

Research and Development of Museum-Community Collaboration: Utilizing Cultural Performing Arts in the Creation of Music and Contemporary Paintings to Promote Chiang Rai's Tourism Image

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze and develop collaboration between museums and local communities using cultural performing arts as a medium for heritage preservation and creative tourism promotion in Chiang Rai, Thailand. The study employs a mixed-methods design. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, and field observations at two selected museums: the Museum of Old Photos Chiang Khong and the Hong Luang Saeng Kaew Museum at Wat Phra Kaew Chiang Rai. Their selection was based on their roles in preserving local history, culture, and the Lanna artistic heritage. Quantitative results from 152 exhibition visitors revealed high levels of cultural appreciation ($M = 4.52$), understanding of Chiang Rai's cultural identity ($M = 4.47$), and interest in cultural tourism ($M = 4.38$). These findings demonstrate that integrating performing arts and contemporary creative works significantly enhances audience engagement and strengthens the cultural tourism image of Chiang Rai. Qualitative findings indicate that cultural performing arts such as Lanna dance, Khap Sor Lanna singing, and traditional theatrical forms effectively communicate historical narratives and reinforce communal identity. The research also facilitated the creation of original musical compositions and contemporary paintings inspired by local narratives, using post-impressionist techniques and popular-music idioms. The exhibition incorporated immersive storytelling, curated lighting, and ambient soundscapes featuring local music and the natural sound of the Mekong River. A key tangible outcome of this project was the strengthened collaboration between Chiang Rai Rajabhat University and Chiang Khong District through an MOU that formalized joint cultural development efforts. This partnership enabled coordinated exhibitions, youth engagement activities, and community-based cultural programming that contributed to local economic stimulation and intergenerational learning. The findings underscore the significance of integrating museums, performing arts, and creative expressions to promote cultural tourism and enhance Chiang Rai's cultural. This study suggests that interdisciplinary artistic collaboration can serve as a sustainable model for area-based cultural development.

Keywords: Chiang rai, Museum-Community collaboration, Music and contemporary art, Tourism image

Introduction

Chiang Rai Province is recognized as one of the most significant cultural centers in Northern Thailand. The region is distinguished by its rich history, diverse ethnic composition, and artistic heritage, which are reflected through its ancient monuments, artifacts, and historical documents (Fongissara & Mekara, 2020, p. 53–63). The city of Chiang Rai, along with surrounding districts such as Chiang Saen and Chiang Khong, has long been interconnected with the ancient Lanna civilization and has served as a major hub for cross-border cultural exchange and economic trade for centuries (Sonthanong, Na Thalang & Wongmonta, 2022, p. 162–183). The development of border towns and culturally rich cities like Chiang Rai requires the integration of knowledge related to cultural heritage, performing arts, and the creative economy to enhance tourism value and promote sustainable community development (Prasunin, 2017, p. 32–46). At the international level, the concepts of cultural tourism and heritage-based creative industries have gained increasing attention, utilizing both tangible and intangible cultural assets as strategic tools for economic development and for reinforcing the distinctive identity of cultural tourism destinations (Richards, 2018, p. 12–21).

Museums play a crucial role as educational institutions in preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge. However, museums in Thailand continue to face challenges related to public accessibility, community participation, and the integration of cultural content into the creative economy (Meesil, 2016, p. 233–243). While these issues exist nationally, museums in Chiang Rai confront additional context-specific challenges, including limited youth engagement, insufficient contemporary interpretive media, and inadequate mechanisms for linking cultural heritage to creative tourism development. These limitations form the foundation of the research gap addressed in this study. Internationally, many countries have adopted approaches that emphasize museum community engagement, enabling communities to present their cultural identities through exhibitions and creative activities. The integration of performing arts and contemporary painting has become a key strategy for revitalizing museums and attracting tourism (Brown, Cummins, & González Rueda, 2023). Performing arts, in particular, provide meaningful narrative-based experiences that allow audiences to better understand and engage with cultural stories (Schechner, 2013). Numerous studies further demonstrate that incorporating music and performing arts into museum settings effectively increases visitor attendance and promotes experiential tourism (Graham & Howard, 2016).

