไม่ใช่ _____

Q19 Would you have preferred more digital navigation aids, such as a mobile app or interactive map? (Yes / No – Please specify what would be helpful) คุณคิดว่าเครื่องมือการนำทางแบบดิจิทัล เช่น แผนที่หรือแอปมือถือ เป็นประโยชน์หรือไม่? (ใช่/ไม่ใช่ - กรุณาระบุสิ่งที่อาจเป็นประโยชน์)

☐ Yes ใช่ _____

☐ No ไม่ใช่ _____

Q20 Were there any challenges in finding transportation to and from the market? (Yes / No – Please explain if applicable) คุณพบความยากลำบากในการหาวิธีการเดินทางไปและกลับจากตลาดนี้หรือไม่? (ใช่/ไม่ใช่ - กรุณาอธิบายหากมี)

☐ Yes ใช่ _____

☐ No ไม่ใช่ _____

Q21 What would you recommend to first-time visitors to Samut Songkhram from your experience? จากประสบการณ์ของคุณ อยากแนะนำอะไรให้ผู้ที่มาเที่ยวสมุทรสงครามเป็นครั้งแรก

- ☐ Visit the floating market (ตลาดน้ำ)
- ☐ Try local street food (ลองอาหารท้องถิ่น)
- ☐ Take a boat tour (ทัวร์เรือ)
- ☐ Explore the temples (ไปวัด)
- ☐ Stay overnight for fireflies tours (ชมหิ่งห้อย)
- ☐ Shop for handicrafts (ทำงานฝีมือ หัตถกรรม)
- ☐ Interact with locals (พูดคุยกับคนในท้องถิ่น)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ)

Q22 (Open ended) What are three things/words that remind you of this market? สามสิ่งหรือคำที่ทำให้คุณนึกถึงตลาดนี้คืออะไร?

Q22 (Open ended) What could be improved to enhance visitor experiences at this market? (Open-ended response) อะไรที่สามารถปรับปรุงเพื่อพัฒนาประสบการณ์ของนักท่องเที่ยวในตลาดนี้

Q23 Information of Samut Songkhram is accesible to find online ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับสมุทรสงครามหาง่ายทางออนไลน์

- ☐ Strongly Agree (เห็นด้วยมาก)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (เห็นด้วย)
- ☐ Neutral (เฉยๆ)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วย)
- ☐ Strongly Disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก)

Q24 I was engaged by the culture and history of the market. ฉันให้ความสนใจเกี่ยวกับวัฒนธรรมและประวัติศาสตร์ของตลาดนี้

- ☐ Strongly Agree (เห็นด้วยมาก)

- ☐ Somewhat Agree (เห็นด้วย)
- ☐ Neutral (เฉยๆ)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วย)
- ☐ Strongly Disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก)

Q25 I was able to find attractions and navigate the market easily. ฉันสามารถหาสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวและ
การนำทางในตลาดได้อย่างง่ายดาย

- ☐ Strongly Agree (เห็นด้วยมาก)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (เห็นด้วย)
- ☐ Neutral (เฉยๆ)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วย)
- ☐ Strongly Disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างมาก)

Q26(Open ended) What things could improve your experience here? อะไรที่ฉันที่สามารถเพิ่ม
ประสบการณ์การการท่องเที่ยวของคุณจากที่นี่

Q27 (Open ended) What things do you think can bring new tourists to Samut Songkhram? อะไรที่
คุณคิดว่าสามารถเพิ่มจำนวนของนักท่องเที่ยวมาสมุทรสงครามได้