Performing arts and contemporary painting are also integral components of the creative economy, reflecting cultural identity while generating value through creative industries (Florida, 2003). Phetruchee et al. (2021, p. 70–95) highlight that utilizing art as a medium for cultural transmission can stimulate tourism and strengthen cultural branding. Music additionally enhances emotional engagement and tourism perception (Sukwin, 2022, p. 109–124), while traditional music and folk performances help establish emotional connections with visitors and reinforce a city's cultural image (Richards, 2018). Despite this expanding body of literature, few studies have explored integrated creative processes that utilize museum spaces in collaboration with local communities to produce new artistic works aimed at strengthening a province's tourism image. This research gap is particularly evident in Chiang Rai, where museums possess rich cultural content but lack systematically developed creative frameworks that incorporate music, performing arts, and contemporary painting for tourism promotion. Addressing this gap is essential for positioning museums as dynamic cultural platforms rather than static repositories. Over the past decade, Chiang Rai's cultural development increasingly involves multi-sector collaboration among local museums, cultural practitioners, Lanna performing arts groups, visual artists, municipal cultural offices, tourism networks, and Chiang Rai Rajabhat University. These collaborative efforts have laid the groundwork for integrating

traditional narratives with contemporary creative practices. However, such partnerships have not yet resulted in a structured research-based framework for producing creative works that promote Chiang Rai's tourism image. Highlighting these partnerships is therefore essential to understanding the foundation and necessity of the present study.

This research aims to develop an integrated framework combining museums, performing arts, and contemporary painting to promote Chiang Rai's image as a distinguished cultural tourism destination. It explores the development of museum-community collaboration through cultural performing arts as a medium for creating original musical compositions and contemporary paintings. The objective is to revitalize museums as dynamic spaces for learning and community engagement and to enhance their role as significant tourist attractions, particularly for youth and broader audiences.

The study emphasizes creative processes that integrate traditional cultural narratives into music and visual arts, ensuring accessibility, relevance, and alignment with Chiang Rai's unique cultural atmosphere. Disseminating these creative outputs through various media platforms is expected to raise public awareness, foster cultural appreciation, and stimulate vibrant cultural tourism activities. Ultimately, the project aims to contribute to Chiang Rai's sustainable cultural and economic development by generating shared value and positive experiences across multiple sectors of society.

Conceptual Framework

Museums function as essential institutions for preserving, interpreting, and communicating cultural heritage. They serve as public learning spaces that make cultural knowledge accessible through curated exhibitions and meaningful cultural interpretation. Local communities, meanwhile, represent living heritage, encompassing indigenous knowledge, traditions, and artistic practices sustained across generations. Collaboration between museums and communities enhances the relevance and continuity of heritage transmission within contemporary settings. Performing arts play a central role in communicating cultural identity, using music, movement, and symbolic expression to transform historical narratives into engaging public experiences. When integrated with original musical compositions and contemporary paintings, these artistic practices expand the expressive possibilities of cultural interpretation. Music deepens emotional engagement and supports narrative expression, while contemporary painting provides visual reinterpretations of cultural identity aligned with modern aesthetics. Incorporating these artistic forms into museum-based initiatives strengthens cultural tourism by enriching visitor experiences and fostering deeper understanding of local cultural landscapes. Such integration revitalizes museums as dynamic cultural spaces that promote learning, creativity, and community participation. Therefore, developing creative processes that connect museums, communities, performing arts, and contemporary artistic production offers a strategic framework for sustaining living heritage, stimulating community engagement, and enhancing Chiang Rai's cultural identity within the context of cultural tourism development.

Review Literature

Hooper-Greenhill (2000) emphasizes that museums are not merely spaces for displaying ancient artifacts but function as dynamic centers for learning and cultural interpretation. Similarly, Smith (2006) through the concept of Uses of Heritage, argues that cultural heritage preservation extends beyond safeguarding physical objects and involves the construction of shared meanings within society. Research on museum community engagement further highlights the importance of positioning museums as living spaces that foster active community participation. In addition, Newman & McLean (2006) assert that museums play a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity and facilitating intercultural understanding among

different social groups. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that museums should not be confined to passive exhibition roles but should actively promote collaboration with local communities and stimulate the exchange of cultural knowledge.

The use of performing arts as a medium for cultural transmission is well articulated by Schechner (2013) who through the field of Performance Studies argues that performance extends far beyond stage presentations; it is a cultural process that reflects values, identity, and social beliefs. Similarly, Small (1998) introduces the concept of Musicking, framing music not merely as an artistic product but as a social activity shaped by human interaction and cultural context. Gombrich (1995) adds that painting serves as a powerful narrative tool capable of conveying historical memory, cultural stories, and cross-cultural understanding. These perspectives collectively indicate that both music and contemporary painting function as effective mediums for cultural communication, creating artistic experiences that bridge past traditions with contemporary expression. Richards (2018) expands this discussion by conceptualizing cultural tourism as a strategic mechanism through which cities and nations can leverage cultural assets to attract visitors. Complementing this, Florida (2003) introduces the notion of the Creative Class, asserting that artists and creative professionals are key drivers of urban economic development through creativity and innovation. Myrczik (2018, p. 239–254) further illustrates how the convergence of creative and digital economies enhances the role of culture in the global marketplace. Nye (2005) also contributes to this discourse by conceptualizing Soft Power as the ability of a nation to influence others through cultural attraction rather than coercion.

The concept of the creative economy underscores the use of cultural resources, creativity, and innovation to generate economic and social value. It integrates cultural assets, artistic production, and creative industries to support local development, enhance cultural identity, and promote sustainable tourism. In summary, culture and the arts are no longer confined to preservation; they have become vital economic resources that generate added value and contribute significantly to the growth and sustainability of the cultural tourism industry.

Table 1 Summary of Key Theoretical Concepts

Topic	Core Concept	References
Museums and Communities	Museums should serve as centers for learning and foster community engagement.	Hooper-Greenhill (2000); Brown, K., Cummins, A., & González Rueda, A.S. (Eds.). (2023); Smith (2006)
Music and Contemporary Painting	The arts function as mediums for cultural transmission and identity formation.	Schechner (2013); Small (1998); Gombrich (1995)
Cultural Tourism and Creative Economy	Culture is a key resource for driving economic development and promoting tourism.	Richards (2018); Florida (2003)

(Resource : Researcher, 2025)

Methodology

The methodology of this research is explained in detail as follows.

This study employed a spatial-based sampling approach to identify the population relevant to the context of museums and local communities in Chiang Rai Province. The initial data were referenced from lovethailand.org, which reports a total of seven museums within the province. However, given the study's focus on exploring collaborative practices between museums and communities in the creative process of art production, purposive sampling was adopted to select museums with the potential to participate in the project.

The selection criteria included: (1) Representation of museums located both within the urban area and outside the city center to ensure diversity in management practices. (2) Relevance to cultural heritage and tourism, which are central themes of the study. And, (3) the museum's capacity to serve as a learning hub and foster community engagement. Based on these criteria, two museums were selected.

1. Hong Luang Saeng Kaew Museum at Wat Phra Kaew Chiang Rai, (HLSK) located in Mueang Chiang Rai District, representing an urban-centered institution.

2. Museum of Old Photos Chiang Khong, (OPCK) located in Chiang Khong District, representing a museum outside the city center that maintains strong historical and cultural ties with the Mekong River communities.

Research Instruments

This study designed and developed research instruments based on the objectives of the study, incorporating both data collection tools and tools used in the creative production process. These instruments are categorized into three main components as follows.

1. Instruments for studying the collaboration between museums and communities. A mixed-methods research approach was adopted, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The primary instruments included.

1.1 Semi-structured interviews, conducted with museum administrators, community leaders, artists, and scholars to collect in-depth qualitative data.

1.2 Questionnaires, designed to gather public opinions on performing arts, museums, and the promotion of cultural tourism.

All instruments underwent content validity evaluation by a panel of experts and reliability testing prior to implementation in the study.

2. Instruments used in the creative process of music composition. These included, field notes, used for documenting observations and conceptual ideas during the composition process. Computers and digital audio workstation (DAW) software, employed for recording, editing, and arranging music. Musical instruments, both traditional and contemporary, used for experimentation and the development of song structures.

3. Instruments used in the creation of contemporary paintings. These included, cameras and field notebooks, used for collecting visual references and inspiration from cultural sites and museums. Sketchbooks, utilized for developing initial concepts and design drafts of the artworks. Painting materials, such as canvases, oil paints, acrylic paints, paintbrushes, and palettes, employed in the production of contemporary artworks.

Research Procedure

Phase 1: Research and Development of Museum-Community Collaboration through Cultural Performing Arts

This phase focuses on fostering collaboration between museums and local communities by utilizing cultural performing arts as a medium to connect traditional knowledge and encourage active community participation. The research and development process in this phase consists of the following sequential steps:

1. Analytical Studies, Data were collected from two primary sources: museums and local communities. The data were categorized into historical evidence, archaeological sites, academic documents, as well as tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Content analysis was employed to establish connections between historical information and the contemporary socio-cultural context of the communities.

2. Community Engagement and Stakeholder Consultation. Initial meetings were conducted with community representatives, local leaders, and museum stakeholders to introduce the research objectives and outline the collaborative framework. A participatory approach was implemented to promote community involvement and ensure mutual understanding. Strategies for collaboration were developed to align with the unique cultural contexts of each locality.

3. Ethnographic Fieldwork and Data Collection. Field data were collected using ethnographic research methods, which included, In-depth interviews with local scholars, traditional artists, and cultural experts to gather qualitative insights. Participant observation to document ongoing traditional performing arts practices within the communities. And, photographic and audio documentation to compile a digital archive of cultural heritage assets. Additionally, data were analyzed from historical documents and indigenous literature to support the field findings.