Appendix C: Local Survey and Interview

English	Thai
1. Who are you? Name, age, how long have you been living in Amphawa. etc	คุณคือใคร ชื่อ อายุ อยู่อาศัยที่อำเภอมานานเท่าไรแล้ว
2. How many years have you been starting your business?	คุณทำธุรกิจนี้มานานเท่าไรแล้ว
3. What inspires you to start this business?	จุดริเริ่มของการเริ่มธุรกิจคืออะไร อะไรคือแรงบันดาลใจ
4. Why should people come visit your store?	อะไรคือจุดแข็งของคุณ ทำไมลูกค้าถึงสนใจร้านของคุณ
5. How has the community been living in the past 10 years?	ในช่วงเวลาสิบปีที่ผ่านมา สังคมชุมชนอำพวาเป็นอย่างไรบ้าง
6. Are you from Amphawa?	คุณเป็นคนพื้นที่อำพวารึป่าว
7. What do you want this community to be like?	ในความคิด อยากให้อำพวาเป็นรูปแบบไหน สังคม
8. Why do you still maintain this way of life?	ทำไมคุณถึงอยากรักษาวีถีชีวิตแบบนี้ไว้ มีข้อดีอย่างไร
9. What is your occupation?	ตอนนี้คุณทำอาชีพอะไร
10. How does tourism affect the environment?	การพัฒนาแหล่งท่องเที่ยวมีผลกระทบต่อการใช้ชีวิตตอนนี้มั้ย
11. How do you feel about the mass tourism problem in Amphawa floating market?	อำพวาถูกพัฒนาเป็นแหล่งท่องเที่ยว จนได้รับความนิยมมาก จนเกิดปัญหาการกระจุกตัวของนักท่องเที่ยว คุณรู้สึกอย่างไร
12. What is your perspective towards “tourism”	คุณมีมุมมองต่อนักท่องเที่ยวอย่างไร
13. What are your expectations? More income, more tourist	คุณคาดหวังอะไร (รายได้มากขึ้น หรือ นักท่องเที่ยวมากขึ้น)

14. What type of business do you own?	คุณเป็นเจ้าของกิจการประเภทอะไร
15.How many years have you operated this business?	คุณทำธุรกิจมากี่ปีแล้ว
16.If you have less than one year, what are the main motivations that make you start?	ถ้าน้อยกว่า1ปีอะไรคือแรงบันดาลใจในการทำธุรกิจของคุณ
17.How many employees, or workers help you manage the business?are most of your employees(family members, local hires, outsourced staff, etc)?	มีพนักงานประมาณเท่าไรหรือคนช่วยทำงานเท่าไร ส่วนใหญ่เป็นญาติพี่น้องหรือจ้าง
18.What are the main products/services you are offering?	ผลิตภัณฑ์ที่คุณขายคือ
19.Are your products/services influenced by local traditions or culture?	ผลิตภัณฑ์ของคุณได้แรงบันดาลใจหรือสืบทอดจากวัฒนธรรมดั้งเดิมของท้องถิ่นหรือไม่
20.Do you source your materials from local or external sources (outsources from your local community)?	วัตถุดิบมาจากในท้องถิ่นหรือนำเข้า
21.Do you sell your product outside Amphawa?	ส่งออกสินค้าไปขายนอกอัมพวาหรือไม่
22.Is your business located in: (Market, nearby area, or off site location)	ธุรกิจของคุณตั้งอยู่ที่แถวไหน (ตลาด, พื้นที่ใกล้เคียง)
23.Do you rent or own the space where your business operates?	คุณเป็นเจ้าของหรือเช่าพื้นที่ที่ดำเนินกิจการอยู่
24. Customer demographics according to the locals' perspectives: Who are your customers? (Locals, domestic tourism, or international tourist)	ข้อมูลประชากรของลูกค้าตามมุมมองของคนในพื้นที่: ลูกค้าของคุณคือใคร (คนในพื้นที่ นักท่องเที่ยวในประเทศ หรือ นักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ)
25.What is the age range of most of the customers?	ลูกค้าส่วนใหญ่มีอายุเท่าไร
28.How do you currently advertise your business? Word of month, social media, flyers/ brochures,partnership, or something else?	ปัจจุบันคุณโฆษณาธุรกิจของคุณอย่างไร คำประจำเดือน โซเชียลมีเดีย แผ่นพับ/โบรชัวร์

Appendix D: Tourist Interview

Demographic Questions for the Interview:

- Where do you come from? Name and Age?
- What is the main attraction for you to visit Amphawa?
 - Food, culture, floating market, temples, etc)
- What other destination did you consider before choosing Amphawa? What brought you here?