4. Data Synthesis and Integration. Data obtained from both museums and local communities were synthesized using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to cultural performing arts. The results were organized into a qualitative database and quantitative dataset, providing a structured foundation for subsequent development and application in creative processes.

5. Data Triangulation and Credibility Assessment. Data credibility was ensured through data triangulation techniques, which involved cross-verification of information from three primary sources: Museums (historical and cultural heritage data), Community representatives (ethnographic and indigenous cultural knowledge), and researchers (data analysis and academic interpretations). A focus group discussion was conducted to deliberate on research findings and gather feedback from relevant stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive validation of the data and enhancing the overall credibility of the study.

Phase 2: The Creative Process of Music Composition and Contemporary Painting to Promote Chiang Rai's Cultural Tourism Image

In this phase, data collected from the initial research stage were utilized as a source of inspiration for the development of artistic content and elements. The aim of both creative processes was to convey the cultural values of Chiang Rai and enhance its tourism image through artistic media that effectively engage the target audience. Cultural narratives and insights gathered in Phase 1 informed both the music composition and the contemporary painting creation process.

Music Composition Process, the process involved composing lyrics and melodies, with the song structure designed to align with the cultural themes and emotions that reflect the identity of Chiang Rai. Music arrangements were developed to ensure artistic coherence and contextual relevance. This phase also included the selection of musicians and rehearsal processes, followed by the dissemination and presentation of the completed musical works.

Contemporary Painting Creation Process, the visual art process began with analysis and interpretation, applying symbolic interpretation and cultural narrative approaches to design meaningful artistic representations. During the sketching and composition design phase, artworks were created following post-impressionism principles, aimed at evoking emotional depth and reinforcing Chiang Rai's unique identity. A variety of materials and techniques were employed, including acrylics, oil paints, and mixed media, to enhance the contemporary quality of the artworks. The completed pieces were showcased in a public art exhibition, serving as a platform to disseminate the creative works and engage the wider community.

Phase 3: Presentation, Dissemination, and Quantitative Evaluation of Research Outcomes

This phase focused on disseminating the research outcomes in both academic and practical contexts, and employed a quantitative evaluation to assess audience perceptions and the impact of the creative works produced. A series of artistic activities and academic discussions were organized to showcase the musical compositions and contemporary paintings developed in Phase 2. The events were held at the Museum of Old Photos Chiang Khong in Chiang Khong District, Chiang Rai Province—a venue closely connected to the region's cultural heritage.

The quantitative component employed an accidental sampling technique (convenience sampling) to recruit exhibition visitors who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study after viewing the artworks. A total of 152 participants completed the questionnaire.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the creative outputs in promoting cultural understanding and enhancing the tourism image of Chiang Rai, a structured questionnaire was administered to respondents. The instrument consisted of Likert-scale items measuring 1) cultural appreciation, 2) perceived value of museum-based creative works, 3) understanding of Chiang Rai's cultural identity, and 4) interest in cultural tourism.

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were employed to analyze audience responses. The quantitative results provided empirical evidence supporting the impact of the artistic works on visitors' cultural perceptions and their intention to engage in cultural tourism. These findings complemented the qualitative insights from earlier phases and strengthened the overall validity of the study's conclusions.

Ethical Approval Process

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Chiang Rai Rajabhat University. The research was granted an exemption status under Certificate No. COE.007/2567, Project ID 007-2567-Exe.

Results

The study found that museums in Chiang Rai Province play a significant role in the collection, preservation, and dissemination of cultural knowledge. These museums are deeply connected with local communities in various dimensions. As, the Hong Luang Saeng Kaew Museum at Wat Phra Kaew Chiang Rai serves as a repository of ancient artifacts and Lanna art. It also functions as a venue for artistic activities related to Buddhism and Lanna cultural traditions. Similarly, the Museum of Old Photos Chiang Khong exhibits historical photographs and narratives that document the history of riverside communities along the Mekong River. This museum serves as an important cultural link between Thailand and neighboring countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Developing Museum-Community Collaboration through the Value of Cultural Performing Arts

The researches implemented a structured process to foster collaboration between museums and local communities, comprising the following key steps:

Step 1: Community Engagement and Field Visits, the process began with a planning phase, in which the research team defined the objectives of the field visits to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the cultural interests and needs within the targeted communities. In the preparation phase, the researchers gathered necessary tools and documents to support effective fieldwork. During the execution phase, data were collected through community surveys and field observations, following the predefined research plan. The next stage involved data analysis and presentation, where findings from the fieldwork were systematically analyzed and shared with relevant stakeholders for feedback and validation. Finally, in the action planning phase, the research team developed practical strategies and action plans based on the insights gained from the fieldwork. These plans aimed to address specific issues and support community development initiatives. Emphasis was placed on building mutual understanding with community members, as this foundational step was critical for ensuring that the research process was meaningful and beneficial to the communities involved. Establishing trust and a reliable understanding of local contexts and needs was essential for enabling effective and sustainable collaboration between the museums and the communities in future initiatives.



Figure 1 A briefing session was conducted to inform local government leaders about the objectives and procedures of the fieldwork activities. (Source: Researcher, 2024)

Step 2: Field Data Collection and Analysis, this phase involved the systematic collection and analysis of data related to local history, cultural heritage, and distinctive performing arts of the area. The study gathered information from existing historical documents and archival sources, as well as through direct field engagement, including consultations with

local stakeholders and community members to gain diverse perspectives. In addition to ensuring that the data were current and relevant, this process fostered collaboration between local authorities, institutions, and community members. Such cooperation not only enhanced the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information collected but also strengthened partnerships that are essential for sustainable cultural development initiatives.

Step 3: Fieldwork Studies, this step involved conducting comprehensive fieldwork to collect and categorize data relevant to both museum collections and additional cultural studies. The field data were gathered with an emphasis on ensuring quality, accuracy, and reliability. Through immersive engagement in local and ethnic communities, the research team fostered mutual understanding and built strong relationships with community members. This approach facilitated collaborative efforts in establishing cultural databases and contributed to the planning of future community development programs.

Step 4: Data Synthesis (Synthetic Studies), In this step, data collected from both museum sources and local communities were synthesized and systematically organized. The integration of qualitative and quantitative data aimed to establish a comprehensive and interconnected cultural database. The synthesized data were structured to ensure consistency, coherence, and accessibility, facilitating future research, community development initiatives, and cultural promotion activities.

Step 5: Data Triangulation, A data triangulation process was conducted to validate the reliability and credibility of the findings. A focus group discussion was held, involving three key stakeholder groups: 1) Government authorities, represented by the District Chief Officer of Chiang Khong, 2) Community leaders, including museum custodians and local representatives, and 3) The research teams. The discussion addressed key findings, identified existing challenges, and explored collaborative strategies to ensure mutual understanding and agreement on data credibility. This process fostered transparency and consensus among stakeholders, reinforcing the reliability of the research outcomes.



Figure 2 The research team held a collaborative data synthesis session with the District Chief Officer of Chiang Khong and key representatives from local community leadership.
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

Preliminary Conditions

An analysis of the current conditions at both museums reveals that the Hong Luang Saeng Kaew Museum at Wat Phra Kaew Chiang Rai, (HLSK) has been in operation for 24 years. The museum has established a management system that includes a curator and rotating staff responsible for its administration. Detailed inventories and documentation are maintained for each artifact in the collection. Since the museum is located within the temple grounds, it

benefits from temple staff who assist with cleaning and maintaining both the interior and surrounding areas. Security is managed through a closed-circuit television (CCTV) system, and community members frequently donate valuable historical objects for display. However, the museum faces certain challenges. As it does not charge an admission fee, relying solely on a donation box to cover expenses, the funds collected are insufficient to meet its high monthly operating costs. Additionally, the museum's management structure is directly overseen by the temple's administrative committee, which can limit its operational flexibility and funding opportunities.

Museum of Old Photos Chiang Khong, (OPCK) located in Chiang Rai, has been in operation for six years. Its management operates under the supervision of the District Cultural Council. A designated leader and management committee are responsible for overseeing all museum activities. However, there are no permanent staff members; instead, volunteers rotate duties to manage and maintain the museum. In terms of funding, the museum receives an annual budget from the Chiang Rai Provincial Administrative Organization. The management structure consists of a committee made up of interested community members, with a group leader responsible for planning and coordinating each activity. Admission to the museum is free of charge, and tourists are allowed to visit during official opening hours. However, visitors who require guided tours or special assistance must make advance appointments with the museum's head coordinator. Despite these efforts, several challenges persist. The absence of permanent staff has resulted in a lack of systematic organization of the exhibits. The presentation of photographs is inconsistent, and the exhibition space has become deteriorated over time. There is evidence of damaged equipment and a lack of regular maintenance and cleaning. Although the surrounding areas have been organized, the absence of designated caretakers has led to suboptimal management and upkeep of the exterior spaces.