Tourist Behaviors and Expectations:

- What is the main purpose of your visit?
- Are you traveling alone, with family or on a tour?
- Do you think Amphawa's natural beauty and local traditions make your visit special?
- What other destinations did you consider before choosing Amphawa? Why did you ultimately decide on this place?

Experiences and Recommendations:

- What did you enjoy most about Amphawa?
- What would you recommend to first-time visitors?(Yes/no)
- Have you visited any temples in Amphawa?

Suggestions, Feedback, and Sustainability:

- What things could improve your experience here?
- What are three things that remind you of Amphawa?
- What do you think Amphawa needs to improve to attract more tourists?

Appendix E: Tourism Authority of Thailand Interview Questions

1. Can you briefly explain what is TAT	คุณช่วยอธิบายว่า TAT คืออะไรได้ไหม? TAT มีบทบาทต่อสังคมยังไง
2. What is your role in TA	บทบาทของคุณใน TAT คืออะไร?
3. What inspires you to work in this industry?	อะไรเป็นแรงบันดาลใจให้คุณทำงานในอุตสาหกรรมนี้?
4. *What is sustainable tourism in your/ organization's perspective?	*ในมุมมองของคุณ/องค์กร การท่องเที่ยวอย่างยั่งยืนคืออะไร?
5. **How does TAT support or promote the place?	**How does TAT support or promote the place?
6. *What are the criteria of selecting the places to promote? *	เกณฑ์ในการคัดเลือกสถานที่เพื่อส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวมีอะไรบ้าง?
7. In what specific side does TAT emphasize?	TAT ให้ความสำคัญกับด้านใดเป็นพิเศษ? (economy, marketing etc)
8. *Do you think that TAT helps engage the amount of tourists visiting the places? *	คุณคิดว่า TAT มีส่วนช่วยดึงดูดจำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวให้มาเยี่ยมชมสถานที่ต่าง ๆ หรือไม่?
9. *Recommendation on promoting the places (platforms/social medias) *	คุณมีคำแนะนำในการโปรโมตสถานที่ท่องเที่ยวผ่านแพลตฟอร์มหรือโซเชียลมีเดียอย่างไรบ้าง?
10. *Do you have data for how many people are visiting locations *	*คุณมีข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับจำนวนนักท่องเที่ยวที่มาเยี่ยมชมสถานที่ต่างๆหรือไม่
11. Has TAT been cooperating with any travel agencies?	TAT ได้ทำงานทำร่วมกันกับบริษัทท่องเที่ยวใดบ้างมั้ย

Add-on questions for TAT Samut Songkhram

1.How often does TAT Samut Songkhram get in contact with the TAT headquarters?	TAT สมุทรสงครามติดต่อ หรือประสานงานกับทาง TAT กลาง บ่อยแค่ไหน
2.Does TAT headquarters help with promoting Amphawa, Samut Songkhram?	ทางTAT กลาง มีส่วนช่วยในโปรโมท อัมพวา สมุทรสงคราม ไหม
3.How does TAT Samut Songkhram deal with the current situation of Amphawa?	TAT สมุทรสงครามรับมือกับสถานการณ์ปัจจุบันใน อัมพวาอย่างไร
4.Which specific district does TAT want to improve and encourage tourists to come to?	พื้นที่ไหนในอัมพวาที่TATอยากจะทำให้พัฒนาและส่งเสริมให้ผู้คนมา
5.Do you think that TAT Samut Songkhram has something that needs to be improved?	TATสมุทรสงครามคิดว่าอัมพวามีอะไรที่ต้องแก้ไข
6.Does TAT Samut Songkhram have concerns with Amphawa?	TATมีข้อกังวลอะไรเกี่ยวกับอัมพวา
7.Has TAT Samut Songkhram been cooperating with any travel agencies?	TATมีการติดต่อหรือประสานงานกับทางเอเจนซี่ หรือทัวร์บ้างไหม
8.How does TAT manage the places for the tour agencies?	TATมีการจัดการเลือกสถานที่สำหรับเอเจนซี่อย่างไร