Figure 3 Comparison between the conditions prior to improvement (left) and following collaborative renovation efforts (right). (Source: Researcher, 2024)

Results of Collaborative Development Between Museums and Local Communities Through the Value of Cultural Performing Arts

The implementation of collaborative development between museums and local communities, utilizing the value of cultural performing arts, revealed that all stakeholders became increasingly aware of the importance of partnership in revitalizing the museum as a vibrant community learning space. The key focus of development was the OPCK, with a shared commitment from all sectors to work collaboratively. The research team served as a facilitator, coordinating joint initiatives, organizing activities, and expanding partnerships across various sectors. The development process involved the community working together to restore the museum space and curate exhibitions aimed at reintroducing the OPCK, as a dynamic and engaging institution. This collaborative effort led to the organization of a major event titled:

“Presentation of Research and the Development of Museum-Community Collaboration through Cultural Performing Arts to Promote Chiang Rai’s Tourism Image.” The event featured the following key activities:

1. An exhibition of contemporary paintings in a post-impressionist style, inspired by historical photographs and cultural narratives of Chiang Khong, depicting its history, way of life, and cultural identity.
2. A presentation of community products, which were developed as part of the collaborative research project, showcasing local craftsmanship and cultural heritage.
3. A live performance of newly composed songs, specifically created to enhance the cultural tourism atmosphere in Chiang Khong District.

Furthermore, as a result of the project’s implementation, all parties involved reached a mutual agreement to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on academic, research, and cultural cooperation for the spatial development of Chiang Khong District. The MoU was formalized between Chiang Rai Rajabhat University and the Chiang Khong District Office, with the primary objective of fostering collaboration in advancing academic initiatives, research activities, and cultural studies that support the area’s development. The key content of the agreement highlights a shared commitment by both parties to collaborate on academic and research-driven initiatives, with a focus on promoting cultural development aimed at enhancing the spatial and community development of Chiang Khong District. This partnership is intended to contribute to the sustainable development and long-term prosperity of the local area.

The Creation of Music and Contemporary Paintings to Promote the Tourism Image of Chiang Rai Province

This study produced original musical compositions and contemporary artworks that reflect the cultural narratives and values of Chiang Rai Province, particularly focusing on the Chiang Khong area. The creative process was informed by field research conducted in local museums and communities, providing inspiration for both the lyrical content and musical arrangements aimed at enhancing the province’s tourism image. Each song was specifically designed to embody the cultural identity, local way of life, and natural beauty of Chiang Rai. The music serves as a medium to promote cultural tourism, while also fostering a sense of pride and cultural identity among local residents, contributing to sustainable community development.

Similarly, a series of contemporary post-impressionist paintings were created, integrating modern artistic concepts with inspiration drawn from Lanna culture, local traditions, and the historical heritage of the Mekong River region. These artworks visually interpret and celebrate the cultural richness of Chiang Rai, as illustrated in the examples presented below.

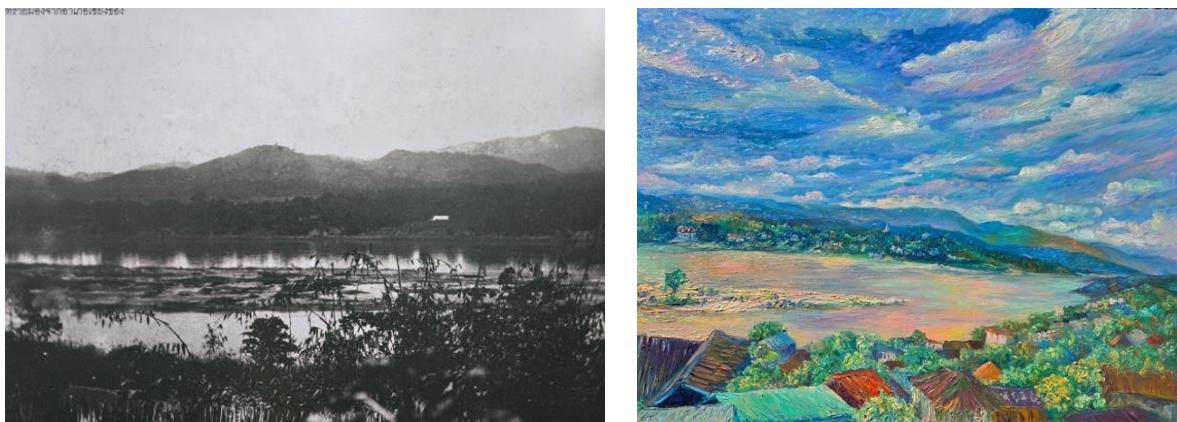


Figure 4 Contemporary Post-Impressionist Paintings Inspired by Local Cultural Heritage.
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

From figure 4, illustrates the expression of emotions and inspiration derived from an original photograph. The research team translated these impressions into a creative artwork, portraying a sense of nostalgia and admiration for traditional festivals held along the banks of the Mekong River.

Exhibition Design and Management

The exhibition and presentation process plays a crucial role in delivering engaging content and creating immersive experiences for visitors. This exhibition was held at the OPCK, in conjunction with an archival photography exhibition, reflecting the historical context and cultural heritage of the area. The exhibition was curated with distinctive design elements, featuring newly developed components that enhanced the museum's display system. These improvements included:

1. **Lighting Design**, A lighting system was implemented to enhance the visual impact of the exhibits. Spotlights were used to highlight key details in photographs and artworks, drawing attention to significant elements. In addition, track lighting systems were installed, offering adjustable directional lighting suitable for galleries and museums. This allowed for dynamic control of lighting to create visual depth and focus on specific works.

2. **Sound Design**, an audio system was installed to complement the exhibition's themes, providing an ambient soundscape. This included traditional Lanna instrumental music and songs composed as part of the current research project, enriching the visitor's sensory experience and reinforcing the cultural narrative.

3. **Spatial Arrangement & Exhibition Display**, physical exhibition components were carefully arranged to enhance historical and cultural interpretation. Artifacts and traditional objects were displayed, such as ancient vases, writing desks, and traditional Tai Lue women's attire. These items were incorporated to establish an authentic historical atmosphere and foster a deeper connection between visitors and the cultural context of Chiang Khong.



Figure 5 The researcher provides an explanation of painting techniques inspired by archival photographs, as visitors explore the exhibition space. (Source: Researcher, 2024)

A total of 152 exhibition visitors participated in the quantitative evaluation survey. The overall reliability of the questionnaire, assessed using Cronbach's alpha, was 0.89, indicating high internal consistency. 1) Cultural Appreciation; Participants reported a high level of cultural appreciation after viewing the creative works. Mean = 4.52, S.D. = 0.48 The results suggest that the musical compositions and contemporary paintings effectively enhanced participants' recognition of Chiang Rai's cultural values. 2) Perceived Value of Museum-Based Creative Works. Respondents expressed positive attitudes toward the integration of performing arts and contemporary visual art within museum settings. Mean = 4.41, S.D. = 0.55 Participants noted that the artworks helped make cultural narratives more engaging and accessible. 3) Understanding of Chiang Rai's Cultural Identity. Visitors demonstrated a strong understanding of Chiang Rai's cultural identity following the exhibition. Mean = 4.47, S.D. = 0.51 This suggests that the creative outputs successfully communicated key cultural characteristics of the region. (4) Interest in Cultural Tourism. The exhibition stimulated visitors' interest in cultural tourism activities in Chiang Rai. Mean = 4.38, S.D. = 0.63 Many respondents indicated that the artworks motivated them to explore additional cultural sites within the province.

Discussions

This research aimed to develop collaboration between museums and local communities by utilizing the value of cultural performing arts as a medium to promote and preserve cultural identity. Additionally, it sought to encourage community participation and enhance cultural tourism in Chiang Rai Province. The examination of the role of museums as centers for cultural learning revealed that both the HLSK and the OPCK possess significant potential to become vibrant learning hubs. However, the findings also indicated that strategies to strengthen community engagement through diverse activities remain essential. These results align with Hooper-Greenhill's (2000) perspective that contemporary museums should shift from functioning merely as repositories of artifacts to becoming dynamic learning spaces that actively interact with their communities. The integration of performing arts as an engagement tool enabled the museums to build deeper emotional and cultural connections between visitors and their local heritage. This corresponds with Falk & Dierking's (2016) argument that interactive and meaningful experiences foster a greater sense of belonging, allowing visitors to connect more profoundly with cultural narratives and historical contexts. Furthermore, fostering collaboration between museums and communities through cultural performing arts enhanced the museums' roles as cultural hubs and motivated community members to participate in preserving their own heritage. This is consistent with Brown, Cummins, and González Rueda's (2023) assertion that community collaboration increases the perceived value

of local culture, as people begin to view museums as integral parts of their identity and collective memory. The findings also suggest that such collaborative initiatives have the potential to attract tourists who are increasingly drawn to authentic cultural experiences. This supports Richards' (2018) findings that connecting arts and culture with tourism development enhances economic value and contributes to long-term sustainability within the tourism sector. Moreover, the dissemination of cultural performances through digital platforms such as YouTube and social media further expanded access to new target audiences, demonstrating how digital engagement can amplify cultural communication and support tourism promotion.

The Role of Music in Promoting Cultural Tourism

The findings of this study indicate that music plays a significant role as an effective medium for promoting cultural tourism. Using music as a tool for public communication and promotion has been shown to enhance tourist interest in the unique identity of the region. The newly composed songs successfully conveyed the cultural image of Chiang Rai, which corresponds with Richards (2018) argument that art and music can add value to tourism by connecting tourists' experiences with the local culture. The melodies and rhythms of the compositions were intentionally designed to reflect the serene and charming atmosphere of Chiang Khong. This aligns with the findings of Gibson & Connell (2005) who suggest that music can help create an immersive ambiance, enabling listeners to form emotional connections with the places described in the songs. Moreover, presenting cultural narratives through music facilitates the dissemination of local culture in an accessible and engaging manner for diverse audiences. This approach supports perspective that music serves as a powerful medium for preserving cultural identity and promoting broader recognition of local cultures through appropriate dissemination strategies. Additionally, the researchers observed that live performances at local festivals serve as another effective platform for delivering musical experiences directly to audiences. Such performances not only bring vitality to tourist destinations but also enhance the overall tourist experience, making the sites more engaging and attractive to visitors.

The Role of Contemporary Painting in Enhancing the Presentation of Cultural Values

In terms of visual arts, the creation of contemporary paintings has contributed to a more multidimensional presentation of cultural values. This aligns assertion that art can serve as an effective medium for communicating and preserving community identity. The application of a post-impressionist approach, which emphasizes expressive use of color and emotive brushstrokes, was found to effectively capture viewers' attention and foster emotional engagement with local communities. This concept is argued that contemporary art can stimulate social participation and enhance public understanding of a region's cultural dimensions. Furthermore, the findings support Richards (2018) perspective that integrating contemporary art with local identity can increase the appeal of cultural tourism and add economic value to the destination. While physical exhibitions in local spaces offer tangible cultural experiences, the incorporation of digital technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) can further expand audience reach and create more immersive and meaningful interactions. This view is supported by Ross Parry (2010) who suggests that digital technologies can revitalize the presentation of art and culture, making them more engaging and accessible to younger generations.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of integrating museum–community collaboration with creative artistic practices to strengthen cultural identity, enhance cultural learning, and contribute to the growth of the local creative economy. This approach offers a sustainable and context-sensitive strategy for cultural development in Chiang Rai and provides a model for other regions seeking to leverage cultural creativity for tourism and community empowerment.

Conclusion and suggestions

This research concludes that integrating cultural performing arts into the development of museums and local communities presents a sustainable and dynamic approach to cultural heritage preservation and creative tourism promotion. Museums, once seen merely as spaces for displaying artifacts, can be transformed into vibrant cultural platforms. Newly composed songs functioned effectively as a medium for connecting people to their local cultural identity. Moreover, the incorporation of contemporary creative works particularly music and visual art inspired by local narratives significantly enhanced emotional and cultural engagement among audiences.

However, the study proposes three key recommendations to advance area-based development.

1. Governmental and cultural organizations should actively support interdisciplinary artistic and cultural collaborations. In particular, music and visual arts should be employed as strategic tools for cultural communication and soft power promotion.
2. Museum management should open space for community participation, allowing local people to engage in storytelling and cultural programming.
3. Further longitudinal studies should be conducted to explore the long-term impacts of creative-based cultural tourism on community quality of life, grassroots economic development, and the preservation of intangible heritage.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Chiang Rai Rajabhat University and Chiang Khong District should incorporate a systematic monitoring and follow-up mechanism. Such a structure would help maintain active collaboration beyond the project period. In addition, the collaborative model developed in this study should be expanded to other community museums across Chiang Rai Province to strengthen regional cultural networks and enhance the overall cultural tourism ecosystem of the region. Future research should prioritize the development of creative methodologies that yield tangible artistic outcomes and effectively engage younger generations through digital media, co-creation processes, and contemporary artistic practices. These directions will help ensure that cultural heritage remains meaningful and relevant within an increasingly dynamic and interconnected society.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

This study contributes new interdisciplinary knowledge by presenting an integrated approach that combines traditional cultural performing arts with contemporary creative expressions such as music and post-impressionist painting to support participatory activities within museums. This approach not only encourages community involvement but also enhances the cultural value of local tourism. The social and community impacts observed in this study can be summarized as follows.

1. The community has developed a renewed sense of pride in its cultural heritage, leading to increased participation in its preservation and development.
2. Cultural knowledge has been meaningfully transmitted across generations, with local wisdom being passed from elders to youth, fostering intergenerational learning.
3. Exhibitions and performances have attracted tourists and stimulated local spending in community-based businesses, such as handicrafts, local cuisine, and guided tours by local residents.

4. The collaborative process between researchers and community members has enhanced mutual understanding of the value of local cultural heritage.

5. The development approach generated through this project can be scaled up and adapted into policy frameworks at both local and national levels, promoting the integration of culture into sustainable area-based development strategies.

In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that artistic and cultural processes can generate tangible and long-term outcomes in social cohesion, economic revitalization, and the preservation of community identity in a highly effective manner.

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